ALGO MÁS

- A case study on the effects of migration from Guatemala to the U.S.

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Master thesis, ILOS, HF

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

18.09.12

Dedicated to my inspiring grandfather.

© Ruidophoto – «en el camino»

Migration as a shared desire to achieve

algo más

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Year: 2012

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http://www.duo.uio.no/

Abstract

Migration from the countryside of Guatemala to the U.S. works as a livelihood strategy to improve the livelihoods of many households. Households send one or several of their members as an investment and insurance to improve and secure their livelihoods. My research question asks how migration affects those who are left behind, with particular reference to women. To answer my research question I use the livelihoods approach to explain how the migration works, as one of several livelihoods strategies, to complement the livelihood portfolios of the households. The livelihoods approach uses the household as the unit of analysis. Those who are left behind are individuals and primarily women. Hence, I find it useful to complement the theory by defining power and empowerment to additionally explain the mechanisms deciding intra-household relations.

I find that the migration strategy contributes to secure the material asset base of many households in Guatemala. Furthermore, I find that migration does not empower women. Rather, migration leads to a strengthening of the structures preventing women from making their own decisions. In this thesis I discover social networks, Facebook in particular, especially relevant when studying the migrant networks and bonding social capital created by these. The thesis reveals how the migration to the U.S. also is led by a desire to achieve *algo más*.

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All faults are entirely mine. Oslo, 17.09.12

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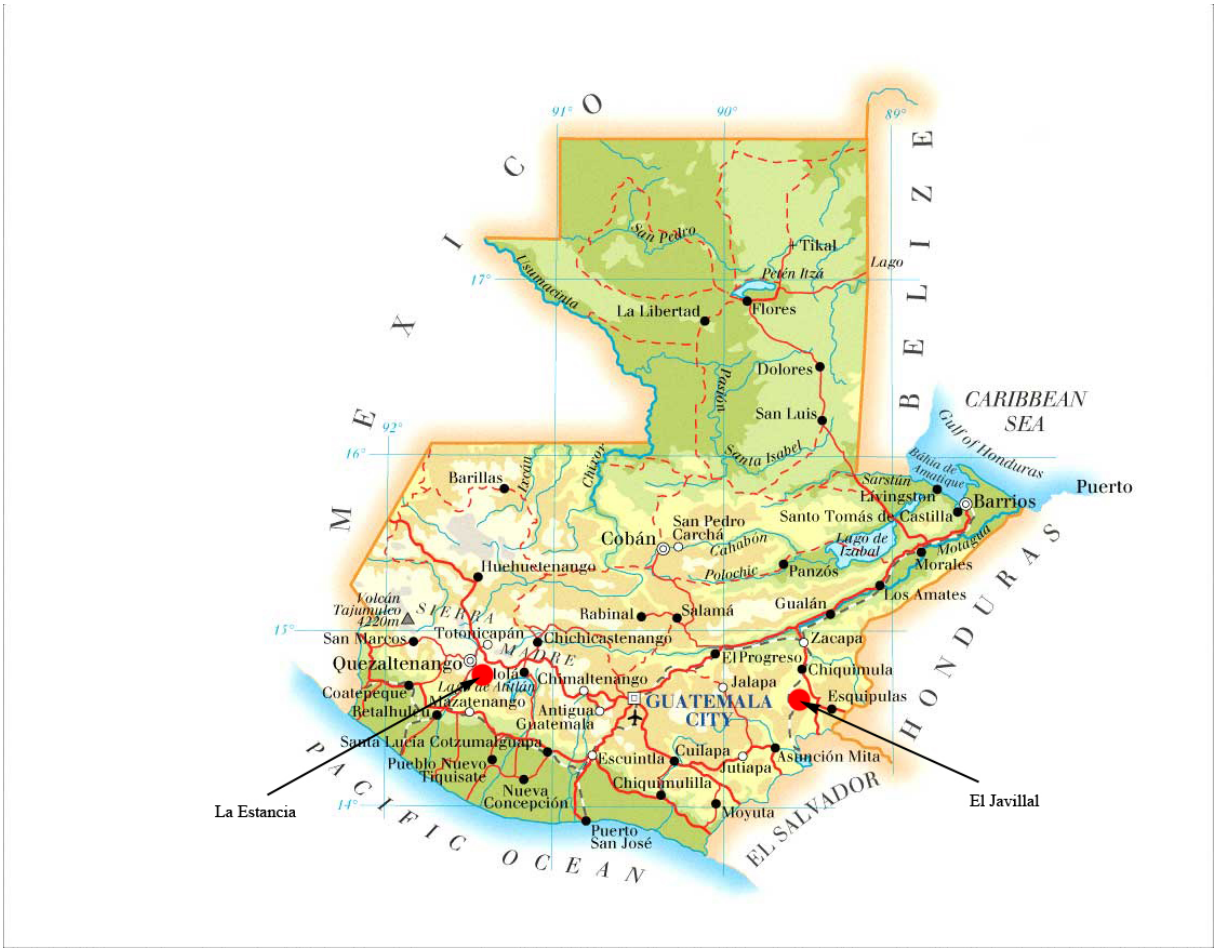
Map of Guatemala



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y juntos caminando, podremos alcanzar

otra ciudad que no se acaba

sin penas ni tristezas, ciudad de eternidad"

Popular Catholic song

1 INTRODUCTION

> "….looking at the situation of my family. Because what I want is something better for them, give them the best that I can. Now, when I´m twenty years old I consider myself to have a great part of my life to dedicate it to them, right. And secure them ahead, and, well, that they don't suffer that much. Because they´ve [the parents] already worked to secure us ahead, but now it is our [the kids] turn to look for ways to secure them [the whole family] ahead….this, this is the motive that I have for travelling[1]."

The quote is "Lucia´s". She is a 20 years old girl who made the risky trip to the U.S. just a few days after I left her village, El Javillal. Like many others, "Lucia" travelled with a *coyote*[2]. It took her almost a month to reach her destination, and during her time on the road I talked to her mother several times. "Lucia´s" mother often cried of anxiety about what could happen to her daughter. She told me that one of "Lucia´s" youngest sibling had stopped eating because she got so depressed when her sister left. Our conversations always ended with "Lucia´s" mother saying; "*But we have to keep faith in God, that he will protect her. She will make it!*" "Lucia" risked everything, but she made it into the U.S. She is now working as a maid outside New York, saving up money to build a house and a future for herself and her family back in el Javillal. Her story is only one of thousands.

International migration has become a significant factor determining the relationship between the global South and global North (Faist, 2007). Remittances have quadrupled in the past years, and now account for a large percentage of the GDP of many countries in the South (de Haas, 2007:1). In 2000, it was estimated that 12.5 percent of the US population were *Latinos* (Guzmán, 2000), and in 2011 the Latin American countries in total received 58.1 billion USD in remittances from their relatives in the North (World Bank 2011: web page). Anzaldúa (1987) writes; "*the U.S. Mexican border es una herida abierta*[3] *where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds*". This quote is often used when describing human rights violations, when undocumented Latin Americans, with hopes for a better future for themselves and their families, cross the U.S. border. Undocumented migrants are willing to sacrifice their own lives to reach the "Promised land" and they risk their families' home and land when they take up loans to pay the *coyotes*. The lives of their family and friends are set

1 "Mirando la situación de mi familia. Porque yo lo que quiero es algo mejor para ellos, dale lo mejor que pueda. Ahora cuando tengo veinte años me considero que todavía tengo gran parte de vida de dedicarle a ellos va. Y sacarlos adelante. Y bueno que no sufran tanto, porque ya se reforzados por sacarnos adelante a nosotros ya nosotros nos toque ver cómo sacarles adelante ellos.....eso es el motivo por lo cual yo viajo" – "Lucia"
2 In Central America the human smugglers that guide the undocumented migrants on their way to the U.S. are called Coyotes.
3 "is an open wound"

on hold: While waiting for the remittances and success of the migrant, the remaining family members have to make ends meet without a husband, father, brother, sister or mother.

It is estimated that 1.6 million Guatemalans have migrated the country, whom of 97.4 percent are living in the U.S. (UNICEF, 2010). Most of these Guatemalans are undocumented migrants (Smith 2006). The bloody civil war forced many Guatemalans to seek refuge in Mexico and the U.S. Although the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, Guatemalans with hopes of a better future continued, and are still continuing, to flee the country. The increasing number of Guatemalans in the U.S., the growing network of Guatemalans outside the country, limited economic opportunities in their own country, and severe inequalities regarding access to jobs and education, are some of the main factors for the high emigration rates to the North (ibid).

Approximately 85 percent of the migrants from the countryside of Guatemala are men (MIRLU, 2010). Most of the people whom I met in the two villages explained that the migrants went as a result of necessity. Remittances are seen as a source of economic capital that can foster economic development in the South (Faist, 2007). The women are the ones left behind with the responsibility for the household, and the majority of my female interviewees said that the migration to the U.S. was a family project. Still, I met several people, especially women, who suffered as a consequence of migration. They experienced material losses and/or were abandoned by their migrating husbands. Regardless of this, most of my interviewees argued that migration *vale la pena*[4]. To my interviewees the migration was worth the cost, because of the much-needed benefits it could lead to. Nevertheless, I often heard people saying; "*They migrate because of necessity. They migrate to achieve algo más*[5]". In other words, the gains of the migration did not only hold a material aspect, the migrants also achieved *something more.*

4 "is worth the costs"
5 Fischer and Benson (2011) write how many of their Guatemalan interviewees answered that people migrated to the U.S. to achieve algo más (something more). This was also something many my interviewees stressed.

1.1 The research question

The research question is as follows;

How does migration from the countryside of Guatemala to the U.S affect the living conditions and livelihoods of those left behind, with particular reference to women?

The purpose of this study is to analyse effects of migration from Guatemala to the U.S., including both the economic and the social aspect. To study how migration affects the livelihood of those who remain I divide the research question into two aspects; one focuses on the material effects of migration, and the other on the social consequences of migration.

The material effects of migration

Studying the effects of migration in economic terms I find it of relevance to examine the use of remittances. I take a closer look at what kind of investments the remittances are used for and find that the two main investments are house and land. Further, I ask why the households choose to prioritise these above other investments. Hence, what lays implicit in housing and land? What types of accumulation do these lead? I analyse how these investments affect the livelihoods of the households. Do the remittances contribute improving living conditions of both women and men? Several households suffer severe loss because of the migration, yet most people underscored the accomplishments the migrants might achieve. Due to this, I describe the material risks households take when choosing to migrate. The pessimist migration approach stresses how migration from the global South to the North[6] creates an increased demand for capitalist consumer goods (de Haas, 2012). I look into how the remittances are used in the everyday life of the interviewees. On what daily expenses do the interviewees spend their remittances? Do the remittances lead to consumerism?

The social effects of migration

In addition to the material effects of the economic remittances I study how migration affects social relations in the villages sending the migrants. I found that the migration is seen as a

6 I choose to use the terms global South and North when defining and describing the countries in the «richer» and «poorer» world. I find these terms to entail least political connotations of similar definitions.

solution to achieve *algo más*. I ask what this means, and further look closer at how, or if, it affects the desire to migrate. I also analyse to what extent migration in fact is a family project by looking into the decision-making process in the households. Are the decisions made by the household as a whole, and with the purpose of benefiting all the family members? Social remittances can be defined as; ideas, values and social capital (Levitt, 2012). Most theoretical frameworks studying migration stress the social remittances that the migrants transfer (de Haas, 2010). In the last section of the analysis I will examine how social remittances affect intra-household relations.

1.2 Structure of thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. In this chapter, *chapter one*, I provide a brief introduction to the migration history of Guatemala, and the contemporary social and political situation of the country. In *chapter two* I discuss methodological issues and challenges. Here I present how I conducted my study, the choices I made, and my reflections around the reliability and ethics of my work. My analysis rests upon a survey connected to the project, MIRLU - The Effect of Migration and Remittances on Land Use Change[7], and a two month long fieldwork in two of the villages where this survey was performed. My main findings, and key focus, rest upon the fieldwork and the observations from the villages I visited. In *chapter three* I present the theoretical framework that I employ in the analysis. The approaches I find most useful to shed light upon my research question focus on how migration, as a livelihood strategy, improves the living conditions of households (Ellis,2000). I also pay attention to power relations and decision-making within the households.

I divide my analysis in two parts. *Chapter four* studies the material consequences for those who remain. I describe the villages and present some of the results from the survey, and focus mainly on the material gains and losses that migration from Guatemala to the U.S. entails. *Chapter five* studies the social dimensions. I focus primarily on intra-household relations, desires and power.

C*hapter six* presents the conclusions of my study, and proposals for future studies.

7 I describe the survey in the chapter of methodology

1.3 A Note on the Scope of the Study

I initially started this project asking how migration affects those left behind, but as the study evolved I shifted my focus to the effects on women since most migrants are men. This also took me away from a strict application of the livelihoods approach. Since I also wanted to study the individuals left behind, I could not treat the household as the sole unit of analysis. Since a household is made up of several people, I complemented the livelihoods approach by discussing intra-household relations and power. In my view, this covered the gender aspects of my project. Nonetheless, it would have been interesting to study the effects of migration through an even more specific gender lens. Age is another important factor that I did not look much into. Studying the younger generation of single female migrants would have been especially interesting considering the outcomes of those who return, and what position they will have in the villages. Furthermore, there is no coming away from the ethnic aspect when studying Guatemala. I chose to do a case study on effects of migration, and did my fieldwork in two villages – el Javillal where the majority of the inhabitants did not consider themselves as indigenous, and la Estancia were the vast majority identified themselves as Mayas. I did not draw particularly attention to this aspect in my thesis, but it would have been interesting to compare the *grass widows*[8] in the two villages from an ethnical point of view.

1.4 Background

Guatemala is located in the Central American isthmus; it features a rich and complex natural and cultural diversity. Guatemala has a population of approximately 14 million, of which 60 percent are indigenous people (CEPAL, 2012: land profile). However, the natural and cultural diversity has not been reflected in the country´s 190 years of independence. The political and economic history of Guatemala has been characterized by inequality and exclusion.

The country is one of the countries with the most skewed distribution of wealth in the world (ASDI, 2003: 36). Land tenure is highly unequal (Aguilar-Støen, 2012), and exclusion (access to school, health care, unemployment rates etc.) primarily affects the indigenous population and women (ASDI, 2003:36-41). For example, numbers from 2010 shows that illiteracy among the adult population is 32.1 percent for women, in comparison to 18.2 percent among men (CEPAL, 2012: land profile). Exclusion is also evident in terms of political participation

8 Grass widow - a wife whose husband is temporarily absent

and representation. This is exemplified by only 12 percent being women (Ibid) and 13.9 percent being indigenous in the National Assembly (Muj Garcia, 2012:6). Over fifty percent of the population is below the national poverty line and 13 percent live in extreme poverty (CIA, 2012: country profile). The country is ranked as number 131 out of 187 on the Human Development Index of 2011 (UNDP Webpage n.d.). The remittances from migrants account for a significant part of Guatemalans' economy. Guatemala is the top remittance recipient in Central America, and the money transfers represent about 10 percent of the country´s GDP (CIA, 2012: country profile). In the following section I give a short introduction to the migration history of Guatemala, and conclude by giving a short introduction to the current social and political situation.

1.4.1 Migration History of Guatemala

Sobrevivientes en el movimiento

Lovell and Lutz (2000) describe the Mayas as *sobreviventes en el movimiento*[9], and how migration has been a strategy of survival of the Maya societies since the Spanish invasion. Migration from the Highlands of Guatemala to the coast and southern parts of Mexico can be traced back to the early 1800s, when coffee was introduced to the country and established as the main cash crop export. The establishment of coffee was made possible by the displacement of the indigenous population to the Highlands, which are less suitable for agriculture (Smith, 2006). In addition, land holdings in the Highlands are small and insufficient to enable most families to be self-sufficient.

Restricted access to land and a skewed land distribution are central in the history of Guatemala. The land has always been in hands of the few, and this has led to several conflicts in the history of the country (Rostica, 2003:32). In the second part of the 1800s the country imposed a range of land liberalisation reforms. These reforms opened up for foreign investments, and the adoption of big farms for the production of export goods. Big plantations depended on the seasonal workers, and transformed whole villages into part time ghost villages in the beginning of the 20th century. The seasonal workers worked under slavery-like conditions, the salaries were so low that they could hardly afford food, and many returned without having saved a *centavo* (Porras 2009: 38-40).

9 «Survivors in movement»

Internal migration to the coast decreased during the short-lived agrarian reform launched during the Revolution in 1944[10], but went up again both on seasonal and permanent basis in the 1950s and 1960s. In this period the plantations expanded and created an increased demand for cheap labour (Stolz and Hamilton, 1991:83-84). In this period the governing class, with strong ties to big international companies and the military, strengthened its position. In 1976 the country was hit by an earthquake. 23 000 people lost their lives, and the damages to houses, infrastructure and farming land were tremendous. As a result of the earthquake migration to Mexico and the United States peaked. This trend only increased as the war intensified (Smith 2006).

As a response to the coup in 1954 the opposition grew, and as the ruling agrarian military class strengthened its position and measures against the opposition, the 36-year long civil war started (Grandin, 2006). During the war about 150 000 civilians were killed or "disappeared". Over one million people were displaced from their homes, and over 440 villages were burned down as a part of the counterinsurgency campaigns. It is estimated that 83.5 percent of the violations and killings were conducted against the indigenous population (Rostica, 2003: 38). In 1999 the Truth Commission of Guatemala concluded that the acts conducted by the army could be characterised as Genocide (Meier in Manz, 2004:xiii). The brutal persecution and repression pushed the population to seek refuge in Mexico, and it is estimated that in the 1980s alone, between 150 000 and 200 000 Guatemalans sought refuge in Mexico, and later also the U.S. and Canada. From these, 46 000 persons got international refugee status (Smith 2006; Stolz and Hamilton 1991:98-99).

Besides the migrants pushed by the war, from the beginning of the 1980s to the late 1990s, the seasonal migration to Chiapas increased significantly. In 1992 it was estimated that as many as 87 000 Guatemalan workers had worked legally during the year, but the number of undocumented workers was estimated to be approximately 250 000 (Smith,2006).

10 The October revolution of 1944 came as an answer to the authoritarian and unfair politics. It was conducted by previous military, workers on strike and an unsatisfied middle class. The revolution imposed, for the first time in Guatemala, since the independence, free and democratic elections (CEH points: 49-62). In 1954 the democratic elected president had to give up the power to a new military government , supported (or installed) by the U.S. (Grandin 2006; Mendelsohn and Pequeneza 2001; Gleijses2005:conclution)

After war time and mass migration

By the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 the unemployment rates had reached between 30 and 40 percent (Smith 2006). Susanne Jonas gives emphasis to the achievement of significant levels of tolerance and participation that the country enjoyed between 1993 and 1997, but underscores that the political parties from the center – left were excluded (Jonas, 2008). In addition, she highlights that the Peace Negotiations would not have been possible without the UN. Nonetheless, the different institutions in the UN divided and separated topics regarding social and economic politics (Jonas, 2000 in Rostica, 2003:39). As a result of the diminished political left, and the division of the social and economic topics within different institutions of the UN, topics regarding Agrarian Reform and job creation were excluded from the Agreements during the Peace Negotiation (Rostica, 2003 and Jonas, 2008: 14 and 21).

AASSA[11] (Agreement on socio-economic matters and the agrarian situation) was led by the financial institutions like IMF, IADB and the World Bank (Rostica, 2003:39). These institutions, and the politics led by them, were first of all liberalisation reforms and neoliberal initiatives. Poverty was recognised as a problem, but the agreements did not contain any recommendations regarding agrarian reform or a programme for creation of jobs. The only measure imposed to improve the agrarian situation was the promise of the government to buy land and sell to small farmers at a low price (Ibid). The problem was that the state did not have the funding to buy land (Rostica, 2003). At the same time, the government was required to raise the taxes and the GDP by 8 (the lowest in the hemisphere) to 12 percent by 2000 (Jonas, 2003: 17, Smith, 2000). Nonetheless, the raise of taxes did not change the fact that the government lacked measures to change the alarming unemployment rates, or improve the welfare of the population (Rostica, 2003).

The social side of the Accords was led by The Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (AIRIP) established in 1995. Its primary goal was to redefine Guatemala as a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual nation. The AIRIP put forward reforms on institutional models for participation of indigenous people, the establishment of mandatory consultation mechanisms and the formation of institutions representing indigenous peoples. The AIRIP was to be followed up by the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights (MINUGUA) (Rostica, 2003:39). Jonas underscores that one of the main

11 Acuerdo sobre Asuntos socioeconómicos y la Situación Agraria

contributions of the Peace Accords was the AIRIP. The Mayan population had experienced tremendous repression executed by the army during the war, and the new politics helped the indigenous population to continue its mobilisation (Jonas, 2000 in Rostica, 2003:39).

Bastos highlights how the political opportunities, besides the development of the "Maya movement" since the 1970s up to the Peace Accords, gradually opened up to include the indigenous people. The previous discourse changed from evolving around class towards more ethno-cultural values. At the same time, the movement experienced a division into different groups. Bastos argues that the movement, dissociated from the political left and the differentiation of the movement, created opening of political opportunities that allowed the Mayan population to enter into politics. The embracing of *lo Maya*[12] as the main aim of entering politics has, he claims, overshadowed the search of a strategy to change the power structures in the country. The rationalisation away from political issues made the movement easier to "swallow" for the ruling political class (Bastos, 2001:7). This, together with the division of the social and economic topics within the UN, stressing neoliberal values, and the diminishment of the political left during the Peace Accords, led the politics to not consider changing the old power structures determining the lives of most Guatemalans.

Segovia emphasises that the new neo-liberal and modernisation policies have put an end to the traditional economic model based on agrarian export and that a new model is rising. The new model stresses new sources of development that are replacing the unilateral commodity export. The new sources are the *maquilas*[13], remittances and tourism. These factors have modified the balance of power within the business sector in the benefits of (national, regional and international) sectors related to the new sources (Segovia 2004:9-11). On the other side, the new economic policy has not changed the economic skewed distribution of wealth that affects the poor. The poor are the ones who are forced to work in the *maquila* industry, informal sector or migrate to the U.S. In other words, the new forms of development force the poor to work without rights in Guatemala, or migrate without rights to the U.S (Kruijt and Sojo, 2005). Despite of the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 inequality and exclusion are still problems for the country. The state is still controlled by, and serving the interests of, the economic elite and little has been done to improve the lives of most Guatemalans (Vasquez

12 The maya – the indigenous
13 Sweat shops – factories – mass production of goods, exploiting of work force. The factories are often placed in so called Zonas francas – free zones, where the State is not allowed to intervene with the affairs.

2011: 25.05, UNAM). In 2005, 140 000 Guatemalans left the country legally, but it is impossible to know how many who emigrated undocumented (Smith 2006).

1.4.2 Guatemala today – two winds blowing in opposite directions

The 26th of January 2012 marked a watershed in the history of the country. General Efraín Rios Montt, primer President and brutal military leader during the most intense and bloody periods of the civil war, was formally charged for his commitments with genocide and crimes against humanity (Doyle, 2012). This is one of several paradigmatic court trials happening recently, and represents one of more steps towards transitional justice in Guatemala. Yet, and only two weeks before the trial, general Otto Pérez Molina, under the slogan "iron fist", took office as President of Guatemala (Aldana, 2012). The newly elected President has background as infantry commander during the war. His troops operated in the areas of the country where the communities' experienced extreme violence and human rights violations (Ibid). He has never been trialed for his actions and has stated on several occasions that Guatemala never experienced Genocide (Castillo, 2012: el Periodico).

Nevertheless, the country faces one of Latin America´s highest rates of crime. In 2010 the country´s homicide rate reached 41.2 per every 100,000 resident, which signifies Guatemala among the highest in the world (Aldana, 2012). The brutal gang crime, narco-traffic and the illegal and dangerous migration crossing the country meet with strict measures. The violence has only increased in correlation to the *super manos duras*, imposed by the governments (Vasquez 2011: 25.05, UNAM). In other words, as Mack and Leonardo (2012) point out, the steps towards transitional justice are held back by the fact that the situation not only includes the crimes committed during the war, but also the high present crime rate. Moreover, the fact that a primer general from the war was elected as the president illustrates the complex path towards reconsolidation.

Despite of this, there are constructive forces driving parts of Guatemalan society. In different sectors there is an increasing awareness of rights. As described, the recognition of the indigenous rights in the Peace Accords has led to a growing recognition of the Maya culture and its rights. In addition, in 2008 the country imposed "the law against *femincide* and other

forms of violence against the woman[14]" (OAS, 2008:web page). These represent steps towards recognising the rights of the most excluded groups in the society. At the same time, there is an increasing awareness of territorial- and human rights. Big international companies exploiting the gold mining and hydro electro industries are met with demonstrations and people are claiming their rights to decide on the access and use of their resources (Hirsch, 2010).

14 "la ley contra el femicidio y otras formas de violencia contra la mujer" – my translation

2 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will justify the choices I made when finding and investigating the material for the thesis. I explain how I completed the field research and I discuss the experiences and challenges I came across during my fieldwork. I reflect on the reliability of the methods used throughout the whole chapter and conclude by discussing the ethics of my investigation.

2.1 Point of Departure

I have chosen an open and explorative research question. Repstad (2001:31) writes that an interpretative approach leaves room to change the statement of problem as the researcher explores what is interesting. In other words, by using an open and explorative approach, I have been able to change the research question as I got deeper into the analysis and saw what was of relevance.

When choosing an explorative methodological approach the researcher is required to operate consciously regarding her personal point of departure (Neumann, 2000). "*The interpretive researcher (…) should reflect on, reexamine, and analyse personal points of view and feelings as a part of the process of studying others*" (Ibid: 75). My interest in the topic emerged in 2004, when I lived with a family in a poor village in the countryside of el Salvador. People talked about migration to the U.S. as wandering into the "Promised land". My impression was that those who had been in the U.S., with their white tennis shoes and by knowing some phrases in English, had a higher status in the society. The families with relatives in the U.S. often had some "show-off" stereo or television in their house, but I did not meet many who had invested in something that I thought of as sustainable investments[15]. At the same time, among developing agencies, the focus on development and remittances has increased in the last few years (Faist, 2007). In this sense, the combination of my prejudices and the growing attention to the theme, led me to choose this topic.

2.1.1 How Individuals Interpret their own Lived Experiences

I wanted the empirical data to guide the development of the analysis and the thesis. Brettell defines my point of view by writing; "*The goal is not to find a typical representative*

15 My perceptions as a Norwegian twenty year old girl – to me sustainable investments were education, production projects etc.

individual, but assess how individuals interpret and understand their own lived experiences" (Brettell, 2002: 439 in Rigg, 2007:29). During the preparations and throughout the fieldwork, I used a theoretical framework for the discussion guide and research questions, but I found the empirical findings most important. I used the theoretical framework, built up by several concepts, as tools to stake out the main paths of my research and help me detach from my prejudices, but my main objective for writing the thesis is to understand and give voice to people whose voices are not heard. By this, I place the findings from the fieldwork in an iterative relation with the theoretical framework (Repstad, 2001:114-116).

Undertaking qualitative research is a holistic process. It strives to see the whole picture and studies a whole, rather than trying to prove or test theories (Jansick, 2000: 385). As described, previous to my fieldwork I held a quite clear personal view on the effects of migration. I tried to disentangle myself from my preconceptions, while at the same time being aware of my presumptions in the field. To be able to conduct a reliable study I was strict when choosing what data to collect and when finding interviewees[16]. I placed the different information in a dialectic relationship as I explored the research questions (Ibid).

2.1.2 Interdisciplinary Studies

My academic background consists of a combination of Political Science, History and Spanish. I chose a masters´ program in Latin American studies because I wanted to write about Central America and Migration and because I acknowledge the benefits of interdisciplinary science. Notwithstanding of this, defining Latin American studies is not an easy task.

Latin American studies opens up the possibility to study a range of topic, from Latin American literature to politics, and the Latin - Americanists are open to choose their position, methodology and theories. I see this freedom as an advantage in the sense that no blueprint exists on how to write a thesis. You are free to choose and combine theories and methodologies that are best suited for your study. At the same time, I also realise the challenges associated with this freedom. Sometimes during my fieldwork I felt a bit lost in terms of not following a specific methodology. Gasper writes that investigators often find their identity as a researcher depending on their department. The interdisciplinary researchers use various methods from different fields. This often appears confusing rather than

16 This I will discuss further in the chapter.

enlightening (ibid,2001:19). The approaches of different methods are widely spread and the gaps between the various forms of application might be difficult to fill (McNeil, 1999:329).

Despite these challenges, I argue that the study of migration should be interdisciplinary. Migration is a complex and interconnected issue affected by politics, economy, demography, culture as well as local conditions and social relations. McNeil stresses what he calls a "democratisation of knowledge". "The new production of knowledge" is based on a broader spectrum of information and more participatory methods (McNeil, 1999:315). He also points to how the insights from the different humanities and social sciences complement each other by combining their approaches (Ibid: 317). My primary goal of writing this thesis is to understand people's everyday lives and give voice to my interviewees. By this, I argue that to fully understand migration requires a multileveled and diverse methodology.

2.2 Research Design – Case Study

Stake writes that a "*case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the object to be studied*". In other words, it is defined by interest rather than methods (Stake, 2000:435). By this interpretation a case can be an individual, a community or a topic, and be studied in a number of ways – quantitatively, qualitatively, or by using a mixed methods approach (ibid).

The type of case-study rests on the purpose of the investigation and how the research question is formulated (Yin, 2009). My case is *the effects of migration in Guatemala*. The analysis rests upon the fieldwork from the two villages; la Estancia and el Javillal, and a survey performed by the project, MIRLU[17]. Stake underscores how a holistic approach to a case-study can examine the complexities of the case (Stake, 2000: 439). In other words, I am interested in a topic. I followed a research question and wanted to explore the phenomenon. The combination of the two methodological approaches - the quantitative survey and the qualitative fieldwork and interviews, helps me strengthen the findings of the other. (Repstad, 2001:30).

The reason for choosing a case study in two villages is that it enables me to study a phenomenon in different parts of the country, and in two different contexts. Gasper stresses that a case-study explores a real-world situation and not only parts (ibid,2001:3). The two villages were chosen both for being part of the MIRLU project, as I could use the contacts of

17 I present the survey in 2.3

the project, and because they are representative of the country. La Estancia is relatively rich, the majority of the population is indigenous and the village is located in the fertile Highlands. El Javillal is poor, the population does not have an indigenous identity, and the village is placed in the dry lowland. I describe the villages later in the chapter, and elaborate in chapter four. The MIRLU project has worked in both villages on several occasions and includes contact persons who are familiar with the aims of the project. These contacts made my fieldwork easier, and worked as important door-openers. Before I entered the villages I had the confidence of persons from the project that are respected in the villages. At the same time, I got access to material about the villages produced by the project.

2.2.1 Mixed Methods Approach

I used a mixed methods approach. Being part of the research project MIRLU enables me to use data from a survey conducted by the project. The analysis will mainly emphasise the findings from my fieldwork, and, as mentioned, I wish to operate from an open and explorative research question.

Ragin points out that the goals of qualitative and quantitative research differ. He highlights that the qualitative research aims to interpret and explore, while the quantitative finds patterns and tests (Ragin, 1994:32-33). This point is debatable, but related to my thesis I use my qualitative findings to interpret, give voice to and understand the diversity among the interviewees. The objectives for using the survey are to find patterns and connections that can help to interpret the qualitative findings (ibid:51). One of the arguments that Grønmo (1998) uses for combining the qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches is that the two, first of all, are describing the features of the data that is collected and analysed, but from different point of views. Doing qualitative and quantitative studies is not a dichotomy where one necessary excludes the other. The two approaches can also be used in a complementary relationship, of which one could benefit from the other (Ibid). As I use an explorative research question my main focus rests on the qualitative part, but I use a quantitative survey to strengthen and shed light upon my findings.

2.3 Survey

This thesis is part of the project MIRLU. The project is a collaboration project between SUM (Centre for Development and the Environment), the Norwegian University of Life Science (UMB), la Universidad del Valle in Guatemala, Denver University in USA and el Colegio de la Frontera Sur in Mexico. The aim of the project is to study the effects of international migration and remittances on land use change in the area which the migrants originated from. In 2010 the project conducted a survey in four villages in Guatemala and four villages in Mexico[18]. In Guatemala 401 households were included, and the units were elected proportionally according to the size of the villages. Although my study focuses on a different aspect of migration than the MIRLU project, I use the findings from the survey to build a backdrop for my analysis.

The four villages where the survey was conducted are located in different regions of the country. Two of the four villages are the villages were I did my fieldwork, el Javillal in east and la Estancia in the west of Guatemala. The remaining two villages are also placed on each side of the country. In other words, two villages are located in the Western Highland, and two are situated in the Eastern Lowland. According to their history, placement and economy the villages represent a good base for comparison and to provide a broader picture of the whole country. Repstad writes that in quantitative research it is relevant to operationalise the research question and test (2001:31-32). Not all researchers using a quantitative approach will agree upon this, but this statement fits well with why I chose to use the survey. In my analysis, the majority of examples are drawn from the two villages where I conducted my fieldwork, and I use the findings as a framework.

Most likely as a consequence of the traditional organisation of the families, where the man is seen as the spokesperson of the family, 73.3 percent of the respondents in the survey are men. The answers given are therefore most likely impacted by the proportion of the participants being men in the survey. That the majority of the respondents are men might weaken the validity of the responses. Hellevik points out that the researcher should conduct discretionary judgment related to how the operational definition corresponds to the theoretical approach (Hellevik, 2003, 186). In relation to my research question, where women are the main focus, the low percentage of women will be taken into account when analysing the findings from the survey. There exist a range of models to strengthen and test the validity of the survey

18 I only use the findings from Guatemala

(Ibid:187), but most of the questions used in the survey are quite clear, and I do not think that the gender differentiation affects the outcomes significantly. I am only using the survey as a backdrop for my analysis and I kept the gender bias in mind when analysing the findings.

2.4 Fieldwork

2.4.1 Ethnography and Participatory Research

> "One advantage of ethnography as a research method is that it pushes us to take seriously people´s motives for becoming involved in activities that, from another – perhaps our own – perspective – seem to involve certain forms of danger and inequality" (Fischer and Benson, 2006: 74).

Migrating to the U.S. is a dangerous project and my previous experience in El Salvador pointed in the direction that it was neither sustainable nor worth the risks. I wanted to live in the communities to understand why people choose to migrate despite the dangers and challenges associated with migration. As stated, I want to give voice to the people who are left behind in the communities and let the empirical findings direct my thesis. This made me choose to do fieldwork.

Doing fieldwork is closely associated with the anthropological approach and the ethnographic method seeking to make "thick descriptions". Geertz emphasised that the researcher must perform a double role. On one side, the investigator needs to reveal the content in the culture that impacts on how the actors act and on the other side, interpret the social discourse (1973: 27). In other words, try to interpret the perceptions of the interviewees and provide information according to the researcher's analytical interpretations. Because a masters´ thesis must be completed in a limited time frame I found it difficult to spend more than two months in the field. I also wanted to see different parts of the country to be able to combine the different findings. In this context I had to use a combination of different methods in order to collect as much information as possible within the limited time frame. I decided to conduct a participatory method and rest my main focus on doing in-depth interviews.

By doing a participatory research I lived, talked and participated in the everyday life of the societies. Chambers stresses that the most significant principles in a participatory research is that the researcher needs to be aware of her behavior and prejudices. The researcher should help the interviewees to express themselves and define for themselves their own ways and

solutions (Chambers, 1994 in Beazley and Ennew, 2006:192). The primary focus of the anthropological methods approach is for the researcher to be sensitive to culture. I only spent a month in each community, and I tried to use my "anthropological eye" by being open and trying to interpret what I saw (Sarfí, 2010: 07.09).

2.4.2 Conducting the fieldwork

In el Javillal I lived with the community president, a well-respected man in the society. I ate all my meals in the neighboring house and got very close to the woman who cooked. In la Estancia I lived with the female director of one of the schools. She was one of two women in the community board. These contacts helped me by representing my inside "anthropological eyes". They both helped me to obtain confidence and contact with interviewees and they always answered the questions I found during my stay (Sarfí, 2010: 07.09). I relied on their honest opinion and together we reflected upon what happened in the villages.

The stays in la Estancia and el Javillal were very different - the two villages differ in culture, economy and nature. In el Javillal people were very open and friendly and all of the inhabitants invited me in. As early as the first week I had visited all the families in the whole village. Members of the women's committee followed me around and presented me, and my work, to all of the families. This helped me to *map out*[19] who had a migration history and the composition of the village already in the first week. In la Estancia the inhabitants were shy and skeptical both towards me and internally towards each other in the village. This made the whole mapping process a bit more difficult, and I had to look for other types of access points to get to know the interviewees (Ibid).

Some advice I got before I went on my fieldwork was to be visible in the villages (Aguilar-Støen, 2011:19.12). I spent most of the hours of daylight walking around trying to talk to people. In el Javillal most of the inhabitants got to know me the first week, so it was easier to just stop to talk with people. Among other places, I spent much time around the mill talking to the women that came before lunch to grind the corn. I also dedicated time in the Catholic Church and the meetings arranged there.

The Rural Participatory Appraisal approach highlights the researcher to be a participant in the society. The investigator might obtain a closer relation to the interviewees by participating in

19 Within the rural appraisal methods approach – to stark out the composition and understand the village is called mapping (Chambers, 1994)

the different tasks (Chambers, 1994). After a couple of weeks I got invited to all of the birthday parties of the younger women in the village. For most of the birthdays´ parties I asked if I could come and help to prepare the dinner. After having traveled many times to Latin America I do not have any problems eating whatever is on the menu and I love cooking. The "clapping" of the tortillas impressed me, and my hopeless attempts at trying to "clap" created a positive environment for relaxed and good conversations with my hosts. I often felt that the people I met looked at me as "the white investigator with much experience", in contrast to themselves "the naturals[20]" without experience. This created a power distance between me and them. Participating but not managing to perform the tasks, helped reduce this distance, and helped the interviewees to both trust me and look at me as "only human" (ibid). I was also quite touched by the services in the church. This helped me in the way that it felt natural to go to the meetings and be a part of the religious discourse.

In el Javillal I found it easy to arrange meetings, to create appointments for interviews, to get people to open up and to get the information that I wanted. I often thought to myself that it was almost "too easy" and that I had to miss something. Looking back I do not think I really did miss anything. To many of the inhabitants I was one of the first persons they had met from outside the country. The fact that I was interested in their life stories and they got to know something about a country on the other side of the world eased the meetings.

My main challenge in the village was the poor living conditions. I lived alone in a small house made of soil. I was bitten by fleas so much that I could not sleep due to the scratching and the feeling of having many small animals crawling in my bed. I also had a big rat in my room, and the community president that owned the house, did not understand why I thought of the rat as a problem. In other words, I did not sleep at night and my whole body was covered in exuding bites.

To a certain extent I think the bites helped me to get interviewees. The people that I met felt really sorry for me and became really impressed by my drive to still stay there to "work for a better world". The community leader, full of admiration, once said to me;

> "Last night I couldn't sleep, I was thinking about how sad I am for you having to suffer that much with your body to fulfill your assignment. But at the same time I think you are a person that will succeed in whatever you do, for being such a strong person".

20 In el Javillal several referred to me as «people of my class, and them as the naturals»

In contrast to el Javillal, I had to be very active to get to know people in la Estancia. The different organised groups did not have the time or desire to follow me around, and the houses were more locked up than those in el Javillal. Often they had a mad dog guarding the house and the people were very skeptical towards strangers. I started using the teachers that I got to know from the community board and went with them to the schools and talked to the teachers. I also visited the two health stations in the villages, and "hung around" talking to the women that came by and the women who were working there. This gave me some insight, but at the same time I felt that I missed the close relations directly to the families that I easily got in el Javillal.

The village had an Evangelic church of which the majority of the village was part. The family where I lived was very active in the church and insisted on me coming to the different celebrations. My family background is Christian, with some Pentecostals too, but I found it very difficult to attend the meetings. The meetings were so intense and mass suggestive, with all the people crying, shaking and screaming. I did not know where to look or how to react. I have never experienced anything like it, and it was so aggressive that I sometimes felt uncomfortable being part of it.

I also found it difficult to arrange meetings. People did not show up, and it was impossible to know if the planned meeting was going to take place or not. Also making appointments for interviews turned out to be very difficult. I had to make several appointments with almost all of the interviewees because they did not show up for the first appointment. For example, one of the interviewees, who had not showed up to the first two appointments, sat hiding under a table when I came to do an interview. I could clearly see him but he pretended not to hear me when I called him. I called him several times, and said that he could just tell me if he did not want me to interview him. He crawled out from under the table and told me that he just had a cold, but tomorrow he could make it. The day after we met and he gave me a sincere and long interview. Also the other interviewees who did not show up for their first appointments gave me very truthful and extensive interviews. I have tried to understand the reasons for the behavior, and I think the main reason for them not showing up the first times was a combination of not being used to having appointments, as well as them being nervous and pride. By pride I mean in the way that they wanted it to be a little bit difficult for me to get their story. I had to work for it. It might also be that they were nervous about the interview.

Most of them had never been interviewed, and I did not get to know all of them before I performed the interview.

The physical conditions were better in la Estancia than in el Javillal, but it was extremely cold. It was cold both inside and outside and I was walking around constantly freezing.

The other main piece of advice I got before I went was to write a diary. In both the villages I used a diary to note down every observation, description and conversation I had during each day (Roaldkvam, 2011:19.12). The first weeks I focused primarily on getting to know people, create confidence and make myself visible. When I started to feel more comfortable in the surroundings, and began to obtain confidence among the inhabitants, I fronted my approach stronger and stronger. I arranged a couple of focus group meetings in the second week, but I waited until the last week to make appointments with my interviewees for the in-depth interviews.

2.4.3 A Virtual Fieldwork

In both villages most of the inhabitants have cellphones. This was something many of the people I met were proud of and pointed out as an important improvement of their lives. Many communicate on a daily basis with their friends and family outside the country. This has also helped me. I have been in contact with many of my interviewees and friends in both la Estancia and el Javillal after I returned from my fieldwork. I am able to stay in touch with them and follow up on how they are doing. I have also called back when I have had questions regarding my findings, and my friends have helped me to find the answer I am looking for.

The Internet has also become a part of the everyday life of people all over the world. In la Estancia there are three Internet cafes, and a few families have Internet in their houses. Also the schools have computers, some with Internet access. In el Javillal I only met two families with Internet access in their house, and to use an Internet café the inhabitants have to go to Quetzaltepeque, which is placed forty minutes away from the village. Moreover, the new cellphones have Internet access, and in both villages these phones were quite common. I made friends on Facebook with several of the people I met in the villages. This has helped me to stay in contact with my interviewees and follow the communications that they have with each other.

Especially interesting is the contact I have with “Lucia” in the U.S. We often chat and send each other greetings. She uploads photos from her new life and she communicates with her friends in el Javillal. All over the world the life people demonstrate on Facebook is the life they want others to believe they have. This makes the communication even more interesting. The photos demonstrate the parts of life people are proud of, who they want to be. This is a point I will further elaborate on in chapter five.

2.5 Focus Groups

During the first weeks, in both villages, I conducted a couple of focus group meetings. Lloyd-Evans defines focus groups as “group depth discussions” (Lloyd-Evans, 2006: 153). As described, I used the first weeks to *map out* the villages and gain confidence. I arranged the focus groups using a “pre-pilot” strategy (Sárfi, 2010:21.09) to map out some of the community dynamics and viewpoints. I only prepared a couple of topics to discuss and let the members of the groups talk. The topics were; defining development, poverty, challenges and benefits from migration and general situation for the inhabitants of the villages.

One of the advantages of arranging the focus groups was the possibility to observe the interaction among the members. These processes often led to spontaneous answers and interesting discussions. By arranging a group discussion I let the participants talk and the direction of the discussions were determined by the participants. This helped equalise the terms of power between me, as the researcher, and the interviewees (Madriz, 2000:836). I especially found the focus groups with women interesting. The women are used to talk about their everyday problems with each other. When I started the discussion, I was able to observe the interactions, conversations and solutions of the women. At the same time, I carefully observed the other members of the group who did not talk, to see if they could disagree on anything (Lloyd-Evans, 2006).

In el Javillal I arranged focus groups with the community board and the women’s group. They are used to collaborating and let everyone express their opinion in a more or less democratic way. By this, I mean they always start by a round where all the members talk. Nonetheless, some talk more than others. The groups consist of persons from different parts of the village and they are selected democratically by village elections. Despite this, I got some indications from some of the interviewees who were not members, or family members of the boards, that

the groups were not actually elected democratically – that a large proportion of the village did not participate in the elections. Several also pointed out that the community board had little acceptance for people that did not share their ideas. In other words, I cannot argue that the answers that I received from the board represent the whole village.

In la Estancia I participated in a couple of women's meetings in the health centers and had an hour in each to present my topics. One of the meetings was a gathering about a cultivation project that some of the women were organising and the other one was a literacy course. In contrast to the focus groups in el Javillal, the participants in these meetings were not used to talking in groups. Only the leading women of the meetings answered the questions while the others only giggled when I asked them.

In el Javillal the focus groups worked out quite well, but the groups did not necessarily represent the opinions of the whole village, since the selection of the members was done primarily by themselves. In la Estancia the composition of participants was more representative than in el Javillal but the discussions often ended up with only a couple of people talking.

2.6 Qualitative Interview

Kvale and Brinkman give emphasis to the meaning of an interview as an *inter - view*. A good interview is an interaction and interplay between the interviewer and the interviewee. The topic is an issue that is of concern of both, and by this the interviewer carries the responsibility to create an environment that makes the interviewee feel confident and respected (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009: 22). The success of an interview rests upon to what extent the researcher manages to interpret the answers and improvise new questions (Grønmo, 1991:85). Furthermore, the outcome also depends on the extent to which the researcher succeeds in creating an environment of trust (Repstad, 2001:44). One way to create confidence can be by explaining to the interviewee the duty of confidentiality and the ethical responsibility for the information given (Dallan, 2000:chap.9).

I started all the interviews by explaining the purpose of the interview that it was voluntary, and if they found some of the questions difficult or problematic to answer, they could just tell me. Further I asked for permission to record the interviews with a tape recorder. Some of the interviewees did not want me to use it and I respected that. During the interviews conducted

without a tape recorder I noted down as much as possible, but some of the interviewees talked with a speed that made it impossible to note down everything they said. Despite this drawback I experienced several times that the interviewee started to talk and open up more after the formal interview and when I had turned the tape recorder off. In other words, the tape recorder helped me remember everything that the interviewees expressed, but it might be that it prevented the interviewee answering completely with the confidence they might have had without it (Repstad, 2001:85).

I conducted different types of interviews with diverse purposes[21]. Directly connected to the analysis I conducted seventeen in-depth interviews. These interviews were semi-structures and relatively closed (Fontana and Frey, 2000: 645). I formed an interview template[22] that I followed more or less, depending on the interviewee. I split the interviews in to three themes and had questions regarding the topics in these themes. Sometimes the interviewees answered the questions without me asking them, other times I had to follow the interview template closely. I wanted the interviewees to develop their ideas during the interview. I always gave them enough time to think about the answers, and explained again if they did not understand (Repstad, 2001:86-94). Moreover, I conducted thirteen interviews regarding the more general aspects. These interviews were open and unstructured concerning the general situation of the village. I had a list of concepts that I wanted the interviewees to define, I just let them talk, and if I came up with other questions I probed them.

The outcomes of the interviews varied according to the confidence I managed to build. In el Javillal I got to know all of the interviewees quite well in advance of the interviews. This made most of the interviews in el Javillal sincere and open. In la Estancia the interviews turned out to be highly variable. Yet, some of the interviewees clearly had a need of being heard and talk about their problems. It was obvious that many of the women were not used to having someone being interested in their opinions. Another aspect was that many of the interviewees in both villages were not used to being asked questions that necessarily implied an answer. At the same time, I got the feeling that they felt they were being rude if they did not answer all the questions. Often the responses became highly personal but irrelevant for the interview. This made it very difficult to stop or redirect the answers back to the intended topic. This resulted in some very long interviews with many repetitions and lots of irrelevant information.

21 Appendix 2 gives an overview of the interviews performed
22 Appendix 1

Another challenge was that I performed the interviews in Spanish. I speak relatively fluently but sometimes I find it difficult to explain in detail what I mean. I never experienced the language barrier as a huge obstacle, but it might be that some of the questions got interpreted a bit differently than the purpose of the question. Spanish was the second language of most of the interviewees in la Estancia and they were used to communicating without agreeing on grammar. To some extent I often thought of the level of my Spanish as a benefit. Some of the people that I met expressed that they felt a bit inferior because of my academic level, but when I started to talk in my clumsy Spanish I became a bit more "human". In this sense the researcher's impact factor I made by being a white academic was to a certain extent blurred because of my clumsy Spanish. At the same time, I often found it beneficial being a woman. Especially when I did interviews with women (Repstad2001:66).

2.7 Choosing Interviewees

When mapping out the interviewees for my interviews I thought of age, gender, history and neighborhood. I wanted to interview people from different neighborhoods, with different backgrounds according to migration and age. When finding interviewees it is important that they together represent a whole of the case and not only parts (Repstad, 2001:58). My main focus in the thesis is on women and because of this I primarily interviewed women. I chose the interviewees according to background but also strategically due to the research question, to ensure that I got the answers I was looking for (Thorsen, 1993:27).

In el Javillal I got to know 90 percent of the families by visiting all the houses. When I visited them I noted the ones with relations to the U.S. After getting to know them on several occasions I chose the ones that I wanted to interview and made appointments. All of the people I asked said yes.

In la Estancia finding interviewees was more complicated. I did not have the possibility to choose the interviewees to the same extent as in el Javillal. I had to use the "snowball method" (Repstad, 2001:57-58). I used the contacts I knew, and I was always awake and asked if my contacts knew anyone who knew anyone etc. Yet, I managed to find interviewees spread in the different neighborhoods and with different ages and backgrounds. Also in la Estancia everyone I approached for doing an interview said yes.

2.8 Ethics

My research project in Guatemala was approved by NSD[23] before I started the investigation. In my application I went through a range of criteria on performing an ethical research. I started all of the interviews with an introduction explaining the purpose of my research. Then I made it clear that the interview was voluntary and that they could choose to not answer all the questions. I always asked for permission when using a tape recorder. I respected the interviewees who did not want me to tape the interview. I was open about my purpose and explained carefully every time I got the opportunity.

In the beginning I struggled with justifying my own presence in the villages. A question that went through my head was; "*who am I to study these people*?" I felt like the imperialist who came to study the poor people, without really knowing what I was doing. In the field I never felt lonely, but still completely alone with my research and my justification for being there. This changed when I started to do my interviews. I managed to justify my presence by the confidence that many of the interviewees gave me. One of my interviewees said; "*please tell my story. It's a story of suffering. Please tell it*". When my interviewees told me their strong stories of suffering I felt they gave me a huge responsibility. They told me their story because they trusted me to tell it to others, and then maybe contribute to changing their situation. I often explained that I could not promise to change anything, but that I was going to tell their story. This is the main reason for choosing to write the thesis in English.

I developed especially strong relations to some of the interviewees. Particularly in el Javillal I became close to a couple of women. I opened up to them and they opened up to me. When analysing my findings I pay attention to what they have told me in confidentiality as a friend, and information they told me as a researcher. I transcribed the interviews I conducted when using tape-recorder, but I am only using sites and I never mention names or where they lived. However, I do not believe that I got any information that could harm anyone.

Together with the ethics of communicating on behalf of the interviewees there is also a problematic side to giving voice when the nature is challenging. There is no getting away from the fact that I am a young female feminist scientist with not only the purpose of passing on the information from the field, but also the drive to change the oppressing structures that hold women back from improving their life conditions. I performed a couple of interviews

23 Norske Samfunnsvitenskapelige Datatjeneste – Norwegian Social Science data Service

were the women told me that their husbands were beating them. I could not listen to that type of information without telling the women that it was wrong. My response to some of the interviews might have affected the reliability of the answers, but I had to respond to the conditions of violence, if not I would have overshadowed my fundamental principles.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I aim to analyse the effects of migration on the living conditions and livelihoods of those left behind, both in general and with particular reference to women. To do this, I will employ what Ellis (2000) and Rigg (2007) term the livelihoods approach. According to the livelihoods approach the household is the unit of analysis, and migration is a strategy for households to overcome challenges and to invest in their future (de Haas, 2010:15). At the same time, the framework entails an understanding of livelihood stretching beyond the economic or material means of life (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005: 32). This is especially interesting when considering that I chose to divide the analysis in two parts by studying, on one side, the material effects of the migration and, on the other, the social effects. I examine the material effects by looking at the livelihoods' assets and outcomes. To analyse the social effects, I look at how decisions are made within households and how the households decide on their livelihood strategies. By social, in other words, I understand relationships between individuals, as suggested by Bolt and Bird (2003). The strategy to migrate transforms livelihoods assets (base and desire[24]) that determine livelihoods outcomes, and again affect the intra-household relations.

In this chapter, I account for the theories relevant to my research question. I start by presenting the development of different theories of migration and elaborate on why I chose the livelihoods approach. In the study of households and their livelihood strategies, it is also relevant to look at intra-household relations. I therefore define the term household and describe the limitations by using the household as the unit of analysis. Because of these limitations, I further employ the concepts of power and empowerment to complement the livelihoods approach to fully answer the research question. Furthermore, I clarify the livelihoods approach and how it can be used for explaining livelihoods diversification, that is, the portfolios of activities and strategies that households apply to secure survival and improve their standards of living (Ellis, 2007:4).

24 I will further elaborate on how I interpret the meaning of desire in the context of livelihoods strategies in the chapter 4, in the section on use of remittances.

3.1 Theorising the Study of Migration

As stated in the introduction, my main research question of this thesis is how migration affects those left behind. With regards to migration from Guatemala to the United States, it is women who are primarily left behind, thus assuming responsibility for both children and the household. In this section, I account for the different theories and concepts related to the study of migration. I chose to do this because I, besides the livelihoods framework, find some of the aspects within the traditional theories relevant to my findings. I conclude by explaining why I decided to add to these theories by employing the livelihoods approach to study the effects of migration.

3.1.1 Migration Theory

Traditionally, the study of migration was analysed according to specific fields and the analysis did not cut across fields or disciplines. The first theories on migration were primarily developed by economists and were based on historical cases. Hence, the research primarily focused on the economic causes of migration. The researchers emphasised the migrant as a rational economic actor who saw his or her migration as an investment (de Haas, 2008:4-8; Østrem, 2006). The traditional theories described migration as the interplay between various economic "push" and "pull" factors. These factors would explain what objectives would drive people to migrate, and what factors attracted migrants to the receiving destination (Østrem, 2006). These theoretical frameworks stressed that migration would lead to an assured equilibrium between economic growth in both countries. The focus of the research was on the material costs of the journey compared to the gains that the migration could yield (Massey et al, 2008:13).

Later, studies on migration branched out in two opposing directions: what de Haas (2007: 10) terms the *pessimist* and the *optimist* approach. Within the optimistic migration theories remittances are seen as a form of bottom-up development, compared to the top-down approach (de Haas, 2007: 10). Private actors help to invest in what is in the families' best interest without intervention from external actors. Optimists stress that South-North migration leads to a transfer of capital that in turn leads to local investments and economic development in the South. One of the basic arguments of these theories thus stresses that migration, in the long term, leads to income equalisation between the countries in the South and North.

Migration leads to saturation of the labour market in the North, while capital flows are directed to the South. This process creates employment in the South, which in turn yields equalisation of wage levels in the origin and destination countries (De Haas, 2008:24-26).

The optimist approaches emphasise not only the economic remittances sent by migrants, but also the social remittances. This aspect I find particularly relevant with regards to my findings[25]. Levitt defines the social remittances as ideas, norms and social capital (Levitt, 2001 in Levitt and Lambda-Nieves, 2011:3). Migrants transfer these remittances when they send letters, emails and photos, and/or come back and speak about life in the North (ibid). From an optimistic point of view, the migrants work as important actors of change and innovation (de Haas, 2008:25).

The pessimists, in contrast, highlight the penetration of capitalist economic relations into non-capitalist or pre-capitalist societies generated by migration (Massey et al, 2008: 36). As the majority of migrants are unskilled labourers, they are placed on the lowest rung of the labour market ladder. The migrants are undocumented and as such without legal rights, they are easily exploited by unscrupulous employers (McKenzie, 2006 in de Haas, 2008:41). Although the inflow of money leads to higher living standards, from a pessimist viewpoint this does not improve economic activity at home. Instead, the South becomes passive and remittances dependent (de Haas, 2008:31). This dependency leads to bigger inequalities, both internally within countries in the South and between the South and North. This process in turn creates a need for more people to emigrate. The pessimists also believe that the migration leads to transfer of ideas and norms from the North to the South, but that these are mainly "Western" values promoting capitalism and unnecessary consumption (Ibid).

3.1.2 Towards an Empirical Migration Approach

De Haas (2010:3-4) notes that the discussion between the optimistic and pessimistic approaches has varied according to the fluctuations in the more general theories of development. However, according to him (ibid:15), the last decade has been characterised by a general paradigm shift in social theory tout court. As a response to the previous migration theories, a new set of ideas emerged. The existing theories were criticised as too rigid, and

25 I elaborate on social remittances in the last part of my analysis, but I find the sending of ideas and social capital to be especially relevant throughout the whole analysis.

proponents wanted to create a more empirical based approach that combined insights from both the optimistic and pessimist views (de Haas, 2010:15; Faist, 2008). This led migration researchers to increase their collaboration across disciplines. At the same time, the focus shifted towards a much stronger emphasis on the social effects, in contrast to the previous economic models of migration (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008: introduction).

The new thinking in the social theory, seeks, according to de Haas (2010:15), to combine agency and structure approaches. Agency approaches emphasise the degree to which the actors have leeway in their decision-making and are able to shape their lives. This is in contrast to the structural oriented approach, in which theorists highlight the structural limitations that constrain the agency of the actors (Rigg, 2007:24). Rigg argues that the debate regarding structure and agency, and how these can be combined, has led to increased attention on studying livelihoods (2007:29).

The study of livelihoods has a more practical focus than previous theories and focuses primarily on the empirical data (de Haan and Zoomer, 2005: 28-29). The livelihoods approach stresses how migration works as a strategy to overcome risks and secure the future of the household. This was something that I observed during my fieldwork and I agree with de Haas when he asserts that: "*in perceiving migration as a household livelihood strategy, we acknowledge that structural forces leave at least some room for agency, although at highly varying degrees*" (de Haas, 2010:20).

I chose the livelihoods approach because during my fieldwork, but also as suggested by previous work on migration, it became evident that the decision to migrate is a collective decision. Several members of the household pull resources together to send one of the members abroad. It has been widely recognised in the livelihoods literature that migration is a household diversification strategy to secure and improve the conditions of the household (Rigg, 2007:87). The possible success of the migrant might challenge the previous negative structures and create new opportunities for the household (Bebbington, 1999: 2022).

The livelihoods approach sees the household as the unit of analysis, and in the following section I define a household and describe the limitations posed by using a household

approach. These limitations are important to address when answering my research question and when I account for the different mechanisms in which the livelihoods operate.

3.1.3 Defining Household

As mentioned, traditional migration theories stressed that the individual acts as a rational economic actor (Massey et al, 2008: 19). The Marxist structuralism in contrast, focused on the societal level of reproduction in which the motivation of social actors was not very relevant (de Haas, 2010: 17). As a response to the shift briefly summarised above in social sciences, household approaches emerged as bridging the micro-economics and structural approaches. The household approaches discourage the individuals from operating alone and instead persuade them to collaborate in larger economic units of production and consumption (de Haan and Zoomer, 2005:29).

De Haas argues that studying household is especially relevant when doing research in the South. In societies where parts of the economy operate outside the formal capitalist economy, extended families tend to have a more cooperative relationship when it comes to production and consumption (de Haas, 2010:20). Ellis uses Stark and Preston's concept to explain a household. "*represent[s] a coalition of players committed by choice or customs to act as a unit vis-à-vis the rest of the world"* (Stark, 1991; Preston, 1994 in Ellis, 2000:18). Ellis also describes the household as: "*a sharing, altruistic and co-operative body with a unitary utility function*" (1988 cited in Bolt et.al, 2003:8). In other words, a household is a co-operative body of people that strive together to improve their livelihoods. I will employ this definition in my thesis.

3.1.4 Limitations to Using the Household as the Unit of Analysis

There are several challenges facing the researcher when using households as the sole unit of analysis. The above definition may entail seeing households as harmonious units without power struggles. However, power negotiations along the axis of age and gender influence decision-making and thus the prioritising of strategies and allocation of resources. Within the household there will always exist opposing interests and social differences concerning, for example, age, gender, mental and physical capacity, level of education and illness (Bolt et.al, 2003:8). When households are reduced to "decision-making units", where a combination of

assets is used to pursue the well-being of its members, the principal challenge is that the household members most likely do not seek to maximise livelihood outcomes on the basis of the common preferences of the whole household (Agarwal, 1997:2). These aspects necessarily affect the internal power struggles and decision-making (de Haan and Zoomer, 2005).

This critique resonates with the dynamics I observed during my fieldwork. While working with my analysis, I found that power determines gender roles and decision-making responsibilities. In this way, the concepts of empowerment and desires emerged as important to answering my research question. I study the ones who are left behind and these are primarily women. Therefore, in the following section, I define some important aspects that will complement the livelihoods approach.

3.1.5 Power and Empowerment

As described in the previous section, the main challenges faced when using a household approach are the power relations and decision-making within the household. In this section I define power and empowerment. These concepts are relevant when trying to understand the intra-household decision-making and to answer how migration affects the ones left behind.

Kabeer defines power as the "*ability to make choices*" (1999:436). This ability is, by definition, undermined by the absence of choice. Rowland (1997: 13) divides power into four categories: power within, power to, power with and power over. *Power within* refers to when people become aware of their position as individual actors to change and shape their position. *Power to* is when people decide to change their lives. *Power with* is when people join networks that can help them to challenge and change power relations. Ultimately, *power over* is when people overcome subjugation.

Foucault writes that "p*ower is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere*" (1976:93). To him, power is not something substantial, or to some degree measurable, it merely exists. This means that individuals are both exposed to the mechanisms of power while, at the same time, they create it (Foucault in de Haan and

Zoomers, 2005:37). This interpretation is further developed in gender studies[26], which stresses the `disciplinary power´. According to this notion of power, gender inequality is maintained by the husband accepting his uplifted position and his wife her subordinated gender role. Power is internalised, and in this sense power works because individual discipline him or herself to act according to traditional power structures. This type of power is the power that is just normal to us, "*it cannot be possessed, but exists only when exercised*" (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005:36).

Agarwal stresses that the bargaining power of the different members of the household decides who does what, gets what and how each member is treated. The bargaining power depends on a range of factors. Within this, she underscores the importance of person´s fallback position. According to Agarwal, the stronger a member's ability to survive outside of the household, the more bargaining power that member will have within the household (Agarwal, 1997). Moore writes that *"bargaining and negotiation between women and men (…) are often about definitions and interpretations, and it is for this reason that gender relations are always involved with power"* (Moore 1991:8-9 in Agarwal 1997:21). Due to this, the bargaining power needs to be put in connection to the `disciplinary power´. The bargaining power is determined mutually by the household members fallback position and their power decided by `discipline´.

Empowerment is a term frequently used in relation to the development and enabling of poor individuals or groups. Critics refer to the expression as just another buzzword for developing practitioners (Cornwall and Brock, 2006). Rowland argues that the expression, if not defined with substance, can easily be ignored or used in an ambiguous or confuse debate (1997:8). I find the expression useful, because I understand it as a bottom-up approach that emphasises the definitions used by the people involved.

According to Kabeer, empowerment entails "*people´s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them*" (1999: 437). De Haan and Zoomers complement this definition by ascertaining the empowered area where the actors perform their agency. This area might increase, as the actors expand their ´room for manoeuvre´ in new areas. This process materialises when actors stand up to oppressing

26 My research question strives to answer how the migration affects those left behind, mainly women.. Within the scope of the thesis I chose not to dive into gender theory, as I find that the theoretical framework I employ covers the most important aspects of my analysis. Notwithstanding, I go further into gender relations in my analysis.

structures and / or improve their positions within power relations (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005:37). According to Rowland´s understanding of different levels of power, individuals strengthen their positions by first realising their capacity and rights by feeling power from *within*. Secondly, he stresses that the individuals must decide *to* change. Their capacity to change is strengthened by joining others in order to have power *with*. Full empowerment, according to Rowland, takes place when people have control over their situation (1997:13-14).

In other words, inequalities in people´s capacity to make choices, rather than in the differences in the choices they make, determine the agency of the members of the household (Kabeer, 1999:444). With regard to my research question, the household member's agency determines how decisions are made both within the household and how households access opportunities. Giddens defines agency to apply "*not only to the intentions people have in doing things, but their capability of doing things in the first place"* (1984:9). Agency is decided by the intentions and to what extent the actor was able to perform their agency. Furthermore, the power relations made the actor want to act the way they did. Foucault´s all-absorbing conceptualisation of power and the `structural power´ determines the norms and values within the society. Consequently, these norms and values affect agency (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005).

In summary, I understand power as the structures that that exclude individuals from taking decisions. The structures might be constituted in social relations, or just be established as accepted "truths" (Ibid). On the other hand, I stress that the relations are often challenged when people become aware of their capacities and rights, therefore generating empowerment (Kabeer, 1999). Empowerment materialises when individuals expand their 'room for manoeuvre'. The actors may expand their 'room for manoeuvre' by opposing the structures, strengthening their fallback positions, and / or joining others to establish new power relations (Rowland, 1997). I will go further in to these mechanisms in the analysis chapters.

3.2 Understanding Livelihoods

> "A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household." (Ellis, 2000:10)

This definition emphasises how livelihoods entail an individual´s or a household´s means of support or subsistence to represent their ways "to make a living". It comprises the assets that together enable households to achieve their goals. Scoones (1998) underscores that the different assets are flexible, combinable and changeable. Accordingly, identification of livelihood resources is required for studying the choices and outcomes of different strategies (Scoones, 1998:8-9). The combination of resources is relevant in all societies, but more decisive for the outcomes of livelihoods in societies with traditional forms of organising the economy. In the global South, explaining livelihoods is more multifaceted than in more purely capitalist societies. "The way to make a living", both in rural and urban households in the South is more diverse, and contains different locations and sources (Ellis, 2000:4-5; 2007).

Moreover, Ellis (2007:4) writes that: "*livelihoods diversification is defined as the process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living"*. Migration is a livelihood strategy used to strengthen the livelihood portfolio. My research question studies how the migration strategy affects those who do not migrate. In the following pages, in order explain how migration functions as a livelihoods strategy, I look at the factors that operate within livelihood diversification.

I start by describing the different types of livelihood assets. Then, I explain the different livelihood strategies households perform to expand the asset base and to access other assets. Finally, I look into how the household´s strategies and assets are defined and decided by processes and structures.

3.2.1 Assets – the Household´s Strengths

Assets can be described as the basic building blocks upon which livelihoods rest. The status of a household's assets determines the opportunities and strategies family members rely on to survive, overcome stress and minimise risks (Ellis, 2000:28). Bebbington highlights that the

assets are the medium through which households make a living, but they also explain the household´s interpretations of the world (1999:2022). In other words, the asset base, and how the households interpret the implications of the assets, explains why they choose their respective strategies.

Ellis (2000) divides assets into five different types of capital: *natural, economic, financial, human and social capital*. The different capitals cover both the material and social assets of the different livelihoods. In this section, I describe these five capitals.

Human capital describes the skills, knowledge, ability to work and health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID, 2000). Moreover, human capital is connected to the labour available to the household, namely its education and skills. Human capital can be improved by obtaining or improving education and training. It operates both on a micro and a macro level. On the micro level, human capital is improved by individuals or households, and on the macro level by, for example, educational reforms or the improvement of health services in the society in general (Ellis, 2000:33). According to studies on livelihoods it is relevant to map out who has an education, who holds what type of knowledge, the degrees of physical condition and the diseases that occur in the household (Ellis,2000).

Bourdieu defines *social capital* as an "*aggregate of the actual of potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of actual acquaintance or recognition*" (Bourdieu, 1985:248 in Rigg, 2007:51). According to this definition, households are linked to networks contributing to improve or secure their livelihoods. Moser describes it as *"reciprocity within community and between households based on trust deriving from social ties"* (Moser, 1998 in Ellis, 2000: 36). In other words, social capital can be materialised either through formal or informal ties. The informal social capital derives from personalised networks and social connections. Associations and organisations represent the formal social capital, and can be epitomised by farmers associations, churches, etc. (Berry, 1989 in Ellis, 2000:9).

There are different ways of categorising social capital. However, the bridging and bonding of social capital are the most relevant categories for my analysis. "*Bonding social capital brings together people who are like one another in important respects*" for example experiences or

religion, "*whereas bridging social capital refers to social networks that bring together people who are unlike one another*" (Goss & Putnam 2002:11). This distinction is important because bridging social capital is more likely to have positive external effects than bonding (Goss & Putnam 2002:11). Bonding social capital is more likely to exclude, by creating `insiders´ and `outsiders´ which can lead to an 'us against them' mentality (Putnam 2000:23). These two categories are not mutually exclusive as it is possible to bring together people of the same denomination (bonding social capital) and also across ethnic boundaries (bridging social capital) (Putnam 2000:23).

Natural capital is related to the natural resource base of the household. Natural resources represent assets that are under human control and help the survival of their holders (Ellis, 2000:32). These could be access to and ownership of land, water or forest etc. In this regard also the level of air-pollution, degree of biodiversity, and capacity to protect resources has evolved to become important (Scoones, 1998:7).

Physical capital represents the physical conditions under which the livelihoods operate. Physical capital includes: houses, roads, sanitation, machines, buildings, computers, tools, etc. These allow for the transformation of natural capital and for generating income, producing food or exchanging information (Ellis, 2000: 33).

The last type capital is *financial capital*. Financial capital refers to the resources bringing money to the households. In the study of livelihoods, it is central to also include what is to be considered finance in the case that is studied. In societies that do not have a fully monetised market economy, a variety of resources might represent the financial capital (Ellis, 2000:34).

3.2.2 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies are activities that generate and maintain the household's means of survival (Ellis, 2000:40). These strategies are part of the activities within livelihoods diversification. The strategies are not mutually exclusive, and most often different strategies are combined (Ellis, 2000). By combining several activities and strategies, households build up their `livelihood portfolio´. These portfolios differ according to asset base and the conditions surrounding the household (Scoones, 1998: 10). In this section I account for the different types of strategies.

Scoones (1998: 9) branches livelihood strategies into three categories. The first strategy refers to on-farm activities used to generate livelihoods from agriculture. The second strategy he defines as non-farm rural employment. This strategy might involve investing in activities for accumulation and reinvestment, and / or a more permanent adaption of activities. The third and final strategy is migration to a city or another country (Ibid). As mentioned, Scoones (1998: 9) highlights the understanding of the assets base as crucial to study the pursuit of different livelihood strategies and outcomes. The livelihoods assets and strategies operate within processes and structures that determine the access to other assets and strategies. By investing in a livelihood strategy, the household might challenge these structures and access assets that help them overcome excluding structures (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005:33-34; Bebbington,1999: 2022).

On the other side, Wallace (2002:14) writes that "[*W]hen a society is subject to rapid social change, leaving households in a situation of risk and uncertainty, household strategies are likely to become more important"*. In other words, the strategies can be divided into *coping strategies* and *adaptive strategies* (Rigg, 2007:87). Coping strategies are responses to unexpected crises, and adapting strategies are long-term adjustments in behaviour (Ellis, 2000:45). Households choose to perform adapting strategies as insurance for the future and for accumulating capitals. On the other side, coping strategies are responses to unexpected crises. Thus, one household´s coping strategy might be another household´s accumulation strategy, and vice versa (Haan and Zoomers, 2005:40).

Empirical studies show a tendency of more vulnerable people adapting more vulnerable livelihood strategies. This might either result from the absence of possibilities, limited asset base or external stress (Ellis, 2007:18). Moreover, sometimes households use some strategies at some points even if it compromises their resource base (Bebbington, 1999:2028). Migration represents a good example. The household pledges their belongings to send their migrant, but in the hope of improving their long-term prosperity.

3.2.3 'Livelihoods Portfolios' - Access and Opportunities

"*Resources are media through which power is exercised, as a routine element of the instantiation of conduct in social reproduction*" (Giddens 1984:16).

The access to assets and strategies is mediated through how society is organised in addition to social relations (Ellis, 2000:10). As described above, livelihoods are the means to make a living for the households. The livelihoods consist of assets that the households use in their strategies to improve or expand their living conditions (Ibid: 28). The assets and strategies operate within structures and processes. These are facilitated by social connections, rules, norms and institutions and driven by the individuals and the organisation of the society (Kabeer, 1999:437). Within structures and processes the power structures lead to an often competitive monopolisation process that includes and excludes different opportunities for the actors in the society (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005:33). In the section defining power and empowerment I defined how power affects the social relations and norms due to the intra-household relations (c.f.3.2.5). In the following section I explain how power affects households by the formal and informal organisation of the society.

Organisations, institutions, formal, informal all influence how some households are included or excluded due to livelihood opportunities (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005: 35-36). Moreover, institutions and organisations influencing households might be local administrations, state agencies, NGOs and farmers associations. These might for example affect land rights, awareness of women´s rights and/or organisation of the market. On the other hand, informal institutions form the rules and norms of the society. These `patterns of behaviour´ constituted by the informal rules and norms might be as influential as the rights exercised by the formal institutions (Kabeer, 1999:437-438).

De Haan and Zoomers use the term "mapping" to explain the processes livelihoods work through. The term refers to: "*how people gain endowments and entitlements; it is in the process by which endowments and entitlements are shaped*" (2005:35). The entitlements refer to what people can have, and the endowments represent the access to these entitlements. Moreover, they describe how `endowment mapping´ represents the process of inclusion and exclusion which determines the access to different assets (Ibid). To illustrate this, they explain how village membership might help the household to gain access to the

communal forest, or a household membership might lead to access to farmland. Hence, it is of importance to note how the community board may play a role in providing access for different households. The board might include or exclude members of the society. Moreover, there might be other networks operating across the interests of the community board that again include and exclude others. Furthermore, the `endowment mapping´ also includes the bargaining process within the household and who can make which decisions (ibid).

Bebbington (1999:2022) emphasises that the researcher needs to interpret how households see the importance of the different assets. Some strategies entail that the household must sacrifice parts of their assets base to be able to gain access to others (Ibid: 2028). With regard to this, the meaning of the assets is relevant for understanding why the household chooses to perform as they do. The access they gain through one strategy might open access to other assets and/or strategies. Moreover, some assets are more important for some households and settings than others (Ibid).

To summarise, the livelihoods portfolios consist of the household's opportunities to expand or improve their livelihood. A household´s livelihood consists of their asset base. The asset base is expanded through livelihood diversification. Livelihood diversification works through processes and structures operating on different levels determining the household's access to assets. Power relations determine how decisions are made within the households and between different households. The relations are conducted through both formal and informal structures. For example, in Guatemala with a limited welfare system the households are pushed to find strategies to pursue financial capital in order to protect their human capital, such as paying hospital bills and educating their children. In rural villages with skewed land distribution the households are forced to find alternative strategies to be able to build up their assets base. Migration is seen as the strategy that leads to the most financial capital, but at the same time it is the strategy that entails the most risks. Some households are willing to risk parts of their asset base in order to access more. The households pledge their house and land to be able to embark on this strategy. I elaborate on this aspect in my analysis, as this was a common strategy in the households I talked with.

4 INVESTMENTS WITH FRONTIERS

"Vale la pena"[27]

"[Migration to the U.S.] has helped the economy a lot. Has helped a lot because many of us are rebuilding our houses, buying land, buying cars, buy or… have a good life[28]". This was the answer I received from "Gabriel" who had left for the U.S. three times. The second time he went he brought his wife and two children with him, but they had to return before reaching the border due to the dangers they faced in the desert. The last time he tried to migrate ended when he was caught by the migration police in Mexico. As a result of this, they were forced to sell some of their assets and they now live in a small rented house. "Gabriel's" answer represents what I interpreted as a common feeling among my interviewees: despite the sacrifices that some of them had to make, they all considered migration as the best way to achieve a better life.

According to the MIRLU-survey men represent about 85 percent of the people who migrate from villages in Guatemala[29]. The ones left behind and in charge of the households are mainly women. Migration implies several risks, and in fact, as a result of migration, some households suffered heavy losses. My interviewees were motivated to migrate because of the lack of jobs and saw migration as a means to secure their livelihoods. Migration and the possibility of obtaining a job in the USA would constitute a way in which the material dimension of people's lives could be improved.

In the following section I describe the structures and processes in where the livelihoods are operating. Secondly, I analyse what the households achieved as seen from my interviewee's perspective. In relation to this I discuss what the investments imply, with particular emphasis on women´s lived experiences. The principal way in which money from the remittances is used are on people's homes: construction or improvement of the house and investments in land and the improvement of cultivation conditions. I discuss how and why these two investments are prioritised above others. Thirdly, I describe some material risks the

[27] «[the migration] is worth the costs» - something I heard all the time
[28] "si, ha ayudado mucho la economía. Ha ayudado mucho porque más algunas nosotros hacen sus casa, compran sus terrenos a compran sus carros, compran o tiene una buena vida" – "Gabriel"
[29] If I do not refer to other sources, then all the numbers in the chapter are from the MIRLU-survey, and can be found in appendix 3

households face when embarking the migration strategy[30]. Finally, I analyse the use of the remittances - how the *algo más* is spent by individuals.

4.1 'Livelihood Portfolios' of the Households

As described in the theory chapter, both external structures and social processes operating in the societies affect the livelihood opportunities of households. Households engage in strategies to cope with stress and invest in the future. Significantly different levels of material standards exist in el Javillal and la Estancia. This can be seen as decisive for the variations in choosing livelihood strategies and investments from the monetary remittances. Therefore, I find it relevant to describe the organisation of the economy, and access to material assets in the two villages. In this section, to fully understand why some households choose the migration strategy, and how this strategy serves the livelihoods of households, I account for the structures and processes affecting the livelihoods. I start by describing the two villages and conclude by summing up whom the migrants are and the general situation in which the households build up their livelihoods portfolios. What do the portfolios of most households in the two villages consist of?

4.1.1 El Javillal

El Javillal is placed in the eastern lowland of the country, close to the border of Honduras and el Salvador. The village is small - containing only 158 households. The area is dry and warm, and the cultivation conditions are challenging. With only a few exceptions, migrating to Quetzaltepeque, or to the U.S., is the only way to secure cash income in el Javillal. Access to the market economy is low, with the majority of the inhabitants relying on subsistence farming. Friends and family carry out most of the construction work in the village without pay. Employment rates are extremely low, and the few people with professional education can only make use of it by moving to the city. The nearest city is Quetzaltepeque, which is around 30-40 minutes away. However, the only way for most people to get there is via public transport, on dirt roads, which just runs a few times a day. Only a limited number of the inhabitants actually own cars. Migration is quite a new phenomenon in the village – with the first migrants leaving in the nineties. Those who migrate come from households with enough

30 Not only do the migrants risk the material assets of their households. The migrants also encounter enormous risks to their lives: human rights violations, discrimination, racism, persecution etc. (Amnistía International: web page). I do not downplay these risks, as my research question primarily spans those left behind and this chapter focuses on the material risks of the households.

possessions to get a loan to pay the *coyotes*. In other words, most of the migrants from el Javillal come from households with more resources than the average *javilleño*[31].

According to the MIRLU-survey 87.7 percent of the houses in el Javillal are made of clay bricks[32] and the rest of concrete blocks. I counted the houses in the village and found a significantly higher number of houses made of blocks. It is difficult to distinguish what material the houses are built of, but I found that about 65 percent of the houses were made of clay bricks and the rest of blocks. The houses made with blocks are houses built from remittances. All of the interviewees with migrant connections to the U.S. rebuilt their houses, and most of them now live in a house made with blocks. This creates a clearly visible division in the village between those with connections to the U.S. and those without.

The village has a highly active community board. The board is elected every five years, but according to several interviewees who did not have close personal relations to the board members, the committee has "*always*" been composed of the same members[33]. The board is made up of five well respected middle-aged men and one woman. She is the only literate member of the board. The community board has close relations to development cooperatives in Quetzaltepeque and the municipal board. This has resulted in several development projects in the village. Only a few[34] of the households do not have access to water with a *Pila*[35], electricity and a latrine. In addition, el Javillal has several health promoters, paid for and trained by a US-aid supported organisation. The promoters provide information about health and regularly visit all the houses. They also hold office every Monday in the centre of the village giving the inhabitants access to basic medical treatment. The Catholic Church is the main meeting point of the village. Most of the inhabitants are Catholics and attend meetings and services several times a week. The village also has an Adventist Church and an Evangelic Church but these are small compared to the influential Catholic Church. The children have access to primary and secondary schools in the village. However, after secondary school, the

31 A person from el Javillal
32 Clay bricks are a type of mud. The material can be found in nature, and the houses only need territory and work force in order to construct the houses.
33 The COCODEs – Community boards – were established as a result of the peace accords, but these men were the first to establish the village in the 1970s.
34 Three or four families who live on a steep hillside, they are the poorest of the families in the village. The communitarian president explained how difficult it was to access the hill with the water pipes. In addition, these families were probably not able to pay the expenses due to these facilities.
35Water battery – a system for water distribution used in the countryside all over Central America

children must travel to Quetzaltepeque or other cities to study. The distance and cost of both the travel and school fees, limit peoples access to education[36].

4.1.2 La Estancia

La Estancia is located in the so-called "Altiplano", in the highlands in the west of the country. It is close to the second largest city in the country, Quetzaltenango. The village is relatively big with 600 households. The economy in la Estancia, in contrast to el Javillal, is better connected to the market economy. Only some of the inhabitants have a profession, but 55.4 percent of the inhabitants have a job besides farming. Several work in the city of Quetzaltepeque, in addition some households in the village have a small business. Migration to the U.S. has helped numerous households to open small businesses and educate their children. Migration to the U.S. started in the eighties, and I found a significant difference between the households receiving remittances and those who did not. Thus, the economy is fairly connected to the monetary economy and a grant percentage of the households have improved their material conditions without migrating to the U.S. The most vulnerable households in the village do not possess any land or businesses. Their limited asset base makes migration a strategy to improve the household's livelihoods. The ones who currently migrate are from a part of the society with fewer resources than the ones previously migrating. However, the households with the fewest resources do not have the capability to take up a loan to pay a coyote.

The MIRLU-survey found that 52 percent of the houses in la Estancia are constructed with concrete blocks. However, I found the percentage to be much higher. Several sources of income exist besides migration and most people had afforded to build a house made of blocks. In the Highlands of Guatemala the houses made from remittances exemplify the particular style: 'architecture of remittances'. The villages in the valleys outside la Estancia are especially characterised by houses of 'remittances architecture'. The style is defined by several stories, terraces with poles and frequently, ceramic floors. In la Estancia there were a dozen of these houses, which all belonged to the families with a history of migration.

Most aspects of the communitarian life are covered. The community board is elected every five years, and there are numerous groups connected to the board covering the different

36 Only a few in el Javillal stressed education as an important investment from the remittances – this is probably due to the limited access to both schools and jobs acquiring diplomas.

aspects of the village. For example: the water group, the forest group, the health group, the organisation to prevent natural disasters group etc. Several of these groups are connected to different development agencies or national programs. These projects and groups have led all the households in the village to access water and electricity. In addition, there are two health stations where the inhabitants can get basic medical treatment for free. The community board has strong ties with the community boards in the neighbouring villages and they often meet to discuss the wider issues affecting all the villages. These boards have worked together to prevent a Hydro-electric company imposing their projects on the region.

There are numerous churches in the village. The Catholic Church and one of the Evangelic Churches are the most influential, but at all times, all over the village houses of prayers carry out different charismatic meetings. The Catholic Church holds services a couple of times a week in addition to different activities and groups. The Evangelic Church also holds their main services twice weeks as well as other services for different occasions are carried out. The Evangelic Church has both a kindergarten and a school.

There are three primary schools and a secondary school in la Estancia. The roads and access to Quetzaltenango are good. Households with enough capital can easily send their children to high school, college and/or universities in the cities. The region has a cooperative, el *bienestar*, with long traditions in la Estancia. The *bienestar* has its office in the centre of the neighbouring village, Xecam, which is only 300 meters from the centre of la Estancia. The majority of the households in the area are members. The *bienestar* gives the inhabitants access to financial capital in order to, for example, start businesses, construct houses or send their children to school.

4.1.3 Who are the migrants?

About one third of the households included in the MIRLU-survey were households with migrants living in the U.S. According to the survey there is no significant difference in numbers of migrants between eastern highlands and western lowlands in Guatemala, and there are no noteworthy differences in the numbers between the villages with a long migration history and those without. In the four villages where the survey was conducted in total 85.3 percent of the people who migrated to the U.S. were men. The survey states that the share of men migrating from la Estancia represent 80 percent, and from el Javillal to be 77.7 percent.

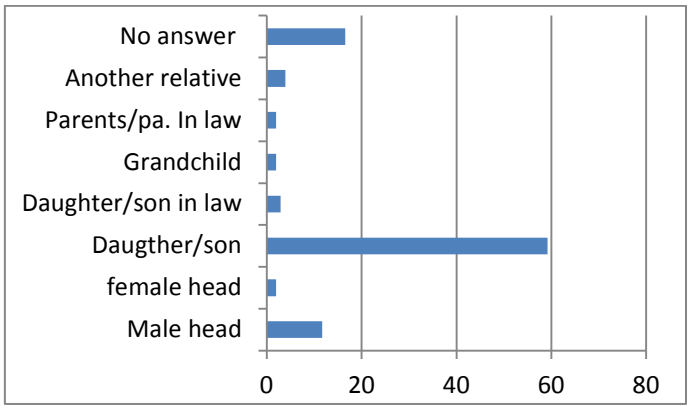

Figure 1. Relation to migrant - percent (table 4.0)

As demonstrated in figure 1, men are most likely to migrate and the majority of them are the sons of the households. Most of the migrants included in the survey were self-employed farmers or wage-dependent farmers. This is quite representative of the rest of the inhabitants in the villages.

4.1.4 General situation for the migrant households

In the introduction chapter I described some of the conditions under which the majority of Guatemalans live. In the following section I will make a short repetition, and describe the conditions affecting the migration in general in the country. 54 percent of the population live under the poverty line with 13 percent in extreme poverty (CIA, 2012: country profile). The welfare system in Guatemala is limited. Access to schools and health care is restricted for the majority of people. The country suffers from high levels of unemployment, and households are forced to choose survival strategies linked to the informal activities (UNICEF, 2011: 45). Moreover, the country scores as one of the countries with the highest crime rates in the world (Aldana, 2012). In other words, because of the limited opportunities in Guatemala, high proportions of the households operate with limited livelihoods portfolios. Households' survival and adaptation depends on their ability to diversify in order to expand their asset base. Households with a limited asset base tend to adopt more vulnerable strategies (Ellis, 2007:18). Thus, numerous Guatemalans risk both their lives and material assets when embarking the migration strategy.

According to the MIRLU-survey the amount remittances sent from the U.S. varied from 50 to 200 USD. Most of the interviewees who received remittances from household members in the

North said that they received money every month. However, most of the interviewees mentioned that the amount and frequency varied according to the job conditions in the U.S. People from both el Javillal and la Estancia told me, on several occasions, that the situation for migrants had worsened over the past five years. The cooperative in la Estancia had seen a drastic decrease in remittances, especially in the last year and a half. I observed several semi-finished houses in the la Estancia, and the carpenters said that several of their colleagues had lost their job following the economic crisis. The carpenters are some of many firms dependent on the money transfers leading people to construct houses and accumulate capital. The financial crisis and the lack of jobs in the U.S. affect the sending of remittances to Guatemala. The decrease in remittances received, forces households to find other survival strategies in order to secure their livelihoods. Therefore, the U.S. has faced a significant increase of undocumented Central Americans as a response to the financial crisis. The rising number of immigrants contributes to greater competition for jobs in the U.S. and migration / remittance turns into a vicious circle (UNDP, 2011). In addition, the increasing numbers of immigrants has correlated with the implementation of stronger measures to prevent the undocumented from entering the United States and Mexico (Rosenblum and Brick, 2011). Moreover, the escalating "war against drugs" in Mexico has aggravated the border crossing conditions for the migrants. The undocumented Central Americans are caught in between the brutal gangs, *narcotraficantes* and the Mexican police. Migrants lack security and rights, which makes them easy targets for organised crime (Isacson, Withers and Bateman, 2011).

As described, the cultivation conditions, especially in the Highlands, are challenging and the households are forced to find alternative strategies in order to survive. Also in the lowlands many of the farmers are suffering from poor cultivations conditions and especially from drought (Asorech, 2012: web page). In el Javillal people complained about the poor farming conditions of the last five years. Additionally, in la Estancia the interviewees mentioned the increase in natural disasters. Natural disasters and climate change affect all Guatemalans, but the most vulnerable to these changes are the poor and especially the poor farmers who make up the majority of the migrants from the country side. The climate changes might be a push-factor for them to look for adaptive strategies to overcome future challenges (World Bank (2009:17).

4.2 Investments - Housing and Land

"They migrate because of necessity, to help their families", the inhabitants of the two villages explained. 31.9 percent of the inhabitants of the villages receive remittances. In both el Javillal and la Estancia the material effects of the remittances were highly visible and significant material differences existed between the households with migrant relations and those without. 83.6 percent of the respondents described the remittances as "very important" for their livelihoods. Most of the people whom I met in both villages spoke about the migration as the "Salvation". Although the majority also mentioned the challenges due to the journey and costs for the households, they primarily underlined that the material remittances were worth the sacrifices.

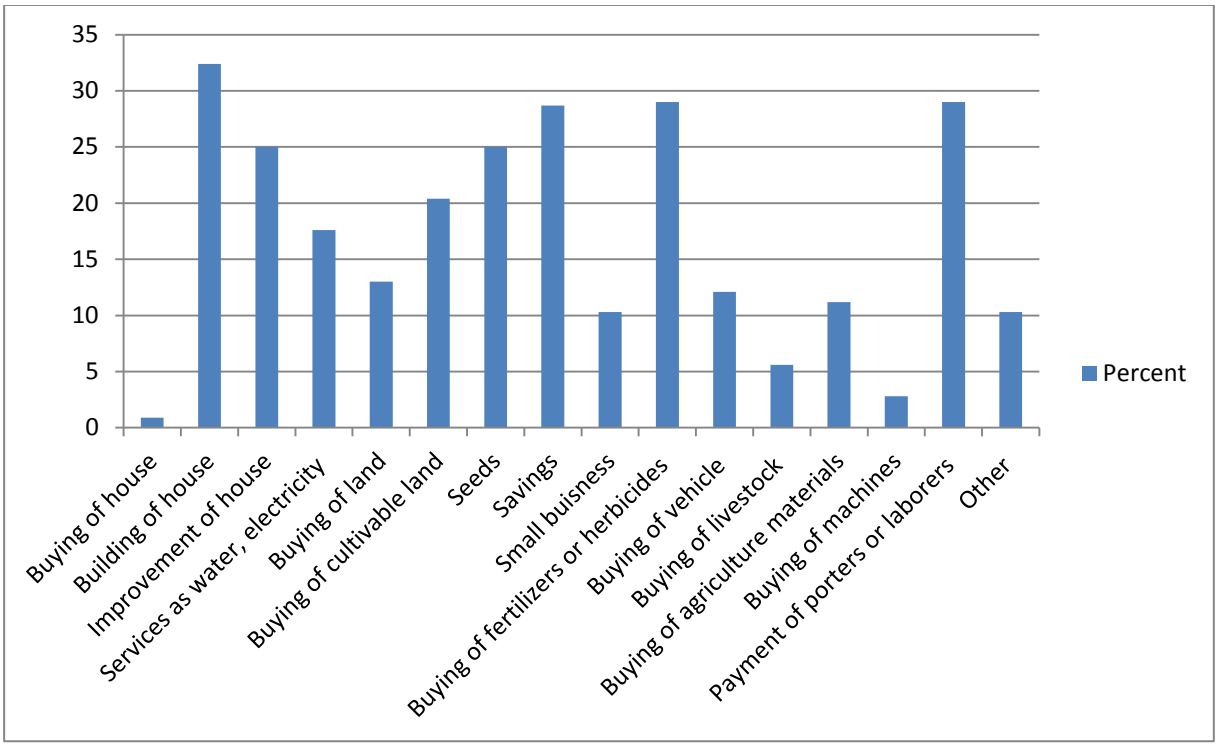

Figure 2 Investments from remittances (table 7.4)

In the MIRLU-survey the respondents with migrants in their household were asked to tick off investments from their remittances. The respondents could tick off more, and did not respond how much they spent on what investment, neither what they considered to be the most important. This makes it difficult to distinguish the range in priorities of the households. As demonstrated in figure 2, the respondents tended to prioritise primarily building of house,

secondly – buying of fertilizers, savings and labourers[37], and further seeds and land. My interviewees in la Estancia highlighted that the remittances enabled them to buy land and improve their homes. In el Javillal my interviewees primarily emphasised the ability to construct or improve their house. Although the goals varied between the different interviewees, in both villages their house was the most important goal. They also mentioned that they saved and that they had bought fertilizers to use on the field, but of material investments, my interviewees' foremost stressed housing and land.

In the following section I explain why and how people chose to use the money from remittances the way they did and how in doing so they pursued several projects. I analyse why households decided to invest primarily in housing and land. I found that the investments in houses and land entailed different forms of accumulation. Within this, I study what the investments meant and added to the livelihoods of the households. In the last part of this section, I discuss the risks for the households associated with the migration strategy. What types of accumulation does the housing and land involve? What material risks do households take when choosing the migration strategy?

4.2.1 A Nicer Place to Live – the Meaning of Investing in a House

> "While rural investment in housing as opposed to productive activities might be considered far from ideal and be a result of a continuing absence of financial institutions or asset and product markets in rural areas, as much as a cultural preference, it is nonetheless a measure of accumulation" Bebbington (1999: 2027)

Migrant households work on projects to improve their livelihoods. It is common to treat the motivations behind people´s projects in poor countries as linked to the fulfilment of "needs". Indeed, I too thought this when I first considered studying migration. The literature on migration focuses on how the money sent home by migrants is, or can be, "invested" in other projects that would ensure the sustainable fulfilment of people´s "basic needs". Using such logic it does not make much sense that economic remittances are used to build or improve houses. In pure economic terms this contributes nothing towards a sustainable source of income to secure the fulfilment of "basic needs". Notwithstanding, during my fieldwork I found that housing investment provided a variety of ways to earn a livelihood for the household. In this section, analysing housing, I describe what I found as the most important objectives among my interviewees when investing in a house.

37 I observed that some of the houses had laborers working on their land or to clean clothes.

Housing - a relative achievement

In el Javillal I interviewed two ladies who still lived in houses made of clay bricks even though their husbands had previously been in the U.S. One of them was “Lidia”. The asset base of her household was almost non-existent before her husband went to the U.S. They used to live in her parent’s house, but because of the remittances they managed to buy a small piece of land and construct a tiny house of clay bricks.

> «From there we bought this small piece of land and constructed this house. To us it´s a lot, because, like I told you, before we didn’t have anything, right. In spite of that it was very little what he did, we managed to get this [the house]... from what he earned. But we achieved to do this. This position helped us a lot, quite a lot[38]».

The small house made of clay bricks meant everything to “Lidia”. It was a miniature house, with only one bed, a closet and a table outside. The kitchen was an outside fireplace; the latrine and the *Pila* were results of development projects in the area. Moreover, this household had close relations to the Catholic Church, and the extended family was highly respected in the village. During the interview she expressed the important role her family and the church played in their life. When her husband was in the U.S., she could always rely on the support of the family and the “sisters and brothers” from the church. Their migration strategy had enabled them to construct a house and by this expanded their physical capital. Nonetheless their livelihood portfolio was influenced by the development project of the organisations working in the area and the social capital represented by the church and in her family. Hence, of all my interviewees, the household of “Lidia” was the most grateful for what they had accomplished with the remittances.

The household of “Lidia” felt that they went from nothing to everything. Her husband went with the objective of constructing a house for his family and he made it. The improvement of the physical capital of the household helped to give the household wider `room for manoeuvring´. They used to live in her parents’ house under the control and decisions of “Lidia´s” parents. Now they are an independent household capable of making their own decisions as a household. I elaborate on intra-household relations in the next chapter.

38 “Desde allá compramos este terrenito e hicimos esta casa. Para nosotros es bastante porque como le decía porque antes no teníamos verdad. A través de eso logramos alquiler esto que fue muy poco lo que hico...lo que trabajó. Pero logramos hacer esto. Esta posición... nos ayudo mucho, bastante”. “Lidia”

The most refined houses in el Javillal were the houses made from remittances. "Marybel" lived in one of the nicest houses in the village. It was made of block, had a ceramic floor, a kitchen inside with a gas stove and a small flower garden outside. Her husband had been in the U.S. for several years before they met but he left again straight after they got married and she became pregnant. He used to have a visa to the U.S. but lost it a couple of years ago. Therefore, he had to go with a *coyote* and was unable to visit his family during his stay in the North. I asked her if they would have had the house without receiving remittances, and she answered: "*this no! Ha-ha, of course not, but maybe another over there, on the other side, a more humble one. Because here you can´t earn money to buy yourself a house like this*[39]". The answer expressed some humbleness. When she said *"a more humble one*" her voice sank, she looked at me and took a small silent pause.

The household of "Marybel" had achieved exceedingly more in comparison to the household of "Lidia", but "Marybel" did not express the same gratitude as "Lidia". The livelihood portfolio of the household of "Marybel" consisted of a great deal of physical capital, natural capital and human capital, but in contrast to the household of "Lidia" the household lacked the social capital from family and the church. She lived in a nice house, wore fine clothes and could afford a relatively varied diet, but she complained about feeling lonely. When she said that they probably would have lived in a more humble house, she said it with a hint of "*and that would have been okay*". Despite the improved financial position and a successful livelihood strategy her asset base lacked the social conditions that provide well-being. In other words, the household of "Lidia" was proud of what they had achieved, and the sole fact that they had a house was enough for them to be satisfied. The house represented independence from the household of "Lidia's" parents, and now they were able to make their own decisions. Their close connections to the church and extended family secured their social life and provided security in terms of future risks. This was in stark contrast to "Marybel" who apparently had "everything" but would have been satisfied with less if she did not have to be lonely.

A healthier family

I observed many households like the household of "Marybel". They had extended their asset base as a result of migration. The physical capital was improved with a nice house and good

39 " ! Está no! jaja, claro que no, pero tal vez otra allí en el otro lado. Una más humilde. Porque aquí no se puede ganar dinero para comprarse una casa como esta"- "Marybel"

sanitation. In Guatemala women are confined to the domestic sphere and much of their activities take place within the house[40]. All of the tasks performed in the house belong to the wife. The wives like "Marybel" had the same tasks as the other wives in the villages but the high standard of her house took a large amount of the workload off her shoulders. It is easier to clean a ceramic floored house, and easier to cook upon a gas stove. The children play around on clean floors which protected them more from diseases and their clothes do not need cleaning as often as the clothes of kids living in houses of clay.

Some of the women stressed how the "healthier" conditions created better physical conditions for the children to be brought up in. They could play around in cleaner areas and it was easier to keep them clean. A healthier family also facilitates the access to human capital. Improved health conditions prevented diseases and good health helps the children to concentrate in school. Moreover, the clean surroundings, table and chairs facilitate the completion of homework.

In addition, cleanliness is often regarded as a value related to being a good, modern woman. I found the women living in these refined houses truly proud of their homes.

Kitchen –Guatemalan food tastes better when cooked on a firewood stove

The traditional stove in Guatemala is the *pollo*[41]. The key part of all Guatemalan meals is the *tortilla*[42]. The *tortillas* have to be cooked on a *comal*[43], if not they will not have the same good taste. In order to use the *comal,* a large amount of firewood is required. Moreover, the use of this type of kitchen requires a lot of work. In both villages, the inhabitants have to gather firewood in the forests. My interviewees, especially men, said that the work of gathering firewood was work for men. Nevertheless, I observed at least as many women as men gathering firewood. The women with husbands in the United States had to do the work themselves and I often saw them carrying heavy loads of firewood on their heads.

The investment in gas stoves from the remittances was an improvement of a physical capital and reduced women's workloads. Women cook and are often the ones gathering firewood. By using gas stoves they saved time and were freed from some heavy work. The majority of the

40 This is a central point in my next chapter
41 A firewood based cooking construction
42 Corn cake – cake made of corn flour
43 Cast iron plate used over a fire place – the pollo

ones with relatives in the U.S. had a gas stove, and all the women who had been in the United States themselves, preferred cooking with gas. Furthermore, this also has an economic side with gas more expensive than firewood. This meant that only the households with better economies used gas.

Despite the reduction in workload, and the improvement in the standard of the kitchen by buying a gas stove, all of the interviewees kept their *comal*. For the birthdays held by the finest houses in el Javillal, the feasts were prepared on the *comals*. "*The Guatemalan food tastes better being cooked on a comal"*, people said when I asked them why they did not use the gas stove. I found that the use of the *comal* was connected to tradition and culture. Empirical findings from Mexico show that the use of kitchens does not solely depend on the expenses connected to their use but also carries an aspect of culture and traditions (Masera and Navia, 1996). Families keep the traditional kitchens in order to protect and carry on their food tradition and culture.

The cultural perception that food tasted better when cooked on firewood stove also plays a role in determining that, despite having access to less work-consuming stoves, women continued using the firewood. Winther observed similar attitudes in Zanzibar. Despite having electric stoves the women tended to continue using the firewood stoves. Winther explains this by describing how men pointed out the particular and superior taste of food cooked with firewood. This, she points out, was to protect the current gender identities. When women use the gas stoves they occupy male space by using "electronic male" equipment (Winther, 2012:200). In other words, men wanted their wives to cook on a firewood stove to protect their identity. This can also be said of the villages where I performed my fieldwork. The cultural perception of food tasting better when cooked on a *pollo* was carried by both men and women, but this did not eliminate the fact that it entailed more work for the women. More work limits their 'room of manoeuvre', and restricts their possibilities to work, participate in politics and have a social life. I will discuss this in the next chapter.

In other words, the improvement of the kitchen expanded the physical capital of the households but the use was also determined by the local culture. The structures in the society decided that food had to be cooked on a firewood stove, and this prevented the women from benefiting from the physical improvements.

A house with a (business) room

In la Estancia the houses made from remittances often had a small business connected to the house. Accordingly, these houses not only expressed that the household had expanded their physical capital by the house, but additionally the house provided financial capital from the small store. Hence, the household had not only improved their house as a result of the migration, they had also managed to invest in a new strategy. The stories of these houses, and how they had been improved from the migration, confirmed the triumphs that migration could achieve.

I observed that the small businesses connected to the houses were often run by the women and children. I rarely saw the man of the house working in these stores. The men only worked in the relatively big stores. Agarwal (1997:2) stresses how the bargaining power of the members of the household, among other factors, depends on access to cash income. That the women were in charge of running the *tiendesitas*[44] helped to expand the `room for manoeuvre´ of some women. The cash income they were generating was outside the control of their husbands and by administrating the business the women strengthened their economic position in the household. Most likely, by the end of the day, she gave some of the income to her husband, but the household was relying on her working hours in the store and this possibly strengthened her bargaining power. In addition, if she found it necessary she had the possibility to put some of the money away as savings.

A place to be happy

The interviewees without relatives in the North, and the interviewees who had just sent their relatives to the U.S. always mentioned the houses with terraces when they talked about the migration. The last question I asked the interviewees was: how do you see the future? "Ingrida" who had just sent her husband to the U.S. answered: "*I think maybe our house will not be like this [we were sitting inside the house], but a house with terrace, or of two floors, so that the family and I can be happy*[45]". Her answer seemed to put a house with a terrace in direct correlation with being happy. This could be related to the feeling of relative deprivation. She perceived her "poverty" through the "non-poor" – the ones who had changed

44 Tiendesita – is the name used for these small grocery stores selling a variety of goods, from food grocery, cell phones cards, newspapers, and alcohol

45 "Tal vez pienso yo que no es así nuestra casa, pues es una terraza o es una de dos niveles para qué está feliz la familia yo digo" – "Ingrida" (She did not speak Spanish fluently, and she sometime struggled to find the words)

their access to material goods. Compared to the ones who had achieved greatly, she had not succeeded. Now with the husband in the U.S. the family could achieve *something* and be *happy.*

De Haas and Czaika (2010:5) describe how people and households also migrate to increase their income relative to others. “Ingrida” had seen how the other households improved their houses and life styles. The success stories, shown off by flashy houses when compared to the small house and sad life story of “Ingrida”, made her household look relatively poorer. By migrating to the U.S. her husband could help the family to achieve the life the other migrants had attained. This made the relative deprivation a push-factor for choosing the migration strategy to improve their livelihood.

Migration was a coping-strategy for the household of “Ingrida”. They had built a house of concrete blocks one year ago, but one of her sons fell ill. The household had to prioritise sending him to the hospital instead of paying back the house loan. Their son died, and now they had a large debt both from the house and the treatment of their son. Her husband felt he did not have any choice but to migrate in order to pay back the loan. He took out a new loan to pay the *coyote*. Now he had been in the U.S. for five months but still had not managed to get a job. The household risks losing their house, the land and all their belongings but “Ingrida” was still hopeful that they could achieve what the “other” migrants seem to achieve. "*Further what I have seen of those who have returned [from the U.S]; first when they are there they build their houses, send [money] from there, and they achieve something. But when they don’t go, they don’t achieve anything here, there is no work*[46]".

One of the middle aged female interviewee, “Erica”, told me that she grew up with alcoholic parents and married a poor man when she was twelve years old. They did not own any possessions, and when they raised their children they were all sleeping, eating and living in a small, one-room house, with holes in the roof. Two of her sons migrated to the U.S. and now the family had three two storey houses, and three cars. One of the houses, which faced the main road, had a grocery store and she told me they had also invested in land. I got in touch with her because one of her sons was a teacher in the school. Because of his brothers in the United States all of his siblings now had a profession.

46 “Más lo que pienso yo de los que han regresado. Primero cuando están allí levantan sus casas, mandan de allí. Y luego casi logran un poco. Pero cuando no se van no logren como por aquí no hay trabajo”. –“Ingrida”

There were more stories like this in the village. Many of the families living in the "remittance styled" houses had gone from nothing to "everything". The poor households with no connections to the U.S. knew all of these stories and dreamt about the same success. "Ingrida", who was at risk of losing her house, voiced the connection between having a house with two floors and being happy. She used the success stories from the village to describe the objectives of her husband. The flashy houses in la Estancia demonstrated the success that migration to the U.S. could lead to.

I interpreted the 'remittances styled' houses as not only representing a house, but also a symbol of "happiness". The people who lived in these houses had an uplifted position in the society, and their success was made evident by their house. In other words, in relation to the livelihood strategy of migration to build or rebuild a house represents not only the improvement of the physical capital, but also the social capital. This elevated position among the migrating households not only demonstrated wealth, but also that they were part of the "network" of households that had achieved "something". "Ingrida" answered: "*first they build their houses and then they achieve something*". The houses illustrated not only the success of the livelihood strategy to build a house, but also a window of opportunity opened to achieve *algo más*. I will elaborate on this point in the end section of this chapter and the next.

4.2.2 Investing in land and the earth

> "The land is the centre of existence, it contains the roots of family, forms base of the social structure, and represents the reasons for bitter fighting when the ownership is questioned"[47]".

Many of my interviewees said that investment in land is one of the main goals for migrating. The communitarian president of el Javillal lived in a small and old house made of clay bricks. He admitted he had access to large amounts of land, and said; "*you never know what is going to happen in the future. It is better to invest in land than in housing*[48]". Land was seen as insurance and people who owned land were rich, both in a material way, but also culturally (c.f. 'significance of land').

47 "La tierra es el centro de la existencia, proporciona las raíces de la vida familiar, forma la base de la estructura social y es motivo de amargo antagonismo cuando su posesión está en entredicho» Lovell,1990 quoted in Camacho Nassar, 2003:41- my translation
48 «uno nunca sabe lo que puede pasar en el futuro. Es mejor tener su riqueza en tierra que en casa» - don Emiliano

To fully understand the wealth entailed in land, I start by describing the organisation of land tenure in the two villages and argue that the migration have led to changes in access to land. Secondly, I describe how land might accumulate other capitals. Thirdly, I describe the cultural meaning of land in Guatemala and conclude by describing how land possession might challenge gender roles.

El Javillal

The organisation of land tenure in Guatemala varies in the different areas of the country and diverse tenure regimes coexist (Camacho, 2003). In some places, like in el Javillal, different regimes are operating at the same time. This makes the organisation of land ownership in el Javillal rather complex. The forest is communal, and relatively well understood rules exist on how to use it. Land ownership is communal, but some portions of it are allocated to individuals with usufructs rights. These rights can be inherited or sold, but property rights will remain communal.

The dry and hilly landscape covered with trees, made it difficult to draw the lines between who owned what parts. At the same time, I found it difficult to discuss the topic with my interviewees. They all tended to come up with different explanations, and I often ended up more confused- than enlightened- after discussing the organisation of land tenure. This might be blamed on my Spanish, but I also believe it was related to how people talked about land. An illustrating example was the answer I got from an older, respected woman when I asked her about the investment in land; *"[W]ho knows. You don't notice, right. No, you don't notice what others got*[49]". Additionally, lack of confidence in each other existed among the population. The region of Chiquimula has a macho and violent reputation and I observed numerous men carrying their guns in public. Every day I heard brutal stories about kidnappings and killings. I did not want to ask about these topics, but I often thought that though not being uttered directly, my interviewees said there was a lack of trust. Furthermore, I do not know what was being cultivated, - it could be that some parts of the land were used to grow drugs[50]. Consequently, not knowing or not wanting others to know how much land they were holding, might be due to the fear of being kidnapped or blackmailed.

49 «Saber - uno no se da cuenta, no.. uno no se da cuenta de lo que los otros tienen» - midwife doña Elena
50 This I do not know and I did not dare to ask anyone due to my own security. However, I know that the region is known for having ties to the narcotraficantes.

Regardless of this, I understood that the land in el Javillal is organised by a combination of the traditional usufructs rights and communal land. Previously, the holders of usufruct land had to pay tax to the Indigenous Community[51] but I heard tales about people no longer paying these taxes. One of my interviewees confessed he had not paid tax for the past three years. Another said people were careful about telling others about how much they really own, because they did not want to pay taxes. When I asked the interviewees in el Javillal if they had bought land with the remittances, they said "*no*", or they said "*well, but only a small piece*". Nonetheless, I found that they had invested in large parts of land, compared to the feedback they had given in the survey. Hence, I understood that my interviewees were referring to the increased use of money in the transactions of usufructs' rights. The position of the Indigenous Committee was weakened and this meant that people were engaging in these monetised transactions of usufructs' rights outside of the surveillance of the Indigenous Committee. This was probably why, together with possible drug cultivations and tax avoidance, people did not want to talk about land.

La Estancia

In la Estancia the forest land is communal, and the cultivation land private. The inheritance rights secure land for everyone with boys and girls having equal rights. This makes the majority of the inhabitants holders of a piece of land. The cultivation land is placed in the middle of, and around, the village. This makes it easy to know who owns what parts. The distribution of land in the village is organised in a way that makes it easy to buy and sell. This makes the investments from the remittances visible, increases the relative deprivation and leads more households to look for strategies to access finance to buy land.

51 The Indigenous community today is a farmers' association based on the previous indigenous organisation of land. The population in the Quetzaltepeque region no longer define themselves as indigenous, but in relation to the Indigenous Community people explained that they had indigenous blood and history. The organisation of land by the Indigenous Community has roots in the traditional organisation of land of the Mayas. These rights acknowledge the individual possession, but foremost, and in coexistence with the communal property (usufruct rights). After the independence in 1821 the liberalization of land was mainly distributed to the hands of the ladinos (and the few), but in some zones, mainly where the agricultural conditions were poor, the Indigenous Communities were granted their land (Camacho Nassar, 2003:23,26). These Communities continued their traditional organisation of the land, and some parts of the country, like Quetzaltepeque, still carry out these associations (don Santos, Acideq, 2012)

Organisation of land – changes in access as a result of migration

Empirical findings from studies on migration and land use points in the direction that migration might affect patterns of land tenure (Taylor and Moran-Taylor, 2006; Aguilar-Støen, 2012: 3). Ellis (2000:83) describes how communal modes of ownership often foster inequalities and the tensions connected to these. The leaders are not necessarily elected democratically, and they alone can include and exclude people from society by providing more access to land to those who offer "drink money" or other benefits (Ibid). On the other side, the communal organising does provide access to land for all the members of the community. In contrast to private land that only allocates to the households with financial capital. Private property rights to land also produce exclusion - by restricting financial capital and access, the market can be influenced by corruption.

As described in the theory chapter, the migration strategy can help households to overcome excluding structures and give them access to capitals they did not have in the first place (Bebbington, 1999). What households are entitled to and their endowment depend on how the land is organised. The livelihoods of the households in el Javillal have secured access to a *milpa*[52]. Nevertheless, this access has been decided by a Community based on traditional family ties and old structures. Migration, with its remittances, has led to the expansion of investment in land. The opportunity to invest in land outside the previous regime of the Indigenous Community gives the households incentives to choose strategies fostering financial capital. Migration is viewed as a strategy especially good at accessing financial capital (Ellis, 2000).

Thus, the new opening for land investments, in combination with the migration strategy, might contribute to breaking the previously excluding land tenure structures, as households choose to migrate to access land. At the same time, this also creates new structures. The households with the least resources will never enable themselves to access financial capital to buy land or to utilise the migration strategy. Besides, the relative deprivation among the other inhabitants leads other households to look for strategies to accumulate financial capital for them to access land. This cycle strengthens the exclusion of the already most excluded. The household with the smallest asset base will never be able to access land within a more

52 Milpa – a cultivation system where corn grows inter-spread with beans and other edibles

capitalised mode of organising, in contrast to a system of communal land, which provides access for all.

Wealth in land

In la Estancia my interviewees expressed that investing in land was as important as housing. In el Javillal people primarily stressed housing. Although, the *javilleños* did not mention land as a main investment, I read between the lines that it was almost as big a priority as the houses. As described, investments in land entail access to several capitals. It is physical in the way that it is the household's terrain where they can expand physical capitals. Secondly, the resources growing on the cultivation land utilise natural capital to provide the households with food. Furthermore, if the household buys or exchanges their crops the land will also generate financial capital. Nonetheless, the cultural aspect of land, protecting it and handing it on to the next generation was central to many of the people I met (c.f. 'significance of land').

In both villages the inhabitants complained about how the land prices had increased in the last few years. Many of my interviewees had bought land with their remittances. The increased demand for land as a result of the migration probably contributed to the increase in prices. To be able to have the same livelihood opportunities as other, a need for strategies providing more financial capital emerged. As explained, migration is a strategy accumulating especially financial capital, and the rising land prices almost certainly created a greater desire among other households to migrate.

The significance of land

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the history of Guatemala has been marked by land conflicts. The meanings of land are complex and of high importance to the people of Guatemala. It not only represents a material aspect but also holds strong cultural and social significance. In Spanish *la tierra* means both land and earth. Thus, earth could be interpreted as Mother Earth. Several of my interviewees stressed the need to protect *la tierra*, and valued the wealth *la tierra* provides. In el Javillal this was particularly reflected in the trees. The trees were part of many interviewees everyday talk. "*Ahh how lucky we are to be surrounded by all these trees*", or "*Thanks to God we have all these trees protecting us from the heat*". To the inhabitants of la Estancia nature was an integral part of their everyday life and conversation. Some of my interviewees explained to me how they walk in nature to clear their thoughts.

I attended a Maya-ceremony in the forest of la Estancia. All of the attendees were Catholic, but also proud Mayas. The ceremony was a sacrifice to the spirits of water. The *sacerdote*[53] explained to me how nature is filled with spirits. Accordingly, humans must live with a spiritual connection to *la tierra*, and to respect and interact with nature. In addition to the natural and financial capital of land, nature and land are closely connected and important aspects of the Guatemalans culture and everyday life. "*Having your wealth in land*" did not only represent physical wealth, but also contained another form of richness, - the richness of the earth.

Gender and command over land property

As mentioned, in la Estancia both sexes have equal inheriting rights. This gives access to, at least in theory, a small piece of land for most of the inhabitants. In el Javillal, the land was in the name of the male head of the family, and women were dependent on their husband or father. Yet, in el Javillal, some of the women whose husbands had been in the U.S. for many years, had managed to change this to a certain degree. The hopes of their husbands coming back were slowly disappearing, but from time to time they still received a small amount of money. As a consequence of the way the economy was organised in the village, a small amount of money did a significant difference. From the 50 $ a month some of the women received, they had managed to build a house of blocks, and some had also invested in land.

One of my interviewees showed me around the cultivated land. He pointed out who in the village owned what piece. The land of the *grass widows* he named by the women's names. If the investment in land had been a household investment, the buying of land most likely would have been made in the name of the husband. As long as the men do not get deported back, the women have secured their own future, with land in their name and ownership. Agarwal (1997) stresses how women are restrained from command over property by structural, cultural and socioeconomic factors. This limits their `room for manoeuvre´ due to their fallback position in their household (Kabeer, 1999). In el Javillal, the women who had obtained land in their own name had also empowered their position in the household. I will develop this aspect in chapter five.

53 Maya-pastor

4.2.3 Material risks due to the migration strategy

The costs of the *coyotes* are high, especially to people from poor communities. The loans to pay the human traffickers are often from private actors who own large areas of land. These loans have turned into big business in many communities. An example is that the cooperative in la Estancia does not give out loans to pay *coyotes* because the loaners lack collateral and the banking services are relatively poor. At the same time, one of the workers in the cooperative told me that they did not give out the loans as a consequence of the risks connected to both the crossing and the lack of insurance in the U.S. This has led private illegal actors build up business and offer loans with extremely high interest rates. To get these loans poor households are forced to mortgage their house and land.

In this section I account for how some households literally risk everything when they choose to migrate. The success often depends on the starting point of the household and the size of their asset base.

Risk-minimising or risk-maximising?

The livelihood strategies are seen as risk-minimising strategies for the households. Improvement in the different capitals helps households to outlast challenges and prevent coming difficulties. "*It is a decision to win or lose*", said a woman in el Javillal when I told her I was investigating the consequences of migration. Frequently I found the migration strategy rather risk-maximising than risk-minimising. The migration could profit by increasing the capital bases but it could also eliminate. Some of the households in la Estancia had literally lost everything. In contrast, the two floor remittances styled houses stood out exemplifying the households that had reached *algo más*. The desired life was equivalent to happiness, and the migrants were willing to sacrifice everything in order to achieve *algo más*. I will detail the meaning of how I define desire and *algo más* in the last section of this and the next chapter.

In la Estancia the household of "Carmen" had lost all their belongings as a result of migration. The husband had tried to enter into the U.S. three times, but only managed to enter on the last attempt. On the first try he gave up in the desert, and the second time he was caught and sent to jail for four months at the Mexican-U.S. border. The family thought he was dead, because they did not hear from him until he came back half a year later. The first time he migrated, he

took out a loan of 75,000 quetzals[54], and when he came back he did not have any choice but to take out another loan to pay back the first loan. He raised a second loan of 50,000 quetzals, but since he did not manage to enter into the U.S., the family lost their house, their land and all their belongings. To qualify for the final loan, of 95,000 quetzals, to pay the third *coyote,* he had to pawn possessions belonging to his friends. This time he managed to enter the U.S. but the family had lost their house and had to live in the house of a relative. "Carmen" told me, while she was crying, how the relative had treated their family as "*animals*". The children were not allowed to play or touch anything in the house. They had to "*work as slaves, and did not feel welcome"*. After a year living in their relative's house friends from the Church helped them collect different materials and laminate boards to put up a small tent/house. Today, four years later, her husband has managed to pay back the loans and buy the land where the provisional house is placed. Their goal is to construct a house and buy some cultivable land.

"Capacitación de usar sus recursos[55]"

The outcome of the migration strategy rests on the household´s asset base, their capability to use their resources, along with their entitlements. Empirical studies show a tendency of more vulnerable people adapting more vulnerable livelihood strategies (Ellis, 2007:18). Moreover, sometimes households use strategies even if it compromises their resource base (Bebbington, 1999: 2028). The example of "Carmen" clearly demonstrates how the household had to mobilise their assets, even though they risked losing them, to pursue their project. It shows the flexibility with which people combine their assets. What started as "a loss" turned after much effort and hard work into "a gain".

Empirical studies also point out that the initial migrants tend to come from the households with more resources in the society. As the migration phenomenon expands, other households, with fewer resources begin to migrate, and finally the households with the least resources enter the migration network (de Haas and Czaika, 2010:6). Though, the poorest of the poor will always be excluded from migrating, as they will not be able to take up the loans to pay the *coyotes*. In la Estancia migration started in the 1980s, and, as described, the migrants who now migrate are from the households with fewer resources. Consequently, the migrant households I met in la Estancia had either stories of loss, or stories of triumph. I did not meet

54 About 9500 USD

55 Doña Enriquetta – one of the female members of the community board in la Estancia defined poverty as "los que no tienen la capacitación de usar sus recursos" – those who do not have the capacity to use their resources

households relatively pleased by the achievements, only the two extremes. They had either lost all their belongings and/or the migrant had abandoned his family, or they had been highly successful as a result of the migration. This is probably due to the long migration history. More people have migrated, and they have experienced both sides of the strategy. The success of the migration also rests on the size of the household's asset base. The households with a vulnerable asset base risk literally everything when they engage the migration strategy. This makes the outcomes either a win or lose situation.

The household of "Carmen" exemplifies this. Before her husband migrated, the household held a limited asset base consisting of a small house, a sewing machine to embroider the typical suits of the women, and a small plot of cultivable land. Moreover, the household were active members of the Evangelic Church. They had lost all of their physical and natural capital as a result of the migration, but she told me how the church helped her with food, and how members from the church also helped the family to construct the small provisional house. Furthermore, the Evangelic Church has strong relations to churches in the U.S. The Evangelic Church of la Estancia put her husband in contact with the employers that finally gave him a job in the United States. This exemplifies how their social capital in connection to the church played a crucial role in their livelihood portfolio, and gave them access to the opportunities the household now has.

4.3 Use of the Remittances – Daily Expenses

As demonstrated in figure 3, the respondents answered that they spend remittances primarily on food and secondly on clothes, shoes and medical expenses[56]. This seems to fit with my observations in el Javillal and la Estancia. As mentioned, in el Javillal education did not seem to be as highly prioritised as in la Estancia. This is probably due to different access to schools and jobs requiring diplomas[57].

56 Also regarding the use of the remittances, (c.f. investments, Figure 2) the respondents could tick off on several options, did not respond on how much they spend on each, neither their priorities.
57 I choose not to discuss education as only a few stressed the education as their main investment or primary everyday expense.

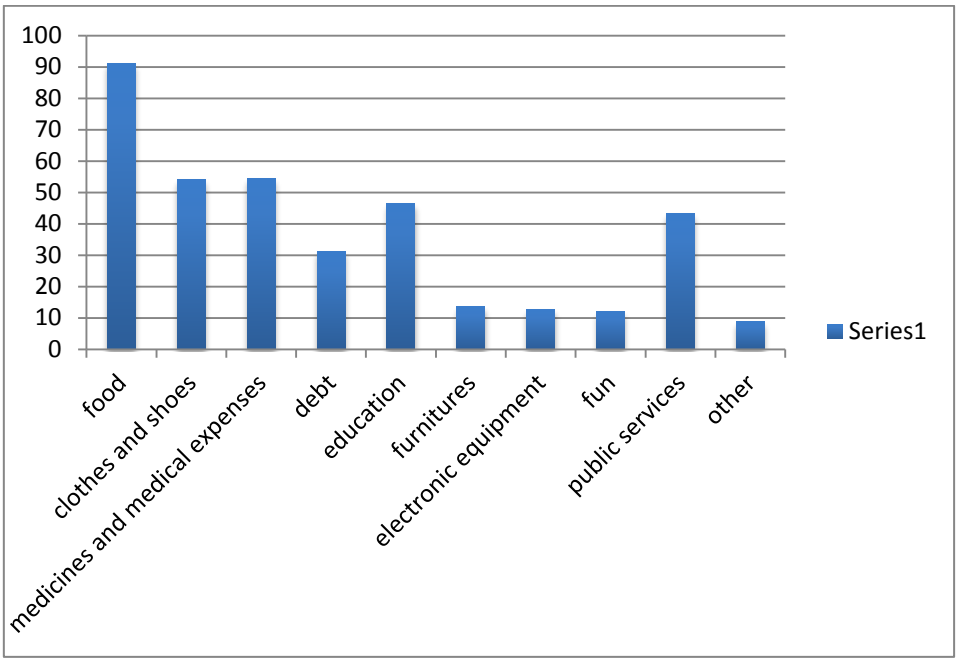

Figure 3 Use of remittances (percent) (table 7.3)

A central argument to the pessimist migration approach is that migration from the global South to the North creates need for capitalist consumer goods in the South (de Haas, 2012). As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, my interest in studying migration started when I visited communities in el Salvador and saw all the white Nike shoes and big electronic equipment in poor people's houses. I was expecting to see much of this in Guatemala but to a certain extent I was proven wrong. Most of the migrant households reflected the remittances economy, but flashy consumer goods were not so evident in la Estancia or el Javillal.

In this section I discuss possible explanations for why I did not find the "showy" consumption as a result of migration to the extent I expected. I elaborate on how I found the inhabitants to rather materialise *algo más*[58]. Finally, I analyse how the *algo más* had become *the* shared desire, motivating many to migrate. Why were the flashy consumer goods not so evident in the two villages? How did the symbolisation of their migrant relation affect the materialisation of the *algo más*?

58 I interpret the *algo mas*.as the "grass is always greener on the other side". It is something better, something to strive for. Algo más is created by the globalisation, social medias and migrants - what shape the desires of people (all over the world). It contains different meanings and is both relational and can be materialised.

4.3.1 Remittances = increased consumption?

The survey clearly supports my observations from the villages. My interviewees with migrant relations stressed that the remittances allowed them to have a more varied diet, to pay for medicines and shoes and clothes. In particular shoes were important to several of my interviewees[59]. Wilhite defines consumption as: *"the acquisition and use of things, including goods, products, and commodities, defined as 'objects of economic value[60]"* (2006:7). In other words, all objects defined by economic value could represent consumption. Consequently, by this definition, the migration leads to more consumption, - food, medicines, clothes and shoes are objects measured in economic terms.

To define whether the migration leads to increased need of capitalist goods, I emphasise consumer goods distinguishing in the villages. In el Javillal I did not observe people standing out with flashy clothes or accessories. One of the explanations for this was probably the considerably poor population. Investing in the most essential means of survival was prioritised. In la Estancia the majority of the inhabitants are indigenous, and the Maya culture has relatively strict traditions on what clothes to wear. Furthermore, the economic standard of the village is relatively high, and a considerable amount of inhabitants owned a car, television etc. even though they did not have migrant relations. Accordingly, the capitalist goods were probably a result of a combination of the remittances and the fact that people were working and lived close to a city. Though, I did not find the migrant households to stand out by these goods.

As described several times, the houses built from the remittances stood out in the two villages. I argue that the remittances houses became the main symbol expressing their migrant relations and the consumer goods were thus not important in this connection. Even though, I did not find the inhabitants of the villages to spend their remittances on flashy clothes or equipment, I observed that the households with migrant relations distinguished in the two villages. In the following section I explain how I found the migration generating *algo más* through consumption.

59 This is probably connected to their way of viewing poverty. When I asked them how to describe poverty the majority answered "those without shoes who wear dirty clothes".
60 'objects of economic value' – term of Appadurai 1986:4

4.3.2 Goods to communicate algo más

> "*Individuals participate by using goods to communicate social meaning, which in turn contributes to creating and keeping social relationships"* Guillen-Rojo (2007:28)

The ones I met in the villages with white tennis shoes, often had a family member in the U.S., or were migrants themselves. However, due to globalisation people are wearing the same clothes all over the world. The younger generation of *javilleños* used clothes as most other youths, and the ones connected to the U.S. did not necessarily stand out because of the "globalised" style. In difference to el Javillal, in la Estancia most of the women used the traditional Maya dresses. This made it easy to spot if the women experimented with apparel not normally part of their traditional dress. The traditions concerning the use of the typical dress were rather strict, and I seldom observed women experimenting with other clothes, only apparels. Furthermore, in la Estancia the majority of the households with a relation in the U.S. had a huge American[61] flag hanging or painted on the wall or used one as a bed sheet or towel. Women used American flags for different purposes. I observed one woman in particular. She used her colourful traditional dress, with all its belonging accessories: shoes, jewellery and her long hair braided with multi-coloured bonds, while carrying her son in a carrier made of an American flag. These accessories communicated both their Maya origin, but at the same time their connection the U.S. thus conveying a social message saying they had achieved *algo más*.

In both villages many of the female interviewees asked me if I always wore high heels and nail polish back home. Because *over there* [meaning all the rich countries like the U.S] they had seen that the women always looked like a doll, that they were living the "American life". The expression "American life" and "American dream" were referred to by many of the interviewees. However, I sensed that the "American life/ dream" was the life presented in the Mexican *telenovelas*[62], music, movies, by the photos from the U.S. and the small "different" goods sent back by the migrants. In other words, the illustrations did not necessarily come from the U.S., but from a stream of illustrations of how the good life is supposed to be.

61 I write "American" while referring to the U.S. American because my interviewees named it American.
62 Telenovelas are Mexican or Venezuelan soap operas. The main characters are white and rich – my interpretation.

Appadurai (1986) describes how desires are created through market forces, public discourses, and the globalised trade[63]. The flow of images and ideas, confirmed in all channels of social life, are conditioned by consumer desires. This means that the desire is never determined by only tradition or simply global culture. Desires are practical, and are created by the interplay of global processes and the local world (Spivak, 1987, 1999 in Fischer and Benson, 2006: 178). The households with migrant relations represented windows to the "American life", those who had achieved *algo más*. Even without having many flashy goods or clothes standing out, the households expressed *algo más* by the houses and symbols. However, these symbols represented both their traditional world, and the *something more*. The *algo más* was achieved by the migrant households and desired by the rest.

4.3.3 A shared desire - individual interpretations

> "[U]nderstanding consumption from a cultural perspective implies researching on the local meaning of consumption. It also involves taking into account the way culture is created (…) facilitates understanding and constitutes the basis upon which consumption activities takes place" (Guillen-Rojo, 2007:27).

I conducted all the interviews by visiting the interviewees at home. This gave me the opportunity to observe their decorations and furniture inside their houses. In el Javillal the interviewees with relatives in the North did not have many things reminding of the U.S. The only way to spot that they had relatives in the States was the standard of the house, numerous photos of their family members in the U.S. hanging on the walls, and maybe some toys or children's clothes.

In el Javillal, one family stood out in contrast to the other families. The son had several musical instruments with the corresponding speakers to all of the instruments but I did not see more than just a small television in the house. The mother said that they wanted him to learn to play instruments because of: "*the joy you can find in music*". The instruments were clearly investments made with the remittances, but I did not see any other flashy equipment in the house. Most likely it was the father, in the U.S., who wanted the son to play instruments. Investing in several instruments because of: "*the joy you find in music*", prioritised above other material goods, was something I did not expect to find in a poor village in Guatemala. This new type of self-realising desire was probably created by the flow of images and ideas

63 I understand the term desire as shaped through different channels, turning into what becomes the "truth", and further makes people want to achieve / desire this "truth" – this life.

coming from all different channels, - the father in the U.S., television, music and the idea of a "better life". That the household expressed this new type of life presumably also created a desire for other households in the village to achieve *something more*. The new desire was not necessarily to buy instruments to find joy in music, but rather enforced the desire to achieve *algo mas*.

In la Estancia the material standard of most houses was quite good, but huge variations existed between households. Most of my interviewees lived in houses made of block and had a latrine, water, electricity, gas stove, a television etc. Not all the wealthy families had relatives in the U.S. Some had succeeded in business or obtained an education and worked in Quetzaltenango. On the other hand, some of the households with fewer resources had relations in the U.S.

"Paz" in la Estancia lived in a small house with responsibility for her two grandsons. Her son and daughter in law had migrated and left her with the responsibility for the children. They did not remit money, and the children were struggling because they felt abandoned by their parents. "Paz" was crying while she explained how she had to make ends meet without financial capital. The children were depressed and had problems concentrating in school. She was illiterate and felt inadequate since she was unable to help them with their homework. Her story was strong and touching, and she said she was disappointed by the parents who had left their children. Yet, she had one of the walls completely covered by an American flag. She had photos of her son and daughter in law stapled to the flag posing with "American clothes" in front of nice buildings, cars or electronic equipment. I found this rather contradictory to the story she told. Moreover, I interpreted this as not necessarily expressing her relation to the parents of her grandsons, but rather her way of portraying her connection to the U.S. - the good life. I will elaborate more on the meaning of algo más in the next chapter.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I found that the principal investments from the remittances are used on housing to construct or improve a house, the buying of land and/or improving cultivation conditions. These investments, especially the houses, make wealth gained from the migration strategy visible in the villages. The outstanding houses represented the success the migration could lead to. At the same time, many of the interviewees stressed how the houses represented a

good life. According to my interviewees the investments and improvement of houses was synonymous with happiness.

Different households have different asset profiles, but it was obvious that variations existed in their capability to switch between assets when the household met challenges (Ellis, 2000: 42). The households with migrant relations had achieved very different levels of improvements, but the ones who had achieved the most from the remittances had expanded their assets in several areas. The types of assets, and to what extend the capitals had the ability to be transformed into another asset, affected the household's possibilities to convert one capital into another (Ibid: 7) . Investment in land was, for example, an important capital investment for the households. Those households that invested in land from the remittances automatically gained access to physical capital by being able to construct a house. Further, they earned natural capital by the resources provided by the land, and financial capital from the business they might have improved by exchanging or selling the resources.

In particular I observed the social capital related to the churches to play a crucial role for the poor households. The "sisters and brothers" from these networks provided access to useful contacts. Furthermore, they helped each other out in practical matters. This I will detail in the next chapter.

Many households sacrificed one or more of their assets in order to build up another asset base more suitable for their livelihood diversification strategy (Bebbington, 1999). I found several households that had sacrificed their house to be able to send a household member to the U.S., with the intentions to expand their capitals with the remittances he would send back. The livelihoods approach describes these types of sacrifices as risk-minimising for the future. However, I often found the migration amount to be rather risk-maximising, as some of the households literally risked everything by migrating.

The work load of the women was improved by the physical improvements of the house. The house is the "area of women" and the houses made of blocks were easier to clean. Also the investment in gas ovens helped relive the work load of the women. Due to land investments, the land is bought in the name of the husband, and this weakens the fallback position of the women. In contrast, some women who had been abandoned by their husbands had invested in

land in their own name. This has, on the other hand, increased their 'room for manoeuvre' in relation to the rest of the village.

Empirical literature on migration from the global South highlights increased consumption as a consequence of the remittances (de Haas, 2012). I did not find the "flashy" consumption that I was expecting to find, but some of the consumer goods I found representative of the connections of the migrants with the U.S. I often heard people saying that migration helped people achieve *something more*. The migration is reflected in a number of ways. It is not only communicated directly through the migrants and the outcomes of the migration but through the "whole" representing the "good life". This "whole" consists of a combination of the *telenovelas*, music, photos from migrants, returnees and the symbols the migrant households use. This has led migration to become the shared desire of the inhabitants. Moreover, this understanding has different interpretations. The instruments in el Javillal, the American flags in la Estancia, the 'remittances styled' houses, the Nike shoes and nail polish, all represent different images that constitute the *algo más*. The *algo más* creates the demand and desire for more people to migrate, and for more people to want "something more". In the next chapter I go further into the social implications of wanting *algo más*.

5 MIGRATING DESIRE

"el sueño americano[64]"

In the previous chapter I analysed the material gains and losses migration might lead to. All of the interviewees stated that the migration *vale la pena*. Implicit in this statement, the interviewees expressed that drawbacks exist in connection to the migration, but that these are overshadowed by the potential material gains. In this chapter I analyse the social effects of migration on livelihoods, and especially those of women. I met several who suffered as a consequence of the migration. They had lost their belongings and/or they were abandoned by their migrating husbands. Even though the majority answered that a good life was defined by having the whole family together, it was obvious that most people put the material aspect above the social.

The majority of the migrants from the countryside of Guatemala are men, leaving women with the responsibility of the household. Most of my interviewees said that the migration was a family project. As described in chapter four, many households, in both villages, improved their economic position as a consequence of the migration to the U.S. Not only did the households with members who succeeded in the United States get an uplifted economic position but they automatically attained a higher social status in the village. They became those who had achieved *algo más*. The *algo más* was materialised by house improvement, the buying of land, access to education, symbols and perhaps clothes and accessories from the U.S. This gave the remaining household members an uplifted position that might lead to the acquisition of new assets. Due to this, in the first section of the chapter, I discuss how the households changed their social position in the villages. Further, I stress to what extent migration really is a household project. The choices concerning livelihood strategies depend on a range of factors. The decision to migrate is motivated by the potential to expand the household´s livelihood opportunities. Moreover, the decision also involves the individual purpose of the migrant. I focus on the decision making processes,- the decision to migrate and

[64] The American dream

the decisions concerning the use of the remittances. To study the household and how the migration affects its members, I look closer at how it affects the intra-household social relations while paying particular attention to gender differences. Finally, both the optimistic and pessimistic migration approaches highlight how the remittances are both economic and social. In the last section of the chapter I analyse how the social remittances touch the households and intra-household relations.

5.1 Migrant desire, networks and Facebook

The differences between the households with and without migrant relations were visible in both el Javillal and la Estancia. Symbols were not only used to demonstrate their direct wealth but also the fact that they had a connection to the "Promised land". In this section I discuss how I interpreted the interviewee's conception of the *algo más*, and how Facebook have evolved to become a source for expecting and confirming the *algo más* across borders. Secondly, I argue how these associations generated social capital, and finally I analyse how the Evangelic Church reinforced the *algo más.* I argue that the creation and strengthening of desiring "something more" encouraged people to migrate. What does the *algo más* entail? How does the desire to achieve *algo más* affect the social relations?

5.1.1 Algo más

As described in the previous chapter, globalisation, with its material channels, leads a stream of descriptions and principles dictating what a good life is supposed to be. These connections are shaping what people imagine as the good life, as *algo más.* Yet, the "good life" is always translated and interpreted by the local culture and traditions (De Haan ,1999:30). Appadurai (1986:31) writes that "*consumption is entirely social, relational, and active rather than private, atomic, or passive"*. Most people had a romantic view of the United States. Not only did the houses and symbols represent a way to improve economically, but also that they were living the "American dream". In this sense, the households with relatives in the U.S., had not only improved the material standard of the household, they also accessed a little piece of the "American dream", the good life. In this context, the interviewees primarily referred to the material effects of migration, but I argue that these material improvements contributed in

materialising the *algo más.*

Moreover, the migrant households were also remembered from someone "outside". This I observed especially in el Javillal – the small, poor, arid and secluded village. People expressed how much they acknowledged the attention they received from their acquaintances abroad. To them the *algo más* also meant this contact. They were not forgotten. Someone from the "Promised land" thought about them and sent them "glimmers" from the "good life".

"Lucia" now works as a maid outside New York. She performs much activity on the social network Facebook. She often uploads photos of her wearing high heels and miniskirts, posing in front of a big television or other electronic equipment. *Javilleños* who use Facebook send her comments on how beautiful she looks and that they have all seen her photos. The photos she uploads are similar to photos I often saw hanging on the walls in the houses of migrants. I found, and still find, these photos to confirm how the "American dream" is being transferred and interpreted back to the villages.

The mass media produces and creates images about the world (Horst, 2006: 151). The new channels of communication, especially the new social networks such as Facebook, have led to a democratisation of the exchange of information. Yet, and despite this, democratisation, the world is constructed through a great and complex collection of presentation and explanation on how life is, and it is supposed to be (Fischer and Benson, 2006). Appadurai (1996 in Horst, 2006: ibid) stresses how the new social medias have resulted in a radical change "*in the nature of imagination [during] the past decades"*. The nature of "truth" is constituted from a variety of sources. Moreover, these sources influence the perceptions of how individuals should live (Ibid). I often communicate with "Lucia" and she tells me how much she misses her family and finds difficulties in adapting to life in the U.S. This is not something she expresses on Facebook. In contrast, she confirms the life people expect her to have by uploading photos portraying herself in a particular way[65]. Appadurai asserts that the nature of imagination is not only about sending social messages, but also receiving. Consequently, actors receive messages and communicate what is expected (1986:31). It is expected that

[65] This is not a unique for "Lucia". It is commonly known that on Facebook most people only demonstrate the life they want other to see.

“Lucia” has the life that people desire. This social pressure makes her inclined to confirm the desired life by sending photos showing her “good life”.

Rigg writes that often migration is structured and organised according to social identities. Further he points out that this classification, in some instances, also becomes an important factor in how people think about themselves (2007:128). I emphasise that this classification creates a divide between how people think about themselves in relation to others. This is a division between the ones with migrant relations and those without. The interviewees without migrants in their household treat the households with relatives in the U.S. as one group. “*They achieve some. They build their houses. They migrate because of the necessity”*. This distinction between them and us, those who had succeeded and we who had not, was not only formed by the material wealth that the migrant households demonstrated. Moreover, the division also consisted of those who had achieved *algo más*, and those who had not. I especially found this fact confirmed by the households without migrant relations. They talked about “those others”, and by this placed themselves below “those” who had achieved *something more*.

5.1.2 Social Capital and Migration

Bourdieu defines social capital as: “*aggregate of the actual of potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of actual acquaintance or recognition”* (Bourdieu, 1985:248 in Rigg, 2007:51). I argue, additionally, that social capital is expressed and strengthened by the network of migrants and their remaining families. These networks are not institutionalised, but are enacted by its members and reinforced by the other households in the villages. What the households with migrants have in common is their connection to *algo más*, to the U.S. and to the good life. Besides, the other households define the migrant households as part of what represents *algo más*. This makes the migration an important source of social capital, along with creating an increased desire among the other households to migrate. The relative deprivation shaped by the desire to reach “something more”.

The households gain bonding social capital by the experience they share with other households with migrant relations, and this strengthened some of the social ties in the

villages. I especially found this illustrated in el Javillal. The women, whose husbands were in the U.S., had a very supportive tone among each other. For example, when one of the women arranged birthdays the other *grass widows* showed up to help. They brought firewood for the *comal*, chairs and helped to prepare and serve food. These relations and shared experiences contributed to them helping one another in practical matters. Moreover, I caught the women giving each other advice on how to make ends meet without their husbands. This bonding social capital strengthened their positions by together facing challenges to get by.

In contrast, these networks created a divide between the households with and without migrant relations. This separation was demonstrated by the remittances styled houses and symbols, and by the experiences the families shared. I found a divide in both villages between *us* and *them*, those who had succeeded and those who had not. These networks stretched across borders and also helped the remaining households to stay informed about their relatives in the U.S. Some households had more contact with their migrant relatives and they provided information about the other migrants to the other households. Additionally, I also found their new social status important in how households identified themselves and the others. The networks strengthened this identification.

The households with fewer resources choose the migration strategy later than the houses with more resources. Besides, the households with fewest resources will never be able to afford to use the migration strategy. Thus, the poorest households are excluded from the networks, and the *something more* that the migration leads to. In other words, the migration strategy could contribute to open up new opportunities for the households, but at the same time, I also found it to, create new patterns of exclusion.

5.1.3 Buscando la Vida Americana tan Bendita por Dios[66]

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the Catholic Church played a crucial role during the civil war. Priests, monks and nuns became important actors in the struggle against the brutal repression of the government. The Theology of Liberation stressed the rights of the poor, and became a central contributor in the legitimatisation of the socialist ideology throughout the war (Grandin, 2006; Porras, 2010). Accordingly, several Catholic leaders were killed and persecuted for their discourse and work on human rights. At the same time, the Evangelic churches made their entry during the war. Missionaries came from all over the world but

66 «Looking for the American life that is truly blessed by God» - "Ana" – reasons for migration

primarily the U.S. The Theology of Liberation and the Evangelic message were conflicting[67], and the Catholic Church became closely associated with the war and its brutal consequences. From a radical point of view, Grandin (2006) argues that the missionaries were part of the CIA´s strategy to defeat the threatening socialist values in the population. Regardless of the validity of this assertion, the Evangelic ideology stressed, and continues to stress, that the followers of Christ can obtain material wealth through their prayers (Schäfer 1992: 76-77 in Bjune, 2007:18).

I intended to perform an interview[68] with the pastor of the Evangelic church in la Estancia. The church has enormous impact on the society and the charismatic leaders were some of the most respected people in the village. I asked him what he thought about the effects of the migration to the U.S. He answered, with a very dramatic voice; "*the development, the paved streets, the cars and improved houses here is not a result of the United States, but God*!"

Something that caught my attention in la Estancia was how my interviewees from the Evangelic church often insisted that the countries in the North were blessed by God. People often told me that "*if you just pray to God, and you mean it with all your heart, he will give you a good material life*". Implicit in this is the view that the capitalist economy is a blessing from God. The pastors stressed how Guatemala had not experienced the material blessing because they had been far away from God, but now, because of the current revival[69], people are expanding their houses and succeeding in business (Stoll 1994: 99 in Bjune, 2007:18). Accordingly, the good life is not only being imposed by the migrants, the *telenovelas*, and the expanding economies, but also God. In other words, the desire and goal of achieving the *algo más* is forced and reinforced from different quarters. This creates an even stronger desire to migrate, to further achieve a good life. The desire is not only imposed by a flow of images, migrants, symbols and media, but additionally by messages from God.

67 The theology of liberation sees the world bottom-up and stresses how Christians should fight together to defeat the structures that are oppressing the poor. In contrast, the Evangelic church highlights the freedom of individuals and that "you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours" (Mark, 11:24). – personal interpretation of the two directions of Christianity

68 I felt so uncomfortable during the interview that I only managed to ask him a couple of questions.

69 The Evangelic church in Guatemala has increased dramatically the last decade –it is estimated that 40 percent of Guatemalans are Protestants (Bjune, 2012:3) and most cities are adorned by enormous churches labelled "Jesus loves you" etc.

5.2 Decision making – a decision to win or lose[70]

Migration is viewed as a livelihood strategy used to improve the livelihoods of the households. The migrant represents the investment of the household and embodies the insurance by securing income (Fuglerud, 2007:cap.1, Ellis, 2000). Accordingly, the decision to migrate is driven by the household´s need to improve their livelihood. As mentioned earlier, several challenges exist when using household as the unit of analysis. The principal challenge is that the household members most likely do not represent a common preference of the whole household (Agarwal, 1997:2). Bargaining power, opposing interests and social differences within the household affect how the decisions are made (Bolt et. al, 2003:8; Agarwal, 1997:2). In this section I analyse the decision to migrate and the decisions regarding the use of the remittances. What did the interviewees consider when they answered that migration was a household project? How are decisions made in the household?

5.2.1 The decision to migrate

Migration was a family decision in the words of my interviewees, but I understood that the perception of a joint decision making process does not necessarily imply that all household members agreed upon the migration. The migrant did it for the future of the household, and this made the decision to migrate a household decision. In this section I analyse why men migrated and made decisions in the households.

"The man is the head of the marriage"

"*The man is less vulnerable. (...) According to the bible the man is the head of the marriage*", said don Trinidad. He was one of the leaders in the Catholic Church in el Javillal, and his statement was an interpretation to why men migrate and women stay. This captures the perception of most interviewees on the differences in gender and migration. Also other empirical studies from Guatemala show that traditional gender roles decide who migrates and who stays (Taylor and Moran-Taylor, 2006:55.) Men are responsible for the cash income of the family and the women are responsible for the domestic sphere. Since migration is related to securing cash income it seemed logical for my interviewees that men migrated.

70 Several of the interviewees defined the decision of migrating as a decision of win or lose

I asked my interviewees about how the decision regarding the migration was made. The male interviewees in particular did not have any hesitate when they said that it was their own decision. A good example was the answer I got from "Juan": *"[Y]es, family decision. I was talking with my wife. I was saying: I´ m going to there for like three-four years*[71]*"*. His answer implies that he saw the decision as a family decision, but he was the one who decided in the household. Therefore, he just told his wife that he was going.

The majority of the women said the decision was made by the husband, but they did not put up any resistance to him making the decision. *"Because he was the one going, I had to accept it*[72]", said "Sandra" from la Estancia. They had rebuilt their house, and he had apparently sent a vast amount of money. Since he was the one migrating, she just had to accept his decision. "Sofia" from el Javillal answered that the decision was made; "*by him because I could not disagree with him*[73]". This family had also earned significantly from the migration of the husband, but it was very noticeable that he was the chief of the household. She had to obey his wishes. The power relations within this household became especially evident by her calling him *Usted* and him naming her only *vos*[74].

In Spanish a status gap exists between those who are named *Usted* and those called *vos*. In hierarchical relationships, the most respected are named *Usted*, and the subordinated *vos*. E.g. – teacher – student relationship. In the countryside of Guatemala most people name each other *Usted*, but good friends and youths normally call one another *vos*. When "Sofia" called her husband *Usted* she showed him a respect that he did not demonstrate towards her. I asked her why she called him *Usted*, when he only named her *vos*. She answered that she just could not call him anything else. In this example the 'disciplinary power´ is confirmed by language, she just accepted her conversational subjugation to her husband. The relation had become normalised in the way that she did not manage to call him anything else. Their power distance was confirmed several times a day when they referred to each other by using different levels of identification. When he told her he was migrating, she just "*could not disagree with him*". He was the one who decided. This she confirmed every time she approached him.

Kabeer (1999:437) writes how the agency of the household members is determined by the inequalities in people's capacity to make choices. It was obvious that women who had men in

71 The interviewee answered the questions in English – "Juan"
72 "Cómo él iba, yo tenia que aceptarlo" – "Sandra"
73 "De él por que yo no podía rehusar de él" – "Sofia".
74 Usted is the polite way of saying you. Vos is the informal version of you.

the U.S. did not have much of an input when their men decided to migrate. None of my female interviewees had been the one who suggested their husband should migrate, but several pointed out they did not want him to leave. Despite their requirements, their husbands had left. Foucault (1976 in de Haan and Zoomers, 2005:37) underlines how power relations are created and reproduced by both the oppressed and oppressor. Accordingly, the intra-household relations are produced and reproduced by all members including the women. That their husbands left and they just accepted it, demonstrates how the decision-making in the households was done by the husband. He is the one who decides and that is just how it is.

Besides, it was the common understanding in the two villages that "*the man is the head of the marriage*". The interviewees saw the women who migrated as women without dignity. In other words, it was the shared view that the man was the one who secured the cash income of the household, and the woman stayed at home protecting the house and children. These norms reinforced the decision-making within the household and the structural power whereof women were subordinated to men. It was correspondingly expected from the other households that if someone migrated from a household, it was the man. This weakened women's bargaining positions and their capacity to make decisions (Agarwal, 1997:16). It was defined not only within the household but additionally decided by the expectations of the whole society.

Woman who migrate – "men are afraid of women migrating"

In la Estancia I heard of only a couple of women who had migrated to provide economic security for their children. Their husbands were alcoholics, and the single way they could ensure the future of their household was to migrate. My female interviewees who had been in the U.S., were either single or had migrated after their husbands. I did not meet any households where the wife had decided to migrate on behalf of the household.

One example singled out. "Lucia" was a single, twenty year old girl who decided to migrate to "*achieve something*". She told me she did not want to find a husband or have children before she had secured her own future. "*How can you give birth to kids in this world*", she said referring to the economic situation of the village. She was certain about coming back to el Javillal, but she wanted to migrate to be able to construct a house, and secure her future children a home. Her example distinguishes from the other examples I found in the village. She also migrated to help her sisters and brothers, but foremost her decision was an individual

decision to secure her own future and her own independence. This will contribute to strengthen her fallback position and her ability to make choices in her future family.

Another illustration was "Ana" from la Estancia who migrated to the U.S. five years ago. She had been abandoned by her husband. Consequently, she chose to migrate in order to provide security for her family. She left her two children with her sister, but explained; "[*I] went to do nothing, because, the truth is, I returned because of my love for them [the children]*[75]". She could not live without her children, therefore she returned to Guatemala after only a short stay. Also empirical literature shows that women who migrate, in contrast to men, cannot resist the emotional pull of their children (Taylor and Moran-Taylor. 2006: 56). This aspect prevents many women from migrating.

None of the male returnees told me he had returned because of his children. However, most interviewees underscored how the woman could not migrate because of her love of her kids. The majority of the people stressed that children where the ones suffering from migration. In this instance they especially mentioned the children who were abandoned by their mothers. I often found degrading views of women who had migrated and left their children. In these societies the woman is responsible for protecting the children, and the husband for providing the income. Therefore, it was accepted and not problematic for men to leave their kids but not for women.

"Marybel", from el Javillal, said that: "*men are afraid that the girls migrate*". She pointed out that they are afraid to feel insufficient, and at the same time they want to remain the sole earners of the household. Her view does not only imply that men represent the income, but furthermore that men are afraid to lose the power that comes by embodying that earnings. In el Javillal people often stressed that the girls did not migrate because they needed to protect their dignity. At the same time, it was the position of a man to provide security for the family. Accordingly, men migrated and women stayed at home.

Ehlers underscores how the male dominance in economic and political institutions in Guatemala limits women's access to economic resources. She describes how men restrict women´s possibilities for independence in the economy by taking over parts of the occupations that control production (1991:11). In connection to the household members´ fallback position, the income earner represents an important role in decision making

75 "No fui a hacer nada porque, la verdad es que me regresé por el amor de ellos" – "Ana" (Her Spanish was not fluent)

(Agarwal, 1997). By migrating men do not only represent the income of the household, they also restrict women from being able to obtain paid work. With the responsibility of the whole family and all the tasks in the household, most women are limited from contributing to the household economy. On the other hand, women who migrate earn money, and by this challenge the male position in the households. Their fallback position outside the household is strengthened by the status they achieve from the migration. In other words, what "Marybel" pointed out, is that all the reasons for why the man should migrate and the woman stay at home, are part of justifying the male dominance in the households.

Forced to migrate or adventure?

Rigg (2007:87) proposes that migration is either a coping strategy or an adaptive strategy. Within this logic, migrants from the South are possessed with a desire to seek adventure even if it would seem useless in economic terms. My empirical material allows me to suggest that curiosity and the search for adventure also impacts on the decision to migrate. The general impression from both villages is that most people who migrate leave to secure income for their household. I met some households that were "forced" to migrate. Their decision to migrate was a coping strategy as a consequence of changes in their livelihood. Several had experienced sickness in their family, and they decided to migrate to pay back the loans they raised in order to pay hospital bills. Others chose to migrate as a long-term investment of the household. The migration was an adapting strategy to strengthen the household in case of future challenges (Ibid). I found that the migrants who went as an adaptive strategy of the household often also had an adventurous motive for travelling to the "land of liberty", where the *algo más* was located.

"Emanuel", from la Estancia, left his household with eight children when he migrated. I asked him why he decided to travel to the U.S., and he highlighted *"[I wanted to find out] what is United States. So I went to see, the clean streets, the beautiful gardens, the good hygiene, the people, and it is nothing like here in Guatemala*[76]*"*. To him the migration was primarily an adventure to see and explore what the United States were like. This was not a unique case. Among young men, curiosity, the desire to seek adventure, to experience something different also played a role when considering migrating. A typical quote people from the villages expressed related to these men were; "*They go and forget about their families here*".

76 "(…) qué es EE. UU. Entonces yo fui a ver. Entonces fui a ver sus calles bien limpio, sus jardines si es bien bonito, sus casas bien bonitos, bien pintado, tiene buen higiene, la gente pues, o sea de que no es igual que aquí en Guatemala pues" ("Emanuel")

5.2.2 Use of Remittances

In the previous chapter I described the objectives and the use of the remittances. Most people stressed buying or improving their house as the decidedly most important investment of the money transfers. Buying land was the second most important objective of the households. From the remittances that migrants sent, most of my interviewees said that they saved one part and used the rest on daily expenses. In the MIRLU-survey, the majority of the interviewees answered food as the main item on which they spent money. In this section I describe how women handled the remittances, who decided its use, and who had the actual responsibility of the usage.

Trust - "He says he does not have a job"

The wives or mothers who received, or had received, remittances all told me that they themselves were in charge of the money their husbands sent. At the same time, most of them complained about the amount they received. Something that attracted my attention was the pride I saw in some of the women´s eyes when they told me that they were in charge of the money. Despite many complaining about the amount the husband sent, none of the women spoke directly around him deciding how much, and how often he sent it.

Currently migrants are striving to get jobs in the U.S. The job market and the situation for the migrants have changed in the last couple of years. This has led many of the previous recipients of remittances to no longer receive any money. I regularly heard people saying "*he says he does not have a job*", but I sensed that they did not quite believe it. "Carmen" from la Estancia said; "[*S]ometimes the men don't say how much they gain over there, but those who are afraid of God say it*[77]". I understood that it was a common understanding among the interviewees that the migrants often did not tell the truth regarding how much they really earned and about whether or not they had a job.

The migrants from the same villages often seek to migrate to the same destinations. The networks established by previous migrants help new migrants to obtain housing and jobs in the U.S. Several of the interviewees mentioned how the relations and connections to networks are facilitated by new technology including Internet access and the improved access to mobile phones. The migrant networks represent a positive form of bonding social capital. The

77 "A veces los hombres no dicen que ganan allá. Pero hay los que tiene miedo de Dios y lo dicen".- "Carmen"

networks facilitate the life of new migrants when they reach the U.S. Despite of this, the networks also worked negatively as a result of the control mechanisms in place across borders. The transnational spaces put up by migrants with technology strengthened the networks. These networks also tightened the possibility of "borderless" control. In this connection, remaining family members often heard rumours from other families connected to the same migration destination. The rumours could be about the finding of a new woman, involvement in crime or that he actually had a job, when he told his household in Guatemala that he did not. Moreover, these rumours also spread the opposite way. The whole village paid attention to what the *grass widows* were doing, both related to the remittances and other men. Several mentioned that the aggressive men used to call back to their wives and abuse them over the phone. Because of the distance it was difficult to find the truth concerning the money and the spreading rumours. Consequently, this created distrust among the couples. Nonetheless, women with restricted `room for manoeuvre´, remained under the control of their husbands even when he was in the U.S.

Amongst the women, I sensed much pride in trusting their husband. Even though I understood they were not satisfied by the amount of money he sent, all of the women justified him by giving explanations for why he did not remit. I often heard them comforting each other. Only women divorced from their migrating husbands complained and said that he was an egoist for not sending enough money. One of the women from the women´s committee in el Javillal guided me around the village to introduce me to all the families. To the women, who were waiting for their husbands to contact them or send money, she said: "[*H]e will call you again and he will come back. Do not lose faith*". Some of the women we met had lost contact with their husbands many years ago, and I could clearly see they had lost their hope of getting them back. Despite this, the woman from the women´s committee encouraged them to keep their hopes up.

On one side, I believe the pride in trusting the husband was related to material dependency. The possessions of the household belonged to him, and the small amounts of money he sent helped their households. On the other side, I found explanation in the religious and traditional culture. Melhus describes how women in Mexico rarely leave their husbands. They mainly stay because of their children but this is also related to the: "*female burden of suffering*" (1996:248). According to the observations of Melhus, the women are valued for motherhood and suffering. It is the role of a mother to be self-sacrificing and suffering in order to be a

good woman (Ibid: 248-249)[78]. The observations of Melhus are based on her studies from Mexico in the early nineties, but I found some of these aspects relevant in the villages. The villages were small and everyone knew "everything" about each other. Women alone were responsible for the whole household. They represented the "face" of the family. Accordingly, many women kept their face in order to survive in the flow of whispers in the communities. It was her role to be a mother and to suffer. Hence, she just had to hold her dignity to fulfil the expectations dictated by the community.

Responsibility in the use of remittances

I often found an undertone stating that the husband gave his wife the responsibility of the money remitted, but simultaneously dictated the use of it. The women were not aware of the difference between only "administrating" and deciding the use of the money. I asked "Marybel" if she saved some of the remittances, and she said; "[*Y]es, yes…when it [the remittances] comes for savings. He tells me that this particular amount is for savings, and the rest is yours*[79]". Another quote, regarding this, was "Sofia" saying;

> "[Economically] we were quite good [when the husband was in the U.S.] because always when he sent money he told me how much to save and how much to spend. And like this over all he has been very kind, because he earned his money and shared it[80]".

By these two examples I interpret that the husbands were telling them how to spend the remittances, but they also got a certain amount to spend on their everyday expenses as they saw fit. This depended on how much they received and what was included in this. The amount varied among my interviewees but for some it was enough to allow her to advance some of her own projects. These projects could lead to the opening of a small `room for manoeuvre ´ with which the women could strengthen their fallback position and become empowered. Notwithstanding of this, my interviewees, whom apparently received a great deal of money, were so busy with their tasks in the house they could hardly manage to perform side projects. Nevertheless, it might be that some of the women were saving some of their share of the money, or they were carrying out activities I did not observe.

In general the husband decided the bigger investments and the wives the small daily expenses. Taylor and Moran-Taylor (2003:57) write that in the villages in Guatemala; "*el hombre es el*

78 I elaborate in respect to this point later in the chapter.
79 "si, si....cuando viene para ahorrar. Él me dice cierta cantidad es para ahorrar y lo de más es tuya". "Marybel"
80 "Estábamos un poco bien…por que siempre cuando él me mandaba me decía tanto a guardar y tanto al gasto. Y así ha sido muy compresivo más que todo…porque él ganó su dinero y lo comparte". – "Sofia"

que manda[81]". Other empirical studies also find that despite the enlightenment of many women in Guatemala, the most important decisions, particularly when it boils down to financial matters, are made by the man. He even makes the decisions from a distance (ibid). In the context of empowerment, the women saw themselves as responsible for the use, but in reality they were only administrating the money he had sent and decided how to spend. Moreover, the fact that the man decided the investments had consequences for the types of capital prioritised. Bebbington stresses how the different assets hold different meanings, and that these meanings determine the access to other capitals (Bebbington, 1999). I asked my interviewees if they thought there would have been differences if a man or a woman decided on the use of the remittances. For my interviewees it was obvious that a woman would have spent the money in a more satisfactory way. Yet, despite this, the man decided. In other words, my interviewees agreed on the women being more responsible for the use of money, but they performed on behalf of the `disciplinary power´.

> "Certain ideas and practices seem to be more resistant to change than other. This is the case when values, ideas and practices are shared by all social actors in a given society, and are taken for granted that they are neither made explicit nor questioned"(Stølen,2012:210).

This explains how gender is naturalised. The naturalising of values, ideas and practices is the process that leads us to accept that inequality and hierarchy are natural. It is expressed by the `disciplinary power´, by all people accepting and acting out the oppressing actions (de Haan and Zoomer, 2005:36). In the villages the gender roles were naturalised. Everyone agreed on women being more responsible, but the male head was the decision-maker. Due to this, there was no room for questions, it was decided and adopted.

In addition, the social norms of what the receivers of remittances could allow themselves to spend money on were quite strict. The *grass widows* had the eyes of the whole village on them, both women and men, watching for them not to waste the money the husband sent. As stated, the rumours could easily spread back to the husband in the U.S. As rumours generally grow more exaggerated as they travel, the women had to step carefully. The women got small allowances to spend on their daily expenses, and were free to spend it as they wanted. These women, who managed to save or spend some on her own project, might have expanded her `room for manoeuvre´ vis a vis her husband. However this `room´ was not only limited by their husband, but also by the whole village. It was obvious that the important decisions were

81 The man decide

made by their husbands, even from a distance. In other words, the women were neither fully able, nor completely entitled, to make decisions regarding the use of the remittances.

"The caring and responsible mother"

My interviewees receiving remittances from family members in the U.S. were primarily the wives of men who had migrated. Still, the majority of the households had sons or daughters in the U.S. These, the younger generation who were not married, tended to send remittances to their mothers. I asked my interviewees why the migrants sent the remittances to their mothers, rather than their fathers. All of them answer that it is because women are more responsible than men and because a son always trust his mother.

I found this aspect rather contradictory in connection to the general women´s position in the household. Why did they choose to send the money to their mother, instead of their father? Melhus describes how the macho-culture and male authority is recognised in God the Father Almighty, but nevertheless virgin Maria is the mother with a superior position. The gender roles are divided by the idea that the: "*women are the keepers of men´s honour while men are the guardians of women´s virtue"* (Ibid: 249). Related to my observations, where a large percentage were Evangelical Christians, I find it difficult to state that women represented the virgin Maria. Nonetheless, I did clearly observe Melhus's distinction. Women held a subordinated position in the household – her role was to protect her sons and be responsible. This was the role model of a good woman. Her roles are dictated by the whole society, and women who do not protect their sons are degraded women. In other words, most women protect their son's honour and this gives them an uplifted position within the household.

Moreover, I observed that within the household the male head is the boss. The "second in command" in the household hierarchy is the oldest son, and after her youngest son comes the mother. Consequently, if the sons sent remittances to their father he would have been the one deciding on the use. When the sons sent directly to their mothers, they themselves could tell the mother what to spend on and how much to save. Moreover, related to the finding of Melhus, the sons trust their mothers, and it is the role of a mother to protect the honour of their men. Besides, the women did not have as many weaknesses as men and they were seen as more responsible. *"I think that hm… some, or a man would maybe spend his money in bad*

habits, in contrast to a woman (…) a woman protect the money better than a man[82]" Several of the fathers would most likely spend some of the money on alcohol, in contrast to the responsible mother. In other words, by sending the money to their mothers, they kept their honour along with protecting their ability to fully decide on the use.

"La mujer es la que siempre debe usar el dinero"[83]

This quotation (c.f. topic) exemplifies a general feeling among my interviewees, explicitly that women are more responsible when it comes to the use of money. "Sofia" said:

> "[I]t might be… a woman doesn't have bad habits in contrast to a man who has got a lot of bad habits…. to drink beer, waste their stuffs on alcohol. And from there is where there is a bad spending. In contrast, a woman thinks "I only miss this thing and I am going to buy it" and only this[84]".

The majority of the inhabitants, regardless of gender, stressed that women were more responsible than men. This proved the female position, personified in the virgin Maria, the "ideal" or model woman representing dignity and grace. The women are the mothers, and the protectors of their sons honour (Melhus, 1996). The women did not have as bad habits as men and they thought more about the well-being of the household members. The focus on women and their use of money has increased in later research on development. Women in general seem to prioritise the improvement of daily expenses as food and health, in contrast to men who tend to give priority to bigger and visible investments. Money lasts longer when women are in charge (Pearson, 2000).

In el Javillal some of my interviewee's husbands had been in the U.S. for many years. They were slowly losing contact with their husbands but saved the small amounts of money they received. Despite of the women being more or less abandoned by their husbands, they had achieved much. They told me he was sending around $50 a month and that this was not enough to do more than just surviving. Regardless of the small amount the women received, most of them had rebuilt their houses, and some even bought land. El Javillal is a small village with little money circulating. $50 a month represented a great contribution to the household economy. In contrast, in la Estancia the women in the same situation had not

82 "yo creo que mmm un poco, porque si fuera hombre tal vez lo gastaría en vicios, o puede ser, verdad. (…) si alguna diferencia que a una mujer puede guardar su dinero que un hombre""Gabriel"
83 "the woman is the one who should always decide about money" - An answer I received several times, from different interviewees, both men and women
84 "Poda ser que si…una de mujer no tiene vicios y en cambio un hombre tiene muchos vicios….. de tomar cerveza, se tiran cosas de así alcohol. Y de allí es donde hay un mal gasto. En cambio una de mujer piensa "yo solo falta esta cosa y lo voy a comprar" y solo eso". "Sofia"

managed to make investments with the small amount of money. More money circulates in the village, and the small sized remittances did not help to the same extent as in el Javillal.

Ethlers mentions how poor women, who are forced to find an additional income for the household often have more `room to manoeuvre´ than the stay-at-home women from richer households. Middle class women tend to be less empowered because their economy is entirely based upon their husband (Ethlers, 1991:12). This is related to what Agarwal says about bargaining and the fallback position. The fallback position correlates, to a certain extent, with who is responsible for the income in the household. When a woman represents a part of the income, she automatically gains a strengthened fallback position. In connection to the abandoned women in el Javillal, I found the women empowered. They had bought themselves a house, land and they were independent of their husbands. They were full administrators of their economy, and the household was completely their `room for manoeuvre´.

5.3 Social remittances

Both the optimistic and the pessimistic migration approach highlight how migration generates social remittances. The optimistic highlights the ideas and norms as positive. Accordingly, the remittances help the societies in the South transform into more "developed" and democratic societies (de Haas, 20120). On the other hand, the pessimistic stresses that the social remittances contribute to development of unnecessary needs and consumerism (Ibid). The Guatemalan countryside societies are traditional especially with regards to gender roles and *macho* culture. In the U.S. migrants face a more gender equal culture. The "Western" liberal view on women might encourage men to change their *machismo* into more gender equal behaviour (Levitt, 2012). The pessimistic approach argues that the migration does not challenge the existing repressive structures, but rather creates new (de Haas, 2010). In other words, the *macho* culture will not be challenged, but the migration will instead create new oppressing structures.

In this section I analyse how the social remittances affect the household relations according to: i.) tasks in the house, ii.) violence and alcohol and iii.) values and norms. Does the migration contribute to change values and norms in the societies? If so, how do these influence the intra-household relations?

5.3.1 Tasks in the house

Empirical studies illustrate that gender roles in the house change the first couple of years after the migrants returns from the U.S. Male returnees describe how they had to clean their clothes and cook in the U.S., and this makes them more open to contribute with the household chores. Nonetheless, these changes are often short lived. After two-three years, the male returnees go back to the previous patriarchal ways (Taylor and Moran-Taylor, 2006:56). In contrast, I did not find any changes in the household tasks as a result of migration. I asked my interviewees to describe a regular day in the house, and followed up by asking if they felt that the tasks had changed as a result of the migration. Most of the interviewees described the traditional division of responsibilities in the households, and none of the interviewees said that the roles changed as a result of migration.

I asked "Lidia" about the different tasks that need to be fulfilled in the household, and she answered: "[*S]o maybe the men's work is a bit heavier, but he has the opportunity to relax a little bit earlier than one, than a woman. A woman works all day. One thing over there (…) She has a more hectic life"*[85]. Despite that most of the people whom I interviewed were fully aware of the gender inequality they defended it by saying that: "*the man is just like that in Guatemala*[86]".

"*Well I think that, maybe…because of the origin here, it could be that we are abusing a little bit the women's rights…It could be. It could be that the rights are oppressed, but ehm…in my case my wife does what she has to do*[87]". "Gabriel" had been to the U.S. several times, spoke quite good English, talked about how much he wanted the "American life" for his family and voiced his concerns of the climate changes in the world. Despite this, he was conservative regarding gender roles. Something that particularly caught my attention was that he said: *"because of the origin here (…) we are abusing the women´s rights"*. Melhus describes how the patriarchal culture in Mexico, and the female roles and positions, have been confirmed by 500 years of establishment. The roles and power structures defining gender have developed to become truly naturalised (1996:236). In other words, the historical articulation between gender imaginaries – ideas about gender and what is appropriate for the man and woman to

85 "Entonces quizás el trabajo del hombre es un poquito más pesado pero él tiene la oportunidad de descansar un poqito más luego que uno, una de mujer. Una de mujer todo el día se pasa. Uno por allá por acá. (..) Tiene mas ocupado el tiempo"- "Lidia".
86 "El hombre es así aquí en Guatemala" – "Ana"
87 "Pues yo pienso de que pues... tal vez por el origen de aquí o puede ser que estamos violando un pocito el derecho a la mujer... pude ser. Puede ser que esta violando el derecho, pero ehm... en el caso mio pues, o sea mi esposa hace lo que hacer" – "Gabriel"

do, institutions for allocating access and control, have become natural. This is evident in the social relations within the households and the societies.

Nonetheless, "Gabriel" mentioned: "*women´s rights"* in his answer. This implies that he knew about women´s rights to not be abused or oppressed. This illustrates that he probably picked up some awareness on women's rights in the U.S. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, in 2008 Guatemala imposed a ley against *feminicidio*. Among other measures this probably contributes to enlighten people about women´s rights. Rowland describes how the first step to empowerment is awareness of rights. The man: "*is just like that*", many interviewees stated. In connection to the naturalisation of gender and the `disciplinary power´, the naturalisation process of the female role has been developed since the conquest. The gendered tasks were accepted. Moreover, both women and men appeared to recognise the gender inequalities, but they seemed to just accept the fact that the rights of women were abused, and the migration did not change that.

In la Estancia I had a long talk with a Mexican nun. She worked in particular with women in the region. She told me a story that she used as an allegory of the life she found that many of the women were living. The story was about her mentally disabled cousin. In Mexico when she was a child, mental disability was taboo, and the mentally disabled were often hidden away. Her aunt used to tie her cousin up so he did not run away. One time the whole family was gathered for a birthday and the kids ran around playing. The aunt untied the restraints, and told him he could go and play with the other kids. He started playing with the other children, but after only a couple of minutes he ran back and tried to tie himself up again. He wanted to be tied up, because that was what he was used to. The nun said that she often told the women the story to make them reconsider their daily life with their husbands.

The story of the nun is a good example of how I found the gender relations in the two villages. The women knew their rights, but in a way they just "accepted" that the man was just like that in Guatemala. Rowland stresses that the second level of power is when people feel power from *within*, which again might lead to *power to* change their situation (1997:15). The women saw that they were being oppressed, but: "*the man is just like that"*. According to

the ´disciplinary power´ (de Haan and Zoomer, 2005) these power relations are normalised to the individuals in the societies. Nonetheless, that the nun compared the women to a disabled child was also something that caught my attention. I do not think that she had any hidden thoughts behind the comparison, but still the metaphor was striking. The comparison implies that women are not particularly intelligent to "accept" their subjugation in the house.

5.3.2 Intra-familiar violence and alcohol

Guatemala suffers from one of the highest levels of violence in Latin America. In 2010 there were 5960 murders registered, which makes the country the fifth most violent on the continent. Violence has many facets and affects the society in various ways. Domestic violence is one aspect, and primarily impacts women (UNICEF, 2011: 47,59; UNDP, 2010:195-196). The nun told me how she was often shocked by the violent daily life of many women. The Catholic Church had arranged a big women's meeting where they discussed intra-family violence. Several of the women had told the nun: "*well, but that is just how our culture is"*. I went with her to one of her women's group meetings and one of her discussion topics was "*God made us free, so why do you make yourselves slaves to your husbands?*" The meeting consisted of the nun preaching and the women listening, but despite of the non-participation meeting, the strong words caught my attention.

Also the Evangelic church in la Estancia focused on the *macho* culture. Many suffer from alcoholism in the communities of Guatemala. In el Javillal I met some alcoholics, but in la Estancia the problem was tremendous. I could not go 100 meters, even in the middle of the day, without meeting a really drunk man. The violence in the households often came in combination with alcoholism, and the churches put a great emphasis on the problem. I met several women who stated that: "*thanks to God he has stopped drinking, and now he is not beating me anymore*". This was also one of the aspects that many of the interviewees mentioned as one of the down sides of the migration. The women in the women´s committee agreed when one of the women said that in the States men: "*lose God, and meet several temptations"*. This leads to worsening of the already existing weaknesses in men.

> "This [the migration and sending of remittances] is what gives opportunities, so that [also] people here can obtain work, right… if it had been so, that many had sent remittances, the community had been better, had

more work… but they [who send money] are few those who create work here. The reason is that when they arrive there they throw themselves into bad habits. So they do not do any type of work[88]".

"Lidia answered when we discussed the effects of migration. She emphasises the potential embedded by the migration. The migrants might earn enough money to secure their home, and also give jobs to others in the society. Regardless of this, many of the migrants fall into bad habits. This quote embodies several responses I received regarding the challenges due to migration. During a focus group I held with the women´s committee in el Javillal, one of the women said; "[*T]here they earn and there they use it.…"* She took a deep breath and then a couple of them looked at each other and said in unison: "*on beer*[89]*"*. The spontaneous answer made the whole group burst out in laughter. Thus, the committee also emphasised how difficult it was for the migrants to come back. Some of the women in the group used to have their husbands in the North for many years. They tried to come back, but got desperate to migrate again. "*They come back with destroyed heads*[90]*"*. In this connection they mentioned alcohol, other women and drugs. During the discussion, due to challenges, one of the women concluded by saying: "*[I]t was a good time. There he found everything… pure felicity for him who goes*[91]". All of the women started to laugh, nodding their heads. Five out of six had their husband, or used to have him, in the U.S. The answer had an undertone saying that it was pure happiness for him, but pain for them, the ones left behind.

In la Estancia various people mentioned that the migrants forgot their culture and got involved with crime and alcohol. Several also stated that the aggressive men, who migrated, used to call back and yell at their wives. Living apart made it difficult for the couples to trust each other, and this created an insecurity that made the men angry. In contrast to this, "Ana", from la Estancia, affirmed that even though he did not send money, life was better when her husband was in the U.S.

"I saw it when he left me for five years. I lived happy with my kids. I went to sell (…) and bought our bread, bought their clothes, even though it cost me some. I paid the rent, and like that, I worked with them. But I lived well, no one that treated me bad, no one that got angry with me. We ate well, and yes…[lived] in peace. But when there is a man with you, ay no… ay God bless me. I say "God release me". The worst if you are late; "where were you? With whom did you go?[92]"

88 "Este es lo que da la oportunidad, que las personas de tener empleo aquí verdad... este si hubiera muchos pues hubiera sido mejor en la comunidad va hubiera tenido este empleo va...pero este son pocos verdad los que hacen trabajo acá. Por el motivo que cuando llegan allá se tiran a los vicios va. Entonces no hacen ningún tipo de trabajo. – ""Lidia"
89 "Allí lo gana y allí lo gasta ….en cerveza" –Pro mujer
90 "Regresan con una cabeza destruida" – Pro mujer
91"Estuvo un buen tiempo, allá encontró todo – Pura felicidad por el que se va" – Pro mujer
92 "Porque yo lo vi cuando me quedé cinco años antes, yo vivo feliz con mis hijos. Voy a ir a vender, entro, compro sus panes, compro sus ropas, si aunque me cuesta un poco. Pago la renta, y así, trabajé con ellos. Pero vivo bien. Nada quien me maltrata, nada que me regañaba,

Her testimony describes how relieved she felt when her husband was in the U.S. She felt happy without having anyone dictating or beating her. When he was away she was free from his terror and him dictating everything in the household. She carefully explained that economically she was struggling when he was away, but it was worth it. Without him, she could freely decide how she used her earnings. Furthermore she described how he had been violent after he returned. Nevertheless she had experienced that she could manage without him, and she did not deserve to be treated like he treated her. She held a small business that helped her survive while her husband was in the U.S. She continued running her business after he returned. She told me that when he came back she told him:

> "[Y]ou are going to respect me, if not I leave. I am not afraid of you. I am a woman and I am valuable". Because of this he stopped. Now it is not much what he does to me. Sometimes he comes home angry, but I just ask him "what happened to you. I didn't do anything. Be careful with me[93]"

The freedom she felt when he was in the U.S., along with the increased `room for manoeuvre´ she gained by opening her business, strengthened her fallback position to the extent that she could survive without him. This, in combination with her increased awareness of her rights, made her empowered in terms of not being terrorised anymore. She still does all the work in the house, and he decides the main investments, yet the level of empowerment that she had reached, compared to before he migrated, was extensive.

Furthermore, "Ana" told me that she was telling other women in the village about their rights. Her inspiration came from "Laura in America[94]". According to "Ana", Laura tells the women who live in bad marriages that: "*if there is no life, if there is no happiness. Separate! One has got hands and feet to work and one can prosper with ones kids*[95]". Her inspiration from "Laura in America" exemplifies how the media can contribute to enlighten and encourage women to stand up for their rights. Regardless of this, "Laura in America" is criticised for not using trustworthy sources, and for being speculative and provocative to get viewers. Nonetheless, in the case of "Ana", it was the programme that contributed to her becoming more aware of her rights.

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comemos bien, ya si, tranquila. Pero cuando hay un hombre con usted, ay ¡No! Jaja, ay Dios me bendiga. Yo digo "Dios me libre". Peor si tardaste, "de donde viniste" "con quien te viniste". – "Ana" (her spanish was not fluent)

93 "Me vas a respetar o te me vas. Yo si no te tengo miedo. Yo soy mujer y yo vale mucho". Entonces allí se paró. Ahora ya no me es tanto lo que me hace. a veces viene enojado, pero yo le digo "que te pasó. Yo no te hice nada. Cuidado con migo (..) – "Ana"

94 Peruvian talk show host, similar to U.S. American talk-show hosts where guests discuss their problems. She especially uses examples from violent relationships.

95"Entonces ella dice "si, no hay vida, no hay felicidad !sepárense! (…) Uno tiene manos y pies para trabajar, y uno logra salir adelante con sus hijos". – "Ana"

By sharing her testimony to other women in the village, she might transfer to other women the empowerment she gained when her husband went to the U.S. The example she used from "Laura in America" also demonstrates that women see the value of strengthening their fallback position outside the household – "*One has got hands and feet to work*". This might strengthen their bargaining position within the household. According to Rowland (1997) the third level of power is when people have "power with" and the fourth, and last, is when individuals together have "power over". "Ana" was a charismatic and strong woman. Her testimony might contribute to help other women empower themselves.

5.3.3 Healthy food, cleanness and environment

The returnees often talked about how clean and organised the U.S. was. In el Javillal the homecoming migrants talked about the paved streets and how easy it was for the cars to get by. Some of them also underlined the healthy food, and at the same time the extremely unhealthy American food. "Juan" who had been in the U.S. wanted me to stay for dinner after I had interviewed him. His wife made a delicious Guatemalan meal but with a variety of vegetables. This is not typical Guatemalan food, especially not in the communities where the diet primarily consists of corn, beans, rice and eggs. He emphasised several times during the meal that it was healthy and how cautious they were of eating unhealthy food. During the interview I asked him how he defined a good life. He answered; "[*I] think the most important [thing] to get a very good life is [to] eat healthy, you know. And I don´t make, don´t drink, don't take drugs. I don't take any drugs, any alcohol. Be clean*[96]".

Another example was the returnee, "Gabriel", about how he saw the future;

> "I would like the streets to be clean. That all of us are cooperating to clean and not taint the streets. That the garbage is thrown in the bin. This is what I want…ehhm.. so that one can advance, so that we can have a better planet. Mmmm better, that we protect the water, the mountains and other important things. So that ehm… the ozone layer, o like one say; the planet does not destroy itself more. And that the global warming does not get worse, from here to the global. Well, this is what I want"[97].

These examples clearly demonstrate that the previous migrants had gained some new values they promoted back home. These values were aspects many people had never heard of. To most people these values were not values of importance in themselves, but the previous

96 The interviewee answered in English – "Juan"

97 «(…) quisiera yo que las calles estén limpias. Que todos colaboraremos a barrer y no a ensuciar la calle. Que todo lo de la basura deposita en su lugar. Eso es lo que yo quiero, eh para que uno avance que tenemos una planeta mejor. mm mejor, que cuidemos el agua, e las montañas y otras cosas muy importantes. Para que ehm...el capa de ozono, o como se dice la planeta que no se riza más. Y que no se calienta el global, aquí a lo global. Entonces, eso es lo que yo quiero".- "Gabriel". His Spanish had a strong quiche accent, and it was sometimes difficult to understand what he said.

migrants had a different way of viewing the world. They had seen the “other side” and “the Promised land”. Not only did this give them material resources, but also because of their experiences and new skills they often obtained an uplifted status in the community. That a family had a healthy diet, or kept their house tidy in a non-Guatemalan way made them special. Nonetheless, the introduction of healthy food, cleanliness and protection of the nature are important when it comes to raising kids in a healthy environment. Many of my female interviewees stressed health and nutrition of the children. Enlightenment on how to improve these conditions was something they found important. On the other hand, these values did not contribute in changing the social values and norms that created and preserved the `disciplinary power' – preventing women from being able to make their own decisions.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the social consequences of migration from Guatemala to the U.S. As stated in chapter four, all of my interviewees said that the material gains of the migration were worth the costs. I found that the material investments from the remittances, not only represented physical capital, but also created an uplifted social status. The inhabitants in both villages highlighted that the migrants achieved *algo más.* This undefined “something” gave the migrant households an uplifted social status. *Algo más* was created through ideas and images shaped by mass media, social media and the migrants. I especially discovered the meaning of social media, and how the introduction of mobile phones with Internet access had eased crossborder contact. By uploading photos and communicating on Facebook, the migrants could demonstrate and confirm the life the remaining household members and friends expected them to live. This created an arena for them to control the meaning of *algo más*. Consequently, the new forms of communication enabled men to also control their women across borders. Many interviewees told stories about men who called back and abused their wives.

I found the social capital funded in the migrant relations bonding. The remaining *grass widows* connected and helped each other to make ends meet without husbands. This empowered the women by the strength they gained from each other. On the other hand, the social capital generated from the migration created an antagonism between the ones with

migrant relations and those without. The ones with migrant relations represented a window to *algo más.* Thus, more people desired to migrate, both to achieve *algo más* and because of the benefits gained by migration.

Regarding the decision to migrate, all of my interviewees stressed that it was a family decision. I found that a family decision meant that the husband decided on behalf of the family and the wives had to accept it. In Guatemala the man decides, and that is *just how the men are*. The `disciplinary power´ became visible in this context. The man is the head of the marriage: he represents the income and makes the decisions. These norms were not only decided from within the households, but were dictated from the whole society. The gender roles had been naturalised through the process of norms and rules on how the gender roles should be.

Concerning the decisions on how to use the material remittances, the women stressed that they were responsible for the money. However, I found to a large extent that they were only administering the money the husband sent and told them on what to spend. The women did not reflect on him deciding how much to send, how often and what they should use the money he sent for. Nevertheless, most of the women received an optional amount upon which they could spend on their daily needs. This might have given them a small `room for manoeuvre´ to expand their empowerment. Additionally, all of my interviewees underlined how women were more responsible than men. The younger generation tended to remit to their mothers instead of their fathers. The interviewees explained this by describing how the mother is more responsible and trustworthy than a man.

The migrants return social remittances when they send or upload photos, letters, emails, , and when they come back. I found that the migration did not bring changes in the gender roles. Nor, did the returnees, who had problems related to violence or alcohol before, migration change in the U.S. The gender roles in the households remained the same, and many of the women stressed that the migrants adopted bad habits, like alcoholism and drug addiction, in the U.S. and brought them back home. On the other side, some of the returnees brought back values regarding healthy food, cleanliness and environmental awareness. The households

where the migrants had returned often tried to eat healthier, and several stressed the value of throwing garbage in the bin. Though, these social remittances did not change the power structures determining the differences in gender.

6 CONCLUSION

My research question asks how migration affects those who are left behind. In the theory chapter, I discussed the limitations of using the household as the unit of analysis in this study. I therefore complemented the livelihoods approach with defining power and empowerment to explain the mechanisms deciding the decisions and roles within the household. Migration works as a livelihood strategy for many households in el Javillal and la Estancia, but within the households the migration affects differently. I found that migration does not empower women. Rather, migration leads to a strengthening of the structures preventing women from making their own decisions.

This study has used the livelihoods approach to analyse how migration is used as a strategy to improve the livelihoods of the households in el Javillal and la Estancia. According to Long (1997), households use strategies to cope with uncertainties and / or respond to new opportunities. Both my fieldwork and the MIRLU-survey have shown that migration is frequently used as a strategy to improve the livelihoods of the households in the countryside of Guatemala. About 30 percent of the households in the MIRLU-survey have one or more household members living in the United States. I found that both the household with migrant relations, and those without, stressed the gains the migration could lead to.

6.1 Investing in Algo Más

The most important investment resulting from remittances is the construction or improvement of houses. Secondly, the households invest in land. The houses built from the remittances distinguish themselves from the other houses in the villages. In el Javillal, the houses gained from the migration were the houses constructed of block, in contrast to the rest of the houses made of clay bricks. In la Estancia, the migrant households had built their houses inspired by the 'remittances architecture' adorning in the valleys of the Highlands of the country. When the interviewees talked about migration they tended to relate migration to happiness. They stressed how the new or improved houses represented *algo más*, the good life. This was something I particularly noticed in la Estancia. A good example was "Ingrida's" answer; *"a house with terrace, or of two floors, so that the family and I can be happy"*. The houses symbolised happiness.

In other words, I discovered that an investment in a house not only improved the physical asset base of the household. Beyond this, the social meaning or status of the house also had several implications and potential for accumulation. The main potential for accumulation was independence from extended family – by investing in a house some households could detach from their extended family. This improved their 'room of manoeuvre' – they could independently make decisions. The house also became a symbol of the achievements gained by the migration and represented their window to *algo más.* This implied not only a materially improved position, but also a social elevation. Based on these findings, I argued that the migrant households increased their social capital as a consequence of their relation to *algo más*, and this was materialised in the notable houses.

Secondly the households invest in land, which is an important source of wealth in Guatemala. The country suffers from one of the world's most unequal distribution of land, and the country's history has been described as a struggle over land (Rostica, 2003). La Estancia has a more monetised economy than el Javillal. The buying and selling of land is common, and many of the migrants I talked to had invested in land. In contrast, el Javillal is a poor and isolated village. Most people survive from subsidence farming, and the monetary economy is poorly developed. At the same time, the organisation of land tenure in el Javillal is quite complex. This complicates doing business with land, and furthermore, I found it difficult to ask questions regarding ownership. *"Who knows? You don't notice, right. No, you don't notice what others got"*, one of my interviewees answered. This notwithstanding, I concluded that the migration has led to changes in the land distribution also in el Javillal. Several of my interviewees described their new access to land as a result of the migration.

A livelihood consists of the asset base of its household. Land represents a natural capital, but by investing in land, the livelihood might correspondingly access other capitals. The importance attached to land in Guatemala means that it represents both social and natural capital. Those who own land are rich in several aspects. Access to land gives possible physical capital. The household might construct their house on their new terrain. Likewise, the natural capital growing on the land might consist of goods to sell or exchange. Through this process, the land has, transformed into financial capital. When not invested, the remittances are primary used for daily expenses. The expenses the interviewees in both villages stressed above all were food, clothes and medicines. The household members of the migrant households often wore some apparels standing out among the other inhabitants. This

was particularly evident among the women in la Estancia. The women usually complemented a traditional dress with white sneakers or a U.S. American flag, thus making the connection to migration obvious. Despite of this, I found that the migrant households did not necessarily stand out with flashy clothes or electronic equipment, but instead prioritised symbols representing their connection to the U.S. These symbols functioned as a materialisation of the *algo más.*

6.2 Migration threatens Structures of Exclusion - By creating new?

The success of the migrant's strategy to improve or secure their livelihoods was clearly evident in the two villages I visited. It became especially evident through the visible improvements of material wealth. Nonetheless, the outcomes of the strategy were highly variable. I met households that had invested in three two storey houses, with gardens, cars and a small store connected to one of the houses. I also I met a household that had invested in a small clay brick house. The attitude among the migrant households to migration varied. The household I met that had achieved the least in material terms, of all the households I came across, was nonetheless where its members expressed most gratitude. They had been able to construct a new house, which had contributed to the ability for the small family to disconnect themselves from the household of their larger family. Their new house symbolised their freedom, and the small house made them accomplish expanding their `room of manoeuvre´ from close to non-existing into "everything".

The success also rested on the household´s asset capacity. Empirical studies point in the direction that the initial migrants tend to come from the households with more resources in the society (de Haas and Czaika, 2010). As more people migrate, other households, with fewer resources, start to migrate, and finally the households with least resources enter the migration (ibid). Nonetheless, I argue that the poorest of the poor households never get the possibility to migrate. I saw examples of this the villages I visited. In la Estancia the migration had started in the 1980s, and the migrants who were migrating now came from households with fewer resources. In contrast to el Javillal, where migration started only in the 1990s, current migrants come from the households with the most resources.

The stories emphasising loss stemming from the migration were more common in la Estancia than in el Javillal. This is probably because it has a longer migration history than la Estancia. More people have migrated, and they have experienced both sides of the strategy. However, I found this also connected to the size of the household's asset base. Empirical findings stress that the poor rural household adapt more vulnerable livelihoods strategies (Ellis, 2000). The households with fewer resources were, by definition, the households with the smallest asset base. Their livelihoods diversification could not play on as many strings as the households with a more extensive asset base were able to. I often witnessed the migration more as a risk-maximising strategy rather than a risk-minimising strategy. Still, if households with fewer resources succeeded, their relative and self-experienced success was of more substance than the success of households with more resources. To be able to actually build a house, even though the house was small and of clay bricks, implied increasing the freedom of the household. At the same time, the most excluded households in the villages will never be able to employ the migration strategy. By implication, migration thus strengthened the exclusion of those who were the already most excluded from before. On a positive note, I saw how the material improvements eased the work load of women. In the countryside of Guatemala, 'the area of women' is the house. The households that had improved the house and invested in a gas stove had eased the work of cleaning and cooking. I observed the importance many women attached to their house. The female interviewees who had improved their house were proud of this.

Summing up, migration is a livelihood strategy to improve the livelihood of the households. I conclude that the strategy leads to an improved material standard in the two villages I visited. The improvements helped the households to expand their assets base, and invest in other strategies. Nonetheless, I argue that the migration contributed in improvement of the livelihoods of households, but within the households the individuals were affected differently.

6.3 Social Capital and Facebook – Desiring algo más

All my interviewees answered that migration *vale la pena.* Implicit in this saying there exist drawbacks connected to migration, but that the material gains made up for these costs. That is, the undefined *algo más* made the costs worth it. *Algo más* materialised in new houses and in the symbols and apparels worn by the migrants or members of a migrant household. *Algo más*

meant the good life. Spivak (in Fischer and Benson, 2006:178) asserts that desires never are only decided by tradition or solely global culture. The creation of desires is practical and created by the interplay of global processes. The "good life" is created by a flow of images, values and consumer goods. As a result of globalisation, capitalist economy, mass media and social networks. It is a continual process. The desire to achieve *algo más,* I proposed in my analysis, was first of all materialised in the construction of new houses, confirmed by the migrants and expected and desired by the rest.

I argued that the migration create both positive and negative bonding social capital. The bonding social capital was exemplified by the relationships among the *grass widows*. Their shared experience made them meet and support each other. These networks were positive and helped the women become empowered and empower each other. On the other side, I claim that the social capital resulted by the migration was negative. It created an antagonism between the migrant and non-migrant households. This opposition became visible by material wealth, but also by the fact that the households with migrant relations had access to the undefined *algo más*, the good life.

Appadurai (1986) writes that the demand of consumption is determined by a "whole" that consists of both sending and receiving social messages, as well as both social and economic forces. This I especially found, and still find, visible in their use of Facebook. The migrants I am friends with on Facebook upload photos they think are expected to upload, and thus confirm the image of the good life they are supposed to live. In this way, Facebook becomes a way to confirm what the good life is, and what it looks like. This creates an increased desire for others to migrate. Migration as a livelihood strategy might help households to exit the structures that are constricting their possibilities. The gains the strategy might lead to would not have been possible without migrating. At the same time, it creates a negative bonding social capital between them and us; between those who have achieved *algo más,* the good life, and those who have not.

6.4 A Household Decision?

As described above, migration improved the livelihoods of several households. Still, within the household different individuals were affected differently. Concerning the intra-household relations, and how decisions regarding migration were made within the households, Agarwal

(1997) stresses how the bargaining power within the household is determined by the household member's fallback position. Additionally, the `disciplinary power´ represents how roles in the society are fixed, and the norms and individuals accept these roles (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005). Empowerment occurs when individuals realise their capabilities and entitlements, decides to use them and to change their oppressed position (Rowland, 1996).

All of my interviewees stressed the migration to constitute a livelihood strategy to improve the livelihood of the household. Accordingly, all of them expressed that the decision to migrate was a family decision. Nonetheless, I found that in the households the husband was typically the one who migrated, and in the last analysis he also made the decisions. An illustrative example was the answer I got from "Juan": "*Yes, family decision. I was talking with my wife. I was saying "I´ m going to there for like three-four years."* In other word, it was a family decision, but since he decided in the family, he could just tell his wife he was migrating. Also the women answered in what I understand as a contradictory way. They said it was a family decision, but at the same time they stated that the husband decided, and they could not deny him.

Empirical studies from Guatemala illustrate how in the countryside "*el hombre es el que manda"* (Taylor and Moran-Taylor, 2006). My suggestions from the field clearly support this claim. This became particularly clear regarding the use of the remittances, where I found that the husbands made the decisions also from distance. *"[Economically] we were quite good [when the husband was in the U.S.] because always when he sent money he told me how much to save and how much to spend"*, said "Sofia" about the use of the remittances. This captures the perception of most women I talked with. They expressed that they were in charge of the money, and yet they never put up question marks about him deciding how much, how often and / or that he dictated the use even from the U.S.

I understand this as an example of the internalised 'disciplinary power' that Foucault and Foucauldian feminists stress the importance of. I found that the "*man is the head of the marriage"*. The norms and structures providing this view I observed as evident within the households, in the community boards and fronted by the churches. Nonetheless, I found both

women and men recognising the existence of gender inequalities in terms of women´s heavier workloads and men´s dominance in decision-making, but neither consider these inequalities unjust (Kabeer:440). In other words, most people were aware of the differences, but not to the extent that they saw the meaning of changing it. "*The man is just like that in Guatemala*", was something I often heard. "*Well I think that, maybe…because of the origin here, it could be that we are abusing a little bit the women's rights…It could be. It could be that the rights are oppressed"*, said "Gabriel" about the gender roles in the house.

This notwithstanding, I found women empowering each other by joining networks of women with husbands in the U.S. I also observed that the migration created some small holes to expand the `room of maneuver´ of the *grass widows*. Despite of this, most of the women only "administrated" the money, most received a small share to spend on their daily expenses. This small share they could actually decide on how to use, and they had the opportunity to save some and invest in what they found of importance.

6.5 To Protect the Children and their Dignity - and the Male Position

Few women migrate, and I often found people using a degrading tone when they talked about the women who migrated. "*They should not migrate because of their dignity*", or "*the mothers cannot leave because of the love of their children"*, were statements I frequently heard. One of my female interviewees explained how the men were afraid that the women migrated. According to her, the men want to represent the income of the household, and it is his role to protect the material life. Ehlers asserts how the institutions in Guatemala limit the women´s access to independence (1991:11). I conclude that the organisation of the household and the norms, dictated from within the household and from the church and community, deciding the gender roles and decision-making, prevented women from building up their bargaining power. The migration could represent a way to secure individuals fallback position by representing the income of the household. If women migrate, men might lose his "head of the marriage" role. Therefore, I argue that the restrictive norms holding women from migrating contribute to men retaining their position.

The restriction of the women´s fallback position correlates with the material success of their husband. I found that the more he achieved in the U.S., the more he expands his fallback position and his position to make decisions. The female returnees I met had all migrated after their husbands. I did not find these women improving their `room of maneuver´ within the household. Their position did not distinguish from the positions of the other wives in the villages. I heard about young single women migrating, and performed an interview with a young girl who was about to migrate. The outcomes of the young single female migrant´s migration strategy would most likely contribute to expand her freedom and fallback position within her future household.

6.6 Social Remittances

Most migrations theories stress the migrants sending not only material, but also social remittances. These social remittances might have impact improving or deteriorating the conditions of the sending countries. Male returnees were fully aware of the differences in gender roles in Guatemala in contrast to the U.S. They often described how they in the U.S. used to cook their own food and wash their clothes. Yet, they did not contribute in changing the gender roles when they returned. Correspondingly, women whose husbands had returned from the U.S. explained that the roles continued to be the same. In other words, I found the social remittances did not challenge existing gender roles. Several women pointed out the problem of alcohol and how the migrants "*lost God in the U.S.*". "*They come back with destroyed heads*", one of my female interviewees complained. The problem of alcohol and domestic violence is striking in the countryside of Guatemala. I especially found this aspect visible in la Estancia. I do not know if the problems were made worse because of the migration, but I think it is reasonable to believe that migration did not change these conditions.

Several of the male returnees stressed healthy food and cleanliness as values they learned in the U.S. Moreover, I met a couple of men who also underline the importance of environmental awareness. These social remittances are important. Particularly healthy food and cleanliness might improve the living and upbringing condition of children. Regardless of

this, I argue that these values do not challenge the unequal terms of making decisions and independence within the households.

6.7 Contribution to the Field and Potential for Future Study

I found social networks, Facebook in particular, especially relevant when studying the migrant networks and the bonding social capital created by these. Facebook is a source where the migrants can stay in touch with their friends and family, thus deciding and confirming how they expect the "American life" to be. My findings suggest how this control provided by the migrants creates an increased distance between those with and without migrant relations. The use of social networks and demonstrating the life you want others to believe you live is a common phenomenon, but becomes particularly interesting in the creation of social capital in relations between the global South and global North. I did not find these connections covered in the theoretical literature on migration, nor social capital theory. In a potential future study, it could therefore be interesting to attempt to test the combination of social networks, social capital and migration

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

General

¿Me podría decir cuál es su nombre, edad, de dónde es, cuantos hermanos tiene etc.?

Casa

¿Por cuántos años han tenido la casa?
¿Me puede decir algo acerca su casa, con quién vive, con qué tipo de material está hecha, qué tipo de cocina tiene etc.?

Trabajo

¿Cómo es la situación del trabajo para la gente de la aldea?
¿Qué piensa sobre los beneficios o las desventajas de que sólo el hombre trabaje?
¿De qué manera cree que la migración a los EE UU ha influido el mercado de trabajo?
¿Hay otros tipos de trabajo producto de la migración o la situación es igual que antes?

Remesas

¿Recibieron remesas cuando estuvo su esposo en EE UU?(if he had returned)
¿Recibe remesas de su esposo? (if he was in the U.S)
¿Mandó remesas cuando estaba en EE UU? (if he/she had returned)
¿En que la gastaba?
¿Y como decidió el uso de las remesas? ¿Decidieron juntos?
En general ¿Cree que haya/exista una diferencia entre el uso si decide el hombre o la mujer?

Roles de la casa

¿Puede describir un día regular en la casa?
¿Que piensa sobre las diferencias que hacen las mujeres y los hombres?
¿Cree que han cambiado mucho los roles o la diferencias entre los hombres y las mujeres?

Migración

¿Cómo decidió (su esposo) irse? ¿Fue una decisión que tomaron juntos?
¿Qué tipo de comunicación tenían cuando estaba en los EE.UU? (if the husband/the interviewee had returned)
¿Qué tipo de comunicación tienen? (if he still was in the U.S.)
¿Cuántas veces a ala semana platicaban/ hablaban?
¿Cómo es tener un familiar en EE UU?
¿Se siente antes que fuera y ahora? ¿Qué sentía antes que se fuera y que siente ahora?

Organización de la aldea

¿Me puede contar un poco sobre la organización de la aldea?
¿Y está involucrada?
¿Como es la diferencia entre los hombres y mujeres involucrados en los grupos y comités?

¿Ha afectado la migración a la organización de la aldea?
¿Mandan remesas a la comunidad o sólo a las familias?

La vida

¿Qué es importante para que pueda vivir una buena vida?
¿Cómo ve el futuro?
¿Es positiva?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEWS EL JAVILLAL

Name	Informant	Age	Village	Theme	Recorder
"Maria"	- Husband in the US - Been in the US herself	37	El Javillal, Candelaria	Migration	Without, with good notes
"Sofia"	- Has had husband in the US, her daughter was going	37	El Javillal, Centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Lucia"	- Has had her dad in the US - Was going to the US	20	El Javillal, centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Marybel"	- Husband in the US	25	El Javillal, Espinal	Migration	With, transcribed
"Lidia"	- Has had husband in the US	26	El Javillal, Achotes	Migration	With, transcribed
"Jose"	- Has been in the US	47	El Javillal, Conceción	Migration	Without, with ok notes
"Juan"	- Has been in the US	30	El Javillal, Centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Evelyn"	- None in her family has been to the US	19	El Javillal, Centro	Migration, health	Without, bad notes
Pro-Mujer	- Group of women working with health		El Javillal, todo la aldea	Migration – Women	Without, with good notes
Don Emiliano	- Community president	55	El Javillal, Centro	Definitions	With, not transcribed
Don Roberto	- Has been in the US	53	El Javillal, Candelaria	Definitions	with, , good notes
Don Hillario	- Has had sun the US - Respected man in community	65-70	El Javillal, Centro	Definitions	With, not transcribed
Don Trinidad	- Church leader	51	El Javillal, Achotes	Definitions	Without, good notes
Doña Elena	- Midwife - Respected women in the community	65	El Javillal, Candelaria	Definitions	With, not transcribed
Don Filipe	- Sons in the US - Respected man in the community	Ca.60	El Javillal, Coceción	Definitions	Without, ok notes
Don Santos	- Leader of ACIDEQ	Ca.60	Quetzaltepeque	Definitions	With, not transcribed
COCODE	- Community board		El Javillal	Definitions	With, not transcribed
Youth board	- Youth board		El Javillal	Definitions	With, not transcribed

INTERVIEWS IN LA ESTANCIA

Name	Informant	Age	Village	Theme	Recorder
"Paz"	- Son and daughter in law in the US - On charge of her grandkids	52	La Estancia, zona 1 – Kótbál Abaj	Migration	With, transcribed
"Ingrida"	- Husband in the US	35	La Estancia, Zona 6 -Xeul 1	Migration	With, transcribed
"Ana"	- Has had her husband in the US - Been in the US - Tried to get to the US with her two kids, but did not make it	34	La Estancia, Zona 6, Centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Carmen"	- Husband in the US - Husband failed two times getting there – lost their land, house and machines because of debt to coyote	42	La Estancia, zona 3 – Tzan Xac	Migration	Without, with good notes
"Sandra"	- Has had her husband in the US	31	La Estancia Zona 5, - centro	Migration	Without, with good notes
"Erica"	- Has had sons in the US	Ca.50	La Estancia Zona 5 – centro	Migration	Without, with good notes
"Emanuel"	- Has been in the US	Ca.50	La Estancia zona 4 – centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Gabriel"	- Has been in the US	39	La Estancia Zona 6 – centro	Migration	With, transcribed
"Sabrina"	- Has had father in the US - Teacher	31	Teacher in Zeul 1, but from Xela	Migration	With, good notes
Doña Enriqueta	- community board - physiologist - respected women in the community	48	La Estancia Zona 4	Definitions	With, good notes
Jose Luis	- community president - teacher	39	La Estancia Zona 3	Definitions	With, good notes
Doña Silvia	- community board - director of one of the schools in la Estancia - respected women in the community	35	La Estancia/ Xecam	Definitions	With, good notes
Don Avelino	- community board - leader of water board - respected man in the community	66	La Estancia Zona 5	Definitions	With, good notes
Nun in the catholic church	- *leading different church groups and visiting families in the community*		*La Estancia (among others)*	*Situation*	*Without, ok notes*
Pastor in the evangelic church	- *pastor*		*La Estancia*	*Situation*	*Without, ok notes*
Health centre 1	- *women working with health promotion*		*La Estancia*	*Situation*	*Without, good notes*
Health centre 2	- *women working with health promotion*		*La Estancia*	*Situation*	*Without, good notes*

APPENDIX 3

TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

Table 1 Households with migrants per village

		Migrant in household		
		No	Yes	Total
Village	Chapas	72	43	115
	La Estancia	150	25	175
	El Javillal	32	18	50
	San Lucas	44	17	61
Total		298	103	401

Percentage of households with migrants per village:
Chapas – 37.39 %, La Estancia – 14.28%, El Javillal – 36%, San Lucas – 27.86 %

Table 2 Household with migrants –total

	Cases					
	yes		No		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Village * Totalmigrants	103	25.7%	298	74.3%	401	100.0%

Table 3 Type of household per village

		Type of Household			
		Non-migrant	Migrant without remittance	Migrant with remittance	Total
Village	Chapas	50	6	59	115
	La Estancia	140	6	29	175
	El Javillal	29	5	16	50
	San Lucas	35	2	24	61
Total		254	19	128	401

Percentage of households that receive remittances:
Chapas – 51.3 %, la Estancia – 16. 57, el Javillal – 32%, San Lucas – 39.34%

Table 4 Type of household –total

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non-migrant	254	63.3	63.3	63.3
	Migrant without remittance	19	4.7	4.7	68.1
	Migrant with remittance	128	31.9	31.9	100.0
	Total	401	100.0	100.0	

MIGRANTS

Table 5 Gender and migration per village

		Gender - migrant		
		Male	Female	Total
Village	Chapas	37	5	42
	La Estancia	20	5	25
	El Javillal	14	4	18
	San Lucas	16	1	17
Total		87	15	102

Percentage of women per village:
Chapas – 11.9%, la Estancia – 20 %, el Javillal – 22.22%, San Lucas – 5.88 %

Table 6 Relationship to migrant per village

		Family relation								
		Male head	Female head	Daugther/ Son	Daughter/ Son in law	Grandchild	Parents or parents in law	Another relative	No answer	Total
Village	Chapas	3	0	30	0	0	1	1	8	43
	La Estancia	4	1	10	2	0	1	2	5	25
	El Javillal	5	0	12	0	1	0	0	0	18
	San Lucas	0	1	9	1	1	0	1	4	17
Total		12	2	61	3	2	2	4	17	103

Percentage in general: Male head – 11.65%, Female head – 1.94 %, Daughter/son – 59.22 %, Daughter/son in law – 2.91 %, Grandchild – 1.94 %, parents/in law – 1.94%, Another relative – 3,88 %, no answer – 16.5%

HOUSE

Table 7 Material of the House

		Material on walls								
		Plaster over bricks	Bricks	Clay bricks	Wood	Bahareque house (wattle and daub)	Lepa (outside bark of trees), sticks, palm o cane poles	Corrugated galvanised iron	Other	Total
Village	Chapas	45	21	48	0	0	0	0	1	115
	La Estancia	54	37	80	0	0	0	4	0	175
	El Javillal	2	2	43	0	1	1	0	0	49
	San Lucas	16	28	2	13	0	0	2	0	61
Total		117	88	173	13	1	1	6	1	400

PROFESSION

Table 8 Profession general –per village

	Village				
	Chapas	La Estancia	El Javillal	San Lucas	Total
Self-employed farmer	31	24	29	42	126
Wage-dependent farmer	31	16	7	6	60
Wage-dependent unskilled worker	9	32	0	0	41
Wage-dependent skilled worker	4	24	0	1	29
Self-employed craft worker	1	31	0	0	32
Qualified/ Professional worker	3	2	0	0	5
Self-employed salesman/ trader	6	8	1	0	15
Youth contributing to household's income	0	1	0	0	1
Housewife with no income	21	26	13	8	68
Student	0	1	0	0	1
Other	9	10	0	4	23
Total	115	175	50	61	401

Table 9 Profession migrants before migration –per village

	Village				
	Chapas	La Estancia	El Javillal	San Lucas	Total
Self-employed farmer	7	0	8	10	25
Wage-dependent farmer	18	0	3	0	21
Wage-dependent unskilled worker	2	8	3	2	15
Wage-dependent skilled worker	4	5	2	1	12
Self-employed craft worker	0	7	0	1	8
Qualified/ Professional worker	1	1	0	0	2
Self-employed salesman/ trader	0	1	0	0	1
Youth contributing to household's income	2	0	1	0	3
Housewife with no income	3	0	0	1	4
Student	3	3	0	2	8
Other	2	0	1	0	3
Total	42	25	18	17	102

REMITTANCES

Table 10 Remittances - amount

		Amount							
		Less than $50	51 to 100	101 - 150	151 - 200	201 - 250	251 - 300	More than 300	Total
Village	Chapas	0	18	11	9	2	7	9	56
	La Estancia	1	5	3	3	2	2	11	27
	El Javillal	3	7	2	2	0	1	0	15
	San Lucas	1	9	3	3	3	1	4	24
Total		5	39	19	17	7	11	24	122

Table 11 Remittances – frequency

		Frequency						
		Every two weeks	Monthly	Every two months	Every six months	Yearly	Other	Total
Village	Chapas	21	13	10	4	5	4	57
	La Estancia	12	15	0	0	1	0	28
	El Javillal	4	9	2	0	1	0	16
	San Lucas	4	10	4	3	1	2	24
Total		41	47	16	7	8	6	125

Table 12 Remittances - Importance

		Importance of remittance			
		Little important	Relatively important	Very important	Total
Village	Chapas	2	8	47	57
	La Estancia	2	4	22	28
	El Javillal	1	1	14	16
	San Lucas	1	1	19	21
Total		6	14	102	122

Table 13 Use of the remittances – general

Food

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	11	2.7	8.8	8.8
	Yes	114	28.4	91.2	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Clothes and shoes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	58	14.5	46.0	46.0
	Yes	68	17.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	126	31.4	100.0	
Missing	System	275	68.6		
Total		401	100.0		

Medicines and medical expenses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	57	14.2	45.6	45.6
	Yes	68	17.0	54.4	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Payment of debt

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	86	21.4	68.8	68.8
	Yes	39	9.7	31.2	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	67	16.7	53.6	53.6
	Yes	58	14.5	46.4	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Furnitures

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	108	26.9	86.4	86.4
	Yes	17	4.2	13.6	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Electronic equipment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	109	27.2	87.2	87.2
	Yes	16	4.0	12.8	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Fun

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	110	27.4	88.0	88.0
	Yes	15	3.7	12.0	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Payment of public services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	71	17.7	56.8	56.8
	Yes	54	13.5	43.2	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	114	28.4	91.2	91.2
	Yes	11	2.7	8.8	100.0
	Total	125	31.2	100.0	
Missing	System	276	68.8		
Total		401	100.0		

Table 14 Investments from remittances – general

Buying of house

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	107	26.7	99.1	99.1
	Yes	1	.2	.9	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Building of house

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	73	18.2	67.6	67.6
	Yes	35	8.7	32.4	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Improvement of house

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	81	20.2	75.0	75.0
	Yes	27	6.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Services as water, electricity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	89	22.2	82.4	82.4
	Yes	19	4.7	17.6	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of land

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	94	23.4	87.0	87.0
	Yes	14	3.5	13.0	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of cultivable land

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	86	21.4	79.6	79.6
	Yes	22	5.5	20.4	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Seeds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	81	20.2	75.0	75.0
	Yes	27	6.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Savings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	77	19.2	71.3	71.3
	Yes	31	7.7	28.7	100.0
	Total	108	26.9	100.0	
Missing	System	293	73.1		
Total		401	100.0		

Small buisness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	96	23.9	89.7	89.7
	Yes	11	2.7	10.3	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of fertilizers or herbicides

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	76	19.0	71.0	71.0
	Yes	31	7.7	29.0	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of vehicle

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	94	23.4	87.9	87.9
	Yes	13	3.2	12.1	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Buing of livestock

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	101	25.2	94.4	94.4
	Yes	6	1.5	5.6	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of agriculture materials

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	95	23.7	88.8	88.8
	Yes	12	3.0	11.2	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Buying of machines

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	104	25.9	97.2	97.2
	Yes	3	0.7	2.8	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Payment of porters or laborers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	76	19.0	71.0	71.0
	Yes	31	7.7	29.0	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	96	23.9	89.7	89.7
	Yes	11	2.7	10.3	100.0
	Total	107	26.7	100.0	
Missing	System	294	73.3		
Total		401	100.0		