Todo Tranquilo

Notions of Happiness and Well-Being in Rural and Urban Paraguay

Fredrikke Herlofson Lunde

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Department of Social Anthropology
University of Oslo
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Abstract

The world leading survey company Gallup ranked Paraguay the world's happiest country in 2015 (Clifton, 2014). Through my fieldwork during the first six months of 2017, I wished to review and investigate this conclusion critically. How is it that one of the world's poorest countries is also the happiest? What constitutes happiness for the people of the small town of Altos or the capital of Asunción in Paraguay, and do they perceive themselves as happy? I wanted to discover how people of both rural and urban Paraguay defined the good life and happiness in particular and how they experience and practice this emotional state.

Throughout my fieldwork I discovered some characteristics of Paraguayan notions of the good life. Food consumption, family life and labour vs. leisure time are some of the repeating, key concepts of happiness in Paraguay. The Paraguayans I studied emphasised the importance of a good meal; however, I interpret this not merely as the act of consuming food, but I also investigate the social relations implied in this consumption. I never experienced any of my contacts eating alone; they shared their meals amongst family and often the extended kin. They did not merely eat and live together, but also worked together. I argue that balancing work and having enough money to fulfil their needs, and leisure to spend nurturing social relations, having a "*tranquilo*" life and attend or host "*asados*" were essential components.

To better understand these topics, one needs to have an understanding of Paraguayan history and politics. A history consisting of colonialism, several devastating wars, dictatorships, massive financial and infrastructural flourishing and a following recession, has shaped the present Paraguay in several different ways. It has also affected Paraguayans notion of the good life, with the death of approximately 90 percent of the male population during the Triple Alliance War (1864-1870), and the resulting gender imbalance, amongst other. All of these factors are pivotal for Paraguayans notion of happiness, well-being and the good life.

Keywords

Happiness, Well-being, Good life, Paraguay, Surveys, Food, Gender, Family, Labour, Relations

"To study the institutions, customs, and codes or to study the behaviour and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realizing the substance of their happiness – is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man". (Malinowski, 1984 [1922], p. 25).

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1. Introduction

Aim of the thesis

“World's Happiest Country? Would You Believe Paraguay?” (Saenz, 2014). From 2014 and forward Paraguay has received an unusual amount of media attention, it has apparently been the happiest country in the world for several consecutive years. These standardised questionnaires and quantitative findings triggered my curiosity towards the field of positive emotions and happiness. This thesis provides an ethnographic account of the Paraguayan people’s notion of happiness, well-being and the good life, in both rural and urban areas. I will challenge this survey, both its results and methods, with my empirical data. By doing so I have sought to shed light on Paraguayans own notions of happiness, what it entails and in which contexts it occurs. With this thesis, I wish to be part of a growing anthropological interest in the field of happiness and positive emotions.

As this thesis will discuss, happiness does not occur in a vacuum. The emotional state of happiness is contextual and embedded within particular historical and political frameworks. My aim has been to observe how Paraguayans interpret, enact and construct their own happiness, well-being and good life. I have observed that their notion of happiness is highly relational and builds upon strong social relations towards family members and extended kin. The relational aspect of happiness is the common denominator throughout this thesis, it can be seen through the sharing of food and time, gender roles, family life and employment. Initially, I will present my field site on which this thesis is based.

Introducing the field

Paraguay is situated in the middle of South America, bordering Brazil in the east and northeast, Bolivia in the northwest and Argentina in the south and southwest. It is popularly referred to as *“Corazón de América"* , the heart of America. In area, Paraguay is a little larger than Norway, and has about 6.8 million inhabitants (Ardigó, 2016, p. 2). While there are several small indigenous groups in Paraguay, the main indigenous population are the Guaraní people. Although the Guaraní only count for about 2 percent of the Paraguayan population, they form an important part of the country's identity. Both Guaraní and Spanish are national languages, and Guaraní is also the currency. Today, there are approximately 300,000 Guaraní

scattered across Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia (GuaraníPeople, 2016). The reasons why there are so few Guaraní in Paraguay will be discussed further in chapter three.

Landlocked Paraguay is often referred to as an island surrounded by land. With the enormous, arid Chaco region in the northwest and the impenetrable jungles to the southeast, Paraguay has been an extremely isolated country. Its connection to the outside world has been dependent on the cooperation of Argentina through the Paraná River. As the proceeding chapters will show, this cooperation has not always been reliable.

Despite the fact that Paraguay is ranked number six in the world on beef exports with over ten million heads of cattle (Cook, 2016) and the country is the fourth largest exporter of soy beans in the world (Hebblethwaite, 2014, p. 18), the country is not very well known globally. Paraguay has gone from being one of the most prosperous countries in South America and the continent's first liberated nation from Spanish rule, to a country with wars, political unrest, dictatorship and corruption.

History has made deep traces in Paraguayan culture. In particular, the Spanish colonization, the Stroessner dictatorship and the wars have had a significant impact on Paraguayans. The Stroessner dictatorship, being relatively recent, ending in 1989, was fresh in mind amongst several of my contacts, and was often compared to the political situation today. From the late 1990s and early 2000s, the political and economic situation in Paraguay has stabilized and free elections have been held. Still, the level of corruption and organized crime is amongst the highest of the countries on the continent. Historical and political aspects of Paraguay and their relation to the notion of the good life will be discussed further in chapter three and is part of the foundation for the whole thesis.

Geography, biggest towns and social composition

Paraguay's geography is as diverse as its inhabitants, from dry lands to jungles and swamps. A full description of the different climates will not be included in this thesis. However, I will briefly describe the larger cities like the capital Asunción and Ciudad del Este and Encarnación. This will give a background and insight into geographical and census data, providing a better understanding of the people I have lived with, their surroundings and notions of the good life.

Asunción is the capital of Paraguay, and it is also the largest and most populous city in the country. The parliament is situated in the old part of the city, close to the Paraguay River with Argentina on the opposite side. This area consists of buildings from the colonial period and has been the heart of the city. Walking through the old part of Asunción today, the lack of maintenance is obvious, the buildings are literally falling apart; with shattered windows, and vegetation growing through the roofs. As my contacts stressed, the government has not subsidised maintenance of the historical buildings of the old town in the same fashion as in Argentina. Which results in the visible deteriorating of the historically rich part of Asunción.

During the last decade, there has been a shift in the structure of Asunción. Hotels, massive shopping malls, apartments, restaurants and nightclubs have popped up at an impressive speed, in another part of the city. This has changed the capital, and my contacts, who were of upper-middle class status, said they rarely, if ever, ventured beyond this new up-and-coming area. According to the Paraguayan government, as of 2015, Asunción accommodates approximately 524 000 inhabitants (DGEEC, 2015, p. 49).

As the name implies, *Ciudad del Este* is a city in the very east of Paraguay. With a population around 296 000, it is the second largest city, both in size and population (DGEEC, 2015, p. 410). Ciudad del Este is located close to the Paraná River, on the border to Brazil and Argentina. The city has become of interest to tourists as it is close to the largest waterfall system in the world, the Iguazú falls. The Johnson family have a branch in Ciudad del Este, and travel there regularly. They also have a daughter living there taking care of the business.

Encarnación is located on the west banks of the Paraná river. It borders to Posadas in Argentina, and is the third largest city in Paraguay, with 130 000 inhabitants (DGEEC, 2015, p. 298). Encarnación is approximately 370km from Asunción, and the two cities were once connected via railroad. The railroad was inaugurated during the first Lopez era in mid 19th century and united people from Encarnación to the capital, and also transported goods and merchandise. In Encarnación the train met a connecting train to Posadas, linking the two countries together. Encarnación has beaches on the Paraná river, reminiscent of Copacabana in Brazil; long, white, wide and with a vibrant day- and nightlife. People flock to the beaches especially in the cool evenings, meeting family and friends, having an *asado*, barbecue, eating, drinking, and listening to music, playing football or volleyball. Throughout my

fieldwork, the gathering of family members over a meal or beverage has become a repeating element and a key factor for Paraguayans notion of the good life. This will be discussed further in chapter four.

Altos

The city of Altos is located about an hour east of Asunción, in the highlands over the lake of Ypacaraí. According to predictions, the population will slightly pass 14 000 (DGEEC, 2015, p. 139) in 2017, with a mixture of Guaraní people, mestizos and foreigners of all ages. However, in an interview with a secretary at the *Municipalidad*, Town hall, I was informed that there are presently 16 000 inhabitants in Altos. The town has a relatively large percentage of Germans. According to the Municipalidad, there are around 500 Germans in Altos, with a German school, grocery store, and cemetery. As with all Spanish colonial cities its layout is centred around the church (see figure 1). A garden enfolds the church, and beyond this there are stores, pharmacies, restaurants, a hospital and schools. The residential areas are mostly situated outside this core.

Figure 1. The front of the church in Altos with its surrounding park.

The main industry in Altos is the same as for the rest if the country, agriculture and woodwork like furniture and wooden art. However, most people in Altos earn a living working in Asunción, San Lorenzo, Luque or some of the other towns close to Asunción. In an interview with the *Municipalidad*, they revealed that only around 40% of the labourers

work in Altos. The agri-business in Altos consists of several cattle ranches, pure-breed horse estancias, poultry farms, as well as farms producing crops, fruits and vegetables. The relatively high number of German, Spanish and other foreigners bringing pensions from Europe to Altos is also boosting the economy.

Besides agriculture there are some car- and motorcycle repair shops and dealerships, small clothing stores, *supermercados*, *heladerías,* ice cream shops, pharmacy, restaurants, a factory and schools. The majority of the shops provide for more than one segment, for instance; the ice cream shop can also copy documents, the place to buy cell phones also sell clothes and gift wrappings. Now, these small family-owned boutiques, many of them attached to their home, have gained competition from newly established *supermercados*. Since the beginning of the fieldwork, three large *supermercados* have opened in Altos, creating competition on prices and selection. Goods one previously had to travel to larger cities to get a hold of, or did not get at all, like sour cream and Haribo, are now accessible in Altos. As will be discussed in chapter four, consumption and especially food consumption, is an extremely important element to the notion of good life in Paraguay. Therefore, this competition and lowering of prices will arguably be a factor to obtaining happiness.

There is only one factory in Altos. This factory cracks and distributes macadamia nuts for export, primarily to Ecuador. The factory opened in 2015 and it is only operational a few months of the year at the moment. There are only women employed at the factory, which is very unusual in Paraguay. Their job is to sort the nuts on the conveyor belts, by size and quality. The aspect of gender and employment will be discussed further in chapter seven.

Economy, main industries and who owns what.

The large informal economy in Paraguay makes it impossible for the government to have control. The government is also not present in the most rural areas. Infrastructure is largely built by private individuals. Landowners must pay for infrastructure (road, electricity, water) to their own properties, and in several instances (which will be elaborated further in forthcoming chapters) the family and extended kin fills the role of the government.

The main industry in Paraguay is agriculture. As previously mentioned, Paraguay is number six in the world on beef exports (Cook, 2016) and the fourth largest exporter of soybeans

(Hebblethwaite, 2014, p. 18). It is also the second largest exporter of the sugar substitute stevia, and sixth-largest exporter of corn. For such a small country, it has grown to become a key producer in the global distribution of different goods. Even though the agri-business is flourishing and creating a massive economic growth, the return and the benefits are not distributed to the people. 77 percent of arable land is owned by a scarce 1 percent of the population (Ardigó, 2016, p. 5). As will be discussed further, the inequality in Paraguay is blossoming and the richest get even richer and more powerful, as in many other parts of the world. This was often discussed amongst several of my contacts in Altos as a horrible trend, causing distress, poverty, reducing happiness, and resulting in the lack of agency.

In Paraguay, owning land gives agency, and with this agency comes (often political) power (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 453). It is a fact that owning land in Paraguay is synonymous to having power. Presidents and dictators throughout the country's history have given massive amounts of land to friends, families and as personal business deals. As this thesis will discuss, the different governments have also sold public land to foreign investors as means of paying down debt, resulting in a large number of Brazilian absentee landowners in Paraguay. As I will discuss further in chapter three, this has caused riots and cultivated rebel groups such as the EPP, as well as affected the Paraguayan people and their notion of well-being and the good life.

Class differences and inequality

"[The] elite hostility to genuine land reform is matched by their hostility to tax reform, the absence of which helps maintain Paraguay's extreme income inequality" (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 453). As Lambert and Nickson elaborates, the huge inequality in Paraguay is rooted in the 1 percent who own 77 percent of the land. When the majority of the people in Congress are part of the few who own most of Paraguay, it is difficult to change the balance of power and the redistribution of land and means, as indeed the Lugo administration's failed attempt to social- and land reform showed.

Inequality is a pressing issue in Paraguay, both in financial terms and as access to agency. Economic inequality is among the highest in the region (Castiglioni & Villagra, 2015, p. 87). The inequality combined with the high level of corruption in Paraguay is troubling. The

difference between those who have the most and those without is enormous. Driving through Asunción or any other city, one will find mansions and million dollar cars next to shacks.

Poverty rates in the urban areas of Paraguay are approximately 23.9 percent, while the rates in rural areas reach about 45 percent. (Castiglioni & Villagra, 2015, p. 87). The class differences between those who live in rural and those who live in urban areas are startling. There are approximately 1 223 000 homes in Paraguay, 733 000 in urban zones and 490 000 in rural areas. More than 38 000 of these houses in rural areas do not have electricity, while just around 5 000 homes in urban areas is without electrical lighting (DGEEC, 2016, p. 52). The apparent division between city and village is the reason why I altered my fieldwork to incorporate a comparative study. The differences and similarities between people from the capital and the smaller village of Altos will be connected to my research question and elaborated further in this thesis.

Even though some people in Paraguay are extremely poor, in monetary value, there is no shortage of food. They are able to cultivate massive amounts of food in their gardens, in addition to eggs, chicken, some pigs and cows for milk and meat. The women in the García family in Altos proudly presented all the food they grew in their garden, showing me everything from their mango trees to their chicken and hens. The mother of the household often exclaimed when we walk around in her garden, that her garden was nothing compared to everything her mother cultivated on her own plot. Food is a key element here, it is a repeating subject when looking at the notion of happiness and the good life in Paraguay. Being able to eat delicious fruits, vegetables and other dishes throughout the year, is extremely important to many Paraguayans. This will be analysed in greater depth in chapter four regarding food consumption.

Introduction to my hosts

Initially, I stayed with my boyfriend's family, who owns a farm in Altos, while I was looking for Paraguayan families willing to let me live with them, granting me access to their homes and private sphere. The benefits and possible ethical implications of this will be discussed further in the upcoming chapter. During fieldwork, I lived with three different families; The García family, the Santos family and the Johnson family. The three families are from highly different backgrounds, different countries, different cities and are in quite different positions

with their financial means. However, their commonalities are quite interesting and reveal a great deal about Paraguayans notion of happiness and the good life.

The García family

The García family was the first family I stayed with in Paraguay. The family lives in Altos, about two kilometres from the city centre. Their property was next to the main road in-between Altos and Caacupé, the capital of the district. María and her husband Rodrigo lived on the property, with Sofía and Ana, two of their four daughters, Rodrigo's mother and Ana's son Gabriel. Like María once had done, their two other daughters worked as chefs and maids abroad, one in Argentina and one in Uruguay. Besides humans, 32 chickens and two dogs occupied the house and garden. The family shared the four bedrooms; three with tile flooring, and one with dust floor. The husband and wife were separated, but she could not afford to divorce him, so he slept just outside the front door, in the open air, his mother had her own bedroom in the rear garden.

When María worked abroad, she saved up enough money to buy a house in Altos, close to her mother and her husband's family. He worked as a private chauffeur and a taxi driver. Eventually his car broke down and he spent the remains of their savings on bingo. María loves to sow, and used to trade sowing against groceries, but when her sowing machine stopped working, this reciprocity also ended. For some years they have been relying on their daughters sending money. The family still own a relatively large house, with a small property where they cultivate fruit like mango, orange and papaya, as well as different herbs and chicken and hens, for their own consumption. However, they do not have the money to fulfil their desires and needs beyond the basic necessities. They do not own a car or a motorcycle like the majority of other Paraguayans, and they are depending on a good relationship with their neighbours and friends to move around or buy groceries. Several people in Altos sell their surplus fruits and vegetables, especially children walk around their neighbourhood selling bananas and pineapple to earn some extra cash. The García family bought fruits they did not cultivate themselves from these kids frequently.

I got in contact with the García family through a friend of my boyfriend's father in Altos. He asked around for families willing to have me living with them, preferably with children my

age, as that would hopefully provide access to the field. I ended up living with the García family for nearly two months.

The Santos'

The Brazilian Santos family came to Paraguay a little more than a generation ago. They started from nothing, with no money or shoes, just a few pots and pans. They farmed other people's properties, saving up enough money to buy their own. They eventually bought one property, cultivated it wisely and earned enough to buy another one. They have done this for some decades now, and it has resulted in them owning properties the size of Oslo in the northern Paraguay. The properties are rented out to large corporations producing soy and cattle, and as I will discuss further in chapter three, making the Santos family the prime example of everything the guerrilla group EPP (Paraguayan People's Army will be discussed further in chapter three) fight against.

The Santos' are some of the half a million Brazilians living in Paraguay. The wave of Brazilians migration to Paraguay became more extensive in the 80s with the boom in soy production. According to Lambert and Nickson the *Brasiguayos,* that is Brazilians living I Paraguay*,* are representing a powerful political force, as they are working on and often controlling major agricultural projects (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 3). Without them ever mentioning it, the Santos family has come to represent the Paraguayan elite. From acquiring his first pair of shoes as a teenager, the father of the household now owns an airplane. They have several apartments in the new and most expensive part of Asunción. I discussed social mobility in Paraguay with the father of the household. He stressed that the possibilities to earn money, even with a financially weak background, is much higher in South-America than in Europe. He emphasised that while getting a good education without having money is difficult, managing business and making money is easy because of the lack of regulation, low taxes and much untapped opportunities. With hard work it is possible to build up as a farmer and constantly increase the agricultural area and its production.

The Santos family consists of grandparents, the first to immigrate to Paraguay, a father and a mother, two daughters, Rosa and Nadalia, and a son. The daughters are in the late twenties and early thirties and married, Rosa also has a young daughter. The son is in his early twenties, studies in the United States and is expected to take over the family business. The

two daughters do some secretarial work in the family business as well. The Santos family still speak Portuguese, they speak their mother tongue amongst each other and teach it to their children and grandchildren. They also observe religious events in Portuguese, like the Sunday mass. Since they recently welcomed a German son-in-law, English and Spanish have become the preferred languages around the dining table.

Two decades ago, Rosa and Nadalia went to school with my boyfriend and his sister for two years, and they kept a sporadic contact as my boyfriend and his sister moved back to Norway. As my study developed, I felt it would be fruitful to take a more comparative view on my research question. Therefore, I lived with Nadalia and her husband in their apartment in Asunción, and after some time I moved into the home of the Johnson family, also in Asunción.

The Johnson family

The Johnson family have Norwegian and Argentinian ancestors. However, it is so far back that neither speaks a word Norwegian, but some of them attend the Norwegian Independence Day at the consulate in Asunción. Their Norwegian ancestors came to Paraguay several generations ago, a businessman and a daughter of a ship-owner; they married and settled in Asunción. Now, the Johnson's own a business empire; they sell all types of large machines, for agriculture, generators, asphalt and almost everything else one would need to construct something in Paraguay.

The Johnson family is well known amongst Paraguayans, both in Altos and Asunción, as their equipment can be seen all over Paraguay. They have a large office in Asunción, where some hundred people work. They also have branches in Ciudad del Este and Encarnación, and frequently fly between them.

My boyfriend's father needed some farming equipment some years ago, and got in contact with the father of the Johnson family. This is how I got in touch with the Johnson family, and eventually lived some weeks with them in their house in Asunción. The Johnson family is quite large, with Luciana the wife, her husband Marcelo, their six children, twelve grandchildren and a great grandson. I became good friends with some of their many grandchildren, we went on excursions to lake Ypacaraí, and spent much time together. They

taught me a great deal about their notion of Paraguay, happiness and the good life. All the children had apartments and houses in close proximity to their parents' home. The grandchildren who had moved out of their parents' house also lived in apartments no more than five minutes from their parents and grandparents. This is a central element to Paraguayan culture and notion of happiness, which I will discuss further in chapter six.

Happiness, well-being and the good life

Words such as happiness, joy, the good life have different connotations in different places and with different people. In the art of translating culture, I wanted to discover how the Paraguayan talk about it and what words they use in which settings. Do they use *felicidad, buena vida, alegría,* or do they have another word for the notion of happiness? Although the term "happiness" or *"felicidades"* was rarely discussed verbally during my fieldwork, it was frequently showed physically through emotions in different contexts, often in the company of family members, sharing a meal or tereré. Therefore, my main method for data collection has been to observe and participate (which will be elaborated further in chapter two), more than listening to what was expressed verbally. *"La buena vida",* the good life, on the other hand, was mentioned more often, this was especially frequent while discussing food or sharing a meal. "*Tranquilo",* was another term regularly used, as a way of saying "everything is good", "all is well" or "peaceful". Tranquilo was one of the most common words for describing well-being amongst my contacts in Altos, and hence the title of this thesis. Therefore, when I use the words happiness, well-being or the good life in this thesis, it is not the words they used, but translations to what I find most suitable for the context.

Not only is the terminology highly contextual, so is the notion of what it entails. Happiness / well-being / the good life, are relative, contextual and subjective notions. Even though these terms are elusive, this thesis will show that there are some common features, linking the notion of happiness in the rural town of Altos, to the notion of happiness amongst my contacts in urban Asunción. The key roles of topics such as history, politics, food consumption, gender, family life and employment for Paraguayans' notion of happiness was evident both in rural and urban areas and visible through participant observation and anthropological theory and method.

Outline of chapters

The second chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to theory and method. To get a better understanding of the data I have gathered and the information I use, the theoretical framework and an explanation of the methodological choices must be accounted for. Third, Paraguay has an incredibly interesting history and political scene, both ancient and present, and it affects the notions of happiness in Paraguay. I will discuss some main features of Paraguayan history and political events in chapter three, its relation to happiness will be clear through this chapter and the succeeding ones. This first part of the thesis have a more theoretical approach with some links to the empirical data.

Food consumption has been a key element in this research and is therefore the fourth chapter of this thesis and the first chapter with a strong empirical focus. It has provided me with access to the field, great insight, and is a central feature in Paraguayans notion of happiness. Both the act of producing and consuming delicious food, and the sharing of time amongst family members close kin and friends is extremely important.

The notion of gender norms and ideals is prominent in Paraguay, as in several other Latin American countries, and this will be the focus of chapter five. The ideals of manliness and femaleness, and the deviations from these ideals will be in focus, and its relation to the good life. The relationship between the genders and what the genders entail is foundational for the further chapters and this is the reason why it precedes chapter six, regarding family life.

The notions of happiness in Paraguay is centred around good relations. Nourishing relationships and close bonds of affiliation, especially between family members and close kin is paramount and is at the core of happiness in Paraguay. This will be discussed throughout the thesis, and particularly in chapter six. It will also be emphasised in chapter seven, regarding labour.

Subjects such as history, gender and family life constitutes a necessary foundations for the chapter regarding labour in Paraguay, and is therefore placed prior to this. In chapter seven I connect labour to Paraguayans notions of happiness, especially in regards to the balance between labour and leisure. I will also emphasise the relational aspect of employment and happiness.

I will present my final thoughts and concluding remarks in chapter eight, the very last chapter of the thesis. Providing the key notions of happiness in Paraguay and interesting topics for further study.

2. Theoretical framework and method

Happiness is a highly subjective and elusive term, and is not perceived the same way everywhere (Malinowski, 1984 [1922], p. 25). As Malinowski's foundational research on the Trobriand Islanders illuminates, happiness consists of several components, varying from place to place and people to people and is highly shaped by cultural orientation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I base most of my discussion on what my contacts did, more than what they said, since they expressed these emotions more physically or implicit rather than verbally and explicit.

The aim of this thesis is to examine Paraguayans' perception of happiness and their notion of the good life. As Adelson, and several other scholars emphasise, definitions and valuations of concepts such as well-being are neither unitary nor fixed (Adelson, 2009, p. 121). During the twentieth century, social scientists neglected the study of well-being, while emphasising subjects such as suffering, depression and power (Eriksen, 2008, p. 10). "The excellent Anthropological Index Online, covering hundreds of thousands of articles from 1957 to 2004, has ten times more entries for 'suffering' (165) than as for 'happiness' (15) and 22 times as many for 'illness' (339)" (Thin, 2005, p. 7). As both Thin and Eriksen underline, the field of positive studies and well-being have been ignored in anthropology, and they have both received strange looks and questions from fellow scholars when airing the subject.

However, the last few decades have seen a rise in the acknowledgement of well-being studies and happiness as a valuable field of research (Eriksen, 2008, p. 10). As Thin describes, without attention to well-being in anthropological research, "we cannot expect to offer adequate descriptions of human experience or human nature (Thin, 2009, p. 41). As the forthcoming paragraph will elaborate, there is too much to gain from researching and exploring the field of happiness and well-being, to bluntly ignore it.

Firstly, this chapter will elaborate the importance of studying well-being and positive emotions, for a broader and deeper knowledge of societies. My initial curiosity with the field of positive emotions rose from a Gallup survey, ranking Paraguayans as the happiest people in the world. I wanted to question this survey critically, both its means and methods, and this will be discussed further in the second paragraph. Thirdly, I argue that anthropological

methods, such as participant observation over time is some of the ways to give a broader and more holistic picture of well-being and happiness.

Why research on well-being is relevant

Some of the ancient Greek philosophers underlined eudemonia, usually translated to happiness, as the moral goal of life. Plato stated that all men desire happiness (Plato & Jowett), while Aristotle spoke of happiness as the goal of human thought and action. Although their definition of happiness developed during their lifespan, some core elements persisted, like virtue, state of mind, knowledge and the possibility to use your skills and abilities. Although these theories stem from ancient philosophy, I will use them as an approach to my field. Acknowledging that happiness is the ultimate human goal, one also needs to realise that happiness affects behaviour (Thin, 2009, p. 20). Happiness and well-being are incentives for action, either consciously or subconsciously, therefore it should be a more popular anthropological field then it has been.

I argue, in line with Thin, that anthropological research on subjects such as development, human rights, poverty and health will benefit from engagement with happiness studies (Thin, 2009, p. 36). Arguing that happiness is an incentive for action, to study origins of happiness will also be a study of people's values, norms, ideals, dreams, aspirations and more. For this reason, I chose the quote from Malinowski in the preface of this thesis, to show what is lost by not thoroughly study positive emotions and happiness. Generally, there are several ways to study happiness and well-being, and most common is data collection through surveys and polls. Therefore, the report from Gallup will be central to my thesis, and I will critically challenge this quantitative survey, both in methods and conclusion.

Surveys

There are several aspects of surveys and polls I want to investigate critically, some key aspects are the leading, close-ended, yes/no questions, the language of the questionnaire and the fact that they do not take into account the social and cultural reasons why people answer the way they do.

The Gallup survey rates people's level of emotional positivity and negativity through asking them a series of questions about the day before the interview. Gallup measured positive

emotions in 143 countries in 2012 by asking people whether they experienced enjoyment, felt respected, felt well-rested, laughed and smiled a lot, and learned or did something interesting the previous day. Gallup compiles the "yes" results into a Positive Experience Index score for each country. Gallup's ranking of happiness is based on perceived emotions from *one* single day(!). And for the third year in a row, Paraguay has been ranked number one in the world on positive emotions (Clifton, 2014). However, this is only one survey, asking a particular set of peculiar questions.

Different surveys, asking different questions will often get different results. The World Happiness Report 2017 ranked Norway as the happiest country in the world, and Paraguay on a mere 70th place (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017, pp. 22 - 23). The World Happiness Report poll uses one data point, i.e. one question and one scale(!) to form this massive survey. They ask people to rate their lives on a scale of zero to ten, from the worst possible life to the best (Clifton, 2017). Which is in my opinion an impossible and unreasonable task to ask a "representative selection" of the world's population.

Even though Gallup had more than one question in their survey, it is still not sufficient to provide insight into such a subjective notion as happiness or well-being. None of these surveys give their respondents the possibility to discuss these terms in their own words, or in their own language. As Mathews and Izquierdo argue, "This not only ignores how individuals express their own senses of their lives, but also ignores how different languages and cultures conceive of well-being in different ways" (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 7). With fixed questions, often made by people from a given Western society and social class, the information they are left with is insufficient to say the least. Surprisingly, surveys measuring happiness are on the rise. In France, former President Sarkozy commissioned a new report to measure happiness beyond GDP (Gross Domestic Product). In The UK, former Prime Minister Cameron conducted a national wide survey on happiness. As well as the former monarch of Bhutan who developed the Gross National Happiness index, which the US now wants to implement as well (Wali, 2012, p. 12). They believe there is a standardized quantifiable measurement of the characteristics of happiness, and that it is universal. One of the aims for this thesis is to discuss and to some degree disprove this assumption.

I argue, the notions of happiness, well-being and the good life can only be expressed through real life social experiences. These surveys are unable to comprehend the interaction between

family members, friends, the value of labour versus leisure et cetera. It needs to be related to the experiences on the ground. Therefore, the anthropological method of participant observation is vital. To observe and analyse people's notion of the good life, the stories people tell and the webs of relationships people build are essential. Anthropologists can account for cultural differences and see beyond the surface and statistical data, to observe the different ways to express emotions and the nature of everyday life.

Surveys are not particularly meaningful without the kind of contextual analysis and real-life stories that ethnographic research could provide. As Mathews and Izquierdo emphasise, "…cross-cultural comparison of survey data leaves out too much to be fully credible" (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 7). A survey does not account for cultural traits, such as modesty and not wanting to brag about individual success in countries such as Japan, or the opposite in countries such as the U.S. Some people are just more open about proclaiming their happiness in a survey form (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 7). In these cases, the survey fails. I opt for a more "soft comparison" of cultures and societies, "comparison based not on – or at least not solely on – bald statistics placed side by side, but rather on all the nuances of sociocultural context ethnographically portrayed" (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 6). With the use of anthropological research and participant observation over a period of time, I believe that comparison on some levels and scales are possible, however, not quantifiable.

In accordance with Mathews and Izquierdo, I argue that statistical measures alone are grossly inadequate to enable us to understand well-being in given societies (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 250). We must take into consideration the ethnographic context. One cannot understand Paraguayan happiness today without considering factors such as history, gender, family life and social relationships. I gained insight into these subjects mainly through participant observation over a six-month fieldwork in several different families and areas in Paraguay.

Methodology

As Colson expresses, translating culture or different cultural traits is difficult, and grading and ranking them is met with ambivalence(Colson, 2012, p. 8). However, by *observing* how people express themselves and what words they use in different contexts, a lot of great

information is obtainable, and can be used in "soft comparison" across societies and people to gain a better understanding of people's emotions.

My wish was to discover what the Paraguayan population's notion of happiness is, how they relate to happiness and the good life and whether or not these "needs" are met. I argue, in line with Colson, happiness is a particularly subjective concept (Colson, 2012, p. 8). To get this knowledge I have studied both what people say and what they actually do (Lutz, 1986, p. 407). During my fieldwork, I have used different approaches to collect information. My main focus has been on participant observation as I lived with my contacts. However, photography and some formal and informal interviews have also been sources of information.

Participate and observe

"The active participant seeks to do what other people are doing, not merely to gain acceptance, but to more fully learn the cultural rules for behaviour*"* (Spradley, 1980, p. 60). An active form of participant observation was essential both to get access to the field and also to learn about peoples' customs, norms and behavioural patterns. I studied activities and events they say contribute to happiness closely, and observed them in different situations and contexts with various people. Both how they talked about this phenomenon, how they did not talk about it, and how they expressed it physically amongst each other. To watch, listen, participate and question was central for my analysis. "…there are always things that people do not say publicly, or do not even know how to say. They live them as their common experience" (Cohen, 1984, p. 220). As Cohen emphasises, there are a lot of things people do that they do not reflect upon, or even have words for explaining. Some actions are normalized and embedded so deep into customs and the body that when being asked most people will not even think about the fact that they are doing it at all. This is also one of the many reasons why quantitative data alone is insufficient to thoroughly understand the notion of happiness. Through participant observation over time, anthropologists can avoid the fact that articulated words can fail to fully reflect inner experiences (Mathews, 2009, p. 168).

Living with the families and following them around for several weeks has been my most fruitful method. Eating the same food, living in the same house, using the same clothes, talking to the same people and attending the same events. I observed and listened to what people were talking about, and which words were being used. Sofía García family helped me

with my Spanish language knowledge while I lived with them. She taught me the language and I quickly learned the words that were important to her and her family, like sowing and different food items. This gave me a good insight into what topics were relevant and imperative for the family.

Since my Spanish/ Guaraní language skills initially were quite inadequate my main method for collecting data has by far been observation and participation. Joining my contacts on their everyday chores and activities has given me a lot of insight, as well as helped me pass linguistic obstacles. I learned a lot by observing body language and how people physically, not just verbally react to different things. Since the social/interpersonal has proved to be the most pivotal aspect of well-being (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 263), participant observation and interviewing is particularly well suited to investigate it.

Interviews

I mainly conducted informal interviews during my fieldwork. It was also too difficult to plan formal interviews, my informants sometimes cancelled our appointments or did not show up at the agreed time, as I will discuss later on as some of the challenges I faced during my fieldwork. Those I tried to conduct more formal interviews with, closed up and stopped talking once we began. I did however, conduct some more formal interviews and discussions with scholars such as Andrew Nickson in Asunción; this gave me a lot of information and new perspectives.

Photos

My contacts showed me photos and videos and we took some together. I also watched what they photographed and some of the photos and videos they were being sent. This showed me what was important enough for them to be captured and saved. It also gave me an insight into what happens when I am not around, "Informants' photographs allow the researcher access to and knowledge about content they cannot participate in themselves" (Pink, 2007, p. 90). This was highly interesting, but only possible with the part of the population who owned smartphones / camera phones, which means that everyone without these newer phones was excluded from this data collection. A lot of the people my age in Altos have phones with the ability to take pictures, but many of the older generations still have the old Nokia phones

without camera. I was shown a lot of pictures and movies, and combined with the formal and informal interviews, and the fact that I spent the majority of the day with my contacts, I reckon I have gathered enough data to draw lines and discuss the topic of happiness and the good life in Paraguay further.

Roles and arenas

During the fieldwork, I have been living with several Paraguayan families, filling the role of roommate, daughter, sister and a friend. As I will elaborate further in chapter seven, a vast amount of Paraguayans are unemployed or involved with informal, part time jobs. As a result, at least the women, spend a great deal of their time inside their home: the household has therefore been my primary arena. I have observed their daily rituals, and participated in cooking and cleaning, reading, talking and watching TV with my contacts. I also got the opportunity to join some private birthday parties, go grocery shopping, as well as walking to and from the stores with the women in the family. However, the kitchen and dining table quickly became the centre of obtaining information, and my most fruitful arena. Since it was a place they spent several hours every day.

Ethical implications

During the initial stages of my fieldwork, the first four weeks, I lived in the house of my boyfriend's father, a Norwegian farm owner in Altos and an employer of some of the people there. I discovered that he had a decent reputation in Altos, and he aided me with some initial contacts. As a result of my connection to him, I feared that some of the information I received from some people might be slightly biased. Being aware of this, I thoroughly analysed all information I gathered. The method of extensively participating and observing over a long period of time also helped me move past this issue, and getting a deeper connection and understanding of the people I wanted to learn about. My contacts were aware of my relation to this Norwegian farm owner, some would talk to me about the farm and asking me for a job there, which initially was quite awkward. After I explained that I had nothing to do with the employment and directing them to my boyfriend's father, they moved on and talked about other subjects, seemingly unbothered. I have compared the information I gathered from my contacts in Altos, Asunción and the literature to get a broader picture of the notion of happiness and the good life in Paraguay.

Gender

It is quite clear that through the anthropological method of participant observation, the researcher's persona is important. The data I have collected and the choices I have made, another researcher would probably choose different and gain different access. The fact that I chose to live with a family with daughters, since I felt more comfortable with other girls and that it would give me access to the field, would not have been possible for a young man. The García family consisting of a mother and a not-very-present father, and several young daughters, would not accept having a young man living with them. As I will discuss further in chapter five, the gender relations in Paraguay are quite clear, and it is not socially accepted for young women to spend a lot of time alone with men. Therefore, my information is collected mainly from other women, and is highly coloured by my gender, as well as my nationality.

Nationality

Neither in the relatively small town of Altos nor in Asunción, are blond hair and blue eyes a frequent sight. There is a quite large group of German immigrants in Paraguay, who came from Germany to Paraguay, amongst other South-American countries, both before and after the Second World War. Many also came from eastern Germany after the fall of communism. However, people with perceived "Nordic" appearances get a lot of attention. After six months in Paraguay, living with my contacts, dressing in the same clothes and eating the same food, I still had the feeling that some of my contacts were showing me off like a neighbourhood tourist attraction. They presented me as a Norwegian student, and their visitors would touch my hair. There are not a lot of Norwegians in Paraguay, only a handful of Norwegian descent and some children of missionaries. The Germans on the other hand, account for a much larger group, and people would often assume I was German or from an "equally rich country" in their words.

In general, Paraguayans have a good relationship with the Germans, so it was not a large issue. However, on average the German population have more money and larger properties, as some of them are retirees and get relatively high pensions from Germany. The Paraguayans would therefore assume that I also had a lot of money. After I told them that I attend a public University in Norway, they reckoned I must be a poor Norwegian.

Theoretical approaches

Mathews and Izquierdo's (2009) compilation of articles has been very helpful for my theoretical knowledge about the term "happiness", and the importance of clarifying and defining the terms I am using. This book enlightens the point of view that happiness is not one thing; it is highly contextual and culturally specific. The interesting part of this book is not just that the authors underline how much happiness differs from place to place, but the facts that they can still see a human commonality and a transferability in this phenomenon.

Secondly, I wanted to question data collecting via quantitative methods conducted by global survey companies such as Gallup. Happiness and the good life are extremely subjective terms, and I wished to see if the universal and standardised questions Gallup asked were at all relevant for the people of Altos, Paraguay. One of the questions were "did you feel well-rested yesterday?" This is a strange question in my opinion. As I quickly discovered, a lot of rural Paraguayans are unemployed, they often stay in their homes, sleep 10 hours during the night as well as a two-hour siesta in the middle of the day. Does this make them happier than people who sleep less, but have a job and can provide for their families, achieve their goals and develop their hobbies? I will discuss this topic further with some examples from my fieldwork.

Researching such a broad topic as happiness have made it necessary to investigate several different aspects of Paraguayan culture. As the chapters in this thesis show, I have chosen to focus on history and politics, identity and food consumption, gender, family life, and employment. For each of these topics I have used several different theoretical approaches. The writings of Lambert and Nickson have been fundamental for my understanding of Paraguay, both different notions of history in Paraguay as well as the present situation. Sidney Mintz has been essential for the research on food consumption and how food can be related to happiness in several parts of the world. Melhuus, Archetti and Stølen have aided me with the notions of gender in Latin America and the concepts such as the macho and "Maríanismo". The construction of gender, gender relations and the ideal vs. practice of gender in Paraguay will be the focus of chapter five in this thesis. For the research on family life in Paraguay, the work of Liu, Esteve and Treviño on Female-Headed Households and Living Conditions in Latin America have been indispensable. Their findings on cohabitation, female-headed households, lone motherhood and non-marital childbearing is a key element to family life in

Paraguay and chapter six of this thesis. The statistical data and knowledge of different Directorates in Paraguay have been fruitful for the understanding of labour in Paraguay. The main sectors of employment, gender variations in different sectors and female participation in the formal economy and labour will be discussed in chapter seven in response to the data from the Directorates.

News, history and the importance of reading

Reading, and staying up-to date on current events, as well as historical aspects of Paraguay has been a method for me to get a deeper understanding of the Paraguayan people and their notion of the good life. "The problem of representation can be partially overcome by using mass media articles as well as statistical data from the society being examined, to correlate one's small-scale findings with broader form of information" (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 260). As Mathews and Izquierdo argue, media and statistical data can be of great importance as an addition to observation and information collected through fieldwork, and can in many cases give a larger view of the whole picture.

I read the newspapers, watched the news and stayed up to date on current events to the best of my abilities. This proved to be a good conversation starter, especially with men and after the President tried to change the constitution allowing him to be re-elected. This also interested some of the women, but the men talked more freely amongst friends as well as strangers about it. A lot happened in Paraguay while I was there. There was a large and very violent armed robbery, kidnappings by the terrorist group EPP, and massive demonstrations that led to Congress being set on fire. Staying up to date on these issues helped me understand what the Paraguayan people were going through as well as giving me something to talk about.

As I will discuss further in the forthcoming chapter, almost all my contacts talked a lot about the political situation in the country. Therefore, I felt it would be essential for my fieldwork to read some Paraguayan newspapers, websites and watch the news in the company of my contacts as well as on my own. The news gave me an insight into the reality of the Paraguayan people, from crime, the state of the schools, what was relevant and what the media focused on etc. The subjects of the medias searchlight say a lot about what is important to the general population, and it will help me to say something about major events in the country and how people react to them.

3. Paraguayan history and politics

To understand the Paraguayan people and their notion of happiness it is vital to highlight the historical as well as the present situation in the country. Paraguayans are, in several ways, shaped by their past, as most societies in varying degrees are. With an insight into their history one will better understand what is happening today. The country and people have suffered under repressive regimes, corruption, oppression of indigenous people and massive inequalities. Their lack of trust in the state and notion of happiness will be illuminated in this chapter, as they still suffer under corruption and inequalities.

One can find traces of the past in several aspects of the present, and contemporary Paraguayans have, in different ways, interpreted and given meaning to the past. The history is not static, but is in constant change as the public perception and analysis develops. As the forthcoming chapters will emphasise, history in Paraguay has affected the people's notion of the good life, cuisine, gender roles as well as relationships amongst family members, friends and co-workers and much more. Therefore, it is important to have a solid grip on the key events throughout Paraguayan history. The focus of this chapter is history; in the forthcoming chapters the connection between historical events and the research question regarding happiness will be more evident.

Introduction

The chapter starts by listing a timeline of major factors in Paraguayan history, making the forthcoming information more accessible. After the brief overview, this chapter will be a chronological analysis of Paraguay from the beginning of the 1500's with the conquest of South America until today. Whilst the civilizations of Mesoamerica (Central America) developed hieroglyphic writings, none of the societies in South America had their own written language before Columbus's arrival. We have some oral testimony written down by Spanish speaking chroniclers, which refers to the time before the Spaniards arrived. However, it is difficult to know the exact degree the social structures and culture changed as a result of colonization. The period after 1492 and the arrival of the Spaniards has given us a much more extensive written material, mostly recorded by the newcomers (Fuglestad, 2009, p. 24), and this is where this chapter will start. The majority of the historical data in this chapter is therefore from the foreigners' point of view, something that is far from ideal. However, I have used some written data from contemporary Paraguayans and supplemented it with

information I collected through my fieldwork, to show historical events from a contemporary Paraguayan point of view.

The chapter provides chronological information from the colonization of Paraguay in the 1500's and the arrival and later eviction of the Jesuits in the 18th century, through the independence in the beginning of the 19th century with Dr. Francia as the country's first dictator. The devastating Triple Alliance War characterizes the second half of the 1800's under the dictatorship of Francisco Solano López. The Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay marks the beginning of the 20th century. Cadet Stroessner rose through the ranks during the war and in the middle of the century he led a military coup against the president and seized power. Stroessner was deposed in a coup in 1989 and since the last decade of the 20th century Paraguay has been a democracy. As the forthcoming chapter will show, this does not mean that there have only been stability and peace in the country, the last decades have been marked by corruption, scandals, protests, burning the parliament and much more.

Timeline

1537 Spain initiates the colonization of Paraguay.

1588 Jesuits establish the Jesuit reductions for the Guaraní people.

1750 The Spanish Crown withdrew their support for the Jesuits.

1767 The Jesuits were expelled from Paraguay.

1811 Paraguay gains independence.

1814 -16 Dr. Francia is Paraguay's first dictator.

1828 – 36 All private land gets confiscated, education is made compulsory and the first public library opens.

1840 Francia dies

1844 Carlos Antonio López is elected President, establishes his dictatorship.

1862 Carlos Antonio López dies and his son Francisco Solano López is appointed President.

1864 -70 Triple Alliance War: President Lopez declares war on Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Paraguay loses over half of its population and an immense amount of land.

1932-35 Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia over territory and prospects of oil.

1954 General Alfredo Stroessner seizes power in coup, resulting in more than 30 years of ruthless dictatorship.

1974 Stroessner is accused of genocide, corruption, slavery as well as torture and kidnapping by the UN.

1989 Stroessner deposed in coup.

1992 New democratic constitution promulgated.

1998 Raul Cubas is elected president amid allegations of fraud.

1999 President Cubas resigns in the wake of assassination of Vice-President Luis María Argaña. Luis Gonzalez Macchi appointed caretaker president.

2001 Head of central bank resigns over alleged involvement in fraudulent transfer of $16m to US bank account.

2002 State of emergency declared after violent street protests. Protesters demand resignation of President Gonzalez Macchi.

2002 December - President Gonzalez Macchi is charged of corruption.

2003 Nicanor Duarte Frutos is sworn in as president.

2004 Peasants stage series of land invasions and other protests, demanding redistribution of agricultural land.

2005 President Duarte promises a crackdown on organised crime following the kidnapping and murder of the daughter of former president Raul Cubas.

2006 Former President Luis Gonzalez Macchi is sentenced to six years in jail for illegal bank transfers.

2008 Bishop Fernando Lugo is elected President, ending over six decades of Colorado rule, and the Conservative Party has returned to power.

2009 President Lugo refuses to resign over claims by several women that he fathered children with them while he was a Catholic bishop.

2012 President Lugo is ousted over his handling of a land eviction in which 17 people are killed.

2013 EPP kills 33 people, both civilians and police officers.

2013 Businessman Horacio Cartes is elected president. The Colorado Party is back in power.

2017 President Cartes attempts to change the constitution in order to be re-elected.

Colonization

Spaniards reach what is now known as Paraguay in the beginning of the 16th century. The first Spaniards to arrive and settle are the *conquistadors* (conquerors). The conquistadores discovered vast amounts of natural resources and minerals in South America. Initially, the Spaniards conducted a fruitless search for gold in Paraguay, they soon realised that the land had no precious metals or goods the conquerors were further interested in, and they were primarily using the country as a gateway to the silver in Peru (Whigham, 1995, p. 159).

No large mines were established in Paraguay that required quantities of labour, as the case was in her neighbouring countries. There was no need to relocate the indigenous people, thus from the outside there would not have been much difference in Paraguay in the time just before and after the arrival of the Spaniards. However, from the 17th century the Guaraní were mainly used for the production of yerba mate (a tea that will be discussed further in chapter four) (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 12). Opposed to the Portuguese colonization, the main focus of the Spaniards was not merely to create trading stations of their colonies, but also to conquer the people, to convert and "civilize" them. At the outset, the Portuguese stayed largely along the coast of their colonies, while the Spaniards, in turn, also expanded inland areas, affecting a greater part of the population.

The relationships between the Spaniards and the Guaraní were initially of mutual necessity and trust. The Spanish needed provisions after long travels as well as geographical knowledge; while the Guaraní used the conquerors as protection and force against rivalling tribes. The Guaraní welcomed the Spanish with open arms, offering their women and providing them with food and labour, in order to formalize a pact. In this way they became relatives and equals, and through kinship they could expect reciprocity (Susnik, 2013, pp. 23 - 24) (López, 1976, p. 10). The blood bond created through the act of sharing their women the Guarani expected mutual respect and devotion. Therefore, when the Spanish treated the Guaraní more like servants than relatives the indigenous groups unleashed rebellions in 1539 where the conquistadors with firearms drew the longest straw, massacring the rebels (Susnik, 2013, p. 24). This marked the initial decrease of the Guaraní. By 1546 the majority of children born in Paraguay were *mestizos*. With Spanish father and Paraguayan mother, the new population kept the language of both ancestors and became bilingual, and the importance of the Guaraní language has continued to the present. According to figures from 2016, today's

Paraguay consists of a staggering ninety-five percent mestizos, with a combination of both Guaraní and Spanish forebears (FN-Sambandet, 2016). The exogamy or the marriage between the different ethnic groups was not the only source of the decrease in the indigenous population.

A new bacterial flora also followed the Europeans to the new world. This led to a mass of epidemics and the spread of copper and typhoid, which resulted in a high number of deaths among the Indians (Wilde, 2015, p. 58). Children and elderly with poor immune systems were particularly vulnerable, which undermined the possibility for local communities to reproduce over time. There is disunity amongst scholars as to the exact number of the South Americans that died as a result of the colonialization, but it is estimated that as many as 90 percent of the indigenous peoples died and that several communities and ethnic groups were erased (Sanabria, 2007, p. 83). Today the indigenous population is less than two percent (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 1).

According to the governors there were a “critical shortage of ecclesiastics” in Paraguay (López, 1976, p. 34). The Jesuits were invited to Paraguay by the bishop of Asunción. In an alleged attempt to gather, convert and protect the indigenous peoples from slave traders, the Jesuits arrived in Paraguay in 1588 and began to set up mission stations around the borders of Argentina and Brazil (UNESCO, 2018). By the late 1620s the Fathers were running over two dozen missions in the area. (López, 1976, p. 35).

Jesuit era

The Society of Jesus, founded in 1534 by Ignatius of Loyola, soon became a transnational movement from the 16th century and it is directly subordinate to the Pope, and therefore it is not reliant on authorities in the countries they come to or from. The Jesuits are not site-bound like many other catholic orders, but they travel around the world on mission journeys. This is the reason why the Jesuits went to "the new world”, to convert the indigenous people and proclaim the words of *their* God.

Originally, the Spanish crown encouraged the Jesuits to take care of the indigenous peoples in South America, placing them in villages, and then "convert" them to peaceful smallholders and villagers by European pattern (Fuglestad, 2009, p. 73). The Jesuits did not necessarily

have to force the Guaraní into their mission stations. They used meat, cattle and education in animal husbandry to gain trust and credibility, thus attracting the indigenous population. In return, the locals had to be baptized and promised to follow the laws of God (Sanabria, 2007, p. 88). This strategy was highly successful for the Jesuits. In the 1600s and 1700s they gained power in major areas of Paraguay with the system of mission colonies, so-called *reductions*. Several scholars claim that the missionaries protected the indigenous groups, which they argue would otherwise have been sold to slave traders. These reductions achieved enormous territorial and political importance. In the beginning of the 18th century, Paraguay's thirty missions housed around 140,000 Guaraní (Wilde, 2015, p. 58). Although missionary work helped save a number of Guaraní from slave trade, it also brought some negative consequences.

A concerning issue with the reductions was that they gathered large amounts of people in a relatively small area. Concentrating the population had several effects; it led to the rapid spread of diseases like smallpox, measles and fevers that decimated the population (Wilde, 2015, p. 58). The other result of the reductions was that the colonial rulers exploited the missionaries and their attempts to gather and convert the indigenous people. "During all of the 17th century, slave-hunting adventurers from São Paulo conducted raids to capture native people from the missions, causing the early destruction of many of these towns" (Wilde, 2015, p. 58). As Wilde argues, the reductions, consisting of unarmed people unable to protect themselves against the slave traders with firearms were an easy prey for the slave-hunters.

Figure 3.1 *Reducción* in Encarnación, 2016. Researchers own photo.

"The Jesuits created an empire within an empire through their *reducciones* or settlements, in which Guaraníes were organized into productive communities, indoctrinated into

Catholicism, but protected from marauding Brazilian slave traders" (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 6). The Jesuits wanted to create societies within the society based on the Christian religion. Jesuit missionary José Manuel Peramàs argues that true happiness was a result of Christian theocracy. Peramàs describes the utopia inside the reductions where the Guaraní could cultivate vegetables, learn to read and write, be builders, farmers, sculptors, and even accomplished musicians (Peramàs, 2013, p. 39).

In 1767 the Jesuits were expelled from Paraguay and the rest of South America. The expulsion of the Jesuits was a part of the Bourbon Reforms, implemented by the Spanish throne in the second half of the 18th century in an attempt to reinstate crown control. Other aspects of the reforms included free trade within the Spanish empire, increased militarization, consisting of a standing army, and more efficient administration. Free trade resulted in opening up for export and several countries, including Paraguay, experienced significant economic growth. With a well-functioning administration centre in Asunción, financial prosperity and lifting the trade-block the dreams of independence and self-government arose.

Independence, *El Supremo* and the 19th century

Paraguay was the first country in South America to claim independence from Spain in May 1811. The personification of the new nationalism in Paraguay became Dr. José Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia. Dr. Francia was Paraguay's first dictator, titled Supreme dictator (*El Supremo*) for life in 1814. He has been credited with making Paraguay an independent country and "…providing a firm economic base for future development" (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 54).

The dictatorship of Francia is a highly contested subject. He is amongst many referred to as a brutal tyrant with a regime based on fear, isolation and violence. For example, Justo Prieto (1897 – 1982), a former president of the Liberal Party, describes the repressive aspects of the Francia dictatorship, which was based upon imprisonment of opposition, well-organized secret police with surveillance in private homes as well as in the public sphere, and executions (Prieto, 2013). Thomas Whigham describes Paraguay during the Francia period as in near hermetic isolation, forbidding all entry and exit (Whigham, 2013, p. 70).

When El Supremo died in 1840, the former lawyer Carlos Antonio López took presidency, steering the nation with a more liberal approach. Lopez had an ambitious development strategy; he lifted the ban on outside trade, also constructed the railway and telegraph lines, as one of the first in South-America (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 54). The changes in Paraguay were massive, and several of my informants talked proudly about their railway, even though it is now a fraction of the length it once was, due to lack of maintenance. The railroads once connected Paraguay's two largest cities Asunción to Encarnación, with connection from Encarnación to Posadas in Argentina. The Paraguayan line was more than 300km long, today less than 50km is operational. Since my contacts in Paraguay lived in Asunción or Altos, which is only about an hour from Asunción, a railroad from the capital to Encarnación would have made traveling much easier for them. Since the García family for instance did not have a functioning car or motorcycle, traveling long distances would be extremely expensive.

The majority of people from the years with El Supremo dictatorship viewed Dr. López as a great patriot and the architect of the Paraguayan nation. The following generations felt he was too cautious and looked instead to his eldest son and former war minister Francisco Solano López (Whigham, 2013, p. 73). Francisco Solano López, succeeded him as dictator following his death in 1862.

Triple Alliance War

There are several theories amongst Paraguayans as to how and why the war broke out. Some say Great Britain was in the curtains pulling the strings; another theory is that Uruguay asked López for help against Brazil's intervention but later changed side. The most common thoughts about the chain of events is that as Brazil intervened in Uruguayan politics in 1864, López was afraid this intervention would upset the regional balance and result in harm to Paraguayan peace. When Brazil did not comply with López demands of refraining from invading Uruguay, he used his navy in an attack on Brazil. López sent a request to Argentina to send his troops through Argentina to reach Uruguay, but when Argentina refused he saw this as a sign of a coalition between Argentina and Brazil and declares war on Argentina as well. In 1865 Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay came together to sign the Triple Alliance Treaty against Paraguay and decided that peace and safety under the López' government would be impossible.

When the most horrible war in the country's history broke out, the Paraguayan forces did not merely face being slaughtered by the enemies, they also suffered from severe lack of nutrition; a soldier wrote in his journal "…Many of us starved to death. We were forced to eat our leather whips and cartridge belts…" (Pineda, 2013, p. 94). As will be described in the following chapters, the scarcity of meals trough the war and in the time after, led the Paraguayans to create new dishes, such as the *vorí vorí,* which will be discussed further in chapter four, to ensure they got enough proteins and calories.

The Paraguayans managed to hold off their opponents impressively; Paraguay was a small country but with an army larger than Brazils. They won some battles and they lost some, but the heroism and patriotism embedded into the Paraguayan soldiers are still hailed. Gaspar Centurión was a soldier in the Medical Corps and describes "…the heroism of Paraguayan soldiers shone… It is one of the greatest source of pride in my life that I helped so many brave men…" (Centurión, 2013, pp. 99 - 100). Centurión describes moments of the war as the proudest moments in his life since he was able to aid the soldiers fighting to protect their country. Not only does he enlighten the patriotism amongst the soldiers, but he also salutes the civilians, those who refused to abandon the army. Several of my contacts discussed the war and the bravery and heroism embedded in the Paraguayan people during and after the Triple Alliance War. The war brought the nation together in several ways during the war; they experienced hardship together and they won battles together.

The war was the most devastating war in Latin America after independence, and has been described as the first example of total warfare in the subcontinent (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 82). It lasted until the death of López in 1870 and resulted in Paraguay losing over half of its population and immense amounts of land. Almost 25 percent of its territory was seized; approximately 60 percent of the population died and a baffling 90 percent of the adult male population were decimated (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 82). The Triple Alliance War was a catastrophe for Paraguay and its population. It marks the turning point in the development of a prosperous independent country. In the aftermath of the Triple Alliance War, Paraguay became an oligarchic society with the political and economic power in the hands of a few leaders (Franks, Mercer-Blackman, Sab, & Benelli, 2005, p. 5). Through the war Paraguay manages to incur a crippling debt, the government resorted to selling off state properties,

leading to a massive amount of Paraguay's land being owned by a small elite, which it still is today.

The following eighty years are defined by authoritarianism, political instability and conflict as Paraguay struggles to recover from the devastating defeat of the war (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 6). Between 1904 and 1936 the Liberal Party governed the country, a period characterized by extreme instability in governance; in 32 years there were 22 presidents (Franks, Mercer-Blackman, Sab, & Benelli, 2005, p. 5).

The Chaco War

The Chaco War is the most recent war in Paraguay and like the Triple Alliance War it used up resources and caused immense strain on the population. In 1932 the Chaco War broke out, it was a territorial war over the Gran Chaco, between Bolivia and Paraguay. There are several aspects of why the neighbouring countries both wanted the Chaco region. Some say the Bolivians needed a trade route to the Atlantic, while others say it was over ownership of petroleum resources in Chaco (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 193). By the end of the war in 1935 when it was believed that the Bolivians would surrender, the Paraguayan Liberal government signed a peace treaty. Around forty thousand Paraguayans and fifty-five thousand Bolivians had been massacred (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 193). The agreed armistice caused resentment in the Paraguayan population towards the Liberal Party, leading to a military coup in February 1936, by what is now referred to as the Febrerista Party, a left-wing socialist party.

Stroessner's dictatorship

When General Alfredo Stroessner seized power in 1954, he was the thirty-fifth president in fifty-four years, which means that each regent was in power for an average of 1.5 years (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 6). This shows how seriously unstable the authorities have been in Paraguay. Both María García and Mario frequently complained about the government and their lack of trust with them. The Johnson family told me about a friend who saved his money under his bed, including the money he earned when he sold his house, instead of "giving" them to the bank. It is no wonder why the Paraguayan people have a hard time relying on their officials, when they alternate so rapidly and have a weakness for corruption.

Stroessner's regime is characterised by repression and institutionalized corruption as he referred to the "price of peace" (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 4). This dictatorship was an era when all public employees were forced to sign on to the Colorado Party and state resources were channelled to Colorado Party interests. Those who were loyal to the Party were given positions as administrators of the government regardless of their competence. "The power network was so tight that there was no distinction among the party, the military government, and the public sector" (Franks, Mercer-Blackman, Sab, & Benelli, 2005, p. 5). The Colorado Party members permeated all levels of the public sector; everywhere from teachers to the military. The opposition was subjected to arbitrary imprisonment, torture and killing.

On the other side, there are those hailing Stroessner, especially from his own Colorado Party. Like former Vice President of Paraguay and Colorado member Luís María Argaña. Argaña describes a blossoming Paraguay under Stroessner who redeemed the nation (Argaña, 2013, p. 246). Argaña emphasises his regards of Stroessner as a great patriot, while glorifying Paraguayan history and dictators or "national heroes" such as Dr. Francia and Francisco Solano López (Argaña, 2013, p. 245). While Altos is considered a *"liberales"* state, several would talk about the better days under Stroessner's rule. One of my contacts in Altos, Emilio Alvarez discussed the political situation in Paraguay with my boyfriend, when he came to visit me during my fieldwork. Alvarez emphasised that the poorest were not so poor under Stroessner, and that the level of corruption was much lower than its current rate. The Paraguayan people's ambivalent attitudes towards Stroessner and his dictatorship became quite clear as my fieldwork developed.

General Stroessner was eventually overthrown in 1989 by a traditionalist wing of his own Colorado Party. With the transition to democracy followed a new constitution with free elections and more public liberties. However, some continuity and stagnation also followed in its wake. The Colorado Party continued to win elections the following decades, despite a strong growth of inequality, corruption, poverty and financial crisis. (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 7). Stroessner's Colorado party has now been in power for 25 out of the 29 years of the new democracy (Ardigó, 2016, p. 2). The first time the *Colorados* lost was in 2008 when they elected Blanca Olevar, the first woman to run for the presidency in Paraguay. They lost a close race against former bishop Fernando Lugo with 31 percent of the votes against his 42 percent.

Lugo and the "new dawn"

With "social reforms in favour of the poor, his image as an honest and committed bishop, and his commitment to tackle corruption caught the popular imagination" (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 322). Fighting for land and social reforms, fronting the rights of the poor, and standing up against corruption, Lugo received 42 percent of the votes in the presidential election. When Lugo was elected president in 2008, it was the first time in Paraguayan history that the power had changed hands peacefully. With Lugo as President, over sixty years of Colorado rule was come to an end and is why he was titled the "new dawn" for Paraguay.

The expectations were high and when only a few of his campaign promises were carried out, his popularity decreased as his presidency proceeded. On one side, he was able to establish free medical attention in public hospitals, which several of my contacts in Paraguay talked proudly about, and cash transfers to benefit over 100 000 of the country's poorest families. On the other side, his image as an honest and humble bishop was shattered as a series of paternity scandals became public.

Lugo was removed from office in 2012, 14 months before his presidency was over and it shows that the frailty of the democracy persists. With the lack of trust from the people and his mishandling of a land eviction in which 17 people were killed, he was succeeded by Federico Franco. One of the many effects of Lugo not following through his campaign promises was a rise of the Paraguayan people's army, known as the EPP.

EPP – Paraguayan people's army

The Paraguayan People's army (EPP) fights for land reform in Paraguay and criticise the Lugo government for failing to solve the social differences and inequality he campaigned. They are especially fighting large landowners cultivating soy, which need little human labour. The current president Cartes is one of these 1 percent landowners owning 77 percent of the land. The EPP is responsible for several kidnappings, bombings and other crimes, and is described as a terrorist organization by the government. It was rumoured that they have killed more than sixty people, mostly civilians. During my fieldwork they had a German Mennonite in captivity for more than six months. The Mennonite was thought to be a rich farm owner, and they initially wanted 700 000USD as ransom. When EPP discovered they had kidnapped the wrong man, they lowered their demands to 1000 rations of food and survival supplies to

poor communities. When the demands were met, even though some of the communities rejected the gifts, as they were results of blackmail and torture, the Mennonite was freed (ABC Color, 2017).

Figure 3.2 A large sign of wanted EPP members, accused of homicide, terrorism, robberies and other illegal actions. The photo is from San Pedro. I saw several of these signs in the areas of Concepción, Amambay and Canindeyú.

The EPP is located in the northern parts of Paraguay, in the Concepción, Amambay, San Pedro and Canindeyú *departamentos*. The Santos family have *estancias*, large properties cultivating soy or cattle, in these areas and fear kidnapping and assault traveling to their estancias. The Santos family is only one of several foreigners owning a massive amount of Paraguayan soil. As described above, the Paraguayan government has sold off a lot of land to cope with debt in the aftermath of war and other conflicts. The EPP fight for a redistribution of land and are opposed to major Brazilian or Argentinian investment companies owning huge amounts of Paraguayan land. The foreign investors are using new technology and machines instead of creating work for the Paraguayan people. Therefore, the Santos family, being Brazilian and owning land the size of Oslo, feel especially insecure about their safety. When talking to Nadalia Santos about going to the areas known as EPP areas, she said her father would not let her go alone and without a good reason. The fact that the EPP has operated for more than a decade without being caught, means they most likely have some support in the local populations, and that someone would alert the EPP if they were recognized. Since a German man was kidnaped during my fieldwork by the EPP, the

organization came up quite a bit on the news. When I lived with the García family and the news came on, they talked sadly about the man being kidnaped, but they did not have a completely negative view of the EPP. María García was against the present government; the corruption, inequality and the lack of jobs in Paraguay, therefore it is fathomable why she recognizes the goal of EPP, while rejecting their methods. Several of my contacts in Paraguay often stressed their dissatisfaction with the present situation of Paraguay, and the ruling government.

Present

As shown through the timeline and paragraphs above, Paraguay has an extremely unstable and violent history that consists of several dictatorships, militant coups, corruption and scandals. A democratic system of government was established as recently as in 1992. This has affected the Paraguayan people in multiple ways, like their lack of trust in the state, the banks, the officials etc.

Throughout my six months in Paraguay everyone I got in contact with talked negatively about the ruling government. The lack of action in pressing issues like upgrading the faulty power lines, maintaining the roads and schools and poor education were the focus of many conversations, both in rural Altos and urban Asunción and amongst all social layers. My contacts blamed former rulers as well as the present for the state Paraguay is in now, and several of often stressed that they did not know if they should laugh or cry in despair. María García insisted excessively that Paraguay needed a new president, she emphasised the bad conditions the schools were in, they rotted and did not get the care and financial aid they desperately needed. This was also highlighted in the news, showing pictures of a school in a big *tinglado,* a shed*,* with classes divided into each of the building's four corners.

The fact that criminals like the EPP are not properly taken care of, in order to protect the people, also weakens the trust in the rulers and the police. Only a minority of Paraguayans from the middle and lower classes have bank accounts; it is difficult, expensive and time consuming to open a bank account today. As a result of the 2001 discovery of the head of the national bank involvement in fraud and other corruption cases, many Paraguayans do not trust that the banks will keep their money safe. The level of corruption in Paraguay is high and pervasive, and was frequently discussed during my fieldwork.

"Only poor people go to jail"

Corruption is flourishing in Paraguay on several levels, from briberies of the local police to politicians, head of the bank and head of the state. As Franks et.al highlight, institutions in Paraguay have been shaped by political, economic and historical processes, and that these institutions have unintentionally facilitated corruption (Franks, Mercer-Blackman, Sab, & Benelli, 2005, p. 2). These are some of the arenas one can see clear traces of the past in the present in Paraguay.

Transparency International measures corruption around the world and ranks Paraguay number 123 of 176 countries, with a score of 30. In comparison to Somalia at the bottom with a score of 10, and Denmark at number one, with a score of 90 (Transparency International, 2017). Corruption is evident in Paraguay on a daily basis. When my boyfriend and I were stopped by the police one day during my fieldwork, they gave us options for not giving us a fine for an illegal crossing. We could give them some cases of beer, or pay a smaller amount of money, and they would tear up the ticket. Mario a *capataz,* foreman, on a property in Altos stressed that only poor people go to jail in Paraguay. His experiences was that rich people would use briberies and connections to avoid jail or get their will in some way, while poor people do not have the same opportunities. Inequality and corruption is clear all the way to the top of the government.

Cartes and burning the parliament

My contacts in Paraguay talked regularly to their friends and family, laughing at the President since it is known that he is corrupt and that his money comes from drugs. President Cartes is far from the first president with a bad reputation; previous heads of state in Paraguay have been accused of having a plane full of drugs on his lawn and corruption.

In the constitution from 1992, introduced after the Stroessner dictatorship, the president may only serve a single five-year term. When Paraguay's present ruler Horacio Cartes in April 2017 tried to change the constitution and remove the restriction, to be able to run for re-election, a massive riot broke loose. These revolts happened during my fieldwork and people from rural as well as urban Paraguay came together in Asunción, the demonstration escalated and resulted in several injuries, one death and burning the parliament. Many Paraguayans are tired of corrupt leaders who can do whatever they please. However, some miss the time of the

Stroessner dictatorship. Mario complained about the present government, and longed for the old Stroessner regime. He stressed that the experienced rate of corruption is higher than ever, the blockade of export made goods like meat much cheaper under the Stroessner era, which is extremely important for many Paraguayans notion of the good life.

As Mario illuminates, history is not a static compilation of events, it changes as time goes on, as well as through development in the current political situation and viewpoint. During the dictatorship people wanted a democratic rule, now they want what they had. Today, Paraguay has the lowest level of support for democracy in Latin America, where 37.4 percent of Paraguayans favour non-democratic systems of government in certain circumstances, and 26.6 percent do not agree that democracy is the best system of government (Ardigó, 2016, p. 2).

Concluding remarks

Low taxes and regulations allow for social mobility, but slow down development. There is no personal income tax, which results in less money for the state to distribute. This has led to bad roads, schools and hospitals, which were key value points for the García family. They were always complaining about the bad shape of the public schools. The Johnson family could afford to send their children to private schools, and did so, because they too felt that the public schools did not have the funds to maintain the buildings and education for the teachers. "The progress in the fight against corruption has been slow as political instability and a strong business sector have deterred efforts" (Ardigó, 2016, p. 2). Since there is a strong correlation between landowners or business people and politicians or people with this type of agency, they vote against higher taxes and other measures that would affect them. This again has resulted in a weak state, in many ways in Paraguay, which has permeated the Paraguayan people.

The political uncertainty and economic scarcity has also resulted in a dependence on strong family ties. Several generations live together under one roof, kin help each other obtain jobs and grandparents raise their grandkids so that their children can work. This has affected the Paraguayans notion of happiness and will be discussed further in chapter six.

As this chapter has highlighted, Paraguayan history is filled with war, dictatorships and political instability. This has not only resulted in the lack of trust in the government and

political institutions, but also affected relationships and the food people consume. Mintz argues that Caribbean cuisine is created by slaves (Mintz, 1996, p. 36), in the case of Paraguay, its cuisine has been created and shaped by war and the need of high nutritional value to balance the scarcity of every meal. As a result of the situation the country was in after the Triple Alliance War the necessity for food with high protein and caloric content was extremely important for survival (Lambert & Nickson, 2013, p. 82). In the aftermath of the war, food was limited and groceries were hard to find. These are some of the ways Paraguayan cuisine has been shaped by the political and historical situation. Cuisine will be discussed further in the forthcoming chapter.

4. Identity and food consumption

"...our hearts and our heads are intimately connected to our stomachs. Eating is not merely a biological activity, but a vibrantly cultural activity as well" (Mintz, 1996, p. 48). Similar to anthropologists such as Sidney Mintz, Richard Wilk and Jane Fajans, I want to discuss the importance of researching cuisine in order to comprehend the broader picture of identity, national and regional cohesion as well as culture. Furthermore, this chapter is aimed at linking food to this thesis' overlying topic of happiness.

For clarification, Jack Goody employs the term "cuisine" with three different meanings; firstly, the *general* name of products of the kitchen, secondly the more *specifically* cultural differentiated cuisine with the high and the low cuisine, and third, the *specialized* sense of the elaborated ways of cooking only found in societies like China, the Middle East and post – Renaissance France (Goody, 1996, p. 7). The main focus in this thesis is on the general name of foods and beverage, however it will also elaborate on the specifically cultural differentiated cuisine with the classes of cuisine.

Introduction

This chapter will look at the significant role food plays on identity and culture. What people ingest is deeply embedded in their identity. I intend to argue that this is the case for Paraguayans. What they eat and drink is a result of historical factors combined with the globalized world Paraguay is a part of. Consumption is a vital part of people's lives, and this chapter will emphasise the connection between what people eat and drink and their notion of the good life. As this section will enlighten, several of my contacts stressed the urge to eat "good food" to achieve happiness.

In order to gain a better understanding of the Paraguayan cuisine, I will initially decipher the eating habits, what people eat and at what times. The phenomenon of the cold beverage "*tereré*" is a highly interesting element in Paraguayan cuisine and social life and the ways it manifests relations and the good life will be visible through empirical examples, this will be the focus of the second subchapter. This will lead to the third section, illuminating the effects history has made on specific Paraguayan dishes, like the *vorí vorí*. The historical aspects of the Paraguayan cuisine will be evident in this section and their importance in society, and the

perception of happiness. The aim of the fourth subchapter is to discuss what Mintz refers to as the classes of cuisine, and bring this into the Paraguayan context. The meals in Paraguay are dictated by several elements, such as the siesta and job opportunities. This will be the subject of the fifth paragraph. The following two subchapters will emphasise the changes Paraguayans are experiencing with their meals as a result of factors such as foreign influences and technology. The eighth paragraph will introduce María García and her projection of the good life through food. The aim of these eight chapters is to give a holistic overview of the relationship between consumption and the notion of the good life in Paraguay, through a combination of empirical examples and a theoretical framework.

Eating habits

Firstly, deciphering eating habits and a brief overview of food and beverages is required to obtain a fundament for further understanding Paraguayan life and why I stress the importance of consumption for Paraguayan culture and happiness. The morning starts off with a cup of *mate cocido*, this is the diluted warm version of the traditional cold *tereré* that I will elaborate further on. With the tea one often just consumes a handful of *galletitas,* small crackers. Being accustomed to a more filling Norwegian breakfast with dark bread or oatmeal, this light morning meal of tea and crackers took some time getting used to, as well as the sounds of my stomach growling. Given that the early stages of my fieldwork fell upon the peak of Paraguayan summer, heat wave and school break, the García family would spend the majority of their time sitting still watching the road. Therefore, the body quickly adapted to not burning as much calories and not needing as much food as usual.

Lunch is the largest meal for Paraguayans, both measured in quantity of food as well as consumers, and is always a warm meal. Throughout the day, family members are scattered around the house, at work, at school, washing clothes and the like, but meals are some of the things that bring them together. Lunch is one such typical meal. The mother starts preparing this feast straight after breakfast. In Altos, lunch entailed rich one-pot stews with different proteins such as chicken or beef and vegetables as well as rice or pasta, made on a bed of charcoal (see figure 4.1). Traditional Paraguayan dishes demand little equipment; the majority of the cuisine consists of relatively cheap ingredients and can be made in one pot. Although Paraguayan dishes often consist of few ingredients, it is still highly time and energy consuming as it is often made outside. Some fruits, vegetables, milk, egg and meat is

cultivated in every household, and reciprocal acts, like giving milk for sowing a shirt, is common. The García family did not grow any vegetables, just some fruits and herbs, and had no milking cow, so they would exchange sowing clothes for milk, vegetables, et cetera.

Figure 4.1 Every meal was made in this pot and "grill". One can find this equipment in all hardware stores around the rural areas of Paraguay. Researchers own photo.

For the Santos family in Asunción, lunch was also the central meal of the day, and it brought the entire family of three generations living and working away from each other, together. Because of their financial situation they did not create their food outside on a charcoal grill on the ground, but had all equipment imaginable in their apartments. The Santos family also made a feast of their lunches, with a variety of dishes, proteins and desserts to every mid-day meal. For lunch, they serve the most delicious beef, beans, rice and imported salmon, with ice cream, cake or a dessert wine afterwards. The father of the Santos family often stressed how important a good meal was for his notion of happiness.

Geertz examines how much of Bali's culture, norms and customs surfaces in a cock ring (Geertz, 1973, p. 417). I argue that much of Paraguay surfaces around creating and consuming food and *tereré*. A huge part of the interaction between family members occurs around the dining table. Often as a result of a lack of other seating arrangements, but also because it is the place where the entire family comes together. The Paraguayan families I have lived with

united the extended family consisting of four or more generations for lunch at least once a week, usually more, some even ate lunch together every day. Consuming food and beverage is more than just an intake of necessary fuel; it's a complex social situation.

Families would talk about current events, watch TV, plan birthdays and discuss hopes and dreams for the future around the table. The kitchen and the dining table turned out to be the place I learned most about my contacts. This arena gave access to observing the ways the families interacted, who bought the food, who prepared the meal, who ate around the same table and in some cases who ate outside. All my contacts stressed that good food and money would make them happier, and able to fulfil their passions. The García family made their family relation very clear during lunch the very first day I lived with them, when I saw that Rodrigo, the father of the household and his mother did not eat inside with the rest of the family, but outside the house. Around the table inside María discussed how nice it would be to divorce her husband and to get rid of both him and his mother. The Paraguayans interacted in general much more with each other around food than they would otherwise throughout the day, both while preparing the meals as well as consuming the food and beverages. I argue that not only solid foods bring the community together, but also beverages like tereré and beer. In Altos, we spent several hours outside in the garden drinking beer, greeting people passing by and sharing a sip of the same glass. Tereré is another drink deeply embedded in a complex set of social relations, with significance to Paraguayan culture and the notion of happiness and relatedness.

Tereré as a way of life

> "Tereré is deeply embedded in our way of being, not because it *makes* us what we are but because we *are* what we are when we drink it" (Alvarenga, 2013, p. 426).

Tereré is a cold herb infusion, similar to cold tea, native to Paraguay. The drink is built upon a base of the distillation of the yerba mate plant *(Ilex paraguariensis)* and water. Lemongrass or mint leafs are usually added, but there are as many different ways of composing the mixture of herbs as there are people in Paraguay. One can add a profound amount of other plants and juices, often depending on individual medicinal needs or family traditions. For the drink to be a proper *tereré* it needs to be served in a yerba mate cup *(guampa),* sipped through a special straw *(yerba mate bombilla)* and is refilled with ice water from a tereré thermos, which

normally comes covered in leather with a holder for the guampa and a logo for a soccer team. The Johnson family had nine or ten of these specialized thermoses on top of their fridge and did not leave the house without one. They come with a leather strap so it is easy to bring along. One can find vendors standing along every road in Paraguay with a table and a massive amount of herbs; they make their favoured mixture of herbs or the blend of the costumer's choice. People frequently stop by these stands on their way to and from work. This is a common sight especially in Asunción and the big cities where many live in apartments without gardens to cultivate their own crops. The García family in Altos grew several supplements to tereré in their own backyard, like lemongrass, mint, orange leaves, burrito and many more.

Unsurprisingly tereré has been declared the national drink of Paraguay with its own "National day of tereré" the last Saturday of February. Tereré is deeply embedded in the Paraguayan culture and for many a sign of trust and acceptance. The first time I visited Paraguay I was in a car with my boyfriend and several men we did not know from before. These men often asked us if we wanted a sip of their tereré, which seemed odd for us back then; sharing tereré means sharing a drink from the same cup and same straw as several other people, and it was something we were unaccustomed to. Throughout my fieldwork I experienced several occasions like this, where a guampa was sent around groups of people. After having lived with Paraguayan people, I got to know tereré and the social meaning behind the beverage. Paraguayans share their tereré with everyone they like; a policeman shares his guampa and bombilla with the construction workers and they share with the farmer they work besides etc. The deeper meaning of the tereré and the openness and entrustment that follows it has become evident.

Mary Douglas insists that there is a sharp division between the social bond that follows sharing a meal opposed to sharing beverage "…sharing of drinks (note the fluidity of the central item, the lack of structuring, the small, unsticky accompanying solids) expresses by contrast [too solid food] only too clearly the detachment and impermanence of simpler and less intimate social bonds" (Douglas, 1972, p. 68). I argue that in Paraguay, the feeling of community, friendship and attachment is much more evident when sharing a sip of the tereré than when eating food. Paraguayan author Alvarenga describes it as a way of joining hands, "…capable of restoring happiness to the sad." (Alvarenga, 2013, p. 432). Tereré is sharing from start to finish; everyone shares the same yerba mate, the same straw and gourd, the same

water and medicinal herbs. Sharing this beverage necessarily means that several people are sipping from the same straw and cup, and this is much more intimate than just the act of consuming food together.

A few years ago, I met Emilio, a Paraguayan man in Spain. He is a seasonal worker with a job at a beach restaurant in the South of Spain during the Spanish summer. My boyfriend, who as a child has lived two years in Paraguay, quickly connected with Emilio. The two talked a great deal about life in Paraguay as well as in Europe. While discussing Paraguay tereré is a usual subject to touch upon, as these two men did. Spain is a sought-after destination for labour migrating Paraguayans, and with the direct flights from Paraguay to Spain, being parted from his country with half the globe in between did not mean he had to be separated from his beloved tereré.

After my fieldwork and in the process of researching tereré as a phenomenon I thought about Emilio and his relationship to the Paraguayan iced tea. Is Emilio's desire for tereré based on his liking of the taste of this beverage, is it caused by the social context that follows it, or may it be the "taste of place" as Fajans describes (Fajans, 2012, p. 5) and a way of bringing a part of Paraguay and his family to Spain? I argue that it probably is a combination of all three. As previously mentioned, tereré is so clearly embedded into the Paraguayan culture, people are encouraged by family, friends, co-workers and the larger society to drink this iced tea. Advertisements for different brands of tereré frequents the televisions, one gets fifteen minutes per two hours of working for tereré-breaks, people bring it to parties, meetings and work. As I have exemplified tereré pervade Paraguayan lives in both highly direct as well as indirect ways. Sharing the guampa and bombilla is a clear sign of confidence, trust and acceptance, several of my contacts drank this beverage multiple times a day, stressing that the social importance of the tereré is a key element to their notion of happiness. Following this particular cold tea is a feeling of friendship, family ties, relationships and safety; and these are cornerstones for many peoples' definition of a good life.

As I returned home after my fieldwork I discovered that 11 131kg of mate was imported to Norway from South-America, between January 1. 2017 and October 6. 2017 (SSB, 2017). This is just the dry leafs of mate; Norway has also imported a massive amount of canned and bottled mate. Mate can now be found in several health food shops and smoothie cafés as well as bars and nightclubs in Oslo. Since mate contains high amounts of antioxidants, vitamins,

minerals, amino acids and caffeine it is regarded as an alternative to coffee and alcohol. For further research, it would be interesting to discover how Paraguayans feel about their cherished national drink become an extremely commercialized product in Europe, deprived of all social relations and connectedness linked to the beverage in Paraguay.

Figure 4.2 A selection of mate sold in a health food store in Oslo. There is a tiny Paraguayan flag on top of the Guayakí logo.

Vorí vorí

There are several other foods in the Paraguayan cuisine with a significant role in the society and perception of happiness and history. As previously mentioned, history is deeply embedded into the Paraguayan cuisine. Vorí vorí is one of several dishes with a massive historical and cultural significance. Vorí vorí means tiny balls in Guaraní and can be reminiscence of a stew of Norwegian raspeballer. There are several ways of making the balls, and in my experience, it can vary from family to family. The vorí vorí that María García made consisted of mandioca flour, Paraguayan fresh cheese, herbs, fat or grease, water and chicken. Vorí vorí is extremely high in calories and protein and since the Triple Alliance War it has been a key factor for ingesting vital nutrients. As previously mentioned, the aftermath of the war sent Paraguay into an era of food scarcity as well as a lack of people to plant, harvest, slaughter, create and distribute the food. Thus, every meal had to be as filling and nutritious as possible. This dish is not only a key source of nutrients, but it also a delicious meal appreciated by most Paraguayans.

Figure 4.3 Vorí vorí with chicken served my last day with the García family. Researchers own photo.

I ate this stew with the García family in Altos, at the cafeteria in Johnson's factory in Asunción as well as on a fancy restaurant with friends also in Asunción. The subject of class and food in Paraguay will be elaborated further in the forthcoming paragraph.

The classes of cuisine

Mintz discusses the classes of cuisine and the distinction between those in the United States who eat filet mignon and those who chuck steak (Mintz, 1996, p. 98). Contrary to this, in Paraguay one finds food like empanadas and previously mentioned *vorí vorí* and beverages like *mate* and *tereré*, which are consumed among every social layer. It is being consumed in both high-end restaurants in Asunción as well as on humble tables around the poor areas of rural Paraguay.

Wilk argues that there is a sharp division between public and private food in Belize (Wilk, 2006, p. 99). Private food being the dishes one eats at home or in the private sphere, and public food on the other hand is what gets served at restaurants and hotels. My experience from Paraguay and to some extent Norway too goes against this theory. In Norway, one can find dishes like the cheap lutefisk and får-i-kål both in restaurants as well as on dining tables in private homes. In the case of Norway, I argue that the class differences are much smaller

than in Paraguay, and this might be a reason why one finds cheap, traditional dishes in restaurants in Norway. The subject of class differences and economy in Paraguay will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

There are several cases of food eaten both at restaurants as well as in homes in Paraguay, and the *asado* is one example. *Asado* is the term for the cherished barbecue in several Latin-American countries (Schneider, 1992). The *asado* is served when one gets a hold of large amounts of meat and is often a celebratory meal. The García family had a barbeque the night before I moved out, with home-made sausage, sirloin, fried mandioca and a lot of beer. This is an example of the typical *asado* in Paraguay, where one gathers family members, perhaps some good friends and a lot of meat, beer and side dishes. The *asado* is not only a phenomenon for the poorer rural Paraguayans but also a meal I was served at fancy resorts and restaurants in Asunción. The *asado* was one of the meals several of my contacts used when exemplifying the importance of good food for experienced happiness and wellbeing.

Although most of the dishes are more or less the same throughout the different social levels in Paraguay, there have been some changes during the last decade. Some of the traditional foods such as the fried potato-like *mandioca* have been altered amongst many of the richer Paraguayans with a focus on and means of eating healthy food. Some of my contacts in Asunción have frying machines that fry without submerging the food in oil, making the highly appreciated vegetable healthier, adapting the typical Paraguayan side dish to their diets. In the same fashion as many Norwegians do with potatoes.

These massive meals are common features in the Paraguayan lunches, and have a strong conjunction to family life, relationships and notions of the good life. At mid-day it is not only the perfect time to have a large meal because of the high temperature and strength of the sun. It is also the time for a small nap and a recess from work, referred to as the siesta.

The changing siesta

The two-hour siesta the majority of Paraguayans can take during the day gives them the opportunity to go home to their families and eat a massive lunch together. Being able to spend every lunch at home with the entire family says a lot about the Paraguayan culture, work and school system. Mintz stresses that "…job opportunities tell people when they can eat and how

long they can take to do it; to a noticeable extent they also therefore tell people *what* they can eat, where, and with whom" (Mintz, 1996, p. 21). Mintz points out how un/employment and employers dictate what, when and where people consume and with whom. The siesta is a common feature in most of South-America as well as in Spain and several other countries. It is an old tradition intended to relieve the workers out in the fields from the scorching sun. In Paraguay today, several manufacturing jobs have opened and a large part of the workers stay inside cool factories, deeming the siesta futile.

A factory owner in Altos told his employees that as long as they work their eight hour shifts, they can start the day as early as they want and work through siesta to be able to get back home earlier. All the people employed at this nut factory have decided to replace the siesta with half an hour lunch break in the lunchroom at work instead of going home for two hours in the middle of the workday. This tiny alteration might have a larger unintended effect on the employees' routines and social relations. Spending more time with co-workers instead of family members might create a shift in the extremely close family ties one now sees in Paraguay. In this factory the majority of the workers are female, and since it is the women who are responsible for creating the midday feast, this will indisputably change both the norm of who makes the food as well as the relationship between husband and wife and wife and children/parents/in-laws, and would be an interesting topic for further study.

In Asunción, at the office of the Johnson family, they also served lunch and did not want their employees to go home in the middle of the day. Marcelo Johnson explained to me the argument for making the workers stay on-sight for lunch, which is that several of the workers have a quite long commute and that they take a much longer lunch break than the thirty minutes they spend in the cafeteria. The majority of the hundreds of workers are men, but there are also some women in the sales department. I will return to this gender division of labour in chapter seven. In Paraguay, men spend more time away from the private spheres of the house than what the women usually do but the norm is to eat lunch at home with the family. It would be interesting to observe the change in family relations in households where both father and mother eat their lunch at work.

The siesta is currently a highly discussed topic in Spain. An alliance of a hundred companies, several unions, activist groups and other interest groups has joined together for reforming the work hours and ultimately abolish the siesta. The purpose of removing the siesta is to make

working hours shorter and more flexible so that people can achieve a "better" balance between work and leisure (Jones, 2017).

There have been several changes in contemporary Paraguay, as previously mentioned we have seen a shift in both political and structural as well as consumption patterns. The preceding paragraph has elaborated on the ways the alteration in the siesta has caused a shift in family relations. The approaching paragraph will discuss the change in what people eat as a result of appropriation, to borrow dishes from different cuisines without losing the characteristics of the more traditional Paraguayan, while enlightening the relationship between food and happiness.

Changes

> "…it is about the emergence of modernity, and what modern life has meant, in relation to food" (Mintz, 1996, p. 3)

Mintz underlines that there has been a change in consumption amongst many nations based on overseas expansion and colonial conquest (Mintz, 1996, p. 17). I argue that in the case of Paraguay the altering of what people eat, as well as when they eat, have been caused by immigration, migration and the emergence of technology. This is not to say that these are solely contemporary factors, I agree with Wilk and Mintz, history plays a significant role in creating a cuisine, but it must be seen in correlation with current trends.

From the beginning of the 20th century migrants from impoverished and embattled nations such as Germany, Italy and Japan have fled to Paraguay, a country providing warm climate and bargain-priced properties. They brought with them new cuisines, techniques, ingredients and tastes that have had a great impact on the Paraguayan kitchen. While the traditional Paraguayan dishes such as vorí vorí, sopa Paraguaya and fried mandioca are still the foundation of Paraguayan cuisine, in birthday parties one will often find the traditional Paraguayan dishes complemented with American pizza. Mintz argues that this way of "adding-on" or supplementing food is frequent amongst nations and can be exemplified by looking at sushi in North America, and how this does not necessarily submerge the more traditional food (Mintz, 1996, p. 24). While Wilk discusses whether culinary diversity will tremble by the weight of the wide spreading uniform food landscape of burgers and fries

(Wilk, 2006, p. 6). In the forthcoming empirical examples, I want to emphasise in the lines of Mintz that in Paraguay, they continue to add new food to their diet, without necessarily removing some of the pre-existing.

"This set of assumptions about culture [as static, fixed and frozen] has fallen away and we have realized that culture is continually made and remade…" (Wilk, 2006, p. 122). I argue that the same can be said about cuisine, like culture, cuisine is shaped by appropriation and revision and it is dynamic. The ways of creating different dishes vary from family to family and generation to generation. This does not imply that the cuisine ceases to exist, it is merely in a constant state of change and progress, adapting to accessible means, knowledge and norms. The ways consume is able to transform itself and adding-on while at the same time maintaining the more historical meals enables the cuisine to grow in alignment with the overall society. Several of my contacts stressed the importance of these new elements of foreign dishes in combination with the Paraguayan dishes as key components to the ideal food consumption and ultimately the source to happiness. What people eat will continue to change in accordance with factors such as migration, and as the forthcoming chapter will elaborate, technology.

Technology

Sofía's definition of the good life, consisting of cheesy food, ice cream and money, is clearly shaped by the increased flow of information and her evident desire to consume what she defines as good food. The emergence of technology has made the world smaller and simplified the flow of information. "Electronic media provide resources for self-imagination as an everyday social process" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4). With smartphones and Internet, one can access an enormous amount of new ideas, wishes and inspiration through pictures and videos of food from all around the world, and in the words of Wilk "making the world a global village" (Wilk, 2006). These waves of new impulses and knowledges has in a major way affected Paraguayan people; they desire ingredients such as Italian Mozzarella cheese and ice cream, Asian apples, as well as American pizza and hamburgers drenched in cheese. Even though my friends in Asunción ate at McDonalds on a semi regular basis, they still appreciated their vorí vorí and drank immense amounts of tereré. As Appadurai puts it, they seek to add the global into their own practices (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4).

Wilk argues that the long-distance movements of ideas, object and language dates back at least 5000 years, and with the telegraph and railroads the world has been a global village for centuries (Wilk, 2006, p. 8). While this might be true, I want to stress the major impact the Internet has had on people. The visible access to goods has become so quick and easy that obtaining information and influence happens every time someone checks their Facebook account. I argue that social media has had an enormous impact on people and their desires for consume, creating new ideals and definitions of happiness.

I stay in touch with some of my Paraguayan contacts through Facebook and they regularly re-post and comment on ostentatious food-videos often originally posted by Americans. Sofía García in Altos re-posts videos of extremely cheesy pizzas, commenting "God, it is so perfect" and "Love of my life, I love you" as well as pictures of chocolate covered strawberries headlined "paradise, or what?!" amongst other delicious dishes. She often showed me similar videos when I lived with them, drooling over how fantastic it would be to be able to eat this food. This was one of her key motivators for studying and ultimately obtaining a job and income.

Sutton enlightens the relation between "to eat" with a general sense of relishing the goods of society and to enjoy life, and this is the point I want to make in this chapter. With empirical insights from the Greek island of Kalymnos, Sutton describes those who get to eat good food i.e. those who enjoy one's portion in life, and those with the desire but without the means to eat rich foods and (Sutton, 2001, p. 27). María and the García family belong to the latter group. The forthcoming paragraph will elaborate this further, having the hope, dreams and aspirations of happiness, consisting of consuming a special type of foods.

The Santos family represent a different part of the Paraguayan population. They live in one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in Asunción, all their children are highly educated from universities in United States, and they have enormous *estancias* with a private plane to fly between them. In many ways, the Santos' are the symbol of the complete opposite of the García family. Still their opinion on food connects these cases. All my contacts in Paraguay underlined the importance of eating good food and being lucky enough to afford good food. What meaning each family gave to the word "good food" varied a great deal, as well as their relationship to Paraguayan vs. international cuisine.

While the García family loved the Paraguayan cornbread, *sopa Paraguaya* and its cheesier relative the *chipa guazu* and *mate cocido* the warm version of tereré, they also dreamt about pizza and hamburgers. The Santos' held tight to their cheesy flatbread *mbeju, fried mandioca* and barbecue and supplemented it with sushi and hamburgers. On the other side was the Johnsons drinking immense amounts of *tereré* and eating *vorí vorí* while importing salmon from Chile. They all took what they wanted from the Paraguayan cuisine and supplemented it with different "add-ons". The common dominator between the families I lived with in Paraguay has been their open desire to share satisfying food with family members, often consisting of somewhat expensive ingredients like mozzarella cheese, in contrasts to the Paraguayan fresh cheese, as well as good beef, pork and eggs. Mintz makes an interesting observation that people consume not just to ease hunger but also out of a desire to feel good and to feel *free*. "The employment of food to achieve a feeling of well-being or freedom is widely felt and understood." (Mintz, 1996, p. 13). Linking food to freedom is a highly relevant aspect of consume in Paraguay as well.

María and the cookbooks

I argue, in conjunction with Mintz, that there are different forms of freedom, "…freedom to move about, …to choose one's clothing, and yes – even one's food" (Mintz, 1996, p. 34). This is a type of freedom many people, like the García family, do not have. The lack of resources restrains them from eating what they want. They cannot decide to have the luscious pizza with mozzarella cheese of their dreams because they cannot afford it. They eat as many eggs as their hens can provide them with, but they have to save eggs for several weeks to be able to make a portion of their favourite *chipa guazu*. Mintz discusses how slaves in the Caribbean experienced a sense of freedom when they were cooking for their masters (Mintz, 1996, p. 46). The slaves got the opportunity to work with sought after ingredients, learning new ways of cooking as well as new recipes, which they could bring with them, giving them knowledge they could use in a time after slavery as well. María García in Altos was far from a slave, but she spent several decades employed as a maid and cook in Buenos Aires. Working for these families María got the opportunity to create delicious foods and learn a tremendous amount of recipes. She worked for a handful different families with a variety of nationalities, such as Dutch, German, Italian and Argentinian. Adapting to their cuisines and acquiring new knowledge gave María joy in life and is something that decades after still brings her a sense of freedom and hope. María's projections of the good life consist of creating delicious foods

and this being her true source of happiness; this is her recipe for utopia but one she cannot fulfil. As Sutton argues, María is "…looking backward to past meals and "prospectively remembering" the special meals" (Sutton, 2001, p. 16). María proudly presented me with her impressive collection of cookbooks filled to the rim with hand-written recipes, and declared that one day she would have enough money to divorce her "no good" husband who spends all their money on bingo and alcohol and once again create the food of her dreams and past.

María often discussed food, herbs and ingredients and she was very keen to know what food we eat in Norway and which fruits and vegetables we cultivate; and for every vegetable and fruit I mentioned she would show me a number of recipes I had to recreate when I returned home. With sorrow in her eyes María would elaborate on how being unable to create the beautiful dishes from her cookbooks deprives her of one of her great joys in life. However, she was grateful for the knowledge she got from working in Buenos Aires and is looking forward to the day she will use them again. As argued, food consumption can be an important instrument for linking the past with the present and future.

Concluding remarks

With the help of scholars such as Sidney Mintz, Richard Wilk and Jane Fajans I have used this chapter to argue the importance of food consumption in the anthropological debate about culture and identity. Stressing the necessity to look at the links between history, politics, food and desires to get a more holistic view of the human society and happiness has been the key focus of this chapter. While the theoretical framework has brought the discussion into a larger debate around food, culture, memory and happiness. The empirical examples have been used to show the major role food and drinks play in the notions of the good life for the people in Paraguay.

I have argued that, creating and consuming food is extremely important in Paraguay, and for Paraguayans notion of happiness. I have discussed this topic in the light of the sharing of time, especially amongst family members. As this thesis will develop further, happiness, well-being and the good life in Paraguay is highly relational, centred around strong social relations to family and the extended kin. As the forthcoming chapter will emphasise, social relations and family bonds rely heavily on the notions of gender and the country's gender imbalance.

5. Gender; ideal and practice

Introduction

This chapter will elaborate on gender in Paraguay, through history and in the present. The main focus is, what the roles of women and men entail and how this affects their notion of happiness. As Diaz and Bui emphasise, gender roles and pressure to conform to these gender roles are key factors for understanding well-being in Latin-American countries (Diaz & Bui, 2017, p. 612). In line with Archetti and Stølen, I wish to explore how people's notions of masculinity and femininity can affect actions, and how it relates to the idea of the good life in particular (Archetti & Stølen, 2008, p. 272). The relationships between the genders and the notions of different gender traits will be related to family life and happiness in chapter six.

As Melhuus and Stølen argue, the social construction of gender plays a significant role in the lives of South-Americans. "They embody meanings which go beyond their original reference of male-female differences, and hence become potent signifiers of more overarching moral issues". (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996, p. 4). As in several other Latin-American countries, the ideal gender notions of the macho, Virgen Mary, the mother, the whore and all categories in-between, are embedded in their construction of gender (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996, p. 4 & 270). Similar to Melhuus and Stølen, I want to stress that the discourses on gender in Latin-America are multivocal (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996, p. 2). There are several different opinions on what it entails to be a man or a woman, both ideals and practices, and it is expressed and observed through different aspects of the everyday life. As this chapter will explore, there is not just one singular opinion in the gender discourse in Paraguay, it varies from several different aspects and points of view.

This chapter, like all the other chapters in this thesis are coloured by who I am, a young, white *woman*. Therefore, the information I have received throughout my fieldwork reflects that. As Giovannini puts it, me being a woman researcher in a largely gender-segregated society limited my access to the world of men (Giovannini, 1981, p. 421). My findings are composed of empirical data, which I have gathered from women in Paraguay, combined with some information my boyfriend received while visiting me, and the knowledge and studies of some scholars on the topic. The research and publications made by the Paraguayan Centre for Population Studies (Centro Paraguayo de Estudios de Población (CEPEP)) have also been of great help with the statistical and quantitative background.

The history of women in Paraguay

Throughout history, women have played an important role in Paraguay, and in shaping the country into what it is today. They have been concubines, source of reproduction and production of food and goods, nurses, caretakers, even soldiers through the wars, amongst much else. Women in Paraguay have in several ways, both directly and indirectly, effected change, continuation and survival. Adalberto López describes how in 1545 some settlers had as many as seventy Guaraní concubines in Paraguay, and the poor only had about five or six. (López, 1976, s. 16). While this might have been an exaggeration, he concludes that most had around twenty. With mainly male settlers and these high numbers of Paraguayan concubines, it is not surprising that the mestizo population in Paraguay today counts for more than 95 percent, while the Guaraní is merely 2 percent.

After the Triple Alliance War (1864 – 1870), when 90 percent of the male population were decimated, it is said that there was one man per every 28 women. The women had an incredible job of producing food, mending the wounded and re-establishing the population. The Paraguayan women have also been given some credit for aiding the soldiers, and even fighting alongside them in the battle of Piribebuy (O'Leary, 2013, p. 106).

When I discussed the notion of masculinity and Paraguayan men with my contacts in Asunción, some mentioned that with a history of being several women per man, it is no wonder why the Paraguayan men of today act the way they do. Emphasising Paraguayan men as arrogant, and treating woman as subordinate. The term subordinate is assigning women with a secondary status opposed to men. In Asunción, they said that throughout history, women have been chasing men, while men could choose freely amongst the great number of women, compared to the few men. Some use this notion of the country's history as an explanation to the macho culture, which I will discuss further in a forthcoming paragraph. However, machismo is not merely a Paraguayan phenomenon, it is a feature in other Latin American societies as well, with different historical and social composition.

Feminism

The women's movement in Paraguay, and women fighting for equality, has a rugged and uneven past, dating close to a century back. Influenced by the women's movement in Europe and North-America, María Felicidad González started the Centro Femenino del Paraguay

(CFP), the Women's Center of Paraguay in 1921 (ABC Color, 2011). She is often referred to as the mother of feminism in Paraguay, and one of the earliest leading females fighting for women's rights. In the coming decade, the Paraguayan Women's Union was established, with their own journal, "Por la Mujer", For the Women. "Por la Mujer" was the first feminist paper in Paraguay, and together with the Union the goal was to raise awareness of women's rights and equality of the sexes, amongst other causes.

Due to the close ties between the Paraguayan Women's Union and the socialist Revolutionary Febrerista Party (PRF), when the leader of PRF was sent to exile in the late 1930', the Women's Union went down with the Party. This was unfortunately not the last time the women's movement in Paraguay was disassembled. The same was to happen to the Women's Democratic Union, established in 1946 and dissolved after the Paraguayan civil war in 1947. The organized activities fighting for women's rights stagnated under the patriarch and dictator Stroessner as well, women's rights were far from his agenda. They have had to fight against the ruling parties throughout their existence. During the last four decades, and since the last part of the Stroessner era, a variety of women's groups and associations have emerged in Paraguay. There are several feminist circles, unions and groups in Paraguay today, mainly in Asunción. Amongst much more, they are fighting for equality, women's rights and as of recent, gay rights (Roett & Sacks, 2013, p. 436). As previously mentioned, the first female candidate in a presidential election was Blanca Olevar in 2008, who came in second.

On February 24, Paraguay's Women's Day is commemorated, in conjunction with the first Assembly of American women in 1867, taking place at the Plaza de Mayo in Asunción. In this meeting, women from both the capital and the interior participated, and by mutual agreement, they decided to gather their jewels to help the cause of the War of the Triple Alliance (Méndez, 2012). In Paraguay, Día de la mujer, the Women's Day are greatly celebrated and appreciated, with dancing and festivities. These events bring together women from the entire town, they dress up in nice clothes, dance, eat and drink, and spend time with family and the extended family out in the public sphere. These are key elements for many Paraguayans notion of the good life. They actually celebrate both the Paraguay's Women's Day on February 24 and the international Women's Day on March 8. Men in Paraguay however, they do not have a day of their own. Even though women have fought for their rights in Paraguay for close to a century, they were amongst the last in the continent to have the right to vote, which they could for the first time in 1963 (Roett & Sacks, 2013, p. 433).

Women in present day Paraguay continue to fight for equality, women's rights, freedom and safety.

Gender in contemporary Paraguay

A report from CEPEP illustrates, the women's movement in present day Paraguay still faces adversity. The study shows that 1/3 of all married or previously married women have experienced verbal abuse from a partner. As this chapter will show, the ways men treat women in Paraguay ranges from the stereotypical macho to the partner/provider. Young men in Paraguay today are being exposed to social pressure from friends and family to behave in a particular way that coincides with the norms of that area or social group. The macho and the partner/provider will be discussed in more detail in a forthcoming paragraph.

In Fleming, Andes and DiClemente's study of young men and the notion of masculinity in Paraguay a seventeen-year-old man describes his perceived difference between girls. The young man characterizes two types of young women, the casual and formal girls "The casual girls dress extravagantly, they want to show off too much, and the others [formal girlfriends] dress more decently, they know how to act when they are around guys" (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 660). The boy describes the much-discussed ideal traits of the Virgin Mary versus the whore in South-America (Archetti & Stølen, 2008, p. 270).

The distinction is quite visible in Paraguay, as the young man mentioned there is a difference between those girls who dress revealing, party after 11pm and smiles and giggles when being yelled at by boys and men, on the one hand. Versus those who dress more "proper" i.e. more covered, and go home before 11 pm. I often discussed this with my female friends in Asunción, and they were always aware of what they wore, when they left the bar/club, and what impression it would give. They knew very well about the notions of the "ideal woman and mother".

There are also those who get mad and shout back when being catcalled by men. According to the Johnson granddaughters, this is an increasing sight in the capital, they themselves yelled back frequently during my time with them, and hoped more women would join them in the future. They demanded respect and were not going to accept that kind of behaviour, as they put it.

The distinction between “formal” and “casual” women appears to be quite clear. However, as I observed in both Asunción and Altos, the situation is much more complex and ambivalent than it might seem. One can see far more bare skin and large breasts on television in Paraguay than in Norway, for example. From breakfast television to soap series and everything in between, there were often half-naked ladies. Sofía, Ana and their mother María García were rolling their eyes and said it was vulgar, cheap and that those women did not deserve respect. On the other side, they watch Sex and the City with great smiles and laughs in the evenings, they themselves dress in revealing clothes, stay out later than 11pm and have children with several different men. There is an obvious distinction and contradiction between practices, how they view others, and their ideals. The girls in the García family would be categorized as “casual” girls, by the young man in the previously mentioned study, however, their ideals were being “formal” girls, finding a man, who is not a macho, but a partner and a provider.

While the Catholic religion is an important aspect of the lives of Paraguayans, a faithful, long-lasting marriage is a rare sight. Affairs are a common practice, as well as having children outside wedlock and cohabitation amongst unmarried women and men. “…the percentage of children born out of wedlock and the number of single mothers have increased in the three decades from 1970 to 2000” (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 312). I was told that one of my contacts in Altos had a lover on the side, and some even claim men can have an entire family, besides their “formal” family. The one who gave this information told me he had three half-sisters, and that this normal.

However, it is not merely men who cheat on their partners. In Altos, Mario said his mother-in-law abandoned her family and went to live with another man. Family is a key component to the notion of happiness in Paraguay, and the composition of the family and how this is connected to the research question will be discussed further in the forthcoming chapter.

The gender roles can be connected to Ortner’s notion of nature/culture whereas she tied women to nature and men to culture, or Rosaldo’s concept of the “domestic” orientation of women and the “public” being more available to men (Rosaldo, 1974, pp. 17 - 18). They both confined women to the domestic sphere. I was seldom in a house without one or more women present. However, it was common to see a lack of men in the house. As Rosaldo and Ortner, I connect culture and social life in the public sphere to the men in Paraguay. Living in Altos, the men in my informants’ household would often be out of the house, relaxing or helping out

their friends or extended kin. Children are raised and thought to mirror the adults' customs. In the Mario's family the boys would either be at school or helping their father with his work. The girls spend divide their time between school, cooking, cleaning and nurturing family ties, especially with their mother. The daughters in the García family were always with their mother, assisting her or cleaning the house.

However, I will not argue that this is a static situation. There are women's marches, festivals and some attention to women's rights. There were several massive marches and festivals on the International Women's Day March 8, in the larger cities in Paraguay. Women and some children and men took to the streets, demanding equal payment, respect, justice for raped women, abortion laws and much more (ABC Color, 2018).

Figure 5.1 A boy marching in Asunción, March 8. 2018, with a sign loosely translated to "If you want a world without violence: Educate me with respect and equality, free from abuse and *machismo*!" Photo from the open account of ParoMujeresParaguay on Instagram.

One warm, early morning in the beginning of February, Sofía García I went to her grandmother's house to watch a rally taking place right outside her doorstep. When breakfast and lunchtime came, her uncle was responsible for making the traditional *sopa Paraguaya* and assisting his wife in the outdoor kitchen area. They were blissfully laughing and joking over the hearth, while making the food. He proudly presented the food he had made and begged me to take second and third portions. This was the first and last time I witnessed a man in Paraguay actively participating in the production of the meals, but it still reflects some mobility in the gender roles. I have also had a female taxi driver in Asunción, although this was a one-time experience, it illuminates different deviations from the norms.

Men with the men and women with women

The division between men and women is quite evident in Paraguay, especially in terms of labour. Traveling around rural Paraguay, visiting small empanada shops and other restaurants and kiosks, one often finds two relatively equal shops next to each other, one employed by men, having only male guests. The other employed by women, with only female guests. I often bought one empanada from each "side" to see if there was any difference, usually there was none, other than the gender of the guests and the employee, and the looks I got when I walked into the "wrong" one, i.e. the one reserved men. It is a common sight in Paraguay, men work with men and are visited by men, while women on the other hand work with other women, and have female costumers.

As Roett and Sacks elaborate "Rural women in Paraguay perform all domestic work ...They cook, collect firewood, tend the hearth, and raise the children" (Roett & Sacks, 2013, p. 434). They perform these chores in the company of other female friends and most commonly female family members. A man doing these chores is unthinkable for most Paraguayans. However, this is not a static attitude, the gender roles in Paraguay are in constant change, and as previously mentioned, it depends on the point of view. As several of my contacts in Asunción discussed, they would appreciate a man who would help out around the house, help with the grocery shopping and tidying. Daughters in both the Santos family and the Johnson family elaborated on how this would improve their lives, removing some of the stress, create equality and eventually lead to what they defined as a more *tranquilo* and better life.

The differences between men and women in the labour market are massive. This sharp gender division is not merely evident in who is working with who, but also the type of work and salary. Both the representation of women in the formal and informal sector, as well as the salary. "Women's monthly incomes are equivalent to only 71.0 percent of those of men, the majority of women working in the informal sector with highly vulnerable working conditions and no access to social security" (UN Women, 2017). As this UN rapport states women earn less than men, they are more likely to work in the informal than in the formal sector, often without any work security or rights. This was some of the issues women marched for in Paraguay on the International Women's Day 2018 and are key components to their notion of well-being. As will be described further in chapter seven, women are often hired on a temporary basis, earn money through selling fruits from their garden, and barter, exchanging

sowing for milk, a haircut for eggs and so on. Sofía García often discussed her dissatisfaction with the job opportunities for women in Paraguay and her desire for a proper job, that pays well so she can help her mother and be able to buy what she needs to achieve happiness.

Not only are men and women separated in terms of formal labour, but they also have agency and operate in different spheres. As I will discuss further, men in Paraguay are more frequently out in the public sphere, while the private sphere is reserved for women. Walking through any rural town in Paraguay, seeing women sitting in one group, usually inside or in close proximity to the house, and men in a group outside or in front of a bar or restaurant is a common sight. This represent far more than preferred seating arrangements, it can be seen as a representation of their respective agency.

Female agency

"While men spend much of their time outside the house, for both labour and leisure activities, women are seen to belong to the house and are responsible for running the household. In Cuba, this typically includes cleaning the house on a daily basis, shopping for groceries, cooking and ensuring that bills are paid" (Pertierra, 2008, p. 745).

Similar to Pertierra's description of Cuba, the women in Paraguay are responsible for all "back-stage" activity. They tend the house and the garden, go grocery shopping, take care of the children, pay the bills, cook and clean. While the men on the other hand spend their days outside in the public sphere, employed or unemployed. This became evident when I lived with the García family in Altos. I paid my rent to the mother of the household, and she distributed it and took care of the daily purchases of food. The daughters were responsible for cleaning the house while the mother was in charge of the money, buying groceries and cooking. If the mother was away for some reason, the division of chores changed. The eldest daughter took over the cooking, while the youngest cleaned the house and washed clothes.

While men spend the majority of their time outside in the public sphere, I argue, that food and consumption are very much connected to women's agency, although often inside the perimeter of the house. According to Rouse and Hoskins "…food and consumption are tied to understandings of empowerment and agency" (Rouse & Hoskins, 2004, p. 239). Food being

under the control of the women and a key source to the notion of the good life in Paraguay, both for men and women, gave women agency.

Machismo and the meanings of being male

"…the macho man is generally understood to be a dominant male who is aggressive, makes major decisions for his wife and children, has extramarital sexual relationships, drinks and smokes and spends his money as he pleases" (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 253).

Harris argues that the term "macho" arose in a dialogue between North American and Mexican popular culture, originally exemplified with the solitary cowboys (Harris, 2008, p. 294). The notion that the term "macho" is universal and uniform, therefore there is no need for explanation, is incorrect (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996, p. 14). "…masculinity cannot be treated as something fixed and universal" (Archetti, 1996, p. 34) As both Melhuus, Stølen and Archetti emphasise, the term entails different meanings and connotations from country to country, town to town and people to people. Thus, I have used the above cited, definition of the macho man by Fleming, Andes and DiClemente. The definition covers quite well the notions many Paraguayans have of what being a macho man constitutes. When discussing *machismo,* the dominant and unfaithful often comes up, as well as spending all the family's money on bingo, as in the case of Rodrigo García and the father of Isabella Johnson and her siblings, as well as drinking all day, which again is addressed as a cause of unhappiness. Sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships can also characterize the macho (Nencel, 1996, p. 57).

Jealousy is another a key component to the notion of being macho in Paraguay. In Altos, I was frequently told about jealous boyfriends in the context of describing a macho man. The sense of ownership towards women is in Paraguay, and especially in Altos, evident in the description of the macho. However, this behaviour was not always viewed as a negative aspect of men, by women. Several of the women I was in contact with discussed their jealous, dominant men, laughing, almost with a sense of pride of having a man that wants her all to himself. The ambivalence previously discussed, it is not merely regarding women's notion of their own gender, but also reflecting what they desire in their partners. They wish for both the ideal macho and the partner/provider, since it is difficult for women to obtain a stable income

and job. Gender insecurity is a key element to frustration and unhappiness in Paraguay, as figure 5.1 shows. As I will elaborate further later on, men's behaviour might be related to their fear of being gay, and earning the respect of their parents.

In Fleming, Andes and DiClemente's study of the notion of masculinity in Paraguay, the young men described two types of masculinities, the macho and the partner/provider (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 562). Through the study, the researchers saw the Paraguayan boys performing their masculinity as part of their transition to adulthood. I argue that this is not merely a state of transition for young men in Paraguay, during my fieldwork I also experienced these characteristics amongst older men as well. Performing masculinity, either as the macho or the provider, is not reserved to young men.

As discussed in chapter three, several presidents in Paraguay have had multiple affairs and children with numerous women. For many, this has become socially accepted and a sign of being a macho and not gay. "…they would be called gay if their behaviour was not in line with the macho norm" (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 658). Homosexuality will be discussed further in a forthcoming paragraph. Bragging about affairs, lovers and mistresses to friends is not uncommon, neither in rural nor urban Paraguay. One of my contacts in Altos told my boyfriend, while he visited me, that his friends always brags about their mistresses. Throughout my fieldwork in Altos I was frequently told rumours about different men in town, who they were married to and which lovers they had.

Disrespecting women and cheating on their regular partners with other women is openly elaborated in Paraguay (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 657). However, the desire to break out of these stereotypes is on the rise. When asked how one is supposed to act to show that one is a man, a seven-teen year old informant told Fleming, "… work, be honest, not have vices, respect your woman, and your family. Because, if you drink, you have vices . . . [you] get into drugs". As the young man described, he did not want to be associated with the macho man I refer to in this thesis, those who drink, are dishonest and with sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships (Nencel, 1996, p. 57).

As Fleming, Andes and DiClemente's study shows, there are competing discourses in Paraguay about what it means to be a man, even differences inside a small community or village. The differences can from town to town, but also from generation to generation, thus the ambivalence many women feel towards their own gender and their partners, the men in

Paraguay experience the same uncertainty.

As figure 5.2 shows, opposed to the macho, Fleming, Andes and DiClemente place the partner/provider. The partner has a long-term perspective for the relationship and is expected to respect and to provide for his family. The husband of one of the Santos daughters also related this to the notion of being a gentleman, with the expectations of opening the doors for his wife etc. He stressed that his mother-in-law would be angry if her daughter had to walk from the car in the rain while she dropped of her husband close to the entry of the mall we were going to. He said this jokingly, but the tone and the look he got from his wife revealed that this most likely was not far from the truth and that it might have happened before. He was in many ways expected by her family and his surroundings to be the provider and what is considered the proper gentleman.

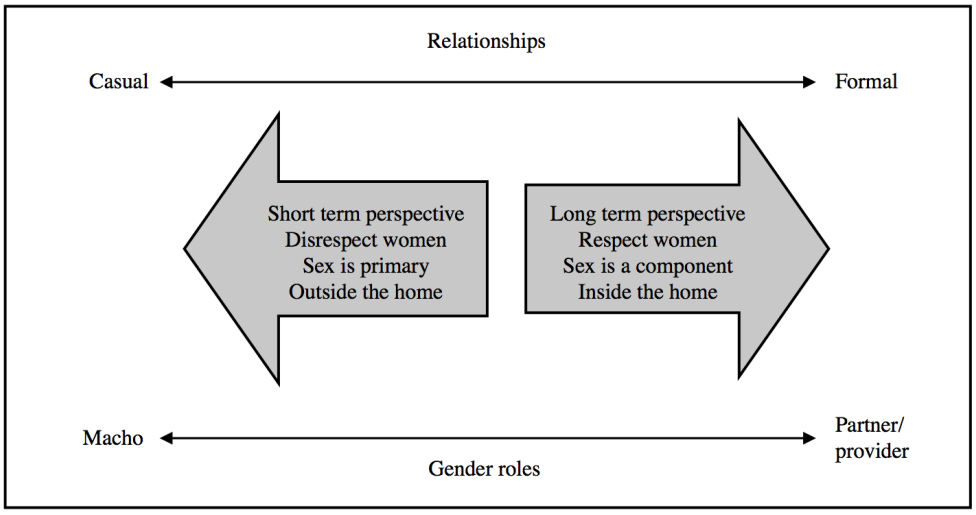


Figure 5.2, from (Fleming, Andes, & DiClemente, 2013, p. 661).

Maríanismo

Maríanismo is referred to as the female ideal counterpart to machismo. (Melhuus, 1988, p. 2). While machoism, as discussed above, can be characterized by (sexual) dominance or aggression towards women, and competitive amongst men. Maríanismo on the other hand, is described with connotation to Virgen Mary, with traits such as virginity, chastity and faithfulness (Archetti & Stølen, 2008, p. 270). The idea of women being compared to Virgen Mary, can also be related to the "formal" girl. The woman who does not stay out late, nor dresses too vulgar, but rather spends time in the private sphere, tend to her house and children.

It is interesting to observe how the social pressure men and women receive from their surroundings can be so different. While men are encouraged to spend most of their time outside with friends, drinking and having casual relationships with preferably multiple women. Women, on the other side, preferred to stay at home with their families, preparing meals and sowing clothes, striving towards the ideal of Virgin Mary. The grandparents in the Johnson house often talked with a worried tone about their granddaughters not living at home with their family, but with friends, and going out partying. While their grandsons never received the same amount of concern. This will be discussed further in the forthcoming chapter.

There is a clear ideal of gender relations, but factors such as a shortage of men, and other historical factors, has led to a derive from this ideal. The ideas are in many instances monogamous nuclear families, with a pronounced sexual difference between the genders; the superior status and authority owned by men, and chastity dedicated to women. They attached high value to the reserved, nurturing, self-sacrificing mother and often a suppression of homosexuality (Harris, 2008, p. 293).

Homosexuality

As previously mentioned, the fear of being labelled a homosexual is quite evident amongst many heterosexuals in Paraguay. Male homosexuality has been referred to as the unnameable sin since the centuries after the Spanish conquest, and is deeply embedded in history as contradicting God's laws (Harris, 2008, p. 279). In the García family, homosexuality is far from acceptable. The five-year-old boy living there told me a story about the other children in his kindergarten and (perhaps wrongfully) addressed one of the other kids as his *novio* (boyfriend) instead of *novia* (girlfriend). His grandmother overheard this and angrily corrected him, saying with a sharp voice that boys do not have boyfriends, they have girlfriends. Her attitude towards homosexuality is quite clear, and also her notion of what it means to be a man. One of my contacts told me that there is a man in Altos who is gay, apparently the whole town knows about it, even though he is not openly homosexual. When, for whatever reason, he is sick, the rumours claim it is HIV.

These views on homosexuality do not reflect the opinions of all Paraguayans. In Asunción, I discussed homosexuality with the Johnson grandchildren, they knew several gay people, and while they did not have the easiest time in school, the attitudes in *their* social group had changed over time. Now, it has become more acceptable to be gay in some areas of Paraguay, and they claim that people "coming out" are more frequent now than before, at least in the big cities. Some of the grandchildren of Johnson have distanced themselves from the Catholic faith, and no longer believe in religion. Some of them are also vegetarians. These characteristics are considered highly alternative in Paraguay, since the majority of the population is Catholic, carnivores and heterosexual. However, the "alternative scene" in Paraguay is growing, and according to some of my contacts in Asunción, breaking out from the norm is gaining acceptance. At least amongst the younger generations and some socio-economic spheres. While it is still difficult to be openly gay in Paraguay, different movements, such as the women's movement are fighting for gay rights as well. They even paraded with the rainbow flag on the Women's Day march. However, I have not come across any information during my fieldwork regarding lesbians.

Concluding remarks

In defining "the other" whether it is the maleness or the femaleness, one is inevitably defining one self. This reflexivity is an important part of life in Paraguay, and also a component to happiness. What constitutes a good man has often been discussed, amongst my female contacts, during my time in Paraguay. I was frequently given examples of the traits of a desirable man; kind, long beard and muscles, in Asunción they also stressed the desire for him to help out around the home. I also received examples of the wrong man, and in Altos, the women in the García family used the father as an example; drinking, not doing anything for the house, not working, being lazy. María García emphasised that his behaviour gave her anxiety and that if she had the money, she would move out, and that was the key to her happiness. The previously mentioned cases have been used to underline how the different notions of gender effects a good relationship at home, which again is connected to the notion of the good life and happiness.

During my fieldwork, I have come to understand how the good life is strongly related and even depending on the well-being of marriage and the home. When a husband is unfaithful or uses the salary on bingo, this is depriving his wife of happiness, as María García often

stressed. Abuse verbally and physically in marriage also inhibits happiness, and as the UN rapport states, this happens to 1/3 of all married or previously married women in Paraguay. The importance of the family, and extended family, in relation to the good life, will be discussed in more detail in the forthcoming chapter.

The significance of family

Introduction

"Family was at the centre of the meaning of happiness: Being with the family, speaking with family members, visiting, going camping on the land together, sharing food, and many other family-related activities were closely associated with wellness, happiness, health, and healing" (Kral & Idlout, 2012, p. 391). Kral and Idlout's research from the Inuit in Arctic Canada, though from a highly different context, describes the link between family and the notion of the good life. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, this is highly relevant to the Paraguayan situation as well. I argue that people in Paraguay emphasise the need for social support, primarily from the family, and have a relational sense of wellbeing. I will discuss this in coalition with Paraguayans in both rural and in urban areas.

In contemporary Paraguay, the majority of the household are led by men. In this thesis, I will use the term "household headship" as the head of the family. Liu, Esteve and Treviño define "household headship" as the status of person recognized as such by other household members (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 313) . I want to add that it is the one who makes the majority of the decision regarding the household and the family.

There is a great sense of collectivism and interdependence in Paraguay. For different reasons, people rely heavily on family members, they spend the majority of their time together, take care of the elders and young ones, as well as the extended family. They work together, eat together, go on vacations together and live under the same roof. In Paraguay, there is a clear connection between family, food, relationships, and collectiveness. Family relationships are highly related to the quality of life, and as I will discuss further later on, they have in many cases the role friends and the government fill in Norway, for example.

As long as the family is a source of happiness, Paraguayans are happy. However, when there is something that is not working, the family can cause great distress, anger, and deprive members of the family of the good life, as shown through María García. She has grown more and more unsatisfied with her husband, labelling him lazy, fat, useless, accusing him of spending all their money and not bringing any money in. Now, her notion of the good life is to get rid of her husband. She wanted her family to be together as long as it provided happiness, when it ceased to bring happiness, then she would rather be a lone mother to her five daughters and grandson. This implies that the family is extremely important to

Paraguayans, however, merely as long as all the components function properly and it results in well-being.

Gender roles and the notion of masculinity and femininity is embedded in the perception of the importance of family, related to happiness. Women tend to spend more time in the home sphere with the closest family, nurturing family bonds and taking care of children and grandparents. While men on the other hand, spend the majority of their time outside in the public sphere, though also with his extended family. This is furthermore related to labour, and bringing family and relations into the work sphere.

Unstable unions have been ascending in Paraguay during the last decades. As Liu, Esteve and Treviño emphasise "... [there has been a] rise in cohabitation, divorce and separation, non-marital childbearing, and lone motherhood…" (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 316). During my fieldwork, I saw several examples of what Liu, Esteve and Treviño describes. The mother and father in the García family are divoced, yet they live on the same property in some "unfunctioning" sort of cohabitation, as the mother often stressed. Their daughter is a lone mother with a child outside marriage, and she is by no means a rare case. As I will discuss in the sixth section of this chapter, cohabitation and non-marital childbearing is flourishing in Paraguay, in both rural and urban areas.

The matrifocal family

In Paraguay, the majority of households have men as "household headship". However, "the Mother" is an extremely important figure in Paraguay, as well as several other Catholic and Latin-American countries (Giovannini, 1981, p. 410). The presence of female-headed households (matrifocality) is also an increasing feature of Latin American family systems (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 311). This can be a result of the legalization and increase in divorce, children out of wedlock and lone motherhood. As there is a growing number of women with children with absent fathers, they eventually become head of their own household. I often saw the mother as the head of the family, where fathers played a less important role in the house and in raising children, like María García and her daughter Ana.

The legalization of divorce and an increase in divorce and separation often result in women taking the children, at least the daughters, and establishes a new household, with themselves on top of the hierarchy. This was the dream for María García, and in her opinion the source to happiness, however, it is quite expensive. In Paraguay, a mutually agreed separation costs approximately 10 million Guaraníes (14 000NOK) , and a conflicting divorce costs around 18 million Guaraníes (25 000NOK), this is close to an annual salary, and more than what most women earn in a year. There are several couples who do not legally divorce because of the expenses involved, so they decide on a private agreement (Martínez, 2014). The previously mentioned expenses of the trial, especially with a juvenile child, divorce is legally a lot of work and extremely expensive for the García family and many others in the same situation (Martínez, 2014).

Why family matters

As previously mentioned, family plays an essential role in the notion of the good life amongst Paraguayans, and there are several reasons to why this is so. Some of the reasons can be that they view their family member as their closest friends. Young people in Paraguay live with their parents far longer than what we do in Norway for example, often until marriage. Several generations live together, helping each other when in need. Furthermore, the lack of a strong government and welfare system forces people to rely more heavily upon each other.

Family members in Paraguay fill a role often friends have for many Norwegians, for example. They consult in other family members, more frequently than with friends. When the daughters in the García family had something that they did not want to tell their immediate family, they could always confide in a cousin. I discussed this with several Paraguayans, both in Asunción and Altos, it seems that family in Paraguay have the role friends fill in Norway, while friends in Norway are equivalent to acquaintances in Paraguay. This can be a result of the amount spent with each group.

The majority of un-married Paraguayans live with their families. It is highly uncommon for young people to live with friends, in collectives and other living arrangements frequently seen in Norway. In Norway, few Norwegians live with their parents consistently from birth until marriage, while this is the norm in Paraguay. I will discuss this further with reference to the Johnson family and gender in a forthcoming paragraph of this chapter.

When the family live together for so long, there is a rise in non-marital childbearing and women often get children at a young age, the result is that three or four generations live under the same roof. When several generations, and family members live together, they spend a lot of time in each other's company. María García took often care of her grandson, as did the boy's aunt, while his mother was out. The boy grew up with extremely close bonds to his aunts and grandmother, and he would spend more time with them, than his own mother. In Paraguay, young, lone mothers, frequently rely heavily upon other family members to watch their child, so they can finish school and continue their lives as it was before the child. This is one of the reasons why strong family relations are so important, and how it can relate to their notion of the good life.

The relationship between strong family ties and perceived happiness can be found all over the world. From Singapore, Tambyah and Tan have found that personal relationships such as marriages, families and friends play a big part in Singaporeans notion of happiness (Tambyah & Tan, 2012, pp. 128 - 129). The similarities and resemblance to Paraguayans notion of the good life is unquestionable. Also in Thailand, it is said that "Happiness among Thai people occurs from harmonious interpersonal relationships among family members, friends and neighbours" (Gray, 2012, p. 144). These results were regardless of factors such as gender, age, religion, living in rural or urban areas. As mentioned above, interpersonal relationships are extremely important to Paraguayans as well. However, as I will elaborate further, they will be defined and weighed differently based on the different factors stated above.

The lack of a strong government and welfare system can also be one of the reasons why Paraguayans rely so heavily on family ties. Where in Norway we have sufficient systems for salaries for the unemployed, lone mothers and the elderly. Paraguay have nothing compared to these benefits. Therefore, the Paraguayans are depending on good family relationships, barter and reciprocity, to obtain an income and different goods, as will be discussed more detailed in chapter seven.

Gendered happiness

"…single women were overrepresented in the labor force, while married women were underrepresented." (Wainerman, 1980, p. 185). A woman is expected to stay at home with her

children while they are young. In Paraguay, as in many other places around the world, the norm is that women take care of the private sphere, entailing amongst much more, the house, land and family. Therefore, as Wainerman describes, the majority of the women in the labour force are single. When a woman marries and get children, she is supposed to retract from the labour force and remain in the private sphere, to be closer to the ideal Mother. This was quite evident in Paraguay, as none of my contacts, who were mothers, worked. María García sometimes took odd jobs, sowing cloths to bring in some extra cash since her husband did not work, but she stayed within the perimeter of her house, in the company of her daughters. As did Mario's wife.

In Paraguay, the ideal is to live with family until marriage. First after the young man or women is married, then they move out of the family home, and into their own place. When young women decide to live in another place than with her parents, it is often thought that she comes from an unhappy home, in which fails at being a proper family. The parents are often embarrassed over those who move out before marriage, this applies especially to women, and was often mentioned by the grandmother in the Johnson family. This can be related to the term "Maríanismo" which was discussed in chapter five. Many young women in Paraguay feel an expectation from her family and society to behave like their ideal perceptions of Virgen Mary; to dress in an orderly fashion, not stay out too late and not have "inappropriate" relations to men. Most often, parents want to have their daughters under their roof, and be able to overlook and control that she follows these norms. Shame, unhappiness and worry is often the result when the practice deviate from this ideal, like in the Johnson family.

When young women move out of their parents' house, before they are married, the disappointment and embarrassment is much larger than when young men do the same. As the previous chapter emphasised, the norms are not equal for young men and women, and men are to a large degree expected to be more outside with friends in the public sphere. In the Johnson family, they had both young boys and young girls who moved out of their parents' home before marriage. When I asked the oldest generation how they felt about this, they would stress that it is wrong that the girls do not live with their mother. They blame the mother, i.e. their daughter, for her family not being a "proper" family who lives together. I was frequently questioned by María García about how I could possibly spend six months away from my own mother during fieldwork. The relief María and her daughters expressed when I told them I would meet my mother on a vacation after I had lived with them for nearly

two months was enormous. Not because of a job, but to voluntarily spend time away from family members, living in different apartments, cities and even countries, not sharing meals and time together was unfathomable.

Food consumption and family

As discussed in chapter four, food is an essential part of Paraguayan culture. Cultivating, creating, and consumption of food is vital to the notion of the well-being and happiness in Paraguay. During my fieldwork, food has been the continuous theme regarding their notion of the good life. All my contacts talked passionately about eating and creating delicious food. When looking further at the topic of food, I came to realise that the good life did not occur in the mere act of consuming the food, but the context that surrounded the meal, more specifically the people.

When Paraguayans have some extra money, usually days after they receive salary or other payments, they frequently spend it on food, usually in form of a big *asado*, inviting the extended family and friends. People in rural Paraguay often say they can receive payment in form of meat or beer. However, this does not necessarily imply the raw product, but can be a symbol for sharing a meal or beverage. The employees living on a farm visited frequently invited the owner of the property over for an *asado,* as a thank you for giving them a job and a house. As I will discuss further in chapter seven, a worker named José often offered to get paid in good beer for his labour, insinuating drinking the beer together. I have seen him drinking a beer with one of his employers several times, talking and having a good time. The social bonds that follow sharing a meal or a beverage in Paraguay are extremely important to Paraguayans notion of the good life. The importance of a "good meal", referring not only to the quality of the food, but more having a good time with the people sharing it, has become quite evident through the fieldwork.

As I ate with my contacts, close to every day for six months, not a single one of them was without the company of one or more family members and often extended family as well. The girls in the Santos family work together with their father, and they also ate lunch together every day. Sundays, when they do not work, they often spend several hours in their parents' apartment, talking, watching TV and eating dinner. However, there are some differences

between the Santos family and my other contacts in Paraguay. Except from their financial status, they are also a nuclear family with no children outside wedlock, and no unstable unions.

Unstable unions

"Latin American societies have witnessed a dramatic expansion of cohabitation and rapid deinstitutionalization of marriage over the last three decades. Cohabitation has become the norm among young women in unions in such countries as Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, and has extended into all layers of society, including the most educated populations" (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 312). I argue, cohabitation is a common feature also in Paraguay.

The unstable unions in Paraguay have strong relations to national as well as continental and European history. The ideal of Christian monogamy can be traced back to the Spanish conquest of Latin America and the Jesuits. However, the informal and often highly unequal practice of relationships in Paraguay, can also be drawn from the conquest. With the informal relationship between Cortés, his noble European wife and his Aztec lover Malinche, the Europeans set an example of ambivalence between the ideal and practice (Harris, 2008, p. 280). Cortés and several other conquistadors and settlers highly contradicted the values they brought from Europe. The difference between the "ideal" Christian monogamy and the practice of polyamory.

Divorce and separation is a common sight in present day Paraguay, and a vast amount of the younger generation refrain from religiously formalizing their relationship, in the form of legalized marriage, all together. Non-formalized relations amongst men and women is a frequent sight in Paraguay, both in small towns as well as the capital. According to Liu, Esteve and Treviño, instability of unions can be seen in several other South-American countries (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 312). This can be compared to Norway where cohabitation and "samboerskap" is highly common. In Norway around 25 percent to 30 percent of couples who live together are unmarried, and it is increasing. Amongst young adults, in the age group 16-29 years, the number of cohabitants is greater than the ones who are married. (SSB, 2015)

The unstable unions, and normalizing divorce, has led to a growth in what is often referred to as the "modern family", half- and step children involving different mothers and fathers. Siblings with different parents is a common feature in Paraguay, both in rural and urban areas and amongst different social layers. In the García family in Altos, one of the daughters had a son, and her new boyfriend, not the father of the child, had a daughter from a previous relationship, and a son from yet another. The man's daughter often came to visit or stay with her "new family", and I witnessed both of his children present at the García boy's fifth birthday.

In Asunción and in another financial layer, one of the daughters in the Johnson family had children with different fathers, and was currently not together with any of the men. Her daughter also had a son where the father was not in the picture anymore, but she dated another man with a child from a previous relationship. The Johnson family said that this was not uncommon, but the oldest Johnson generation were not happy with the situation. The increase in "modern families" in Paraguay can be related to Norway as well. Large families with "his, hers and our children" are a frequent sight in Norway. Men and women with children from previous relationships get together, in cohabitation or marriage. Out of about one million children in Norway, 87 000 live with mother/stepfather or father/stepmother. There are 600 000 who live with married parents, the rest live with unmarried parents, just one parent or parents and stepparents (SSB, 2017).

Though this "modern family" situation is a relatively common practice in Paraguay, not everyone wants to live this way. "I'm not like the other women around here that get together with a man, then split up and end up with kids with different fathers" (Bernarda, 2013, p. 438). Bernarda underlines the normality of having children with different fathers in Paraguay, however she does not want to be one of them. Although Paraguay is one of the countries in the world with the highest percentage of Catholics, religion cannot be given all the blame for unplanned children. When I talked to the siblings of girls with children with absent fathers, they underlined that their sister had been "stupid", in their own words. They gave their sister all blame, and said that she knew how to protect herself, i.e. use contraceptives.

Working with family

As this chapter aims to emphasise, Paraguayans spend the majority of their time in the company of family members, which includes working. Like much else, working and labour is also gendered. As chapter seven will discuss, women often work in the private sphere, in proximity of the house. Her daughters accompany her when they are not at school. Young men on the other hand, they often join the father. There is a lot of informal labour in Paraguay, and hiring often occurs through friends, family and extended family. It is common for a man to be hired for a job, often manual labour on construction sights and the like, through another male member of his extended family. If they need more workers, he brings his sons. When I walked by some men working on building a brick wall, I was explained that one of the young men was the son of another employee there, and that his uncle also worked on the same wall. The importance of strong family ties, even with extended family, can in this context be crucial for obtaining work and an income.

In Asunción, both the Johnson and the Santos have family businesses where they have employed several family members. The children and grandchildren of both families are more than capable of obtaining work outside the family business. However, they have a desire to spend time together with their family. This is one of the reasons why they live together, work together, go on vacation together and eat together.

Concluding remarks

Through this chapter I have emphasised that interpersonal relations constitute a fundamental factor for happiness in Paraguay, however I have also drawn connections to other countries as well. Bearing several similarities to Paraguay, Rojas describes the importance of good relations and relationships for Mexicans perceptions of the good life. “Mexicans derive a lot of life satisfaction from having satisfactory relations with their spouses, children, parents and the rest of their extended families” (Rojas, 2012, p. 250). This quote from Rojas sums up this whole chapter and can be translated directly into the Paraguayan context.

As the previously mentioned examples have shown, cross-culturally, the family and social bonds are essential features of wellbeing. A happy family life can be seen as a central element of happiness in many cultures and places, and Paraguay is no exception. As this chapter has emphasised, Paraguayans strive to spend as much time with each other as possible. They live

together much longer than what is common practice in Norway for example, they share meals as often as they can, and they want to work together as well. As my empirical data, together with the collected information from several scholars, has shown, family is a key component to Paraguayans notion of the good life. A non-functioning family on the other hand can cause depression, anxiety and unhappiness, as seen in the case of the García family.

While Kral and Idlout elaborate how family life is at the core of Inuit happiness (Kral & Idlout, 2012, p. 396) and Rojas emphasises the importance of good relationships, I argue that the same can be said about Paraguayan's notion of the good life. Family life and sound relationships to family members, as well as the extended family, is not merely a direct link to Paraguayans notion of the good life. It is also a necessity for barter, aid in times of need, friendship as well as obtaining a job and income, which will be developed further in the forthcoming chapter.

7. Labour, flexibility and a *tranquilo* life

As previously mentioned, agri-business is the largest sector of the Paraguayan economy. The Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos (DGEEC) has published a report on the Paraguayan economy. Loosely translated the report reads, "It is known that the national economy is characterized by high dependence on agriculture and livestock" (DGEEC, 2013, p. 13). Strangely, the report excludes the agri-business, claiming that the "agricultural-livestock sector is outside the context of the census" (DGEEC, 2013, p. 13). The census being named Características de la Economía del Paraguay, one would assume that all major components of the Paraguayan economy would be included. Nevertheless, the report provides insight into several interesting aspects of Paraguayan economy and labour.

This chapter will discuss the agri-business and other key sectors in Paraguay, the different types of labour and Paraguayans relationship towards working. Industry, trade and service are categorized by the DGEEC to be the largest sectors, based on employees and income, besides agriculture. What these sectors contain is discussed further in a forthcoming paragraph. The data for this chapter has been collected via governmental documents, empirical data and other written sources, interviews with government officials as well as foreign scholars on Paraguay. The information is used to provide a through insight into employment in Paraguay and how I link labour to happiness.

Introduction

Primarily, the aim of this chapter is to illuminate the most common types of employment in Paraguay, and how labour is related to the notion of the good life amongst Paraguayans. The first paragraph will show the three largest economic sectors, excluding agri-business, and what they entail. The legal working hours and minimum wage will also be discussed. Secondly, an overview of the differences between employees who are housed by their employers and those who are not is presented. I argue that living on the property of the employer affects the lives of the employees in a greater way than those who can separate living and working.

The informal sector and what I refer to as the ad-hoc sector of Paraguayan employment is discussed in the third section. As the paragraph will examine, ad-hoc, or project work, is a key component to labour in Paraguay. I use ad-hoc labour as a term for workers who are brought together for one job, one project only. It might be to build a house or to paint a wall. I argue

that ad-hoc work is essential to the notion of the good life for Paraguayans, and also necessary to survive, especially in the rural areas.

Gender is a central part of labour, especially in Paraguay where the distinction between the notion of the masculine and femenine is strong. Family life and gender are key components to labour in Paraguay, and I felt it was necessary for this chapter to have that foundation, in order to gain a better understanding of the subject. The home sphere and the public sphere also become relevant in this setting and will be discussed further in the succeeding paragraph.

Lastly, the ways Paraguayans are keeping money, using money and the social pressure around earning money will be discussed. Suggestions to why many Paraguayans are extremely poor, while having some sort of labour are aired. And how money can be related to the notion of happiness.

Main sectors

Figures from The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) from 2013 shows that approximately 3.5 million people are employed in Paraguay, of these 23,40 percent are in agriculture business (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, 2014). According to MAG, agri-business is by far the most employed sector in Paraguay. Defined by the Paraguayan government (DGEEC) on the other hand, the main economic sectors are industry, trade and service industry, as illustrated in figure 7.1 (DGEEC, 2013). As previously mentioned, the DGEEC report has excluded the agri-business, which is arguably the largest sector in Paraguayan economy.

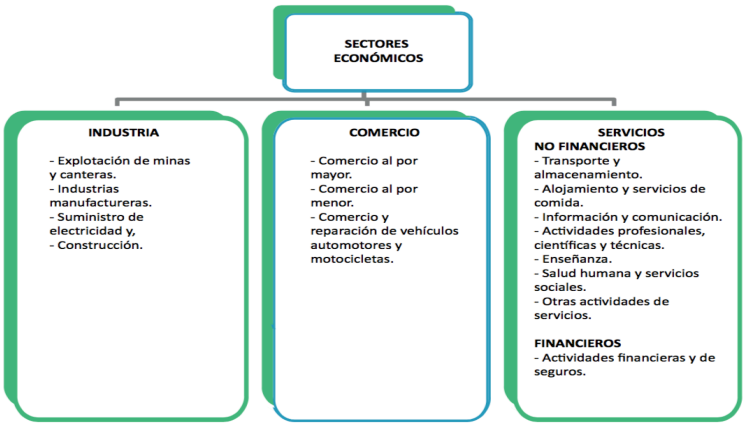


Figure 7.1. From (DGEEC, 2013) This is an overview of the largest economic sectors in Paraguay, excluding the agri-business.

Loosely translated, the industrial sector contains mining, manufacturing, supply of electricity and construction. Trade entails wholesale, retail, trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles. And the service industry consists of transportation, food services, information and communication, teaching, health and social services, bank and insurance activities, and other service activities.

In an interview with the secretary at the *Municipalidad,* municipality office, she revealed that the main industry in Altos is woodcraft, like furniture and wood arts, with a national association they distribute through, and the agri-business. Besides this, Altos has a relatively large trade and service industry. The entrepreneurship is high, and one will find tiny *bodegas*, shops and kiosks or empanada stands on every corner and often connected to the owner's house. According to the *Municipalidad*, there are 458 *patentios comerciales* in Altos, which is a legal requirement to have employees. This means there are almost 500 legal businesses of various size in a town with 14 - 16 000 inhabitants, and that one in every 30 people have their own legal business. This is a huge amount, and visible when observing all the big and small shops all around the town. The number is especially high when taking into consideration that the majority of the large ad-hoc sector in Altos does not have this patent.

In urban areas, the work limit is set at 55 hours per week, eleven hours Monday to Friday, with an hour lunch/siesta and five hours Saturday. Compared to Norway with a collective labour agreement (tariff) limiting the working hours to 37,5 hours per week, the Paraguayan labour is much more extensive and the unions have less power. The minimum wage in these areas is affected by inflation, but currently it is just above 2 000 000PYG equivalent to 3000NOK (April 2018 currency). This is not a fixed rate for all employees in the formal sector in Paraguay, there are several exceptions, such as when housing is paid by employers.

Employees housed by employers

As a *capataz,* caretaker of a property, or other persons living and working at their employer's *estancias*, country estates, the rules are different. The salary is lowered, since the employers pay for housing and electricity. This arrangement is common in rural areas, as large properties often requires someone to live there and take care of the land and what it cultivates. The *capataz* often brings with him his entire family to live on the employer's land. The salary for a *capataz* is around 1 600 000 PYG (2400NOK), and 2 000 000PYG (3000NOK) with family.

On one of the properties I lived on in Altos, there was a *capataz* named Mario who had brought with him his wife and six children age six to eighteen. They would all help if necessary, with big and small chores, before or after school. The youngest children would help picking up weeds and "cleaning" the land, while the eldest would do the heavier lifting. The entire family had the opportunity to spend the majority of their time together, cultivating their own plot around their house, or doing chores for their employer.

A Capataz usually has a small piece of land they can farm themselves for food. They are able to keep chickens, hens, ducks, etc. which lowers their cost of living. Mario and his family owned two dogs, several chicken and hens, turkeys, guinea fowls, ducks and a kitten. They had the opportunity to cultivate what they wanted on their plot, and had several herbs, vegetables and fruits in their garden. Some of this also applies for young women working as maids, living with her employer, like two of María García's daughters. Since all their basic needs were met, besides the salary, it is allowed to pay lower than those who have to pay for their own home, electricity and land.

I argue that the *capataz* labours and other work where the employers provide housing are blurring the lines between off- and on- work. It affects the lives of the employees in a greater way than those who work for their salary and go home to their house, away from their place of work. During the periods when *el jefe* is present, the employee is always on duty, and can be called at any hour, any day. Expected to say yes and oblige. On larger properties, the owner spends the majority of his time elsewhere, dividing his time between several *estancias* and a house in Asunción. Some of the property owners I have gotten to know, only visit their estancias once a week to pay the employees, or even more seldom. Giving the *capataz* a greater sense of freedom and independence than most employees.

Historically there is a pattern of absentee landownership for larger estancias and rural estate throughout many parts of Latin America, and also for Southern Europe. Since there is a huge amount of foreign as well as Paraguayan absentee landowners in Paraguay today, there is a vast number of *capatazes*. The majority of the time, the *capataz* and his family have the property for themselves. Enabling them to spend their days in a more *tranquilo* manner, having friends over for an *asado* and some tereré, more in line with the Paraguayan sense of

the good life. The *capataz* work is part of the formal employment in Paraguay. However, a large part of the labour force in Paraguay is informal or ad-hoc.

The informal sector and ad-hoc labour

Informal sector and ad-hoc labour is a massive part of the Paraguayan economy. If one needs a wall to be built or a house to be made, one hires a contractor who collects a group of men, usually his extended family or friends to work for him. This is especially common in rural areas. It is no guaranty that he will use the same people every time he gets a contract, so people are to a large extent depending on a good relationship and reciprocity to get jobs in rural areas. José a contractor in Altos also discussed how also he is relying on a good relationship with the owners of the different properties to get contracts. The level of camaraderie in employment in Paraguay and especially in rural areas like Altos is evident.

Ad-hoc and project work is a common feature in rural Paraguay, and many have a relaxed relationship to employment and obtaining a job. They can get a call from a friend or a family member, offering a day, a week or a month of labour and when the project is finished they can go several weeks unemployed. This is especially common for physical work, the industrial sector, amongst men. There is no job security in the informal and ad-hoc sector in Paraguay, and the labour situation and income is filled with uncertainty, to some of my contacts great ambivalence, both dissatisfaction and unhappiness as well as the ideal for a good life. María García and her daughter Sofía often discussed the unstable labour market in Paraguay and lack of a steady income, especially in rural areas. Sofía had accepted the fact that she would leave Altos to college or get a job after high school. This is highly gendered and individual in Paraguay, both the desire for ad-hoc labour and the opportunities to get jobs, as I will discuss further in the forthcoming paragraph. There are a great deal of men, as well as women wanting to have more informal jobs often stressing their desire to not have a boss and regular working hours. A key factor here is the desire to be their own boss in order to be in control of their own time, as Sofía García often stressed.

I know several people in Altos who had a fulltime job, with good pay, who quit just because they did not want to have such a confining life. This accounts for both women and men. One of the daughters in the García family worked a year in Argentina as a maid and cook, but quit, as she did not want a fulltime job anymore and the liability. As Wilk describes, "…as long as

they had land of their own to farm, they did not have to take full-time wage labour." (Wilk, 2006, p. 73). I argue that this desire for ad-hoc labour is connected to the Paraguayan notion of the good life. As also Wali discusses, "time flexibility" or the ability to have control over their time, having a *"tranquilo"* life is more important than earning the extra money (Wali, 2012, p. 13). Like Eriksen's observation from the Seychelles, I witnessed in Paraguay my informants not wanting to work more than what was necessary for meeting *their needs* (Eriksen, 2008, s. 139). Paraguayans' needs, entailing the basics such as food and shelter, but also cultivating relationships and taking care of family members and extended kin.

"Tranquilo" is a term often used in Paraguay; I argue that it has a larger significance than the literal translation of quiet and calm. When asked how are you, the usual answer in rural Paraguay would be *tranquilo,* often accompanied by thumbs up. During my fieldwork, my contacts in Altos often stressed their desire for a *tranquilo* life in Altos, rather than what they referred to as a stressful life in the city. As discussed above, *Tranquilo* can in many cases be connected to the good life and well-being.

I argue that the desire for more flexible working hours can be seen in Altos as well as in Asunción. Both the Johnson and the Santos families have large companies employing their children. And in both families, several of their children want to work part time, providing the possibility to only work the days they want to and when they need the money. The rest of the time they could spend with family and friends, eating long meals and relaxing. While they do not have ad-hoc or informal labour, they share the same values and desire to be in control of their days and have the ability to have *tranquilo* days. These families have money and they can afford to choose to be part-time employees, as opposed to the majority of Paraguayans who do not have a choice. However, as the girls in the García family shows, even with a full-time, stable job, they often choose to work part time, and rely on family members when they are out of a job.

Other characteristics of the informal and ad-hoc sector of Paraguayan employment are the possibility of alternative- and often reciprocal payment, instead of pure monetary salary. People working in the informal sectors, especially in rural Paraguay, often accept and sometimes asks for payment in favours and goods. José had a small job, collecting some fish for a pond in an estancia in Altos, and he asked for beer in return. Beer, meat and future work are some of the most common alternative payments. José is also helping another friend with

some work, and as payment his car will be painted and polished. Barter economy and the reciprocal aspect of repayment is flourishing in Altos.

While the previous examples are regarding typical male work in Paraguay, the informal and ad-hoc sector is large amongst women as well. In Altos, cleaning, catering, selling food, sweets and herbs along the road are some of the many places where women are involved with the informal and ad-hoc sectors. Barter is an especially common feature for female labour in Altos. As previously mentioned, María García exchanged sowing clothes for milk, cheese and other items.

Employment and gender

There is no doubt that there is a clear gap between the genders when it comes to earning and labour force participation in most Latin American countries, both in the formal and informal sectors (Liu, Esteve, & Treviño, 2017, p. 320). First, I argue that there is a huge leap between the number of women employed in the formal sector as opposed to the informal sector. As discussed above, there are a lot of women in the informal and ad-hoc sectors. Second, the massive gap between the number of women and men in the formal sector will be exanimated.

While there are no figures on how many women are working in the informal sector in Paraguay, I argue that the number is much higher than for those in the formal sector. The reason for this is the Paraguayan notion of the macho and the feminine, discussed in chapter five. As this paragraph will illustrate, several men in Paraguay consider the proper place for a woman to be in the private sphere of the home, and that formal labour is reserved for men. Informal and ad-hoc labour on the other hand is *more* socially accepted for women, such as those working in the nut factory in Altos.

As figure 7.2 reveals (DGEEC, 2013, p. 28), the distribution of work is uneven between the sexes. By looking at the statistics it is clear that there are drastically fewer women than men working in formal labour. This is especially evident in the industrial sector where, between the six main counties, 119 000 men work but only 33 000 women.

Cuadro 1.10. Personal ocupado por sexo, por sector económico, según principales departamentos. Año 2010

Principales departamentos	Sector económico					
	Industria		Comercio		Servicios	
	Hombres	Mujeres	Hombres	Mujeres	Hombres	Mujeres
Total	**119.012**	**33.752**	**197.242**	**149.816**	**163.083**	**136.248**
Asunción	29.830	9.962	49.636	31.157	67.943	54.098
Central	45.474	14.060	49.049	40.930	39.341	31.781
Alto Paraná	11.240	2.918	37.050	25.643	20.067	16.522
Itapúa	8.119	1.374	15.324	12.793	8.930	8.340
Caaguazú	5.168	912	8.965	7.019	5.274	4.899
Resto país	19.181	4.526	37.218	32.274	21.528	20.608

Fuente: DGEEC. Censo Económico Nacional 2011

Figure 7.2. Personal occupation divided by gender and geographical location.

I argue that the differences are much larger in the agri-business in the rural areas. Throughout my time in Paraguay, I have never seen a woman out in the fields. She is working in her own garden and on her own land, but not as a paid labourer. The distinction between those working in the garden (women, private sphere) and those working out on the farmlands (men, public sphere) is enormous.

During my fieldwork, I worked with María García in her garden, trimming the herbs, collecting fruits, cultivating old and new plants. It was hard work, out in the scorching sun, and it did not bring any monetary gain. Later in my study, I worked in the terrain with Mario, his sons age 6, 8 and 18 and my boyfriend. The moment I entered the field, the mood changed, I immediately became Mary Douglas' anomaly. Women working the farmlands (participating in the masculine sphere) with the men were obviously far from normal. I was picking weeds like the children while Mario, his eldest son and my boyfriend would axe down trees. None of them wanted to engage in conversation with me, they answered my questions politely, but nothing more. As I left to go back to the female sphere (making lunch), my boyfriend described to me how the atmosphere loosened, and they talked more. Division, especially when working, characterizes the relationship between the sexes.

As discussed above, the informal and ad-hoc sector is a huge part of the Paraguayan economy, and is desired by many, both male and female. Seasonal work is another key component to Paraguayan employment.

Seasonal work

There is a lot of seasonal work in Paraguay. Having such a massive agricultural sector, where the labour-intensive parts, like harvesting, only takes up a fraction of the year. When it is not time for harvest, a lot of the workers find other short-term labour or go without a job. The one factory in Altos is also only open a few months of the year. The time the factory is open, the women employed there have a job, the other parts of the year some of them clean houses, some find other work, and some stay at home.

There are also a massive number of seasonal workers who work outside the Paraguayan borders, mainly in neighbouring countries like Argentina and Uruguay, but also in Spain. The latest figures released by the Paraguayan Consulate in Spain reveal that almost 70 000 Paraguayans live in Spain today, of which 90% of them work, both seasonal and more permanent. The majority of the Paraguayans have precarious jobs in Spain, with low pay and a large number of working hours. Several of them even have three or four jobs in order to cover their expenses, otherwise they do not make ends meet (Hoy, 2017). As mentioned in a previous chapter, Emilio is one of the Paraguayan seasonal workers in Spain. He spends the Paraguayan winters, i.e. European summers, working at a beach restaurant in the South of Spain. When the season ends, he goes back to his wife and children in Paraguay. In Paraguay, Emilio spends the rest of the year *tranquilo*, spending time with family and friends, and taking some ad-hoc labour if necessary.

When discussing employment and payment, a key factor is also the ways the Paraguayan people keep money, use it and the social expectations revolving around salary. These are some of the topics that will be discussed in the succeeding paragraph. The interesting connection between the salary and peoples' perception of happiness is what the section aims to explore.

Keeping money, using money, expectations and social pressure

Saving money is difficult amongst the poorer people in Paraguay. Opening a bank account is highly time consuming, expensive and impossible without a salary or proof of payment of electrical bills, amongst other criteria. As previous chapters have emphasised, the lack of trust in the government, state officials as well as head of bank has also weakened the confidence in

the security of the banks. These are some of the reasons why many Paraguayans do not save money.

As Andrew Nickson, author of Historical Dictionary of Paraguay, co-editor of The Paraguay Reader, and several other publications, described to me in an informal interview in a café in Asunción, other reasons why Paraguayans use money immediately instead of saving it, might be the social expectations and pressure from friends and family. It is expected that when one in the family or circle of friends acquires an income, it is supposed to be shared amongst those without a job. There is a social obligation to have an *asado*, and providing massive amount of meat and beer to family and extended kin. In accordance with Heil, I argue that instead of investing in their own individual economic future, Paraguayans are more likely to share their wages and invest in social relations and extended kin (Heil, 2009, p. 102). Saving money in Paraguay is not a common practice for all Paraguayans.

José owns two cars, and two houses, one of them is rented out, but when he broke his arm in a motorcycle accident, he had to go around begging his friends for a loan to get physiotherapy. All electronic stores, car dealerships etc. offer a down payment plan, on everything from ovens to cars. So, acquiring a car does not necessarily mean one has a lot of money; it can be a cheap used car or new with a long down payment plan. In Paraguay, buying a car is much easier than opening a savings account.

As previously discussed, food consumption is a major element to Paraguayans notion of good life. Spending money on a large meal with good meat and alcohol is more important for their happiness than saving it for later or investing in future income. When I lived with the García family, the grandson in the house turned five years old. I paid the family 4500NOK to stay with them for two months. Instead of using this money to fix the husbands taxi or the wife's sowing machine, assuring them future income, they invited more than a hundred people over for a big birthday party for their five-year-old son. They stressed that their happiness is relational and that they must cultivate relationships with family and friends with reciprocal acts, usually in form of a large *asado*, or a party of some sort.

The Santos family told me a story about their new nanny that illuminates this further. When one of the daughters in the Santos family got a baby she also got a nanny. The day she was hired and signed her contract, she also got two weeks' pay. The day after, the nanny called her

employer saying that she could not come to work, since she had used her wage on a big family *asado*. She had no money saved away for her bus fare. Both of these examples underline just how important family, food consumption and social obligations are to the Paraguayan people and their happiness.

This is not a new phenomenon in Paraguay. Teodosito González (1871 – 1932) a former Paraguayan administrator and author of the country's penal codes once wrote, "A peasant who works a tiny rented patch of land will spend his whole year's earnings on a wedding or a church function, even become indebted, rather than use the money to buy the land he works…" (González, 2013, p. 165). Whereas González characterizes this behaviour as laziness, I argue that the Paraguayan people are not lazy, but that they value social relations and the norm of celebrating and spending money when one has it, more highly than to save it for future investment. With the common mistrust in the banks, scarcity of work, economic crisis and inflation the family unit and solid relationship amongst kin is extremely important.

Alvarenga describes "They may have everything that they want in terms of material possessions, but they will not have what really makes a human being happy – openness, caring, confidence, and the happiness of others" (Alvarenga, 2013, p. 432). According to Alvarenga, working too much for personal financial gain does not lead to happiness. This might be one of the most common explanations for why people in Paraguay are happier than people in the north of Europe. In Paraguay, the strong reciprocal bond between family members, friends and neighbours reflects protection, care and comfort. The family as a key component to Paraguayans' notions of happiness.

Concluding remarks

The aim for this chapter has been to illuminate the relationship between earning money and the notion of the good life. I wanted to show how the Paraguayan people appreciate freedom and a collective *tranquilo* life higher than *personal* financial gain.

Through this section I have discussed the main sectors of Paraguayan economy, and specific features, such as the minimum wage and working hours. The salary varies from rural to urban areas and type of employment; this has been exemplified with ad-hoc labour and capataz work. Furthermore, the gender imbalance regarding employment has been briefly discussed.

There are many Paraguayan seasonal workers inside and outside Paraguayan borders, especially in Spain. They work some parts of the year, and spend the majority of the year unemployed, or with other ad-hoc labour. I have argued that many Paraguayans desire these types of employment and that it is a key component to their perception of happiness. Finally, the last part of this chapter has been used to discuss the social pressure and obligations, involving money. The norm that a wage should be shared in terms of food and beverages amongst family and friends is a highly interesting characterisation of the Paraguayan people, and it reveals just how important social relations are to Paraguayans and their notion of the good life.

8. Conclusions

In Norway, it is quite difficult to get through a day without the word *"lykke"*, frequently translated to happiness, appearing several times. Advertisements for finding real happiness through meditation, books about happiness as a result of cleaning the house, popular movies such as "The pursuit of happiness", TV programs such as "Typisk deg, med Petter Schjerven" and several public debates address the topic of happiness, what it constitutes and quick and easy ways to achieve it. The topic of happiness and the desire for "the good life" has become extremely popular in many places. Therefore, I argue that it should be of anthropological interest. Anthropologists research cultures and societies and what they entail, and, as this thesis has discussed, happiness and the good life can be rooted in history, politics, food consumption, gender norms and social relations, which are all common anthropological subjects.

"Happiness is not one thing; it means different things in different places, different societies, and in different cultural contexts. There is no unambiguously single pursuit of happiness – rather, there are multiple 'pursuits of happiness'" (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 1). Through this thesis I have argued, in line with Mathews and Izquierdo, that happiness is not the same everywhere. The notions of happiness and the good life are socially constructed and vary from place to place and from people to people. However, as this thesis has shown, there are some repeating key aspects of the notion of well-being, both in rural and urban Paraguay, amongst different social classes, that also cross national lines.

In this final part of the thesis I will summarise the key notions to happiness, the good life and well-being in rural and urban Paraguay, as well as offer an idea of why these factors are so important. Secondly, I end my discussion on quantitative surveys and give my opinions on their role and application. Thirdly, there are several aspects on the study of positive emotions that this thesis has not aired. Therefore, I will give some thoughts and suggestions for further research and study. The thesis will end with some of my final thoughts on the topic of well-being in Paraguay, and why a focus on positive emotions is beneficial to the overall society.

Key notions

The perceptions of the good life in Paraguay based upon close bonds of affiliation, manifested through consumption of food and sharing meals and time. As I have discussed, the notion is built upon Paraguayan history and politics, which again is effecting the idea of gender, family relations and labour. I argue, combining all of these factors result in the construction of the good life in Paraguay, and can be compared to several other people and places.

Close bonds of affiliation

As Reyes-García's research from the Bolivian Amazon emphasises, strong social relations and family bonds are key concepts for the notion of happiness several places in Latin America. "...for the Tsimane', social relations seem to be the central and defining feature of happiness" (Reyes-García, 2012, p. 220). The top three sources to happiness in the Bolivian Amazon is to spend time with close family, have a good garden plot and have good food (Reyes-García, 2012, p. 216). While to spend time with friends is on the 20th place. This underlines the importance of family relations and the roles family and friends fill. As I have argued, this is somewhat the same in Paraguay, the family and extended kin are extremely important for the Paraguayan notion of the good life, even more so than friends.

Food consumption and sharing of time

As I have discussed, in Paraguay, good relations are especially constituted through the sharing of meals, but also labour and family life. Paraguayans eat the majority of their meals together with close family or the extended kin. The meals with extended kin in Paraguay that I partook in, were much more informal than meals with my own relatives, or relatives of friends, in Norway. While the guests were still present, some would go to bed, put on the TV or exercise, this came as a surprise for me, as I am used to large family dinners being formal, stiff and something out of the ordinary, in Norway. This might be a result of the frequency of the shared meals between extended kin. As my contacts shared meals with two, three or four generations family members, often every day, they are much more comfortable with their larger family, freeing them to go to bed, exercise and watch TV while the "guests" were still there.

The consumption of food and drinks were repeatedly expressed vocally by my contacts to be the good life in itself. As I have argued, I draw a line between the mere act of consuming food and beverage to the shared time between family members. All major events in Paraguay were celebrated by sharing a meal, such as the *asado*. Throughout a normal day in Paraguay, tereré is shared amongst family and friends every few hours, then a larger lunch is shared amongst family members and extended kin. The need and desire to spend time together is evident, and also its relation to their notion of the good life. However, there is a clear line between the ideal state and what is actually practiced.

Ideal vs. practice

Practice theory and the notion of the ideal state vs. the actual practice is another interesting part of the Paraguayan culture. My Paraguayan contacts often stressed the ideal gender traits, family relations, and ways to live and act; however, the reality was often quite different. Their ideals and aspirations were frequently similar to the Catholic church's ideals of Christian monogamy, the ideal woman, pictured by the Virgen Mary et cetera.

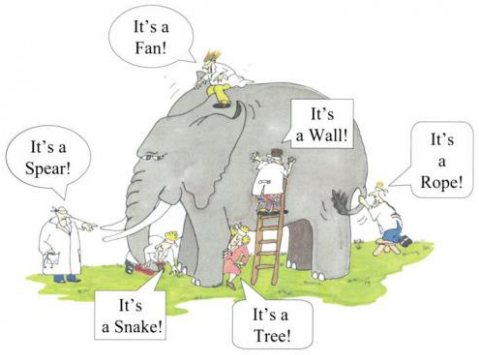
They aspire for these ideals and gender relations taught by the Church. However, throughout the post-conquest era, exacerbated by the Triple Alliance War, factors such as a shortage of men has led to deviations from this ideal. As mentioned in chapter five, the notions of monogamy and Christian gender ideals were brought to Paraguay from Europe through the conquistadors. Ever since the Spanish invasion, there has been a gap between the ideal and practice, not only in regard to gender roles, but also the ideal kinship centred on the nuclear family. Although the notion of the nuclear family consisting of two (married) parents and two or three children is the ideal for many Paraguayans, it is far from the reality. There is a clear relationship between different often collective ideals and commonly individual agency and practice. Both the García family and the Johnson were deviating from this ideal, although they frequently discussed their desires for this ideal, they had children outside wedlock with different fathers and were lone mothers. This would often cause their other relatives shame and concern, as they all had the same notion of their ideals.

The weak state

Strong social relations are emphasised as the source to happiness in several places, such as in Paraguay, Bolivian Amazon, and amongst the Inuit in Arctic Canada. It is interesting to see that in some of these cases, a weak state is another common feature. Many places, the lack of a strong state and some sort of welfare system makes people count on each other as a safety net. In Paraguay, the role of the state is filled by family members and extended kin.
As discussed in chapter three, "The joint-family institution gives people a sense that they can rely on others for support. Because in a joint family, a mother's care is complemented by other caretakers (siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents)" (Derné, 2009, p. 136). The lack of government programs of unemployment compensation and old-age benefits makes family key to social security. When the state fails to provide a safety net, it pushes people to rely more heavily on their own families (Derné, 2009, p. 137). A weak state cultivates close bonds of affiliation based on necessity to survive and have a good life, and these are some of the factors the majority of the happiness surveys or polls often neglects.

Surveys

This thesis takes as a starting point the results of a 2015 Gallup survey, ranking Paraguay the happiest people in the world. In the first pages of this thesis I have deeply criticized the methods of these types of surveys, and I want to finalize it up by asking the question: what is the point of these surveys? Like Mathews and Izquierdo, I argue that creating a scale, such as these surveys do, only result in privileging some cultural traits and conceptions over others, culture traits defined by "western" survey companies (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 8). Based on only a few, or only one, data point created by a few chosen people from Europe or North America, we cannot expect to get a thorough view of the picture. It is like the picture of the blind men and the elephant, each touching a part of the elephant and claiming it is a tree, a snake, a rope or a wall.



"…measures such as income – defining standard of living – cannot fully tell us about what makes life good or less good to live in different places". (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, p. 3). As stated above, measuring statistical data such as income does not give a full view of the picture. However, it can provide some interesting facts for further study, to be complemented and explored in great detail through anthropological research.

As Colby describes, simply asking questions like "how happy are you?", "what makes you happy/unhappy?", can give highly interesting information (Colby, 2009, p. 61). However, it should not stand on its own or be used alone, but complemented with other sources of information, i.e. participant observation over a period of time, actively engaging and observing what people do, what they say, and how they talk about what they do. Through anthropological research and ethnography, we can compare different cultural traits and elements, without evaluating one as better than another. We do not need to rank people and cultures on a scale from one to ten, as I have argued, this is fruitless and unnecessary. However, there are several interesting ways to continue and develop the study of positive emotions, well-being and happiness.

For further study

There are several interesting topics for further research on happiness, well-being and the good life. Some of the subjects that did not receive the full discussion they deserve are for example, the individual versus the collective perspective on well-being, and the aspect of time. I will briefly introduce them as suggestions for further study below. There are different reasons why these discussions have deliberately not been addressed and these will also be stated.

Individual versus collective desires

There are both individual as well as collective desires and needs that constitute the good life in Paraguay. Several of my contacts wished to study or work abroad, or had studied abroad in the past. They searched for autonomy and independence, in the sense that they wanted to experience living on their own, in a new place, learning more than what they imagined they could at home. This applies to both my contacts in Asunción as well as in Altos. However, they all saw this as a temporary situation, and after some year, they wanted to return to their home and family. As discussed in chapter one, several also sent money home, to take care of their remaining family. I argue that in this way, they have both individualistic and collectivistic desires and dreams. Every time I talked about the future with my contacts, they stressed both hopes and dreams for themselves, but also for their family as a whole. In many cases, their desires would also entail fulfilling their relational obligations, in some way or the other.

This part of happiness, the individualistic versus collectivism, has received little attention in this thesis and has been selected out, due to the overflow of interesting and relevant topics. However, it is a highly interesting subject, that can give great insight into the field of positive emotions (Robbins, 2015, p. 320). Another neglected part is the aspect of time, the difference between long-term and short-term sense of happiness.

The aspect of time

Although not given sufficient room in this discussion of the notions of the good life in Paraguay, the aspect of time is also a highly relevant topic. The difference between long-term and short-term sense of happiness could be discussed at length (Robbins, 2015, p. 216). However, I will just briefly introduce the subject here. As I have discussed in chapter four, food consumption is a central feature and characteristics of the notion of happiness in Paraguay. I argue, the act of eating and drinking is a symbol of good social relations. Eating is a short-term sense of happiness, but results in long-term investment in kinship and social relation. The aspect of time and long-term versus short-term happiness as well as individual and collective happiness can (I argue, should) be discussed extensively, and are my suggestions for further study on the topic.

Final thoughts

People understand, experience, and express happiness in different ways. Perception and experience of happiness is highly varied and influenced by social and cultural contexts. However, as Mathews and Izquierdo argues, there are some common features, such as thriving in social relations. “The concepts of well-being have broad similarities, in that they are based in kin groupings, social networks…” (Mathews & Izquierdo, 2009, pp. 251 - 252). The quote from Mathews and Izquierdo can also be applied to this thesis, even though positive emotions such as happiness and well-being are extremely subjective terms, the valuation of good relationships with other people can be seen as a notion of the good life in many societies.

Anthropology has often concentrated on the marginal, poor and the exotic. Through this thesis I have argued the need for a focus on positive emotions, well-being and happiness as well. “Since happiness analysis is closely intertwined with the analysis of human flourishing, needs, nature, personhood and social progress, it is hard to imagine a topic more suited to anthropological analysis and ethnographic enrichment” (Thin, 2005, pp. 4 -5). In line with Thin, I argue, happiness is deeply embedded in human needs, desires, reasons for action, relations and personhood. Therefore, I find it interesting that there is a lack of explicit ethnographies and anthropological theorising on happiness and the good life. I believe it is of both anthropological and social benefit to illuminate positive emotions and the notions of the good life, in order to learn more about people and what drives us. Furthermore, to possibly look for universal aspects of emotions around happiness to connect happiness in Paraguay to the happiness of other people.

There is much to say about further research in the field of happiness and positive emotions. My hope is that more anthropologists follow the increasing interest in the study of happiness, and decide to do more extended fieldwork and research on the topic. Anthropological data and ethnography can be complemented by the research and knowledge of other disciplines, such as psychology, economy, social geography, sociology, history and politics to name a few, to get an even broader view of the whole picture.

I opened this thesis by citing Malinowski and the founding text of social anthropology; The Argonauts of the Western Pacific, and I will close this thesis with it as well. As Malinowski

argues, to study culture, society and people, without reflecting over the substance of their happiness, deprives us of much great knowledge (Malinowski, 1984 [1922], p. 25).

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