Department of Culture and Global Studies

**“Tomorrow is another day, Guatemala” “Mañana sera otro día, Guatemala”**

 The pursuit of Women Empowerment in Guatemala: a bottom-up perspective

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# Abstract

Guatemala is a country with great natural and cultural richness, as well as uncountable poverties, due to its historical, social, political and economic structures. In order to create human development in this country, one must be able to defeat poverty in the broadest sense of the term. Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winner and professor in (development) economics, thereby states that one must understand poverty as: *“the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely the lowness of incomes”* (Amartya Sen 1999, 87). According to Sen the true nature of human development exists in *“enlarging people’s choices, capabilities and freedoms so that they can live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge, a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community”* (Sen, 1998; in Barder 2012). This thesis follows Sen’s insights and researches a specific and complex kind of poverty, suffered by the (indigenous) women of (rural) Guatemala, namely: *the deprivation of women’s fundamental human rights* *of freedom, education, violence free lives, and social/political/economic participation in their own society*.

 The transnational Nobel Women’s Initiative delegation, supported by Guatemalan human rights defender Rigoberta Menchu Túm, emphasised its pressing concern about gender based violence (GBV) and the (sometimes gruesome) violation of fundamental women’s rights on Guatemalan territory. This concern derived from an in-depth investigation into the country’s socio-political structures in 2012, during a transnational open meeting with the current president, governmental delegates, NGOs, and Guatemalan women themselves. Investigation concluded that, despite ratification of the UDHR, CEDAW and the Beijing PFA, Guatemala scores intolerably low in women’s rights implementation and safeguarding, according to internationally published reports on the topic (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012). Starting from a literature study and the Nobel Women’s Initiative backgrounds, case-studies of bottom-up women’s development, their approaches, hindrances and (future) successes will be conducted in this thesis, to investigate the status of not for profit development building, in the context of women’s human rights in developmental Guatemala.

**A starting word**

Personal interest in this topic grew from an internship (fall 2014) in the development aid sector in Guatemala and the knowledge that this specific gender-based problem is a long neglected one, which is lately getting out of control. As a Development and IR student, I feel that I cannot neglect a problem that has been so vividly present in front of my eyes. With this thesis, I also hope to do my share in alleviating women’s issues researcher Palmer’s (1980) lifelong concern and criticism that: “*There is an evident intellectual inability to cope with women’s issues*” (Palmer 1980; in Snyder 2006).

# Reflections

If lands, and flags and ships and nature and life itself are all women,

why are they ever crushed by madmen?

Stand up, woman!

 

A simple-minded Illusión

…

And the great Eveningland of Europe ate territory as Millefeuilles or Napoleons.

Fortified by dynasty and silver-shining Empires of kings and queens and madmen.

Europa, the princess, left to her fate – by big- and rat-like men alike.

The sword, the Bible and the gentleman’s bow playing their highest note.

But when the territory was all eaten and bows came to an end.

The Land of Free became imagined.

The Eveningland left still.

The Native Lands bloodshedded.

The Native Lands bewitched.

The Native Lands bewildered.

Always fairly paid for.

With blood and organs of Native women carrying justice in their wombs.

All for the Greater Good of all.

All for the Greater Good of the Land of Free.

And all her puppets on electric loaded thrones.

#  (Stefania Schepers 2015)

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## Abbreviation list

**ADIMH:** Asociación de Desarollo Integral de las Mujeres Huehuetecas (or Association for the Integral Development of the Women in Huehuetenango) (Nolin and Reade 2008, V).

**Beijing PFA**: Beijing Platform For Action; pinpointing 12 areas of concern for women’s advancement: *education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child*, during the Fourth Global Conference on Women in 1995 (UN Department of Public Information, 2000).

**CEDAW**: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which is the first international convention (1979) that legally binds its ratifying states towards the protection of women’s rights. (The 189 states that have thus far ratified the Convention have however very diversely interpreted their obligations to the treaty, with reluctance to active incorporation as (sub) national effects) (Zwingel 2005).

**CONAPREVI** (Spanish): National Coordinating Body for the Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women.

**DEMI:** Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women (in Guatemala)

**ECLAC:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, with CEPAL as its Spanish acronym, established in 1948 as one of five regional commissions of the United Nations. In recent years ECLAC has made gender equality in development one of the major topics on its agenda (UN ECLAC 2015, ECLAC 2010).

**GBV:** Gender based violence

**GHCR:** Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA

**IR:** International Relations

**SEPREM:** Presidential Secretariat for Women (in Guatemala)

**UDHR:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## Explanatory list of terms

**Empowerment** **(Sp. capacitación):** According to the Women’s Empowerment Principles, empowerment is measured by the opportunities for women to fully participate in economic life. As a partner of UN Women and UN Global Compact, the Women’s Empowerment principles promote gender equality in the workplace, market and in the community (Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative 2011). In an article on Global Governance, Gains and Gender, political science researcher Bexell talks about the “*business of empowering women*”, as international organisations, academics and companies start to invest in girls to effectuate socio-economic development. She warns however about the possible abuse of the female empowerment process, as a means towards a goal, instead of a goal in itself (Bexell 2012). In the knowledge that empowerment as a term surpasses gender specification, in this thesis it is used as *female empowerment* for full participation and equality in the economic, social and political field.

**Discrimination**: In the light of this research, discrimination is specified as discrimination against women and defined by the Nordiskt Forum’s New Action on Women’s Rights as: “*any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition of exercise of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms*”, emphasising that these human rights are individual, universal, indivisible and non-hierarchical (Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014).

**Defensora:** “*A woman in search of justice, an advocate, a defender*” (Nobel Women and Jass 2014). The Nobel Women delegation broadens this dictionary definition towards a (female) individual defending human rights and demanding justice, in case of violent and/or illegal attacks on/within her family or community or even beyond national borders (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012). (See appendix 1)

**Femicide:** A term used to describe the phenomenon of killing women because of the fact that they are women (Russell 2001; in Nolin and Reade 2008, 20).

**Feminicide:** The concept of feminicide (mostly used in Guatemala) is built from the term femicide but is by definition a political term, and this because it channels responsibility for femicide from male perpetrators towards political and legal structures that normalise misogyny (and back). In this respect, failing to safeguard female safety and the toleration or neglect of female killings are seen as equally significant reasons for femicide (Sanford 2008; in Nolin and Reade 2008, 21).

**Feminism:** Despite many other definitions of feminism, this thesis will follow the definition provided by political science and IR professors Ackerly and True, stating that: “*feminism is the search to render visible and to explain patterns of injustice in organisations, behaviour, and normative values that systematically manifest themselves in gender differentiated ways*” (Ackerly and True 2010). Researchers on Guatemala’s social movements, Teijido and Schramm, point at the importance of these feminist insights for the Guatemalan women’s movement, which started to position itself clearly since 1997, but weakened ever since due to structural discriminations (Teijido and Schramm 2010).

**Gender:** The Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative of 2011 defines gender as: “*the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis*.” It adds that “*gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time and varies widely within and across cultures*” (Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative 2011). Professors Ackerly and True (2010) emphasise that gender is perceived differently in different contexts, due to diverse socio-economic and political pressures. Psychologist D´hooghe adds that gender roles have a significant influence on the development of the human brain, pointing out that boys and girls are treated differently from the first minute they are born. He attributes this phenomenon to both inborn gender specific skills and the fact that the brain is a ductile organ, highly sensitive for social influences (D’hooghe 2015).

**Gender equality:** Next to the concept of gender, the Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative (2011) describes gender equality as a condition where all human beings, male and female enjoy a freedom towards their personal development and choices without being limited by prejudice, rigid gender roles or stereotypes. This thus means that “*their rights and responsibilities will not depend on whether they are born female or male*.” IR professor Arnfred thereby points at the difficulties of understanding gender equality in a development context and the need of more holistic and inclusive notions of equality in the debate that links development and gender (Arnfred 2011).

**Gender mainstreaming:** In the knowledge that gender mainstreaming is defined in several ways, this thesis uses the Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative’s (2011) general definition: “*a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels […] for making men’s and women’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between women and men is not perpetuated*.” The concept of gender mainstreaming was one of the main topics in the Beijing PFA, focusing on future sustainable development.

**Human rights:** The definition of human rights is taken over from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which can be consulted in full text via the following web link: <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>>.

The protection of human rights by international law is organised so that states that become part of treaties are bound to respect, protect and fulfil human rights (UN 2015).

**Machismo: “***A strong, exaggerated sense of masculinity stressing attributes such as physical courage, virility, domination of women, and aggressiveness*”, which is playing a strong role in the lives of women in rural and urban Guatemala (American Heritage Dictionary 2015; in Jamali 2012)

**Marianismo:** “*A strong or exaggerated sense of traditional femininity, especially in some Latin American cultures, placing great value on forbearance, self-sacrifice, nurturance, and the limiting of sex to marriage*” (American Heritage Dictionary 2015).

**Intersectionality:** Following professors Ackerly and True: intersectionality in the context of gender research distances itself from the depiction of (unfair) gender relations as a sole patriarchal domination of women by men, which conceals the parallel existence of equally oppressing racial, ethnic, age-bound and colonial hierarchies. In feminist and gender research intersectionality thus appears as an effort to demonstrate the intersection of various forms of oppression (endured by women in specific geographic, socio-economic, ethnic and political contexts) and is mostly integrated in recent feminist debates (Ackerly and True 2010, Vidal 2014).

**Poverty:** In this thesis, poverty is mostly approached as “deprivation poverty”, which is different from “income poverty” in this way that income does not always directly influence people’s chances and personal development. Exclusion, lack of resources or education, discrimination, gender inequality and marginalisation from society (for a variety of reasons) are all part of deprivation poverty (Jamali 2012). Or, quoting professor and economist Sen again: “*Poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely the lowness of incomes*” (Amartya Sen 1999, 87).

**Power:** In the words of psychologist Hillman: “*power is the agency to act: not the doing itself but the capacity to do something*.” In this research, power and domination interact, supporting class-, education- and gender structures, and thus the empowerment of one group over the other. Moreover, in Guatemalan culture, machismo as a cultural norm promotes the “*dominus*” aspect of power, implying female subordination to male authority. According to psychologist Allen, there exist two types of power: the power to dominate and the power to resist (Hillman 1995 and Allen 2003; in Nolin and Reade 2008, 28). Both will be used in this research.

**Resistance:** In the context of “third wave feminisms” or “post-structural feminism” and in the context of this thesis, resistance must be understood in the form of micro-political, local or individual resistance, meaning that: “*resistance to the dominant at the level of the individual subject is the first stage in the production of alternative forms of knowledge, or, where such alternatives already exist, of winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social powe*r” (Weedon 1999). In this respect, resistance is often local, subtle or small-scale and carried by specific groups (Davies and Thomas 2005).

# 1. Introduction

 “Gender equality is not only a women’s issue, it is a human rights issue that requires my participation. I commit to take action against all forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and girls.”

 (HeForShe Campaign, UN Women 2014)

With these words, UN Women recently started to mobilise people all over the world to stand up for gender equality. In these words many people see a new era of feminism rising, some people see a global movement for solidarity trying out its first steps, and very few people see the real life problems behind the campaign. However, the real life stories of gender inequality are numerous, widespread, and in most cases excessively opposed against fundamental human rights. Very many real life stories of this kind happen in Guatemala, a Central-American country where over the past decade *more than 600 murder cases* were *classified as femicides* every year (MuJer Guatemala 2015). (See appendix 2) Besides the constant danger of getting killed, violated or otherwise attacked for the fact of being a woman, the great majority of Guatemalan women and girls are also denied many *freedoms* and *human rights*, as described by the UDHR (Nobel Women Initiative 2012).

 However, within the academia, development economist Sen describes exactly *freedom* as both *the starting point* for development and *the means to* achieve development. Specifically interesting for this thesis is that Sen also takes a stand in the gender inequality debate, positioning himself as a supporter of female empowerment. In the context he remarks that: “*An enhancement of women’s active agency can contribute substantially to the lives of men as well as women, children as well as adults*” (Sen, 2001).

 Internationally, women’s development and the concept of female empowerment have moreover slowly come to the top of international agendas over the past 40 years. Four Global Women Conferences (1975-1995) have thereby opened a global dialogue, pinpointing problems and establishing action plans throughout decades. Next to this and in particular important for the betterment of women’s situations worldwide has been the adoption of CEDAW (or the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. The CEDAW agreement binds ratifying states (Guatemala inclusive) to the obligation of reporting on progress made in national women’s development, every four years.[[1]](#footnote-1) Further, in 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action, a modern action plan on women’s development and rights, including a review on 20 years of international efforts, hindrances and goals for future success, was presented and adopted by 189 sovereign states. As explained in the explanatory list of terms, the PFA promoted the implementation of gender mainstreaming by all nations that support women’s rights and ratified CEDAW. The Guatemalan state agreed with the PFA, albeit an interesting reservation, on which this thesis will come back later (UN Department of Public Information 2000).

 More recently then, as a call for global action, international organisations as the UN and its subdivisions of UN Women and Global Compact have published the Women’s Empowerment Principles (2011) to help national private sectors promote and establish gender equality in the workplace, the marketplace and the community. This turn to the private sector can be seen as an international pressure to build more gender balanced societies, especially where sovereign states fail, or lack the political will to structure their national policies to achieve effective gender equality. Supporting the private sector in knowledge and implementation, the Women’s Empowerment Principles published relevant progress, up to date statistical data and promoted the following focus points: *leadership, equal opportunity, inclusion, non-discrimination, health, safety, freedom of violence, education, training, enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices, community leadership and engagement, transparency, measuring, and reporting* (Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative 2011).

 Also nowadays, the international Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are coming close to their 2015 target date and thus eight globally accorded goals, among which *gender equality and empowerment of women* are in a progress measuring procedure since 2010. Already then, further progress was demanded for the achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, an agenda for post- 2015 development was set up, which is the current base of further developmental discussion between international institutions, governments, civil society organisations, the private sector, academic researchers and other stakeholders, focusing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN Women, 2015). Besides the MDGs and SDGs, the protection of human rights (and more specifically women’s rights) have been central topics on the UN organisational agenda since the UDHR in 1948 (UN, 2015). However, achieving MDGs, safeguarding fundamental human rights and implementing policies towards the development and security of women have proven to be very difficult tasks for several regions and countries in the world.

 One of these countries, known for its specific and complex history of conflict, violence and human rights abuse and neglect is thus Guatemala, a middle sized country in the Central American region, bordering Mexico, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Although, the Peace Accords of 1996 ended 36 years of internal armed conflict in Guatemala, and were seen as an important step forward in the overall development of the country, the aftermath of this destructive period has been less progressive as initially hoped. As an effect Guatemala still ranks very low in the achievement of MDGs, both globally and in the own Central American region. Next to more general problems as instable economy and instable (often corrupted) institutional frameworks, the country experiences alarming rates on specific human rights violations. As a marginalised group of society, women are the first targets of these (human rights) violations and *gender inequality based on discrimination* (1), *gender based violence* (2) and a *consequent disempowerment of women* (3) are described as most pressing social problems (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012). Maintaining a bottom-up approach, this research will therefore elaborate on the next research questions:

*In what ways has the post-conflict period (since 1997) in Guatemala continued and re-created a social sphere of gender bias and severe female disempowerment?*

*Taking into account a difference in structure and authority, how are transnational and local women-only organisations in Guatemala using various approaches and tools to promote women’s social development and establish positive change[[2]](#footnote-2) in traditional Guatemalan gender roles?*

*What could be future (gender) strategies to be implemented in Guatemala’s institutional frameworks to the advance of communities’ sustainable development based on this research findings?*

These research questions originate from a pre-research on Guatemalan governmental involvement in the development and empowerment of women, which led to the conclusion that there is not enough research opening available from a top-down perspective. This is mostly due to the fact that renowned UN, ECLAC, CEDAW and other delegations have visited Guatemala to mediate human rights, socio- economic standards and traditional norms with subsequent Guatemalan governments, and to mandate reform since the end of the civil war, without remarkable success to date (Burgerman 2000, CEDAW 2009, ECLAC 2010, Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012). Also, despite the constant reference to the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women (DEMI) and the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), which work on women’s issues, the Guatemalan government, anno 2015, does not effectively prioritises gender equality. This governmental attitude is an often expressed concern of the CEDAW committee (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012, CEDAW 2009).

# Methodology

### 2.1 Structure of the project

This thesis consists of 5 main sections: an introduction, a methodology, theories, an empirical study and a general conclusion. The introduction contextualises the research topic in the wider development debate and states the problem formulation and the three research questions. The methodology describes and argues for the applied methods in order to structure the thesis, connect the thesis sections and ultimately answer the research questions. The theory section identifies academic theories that have relevance for the development context of focus. The empirical study is divided in two. First, a literature study investigates the social, economic and political status of Guatemalan women and answers the first research question. Then, a case-study part extensively researches three women empowerment NGOs within Guatemalan civil society and answers the second research question. The general conclusion is structured to best summarise the complexity of the thesis topic and to look forward into the future, answering the third research question. To make the entire thesis more comprehensible as well as contextualised, additional parts are provided. These parts are: an abstract, a starting word, reflections, an abbreviation list, an explanatory list of terms, a bibliography and appendices. Moreover, headlines are meant to lead the reader on its way through methodology, theories and the empirical study.

### 2.2 Purpose of methodology

The methodology part is used to explain the design of the thesis and the thesis base. It consists of the research design, the research method and the theoretical and empirical framework. As a start, the research design clarifies the design type, the writing logic, and the type of research questions. Then, the research method defines the research start, the collection of data, the sources used and the overall restrictions of the thesis writing. Finally, the research framework argues for the implemented theories and the set-up of the empirical study.

### 2.3 Research design

Because of the real-life problem setting, involving the living context of a specific group of individuals, i.e.: Guatemalan women, this thesis uses a qualitative approach based on hermeneutics. Practically, it qualifies as qualitative research for its emphasis on the in-depth understanding of a real-life situation, influenced by human behaviour, values, actions and restrictions. Moreover as characteristic for qualitative research, the thesis is dependent on the social and cultural context of the research focus. Based on hermeneutics, the thesis further relies on the skill of interpretation to come to the explanation of the reality. The main objective of hermeneutics is indeed to research and analyse the lifeworld of individuals (or in this case, small groups of individuals) (Addeo 2013). What needs to be considered, while adopting the above defined qualitative hermeneutic approach is its reliance on *constructivism*: stating that reality is socially constructed by an ever dynamic process of people involved, and its reliance on *phenomenology*: focusing on subjective experiences and opinions about the world. Because of this, it is obvious that no generalisation can be made on the basis of a qualitative hermeneutic research, as it is so specifically centred and variable (Addeo 2013). To come to a complete understanding of the problem of focus, the thesis (on the basis of hermeneutics) therefore explains the whole situation from parts, provided by a literature study and three case studies (Holm 2011). Actors as the International Community, the Guatemalan state, women empowerment programs from civil society and individual women activists are thereby identified and implemented. Typical for a qualitative hermeneutic approach, is further the use of interviews (or in this case questionnaires). Also, the role of the researcher is important, for every researcher is prejudiced in a way regarding its qualitative research topic (*Idem* 2013). Within the academia, it is therefore expected that the researcher tries to safeguard his/her objectivity as much as possible, without being insensitive towards implemented actors’ opinions and/or interview/questionnaire responses (*Ibidem* 2013). In writing the thesis, inductive logic is used, meaning that research is preceded by a particular field observation and is handed contextualisation and theoretical support in elaboration. From the particular observation, patterns are explored, hypotheses drawn and research questions built. Moreover, theories are identified in connection with all the foregoing and throughout the whole research process (Trochim 2006). As the full thesis researches a real-life problem, it is evident to use inductive structure, while the empirical information is available before the theoretical framework. What concerns the research questions, they are consecutively descriptive: *In what ways has the post-conflict period (since 1997) in Guatemala continued and re-created a social sphere of gender bias and severe female disempowerment?*, analytical: *Taking into account a difference in structure and authority, how are transnational and local women-only organisations in Guatemala using various approaches and tools to promote women’s social development and establish positive change in traditional Guatemalan gender roles?*, and interpretational: *What could be future (gender) strategies to be implemented in Guatemala’s institutional frameworks to the advance of communities’ sustainable development, based on this research findings?*. The first question thereby defines the problem context in function of the further thesis research. The second question investigates the most emphasised actors and comes to a conclusion that answers the central focus of the thesis. The third question uses the research results to list solutions/suggestions regarding the problem of focus, and opens up for discussion and other research insights. In order to respond to the research questions, a literature study and comparative case studies are needed. Within these, the case-studies are the most central elements of the thesis, as they imply unpreceded personal research and lead to answer the most significant (second) research question, out of three. In promotion of case-study research, qualitative research specialist Eisner believes that it offers possibilities towards complex and very specific (micro-) research. Next to this, he states that case-study outcomes often have the potential to be elaborated upon or compared in similar research, opening up for placement in a wider context (Eisner 1991; in Reis 2009). In the thesis, this is visible, while a former researched case (ADIMH) is taken in to start personal research on two other cases, and to make more extensive comparisons (ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, NamasteDirect 2015). In the light of Guatemala’s women empowerment, case-study research also gives an insight in what is really happening in the field, bypassing the knowledge provided by literature. Still, case-study research relies on the integrity of the researcher and the transparency of the sources, as its appropriateness can be conformed to the researcher’s ideas (Maoz 2002; in Willis 2014). Finally, it must be emphasised that it is impossible to analyse women’s (dis)empowerment in Guatemala in full detail. Therefore conclusions from the literature study and the case-studies cannot be considered the only official results on the topic, and further research is needed before generalisation is advisable (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Arguments for the research cases will however be noted in the empirical framework of this section.

### 2.4 Research method:

Practically, the thesis origin lies in an internship semester in Guatemala, where developmental problems of the country became visible. Involvement in the Guatemalan development scene, personal communications and real-life experiences built up during this period and provided awareness in the complexity of some development questions. As the starting word of the thesis states, field experience and reflections on the gender-based problematics demonstrate the gravity and pressing urgency of the situation. This leads to many similar problem formulations, trying to express the real-life circumstances for women in Guatemala. One of those: *Next to more general problems as instable economy and instable (often corrupted) institutional frameworks, the country experiences alarming rates on specific human rights violations. As a marginalised group of society, women are the first targets of these (human rights) violations and gender inequality based on discrimination (1), gender based violence (2) and a consequent disempowerment of women (3) are described as most pressing social problems (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2012)* has become the final problem formulation. Academic literature is consulted based on the starting idea of *the machismo paradox*, described in an article by Kumar (Kumar 2014). This article investigates the role of empowered women in Latin America in regard to the existing social sphere of machismo. Taking this topic to the Guatemalan context, academic literature, international reports and press releases however denote a far more complex situation, as women empowerment in the country shows in many ways distorted by the country’s history and social structures. Supported by extensive, multiple English and Spanish sources, the literature study gives the reader a broad context to in-depth understanding of the problem of focus. Besides this, the central research of this thesis is in need of unpreceded case-studies to thoroughly investigate the bottom-up initiatives from the Guatemalan civil society field, and this because a pre-research on the governmental (top-down) perspective did not provide much input. The bottom-up research is therefore supported by a study by Nolin and Reade, which investigated the civil society women empowerment NGO ADIMH in 2008. With this study as a guideline, further case-studies are identified and personally researched through website analysis, skype and telephone contact, emails and questionnaires. As all empowerment NGOs implemented in the thesis are quite small organisations, in personal research questionnaires are sent out to only a small amount of staff members, as well as participants to collect relevant information. Due to language barriers, distance- and time restrictions, two questionnaire responders from Starfish and two questionnaire responders from NamasteDirect are taken in in the research (See appendix 3-7). Thereby the extent of the case-study research does not need to be questioned, as additional information is available through emails, website consult, and a skype contact (with Starfish). Thesis structuring is clearly a work in progress, influenced by many factors, as well as restrictions. The most apparent one for this research is the position of the researcher versus the empowerment programs and the people involved in these. As remarked, language and distance barriers are to be experienced, as well as the difficulty to build trust between researcher and the programs of research, while not being in the field personally during the thesis writing. Focused on qualitative, micro-research, this thesis thus contextualises a bottom-up movement in a nationwide development problem in Guatemala. Literature, personal contacts and questionnaires thereby count as descriptive and explanatory data to substantiate the thesis as much as possible. Statistical data on the topic are not often taken in, as literature points at its regular incorrectness due to for example widespread impunity in femicide cases. The mix of primary (questionnaires, emails, skype, calls) and secondary sources (academic articles, reports, media and international development publications, relevant websites) is however sufficient and relevant to shed a new light on the problem formulation, answering the research questions.

### 2.4 Research framework: theoretical and empirical

In researching the problem formulation and answering the research questions, 4 supporting theories are identified. Consecutively these are Activist/Structural feminism, Post-structural feminism, Resource/Mobilisation theory and Capability theory. In the theory section, these theories are explained content-wise and contextualised within the wider theoretical frames of feminist theories, social movement theories, and alternative development theories. The feminist theories (both Activist and Post-structural) connect with the Guatemalan research topic and context in that they promote female action or female supporting action against patterns of injustice (in Guatemalan society). These feminist ideas of supporting women are implemented in many international and Guatemalan initiatives, like the GHCR, individual women activist actions, and in the three researched empowerment groups (Suarez and Jordan 2007, Saenz 2014, Bevan 2015, ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, NamasteDirect 2015). In particular the challenging of male-based societal and institutional power over women is thereby emphasised by the empirical actors of the Guatemalan case. Next to this, the characterising praxis-oriented status of Activist feminism, in order to achieve betterment is supported by many actors (Ackerly and True 2010). Besides, all actors hold it as an objective to turn being female into a societal benefit (Davies and Thomas 2005). Further supporting (Post-structural) feminism, quite some research sources point at the importance of intersectional discrimination and the investigation of power structures, and/or engage in micro-level actions to reverse the existing female disempowering context (Mindiola and Chabot 2008, Teijido and Schramm 2010, Vasquez et al. 2013, Q Baján 2015) (Graff 2012, Davies and Thomas 2005). What concerns the Resource/Mobilisation theory, as a part of the Social Movement theories, it can be said that this theory is partly taken in in the current Guatemalan empowerment movement, and supported to a greater or lesser extent within the case-studies (ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, NamasteDirect 2015). However this theory can be also seen as a future academic aid to help build a solid, social movement for Guatemalan women, as the general conclusion of the thesis suggests (Jenkins 1986). Regarding the Capability Theory, having its place in the alternative development theories, it can be said that empirical actors are mostly using it as an approach to analyse social situations and to foster personal female development, through the means of “capability” notions and “achieved functionings” (Robeyns 2003). Implementing this theory, the case-study initiatives mostly connect it with (positive) power typology, as described by Rowlands (Rowlands 1998; in Nolin and Reade 2008). Alternative Development as a whole can thereby also be seen as a future lead to Guatemalan development, as it supports interdisciplinary approaches and bottom-up action towards gender equality and other development goals (Pieterse 2010, 13; Levis and Kanji 2009, 69). The choice of the theories thus needs to be seen in the light of current circumstances and future possibilities in the Guatemalan gender scene. However, even if these theories are identified as connected with the thesis, it cannot be excluded that other theories would also have fit in this research. As theories are only an academic frame, serving a real-life context, it must thereby kept in mind that no theory will ever be able to capture any development problem fully, or to suggest any perfect solutions. If that would be the case, development problems would not exist at all or not continue to exist at least. Time and space restrictions, as well as the complexity of the development problem of female disempowerment in Guatemala make it impossible to analyse or clarify the whole situation as it is. Many factors (as governmental motives, civil society conflicts, international involvement) have proven out of reach for this thesis research, but could be important to come to new perspectives. However, this thesis attempts to give an extensive contextualisation of the problem with the literature study and focuses on bottom-up cases, spread over the country to explore women empowerment from within civil society, from different perspectives. Personal contacts, interest and extensive research thereby lead to three cases, comparable to one another and relevant for responding the research questions.

 During the research, the noticeable shared morale for women’s empowerment and positive change in Guatemala, from a bottom-up perspective has resulted in the thesis title. In the hope that the existing protest against the gender context grows, this title could be realised one day soon, and in the meanwhile serve as a catch-phrase.

# Theories

Identifying the right theories for a real life problem requires an in-depth understanding of that problem, often achieved by combining field based experience with a literature study on potential theoretical support. Thereby one must remember that, according to political science professor Cox: “*theory is always for someone and for some purpose*” (Cox, 1981). This indicates that theory, especially in development topics, needs to be viewed upon with a critical eye, as no theory captures the full depth of any development problem. Besides this, a researcher’s combination of theories, connecting to the development problem of focus will always be subject to discussion along the line of different perspectives. Nevertheless, the following theories, in their own specific way, support the thesis context and add to answer the research questions.

### 3.1 Theories of feminism

Taking the definition of feminism[[3]](#footnote-3) as a starting point, it is important to understand that various feminist theories exist, due to differences in perspective or focus field, changing societies, national situations, cultures and norms, and different levels of need for action throughout the world. Linked with this research topic, two kinds of feminist theories are in particular relevant.

 Nevertheless one must also be aware of the critique on a subdivision of feminist theory. This critique emphasises the importance of a synthesis of feminist theory (including liberal, radical, socialist, psychoanalytic, postmodern etc.) in empirical research (Ackerly and True 2010).

### Activist/Structural feminism:

Ever since their growing number, feminist theories have been divided into so called schools of thought (Ackerly and True 2010). Activist feminism has its roots in women’s movements, arising across the world in the 1960s and 1970s. Understanding gender and sex as “socially constructed”, activist feminists use awareness campaigns as a method to confront women with the political and social structures they live in (Cook and Fonow 2005). This process of “becoming aware” launches social exchange, discussion and a redefinition of individual engendered problems as social problems, requiring political solutions (Lather, 1986).

 Activist or Structural feminism states that it is the shared experience of being oppressed that unites women and supports collective action (Davies and Thomas 2005). Concerns as domestic violence and rape, maternal health, employment discrimination, sexual harassment and a feminisation of poverty are cornerstones of the theory, identified as calls for action. Moreover, activist feminists promote the challenging of male-based societal and institutional power over women. Their praxis-oriented approach includes all level women’s voices and elaborates on research, leading to beneficial actions for women.

 Over the years, the Activist or Structural feminist theory has been implemented in different fields, such as psychology, economics and international relations; opening its territorial borders and connecting local feminist movements (Ackerly and True 2010). In the field, it is focused on female empowerment, displaying and protesting forms of oppression, and engaging in awareness programs to turn being female into a societal benefit. Next to this, it points at the importance of women speaking out and the identification of female experiences as universally shared (Davies and Thomas 2005). Lately, activist feminists also felt the influence of globalised forces in the problems they address and realised that their supporters might be found globally (Ackerly and Attanasi 2009).

 As the implementation of feminist theories evolves, feminist researchers keep the historical grown structure of the subdivided feminist theories alive but start using critical and specific frameworks to explain certain theories (e.g. Activist feminism) in certain real life contexts (Ackerly and True 2010). This for example because of the critique on Activist/Structural feminism that women’s oppression cannot be seen as a universal collective phenomenon, as there exist many intersecting forms of oppression between class, race, age, and sexuality (Sum 2000).

### Post-structural feminism:

Post- structural feminism is defined as a turn away from Structural feminism, in this regard that it distances itself from a display of women as “universal victims of oppression.” It readdresses the question: “for whom are we (feminists) fighting?” and recognises the relevance of various voices (Davies and Thomas 2005). According to philosophy professor Graff, post-structural feminism goes out from certain assumptions. Amongst other things, it acknowledges that intersectionality (as defined in the explanatory list of terms) is an important concept to involve in any feminist research or perspective, as the marginalisation of women depends on several factors (as sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, class and age) which form hierarchies within female groups. Further, the theory follows the Foucauldian notion, stating that: “*human subjects are effects of power relations proliferated through multiple discourses, and that deconstructing these power relations is essential for resisting repressive forces*.” Adding to this, it tries to investigate how power works to open up space for new topics and a less oppressive institutional framework (Graff, 2012).

 Post-structural feminists are also described as being concerned with the “*politics of re-inscription*”, meaning that they understand female resistance as micro-level negotiations and actions, leading towards a re-writing of the existing (social, political and economic) script. Their focus is thus often small-scale, subtle and for specific groups within local communities, recognising the cultural and historical complexity of any specific/local situation (Davies and Thomas 2005).

 However, Post-structural feminists are profoundly criticised for keeping too far away from reality and for being too concerned about academic frameworks and textuality, which detaches them from the Activist sphere of feminism (Graff 2012).

### 3.2 Social movement theories (women’s movement)

In definition, social movements refer to (civil society) groups trying to organise individual people in a common perspective, and in acting together to create pressures causing or preventing change within a socio-political or economic situation (Enotes 2015). In this regard, social movements need to be understood as specifically bound to the time, place and context they appear in. Robert Brym, professor in sociology, points at the differences between old and new social movements, over the last three centuries. Where old social movements have mostly been small, local and aggressive, new social movements are becoming less or non-violent. Next to this, new social movements see the potential of globalisation and becoming connected with concurring movements throughout the world. In addition, the latter are divided in movements that stride for all of humanity (e.g. environmental movements) and movements that support the rights of specific socially marginalised groups (e.g. the women’s movement). In development countries, the new social movements focus primarily on ensuring more fundamental human rights (Brym 2009; in Petkau s.d.).

### Resource/Mobilisation theory

According to Brym, Resource/Mobilisation theory states that it is only when a marginalised part of society finds the resources needed to challenge their authorities that a successful social movement is able to come forth (Brym 2009; in Petkau s.d.). Moreover, according to sociology and political science professor Jenkins, the theory holds that the major cause of forming social movements is the availability of resources, rather than personal or communal grievance. Jenkins described the main principles of Resource/Mobilisation theory as follows:

1. The actions of social movement's members and participants are rational.
2. A social movement's actions are strongly influenced by institutionalized power imbalances and conflicts of interest.
3. These power imbalances and conflicts of interest are sufficient to generate grievances that lead to the mobilization of social movement's intent on changing the distribution of resources and organization.
4. Centralized and formally structured social movements more effectively mobilise resources and achieve goals of change than decentralized and informal social movements.
5. The success of social movements is heavily influenced by group strategy and the political climate.

 (J. Craig Jenkins 1986)

In retrospect, Resource/Mobilisation theory explains the development of old social movements, defined by local leaders, large membership and direct internal donations into new social movements, embracing professional leaders, paid staff, and resources from in- and outside the movement itself. The theory suggests that the success of social movements depends on the adequate mobilisation and use of resources and the development of (political) opportunities for its members (Enotes 2015).

 As for the resources themselves, they can be either material or non-material, going from money, technology, communication and access to a public, over internal social ties, networks, capacity building, legitimacy, moral commitment, solidarity and more (Fuchs 2006). In new social movements (e.g. the women’s movement) it is said that many resources are obtained from “conscience constituents”, which are individuals or organisations that ally with a specific social movement without being its member. These persons or groups thus associate with the movement’s cause or mission and are equally important for carrying out the movement’s perspective to the wider world (often with help of the media) (Paulsen and Glumm 1995).

 Critics of the Resource/Mobilisation theory argue that the impact of (financial) resources on social movements is estimated too highly. Their main argument is that quite some social movements today still work efficiently on a base of movement spirit and voluntary help of members without being over dependent on financial aids (Boundless 2015).

### 3.3 Alternative Development theories

What counts as development varies along levels of society, culture, political structures, geographic locale and historical background (Pieterse 2010, 4). Because of this, the idea to measure development by capacity and capabilities on site, rather than by economic growth and global income figures, emerged during the last decades (Barder 2012). Professor in global studies and sociology Jan Pieterse states that Alternative Development theory has come forth as a solution that has widely been discussed upon in recent years. This theory challenges the long supported concept of development as a sole economic goal, focused on the increase of financial resources. Next to this it opens up the development picture towards social development and community building. The theory however also keeps in mind the intrinsic relation between economic growth and human development (Pieterse 2010, p.4).

 As most important topics within Alternative Development theory count: social relations and networks, diversity, gender equality, environment and community empowerment. This wide-ranged focus demands interdisciplinary approaches and is most likely to be found in grassroots organisations, empowerment programs and bottom-up development. In the development debate, supporters of the theory describe it as a key to a right-minded and sustainable development foundation, with NGOs and empowerment organisations in the role of challengers of the top-down development infrastructure (Pieterse 2010, p.13; Levis and Kanji 2009, p.69).

 One of the supporters of alternative development is professor Sen who defines development as: “*enlarging people’s choices , capabilities and freedoms so that they can live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge, a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community*” (Sen 1998; in Barder 2012).

### Capability theory

Since capability as a theory has been first reflected upon by Sen in the 1980s, a range of scholars have discussed, supported or criticised it. Sometimes referred to as a framework or approach, a theory or even a human development paradigm, it has been debated thoroughly and in different fields, including international development (Fukuda-Parr 2003). Professor Ingrid Robeyns, specialist in political science, linked to the Ethics institute and fellow of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA) researched and overviewed professor Sen’s perspective on the theory of capability. According to her, the capability approach is used in analysing situations of well-being, poverty and inequality and focused on people’s capabilities: i.e. the things that people are able to do and be.

 Capability theory thus holds that development must be understood in people’s effective possibilities to engage in activities they want to be part of, and in being the person they really want to be. In Sen’s terms: being literate, healthy, valued, part of a community etc. count as states of being and are called “achieved functionings*”* (Robeyns 2003).

 “Achieved functionings” and capabilities differ in that the first are achievements (which are realised) and the second are mere freedoms (or possibilities) to personally choose from. For Sen, it is fundamentally important to be capable of leading the life one wants to lead without being restricted or discriminated. Capability theory therefore urges to look upon the developmental status of a country/region and pursues situational questions. These questions include whether people are nourished, supported, politically enabled, and empowered enough to meet human development standards, if they have access to education or community participation and if they are ready to cope with everyday life constraints (Robeyns 2003).

 To foster capabilities, the main aids could be financial resources, as well as policies, the protection of freedom of thought, freedom of speech, political participation, social and cultural handling, social norms, and so forth. This means that the capability approach is in the first place a framework of normative thinking. According to Robeyns it can be used:

 1. As a framework of thought for the evaluation of individual advantage and social

 arrangements.

 2. As a critique of other approaches to the evaluation of well-being and justice

 3. As a formula or algorithm to make interpersonal comparisons of welfare or wellbeing.

 (Ingrid Robeyns 2003)

Moreover the capability theory includes a perspective on diversity and equality, taking gender discrimination as an example. It states that group specific constraints or discriminations can affect both capabilities (freedoms) and achieved functionings (realised achievements).

 Critics of the theory have rejected the complexity of capability selection, stating that one needs uncountable different “achieved functionings” to draw the full picture of all people’s personal well-being. In addition, the selection of capabilities can contain biases. Another critique is that the theory is too individualistically focused, taking individuals out of their social environment while pursuing their own personal capabilities. Supporters of the theory however respond that the capability theory needs to be complemented with other empirical, normative theories such as normative IR theory, etchical cosmopolitanism or cultural education theory, to make it functional in sustainable development (Robeyns 2003).[[4]](#footnote-4) (See links in appendix 8)

#  4. Empirical study

## 4.1 Literature study on female (dis)empowerment

### 4.1.1 Introduction

Twenty years have passed since the then Guatemalan government adopted the Beijing PFA in 1995, with the reservations that the PFA would not be implemented where it was in conflict with Guatemala’s existing political constitution, national legislation and/or other legal documents. This in fact meant that Guatemala showed itself unwilling to act out legislative changes in accordance with the PFA (or for that matter with the World Summit’s agreement for Social Development) (UNED Forum 1995). Fourteen years later, in 2009, the Committee of CEDAW (or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), published a negative report on the status of Guatemala in gender equality and women’s rights. In this report, attention was given to international concerns about gender specific issues, which continued to be unsolved in Guatemala. The main worries thereby were *continued violence against women, a discriminating legal system, normalised stereotypes and cultural practices, sexual exploitation, lack of education, engendered poverty, health issues and a severe lack in the coordination of women empowering mechanisms (both governmental and in the private sector).* The Guatemalan state was strongly recommended by the Committee to adopt short- middle- and long-term measures for the betterment of this situation and given some outline in how to start this. Next to this, the state was also reminded to the Beijing PFA and pressured to amplify the starting-points of this convention in the Guatemalan legal system, in order to report on better results in the next report period on gender equality in September 2015 (CEDAW 2009). In 2010, ECLAC once more expressed its concerns to the government of former president Álvaro Colom, stating that gender equality had not yet come forth in the country. As reasons for this, ECLAC pointed at the *indefinite stance of the Guatemalan state in the recognition of gender equality*, the *ineffective innovation programmes*, *the* *lack of resources provided* *and the* *unwillingness to implement the economic, political and social changes to advance this equality* (ECLAC 2010). The ECLAC concerns were expressed despite international pressures by UN organisations, social movement lobby groups and international conferences and agreements (see: PFA and CEDAW) to finally create an agenda for gender equality in Guatemala, focusing on opportunities as well as the exercise of human rights by the Guatemalan state. In the context of Guatemala as a development country with a history of violent militaristic regimes and a social sphere of ambiguous traditional norms, ECLAC recognised however, that the existing inequalities were the outcome of a *coaction* between political, economic, social and cultural elements. Keys for change, according to ECLAC, should therefore be*: a strong and democratic policy response by the Guatemalan government* on the one hand, and *a mentality change in the discriminating patriarchal culture as known in the country* on the other. Regretting that the international legal standards (more specifically on women’s human rights) are recurrently neglected by many Central-American governments, ECLAC also acknowledged that societies need integration before production and greater equality in the social environment in order to obtain political influence and change. With this last acknowledgement, ECLAC suggested the possibility to look upon gender equality development from a bottom-up perspective, focusing less on governmental efforts and more on initiatives from civil society (ECLAC 2010). As already mentioned in the general introduction of this thesis, the Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative, set-up by UN Women and Global Compact, primarily focuses on private sector actions (including the market’s and NGOs’) to build more gender equal communities and from there a more gender equal Guatemalan society (Women’s Empowerment Principles Initiative 2011). The analysis of this thesis will therefore focus on female empowerment and gender equality from a bottom-up perspective, researching its origins, structures, aims, hindrances and sustainable expectations. To do this, it is however important to overview the political, economic, social and cultural positions of women in present Guatemalan society and how these positions came (and come) into being. Concluding the literature study, the first research question: *In what ways has the post-conflict period (since 1997) in Guatemala continued and re-created a social sphere of gender bias and severe female disempowerment* ? will be answered.

### 4.1.1. Analysis: The position of the Guatemalan woman in society: a disempowered status

 **Historical background and fact sheet**

To understand the present (past-conflict period) position of women in Guatemalan society, one must in the first place comprehend the historical background and population structure of the country. Worldwide the classic and post-classic Maya civilisation (250-950 CE and 950-1524 CE) has captured the attention of many historians and archaeologists. In the flourishing classic period, the Maya civilisation has proven to be highly cultured with a refined and complex world image, a society build on a hierarchic socio-political structure and admirable knowledge of arts, architecture and sciences. The fragmentation of the Mayan reign started already in the post-classic period, but a totally different structure of life came with the Spanish colonisation of Central America since the 16th century. Next to Christianity, the Spaniards brought new cultural behaviours and new politics to the Central-American region (Mark 2012).

 Today, Guatemala is still called the heart of the Mayan culture, with over 40% indigenous (mostly) Mayans and 60% mestizos (people of mixed Mayan and Ladino descent) populating the country. Besides, while the official language is Spanish, 24 indigenous languages are spoken throughout the country. All this makes Guatemala a unique, multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual nation, rich in history and tradition but also in foreign exploitation, economic devolution and violent wars (Mark 2012, UN report 2007, GHRC 2009). The estimated total population of Guatemala is around 13 million with far over half of this number living in rural parts of the country and more than half of this number being women. (Teijido and Schramm 2010, 14).

 Statistically predominant in number, women in Guatemala are however heavily discriminated and subjugated by male structures of power, both in the present period and throughout history, and this due to a very common denial of their social, cultural, economic, and political civil rights. Because of this reality, many studies have concluded that (extreme) poverty, in the broadest sense of the word, affects more women than men. The most distressing figures on “poverty”, including economic, educational and other deprivation poverty are thereby for rural, indigenous Guatemalan women, who suffer from intersecting discriminations (Mindiola and Chabot 2008). Reasons for female discrimination and gender bias go back as far as the Spanish conquest, which introduced an exclusionary and male driven political, social and economic hierarchy. A more recent cause for female disempowerment has been the internal armed conflict, capturing Guatemala in a militaristic stranglehold from 1960 to 1996, and its unpromising aftermath (Teijido and Schramm 2010, p. 15).

 **Cultural and social patterns**

Culturally and socially seen, the present status of Guatemalan women is thus twofold. On the one hand there is the origin of machismo, a patriarchal norm (imbedded in Guatemalan culture) that is said to have its roots in the Spanish conquest. On the other hand there is the militaristic and ultraviolent character of the civil war that shattered the people of Guatemala and left a trace of fear, despair and mistrust in national institutions, between different ethnic population groups and between women and men.

 The main idea of machismo supports legal rights as they were known under old Roman law: with a paternal power (potestas), a female subordination to the husband (manis) and the act of guarding this (tutelo). Linking this with Guatemala (and the whole Latin American region), historians bring back machismo to the Spanish conquest. They state that the Spanish conquerors introduced chivalry together with a strong and restricting religion (Christianity) and sexist norms and values. The behaviour of men became defined by stoicism, endurance and power while women were categorised as either mothers (to the example of the Virgin Mary) or whores. Next to this, the native customs were bent towards the benefit of the Spanish and native men were forced to perform former female tasks in the *encomiendas.* Rather than increase respect for women’s skills, that in earlier reigns had gained prestige, women became severely devalued, by the conquerors, the native men and the male mestizo offspring of later generations. Imitating the Spaniards, natives in the Latin American region did thus not only take over the Spanish ideas of courtship, chivalry and Christian religion, but also the superior positioning against women. This was a behaviour that had been much less present in the own Mayan, Aztec and other native cultures. Due to the long Spanish reign in Latin America, from the 16th to the 19th century, the concept of machismo has however had a long time to grow into the present Latin-American - and thus also Guatemalan society (Morford 2013).

 Together with machismo, marianismo, “*an exaggerated traditional femininity*” came into existence, when the Spanish conquerors created the dichotomy of the mother and the whore, as described above. In the conviction that men and women have their own (superior and subordinated) place in society, the native males started to evaluate women. Men would show respect only to the Madonna- type of woman, figured in the mother and look down upon all others. Their task towards these motherly women was mainly to protect them, as the ideal of femininity, according to marianismo, is to be pure, pristine and helpless (or in other words: powerless) (Morford 2013). Machismo and marianismo, in their original forms, are still very much embedded in present Guatemalan culture.

 More specific for Guatemala’s national history, the 36 year long civil war (1960-1996) has played an important role in the positioning of men and women towards each other. This civil war has been a devastating conflict between the militaristic Guatemalan government and (indigenous) guerrilla groups. In 1999, the UN, by means of a Historical Clarification Commission report judged the internal armed conflict to be genocide on Guatemala’s indigenous people, commissioned by subsequent governments (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Historico 1999). During the whole civil war period, state controlled defence patrols were trained in targeting and killing indigenous women, as they were (or could be) the mothers of future guerrilla fighters. Torture and violent rape was widely used to destroy women’s sense of femininity and their reproductive capability (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala 1998). To make the situation even crueller, the national military and government forced indigenous men to be part of the defence patrols. Other than getting killed by the government, a majority of indigenous women lost their husbands, sons and brothers to these civil defence patrols (PAC in Spanish) (Castaneda 1996). Militaristic state troops thus used killing strategies focused on women, and this to prevent indigenous culture transmission, preservation of families and the care for others, mainly given by women. Pregnant women were a highly emphasised target and the act of raping women before the eyes of their families became a violent tactic to suppress whole families or communities (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala 1998, Doyle 2010).

 A most pressing and on living problem in Guatemala is that violence and femicide, originating from the civil war period, are highly normalised in the present social sphere. This is visible in the way that today’s femicides are characterised by (1) the same patterns of torture and (2) an even more concerning impunity with which these cases are treated by the legal system and governmental authorities (Kaufman 2007). In this context, Guatemalan women’s rights defenders speak of feminicide, involving both femicide perpetrators and the government in the brutal killings and the tolerance of these killings. Aggravating the problem, there is no profile of the femicide victims or the perpetrators: women from all levels of society and ethnic origins are equally in danger and perpetrators go from street gang members, over clandestine and governmental security teams to even domestic partners and family members. The whole problem thus spreads in the face of normalised gender based violence and very rigid gender roles, banning women to the domestic sphere, where they are socially controlled by men (Lakshmanan 2006, Filipovic 2008).

 Other socio-cultural factors that determine the Guatemalan woman’s status in society today are ethnic origin (fostering intersectional discrimination), religion, and an uneven access to education and health[[5]](#footnote-5) (Mindiola and Chabot 2008, Teijido and Schramm 2010). Especially religion is thereby restricting (in particular Maya) women’s opportunities to climb the social ladder because it severely hinders family planning. In the belief that big families are a God’s blessing many Mayan women are restricted to a solely domestic life and taking care of big families. This often connects with negative effects towards economic resources, health, and domestic partnerships (Abadian- Heifetz 2010).

 **Economic and political patterns**

Building on the cultural and social backgrounds that create the status of Guatemalan women, economic patterns can be closely linked. According to a report on the reproductive and educational situation of women in rural parts of the country, the civil war has had life-changing effects on present female generations and their economic contexts. This for example, because of the fact that many young women at the beginning of the new millennium were widowed or fatherless, due to the cruel practices of the government’s military in the conflict. These women were forced to make different choices, and/or take up different societal roles as abrupt head of households. This situation however, did and does not fit well in the traditional and nationally highly valued Guatemalan culture (Abadian-Heifetz 2010). It has thus been mostly out of necessity (see the civil war aftermath and the weak national economy) and besides quite recently that Guatemalan women have started to take on responsibilities that were men’s only for centuries. These responsibilities include productive work outside the home, with a pay and a certain sense of independence (Teijido and Schramm 2010, p. 21). There is no doubt that the new economic roles and remunerations play a part in the bottom-up empowerment of women and women’s actions for progress, as suggested by Brym’s Resource/Mobilisation theory. Moreover, it strengthens their capabilities and achieved functionings, as suggested by Sen’s capability theory. However, this new economic context where women step out of the domestic environment also works as a trigger forviolence, because a growing independent female position stands in the way of many years of rigid gender stereotypes and ultimately challenges male social control over women in the public and private sphere. While many men in Guatemala still look upon female independence as threatening, women (who are not head of the household) are therefore often still forced to stay at home where it is said to be safe. The domestic violence that is regularly connected to this kind of restriction is however also one of the major forms of violence suffered by Guatemalan women (Filipovic 2010). Besides this, forced domesticity does not solve the problem of a national economic malaise neither the problem of overpopulated families with extreme income poverty, malnutrition, and unequal relationships as results (Mayan Families 2014). In the political field, Guatemalan women are even less represented. Whereas Latin American countries (as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama) have been electing female presidents and some more countries in the region (Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela) have been strengthening their female politicians with important minister posts in the last two decades, Guatemala keeps far behind (Montealegre 2014). The country has no gender quota laws on political representation, and shows to have the highest gender gap in voting, with 12% less women than men participating in voting for elections in 2011 (Htun 2005, Schwindt-Bayer 2011).[[6]](#footnote-6) Analysing further numbers on political representation, Guatemalan women made some progress during the last national elections of 2011. Female politicians won six seats in the Central American Parliament and the vice president happened to be a woman for the first time in Guatemalan history. However, in national Congress, Guatemalan women still only make up 13%, with a representation of 1.8% of indigenous women (see intersectional discrimination). It is said that the challenges for women who run for office in Guatemala are (again) the traditionally suggested gender roles, institutional barriers in political parties and the national electoral system (Vasquez et al. 2013, p. 30). Moreover, very recently the only female political authority, Vice-president Roxana Baldetti and her administration have been entangled in a tax-fraud corruption scandal. Investigation goes on, but the national media are keen on damaging Baldetti’s reputation irreparably (Balcárcel 2015). In the light of Latin American, very conservative media, former Brazilian president Lula said the following about Dilma Rousseff’s presidency, when she as a female political leader got attacked by the Brazilian press:

 “The prejudice against her is because she is a woman and because of the fact that it was not foreseen in the minds of the Brazilian elite that a woman could occupy the political spaces which have been, until yesterday, occupied by men.”

 (Lula da Silva 2013 in Kumar 2014)

Away from the discussion on the quality of female politics in Latin America or the background of the current political scandal around the figure of Baldetti, this quote, by a former Latin American president shows the importance of male influences and patriarchal thought, experienced in the whole region until today. What is more, due to further discrimination of indigenous people in Guatemala, and controversies between indigenous groups themselves, Mayan movements are not structured as a practicable national political party, unlike indigenous movements in other Latin American countries. When Nobel Prize winner and human rights defender Rigoberta Menchu Túm ran for president in 2007 and 2011, allied with some small, non-influential leftist parties (which have always been rather small in Guatemala) she won just over 3% of the national vote, as she had difficulty to attract the highly divided Mayan voters as well as any other. Reasons for this were furthermore a lack of program, a lack of social movement basis (which is one of the Resource/Mobilisation theory principles) and the continuing preference of male candidates (Pallister 2013). In the end however, it is the structure of the legal electoral system which is the most fundamental obstacle to full female citizenship and participation. Therefore, in 2009, CEDAW expressed an urgent need for the Guatemalan government to develop measures to increase female political participation and representation (Teijido and Schramm 2010, p. 22). Up until now, the situation stays however very unbalanced and progress is hoped to be achieved in the upcoming elections of 2015.

 **Women on the barricades**

Despite the title of this part, it cannot be stated in an absolute way that the women of Guatemala are in a state of revolution. Keeping in mind their social, cultural, economic and political contexts, it needs no explication that female uprisings in Guatemala can be extremely complex and also extremely dangerous. Nevertheless, forms of protest did appear and continue to appear and gain success today, as a means against the hostile societal factors, excluding women from Guatemala’s public life. When the Peace Accords of 1996 were signed, many women’s movements in the country stood up, reinforced with a mixed quantity of Structural and Post-structural feminist theory, depending on their rural or urban bases. As a social movement, the women’s movement in Guatemala created the greatest possibility to achieve positive change in the iniquitous situations of women all over the country. From Activist feminism it took over the redefinition of individual engendered problems as widespread social problems, requiring political solutions, as well as a need for a practical approach (Lather 1986, Ackerly and True 2010). At the end of the civil war, the movement began to posture itself step by step as a political project with particular needs and essentials (Teijido and Schramm 2010, p. 16). Besides, it saw importance in analysing existing power structures to implement a less oppressive institutional framework in the long run, as supported by post-structural feminism (Graff 2012). Even if the movement also lived up to almost all the principles stated by Jenkins to meet the Resource/Mobilisation theory within social movements (Jenkins 1986), it is important to place it in the ongoing national context of an unstable political climate with structures of gender-based violence and discriminating social and cultural stereotypes. These structural discriminations have severely undermined the Guatemalan women’s movement from the start and hindered its aligning with other civil society sectors. Another reason for its present weakness is the fact that mestizo and indigenous women’s movements reach for different goals, due to different (intersectional) discriminations towards their female members (Teijido and Schramm 2010). Together with the rise of the women’s movement around 1996, it should be mentioned that the then Guatemalan government started up the Indigenous Women’s Defense Office (DEMI) and the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women (CONAPREVI in Spanish). Adding to this, in 2008, a Law against Femicide and other Forms of Violence against Women was established and promised to sentence femicide perpetrators to 50+ years of imprisonment. The problem with these governmental initiatives however is the fact that there has been insufficient financial and legal state support to date to let these organisations and laws act out efficiently. One example of the state’s negligence on the matter is that the 2008 Law against Femicide convicted two perpetrators in a whole year, while statistics show that 722 women have been killed in femicides that same year (Teijido and Schramm 2010). Given the complexities hindering one centralised national women’s movement with political potency, Guatemala is mostly dependent on local or transnational women empowerment initiatives, existing in the civil society sphere. One transnational organisation working for local women’s human rights is the GHCR or the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, which is a not for profit, independent and humanitarian organisation, publishing information on human rights in the country for over more than 30 years. Regarding women’s rights, GHCR takes care for abuse survivors and promotes structural change in all society levels. Doing so, the organisation uses an activist (feminist) approach and develops campaigns to raise awareness about gender based violence in Guatemala and women’s human rights (abuses). In cooperation with individual Guatemalan women activists, GHCR organises speeches, workshops and presentations throughout Guatemala and the US. On the one hand it thus uses top-down approaches, raising legislative pressure in the US Congress and Senate in order to put transnational pressure on Guatemalan authorities. On the other hand, it works from the field, mobilising activists with, for example, postcard campaigns, addressed to the Guatemalan president. Besides this, GHCR is interested in academically researching the roots of GBV and find solutions for the many discourses that affect human power relations. As a transnational organisation overviewing a national situation of severe women’s disempowerment, GHCR criticises the long experienced governmental indifference in Guatemala and the intolerable loopholes in laws for female protection.[[7]](#footnote-7) Its greatest concern however, is the intersecting network of female abuse throughout all society levels and the subsequent undemocratic positioning of women who are afraid of speaking out about their situations, due to a constant pressing sphere of violence. Giving a voice to women activists, GHCR is now also examining the roles of the Guatemalan government and its civil society, as well as transnational and international frameworks dealing with this topic. Thereby they publish the opinions of individual activists. Interesting for this thesis is the fact that many of these activists repeat that governmental women programmes as SEPREM or CONAPREVI are mostly “*just smoke and mirrors*”. Counting most for these women activists would be a change in the penal codes, continued solidarity from the international scene, pressure on national authorities and a halt in the US promotion of terrorism security networks in Guatemala, as they foster more violence than safety (Suarez and Jordan 2007). Without being a social movement itself, the transnational GHCR organisation can be seen as a conscience constituent of the activist trend for female human rights in the country and thus be linked to the Resource/Mobilisation theory (Paulsen and Glumm 1995). Next to transnational programs, there are also quite some local Guatemalan empowerment programs with some different theoretical and practical focuses, and some of these will be researched upon in the next analysis chapter. However, as indicated in the GHCR description, many one-woman-activist-shows appear here and there in the country. Despite difficulties to gather as one movement, a Guatemalan women activist trend does exist. Each in their own way and (mostly) for personalised reasons, women activists in Guatemala raise their voices. Giovanna Saenz is a Guatemalan journalist who calls GBV “*a phenomenon that does not change with the new fashion season*”. She warns Guatemalan citizens about the danger of becoming insensible for violence, refers to female killing statistics and condemns male superiority in society through her articles. Next to this, she emphasises the role of education regarding gender equality and sympathises with the women’s organisation “*Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres*”, which contributes to women empowerment with article publishing, awareness campaigns and awareness raising art on the annual kite festival in Sumpango. According to Saenz, volunteers are needed urgently in Guatemala to build an association and networks, and raise attention for the inhumane situation women are living in (Saenz 2014). Another women’s rights activist is Kimberley Bautista, a feminist Colombian-Irish film-maker who travelled to Guatemala to film a documentaryto break the silence on GBV in the country. (See appendix 9) As a personal victim of rape at gunpoint during the producing of her film “*Justice for my Sister*”, Bautista understands that GBV very often becomes a personal subject in Guatemala. To prevent further deterioration of the situation, Bautista tries to engage in leadership development to create far-reaching impact on Guatemalan lives. She does this through a screening of her documentary all over Guatemala, where she gives women in the audience a chance to relate with the story and to share their own stories. Making the problem visible, Bautista in fact provokes societal reactions. Also, she and her team offer material and trainings for the prevention of domestic violence, reaching out to several people, including local communities, men in male-dominated sectors, police, legal officers and lawyers. This with the idea that it takes a whole community to understand and solve such a serious problem. Finally, Bautista’s team creates local resource guides for women to inform them about places to go for help (Bevan 2015). Combining both feminist theories of this thesis, individual women’s rights activist in Guatemala thus concentrate on awareness raising, the display of oppression, challenging existing power-structures and practical as well as academic projects to create positive change (Cook and Fonow 2005, Graff 2012, Davies and Thomas 2005). Without being centralised movements in a stable political climate, all women’s activist also act rationally and in face of severe institutionalised power imbalances, resulting in individual mobilisation, which gradually becomes a nation-wide trend (Jenkins 1986). Moreover, the activists try to create more female capability in local communities, relying on Alternative Development theory’s interdisciplinary approach (Pieterse 2010, p.13). Besides the (weakened) Guatemalan women’s movement and individual women activists, a third wave of female activism is currently on the rise in Guatemala. Fighting two wrongs at one front, several ecological feminist movements are standing up to protect Guatemala’s natural resources and agriculture from economically based foreign megaprojects (in for example mining) (Teijido and Schram 2010, p. 3-4, Geglia 2012) However, this third female wave of protest has objectives that go beyond the thesis research and will therefore be a case for further gender research in Guatemala. In the end, it must also be said that many (transnational) female human rights defenders, be it individually or in a movement, are specifically getting attacked, violated and murdered in Guatemala. Research by the Nobel Women Initiative (2012) reported on this phenomenon, as an additional element in the existing situation of female disempowerment (See appendix 10).

### 4.1.3 Conclusion

Concluding the literature review, it can be said that the topic of gender inequality and female disempowerment in Guatemala is widely spread throughout all layers and sectors of society, and has been built up from the country’s specific historical background, overshadowed by conquest, foreign exploitation and civil war. Answering the first research question: “*In what ways has the post-conflict period (since 1997) in Guatemala continued and re-created a social sphere of gender bias and severe female disempowerment?*” has thus many elements to it. First and foremost, this question is not to be answered without knowledge of the social, economic and political history of the country, shaping its diverse population structures and engendered attitudes. The Spanish colonisation, bringing Christianity as well as machismo and marianismo into the country, surely influenced the gender interrelation of today’s society (Mark 2012). That these socio-cultural behaviours, that were first introduced in the 1600’s, strongly live on in Guatemalan society anno 2015 certifies a lack of social modernisation. Crucially important for the evolution of the post-conflict period then, has been the internal armed conflict (1960-1996) itself. The discrimination of and attacks on indigenous people, and in particular indigenous women, have left their mark on the country’s overall hierarchy and social positions. Therefore rural, indigenous Guatemalan women still suffer the most from racism, discrimination, deprivation poverty and human rights assaults today (Mindiola and Chabot 2008). Talking about *a continuation of gender bias and female disempowerment after 1997*, the distorted cultural basis of machismo and marianismo needs to be kept in mind, together with the social hierarchy built in the civil war, placing women on the lowest step of society’s ladder. The fact that women are still much underrepresented in politics today is also part of a continuation of rigid gender roles and old institutional barriers within political parties, neglecting women in politics. Besides, Guatemala never introduced a gender quota for its political elections, unlike many other Latin American countries that did capture notions of gender mainstreaming (Vasquez et al. 2013, p. 30, Htun 2005, Schwindt-Bayer 2011). Talking about *a recreation of gender bias and female disempowerment*, one must consider in the first place the present normalisation of violence against women in Guatemala (Kaufman 2007). Femicide cases that result in impunity for perpetrators and deeply imbedded rigid gender roles make that women are discouraged to raise their voices, in the knowledge that there is no safety net in legal frameworks and neither in most civil society’s contexts. Apart from this, women nowadays appear more and more outside the domestic sphere, due to changes in their economic situations. In many ways this could be seen as an important element of personal progress for the Guatemalan woman, were it not for the fact that most men see this economic independency rise as threatening for their own jobs and for their long celebrated gender-based superiority (Abadian-Heifetz 2010, Teijido and Schramm 2010, Filipovic 2010). In the end however, while a centralised Guatemalan women’s movement has been weakened due to the many described social, cultural and political complexities, individual activists, transnational organisations and grassroots women’s groups do challenge the situation as it is now for Guatemalan women and girls (Saenz 2014, Bevan 2015). Thanks to the literature study, it became clear that all these pressure persons or groups already (consciously or not) make use of (parts of) the theories included in this thesis. The next chapter will however look more in depth into how transnational and local, civil society empowerment groups work in Guatemala, what their dynamics, aims and hindrances are, and to what extent they go with or against the theories.

## 4.2. Case studies: Different approaches to the same cause; Women’s empowerment in transnational and local organisations

**4.2.1 Introduction**

Confronted with literature, statistics or first-hand experiences with the problem of focus in Guatemala, many national and international voices speak up and many individuals engage in actions to improve the Guatemalan women’s situation (mainly since the last decade). As introduced before, transnational committees as ECLAC and international UN and CEDAW delegates have been directing and following up Guatemalan human rights discriminations, socio-economic standards and social, political and cultural structures. Due to the international authority status of these committees and organisations it could be expected that Guatemala would have shown significant progress in the pursuit of gender equality. However, without jurisdictional power in Guatemala’s legal system and Guatemalan governments sending out restrictions and reservations on women empowering conventions as CEDAW and the Beijing PFA, international top-down pressures do not achieve the envisioned effects in the country (UN Department of Public Information 2000). Keeping in mind that ECLAC defined the existing gender inequalities in Guatemala a *coaction* of the governmental and civil society sphere, the remaining part of this thesis will therefore focus on civil society approaches to women empowerment (ECLAC 2010). Rather than relying on international reports or penalties, civil society initiatives are trying to gather people and find solutions for the gender discrimination problem themselves, and this both nationally and transnationally. Also the Nobel Women’s Initiative turns to empowerment programs from within civil society, as the first and currently most impactful factor for gender equality and female societal advancement (Nobel Women Initiative 2012). In itself the Nobel Women’s Initiative proved an exceptional example of transnational research on gender issues, implementing the voices of the Guatemalan government, (civil society’s) women’s organisations and Guatemalan women themselves. The scope of its research was possible thanks to the Initiative’s transnational structure, its involvement of gender issue specialists and its will to investigate the roots of gender inequality in Guatemala. During its fact-finding mission, the Initiative exposed the War on Drugs (as a war on women), the lack of effective gender equality implementation, and the socio-culturally imbedded attacks on women human right defenders as key factors for the problematics of this analysis. Further, it described upcoming military and police presence, displacement for natural resource exploitation and megaprojects, and inept justice systems as main causes for the ever-increasing violence. In an attempt to find solutions for the persistent unequal Guatemalan gender situation, the Nobel Women’s Initiative results keep emphasising the importance of International Community pressures and attention. To investigate the role of (trans)national civil society on the topic, this thesis identified three bottom-up women’s empowerment programs that are active in Guatemala and employ several participative approaches and tools to create better circumstances for Guatemala’s discriminated women. In consecutive order, ADIMH (2003), Starfish (2015) and Namaste (2015) will be analysed, compared and later discussed concerning their sustainability. As remarked in the methodological section of the thesis, the first empowerment program analysis is based on earlier research by Nolin and Reade (Nolin and Reade 2008). Analysis of this research combines the origins, structures and operation of the organisation as well as the motivations and opinions of directors, staff and participants. The next two programs then are based on personal research via online contacts, website research and questionnaires and are worked out according to the analysis structure of the first empowerment program. The structure chosen is based subsequently on (1) origin of each NGO, (2) their (different) problem identifications within the Guatemalan gender topic, (3) the (different) approaches and women’s roles, (4) the program topics, (5) the effects and restrictions, and the roles of men. This is to provide a clear overall overview, make demonstrable comparisons and look easier into matters of sustainability and future perspectives.[[8]](#footnote-8) Moreover this analysis structure adds up to answer the second research question: *Taking into account a difference in structure (and authority), how are transnational and local women-only organisations in Guatemala using various approaches and tools to promote women’s social development and establish positive change in traditional Guatemalan gender roles?,*  in the conclusion of this section.

**4.2.2 Analysis: Case studies: ADIMH, Starfish, and Namaste**

 **ADIMH (local with transnational financiers)**

**Who, what and where?**

Transnational development agencies state that the Peace Accords of 1996 were a key for Guatemala’s recent development programming context. It is therefore credible that also many women empowerment initiatives came with it. A first case-study example is the Asociación de Desarollo Integral de las Mujeres Huehuetecas, abbreviated ADIMH. The organisation established itself in 2003 as a women’s empowering program, originating out of the National Forum for Women. This Forum in turn grew from the Peace Accords signing in 1996 (CIDA 2006, 6, ADIMH 2003). Located in Huehuetenango, a district and a city in the Guatemalan western highlands, ADIMH has been originally organised to “*facilitate training and education processes that enhance women’s ability to analyse, propose, and participate, supporting the creation of women leaders in their communities*” (ADIMH 2003). This aim can also be seen as the organisation’s mission statement (Nolin and Reade 2008, 63). From the start, the initiative of ADIMH has been supported financially by the European Commission, the Austrian cooperation for Development, CARE Austria (NGO) and the Austrian government (*Idem*, 62). Being a fully local civil society program, underpinned by transnational support and volunteerism, the organisation is structured through a municipal organisations network which brings together development initiatives, educated local women, law officials and human rights workers, all counting as stakeholders (*Ibidem*, 63).

**Problem identification**

Fighting specific disempowerment, cultural isolation of (mostly indigenous) women and the custom of dominating male power over associational power, ADIMH has been analysing and noting the causes and effects of the unequal situation towards Guatemalan women with the help of interdisciplinary literature (*Ibidem*, 24, 25, 28, 30, Allen 2003). Just as this thesis’ literature study, research by ADIMH volunteer Jennifer Reade describes *social structures that idealise machismo, male domination and female (intersectional) discrimination with GBV as a violating result*, as a major part of the problem (Nolin and Reade 2008, 5-7). Next to this, ADIMH volunteer’s research once more accuses the Guatemalan state of maintaining *unjust and abusive legal systems and practices, and of a general governmental neglect regarding gender equality needs*. Like the Nobel Women’s Initiative, ADIMH further points at the *recurrent police involvement in femicide cases* (*Idem*, 21-23). Analysing and reanalysing this discriminating gender situation, ADIMH as a local empowerment organisation, focuses on a bottom-up empowering process that links women and community development (*Ibidem*, 12).

**Approach and women’s roles**

Labelling their organisational design as “*capacitación*” (Spanish for empowerment), ADIMH promotes *four stages of empowerment* as described by social scientist Garba and identifies positive and negative types of power to be in- and excluded in their workings (Williams et al. 1994, Rowlands 1998, Garba 1999, in Nolin and Reade 2008, 57-58, 65-66). What concerns the stages of empowerment, ADIMH projects focus on: (1) *awareness building to understand the need of empowerment itself by community women*, (2) *capacity building and skills training to create the right interpersonal, economic and important life networks and disciplines*, (3) *participative actions and decision making control to take up a rewarded position in the community* and (4) (personal) *action for change*. Through these empowerment stages, ADIMH is aiming to give women an active role in the community of Huehuetenango and in the community’s development (Nolin and Reade 2008, 65-66). Regarding power, ADIMH follows social development specialist Williams typology of “*power over*” (domination, negative), “*power to*” (decision making ability, positive), “*power with*”(common purpose organising, positive) and “*power within*” (knowledge how power works towards oneself, positive) (*Idem*, 57-58). As NGO specialist Rowlands states, the general Guatemalan context solely recognises power as “*power over”* while empowerment programs as ADIMH try to introduce the other three more positive power types in their female advancement objectives (Rowlands 1998 in Nolin and Reade 2008, 58). Promoting participation by community women, ADIMH propagates to surmount the situation of internalized subordination, strengthened by positive power strategies. According to Reade’s interviews with ADIMH participants, this participation basis is what fuels the increasing interest by the women of Huehuetenango (Nolin and Reade 2008, 58).

**Program topics**

In practice, the organisation carries out four projects that are intended to reach as much women as possible within 17 municipalities in the district of Huehuetenango. Linked to the direct female needs and indirect community needs these projects are: *a literacy program* for indigenous women to advance their level of Spanish, *training workshops* teaching conflict solving, self-esteem and female rights and obligations, *institutional empowerment training*, and *political participation training*. The projects are elaborated in the form of workshops, available throughout Huehuetenango and the focus of these four projects is said by ADIMH to be fundamental to include rural Guatemalan women in their own community contexts and give them the power to create betterment themselves. Open for all women, ADIMH thereby believes that the women who get empowered or educated through the projects will pass on their knowledge and experience towards other women in their communities.

**Changes, restrictions and men**

ADIMH’s employees and volunteers also claim to see the effects of their empowerment programs through effective changes in the communities they work with. For example, female participants from all 17 districts in Huehuetenango inform ADIMH through workshop meetings on their more balanced family lives, as they reach the self-esteem to delegate daily tasks equally between man, woman and children. Next to this, ADIMH is aware of an increase of females speaking up against authorities (mostly municipalities) and the institutional system as a whole. The most important change however, is that women are approaching ADIMH to ask for new productive projects in function of community development. Services and projects (think: water cleaning operations, electricity instalments, health advancing projects) that are requested and carried by female community members thereby benefit many more than just the program’s target group (*Idem*, 64). As women are thus naturally more entitled to connect own needs with their families or their communities, empowering women is desirable for the creation of overall wellbeing (*Ibidem*, 79). Thereby it must however be guarded that women use the “*power within*” strategy for empowering their own personalities next to the “*power to”* strategy used in a more general development context (*Ibidem*, 67). Or, as Bexell warned before, it is key to use female empowerment not only as a means towards a goal, but in first place as a goal itself (Bexell 2012). According to Reade and Nolin, this must be taken in in the learning process of female empowerment, as women define development as a community matter instead of a personal one. Actually, the participants’ leaving out of account of personal needs, as described above, can be counted as a restriction on female empowerment already. To counteract on this, female attitudes need to be changed over time. As an empowerment organisation in Guatemala, ADIMH thereby needs to recognise that, due to Guatemala’s background and structures, this will be a slow process (Nolin and Reade 2008, 65). A more striking but also more characteristic restriction on female empowerment in the country, is however widespread male resistance. For every positive effect of change in rigid gender roles that ADIMH effectuated, interviews by Reade with several female participants, uncovered situations of male enforcement to stop attending ADIMH’s workshops (*Idem*, 67). While changing Guatemala’s female attitudes will be a slow process, it doesn’t need to be said that changing male attitudes will be an even slower and far more challenging one.

 **Subconclusion ADIMH**

ADIMH’s empowerment goal thus is the enhancement of women’s oppressed living conditions and the creation of new female roles within the community. To come to this goal, positive power strategies (“*power to”, “power with” and “power within*”) are used to overcome the dominating custom of “*power over*” (women) in Guatemala. Looking at the effects of the program within Huehuetenango, ADIMH believes that women’s empowerment is an important element in the creation of sustainable community development (*Ibidem*, 68). Using a guided self-help approach that moves from the bottom up, ADIMH thus concentrates on educational processes based on identified direct needs as literacy, political participation, decision making and personal action for change. Based on their organisational structure, ADIMH can be categorised as a local women’s organisation, responding on everyday disempowering situations, and leaning on the involvement of a local development network, local women and local law specialists. However, financially, they do rely on transnational help and they also welcome foreign volunteers, academics and development specialists to engage in their program. Regarding the identified theories within this thesis, it can be concluded that ADIMH as a local Guatemalan organisation links to several of them. Partly leaving out the Resource/ Mobilisation theory, in the knowledge that ADIMH is not a social movement in se, and a decentralised initiative, it must however be recognised that in mobilising resources, ADIMH does follow the theory. This is because of its use of non-material (networks, social ties, capacity building, etc.) as well as material resources (mostly sponsored by “conscience constituents” from Europe) (Fuchs 2006, Paulsen and Glumm 1995). Instead of being a social movement, one can therefore maybe speak of ADIMH being part of a social empowerment trend, appearing here and there within Guatemala’s civil society. ADIMH, in a more extensive way, makes use of both feminist theories implementing awareness campaigns and social exchange to create personal and communal realisation between women. Moreover it starts from the idea that a shared experience of oppression unites women to speak up for change and that it is necessary to challenge male dominating power (Cook and Fonow 2005, Davies and Thomas 2005). Next to this, ADIMH tries to turn being female into a societal benefit for women themselves and their communities, thanks to the positive power strategies (Davies and Thomas 2005). In terms of power and resistance, ADIMH further relies on academic research on power structures to overcome oppressive frameworks and keeps working small-scale and with a female group within local communities to bring forth changes in the existing socio- economic and political structures. Furthermore, ADIMH recognises and emphasises the problem of intersectional discriminations and tries to solve this situation by giving all women in the Huehuetenango community the chance to speak up as equals (Graff 2012, Davies and Thomas 2005). Linking itself to Alternative Development theory and Capability approaches, ADIMH stresses that empowerment and development go further than the pursuit of a prosperous economy. Enabling people (women) to comprehend their everyday social, political, cultural and economic realities will support them best in personal and communal development (Nolin and Reade 2008, 81). With the different notions of positive power towards development, ADIMH thereby connects much to Sen’s capability theory, which promotes “achieved functioning” and “capabilities” as the bare forms of this development (Robeyns 2003).

 **Starfish (mixed local (indigenous) and transnational board)**

 “One morning an elderly man was walking on a nearly deserted beach. He came upon a boy surrounded by thousands and thousands of starfish. As eagerly as he could, the youngster was picking them up and throwing them back into the ocean.

 Puzzled, the older man looked at the young boy and asked, "Little boy, what are you doing?"

 The youth responded without looking up, "I'm trying to save these starfish, sir."

 The old man chuckled aloud, and queried, "Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?"

 Holding a starfish in his hand, the boy turned to the man and, gently tossing the starfish into the water, said, "It will make a difference to that one!

 (Author unknown, s.d.)

**Who, what and where?**

A second example of a women empowering program in Guatemala is Starfish. Being in personal contact with the staff and participants of this non-profit organisation, it proved easier to regain more detailed (background) information and to uncover the fundamental motives for this program, which will be discussed in the following part. Founded in 2007 by Ted and Connie Ning and Mimi Schlumberger, three non-profit specialists from the US, Starfish originated from another non-profit called The Friendship Bridge. Thanks to this microcredit project for rural women, the founders learned about severe poverty problems within rural Mayan families in Guatemala. Besides this, they were drawn to the parable of the Starfish and started to investigate Guatemalan rural indigenous living situations, to create a well-fitting program (Blacktie Colorado 2015, Starfish 2015). Identifying most pressing needs and problems, the Starfish founders thereby immediately connected their program ideas with the knowledge and experiences on indigenous matters of Norma Baján, a Mayan university graduate and former Education Director at The Friendship Bridge. Like ADIMH, Starfish thus grew out of another women’s development initiative. Unlike ADIMH however, it has never been directly linked to the Peace Accords of 1996 but was more a result of a specific need identification and engagement. Furthermore, it has had a much more selective empowering focus from its operational start in 2008 (Starfish 2015). Working in the central to south-western Guatemalan departments of Sololá and Suchitepéquez and supported by mixed local and transnational board members, staff, mentors and volunteers, Starfish concentrates on the unlocking of young female potential within rural indigenous families. The organisation thereby narrowed down the group of focus to a selection of 500 indigenous Guatemalan girls, labelled Generation 500. As a mission statement, Starfish notes *the empowerment of a new generation of pioneers, leading self-determined lives and inspiring others to do the same* (Starfish 2015). Envisioned to maximise the available potential of a generation of girls and young women, Starfish believes that well-supported education of an otherwise neglected group will bring forth great influence and positive change in the future of social, political and economic fields (*Idem*, Q Baján 2015[[9]](#footnote-9)). The organisation thus believes in the power of a small working group to bring about broader equality and opportunity. Summarizing the Starfish set-up, it can be said that it is a mixed local and transnational NGO, focused on educational empowerment of a select female, indigenous group. Therein it is notably different from the wider empowerment design of ADIMH, which is open to all community women without any ethnic or age focus.

**Problem identification**

Noting nationwide factors of underdevelopment in Guatemala, Starfish emphasises extreme poverty, health issues and illiteracy. Further, staff and participants of the organisation acknowledge the severe GBV problem and begrudge the *prevailing machismo culture*, without going in too deep on these issues. GBV and machismo are indeed researched and emphasised very much already in the transnational press and the academic literature on development in Guatemala. Keeping close to the design and structures of their program, Starfish employees therefore mark the *lack of human rights knowledge* by (rural) Guatemalan women as an equally serious cause of GBV. With this, Starfish thus identifies yet another cause of violence against women, described by (amongst others) the Nobel Women Initiative (Q Baján 2015, Nobel Women Initiative 2012). What is brought up more vigorously by the Starfish team however, is the fact that Guatemala has the *worst gender equality gap in the Western hemisphere*. Starting from data on early educational drop-outs by indigenous rural girls and alarming figures on literacy (3/5 indigenous women in Guatemala cannot read or write), Starfish stresses the *low social status* of their target group. It also explicitly explains and condemns the situation of *intersectional discrimination*. According to Baján, Starfish identified the most overlooked citizens of the country in the set-up of their program. As victims of intersectional exclusion these citizens are poor, rural, indigenous women (Q Baján 2015). Keeping (rural, indigenous) women low on the social ladder and declining them the rights of and access to social/political and economic participation, are seen by Starfish as the most urgent problems, hindering Guatemala’s overall development. As an always recurrent problematic factor on this topic, the insufficient and political corrupt resources for gender equality by the government are repeated. (Starfish 2015, Q Baján 2015, Q Chonita 2015). Linked to their problem identifications on the gender situation in Guatemala, the Starfish program can be seen as a bottom-up, specifically focused women’s empowerment program, with both a short local and a long-term nationwide aim. Taking the most overlooked out of a socio-cultural, political and economic isolation is thereby a starting goal.

**Approach and women’s roles**

Identifying the social value of “Girls Pioneers”, selected from rural and poor indigenous families, Starfish embarked on a project to guide an often neglected part of society through a full academic career from secondary school into and beyond higher education (Starfish 2015).What concerns the program design and operational approach, Starfish builds on three cornerstones to elaborate their empowerment process: *access*, *accompaniment* and  *knowledge*. Access is created by giving each girl the tools and materials needed to start their education in an equal way. For its accompaniment, the program assigns female “Mentors” from the same society as the “Girl Pioneer” to support and follow up her student, and to assure continued participation and endorsement by the student’s family. To have educated young women as an end goal, Starfish finally leans on knowledge, created by both the educational process and the mentor’s influence, supporting the students in self-awareness, confidence, daily life capacities and personal development (Q Baján 2015). This cornerstones strategy to empowerment is promoted by Starfish as influential and successful, fostering academic achievements. Keeping specifically focused, Starfish claims to encourage deep impact on a well considerate select group of women, with a positive change implication towards the future. Differing in many ways from ADIMH’s empowerment approach, Starfish however (without noting it) makes use of the same capacity creating positive power types. Less focused on “*power with*” (common purpose organising), Starfish does emphasise “*power to*” (decision making fostering) and “*power within*” (knowledge how power works towards oneself) (Nolin and Reade 2008, 57-58). Moreover Starfish is not afraid to try out new things and ways of doing things. Implementing a unique mixed local and transnational approach that invests in the most neglected part of Guatemalan society, it believes that adaptation and improvements on the way are keys of progress. In doing so, they quote humanitarian activist Dan Pollota as follows: “When you prohibit failure, you kill innovation.” (Dan Pollota in Starfish 2015). As for women’s (and girls’) roles, Starfish believes in local expertise, hiring local Mayan women to engage in their program to create an inarguable valuable experienced resource for help and implementation (staff and mentors). Further the program heavily leans on the support of “Girl Pioneers’” mothers, who believe in the development model in which their daughters are enrolled (Q Baján 2015, Q Chonita 2015). Generating interest by local communities’ young women, Starfish promotes the idea of making a change in women's realities of today to create capacity for women’s self-help tomorrow. Connecting with indigenous women’s readiness to work for the women’s cause, Starfish encourages and helps to establish changes in the ever intersectional discriminations, in gender inequality and engendered poverties (Q Baján 2015).

**Program topics**  Operationally, the Starfish program is based on three successive projects called *Poder, Puente and Horizontes*. *Poder* is directed towards girls aged 12 to 15, who Starfish immerses in a capacity building framework focused on self-confidence. After this, *Puente* is a bridging project; giving girls aged 16 to 19 insights in entrepreneurship and voice-raising activities. *Horizontes* finally, helps young women from 19 to 25 to find their place in higher education, developing their professional levels of knowledge and experience. Baján labels this last project as crucial in the starting generation of Starfish, as statistical data points out the very low (female) presence in academic training (4.1%), severe underpayment of women in the labour market, and socio-cultural habits of early domestic life due to extremely young marriages (UNDP 2015). Themes of the projects are leadership, self-confidence, teamwork, communication, sexual and reproductive education, citizenship, financial education, entrepreneurship etc. (Q Baján 2015). As an empowerment program, Starfish thus resembles ADIMH somewhat in project themes and (more) in long-term effects of passing on knowledge to other women. Regarding structure, design and target group, however, Starfish is much more defined and selectively focused.

**Changes, restrictions and men**

(Positive) changes within the target group and in their immediate family context are measured by an unseen number of indigenous young “Girl Pioneers” being enrolled in university (50% against 1% nationwide) after an average educational length of 12 years provided and supported by the program. Next to this, also 90% of the indigenous young women are employed on the labour market (against 0% among their own mothers) and, with an estimated 140 graduates by ultimo 2015, none of the Starfish women have been married yet. According to blogs on the Starfish website, indigenous families with daughters participating in the program besides explain about new divisions of domestic tasks and new perspectives on female opinions (Starfish 2015). Nevertheless, just like ADIMH, Starfish admits that paternal (and thus male) consent for young women to participate in the program often still works as a restriction. Further Starfish indicates forced marriages, machismo driven mind-sets, and a preference for remunerated work over education as factors that keep indigenous girls away from the organisation. As a different restricting element, the deficiencies of Guatemala’s (rural) schools are mentioned by Starfish. Because of the organisation’s lack of institutional influence, it decided to invest in a self-built network of secondary girls schools, following the example of modern education models abroad. Like ADIMH, Starfish is opposed to the male expressions of envy towards women empowering organisations and believes that in the light of long-term development for all Guatemalans, this behaviour needs to be addressed and reversed (Starfish 2015)

 **Subconclusion Starfish**

While investing in female empowerment, just like many other Guatemalan civil society organisations (see also ADIMH), Starfish’s ultimate goal is slightly different. This goal is a long-term gender and ethnic equality obtained by a selective and intense educational program for indigenous girls. Despite serving a purpose of community involvement and development like ADIMH, Starfish does not see this purpose as a first urgent objective. In this regard, Starfish is more directly connected to the personal development of young indigenous girls, using the “*power within*” strategy (Starfish 2015, Nolin and Reade 2008, 68). Thereby it also avoids the restrictive situation of women who do not recognise their personal development as generally important. Just like ADIMH however, Starfish believes that the empowerment of women (and in this case, girls) is impactful for their communities. An argument for this is the so-called “*Girl-effect*”, so states the organisation. The “*Girl-effect*” proves that health, education and economic development all improve when girls have access to education. As a supportive educational, mixed local/transnational and bottom-up organisation, Starfish claims that their selective approach will help a present generation to break the cycle of poverty and inequality within generations to come (Starfish 2015). In operating the program the organisation makes use of local and international expertise, models and insights. For financial support and volunteer support, Starfish reaches out to Guatemalan and foreign investors, donators and volunteers alike. Being more specific in the program design and purpose, Starfish links to fewer theories, described in this thesis. Other than adding to the social trend of women empowerment, Starfish does not connect too much to the theory of Resource/Mobilisation. Next to this, it also picks up little from Activist feminism, a theory which is clearly focused on collective action by (all-level) groups of women, which strive for political solutions (Davies and Thomas 2005, Lather 1986). Moreover the Activist feminism theory does not really bring into account the situation of intersectional oppression, which Starfish emphasises (Sum 2000, Starfish 2015). Despite not taking up the activist feminist praxis of all-women empowerment, Starfish does however engage in a more specific form of female empowerment, challenging male-based power over women- as supported by the activist theory (Starfish 2015, Ackerly and True 2010). As little as Starfish thus links to the Resource/Mobilisation- and Activist feminism theory, so much does it link to Post-structural feminism and the Alternative Development theory of Capability. From Post-structural feminism theory, Starfish takes over the importance of intersectionality within gender research and empowerment, pointing out the exact same factors of ethnicity, class, age, religion and more. In addition Starfish implements power strategies to overcome “power over” and to prepare for a new, non-oppressive living context (Starfish 2015, Graff 2012). Further, just like this theory, Starfish understands female empowerment as a changing of the existing societal script, focusing on a small-scale and specific group within the local community (Starfish 2015, Davies and Thomas 2005). From Sen’s capability theory then, Starfish takes over the focus on young women’s personal abilities and their possibility to engage in activities they want to be part of, to become the persons they really want to be (for themselves and for their communities). Besides, Starfish works with the theory’s questions of educational access and community participation to reverse the existing life constraints of young indigenous women. Thereby it centres on gender discrimination, which is the chosen inequality example of the capability theory (Starfish 2015, Robeyns 2003).

 **NamasteDirect (transnational)**

**Who, what and where**

A third example of women empowering organisations in Guatemala (in this thesis) is NamasteDirect. This NGO came into being out of Kellogg Foundation Fellow Bob Graham’s long promise to give financial support to Guatemala whenever he would be in the right position to do so. In the 1980s Bob Graham therefore became one of the first microfinance investors in the Latin American region, launching the “Katalysis Partnership” microloan non-profit in Central America, supported by USAID. By 2004, Graham’s microloan projects were spread over 21 transnational NGOs in Central America, the Carribean, the African region, India and Mexico, presenting a financial portfolio of 60+ million dollar. One of these microfinance NGOs, founded in 2004, by Graham, Bob and Sherrie Ilse was NamasteDirect, an organisation working with low income businesswomen in Guatemala. Special for NamasteDirect was that next to the initial idea of financial resource provision, a starting idea for mentoring and knowledge building for poor businesspeople became implemented. Being an NGO with origins in other microfinance projects, NamasteDirect thus resembles Starfish. Nevertheless, despite the implementation of educational elements to their program, the organisation keeps mostly centred on resource mobilisation and financial support. Focused on women entrepreneurs, it is also more selective in its target group than (i.e.) ADIMH (NamasteDirect 2015, Q Durán 2015). NamasteDirect differs further from ADIMH and Starfish for the fact that the organisation is urban based, in the city of Antigua, the former capital of Guatemala. Besides this office, NamasteDirect is also operated from an office in San Francisco, which partly explains the transnational character of the NGO. Nevertheless, NamasteDirect works throughout the regions of Sacatepéquez and Suchitepéquez. Next to the different location bases, NamasteDirect is run by transnational staff and board members from the US, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and Germany. The NGO’s mission statement is stated as: *“a direct contribution to Womens’ Economic Empowerment by providing business development programs that increase the business cash flow of low income women”* (NamasteDirect 2015). Following this mission statement, NamasteDirect thus openly focuses on the economic empowerment of poor Guatemalan women. This however does not mean that it does not support social or political empowerment, as economic development and general human development are not completely separable (Pieterse 2010, p .4). However, NamasteDirect does not emphasise indigenous women in their program set-up, while they are identified as the most neglected and intersectional discriminated citizens of Guatemalan society (according to literature and organisations as Starfish) (Q Durán 2015). As a transnational microfinance NGO, NamasteDirect plays the card of an inclusive economic based support for women with entrepreneurial sense in Guatemala. With transnational directors, staff and financiers (Canadian NGO: Open to Grow and local banks), it therefore differs from ADIMH, as well as Starfish in transnational scope, program design, mission, and target group.

**Problem identification**  According to the responses on a questionnaire filled in by Eugenia Durán, General Manager at NamasteDirect, lack of education (with illiteracy as result), *machismo* and a *lack of access to health services* are the most fundamental urgent problems in the country. Machismo is thereby noted as one of the most pressing issues in general, but is also relativized in oppressiveness when confronted to women empowerment programs. Durán thereby explains that men do understand the importance of helping and empowering their women, even if minor resistance still comes up when women are taken out on trips or retreats by the organisation (Q Durán 2015). In comparison with NamasteDirect client experiences (Ana 2015) the other investigated women empowerment programs, literature inputs and general experiences, this toning down of machismo is remarkable.[[10]](#footnote-10) Just like any other input in this thesis, however, Durán is unmerciful for state initiatives on the empowerment of women, openly accusing those of *high level corruption*. Keeping close to NamasteDirect’s own program design, Durán further notes the *poorly operated small Guatemalan businesses* by women who did not receive any form of (financial) training for entrepreneurship as a major economic problem. With the emphasis on this last problem, NamasteDirect needs to be contextualised within a transnational framework of economic empowerment first. The main objective the NGO pursues is thus the empowerment of women to do better economically and to find that they have a value in society (Q Durán 2015). Noticeably, Durán thereby does not key out the isolation of indigenous people (and women) as intersectional discrimination. In her opinion, indigenous isolation is linked to the preservation of the Mayan culture. This opinion is however strongly opposed by initiatives as Starfish.

**Approach and women’s roles** In order to come to the objective of professionalised economic management by Guatemalan women, NamasteDirect primarily invests in basic financial training through its program design. This training contains management techniques concerning private and business resources and finances, participation techniques, and thorough knowledge of the loan cycle provided by the organisation. The basic financial training is seen by NamasteDirect as a key to the advancement of Guatemalan women’s economic positions, as well as their personal lives (NamasteDirect 2015). As a requirement for investment, NamasteDirect holds that its Guatemalan women entrepreneurs are owners of a business that has been established for one year at least, to be able to offer the right financial tools for economic betterment to existing and viable businesses (Q Durán 2015). Different in set-up and objectives from ADIMH and Starfish, NamasteDirect however follows the earlier identified “*power to*” (decision making fostering) “*power within*” (knowledge how power works towards oneself) principles and to a lesser extent the “*power with*”- (common purpose organising – between women entrepreneurs) principle (Nolin and Reade 2008, 57-58). Besides this, it also believes in accompaniment, as elaborated upon by Starfish. Therefore, NamasteDirect appoints professional business advisors (comparable with Starfish mentors) for the full period of the loan cycle. The advisors, who are familiar with the local communities and their economic context as well as with the regional languages, follow up on the entrepreneurs in business details, the analysis of cash-flow, bookkeeping, and strategic planning. Adapted to literacy percentages and socio-cultural contexts, NamasteDirect’s training approach is strengthened to serve all entrepreneurs equally and ensures enhancement in the economic status of women within communities, as well in the communities’ economy itself (NamasteDirect2015). What concerns women’s roles, NamasteDirect sees women as the cornerstone of the home, taking up responsibility to feed, shelter and support family. According to the organisation, this position is especially important for the creation of economic growth, as, with the right educational tools and training, women are the most able figures in society to develop their country’s economy and living standards. Using advisors who are linked closely to the community of women entrepreneurs, NamasteDirect tries to manifest this female position towards overall national development, based on an economic premise (Q Durán 2015). Thereby Bexell’s warning of female empowerment as a means towards a goal, needs to be repeated however (Bexell 2012).

**Program topics** Different projects in NamasteDirect’s microfinance program are the successive *Business Development Program,* the *Cycle* and *Starz*. The first (*Business Development*) project consists of three financial empowerment cycles of nine months each including education, advisory and a micro-loan. The second (*Cycle*) project is a one cycle of 18 months project with more detailed financial and personal education, advisory and a higher loan. The third and last (*Starz*) project is a loan, based on 60 more hours of education and every other week advisory by personal business advisors to give successful entrepreneurs the chance to enlarge their businesses and employ additional workers (Q Durán 2015, NamasteDirect2015). Next to the focus on business advising, the projects are filled with topics as financial literacy, personal business strategies and precautions and conditions against loan stacking. Furthermore, NamasteDirect makes use of a technological tool with an online database called PROSPER (Poverty Reduction Operating Software that Plans, Evaluates and Reports) to examine and analyse entrepreneurs as well as staff performances. This is to ensure the sustainability of the program and the separate projects in the hands of staff and participants (NamasteDirect 2015). NamasteDirect, in almost all facets is very different from the open empowerment program towards social community development of ADIMH, as well as the indigenous focused program of Starfish educating a generation of young discriminated women to take up future leadership positions in all society’s fields. However it also serves a twofold goal of personal women empowerment as well as empowerment of women in the (national) economic field.

**Changes, restrictions and men**  Change is created in the everyday situation of small female entrepreneurs in Guatemala through the NamasteDirect program implementation itself. With this statement, NamasteDirect points at its first and principal change factor to be witnessed by participants. The influence of the program is thereby visible in the overall business knowledge and management growth within the pool of the organisation’s entrepreneurs. As NamasteDirect tries to be as tailor-made as possible towards each client and her business, specific changes are however personal and not always easily identified (Q Durán 2015, Q Maria 2015, Q Ana 2015). Different from ADIMH and Starfish, NamasteDirect spots few to zero restrictions towards and within the program as caused by men. On the contrary, Durán points at the women’s responsibility to change the machismo mentality in the upbringing of their own sons. Most restrictive towards the program implementation is the fact that it is difficult to find (female) participants who understand the importance and benefits of financial education, so states Durán further. Moreover, the program itself is restrictive towards its target group as it asks for recurrent demonstration of favourable investments connected to the personal business and the provided loan. Appropriate use of the microfinance program can be perceived as difficult or intimidating for poor female participants, making it a program-specific restriction (Durán 2015). Likewise ADIMH and Starfish however, the NGO recognises the lack of general proper education, provided by the national system as a major restriction towards the whole society in the first place (NamasteDirect 2015).

 **Subconclusion NamasteDirect**

Playing the card of bare economic empowerment, NamasteDirect is different from more socially focused empowerment programs as ADIMH and Starfish. Despite the interconnectedness of economic welfare and more general development and wellbeing, NamasteDirect thereby mostly supports the idea of “*power to*”, enhancing the economic status as well as the national economy of Guatemala (referring once more to Bexell and her warning). Still, NamasteDirect’s program is centred on reversing a pressing gender inequality problem, referring to the literature study of this thesis. This gender inequality problem is the economic imbalance between women and men in Guatemala, due to traditional gender roles and responsibilities, machismo behaviour, high-level corruption, neglect of female potential and male fears of competing with women in the labour market. In fighting this gender inequality status, NamasteDirect also implements the “*power within*” strategy, making women aware of existing power structures but also of their own power potential (NamasteDirect 2015, Nolin and Reade 2008, 57-58). Like ADIMH and Starfish, NamasteDirect thus believes in the impact of female empowerment on Guatemalan communities, albeit their sole economic approach. In this they agree with Starfish’s principle of the “*Girl-Effect*” or in this case the “*Woman-Effect*”. As a transnational microcredit empowerment organisation, NamasteDirect thus links education with female economic advancement to weapon poor Guatemalan women against a pressing gender inequality problem. Due to its reliance on local business advisors and its program design focus, the organisation’s approach can also be categorised as bottom-up, just like the other two case examples. The financial investments in the program are further received through transnational financiers and local banks, but the main idea of economic development before anything, keeps most closely connected to the US dogma of neoliberalism, and is therefore an influence from abroad. For what concerns theoretical linkages, NamasteDirect, supports Activist and Post-structural feminism, without fitting these theories fully. As a unilaterally economic focused program for women, the organisation greatly ignores the collective action and political solutions pursuit, which activist feminism promotes (Lather 1986, Davies and Thomas 2005). Furthermore it does not link to themes as sexual harassment, domestic violence or maternal health. However, NamasteDirect does support the Activist feminism cornerstone themes of employment discrimination and the feminisation of poverty and tries to challenge these situations as much as challenging (economic) institutionalised power over women. Believing in research that identifies gender inequality problems, NamasteDirect is also committed to provide beneficial (economic) actions for women. So far, NamasteDirect can thus be seen as an example of Activist feminism being implemented and fitted in an economic development program (Ackerly and True 2010). Just as the other case examples, NamasteDirect further takes over the investigation idea of power structures from Post-structural feminism, in order to create a less oppressive power framework for women (NamasteDirect 2015, Graff 2012). With the help of micro-level actions, in this case micro-level loans, NamasteDirect also attempts to change the economic context in which women in Guatemala still live. Like Starfish, NamasteDirect is thus specifically focused on local community groups, recognising the local social sphere and backgrounds for their empowerment work. This is as promoted by Post-structural feminism (NamasteDirect 2015, Davies and Thomas 2005). It must further be admitted that NamasteDirect, as a transnational NGO is not even part of an existing social movement in Guatemala. As an individual empowerment program working towards the benefit of Guatemalan women, it however is another example of the women empowering or mobilising trend as described before. In this regard NamasteDirect connects with the Resource/Mobilisation theory for the fact that it uses mostly financial resources to challenge the existing economic authorities known in Guatemala (NamasteDirect 2015, Brym 2009; in Petkau s.d.). According to the theory, success of social movements (or in this case social/economic empowerment trends) is linked to (amongst others) adequate mobilisation of internal and external resources and the employment of professional leaders and staff. Linked with the analysis of NamasteDirect, it can thus be said that this idea is very much followed by the NGO (Enotes 2015, NamasteDirect 2015). Central for the link at last between NamasteDirect and the Alternative Development theory of Capability is Sen’s “achieved functioning” principle, which is stated as the most fundamental phase of personal and general development. Working towards it with the positive power strategies of “*power to*” and “*power within*”, NamasteDirect truly agrees with this statement of development. Moreover the NGO starts from a context identification measured by human development standards to work out its empowerment program, just as promoted by the theory of Capability (NamasteDirect 2015, Robeyns 2003).

**4.2.3 Conclusion of the case studies: a question of sustainability**

To most synoptically conclude the case study part of this thesis, it is best to answer the second research question. This question is: “*Taking into account a difference in structure (and authority?), how are transnational and local women-only organisations in Guatemala using various approaches and tools to promote women’s social development and establish positive change in traditional Guatemalan gender roles?”.* Answering this question, it must be said that however different in approach, there is no evidence that the transnationality or locality of the analysed empowerment programs has an influence on their authority status. According to examples of the three programs’ results, none can be considered as superiorly effective towards the others. Besides this, a discussion on nationwide authority or influence is not relevant as all three cases are working from the bottom up, as individual civil society initiatives, covering similarly sized areas for operation (ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, Namaste 2015). It is furthermore complicated to research on authority differences due to transnationality or locality because all three cases to a bigger or lesser extent operate with transnational and local actors alike. Transnationality or locality having the upper hand in the structure of the organisation does thus not change the status or influence of the civil society initiative, or at least not in this analysis.[[11]](#footnote-11) What concerns structure, all depends on how wide one defines “structure” of any case example. As just indicated, all three cases are women empowerment programs, working in a bottom up way. In this regard they are thus similarly structured. Thanks to further analysis however, it can be concluded that it is in particular the approach towards this empowerment, together with the target group and the final objectives which distinguishes the three organisations. To shortly repeat, ADIMH is a local empowerment organisation supported by transnational financiers, focusing on all-field development of (unspecified) oppressed women in the context of sustainable community development (Nolin and Reade 2008, 68). Starfish is a mixed local and transnational empowerment organisation, supported by foreign donation aid, focusing on societal development of young indigenous women in the context of positive change in future generations (Starfish 2015). NamasteDirect is a transnational empowerment organisation with local support, financed both transnationally and locally, focusing on economic advancement of entrepreneurial women in the context of an economic gender inequality struggle (NamasteDirect 2015). The approaches of the three cases thus widen and narrow down in target group and are differently connected with all-field, societal or economic insights. In addition, all envision women empowerment towards a different gender goal. Because of this, it must be understood, that despite all organisations’ involvement in women empowerment, the three organisations try to solve a different gender inequality problem. Where ADIMH is centring on sustainable community development through new women roles, Starfish is battling intersectional discrimination of indigenous women through extensive education, and NamasteDirect is trying to reverse economic gender inequality through financial training and microcredit loans. This is a good thing, as literature identified very many gender inequality issues in different fields, and this analysis displayed how civil society initiatives are tackling several of these. *With their specific program designs as a means, all three organisations thus promote female social development and establishing positive change in traditional Guatemalan gender roles.* Connected to the different program designs and (most importantly) different empowerment goals, the tools of use are sometimes different. Without recapitulating everything, it can be said that educational workshops and local experts exist in all three organisations, but that mentors or advisors only exist within Starfish and NamasteDirect. Next to this, financial resources are more centralised in NamasteDirect’s set-up and Starfish more openly relies on family support and involvement (ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, NamasteDirect 2015). However, all three organisations make use of positive power strategies as described by Rowlands to the advance of female personal, community or nationwide development (Rowlands 1998 in Nolin and Reade 2008, 58). To fully answer the second research question it can thus be said that *different structured empowerment programs appear to pursue different women empowerment goals, each without forsaking the idea of women’s social development or failing to create positive change*. Because of the many ways to overcome several identified gender problems in Guatemala, the three case-studies thereby use different broad or narrow targeted, all-field, educational or economic approaches, strengthened by different matching tools to reach their specifically selected and different gender goals. However different in approach, the three case studies use their programs as bottom up women empowerment tools, and are supported by local expertise and transnational aids. Due to their prioritised problem identification, the program designs are logically different in structure and focus. More than answering *how they use different approaches*, this research thus also answers *how these approaches equally promote women’s social development and positive gender role change, while having different women empowerment goals in mind*. Due to the different program designs, tools and (most importantly) final objectives, the three organisations also connect to different extents with the identified thesis theories of Activist and Post-structural feminism, Resource/Mobilisation and Capability. As the methodology section of this thesis noted, the overall development debate is however turning somewhat away from theoretical premise, giving priority to practical experience. Because of NGO’s and civil society initiatives’ central role in this practical experiences, it is however essential for academic research to contextualise these NGOs in the development debate and prospect their sustainable status (Lewis and Kanji 2009, p. 71). To be sustainable, applied NGO methodology is fundamental. Responding to the direct needs for women in community development, ADIMH thereby maintains a short-term pick- and choose method to assist as good as possible in urgent problems as language deficiencies etc. Starfish however invests in a long-term method based on extensive education for indigenous women to reverse the fate of future female generations. NamasteDirect finally holds both a short- and long term unilateral financial method to foster female economic development. To increase their impact, NGOs also need to monitor and evaluate their programs and results, so state development academics. Credibility, reliability and validity are thereby the most important buzzwords to pursue (Adams, 2001). Research of the three cases can conclude that due to its method and organisational structure ADIMH could be the least sustainable organisation, as their local workers and foreign financiers are very far from one another, projects are very direct need focused, unlabelled and changeable, and Reade did not emphasise any monitoring or evaluation of the program. Starfish and NamasteDirect follow up on the sustainability buzzwords quite better, as they provide information and data results about their set and labelled programs online, update these data and invest in new projects or program perspectives whenever needed- as becomes clear from their websites. This thus means that the last two NGOs do implement monitoring and re-evaluation in their organisational workings. Nevertheless a whole new study on sustainability of these (or any other empowerment) cases could be written out and therefore this discussion keeps open.

#  5. Conclusion and discussion: Towards a better tomorrow

As this research showed, gender inequality with all its causes and effects is a very complex matter in Guatemala. The post-conflict period (since 1997) has continued and recreated a sphere of severe female disempowerment due to outdated cultural norms and habits, an old hierarchic pattern of gender discrimination in all society fields, and a distressing normalisation of female oppression and GBV within both civil society and national institutions (Vasquez et al. 2013, Schwindt-Bayer 2011, Kaufman 2007). Specifically restraining for Guatemala’s gender equality progress, compared to other Latin American countries is the fact that there is not even a first step towards gender mainstreaming in establishing political gender quota, even if these quota (in other countries) do not always imply progress on gender issues in the end (Htun 2005). Moreover, because of the country’s violent history towards indigenous people and the actual disintegration of several indigenous groups, social movement building or indigenous political representation remains very weak to non-existent (Pallister 2013). In connection with this, it must be kept in mind that the most suppressed citizens in Guatemala are the indigenous women, suffering from intersectional discriminations, as several sources demonstrated (Mindiola and Chabot 2008, Teijido and Schramm 2010, Vasquez et al. 2013, Q Baján 2015). However this research also showed that protest against the Guatemalan gender situation exists and is gaining success in international frameworks, as well as in transnational and local civil society initiatives, women support groups, and by the efforts of women activists (Nobel Women Initiative 2012, ADIMH 2003, Starfish 2015, NamasteDirect 2015, Suarez and Jordan 2007, Saenz 2014, Bevan 2015). In research of the case-studies, it can be concluded that it is difficult to tell the exact impact of any women empowerment program in a country that is in many ways reluctant towards female development. Moreover, the researched cases promote female empowerment within different society fields, and serve different gender goals. Whereas analysis demonstrated the specific paths towards these different goals, comparisons towards the overall gender development influence stay difficult. Nevertheless, the thesis showed that identified theories of feminism, social movements (or trends) and alternative development do fit the case study examples as well as other empowerment initiatives within Guatemala. As these theories correspond with development literature and realisation, it can thus be said that the bottom-up movement in Guatemala is on a progressive path towards female development. The focus of the empowerment programs on different society fields in need of gender progress is thereby an advantage for the general realisation of Guatemalan female development. From the research results, it is however important to look at the future. Therefore it is significant to also respond to the third research question, which is: *What could be future (gender) strategies to be implemented in Guatemala’s institutional frameworks to the advance of communities’ sustainable development based on this research findings?* According to academic recommendations the keys of credibility, reliability and validity need to be premised for development to be sustainable (Adams 2001). For the civil society initiatives that are already working to create more gender equality in Guatemala, it is thus important to watch over the sustainability of their programs in order to make a long-lasting difference. More important however for these civil society initiatives is to not give in to the many hindrances and threats to women empowerment. For it are these initiatives that (maybe for the first time) try to give a voice to Guatemalan (rural, indigenous) women.

 What concerns the *implementation of gender strategies in Guatemala’s institutional frameworks* it must unfortunately be admitted that this is not the most urgent next item on the agenda for the Guatemalan government. This is because there is a lack of many other, more fundamental elements towards communities’ sustainable development and human/female rights. Or, in other words, many other things need fixing or priority investment within Guatemalan society before gender strategy can be feasible or even credible. The first urgent strategy to create positive development in the country is a long demanded functional education system, monitored by a non-corrupted high-quality ministry (CEDAW 2009, Starfish 2015, Q Durán 2015). This demand has already two immense challenges in it, as it implies a very extensive financial investment in education by the government, as well as a thorough cleansing of its sometimes highly corrupted ministries. Next to this, access to this education for all Guatemalan children and youth, disregarding gender, ethnic descent or economic status will be the next great challenge. As education is a fundamental human right, which is necessary to realise all other human rights, free, accessible and high-quality education for all should be the number one priority of the Guatemalan state to institutionalise and work out (Unesco2014). More than fostering nationwide social, economic, cultural and political development, this education strategy will also be a gender strategy. This because it would give each Guatemalan (child) an equal opportunity to develop him- or herself as wished, as promoted by Sen’s capability theory (Robeyns 2003). Moreover it would be a key to eliminate machismo thinking, as boys and girls would finally be treated as equals in one of the most essential fundaments of their lives, namely: their personal development. The day the Guatemalan state accomplishes this education strategy, the way will be open towards top-down gender strategies as political or economic gender mainstreaming. However, from the bottom-up and from the International Community, voices and influential bodies need to keep pressure the Guatemalan government to effectively counter the GBV spirit that rules the country. The first element to tackle will thereby be the problem of impunity. As the Guatemalan government is in the position to act out new laws or to change discriminating penal codes, it needs to take up its responsibility towards its female population and their fundamental human rights. Education and safety thus go hand in hand, as female development creators and gender strategies. In the end, Guatemala as a country must understand that national development is only achievable while empowering instead of discriminating the biggest half of its population. Repeating Sen’s words, Guatemala thus needs to remember that: “*An enhancement of women’s active agency can contribute substantially to the lives of men as well as women, children as well as adults*” (Sen, 2001). Another thoughtful suggestion, based on this research, could be an effort to reinforce the social female empowerment trends (that now exist here and there in the country), and bring them together to form once more an operational social women’s movement. In the knowledge that this implies the overcoming of ethnic oppositions and a struggle against a whole lot of existing gender discriminations, this bottom-up gender strategy could however lead to a more established position to challenge and change the current circumstances, as suggested by the Resource/Mobilisation theory (Jenkins, 1986). Besides this, also Alternative Development could be used as a theoretical aid to add vigour to the empowerment trend, as it heavily promotes a bottom-up movement (Pieterse 2010, p.13; Levis and Kanji 2009, p.69). Kimberly Bautista, victim of Guatemala’s deterrent female disempowerment and unshakable activist for female advancement in the country can thereby be seen as a good example. As it is time for Guatemalan women to finally speak up.

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# Appendices

**Appendix 1: Women Crossing the Line, documentary by the Nobel Women’s Initiative, Defensoras**

<http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/2014/12/nobel-women-and-jass-launch-women-crossing-the-line-docu-series/>

**Appendix 2: Graphs on femicide and prosecution in Guatemala**







Source: [www.redfeminista-noviolenciaca.org](http://www.google.dk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.redfeminista-noviolenciaca.org%2Fnode%2F15&ei=xINkVbrAO8z9ULq2gcgI&bvm=bv.93990622,d.d24&psig=AFQjCNENg1f1VeGLQhWu1oFqnwV6DG-zEQ&ust=1432737093613262)

**Appendix 3: Questionnaires ENG/SP by Stefania Schepers for Starfish and NamasteDirect**

Questionnaire Starfish ( executive director + staff: T. Ning, N. Baján, W. Valentine, V. Saloj or staff members willing to answer the questions) These can be answered in written form in English or Spanish and emailed to stefania\_schepers@hotmail.com OR answered over Skype (preferably in English).

1. Can you explain a bit about the forming of Starfish?

2. Describe briefly what you do and why you decided to work for Starfish?

3. What types of discrimination do women face in your community?

4. How and why do you promote the participation of women? Why is it important for women to be involved?

5. What role are women taking in the development process?

6. How does machismo and marianismo as cultural behaviours impact the development work? What are men’s reactions to the programs?

7. What communities do you work in?

8- What programs do you run? Short term? Long term?

9. What problems does Starfish face in implementing programs?

10. What topics/projects are covered in the program? How are they set-up? How do women respond to them?

11. Why are women interested in participation?

12. What changes did you notice, immediately after the program started? Later on in the program?

13. Why do you think gender specific aid is needed in your country?

14. Do you think the resources for development aid, provided by the government are good?

15. What do you think about DEMI and SEPREM (Guatemalan governmental initiatives s for women’s development?)

16. Is cultural isolation a problem Guatemalan indigenous people face? Why? How?

17. How do you see the role of women in Guatemala’s sustainable development?

18. With the history of gender imbalance, poverty and violence in mind, how do you think that women can best be empowered in the country?

19. Literature points at the men’s fear of losing control as an obstacle for women’s development, what do you think about this?

20. What do you think are the causes of violence toward women in Guatemala? (Literature points at: rise in military/police presence in War on Drugs context, corrupt justice systems, targeted attacks on women Human Rights defenders)

21. Do you think the International Community is needed in advancing the situation of women in Guatemala? Yes/no? Why?

↓

Questionnaire 2: Starfish: girl pioneers (2 or 3) These can be answered in written form in English or Spanish and emailed to stefania\_schepers@hotmail.com OR answered over Skype (preferably in English).

1. What made you become involved with Starfish? (2)

2. What types of discrimination do women face in your community?

3. What would you define as problems affecting ALL Guatemalans?

4. Why do you think gender specific aid is needed in your country?

5. What do the terms femicide and feminicide make you think of? Do you know the terms? Have these terms ever affected your family or community?

3. What ways are communities and women working towards development?

4. How did you find Starfish?

5. Do you have any problems in participating with Starfish?

6. Are you involved with other organisations?

7. Has the civil war in any way affected your family?

8. What work do you do around the house? And in the community?

9. What would your community be like without women’s development programs?

10. Is cultural isolation a problem Guatemalan indigenous people face? Why? How?

↓ **(Translation)**

1. ¿Puede explicar un poco acerca de la formación de la Asociacion Starfish?

2. Describa brevemente lo que hace y por qué decidió trabajar para Starfish.

3. ¿Qué tipos de discriminación se enfrentan las mujeres en su comunidad?

4. ¿Cómo y por qué se promueve la participación de las mujeres? ¿Por qué es importante que las mujeres se involucren?

5. ¿Qué papel están tomando las mujeres en el proceso de desarrollo?

6. ¿De qué manera afectan el desarollo el machismo y el marianismo como comportamientos culturales? ¿Cuáles son las reacciones de los hombres a los programas?

7. ¿En cuales comunidades trabajan Uds.?

8- ¿Qué son los programas que hacen? Corto plazo? A largo plazo?

9. ¿Cuales problemas se enfrenta a Starfish en la implementación de los programas?

10. ¿De qué temas / proyectos se tratan el programa? ¿Cómo se presentan? ¿Cómo responden las mujeres a ellos?

11. ¿Por qué estan interesadas las mujeres en participar?

12. ¿Qué cambios notaron, inmediatamente después de iniciado el programa? Más adelante en el programa?

13. ¿Por qué creen que un tipo de ayuda específica de género es necesaria en su país?

14. ¿Creen que los recursos para la ayuda al desarrollo proporcionados por el gobierno son buenos?

15. ¿Qué opinan sobre DEMI y la SEPREM ( iniciativas gubernamentales de Guatemala para el desarrollo de las mujeres?)

16. ¿Es el aislamiento cultural un problema que enfrentan los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala? ¿Por qué? Cómo?

17. ¿Cómo vean el papel de la mujer en el desarrollo sostenible de Guatemala?

18. Considerando la historia de la desigualdad de género, la pobreza y la violencia, ¿cómo crees que las mujeres pueden ser mejor habilitados en el país?

19. La literatura implica el miedo de los hombres de perder el control como un obstáculo para el desarrollo de las mujeres, ¿qué piensan Uds. de esto?

20. ¿Qué creen que son las causas de la violencia contra las mujeres en Guatemala? (La literatura implica a: el aumento de la presencia militar / policial en el contexto de la "Guerra contra las Drogas", los sistemas de justicia corruptos, ataques dirigidos a las mujeres defensoras de los Derechos Humanos)

21. ¿Creen que es necesaria la Comunidad Internacional en el avance de la situación de las mujeres en Guatemala? Si o no? ¿Por qué?

↓

1. ¿Por que Ud. quiso involucrarse con la Asociacion Starfish?

2. ¿Qué tipos de discriminación se enfrentan las mujeres en su comunidad?

3. ¿Qué definiría como problemas que afectan a todos los guatemaltecos?

4. ¿Por qué cree que es necesaria una ayuda específica de género en su país?

5. ¿Qué le hacen pensar los términos femicidio y el feminicidio? ¿Conoce los términos? ¿Estos términos han afectado a su familia o comunidad?

6. ¿Como estan trabajando por el desarollo las comunidades y las mujeres?

7. ¿Cómo se encontró a Starfish?

8. ¿Tiene algún problema en participar con Starfish?

9. ¿Ud. está involucrado con otras organizaciones?

10. ¿La guerra civil ha afectado a su familia?

11. ¿Qué trabajo hace usted en la casa? Y en la comunidad?

12. ¿Como sería su comunidad sin los programas de desarrollo de las mujeres?

13. ¿Es el aislamiento cultural un problema que enfrentan los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala? ¿Por qué? Cómo?[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Appendix 4 to 7: Questionnaire responses:**

**4. Norma Baján (Starfish director)**

1. ¿Puede explicar un poco acerca de la formación de la Asociacion Starfish?

*¿Quiénes somos?*

*Estrella de Mar es una organización que brinda oportunidades a través de su programa de educación para que las niñas indígenas de Guatemala formen habilidades para la vida y tengan acceso a una mejor educación, encontrando así más opciones para el futuro. Con este esfuerzo estamos visionando la preparación de una generación de lideresas con una alta formación académica que aportarán el desarrollo económico, social y política del país.*

2. Describa brevemente lo que hace y por qué decidió trabajar para Starfish.

*¿Cómo lo hacemos?*

*• Acceso: A través de becas cubrimos los gastos principales de estudio como útiles escolares, transporte, colegiatura, uniforme. De ésta manera aseguramos el acceso a la escuela y la oportunidad de seguir estudiando a nivel básico, diversificado y universitario.*

*• Acompañamiento: Cada joven es apoyada por una mentora que viene de la misma comunidad de donde vienen las jóvenes. La mentora da acompañamiento personalizado a cada beneficiaria del programa, así también acompaña a la familia para asegurar la participación y asistencia de las jóvenes en la escuela y programa de Estrella de Mar.*

*• Conocimiento: Dentro de las mentorías, se proveen una formación más holística a través de capacitaciones en temas como la salud sexual, las finanzas personales, la voz empoderada, desarrollo profesional y el liderazgo.*

*Mi pasión es de trabajar siempre con mujeres, creo en el gran potencial que ellas tienen y creo firmemente que ellos con capaces de hacer grandes cambios y transformar el mundo. Creo* *firmemente también que la educación es la única herramienta que ayuda a salir de la pobreza. (promotion and participation)*

3. ¿Qué tipos de discriminación se enfrentan las mujeres en su comunidad?

*En Guatemala una mujer enfrente 4 veces descriminacion, por ser mujer, indígena, por ser pobre y por venir del area rural.*

4. ¿Cómo y por qué se promueve la participación de las mujeres? ¿Por qué es importante que las mujeres se involucren?

*Es importante la participación de las mujeres por que representamos el 51.2% de una población de 15 millones de habitantes según dato demográfico de INE 2012, donde el 51% provienen del área rural, y en su mayoría son analfabetas.*

 *EdM está promoviendo la participación en los diferente espacios como la Escuela, su hogar, espacios comunitarios que ocupan como COCODES, iglesias, formación de grupos de jóvenes, escuela, pasantías que realizan en diferentes organizaciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales, y servicios comunitarios que realizan en sus comunidades.*

*Para que las Jóvenes se involucren, es necesario que ellas estén capacitadas y formadas es por eso que semanalmente ellas reciben capacitaciones en diferentes temas como: Salud Sexual y reproductiva, Autoestimas, Liderazgo, Formación Ciudadana, sobre Voz Empoderada, y en temas para que tengan competencias para la vida. También reciben formación para ser buenas profesionales y líderes e incidir en sus comunidades.*

 *Sabemos que para hacer incidencia en nuestras comunidades y sociedad, es importante que las mujeres estén educadas y formadas. Según datos estadísticos de la INE, el 66.1% ingresan a primaria, donde únicamente con 22% pasan a nivel básico y apenas el 17% ingresan a nivel diversificado donde apenas el 70% aprueban el grado.*

5. ¿Qué papel están tomando las mujeres en el proceso de desarrollo?

*El hecho de permitir que sus hijas se eduquen ya es un gran paso para el desarrollo. Las mujeres también han hecho un gran trabajo el contribuir en la economía de su familia a través de sus pequeños negocios, como artesanía, bordado, agricultura, etc. Así, también están empezando a participar en espacios políticos.*

6. ¿De qué manera afectan el desarollo el machismo y el marianismo como comportamientos culturales? ¿Cuáles son las reacciones de los hombres a los programas?

*Afectan en varias maneras :*

*• Porque salen solas a la calle*

*• Porque las ven conversando en grupos de compañeros de la escuela (grupos mixtos,*

 *hombres y mujeres) algo que no está bien visto en la comunidad.*

*• Porque no se mantienen mucho en sus casas (por que salen a hacer tareas del colegio etc.)*

*• Porque las que no se han casado después de los 25 años.*

*• Los hombres se sienten discriminados por que el programa de Estrella de Mar atiende solo*

 *a mujeres.*

*• La forma de vestir (cuando usan su uniforme para educación física)*

*• La religión impide el empoderamiento de la mujer.*

7. ¿En cuales comunidades trabajan Uds.?

*Trabajamos en el departamento de Sololá y Suchitepéquez. Atendiendo 10 municipios de Sololá y un municipio de Suchitepéquez*.

8. ¿Qué son los programas que hacen? Corto plazo? A largo plazo?

*A Corto plazo: Que las jóvenes continúen sus estudios después de la primaria.*

*Largo Plazo: Que las jóvenes logren ingresar, mantenerse y graduarse en la universidad. Que se cuente con una red de mujeres profesionales indígenas.*

9. ¿Cuales problemas se enfrenta a Starfish en la implementación de los programas?

• *Apoyo de los padres de familia*

*• Matrimonios forzados a temprana edad*

*• Económicos, ya que los padres ven a la niñas como fuentes de ingresos en la familia y prefieren que trabajen y no que estudien.*

10. ¿De qué temas / proyectos se tratan el programa? ¿Cómo se presentan? ¿Cómo responden las mujeres a ellos?

*TEMAS :*

*• Liderazgo, Autoestima, Trabajo en equipo, Comunicacion acertiva, Empoderamiento*

*• Educacion sexual y reproductiva, Formacion ciudadana, Empoderamiento vocal*

*• Formacion profesional, Educacion financiera, Emprendedurismo*

*Lo trabajamos en 3 proyectos :*

*PODER : Son ninas de 12 a 15 anos, de edad, donde las formamos y capacitamos para desarrollar su seguridad en si misma y su autoestima.*

*PUENTE : Son ninas de 16 a 19 anos de edad, donde las formamos mas a nivel profesional, emprendendurismo, y formacion vocacional.*

*HORIZONTES : Son jovenes de 19 a 25 anos. Le damos acompanamiento a las Jovenes para que puedan desarrollarse a nivel profesional, academico, personal, etc. Esto lo basamos en 4 metas.*

*• Formación Académica de 15 años (En Guatemala la formación académica es de 4.1% según informe de desarrollo humano presentado por PNUD en 2014.)*

*• Después de graduarse que generen ingresos de acuerdo al salario mínimo (que asciende a $343.43 mensuales).*

*• Que se casen o formen familia después de los 25 años, ya que en Guatemala la mitad de las mujeres jóvenes inicia una unión (formal o consensual) antes de cumplir los 20 años. Según informe de Guttmacher Institute y Population Council. Desde 1963, el Código Civil permite el matrimonio, con autorización familiar, del “varón mayor de 16 años y de la mujer de 14”. Y si son menores de esas edades, con permiso paterno o de los tutores, acepta el casamiento si la niña estaba embarazada y ya dio a luz.*

11. ¿Por qué estan interesadas las mujeres en participar?

*Para hacer un cambio de su realidad y asi poder ayudar a mas mujeres.*

12. ¿Qué cambios notaron, inmediatamente después de iniciado el programa? Más adelante en el programa?

*Autoestima y seguridad en si misma para opinar, comunicar sus ideas. Asi tambien tener vision en el futuro contar con un proyecto de vida.*

13. ¿Por qué creen que un tipo de ayuda específica de género es necesaria en su país?

*Por la desigualda de derechos y oportunidades.*

14. ¿Creen que los recursos para la ayuda al desarrollo proporcionados por el gobierno son buenos?

*No son suficientes y en su mayoria los proyectos impulsados por el gobierno siempre va con un fin politico. Las ONGs son los que en su mayoria han asumido responsabilidades que les corresponde al gobierno.*

15. ¿Qué opinan sobre DEMI y la SEPREM ( iniciativas gubernamentales de Guatemala para el desarrollo de las mujeres?)

*Abre espacios politicos a las mujeres.*

~~16. ¿Es el aislamiento cultural un problema que enfrentan los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala? ¿Por qué? Cómo?~~

17. ¿Cómo vean el papel de la mujer en el desarrollo sostenible de Guatemala?

*La mujer es clave en cualquier cambio en la sociedad ya que es la que educa y mantiene a su familia y es la que menos atención tiene ahora.*

18. Considerando la historia de la desigualdad de género, la pobreza y la violencia, ¿cómo crees que las mujeres pueden ser mejor habilitados en el país?

*Creandoles espacios para que se puedan desenvoler e invertir mas en la educacion.*

19. La literatura implica el miedo de los hombres de perder el control como un obstáculo para el desarrollo de las mujeres, ¿qué piensan Uds. de esto?

*Lamentablemente esta ha sido nuestra formacion cultural, pero es tiempo de trabajar poco a poco para que lo vean como un complemento no como competencia. Toda esa formacion viene desde la familia.*

20. ¿Qué creen que son las causas de la violencia contra las mujeres en Guatemala? (La literatura implica a: el aumento de la presencia militar / policial en el contexto de la "Guerra contra las Drogas", los sistemas de justicia corruptos, ataques dirigidos a las mujeres defensoras de los Derechos Humanos)

*Esas son las causas,pero tambien es pos la misma pobreza y la falta de igualdad y conocimiento de los derechos y un espacio para atencion emocional para la mujer.*

21. ¿Creen que es necesaria la Comunidad Internacional en el avance de la situación de las mujeres en Guatemala? Si o no? ¿Por qué?

*Los pocos avances que hasta ahora se ha tenido ha sido por las Ongs que han apostado y han creido en los programas dirigidos para las mujeres. Creo firmemente que sigue siendo importante tener siempre la colaboracion de la Comunidad Internacional. Al tener los ojos del mundo sobre Guatemala, eso ayuda a empujar las politicas publicas en Guatemala para dar espacios a las mujeres.*

**5.** **Chonita\* (Girl pioneer Starfish)**

1. ¿Por que Ud. quiso involucrarse con la Asociacion Starfish?

*Porque necesitaba romper el ciclo de la pobreza y ser una persona de cambio, que tenga incidencia en todos los ámbitos de mi vida, para poder ayudar a las demás personas ya que la Asociación Starfish es muy innovodora y está en constante cambio.*

2. ¿Qué tipos de discriminación se enfrentan las mujeres en su comunidad?

*Hay muchos tipos de discriminación que enfrentan las mujeres pero uno en especial es la falta de involucramiento en los diferentes actividades sociales (existe todavía el machismo).*

3. ¿Qué definiría como problemas que afectan a todos los guatemaltecos?

*Considero que el problema que más afecta es el creciente empobrecimiento de la mayoría de la población guatemalteca.*

4. ¿Por qué cree que es necesaria una ayuda específica de género en su país?

*Porque realmente lo necesita especialmente en aspecto educativo porque muchos anhelan estudiar pero por falta de recursos lo dejan de hacer, olvidandose que el mejor medio de romper el ciclo de la pobreza es la educación.*

5. ¿Qué le hacen pensar los términos femicidio y el feminicidio? ¿Conoce los términos? ¿Estos términos han afectado a su familia o comunidad?

*Me hace pensar en muchas cosas porque tanto la mujer como el hombre tienen los mismos derechos como seres humanos que son, tengo conocimientos de estos terminos, no tiene mucho efecto en mi familia aunque con algunos familiares existe el machismo pero he visto en mi comunidad que muchas mujeres sufren por lo mismo especialmente en área rural.*

6. ¿Como estan trabajando por el desarollo las comunidades y las mujeres?

*En la actualidad ya existe muchas leyes que ampara a las mujeres, incluso ya hay grupos de mujeres que se estan involucrando en las actividades sociales y todo eso ya es un avance pero hace falta el involucramiento de la mayoria, tambien hay ONG que estan apoyando a la mujer para alcanzar su desarrollo, ejemplo de eso es Starfish ya que trabaja en orientar a las señoritas en temas relevantes.*

7. ¿Cómo se encontró a Starfish?

*Estaba buscando una beca para poder seguir estudiando porque mi sueño era ser maestra, ayudar a mi comunidad y ser modelo ante las demás señoritas para ellas crean en el pontencial que tenemos las mujeres para salir adenlante, en esa busqueda encontre la gran oportunidad de formar parte de Starfish y honestamente me siento afortunada de ser parte de la Asociación.*

8. ¿Tiene algún problema en participar con Starfish?

*No tengo ningún problema, al contrario tengo una gran oportunidad.*

9. ¿Ud. está involucrado con otras organizaciones?

*No, solo he participado con algunas organizaciones por los talleres que han desarrollado para mi crecimiento personal y profesional.*

10. ¿La guerra civil ha afectado a su familia?

*Si, porque la mayoría de mi familia prefieren quedarse callados que denunciar las injusticias porque la guerra civil intimidó a la mayoría de la población.*

11. ¿Qué trabajo hace usted en la casa? Y en la comunidad?

*En mis tiempos libres me gusta bordar en mi casa y en la comunidad estoy trabajando con un grupo de señoritas beneficiadas por Starfis es decir trabajo como mentora para Starfish.*

12. ¿Como sería su comunidad sin los programas de desarrollo de las mujeres?

*Estaría peor porque digo por la propia experiencia la mayoría de aprendizaje que tengo en la vida lo he adquirido con Starfish y si no existiera este programa yo desconocería muchas cosas que ahora lo estoy aplicando en la vida.*

13. ¿Es el aislamiento cultural un problema que enfrentan los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala? ¿Por qué? Cómo?

*Si, porque hay mucha discriminación, pobreza, clases sociales y normalmente todo esto recae sobre la población indigena.*

**6. Eugenia Durán (NamasteDirect Manager)**

1. Can you explain a bit about the forming of Namaste?

*It all started in 1973 when Namaste founder Bob Graham visited Guatemala during his Kellogg Foundation Fellowship. He was struck by the tragic circumstances endured by so many Guatemalans. He promised himself one day, if he could, he would help these people with both resources and money.*

 *Fifteen years later, Bob was one of the first “social entrepreneurs” for microfinance in Latin America. In the 1980’s he was a founding pioneer for one of Central America’s first microloan NGOs, the Katalysis Partnership, which received early support from USAID. In 2004 when Bob turned Katalysis over to its regional non-profit partners, Bob’s microfinance work encompassed 21 NGOs in 5 countries with more than 200,000 borrowers and a loan portfolio of $60 million. By now Bob has had 25 years of experience doing development work throughout Central America, the Eastern Caribbean, Mexico, India and Africa.*

 *For microfinance to work best, Bob recognized not just the need to make money available to people in poverty, but also the critical need for effective mentoring and education to accompany loans. With this goal Bob, joined by Bob Ilse and Sherrie Ilse, started Namaste Direct in 2004 (and later its sister organization Fundación Namasté Guatemaya) to work with low income women entrepreneurs in Guatemala.*

2. Describe briefly what you do and why you decided to work for Namaste.

*I joined our team in July of 2012 as our Program Coordinator and got promoted as a General Manager in December, 2013. I came with extensive business experience including 16 years with Swiss company CIBA-GEIGY (now Novartis). Through her persistent devotion and ambition advanced through many positions in the company- starting as a secretary, moving to logistics, then as a Plan, Information and Control assistant, next as the Manager for the Marketing Services Department, promoted to Marketing Manager of the Caribbean, and finally Manager for the Department of Materials. Throughout this time, I was able to work and visit in over 20 countries in Europe, North, Central and South America and the Caribbean.*

 *I left CIBA-GEIGY to assist in the construction of a coal Power Plant in China. She then returned to her homeland of Guatemala where she bought a piece of land in Sacatepéquez, about 40 kms from Guatemala City and started her own Hass Avocado farm. The farm became a very successful venture, and was visited by UCLA, Riverside among many others. Joining Namaste in 2012 presented a new set of opportunities for Eugenia. She said, "I had the great opportunity to start working with Fundación Namaste Guatemaya as Program Coordinator andexplore new challenges for me in helping women that appreciate the education and advisory services we provide to them."*

 *Like many of the women we work with, I am a mother of 3, and grandmother of 4.*

3. What types of discrimination do women face in your community?

*Lack of education (25% of our clients are illiterate), machismo, lack of opportunities to ealth services.*

4. How and why do you promote the participation of women? Why is it important for women to be involved?

*We work with women with a business established for at least 1 year. Our objective is to give to them basic financial tools to get better with her business and to save money for emergencies or to improve her personal life.*

 *It is important for them to get involved in our program because we provide, educational tools and we follow up every month the results of the education in her business and how is she using them.*

5. What role are women taking in the development process?

*Our objective is to empower them to do better in life. To find by themselves that they have a value in society.*

6. How do machismo and marianismo as cultural behaviours impact the development work? What are men’s reactions to the programs?

*Machismo is one of the highest issues we find in the field, but when they see that we are helping their wifes to get better, they accept it. We only have find trouble them letting them go for 3 days to our Annual Conference, which is a retreat for our clients. Men do not accept their women to go by themselves.*

7. What communities do you work in?

*Sacatepéquez and Suchitepéquez*

8. What programs do you run? Short term? Long term?

*Business Development Program: 3 cycles of nine months each including Education, advisory and micro-loan*

*Cycle 4: 1 cycle of 18 months with more detailed financial and personal education, advisory and a higher loan*

*Starz: 1 loan with 60 hours education with Intecap and every other week advisory*

8. What problems does Namaste face in implementing programs?

*To find women who understands the benefits of education.*

9. What topics/projects are covered in the program? How are they set-up? How do women respond to them?

*We have seen that without basic financial training, many microcredit borrowers can end up worse off than before they took a loan. In our program, each Namaste Entrepreneur learns important cash management techniques, such as separating business money from personal money. Through culturally-sensitive education materials developed by the Freedom from Hunger foundation and participatory techniques, our clients learn by doing, along with a supportive group of cohorts. The education sessions are front loaded, offering Namaste entrepreneurs the ability to utilize the valuable lessons throughout the loan cycle. As a result, they gain control over their businesses, and their lives.*

10. Why are women interested in participation?

*Each Namaste Entrepreneur is assigned a professional business advisor for the duration of their loan cycle. Business advisors are local community leaders, well versed in the local economy and also the indigenous language of the region. Together, client and advisor go through the details of the business, focusing on cash-flow analysis, detailed record keeping, and strategic planning. The Namaste training methodology - highly sensitive to literacy rates and cultural needs - is crafted to keep each client on track.*

11. What changes did you notice, immediately after the program started? Later on in the program?

*As a part of our business development program, we ensure that our client obtains a small business loan to finance her business and leverage what she learns from us about business. A Canadian NGO, Open to Grow, provides a substantial portion of the capital needed to fund small business loans to our entry level clients and to program graduates at interest rates 25% - 50% below other microfinance organizations in Guatemala. We work with local banks to finance the businesses of larger and high growth clients, as our goal is to help clients enter the mainstream economy. Each woman’s business is unique, which is why the loans are tailored to the specific needs of each client. Before even obtaining a loan, however, we perform metrics to qualify clients and to help us determine our impact. At the outset we measure the daily income of each Namaste Entrepreneur. Within 30 days of receiving the loan, our clients must satisfy their personal business adviser that they have invested at least 80% of the loan proceeds into their businesses. Throughout the loan cycle, clients must demonstrate that their business profits are sufficient to be the source of loan repayments. These steps help us guard against ‘loan stacking’ and the inappropriate use of funds. After we are satisfied that each new Namaste Entrepreneur is on a solid footing for success, Namaste Business Advisors work with their clients to define specific business objectives, outlining important steps to take to achieve their dreams.*

12. Why do you think gender specific aid is needed in your country?

*Women are the most gender at risk in our country*

13. Do you think the resources for development aid, provided by the government are good?

*Definitely no*

14. What do you think about DEMI and SEPREM (Guatemalan governmental initiatives for women’s development?)

*In Guatemala, corruption is at all levels and I do not think they are doing as much as if they were an individual initiative.*

15. Is cultural isolation a problem Guatemalan indigenous people face? Why? How?

*Indigenous people have their own culture and their isolation is because they want to keep it. They have not changed in centuries and is part of our responsibility to keep their cultural believes.*

16. How do you see the role of women in Guatemala’s sustainable development?

*Women are the base of the home. She is the one who takes care of everything and many times, also responsible to feed the family. They need to get more education to be able to develop the country.*

17. With the history of gender imbalance, poverty and violence in mind, how do you think that women can best be empowered in the country?

*With education*

18. Literature points at the men’s fear of losing control as an obstacle for women’s development, what do you think about this?

*It is in the hand of the women, to change the mentality of machismo since their sons are little kids. It will take few generations, but every mother is responsible of the change.*

19. What do you think are the causes of violence toward women in Guatemala? (Literature points at: rise in military/police presence in War on Drugs context, corrupt justice systems, targeted attacks on women Human Rights defenders)

*Men and women are at the same risk in all of the topics mentioned in your question.*

20. Do you think the International Community is needed in advancing the situation of women in Guatemala? Yes/no? Why?

*No, International Community most of the times stop the advance in Guatemala. For example : Death Penalty, with this punishment it could be that violence will go down, but due to International Community Guatemala is not able to do it.*

**7. Ana\* (participant NamasteDirect)**

1. ¿Porque Ud. quiso involucrarse con la AsociacionNamaste?

*Porque es una asociacion de ayuda a mujeres para proresar y creccer en nuestros negocios atraves de educacion administrativa y credito.*

2. ¿Qué tipos de discriminación se enfrentan las mujeres en su comunidad?

*Desigualdad ante los hombres*

*En el trabajo*

*En la casa*

*En la familia*

3. ¿Qué definiría como problemas que afectan a todos los guatemaltecos?

*La seguridad el desempleo y nivel educativo.*

4. ¿Porqué cree que es necesaria una ayuda específica de género en su país?

*Por la descriminacion especialmente las mujeres.*

5. ¿Qué le hacen pensar los términos femicidio y el feminicidio? ¿Conoce los términos?

*Si que nuestro pais por el machismo se da mucho esto.*

6. ¿Estos términos han afectado a su familia o comunidad?

*Mi comunidad.*

7. ¿Como estan trabajando por el desarollo las comunidades y las mujeres?

*Se esta trabajando muy poco se necesitamucho mas educacion de esta para que las mujeres puedan desarrollarse en todo ambito.*

8. ¿Cómo encontró a Namaste?

*Por una clienta de mi negocio.*

9. ¿Tiene algún problema en participar con Namaste?

*No es una buena fundacion.*

~~10. ¿ Ud. está involucrado con otras organizaciones?~~

11. ¿La guerra civil ha afectado a su familia?

*No.*

12. ¿Qué trabajo hace usted en la casa? Y en la comunidad?

*Yo tengo un negocio de ropa reciclada.*

13. ¿Como sería su comunidad sin los programas de desarrollo de las mujeres?

*Muy mal ya que atraves de esta las mujeresaprendemos a que tenemosderechos y obligaciones.*

14. ¿Es el aislamiento cultural un problema que enfrentan los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala? ¿Por qué? Cómo?

*Si porque no benefici ni desarrollo ni progreso.*

**Appendix 8: Links to other normative theories:**

Normative IR theory

Etchical cosmopolitanism:

<http://global.oup.com/uk/orc/politics/ir_theory/dunne3e/01student/guide/ch02/>

Cultural theory of education:

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\_ID=26925&URL\_DO=DO\_TOPIC&URL\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID%3D26925%26URL_DO%3DDO_TOPIC%26URL_SECTION%3D201.html)

**Appendix 9: Awareness documentary Kimberly Bautista:**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/justiceformysister>

**Appendix 10: Report Nobel Women Initiative Delegation 2012:**

<http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Report_AmericasDelgation-20121.pdf>

**Appendix 11: Campaign examples throughout Latin America**

**1. Chile:**



Source: Red Chilena <http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/~nomasvio/nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/content/declaraci%C3%B3n-p%C3%BAblica-25-de-noviembre-d%C3%ADa-internacional-contra-la-violencia-las-mujeres>

**2. Mexico**



Source: Vicky Form

<http://www.paratimujer.us/luchando-contra-machismo/>

**3. Argentina**

 

Source: Acción Respeto

<http://apaprensa.com.ar/accion-respeto-por-una-calle-libre-de-acoso/>

**4. Guatemala?!**

1. It must be noted however that the last CEDAW report on Guatemala in 2009 agreed on a next reporting

 meeting in September 2015, which is 6 instead of 4 years later. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Positive change in Guatemalan traditional gender roles is defined as a change that aspires more gender

 equality, less discriminatory standards towards women and consequently less gender based violence. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Feminism is the search to render visible and to explain patterns of injustice in organisations, behaviour,

 and normative values that systematically manifest themselves in gender differentiated ways” (Ackerly

 and True 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The capability theory has been discussed in many fields during the last decade. Especially from a

 philosophical perspective it is criticised and altered thoroughly. Nussbaum (2002) and Koggel (2003)

 elaborate on the theory. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The situation of health access and (to some extent) education access has been progressing during the last

 years, thanks to advanced governmental attention and civil society networks, dealing with international

 pressures: see: <http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_gtm_en.pdf> and

 <http://www.usaid.gov/guatemala/education>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. An annotation is however needed in this apparently unequal comparison between Guatemala and most of the other Latin American countries. Literature on female presidencies and political power in the region demonstrates that relevant female presence on the political scene is not equivalent to progress in gender equity. This mainly because machismo stays a key norm in the whole of Latin America, and upcoming female political potentials turn away from any feminist program that could hinder their relative power (Picq 2011). This late political phenomenon is labelled “the machismo paradox” and was a starting description for the writing of this thesis (Kumar 2014). Structural or even Post-structural feminism are thus not considered yet in the field of Latin American politics. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In this regard, GHCR published a case of sexual abuse of a young girl with several foreign objects, in

 which the perpetrator was not convicted, as Guatemalan law only punishes sexual abuse by penetration. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. During the internship in Guatemala, I had a first meeting with the Starfish empowerment group, as it was active in the town I worked for another NGO. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Q in the in-text reference stands for questionnaire and points at personal research. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ana is a fake name, given to the client of NamasteDirect who responded on this thesis

 questionnaire II. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. When compared to a far greater scoped transnational organisation as for example The Nobel Women Initiative, it must however be admitted that civil society initiatives are not as able to connect with institutional national frameworks or political leaders. This is nevertheless mostly due to the lack of a top-down basis, supported by a greater international framework. It is thereby not guaranteed that in the Guatemalan context, international frameworks and top-down influences can actually bring positive change for what concerns the gender inequality situation. This was already demonstrated in the introduction of this case-studies part (UN Department of Public Information 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The questionnaires for NamasteDirect were the same, only directed in form to NamasteDirect instead of

 Starfish. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)