

London School of Economics and Political Science

*Paradoxes of Peace:
Violences Against Women in Postwar Guatemala's
Northern Transversal Strip*

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationships between socio-economic change and violences against women (VsAW) in postwar rural Guatemala, and how this violence is understood, experienced and resisted by women living in the Northern Transversal Strip (FTN) region. Research was conducted utilizing a feminist qualitative methodological approach, drawing on ten months of fieldwork, including semi-structured interviews with predominantly indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' women community leaders and social and legal service providers, as well as participant observation in community development and women's forums.

Empirically, the project highlights aspects of continuity and change in a post-conflict context, linking VsAW not only to the historical and social context in which it occurs, but also to rural life and postwar development. In the context of postwar economic transformation, violent crime remains problematic. Research has drawn attention to high reports of VsAW, yet tends to concentrate on urban spaces; little attention afforded to how such violence manifests in rural communities, where many of the shocks of the postwar development model are most acutely felt. In aiming to address this empirical lacuna, this study asks, how can we understand VsAW in rural Guatemala in contemporary times? To what extent are VsAW a legacy of the past, and to what extent are they linked to contemporary political economic change? How does this shape resistance?

The research, informed by feminist historical materialist, decolonial and feminist geographical literature, found that VsAW was framed in relation to the political economic, social and environmental impacts of development in rural communities and coloniality, particularly in relation to the palm-oil sector. Theoretically, the project illustrates how shifting from a "continuum of violence" to a matrix approach can illustrate the interrelated social, political and economic dynamics that shape not only the ways in which VAWF occurs, but also how it is resisted by women community leaders.

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List of Abbreviations

CAFTA-DR	Central American + Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement
CHC	Commission for Historical Clarification
COCODE	Community Council for Development
COLRED	Local Disaster Management Council
COMUDE	Municipal Council for Development
CONAPREVI	National Coordination for Prevention of Intrafamilial Violence and Violence Against Women
CONGCOOP	Coordination of NGOs and Cooperatives of Guatemala
DMM	Municipal Women's Directive
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FONTIERRAS	Land Fund
FTN	Northern Transversal Strip
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GREPALMA	Guatemalan Palm Oil Growers' Association
INCIDE	Civil Initiative for Democracy Foundation
INE	National Institute of Statistics
IUMUSAC	Women's Institute of the University of San Carlos
LOI	Letter of Information
MP	Public Ministry
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODHAG	Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala
OMM	Municipal Women's Offices
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council (United States)
PDH	Human Rights Ombudsman's Office
PNC	National Civil Police
REHMI	Recovery of the Historical Memory Project
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
UNAMG	National Union of Guatemalan Women
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNRG	Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
VIF	<i>Violencia Intrafamiliar</i> (intimate partner violence/intrafamilial violence)
VsAW	Violences Against Women

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Page 31, poem by Humberto Ak'abal

Page 51, Figure 2.3 (Map)

Page 168, poem by Rebeca Lane

Page 199, poem by Humberto Ak'abal

1. Introduction: The Gendered Violences of Guatemala's Postwar Years

When I first arrived in Elena's rural village, she took me to a meeting in the community hall organised by the palm oil company that operated a nearby plantation. She explained that the palm oil company representatives were there to discuss plans to sponsor new teachers at the local school. Yet, Elena explained, the palm company had not drawn up any contract to ensure a fair wage for teachers, and the representatives were really only there to "fool the community with false promises." We entered in the middle of the meeting, and three ladino men were explaining to the community that they would bring outside teachers to help educate local children (filling a gap of state resources), and improve the well-being of everyone in the village. Elena, a respected community leader and vocal opponent of the palm oil industry, eventually raised her hand, in order to ask for a fixed teaching contract to be created, one that would specify working hours and conformed to the minimum salary for a teacher in Guatemala. The women in the meeting began laughing, chatting in Q'eqchi, and appeared to be mocking the male company representatives, who became visibly frustrated, because they (like me) could not understand the women's conversations. While they stated in Spanish they would take the contract into consideration, they soon left the meeting, visibly dishevelled. Elena had me then introduce myself to her community members as an American human rights worker, interested in supporting the work of women, "so no one follows you home!"

As we walked back to her home from the community meeting, Elena told me that she would like to tell me her story of coming into organizing. She told me she was moved by the inequalities and injustices she saw around her to become a comadrona or midwife in order to help other women, who did not have access to basic health and social services. She then became increasingly involved with political work, and now oversees more than 100 women organizing in the municipality of Chisec. When I asked about the work that they do, she said, "We organise against palm oil and violence against women". When I asked her why they organise for both issues specifically, she stated that the two go hand-in-hand. I asked her to elaborate, and she explained that the expansion of palm oil in her community had changed community social dynamics, and as such, was linked with violence against women and other social issues. The shocks of postwar development were being absorbed by women in her village in complex and contradictory ways².

1.1. Introduction

Over 20 years ago, the 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords brought an end to 36 years of armed conflict between guerrilla groups and the state military in the Central American country, which culminated in a genocide and claimed over 200 000 mostly Mayan indigenous lives. Yet, despite being a country no longer at war, high rates of postwar violence and crime persist today. In 2013 for example, 101 murders were reported per week (OSAC 2014); consequently, Guatemala's homicide rate of 40.0 per 100 000 is more than twice the average of 16.0 per 100 000 in the Americas region (UNODC 2013). Further, activists, politicians and academics have suggested that rates of violences against women (VsAW) and femicide are particularly high in contemporary Guatemala. Although a 2008 Law on Femicide and Other Forms of

¹ Elena feared that I would be followed or threatened by the palm oil company; human rights and environmental activists are regularly targeted or threatened for their activism in Guatemala. She suggested I not mention I am Canadian living in the U.K., but refer to myself as American to further protect my identity.

² Extract from fieldnotes.

Violence Against Women (hereafter: Law on Femicide) renders all forms of VsAW and femicide crimes before the law, Guatemala ranks third in the world for femicides, the targeted killing of women by men on the basis of their gender, with 9.7 cases per 100 000 reported (Nowak 2012; GGM 2009).

Given the gravity of cases of VsAW and femicide, academic research has focused on questions relating to the causes of this problem in Guatemala. Yet, in doing so, research has ignored the relationship of context to instances of, and resistance to VsAW in the country. The Peace Accords, particularly their Socio-Economic Accord component, laid the foundation for postwar development, emphasising an increase of a wide range of social expenditures in health and education, steady GDP growth by an annual 6%, and the encouragement of “productive investments” in Guatemala by national and foreign companies. Further, the Socio-Economic Accord stressed the need for Guatemala to “take advantage of the high potential for agricultural, industrial, commercial and tourist development of those resources deriving from its wealth of natural resources” (Short 2007,135). The Socio-Economic Accord also states, in Article 15 of Section 2 on Social Development, that “Guatemala requires speedy economic growth in order to create jobs and enhance social development. The country’s social development, in turn, is essential for its economic growth and for better integration into the world economy” (124). As I will discuss in Chapter 2, the Peace Accords established contemporary models of development, particularly the expansion of the extractives sector in rural areas.

Guatemala’s economic growth in the post-conflict years has occurred alongside high rates of violence over this time. While many of the discussions on VsAW and femicide in Guatemala have explored the role culture and impunity in the justice system play in these cases, they have focused primarily on urban settings, and have not examined such violence in rural areas impacted by postwar development agenda – which may bear some relationship to the high rates of VsAW and femicide persisting in Guatemala.

Alongside the neoliberalisation and globalisation of the Guatemalan economy, the women’s movement and women’s rights-focused non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have expanded exponentially (Drysdale Walsh, 2016). While many feminist activists were silenced or exiled during the war, the Peace Accords called for increased social participation of women’s groups (among others) in the

postwar era. Further, Article B of Section I (Democratisation and Participatory Development), entitled “Participation of women in economic and social development” outlines women’s rights to work, organise, and receive basic education, and to be protected by national legislation eliminating all forms of discrimination against women (as per Guatemala’s ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979). The NGO-isation in postwar Guatemala, also a product of the country’s neoliberalisation, reflects some of the commitments made by the Peace Accords in terms of increasing women’s participation (see also: McAllister and Nelson 2013).

At the same time, women have resisted some of the changes that have accompanied postwar political economic transformation: as Alexandra Pedersen (2014) points out, women human rights defenders – known as *defensoras* – have been on the front lines of some of the resistance movements against extractive development. Despite facing threats, and a number of assassinations and assassination attempts against *defensoras*, women continue to resist the different forms of violence and oppression that they face. Thus, there is an important dynamic of resistance to different forms of violence, particularly VsAW, that is absent from many discussions on this topic.

My project aims to engage with these less-discussed aspects, broaden the analysis of VsAW, and situate the issue in a material context. By doing so, I will build on the limitations and gaps present in existing research on both a theoretical and empirical level. Much of the literature on VsAW and femicide in postwar Guatemala has pointed to cultural characteristics of *machismo*, impunity, corruption, and gang violence as possible causes of high rates of femicide and VsAW in post-conflict Guatemala (Bellino 2010; Carey Jr and Torres 2010; Musalo et al., 2010; Musalo and Bookey 2013; Sanford 2008; Torres 2008, Velasco 2010). Research has also explored possible political economic and structural causes of femicide (Costatino 2006) as well as the necropolitics of femicide (Nyberg Sorensen 2014). Further, due to the establishment of a specialised gender justice system as a result of the 2008 Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, much of the literature has also focused on the effectiveness and nature of state-led responses to VsAW, leaving a gap surrounding the ways in which women in particular relate to the law (Aldana 2013; Drysdale Walsh 2016; England 2014).

Indeed, in interrogating the paradoxes of peace in Guatemala, I am particularly interested in exploring the possible relationships between development and its associated transformations on one hand, and persisting (or perhaps, rearticulated) forms of gendered violence. What forms of violence are reproduced, and which new forms have emerged in the wake of Guatemala's postwar transition to official peace? While emphasising that correlation is not causation, in pursuing this research, I aim to also consider VsAW in rural areas, which absorb the shocks and transformations of development in acute ways. Notably, most research on VsAW and femicide in Guatemala focuses on urban areas. Yet, rural areas were the hardest-hit by state-sponsored violence and genocide during the internal armed conflict, which, as I discuss later, took intrinsically gendered and racialised forms. As such, the importance of understanding contemporary manifestations of VsAW in rural areas can open up spaces for broadening knowledge about VsAW in postwar Guatemala more broadly. Indeed, how do historical legacies, socio-economic change, and development intersect to shape the landscape of rural communities, in which VsAW persists?

As I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 3, much of this existing research on VsAW and femicide in Guatemala frames the issue along a continuum of violence; my research aims to broaden this perspective, and develops a new framework for understanding VsAW that takes the specificity of the context, and the geography of rurality and development in relation to VsAW into account. Additionally, few projects have explored the nature of violence in contemporary rural Guatemala, pointing to another gap in current research with which I seek to engage.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief introduction to both my project and the context of this research. After providing an overview of key relevant Guatemalan historical events and political economic developments, I present the significant research questions to be explored as well as the aims of my project. I conclude by providing a roadmap for the chapters to follow in the thesis.

1.2. Historical and Contemporary Political Economic Transformation in Guatemala

1.2.1. *Historical antecedents to Guatemala's contemporary political economy*

In this section, I provide a brief historical contextualisation of Guatemala's political economic history, which I explore in greater detail in Chapter 2. Guatemala's economy was built on export of primary agricultural products, which came at the expense of the exploitation of indigenous communities already living in established borders of the country. In 1871, following a Liberal Revolution, a rising coffee plantation class instigated the push towards coffee exports that dominated the Guatemalan economy and prevailed until the mid-twentieth century (Grandin 2013; Grandin et al., 2011). This economy drew on *mandamientos*, or forced labour of the mostly indigenous rural poor, primarily on coffee *fincas* (plantations) but also in the cultivation of other large scale crops (Grandin et al., 2011; McCreery 1990; 2011; Smith 1990; Woodward Jr 1990). Guatemala's economy was based primarily on agricultural exports well into the twentieth century, and "coffee capitalism" prevailed into the late 1970s (Grandin 2013, 62; see also Smith 1990; Woodward Jr 1990).

In 1944, following the rise of the trade union movement in Guatemala during the 1920s, the social democratic October Revolution overthrew dictator Jorge Ubico; the 'Ten Years of Spring' that followed saw widespread social welfare reform and ushered in pro-poor agricultural land redistribution policies (Grandin et al., 2011, 197). The changes were not welcomed by Washington: motivated by Cold War anti-communist ideology and a desire to preserve American United Fruit Company interests in Guatemala, the CIA orchestrated a coup that overthrew democratically elected President Arbenz and propped up puppet administrations for the decades that followed (Schlesinger and Kinzer, 2005). The violence of the armed conflict occurred in outbursts over the latter half of the twentieth century between guerrillas and the military, beginning in 1960, with the worst years of the violence coming over the course of the 1980s under the presidency of military officer Efraín Ríos Montt (Grandin 2013; Grandin et al., 2011; McAllister and Nelson 2013). As the Guatemalan government sought to impose Green Revolution policies and transform rural land ownership, Ríos Montt, supported by the Reagan administration, led a

“scorched earth” campaign against Mayan highlanders, mostly in rural Guatemala, often referred to today as a genocide (Grandin et al., 2011, 5). Over 600 massacres occurred particularly in the early 1980s (ODHAG 1999; CEH 1999).

In particular, indigenous Mayans were targeted in these massacres by the Guatemalan military, who drew on extreme forms of gendered, sexual violence, such as targeted, mass rape, mutilation of pregnant women’s bodies, and sexual torture (ODHAG 1999). As such, these communities were targeted in specifically gendered ways. Indeed, a literal interpretation of Guatemala’s current 2008 Law on Femicide would classify the violent murders that (predominantly indigenous) women faced at the hands of the military as femicide. Other forms of VsAW, such as sexual violence, committed by the military during the war would also today be illegal under Guatemala’s Law on Femicide³ While exact numbers of femicides and VsAW during the conflict are not known, the Recovery of Historical Memory (REHMI) project compiled in the 1990s calculated that one in six massacres included sexual assault, but suggests that the number may be much higher given the frequency of testimonies presented and the under-reported nature of sexual violence and sexual torture (ODHAG 1999). Forced disappearances targeting activists and students was also common place (ODHAG 1999; see also Estrada 2013). The REHMI project further suggests that “...the war’s legacy is already apparent in new forms of social violence” (ODHAG 1999, 176). Postwar everyday violence in Guatemala occurs at rates compared to the conflict (Mariano 2015; McAllister and Nelson 2013). Seen from this perspective, the use of VsAW by the military during the internal armed conflict and genocide⁴ can be understood as providing a historical basis for the persistence and normalisation of femicide in Guatemala in the post-conflict era (see: Sanford 2008). The use of sexual violence in this context reflected the use of such violence as a weapon of war, a point to which I return later in the thesis.

³ The appeal aimed to bring those to trial involved in the sexual slavery camp set up at Sepur Zarco (near Polochic) during the 1980s. The military personnel posted at Sepur Zarco forced indigenous women from nearby communities to perform slave labour and repeatedly raped them. The legal case being launched by an alliance of women’s organisations, the first sexual violence case brought forth from the war, is currently underway in Guatemala.

⁴ This is not to play into tropes regarding women solely as victims and men solely as perpetrators of sexual violence during conflict (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2014). Indeed, while women were victims of sexual violence during the war, many women were also involved in resisting the military as members of the guerrilla, and former guerrillas such as Luz Mendez and Walda Barrios Klee have been instrumental in shaping the postwar women’s movement in Guatemala.

In 1986, a civilian president was elected, putting an end to a series of military governments and between 1996 and 1999, peace was brokered and finalised between guerrillas represented by the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (UNRG) (which brought together the major insurgent groups involved in the conflict) and the military (Grandin et al., 2011; Jonas 2000; Reilly 2009;). The Socio-Economic component of the Peace Accords rendered development contingent on foreign investment in Guatemalan resources and industries (Short 2007, 195). For Guatemala, the Peace Process was constitutive of a post-Washington consensus “roll-out”, where NGOs and other non-State institutions and actors (including transnational actors, such as foreign NGOs) were made responsible for improving social relations, including gender-related issues. Alongside this dynamic, the Socio-Economic component of the Peace Accords rendered development contingent on increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) entering the country, inviting foreign multinationals, such as US and Canadian mining companies to come calling.

At the height of the conflict, a region known today as the Northern Transversal Strip (FTN) was formally institutionalised via *Decreto 60-70* in 1970, spanning across Guatemala and separating the southern part of the country from the northern-most department of Petén. This zone, at the time an area of concentrated conflict, violence and military interests, became a designated “corridor for development”. Populated primarily by indigenous communities in rural villages, its borders were defined as an agro-extractivist zone. While conflict between guerrillas and state military stalled infrastructure development, in the postwar years, the region has developed rapidly, starting with the expansion of a highway project as well as investment in oil, mining, agriculture, and more recently, palm oil (Grandia 2012; Solano 2013).

Guatemala’s pathway towards neoliberalisation was solidified with right-leaning President Arzu (1995-1999), who began developing the extractives sector in Guatemala, opening up the economy to FDI in oil and mining (Solano, 2013); this transition to neoliberalism also saw the intensification of development in the FTN region. Furthering this trend, CAFTA-DR free trade agreement was signed between the US, Guatemala and other Central American countries under Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo (1999-2003). As the chart below indicates, the country’s

levels of FDI have, for the most part, steadily increased in the postwar years (Figure 1⁵).

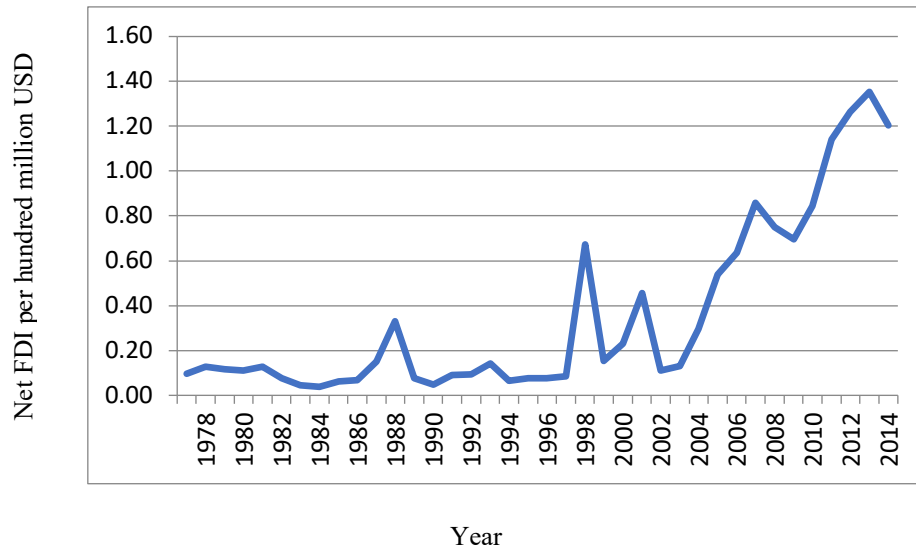


Figure 1.1: FDI Rates in Guatemala, 1978-2014. Source: World Bank 2015

Since the signing of the Peace Accords, the World Bank reports that Guatemala has had mostly steady economic growth, making the Peace Accords appear, from a neoliberal political economic perspective, largely successful. Yet, arguably, such economic growth has been accompanied by insecurity and the entrenchment of gender, race and class hierarchies in Guatemala.

In 2011, Otto Perez Molina of the centre-right Patriotic Party won the presidency under a campaign of promises of improving security in the country.⁶ The mandate of President Perez saw the expansion of the specialised justice system dealing with femicide: while the tribunals of the specialised justice system were initially concentrated in Guatemala City, Chiquimula, and Quetzaltenago, they have recently expanded to reach more isolated areas in Huehuetenango and Alta Verapaz (Musalo and Bookey 2013). Despite the increased legal infrastructure for dealing

⁵ This timeframe spans the years that were available in the data used, and was chosen to illustrate the difference between FDI during the internal armed conflict and into the postwar years.

⁶ President Perez was an officer with the military during the time of Rios Montt, and has been linked to the massacres that occurred during the genocide (Goodman and Gonzalez, 2011).

with cases of gender violence, and femicide specifically, femicide remains a persistent problem, one that Amnesty International (2013) reports as on the rise.

1.2.2. Contemporary extractivist-led development in postwar Guatemala

Extractivist-led economics have characterised historical development in Latin America since early days of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. However, “there exists a progressive neo-extractivism, which has differences...with practices in traditional extractivism...this new extractivism maintains a style of development based on the appropriation of Nature” (Gudynas 2010, 1). Further, this appropriation is led by foreign companies in many parts of Latin America: as Henry Veltmeyer (2013) highlights, Latin American economies are increasingly moving towards a model prioritizing foreign investment-led natural resource extraction and primary commodity exports. Indeed, “extractive imperialism in the current context has turbocharged the engine of capitalist development in the region, creating conditions for another period of accumulation by large-scale, long-term foreign investments following dispossession” (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014, 5).⁷

As Eduardo Gudynas (2010) highlights, among the countries of the new South American Left, extractivism is drawn on as a means to promote economic growth by benefitting from high market value for minerals.⁸ In this context, extractivism is differentiated by Gudynas (2010) from neoliberalism, but also does not represent a viable alternative to neoliberalism due to environmental and social costs of this kind of economic activity. Although Guatemala’s most recent presidential leadership did not align with the leftist politics of other countries in Latin America (which may better reflect Gudynas’ conjecture), former Presidents Arzu and Perez’s policies support for mining and other forms of extractivism as development parallels these countries in their shift towards pro-mineral extraction.

⁷ Much of Latin America followed a trajectory of import substitution industrialisation (ISI) from the 1930s through to the 1980s. The 1980s marked a shift towards neoliberalism; indeed, the Washington Consensus brought about liberalised trade, loan conditionalities, structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and a reduction in the welfare state. The 1990s brought what Soederberg (2002) refers to as a humanised, rights-focused form of neoliberalism through a post-Washington consensus model geared at implementing pro-poor policies alongside a neoliberal agenda.

⁸ The shift in extraction of natural resources has been promoted as a form of development by governments, particularly self-proclaimed leftist and anti-capitalist administrations in countries like Bolivia and Ecuador (Gudynas 2010). As such, it has also been contextualised under the umbrella of “the new developmentalism”. Given the scope of this chapter, I focus on extractivism. My project will explore the extent to which the “new developmentalism” is present in Guatemala, drawing on empirical research.

Indeed, in 2014 former President Perez increased the royalties rate from 1% to 10% on mining in order to reap the benefits of mining development in Guatemala (Telesur 2014).⁹

More recently, the expansion of palm oil in the northern part of Guatemala, particularly in Maya Q'eqchi' communities, has become part of the development strategy of post-conflict governments in Guatemala. Academic research has begun to interrogate the effectiveness of this strategy. Alonso-Fradejas (2015) argues that in northern areas in Guatemala – specifically, Southern Petén, the FTN (Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and Chiseq), and Polochic palm oil and sugarcane agribusinesses are “harnessing control over land resources” (495). Similarly, Mingorría et al., (2013) argue that palm oil production’s boom “...increases incomes for plantation workers’ households, but decreases the productivity of maize cultivation, reduces the time that household members have available for other activities and, particularly, reduces women’s resting time” (Mingorría et al., 2013, 841). They draw on research conducted in the Polochic valley to argue that palm oil can increase household incomes, but disrupts other aspects of household and community life (particularly food security/access to food, social relationships and health). As Alberto Alonso-Fradejas points out,

There were active land and labour markets in the northern lowlands long before the mid-2000s. But it is since then, and in the context of renewed interests in land resource control for accumulation purposes...that the Market-Led Agrarian Reform (MLAR) and land titling programs implemented by the state land fund (FONTIERRAS) rendered local land resources commodities of interest to capitalized outsiders. Crucially, this set the conditions for major changes in the social relations around land and around capitalist agricultural production, which ultimately became major sources of unrest among Q'eqchi' lowlanders (Alonso-Fradejas 2015, 495).

He argues that the arrival of palm oil and sugar cane agro-extractivism in these regions in Guatemala – particularly led by Guatemalan companies - is transforming strategies of resistance, community relations, and land relations in complex and multiple ways. Importantly, the Guatemalan state has facilitated the expansion of agro-extractivism, as a form of development, through the implementation of various agro-extractivist reforms; this parallels the developments in mining I discussed above.

⁹ While Guatemala may be classified as neoliberal, President Perez’s recent policy shift may represent a move towards an increasingly nationalized form of economic development. My project will explore this further in subsequent chapters.

Critics have linked human rights abuses and environmental and social problems with extractive activities (AVANCSO 2016; Castro et al., 2015; Gordon and Webber 2008; Gudynas 2010; LaPlante and Nolin 2014; Nolin and Stephens 2013; North et.al. 2006; Metz and Francesch 2015; Pedersen 2014; Veltmeyer 2013; see also Pineda and Rodriguez 2011). They argue that this has provoked resistance and discontent from community members, which in turn fuels conflict and violence between security forces (police, private security companies, military) and communities (Pedersen 2014; Yagenova and Garcia 2009). As Alonso-Fradejas (2015) observes, the arrival of palm oil and sugarcane in northern regions of Guatemala has brought many different movements – including women’s movements, indigenous groups, and labour activists – together to challenge agro-extractivism in the region. While the Guatemalan government is institutionalising and facilitating different forms of extractivism as a form of development, extractivist activities are contested: for developing countries, the possibility of extraction in communities has also been described as a ‘resource curse’. My research will explore this contestation in relation to gendered violence. Indeed, extractivism in its various forms is contested worldwide; in Guatemala, these tensions are also present as forms of disruption that interact with traditional life, higher but uncertain income, and arguably, VsAW.

Bearing in mind Guatemala’s political economic history has been linked to colonial legacies and militarised violence, contextualising VsAW in relation to the political economy of development offers important avenues to explore in terms of understanding the dynamics of development and change from a gendered perspective. In this vein, my project is particularly interested in the tensions and contradictions surrounding development on one hand, and problems of VsAW on the other, and I aim to explore the possible links, relationships and tensions that may or may not exist between these issues.

While these critiques provide a foundation for understanding the ways in which extractive dynamics transform in Latin America, a gendered analysis, to which I will devote my attention later in this chapter, remains lacking. In particular, given that palm oil extraction is a relatively recent phenomenon in Guatemala, little academic research has been undertaken to explore the issue from a gendered perspective. Indeed, this literature tends to focus on broader, macroeconomic processes involved in extractivist-led development. On the other hand, literature on

VsAW in Guatemala, which I explore in Chapter 3, isolates cases of VsAW from economic changes, coloniality, and situates VsAW along a linear continuum that obscures the possible roles that material conditions play in shaping understandings and resistance to different types of VsAW. Furthermore, there is little focus on VsAW as it occurs in regions where development is most intensely felt – specifically, the rural regions of the FTN, and other areas where contemporary, postwar agro-extractivism has characterised postwar transformation.

1.3. Research Aims and Questions

Bearing in mind these gaps, my project aims to explore the tensions between violences against women on one hand, and new forms of women’s resistance to violence and extractivism on the other. I am interested in exploring the extent to which and the ways in which women in rural communities understand the violences that are committed against them – including (but not limited to) domestic violence, political violence and structural violence – as being shaped by the context in which they live, specifically, a context profoundly shaped by the rapid political economic trends of development, in particular, agro-extractivism. Further, I aim to highlight the ways in which such development has also opened up spaces for women’s organisation to resist VsAW. As such, my project aims to explore two central aspects of VsAW: the ways it manifests and is understood, and the ways resistance is mobilised against it. In attempting to make both a theoretical and empirical contribution to the work on violence (and VsAW) in Guatemala, which I explore in my following chapter, my broad, guiding research questions and sub-questions are articulated in Table 1.1:

Primary Research Questions:	<p>How can we understand VsAW in rural Guatemala in contemporary times?</p> <p>To what extent are VsAW a legacy of the past, and to what extent are they linked to contemporary political economic change? How does this shape resistance?</p>
<i>Sub-Questions:</i>	<p><i>What are the key elements of socio-economic change and continuity in rural Guatemala?</i></p> <p><i>How do women community leaders mobilise and organise to alleviate problems related to VsAW in their communities?</i></p>

Table 1.1: Research Questions

While I approached the research with these key aims in mind, the data collected resulted in unexpected and unintended findings, beyond the scope of my initial area of interest. Notably, as I will illustrate throughout the thesis, the findings pointed to an important lacuna in terms of the invisibilisation of postwar violences in rural areas. While research and postwar transitional justice efforts have rightfully illustrated the ways in which the Guatemalan military perpetrated violence (which was often gendered), and how such violence left lasting scars among those impacted, little research has centered contemporary manifestations of violence, within the realm of the everyday rural reality. While I do not dispute the vital importance of justice and memory projects, my research uncovered a multiplicity of VsAW, which in some cases emphasised the deeply entrenched social norms in rural, indigenous communities, as coexisting alongside or taking precedence over broader historical trajectories of violence. The thesis thus also explores how the manifestations of VsAW were in some ways contingent upon the complex dynamics of rural development and political, social and economic relations in the FTN region, a point which I develop through the theoretical framework I elaborate in the thesis.

As I explore in Chapter 4, I draw on a feminist qualitative methodology, and inspiration from feminist ethnography to explore my research questions. My research, conducted over three fieldwork trips, is based in 3 municipalities in the FTN: Chisec, Raxruhá and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, with specific emphasis on

the municipality of Chisec, the site of the most concentrated mobilisation of women's organising in the postwar years. An increasingly active NGO sector in Chisec, as well as an active Municipal Women's Directive, whose role I discuss at greater length in Chapters 2 and 4, contribute to this mobilisation and political engagement.

Because these municipalities are geographically situated in the heart of the FTN, they are also centrally located in terms of postwar development. Furthermore, each of these municipalities have, to varying degrees, also been sites of the expansion of the palm oil sector, making them key places to explore the dynamics of postwar political economic change in relation to agro-extractivism. The rural space of the FTN offers an interesting and relevant region in which to explore and interrogate the intersections of gender, development and violence in postwar Guatemala, as part of the constitution of the paradoxes of peace.

1.3.1. Naming the Gendered Violence of Peace

In this project, I approach violence faced by women as being multi-sided, dynamic and complex: in this respect, postwar Guatemala offers a paradoxical context in which to approach the study of gendered violence. On one hand, the country is officially at peace, with an impressive judicial infrastructure to address issues of gendered violence. Yet, research has already shown that violence persists, illustrative of what Carlota McAllister and Diane Nelson (2013) refer to as "war by other means". What other ways can violence, particularly the violence women face, be understood? How can it be understood in relation to the context in which it occurs?

The work of Elizabeth A. Stanko (2003) on domestic violence in the UK has been particularly influential in helping me to move towards my own understanding of violence in the context of the rural FTN. Stanko (2003) compiled a key volume of studies focusing on many different forms of violence in the UK, in which she argues that violence itself can take on many meanings; indeed, there is no one standard definition of violence in academic literature. She argues, "what violence means is and will always be fluid, not fixed; it is mutable" (Stanko 2003, 3). Further, she suggests, "...it is only through fluidity of definition that we can think creatively about disrupting violence as a social phenomenon" (Stanko 2003, 3).

While Stanko's work focuses on the UK, her approach to understanding violence as fluid and malleable is particularly useful for my own project; it challenges static interpretations of violence, and is a useful framework to allow for an incorporation of the historical legacies of violence without obscuring the role contemporary forms of power and inequality play in shaping the context in which all forms of violence occur. Indeed, it is from Stanko's framing of violence that I make my own departure. Relatedly, I follow the work of Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2001) in terms of conceptualising the ways in which violence of the everyday persists and/or is rearticulated in the postwar context. I devote more space to interrogating and situating the kinds of gendered violence my project engages with in Chapter 3.

Throughout the thesis, I refer to the various forms of violence that women experience by drawing on the term "violences against women". By pluralising violence in this way, I refer to the wide range of forms of violence that women face in postwar Guatemala. Furthermore, I do not wish to reproduce a hierarchy of violence that women face; for instance, my research does not aim to explore which forms of violence are normatively or objectively worse than others. Relatedly, I do not aim to measure which forms of violence manifest most often in postwar Guatemala. By referring to the ways in which women experience violence as a plurality, I aim to encompass not only those forms of violence which are granted recognition through legal frameworks (such as physical, sexual, economic, psychological violence and femicide, recognised through the 2008 Law on Femicide), but also *violencia intrafamiliar* or intrafamiliar (intimate partner) violence (VIF), structural violence, political violence, everyday violence and symbolic violence. As I reiterate in Chapter 3, I view all forms of violence faced – and resisted – by women in postwar Guatemala not as isolated or distinct; rather, these categories of violence should be understood as blurred and slippery.

Importantly, I do not draw on the terms gender-based violence (GBV); rather, I view VsAW as a specific form of GBV. While men also experience gendered violence, my project is specifically concerned with the violence that women face; indeed, researching violence against men, or GBV against men in the rural areas of the FTN would offer new avenues for future research outside the scope of this project. Using VsAW allows me to encompass the slippages and tensions between different forms of violence, and to recognise that all forms of violence faced,

endured and resisted by women are not mutually exclusive but rather, co-constitutive. As such, in using the acronym VsAW throughout the thesis, I refer to violence in its multisided forms, in order to recognise that women face many types of violence oftentimes simultaneously, including domestic violence (violence perpetrated by a partner, ex-partner, or family member), structural violence¹⁰ (suffering caused by political economic structural inequalities), and symbolic violence - what Cecilia Menjívar, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu (2004), calls “the internalized humiliations and legitimations of inequality and hierarchy that range from sexism and racism to intimate expressions of class power” (Menjivar 2013, 43). Throughout the project, I also make use of the acronym VAW where relevant and appropriate, particularly in relation to speaking about state-responses to the issue. Although my project does not focus specifically on cases of femicide, but on VsAW more broadly, I also use the term femicide¹¹ to refer to the murder of women by men in the context of unequal gender power relations and on the basis of their gender.

Further, it should be noted that men also experience violence and oppression in postwar Guatemala. Indeed, research has pointed to a broader climate of gang violence and narco-trafficking, which often involves and targets men. Social norms that oppress women also serve to reinforce hegemonic masculinities. That said, much of the violence that men face in postwar Guatemala is not on the basis of gender. Postwar legal frameworks that specifically criminalise VsAW emphasise this distinction between the violence that men face and those that target women. Nonetheless, as I discuss below, I will explore how women endure and contest sexism, or *machismo* in the FTN. I recognise that men also suffer oppression via *machismo* as a normative social structure, in diverse ways - an issue that necessitates careful research in future.

¹⁰ See Farmer (1996; 2004); Galtung (1969); Torres-Rivas (1998).

¹¹ This is the definition used by Guatemala’s 2008 Law on Femicide. Some feminist academics prefer to use the term ‘feminicide’ (English translation for *feminicidio*), which is the term employed by similar legislation enacted in Mexico. The preference for this term lies in the fact that this term implies that the state is in part responsible for such murders in either failing to follow through with investigations into these cases (on the assumption that this thereby encourages other perpetrators to commit these crimes given the lack of judicial response), or by failing to create policies and provisions aimed at preventing this kind of violence in the first place. Thus, feminicide is a more political alternative to femicide. While I do not dispute the political nature of femicidal violence, given that femicide is the term most commonly used in Guatemala, I choose to use this term in my project; yet, I do understand it as a political form of violence.

1.4. Thesis Overview and Conclusion

In approaching these questions, the thesis is constructed as follows. In Chapter 2, I build on the contextual discussion highlighted in this chapter to explore in greater detail the context of my research, pointing to the emergence of the FTN in relation to historical legacies of coloniality and development. I emphasise the important links between coloniality, histories of conflict, gender, and violence in shaping the postwar political economic landscape, arguing that recognition of this point is key in approaching the study of VsAW in the postwar FTN. I then explore how VsAW can be approached in this context in Chapter 3, highlighting existing research and theoretical perspectives on violence, with emphasis on Guatemala. Ultimately, drawing on a feminist historical materialist lens, I introduce and develop a matrix framework which I will draw on to theoretically orient my research.

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the methodological approaches chosen, situated as feminist qualitative methodology, as well as my research design. I emphasise the ways in which I drew on ethnographic techniques in order to conduct my research, and the advantages and pitfalls of this approach. In addition to addressing questions of the politics of location, representation, epistemology and methodology, I also offer reflections of methodological challenges and encounters in the field.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present my empirical findings. In Chapter 5, I explore the judicialisation of VsAW in postwar rural Guatemala, and highlight how new legal frameworks allowed for the construction of a new ‘vocabulary of violence’ for women in the FTN. I also highlight key challenges in addressing VsAW in rural communities, often instigated by the material conditions of rurality in the FTN. Further, many of these challenges were rooted in social norms characteristic of, but perhaps not exclusive to, rural communities, which leads into the following chapter. In Chapter 6, I highlight the ways in *machismo* and social norms influence the ways in which women community leaders addressed VsAW in the FTN, as a kind of “strategic essentialism”, following Gayatri Spivak, and as a means through which they mediate their political participation. They linked *machismo* with *violencia intrafamiliar*, or intrafamiliar violence (VIF) in particular, and also highlighted the role of alcoholism in many cases, which in turn became a focal point of organising. Alcoholism was linked to transformations of the wage labour economy, and also

linked “economic violence”, and economic dependence on male partners, particularly in terms of the expansion of the palm oil sector in communities, which I explore in greater detail in the following chapter. In Chapter 7, I highlight how historical legacies of violence, and political economic transformation of the FTN through the palm oil sector have shaped what I frame as a new kind of postwar, gendered structural violence. I illustrate how my findings suggest this form of violence is inherently gendered.

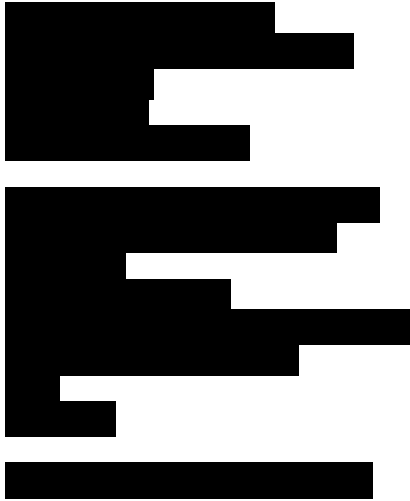
In Chapter 8, I address my research questions more broadly, and discuss how my findings point to the complexity of addressing and understanding VsAW in postwar, rural contexts, exploring further the operationalisation of the matrix approach. I discuss the mobilisation of oppositional consciousness vis-à-vis development and women’s rights by women community leaders, and how this process was at times contradictory. I also discuss the ways in which the research conducted for this project opens new avenues for future research.

Decisively, Guatemala is a place of paradoxes, and the contradictions of peace are no exception. Indeed, though the country’s postwar economy has grown and peace has officially been restored for more than two decades, legacies of war and violence still linger. By exploring the relationships between rurality, development, gender and violence in the FTN, I seek to uncover some of the gaps in existing research on violence in postwar Guatemala. I also aim to contribute empirically and theoretically to the literature on VsAW more broadly, by highlighting the manifestations of such violence in the FTN.

2. Contextualizing Coloniality: The FTN and Postwar Development in Guatemala

“Development is a voyage with more shipwrecks than navigators”

Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America*



2.1. Introduction: Tierra Caliente

Throughout my fieldwork, I observed that the region of focus for the research, the Northern Transversal Strip (FTN), was considered by many – human rights defenders, professionals working in NGOs, lawyers, activists, and friends – to be a volatile, contentious space. This was the *tierra caliente*, or the hot land of Alta Verapaz in both a literal and figurative sense. High rates of poverty and inequality affirm this characterisation of the FTN as a space that reflects the inequalities of Guatemala *in extremis* and is further characterised by its isolation, its rurality, and the gravity of extreme poverty. Indeed, as I highlighted in Chapter 1 violent crime and poverty are not uncharacteristic to postwar Guatemala; in this respect, numerous studies have illustrated the ways in which postwar criminal violence has escalated in the wake of the signature of the Peace Accords (Levenson 2013; Moser and McIlwaine 2000; Nelson 2015; Nelson and McAllister 2013). Gang violence, narco and human trafficking are problematic throughout the country, and the FTN is an important region through which much of this activity transits. In this respect, community leaders, legal professionals, social workers, others working the NGO sector, and gatekeepers also spoke of rumours around narco-trafficking in the FTN and of sexual trafficking of women and girls from villages.

Bearing the contentious aspects of the region in mind, the FTN also plays an important role in the broader political economic landscape of development and growth for postwar Guatemala. The development corridor is the site of many extractivist and agro-extractivist developments in the postwar years, which have helped insert Guatemala into the global economy. These transformations have been anything but peaceful; indeed, conflicts over land and territory have marked Guatemala's contemporary history and have been articulated through violence, inequality and more recently, through narratives of development promoted by the state. Rural spaces are often the sites of development activities, such as mining, hydroelectric dams, coffee *fincas*, and palm oil plantations. Yet, the impacts of development projects in Guatemala are not necessarily catalysts for widespread improvement of livelihoods and social conditions; rather, they are fraught with material contradictions and have also been associated with human rights abuses perpetrated against rural, indigenous communities most impacted by these projects (Dougherty 2011; Dougherty 2017; Laplante and Nolin 2014; Pedersen 2014).

Importantly, these initiatives are part of a longer historical trajectory of conflict over land and resources in Guatemala, and in Latin America more broadly, characteristic of colonialism and its legacies. In this chapter, I will explore how the intersections between the present and the past as shaped by colonialism, is linked to development in Guatemala, particularly in relation to the FTN. I draw on the concept of coloniality, by which I mean this intersection of past and present in relation to legacies of colonialism, to highlight the tensions and contradictions of development in the context of my research (Escobar 1995; Escobar and Mignolo 2010; Lugones 2007, 2010; Madhok 2018; Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000).

The chapter is divided into several sections. I draw on the concept of coloniality, or the legacies of colonialism to refer to the intersection of the past and present in highlighting Guatemala's post-independence development trajectory. I will suggest that the internal armed conflict fed into existing power relations in the country, and that the 1996 Peace Accords served to reproduce these dynamics in a neoliberal era. I then highlight the formal emergence of the FTN region as a 'corridor for development', and how the region, which absorbs the shocks and contradictions of development, exists as a microcosm of coloniality in Guatemala in the postwar years. In drawing links between development, coloniality and state-

sanctioned violence, I aim to set the context for the chapters to follow, and illustrate the complexity of the context in which VsAW occur in my research.

2.2. Roots of Development in Guatemala: From Conflict to a Troubled Peace

In this section, I briefly highlight the ways in which land, conflict, agriculture and extractivist activities have played a fundamental role in shaping Guatemala's current development trajectory. Recognizing that this history of development in Guatemala is vast, in this section, I aim to provide a brief summary to lay the foundation for the rest of this chapter. I will situate these activities as part of the colonial and neo-colonial liberal¹² post-independence project which constructed a judicial infrastructure that legally designated Guatemalan indigenous groups as a controlled force of reserve slave labour, legacies which still reverberate in Guatemala today. Further, these regimes normalised sexual violence against women, which became a characteristic tool employed by the military during the internal armed conflict. Such policies and laws reflect deep-rooted legacies of colonisation enforced by *criollo/ladino*¹³ liberal presidencies following independence, which continue to shape modes of agricultural production and (agro-) extractivism in Guatemala today.

2.2.1. Consolidation of a national bourgeoisie through coffee capitalism

The Spanish, under Pedro de Alvarado first colonised the region that is now constituted as Guatemala in 1524. Independence from Spain was officially declared in 1821, following the wave of independence movements ignited throughout the region, which brought the transfer of political power from the Spanish crown to the local *criollo* elites descendent from Spanish colonisers. The early years of independence were marked by instability, as political conflict and small wars with neighbouring countries were undertaken, establishing the borders of Guatemala today (Grandin et al., 2011; Short 2007). Ultimately, the post-independence political sphere reproduced the same configurations of neo-colonial control over indigenous groups, but under the banner of independence and republicanism.

¹² Here, I am referring to the Liberal governments which were highly influential in shaping development in post-independence Guatemala, particularly following the 1880s.

¹³ Descendants of Spanish colonisers

The architecture of the Guatemalan state, which survives as a legacy of colonialism into contemporary times, can be understood to have emerged through the early turmoil of independence to reinforce dominant *criollo*, or *ladino* class interests in the state. In this vein, Marxist and Gramscian state theories help illuminate how the state consolidated these colonial class interests. For instance, in *The Origin of the Family* Friedrich Engels theorises that the emergent state reproduces the interests of the dominant class in society, arguing that the state “...is a product of society at a certain stage of development” in order to consolidate class struggle over economic interests, the state is positioned as an artificial, higher power tasked with governing (Engels 2004, 157). Importantly, following Engels, the state is not neutral entity; related to this point Antonio Gramsci (1971) suggests that the governing elite consolidate power along economic lines and thus establish political hegemony. Both Engels and Gramsci, albeit in early capitalist Germany and early unified Italy respectively, highlight how the organisation of the state reflects the means through which economic class interests are protected. Similarly, Niko Poulantzas (2014) argues that the institutional materiality of the state operates in the interests of the dominant class. Bearing in mind Marxist and Gramscian perspectives on state formation the state forms around dominant class interests reflecting the dominant mode of production. In Guatemala, much like other Central and Latin American countries, control over the means of production continues to be reinforced and racialised through colonial legacies, which survive the colonial administrations of the past. Following Engels, economic interests influence the formation of the state; in Guatemala, economic interests passed from one elite group to their descendants, who reproduced similar structures of oppression.

Indeed, the transfer of the legacy of political power, from one group of colonial elites to a national bourgeoisie descendent from these colonial elites can be conceptualised through the lens of coloniality. Drawing on the work of Arturo Escobar, Maria Lugones, Walter Mignolo and Anibal Quijano, by coloniality, I refer to the ways in which colonial practices and social, political and economic power dynamics survive beyond colonisation, representing the intersections between past and present. Anibal Quijano (2000) suggests that the coloniality of power structures the hierarchies, knowledge and cultural systems which naturalise racial difference as fundamental to the nation state. In Guatemala, the early independence nation state was built by descendants of the colonizing elites; further, today several key elite

families maintain considerable political economic influence and control over the country. Quijano's (2000) argument is thus particularly relevant in considering the architecture of political power in Guatemala, and its local impacts.

The entrenchment of Guatemalan independence, republicanism and political authority became more stable over the latter half of the 19th century, and reflected the ways in which coloniality was embedded in the political economy, reinforcing governing elite class interests. As David McCreery points out, at this time, coffee increasingly became a staple export in the 1850s and 1860s, and, following the Liberal Revolution (1871), land reforms and laws were passed "aimed at breaking the autonomy of indigenous communities" (McCreery 2011; see also Hale 1997). The 1877 *mandamiento* (abandoned in 1894) enforced communities' provision of compulsory labour in coffee and sugarcane plantations owned by *crillolo* elites, and allowed plantation owners to expand their plantations in cases where communities did not have legal titles to their lands (McCreery 2011). Nonetheless, this system of forced labour continued through to the 20th century. In this vein, decolonial feminist scholar Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) argues that this forced labour system reinforced racial difference legitimising civilizing missions, and alluding to a clear link between class, economic interest, and racial discrimination in post-independence Latin America.

Indeed, the *mandamiento* system reflects this legacy, in that it helped institutionalise ethnic difference through the forced labour of indigenous peoples in post-independence Guatemala; Guatemala's insertion into the global economy relied on the exploitation of indigenous groups, inextricably linking the political economy of development and colonial legacies. The *mandamiento* system formalised the class and racial differences between indigenous and non-indigenous people in Guatemala through labour exploitation. Even today, in Alta Verapaz, coffee cultivation was and still remains a prominent economic activity in the municipality of Cobán, where the National Institute of Statistics (INE) departmental statistics (2007/2008) illustrate that 75 259 coffee plantations operate, and 66 883 *manzanas*¹⁴ of coffee continue to be cultivated annually. As McCreery (2011) reflects, the cultivation of coffee "... did transmit the secondary effects of an expanding world capitalist economy to large areas of the countryside and to much of the indigenous population that before had

¹⁴ Manzana is a unit of measurement used throughout Central America, roughly equivalent to 0.698 hectares or 1.727 acres. (NB: The precise conversion varies between country.)

had little or no part in cash or export agriculture” (124). This process of capitalist expansion in Guatemala, drawing on the forced labour of indigenous people, reflects the salience of coloniality in Latin America: following Quijano, “This new structure was an articulation of all historically known previous structures of control of labor, slavery, serfdom, small independent commodity production and reciprocity, together around and upon the basis of capital and the world market” (Quijano 2000, 534).

In this respect, coffee capitalism and the push to make Guatemala an exporter of agricultural goods relied on the legitimised use of force to do so. Guatemalan Maya-Kaqchikel feminist anthropologist Aura Cumes refers to this process as an aggressive form of “recolonisation” of indigenous lands, in the interests of modernisation and national bourgeois interests (Cumes 2014). To this end, the state formalised its military power: Richard Adams (2011) elaborates that the attempted professionalisation of the Guatemalan military developed alongside the *mandamiento* system of forced labour, particularly initiated under the leadership of President Justo Refino Barrios (1873-1885). The military’s force was instrumentalised by liberal presidents to enforce the *mandamiento* forced labour system, which was revived in 1897-1898¹⁵. The extent to which the professionalisation of the military was accomplished was limited, though liberal presidents sought to create a professional *ladino*-ised military in order to push forward coffee capitalism and the expansion of the rural economy (Adams 2011). Consequently, and through increased militarisation and state intervention and consolidation of elite class and race interests, the development of coffee cultivation in rural Guatemala, particularly in Alta Verapaz, acted as a catalyst for initiating the process of economic integration of rural, isolated regions primarily populated by indigenous groups into Guatemala’s national economy.

The cultivation of coffee and other agricultural exports (sugar cane, bananas), and the reliance on indigenous people as a reserve of surplus indigenous slave labour, provided the basis for the plantation system of agriculture, which continues to shape the rural political economy in Guatemala today, and endured throughout the internal armed conflict¹⁶. The *mandamiento* system enforced through late 19th and

¹⁵ Conscription was enforced during the 1880s-1900s conflicts with Honduras and El Salvador.

¹⁶ Importantly, it is difficult to ascertain the precise ways in which indigenous women were impacted by the expansion of coffee capitalism in Guatemala, or the ways in which they may have experienced the violence of coloniality in particularly gendered ways; ethnographic and anthropological accounts have suggested that women were undoubtedly exploited alongside men as a surplus labour force, and

early 20th century coffee capitalism laid the foundation for the expansion of other mono-crops in the country, which I discuss later in the chapter. The rise of US-led mono-crop agriculture developed in the late 19th century, and by the 1950s, the United Fruit Company (UFC) controlled much of Guatemala through its ownership of banana plantations in the country (Grandin 2000; Grandin et al., 2011; Schelsinger and Kinzer 2005). Ultimately, Guatemala's early history of independence was marked by the forced exploitation of indigenous groups in order to produce agricultural exports and integrate Guatemala into the world economy: racialised colonial difference reinforced through class difference thus was central to economic growth and development.

More broadly, decolonial feminists argue that coloniality is inherently gendered, and imposes hierarchies that reproduce the marginalisation and oppression of indigenous women in order to consolidate colonial/neo-colonial interests (Chow 1994; Cumes 2014; Cusicanqui 2010; Lugones 2007). In the Latin American context specifically, Maria Lugones (2007) situates the modern gender system in relation to colonialism in the Americas. Speaking to the Guatemalan context, Cumes (2014) argues that studying the relationship between indigenous men and women can illuminate how coloniality reinforces gender oppression, by focusing on how gender oppressions are linked to colonial hierarchies, following Lugones' conjecture. Relatedly, Xinca¹⁷ communitarian feminist scholar and activist Lorena Cabnal (2010) argues that while gender oppression and gender divisions pre-dated colonialism, colonialism and its legacies have reconfigured and entrenched modern forms of gender difference and oppression in Guatemala's indigenous communities. Indeed, bearing Marxian and feminist decolonial theoretical perspectives in mind, my point of departure is that gender divisions and oppressions that manifest in contemporary times are also shaped by coloniality, paralleling the linkages between historical and contemporary forms of violence (Lovell 1995). These oppressions

were thus central to capitalist expansion as being part of the reserve force of slave labour; further, indigenous women have historically been and continue to be employed as domestic workers in *ladino* households. In Rigoberta Menchu's autobiographical testimony, she recalls how many indigenous women working as live-in domestic workers in urban ladino households were subject to sexual abuse by owners (Menchu and Bourgos-Debray, 1984). Thus, while historical and documented research on the gendered dimensions of coloniality and exploitation of indigenous people in Guatemala in early independence years is limited, it can be discerned that the Guatemalan economy had its roots in the exploitation of both men and women and that such exploitation took on gendered characteristics.

¹⁷ The Xinca constitute another indigenous group in Guatemala, distinct from the numerous Maya groups.

form through the gendered division of labour and social norms which position women as subservient to men, a point to which I return in Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7. Ultimately, the organisation of a post-independence national bourgeoisie reinforced colonial difference, and laid the groundwork for the political infrastructure in years to follow.

2.2.2. *Twentieth Century Genocide: Coloniality in Contemporary Times*

The first half of the 20th century, brought about a wave of political economic change for Guatemala; this period was marked by social transformation in Guatemala, particularly following the middle-class 1944 October Revolution ousting military dictator General Jorge Ubico. The subsequent 10 years brought a rise in trade unionism and social movements, in a period referred to as the “10 Years of Spring”. This culminated in the democratic election of President Arbenz in 1951, who aimed to redistribute land to rural *campesinos* without legal land titles.

In 1954, President Arbenz was overthrown by a CIA¹⁸ -initiated coup, in response to these attempted land reforms aimed at redistribution of land holdings to Guatemalan *campesino* farmers. Subsequently, he was replaced by a succession of military dictators propped up with US support, in a geopolitical climate of cold war politics and interventionism¹⁹ (Grandin et al., 2011; Schlesinger and Kinzer 2005). Indeed, the military rose as a new elite class, as a powerful force to back US imperialist interests in the region, with the support of the national bourgeoisie.

The role of the military and authoritarian regimes in terms of enforcing development is reflected in research conducted by Guillermo O’Donnell (1978; 2010), who suggests that the rise of authoritarian regimes in Latin America is linked to the rise of industrialisation in the region (with specific reference to the Argentine coup in 1966). Following O’Donnell, Guatemala’s experience of state power, violence and coercion parallels some of the early experiences of industrialisation in Latin America, particularly in relation to the rise of conflict over the latter half of the twentieth century. Industrialisation over the course of the 1940s and attempted land redistribution policies were met with the rise of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes supported by US government intervention and the 1954 coup d’état.

¹⁸ US Members of Congress were also shareholders in the United Fruit Company, which gave the United Fruit Company important access to political/military resources

¹⁹ The US official statement at the outset of the coup highlights the OAS claim of “the problem of communist intervention in Guatemala” (Schlesinger and Kinzer 2005, 18)

As I discuss in Chapter 1, the US-orchestrated coup was a catalyst for the internal armed conflict that lasted from 1960-1996. The early years of the conflict were characterised by clashes between diverse Marxist guerrilla groups organised against the state and the military. The highest numbers of civilian casualties occurred in the 1980s, when the Guatemalan military and government led under military Generals and presidents Lucas Garcia and Efraim Rios Montt pushed scorched earth policies and massacred over 200 000 mostly indigenous civilians in approximately 422 reported massacres in mostly Mayan communities. Many of the massacres that were perpetrated by the military under the banner of national security have been shown to have been linked to agrarian and land conflict. The REHMI (1999) report compiled data and testimonies on 422 massacres committed by armed groups during the internal armed conflict. The majority of the massacres were committed by the military and the civil auto-defence patrols²⁰, with under 4% of all massacres committed by the guerrilla forces opposing the state military.

Furthermore, military power was supported by foreign intervention: US intervention sparked the internal armed conflict to begin with, and many military leaders in the decades to follow were trained at the US-based School of the Americas²¹. Further, Israeli forces provided military training and weapons to Guatemalan military during the internal armed conflict by proxy, when President Carter issued a congressional ban on military and economic aid to Guatemala in 1978 and in 1983, respectively²² (Reilly 2009).

The links between gender, state violence and coloniality were made increasingly apparent throughout the internal armed conflict and genocide. In this respect, the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), the truth commission that was held following the war, found that cases of sexual VAW were particularly prominent during the internal armed conflict and was perpetrated and sanctioned by the Guatemalan state and military. In its chapter on sexual violence, the CEH highlights:

²⁰ Civil Auto-Defense Patrols (PAC) were present in many Guatemalan communities during the internal armed conflict, and functioned as paramilitaries allied with the military against guerrilla resistance.

²¹ The School of the Americas was a US-based military training facility, which provided training in torture, forced disappearances and other human rights atrocities to many Latin American military officials.

²² The Congressional ban on the sale of weapons to Guatemala was in response to human rights atrocities committed by the military at the time.

Rape was committed in a systematic and widespread manner by state agents within the framework of the counterinsurgency strategy. Rape became a weapon of terror in serious violation of international human rights and humanitarian law . . . Sexual violence caused suffering and profound long-term consequences for direct victims as well as for their families, partners, and communities (CEH 1999, 53).

Further, the CEH registered 9411 women victims of violence, 1465 of which included reports of rape²³. The CEH also found that 25% of women victims of sexual violence during the conflict were executed. This form of violence was instrumentalised in order to demoralise communities, creating shame and destroying social ties as a result. Indeed, the use of sexual violence against women in the conflict fed into and instrumentalised social norms that cast women as the “bearers of life”²⁴ which in turn broke the “social fabric” in communities and created long-lasting traumas among those who suffered such violence. The sexual VAW instrumentalised against indigenous women by the military reflects the salience of the coloniality of gender, and its violent implications during Guatemala’s internal armed conflict. Ultimately, as the CEH found, because many of the perpetrators were unknown to the women who were targeted, many cases continue to remain in impunity; further, a great deal of stigma and shame was attributed to the women victim-survivors, resulting in generations of trauma and reinforcing inequalities in the postwar years. Indeed, indigenous women who survived sexual violence perpetrated during the internal armed conflict face added marginalisation within their communities for having been targeted by the military (see also Casaus Arzu 2015).

Indigenous women’s experience of marginalisation as a result of being targets and victim-survivors of sexual violence illuminates how gender relations operate in some communities. The diverse social relations and shaming associated with sexual violence have been noted in countless other postwar contexts as well (see, for example: Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009; 2013; 2018; Mookerjee 2015; Sjoberg 2014; Skjelsbaek 2006). Indeed, if women bear shame of having been

²³ This statistic does not include unreported cases of rape, or instances of sexual violence perpetrated in cases where women were detained by the military. Actual instances of sexual violence are presumed to be much higher.

²⁴ Here, I reference a statement made by Judge Yassmin Barrios’ during the sentencing of former General Efraín Ríos Montt. Ríos Montt was president in Guatemala during the worst years of the conflict and was tried and convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in the massacre of the Ixiles (one of the indigenous groups affected by the conflict and targeted in the genocide) in 2013, before the verdict was overturned on the grounds of a constitutional technicality. Although he was never incarcerated, and efforts for a retrial are ongoing, the verdict is largely viewed by indigenous groups and activists in Guatemala as a victory in terms of recognizing the violence perpetrated against the Ixiles during the war.

assaulted, it suggests that there exists an expectation for women's sexuality. A sexual assault, then is seen to have corrupted a victim-survivor, and invisibilises her traumas and the violence she faced. Rather, she is to blame. Further, this logic reinforces the notion that women's sexuality is the domain of their husbands; if women have been sexually violated by another man, it is also seen as an affront to men's sexuality and social dominance.

A key exception to the general trend of impunity for crimes committed during the war is the Sepur Zarco Trial: at the Sepur Zarco base, the military was accused of sexual slavery and violence against the Q'eqchi' women living in the community, perpetrated throughout the 1980s. The two retired military officials in charge of the base, Estelmer Reyes Girón and Heriberto Valdéz Asij were tried and convicted in February 2016 for crimes against humanity and assassination in the case. While the trial may have occurred over 30 years after the abuses took place, it represented, on a global level, the first time a national court system convicted former military members for crimes relating to sexual violence perpetrated during conflict. Furthermore, it offered a means of formal recognition of wrongdoing against the victim-survivors, which carried immense weight in a context where the women had been marginalised for the state-sanctioned sexual violence to which they were subjected (see also: Boesten 2017).

Importantly, the trial revealed important links between land and state-sanctioned violence and exploitation of indigenous groups: the base was constructed to pacify local campesinos organizing to secure formal land titles, a process which conflicted with the interests of landowning elites in the area, experimenting in monocrop cultivation, in particular, palm oil and sugar (Abbot and Hartviksen 2016²⁵; Mendez and Carrerra 2015). As I discuss at greater length in Chapter 7, the links between control over land and resources and sexual violence perpetrated against women in the case of Sepur Zarco, at the height of the Guatemalan genocide, reflects a clear link between V_sAW on one hand, and coloniality on the other.

The different forms of violence that occurred during the conflict, particularly genocide and sexual VAW, echoed the colonial violences perpetrated during the early years of Spanish colonisation: much like the violence of conquest, the

²⁵ This reference refers to a journalistic article co-authored and published in NACLA during the time of fieldwork. It drew on data from interviews not used for this PhD research, and solely focused on the events of the trial.

genocidal violence of the internal armed conflict was instigated in relation to gaining access to land and territory through scorched earth policies. These antecedents shaped the nature of violence characteristic of the internal armed conflict, and the use of state military and state-sponsored violence to exercise control over indigenous communities. local elites used military power to oppress and exterminate indigenous populations during the internal armed conflict. The extermination of Mayan communities in the interests of securing state access to land and territory in the 20th century, with its particular targets of indigenous women, reflects the gendered dynamics of coloniality in post-independence Guatemala. In this vein, considering the violence of conflict and coloniality in relation to gender highlights the ways in which VsAW may have been normalised throughout post-independence Guatemalan history, and contributed to moulding the context in which VsAW occur today. Importantly, as I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 3, the violence perpetrated in the war has arguably shaped the ways in which violence manifests today in Guatemala.

2.2.3. The Peace Accords: A Development Trajectory for the Postwar Years

The UN-overseen Guatemalan Peace Accords were finalised in December, 1996, after a lengthy process of negotiations, marking the official end of the conflict, and the transition towards a new era for development in Guatemala. Indeed, although Guatemala officially is a country in peace, many tensions and contradictions remain apparent in the country in the postwar years, including high rates of violence. While not to assume a correlation between development and persisting violence, the postwar years have been conflictual in the midst of economic, social and political development initiatives.

Indeed, bearing in mind the political, social, and economic inequalities reinforced through colonial legacies, Arturo Escobar (1995) also suggests that the coloniality underpins development initiatives and projects in Latin America, and theorises development as inherently violent. Relatedly, Quijano (2000) theorises modernity in relation to capitalist development, emphasizing the changes and transformations to ways of life, brought through the imposition of European colonial rule in the Americas:

The concept of modernity accounts equally for the changes in the material dimensions of social relations (i.e. world capitalism, coloniality of power). That is to say, the changes that occur on all levels of social existence, and therefore happen to their individual members, are the same in their material and intersubjective dimensions. And since “modernity” is about processes that were initiated with the emergence of America, of a new model of global power (the first world-system), and of the integration of all the peoples of the globe in that process, it is also essential to admit that it is about an entire historical period. In other words, starting with America, a new space/time was constituted materially and subjectively: this is what the concept of modernity names (Quijano 2000, 547).

Following Quijano, then, in the process of development and integration into the ‘first world system’ brings about many changes for indigenous groups. In Guatemala, this integration did not only occur with the imposition of coffee capitalism and forced exploitation of indigenous groups, nor throughout the internal armed conflict’s genocide: rather, the Peace Accords that brought about an end to the war, while bringing about some positive advancements for Guatemalans, has continued to further entrench this process of economic, political and social transformation in paradoxical ways.

On one hand, the Peace Accords, are ambitious, calling for increased participation of indigenous groups, women’s groups, and rural communities in local, municipal, regional and national spaces; further they recognise the diversity of Guatemala’s indigenous groups, indigenous ways of knowing and health, spiritual and social beliefs (Reilly 2009; Short 2007). They have played an integral role in shaping how women’s rights have evolved in the postwar political economic landscape. Indeed, they were also instrumental in charting a trajectory for women’s rights in the postwar years. While the Peace Accords have been criticised for not incorporating women in the Peace process to the fullest extent (Short 2007), they do offer some provisions for gender. In particular, “After the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 several mechanisms specifically for women were created (DEMI and SEPREM); laws were issued (women’s comprehensive development, domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking and exploitation, femicide and other forms of violence); policies were drafted (National policy for the promotion and comprehensive development of women - PNPDIM)” (UN Women ND). Further, Guatemala is also a signatory to UN resolution 1325, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

As I state earlier in the chapter, high numbers of reports of sexual violence during the internal armed conflict have been widely documented (CEH 1999; REHMI 1999). Interestingly, the postwar era has been marked by the language of a

different form of gendered violence: that of the femicide and other forms of VAW. In 2008, Guatemala became the second Latin American country to adopt a law criminalizing femicide as well as sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence. Indeed, as I discuss at greater length in Chapter 5 the Guatemalan legal framework for VsAW and femicide largely frames such violence as an individualised issue and is widely understood to represent *violencia intrafamiliar* (intrafamiliar violence or VIF); indeed, in practice, cases that are tried in the femicide tribunals are most often cases that in other countries would be classified as domestic violence (Drysdale-Walsh, 2008; 2016). As I discuss in the chapters to follow, state institutions that address the issue of VsAW, often mobilise this language, rather than recognizing the legacies of violence inherited from the internal armed conflict. In this respect, then, the rights-based approach to VsAW in the postwar era erases legacies of gendered violence perpetrated against indigenous women.

Importantly, unlike other countries in Latin America, the Guatemala's women's movement²⁶ emerged slowly over the 1980s, with greater visibility in the post-conflict era (Berger 2005; Drysdale Walsh 2016). Indeed, although women were involved in the drafting of the Peace Accord, which recognised women's rights, their inclusion in practice was limited (Luciak and Olmos 2005; Mouly 2011). Nonetheless, the post conflict era saw a wider visibility of women's issues and the women's movement; as Shannon Drysdale Walsh (2016) points out, "Guatemala ratified the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Violence Against Women in 1995. It brought its domestic law into closer alignment with this international norm with the creation of the Law to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Intrafamiliar Violence in 1996" (32). Women's organisations in Guatemala did not strengthen ties with the Guatemalan state in the 1990s; while Drysdale Walsh (2016) argues that this may have limited the extent to which they could implement laws, this also perhaps comes as no surprise, given the legacies of state oppression and

²⁶ By women's movement, I am referring to the organisation of both indigenous and non-indigenous women in Guatemala for women's rights (political, reproductive, legal). Aláide Foppa was a central figure in this movement in its early years, which has involved indigenous and non-indigenous women. National Guatemalan Women's Union (UNAMG) has historically been made up of indigenous and non-indigenous women. Furthermore, indigenous and non-indigenous female/feminists and revolutionaries who were active during the armed conflict are now key players in the Guatemalan women's movement today (in particular: Luz Mendez and Walda Barrios Klee).

violence perpetrated by those in positions of political power – which continues to this day.

The Peace Accords also provided provisions to allocate further powers and responsibilities to municipalities and municipal authorities in Guatemala. This in turn has enabled the development of municipal services for women in rural communities, particularly through of the *Oficinas Municipales de la Mujer (OMM)* (municipal women's offices) and *Dirrecciones Municipal de la Mujer (DMM)* (municipal women's directorates). These offices provide advice and support in cases of VsAW, referring women to appropriate authorities (the OJ, the PNC, the MP and femicide tribunals) and health professionals. In the FTN, services are provided to women experiencing violence through the *Oficinas Municipales de la Mujer* or the *Dirrección Municipal de la Mujer*²⁷ in Chisec. In particular, the DMM in Chisec is particularly active, and coordinates the *Consejo de Mujeres*²⁸ (hereafter: *Consejo*) which is a council of community leaders meeting monthly to discuss common issues and address cases of VsAW and women's issues in rural FTN communities in Chisec (and sometimes in other municipalities). Local and regional NGOs and the SEPREM participate in the *Consejo*, which also offer legal and practical advice and intervention in cases of VsAW. I will explore the role of these organisations in addressing VsAW in the FTN in my empirical chapters, highlighting the legacies of the Peace Accords.

Despite the construction of a judicial infrastructure to address VsAW in the postwar years, high rates of violence continue to be reported. Guatemala continues to report some of the highest rates of VsAW in Latin America. On a national level, 60.4 per 10 000 cases of VsAW are reported. MP statistics analysed by the INE illustrate an increase in overall reported cases of VsAW from 2012-2016. Further, ENCOVI statistics compiled in 2014 on intrafamilial violence suggest that the vast majority of perpetrators of such violence are spouses; in contexts where women are economically dependent on their male partners, reporting gendered violence may be inhibited. I explore this dynamic in greater detail in Chapter 5. Ultimately, although the Peace Accords laid the groundwork for women's rights and inclusion of women

²⁷ The DMM in Chisec was inaugurated in 2017; previously, it had been operating as OMM.

²⁸ The Consejo de Mujeres was inaugurated in 2017; previously, it had been operating under the authority of commission. This new change has enabled representatives from the Consejo to participate in municipal meetings with the mayor.

in Guatemala, the gendered violences that continue to persist in the postwar years illustrate how peace has been limited.

The violence that targeted indigenous women during the conflict reflects the gendered nature of coloniality: as documented by the CEH, the sexual targeting and violation of indigenous women was instrumentalised in order to destroy community relations, morale and the social fabric. Arguably, violence faced by indigenous women today in Guatemala, in all its multisided forms, cannot be understood as apolitical or in isolation from such a context, but rather, should be understood in relation to coloniality. Yet, the postwar development of the judicial infrastructure for VsAW and femicide, while a major political achievement, paradoxically does nothing to address the forms of violence that were perpetrated during the war, a point to which I return in my empirical chapters (see also Lugones 2007).

Ultimately, in emphasising rights frameworks and inclusive involvement of indigenous groups in the postwar years, the Peace Accords represent a new era for development in Guatemala, but also for coloniality. Rights frameworks of the postwar years may present greater opportunities for groups that have historically been marginalised in Guatemala, but they emerge in the context of a post-Washington consensus brand of neoliberalism. Indeed, the Peace Accords also laid the foundations for development in rural communities. Further, Section III (Agrarian and Rural Development), Articles 27, 28 and 29 call for the increased incorporation of rural populations into agrarian and rural development activities, establishing a new tax schedule for undeveloped land. Relatedly, the decentralised institution and World Bank endorsed *Fondo de Tierras* (Land Fund, hereafter FONTIERRAS) was created through Decreto 24-99 to fulfil the mandate of the Peace Accords, with a strategic agenda to improve access to land and promote sustainable rural community development (FONTIERRAS, 2012). Further, in 2016, FONTIERRAS implemented regulations to improve women's access to land through the programs. Yet, the FONTIERRAS program represents a form of market-assisted land reform, an extension of the Peace Accords' marketisation agenda, which aims to "grant subsidised credit, non-refundable financial support and technical assistance to groups of landless and near-landless families; and to manage the official land regularisation and titling programme" (Alonso-Fradejas 2012, 513-514).

Importantly, the FONTIERRAS makes no concessions for communal land ownership, failing to recognise how many indigenous communities throughout

Guatemala are organised. The postwar rural development reinforces a model of landownership imposed from the state. While the programme recognises joint property ownership between couples as well as individual ownership (male or female), implementation has been “patchy” and ineffective (Garoz and Gauster 2002, 2): properties that have been purchased through FONTIERRAS are often located on “low quality/overutilised” land, and many families resort to ultimately selling their land in order to alleviate debts owed to FONTIERRAS (Alonso-Fradejas 2012, 514). Furthermore, in the FTN specifically, FONTIERRAS has been rendered less effective due to the distribution of lands among military elites rather than among indigenous peasants (Garoz and Gauster 2002). Overall, the FONTIERRAS model has been widely ineffective in redistributing land to peasants in the postwar years (Alonso-Fradejas 2012; Garoz and Gauster 2002, 2006; Gauster and Isakson 2007; Garoz et al., 2005).

Relatedly, the Peace Accords chart a neoliberal, extractivist model of development. As stated in Chapter 1, the Socio-Economic Accord lays the foundation for economic development in the postwar years: Section II, Article 17 calls for “an increase in productive investments” from foreign and national investors (see also Short 2007, 124). In this respect, Guatemala has grown immensely. Today, Guatemala is the most populated country in Central America, with a population of 16.58 million. Regionally, it is an important economic centre: Guatemala has the largest economy in the region, and has a GDP of 75.62 Billion USD (World Bank 2018). Guatemala’s economic performance could arguably be framed as a reflection of the kinds of reforms and policy orientations pursued by the government and foreign actors. In this respect, a number of key agricultural and economic policies have played a key role in shaping the postwar political economy. Reforms made to the Ministry of Mining and Energy (MEM) facilitating the expansion of extractivist activities through FDI (see Pedersen 2014), and more recently, Guatemala’s participation in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) first initiated under the George W. Bush administration, have granted increased rights and priority to land access to national and transnational companies operating in the extractives industry over communities. Through CAFTA-DR companies have recourse to sue the Guatemalan government if they impose any national laws to impede profits, serving to further establish the rights of corporations to profit, over the demands of communities impacted by their activities.

Despite the country's position as the largest economy in Central America, Guatemalans experience some of the highest regional levels of inequality: the most recent data available via the World Bank (2014) ranks Guatemala's GINI coefficient as the 17th highest in the world, and the 4th highest for the Central American/Caribbean region (World Bank, 2018).

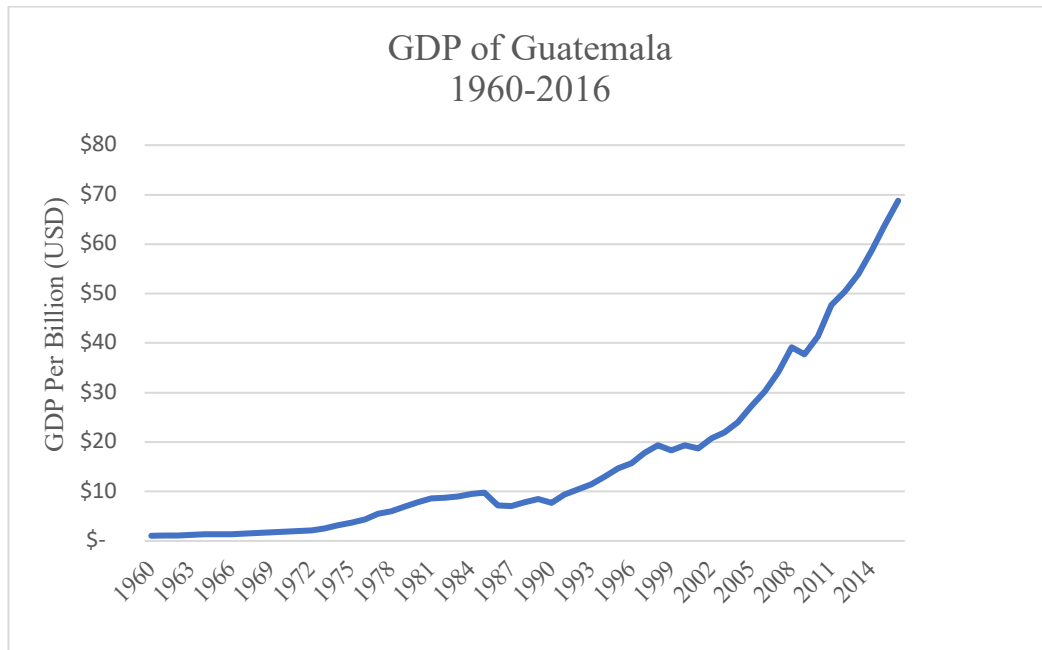


Figure 2.1: Guatemala GDP (USD) 1960-2016. Source: World Bank, 2018

Indigenous people in Guatemala, who officially make up 38.8% of the population are among the most adversely impacted by the persisting disparities in postwar years. While 12.9% of the *ladino/mestizo* population lives in extreme poverty, 39.7% of the indigenous population does so. Similarly, in terms of general poverty, 33.8% of the *ladino/mestizo* population lives in these conditions, contrasted to 39.3% of indigenous people. Further, 89.4% of the people working in informal labour are indigenous, 92.5% of whom are women. Statistics also illustrate the extreme disparities between indigenous women in Guatemala and the rest of the population. Indigenous (Maya) women and girls report the lowest rates of literacy (57.6%), primary and secondary school registration (20.1% and 28.3% respectively), and graduation from post-secondary studies (7.1%). Indigenous women only earn, on average, 42.6% of the average monthly salary of a *ladino/mestizo* man, where

indigenous men earn 59.2%, and *ladina/mestiza* women earn 87.7% of this amount. The overwhelming representation of indigenous peoples on the lower spectrum of economic indicators, particularly indigenous women, points to the enduring nature of inequalities in postwar Guatemala (ENCOVI 2016).

The postwar era has ushered in many changes for Guatemala, including improved access to rights and a transformation of the country's economy. These changes have led to rapid economic growth in Guatemala (Figure 2.1) but have not necessarily brought about benefits for all Guatemalans; indeed, as evidenced by high rates of inequality between indigenous poor and non-indigenous peoples in the country, particularly for indigenous women, the benefits of political economic transformation have not been reaped by the majority of Guatemalans.

2.3. The FTN: Corridor for Coloniality

The Peace Accords charted a course of postwar development, reconfiguring power relations in contemporary Guatemala. An important region for postwar development is the region of focus for my study: the *Franja Transversal del Norte*, translated to Northern Transversal Strip (FTN), also referred to as the Development Corridor (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). Indeed, the region has been profoundly shaped by political economic development of the postwar years, and is designated by the state as an extractivist, agro-extractivist and agricultural region. While all of Guatemala is shaped by legacies of colonialism, the FTN region in particular represents a microcosmic space of coloniality, in that it has been designated by the state and the national bourgeoisie to act as a corridor through which extractivist, agro-extractivist and agricultural development is concentrated. In practice, few potential benefits of this development reach the communities in the region.



Figure 2.2: Map of Guatemala.²⁹

²⁹Source: [50](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Guatemala/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x8588135036e7506b:0x35982b375b84d5bb?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj16rua5d3cAhVMYVAKHcRDCqS08gEwAHoECAIQAJ. Accessed July 1, 2018.</p></div><div data-bbox=)



Figure 2.3: Map of the FTN. Source: Access to Information Request, SEGEPLAN 2018, my translations.

Historically, agricultural and economic development in the FTN region has been initiated by external actors. In the Alta Verapaz region, for instance, the economy was built around the cultivation of coffee by primarily German settlers, starting in the mid-19th century (Solano 2012). Over the course of the 20th Century, the FTN increasingly became an important site for development and military intervention in Guatemala. Following the 1954 military coup, the first contemporary settlement project was initiated in Sebol, Alta Verapaz, strategically located between Alta Verapaz and the Petén. Simultaneously, the Guatemalan military and government officials, particularly future military dictator Romeo Lucas Garcia, initiated infrastructure development in the region.

Following the creation of the INTA in 1962 via Decree 1551, settlement continued, until the borders of the region were finalised in 1970 (Solano 2012). The FTN was officially demarcated by the Guatemalan state through Decree 60-70. The region spans across the central part of northern Guatemala, encompassing 23 different municipalities located in the departments of Izabal, Alta Verapaz, Quiché, and Huehuetenango. The region encompasses approximately 21,748.35 km², or 20% of the country, in which 1 176 316 people of 12 different ethnic groups, or 10% of the population resides (Solano 2012). While the FTN region, where 75% of the population is indigenous (higher than the overall average for Guatemala) represents the ancestral lands of the various Mayan indigenous groups, the Alta Verapaz region of the FTN is predominantly Maya Q'eqchi' territory.

Over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, the region was legally designated as a region dedicated to agricultural development and forestry. Liza Grandia's (2012) anthropological study on ranching among Q'eqchi' lowlanders (primarily in the Ixcán and in Belize) documents how the INTA granted extensive land claims in the FTN during this time to military generals in what she refers to as the "generals' strip" in order to promote ranching activities in the region. By the late 1970s, natural resources (minerals and oil) were also discovered. (Solano 2012). Further, the process of state-led colonisation of FTN in the early years of its development conflicted with existing Q'eqchi' ancestral ties to the land, as well as their own communal land titles (Grandia 2012; Solano 2012; 2013).

During the years of the internal armed conflict, the region became the site of much of the violence of the conflict: the FTN region was central in counter-insurgency tactics of the later years of the internal armed conflict, particularly with the advent of the massacre that occurred in Panzos, Alta Verapaz in 1978 (Solano 2013). As Grandin (2000; 2004), Solano (2013) and others have suggested, the Panzos massacre³⁰ set a precedent for other massacres in the years that followed, making the FTN in its entirety the epicentre of genocidal violence during the worst years of the conflict. Over the course of the 1970s, the military³¹ maintained a key presence in the region to facilitate development and the construction of a highway, which stagnated somewhat over the course of the 1980s due to the violence of the conflict. Indeed, the FTN was a "zone of subversion" during the internal armed conflict: revolutionary guerrilla groups, in particular the Guerrilla Army of the Poor and Rebel Armed Forces were prominent forces in the region (Solano 2013). In the departments that currently constitute the FTN, Quiché was the site of 263 massacres; Alta Verapaz was the site of 63 massacres; and Huehuetenango was the site of 42 massacres, with many of the massacres being perpetrated in 1981-1982 (ODHAG 1999). It is important to understand these violences in the context of the strategic nature of the FTN for the state and guerrilla movements during the internal armed

³⁰ The Panzos massacre occurred in the town of Panzos, Alta Verapaz in 1978. The military killed citizens protesting working conditions on local plantations, in an event widely considered a precursor to the state-perpetrated genocide that followed in the 1980s. Greg Grandin (2004) points out that prior to the Panzos massacre, most of the state-perpetrated violence targeted non-indigenous civilians. Following the Panzos massacre, particularly in the early 1980s, the military generals in power centralised a strategy for genocide in Mayan communities, which was carried out primarily between 1981-1983.

³¹ The military presence was bolstered through the support of Israeli training and funding of military operations.

conflict. Consequently, then, the violence perpetrated during the conflict, particularly as it manifested in the FTN reflected colonial legacies at stake: the military aimed to pacify tensions in order for the region to be effectively developed by the national bourgeoisie.

Out of the three municipalities where the research was conducted, Chisec, today the site of much political organizing against palm oil in Alta Verapaz, was also the site of most of the violence during the internal armed conflict, particularly in the form of targeted massacres perpetrated against Q'eqchi' communities. Officially, the REHMI report documents eight massacres, mostly occurring between 1981-1982, with one massacre perpetrated by the military at the Xamán finca in October, 1995. The majority of the massacres were committed by the military and the Civil Auto-Defense Patrols, while one massacre was committed by the guerrilla forces in the region at San Miguel Sechochoch in March, 1982 (see Appendix 3). Consequently, understanding new manifestations of violence in the context of the violences perpetrated during the war allow for a nuanced understanding of what counts as violence, and why that matters for understanding VsAW, which I address in subsequent chapters.

The ramifications of the massacres in Alta Verapaz, like much of the rest of the region, are still felt in the postwar years. In 2012, a mass exhumation was carried out in Cobán, the departmental capital, whereby over 500 bodies were exhumed near a military base on the outskirts of the city. Ultimately, the violence perpetrated against indigenous communities throughout the internal armed conflict and genocide also reflects legacies of colonialism in Guatemala, particularly in relation to the violence perpetrated in the FTN. The expansion of militarism in relation to securing elite access to land and resources as well as the violence that ensued reflects the violence of coloniality: violence targeting indigenous groups was rooted in elite control over land and resources.

While the conflict ultimately ended in a stalemate, the Peace Accords solidified the path for a neoliberal model of development, influencing the future of the FTN as a development corridor. Since the signature of the Peace Accords, the FTN region has remained an active area for development in the agro-extractivist sector, acting as a microcosmic region for postwar change. As I highlight earlier in this chapter, the Peace Accords explicitly link development with expansion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in their socio-economic component. In this respect,

the Guatemalan state central planning agency, SEGEPLAN also lists several axes to development in the FTN region (see Figure 2.4; see also Appendix 2). Yet, despite these axes for development, which focus on developing infrastructure and the regional economy, high rates of poverty persist in the region. According to data collected by SEGEPLAN, today, 77% of the population of the FTN lives in rural areas, in comparison to the national average of 54% (SEGEPLAN, 2016). Eighty percent of the population of the FTN lives in poverty (Solano 2012; SEGEPLAN 2016). The SEGEPLAN data marks poverty rates in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas at 91.2%, with 55.3% of the population living in extreme poverty; in Chisec, SEGEPLAN reports 93.0% of the population living in poverty and 52.0 % of the population living in extreme poverty.³²



Figure 2.4: SEGEPLAN Axes of Development. Source: Access to Information Request, SEGEPLAN 2018, my translations.

³² NB no statistics are available through SEGEPLAN on poverty in Raxruhá, a new municipality as of 2008.

The rates of poverty for the FTN are relatively high in relation to the rest of Guatemala; according to 2014 World Bank statistics, the Guatemalan national percentage of the population living in poverty is 59.4%, with 80% of rural residents living in poverty (World Bank 2016). The 2014 ENCOVI (National Study for Life Conditions) illustrates that Alta Verapaz had the highest reported rates of poverty in Guatemala at 37.7%, followed by Chiquimula at 28.3 % and Zacapa at 25.0% (ENCOVI 2016). The FTN is a region of contradictions: the levels of poverty and extreme poverty reported in the FTN point to the tensions between narratives of development on one hand, and social inequality on the other. The wide disparities between the discourse of development, and material conditions of daily life reflect the contested nature of development in the region.

Development in the FTN over the course of the internal armed conflict remained relatively stagnant; yet the Peace Accords ushered in a new era for development. Talks around the construction of a highway linking the FTN to Mexico and El Petén were revitalised (Solano 2012). Post-Peace Accords administrations sought to promote FDI, and develop the “corridor of development” in the FTN (Grandia 2013; see also Reilly 2009; Short 2007). SEGEPLAN documents obtained through a formal access to information request highlight: “The highway Project for the Northern Transversal Strip – FTN – since its beginnings has been visualised as more than just a Project, the proposal from SEGEPLAN has been to support the implementation of a true hub of development in the central part of the country...” (SEGEPLAN). The highway project in particular reflected the push for FDI by the Peace Accords: the 338 km construction of the FTN highway, which accounts for 30% of paved highways in Guatemala, was granted to Solel Boneh International (SBI)³³, an Israeli civil engineering company with expanding interests in Guatemala. The project aimed to link the FTN together, and to facilitate access to the FTN and the northern part of El Petén department of Guatemala³⁴ (SBI, nd). Under President Berger, highway construction facilitated his push for the expansion of the palm oil industry in the region. Construction of the highway was completed in 2010. In

³³ As Solano (2012) highlights, SBI has been licensed to operate in Guatemala since 1980, and has also been involved in the construction of hydro-electric projects in the country.

³⁴ SBI also holds contracts to several hydroelectric projects in Guatemala, including those of the Oxec I and II dams. These projects have sparked a major conflict with communities in Alta Verapaz with regards to use of the Rio Cahabon. While I was on fieldwork, a community consultation was planned with the company; however, the consultation has repeatedly been cancelled.

addition, the Israeli firm is contracted for 10 years of maintenance work on the highway³⁵ (SBI, nd). Furthermore, in April 2018, SBI was granted an additional 93 Million USD roadworks construction and maintenance contract, spanning approximately 144 km in the Alta Verapaz and Quiché regions³⁶.

While different extractivist industries have grown in the FTN over the postwar years, a key recent dynamic in the municipalities where I conducted the research is the emergence of the palm oil industry, which I discuss below. On a global scale, the demand for palm oil has increased exponentially over the past three decades, and is framed by some development organisations as a sustainable alternative to other vegetable oils. Palm oil is used in cooking, processed snacks and food, as a biofuel, and in other products. The World Bank projects that by 2020, 28 million additional tonnes of vegetable oils will need to be produced in order to respond to population and consumption increases, and that palm oil can respond to this demand with the lowest land use in comparison to other vegetable oils. Furthermore, the World Bank argues that to respond to projected demand, palm oil cultivation would require an additional 6.3 million ha in land, whereas other vegetable oils, such as soybean oil would require an additional 42 million hectares. As such, palm oil is framed by mainstream development organisations as a more sustainable solution in terms of meeting increased demand as a result of population growth and rising consumption of processed foods.

Palm oil cultivation is a key economic activity for Central and West Africa; for Papua New Guinea and for Southeast Asia. Cultivation has exponentially increased in Latin America over the past decade. According to a study published by Verité in 2014, Guatemala was the 11th largest producer of palm oil worldwide. In addition, 70% of palm oil produced in Guatemala is for export, with the key markets being Mexico, El Salvador, the US and Europe. Further, according to data collected by the USDA (2018), Guatemala has increased its production of palm oil by 10% per annum over the past several years, with growth currently stagnated (see Figure 2.5).

³⁵ While I conducted my primary research trip, road blocks had occasionally been organised by rural communities to protest the conditions of the roads leading into the FTN

³⁶ See World Highways, 2018: <http://www.worldhighways.com/categories/auctions-equipment-supply-servicing-finance/news/guatemala-highway-contract-awarded/>

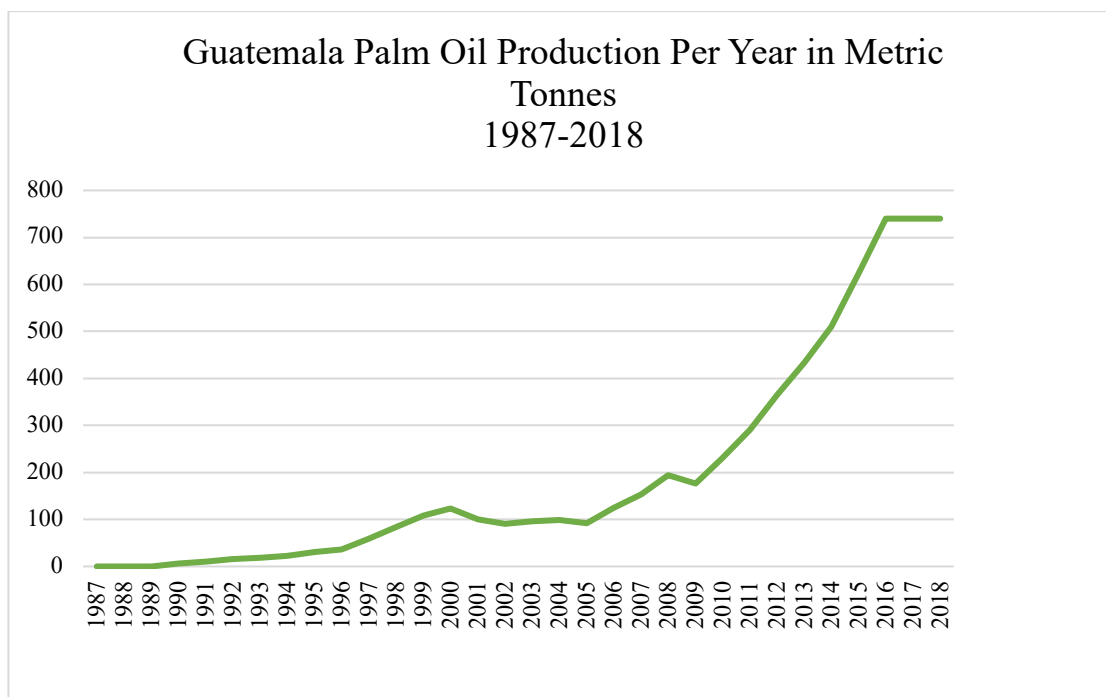


Figure 2.5: Annual Production of Guatemalan Palm Oil (Metric Tons). Source: USDA, 2018.

Palm oil cultivation has been a recent development in the FTN’s postwar political economic landscape. In 2004, President Alvaro Colom initiated a Pro-Rural sponsored program alongside Palmas de Ixcán, the largest palm oil company in Guatemala, and who inaugurated a palm oil plantation in Chisec, in order to encourage the cultivation of palm oil among small-scale holders in the FTN, where Palmas de Ixcán was already planning on cultivating another 25 000 hectares of palm oil. The plan itself, which included 6.5 million USD for fertilisers and pesticides is controversial as it threatens food security in the region; palm oil cultivation often involves deforestation and replaces diversified agriculture with the monocrop.

According to the Palm Oil Growers’ Guild (hereafter GREPALMA), the cultivation of palm oil accounts for 1% of Guatemala’s GDP, and in Alta Verapaz palm oil accounts for nearly 4% of this percentage, with the highest rates being reported in Fray Bartolome de las Casas and Chisec³⁷ (see Figure 5). The lowest

³⁷ At the time of my primary field research trip, however, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) in Cobán, had no records of palm oil cultivation in Alta Verapaz. The INE in Cobán oversees and manages statistics for the department of Alta Verapaz, and has data on agricultural crops for up until

rates of palm oil cultivation in Alta Verapaz were reported in Raxruhá, a municipality marked by resistance to the expansion of the palm oil sector through campesino organising. Overall, when I conducted my research, palm oil was in its infancy in the region of the FTN, but it was introducing a major transformation to an area otherwise dominated by ranching and subsistence agriculture. At present, two main companies operating in the FTN are Palmas de Ixcán (the largest palm oil company in Guatemala) and Naturaceites. Notably, Naturaceites has certification from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil³⁸ (RSPO). In addition, a smaller company, Industria Chiquibul operates in Chiquibul, Chisec as a subsidiary of the Guatemala City-based Unisource Holding Inc. Guatemalan exports of palm oil are primarily to Central American countries, Mexico, USA, and Europe.

Importantly Guatemala can reasonably be expected to have an increase in palm oil cultivation in the next few years, in part given the continued increase in its growth but also given the fruitfulness of the annual yields of palm oil; in Guatemala, one hectare of palm oil plantation yields seven metric tonnes, which is nearly twice the global average of palm oil cultivation, rendering Guatemala a lucrative site for production. In Alta Verapaz alone, 20 583 ha of palm oil are cultivated annually, generating 17 036 million Quetzales (over 2 Billion USD) in production. (GREPALMA, 2017; see also GREPALMA 2016).

2008. The available statistical data is thus limited, given it has not been updated to reflect current agro-extractivist dynamics.

³⁸ The RSPO principles and criteria for certification, which are granted to palm oil companies worldwide, stipulate specific requirements for palm oil companies to follow, and are aimed at regulating abuses perpetrated by palm oil companies. They include a commitment to transparency; environmental responsibility; compliance with laws and regulations; long term financial commitment; responsible development of new plantations; and use of best practices (RSPO 2013)

Location	% of GDP
Guatemala	1.0%
Alta Verapaz	3.9%
Fray Bartolomé de las Casas	23.0%
Chisec	18.3%
Panzos	17.1%
Chahal	13.9%
Raxruhá	12.5%

Table 2.1 Palm Oil Cultivation (Percentage of GDP) in Guatemala and Alta Verapaz. Source: GREPALMA 2017

The expansion of palm oil in Guatemala and in the FTN reflects the power dynamics at stake in the country; elite *ladino* families³⁹ connected to long legacies of agro-exportation as well as to the mining sector control the sector (Alonso-Fradejas 2012; Solano 2013). The expansion of the palm oil sector in the FTN and in Guatemala has exacerbated inequalities and manifests as a new articulation of the *finquero* model in postwar times (Solano 2013; Caal and Willis 2015). It has also been linked to human rights abuses and social problems in communities (Castro et al., 2015). Arguably, the expansion of palm oil and its organisation in the FTN represents a material manifestation of the dynamics of coloniality at stake in the region today. In this respect, 98 per cent of palm oil in Guatemala is dominated by eight elite families, whose plantations all are affiliated with the Guatemala Palm Oil Growers' Association, GREPALMA (Alonso-Fradejas, 2012).⁴⁰ Yet, in the context of the FTN, cultivation of the crop occurs in predominantly indigenous areas, where communities have little to no say in its production. Because this important network of elites continues to control the flow of resource extraction in the FTN, this shapes the ways in which communities and resources are extracted in the FTN. The operation of a network of a national bourgeoisie, linked to broader global processes, in an integral part of postwar development in Guatemala. Indeed, bearing the links between the national bourgeoisie and expansion of palm oil in mind, the cultivation

³⁹ In particular, the families connected to the expansion of palm oil in Guatemala are the Bolanos Valle, Arriola Fuxet, Torrebiarte families. These families also held ministerial positions under the GANAS government (see Solano 2013)

⁴⁰ GREPALMA is a member of Guatemala's politically influential business lobby, the Coordinating Committee of Financial, Industrial and Agricultural Guilds (CACIF). The CACIF has been linked to the longstanding oligarchy in Guatemala.

of the crop reflects the historical political power configurations in Guatemala: the production of palm oil is rooted in coloniality. The expansion of mono-crop and agro-export industries are inherently linked to *ladino* elite networks of power who have dominated agricultural development in Guatemala since the 19th century. This relationship is also a reflection of the ways in which colonial legacies continue to shape the landscape of development in Guatemala and the FTN today (see also Alonso-Fradejas 2013, 2018; Durr 2017; Reyna and Rodriguez 2009; Solano 2009).



Figure 2.6: Young palm oil trees in Raxruhá. Author's photographs.

The relationships between different forms of inequality and development has been observed in communities where other extractive industries are present; indeed, the expansion of the palm oil sector in Guatemala's FTN can be situated as part of a broader, country-wide landscape of extractivist postwar development. For instance, the transnational mining industry in Guatemala has been contentious in recent years. Research has emphasised the link between violence, dispossession and extractivism in relation to the postwar extractivist model (Dougherty 2011; Dougherty 2013; LaPlante and Nolin 2014; Nelson and McAllister 2013; Pedersen 2014; Solano 2012; Solano 2013; Yagenova and Garcia 2009). A notable example is the case of the Lote Ocho project in El Estor: in this case, 11 Maya Q'eqchi' women were gang-raped by security guards employed by the then-Canadian company HudBay Minerals. In this case, one male community leader was also shot and killed, and another was shot and paralysed by the security guards. The case is currently being pursued in a Canadian civil court (see Deonanden et al., 2017; Mendez and Carrera 2015). Mendez and Carrera (2015) point out that in this case, the gang rapes paralleled the sexual violence women were subjected to during the internal armed conflict and genocide, blurring the distinctions between wartime and peacetime VsAW. They also argue that it parallels the sexual violence perpetrated against indigenous women in the case of Sepur Zarco discussed earlier in the chapter, which was linked to palm oil expansion. In this regard, palm oil expansion in Guatemala is rooted in the sexual exploitation of indigenous women. I will explore this argument further in Chapters 3 and 7.

Furthermore, research conducted elsewhere, particularly in Asian contexts, has indicated that palm oil expansion may be understood to further entrench existing gender hierarchies and inequalities (Julia and White 2012). I return to this point in the empirical chapters to follow. Additionally, palm oil expansion in other contexts have been linked to deforestation, labour abuses and other social ills, particularly in cases where practices of good governance (such as RSPO certification) were not in place (Carlson et al., 2018; Sayer et al., 2012). From my interviews in the region, while a small number of women work in palm oil, the vast majority of workers in plantations are men. In a sense, the gendered inequalities reinforced by the unequal benefits reaped through the expansion of palm oil reflect what Maria Lugones (2007,

2010) refers to as the coloniality of gender, whereby heterosexist gender systems are reinforced through processes linked to coloniality.

Overall, the FTN, a region which was created during the internal armed conflict, has represented Guatemala's postwar development model, and its related tensions and contradictions. While infrastructure has improved, and industries such as the palm oil sector have emerged to benefit regional and national economies, the context remains one intrinsically shaped by the coloniality of power and gender. What might the study of VsAW in such a context reveal about the ways in which such violence occurs and is addressed in rural communities? I return to this question in the chapters to follow.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of development, capitalism, inequality, and conflict in Guatemala. I have emphasised the ways in which indigenous women have experienced violence in conflict, and the lingering gendered violences that persist in postwar Guatemala. I have focused on pointing to some of the legacies of coloniality in relation to development in Guatemala and in the development corridor region of the FTN.

In the postwar era, the facilitation of a post-Washington consensus brand of neoliberalism via the Peace Accords imposed a new model of development (and modernity) in Guatemala, one that sought to further integrate the country into the global economy, particularly via the extraction of the country's resources. The FTN has become a geographic site where the processes of development are concentrated and where the shocks of development are most felt by the rural, mostly poor, mostly indigenous populations. This is not to say that all development in the FTN should be understood as being situated somewhere within a good/bad binary; rather, the inequalities that were already present in the region, and the elite power dynamics cannot be understood in isolation from the impacts of development and its links to coloniality.

Development is undoubtedly contentious in Guatemala: in its contemporary manifestations, it reproduces the same kinds of hierarchies that were enforced through colonial rule and early years of independence. The class, race and gender hierarchies are evidenced through the high rates of economic inequality, coupled

with high rates of violence, particularly in rural, mostly indigenous regions of the FTN. The formalisation of the FTN as a ‘corridor for development’ by the Guatemalan state illustrates how colonial legacies have lasting impacts and shape context in which all forms of violence occur. Indeed, talking about coloniality in relation to development helps make sense of the kinds of violence that occur today in Guatemala. This is especially relevant in the context of the FTN, which was an area of violence in the war, and an area populated by majority indigenous populations, who live overwhelmingly in poverty despite the fact that it is a development corridor.

How, then, can violence, especially the gendered violence women, specifically indigenous women, face in postwar Guatemala be understood in relation to the context of the FTN? In the following chapter, I explore diverse meanings of violence, and how VsAW can be theorised in relation to the context in which it occurs. Such an undertaking does not imply that correlation is causation: indeed, it cannot be deduced that violence will occur simply as a result of contentious legacies of development. In a sense, this logic would absolve perpetrators of any wrongdoing.

Simultaneously, postwar development in Guatemala has brought about visibility for some issues. In particular, new laws have recognised some of the forms of violence women face (though perhaps, by occluding others, a point to which I return throughout this thesis). Land reform projects have been implemented, albeit within a neoliberal development paradigm, aiming to improve access to land for the rural poor. At the same time, as Guatemala’s economy has grown, gains that have been made have accompanied processes of capital accumulation that have benefited some groups, but reinforced inequalities for others: I have argued that such a process reflects the legacies of colonialism at stake. This relationship is particularly evident in the case of the FTN’s emerging palm oil industry. In the chapter to follow, building on these understandings of legacies of colonialism, development and inequality in Guatemala, I develop a framework to contextualise the multiplicity of forms of violence that materialise in rural Guatemala, pointing to the gendered paradoxes of peace that persist in the postwar years.

3. A Matrix of Violence: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Violences Against Women in Postwar Rural Guatemala's *Franja Transversal del Norte*

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I provided a brief overview of key political economic shifts in postwar Guatemala, and highlighted the tensions and contradictions surrounding development in the country over the past two decades. I related the ways in which coloniality has shaped the emergence of the FTN as a development corridor in the postwar years, and the tensions that have evolved as a result. Indeed, the FTN has served as an important region for the advancement of the postwar extractivist agenda, particularly in agro-extractivism. The extractivist shift has played a fundamental role in Guatemala's insertion into the global economy, and has shaped the FTN profoundly. Ultimately, the everyday in Guatemala, particularly in rural regions like the FTN, is marked by a concentration of various forms of violence, which often take gendered forms. How can VsAW in postwar rural Guatemala's FTN be theorised and understood?

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, I aim to provide an overview of existing literature related to the study of violence, and VsAW in postwar Guatemala. Second, I will develop the theoretical framework that will guide this research. As I will highlight in this chapter, there is a tendency to isolate recent trends in cases of VsAW from Guatemala's broader contemporary postwar political economic and socio-spatial context and dynamics, and instead to emphasise the causal factors, in particular, *machismo* and impunity (Bellino, 2010; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Sanford 2008). While these have been important contributions, studies to date have yet to contextualise VsAW in Guatemala's rural communities impacted by extractivist activities, and have not explored the ways in which recent economic developments, specific to the development of agro-extractivist industries influence the level and degree of violence and understandings of and resistances toward such violence. Some studies explored the possible historical continuations between state-sponsored violence, and VsAW in particular over the course of the armed conflict, with contemporary forms of VsAW (Green 1999; McNeish and Lopez Rivera 2009; Sanford 2008; Sanford 2015). Yet, such research does not consider the political economy and multifaceted nature of VsAW in the postwar, rural landscape.

Furthermore, there is a conceptual slippage between using a continuum to refer to forms of violence that occur over a woman's life and to legacies of historical forms of violence that shape contemporary manifestations (Boesten 2012; Camus et al., 2015; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Sanford 2008; Sanford 2015; see also Cockburn 2004; Kelly 1988; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). While different continuums are useful frameworks, and encapsulate many of the dynamics inherent to different forms of violence, this framework may not be sufficient to respond to the research questions, or to explore the issue of VsAW in a rural context. Indeed, disentangling forms of violence from the different continuums (ie: continuation of historical legacies and continuum of VsAW) present in the literature may help illuminate the complexities of VsAW and the ways it was resisted. Building on these frameworks, then, I develop a matrix framework to situate VsAW in context, and to relate it to other forms of violence that women face in the postwar FTN. My framework draws on feminist historical materialist, post-colonial/decolonial and ecofeminist scholarship to situate VsAW in relation to the gendered, material realities of rurality in the FTN, and to expose the ways in which the violence endured by women in the FTN is multifaceted in nature.

This chapter is divided into four key sections. First, I discuss the ways in which violence has been explored and theorised in postwar Guatemala. I emphasise a continuation thesis that has guided this research, linking the past and present manifestations of violence and blurring the distinctions between war and peace. I also emphasise research on VsAW in postwar Guatemala, which relates to the continuation thesis in that it mobilises the notion of a continuum approach. I then explore how concepts of structural and everyday violence can be incorporated into the study of VsAW in rural Guatemala, before introducing the matrix framework which guides the analysis in the empirical chapters to follow.

3.2. Approaches to Violence in Postwar Guatemala

In the sections to follow, I will engage with two important conceptual frameworks that have guided research on different forms of violence in Guatemala and elsewhere (see Figure 3.1). First, historical continuities or 'continuation thesis' has been mobilised to explain how and why violence persists in postwar Guatemala. Historical continuities have also been used to link cases of wartime sexual violence

and gendered violence with postwar manifestations of VsAW. I will explore these frameworks, and bring them together in my own approach in this chapter.

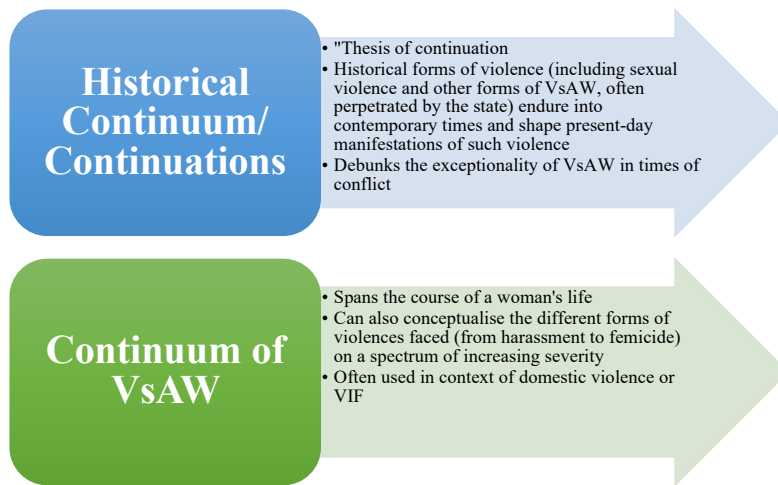


Figure 3.1: Continuum and Continuation Frameworks

3.2.1. Violence in Postwar Guatemala and the Continuation Thesis

In the previous chapter, I highlighted how coloniality shaped the FTN, known as the corridor of development, how legacies of colonialism exist in the region, and how that might shape the kinds of violence that persist in the postwar years.

Lorenzo Mariano Juárez (2015) suggests that a continuation thesis has been used to characterise the manifestations of violence in postwar Guatemala in the academic literature and in activist work in the country. The use of a continuum or continuation thesis in the literature on violence in postwar Guatemala to link violence of the past with violence of the present speaks to my discussion on coloniality from Chapter 2: it highlights the ways in which historical oppressions and cases of violence survive into the present, and shape violence in contemporary times. Within this continuation thesis, similar actions and violences can be seen to have been taking place both during and after the years of the war. The work articulating a continuation thesis also draws on and parallels the work of Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) who posit:

...a *violence continuum* comprised of a multitude of small wars and invisible genocides...conducted in the normative social spaces of public schools, prisons, detention centres, and public morgues. The violence continuum also refers to the ease with which humans are capable of reducing the socially vulnerable into expendable nonpersons and assuming the license – even the duty – to kill (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004, 19, emphasis mine).

While statistics suggest that rates of violent crime remain high in contemporary Guatemala, McAllister and Nelson (2013), Green (1999) and others have suggested that perhaps the most marked and engrained aspect of such violence is the fear it instils within Guatemala's diverse communities – reminiscent of the worst years of the armed conflict and genocide. Related to this point, Manuela Camus, Santiago Bastos and Julián López (2015) explore contemporary manifestations of violence in Guatemala in relation to the violences that were perpetrated by numerous actors in the past. On a theoretical level, they argue that so-called “old” and “new” violences – are simultaneously metamorphic and continuous (9). Camus et al., (2015) understand postwar violence as part of the social, political and economic fabric, which is rearticulated from historical forms of violence; violence is understood as proliferating and as expanding into all sectors of social life and the everyday (see also Machkenbach and Maihold 2015).

Relatedly, Laura Sala (2014) builds on this continuum of violence and continuation thesis by suggesting that the military, responsible for the most egregious atrocities during the war, today is reconstituted as a purveyor of security and peace (106).⁴¹ In a similar vein, Victoria Sanford (2015) argues that former President Otto Perez Molina's⁴² election campaign promises of a *mano dura* (iron fist) approach to violence and crime paralleled the violence he oversaw as a General in the Intelligence Branch of the military (119).⁴³ In this sense, Sala (2014) suggests that the contemporary security model has not acted to provide peace and stability, but rather, is a re-articulation of the authoritarianism characteristic of the

⁴¹ This is mirrored by the more recent Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity, which will increase military patrols on borders to prevent migration.

⁴² Otto Perez Molina was forced to resign from his presidential post in September, 2015 following months of widespread popular protest, and after the UN mandated anti-corruption body, the CICIG released evidence implicating him of involvement in the “La Línea” corruption ring.

⁴³ Otto Perez Molina was a General in the Intelligence Branch of the Guatemalan Military, under former General Efraín Ríos Montt. Ríos Montt was convicted of genocide against the Maya Ixil people and war crimes in 2013 in a Guatemalan court, although the decision was overturned on a procedural technicality. The Intelligence Branch of the military perpetrated genocidal massacres in indigenous communities during the early 1980s. Otto Perez Molina was also a representative of the Guatemalan Military at the Peace Accords negotiations.

Guatemalan state during the war⁴⁴. Further, security has become a central pillar of Guatemalan politics, and, as Sala argues, this took place at the expense of addressing racism, social exclusion and poverty; security is the priority, yet security forces in Guatemala have a particularly violent historical legacy (Sala 2014, 121). The prevalence of security as a form of social control, she suggests, is represented by the proliferation of *Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil* or civil self-defence patrols (124). The military controlled certain communities during times of war, whereas in contemporary times, self-defence civil patrols have taken over this role without a discernible difference from the role the military played during the war.

Further, Sanford (2003; 2008; 2015) has written extensively on violence in postwar Guatemala, drawing on ethnographic research in the Guatemalan highlands to link contemporary manifestations of violence – including femicide (which I discuss in the following section) – with violence that was perpetrated by the state during the war. More recently, Sanford (2015) echoes the conjecture posed by Sala (2014), arguing that organised crime groups and state institutions, particularly the military and National Civil Police cooperate in the postwar era,⁴⁵ such that there is a continuation of wartime violences in the present day. She argues for the necessity of understanding contemporary forms of violence as social cleansing, and suggests that impunity for perpetrators of crimes is embedded within political and legal institutions, and “is further an invitation for crimes to be committed in an atmosphere of disorder and anarchy” (Sala 2014, 129, my translation). Here, Sanford refers to the lack of state action in terms of resolving these crimes in relation to impunity: the continuation of violence occurs within the state’s guise of security.

Neoliberal reforms in postwar Guatemala have been linked to the exacerbation of the conditions of inequality and precarity that facilitated high rates of violent crime and gang violence. In particular, Deborah Levenson (2013) develops an important contribution to linking structural violence to the continuation thesis in relation to politics of the postwar years. She suggests potential linkages between structural and criminal violence exist in her study on youth criminal gangs in

⁴⁴ Sanford (2003) refers to this in greater detail in *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*, where she emphasizes how National Security Doctrine was used by the military and the Guatemalan state to justify massacres perpetrated against Mayan communities during the armed conflict.

⁴⁵ A clear example of this level of corruption can be seen in the 2015 *La Linea* embezzling scandals that forced both former Vice President Roxana Baldetti and former President Otto Perez Molina from office.

Guatemala City. She also argues that the government's inability or refusal to address impunity and immunity for perpetrators of violence contributes to these conditions; the impunity surrounding crime allowed by government officials (often linked to the military) today parallels the immunity that persists for state/military officials who committed crimes of genocide during the internal armed conflict.

Furthermore, by failing to improve the social conditions of the population, the Guatemalan state also contributes to constructing a landscape in which youth criminal gang violence becomes pervasive. To this effect, Levenson (2013) states:

...the structural violence that led Guatemalans to rise up in the first place intensified with neoliberal policies, and more so because rural and urban organisations that might have countered the violence by winning better pay, benefits, and rights had been destroyed or had turned inactive (with notable exceptions) nationally. The postwar governments' refusal to take up the burning problem of impunity has encouraged the renaissance of local and international organized crime. Impunity has authorized violence (Levenson 2013, 203).

Similarly, Moser and McIlwaine (2000) explore the links between different forms of violence in urban and poor Guatemala, specifically domestic violence, economic violence, and gang and other forms of criminal violence. Drawing on a mixed-methods study, they develop a useful framework for analysing such violence: they argue that political, economic and social violence, different forms of capital, and exclusion interact and are related (Moser and McIlwaine 2000, 14). Their research also points to a possible link between what they refer to as desperation (which they explain is caused by unemployment) and violent criminal activities. While their framework is particularly useful in understanding the causes of violence in an urban context, its lack of gendered and historical focus tends to emphasise forms of violence (and VsAW in particular) as a modern-day social ill, understating the role of historical legacies in shaping the context in which such violence occurs.

The normalisation of fear, and perhaps mistrust of police and the state today in Guatemala – linked to the legacy of state-led violence and to the continuation thesis – may be reinforced by what Moser and McIlwaine (2000) refer to as *la cultura del silencio*⁴⁶ (the culture of silence) surrounding acts of violence. They

⁴⁶ Similarly, the notions of silence and secrecy are explored in great detail in Silvia Posocco's (2000) doctoral thesis entitled *Secrecy, Subjectivity and Sociality: An Ethnography of Conflict in Petén, Guatemala* in relation to guerrilla fighters in the Petén region during the war. Posocco explores silence and secrecy in relation to the insurgency/counter-insurgency during the armed conflict and

noted the absence of reporting of crimes, arguably caused by fear and mistrust of authorities, which they contribute to the pervasiveness and the invisibility of violence, and also discrimination against indigenous communities having faced or facing violence. Further, *la cultura del silencio* may reinforce stigma and shame experienced by survivors of wartime sexual violence, discussed in Chapter 2 in the case of Sepur Zarco.

Further, building on the idea of structural violence as articulated by Paul Farmer (1996; 2004), which emphasises the links between precarious structural conditions and various forms of violence, the macro-level political economic transformation (particularly, the shift towards neoliberalism and extractivism) in postwar Guatemala has increasingly been linked to high rates of violence as well, specifically as a causal factor of physical and criminal acts of violence. The expansion of extractive activities under the banner of the post-Washington consensus neoliberal development, and in line with the foreign direct investment-driven economic growth inherent to the 1996 Peace Accords that I discussed in Chapter 2 (see also: Short 2007), have also generated conflict between communities, extractives companies, and police and private security forces; these conflicts have escalated into cases of violence (for example, assassination of protest leaders, and in one case, the gang rape of 11 Mayan women resisting forced eviction by a mining company) and threats of violence against protesting human rights defenders, which I discussed in Chapter 2 (Deonandan et al., 2017; Dougherty 2011; Dougherty 2013; LaPlante and Nolin 2014; Pedersen 2014; Solano 2013; Yagenova and Garcia 2009).

Overall, diverse forms of violence in postwar Guatemala have been explored in relation to histories of conflict and violence, and their analyses have been informed by a continuation thesis. This continuation thesis has aimed to account for the causes of different forms of violence (structural, political and everyday violence), which I explore further in Section 3. Importantly, there are evident links between the forms of violence that were perpetrated in the past, particularly by the military, and the climate of insecurity that persists in Guatemala today. The use of a continuation thesis, however, risks obscuring some forms of violence in contemporary times, in that it reinforces the notion that all forms of violence are an extension of the past, and that the war in Guatemala never truly ended, also risking absolving some

genocide. Here, I refer to *la cultura de silencio* in relation to the ways in which crimes go unreported, and I use it in that specific sense.

perpetrators of violent acts in the present. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, however, the Peace Accords signalled a new era for development in Guatemala, and as such, while historical factors remain paramount, disentangling contemporary forms of violence from the past may allow for a richer understanding of violence, particularly VsAW as they manifest in the FTN.

3.2.2. *Gendered Violences in Postwar Guatemala*

Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW) have been extensively theorised and explored in academic literature. In particular, the literature in broad, global context pushes for a gender-based analysis of VAW emphasizing gender inequities as a key causal factor: “A gendered analysis of violence views men’s violence against women as a manifestation of male power that is replicated and endorsed through individual experiences and wider structural inequalities” (Lombard and McMillan 2013, np; see also Kabeer 2014).⁴⁷ In this vein, Stark argues that abuses relating to VAW, particularly domestic and sexual violence and exploitation occur within a broader framework of gender inequality (Stark, 2013; see also Lombard and McMillan 2013).

Importantly, continuum frameworks have also informed research related to VsAW. Liz Kelly (1988) argues that the metaphor of a continuum can best illustrate how violence occurs over the course of women’s lives, and is most often credited with developing this theoretical approach. She understands the continuum as referring to different forms of violence, from sexual harassment through to rape and death (Kelly 1988). She uses the term to encompass the range of forms of violence women experience, and also to suggest that acts of VsAW should not be understood in isolation from each other⁴⁸. Importantly, Kelly (1988) argues that this term should not be taken as implying a linearity of violence and does not mean to privilege certain forms of VsAW over others. Kelly’s continuum approach has been groundbreaking in the study of VsAW, and is influential in guiding transnational literature on VsAW.

⁴⁸ In their research on father-daughter incest, Herman and Hirschman (1977) use a continuum approach to reflect the degrees of severity of gendered violence. Kelly differs in her approach in that linearity or degrees of severity are not implied; this differentiation has been influential in the field.

The concept of a continuum has also been applied to conflict and post-conflict contexts where gendered violence has been pervasive (see: Boesten 2010; 2014; 2017; Cockburn 2004). As Cynthia Cockburn (2004) notes, “a gender perspective on the successive moments in the flux of peace and war is not an optional extra but a stark necessity” (24). She argues that

...gender links violence at different points on a scale reaching from the personal to the international, from the home and the backstreet to the manoeuvres of the tank column and the sortie of the stealth bomber: battering and marital rape, confinement, “dowry” burnings, honor killings, and genital mutilation in peacetime; military rape, sequestration, prostitution, and sexualized torture in war (Cockburn 2004, 43).

Relatedly, Jelke Boesten (2010; 2014; 2017), building on Cockburn’s research focusing on the gender power dynamics of postwar justice in Peru, suggests: “Observing a continuum – a continuity and affinity in the use of violence rather than rupture and exceptionality – forces us to examine the underpinning norms, values, and institutional structures that normalize certain violences and exceptionalize others” (Boesten 2014, 7). Indeed, Boesten (2010; 2014; 2017) uses a continuum framework in order to destabilise the exceptionalisation of sexual violence during conflict and after the war has ended: she argues that the sexual violence that was perpetrated during war operated to reproduce gender, class, race and other forms of inequalities, and that in times of peace, such violence operated to the same ends. In a similar vein, Victoria Sanford (2008) suggests that the forms of VsAW perpetrated during the genocide have laid a foundation for contemporary cases of femicide by contributing to the normalisation of such violence in Guatemalan society.

In relation to VsAW in Guatemala, the literature has predominantly mobilised the continuum approach. With Victoria Sanford (2008)’s work being a noted exception, Guatemala’s debate on VsAW⁴⁹ typically frames this kind of violence within the realm of the interpersonal, though not necessarily exclusive to the private domain, and has been largely shaped by the debates in global academic and non-academic context. Further, the issue of femicide, often labelled as being at the end of the continuum of VsAW, has been the central focus of much of the research on VsAW in postwar Guatemala (Aldana 2013; Bellino 2010; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Costatino 2006; Drysdale-Walsh 2008; England 2014; Fuentes

2016; Musalo et al., 2010; Sanford 2008; Torres 2008; Velasco 2008). It can be defined as the targeted killing of a woman by a man on the basis of gender power inequality, drawing on Diane Russell's usage of the term (Lagarde 2005, 2006, 2010; Aldana 2013 Radford 1992; Russell 1992; Welchmann and Hossain 2005). The role of the nuclear family, and the "patriarchal home" has been illustrated as "the most lethal place for women" in early research on femicide, which drew on research conducted in North America and Western Europe. Male partners attribute a sense of ownership over their wives, where "husbands are almost invariably entitled to exercise control over their wives' sex lives" (Wilson and Daly 1992, 86). Such critiques emphasise the ways in which men exert ownership over women (Radford and Russell 1992; Russell 2001).

The transnational literature on femicide has informed a body of scholarship which focuses on this crime in the Guatemalan context. Drawing on the early work of Diana Russell and Jill Radford, this literature has emphasised the gendered and political power relations at stake in cases of femicide (Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Drysdale-Walsh 2008; England 2014; Fuentes 2016; Garcia 2015; Godoy-Paiz 2010; Musalo et al., 2010; Sanford 2008; Torres 2008; Velasco 2008). This research has interrogated the effectiveness of the state legal system in prosecuting perpetrators of femicide (Drysdale-Walsh 2015; England 2014; Godoy-Paiz 2010; Musalo et al., 2010). Lorena Fuentes (2016) interrogated the heteronormative assumptions guiding the legal responses to femicide in her doctoral thesis. Further, research has also stressed the role of cultural norms in trapping women in a "vortex of violence" (Carey Jr and Torres 2010). However, the research tends to focus on urban cases, given that some of the highest rates of VsAW are reported in Guatemala City. While this thesis does not focus on femicide specifically, the literature on the subject in Guatemala is particularly helpful in elaborating the ways in which social norms and impunity are factors in the broader context of VsAW.

Ultimately, research on VsAW in Guatemala is situated within the paradigm of the continuum approach, and has largely focused on femicide as a form of violence at the end of the continuum, given the high rates of femicide reported in the postwar years. On one hand, it has highlighted the links between war and peace in Guatemala, building on existing research highlighting the continuities of violence, and the ways in which this relationship shapes contemporary manifestations of the issue from a gendered perspective. On the other, it has also aimed to illustrate the

ways in which the continuum of violence spans a woman's life course. Research has also focused on the ways in which VsAW are named, defined, interpreted and codified by law. Yet, such forms of violence may take on new meanings, or specific manifestations in rural contexts. What of different forms of VsAW, which manifest in relation to rurality, development and political economic change?

In this respect, I draw inspiration from Cecilia Menjívar's research on *ladina* women and their experiences of violence in urban Guatemala. Menjívar argues that "...violence constitutes a process, one that is embedded in the everyday lives of those who experience it" (Menjivar 2011, 29). She focuses on what she refers to as women's "private terrors" to encompass the multiplicity of forms of violence – structural, interpersonal, political, symbolic and gendered – faced by *ladina* women in an urban Eastern Guatemala (62). In this respect, Menjívar (2008, 2011, 2014) has advanced a more nuanced understanding of VsAW by drawing on Iris Marion Young's "five faces of oppression" (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and random acts of violence)" (10) in order to better understand violence, in particular VAW in her study on *ladina* women in Eastern Guatemala, beyond the interpersonal and as inherent to the everyday. Her framework recognises five key forms of violence, which are linked with each other and with broader social structures and institutions and shaped by the faces of oppression she identifies: structural violence, political violence, everyday violence, symbolic violence, and gender violence. Further, this framework suggests these forms of violence are "mutually constituted" rather than isolated from each other (Menjívar 2011, 28).

In this framework, Menjívar (2011) emphasises the normalisation of what she refers to as "the domination of women by men" and the invisibility of gender violence in Guatemalan postwar society (13). Her focus on violence that women endure (which she also frames as "everyday" violence) is an attempt to de-normalise it. She suggests that gender injustices are embodied in numerous ways, particularly in relation to illness (*nervios*, distress, headaches) and gossip/reputation (as a form of social control). She argues: "the lens I use here allows an examination of body ailments, malnutrition, unequal access (or lack thereof) to health care, as well as the control of gossip and movement and socializing as arenas where social suffering becomes visible and recognized" (Menjívar 2008, 23). In doing so, Menjívar (2008, 2011, 2014) builds on and beyond the "continuum" framework in order to politicise VsAW in Guatemala, a contribution upon which this project aims to build.

Further, drawing on research in comparative transitional justice contexts, Catherine O'Rourke (2013; 2015) develops the concept of the 'web of harms' to point to "...commonalities across public and private harms, pre-, during and post-conflict harms against women" (O'Rourke 2015, 122). Her web of harms concept, a response to continuum approaches, helps bridge forms of VsAW that occur in times of war and peace in both the public and private spheres, without obscuring the gendered dynamics of these forms of violence. For instance, this framework allows O'Rourke (2015) to argue that "public harms of violent conflict and political repression exacerbate and alter the nominally 'private' harms of violence against women in the home, on the body, the repressive regulation of women's reproductive lives, and the manipulation of women's collective organizing" (123). As such, this framework is useful in considering how political violence perpetrated by soldiers against women during conflict (ie: sexual violence) can be considered in relation to everyday violence, or *violencia intrafamiliar* (VIF) in times of peace: the perpetrators involved differ, but the gendered dynamics at stake are linked. I thus draw inspiration from O'Rourke's framework in constructing the context-specific matrix of VsAW I elaborate below.

3.3. The Structures of the Violent Everyday: Broadening the Study of VsAW in the FTN

In the previous section, I explored some of the key contributions to literature on violence, and VsAW in postwar Guatemala. This literature situates different forms of violence as existing along various continuums, or as part of a continuation thesis, which risks blurring the lines between violence perpetrated in times of war and peace.

Understanding the continuum of violence in relation to historical violence is helpful, in that it helps to illustrate the ways in which wartime cases of sexual violence are perpetrated in relation to the forms of violence that might be acceptable or normal. Indeed, wartime sexual violence feeds into gender norms that govern women's sexuality and respectability. Further, as Boesten (2010; 2014; 2017) has emphasised, using a continuum can help debunk the idea that gendered violence is exceptional to times of conflict: this is particularly relevant to the Guatemalan context. While the research on gendered violence in postwar Guatemala primarily focuses on urban areas, the continuum and continuation frameworks carry weight,

considering the legacies of coloniality I highlighted as instrumental to the context of the FTN in Chapter 2.

In times of peace, however, the forms of violence that are perpetrated may not be committed by the same actors, however; in this research, I found that in cases of VIF, women did not blame soldiers or the war, but rather, emphasised that indigenous men in communities were perpetrators of violence. Thus, solely focusing on the historical continuities at stake in postwar VsAW obscures the particularities of some of these cases and follows an almost apologetic logic regarding the perpetrators. As such, while not discounting the importance of historical continuities and continuums of violence, I also found that other dynamics played into the ways in which women talked about the kinds of VsAW that were prominent in their communities.

Further, in conducting my research, I found that VsAW could not be understood as a singularity in the context of the FTN, or at least, needed to be understood more broadly: the legal definitions were not sufficient to describe the forms of violence many women community leaders discussed as most pervasive in their communities. Indeed, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillippe Bourgois (2004) have observed, violence is a “slippery” concept, and defining it is an elusive task. Following Menjívar (2011), different types or categories of violence are not mutually exclusive, but rather, can be understood as co-constitutive and dynamic.

I found the political economy of development, as well as the gendered material reality of everyday life in the rural FTN were key factors in shaping VsAW. My research and theoretical approach also speaks to political geographic traditions (Little 2017; Loyd 2012; Pain 2014; 2015; Springer 2011; Tyner and Inwood 2014), which suggest that violence, including gendered forms of violence, can also be understood in relation to the space in which it occurs. How then, can the concept of VsAW be broadened to encompass these factors? How can VsAW be situated in context? In this section, I will explore different meanings of violence, from which I draw inspiration in the empirical sections of this thesis.

3.3.1. Structural Violence

In Section 2, I discussed how research on violence in postwar Guatemala speaks to the notion of structural violence. This research is part of a larger body of work

focusing on the ways in which structures of oppression reproduce different forms of violence in daily life. How can this be understood in relation to VsAW? In the subsection below, I explore meanings of structural violence, before situating it in relation to the feminist political economy of development.

Johann Galtung (1969) elaborates a typology for understanding violence in the context of studying peace, which is useful for this thesis. He argues, “*violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations*” (Galtung 1969, 168, original emphasis). Though not specifically taking gender into account, he classifies violence as either personal or structural, both of which have been explored in the research on violence in postwar Guatemala more broadly. Both can manifest as physical and psychological. Further, he argues that personal violence occurs against the backdrop of structural violence. Galtung (1969) clarifies on this point that structural oppression does not necessarily cause an individual to become violent, and argues that context matters: personal violence occurs in relation to structural violence, and vice versa (see also Galtung 1971; 1990; Galtung and Hoivik 1971).

Structural violence has conceptually and theoretically been useful for pointing to the ways in which some people are at greater risks of suffering and experiencing other forms of violence. In particular, Paul Farmer (1996; 2004) draws on medical anthropological work on HIV-AIDS epidemics in Haiti to explore the ways in which “social forces ranging from poverty to racism become embodied as individual experience”, specifically, as violence (Farmer 2009, 11). In his work, he argues that specific “social forces” structure conditions of risk, exposing individuals to “extreme suffering, from hunger to torture and rape”, thereby laying the foundation for an understanding of structural violence in relation to suffering and illness in conditions of precarity (Farmer 2004, 11).

Relatedly, this framing is taken up by Torres-Rivas defines structural violence as being

...rooted in the uncertainty of everyday life caused by the insecurity of wages or income, a chronic deficit in food, dress, housing, and health care, and uncertainty about the future which is translated into hunger and delinquency....it is often referred to as structural violence because it is reproduced in the context of the market... (Torres-Rivas 1998, 49; also quoted in Menjivar 2011).

From this perspective, building on Galtung, and Farmer, structural violence can also be understood as enforced by the inequities of capitalist globalisation. This is particularly relevant in the context of the FTN, which has absorbed many of the shocks of postwar development in Guatemala in paradoxical ways: a point to which I return throughout the following chapters. Importantly, capitalism in Guatemala has evolved in the postwar years. For instance, in Chapter 2, I discussed how a post-Washington consensus brand of neoliberalism has emerged through the Peace Accords, differing substantially from previous articulations of capitalism in Guatemala. While palm oil expansion may operate as a reconfiguration of a *finquero* economic model, developing a framework that untangles the continuums may help illustrate how gendered articulations of structural violence manifest.

Political and social geographic perspectives have illuminated the ways in which violence can be framed in non-conventional ways, particularly in relation to structural violence. In terms of linking structural violence to space and context, other political geographers have found key connections in postwar contexts. For instance, Drawing on Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, Farmer, Galtung, Foucault and Fanon, Loyd's (2005; 2012) research illustrated that key links could be bridged between structural violence and militarisation, which in turn points to how divisions between war and peace can be blurred by such an approach. Similarly, Tyner and Will (2014) argued that in 1970s Cambodia, post-conflict water management policies aimed at improving agricultural yields ultimately resulted in the deaths of millions, reflecting links between the management of nature and structural violence. This study is particularly relevant in terms of thinking about the links between development of land and resources in the FTN and violences that occur, from a gendered perspective: for instance, in Chapter 7, I explore how palm oil cultivation is linked to gendered inequality which participants spoke of as a structural form of VAW.

Drawing on the concept of structural violence also helps broaden understandings of different forms of violence. Certainly, structural violence could be critiqued as necessarily essentialising and problematic in that it defines any form of avoidable deprivation as violence. Further, it speaks to a form of violence that cannot necessarily be linked to an individual perpetrator, which risks absolving those who commit violent acts. When considering this framing from a gendered perspective, in relation to VsAW, this begs the question, does Galtung's approach erase the experiences of direct, personal violence faced by women victim-survivors of

violence? While much of the research of VsAW in postwar Guatemala has not explored the issue from a structuralist perspective, I consider structural violence as constituting one of the many forms of violence that women in the FTN endure, in relation to other forms of gendered violence: indeed, the existence of structural violence does not occlude or diminish experiences of physical violence; rather, it does, in a sense render personal violence more complex and compounded. Further, conceptually drawing on structural violence also does not imply that the personal violence endured is caused by structural oppressions, nor does it excuse individual perpetrators who commit violence; rather, drawing on structural violence highlights the multiplicity of ways in which women in the FTN experience violence in relation to the material conditions of life in the region. Importantly Sara Davies and Jacqui True (2015) suggest that structural gender inequality is often obscured in its causal link to gendered violences; I draw inspiration from this point in my use of structural violence. Additionally, the concept affords a richer understanding of the ways in which the continuum of violence is propelled forward – not only does violence occur in relation to histories and legacies of conflict, and over the course of a woman’s lifetime, but also as part of a gendered and political economic system of oppression that includes structures that reinforce and compound the experiences of personal violence.

3.3.2. From the Global to the Local: Intersections of Political Economic Change and VsAW

Political economic approaches to understanding VsAW have suggested potential linkages between the materiality of political economic processes and the manifestation of various forms of violence in the lives of women, which relates to the concept of structural violence articulated above, and also highlights contemporary articulations of VsAW. These perspectives are rooted in feminist historical materialism, a theoretical lens useful for understanding the impacts of socio-economic change in postwar Guatemala. On a basic level, historical materialism relates relations of production to the constitution of daily life. In this respect, Marx and Engels (*German Ideology*) argue that material relations of production shape consciousness and life, influencing social relations:

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production (Marx and Engels 2000, NP).

By tracing the development of relations of production from feudal to private land ownership, Marx and Engels highlight the emergence of a proletariat class shaped by the social relations of production and subsistence, and argue that alienation through primitive accumulation shapes material life and social relations.

A feminist historical materialism builds on Marx and Engels' framework, and allows for a consideration of the ways in which relations of capitalism shape the material context in destructive ways, emphasising the inherently gendered aspects of capitalist expansion. Following Marx and Engels, who ground the construction of consciousness in relations of and relationships to the means of production, feminist historical materialism relates the oppression of women to another relation of production: the gendered division of labour. Feminist historical materialism posits that reproductive labour (predominantly performed by women) enables the reproduction of the workforce, and the necessary tasks of daily life required for the reproduction of capital. By doing so, feminist historical materialist thought shifts the ways in which production and reproduction are related to value; reproduction is not a non-value, but rather, the foundation of, or intrinsically (dialectically) linked to value generated through production (Fortunati 1995; Fraser 2016; Hartsock 1983; Young 1980). Further, following the early feminist historical materialist tradition, of Dalla Costa and James (1975), Fortunati (1995), Hartsock (1983) and others, social reproduction feminists highlight how unpaid social reproduction, which is gendered, is at the crux of women's oppression (Katz 2001). A feminist historical materialist perspective, then, contends that capital accumulation is not possible without the oppression of women by re-centering the nexus of oppression in the unpaid social reproductive labour performed by women (Dalla Costa 1970; Federici 2012; Fortunati 1995; Hartsock 1983). Such perspectives advocate for an understanding of oppression that understands social reproduction as another social relation of production in a capitalist society.

Ultimately, bearing these perspectives in mind, I understand the economy as what Jasmine Gideon (1999) refers to as a gendered structure in her research on the gendered political economy of development in Central and South America. In doing

so, I uphold “A view of the economy that includes not only the productive but also the reproductive economy offers a broader perspective from which to analyze the determinants of sustainable economic growth and development” (Gideon 1999, 3). Furthermore, research on development in Latin America which shares an epistemological consonance with feminist historical materialist perspectives, has analysed the gendered implications and contradictions of neoliberalism in the region (see, for instance, Gideon 1998, 1999, 2010, 2005, 2006, 2010; Chant and Craske 2002; Chant 2008; Molyneux 2002). This research has emphasised how women absorb impacts of neoliberal development, which in practice has not brought the transformation and change often needed to those most marginalised in the region.

Taking a feminist historical materialist perspective into account in approaching the study of violence, including structural violence, emphasises the ways in which the political economy of capitalism and its impacts are gendered. Further, by approaching the changes provoked by neoliberalisation from a gendered perspective, gendered dynamics of structural violence can be illustrated, linking global political economic processes with local impacts and VsAW. Moreover, taking the feminist historical materialist perspective into account allows for a gendering of structural violence, but also of other forms of violence. Jacqui True (2012) constructs a broad analysis of the political economy of VAW. She argues, “the gendered inequalities that fuel the violence against women are rooted in structures and processes of political economy that are increasingly globalized” (5). Developing a feminist political economic approach to understanding VAW, True (2012) asserts that economic transformations disproportionately affect women, and that “women are often the hardest hit by economic transition, financial crises, and rising unemployment” (101). In Guatemala, neoliberalisation has emerged in the postwar years; to a certain degree, the FTN absorbs the shocks of this political economic transformation, which occurs in part through the context of extractive activities, and may provoke the disproportionate gendered impacts that True references. This dynamic may in part exist because women are less likely to be employed in the new extractive industries, yet the presence of these industries affects their ability to maintain their livelihoods through subsistence agriculture (see Chapter 7).

Notably, in this respect, a feminist political economic approach grounded in feminist historical materialism has been utilised to explain the persistence of femicide in Mexico, particularly regarding the high numbers of femicides reported in

Ciudad Juarez. Over a decade, starting in the early 1990s, hundreds of girls and women's bodies were found in public spaces, along roadsides, and around the city, often exhibiting signs of rape, torture, and disfigurement. The climate of VsAW in Ciudad Juarez has been linked to the *maquila* sector, which grew following the implementation of NAFTA in the region⁵⁰ (Gaspar de Alba and Guzman 2010; Gonzalez Rodriguez 2012; Monarrez Fragoso 2010; Wright 2006, 2011, 2014).

Moving away from solely focusing on the Ciudad Juarez feminicides, Mercedes Olivera (2006) argues that rates of femicide in Mexico dramatically increased "...in direct relation to the expansion of neoliberalism" in the country (104). Olivera suggests that "the systemic violence of the neoliberal social structure" enables the development of hypermasculinity, which in turn enables VsAW. More specifically, she attributes "poverty, unemployment, the disintegration of the peasant economy, and migration – all more acute since the Salinas government (1988-1994) accelerated neoliberal policies" as key causal factors of VsAW, thereby suggesting the existence of a direct correlation between the development of neoliberalism and the endemic rates of VsAW in Mexico. The link between neoliberalism and VsAW is not unique to this context: similarly, Barbara Sutton (2010) also links the precarity of neoliberalism with violence and women's resistance in post crisis Argentina.

Similarly, Costatino (2006) suggests the existence of connections between neoliberalism and VsAW in Guatemala. She points to the privatisation of security in the post-conflict period as an exacerbating factor of VAW, affirming the possibility of potential linkages between neoliberalism and femicide. She argues that private security guards and public security officers – often former members of the military trained in methods of sexual violence and torture – tend to collaborate, exacerbate, and take advantage of insecurity (Costatino 2006).⁵¹ Consequently, she historicises the issue of VsAW in terms of political economic transformation and the shifts from public to private security in Guatemala.⁵² Bearing these perspectives in mind,

⁵⁰ Alternatively, Rita Laura Segato hypothesises that these cases of femicide were linked to gang violence that specifically targeted women as part of initiation or revenge rituals. Based on this research Segato (2013) theorises rape as an act of violence that occurs as a violation of sovereignty (74), and as a representation of patriarchal sense of disposability and hatred of women. Segato argues that men killed women in Juarez not only to gain a sense of sovereignty, but also to reaffirm their masculinity and sense of belonging within a group. See also Segato 2006, 2012 on conceptual notes on femicide in Mexico.

⁵¹ These cases are outlined in greater detail by the Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REHMI) report (ODHAG 1999).

⁵² The private security sector in Guatemala is also highly informal, with only approx. 1% of private security guards operating legally (Yagoub 2014).

political economic processes can have local, violent impacts, particularly from a gendered perspective.

This research is especially helpful in illustrating how neoliberal capitalism could contribute to the ways in which different forms of VsAW manifest. Importantly, however, a feminist historical materialist perspective should aim to encapsulate the complexities of neoliberal capitalism. In this respect, I draw inspiration from Chandra Mohanty (1988; 1995; 2003), who suggests that developing a feminist historical materialist lens that emphasizes both oppressions and struggles in the construction of material conditions, and analysis of the ways in which they operate to shape social life. In calling for research that destabilises commonplace assumptions about ‘third world women’ and developed vs. developing dichotomies, Mohanty thus emphasizes the importance of understanding the global and the local in the ways in which women experience and challenge oppressions, particularly those shaped by the accumulation of capital. Melissa Wright’s (2006) research serves as a useful example in this regard: she develops the concept of the myth of the disposability of the Third World Women in reference to femicide in the same context. Wright (2006) points to the ways in which “the body is a constant site of contestation within the rarefied world of corporate capital” (7). Yet, she emphasises that this framing of disposability is only a myth in global discourses relating to VsAW; women actively have organised to resist becoming victims of VsAW and thus, they challenge this framing through their agency. Wright’s Marxian analysis and exploration of the ways in which so-called disposable labour is gendered as female, and how this myth is both resisted and challenged by the women it represents, lends itself well to understanding how women resist forms of violence despite subaltern status and experiencing oppression; this blurs the binary of victimhood and agency, and is useful for understanding how VsAW manifests and is resisted in the FTN (Wright 2006; 2011; 2014).

Thus, I draw inspiration from the feminist historical materialist and feminist political economic perspectives on different forms of VsAW, as well as the literature on structural violence, to highlight how economic changes impact women disproportionately and can also be linked to experiences of VsAW. In doing so, I aim to illustrate not only historical continuities and their importance, but also new forms of violence that emerge in relation to the political economy of development in the FTN.

3.3.3. *The Violence of the Everyday: Social Norms and the Violence of Space*

The concept of “everyday violence”, articulated by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) builds off of Galtung’s framing of structural violence, and is useful for understanding VsAW in the FTN. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) argue that “everyday violence encompasses the implicit, legitimate, and routinized forms of violence inherent in particular social, economic, and political formations” (21). Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, in theorising configurations of everyday violence build on Taussig’s notion of “terror as usual” to point to the normalisation of everyday violence in daily life (Taussig 1989). This notion of normalisation occurred in the FTN. Everyday violence understood in relation to VsAW is therefore a key concept for this thesis. Further, Scheper-Hughes (2004) also argues for a more structuralist understanding of everyday violence as “another sort of state “terror” ” which occurs in cases where the state ignores violence in communities, fails to investigate, or even commits violence against communities through its different institutions (182). As such, she argues that the antagonised relations between the state and communities can facilitate everyday violence.

Similarly, Slavoj Žižek (2008) conceptualises violence as subjective and objective, the former being understood as the “perturbation of the normal state of things”, and the latter as “invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent” (2). For Žižek, violence is not a disruption to order or peacefulness; in this respect, he would counter the claim that the zero-level of non-violence pre-existed a given violent act. Rather, structures of oppression such as sexism, racism and other forms of inequality are assumed to foreground a particular moment of violence, constituting what Žižek (2008) refers to as objective violence. For instance, from Žižek’s perspective, an act of rape would constitute an act of subjective violence, but this act does not occur as a disruption to a peaceful state of things; rather, the act occurs in a context of objective violence: there is no zero-level of violence. As such, following Žižek, the notion that structures of oppression foreground the violences of the everyday is illustrative of how social norms themselves can contribute to the ways in which violences are perpetrated, which I discuss later in this section. Indeed, Žižek’s conceptualisation allows for an understanding of how structural violence can be related to the everyday and the normalisation of some forms of violence and oppression.

Relatedly, Bourgois (2001) also incorporates symbolic violence into his understanding of everyday violence, reflecting on the ways in which symbolic and everyday violence interrelate among Salvadorian migrants in the USA. Drawing on Bourdieu, he defines symbolic violence as revealing,

... how domination operates on an intimate level via the misrecognition of power structures on the part of the dominated who collude in their own oppression to the extent that every time they perceive and judge the social order through categories that make it appear natural and self-evident (Bourgois 2001, 8; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

This notion of collusion should be understood in relation to the ways in which certain oppressions, such as racism or sexism, can be internalised by those who also endure their impacts. Further, Pierre Bourdieu (2004) understands symbolic violence from a gendered perspective, and illustrates this point: gendered oppressions and relations of domination can be reproduced and internalised by women. He argues:

The practical acts of knowledge and recognition of the magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated that are triggered by the magic of symbolic power and through which the dominated, often unwittingly, sometimes unwillingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed, often take the form of *bodily emotions* – shame, humiliation, timidity, anxiety, guilt. (Bourdieu 2004, 341).

This point was especially relevant to the findings related to women expressing fear or shame in reporting cases of violence (see Chapter 5); further, it speaks to the prevalence of social norms like *machismo* (discussed further in Chapter 6), and the interaction of social norms with development and structural violence (as will be addressed in Chapter 7).

Symbolic violence is “embodied in language and its forms” (Žižek 2008, 1). For example, racism and sexism as systems of oppression render the exclusion and marginalisation of indigenous women in Guatemala normalised, as forms of symbolic violence. While I do not draw specifically or at length on symbolic violence to account for specific forms of violence in the FTN, the concept highlights the normalisation of certain social behaviours, which are often taken as a given. I return to the notion of the normalisation of VsAW in Chapter 6, and therefore draw inspiration from Bourgois (2001); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992); and Žižek (2008) in this regard.

Springer (2011) develops a key theoretical approach to understanding violence in relation to space and cultural norms, which speaks to the scholarship on structural and everyday violence. He argues that framing violence as cultural is problematic in that it draws on an Orientalist and colonialist logic. Indeed, he argues that such an assertion is rooted in neoliberal ideas about space and place, which disconnect violence from political, economic, social and geographic processes; rather, he suggests that “...while violence is clearly mediated through and informed by local cultural norms, it is equally enmeshed in the logic of globalized capital” (91). Indeed, Springer’s framework speaks to the culturalist arguments posed for the persistence of femicide in postwar Guatemala as inherent to Guatemalan culture: while *machismo* does exist, and may normalise and authorise some forms of violence, it cannot be blamed as a sole cause, if we situate violence in context.

Furthermore, Springer reconceives space in terms of understanding violence: “While violence *sits in places* in terms of the way in which we perceive its manifestation as a localized and embodied experience, this very idea is challenged when place is reconsidered as a relational assemblage” (Springer 2011, 91, emphasis mine). Springer thus points to a complex dynamic, that of the relationships between space, place, and the impacts of globalisation and development; the manifestation of violence does not occur in a static environment, but rather, in one that is dynamic. This dynamic relationship between context and violence is one that foregrounds my understanding of VsAW in the FTN, as explored later in this thesis.

Following this logic, Tyner and Inwood (2014) argue that violence should be understood as dialectic, and that space and socio-spatial relations play an important role in the constitution of violence. Drawing on David Harvey’s (2009) historical materialist contention that concepts are produced by the conditions in which they exist, they argue that “...violence must be theorized as not having a universal quality – but as being produced by, and producing, sociospatially contingent modes of production” (Tyner and Inwood 2014, 771). Tyner and Inwood also contend that a considerable amount of research has focused on the aftermath, fear, representation, criminalisation, landscapes and memorialisation of violence but less so on the act of violence itself. They argue that this trend in research “gives the appearance of violence as being natural and *aspatial* to the human condition” (772), which in turn fails to account for the constitution of violence in relation to the spaces and environments in which it occurs. In the case of Guatemala, this rings true: by

exploring new forms of violence characteristic to the postwar context, building from and beyond continuum frameworks, as Juarez (2015) suggests, new articulations of violence can be discussed. Following Springer and Tyner and Inwood's theoretical approaches, exploring violence and its constitution in relation to the space and time in which it occurs offers the potential to gain greater understanding into how it occurs and how it is being alleviated. This framing also promises a shift away from culturalist arguments that frame violence as inherently Guatemalan, but at the same time, situates such violence in context. In addition, this also helps build on continuum frameworks to situate forms of violence in relation to the context in which it occurs.

Political geographic perspectives on violence highlight the links between space, place and violence, which offer a possibility of deconstructing the ways in which violence is essentialised as natural to the human condition (Little 2015; Little 2017; Loyd 2009; Springer 2011; Tyner and Inwood 2014). Relatedly, in her study of conflict-related VAW in Liberia and Ireland, Aisling Swaine (2018) argues, "Violence against women cannot be separated from the contexts in which it occurs and the contextually specific factors that determine whether and how it becomes defined as "violence" (31). These frameworks speak to the notion of everyday violence, which is a useful concept for understanding VsAW in the FTN. Further, political, rural and feminist geographers offer important insights into the study of violence in relation to the environment in which it occurs. In the case of rural Guatemala then, taking these perspectives into account may enrich the discussion on VsAW and help build beyond the continuum approaches.

While not speaking directly to rurality, Rachel Pain (2000; 2014; 2015)'s use of space and violence illustrates the relationship between the global and the local in terms of terrorism and intimate partner violence, which is particularly relevant for this project. This linkage illustrates potential connections between politics of development on one hand, and the violence of the everyday on the other. Indeed, Pain's research suggests that the violence that plays out in the international sphere of geopolitics also plays out in intimate partner relationships, reflecting the spatial configurations of what she refers to as intimate war, or intimate terror. Pain argues:

War is both driven by intimate dynamics and, in turn, exacerbates their violence. This is less a two-way flow, and more a single winding complex of violence... The brutal effects of globalization, colonization, race, class and gender are wound into this structure, shaping the presence and aftermath of intimate war (Pain 2015, 72).

Here, Pain (2015) points to the ways in which the divisions between the global and the local, or the intimate, can be blurred. Further, her contention that violence can be understood as a ‘complex’ pushes the boundaries of continuum approaches to VsAW. Similarly, situating rural manifestations VsAW in relation to the space in which it occurs – in the case of the FTN, the postwar landscape of the “corridor for development” – reflects how space matters and blurs such a divide. In this respect, the space in which VsAW occurs shapes how it manifests. Further, the rural spaces in which VsAW occurs cannot be separated from broader geopolitical dynamics of development; Pain (2014, 2015) illustrates the connections between the intimate and the global in terms of global warfare and interpersonal violence. This is particularly relevant in the context of postwar Guatemala. Little (2017) explains that intimate terrorism can offer a way to understand the techniques, impacts and control inherent to intimate partner violence, and suggests that framing domestic violence in this way can enable a politicisation of the issue: it removes domestic violence from the private to the public sphere. Relatedly, Pain illustrates how entrapment can be used as a technique by abusers to control their victims; in rural spaces of the FTN, on a practical level, considering entrapment in relation to rurality is illuminating: simply leaving abusive partners is not always a possibility for economic or social reasons (see: Bowstead 2011), and perpetuates a cycle of violence, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

3.3.4. *Gendering the Everyday: Social Norms, Rural Life and VsAW*

Guatemala has been referred to as a “killer’s paradise” due to the *machismo* alleged to be prevalent in the country, and which may allow for such high rates of VsAW (Drysedale Walsh 2008, 49). Indeed, much of the literature emphasises causal factors relating to femicide, rather than context, and seeks to explain why femicide occurs in such high numbers in postwar Guatemala. As such, femicide is often presented as a cultural problem (Torres 2008), with a culture of violence framed as a product of everyday violence manifested as gang warfare and crime (Bellino 2010; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010). While rates of violence are undoubtedly high, the danger in this culturalist framing is that it essentialises cases of VsAW in Guatemala in its assumption of the inherently “Guatemalan” aspect of these crimes. In making this

claim, this perspective situates Guatemalan culture as the problem or cause of VsAW, rather than focusing on underlying structural causes of VsAW.

This is not to say, however, that social norms carry no weight; indeed, social norms do shape the context in which violence occur. In this respect, Jo Little's research on rural communities in the United Kingdom has highlighted the complexities related to social norms and gender in relation to rurality, which is particularly relevant for understanding VsAW in the context of the rural FTN. In doing so, she adopts a more sensitive approach to understanding how social norms might influence rural life. She reflects that rural studies that have taken a gendered approach often tend to focus on traditional gendered roles (Little 2002; Little, 2015; Little 2017; Little and Morris 2005; Little and Jones, 2000; Little and Pannelli 2003). In this sense, traditional cultures of rural areas have been linked to the ways in which such violence is characteristic and invisibilised in these spaces. Yet, as Little rightfully points out, such arguments are limited in scope, and need to go further in terms of accounting for performances of gender. Furthermore, blaming rural culture and an assumption of traditional values for experiences of violence is contradictory to the aims of situating violence in place; rather, it reproduces the same kinds of culturalist logic that Springer (2011) refers to as Orientalising in terms of portraying different forms of violence in the global south. How can VsAW of the FTN be situated in relation to the social norms that shape the issue, without reproducing Orientalising logics rooted in coloniality?

In recent years, feminist scholarship on rural geography has shifted to focus on the construction of masculinities and femininities in rural contexts (Little 2002; Little, 2015; Little 2017). As such, rural studies have shifted to move beyond studying the binary reinforcing of gender norms (for instance, the idyllic countryside, nature/culture divide), to consider the dynamic nature of gender, and masculinities and femininities in this context, as well as underlying gender power relations.⁵³ Building on Little's argument, and following Mimi Schippers (2007), I understand femininities and masculinities as inherently relational. As Schippers suggests, gender relationality is institutionalised (Schippers 2007, 91). Further, she argues,

⁵³ Hegemonic masculinity has been widely theorised, particularly by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) who illustrate the ways in which performances of masculinity to conform to a dominant social order are often unattainable.

The idealized features of masculinity and femininity as complementary and hierarchical provide a rationale for social relations at all levels of social organization from the self, to interaction, to institutional structures, to global relations of domination (Schipper 2007, 91).

Schipper's framing of femininities and masculinities and Little's call for a more dynamic approach to understanding gender relations in rural communities opens space to explore the tensions and contradictions related to gendered social norms in the FTN at a time of rapid economic and social transformation.

The role of development in fostering certain gendered social norms is paramount in the context of the rural FTN. The relationships between women, gender and development have been theorized through "GAD" (Gender and Development) scholarship, which emphasizes the structural and social causes of gender-based oppression and challenges the notion that growth-focused development is beneficial for all (Elson 1995; Marchand and Parpart 1995; Parpart, Rai and Staudt 2002). Thinking within the GAD paradigm, Caroline Moser (1993)'s suggests that women in developing context households often have a "triple role" in their communities, influencing social norms considerably. Her research and gender planning model highlights that women are responsible for performing reproductive labour, productive labour, and community management as well. She argues, "it is the gendered divisions of labour that are identified, above all, as embodying and perpetuating female subordination" (Moser 1993). Women's triple burden in their communities may reinforce certain forms of gender inequality and social norms, which in turn shapes the context in which VsAW occur and are resisted.

Gender norms can, however, also be transformed into political tools, a contention which helps analyse the ways in which VsAW may be shaped and resisted. In this respect, research conducted in the context of Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru by Luisa Dietrich Ortega (2012) suggests that "...traditionally feminine coded traits, such as the ethic of care, display of emotions, spirit of sacrifice and comrade solidarity, were considered a strategic insurgent repertoire..." (494). Bearing the ways in which Dietrich Oretaga (2012) observed feminine traits being instrumentalised by revolutionary fighters, the disruption of social reproductive sphere, traditionally relegated to women and feminised, may operate as a strategic point of entry for women community leaders and human rights defenders in terms of

addressing VsAW, and resisting the expansion of certain forms of development in their communities. Indeed, the vocabulary of gendered respectability, drawing on a grammar of social reproduction may legitimise women's claims and struggles in relation to VsAW and stopping the palm oil industry.

Furthermore, ecofeminist perspectives on women, the environment and violence are helpful in illustrating the tension between women's political involvement and persisting social norms that may occlude them from being engaged. Ariel Salleh argues that Spivak's "strategic essentialism" is used in some feminist movements "for pragmatic emphasis" in that women may mobilise certain identities in order to gain political traction (Salleh 2003, 66). In this sense, the relationship between women and the environment present in ecofeminist scholarship (see: Mies 1998; Mies and Shiva 2014; Salleh 2003) can legitimise their participation in political spaces, in the context of otherwise patriarchal social norms, a point to which I return in Chapter 7. Relatedly, Bina Agarwal (1992) develops a feminist environmentalist perspective, and argues that rural women in India are both victims of environmental degradation in specifically gendered ways and at the same time, exercise agency as participants in environmental activism, contributing specifically gendered lenses to struggles aiming towards the protection of the environment. Consequently, such approaches to understanding the relationship between being oppressed by environmental degradation and experiencing violence on one hand, and resisting environmental degradation on the other, is particularly relevant to this research.

Ultimately, drawing inspiration from Menjivar's work (2008; 2011; 2014), as well as related concepts of structural violence (Galtung 1969, 1971, 1990; Galtung and Hoivik 1971; Farmer 1996; 2004) and everyday violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004), I am to illustrate the multifaceted nature of VsAW in the postwar FTN. Indeed, following Pain (2014, 2015) and Little (2017), as well as the ontological approach to violence articulated by political geographic perspectives (Harvey 2009; Springer 2011; Tyner and Inwood 2014), the space in which violence occurs is shaped by the material relations of the political economy, which also shapes the social norms that mould daily life, and, as a result, everyday violence. As I highlighted in Chapter 2, the FTN as a geographic space has been markedly shaped by political economic development and power of the Guatemalan state. In this respect it has also been shaped by legacies of colonialism and coloniality, which

endure today through the expansion of the extractives sector. Relating VsAW to this space, then, offers the means through which these political economic relations and their links to gendered violence can be uncovered, and the boundaries of continuum frameworks can be expanded to account for these complexities.

3.4. Landscapes of Violence: A Matrix of Violence Against Women

3.4.1. Incorporating the Continuum into a Matrix

The concepts of a continuum of violence and continuation thesis have been instrumentalised to blur the divisions between war and peace and to draw attention to fundamental similarities between past and present structures and configurations of power and violence. Certainly, this speaks to the continuities and relationships of coloniality, violence and development highlighted in Chapter 2. Yet, these concepts run the risk of slippages between forms of violence and how it occurs, as well as between the notion of historical continuities and the spectrum of different forms of violence itself.

In this respect, Juárez (2015) complicates and troubles this framework, by developing a theoretical critique on what he refers to as the “discourse of memory”. Juárez argues that the “discourse of memory” has played a prevalent role in postwar Guatemalan society, academic debate and activism, particularly in denouncing violences perpetrated the state. By linking violence to the past, however, Juárez suggests, we risk erasing or masking their linkages to contemporary manifestations of violence in postwar Guatemala. Further, the “discourse of memory” risks naturalizing violence in Guatemala. He argues that

Without simplifying all the contributions on this subject, it seems evident that memory as a field of study, or better yet, as an explanatory variable that has become commonplace... and, in the wake of contemporary violences, to recreate a “mystifying” discourse of old and modern distributions of power. The discourse of memory, justifiable as it may be, may still obscure an analysis of violence that tackles contemporary inequalities, some of which have persisted for centuries, others derived from new political and economic contexts (Juárez 2015 30-31, my translation).

Thus, for Juárez then, while understanding contemporary manifestations of violence as linked to the war may be useful, and even obvious, the emphasis on memory can obscure its new forms and power and inequality. Relatedly while historical continuities are important to recognise, this focus on the ‘discourse of memory’ runs

the risk of obscuring the kinds of violences that occur in the everyday. While everyday violence such as VIF may be normalised by historical forms of violence perpetrated by the state, it is also important to emphasise forms of violence that occur beyond the realm of the war. As such, it is not sufficient to understand violence as simply continuing: it must also be understood as reconfiguring and transforming, particularly in the wake of expanding extractivism and Guatemala's insertion into the global economy over the postwar period. For instance, as I have shown earlier, the FTN is a region marked by historical continuities and coloniality, but daily rural life is also shaped by new political economic processes of neoliberalism and extractivism. In this respect, in the FTN, the violent impacts of continuity and change co-exist. Ultimately, Juárez points to the need for a revived study of violences in postwar Guatemala; my project seeks to respond to this call from a gendered perspective.

In the previous sections, I have argued for the usefulness of taking into account the relationships of capitalism, development, rurality and social norms in shaping the ways in which women may experience violence in rural communities from a theoretical perspective. In doing so, I have suggested that global processes have local implications, and that both structural and everyday forms of violence shape my understanding of VsAW. Feminist historical materialist perspectives highlight the necessary, sometimes paradoxical linkages between political economic and social relations, which broadens understandings of VsAW. Feminist political geographic perspectives highlight the ways in which rurality shapes the ways in which women experience violence in relation to rural life. These perspectives highlight how rural communities create unique spaces for the ways in which VsAW is experienced, understood, addressed and alleviated. For instance, rural spaces shape how access to services can be facilitated. In this section, I aim to show that incorporating such perspectives into analysis illuminates the contradictions and paradoxes of postwar change in Guatemala's FTN.

As such, I propose a matrix framework to understand VsAW in Guatemala's postwar FTN. This matrix approach does not refute the existence of a continuum of VsAW, but rather aims to account for the socio-spatial relations that shape not only the ways violence occurs, is understood, but is also resisted. As such, I do not aim to replace the notion of a continuum of VsAW, but rather, to build on it, and develop a theoretical framework that accounts for the complexities, tensions and contradictions

encountered working in a rural, post-conflict context. Furthermore, this matrix aims to account for the dynamic nature of VsAW in communities where I conducted my research, and to highlight how a particular political economic and socio-spatial landscape influence and are related to VsAW.

The matrix is organised around 4 key axes, which are not to be understood as mutually exclusive. Rather, they should be read as interlocking, overlapping and inherently relational; this is indicated in Figure 3.2 by dashed lines. The axes identified through the research shape the landscape of violence indicated by solid arrows.⁵⁴

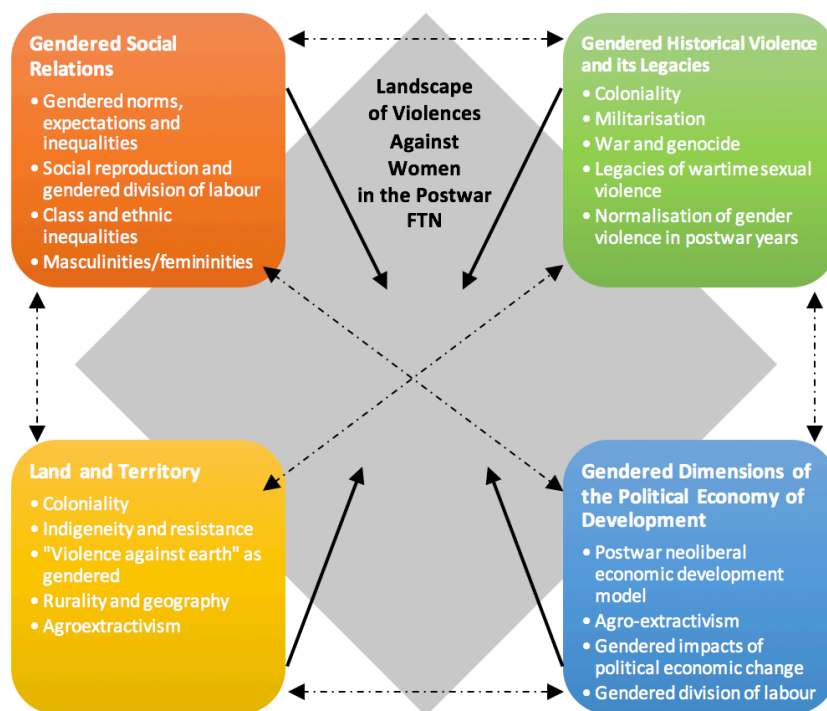


Figure 3.2: Matrix of VsAW and a Landscape of Violence

As stated earlier, the categories in the matrix should not be understood as necessarily distinct, but rather as co-constitutive. Drawing on the scholarship I survey earlier in the chapter, oppressions are interlocking; this logic informs the matrix. This contention also draws inspiration from Black feminism's concept of

⁵⁴ While I did not pursue a grounded theory approach to my research, given that I carried my own theoretical and epistemological interests into the field, the matrix concept emerged through fieldwork; in particular, the concept became useful as I analysed preliminary findings following the first research trip (see Chapter 4).

intersectionality, which views oppressions, such as race, class, gender and sexuality, as interlocking (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013). In the case of the matrix, I draw on the logic of intersectionality less in terms of identity, and more in terms the political, social, historical and economic dynamics at stake, following Patricia Hill Collins' (2000) concept of a matrix of domination, which, in the context of the US, "...describes this overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained" (Hill Collins 2000, 228). Relatedly, feminist historical materialist and ecofeminist traditions highlight the possible relationships between capitalism, environmental degradation and women's oppression, as well as VsAW. These processes and relations are informed and shaped by histories and legacies of colonialism and internal colonialism. Furthermore, these relationships are compounded by the socio-spatial relations of rurality, as problematised by feminist geographic perspectives, which also emphasise the relationships between rural life and gendered social norms. The links between land, capitalism, history, and social relations ultimately foreground the context in which VsAW occurs in Guatemala's FTN. And, at the same time, to reiterate Agarwal (1992)'s conjecture, this matrix foregrounds the ways in which women also find ways to resist and organise to alleviate VsAW in their communities.

In recognising historical continuities and the impacts of historical legacies and coloniality, the axis of historical legacies aims to encompass the impacts of war and militarisation on postwar life. As I highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2, the Guatemalan internal armed conflict and genocide profoundly impacted rural areas, particularly those of the FTN. Massacres targeting Maya Q'eqchi' indigenous communities in the FTN instilled fear of government authorities, and created long-lasting wounds. Transitional justice did not recognise the genocidal nature of these deaths; further, cases are only now, decades after the conflict, being heard in the Guatemalan Supreme Court. Recent cases have illustrated the link between state development policies and green revolution policies in the 1980s, and genocide targeting indigenous communities. In postwar years, while Guatemala is no longer a country officially at war, impacts of internal colonialism and conflict and tension between indigenous communities and territorial rights and the Guatemalan state persist.

This mistrust of state institutions has inherently gendered impacts. In Chapter 5, I show how this mistrust plays into rural accessibility of state institutions dealing

with VsAW, and in turn, leads to the emergence of local strategies to address VsAW. In Chapter 6, I show how women appealed to the state in different ways to make certain claims, and how these claims were interwoven with rural social norms about gender relations and expectations of men and women.

The legacies of the conflict also have shaped community responses to development in the region more broadly. The emergence of the palm oil sector was seen as a “form of violence” itself, particularly as a form of VAW as a result of the impacts it had on women’s social reproductive labour given the prevailing social norms. Consequently, the prevailing social norms, shape the ways in which women understand VsAW and shape their responses to violence. Social norms are articulated and performed in relation to legacies of the conflict. They are also indivisible from the histories of the communities.

Further, relationships between communities and the notion of territory was a reoccurring theme in my interviews and field research. Indeed, the concept of territory was related to the new forms of development that were emerging in the FTN. Contemporary development was also linked to the model of development imposed by the state during the worst years of the conflict and being rearticulated as growth and promise in the corridor for development, which in turn shaped women’s lives in particular ways. As I discuss in Chapter 7, women felt that the benefits of development unequally benefitted men and disadvantaged women, particularly indigenous women in rural communities, fostering and fomenting structural inequalities.

Development itself is an articulation of the contemporary relations of capitalism, which I identify as another axis in the matrix. It is also important to not conflate historical legacies of conflict as a simple extension into the postwar years, but rather, to recognise both the historical and contemporary dynamics that have emerged in the postwar years. While some have argued that VsAW and the broader violent crime that exists in Guatemala in postwar settings reflects a continuation of the conflict, I will argue that is important to distinguish between the years of conflict and the postwar years. While the dynamics and legacies of the conflict still shape daily life in Guatemala, it is key to differentiate between capitalism during the conflict and the model imposed in contemporary times: the postwar development model has plotted a neoliberal development trajectory for Guatemala, and presents gendered implications and contradictions.

The imposition of capitalism in Guatemala during the internal armed conflict, particularly through scorched earth and genocide, was not officially condoned by governments. Today, the imposition of capitalism through an extractivist model of development, and mediated through the Peace Accords takes a different turn. Indeed, Canadian, US, and other foreign administrations have facilitated the entrance of foreign multinational companies into Guatemala. Impacts of development are not gender, race or class neutral; my research shows that women linked their experiences and understandings of VsAW with the material conditions in which they lived. Further, they found means of negotiating oppressive structures of power and inequality to make certain gains for their communities, to become politically active and participate in local, regional and national political activities in order to surmount the challenges they face in relation to violence and inequality.

The matrix aims to foreground the landscape in which VsAW occurs; the axes discussed here shape all forms of VsAW discussed in the thesis and also played a role in the ways in which women community leaders organised to address the issue beyond purvey of the Guatemalan state. As elaborated in Chapter 1, by referring to gendered violence as VsAW, I aim to incorporate a flexible understanding of the constitution of the multiple forms of violence faced by women (see: Stanko 2003). Further, I draw inspiration from Menjivar's (2011) contention that in postwar Guatemala, forms of VAW are not necessarily mutually exclusive from each other. In the empirical chapters to follow, I specifically focus on how the findings illustrated instances of intrafamiliar violence (VIF); psychological VAW; economic VAW; structural VAW; and everyday VAW, noting that the forms of violence never occurred in isolation from each other. The matrix I have elaborated guides my analysis in the chapters to follow, and helps to show the ways in which women understood violence in three interconnected ways: first, in relation to psychological violence and gossip as well as distinct features of rural life; second, as being represented by domestic violence, linked specifically to rural social norms; and third, in relation to the palm oil industry and development. In these three ways, I illustrate how women in rural communities have worked to challenge constraints and contradictions that have emerged through development, in relation to VsAW.

Consequently, the matrix I propose here aims to respond to the slippages surrounding historical continuities and continuums of violence in existing research. In doing so, it seeks to untangle the myriad of factors shaping the landscape of

VsAW that emerged through findings. By accounting for the gendered, raced and classed dimensions of historical, political economic, social and socio-spatial relations that shape how VsAW manifests in the FTN, the matrix aims to build on existing perspectives to highlight the complexities and paradoxes emergent in the research.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has brought together several interdisciplinary bodies of academic literature to broaden the concept of VsAW in order to situate it in the context of the FTN. By drawing on feminist anthropological, geographic and political economic perspectives, I have highlighted how key contributions to research on postwar violence, and VsAW and femicide in Guatemala illustrate important links between past and present forms of violence. This research speaks to the legacies of violence, conflict and inequality ongoing in the FTN, which I discuss in relation to coloniality in Chapter 2. In this chapter, I also highlighted how concepts of structural and everyday violence, when taken from a gendered perspective, may encompass the nuances and complexities of studying VsAW in the postwar FTN. Indeed, this work has been effective in pointing to some of the injustices of development and the persisting inequalities in Guatemala, particularly in urban settings.

Yet, the logic of continuation which underpins much of the scholarship on violence in postwar Guatemala limits the ways in which VsAW can be understood in the case of the FTN, the ‘development corridor’. Certainly, historical factors are key, but so too are social norms, the political economy of development and the geography of the everyday and rural life, all which are inherently gendered. As such, building on the concept of a continuum and integrating it into the matrix approach responds to the complexities encountered in the research. The matrix framework thus helps conceptualise not only historical continuities, but new articulations of VsAW as well.

The matrix I elaborated thus lays the foundation as a framework for the analysis in the chapters to follow. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the research was undertaken, and the methodological and epistemological choices that were made to explore the questions, tensions and paradoxes at hand.

4. Situating VsAW in the FTN from a Feminist Standpoint: Methodological Considerations

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I highlighted the ways in which VsAW have been framed and understood in postwar Guatemala, and proposed a theoretical orientation to encompass the complexities of the issue in the rural context of the FTN. In doing so, I aim to build on existing theoretical work highlighting different forms of violence, and suggest that a matrix approach to VsAW in postwar rural Guatemala broadens the scope and accounts for the multiplicity of factors shaping the issue. In this chapter, I will provide an overview and reflection of the research methodology and epistemology that I employed to respond to my research questions, reiterated below in Table 4.1.

Primary Research Questions:	<p>How can we understand VsAW in rural Guatemala in contemporary times?</p> <p>To what extent are VsAW a legacy of the past, and to what extent are they linked to contemporary political economic change? How does this shape resistance?</p>
<i>Sub-Questions:</i>	<p><i>What are the key elements of socio-economic change and continuity in rural Guatemala?</i></p> <p><i>How do women community leaders mobilise and organise to alleviate problems related to VsAW in their communities?</i></p>

Table 4.1: Research Questions and Sub-Questions

As I stated in Chapter 1, I utilised what I refer to as a feminist, qualitative methodology, pursued over ten months of research conducted over three fieldtrips (preliminary, primary, follow-up; see Table 4.1). Following Corbin and Strauss (2015), “qualitative research is a form of research in which the researcher... collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as the participants and data they provide” (Corbin and Strauss 2015, np). From a feminist perspective, my qualitative approach aimed to incorporate a feminist standpoint, reflexivity, and accountability to research participants.

Over the course of fieldwork, I embedded myself in my research, drawing on various qualitative research tools informed by feminist research practices, as well as feminist ethnography (Corbin and Strauss 2015; Green 1999; Guest et al., 2013; Haraway 2004; Harding 2004; Hartsock 1983; Kvale 2007; Letherby 2003; Nelson 1999, 2015). In early stages of my research, I conducted 3 focus groups with community leaders, which offered the means through which I scoped for key themes and issues. Research data also consisted of 80 semi-structured interviews with mostly Maya Q'eqchi' women community leaders, activists, and service practitioners in the FTN. Some interviews with service practitioners were also conducted in the neighbouring departmental centre of Cobán as well as in Guatemala City. I also conducted participant observation in community meetings, development forums, and events throughout my fieldwork. Lastly, I drew on the analysis of secondary documents obtained through fieldwork.

In this chapter, I reflect on how my research aimed to illustrate the complexities and contradictions related to VsAW in the FTN that emerged during fieldwork. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to exploring the ways in which I locate myself within and in relation to the research, and highlights the epistemological issues of representation at stake, as well as how I aimed to incorporate a feminist standpoint into my research. I then proceed to provide an overview of my research activities, elucidating how my research is informed by feminist standpoint and feminist ethnographic approaches. I then highlight how I addressed research practicalities, before concluding the chapter.

4.2. Illuminating Tensions and Contradictions: The Need for Incorporating A Feminist Standpoint

4.2.1. Feminist Standpoint

While I was conducting my preliminary research, a first point of entry to my research site was situated among NGO professionals working in Guatemala City, who offered connections and information about the FTN and rural Guatemala. For instance, I interviewed Roman, a representative of USAID, who recounted that poor rural women, and poor rural indigenous were among some of the most vulnerable and silenced in Guatemala. This was echoed by other NGO professionals I spoke

with in preliminary interviews, both in Guatemala City and in the FTN. As my research evolved and I developed research relationships, I interviewed mostly Maya Q'eqchi' women community leaders, many of whom would be classed in this group of vulnerable and silenced Guatemalans, a subaltern group in the Spivakian sense (Spivak 1988; see also Mignolo and Thlostanova 2006). Yet, importantly, in pursuing this research, I was aware that their subaltern status did not preclude them from political organisation: they were engaged community participants and key actors in addressing the problem of VsAW in their communities. Furthermore, their perspectives were central to building knowledge in my area of research, which is largely undocumented in rural areas (a point I discuss further in Chapter 5). As such, centring their perspectives was a key methodological consideration.

This methodological and epistemological choice was rooted in feminist standpoint theory. While feminist standpoint theory encompasses a vast and controversial literature, it is grounded in the notion that "...knowledge is always socially situated" (Harding 2004, 7). Standpoint theorists call for an epistemic shift in knowledge construction, insisting on the importance of decentring knowledge claims, and on framing knowledge from subaltern perspectives (Anzaldúa 1987; Hill-Collins 2000; Harding 2004; Hartsock 1983; Haraway 2004; Sandoval 2004). Feminist standpoint theorists and researchers suggest "experience should be the starting point for any knowledge production and insist on the need to investigate and theorise the social world from the perspective of women" (Letherby 2003, 44; see also Hartsock 1983; Harding 2004). This intervention builds on the notion that research and understandings of truth and objectivity are often centred on male experience in mainstream social sciences research. By socially situating knowledge, feminist standpoint theory contends that the power dynamics and epistemic hierarchies inherent to knowledge construction can be subverted.

Nancy Hartsock (1983) develops a feminist standpoint approach which centres women's experiences as a basis for objective truth in research. In this respect, feminist standpoint theory does not promise a universal, objective truth, but simultaneously seeks to avoid reproducing relativist claims of knowledge construction. Further, it does not disavow the possibility of a feminist objectivity, which for Donna Haraway (2004) "...means quite simply situated knowledges" (86). Haraway elaborates that a feminist objectivity recognises the limitations of location and knowledge production; in elaborating her concept of partial perspective, she

suggests that feminist objectivity “...privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformations of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing” (Haraway 2004, 89). Relatedly, Sandra Harding (2004) advocates for what she refers to as a strong objectivity in feminist research, which involves blurring the distinction between subjects and objects of knowledge. She suggests “it is starting off thought from a contradictory social position that generates feminist knowledge”, emphasising the complexity and multiplicity of research subjects as a means to avoid relativistic claims (Harding 2004, 134). Partial knowledge thus depends on the standpoint taken, and makes no claim to a single, objective truth. Feminist researchers must engage in practices of reflexivity so as to enhance the validity of their research and findings (Harding 2004; Letherby 2003); from a feminist standpoint perspective, reflexive research leads to what Harding refers to as “strong objectivity” and therefore the valid and ethical construction of knowledge.

Bearing these perspectives in mind, the research does not make claims to a universal truth. Furthermore, for any researcher interested in the issue of VsAW in rural Guatemala, taking a feminist standpoint (and its prescription to centre subaltern perspectives in knowledge construction) into epistemological consideration may be a necessary methodological choice. Researching the issue could arguably never be approached from a purely objectivist or positivist perspective, given the lack of reliable statistical data, discrepancies and shortcomings in formal documentation, and the culture of silence surrounding many cases. Rather, it was necessary to centre the experiences of rural, mostly indigenous women, in order to understand their experiences of violences and bring these into the wider domain, or as Rosa, one of the Mayan organisers insisted that I include certain themes, such as colonialism and gendered colonial legacies in my thesis (discussed further in Chapter 7). This enabled me to build on existing understandings of VsAW in postwar Guatemala, and centre rural, indigenous women’s perspectives in relation to the issue, in a context where data was otherwise non-existent.

I also sought to consider the tensions between the material challenges and inequalities faced by indigenous women in the FTN in relation to VsAW, and the ways in which they resisted or subverted these conditions to address problems in their communities. In this respect, taking a standpoint perspective into account was particularly illuminating; standpoint theorists emphasise the ways in which

oppressed groups can “...turn an oppressive feature of the group’s conditions into a source of critical insight about how the dominant society thinks and is structured” (Harding 2004, 7). The notion of oppositional consciousness, as elaborated by Chicana feminist and standpoint theorist Chela Sandoval, reflects this line of thinking, suggesting that opposition to oppression also affords possibilities of emancipatory subversion, which can be illuminated and articulated through research (Sandoval 1991). Relatedly, Anna Sampaio (2004) researched the impacts of globalisation linking activist networks among indigenous women in Chiapas, Mexico and Chicana/Latina feminists in the US and found:

These critical spaces enabled the development of women’s political consciousness rooted in particular communities, asserted an ‘oppositional’ political subjectivity that challenged discourses marginalizing women and racial minorities and developed a theory of ‘difference’ as the simultaneous existence of contradictory and complementary positions (Sampaio 2004, 197).

Drawing on these perspectives, organisation against oppressive forces can provide the space through which further oppositional consciousness is generated. Additionally, the focus on women’s victimhood in research on VsAW in Guatemala has been reinforced by high rates of reported violence in recent years (England 2014; Musalo et al., 2008; Torres and Carey Jr 2008). While this research has illustrated the gravity of the issue, I aim to build on this work, and incorporate a feminist standpoint to highlight an under-researched side of VsAW in rural Guatemala.

For instance, in Chapter 1, I discuss my first visit to Elena’s community. Much of our discussion and my observations during this visit were centred around the ways in which she was involved in organizing and challenging something that she considered an important part of the context in which VsAW occur in her municipality, despite experiencing many oppressions reinforced by structures of patriarchy and capitalism in postwar Guatemala. Indeed, the spaces in which she organised against palm oil development and its impacts also provided her with a space to challenge VsAW, a point to which I return in the chapters to follow.

By focusing on the richness of analysis and knowledge offered by a partial perspective, feminist standpoint theory enables a blurring between structure and agency. In the case of my research, this blurring occurs in relation to VsAW and structural inequality. Related to this point, in this respect, and in relation to researching violence, Chandra Mohanty argues,

Although it is true that the potential of male violence against women circumscribes and elucidates their social position to a certain extent, defining women as archetypal victims freezes them into ‘objects who defend themselves’, men into “subjects who perpetrate violence” and (every) society into a simple opposition between the powerless (read: women) and the powerful (read men) groups of people (Mohanty 1988, pp. 67).

Mohanty advocates for a troubling of the binaries defining those who experience violence, and those who perpetrate it; rather, she suggests that the victim-perpetrator divide is too simplistic to encompass the ways in which women may also exercise agency in the face of oppression. This contention speaks to my early observations in Elena’s community, whereby Elena recounted how she both endured the negative impacts of palm oil, but also resisted them as a community leader; further, this perspective also informed the formation of my research questions, listed earlier in the chapter. My research questions were thus framed to explore the ways in which violence persisted, but also the ways in which women community leaders were addressing the issue in their communities. As such, notions of feminist standpoint and oppositional consciousness were central in framing the research.

Bearing in mind my political and personal interest and experiences in Guatemala, I recognise that my research and questions have been shaped by my experiences and political leanings. In this respect, my research has been shaped by my understandings of coloniality, violence, and inequality in Guatemala, and my political and personal investments in struggles for justice in the country. I am sympathetic to the diverse women’s movement in Guatemala in its multiplicity of struggles against inequalities and injustices they face. Conducting semi-structured interviews with women community leaders, as well as those working in other NGO and state sectors to address VsAW in the FTN inevitably offers a limited – and partial – perspective. Yet, drawing on their testimonies and perspectives provides the means to challenge the “view from above”, and instead, moves to draw on traditionally more marginalised voices. Furthermore, “what counts” as knowledge differs in many disciplines and in different research approaches – including feminist approaches. Recognizing marginalised voices as valid is thus an important part of my project; following feminist standpoint theory, this epistemological choice was central to my research.

4.2.2. Location and Representation

My interest in Guatemala emerged when, as an undergraduate student studying international politics and languages in Ottawa, Canada, I first learned of the role of Canadian extractive companies and their implication in human rights violations and violence abroad. Canadian companies are among the largest investors in the Latin American mining industry, and play an important role in resource extraction worldwide. Canada's murky role in this industry challenges commonplace assumptions of Canadians as the global do-gooders, and instead paints a much bleaker picture of Canadian enterprise and its imbrication with violence, coloniality, and inequality (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014; LaPlante and Nolin 2014; Pedersen 2014).

In 2012, I went to Guatemala as an undergraduate student on a semester-long work placement as a research and communications assistant for the National Union of Guatemalan Women (UNAMG). My colleagues would introduce me to their friends and to others working in the Guatemalan women's movement as "Julia the Canadian" but with an added, welcome disclaimer: "don't worry, she is against the mining". Indeed, part of my work involved attending, filming and documenting a locally organised people's health tribunal near a Canadian mine operated by Goldcorp. My work also involved compiling news stories from recent years about femicides occurring in the country. As such, I began to consider possible relationships between two seemingly separate areas of inquiry – neoliberal extractivism and its impacts on one hand, and high rates of violent crime against women on the other. Certainly, while maintaining that correlation is not causation, I found myself wondering about the extent to which the postwar development model, and move towards extractivism, could be understood in isolation from violence, particularly gendered violence.

These concerns remained with me as I continued my Masters studies and work. When I began my doctoral research, after completing a Master's Thesis, I already had ties to Guatemala and an interest in the paradoxes of peace that persisted. While my interest in Guatemala came with an intention to understand the gendered contradictions of capitalism, and a political commitment to address these issues through research and knowledge exchange, my own presence in the country cannot be regarded as unproblematic, particularly from a feminist epistemological perspective. Throughout my research, I grappled with questions of location,

positionality and reflexivity. As a foreign researcher, a *canchita*⁵⁵, I carried many privileges with me into the field. Not only do I indirectly benefit from the wealth Canadian companies extract from Guatemala, but I also carry the advantages of the mobility of my Canadian citizenship and status of a doctoral student studying in London. How then, could my work employ a feminist approach to representation and research, if I was a privileged outsider in rural Guatemala?

Feminist scholars have questioned the nature and aims of research, and the ways in which academic work often reproduces epistemic violence through representation. Linda Alcoff (1991) engages with these issues, and suggests:

...a speaker's location (which I take here to refer to their social location, or social identity) has an epistemically significant impact on that speaker's claims and can serve either to authorize or disauthorize one's speech (Alcoff 1991, 7).

As such, following Alcoff, a researcher's location shapes how research and others are represented and ultimately, how knowledge is constructed and reproduced. Further, she suggests that the researcher's location also shapes their authorisation and credibility as a speaker. My interest in Guatemala is also filtered not only through my political investments in the issues at stake, but also through the lens of my privilege: unlike many of the women I worked with, my citizenship has enabled me to visit and leave the field whenever I wished. For women working to address violence in rural Guatemala, this privilege does not necessarily exist. Furthermore, the epistemic privileges reinforced through representation can have harmful implications:

In particular, the practice of privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons has actually resulted (in many cases) in increasing or reinforcing the oppression of the group spoken for (Alcoff 1991, 7).

Alcoff contends that there is a slippage between speaking for and speaking about others, she ultimately points to the importance of considering the impacts of research and representation on those involved in the research process:

It is not always the case that when others unlike me speak for me I have ended up worse off, or that when we speak for others they end up worse off. Sometimes, as Loyce Stewart has argued, we do need a "messenger" to advocate for our needs (Alcoff 1991, 29).

⁵⁵Guatemalan slang term and diminutive for a blonde/white person. Research participants and gatekeepers often used this term to describe my physical characteristics.

This notion of a messenger is key in feminist research. Indeed, in recognizing the power relations inherent to my outsider status, I also acknowledge the ways in which being an outsider can benefit those I work with. Following Hill Collins (1986), approaching a situation as an outsider can also offer different perspectives and understandings of certain issues otherwise ignored. Furthermore, my status as a foreign researcher in Guatemala can also afford me privileged access to information that otherwise would be difficult to obtain. For instance, when I contacted the GREPALMA, or the Palm Oil Growers' Association, with a request for further information about the history of palm oil cultivation in Guatemala, I was invited to the head office in the wealthy Zone 10 of Guatemala City, and offered an interview with the executive director. Guatemalan colleagues, particularly those who had already politically positioned themselves against the palm oil industry, had not, alternatively, been able to engage with the GREPALMA.

Relatedly, Gayle Letherby (2003) suggests that feminist research can advocate for opening spaces for others to speak, by speaking for ourselves; yet, she also points out that speaking for ourselves reproduces problematic binaries of 'we' and 'them':

Speaking only for ourselves implies maintaining a respectful silence while working to create the social and political conditions which might enable 'others' to speak (and to be heard) in their own terms, but there is a problem in defining who, exactly, 'we' are...attempts to define 'us' inevitably become reductionist (Letherby 2003, 134).

In addition to the notion that advocating for only speaking for oneself is limited, Letherby also suggests that this kind of speaking would only reproduce research on privileged groups: indeed, as Spivak suggests, "the subaltern cannot speak". I thus follow Alcoff's and Letherby's arguments that representation in research is unavoidable, but bearing in mind its impacts and the potential role of the researcher as a desired messenger and as an advocate, offers a means through which epistemic violence can be avoided and the assumed binary of researcher-researched and associated power relations can be avoided at least to the extent that it can be appreciated.

During my preliminary field research trip, I began to reflect more closely on such themes. I was able to meet with a local judge, Ester, at the office of the justice

of the peace without a pre-arranged meeting⁵⁶. When I recounted the details of my successful meeting with the judge to David, the anthropologist who hosted me in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, he laughed and told me: “you just walked in and asked for the information? Incredible. Me, I could never do that. I, as a Guatemalan, would have to fill out so many forms. You better make something of this”. While not to romanticise my role, or perpetuate white-saviour narratives in my research, my role as an outsider *undoubtedly gave me* access to information that otherwise may not be so easily obtainable. To a certain degree, then, having privilege also meant having access to material and interviews otherwise difficult to attain. Indeed, “sometimes “outsiders” can parlay their advantages into assets [for others]” (Blacklock and Crosby 2004, 57).

Further, representation is not one-sided; indeed, the researcher does not only represent the findings and people involved in the research process. As feminist researchers, we are engaged in, and rightly critical of the power dynamics reproduced in the researcher-researched dynamics. While paying attention to such relations of power is undoubtedly inherent to a feminist approach, I discovered that participants and gatekeepers also engage in acts of representing the researcher, in ways that eluded my control. Indeed, when I met with Elena and other women community leaders in Chisec during my primary fieldwork, she told me that she had chosen to represent me in a particularly politically charged way. Because I had accompanied her to a meeting with the palm oil company in her community, in which the company promised to bring in a teacher to the local school who would be paid the minimum wage, she used my attendance (as an extremely visible outsider in the meeting) as leverage. Elena told me that she had told the palm oil company executives that I was a representative from the Guatemalan human rights ombudsmen’s office, the *Procurador de Derechos Humanos* (PDH). She also threatened them, insisting that if they did not fulfil their promises, I would return to sanction the company.

As much as I would have liked to have held such authority, Elena’s misrepresentation of me also put me, and potentially other research participants in a possibly precarious security situation. Human rights defenders are often targeted in Guatemala with threats and violence, and I found myself being thrust into the role of

⁵⁶ I later interviewed Ester and her successor, Elisabeth (who replaced her as Judge one year later) and refer to these interviews in Chapters 5 and 6.

a human rights official in Guatemala. While sympathetic to the concerns Elena and others face in their communities, I was also aware of the fact that not only did I not have the authority of a human rights official, but in the field, I also did not have the kinds of protection and security that would be afforded to such an official. Consequently, Elena and I, along with the other community leaders in this meeting, decided that from then on I would be referred to as a researcher from the University in London. This decision came after negotiating: Elena and others wanted to use my presence in the communities to their political advantage. As a visible outsider, Elena and others bestowed a kind of authority to my status. I thus became aware of the fact that not only was I, as a researcher and outsider engaging in representation; in addition, my participants were also representing me in ways that were, to a certain degree, beyond my own control.

Further along into my research, women community leaders from the municipality of Chisec asked me to go speak to the local mayor, and give him an overview of key research findings. They also asked me to invite him to an upcoming meeting of the *Consejo de Mujeres*, telling me that he had never agreed to attend the meetings when they had invited him. Interestingly, while I was able to meet with the mayor, and while he promised me he would attend the upcoming meeting, he never fulfilled his commitment; yet, my own involvement in going to the mayor and effectively being snubbed, seemed to reinforce the complaints community leaders had about the mayor's lack of interest in their engagement and activities involving VsAW and women's issues in their communities.

Overall, feminist researchers highlight the dilemmas, challenges and epistemic violence that can accompany the act of representation in research (Alcoff 1991; Anzaldúa 1987; Mohanty 1984; Mohanty 2003; Spivak 1988; Spivak 1993). At the same time, research participants also engage in practices of representation beyond the control of the researcher (Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry 2007); as became apparent throughout my research. Ultimately, engaging in feminist standpoint theory's call for reflexive thought, representation and knowledge construction was central to my research design and practice.

4.3. Research Activities

Feminist standpoint approaches illustrate the importance of reflexive knowledge construction, partial perspectives, feminist objectivity as situated knowledge, and the

role of oppositional consciousness in constructing knowledge that illustrates the complexity and gendered nature of life and social relations. By drawing on a feminist standpoint perspective to guide my methodology, I aimed to design the research in a flexible way, that allowed me to devote time to build networks and engage with people who might subsequently participate in my research. I did not wish to conduct research in an extractivist way, by simply taking knowledge from communities (Blacklock and Crosby 2004); rather, I aimed to foster a dialogue with participants, and sought to find ways to share findings with communities in an accountable and open way. In this section, I will provide an overview of and rationale for my research activities, and reflect on methodological decisions taken in the research process.

4.3.1. Choosing the research sites and defining the field

In the planning stages of my research, I initially chose to focus on three neighbouring municipalities in the FTN: Chisec, Raxruhá, and Fray Bartolome de las Casas. This choice was made with the aim of getting a broader sense of how communities responded to VsAW, and to make sure not to overburden any community by my presence. Furthermore, these municipalities have been the site of palm oil expansion to varying degrees in recent years: in both Chisec and Fray Bartolome de las Casas, Guatemalan-run palm oil plantations have expanded. In Raxruhá, however, resistance to the palm oil sector has been more prominent: furthermore, development forums are often held in this municipality to challenge and resist the expansion of palm oil in the FTN and in Guatemala. Additionally, a number of different services and actors play a key role in engaging with and addressing VsAW in the FTN, and are based in the three municipalities I selected (see Table 4.2). Finally, by planning to conduct research in these three municipalities, I envisioned having greater access to a broader network of activists, practitioners and human rights defenders, with whom I aimed to conduct interviews and participant observation. I also sought to avoid elite capture by engaging with different groups across the three municipalities.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS	LEGAL/STATE SUPPORT
<p>Municipal Women's Offices/Municipal Women's Directives (OMM or DMM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide accompaniment, advice, and referrals in cases of VsAW - Chisec: Coordinates with Nuevos Horizontes and APROBASANC to support and organise Women's Council <p>Women's Council, Chisec</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group of elected women community leaders, meets at least once monthly to address VsAW 	<p>Nuevos Horizontes, Chisec</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides psychosocial and legal support to women victim-survivors of violence - Coordinates with Chisec DMM to support Women's Council <p>APROBASANC, Chisec</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organises promote indigenous rights and access to land <p>MADRE TIERRA, Raxruhá</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental organisation in Raxruhá; runs educational programs on women's rights <p>INCIDE, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducts research on VsAW; runs educational programs to prevent VsAW; provides accompaniment to victim-survivors in emergency situations <p>Mama Maquín, Fray Bartolome de las Casas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's rights organisation, coordinates talks and activities related to VsAW <p>Union of Verapaces Campesinos Organisations (UVO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinates the defense of territory and indigenous rights in Alta Verapaz 	<p>Municipal Justices of the Peace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local judges, can authorise spousal support payment of up to 500 Quetzales <p>Femicide Tribunal (located in Cobán)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised tribunal to address cases of VsAW and femicide, regional centre <p>SEPREM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitors activities of OMM/DMM in the FTN <p>Red de Derivacion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network of legal, police, and NGO professionals coordinating monthly to discuss VsAW in Alta Verapaz

Table 4.2: VsAW Organisations and Services in the FTN⁵⁷

While I initially aimed to spend equal amounts of time in all three municipalities, local political transformations and administrative shifts played an important role in shaping the extent to which people were open and eager to participate in my research. For instance, although I conducted interviews and participant observation in all three municipalities, I ultimately spent most of my fieldwork in Chisec, a decision which evolved in response to dynamics I observed over time, and due to the activities of organisations in the municipality. Throughout the research, I observed a high level of women's organising to address VsAW in rural communities in Chisec, which therefore offered greater avenues for research. Indeed, following elections

⁵⁷ Here I have highlighted the primary organisations and bodies that impacted my work. Although I met with organisations based in Cobán, the bulk of my research focused specifically on the FTN, in order to limit the scope of the research.

that occurred in January 2016, the DMM was increasingly active in the municipality: a new director had been appointed, and took on a more active role in coordinating activities with local NGOs than in other municipalities. This rendered Chisec an interesting and appropriate location to deepen research. Further, women's organisations and NGOs in Chisec supported the development and activities of a municipality-wide Women's Council, which brings together over 40 mostly Maya-Q'eqchi' women community leaders from rural villages in regular meetings to address VsAW in the region. At the same time, I also sought not to focus exclusively on Chisec, in order to recognise the difficulties that can arise in challenging VsAW in areas harder to reach in the FTN.

In this respect, gaining access to political organising and women's groups in Raxruhá and Fray Bartolome de las Casas became more challenging in a twofold way; first, due to local political dynamics and institutional challenges faced by women community organisers, and second, due to compromised security issues. As such, at times it was not appropriate for me, an outsider conducting research, to be involved. For instance, for much of my fieldwork, the OMM in Raxruhá was inactive, rendering my access to women's political organising and VsAW service practitioners more challenging. When I first visited the OMM in Raxruhá (at a time when it was operational) the office had no dedicated space to receive women in private, but rather, constituted a desk in an open plan office for other municipal offices. Further, the director at the time also expressed concerns about the political dynamics in the municipality and a lack of support from higher authorities. I therefore arranged interviews with human rights defenders in Raxruhá with the support of the NGO Sagrada Tierra, rather than through the OMM. In addition, administrative challenges and local politics also shaped my access to the OMM in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, who acted as gatekeepers to other organisations in the municipality. In this case, I interviewed staff members, as well as two separate directors of the office; administrative transition during fieldwork made further research less feasible. Further, in the case of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas carrying out further research became challenging from a security perspective: the *Mama Maquín* organisation was attacked by masked, armed men in September 2015, resulting in a compromised security context for both myself and future participants.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ While I did carry out interviews with Luciana, a member of the organisation, this was carried out in her own home, outside the office of Mama Maquín (which at this point had been closed, although the

In the end, because of administrative issues and security concerns, extended research in Raxruhá and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas was less feasible.

Importantly, although the FTN presents an appropriate context for which to conduct this research, data on VsAW in the FTN is challenging to access for a variety of reasons. First, information about specific or ongoing cases is either poorly documented, or often kept confidential in the offices of the local justices of the peace. For instance, when I initially travelled to the field during my primary field research trip, I found that one local judge in Fray Bartolome de las Casas was eager to facilitate my access to case files in her office, which would have provided me with more detailed information about cases coming forward. As a result of political changes, however, by the time I returned for my second field research trip, this judge had been replaced by a new judge who was not open to sharing this information, but instead felt more comfortable discussing the cases in person. By the time I conducted my third and final follow-up trip, the mandate of the judge of the municipality of Fray Bartolome de las Casas was being overseen by the judge in Chisec, because the second judge had been relocated months prior, and no replacement had been arranged⁵⁹. Furthermore, while some cases were brought to the judges, many cases were not reported, as I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 5. Indeed, some cases are addressed solely in communities, by local development councils (COCODES; see Figure 4.1) while others are brought to the DMM or the OMM. As such, frequent administrative challenges, changes and hurdles rendered my access to case files challenging during this project.

organisation remained active) to avoid potential security risks or attracting unwanted attention to the organisation. I discuss this case further in Chapter 7.

⁵⁹ In the context of the office in Chisec, the new judge had been brought in between my second and third fieldwork trips; prior to this, a former judge had been removed in a corruption/bribery incident. In the case of Raxruhá, as I elaborate in Chapter 6, the local judge had been the target of a local complaint for not taking cases of VsAW seriously.

<p>Guatemala National System of Development Councils Development councils are constitutionally mandated governance bodies, which promote economic development and function at national, regional, departmental, municipal and community levels.</p>
<p>National Level: CONADUR National Council of Urban and Rural Development</p>
<p>Regional Level: COREDE Regional Development Council</p>
<p>Departmental Level: CODEDE Departmental Development Council</p>
<p>Municipal Level: COMUDE Municipal Development Council</p>
<p>Community Level: COCODE Community Development Council</p>

Figure 4.1 National Development Councils

Ultimately, then, research activities were designed bearing these shortcomings in mind. As I stated earlier, the feminist standpoint perspective became an integral component of my feminist qualitative approach: centring the voices of the mostly Maya Q’eqchi’ women community leaders who deal most directly with the issue of VsAW in the FTN was perhaps the most effective means through which such knowledge was accessible.

4.3.2. Primary Research Activities: ‘Travelling’ vs ‘Mining’

Bearing in mind the empirical challenges related to researching VsAW in the FTN articulated in the previous section, I chose to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews, pursue secondary document analysis, and engage in participant observation in order to understand the ways in which VsAW manifested and were being addressed in rural communities (see Table 4.3; Appendix 6). In the early months of my primary fieldwork trip I also conducted 3 focus groups to gain an understanding of common themes, which then aided me in developing questions to guide my interviews. Indeed, the focus groups arose somewhat by chance, in the sense that I was invited to meet with local officials and community leaders. Two focus groups were held in two separate communities in Raxruhá, both with local

indigenous authorities, of which one group constituted the local disaster management team. The first group was comprised of 8 men, who acted as gatekeepers into the community. Further, the wife of one of the authorities was also present, and joined the discussion. The second was comprised of ten local authorities (four women, six men). Lastly, a final focus group was held with 6 women community leaders in Chisec, who were invited by the DMM to discuss problems of violence in the municipality. Findings were recorded, and transcribed numerically, rather than by using names (ie: Participant 1, male; Participant 2, female, etc.). Ultimately, the focus groups served to point to key themes, rather than act as the foundational basis for the analysis. Developing the key themes and issue areas that arose in the focus groups provided me with a foundation for the interviews to follow.

This approach also helped me to build a rapport with community leaders, essential to ethnographic work. Indeed, I was welcomed and trusted in conducting further interviews in Raxruhá as a result of being presented to local indigenous authorities. In this respect, I drew inspiration from anthropological, ethnographic, and feminist research conducted on violence in Guatemala and other postwar contexts (Boesten 2014; Menjivar 2011; Nelson 1999; 2015).

RESEARCH TIMELINE SUMMARY		
<i>Length of Research Stay</i>	<i>Aim of Research Trip</i>	<i>Key Research Activities</i>
July-August 2015 (2 months)	Preliminary research, scoping trip; choosing research site, building research relationships, clarifying research questions	-Guatemala Scholars Network Conference -Interviews with activists, NGO professionals in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Chisec and Guatemala City -Field visit to the FTN -presented preliminary findings at USAC
January-August 2016 (7 Months)	Primary fieldwork trip, collect primary data,	-3 Focus groups with community leaders in Chisec and Raxruhá Participant observation in development forums and community events -Attended Sepur Zarco Trial -Conducted majority of interviews (Chisec, Raxruhá, Fray Bartolome de las Casas, Cobán, Guatemala City) -collected secondary documents -presented preliminary research findings in Chisec
July-August 2017 (1 month)	Follow-up research trip	-follow up interviews in Chisec, Cobán and Guatemala City -Participant observation in community events and meetings -shared research findings

Table 4.3: Summary of Research Activities

In conducting interviews, I also drew inspiration from Steiner Kvale (2007), who distinguishes interviewers and researchers as either behaving as a miner, for whom “knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal”, or as a traveller, who walks alongside research participants, learns and interprets stories told through interviews, and ultimately, “interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction” (36). Kvale suggests that approaching interviews as a ‘traveller’ emphasizes the stories that are told through research, as well as the social construction of knowledge. Undertaking Kvale’s approach to interviews, which incorporated flexibility and engaging with participants, also lends itself well to a feminist standpoint epistemology: it recognises the partiality of perspective, and values the contributions of subaltern knowledge as strong objectivity.

Overall, I conducted 43 interviews with community leaders and activists in the FTN; 20 interviews with VsAW service practitioners in the FTN and Cobán; 13

interviews with legal and government officials in the FTN, in Cobán and Guatemala City; and 4 interviews with professionals working in the palm oil field (including 1 researcher from the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City and the executive director of the GREPALMA in Guatemala City). (See Table 4.4 and Appendix 5). Within the thesis, I refer to interviews by a reference code (See Table 4.4). For instance, interviews with community leaders are referred to as CL, followed by the interview number (see Appendix 5; example: CL 1, CL 2, etc.)

Participants were recruited via snowballing technique, which was possible through my own personal networks in Guatemala, and through the participant observation I discuss below. While I drew on a standard list of questions to guide each interview, questions were in most cases modified depending on the expertise of the interview participant; in many interviews, participants spoke at length, without pause. In such cases, I adapted questions based on substantive material, asking unplanned follow-up questions as needed. I therefore incorporated some principles of open ended interviews into conducting my semi-structured interviews, in that at times, conversation flowed freely, and I probed for responses to topics that arose in the interview itself (Angrosino 2007; Desai and Potter 2006; Guest et. al. 2013; Kvale 2007).

Semi-Structured Interviews	
<i>Community leaders/activists</i> <i>Reference code: CL</i>	43
<i>VsAW Service Practitioners (NGO and psycho-social support professionals)</i> <i>Reference code: NGO</i>	20
<i>Government and legal officials</i> <i>Reference code: GL</i>	13
<i>Palm oil industry professionals</i> <i>Reference Code: PO</i>	4

Table 4.4: Semi-Structured Interviews

An important point to address is the fact that I explicitly did not seek to interview victim-survivors of VsAW. Rather, I chose to interview professionals working in legal organisations, and women community leaders and *defensoras* about VsAW occurring in their communities. Following the methodological approach undertaken by Jelke Boesten (2014) in her research on sexual violence in Peru, directly going to victim-survivors to talk about violence they faced seemed ethically precarious and opened myself and women in the FTN up to greater risk. This follows a longer tradition of feminist research on VsAW more broadly (Kelly 1988). I also draw inspiration from Lorena Fuentes' (2016) qualitative mixed methods approach to researching femicide, predominantly in the Guatemala City metropolitan area, which also did not draw on interviews of victims, but on a triangulation of diverse sources (including interviews and news articles) to explore and interrogate the issue from a discursive perspective. Furthermore, I do not have psychological training and the support I can offer victim-survivors is thus limited. Rather than run the added risk of re-victimisation of victim-survivors, I chose instead to focus on conducting interviews with the community leaders appointed or elected to address the cases, as well as with professionals directly addressing the issue in the FTN. Following Boesten, "...the more I learned about the theme, the more I became convinced that the focus of critical research should not lie with the suffering of individual women, but with the process and structures that make their suffering possible" (Boesten 2014, 15)⁶⁰.

Further, while I do draw on some interviews with men, this was not a stated aim. Ultimately, I recognise the limitations of not including men's testimonies as a key point of focus for this project: indeed, I am representing the voices of women, and their perspectives in my findings. That said, while paying attention to the notion that ultimately, VsAW is most often caused by men, I am not solely focused on the act of violence itself, but rather, the context in which it occurs, and the socio-structural factors that shape violence and resistance to it, from the perspective of those that I interviewed. To complement interviews, I also conducted participant observation in community meetings, events, and development forums in the FTN and in Cobán throughout my fieldwork (see Table 4.5). Findings from participant observation were used to complement and triangulate interview data, and, in some

⁶⁰ Also quoted in Fuentes 2015.

cases, to provide an additional source of information to verify claims (see Bleek, 1987). This work was necessary to build relations of trust and rapport among research participants.

<p>Participant Observation Highlights</p> <p><u>Monthly Red de Derivacion Meetings – Cobán</u> April-July 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly meetings held in Cobán that bring together network of VsAW professionals in Alta Verapaz, and provide report on key issues related to VsAW in the department (police, lawyers, social workers, MP, NGO professionals, OMM/DMM workers)
<p><u>Comision de Mujeres (Municipal Women’s Commission) Meetings – Chisec</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March 2016 - April 2016 - May 2016 - June 2016 - July 2016 - July 2017 - July 2017 - August 2017 - Meetings of community leaders held in Chisec, discussion of women’s issues and problems of addressing VsAW in rural communities
<p><u>Palm Oil and Development Forums/Meetings</u> July 2015 Guatemala City August 2015 Chisec March 2016 Raxruhá May 2016 Raxruhá June 2016 Raxruhá July 2017 Raxruhá</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forums organized by communities and external NGOs to address problems related to palm oil in the FTN. The meetings presented problems and testimonies, and offered a space to share common concerns across municipalities. In some meetings, mayors and palm oil officials were invited, but often did not attend.
<p><u>Participant Observation – OMM Chisec</u> April-June 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant observation in DMM in Chisec

Table 4.5: Participant Observation Overview

In this respect, I drew inspiration from feminist ethnographic traditions, particularly in pursuing participant observation. An ethnographic research method involves spending time and building relationships with research participants and getting to know their communities, in order to get a broader picture of the issues that my project addresses, as well as drawing on other research tools (such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, etc.): “Ethnography takes the position that human behaviour and the ways in which people construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific” (Corbin and Strauss 2015, np). Ethnographic

approaches rely primarily on the researcher as the key research tool; in my case, having contacts, experience and knowledge of Guatemala was central in enabling me access to locations, research participants and information. In drawing inspiration from ethnography, I also aimed to take Henrietta Moore's (2004) critiques of concept-metaphors into consideration: she argues that both the local and the global are theoretical abstractions in anthropological work. By recognising their status as concept metaphors, I aimed to conceive of the distinction as complex, and explore "...the pre-theoretical commitments that underpin their interrelation" (Moore 2004, 75). In practice, this meant recognising that "the local is not about taxonomies, bounded cultures and social units, but about contested fields of social signification and interconnection, flows of people, ideas, images and goods" (Moore 2004, 78).

Feminist ethnographers depart from the assumption that the possible caveats of voyeurism and epistemic hierarchies can be avoided in ethnographic work (Davids and Willemse 2014; Davis and Craven 2016). Drawing on their own ethnographic research experiences in the *Women's Studies International Forum 2014 Special Issue* on feminist ethnography, Davids and Willemse (2014) emphasise the importance of agency in ethnography, and argue that complicating conceptualisations of agency, both of the researched "other" and the researcher "self", can underpin epistemological foundations of feminist ethnographic work and the methods, tools and concepts it draws upon. Agency can thus be "the starting point of representation" of research subjects in ethnographic research (Davids and Willemse 2014, 2). Indeed, other ethnographers have pursued a similar approach in their research in Guatemala from which I draw inspiration (Green 1999; Menjivar 2011; Nelson 1999; 2015).

This conception of agency as an important component of feminist ethnographic work became central to guiding the development of my research, particularly participant observation. Indeed, resistance to VsAW was significant, and perhaps greater than I anticipated; this became clear through the participant observation I carried out in community meetings and forums in the FTN and in Cobán, whereby many women were active participants, and found ways of subverting gender oppression in complex and contradictory ways. In my case, emphasising agency in participant observation came through conducting participant observation in settings where women community leaders were engaged in activism and decision-making, to varying degrees (see Table 4.5). Indeed, in different

meetings and events, women participated to different extents, which informed the findings I discuss in the empirical chapters to follow. Ultimately, the ways in which women created spaces to address the problem of VsAW in their communities paralleled the notion of oppositional consciousness among standpoint theorists, which I discussed earlier in the chapter.

In addition to helping me immerse myself as a researcher in the field and explore women's agency, participant observation also helped provide a means through which trust was built between myself as a researcher and women community leaders and activists in the FTN. For instance, I was first introduced to Luciana, a community organiser in the municipality of Fray Bartolome de las Casas and member of the NGO Mama Maquín by a gatekeeper who brought me to Luciana's home. In this first meeting, I conducted a preliminary interview with Luciana, but she did not wish to be recorded. In the months that followed, I participated in community development forums in which Luciana was also present. Luciana and I became further acquainted; on one occasion, we sat together during an event held in Raxruhá. Eventually, Luciana invited me back to her home, to conduct a follow-up interview, which lasted longer than the first one, and in which she felt comfortable and agreed to being recorded.

Bearing in mind the multiple sources of data I collected, following conventional qualitative and ethnographic convention, I triangulated between official policy documents, findings from participant observation, and findings from interviews (Angrosino 2007; Corbin and Strauss 2015; Desai and Potter 2006; Guest et. al. 2013; Kvale 2007; Schensul 1999). For instance, I also analysed findings derived from secondary document analysis (Women's Presidential Secretariat, or SEPREM Action Plan, Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, Presidential Planning and Programming Secretariat, and SEGEPLAN documents; see appendices 2 and 7). I also conducted two access to information requests each with SEGEPLAN and the Public Ministry in order to obtain information about the FTN (Chapter 2) and statistics on cases of VsAW that were officially reported to the state (Chapter 5). Interview data was transcribed and analysed using NVivo software which provided me with the tools to effectively code and sub-code interviews and pull out common themes and subthemes from my research findings, and to organise empirical data effectively. I drew on what Kvale (2007) refers to as 'bricolage' technique to analyse interview findings, focusing on

narratives, themes and patterns that emerge through the research. As I stated earlier, also following Kvale (2007) and Corbin and Strauss (2015), I pursued the ‘travelling’ approach to conducting interviews, in that I aimed to analyse findings while interviewing, and sought to generate a narrative based on the findings my research generated.

To collect/document findings in participant observation in community events, and build on the narratives I sought to weave through interview findings, I also took detailed handwritten notes, which then were transferred and summarised into my field journal, to which I referred in my analysis process. I followed Angrosino’s (2007) suggested technique of detailing the time; setting; characteristics of participants (age, ethnicity, gender); descriptions of behaviours; and chronology of events in participant observation notes. My observational techniques were participatory, in the sense that those around me were aware of my presence and my role as a researcher, and had verbally consented to my presence. I acted as a ‘participant-as-observer’ meaning that I was present, integrated and engaged whilst conducting observation, still as a neutral observer but also known to participants (Angrosino 2007, 55). In my case, unobtrusive participation would not have been ethical or consistent with the feminist standpoint guiding the research epistemology and methodology: the issue of VsAW is sensitive, and making my presence clear and known helped to build rapport with participants.

4.4. Practicalities of Research in the FTN

In this section, I discuss how I navigated key research practicalities: translation of findings; security; and ethics and accountability. One practicality requiring attention in the research was the issue of translation and its limitations. My research involved the use of translation, from Spanish-English and in some cases, from Q’qechi’-Spanish-English. Feminist and anthropological/ethnographic scholarship on translation have interrogated the politics and power dynamics inherent in translation, and have highlighted its complexities and contradictions (Alvarez 2014; Gal 2015; Klahn 2014; de Lima Costa 2014; Spivak 1993). Following these traditions, I also view the politics of translation as inherent to the process and politics of representation. In arguing for a trans-local politics of translation, Claudia de Lima Costa and Sonia Alvarez (2014) write,

If to speak means to be already engaged in translation, and if translation is a process of opening the self to the other, then we can say it always involves a process of displacement of the self. Therefore, in translation there is a moral obligation to uproot ourselves, to be, even temporarily, homeless so that the other can dwell, albeit provisionally, in our home (Alvarez 2014, 557).

Translation represents not only the words of others, but ideas and theories, which travel and are not temporally or socio-spatially static. Translation understood this way is a process of exchange, whereby I view my role as researcher to impart the meanings and stories conveyed to me. Relatedly, in reference to Rigoberta Menchu's autobiographical testimony, as well as to that of Domitila Barrios de Chungara⁶¹, Norma Klahn argues "To understand this "coloniality of power" means also to comprehend the unequal traveling and translation of feminist practices, theories and texts, and their reception" (Klahn 2014, 43; also quoted in De Lima and Alvarez 2014, 558). Consequently, my own engagement with translation in the field was not limited to translating conversations and words, but also involved considering how the traveling of feminist ideas, practices, texts and theories were evident in the field. I revisit this theme in the chapters to follow.

Some of my research participants preferred to conduct interviews in their native language of Q'eqchi'. Although I took private beginner Q'eqchi' lessons during my primary fieldtrip, in these interviews, I required the use of a translator who translated the interviews from Q'eqchi' to Spanish. In most cases, the translations were done by the gatekeeper who accompanied me, given the issue of trust and access to rural villages. To ensure the accuracy of the translations into Spanish, I also hired a translator from the Maya Languages Institute to double check the translations and transcribe the Q'eqchi' interviews with Spanish translations. The translator I hired had considerable experience translating in sensitive cases, and was suitable for the position. As such, we discussed at length the importance of confidentiality surrounding my interviews before beginning our work together. We also discussed the importance of effectively conveying meanings of participants from Q'eqchi' to Spanish.

The rest of my interviews were conducted in Spanish, a language I speak fluently, but one that is my third language. All translations from Spanish to English were done by me, and I accept responsibility for any translation errors. It is

⁶¹ An activist and wife of a miner who was instrumental in hunger strikes that resulted in the downfall of Bolivian military dictator Hugo Banzer (Klahn 2014)

important to note that in Guatemala, Spanish is the language of the colonisers: 22 other indigenous languages are still actively spoken. I thus recognise the limitations to my research, and the power relations involved regarding my own familiarity with Spanish (being less familiar with Q'eqchi'). Nonetheless, as Spivak writes, "if you are interested in talking about the other, and/or in making a claim to be the other, it is crucial to learn other languages" (192); while I make no claim to be Guatemalan or Q'eqchi', my own personal investments in learning Spanish and gaining a sense of familiarity with Q'eqchi' during my time in the field was formative for my research.

Spivak recounts that she translates "at speed" without focusing on audience, and without pausing to think about how such translations are conveyed in English. She argues that "the task of the translator is to surrender herself to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original text" (Spivak 1993, 189), translating "at speed", then revising so to make the translations fit within protocols of English grammar. This technique was particularly useful to me when writing fieldnotes, or taking notes during interviews and meetings, in cases where my participants spoke Spanish and I took verbatim notes in English. I also drew on this technique when translating interviews to include in my empirical chapters.

Palmary (2014) emphasises that academics working in English often do not reflect on the complex nature of translating into the English language, and notes that a feminist approach must consider the power dynamics related to the act of translation. Reflecting on translating in the Rwandan context, she suggests,

Attention to translation, when conducting research across linguistic contexts, helps us to reflect critically on the context in which the meaning of an event is produced. Moments of translation difficulty, be they words that do not easily translate or be they moments when the meaning of a word differs despite there being a linguistic equivalent, offer new insights into research. They give us an opportunity to understand how a phenomenon, for example, gender inequality, might be produced differently in different contexts and what conditions lead to this differential production. They also allow for a space to explain things that otherwise are taken for granted and difficult to interrogate (Palmary 2014, 578).

Indeed, as I reflect further in Chapter 5, the Spanish term *violencia contra la mujer*, translated as 'violence against women' in English, draws on the usage of the singular noun, '*mujer*' or 'woman'; *violencia contra la mujer* is reproduced in the 2008 Law on Femicide, and by countless women's organisations, and state institutions in Guatemala. As I reflect further, this seemingly miniscule difference between the English and Spanish terminology for this manifestation of gendered violence has

political consequences: for instance, Guatemala is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country marked by highly racialised class distinctions, with diverse women, rather than the homogenous Guatemalan ‘woman’ implied by this terminology. Further, as I have stated earlier, I frequently draw on the acronym ‘VsAW’ to indicate a plurality of violences faced by women in the FTN; by this, I also aim to emphasise the plurality, and not singularity of women victim-survivors of different forms of violence.

Safety and security constituted another practicality, which I took seriously in my research. Given the sensitivity of my research subject, the high levels of attacks on human rights defenders and activists, and the rates of violent crime in Guatemala, several precautions were taken to secure my own safety and that of my participants. All recordings of interviews and notebooks were stored in a locked cupboard and on an encrypted external hard drive while I was on fieldwork. Interviews were assigned a code by date and interview number (IE: SSI45-2016-05-03), and pseudonyms were given to interview participants to protect identity. I explained to interview participants that I would be using pseudonyms, and invited them to choose their own; in some cases, interviewees asked to be referred to by their own name or stated that it did not matter if I used their names. In these cases, I have elected to continue to use a pseudonym of my own choosing, bearing security risks in mind, and to ensure consistency across the research. In my findings, I also do not name specific communities, but rather, refer broadly to the municipality in which the interview took place, to further preserve anonymity.

Another important point to note is that all interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, a logistic with which interview participants expressed no problems or concerns. I took time to explain to participants that using the recorder was a means for me to recall the interview later, and transcribe the findings. Further, recordings were uploaded immediately following interviews, and deleted from devices, as an added security protection. Finally, as stated earlier, I worked with a translator for interviews that were conducted in Q’eqchi’. The translator I hired had considerable experience working in sensitive topics as was certified by the Mayan Languages Institute in Cobán. Further, we discussed at length, before beginning working together, the sensitive nature of the topic and the vital need for confidentiality associated with all interview data. As a result, all transcriptions were stored on an encrypted USB stick for added security.

Ethics approval for the project was granted through the LSE and Department of Gender Studies. Written consent forms and letters of information were provided to interviewees when appropriate (see Appendix 4); in some contexts, interview participants were illiterate and thus in these cases, the use of consent forms were inappropriate. As such, in these cases, oral consent was given after I explained my research aims, objectives and subject of the interviews. Participants were told that their participation was entirely voluntary, that they could consent to not being recorded, and that they could withdraw participation at any time. Participants were also told that they could choose not to respond to questions if they did not wish. I followed a guideline for oral consent (see Table 4.6) in order to effectively communicate the nature of the project and my aims to interview participants.

Participation was voluntary	- Participation was voluntary at all times. Interview participants have the right to withdraw/stop the interview at any time. Those participating in interviews may also choose not to respond to any question asked.
Use of recorder/notetaking	- With the interviewee's permission, the interviews were recorded with a tape recorder. While on fieldwork, the interview recordings and recorders were stored in a locked, safe location and on a password encrypted external hard drive. - With the interviewee's permission, the researcher took notes throughout the interview to recall key points raised and to develop additional questions
Sharing of findings	- Findings will be presented in the thesis, possible publications and at academic conferences and lectures. This information was shared with interview participants
Anonymity and confidentiality	- All names will be changed and names of specific communities will not be given. Interview participants were asked about possible pseudonyms

Table 4.6 Oral Consent Guidelines

The risks posed to those working on issues related to human rights in Guatemala applied also to me working as a foreign researcher in Guatemala. In order to mitigate and identify risky situations, I received comprehensive training through the LSE on safety in contentious research environments, which helped me to identify risks and develop adequate risk assessment plans, which I updated regularly as I moved between field sites. During my preliminary field research trip, as I stated earlier in the chapter, snowballing contacts helped me to ensure that I travelled with some degree of accompaniment in the FTN. Nonetheless, I was also aware of the

implications of my presence in these communities. In order to avoid attracting unwanted attention to the groups I worked with, I conducted interviews and collected data based on what was most convenient/suitable for them; for instance, by travelling to their houses, or places where they felt safest and most comfortable. Further, I mitigated risks by maintaining a low profile and moving between Guatemala City, Cobán, and the FTN, and updated my risk assessment documentation when I moved between fieldwork locations.

Relatedly, conducting multiple trips provided me with a ‘time out’, as a means to process and reflect on findings before returning to pose new questions and conduct follow-up interviews as needed. Letherby (2003) emphasises the importance of developing relationships with research participants in the field, and suggests that the fieldwork and these relationships should not end when the research is finished. Designing multiple field trips was not only practically feasible, but it became a way for me to keep in touch with people I met in the field, particularly where access to internet and mobile phones is limited, thereby ensuring my own engagement with my responsibilities as researcher. Further, this format enabled me to return to the field to share my findings; multiple trips became a mechanism for accountability in the research process.

Importantly, VsAW present a challenging subject matter to address in research. As Letherby (2003) reflects, discussions that emerge through interviews and research can be emotional, or upsetting for the interviewer. In my own experience, attending sessions of the Sepur Zarco trial and being present for the sentencing was humbling; further, hearing similar stories of violence during conflict being recounted in interviews was at times very challenging. Women I interviewed often shared deeply personal stories and testimonies with me, which also required a sensitive approach to the subject, and relations of trust between me and the women I interviewed. While I never asked the women I interviewed if they had personally experienced violence, many openly shared such experiences with me, and also discussed open and ongoing cases with me; it was helpful for me to be connected to local NGOs and the DMM in Chisec, who, in some cases were able to assist further. For instance, in one case in particular, I travelled to conduct an interview in a village in Chisec with a local community leader, and was accompanied by the Director and Secretary of the DMM. During the interview, the community leader explained a custody case ongoing in the community, whereby a male ex-partner had kidnapped

his two children from their mother, and could not be located anywhere in the village or in the municipality. The staff of the DMM were informed of the case and intervened with the assistance of the PNC; a year later, when I returned to conduct a follow-up interview, I discovered that the children had been located and returned to their mother as a result of this intervention.

Furthermore, as Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby (2004) note, Guatemala is a complex research environment, and building trust with Guatemalan women's groups and activist organisations requires time. Working in postwar Guatemala, they note that why, how and for whom knowledge is produced are important considerations. For instance, in my case, I formally requested permission to conduct interviews and research among the members of the women's council (who became the most involved with my research) during one of their monthly meetings. I was only able to do so after spending several months building rapport and conducting interviews with NGO professionals in the FTN, who acted as gatekeepers in this respect.

Blacklock and Crosby (2004) also insist on the necessity of finding ways to 'give back' by sharing research with participants; this is echoed among feminist researchers and ethnographers. In my case, I shared research findings on multiple occasions, and in multiple settings: for instance, I guest lectured at the USAC, I presented research in regular community meetings (in which interview participants were present), and lastly, on my final follow-up trip, I presented on a locally-organised academic conference panel with Guatemalan scholar-activists, which put me in touch with future translators to publish findings post-submission. In sharing my research thus, I was also able to gain valuable feedback and present early findings to participants. Regarding this latter point, many participants were not comfortable reading and writing in Spanish, and consequently, sharing transcripts for verification was not appropriate; as such, communicating findings, while respecting anonymity, through sharing in public meetings was a key way to recognise participants and verify findings.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed my methodological approach undertaken for researching VsAW in the postwar rural FTN. By drawing on a feminist epistemology, and situating my research in relation to feminist standpoint, I aim to fill important gaps in

research on Guatemala, and advance understanding on the key issue of VsAW in the FTN.

Here, I explored my own location and positionality vis-à-vis my research, highlighting key considerations of representation and power in the research process. I also discussed the ways in which I sought to incorporate a feminist standpoint into my methodological approach, aiming to be reflexive in my own practices of research, representation and knowledge construction. In doing so, I also centred perspectives of those working on the frontlines of service provision for VsAW in the FTN: in many cases, this involved centring the voices of Maya Q'eqchi' women who are otherwise missing from much of the research and mainstream forms of data collection in this area. Finally, I provided an overview of my research activities and logistics over my three fieldwork trips, which were designed by keeping in mind the feminist principles of research practice that I highlighted earlier, and inspired by feminist ethnographic traditions.

Overall, my research aimed to be flexible, and account for agency, in order to encompass the complexities that arose through the process. In the empirical chapters to follow, I discuss my findings and explore the ways in which VsAW materialised, and were addressed and resisted in the FTN. Ultimately, my research aims to illustrate the ways in which rurality, gendered violence, inequality and development intersect in the complex postwar Guatemalan context.

5. Paradoxes of the Criminalisation of Violences Against Women and Femicide in the *Franja Transversal del Norte*

*Justice does not speak in the language of the indios
Justice does not descend to the poor
Justice does not wear leather sandals
Justice does not walk barefoot
On dirt roads...*

Humberto Ak'abal⁶², my translation

5.1. Introduction

As I began my preliminary doctoral field research in July 2015, I was invited to have lunch with feminist journalists at the offices of the feminist newspaper, La Cuerda, in Guatemala City. When one of the editors asked me to explain what I was interested in researching, I responded that I was interested in researching “*violencia contra la mujer y femicidio*” in rural communities. She quickly corrected me, saying that I should have instead referred to the problem as “*violencia contra las mujeres*” arguing that women are a plurality, and should not be referred to in the singular, particularly in a context as diverse and complex as that of Guatemala.

Reflecting on why I had referred to women in the singular form (particularly because in English, I exclusively use the plural form), I realised that I was in fact using and reproducing the Spanish terms used by the 2008 Law on Femicide, which defines and codifies VsAW as criminal offences punishable by law, and on an individual level. Given this small, but significant distinction to which the journalist alerted me, I began to consider how the operationalisation of the Law on Femicide may be fraught with contradictions and complexities. Bearing this in mind, I also recalled “the question of whose notions of womanhood come to be embodied in the process of framing and claiming rights” (Cornwall and Molyneux 2006, 1187). As stated in Chapter 2, part of the postwar development trajectory has been characterised by a rights-based approach to development, particularly from a gendered perspective. What challenges and tensions had emerged in the FTN in relation to these changes? How would the Law on Femicide and women’s rights in postwar rural Guatemala be understood and how would it be implemented in rural areas, where indigeneity, poverty and isolation from urban centres may confront and challenge its conventional and smooth application?

⁶²Ak'abal's work also appears as epigraph in Chapter 11, Los Masacres de Rio Negro. My translation.

In this chapter, I explore these queries, and highlight the limitations and paradoxes of the application of the Law on Femicide in rural communities. Ultimately, the findings suggest that despite an elaborate postwar legal infrastructure for reporting and addressing VsAW, access is extremely partial and limited in the FTN. Nonetheless, while new laws cannot necessarily be engaged with to the fullest extent by women in rural communities, they do provide space for women to negotiate around, and often serve as a preventative tool to which women community leaders frequently appeal in cases of violence. Further, they provide the foundation for a vocabulary of violences against women.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. I first briefly situate the legal infrastructure for VsAW in postwar Guatemala, as a legacy of the Peace Accords. I specifically draw attention to the tensions between “*la cultura de denuncia*” (culture of reporting), informed by the new laws in place, and “*la cultura de silencio*” (culture of silence), with respect to the reporting cases of VsAW in rural communities. I then illustrate key limitations of the operationalisation of the legal infrastructure in rural spaces, which I frame as roadblocks along *la ruta de denuncia* (path to reporting). I discuss the limitations to formal reports of VsAW made in the FTN, and emphasise that despite the challenges, the new legal changes have also provided frameworks and possibilities for the alleviation of VsAW in the postwar FTN.

5.2. Guatemala’s Postwar Legal Infrastructure for VsAW

5.2.1. Overview of the Laws

In this section, I aim to put Guatemala’s postwar VsAW legal infrastructure into context, building on Chapter 2. I begin by providing an overview of key components and legal mechanisms that define VsAW. The Peace Accords created an institutional context in which certain forms of VsAW could be criminalised, including specific provisions for the recognition and promotion of women’s rights. Article 1 Democratisation and Participatory Development, B. Participation of women in economic and social development recognises the “undervalued” role of women in Guatemalan society, calling for:

Revising national legislation and regulations to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in terms of economic, social, cultural and political participation, and to give effect to the government commitments deriving from the ratification of the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Three main laws constitute the legal infrastructure for addressing VsAW in postwar Guatemala (see figure 5.1).

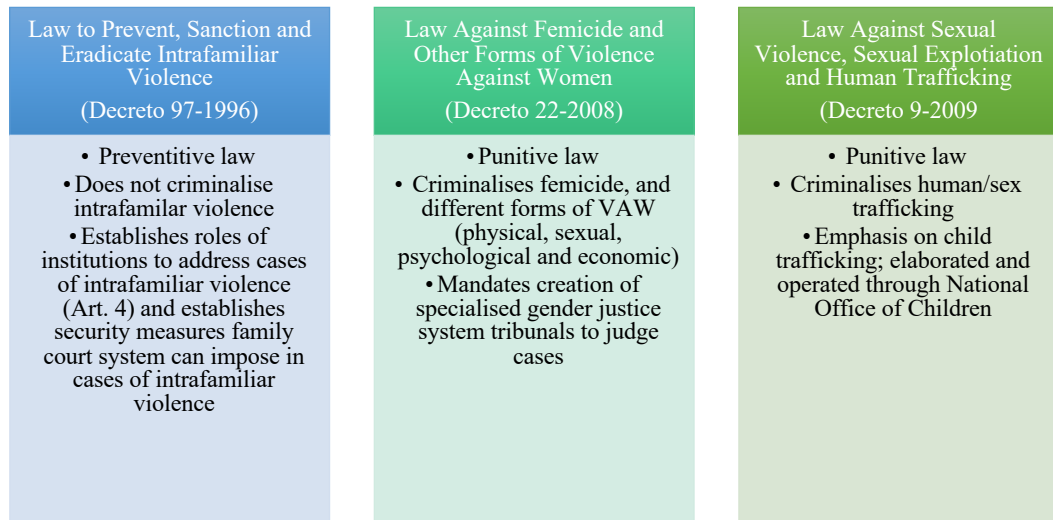


Figure 5.1: Trilogy of Laws on Violence Against Women in Postwar Guatemala

Out of these laws, two were particularly relevant to my research: Decreto 97-1996 and Decreto 22-2008. First, Decreto 97-1996 (the Law to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Intrafamiliar Violence) was passed as the Peace Accords were being finalised, and became the first in the trilogy of laws to address VsAW in Guatemala. The Law to Prevent, Sanction and Eliminate Intrafamiliar Violence outlines the different responsibilities of state institutions vis-à-vis providing support for victim-survivors, but ultimately is not a punitive, or penal law; rather it aims towards delegating responsibilities for addressing VsAW amongst different government institutions. It also establishes the provisions for putting in place *medidas de seguridad*, loosely translated as restraining orders, against perpetrators. In the FTN and other rural regions in Guatemala, local justices of the peace have the authority to establish *medidas de seguridad*. In the communities where I conducted my research, most of these cases are dealt with via the justices of the peace.

Supported by women's organisations and appeals of Congress, the Law on Femicide was passed in 2008 (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2), rendering physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence punishable crimes before the law. The Law on Femicide was passed through the coordination of women's organisations and members of congress in Guatemala. Following Costa Rica, Guatemala became the second country in Latin America to criminalise femicide, through a law celebrated by the women's movement in Guatemala City as a key victory for women's rights in the country (Drysdale-Walsh 2008; England 2014).

The Law on Femicide⁶³ defines VAW as

all action or omission based on belonging to the female sex that has as a result the immediate or subsequent physical, sexual, economic or psychological suffering of the woman, as in threats of such acts, coercion or the arbitrary privation of freedom, as it is produced in both the public and the private spheres (Article 5, GGM 2009)

It also provides a legal definition for femicide, which it terms as

the violent death of a woman, caused in the context of unequal power relations of men and women, in the exercise of gender power against women". Further, it defines power relations as "manifestations of control or domination that lead to the submission of the woman and discrimination against women (Article 5 g, GGM 2009).

Importantly, the Law on Femicide recognises men as perpetrators of gendered violence, and women as victims in these cases. While the law does not expressly use the language of domestic violence or VIF to refer to the forms of violence it criminalises, in practice, it applies solely in such cases. Further, the Law on Femicide is operationalised through the *ruta de denuncia*, or the path to reporting (see Figure 5.2⁶⁴). Like other crimes, this process involves the victim-survivor reporting the case to the Public Ministry (MP) MP or the National Civil Police (PNC). The case and related evidence is then reviewed by legal professionals at the MP, who presents this information before a judge, who then determines whether and where the case proceeds. The case is then tried in the relevant court (i.e.: the specialised femicide tribunal in cases of VsAW).

⁶³ The Law on Femicide refers to women who experience VsAW in different forms as victims (not as victim survivors). As such, I use the term victim in this context, recognising/recognizing that these women are also survivors.

⁶⁴ Also published on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OJGuatemala/status/683325405730750465/photo/1>, accessed on the 31st of July 2018.

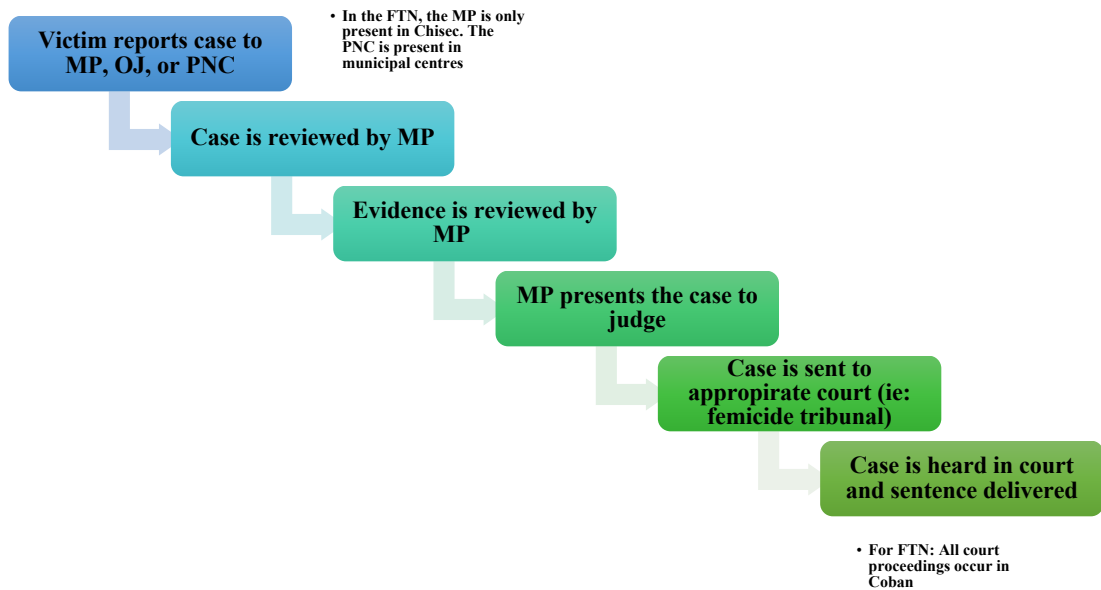


Figure 5.2 Ruta de denuncia . Source: OJ Guatemala 2016.

The Trilogy of Laws applies nationally in Guatemala. The Law on Femicide is implemented through the specialised gender justice system, which operates through specialised tribunals, which deal exclusively with cases of VsAW. Lawyers and judges working in this court system receive specialised gender justice training in order to work specifically on cases encompassed by the Law on Femicide. At present, these tribunals are operational in Guatemala City, Sololá, Huehuetenango and Cobán. In terms of legal service provision in the FTN, the Femicide Tribunal in Cobán is the main legal entity equipped to service cases of VsAW from the Alta Verapaz FTN municipalities.

These laws are also reinforced by state bodies that oversee and monitor the implementation of laws related to women’s issues. In particular, the Presidential Secretariat of Women (hereafter: SEPREM) is a key state body dedicated to the monitoring of women’s rights and implementation of the trilogy of laws in Guatemala. Coinciding with the passage of the Law on Femicide, the SEPREM also elaborated the National Policy for the Comprehensive Promotion of Women (PNPDIM) and the Plan for Equality of Opportunities (PEO) (see Figure 5.3). These policies were facilitated through the National Policy for the Promotion and Development of Guatemalan Women (1999). The current PNPDIM and PEO demonstrate the Guatemalan state’s plan for women’s development, in line with

obligations set out in the Peace Accords, and encompasses a timeframe of 2008-2023. The SEPREM is the governmental body responsible for executing and fulfilling both the PNPDIM and the PEO, and draws on cooperation from government institutions, OMMs, women’s organisations/NGOs, academia in order to implement the plan’s twelve focus areas (see Appendix 7).



Figure 5.3: Implementation Guide SEPREM 2008-2020. Source: Author’s photograph.

In this policy, the SEPREM lists 10 technical criteria in its implementation guide based around 12 Axes of focus areas (see Figure 5.4 and Appendix 7). In particular, technical criteria 10, which reproduce some of the language around justice, appeal to rights and rule of law, and “breaking the silence”:

No tolerance to any form of violence against women. Violence against women is the expression of domination and oppression that is exercised against us, limiting our development and impeding our exercise of our rights. There are different types or classes of violence, which go from physical, sexual, psychological, and financial abuse, up to death. *We must break the silence, help ourselves, and give ourselves strength to not tolerate any type of violence and bring those who commit violence against us to justice* (emphasis mine).

Further, the Axis 5: Eradication of VAW, has the “objective... to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against us [women] in all its forms. There is physical, economic, social, psychological sexual and discriminatory violence. The policy will/aims to realise many actions in 4 important fields: in ideas and feelings, in public spaces, and in institutional and legal strengthening” (SEPREM 2013). Taken together, Axis 5 and Technical Criteria 10 emphasise the role of the rule of law in addressing VsAW

in state-led approaches to the issue, and also comment on the notion of ‘breaking the silence’. The need (and ability) for victim-survivors to report cases via the state legal system is a central, underlying assumption in the policy (see figure 5.4).

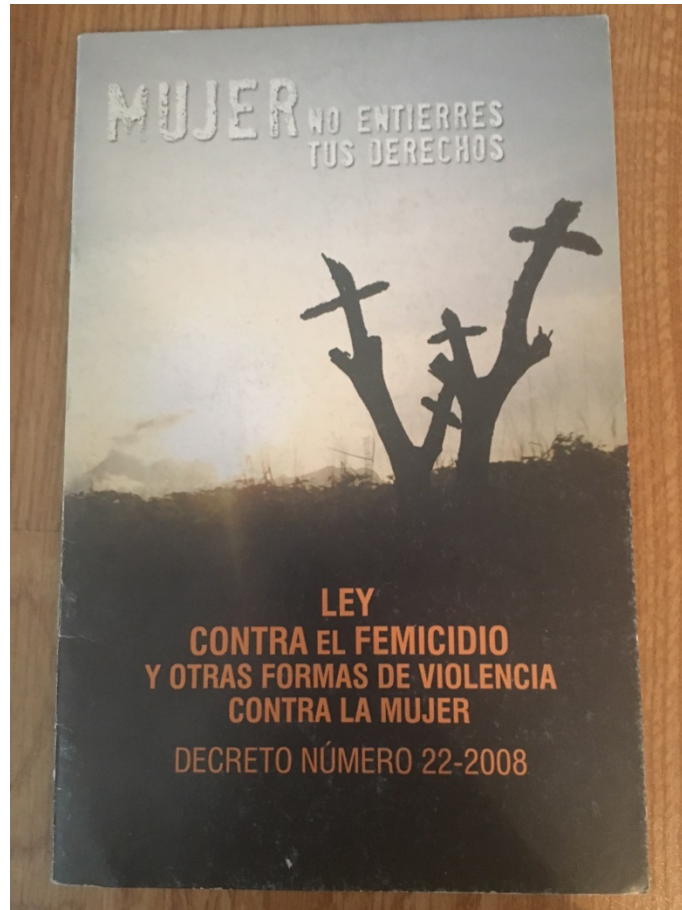


Figure 5.4: Copy of the Law on Femicide, *Fundacion Sobrevivientes*. Cover title: “Woman: Do not bury your rights” Source: Author’s photograph.

The emergence of the new legal frameworks speaks to the broader trend of politics in Latin America, where a form of judicialisation from below has become prominent particularly in relation to struggles for indigenous and human rights (Brinks 2003, 2012; Couso 2007; Huneus et al., 2012; Sieder 2012, 2015). The emergence of the Law on Femicide materialised through the activism of the women’s movement in Guatemala City. Indeed, this law and its emergence typified this trend of an increased appeal to state court systems and the rule of law by activists and social movements. It also was illustrative of the role of informal institutions in ensuring the promotion and protection of rights. Further, its

implementation has created a specific vocabulary with which state actors, NGOs, and other groups can engage to name and report crimes related to VsAW.

Moreover, Guatemala has been at the forefront of legislative developments for VsAW and femicide in Latin America and the world (Drysdale Walsh 2008; 2016; England 2014). Drysdale Walsh (2008) also notes that the development of a specialised justice system for dealing with VsAW and femicide forces states to “engender justice”, thrusting what is normally understood as a private issue into the public spotlight (57). This is an important development: VsAW and femicide are not “private” but play a structuring role in how public and private forms of violence are defined and how they construct different subjects. In the same vein, England (2014), argues in her discursive critique of the Law on Femicide that the legal developments present possibilities for transforming social understandings of sexual violence in Guatemala by introducing gender inequality into the formal legal system and introducing “a new vocabulary with which the public can begin to rethink, critique, and disable the cultural logic behind violence against women” (126). Relatedly, Aisling Swaine (2018) argues that legal frameworks that emerge in times of peace to address VsAW often provide the terminology to name forms of violence, which can be both empowering and disempowering for women seeking justice.

In this respect, the state and NGO workers I interviewed argued that the new legal frameworks outlined above have created a way to name the different types of violence women face, specifically as crimes. The importance of legal categories for VsAW parallels findings of Swaine, who argues in her study of peacetime VsAW in Ireland and Liberia that “[t]he act of labeling creates a space for women to reassess their experience of violence and to act on it if they so desire” (Swaine 2018, 212). In the case of the FTN, the NGO workers as well as legal professionals linked this process of classification to higher reporting rates of VsAW in recent years. In this respect, higher reporting rates could, to a certain extent, be attributed to the legal changes in the postwar years and women’s increased knowledge and understanding of rights and the laws.

Notably, the Law on Femicide creates a very specific typology of criminal acts related to the perpetration of VsAW by men. Related to this point, Carlota, a representative from the national Human Rights Ombudsmen’s Office in Guatemala City and coordinator of the *Red de Derivacion* in the Metropolitan region of Guatemala, alluded to the importance of the Law on Femicide. Similarly to other

NGO and legal professionals interviewed, she suggested that it had visibilised the violence that women face in Guatemala:

with regards to the Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, we refer to VAW in its physical, psychological, sexual, economic manifestation, or femicide, while before, we just referred to femicide as an assassination...so this is the confusion... registering reports of intrafamiliar violence... if you register a case with this name [of Intrafamiliar violence], we invisibilise VAW. Why? Because [Intrafamiliar violence technically] is not a crime (LG 2).

Technically speaking, domestic violence or VIF are not crimes in Guatemala. Following the passage of the 2008 Law on Femicide, VsAW specifically has become criminalised as *violencia contra la mujer* (in physical, sexual, psychological and economic forms) and femicide. The new legal terminology must be used if cases are to be registered and addressed, pointing to the distinction between VIF and VsAW in the Trilogy of Laws. Yet, as Lorena Fuentes (2016) found in her doctoral research on the discursive economy of femicide in Guatemala, the legal system generally addresses femicide (and VsAW) in the context of intrafamiliar violence, often mobilising heteronormative and socially conservative discourses to call for the end of VsAW. This was also found in the operationalisation of laws for indigenous women victim-survivors of violence in Mexico (Sierra 2007). Ultimately, while the law does not recognise intrafamiliar violence as criminally punishable, in practice, cases that are recognised and tried fall under the classification of VIF (see also: Drysdale Walsh 2016).

Consequently, the theme of an emergent *cultura de denuncia* (culture of reporting) in Guatemala arose in interviews with professionals working in service provision or in state bodies dedicated to addressing VsAW, and recurred throughout the research. Carlota also linked the visibilisation of VsAW with the *cultura de denuncia* in relation to the notion of “breaking the silence”, which was echoed in interviews with NGO practitioners. This key phrase is also employed by the SEPREM technical plan I discussed earlier. Paralleling other legal professionals, Carlota explained,

Well, in Guatemala...there is a way to talk about how there is physical, psychological, sexual, economic [violence]... which is established in the law. Now, at the root of this, the *cultura de denuncia* is growing, the rights of women are becoming more visibilised. Women *break the silence* in the system of justice....to obtain better security, better protection, or to initiate the penal process against the aggressor” (LG 2, emphasis mine).

In the quote above, Carlota attributes the *cultura de denuncia* to the presence of the legal infrastructure, and its operationalisation in postwar Guatemala. Her response exemplifies a broader theme: inevitably, in order to be effective, the laws effectively rely on victims or victims' families to come forward with allegations of crimes. This theme was typified by Andrea, a respected community leader in Chisec; Andrea had gained expertise in legal support and avenues for victim survivors because she had worked as a cleaner in a local judge's office in her youth. She recalled her own her experiences,

As a Representative in the Women's commission, for example, someone will come here, and will say, "Look, Doña [Andrea], I have problems with my husband, he hits me. What can I do?" And I ask, "what do you want to do? Do you want to separate from your husband, do you want to report him?" So if she decides to report her husband, I then take care of it. But if she decides that she does not want to, and wants to live like this, I cannot do anything when someone wants to live like this (CL 24).

Andrea draws attention to the emphasis placed on the need for the victim to come forward, highlighted by service practitioners and by women community leaders in the FTN. In order to gain access to legal justice and support, victim-survivors of VsAW are necessarily required to become agents themselves. This tension points to the limitations that community leaders face with respect to assisting victim-survivors of VsAW and also to the complexities, and contradictions of VsAW in the FTN.

Further, this reliance on victim-survivors to come forward ultimately generates a reliance or dependency on the existence of the *cultura de denuncia* for the application of the law to take effect; however, women require an awareness and access to services in order to "break the silence" and for the *cultura de denuncia* to develop. Thus, legal language may have rendered VsAW political, and recognised that aggression of women's bodies can occur beyond the domain of the home; it has also provided the means through which acts of aggression against women's bodies can be framed and recognised as inherently gendered. Yet, violence perpetrated by men against women that occurs in the private sphere runs the risk of invisibilisation if it is not registered in accordance with the legal frameworks.

Despite the emergence of a *cultura de denuncia* emphasised by government officials and NGO practitioners operating at a national/urban level, reporting is very complex in practice. Differing from the interviews with NGO practitioners working in urban settings, conducting interviews with women community leaders and

frontline service workers in the FTN revealed that the operationalisation of the legal infrastructure was challenging in practice for a number of reasons discussed in more detail below. Indeed, the idea that the *cultura de denuncia* existed alongside and in relation to a *cultura de silencio*, or culture of silence, was a prominent tension that emerged through my research. This is not to suggest, however, that women in urban contexts may also choose not to report cases of violence, or do not face stigma or deal with fear in reporting cases; rather, the *cultura de denuncia* is framed as most prominent where there is knowledge and understanding of legal rights and, more importantly, access to legal services which is greater in urban areas at least geographically if not financially. This dynamic thus presents a key distinction between the way in which the rule of law operates with respect to VsAW in urban spaces and in rural communities.

5.3. Roadblocks along the *ruta de denuncia*: the *cultura de silencio* in the FTN

As research elsewhere has shown, VsAW, particularly VIF do not manifest like other criminal acts. Rather, such violences are differentiated from other forms of criminal violence by their inherently gendered elements, and the power relations foregrounding their perpetration (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Kelly 1988). These distinguishing elements of VsAW render reporting such cases more complex. My findings speak to this literature, but also suggest that these power relations are multifaceted and compounded in rural contexts, where coloniality, histories of conflict, poverty and geographic isolation are important features to social, political and economic life, and shape gender relations. As I will elaborate in the subsections to follow, my findings also suggest that the development of a *cultura de denuncia*, so necessary for the operationalisation of the new laws, is complex and affected by these roadblocks.

In this section, I discuss how three main factors shaped the extent to which the new legal infrastructure was effective for women in the FTN, these factors are: the limitations of the legal system; the inaccessibility of the legal system; and fear and social stigma/shame associated with reporting cases. I refer to these factors as roadblocks on the *ruta de denuncia* (see Figure 5.5). Further, I found that these roadblocks contribute to the development of what interview participants in rural

communities often referred to as the *cultura de silencio* or culture of silence in reporting cases. The *cultura de silencio* did not mean that people were silent on the issue of VsAW; rather, the roadblocks made it such that reporting, and thus visibilisation of the issue from the perspective of the state and NGO practitioners, was rendered impossible. Indeed, the issue persists as a problem and is recognised as such in many rural communities, so often, the rule of law cannot be operationalised as intended, and thus appears invisibilised or impotent.

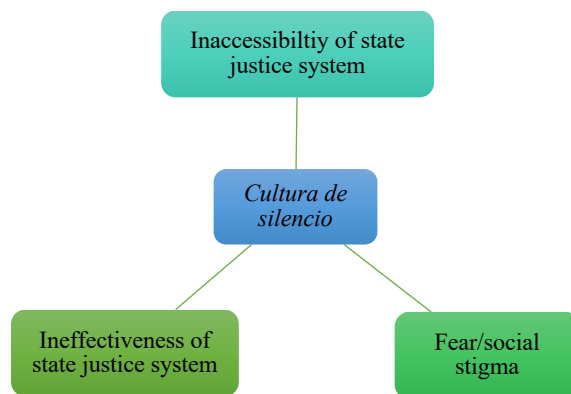


Figure 5.5: Roadblocks on the *ruta de denuncia* in the FTN

5.3.1. *Limitations of the legal system in the FTN*

A key roadblock on the *ruta de denuncia* was the (perceived) ineffectiveness of the state legal system. Alma, who works as a monitoring and assessment officer for the SEPREM office in Cobán, and oversees the monitoring and evaluation for VsAW services in the FTN, explained to me that the steps to follow in order to report a case are complex, and dependent on the presence of the justice system in communities in the FTN. In Section 2.1, I discussed the *ruta de denuncia*; yet in the context of the FTN, this path cannot always be reasonably followed. Reporting to the relevant bodies is not possible because they do not exist in many parts of the FTN, including the municipal centres;. Alma confirms my observation of a noted absence of legal services in most rural communities in the FTN:

In the Franja, there isn't a specific *ruta de denuncia* because the justice system does not exist in all the communities. Only in Chisec there is the Public Ministry. The Public Ministry is there to support the 4 municipalities of the FTN [In Alta Verapaz: Chisec, Raxruha, Fray Bartolome de las Casas and Chahal]. So what happens then in each municipality where there isn't the Public Ministry, the cases go directly to the National Civil Police. Then, the police, depending on the severity of the case, will recommend the case to the Justices of the Peace. And, if it is necessary, then they send the reported cases directly to the Public Ministry (LG 6).

Here Alma outlines the key steps that should be taken, but are not always pursued in cases of VsAW in the FTN, pointing to the complexity of recording cases. Alma's claim that the *ruta de denuncia* is complex, and pursued through a variety of avenues, was also reinforced by women community leaders.

In cases where access to reporting mechanisms exist, women viewed the system as slow and backlogged (see figure 5.2). Indeed, community leaders and NGO practitioners argued that even if the reports are made to the PNC, and then are taken to be assessed by the local justices of the peace, the cases receive no follow-up. As I stated in 5.2.1, the MP is responsible for the follow-up in the *ruta de denuncia*, yet, from a logistical perspective, for the entirety of the municipalities researched the MP only has an office in Chisec. Lorena, a young woman who worked for a women's NGO in Fray Bartolome de las Casas recounted her familiarity with the *ruta de denuncia* but exemplified the theme of backlogged cases: "there are laws, that sometimes accelerate the process, but sometimes, *the cases are just stuck in the system*" (NGO 3). The formal justice system was also viewed as corrupt; my interview with Lorena elucidated this theme:

Recently, a woman was telling me she went to report a case of violence. And they [the police] told her that she already had her *medida de seguridad*... [protection order]...that the case was resolved... but the same spouse beat her. He also worked in the *juzgado* [judge's office], so made sure that they didn't follow up with the case. This is... well, here we can't do anything, because they are the law, and they do that... this has affected lots of people to not want to make known what is happening. It is fear. Why would I go to report, if they do nothing? *They do nothing!* (NGO 3).

In this case, the legal authorities intervened to prevent the case from going through the Guatemalan justice system, pointing to limitations to the application of the legal solutions, speaking to the literature on judicialisation in Latin America more broadly. Indeed, the findings here parallel broader problems with legal changes in Latin America; similarly, Javier Couso (2007) found that despite increased rights for prisoners in Chile, dealing with courts responsible for ensuring such protections was

frustrating, and marred by the “passivity” and lack of will from within the legal institutions (343).

The theme of institutional corruption and passivity that arose in my findings reinforces those of other research in Guatemala, where others have noted the level of political and institutional corruption, and also spoke to some of the historical, neo-colonial antecedents of such corruption (Nelson and McAllister 2015; England 2014; Sala 2014; Sanford 2015). Furthermore, the findings speak to the literature on femicide in urban Guatemala, which notes that most perpetrators of femicide are never prosecuted, and that the state justice system allows for impunity to persist (Bellino 2010; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Drysdale-Walsh 2008; Musalo et al., 2010; Nolin and Fraser 2016; Torres 2008; Velasco 2008). To this effect, Velasco (2008) states: “Officials discount the severity of the femicide; they fail to conduct proper investigations and allow perpetrators to remain at large; and by omission and a system of impunity, the Guatemalan government is complicit in the terror” (398). The issue of corruption and its extension into the VsAW judicial infrastructure, which has been noted in urban cases of femicide, applies, and is perhaps exacerbated in rural cases of VsAW.

As an illustration of the problem of institutional corruption and ineffectiveness, Lorena also explained a case where a victim-survivor was left without support in a case, because the police officers lacked the money to buy the needed gasoline for their vehicles, in order to respond to the case:

I go to the OMM on Thursdays, and there, I hear and see a lot of cases [of victims-survivors who come to the office]. This office works directly in dealing with the cases of different types of violence. Recently, a woman arrived to report a case of violence, saying: “What can I do, I was beaten [by my partner] and I called the police, but what did the police say to me? That they didn’t have petrol to come and rescue me.” So this makes you mad to hear this. The *senora* had previously been in the hospital [as a result of the abuse], and she even had gotten the *medidas de seguridad* [protection order] and the police still did not go to rescue her! (NGO 3).

In this case, the victim-survivor had managed to obtain the necessary protection order, and police still had failed to intervene – either because of a lack of petrol, or a lack of will; as a result, the OMM was left powerless to provide further help.

Another important theme relating to institutional ineffectiveness was the idea that the legislative changes and women’s rights legal frameworks in Guatemala were beyond the scope of the mandates of service providers in the FTN. Indeed, this was

reflected in the case recounted above: the OMM and support worker felt powerless to assist further. In addition, law and justice for victim-survivors of violence were framed as externally imposed frameworks for supporting women who were “breaking the silence”. The laws were framed as outside, untouchable powers that were beyond the control of those working to support victim-survivors, and were also framed as unmalleable forces. Luz, a nurse who worked with a women’s organisation in the FTN typified this point with reference to a recent case she had accompanied:

On Sunday, there was another case of sexual violence, an adolescent girl. We have been following up with this case [in the OMM] so that it moves forward. But the law always has its own process. It moves very slowly. Although the women [victim-survivors] want things to move quickly, it does not work like this. *It is not in our hands* (NGO 10).

Here, Luz alludes to the sense of inevitability and helplessness that arose in other interviews, with regards to the problems identified within the legal institutions in which the OMM engages in order to support victim-survivors of VsAW. Further, she positions the OMM as a neutral mediator and intermediary between the rule of law and legal justice and the victim-survivor seeking these services.

In contrast with a sense of perceived neutrality of women frontline workers, who could only act within the confines of the laws, community leaders noted the biased nature of local justices of the peace, and framed this as another inhibiting factor for rural victim-survivors seeking legal justice. The issue of racial and gender-based discrimination was common throughout the findings: women felt that the system did not take cases of VsAW seriously because the victim-survivors were indigenous, often poor, and were women. More broadly, NGO practitioners also argued that women in the FTN tended to represent some of the most marginalised people in Guatemala, given the different discriminations faced. Luz elaborated on this point: “Sometimes no one takes us seriously, more so because we are *indigenous* women. In Guatemala... there is discrimination in every government institution” (NGO 10). My interview with Luz exemplified the pervasiveness of discrimination in state institutions in Guatemala, which hindered access to them. Indeed, the different, intersecting layers of discrimination highlighted in interviews demonstrate intersectionality in practice, elaborated by Black feminists Crenshaw (1989), Cho, Crenshaw and McCall (2013), and Hill Collins (1990), as I argue in Chapter 3.

Overall, the institutional limitations and the sense of mistrust and hopelessness constituted a key and important roadblock along the *ruta de denuncia*, discouraging women to report cases to the state justice system throughout the FTN.

5.3.2. *Inaccessibility of the legal system*

In addition to the ineffectiveness of the state legal system, a key, logistical roadblock highlighted in findings is the inaccessibility of the feminist legal system for Maya Q'eqchi' women living in rural areas. This inaccessibility manifests in several ways. First, the geographic isolation of many communities in the FTN renders it both costly and time-consuming for reports to be made. I noted this in interview findings, and also through reflections from my fieldnotes. A great deal of time was usually required for me to travel to communities to conduct interviews: my journey by vehicle would often begin as early as 5:30 a.m. in order to reach a community by 8:30 a.m., and be able to meet with the community leaders; further, my transport was coordinated and facilitated by a driver and with the support of the DMM in Chisec, making the journey feasible and more time-efficient. For women living outside the municipal centres, access to private transport is extremely limited and costly. While public transport exists in some communities in the form of micro-buses, I was told that in many cases, very few buses ran, albeit unreliably, during the day (for instance, in one community, only two buses left daily, at 6:00 a.m. and at 3:00 p.m.). Limited transport options meant that in many communities, any woman who wished to make a formal report had little flexibility in doing so. Ultimately, then, due to the geographically isolated nature of communities, traveling to access the Guatemalan legal system was for some next to impossible, especially given the costs of travel. This theme parallels research conducted by Janet Bowstead (2011), who found that rural space and isolation can act as a constraint for women seeking refuge from domestic abuse. The isolated nature of many communities of the FTN and the rurality of the region thus acts as a constraint for Maya Q'eqchi' women in the FTN trying to seek support from women's organisations or the state, but lacking the resources in order to do so⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ It should be noted, however, that while many women had access to mobile phones, phone and internet service was not always reliable in rural, isolated communities. Indeed, when traveling in many communities outside of municipal centres, I noted that I also lost mobile service. Importantly, men's control over the use of mobile phones or access to this technology did not arise in the findings, but may be an area for future research; perhaps this was the case because access to regular service

Thus, the logistics of the *ruta de denuncia* and the geography and political economy of rural life also shape the accessibility of the formal legal system. Typically, the costs of reporting cases of VsAW in rural communities exceed the income of victim-survivors, rendering it difficult for cases to be brought forward: the reporting and trial process involves travelling as far as Cobán (for some communities, longer than a half-day's journey) multiple times. Also, even if the victim-survivor found the economic means and time to travel to Cobán, there was no way of guaranteeing the perpetrator was present for the relevant proceedings: a summons from a judge in Cobán could hardly be enforced in practice in isolated communities hours away, with little presence of state officials and authorities. Further, in communities where men are main breadwinners, the challenge of obtaining access to funds to travel to municipal centres to report cases, or to seek legal support in Cobán renders this possibility virtually obsolete. As such, criminalisation of VsAW and the mechanics of the legal infrastructure operate to the disadvantage of rural women: the laws, while recognising gender power dynamics in cases of VsAW, fail to account for the power dynamics at stake in the process of reporting.

Another logistical factor rendering the system inaccessible is the issue of language barriers (this point has also been raised elsewhere; see Erturk 2005). Many rural communities are solely Q'eqchi' speaking, yet the official language of the legal system and state institutions is Spanish. As such, for rural communities in the FTN (and arguably, elsewhere in Guatemala), where a large proportion of the population is indigenous, the problems around access to legal services were attributed to discriminatory practices permeating all levels of government institutions. This was also reinforced by access to justice in communities; for instance, two out of three justices of the peace offices in the municipalities where I conducted research, were presided over by judges who did not speak Q'eqchi'. In the justice of the peace office in Fray Bartolome de las Casas, funding for an interpreter (Spanish-Q'eqchi')

was limited. Nonetheless, many women community leaders, particularly those who spent a good deal of time in the municipal centres participating in events or workshops, still managed to make use of apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook to communicate. These apps were often inexpensive to access with certain phone packages and frequent discounts offered. Furthermore, research in Africa has shown that mobile phone access can contribute to women's economic inclusion by providing them access to online banking (see: Asongu 2013). As technology and networks develop, future research may illuminate similar links in Guatemala.

had been diverted to paying the costs of an additional office assistant, due to the high volume of cases entering into the office.

Further, it should also be noted that the OMM and DMM as well as the local NGOs were instrumental in ensuring women could access to the limited state support for cases of VsAW. Indeed, support workers from these bodies accompanied women on cases brought forth to the local justices of the peace. In this respect, support workers were needed as intermediaries for women and often provided necessary translation, pastoral support and guidance. They also were required to negotiate around institutional and bureaucratic hurdles, which rendered the system oftentimes inaccessible. Indeed, having institutional support from the municipality was key in reporting cases. An extract from my fieldnotes illustrates the role of a gatekeeper in facilitating who was permitted access to the judge, which at times presented an institutional hurdle in bringing cases forward:

Following our meeting with the women community leaders, [Antonia] accompanied me to the local court in Chisec in order to arrange an interview with the judge. The office was open and staffed, for the first time since I had begun my field research. Antonia explained to me that judge's secretary was a sort of gatekeeper in this case and often did not like to receive people: we would have to ask her permission for the interview, and Antonia would need to introduce me. The office was a small, white building across from the municipality and central park, with one entrance that was staffed by a security guard. Unlike the office in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, we were not permitted to enter. Instead, Antonia asked to speak with the judge's personal secretary, explaining to the officer that I was a researcher and would like to arrange an interview with the judge. We waited outside for a couple of minutes, and the secretary came out to meet us. Antonia gave the necessary introductions. The secretary, a ladina woman, appeared initially tentative: she said the interview would be possible, but that the judge was very busy, and was not present for the entire day. We exchanged contact details, and it was decided that I could return next Thursday to conduct the interview when the judge would be present and not working on any cases. Afterwards, as we walked back to the DMM, Antonia expressed her surprise at the relative ease with which the interview was arranged, explaining that usually they [the women from the DMM] struggle to get past the secretary and speak to the judge.

For me, my status as an outsider and researcher may have contributed to getting access for an interview; Antonia had explained to me that making appointments with the judge continued to be a challenge because the gatekeeper often decided who could pass (a point echoed in conversations I had had with other women from the DMM). Bureaucracy thus posed an issue in terms of inaccessibility as well.

Finally, while the VsAW legal infrastructure adds a gendered lens to justice, services that exist in Guatemala City are not available in the isolated communities of the FTN. For instance, Drysdale Walsh (2016) notes that the Office for Attention to Victims (OAV) was established to provide comprehensive services for victim-

survivors, and works in collaboration with the PNC. In this context, however, she observes that this service is still ineffective “due in part to its lack of institutional focus on women” (35). My findings speak to this research: in the FTN, gender-specific services, apart from local NGOs and the OMMs and DMM, are limited in scope and effectiveness. The local justices of the peace, the PNC and the MP have no gender-specific focus, and no training in gender sensitivity.

5.3.3. *Fear, Stigma and Social Norms*

The institutional limitations and ineffectiveness, particularly related to discrimination and corruption, feed into existing, historically entrenched fears associated with the Guatemalan state. Indeed, paradoxically, the institutional push for women’s rights has relied on the state to move forward. Yet the state is the same entity complicit in cases of wartime sexual violence, the purveyor of rights and security for women victim-survivors of gendered violence.⁶⁶ In this respect, new legislation related to VsAW did not appear in isolation from the political transformation of the postwar years; rather it is part of the provisions made for the inclusion of women’s rights as part of Guatemala’s postwar development trajectory. This tension has been highlighted in other postwar contexts; for instance, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, as Jelke Boesten (2012) suggests in the Peruvian postwar context, a historical continuum links the perpetration of wartime sexual violence (specifically, rape) and sexual violence in postwar contexts. Indeed, as stated in Chapter 2, the entirety of the FTN was a concentrated site for much of the violence perpetrated by the state against indigenous people that occurred during the war. Thus, bearing in mind the historical legacies, it is not surprising to note a sense of mistrust and fear linked to the Guatemalan state and law enforcement.

Consequently, the COCODEs, or local development councils located in villages intervened in most rural cases of VsAW: bearing in mind the mistrust of state institutions as well as the historical wrongdoings associated with the state, community based interventions that had evolved also differed considerably in aims

⁶⁶ Broadly speaking, the Peace Accords facilitated the transformation of the Guatemalan legal landscape; other laws and legislative changes, such as the Reform to the Mining (2012) and Guatemala’s participation in CAFTA-DR can all be understood as stemming from the context of the Peace Accords, which also promoted the increase of FDI as a main pillar of Guatemala’s postwar development model (Short 2007). See also Chapter 2.

from the state. In this respect, reconciliation between partners was understood to be the key aim of intervention in communities, an important distinction from the state narratives on the issue. Indeed, much of the material produced by the OJ and femicide tribunals perpetuates messages of women raising their voice, breaking the cycle of violence through reporting, and cutting ties to abusive partners. This was also reinforced by SEPREM and in interviews with NGO professionals in Cobán. Furthermore, the Law on Femicide is a punitive law, which criminalises VsAW. In many cases, however, my findings counter some of these messages: women community leaders often sought instead to educate men about the wrongs of different forms of violence, and to restore family harmony. This point was highlighted by Petrona, who recalled a case she had accompanied:

After this other women [who had been burned]... another woman had a problem, at 5 in the morning, her husband wanted to have intimate relations with her and she didn't want to. And her husband began to beat her, and they fought between themselves. And then she went to stay in the office. This happened in 2014. And they went to the judge, who told the man that what he did was wrong, and that it was punishable by 12 years in prison. So the man promised not to do it again, and said he would love his wife, so now things are better (CL 24).

In this case, the perpetrator was made to fear legal consequences, and pressured into stopping the abuse. Further, here, the law was used as an educational tool, above and beyond the community or the COCODE. Because the law prohibited marital rape and physical VAW, the threat of possible incarceration was used to prevent further violence, but actual incarceration was not sought. In a similar vein, Maria Teresa Sierra found that despite challenges facing indigenous Mexican women in accessing and using the law, “recourse to the law plays an important part in pressuring the defendant to fulfill his commitments or discouraging him from separating from his wife” (Sierra 2007, 119). The law can thus become an educational tool, and, as Sierra (2007) also found, can be instrumentalised to prevent violence from escalating. My findings paralleled this tension.

Relating to the aim of reconciliation, as Nelly, a member of the *Consejo de Mujeres* explained,

Here in our community, yes there is a lot of violence, there are women who are beaten by their husbands, and sometimes fathers abandon their children, and there are cases where mothers abandon their children. We have tried to respond to these cases and look for a solution to the problem. When it happens that one partner leaves, the first we do is try to talk to them, so that both forgive each other, and if that does not work, then we send them to the [indigenous] authorities.... the COCODES and the indigenous authorities will help me and

see that... we have to unite to find a solution, and thankfully they help me to understand the situation. Up until now, not a single case has gotten to the point where we have had to take it to the [state] authorities (CL 29).

Taking cases to state authorities is framed by many community leaders, including Nelly, as a last resort: indeed, the emphasis made by women community leaders in the FTN – on a need for reconciliation over punishment – differed considerably from the punitive aims of the Law on Femicide. As such, many cases did not get reported because the aims of communities were different: to restore and preserve family harmony, to educate the male perpetrator against committing any form of violence in the future. These aims of reconciliation and preserving family harmony were rooted in a logic of heteronormative, traditional family values, a point which has also been found to shape laws on VsAW and femicide (see Fuentes 2016; Baitenmann et al., 2007; Sierra 2007). They also reflected the importance of community legal structures and indigenous authorities in rural communities (Ekern 2015; Sieder 2015).

Importantly and relatedly, rural communities are also shaped by close social networks; in communities where fewer than 100 families live, for instance, a perceived sense of shame associated with reporting cases was a prominent theme. This point speaks to the discursive critique posited by England (2014), which also positioned stigma as a factor inhibiting reporting cases of VsAW in Guatemala. While such stigma and shame may also persist in urban spaces, the closely linked networks of rural communities are especially important in this regard. Gendered expectations of rural sexuality and respectability shape social relations, often inhibiting the reporting of cases. This acted as a further roadblock along the *ruta de denuncia* in the FTN. Indeed, research on gender and rurality in other contexts has shown that social norms and rural conceptualisations of women's acceptable and respectable roles in communities are often deeply entrenched, with normative masculinities and femininities taking a prominent role (Campbell 2000; Little and Jones 2000; Little 2002).

In my research, as stated earlier in the chapter, VsAW was viewed by many as a normal part of everyday life for many women, particularly in terms of VIF. The notion of VsAW as normalised has been discussed elsewhere; for instance, a study presented to CEDAW of the different forms of gendered violence in Nicaragua noted that Nicaraguan women viewed domestic violence as a normal part of family life, one which women must simply endure (Perez-Landa, 2001). Similarly, Ana Alonso

(2007) noted that women in Mexico viewed violence as a normal part of life, and that contesting violence transgressed “normative femininity” inherent to social norms and community relations. Speaking to this research, in the case of the FTN, reporting violence represented transgressing the normalised expectations that women would simply endure it, and a break with social expectations. This fear contributed to the roadblocks in reporting.

Fear over social pressure also meant that women often forgave perpetrators, an issue raised by many of the women from the *consejo de mujeres* in the interviews. Indeed, a common occurrence in cases of VsAW was for victim-survivors to retract reports of cases to the authorities after the reports had formally been made. For instance, Petrona recounted a case she had assisted in her community, whereby a woman who had resisted rape by her partner was beaten. Following reporting this case, the judge intervened to prevent the perpetrator from being incarcerated for the maximum period. In a similar case, another member of the *consejo de mujeres* called Nelly recounted:

But there was a case, there was the wife of a teacher. He went to jail – the wife had asked me to help, because he hit her a lot – and we went before the COCDE and the indigenous authorities, and signed an act, but she herself went to get him out of jail! (CL 29).

Forgiveness of perpetrators was another important tendency in the findings; here, Nelly states how, despite facing physical violence and aggression, the victim-survivor called for the release of the detained perpetrator. The theme of forgiveness was exemplified by Valentina, who emphasised that forgiveness enabled the continuation of what she referred to as a cycle of violence:

This is what we seen in cases of violence, it affects [women] in all ways – economical, physical, sexual, and more. And psychological ways. Many women don’t get out of the cycle [of violence] for this reason. Because one day, they are beaten, the same day or the following day, the men come back to beg forgiveness, and the cycle starts again (CL 25).

Forgiveness may be linked to social stigma, economic dependence on perpetrators, as well as to community pressure for reconciliation over incarceration or separation. In this respect, because of the importance attributed to social networks in the rural communities, there was a large emphasis on fear of what others would say or do if a woman reported. Women in communities feared the social implications of reporting cases of VsAW, a theme to which I return in the following chapter.

Further, fear of perpetrators and abusers was framed as an inhibiting factor in victims coming forward. The community workers explained that the women they assisted were concerned about reporting violence because of the risks they perceived in terms of retaliation, an escalation of violence and social stigma. These concerns were intensified owing to their economic dependence on the perpetrators. In this respect, a community leader, member of women's commission, and former COCODE secretary who asked to be called Candelaria, told me,

There are some women who go on allowing their husbands to abuse them, but there are some who don't stand for it. [For those who don't report] it is because they are afraid to denounce, and think that their husband can do something more serious [if they report]. But it shouldn't be this way (CL 27).

Here, Candelaria highlights that women are afraid that reporting cases of violence will lead to further harm. In such cases, fear felt by victims impedes addressing VsAW. Consequently, "the cycle of violence" continues for victim-survivors. In the previous chapter, I discussed the tensions between the *cultura de silencio* (culture of silence) and *cultura de denuncia* (culture of reporting). The *cultura de silencio* identified by interviewees reinforces the normalisation of VIF in households and communities.

Further, communities developed their own responses to addressing VsAW where accessing other solutions were not feasible. For instance, in a follow up interview I conducted with Maria Isabel, the community leader, she explained to me that cases of VsAW had decreased in the year since my last visit to her village. When I asked why, she explained:

Maybe it is the fruit of our labour, we have told to the men, but for example here, they [the COCODE] has enforced a fine... they tell them to resolve the problem, or they will be fined, they tell them that the Muni [municipality] will fine them, and equally, if they go all the way to Chisec to report the case, they require the transport, the money, and with this, the problem has been diminishing since last year (CL 39).

She elaborated that in cases of VsAW, both parties were required to pay a fine of 100 Quetzales each (roughly equivalent to a day and a half's work at the minimum wage), and that this money then was used by the COCODE to fund their transport to municipal meetings.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ As of January 2017, the minimum wage for Guatemalan agricultural workers is 10.86 Quetzales per hour. As I elaborate in Chapter 4, however, high rates of poverty and extreme poverty in the FTN indicate that many workers are not paid the minimum wage (Minitrab 2018).

The COCODE's approach to addressing VsAW in their community, aims to translate existing laws into an adaptable, local approach. This particular experience in the context of the COCODEs in the FTN could also be conceptualised as what has been referred to elsewhere as the vernacularisation of human rights (Dunford and Madhok 2015; Levitt and Merry 2009; Madhok 2013; Rojas 2013; Sharma 2011). More specifically, vernacularisation can be defined as "the appropriation and local adoption of globally generated ideas and strategies" (Levitt and Merry 2009, 441). Levitt and Merry (2009; 2011) have also explored how women's rights are reconstituted in different Western and non-Western contexts, in a way that appeals and corresponds with local culture, society, and politics. As Dunford and Madhok (2015) state, "vernacular rights cultures arise as movements make demands for rights that are inflected with the particular cultures, histories, and contexts of political mobilization" (2). The concept of vernacular rights elucidates how some groups may rearticulate rights to correspond to a given context and use them to make specific demands.

In the context of rights, or laws, this process of vernacularisation illustrates how authorities or organised groups may reinterpret rights in order to suit a local context; the COCODE in this community responded to the integration of new laws and frameworks to address VsAW in the FTN and in Guatemala by adapting it to local social norms. Relatedly, Maria Isabel, the community leader quoted above did not criticise the approach to dealing with VsAW by the COCODE; rather, she attributed it to reducing cases of such violence in her community. Yet, this particular solution risked silencing victim-survivors. Further, it reproduced existing gender hierarchies: the COCODEs are mostly dominated by men, and in this particular case, men made the decision to impose the fine structure on those wishing to report a case of VsAW, without taking into account the power dynamics and inequalities at stake (for instance, the high cost of the fine, women's dependence of women on men, and the willingness of the main male cash holders, also the perpetrator, to pay for this).

In her recent research comparing the effectiveness of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) in relation to state-led responses to VAW in Nicaragua and Guatemala, Drysdale Walsh (2016) has argued that agency and "coordinated efforts" between state institutions, NGOs and other organisations play a key role in building institutions that respond to VsAW (17). In rural communities, this kind of collaboration and institution building relies on rural social networks and local

governance structures. While the DMM played an important role, so do the COCODEs; in the case discussed above, this involvement came with unexpected and controversial outcomes.

In the interview with Maria Isabel discussed above, I was accompanied by Antonia, the sub-director of the DMM. Following the interview we discussed the implications of the fine system; Antonia explained that many women in the communities where the DMM worked with the *Consejo de Mujeres* had little to no access to economic resources. In the transition from subsistence agriculture to wage labour economy, men were the primary earners of money, alluding to the link between economic limitations and social norms and stigma. Thus, the rate of reports in Maria Isabel's community would have likely been decreasing not because of fewer incidents of VsAW, but rather, because women would not have had access to the economic resources to report in the first place. Indeed, the case in Maria Isabel's community is particularly salient, given that it exemplifies the intersection between the inaccessibility of the state justice system (because of its geographically isolated location, hours away from the municipal centre); social norms and stigma (the response of the COCODE inherently favoured male perpetrators); and the political economy of rural life (the gendered economic inequalities rendering it virtually impossible for victim-survivors to report cases of abuse and/or VsAW). This instance was illustrative of how judicialisation from above had imposed certain laws that were then vernacularised to suit a particular, rural context, to the possible detriment of women in the community.

5.3.4. *The FTN and the limitations to state justice for VsAW*

The three main roadblocks I have presented are not exclusive categories; rather, they are mutually reinforcing factors that inhibit the reporting of cases in the state legal system. For instance, the inaccessibility of the Guatemalan justice system for rural communities in the FTN is reinforced by structural inequalities, which in turn influence social norms related to women's position in society. Fears of reporting can be linked to economic dependence on male partners, and the limited economic means to report. The ineffectiveness of the justice system for indigenous people may also be considered a demonstration of the coloniality of the rule of law in Guatemala.

My findings illustrate important limitations to the operationalisation of the specialised justice system in cases of femicide. Similarly, research in urban areas found that it is reportedly confusing for practitioners, and introduces so-called complex terminology around misogyny and patriarchy (Musalo et al., 2010). Further, femicide cases rest largely in impunity: Musalo et al., (2010) point out that only 2% of perpetrators of femicide actually face a conviction (163). Former President of the Supreme Court of Justice and former Attorney General of Guatemala Thelma Aldana (2013) has likewise suggested that significant institutional barriers prevent the implementation of the law. Relatedly, Godoy-Paiz (2008) speaks in reference to the Law on Femicide, noting the neoliberal shift in postwar Guatemala: “while neoliberalism is premised on the freedom of contract, if the subjects of rights lack the conditions and resources to exercise their rights, freedom of contract does not truly constitute freedom” (38-40). Bearing the roadblocks identified above in mind, it was apparent that these issues were compounded by the geographic and political economic isolation experienced by women in the FTN.

These roadblocks are not intended as an exhaustive list of factors that limit the implementation of the Law on Femicide and legal trilogy. Further, these roadblocks may also exist in urban spaces, to varying degrees and in different ways. Importantly, these key roadblocks, and the ways in which these factors were emphasised in rural communities, illustrates some of the limitations to the judicialisation of VsAW in postwar Guatemala. In particular the implementation of laws related to VsAW is only successful insofar as they can reasonably be applied. The lacuna between laws developed in urban Guatemala and their application in rural communities such as those of the FTN, demonstrates how judicialisation from above has its own limitations, and shapes the ways in which communities relate to the law. In this respect, with the aims of preventing further continued violence and educating perpetrators against abusive behaviours, many community authorities and women community leaders encouraged women victim-survivors to reconcile with male perpetrators, representing a gap between the punitive aims of the laws and the goals of those intervening in cases in rural communities. Ultimately the roadblocks identified along the *ruta de denuncia* inhibit the operationalisation of the legal solutions.

Further, the roadblocks on the *ruta de denuncia* illustrated an intersection between symbolic forms of violence and structural forms of violence. Firstly, the

geographic isolation, and the political economic conditions that inhibit reports being made reflect a form of structural violence, in the sense that it is the wider geographical and socioeconomic circumstances that are exposing women victim-survivors of violence to increased risks of everyday violence (Bourgois 2004; Farmer years). Secondly, the symbolic power of social norms and stigma compounds the structural factors preventing women from coming forward. As a result, multiple violences are at stake.

The ways in which the legal system operates in the FTN also exemplifies the different axes of the matrix illustrated in Chapter 3 (see also Figure 5.6). Indeed, relations of land and territory (particularly in terms of rurality and geography) influence the inaccessibility of the justice system, as well as the gendered inequalities of political economic change. The class, gendered and ethnic inequalities of social norms get reproduced in the application of the justice system, rendering it ineffective for many indigenous women. This dynamic can also be elaborated and understood through the concept of coloniality, which highlights how colonial legacies survive into the present. The challenges women face in accessing the law, and their exclusions from it, reflect how these legacies often erase or ignore the needs of indigenous women. Furthermore, historical legacies have shaped the formation of the Guatemalan state; historically speaking, indigenous people have been marginalised, excluded and killed by state policies.

Inaccessibility of state justice system	Ineffectiveness of state justice system	Fear, social stigma and norms
-Geographic inaccessibility and isolation -Limited transport options -Costs and time involved in travel -Language barriers in state justice system	-Corruption -Lack of resources and institutional presence in the FTN -Slow processing times -Intersectional discrimination in legal system	-Forgiveness of perpetrators by victim-survivors -Mistrust and fear associated with state justice system -Normalised violence and fear of social perception if reporting -Social pressure for reconciliation over incarceration of perpetrators



Relevant axes of the matrix:
 -Land and territory (rurality and geography)
 -Gendered dimensions of political economy of development (gendered impacts of political economic change)
 -Gendered social relations (class and ethnic inequalities)
 -Gendered historical violence and its legacies (coloniality)

Relevant axes of the matrix:
 -Gendered social relations (class and ethnic inequalities)
 -Gendered historical violence and its legacies (coloniality)

Relevant axes of the matrix:
 -Gendered historical violence and its legacies (normalisation of VsAW)
 -Gendered social relations (gendered norms, expectations and inequalities; masculinities and femininities)

Figure 5.6 Roadblocks along the *ruta de denuncia* in relation to the Matrix of VsAW

In order for violence to be recognised, it has to be named and reported. For indigenous women in the FTN, however, this process has been compromised by the roadblocks and the limited services available. In this respect, land and territory and the gendered dimensions of the political economy of development are central in shaping the extent to which access to the law and legal services is possible. The rural

geography of the FTN, and the isolation of communities, is also an important inhibiting factor. Further, because of the gendered nature of political economic relations of households, women are often financially dependent on perpetrators they wish to report. The legal infrastructure generates unintended consequences, reproducing power dynamics of political economic, gender and ethnic inequality: in context of rural areas, this process is compounded.

Furthermore, historically, laws have never favoured indigenous people in Guatemala, let alone indigenous women. The gendered historical violence of the internal armed conflict and legacies of the past shape mistrust and fear of the state among indigenous communities; these legacies may also shape how in practice, legal institutions operate in discriminatory ways, reflecting long legacies of exclusion in Guatemalan history. The VsAW judicial infrastructure represents a rights-based approach and legacy of the Peace Accords: they are not apolitical, and while they are part of a trajectory of recognising the different forms of violence women experience in Guatemala, the exclusions they produce are part of a longer legacy and coloniality of laws and policies that have disadvantaged indigenous women in Guatemala.

Relatedly, the limited effectiveness of state institutions in addressing gender issues is not unique to Guatemala. For instance, Gideon found that Chilean state health institutions which were involved in the mainstreaming of gender issues had limited impacts “...beyond a mere ‘add on’...” in practice (Gideon 2006 345). While the new laws may reflect a recognition of VsAW, in application, they fall seriously short.

Nonetheless, the laws are necessary, and have had some positive impact: they have created frameworks to address some forms of violence that women face. Further, the threat of incarceration also had an impact in disciplining perpetrators. Paradoxically, however, despite this emancipatory possibility of the laws and bearing the roadblocks identified above in mind, the laws themselves could also be understood to reproduce a form of epistemic violence: the discourses of the VsAW infrastructure and their operationalisation produce exclusions to the detriment of the indigenous women of the FTN. Indeed, the subaltern often cannot and does not necessarily speak the language of the *cultura de denuncia*, as a result of many inhibiting factors discussed in this chapter (see Spivak 1988).

Finally, gendered social relations are central in shaping the ways in which communities and women victim-survivors as well as community leaders interact

with the VsAW legal infrastructure. Gendered social relations shape the aims of intervention in cases, with emphasis on reconciling couples, rather than punishment. As discussed in Chapter 3, following Bourdieu (2004), women's desire for reconciliation and forgiveness reflects the symbolic power of gendered social norms in the FTN. Further, many women felt social pressure from their communities, and often forgave perpetrators of violence in order to reconcile. Gendered social relations also contribute to the fears around reporting, another inhibiting factor along the *ruta de denuncia*. Women's economic dependence on male partners also rendered it difficult to report. Finally, despite the laws, social relations normalise VsAW, making it less evident for women to report, a point to which I return in the following chapter.

5.4. What's Behind the Numbers? Characterising VsAW in the FTN

Bearing the tensions between the *cultura de denuncia* and *cultura de silencio* in mind, I visited the Public Ministry (MP) office in Chisec (the only one in the region of the research) in order to obtain access to official statistics on reported cases. Notably, this office is the only MP presence in the municipalities where the research was conducted. When asked about obtaining access to the data, the researcher there explained that each research assistant had a different set of reported cases on each computer, so that there was no complete set of information on all the reported cases. She remarked: "This is a third world country. This isn't like your country. We don't have everything all organized [the way you would]." The researcher at the MP in Chisec was frustrated and skeptical of their capacity to provide any data, and advised me to seek assistance from the national office of the MP in Guatemala City. I thus obtained a list of recorded cases through an access to information request, placed with the MP in Guatemala City. I requested information on the numbers of reported cases of VAW and femicide, in each municipality, from 2008-2017 (see Table 5.2).⁶⁸

⁶⁸ It should also be noted that the statistics differed somewhat from an earlier access to information request submitted in 2016. I had submitted a second request in order to obtain more recent statistics in line with the completion timeline of the thesis, and have included these figures in the chapter. These discrepancies reflect further the limitations of VsAW quantitative data collection in the research.

	Type of VAW	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total:
Chisec	Unregistered	2	15	22	33	84	86	18	88	201	19	568
	Psychological	0	0	0	0	4	1	19	9	3	61	97
	Sexual	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	4
	Physical	0	0	0	0	4	3	67	86	4	98	262
	Economic	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
	Total per year:	2	16	22	36	93	90	106	183	208	180	
											Total:	936
	Type of VAW	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total:
Fray Bartolomé de las Casas	Unregistered	17	24	10	58	144	102	6	60	255	37	713
	Psychological	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	5	5	107	124
	Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Physical	0	0	0	0	4	2	62	73	3	140	284
	Economic	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Total per year:	17	25	10	58	151	104	68	138	263	285	
											Total:	1124
	Type of VAW	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total:
Raxruhá	Unregistered	3	8	27	40	112	97	15	57	128	91	502
	Psychological	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	4	0	19	29
	Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	Physical	0	0	0	0	1	1	101	48	0	55	206
	Economic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total per year:	3	8	27	40	114	98	117	109	128	167	
											Total:	739

Table 5.2 Reported Cases of VsAW in the FTN. Source: Public Ministry, 2018

Importantly, the OMMs also maintained their own, confidential lists of cases they work on and support, many of which were not included in the official statistics kept by the MP, illustrating the limitations of the data available in terms of accurately portraying which cases were most prominent. The data does suggest, however, high numbers of unregistered forms of VsAW in all 3 municipalities. By unregistered VAW, the data refers to cases of violence that were not categorised according to the typology constructed by the Law on Femicide. As such, while not entirely invisibilised, such forms of violence were not classified. Further, it should be noted that no cases of economic violence were reported or counted in Raxruhá.

Despite its limitations, the data from the access to information request shows increasing numbers of reports of VsAW to the MP, with highest numbers being reported in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and Chisec, the most populated municipalities and those with the most active OMM and DMM. The findings from the MP do suggest, then, that an increasing number of cases are, in fact, making it to the reporting stage, despite the existing challenges. Indeed, broadly speaking, in Chisec and Raxruhá, numbers tend to increase over the passage of time. For Fray

Bartolomé de las Casas, reports increase steadily between 2014-2017. Why then, engage with the law, if the process is fraught with challenges and access is limited?

5.4.1. *“Women have rights now”*

The tensions noted in relation to the legal developments in Guatemala with regards to VsAW, speak to the larger body of research on rights in Latin America (Craske and Molyneux 2002; Cornwall and Molyneux 2006; Macaulay 2002; Molyneux 2002; Gideon 2002), which highlight the limitations, contradictions and possibilities of rights and the rule of law for women’s equality and political gains. Indeed, despite the challenges and limitations, the new legal infrastructure was instrumental for rural women addressing VsAW. The law and women’s rights were made useful in a twofold way: first, as a neutral force and secondly, as a preventative force to police VIF.

In section 5.3 above, I discussed how the legal system was viewed as corrupt and often discriminatory for indigenous women. Interestingly, however, the rights ascribed to women via the legal changes of the postwar years were understood and framed as neutral, and above the machinations of the justice system. Frequently, community leaders insisted that things in the postwar years were different from the past, given that women’s rights and the criminalisation of VsAW were formally codified.

The apparent tension alludes to some of the contradictions related to the operationalisation of the new legal changes: on one hand, the barriers to accessing the laws and legal system were demonstrative of longstanding inequalities in Guatemala. The laws offered little recourse to accommodate the challenges faced by indigenous women, for instance. Yet at the same time, the judicial infrastructure still has, to a certain extent, offered legitimacy for women’s struggles against VsAW, and was instrumentalised to challenge the prevailing morality or narrative that such violence was a normal part of daily life. The new laws in place offered emancipatory possibilities for women in the FTN, specifically in addressing VIF.

Second, the new legal changes served as a preventative force for women in the FTN. In section 3, I noted how in some cases, perpetrators were released with a warning. On one hand, this was a form of institutional corruption and failure to fully prosecute the cases. Yet, women also viewed the laws as having the capacity to

threaten men into patterns of ‘good behavior’, as the case pointed out by Petrona in section 3 has shown. Indeed, by threatening to report, and appealing to the law and its consequences, rather than appealing to the justice system and those who operate it, women community leaders policed VsAW in their communities. They did so without fully engaging with the legal system; rather, it was the laws and rights that mattered in this case. Yet this is paradoxical: women knew the system was largely ineffective and costly to access. If a victim-survivor sought to follow through with the threat of engaging with the legal system, it would likely be a challenging undertaking, given the roadblocks along the *ruta de denuncia*. Nonetheless, the threat of the law still offered some negotiating power for addressing VsAW in rural communities, reflecting another contradiction of sorts.

It became clear that different forms of VsAW were pervasive in the FTN, and that the vast majority of cases never made it to the reporting stage. I asked women community leaders and service practitioners which forms of violence were the most prominent in the FTN. Women spoke about all forms, in different ways, a point to which I return in the following two chapters. My findings suggest that economic violence emerged as one of the most prominent forms of violence faced by women in the FTN. Importantly, this is not apparent in the statistics from the MP, which report a total of 7 cases of economic violence for the entirety of the region (see Table 5.1) Economic violence is defined by the Law on Femicide as

Actions or omissions that pertain to the use, enjoyment, availability, or accessibility of a woman to material goods that pertain to a woman by right, through matrimonial or lawful union, through capacity or inheritance, causing her deterioration, injury, transformation, theft, destruction, retention or loss of her own objects or material goods or those belonging to the family, including the retention of work instruments, personal documents, goods, values, rights or economic resources (GGM, 2009).

Thus, economic violence refers specifically to the ways in which women are denied access to economic resources and monetary/economic benefits in domestic partnerships or marriages. This is especially significant in the context of a breakup. The commonality of such cases has also been found in Mexico, particularly in the case of indigenous communities (see: Sierra 2007).

The prominence of economic violence in communities may also illustrate how the new rights frameworks influenced the kinds of violence that is discussed and addressed. In this respect, it is most feasible and practical to get access to legal

support in cases of ‘economic violence’, which was understood to be within the scope of women’s rights. Local justices of the peace located in the municipal centres are permitted to authorise women’s entitlement of up to 500 Quetzales per month in support payments from ex-partners (any payment higher requires authorisation from the departmental family court in Cobán), and often with the intervention of the DMM or OMM, offices which regularly provided assistance in such cases.

Arguably, the prominence of economic violence corresponded with the services that were available to women in the FTN. In practice, however, ensuring that support payments are made is challenging. As I suggested in Chapter 2, rates of poverty and extreme poverty for the region are exceptionally high, often making it difficult to ensure sufficient maintenance. While support payments are mandated to correspond with the paying ex-partner’s wages, there are no real mechanisms in place to ensure that payments are made regularly. Nonetheless, having access to certain services, such as the means to ask for child support payments, may have meant that it was rendered more commonplace to talk about these issues in communities.

Relatedly, physical and sexual violence were also often addressed via imposing *medidas de seguridad*, or protection orders, rather than reporting cases to the PNC, the OJ or the MP for follow-up in the specialised justice system. The *medidas de seguridad* were also granted by local justices of the peace. The provisions for granting the *medidas de seguridad* fall under the umbrella of Decreto 1997-1996, which is a preventative, rather than punitive law. Importantly, the *medidas de seguridad* were limited in ensuring a victim-survivor’s safety: they relied on the compliance of the aggressor, given that police will and ability to intervene was often compromised. Furthermore, throughout much of my fieldwork, there was no justice of the peace in Chisec; in 2017, a new judge had been appointed, but they were also responsible for overseeing the office in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas after the previous judge had been transferred.⁶⁹

The prevalence of certain forms of violence over others suggests how the presence of services to address some forms of violence shapes the way that the issue

⁶⁹ The previous judge was reportedly transferred to be closer to family.

is brought forward. Further, addressing economic violence as a priority reflects not only service availability, but also the material necessities of women in the FTN. Despite the limitations in providing these services, these services open a window of opportunity to address some of the problems related to VsAW. They also characterise the reality of rural life in this region: where services are limited, the *ruta de denuncia* is not apparent, and using the services that were available was the only option for many.

5.4.2. *Femicide in the FTN?*

Further, as stated in Chapter 3, much of the research on VsAW in Guatemala emphasises femicide as a problematic issue in postwar Guatemala (Bellino 2010; Costatino 2008; Carey Jr. and Torres 2010; Drysdale-Walsh 2008; 2016; Musalo et al., 2010; Sanford 2008; Torres 2008; Velasco 2008). This literature also focuses on the ways in which femicide occurs at alarming levels in urban spaces. In my research, however, femicide was less of a problem in rural communities: other forms of violence were highlighted as most pervasive. The lack of concern around femicide in the FTN was noted in interview findings, and also by statistics generated through the access to information request (see table 5.3) Certainly, the low femicide reports could in part be attributed to the lower population of rural communities. This is not to say that femicide never occurs in the FTN: indeed, a case of femicide occurred in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas during my field research in 2016, and two others were reported that year as well.

Municipality	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total:
Chisec	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fray Bartolomé de las Casas	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	3	0	10
Raxruhá	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total:	1	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	4	0	12

Table 5.3: Femicide Number of cases, 2008-2017. Source: Public Ministry access to information request, 2018

Indeed, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas reported the highest numbers of cases of femicide. It is also the most populated out of the municipalities. While determining why Fray Bartolomé de las Casas may have had higher numbers of femicide is difficult, I alluded to a broader climate of violent crime in the municipality in Chapter 4, which rendered my own access to it difficult. It should also be noted that this municipality was also the site of a violent attack against a women’s organisation, which I analyse further in Chapter 7.

Ultimately, the issue of femicide was not a concern for most of the participants in all three municipalities. In Chisec, for instance, most participants could not recall the one case that had been reported, which allegedly involved a woman who was fatally stabbed by her partner in a village located near the municipal centre. While femicides do occur in the FTN, they are thus not as prominent in the public imaginary, as is the case for urban spaces. Indeed, the alarming rates present in urban areas suggest an important difference between the ways in which VsAW manifest along an urban and rural divide; further research is required to illuminate why this may be the case.⁷⁰ For instance, research conducted

⁷⁰ It should be noted, however, that concerns around decapitations emerged in the findings, but were never officially recorded and circulated as rumours. In one case, an adolescent girl, the daughter of an interview participant was the victim-survivor of an attempted decapitation: a man on a motorcycle picked her up from the side of the road and attempted to decapitate her. Women from the community witnessed the attack as it was taking place, and swarmed the attacker, forcing the girl to be released. Yet, no formal complaint was made to the authorities; rather, warnings about decapitations were being transmitted through local Q’eqchi’ radio stations rather than being reported to formal justice institutions. The issue of decapitations in the FTN parallels a mass decapitation incident in 2011 in Peten, which was perpetrated by members of the narcotrafficking gang, the Zetas. These allegations and the rumours that circulate, remain otherwise largely undocumented in official sources, however, largely due to fear and mistrust of local law enforcement and justice authorities. In this particular

by Rita Laura Segato (2008) in the case of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, found that femicides were often linked to gang-related murders and initiation activities, based in deep-rooted, sexist hatred towards women. This is not to say that such attitudes are not present in rural spaces; rather, other factors irrelevant to some rural communities may be relevant and contribute to the high rates in urban Guatemala.

Ultimately, many of the cases of VsAW in the FTN constituted the normalised violences of the everyday. Further, the cases that were prominent and were talked about were illustrative of the institutions and services available for women in the region, however limited in effectiveness. While all forms of violence exist, it became easier to recognise those that could be addressed with the services available in municipal centres. Despite the roadblocks along the *ruta de denuncia*, new laws that have emerged in the postwar years offer some new possibilities for women addressing VsAW in the FTN.

5.5. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been twofold: first, to illustrate the ways in which the VsAW legal infrastructure has emerged in the postwar years, and second, to highlight the limitations and contradictions associated with these laws in the FTN. I also addressed the limited amount of information available on the different forms of VsAW in the region. Ultimately, the VsAW legal infrastructure represents a rights-based approach to addressing the problem of gendered violence, and exists as a legacy of the Peace Accords, but very often falls short in effective operationalisation. The findings demonstrated a gap between the ways in which NGO professionals envisioned the operationalisation of the laws, and the *cultura de denuncia/silencio* that existed and the ways, in which community leaders and women in the FTN utilised the laws in practice. Further, the limitations have resulted in vernacularised approaches to addressing VsAW within communities, a finding which merits further research in future. The gap between policy's intention and lived, rural reality reflects the dynamics of the matrix approach proposed in Chapter 3, which emphasises the interaction between social, historical, political and economic factors in shaping VsAW.

case, however, the women of the DMM were made aware of the issue, and could follow up as required, as they had accompanied me on the interview in which this was discussed (see also Lopez 2015 on dynamics of narco-trafficking in Guatemala)..

These gaps and limitations also speak to the ways in which judicialisation from above interacts with the below. Translating the Law on Femicide from urban spaces and the desks of legal professionals and policy makers, to rural regions of the FTN is fraught with complexities. Despite a legal infrastructure addressing VsAW, various forms of violence continue to go unresolved and unaddressed in these rural communities as a result of structural inequalities and deeply entrenched social norms. Nonetheless, new rights for women have opened spaces for their engaging with the alleviation of VsAW in their communities, particularly in terms of dealing with intrafamiliar violence.

In this chapter, I have explored also some of the key pitfalls and limitations of the rule of law in dealing with VsAW in the FTN. At the same time, however, despite their limitations the new laws open windows of opportunities for women to participate and address the issue of VsAW in their communities. Finally, this chapter predominantly focused on the kinds of violence that emerged through the codification of Decreto 2008-22, the Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women. There are, however, forms of violence that are difficult to address institutionally. So, what other ways were VsAW framed, beyond the scope of the laws? What further challenges do women face in attempting to address VsAW in their communities? These questions will guide the chapters to follow.

6. Confronting *Machismo* in the FTN



6.1. Introduction

For the Guatemalan women's movement, International Women's Day, March 8, represents an important moment, where feminist organisations join together in protests and activities in Guatemala City and across the country. The Latin-America wide "*ni una menos*"⁷¹ movement, which began in Argentina to protest high rates of femicide, illuminates the ways in which the issue of VsAW and femicide are widespread, systemic problems across the continent. In Guatemala City, the women's movement marks the date with a *paro nacional*⁷² and rallies to protest persisting violences, inequality and discrimination against women in the country, and in Latin America in general. March 8 has also become a day to remember the lives of 41 adolescent girls who died in a 2017 fire at a state-run shelter outside of Guatemala City; the event was sparked criticisms of the authorities, with many activists blaming the government of Jimmy Morales for inaction and institutional failure.

During my fieldwork, on March 8, 2016, I attended International Women's Day celebrations in a local municipal park in a community located in the *Franja Transversal del Norte* (FTN). Performances of music and traditional Q'eqchi' dance displays had been organised and coordinated by local activists to mark the day's celebration. I was invited by a local indigenous leader and member of the APROBASANC organisation, who served as a key gatekeeper in terms of

⁷¹ Not one less

⁷² National Strike of Women protesting gender violence and inequality in society, similar to other movements and women's strikes held around the world.

connecting me with a group of women's activists and organisers in the municipality. As we sat and observed the festivities, the local mayor rose to address the crowd and gave a brief speech, recognizing the importance of women's roles in the community and in the family. He concluded:

Today we celebrate International Women's Day. On this day, let us remember that in the Bible, it says that women come from Adam's rib, and so we also must celebrate men.

While the mayor's remark seemed out of place given the nature of other international women's day celebrations in Guatemala, it echoed the deeply-rooted gendered hierarchies and normalised sense of *machismo* that structure life, violence and women's political engagement in the rural regions of Guatemala. The mayor's speech demonstrated the social norms that women in the FTN engaged with and subverted in complex and often contradictory ways. The rural community is a site where gender and related social norms are reproduced, where "women and men relate to each other and make sense of their lives" linked with the "practical workings" of daily life (Little 2002,71). In rural communities of the FTN, *machismo* shapes and structures these relations, but it is also simultaneously subverted by women community leaders in their work to address the various forms of violence that women face.

By *machismo*, I refer to the prevailing social norm that positions males as superior to women, which in turn legitimates gender inequality as part of the social structure. More specifically, *machismo* is characterised by an exaggerated sense of male pride and power, which values masculinity over femininity, and normalises the view that control over women and their bodies by men is legitimate (see: Chant 2002; Lancaster 1992; Melhuus and Stolen 1996; Sternberg 2001). Conceptually, there are parallels between *machismo* and hegemonic masculinities, which as prevailing social norms structure societal expectations for the ways in which men are expected to be and behave (Connell 1995; Connell and Messerschmit 2005; Messerschmidt 2012; Schippers 2007). In this chapter, I will explore how *machismo* permeates social structures, manifesting in daily private and social interactions and legitimates the unequal treatment of women in societies. Yet, by conceptually drawing on *machismo* as a prevailing social norm in Guatemala, I am

not suggesting that Guatemalan culture is inherently *machista*⁷³, and that as an innate aspect of the culture, VsAW are therefore inevitable. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which the women community leaders in the FTN address VsAW in their communities, despite confronting what they identified as a key social and cultural barrier to their involvement.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how the findings pointed to limitations surrounding the new legal infrastructure for addressing VsAW in the FTN, as well as roadblocks to reporting individual cases. These roadblocks were influenced by social norms, which in turn normalised VsAW. Arguably, the logic that foregrounds and legitimises many of the challenges and normalisation of VsAW is rooted in *machismo*, a theme this chapter aims to explore in relation to other forms of violence that women experience. Consequently, in this chapter, I focus specifically on *violencia intrafamiliar*, or intimate partner violence (hereafter: VIF) as a form of VsAW and in relation to *machismo* and social norms: women spoke mostly about *machismo* in relation to VIF and political involvement. Nonetheless, I consider this form of violence to be part of, and not separate from the wide range of violence women face, including structural, symbolic, everyday, and political violence. Building on the theoretical work on violence discussed in Chapter 3, I also consider the multisided nature of violence (see also Menjivar 2011). Further, I also found that gossip, or *chisme*, was frequently reinterpreted as a form of psychological violence and that this reinterpretation exemplified how many women internalised *machista* attitudes vis-à-vis their peers. As such, in this chapter, I also discuss how the social norms influence the ways in which community leaders confront *machismo* in political spaces.

As stated in the methodology (Chapter 4), my interview participants were primarily women. I thus recognise the limitations of the claims I make in relation to *machismo* and men's behaviour. This chapter is therefore concerned with women's interpretation of and engagement with *machismo*. To enrich this discussion further, future research may consider how men understand social norms and *machismo* in this context.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. First, I explore the notion of male ownership over women's bodies and control over women's participation in

⁷³ The adjective related to *machismo*

public and political spaces. This issue was particularly prominent among local community women leaders involved in the Chisec municipal women's commission. Bearing this in mind, I show how *machismo* is often internalised, and fed into *chisme* (gossip) about women in communities. I then explore the role of alcoholism in relation to VIF, and how women community leaders negotiated participation in political spaces and addressed VIF by working around this issue. In the final section, I examine the implications of understanding *machismo* as eluding the divide between public and private spaces, and the ways in which *machismo* is both resisted and engaged with in this region.

6.2. *Machismo* in the FTN

In this section, I discuss how *machismo* is understood by women in the FTN. First, I highlight how *machismo* is framed as a form of sexist ignorance, but one that is also malleable; this exists in tension with the new legal frameworks mentioned in Chapter 5. Second, I explore how, despite the perceived malleability and fragility of *machista* attitudes, *machismo* is still understood to be a key cause of VIF. The link between *machismo* as ignorance and *machismo* as a cause of violence that was prominent in the findings is also related to the importance that many women place on the need for women's political engagement in the FTN.

6.2.1. Machismo as ignorance

As *machismo* was a reoccurring theme, I asked participants to situate and define the term, drawing on their experiences in their communities. As a result, several common points arose; *machismo* was understood by the community leaders as being related to a perceived, assumed and accepted sense of male superiority over women. *Machismo* also was attributed to reinforcing the sexual division of labour in communities. Exemplifying this point, Sandy, a new member of the *Consejo de Mujeres* explained to me, "What I understand about *machismo* is that there are men who say that us women are meant to be in the house, that only they [the men] can do what they want" (CL 38). As a consequence, when women challenged these restrictive social roles, it results in a confrontation with *machista* attitudes, comments or actions performed by male partners or heads of households. For example, community leaders characterised *machismo* as manifesting through

jealousy over women who *salir adelante* (get ahead) or who participate politically, and secondly as manifesting through control over women's activities (such as leaving the house and participating in political organizing) and access to financial resources.

Consequently, the link between *machismo* and *machista* attitudes and economic VAW (understood as deprivation of or control over women's access to financial resources) was made explicit by many of the community leaders. In a follow up interview with, Petrona explained that,

The *machismo* that we see here, as we say, it's when the women come to see me, and the men intimidate the women, saying that if they report their husbands, then they will do something, or they say that they won't give them money, they say just wait and see what they'll do, that they [the woman] are nothing without them [the man]... The men believe themselves to be superior to women, and that they are the only ones who can do things (CL 40).

Petrona's comment, similarly to other community leaders, associates *machismo* with the gender division of labour in the region, which resulted in women's economic dependence on men. Typically women work in subsistence agriculture and are responsible for most social reproductive labour (childcare, cleaning, cooking, washing). Consequently, their earning power is very limited; it has been undermined further by the introduction of palm oil in the region, which they attributed to water contamination and pollution (as will be discussed further in Chapter 7). By contrast palm oil has also created jobs, which have mainly benefitted men, thereby increasing their earnings and sense of power. As such gender norms are organised around a traditional sexual division of labour in rural communities of the FTN and my finding suggest that *machismo* is linked to, reinforces and is reinforced by the sexual division of labour, which in turn reinforces women's economic dependence on male partners.

In the previous chapter, I illustrated the evolution and emergence of the VsAW legal frameworks over the postwar years. Relatedly, women defined *machista* attitudes as a form of ignorance, which blocked the fulfilment of legal rights to which they are entitled; those who behaved in a *machista* way were considered unknowledgeable or unaware of women's rights. *Machismo* is thus framed as antiquated or dated in relation to the new social norms. In particular, Nelly's comments exemplified this:

About [*machismo*], the truth is it exists because men don't have enough awareness... we aren't looking to put women in charge over men, rather, what we are looking for is for men and women to have equal rights, this is what the man doesn't get, he just wants to be the brains, the one in charge... As we say, the man who says his wife must fulfil her elected duties, and give her space and time, this is an intelligent man and not a *machista* man (CL 29).

Here, Nelly points to what she perceives as a contradiction in men's *machista* attitudes: men want to be in charge, she explains, but do not understand that they do not have a right to dominate women; those who do (men and women), she contends, are more aware of the current context of rights and are therefore 'intelligent', from her perspective. Indeed, women see the existence of, and appeal to rights as a means through which *machismo* could be subverted.

Overall, while *machismo* is defined as being entrenched in communities, it is not understood as permanent or unchangeable. Indeed, women in the FTN subvert and engage with *machismo* through activism and political engagement. These women emphasise how *machista* social norms shape their engagement in a two-fold way. First, this *machismo* is manifested through exclusion from community development meetings and not having their concerns taken seriously by their male counterparts, despite their long histories of involvement in women's organizing in the FTN. Second, *machismo* is manifested through a sense of ownership or entitlement over women's bodies and is considered as a cause underlying the problem of VIF and its normalisation in their communities; a point that I discuss next.

6.2.2. *Machismo as a cause of VIF*

Despite the fact that *machismo* is understood as malleable, it is also framed as a root cause of violence, the latter point speaking specifically to other research on femicide in Guatemala, which emphasises the dangers of this attitude (Carey Torres 2008; Velasco 2008). Similarly, James Messerschmidt (2017) links hegemonic masculinities with femicidal violence. Further, despite new laws in place to address violence, as discussed in Chapter 5, *machismo* is still understood to be a powerful force and significant factor, which often trumped institutional changes: it is framed as a direct cause of VsAW, specifically VIF. Andrea, a community leader with a long history of organising in Chisec, and one who regularly sheltered victim-survivors in her home, spoke to this point. As a teenager, Andrea had worked as a

cleaner in the local justice of the peace's office. She claimed that this exposure to the legal system provided her with an in-depth knowledge of local laws, particularly in relation to VsAW, and made her an expert for women seeking assistance and advice in her community. As such, she had a long history of involvement in legal cases of VsAW and in providing advice and support to women but argued that existing laws (discussed in Chapters 1, 4 and 5) designed to protect victims of VsAW and to promote women's rights fell short:

The truth is that in Guatemala, since we gained the same rights as men, this means that we women should have the same opportunities to get ahead and make ourselves independent, yet in practice, we still have the issue of discrimination that we live with... *machismo* is the cause of violence against women (CL 24).

Here Andrea raises an important issue that was shared by many women in the FTN: the root cause of VIF could be attributed to *machista* attitudes towards women, and goes unaddressed by existing laws which deal solely with the outcomes of cases of such violence. Although women's rights frameworks were in place, through mechanisms such as CEDAW and through the recognition afforded in the 2008 Law on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, the impact of the rights was limited by the symbolic power carried by *machismo* in the communities.

Another important theme that arose in relation to *machismo* was the normalisation of VsAW and VIF in the FTN. For instance, another community leader and member of the *Consejo de Mujeres*, Sandra, suggested that *machismo* contributed to the gradual normalisation of VsAW:

Well, sometimes men just become violent little by little, and begin to appreciate less their wife, thinking that they don't have rights and that because they are women, they are not worth anything (CL 22).

Sandra links the cumulative nature of VIF with the idea that women are perceived to be worth less than men, and this point, which was emphasised in many interviews, also reinforces the argument that *machismo* structures the normalisation of VsAW in these areas. Further, men were the purveyors of deciding the worth of an individual. *Machismo* was thus an important social force shaping the ways, in which women are valued by men. Worth is thus linked to both safety/protection from violence and one's gender, harkening to the question of whose life is "worth of protection" (Butler 2009, 82).

Furthermore, in a temporal sense (or in terms of how VIF occurs over the course of a woman's lifetime) the assertion that violence is cumulative, in relation to, or regardless of, the existence of women's legal rights and the criminalisation of VsAW highlights how *machismo* is an important social force in the communities. Despite legal shifts, existing social structures have not changed. Sandra and Nelly both present a complex tension between the interplay of *machismo* as a prevailing social norm on one hand, and the implementation of the 2008 Law on Femicide and women's rights on the other: this dynamic links back to the theme of the legal ineffectiveness discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, this tension adds an important nuance to the existing theoretical work on VsAW. Such violence not only occurs within the space of a continuum; rather, there is an important interaction with *machismo* undertaken by the women addressing cases of VIF. They are not only dealing with cases of violence that have a history or pattern in a victim-survivor's lifetime; but they are also confronting and engaging with the difference between prevailing social norms and new arising expectations as they apply to the new rights frameworks.

The cumulative nature of VsAW was also signalled by another community leader, Floriselda, who stated:

What I see in my community is, for example, when a young couple weds, but do not really plan how to live together – they just get married, and then come the problems. The men hit their wives, even when the wives are pregnant, and *the problems just grow* (emphasis mine). They don't say anything to anyone about what is happen, not to the COCODEs [local development councils], not to anyone else who is involved (CL 18).

Thus *machismo* also normalises violence that women in the FTN face, such that it becomes a part of the everyday (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Further, this normalised violence entrenches the continuum of violence that women face, specifically VIF. Yet, at the same time, community leaders actively resist the normalisation of VIF, by drawing on the new rights frameworks and education programs discussed in Chapter 5.

Women also alluded to a perceived sense of disposability of women, a theme that was widespread in the findings: men viewed women as disposable (see: Wright 2006) or replaceable, a view rejected by women community leaders. In the case of the FTN, the women, alternatively, used laws and the existence of new rights to legitimise their challenge of the idea of disposability, which again was linked to

machismo. This theme was typified by community leader, Sandra, who challenged the dehumanisation of women she associated with *machismo* in private partnerships:

I am not going to say that it [*machismo*] does not exist, of course it exists! In many cases, the husbands insult their wives. They will say that she is not the only woman [in his life] that women are in abundance, they are plentiful. But I say that... we are all women, and we are all equal (CL 22).

Further, women were expected to abide by certain social codes, for instance, by being married and having children. Ana Alonso refers to this in Mexico as normative femininity, linked to social expectations that women should be mothers and wives, and submissive to their husbands. This concept of normative femininity parallels what I observed in the FTN. More broadly, feminist geographers and sociologists have also pointed to the social construction of femininity in rural spaces as being rooted in specific social reproductive roles, a point with which my findings also align. This is illustrated by a quote from Camila, who identified as a 36-year-old housewife and is a representative to the women's commission, when she suggested that the institution of marriage itself changed women's roles and position in the community:

What I think is that when a woman lives with her parents, or is single, well, it is worse for her when she gets married... Sometimes they believe that things will stay the same when they are married, that she will still have everything [she had with her parents] (CL 23).

Camila also typified the contention that many community leaders held: these norms were at the root of many of the cases of VIF she dealt with. In this respect, she argued that men reacted violently when their female partners did not comply with socially expected social reproductive roles. She stated,

I think that it is when the women take too long to give food to their husbands they become violent, well, the problem can start here, I think. Also, women have children each year, and this provokes men to hit them, I have seen this. In some cases, it gets to the point where the husbands get mad and hit their wives (CL 23).

Ultimately, however, *machismo* was framed as an outdated attitude, but one with dangerous consequences. Women community leaders thus highlighted the importance of getting involved in communities, through for instance, the *Consejo de Mujeres*, as a means of challenging it.

6.3. *Machismo, celos, and chisme: Confronting Machismo in Addressing*

VsAW

In the previous section, I illustrated how *machismo* is understood to be a form of ignorance and a cause of VIF. Consequently, many women emphasised the need for women to be politically engaged in the FTN, and work towards changing social attitudes. Women's involvement often confronted *machista* norms, as I will demonstrate in this section. Indeed, research elsewhere has emphasised the salience of hegemonic constructions of femininity (and masculinity) in rural communities, which defines specific, often domestic roles for women in these areas (see Little 1986; 1987; 2002; 2007). My findings suggest that by becoming politically active, women make social transgressions related to their respectability, and face *machista* attitudes espoused by others in their communities.

To illustrate this point, I first will emphasise the role of *celos* (jealousy) and men's sense of ownership over women that occurred when women were politically active. Second, I address the theme of internalised *machismo* and *chisme* (gossip) to show how women also possessed *machista* attitudes. Ultimately, women's respectability and its transgression were at the crux of the *machismo* women were confronted with when politically active.

6.3.1. *Transgressing Norms through Political Participation*

Related to transgressing social norms, women encountered *machismo* in political participation. This theme was widespread in interviews among rural women in the FTN. For instance, members of the *Consejo de Mujeres* participate in activities of the local community development councils, or COCODEs yet struggled to be fully involved, a point emphasised by community leader Andrea. The case of Ximena also exemplified this finding. Indeed, Ximena had just been elected to the COMUDE, the municipal council, with resounding support from her community. Her election represented a historic moment for her municipality: she had become the first woman to be elected to the COMUDE. Despite having gained such support from her community, she felt that she was frequently not taken seriously by her male colleagues, a point echoed by many women community leaders. Ximena recounted the different meetings in which she had participated since her election and noted that new rules had been imposed, which she suspected were intended to undermine her

authority; for instance, one male colleague introduced a motion to ensure that only men hold the ceremonial *palo* in meetings (a ceremonial staff and symbol of authority in the COMUDE and indigenous authority).

In terms of my participation in the COMUDE, well already... I have been discriminated against, we could say. I feel discriminated, because an employee of the municipality gave a brief introduction when everyone took their new positions, and explained that only the men could hold the staffs and could make decisions... in this space, I am the only woman. This is why I felt discriminated... for me, well, the staff is a respectable symbol, it is not a toy, it is a symbol of what the people gave you, so I bring mine to the COMUDE. I bring my staff, I go as a representative of 18 barrios (CL 41).

Ximena explained that despite facing considerable resistance from her male colleagues, she spoke in COMUDE meetings, and often faced resistance but continued to persist with the support of her community and other women community leaders.

Relatedly, women's participation was linked to men's *celos*, or romantic jealousy, and the socially perceived threat of promiscuity associated with women's independence and political engagement. Andrea noted this point:

[I]n the first place, [a key challenge that women face] is discrimination, because before we could not participate – because the first challenge is that if you see a woman walking in the street, people think she has a lover; if one goes out like this, you are just looking to cause problems, but now we have this opportunity [in the women's commission] as women to participate freely (CL 24).

The theme of *celos* arose in many interviews. *Celos* was used as an explanation for men's acts of violence towards women. In a way, this linkage reproduced an apologetic logic, in that the cause for violence was not a violent man, but rather, his violent attitudes triggered by woman's actions. The link between *celos* and VsAW reflects women's understandings of *machismo* as an ignorant and sexist frame of mind: *machismo* is an attitude and is thus not fixed but malleable and changeable.

The broader issue of women's participation was also explicitly linked with the social institution of marriage: women's freedom to be politically engaged was limited by *machismo* on the part of their husbands. Related to this point, the notion of men's assumed ownership over women shaped women's experiences in political spaces, and is rooted in *machismo*. Yet, participants actively challenged this; as Candelaria told me,

It is true that there are some men who impede our participation. It is worse because they want women to just remain as they are, they do not want us to know and understand our rights, they want us to go on living in the same way. What they want is to continue beating [women] and for us women to just take it, without saying anything, this is what they think and what they want, and this is what we see more or less here, that such men do not allow their wives to participate (CL 27).

Candelaria highlights the ways in which men control women's access to spaces for participation. She links this form of control over public spaces of political participation to men's use of violence in private spaces and in intimate partner relationships. Importantly, Candelaria complicates the divide between the manifestation of violence in the home, with the manifestation of control over public spaces, linking prevailing social norms in the public and private sphere.

Marriage problems and *machismo* were closely linked to public participation, such that private and public spaces and relations were blurred. Candelaria reflected on this blurring of private and public spaces in her own experiences in the context of the COCODEs. She explained,

As I commented in a meeting with the COCODES, I said there was no female COCODE member. This is because they said that we don't have time, and that women have to be at home preparing the meals for the men, but as I told them, maybe the women could prepare the food in advance, and the men could serve themselves [so the women could participate]. Maybe all through life, one can try to understand that women also have the right to participate, but many of them [the men] don't like that (CL 27).

Echoing other interviews, Candelaria points to the ways in which traditional gender norms govern women's work in her community which in turn is associated with particular activities and times of the day (Little 2002: 94). She aims to strike a compromise; rather than refuse to engage in "women's work" of cooking and preparing meals for male partners, she tried to convince her male colleagues in the COCODE that women could perform this work, and participate in community governance. She elaborated further:

Yes, [now] they give me my time [to speak], but it is because I insisted that I go. I have a turn to speak. And that it is my job in the COCODE, so they take me into account (CL 27).

Candelaria's comments were reflective of a broader theme that emerged through my findings, specifically, that women's performances of femininity and engagement with social norms are malleable.

Women's interest and desire to be active in the public sphere was considered to be in conflict with the socially imposed obligation of being available for domestic work in the home, which in turn is rooted in what many of the women framed as a sense of male ownership over women's bodies. Participants also pointed to the ways in which they felt their work as representatives in the women's commission was important and also spoke about how their participation is contingent, in many cases, upon receiving permission of their husbands. Further, they highlighted the ways in which local governance structures (ie: the COCODEs) were *machista* institutions, where their legitimacy and purpose as community leaders and key players in providing assistance to victim-survivors of VsAW was questioned. They engaged with these dynamics by questioning traditional gender norms, drawing on the rule of law (for instance, the integration of new laws and legal commitments of the Guatemalan state to addressing VsAW), and through challenging male leaders in the community.

One community leader and representative in the women's commission, Nelly, spoke about the challenges she and other women faced in terms of participating in the municipal women's commission and in relation to being 'allowed' to participate by male partners. Nelly originally came from another municipality, but now lives with her husband and six children, in a community where she had already been involved in with women's organising for four years. Nelly also explained that she is part of the COCODE, the Committee of Housewives as well as working in agriculture (growing beans, peppers, and peanuts on their own family plot). Drawing on her knowledge and experience, she told me,

In my case, I had participated in meetings forever... Well, there are women who put themselves forward as leaders, but they do not do it, for example, this year there are women registered [to participate in the women's commission] but they are not fulfilling their role. The reason for this is because their husbands are angry, and do not give them permission... So this is the *machismo* that the man has, and that the man has the right to give permission to the wife, he dominates more through jealousy, and for this reason, he does not give his wife permission to go anywhere... this is what happens – that husbands are keeping their wives locked inside, and not allowing them to leave, like in the case of the committee where no women attended. It was because their husbands got angry and would not give them the permission to do so. This is what we see so much here – men's jealousy and envy over their wives (CL 19).

Here, Nelly suggests the ways in which women's participation is controlled by their husbands permission, a theme most community leaders spoke about. Nelly suggests

that the reason women were tentative and cautious about participating was a result of the *machismo* performed by their partners and the jealousy/suspicion of promiscuity that male partners associated with their participation in outside spaces, which they confronted in trying to get involved in politics. The suspicion associated with women's activities and engagement parallels the theme of gossip as a form of gendered psychological violence, on which I elaborate later in this chapter.

Women's participation in politics was generally dependent on getting their husbands permission but also on the male members of the organisations letting them know about the meetings and allowing them to contribute when present and overcoming their own reservations about speaking in public Rebeca exemplified these points:

Here, women participate in meetings, but sometimes we are not informed about them before they are held. In other cases, women are too ashamed to speak – they participate, but only by listening... in my case, I have been involved in participating [in organising] since I was young, and no one stopped me. Thankfully, my husband lets me continue to participate (CL 28).

Rebeca also told me that her husband holds an administrative post in the mayor's office, and thus, is familiar with the work of the women's commission. She felt that her husband's influence and connections facilitated her own participation, from her perspective; she, like many other women, viewed her participation as contingent upon her husband's approval.

With reference to other women, she suggested that women were excluded from COCODE meetings by not being informed about them in advance. This theme arose in many interviews: men did not invite women community leaders to political meetings. As Camila recounted,

The COCODEs here in this community take our work as a women's commission seriously. When there is a COCODE meeting, they take us into account. But there is a community here [in the micro-region]... where the COCODES do not take us into account when we attend to meetings at the micro-regional level. They only criticise our work, there are two men in particular who do this. But in our community, our COCODE has a car, and when there is a woman who is physically beaten, he drives us to take her to the OMM to get help – this is a good thing, the support he gives (CL 23).

Camila suggests that not all men abide by *machista* norms or prevent women from participating or getting urgent assistance in cases of violence. Indeed, some men resist these norms themselves; pointing to the ways in which persisting social norms

are complex and malleable. Yet, simultaneously women like Camila often depend on the assistance of this male COCODE to help in emergencies. Thus, the interplay between a form of dependence and a partner's support illustrates an important tension related to social norms in the community: on one hand, women's political involvement challenges *machismo*, but on the other, women community leaders often rely on the approval of male counterparts in order to gain social acceptance and continue to be politically active. Despite this control in private life, as well as impediments to women's right to speak at and engage in community affairs, women nonetheless organised public events such as meetings and public talks, or *charlas*.

Another community leader, Viviana, explained that she faced opposition in relation to her work in supporting victim-survivors of VsAW, similarly to other women. Viviana explained that she had moved to her new community a year earlier with her family. Since moving, she had taken an active leadership role in the women's commission and stated:

The obstacle we encounter is that we are not given the space that corresponds to our work, when we are intervening in a problem, and we want a solution. The first people to oppose us are the men. They ask me why am I getting involved in a problem that does not concern me. And they tell me that they will resolve the problem themselves, and many [of the men] do not like that we [women] help (CL 20).

Viviana also stated that she felt that the community opposed her involvement in matters that did not involve her (specifically, responding to victims of VIF), despite the fact that her role as an elected member of the municipal women's commission requires her to perform this work and support victims. Viviana followed up by explaining that she still persists and supports the victims, despite facing social disapproval:

My work as a representative is, for me, very important, because if I am in my house and something happens that shouldn't, I would not have known how to deal with it. And now that I am attending the meetings each month, I learn more and more (CL 20).

Here, Viviana speaks directly about addressing violence she could possibly face in her home, and sharing this new knowledge with women in her community.

In organising events such as public meetings and *charlas*, rural women in the FTN were able to reclaim public spaces such as municipal halls, and in one case, an eco-tourism centre, in order to share information about VIF, brainstorm solutions

and share in knowledge-exchange. Further, meetings were organised around specific times: they corresponded with the arrival of micro-buses and pickups from the villages to the municipal centre, and normally lasted until early afternoon, so that women had time to return home in order to prepare food. Relatedly, in many meetings and events I attended, women brought their children with them. While the events were viewed as women's affairs, the occupation of public spaces nonetheless represented claiming them as their own. For instance, when meetings were held in the municipal hall, as they often were, the women had occupied a space dedicated to local politics, bridging the personal and the political and the public and the private.

Ultimately, *celos* was a means through which male partners controlled women who wanted to get involved in the women's commission and participate politically. The social control associated with the perception that men have the right to grant permission to their wives, seems to contradict the laws and education surrounding women's rights/VsAW in postwar Guatemala. The idea of male ownership over women's bodies in cases of VIF and as it manifests in private spaces, was a recurring theme related to the experiences of women community leaders and their engagement in political spaces. This notion of ownership and control shaped the ways, in which the women spoke about victim-survivors they assisted.

6.3.2. *Internalised machismo: chisme and psychological violence*

Men are not the sole bearers of *machista* attitudes: indeed, many women explained how within communities *machismo* was internalised and expressed by women. Internalised *machismo* was often revealed through *chisme*, or gossip, which was spread about women who became politically active or got involved in their communities. As discussed in Chapter 5, women feared what their neighbours might think, should they report their partner. Women also feared social perceptions about their political participation. Indeed, women spoke about how *chisme* circulated in their communities relating to women who are engaged in some form of political participation or women who tried to *salir adelante* (get ahead) by getting a job. As Isabel, a director for the DMM commented: "Well, this thing, [*chisme*]... When one woman participates, another gossips, and the man won't receive her... as if she was doing other things, right? This is what we have seen" (LG 7).

Many of the rumours that circulated focused expressly on women's respectability. Women who participated politically in their communities as leaders

were often the subjects of rumours targeting their sexuality: they were whispered about as promiscuous, and as having extramarital affairs. When women attended meetings, others in the community, particularly women, would tell others that they were instead going to meet a lover, for instance. This interpretation is rooted in rural notions of respectability (see also Skeggs 1997). Indeed, “to not be respectable is to have little social value or legitimacy” (Skeggs 1997, 5). *Chisme* thus could be understood to undermine the value of participation of women community leaders vis-à-vis their peers.

The affront to a political active community leader’s respectability was demonstrative of a kind of *machista* behaviour of other women which reinforced notions of how women were expected to behave and the social reproductive roles they were required to fulfil. Indeed, women who participated were viewed as transgressors of normative femininity (see Alonso 2007); other women mobilised *machista* attitudes channelled through *chisme* in response.

This response reflected a form of social control in rural communities; indeed, gossip as a form of social control has been found in other research in Guatemala (Menjivar 2011). Related to this point, I noted that women specifically framed other women as instigators of violence: *chisme* was often framed as a form of psychological violence. This deviates from the legal definition of psychological violence as outlined by the Law on Femicide, which refers to the acts that harm women, emotionally or psychologically, such as threats and intimidation, by, for example, damaging their self-esteem. It is defined as:

Actions that may produce psychological or emotional injury or suffering of a woman, her daughters and sons, such as actions, threats or violence against the daughters, sons or other family members, up to the fourth level of kinship and second level of the victim, in both cases with the object of intimidating her, undermining her self-esteem or controlling her, she who is submitted to this emotional climate can suffer a progressive psychological debilitation leading to depression (GGM, 2009).

The prevalence of *chisme* was prominent throughout the FTN, and many women complained to me about its impacts: they too were gossiped about for ‘getting ahead’ and becoming involved. For instance, a community leader Matilda, a new member of the *Consejo de Mujeres* in 2017, told me that physical violence was not a major problem in the community, but psychological violence, framed as gossip and lying was a key issue.

What I have seen the most is lying, this is to say, psychological violence. There is a lie, and someone repeats the lie and it gets bigger and bigger... There are cases between women who fight between themselves... There was a case where people talked about a woman who wasn't taking care of her baby, they were saying she was mistreating it... and she was scared she would be sent to jail.... There are various cases, people just invent things... this is the violence that affects us and it isn't going to stop anytime soon (CL 33).

Matilda reports how one woman who was gossiped about for failing to take care of her child, transgressing the socially accepted behaviours of a mother. Further, Matilda also said that she had experienced the impacts of *chisme* first-hand, when gossip circulated about her when she was elected to the *Consejo*, and that the issue of *chisme* in the community was the main concern related to violence:

The problem that is the biggest that we have not been able to eradicate is the mistreatment between people. Sometimes you hear something said about someone else... It is like in my case, where they invented things that weren't true, and in reality this is a type of violence, and if we don't address this, it is a big problem (CL 33).

Women's participation in political spaces within rural communities is regarded as a relatively new phenomenon, and occurs within a post-war context of the judicialisation of women's rights. This participation was understood as a contradiction; on one hand, it brought women's increased political engagement, but on the other, it was perceived as a disruption of traditional community values and a violation of the respectability of women's sexuality. Relatedly, Carolyn Pedwell and Diane Perrons (2007) found in their World Action report on the politics of democratic governance that women in diverse contexts were unwilling to stand for re-election because of similar treatment such as gossip linked to their political engagement. This points to the powerful effects gossip might have on women's political participation.

Further, the way women spoke about gossip as a form of violence, rooted in *machismo*, parallels Menjivar's (2011) observation when studying VsAW among urban *ladina* women, whereby women spoke about family violence in relation to illness and suffering, rather than in relation to physical bruises caused by a male partner. My research in predominantly indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' communities, however, shows that women spoke about VsAW in relation to the dynamics of social

life. In doing so, while alluding to a serious problem in communities, they also diverted blame from male perpetrators of VIF, and situated it within social attitudes.

Importantly, gossip is gendered: it is often framed as a women's issue (Alonso 2007; Menjivar 2011). Yet, in the case of the FTN, this notion was complicated: *chisme* was circulated by both men and women, who were both influenced by *machista* social norms. For instance, Antonia, a 27-year old Maya Q'eqchi' woman working as Sub-Director in the DMM in Chisec, illustrated this point:

Well, *chisme*, sometimes, on the part of *machista* men, they do it, and on the part of ourselves women we do it. Because we are not used to seeing women participate, we invent stories about those who do... We invent things about what our *companeras* are doing... "Look what she is doing, is she participating... you never know, she could be with her lover" or such questions... It is the same thing in terms of work, if a woman gets a job. People will say to her, "look who offered it to you, this is why you have a job" many times between ourselves women we commit this sin. *Chisme* happens when there is jealousy. Because if I don't want her to succeed, I will invent something so that something bad happens to her, right? (LG 17).

Antonia explains that women gossip about politically engaged female community members out of jealousy or envy; furthermore, for Antonia the daughter of an Evangelical pastor in the FTN, gossip was framed as sinful because it originated in women's jealousy of others. She suggested that the gossip spread about women community leaders targets these women's (sexual) respectability, alluding to women's sexual promiscuity so contrary to religious (Evangelical) social norms. Antonia also suggested that such gossip circulates because women's participation in political spaces, particularly in rural areas, is a relatively new dynamic in these communities. As such, gossip, which plays into social mores of sexual respectability, is framed by Antonia as a response to these changes of the postwar years.

Chisme was also linked to the tensions between the *cultura de denuncia/cultura de silencio*, which I identified in Chapter 5. Indeed, women do not come forward for fear of the gossip that may circulate about them and their families in their communities. In a related way, the perceived fear of *chisme*, prevented women from reporting violence. Given the rural, isolated nature of communities where I conducted many of my interviews, gossip that spreads can change community dynamics such that a given woman may experience isolation within tightly knit community networks. Further, within Q'eqchi' culture, the notion of truth and taking one's word at face value has traditionally been highly valued; it is a pillar of Q'eqchi' community values and life. Relatedly, the concept of the *tejido*

social, or social fabric was emphasised as central to social life. Yet, the *tejido social* has, in the postwar years, been shaped by political and legal developments that challenge traditional ways of life. In the context of changing community dynamics and relations, gossip can go unquestioned and lead to devastating impacts for women in these areas.

Chisme intersected with other social dynamics and issues, as well. In one case in particular, gossip was linked, to a man's suicide by Petrona, a community leader. Days after the death of a man in a nearby community, she recounted:

I am going to share with you something... the *senora* came to tell me, on Tuesday her husband began to drink – he was a construction worker in the palm oil company – anyways, this day he began to drink, and later in the day, he drank poison. Because they say there were two of them that were drinking, and the other man told him that he knew that his woman had a lover who would come when he wasn't there, and then he asked him what he thought about it. But the man didn't just leave it, and when he got home, he beat his wife... early in the morning on Wednesday, he took the poison, and arrived in the hospital in Fray [Bartolomé de las Casas]. Yesterday he got home, and he died at home, all for the fault of the company, for drinking, and listening to the gossip of his friend (CL 40).

Here, Petrona reflects on how *machismo* operated in this case: she alludes to the ways in which respectability and sexuality are linked to gossip, with consequences that she framed as violence. The alleged incident of infidelity reflected the competitiveness between men that is linked and that manifests through machismo as well; the allegations of an affair, a transgression of *machismo*'s prescription for women's sexual chastity, provoked aggression and ultimately, suicide (see Cubitt 1995). Petrona also blamed the palm oil company, who provided the salary and economic means to sustain the deceased's drinking. While I explore further the links made by participants between palm oil and VsAW in Chapter 7, this comment comes after Petrona had, in a previous interview, situated herself as staunchly opposed to the palm oil industry in her community.

Indeed, this case was paradigmatic in that it linked several key themes: women's respectability, *chisme*, and lastly, the excessive consumption of alcohol, which I address in the following section. In recounting this case, Petrona insisted on the particularly fatal nature of *chisme*, and its consequences: "*chisme mata*" (chisme kills); further, the aftermath of the suicide was framed as a hopeless situation for the widow, who was totally dependent economically on her male partner.

6.4. Mediating Participation through *Machismo*

In the previous sections, I illustrated how women's political participation in spaces dedicated to addressing VsAW was often challenged by *machismo*, both from men who exerted a sense of ownership over women, and by community dynamics perpetrated between women themselves, often manifesting as a form of internalised *machismo*. Further, I found that *chisme* circulated about women who were politically involved, and targeted their respectability.

When talking about VIF, it became apparent that a key theme was the role alcohol played in such cases. Indeed, alcohol played an important role in the case with which Petrona was involved. This is not to say, however, that alcohol consumption necessarily causes VIF: however, women interviewed pointed to its importance. In a way, denouncing men's alcohol consumption was a means of reclaiming respectability. As I elaborate below the appeal to alcohol consumption worked in a twofold way: first, as a way to hold men accountable to the social expectations placed on them (in particular, to perform *machista* social norms and abide by hegemonic masculinities) and second, as a factor in many cases of VIF. In the section below, I show how condemning and addressing alcohol consumption became a strategic point of engagement for women in the FTN and a means to engage with and subvert *machismo*.

6.4.1. "Chupan su dinero"

Earlier in the chapter, I referenced how *machismo* is understood as a cause of VIF. In this section I build on this notion. Indeed, women activists made an important link between *machismo*, alcohol consumption and VIF. The link between alcohol and *machismo* is not new: this was also noted in the Costa Rican context (Chant 2002); similarly, Roger Lancaster (1992) found that drinking and other *machista* behaviours constituted a performance directed not only to women, but to other men, in order to conform to *machismo* as a social norm.

In the research in the FTN, this link reproduced expectations of men as breadwinners and providers for their families, rooted in social norms and values, and, importantly, in *machista* attitudes. This is reflected in Nelly comment below:

The women suffer from physical violence [VIF]. Often, the husband drinks too much, and then there is no money left to give to his wife or to his children. So this is where I

intervene, and speak to them both, that the husband has to provide these payments, especially if there are children (CL 19).

Nelly links limitations of male breadwinner financial support with alcoholism and VIF, specifically economic violence, as codified in the 2008 Law on Femicide. These responsibilities reflect the obligations placed on men to provide as breadwinners, illustrating traditional family dynamics as pervasive. Men who drink excessively and do not provide financial support are framed as irresponsible and as failures. Similarly, Alicia, who had worked in an OMM in the FTN for part of my fieldwork, explained to me that previous state-sponsored bonus programs that operated as conditional cash transfers (for example: *Mi familia progresa*, or My family progresses/grows) had been diverted to purchase alcohol controlled by male heads of households. Alicia recounted: “We used to call it “*mi cantina progresa*” (my *cantina* progresses/grows) because the men would drink the money from the bonus” (LG 3). The cash transfers, which fit into a broader model of economic development common throughout Latin America had ultimately, been limited in their impact (see Barrientos et al., 2010; Dotson 2014). Further, alcoholism is linked to a failure to provide for families, viewed as a male breadwinner responsibility, and ironically is an articulation of the same prevailing social norm that the women identified as oppressive for women.

Importantly, the problem of excessive alcohol consumption was drawn on as a way to reinforce normative masculinity. The women argued that when men “*chupan su dinero*”⁷⁴ (drink their money) they were failing to meet the expectations of a traditional male breadwinner model inherent to prevailing social norms and expectations. This normative masculinity was rooted in the same *machista* logic that oppressed women and reinforced normative femininity in the communities. Furthermore, the expectation that only men must provide for families may be oppressive towards men as well, and reinforces traditional gender roles and values. Such expectations then become a way to turn *machismo* around, and hold men accountable. Furthermore, women reinforced normative masculinity to call out instances of economic VAW. Indeed, if men drank excessively, to the point where no money was available to cover costs of maintenance, not only did they fail to

⁷⁴ Drink their money

uphold the social expectations placed on them, but they had also committed the offence of economic violence, criminalised in the Law on Femicide.

Yet, alcohol consumption was not only linked to male breadwinner activities. Indeed, Sandra's interview typified this theme: she spoke of a case where the victim-survivor's husband's drinking led to threats of violence and emotional abuse. She recounted a case where the husband would not permit his wife to leave the house, and, under the influence of alcohol threatened her with violence. Sandra eventually intervened in the case:

If a woman suffers from violence, the husband has to pay for this. I asked him if he was going to continue threatening his wife, bothering her like this when he was drunk. I told him that this too was violence what he was doing, because even when you do not hit a woman but threaten to, this is also a form of violence. And the husband accepted that he was wrong in what he was doing to his wife. This resolved the problem; up to today, he has not continued [to threaten his wife] (CL 22)

Sandra argued that the husband's alcohol consumption was linked to threats of physical violence. Her appeal to the law, linked to alcohol consumption, reflected her strategic engagement with the dealing with a case of VIF: her own involvement in the case was couched around the morality of drinking and threats of physical abuse.

Alcohol consumption was viewed as problematic in many communities. In the FTN, alcohol is sold in bars, or *cantinas* and in local corner stores, called *tiendas*, which sometimes offered liquor or beer for sale. Yet, the sale of liquor in local *tienda* shops (as well as in *cantinas*) is subject to legal regulation: national Guatemalan law prohibits the sale of alcohol in *tiendas* after 7pm. However, many *tiendas* sell liquor irrespective of the law, which the women attributed to cases of VsAW.

As has been documented elsewhere, drinking practices are often inherent to hegemonic constructions of masculinity. For instance, Michael Leyshon (2005) found that in the British countryside, pubs "are a site of male power and legitimacy in rural communities" (Leyshon 2005, 106; see also Campbell 2000). My findings suggest that in the FTN, women actively critiqued male drinking as delinquent and disruptive behaviour. Men who *chupan su dinero* fail to fulfill their responsibilities as male heads of households; further, the women linked men's alcohol consumption with VIF. In criticising it, and seeking to regulate it, the women also found ways to

subvert *machismo* they faced by engaging with it head on: if women had certain roles to fulfill, so too did the men.

This relationship between illegal sale and purchase of alcohol on one hand (which facilitated the delinquent behaviour of men), and problems associated with VsAW on the other has generated spaces of political engagement for women. In particular, Andrea became a key leader in the movement to close illegal *tiendas/cantinas* in Chisec. Andrea recounted that her vast knowledge and experience allowed her to take an important leadership role with respect to addressing VsAW, but this role also forced her to confront the broader context of prevailing *machismo* in the community. Andrea recounted:

I was in the Women's Commission last year, and I got interested [in the issue of illegal alcohol sales], so I informed myself, and I focused with my comrades from the COCODE. They gave me the opportunity to be a leader and to close the clandestine sales locations, so that is what we started to do. We went out in shifts, walking from 6pm-11pm at night, so that we would be able to close the places selling beer after 7pm in the evening (CL 24).

Andrea coordinated the group of COCODE and other community members in looking for *tiendas* illegally selling alcohol after designated hours (see Appendix 8 for copy of the regulation). Her role in this process was central; she explained how she was a key leader in the monitoring process of illegal liquor sales in her community. Indeed, other women community leaders looked up to and respected Andrea for her role in this organising, and in helping women in the municipality: in local meetings, she was often a point of reference and offered advice for younger women participating. Andrea acknowledged issues of *machismo* faced by women and in relation to VsAW. Further, she legitimated her participation and leadership in relation to the application of the rule of law, which she used as an important tool to carve out space for her role in social activism, drawing on her own experiences and expertise. In the end, Andrea's efforts were successful: over 7 illegal establishments were forced to close. This was not, however, always without its problems, as she described it:

Here there was a woman who did not want to close her clandestine *cantina*...she said that "I am in my house"... but she is illegally selling alcohol, which is a crime (CL 24).

An important tension was also present in this specific case: the sale of alcohol had become a source of income for the woman who sold illegally from her home. Nonetheless, because alcohol consumption was such a salient issue, thwarting it became more important than helping the woman vendor of illegal alcohol. Ultimately, the efforts of Andrea and other women in the municipality were also ongoing; she had taken initiative to educate and sensitise the new COCODE members in order to continue the work of stopping the illegal sale of alcohol in her community. The regulation was passed, and recognised the work of the women's *Consejo* (see Appendix 7).

Andrea's case and key role in coordinating the closure of illegal *tiendas* presents an important tension. The *machismo* she and other participants identified as problematic in relation to women's participation and involvement in addressing VsAW seemed not to impede her involvement in the movement to stop illegal liquor sales. Further, she, like many other community leaders, had the support of her husband: as Andrea shared her experiences with me, her husband sat in the room and was present for the interview. Andrea and her husband both explained that while he often feared for her safety, he supported Andrea in her work to support victims of violence in her community; Andrea's husband performed a protective role, arguably a different form of *machismo*. Further, Andrea was supported by organisations in her community to oppose illegal alcohol sales and violence and is considered to be an authority on this issue within and outside the community:

When we started doing the shifts [to close the illegally operating *tiendas*], I was the only woman in a group of sixty men... other women saw me participating and decided they should participate too... women came to my house and said, "Doña Andrea, if you are going to continue, we will participate", so I told them that I was going to participate, and in this way, other women wanted to get involved (CL 24).

The linkages between (illegal) alcohol sales and VIF in the communities open spaces of political participation for women. Women argued that the illegal sales facilitated the increased sale of alcohol because alcohol was being sold outside of permitted hours and was therefore easier to purchase and consume. Interestingly, their condemnation of alcohol consumption plays into traditional norms and values that are prominent in their communities, and which in turn also shape *machista* views regarding the role and participation of women in society. As such, engaging in addressing VsAW in relation to the issue of alcohol consumption becomes a means

through which the women community leaders can negotiate their participation in otherwise *machista* political spaces. Further, the men who became involved also illustrated a breakage between *machismo* and alcohol in the communities.

The experience of Andrea exemplifies how she and other community leaders subverted some of these gendered norms by campaigning to prohibit illegal liquor sales. The issue of illegal alcohol consumption became a “respectable” avenue for women’s engagement; yet, at the same time, this problem was something she too attributed to the issue of VAW. Similarly, as I stated earlier, Sandra addressed the particular case of emotional abuse in relation to excessive alcohol consumption, without being challenged by her male colleagues or other members of the community. Consequently, women engaged in what they perceived as means of preventing or addressing VsAW through an appeal to broader social values linked to regulation of or abstinence from alcohol consumption. This presents an interesting tension that illustrates how women community leaders in the FTN engage with and negotiate their involvement in *machista* political spaces. Andrea and other women community leaders mediated their participation in addressing causes and issues related to VsAW through targeting alcoholism. Part of this negotiation tactic worked through and around an appeal to existing laws and the authority afforded to the rule of law and legality.

6.5. Conclusion: *Machismo* in the Matrix

In this chapter, I have highlighted how *machismo* is linked to VIF, and how it shapes women’s involvement in the FTN. The chapter aimed to illustrate links between social relations and norms, masculinity, femininity, and the ways in which VsAW, specifically VIF are tackled. *Machismo* foregrounds constructions of femininity and masculinity in their hegemonic and normative manifestations. It also shapes how VsAW is addressed, and the kinds of appeals that can be made and are socially permissible. The findings here can be understood in relation to the matrix elaborated in Chapter 3, specifically the axis of Gendered Social Relations (see figure 6.1). Importantly, *machismo* as a key social force is confronted by and at odds with development that has occurred in the region around women’s rights (see Chapter 5). This development has opened spaces for women’s participation, which in turn was met with opposition. Furthermore, in transgressing normative gender roles, women

defied machismo by becoming politically involved. They faced *chisme*, rooted in a *machista* logic and centered on sexual respectability, as a result. Ultimately, they carved spaces of resistance and overcame these challenges, at times reproducing *machista* discourses around normative masculinity (men as male breadwinners).

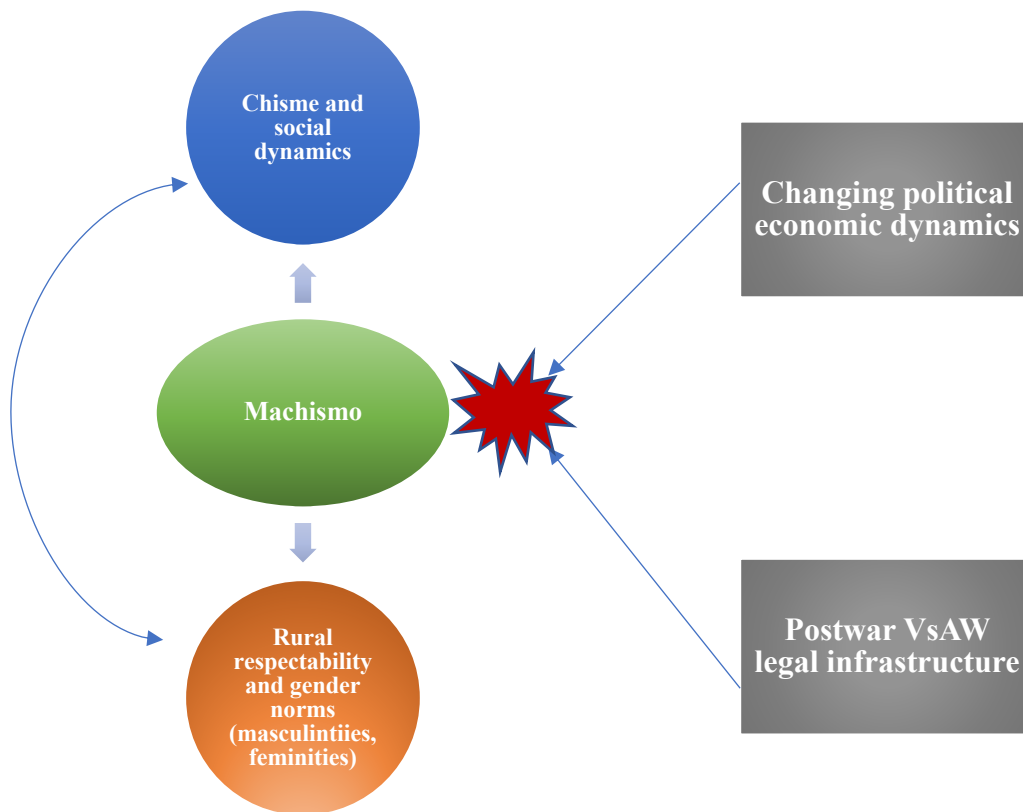


Figure 6.1: Summary - *Machismo* and Social Norms

The findings relating to *machismo* also speak to the historical normalisation of violence in postwar Guatemala. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, and as I will elaborate in Chapter 7, historically speaking, the military perpetrated sexual violence against indigenous women during the internal armed conflict. Bearing in mind the historical legacies of sexual violence, and how it was linked with the destruction of the *tejido social* (social fabric), the emphasis on the shame associated with sexual promiscuity in *chisme* and rumours about politically active women can be situated in a broader landscape of historically entrenched shame. Preserving sexual respectability in the postwar years is an important aspect of rural life in areas hardest hit by the war: *chisme* that suggests otherwise is undoubtedly powerful.

Further, political economic transformations of the postwar years noted in Chapter 2 shaped community life and social relations in the FTN. In particular, the transition from subsistence or small-scale agriculture to palm oil plantations in many communities has also been met with a transition to wage labour economy benefitting men. Women linked this to the consumption of alcohol, which was connected to VIF and men's own transgression of normative masculinity. I will revisit this theme in the next chapter.

My findings show that *machismo* plays an important role in shaping women's political participation and engagement on issues relating to VsAW and VIF in their communities both in private and public spaces. Initially, in conducting my research, I was apprehensive to discuss the issue of *machismo*, viewing it solely as a culturalist argument to which blame for high rates of VsAW could be attributed. Indeed, following Aída Hurtado and Mrinal Sihna (2016) in their study on the ways in which educated, class mobile Chicano men in the US draw on feminism, their education, and lived experiences to subvert *machista* norms in their work and communities, I recognise that conceptualising *machismo* as a prevailing social norm in Latin America carries with it particular, negative stereotypes about the region. They argue, "Many times Latino cultural practices are used as the measure of the liberal sexual and gender attitudes of other nation-states" (Hurtado and Sihna 2016, xi), building a case for moving beyond *machismo* in analysis of gender and political issues in Latin America and the US. While I agree that this work needs to be undertaken, my findings illustrate the emphasis placed on *machismo*: the women I interviewed argued that *machismo* was still a persisting norm impacting their political engagement, and their work and the cases that they assisted.

This is not to say, however, that all men involved in political spaces that I encountered perform a similar *machismo* that inhibits the work of the women in the women's commission. Indeed, as I stated earlier in the chapter, I attended the International Women's Day celebrations with a male indigenous community leader, who served as an important gatekeeper to many interview participants, and who had openly expressed his own discomfort at the mayor's comments quoted at the start of this chapter. Yet, his authority as a male indigenous leader also facilitated my own connection to important community networks of women leaders in the FTN. While he was sympathetic to the work of the women leaders in the FTN, and participated in some of the women's commission's monthly meetings as an observer, as a male

leader in the community he was invested with an authority and privilege that enabled him to facilitate my research connection in the first place, which otherwise would have been difficult for me to make. Thus, as a researcher and outsider, carrying my own privileges and epistemological baggage to the field, I also found myself engaging in a practice of engaging with *machista* norms in order to carry out my own research work.

While *machismo* persists as a key challenge, it was addressed in many instances through an appeal to the rule of law. Further, law is strategically engaged with as an objective, neutral entity by these women. It is used to justify their participation, and appealed to in order to prevent further escalation of violence, specifically VIF. Simultaneously, however, women face barriers imposed by the rule of law; in practice, it is not neutral, but rather, its operationalisation is shaped by the same prevailing gendered social and political norms that women confront in their private lives.

Further, the women spoke about women's rights and legal developments as a form of protection for women who suffer from violence in their communities. The importance of a timeframe for justice was highlighted; as I mention in Chapters 4 and 5, prior to 2008, existing laws in Guatemala did not criminalise VsAW/VIF. In historical context, as I explore further in Chapters 1, 4, and 7, sexual violence against women was a tactic employed by the Guatemalan military to "destroy the social fabric" of indigenous communities (CEH 1999; Abbott and Hartviksen 2016). As such, the women situated current legal developments as a form of protection, against contemporary manifestations and expressions of *machismo*, which they viewed as a key causal factor in cases of intimate partner violence they addressed.

6.5.1. *Concluding reflections*

In this chapter, I have explored the ways in which *machismo* transcends public and private spaces, and the complex and contradictory ways in which the women community leaders who shared their experiences and knowledges with me negotiated their work in this context. I found that women deal with *machismo* in a way that blurs the divide between public and private spaces and that women's political participation operates and is mediated through prevailing social norms. This mediation is complex and contradictory, and points to the inherent tensions still

present in relation to gender issues in the FTN. Arguably, these issues may also be present in other rural areas in Guatemala. I also suggested that women engaged in work in certain sectors, particularly around alcoholism in order to draw attention to and address VIF in their communities. I pointed to the important appeal to the rule of law in relation to VIF made by these women, and how this too presents certain complexities, given the inherently problematic application of the law in relation to cases of VIF.

As I prepared to leave Chisec after my primary fieldtrip in 2016, local community leaders asked me to try to meet the local mayor, and invite him to an upcoming meeting of the *Consejo*. In this meeting, local leaders would be collaborating on assisting in cases of VIF, the possible distribution of conditional cash transfers, and I would also be sharing key findings from my research. The women had complained that he had not, to that point, taken them or their concerns seriously. Seeing new changes that had been brought about with regards to the DMM (a new, larger and more private office at the front of the municipal building, new staff members), I was optimistic going into my appointment with the local leader. Following our meeting, the mayor assured me that he would attend the meeting, but he never did.

I kept in touch with women in the municipality, which I revisited in 2017 for a final fieldtrip. I was surprised to note on this final trip that many of the women who worked most closely with the municipal authorities, typically referred to the mayor not by name, but using the term *patrón* (boss). The term suggested respect, authority and power attributed to the mayor, who had been by many critiqued for his *machista* attitudes. I also noted that the mayor had recently equipped some of the women in the DMM with new uniforms, which included crisp, smart blouses emblazoned with the municipal logo, as well as matching, traditional *huipiles* and *cortes* (indigenous shirts and skirts) to wear to municipal events and meetings. Further, with the mayor's blessing, the office had expanded, and was more active than ever. Had the women found alternative ways to negotiate, and make small gains where possible, all the while mobilising *machismo* to their advantage? Affording the mayor the respect of the title *patrón* seemed counterintuitive to the perception of him, expressed by many of the women a year earlier. Was there any alternative to this course of action, if their work was to advance, and needed his authority to do so?

In early 2018, I received the news that Elena, now a municipal authority herself, had filed an official complaint about the mayor to national authorities in the Public Ministry in Guatemala City. She charged the mayor with sexism and discrimination towards women in politics and in her municipality. Images and videos of Elena, dressed in traditional Maya Q'eqchi' *traje* and leaving the offices of the MP circulated on social media. As I was in the process of completing my thesis, her complaint was still being processed, but it nonetheless represented the ongoing contestations against *machismo* and confrontations Maya Q'eqchi' women in the FTN make, to unsettle the conditions and social norms that enable the persistence of VsAW in their communities.

7. “For us, palm is a form of violence against women”: Gendering the Violence of Development in the FTN

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7.1. Introduction

The first trip I took to the Franja Transversal del Norte (FTN), during my preliminary field research trip, brought me to the community of Fray Bartolome de las Casas, where an anthropologist, teacher and researcher from the national university, the University of San Carlos, called David introduced me to local community leaders and social networks. On my way to meet with a support worker from a local women’s NGO and her partner, who worked for the palm oil company Naturaceites, we hiked up a small hill to get a view of Fray Bartolome de las Casas from above. David pointed to the limits of the community, and then directed to across the horizon, explaining that all the trees we could see were extensive rows of palm oil trees, mostly belonging to the Naturaceites plantation in the municipality. David remarked: “Before, this used to be much more diverse. There were beans, corn, ranching. Now, it is all palm oil. Look, here [pointing to horizon]. It is all palm that you can see” (PO 2).

The researcher pointed out that the landscape on the horizon had been transformed from diversified, subsistence agriculture and ranching to almost exclusively palm oil plantations in recent years. Indeed, the political, social and economic landscape of the FTN has also been transformed since the signing of the 1996 Peace Accords. Many of the community leaders I interviewed perceived the imposition of the palm oil industry in their communities and in neighbouring villages in complex and contradictory ways, both as a potential source of economic opportunities but also as a disruption to local agriculture and indigenous, mostly

Maya-Q'eqchi', rural life, cultural practices and beliefs. It was also understood as part of a broader historical trajectory of development shaping the region.

Underpinning these understandings was a sense that the expansion of the palm oil industry has had uneven gender implications: women, particularly indigenous, rural, and poor women in the FTN absorbed the disruptions provoked by the industry most acutely. Further, palm oil cultivation and expansion was discussed in relation to and as a form of VsAW. This linkage is perplexing: in the previous chapters, I illustrated how VsAW were understood in relation to the legal infrastructure (Chapter 5). I also discussed how VIF and other forms of VsAW were linked to *machismo* and social norms, as well as the consumption of alcohol (Chapter 6). Simultaneously, I noted that women, particularly those living in the FTN and serving as community leaders and organisers, were adamant that palm oil cultivation constituted a gendered form of violence. Why was this the case, and in what ways does palm oil become or provoke VsAW in the FTN?

In this chapter, I will discuss how the disruptions women associated with palm oil are perceived in relation to VsAW: they are linked to suffering, and this suffering is gendered. Palm oil cultivation constructed the conditions in which women experienced different forms of violence. The claim that palm oil is a violent process, or a form of gendered violence, however, is asserted within a broader framework of social norms that bear an immense symbolic power over communities. Calling palm oil out *as* violence is an empowered act of resistance for many women; but it is also situated within a framework that otherwise oppresses them, pointing to an important contradiction.

The chapter is organised into four key sections. I first highlight how I conceptually draw on understandings of structural and symbolic violence to inform the analysis in the chapter. I then explore the ways in which palm oil affects communities, and elucidate how women leaders and communities linked palm oil with VsAW. I discuss histories and legacies of violence and their relationship to palm oil, and suggest that the symbolic power of social norms has served, perhaps paradoxically, to challenge coloniality in the postwar years. Ultimately, my findings suggest that palm oil is nonetheless related to structural, everyday and sometimes political violence for women in the region, in complex and contradictory ways.

7.2. Gendering Structural and Symbolic Violence in Relation to Palm Oil

Palm oil cultivation is framed as a form of gendered violence by community leaders, and as an inherently gendered form of development in the FTN. Its impacts are said to affect women most intensely. As a result, palm oil cultivation can be understood to exacerbate existing inequalities, and therefore contribute to the landscape of violences faced by women. This contention, that development is violent or linked to violence, is not unique; rather, it speaks to Arturo Escobar's argument that development is necessarily a violent process, also echoed in Lara Coleman's (2013) research on neoliberalisation and gender in Colombia.

The findings I discuss below illustrate the manifestation of gendered articulations of structural violence in relation to the exclusions and inequalities linked to palm oil. In this respect, bearing the gendered impacts of palm oil in mind, and the ways in which women relate them to different forms of VsAW, it is clear that much of the violence that women refer to is intrinsically linked to the political economic structures that facilitate palm oil as a model of development in their communities. Indeed, conceptually, this relates to the notion of structural violence, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Structural violence is often framed as the inability of people to access their basic needs, inhibited by structures and/or institutions in society (Galtung 1969). Seen from this perspective, palm oil cultivation may be understood to reinforce social gender and ethnic inequalities.

Similarly, Paul Farmer (1996; 2004) argues that specific "social forces" structure conditions of risk, exposing individuals to "extreme suffering, from hunger to torture and rape" (Farmer 2004, 11).⁷⁵ This is not to equate the violence of hunger with the violence of rape; rather, social forces influence the ways in which people are exposed to different kinds of violence. Those who are on the margins are at greater risk, for instance. In the case of the FTN, indigenous women living in rural communities face multiple risks: the risks of geographic isolation; the risks associated with *machista* social norms; and the risks related to living mostly in poverty, and in areas most impacted by the development of the palm oil industry.

Relatedly, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2004) discuss the violence of the everyday:

⁷⁵ Rachel Pain (2014) also takes up the concept of structural violence, but in the home, which she refers to as "terrorism". She suggests that there are parallels between global terrorism and "the intimate and structural dynamics of terrorism experienced in the home" (Pain 2014, 531).

Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality – force, assault, or the infliction of pain – alone. Violence also includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim. The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what gives violence its power and meaning (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, 1).

Conceptually drawing on structural violence is not, however, to reinforce the blamelessness of perpetrators of gendered violence. Rather, structural violence is linked to uneven power relations which lead to the enactment of particular models of economic and social development which in this case results in the inability of some people – the Maya-Q’eqchi’ women, in particular, to access their needs. Furthermore, structural violence exposes people to risks for different forms violence, through structures of oppression and inequality. Women in the FTN experience structural violence in different ways, specifically through racism and sexism. This is not to say that they do not experience intrafamilial violence or other forms of violence committed by perpetrators; rather, these forms of violence are exacerbated by the structural violence of living in the context of development in the FTN. Indeed, by referring to structural violence I argue that structural inequality can exacerbate conditions in which VsAW can and do occur.

Further, I found that structural violence was profoundly shaped by social norms, which also reinforce racism and sexism linked to structural violence. Indeed, the ways in which palm oil was spoken about as violent often was situated in relation to women’s social expectations and roles. By critiquing palm oil as a form of violence, however, women did not critique the social norms and reproductive labour they were expected to perform. These social expectations can be conceptualised in relation to the concept of symbolic power and symbolic violence, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Indeed, in line with Bourdieu (1979; 2004), Bourgois (2001), and Menjivar (2011), because gendered, oppressive social norms went unquestioned, and were considered “natural and self-evident” (Bourgois 2001, 8; also quoted in Chapter 3).

Ultimately, then, as I will explore in the sections to follow, structural violence linked to palm oil and the symbolic power and violence of social norms influenced how palm oil was understood in relation to VsAW in the FTN (see Figure 7.1)

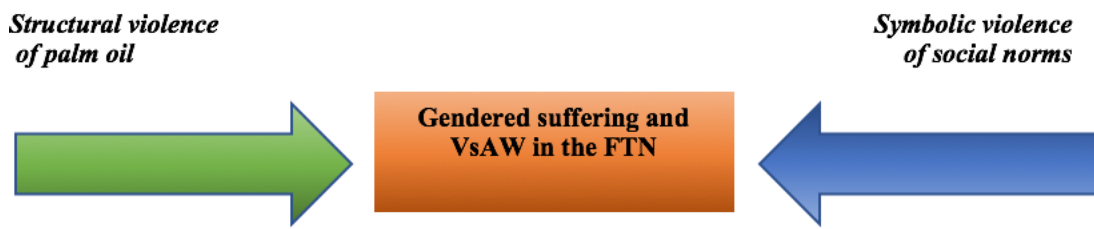


Figure 7.1 Intersection of structural and symbolic violence

I will draw on this understanding to critically engage with the notion that palm oil shapes VsAW in the FTN in the sections to follow. Further, bringing aspects of structural and symbolic violence together allows for an understanding of how social norms and political economic change are related to VsAW, as illustrated by the matrix framework I developed in Chapter 3.

7.3. Gendered Impacts of Palm Oil in Relation to VsAW

In this section, I discuss the gendered impacts of palm oil, and the ways in which they are perceived as related to VsAW by women community leaders. There were four key impact areas identified as negatively impacting women: environmental disruptions; economic transformations; land tenure and community relations; and political violence and tensions (see figure 7.2). These impact areas were all influenced by social norms, and rooted in the *machista* logic discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, as I will illustrate in the final section of the chapter, palm oil cultivation was part of a broader, historical trajectory of coloniality and development, which has been contentious and ultimately, has shaped community dynamics in the postwar years.

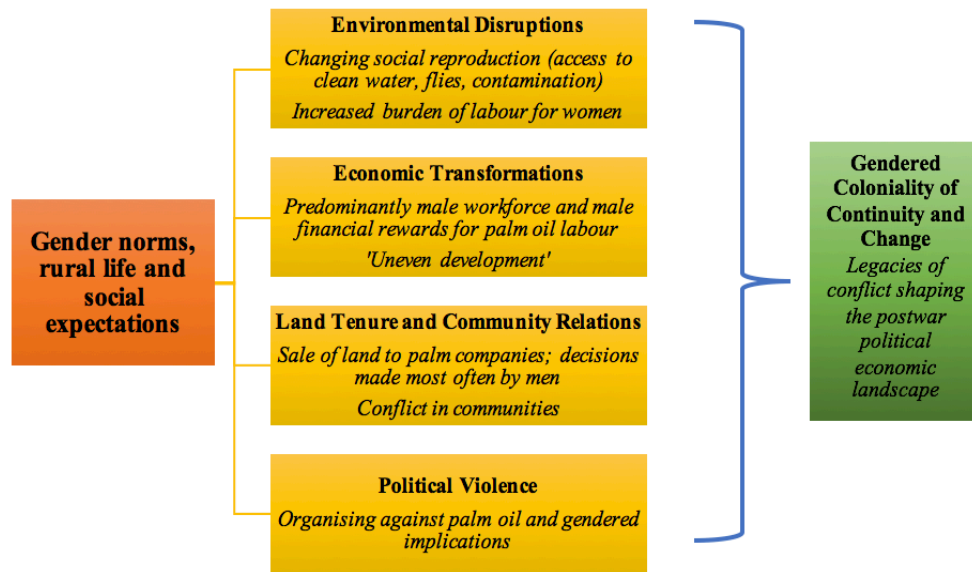


Figure 7.2: Key Gendered Impacts of Palm Oil Cultivation in the FTN

7.3.1. *Environmental Disruptions*

The introduction of palm oil into or near communities was said to provoke gendered environmental disruptions. In particular, the issue of possible water contamination and water use from palm oil was a key problem, as well as the attraction of pests and flies, which I discuss below. It should be noted, however, that in relative terms, palm oil is in its infancy in much of the FTN: there is little empirical evidence documenting related environmental disruptions, such as flies and use of water. This is not to say that women do not experience these issues and that the disruptions are immaterial: the issues of water use and contamination and health concerns are very real for women who experience them. Moreover, elsewhere, research has linked palm oil cultivation to deforestation and high water use; however, this scientific research is limited in Guatemala. Concerns over deforestation were voiced in development forums. This issue was also addressed in interviews. For instance, a leader from Raxruhá called Serapia explained that deforestation was not only dispossessing communities, but also rendering cultivation of subsistence agriculture precarious, which has life-altering impacts on rural communities in the FTN:

In the [nearby] *finca* (plantation)... many trees have been cut down... it was the habitat of many animals, and now the animals are coming to where we are. When we try to cultivate [subsistence agriculture], the animals eat our crops and we don't have the same harvests as before... and so *the palm is killing us, little by little* (CL 3, emphasis mine).

Serapia's argument, that the environmental consequences of palm oil cultivation is ultimately and slowly *killing off* communities, epitomises the language of violence that was regularly associated with the palm oil industry, both in interviews and in participant observation.

In terms of documented, widespread cases of contamination, in 2015, an ecocide occurred in the Rio de Pasion, in the neighbouring Petén department, which served as a landmark case. The ecocide was a result of a chemical spill caused by the REPSA palm oil company; the mass death of fish in the river gravely impacted communities in the Sayaxche municipality, for whom fishing was a key source of livelihood. In September 2015, local community leader Rigoberto Lima, a vocal opponent of REPSA, was shot and killed in what is widely considered a political assassination (though it was never investigated by authorities) (Escobar 2015).

7.3.1.1. "Water is Life"

When I returned to the FTN for a third and final field trip, another environmental incident had occurred in the municipality of Chisec: large numbers of fish were found dead in a river in a community near a palm oil plantation and processor. The community had attributed the problem to the palm oil company; subsequently, the Public Ministry had been informed by community leaders, who then came to the community to collect samples, but arrived too late for the samples to reveal levels of chemicals. I attended a meeting with the women's commission of Chisec, which was held in the community, and Elena rose to say: "Here we are in [this community], and we are 5 km from where the ecocide happened. Why aren't we talking about the palm oil? It is a problem that is affecting all of us women!"

In Chapter 1, I discussed my first interview with Elena, a human rights defender from a community that shares its boundaries with a Guatemalan palm oil company. Elena explained to me that because palm oil cultivation and processing uses an excessive amount of water, and the processing is not regulated and contaminates rivers, women, who use water for washing, cooking and cleaning experience the most impact.

The theme of water contamination and excessive water use by palm oil companies, and the apparent link to social reproductive roles was prominent throughout the research. In particular, the link fed the claim that because of environmental impacts, and because women's burden of labour had increased, women suffered as a result of the palm oil in the FTN. For instance, in a group interview I conducted in a community in Raxruhá, the leaders explained that the nearby palm oil company had polluted the water, forcing women to travel further to access clean and potable water. This community also relied on ecotourism as a main source of income; accessing clean water was a priority for preparing food for tourists, another role performed by women. Furthermore, the river located near the community was distinctly turquoise in colour; local officials argued that since palm oil, the colour of the water had faded, and blamed palm oil pesticides and chemicals for the transformation. At this point in the interview, one of the wives of the indigenous authorities also participating in the group interview, and serving refreshments to my interpreter, a gatekeeper, and myself spoke up: she explained that the water was used for cooking and cleaning and bathing, and had produced rashes and made some people in the community fall ill. Because women were the primary carers in the community, they absorbed these impacts most acutely because of how their labour would be complicated. At this point, a male member of the indigenous authority intervened and exclaimed: "It's the *women* who suffer the most!" These claims were later articulated by other women from this community and from elsewhere in the FTN. Indeed, in separate interviews that I conducted at a later date, with other two women from the same community in Raxruhá named Catalina and Teresa, they both reinforced the issues: "For us, palm oil is a form of violence against women!" (CL 10).

Importantly, many communities do not have access to running water; if communities' water sources are located near palm oil, the issue of access to water was exacerbated. For communities that were not impacted, however, women expressed their relief: "*Gracias a dios* (thank god) we are not affected", as one participant phrased it. Further, women spoke of their pity for those impacted negatively. Palm oil and its feared associated environmental disruptions were framed as an added burden for women.

Ultimately, women rely on access to rivers with clean water in order to perform social reproductive labour often designated as women's work. Because

women and the labour they were socially expected to perform were the most affected by changing access to clean water, palm oil cultivation was framed as an inherently gendered issue; while both men and women protested development in palm oil in the region, the disruptions that palm oil caused were inherently gendered. Such disruptions occur in relation to already present social norms. In Chapter 6, I spoke of how *machismo* governed women's political participation; relatedly, such social norms, which reinforce the sexual division of labour, also shape the impacts of palm oil expansion in the FTN.

7.3.1.2. *Flies and Illness*

The environmental disruptions of palm oil were linked to illnesses in communities, which were also said to burden women specifically. This linkage was made in relation to women's role as mothers and carers in their communities. Illustrating this theme, a community leader from Raxruhá, Serapia, stated:

What is happening here in our community is that palm is bringing problems for us women, and for our children too. There is so much heat, and many illnesses, we don't know anything about the illnesses that the palm is causing... it wasn't like this before, 20 years ago, we could handle the heat, and now we can't (CL 3).

The issues of heat and illnesses were not framed as problematic for men; rather, they were contextualised as issues that women and children endured disproportionately: not only were women responsible for caring for those who were unwell, but they were also assumed to be weaker than men, who could thus handle it better.

The issues of heat and illness are ambiguous in the sense that the causal link with palm oil is not empirically evident; yet, Serapia was not unique in associating them with palm oil or women's work. This contention arose in interviews with women who lived near palm oil plantations. Indeed, because palm oil was the visible culprit, it was also easy for women to link climate change, which undoubtedly impacted women, with transformations to the local environment. In this sense, the problem of suffering as a result of palm oil cultivation was thus understood in relation to women's gender roles, and the responsibilities of care assigned to them.

Another key issue raised in interviews was the issue of pests and flies, attributed to palm oil plantations. For instance, Luciana, who is a founding member of the renowned *Mama Maquin* feminist organisation and respected leader in the

FTN, argued that flies in her community (which was located directly beside a palm oil plantation) had become so problematic, that cooking and daily tasks were rendered uncomfortable: “We couldn’t even prepare the *atol* [corn based drink] because of the flies... my daughter was doing her internship placement in a local school, and because of the flies, she could not even talk. It affected her too.” Serapia in Raxruhá described the problem as a “plague of flies” which bit and caused rashes and discomfort among those living in the area, while Ada, a community leader, single mother, member of the Women’s Commission in Chisec and survivor of domestic abuse, also complained about the flies that came as a result of the palm oil, as well as the stench of the processing plant:

There are so many flies from the palm, and there is a stench that comes from the processing plant, which in the afternoon they say they can’t deal with, and I say the same, because sometimes I can smell it from my house and this affects our health too, this is because of the palm (CL 20).

Here, Ada shared the opinion held by many women in the FTN, who felt the flies were becoming a health concern, which impacted them most directly. Indeed, Luciana, Serapia and Ada were examples of women living near palm oil, and highlighted the ways in which environmental impacts were linked to women’s suffering; women’s suffering was situated in relation to the social norms women were required to fulfil as carers (see Moser 1993). The burden of care had increased effectively rendering women’s work increasingly challenging. Further, these findings also bear parallels to research on the gendered impacts of capital accumulation in countries of the global south, specifically in terms of women’s labour and roles in communities. For instance, Maria Mies (1982; 1998) links global capital accumulation with the oppression of women in parts of the world absorbing the shocks of such political economic processes.

The gendered links to environmental disruptions were not exclusive to interview findings: women participated in social forums and community events, and talked about the health and water problems, which afforded them space to speak and engage. For instance, in one such forum held in Raxruhá in March 2016, Elena was given space on a panel to speak and she explained that the environmental issues provoked by palm oil in close proximity to her village meant that women suffered

disproportionately the impacts of palm oil cultivation, drawing on the same reasoning presented by other community leaders.

The theme of women's suffering through palm oil as a form of VsAW parallels Mies and Shiva's (1993) work on ecofeminism, whereby they contend environmental issues are feminist issues, and how ecological devastation is linked to patriarchal norms and practices in society (see also Salleh 2003; Agarwal 1992). Building on this argument, my findings also show how the material impacts of palm oil, and the way it shapes women's daily lives in relation to environmental degradation played into key norms and values within communities. In addition, these cases of changing social dynamics reflect how women absorb some of the shocks of development in particularly gendered ways. The reference made here is also demonstrative of True (2012)'s assertion with regards to the political economy of VsAW: that the shocks of development are not evenly distributed, from a gendered perspective. Women absorb the impacts in ways that affect them differently than men; in the case of this research, this was evident in relation to social reproductive tasks women were expected to carry out. Furthermore, the development of palm oil in the FTN exacerbates structures of social inequality and gender hierarchies which I suggest also may contribute to the ways in which VsAW materialise in rural contexts in Guatemala.

Ultimately, environmental degradation caused by palm oil cultivation, or feared to be caused by it, was framed as a provoker of women's suffering, and thereby considered a violent process. Palm oil is not a form of VIF, yet the disruptions it causes impact women in particular ways. Indeed, similarly to the case of water, the health issues or discomfort attributed to the disruptions of palm oil cultivation were framed as affecting women the most because they increased women's burden of social reproductive labour, which in turn is reinforced by *machista* social norms in rural communities. At the same time, these issues became a rallying point for women engaged in political participation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, women in these spaces, while calling for the halting of palm oil expansion, also carved out space for women's involvement, and for thinking about VsAW.

7.3.2. "Uneven Development" and Economic VAW

It should be noted that some women spoke about how palm oil could potentially benefit communities: in some cases, it offered much needed employment in widely

impoverished areas. Yet, this was framed as a temporary fix to a larger problem of structural inequality. Further, palm oil was referred to as a form of uneven development; the issue of gendered, uneven development linked to palm oil was referenced in interviews in a twofold way. First, men were framed as the key beneficiaries of any financial gains that were generated from employment in the industry. Because of social norms and expectations, men also controlled household finances. Second, financial benefits were limited, and the precarity of labour in the industry contributed to household tensions, which in turn contributed to women's understanding and experiences of VsAW.

In the communities where the research was conducted, mostly men were employed in the palm oil companies.⁷⁶ This observation was reinforced by a social worker from Cobán named Blanca, who deals with cases of VsAW from across Alta Verapaz, including the FTN. Blanca explained that in her work, she observed the reinforcing of persisting gender hierarchies and inequalities: "Palm oil [cultivation] reinforces gender inequality because it is mostly the men who work, not women, so men's condition might improve, but certainly not women. It is *uneven development* in this sense" (NGO 9). Thus, some of the women leaders I interviewed explained that while palm brought some economic benefits, such as wage labour, these benefits did little to change the status quo in terms of gender relations.

Further, communities reported that many palm workers faced precarious working conditions. At the time of my research, only Naturaceites held RSPO certification, ensuring minimum wage salaries and respect for labour rights in palm oil plantations and processing; it was less feasible to determine the extent to which labour rights were respected in the other companies. Communities, on the other hand, reported precarious working conditions. For instance, I conducted a focus group in Raxruhá with local indigenous authorities who served as the environmental disaster management team, who explained that while some contracts in the palm oil company nearest their community paid "around the minimum wage", they were short term. Additionally, the company only hired younger men on short term contracts; if men fell ill or were injured, they would be let go; this point was echoed

⁷⁶ There are reports of women employed by the REPSA palm oil company in the neighbouring Petén. While women I interviewed overwhelmingly reported that men were primary employees in local palm oil plantations, this is not an indication of the fact that that palm oil exclusively employs men, elsewhere in Guatemala or worldwide. I did not have access to employment figures by the palm oil companies, and so relied on women's understandings, having had no other way of cross-checking these.

in individual interviews as well. Consequently, for this community and others, it was widely seen as more profitable to continue cultivating subsistence agriculture on family plots of land rather than leave to work on the palm oil plantation. Further, the community agreed, communally to not sell land to the company; this was an increasingly common trend noted in interviews as well.

The notion that palm oil cultivation could be a deadly or dangerous field of employment arose in many interviews. Yet, in some communities, palm oil was the only option for employment. Because options for work were limited, the dynamic created a sort of dependency of communities on palm oil. Consequently, women suggested that the men who went to work in the palm oil plantations and processing were often treated as disposable labour. Nelly, a community leader in Chisec, highlighted this point:

It is true that there are communities where the only place to work is palm oil, and the wages are really low... in this work you can suffer accidents or the attacks of animals that you can find there, and they only pay them 60 Quetzales per day, and when they suffer an accident, they have to stop working and they don't get paid. The rich are those who are taking advantage of the poor people. And they barely receive any medical help; they just go to the IGSS [social security clinic], where they do the examinations but don't give medicines. Like in the case of the woman whose husband died [in the palm oil plantation], she was left with 7 children, also she was pregnant, and when this happened, well, they received nothing... they were left without land and they are stuck in poverty (CL 19).

Here, Nelly also referred to a case where a man working in a palm oil plantation near her community was shot and killed by a security guard, allegedly by mistake. She had explained that he was walking in the plantation, carrying a backpack. Following his death, no investigation was carried out and his wife, who was economically dependent on him, received no compensation. Indeed, as Nelly highlighted, and as others contended, poor and dangerous working conditions often accompanied precarious contracts or meagre salaries for men in the FTN.

Nevertheless, the theme of economic violence in relation to palm oil was especially prominent in interviews. Despite all the challenges men faced in the industry, they still remained the key beneficiaries. Economic violence was also rooted in the traditional male breadwinner model, which was now departing from traditional subsistence agriculture. Further, economic VAW linked to palm oil was associated with the issue of excessive alcohol consumption discussed in Chapter 6. For instance, Petrona explained:

The types of violence that exist are when the husband works for the palm oil company, and when he receives his pay, he goes and gets drunk. And the woman stays home in the house without any money, this is what mostly exists, and the children do not have food and the woman passes the two weeks [salary period] without any money. This is what we see the most of in our community (CL 16).

Petrona's observation is paradigmatic of the issue that was raised surrounding alcoholism and alcohol consumption and *machismo*, which I discussed in Chapter 6, and also of the problems pointed out by many women community leaders in the FTN. The structural inequalities reinforced by labour in the palm oil sector were also understood to shape and influence VsAW in the FTN. Similarly, community leader Reina Elisabeth commented:

There is economic violence, it is because of this [the palm], because the husbands work in palm, and there are those husbands who like to drink a lot, and spend the money that should be for the children, but it is spent in the *cantinas* (bars)... Us women, we get up at 3 am, and to receive nothing? This is hard, this is what is happening to my *compañeras* (female comrades), this is what I see happening in my community (CL 17).

Interestingly, Reina Elisabeth's husband worked for 2 months in palm, but she explained that the pay was not worth it, and it was more profitable for them to cultivate their own crops on their own land. Reina highlighted the point that under conditions of palm oil cultivation, women have an increased burden of unpaid/reproductive labour, while men enjoy the benefits, sometimes frivolously.

The idea of uneven development in communities impacted by palm oil was understood as a form of economic violence, alluding to an engagement with the legalistic jargon associated with VsAW, institutionalised in the 2008 Law on Femicide (as discussed in Chapter 5). In this respect, the language of the Law on Femicide proved useful for women in terms of conceptualising the ways in which economic inequalities were exacerbated by palm oil in their communities. Interestingly, this notion was so pervasive, that it also arose in anecdotal conversations with gatekeepers, interview participants and friends. For instance, following my interview with a newly installed local judge in Chisec, several dozen *palmeros* (palm oil workers) were waiting outside the bank to collect their biweekly pay; the judge remarked, jokingly, that the men would be off to the *cantina* to drink their wages.

Opposition to the inequities associated with palm oil was framed in relation to women's roles as mothers, as well. This opposition demonstrated the same kind of

logic that influenced the way women engaged with environmental disruptions of palm oil. The idea of motherhood was central to reinforcing the broader impacts. For instance, Serapia justified her position in relation to palm oil cultivation and the issue of land conflict by appealing to motherhood, and children:

What I want most is for the palm oil plantations to disappear, now that we have children, and for them to have land and space to cultivate their own crops. Because if we realise that there are children being raised here, and that in ten or twenty years, there won't be any land for them, and where are they going to find land if there isn't any... People [who sell to palm companies] aren't thinking about the lives of their children tomorrow, they don't wish for the best for their children; the only thing they are thinking of is the present (CL 3).

The role that traditional gender norms play in opposing the palm oil industry was prominent; appeals to motherhood, as well as concern for the future, were often used to justify opposition to expansion of palm oil in communities. Indeed, more broadly, the notions of motherhood and rural femininity was linked to how women experienced the impacts of palm oil. As such, a gendered experience of palm oil was related to the social norms inherent to communities and women's roles within them.

Ultimately, because the palm oil industry predominantly employs men in the communities where I conducted research, and has solidified a wage labour economy in these communities, it was linked to economic inequality, and economic VAW. Further, it has been attributed to enabling men to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages, while women endured an added burden of labour as a result of the disruptions that palm oil cultivation causes in their communities.

7.3.3. Land tenure and community relations

Closely linked to the environmental and economic disruptions related to palm oil is the issue of land tenure. The issue of land was framed in two key ways: first, in relation to women's inclusion (or exclusion) from decision-making; and second, and relatedly, it was also linked to instances of VIF. Regarding the latter point, the expansion of the palm oil industry and the sale of land disrupt community and household relations, and are thereby seen to contribute to VsAW. Broadly speaking, the sale of privately held land to palm oil companies was staunchly opposed. For instance, as Petrona explained,

Many have sold their lands, the companies convinced them to. They told them that they would have money, and that they were going to have work, and that they were going to get rich and never have needs. But now, the money has run out... now [families] only have space for their houses (CL 16).

I asked why lands were sold, and who made the decision to sell in the first place, if it was so unsustainable. Women explained that men typically control the sale of family plots of land, which are used for subsistence agriculture. Further, the sale of land was framed in relation to trickery or duping of local community members by palm oil companies or their intermediaries, because many families did not have the formal paperwork in place to confirm their ownership over their lands; selling land was thus a way to turn a profit, without risking future dispossession.

Indeed, the notion of duping was important: companies were positioned as tempting locals with money; however, the benefits were only short term. For instance, as a community leader in Raxruhá called Susana argued, the sale of land to outsiders and to palm oil companies was a form of duping, that was further reinforced by class and race divisions in in Guatemala:

All of this is the rich who are provoking all of this, and they don't realise what they are causing, how they are governing us, they are sending the palm in these places [our communities], they are the ones who are taking advantage of people who don't have their papers over their land...for this, they are taking advantage and appropriating these lands, and we didn't know, and it was so easy for them to fool us... they are generating problems for us the indigenous, and these lands are ours, and were ours, and they are sending us... to land that isn't fertile for cultivating [subsistence agriculture] (CL 4).

Ultimately, land sale was often required in order to facilitate the expansion of palm oil industry in the FTN. Via participant observation findings in development forums I found that participants were increasingly encouraged to instruct their neighbours not to sell their land. In one forum held in Raxruhá, one of the organisers showed photos of anti-palm organising in another region in Guatemala, where locals began to reclaim land by chopping down palm oil trees.

Importantly, many of the formal land titles that had been granted in the postwar years came through the FONTIERRAS programme. As I stated in Chapter 2, FONTIERRAS is a World Bank sponsored entity charged with facilitating market-assisted land reform, which aims to grant private land titles; recipients are indebted to the FONTIERRAS. This programme, land ownership and land sale are not gender neutral, as pointed out by one of participants:

[P]reviously, the *Fondo de Tierras* only granted land titles in the name of the man. And only men were granted [land titles]. And whenever they had problems within families, or partners separated, the women was left with nothing because everything was in the name of the man (CL 7).

Indeed, in most communities, formal titles are either in the names of male heads of households, or in family names, and in both cases, men typically hold the decision-making power. Other participants reiterated that it was rare for women to be the sole proprietors of land titles.

Consequently, improving access to land was framed as important in terms of the empowerment of women. Women have thus organised to ensure increased access to land via FONTIERRAS. Ensuring women's formal access to land helped to guarantee property rights, which in turn could protect them in the case of separation. Further, empowering women with access to land was viewed as a means to prevent VsAW and as a means to prevent the expansion of the palm oil industry – a theme, which was intrinsic to *campesino* (peasant) organisation on a local level, and also operated through larger institutions and other organisations with more resources. Alluding to this point, Valeria, a lawyer working for a local NGO specialising in legal services for VsAW also emphasised that they offered support in the cases of land title registration. Her work thus bridged two key issue areas: that of palm oil and land tenure, and VIF. In reiterating what others argued, she suggested that palm oil and issues over land and the sale of land are contributing to tensions in communities and in households. This in turn could be said to provoke instances of VIF. Similarly, Ximena, explained that while her organisation dealt mostly with issues and conflicts relating to land, gendered violences were part of what they had observed in their work:

As I told you, we don't have an area to receive victims, we don't have lawyers or anything like that... because what we mostly work on is land ownership and agriculture, but us, what we have seen most, is that *women suffer violence because of land too*, so this is what we have succeeded in resolving (CL 7).

She continued,

So [we] began working in this area... a very difficult theme to work with in the communities... but eventually, the *Fondo de Tierras* began granting land titles in the name of women. Because before if women asked for land titles, the *Fondo de Tierras* didn't grant them, they would only grant them to men. Or they would give them, but only if the women were in a partnership with a man... So we kept pushing for a few

years... when the papers are granted, now, they give one for the woman and one for the man. So, in the communities where we work, if there is a family that breaks down, the [separated couple] each has a part of the land (CL 7).

While in some communities, local authorities and COCODEs attempted to halt the sale of land for palm oil, women have begun to engage with existing, market-led land reform programs via the FONTIERRAS in order to increase women's access to land in order to protect them from economic exclusion and promote women's empowerment and access to assets and property. This shift in the FONTIERRAS programme fits within the broader trend in Latin American social policies to centre households in programming, rather than focus on the male breadwinner model (see Barrientos et al., 2010). It also may highlight how local NGOs, offering service provision in a neoliberal economy, engage with certain models or programs to comply with donor sponsorship and funding (Gideon 1998). Further, as Gideon concludes, "NGOs who pose a challenge to state sovereignty, such as those concerned with the promotion of gender and class equality, find themselves outside the political arena" (Gideon 1998, 304). In the case of dealing with the FONTIERRAS, engaging with a neoliberal model and market-assisted agrarian reform from a gendered perspective became a mechanism for repoliticising gender issues.

In the contemporary context of the FTN, gendered violence related to land ownership and land conflict appears more explicitly linked to the context of the household and prevailing social norms: women are excluded from decision-making processes by male partners, and this exclusion reinforces and produces structural inequality and violence. Selling to palm oil companies or other stakeholders was framed as a temptation for male heads of households. The work of Ximena and her colleagues, as well as other community leaders, was thus framed as instructional and educational for communities, and for the benefit of both women and men. Yet, at the same time, this work also aimed to address more complex understandings of what constituted VsAW; indeed, the violence that women in the FTN face is not solely domestic violence, but rather, is understood as a process of exclusion.

Yet, at the same time, efforts to formalise land titles was demonstrative of the ways in which communities and leaders engaged with the neoliberal development model more directly, to work to their advantage. Indeed, market-assisted land reform presents a different agenda vis-à-vis traditional, communal land practices. On one

hand working with the FONTIERRAS to improve women's access to land was aimed at alleviating the structural inequalities that also reinforced economic dependence on male partners. The FONTIERRAS offers provisions enabling women to become formal landowners: this in turn gives women decision-making power over possible land parcel sales (for instance, to palm oil companies). Yet on the other, this process operates within the neoliberal development model that has also facilitated the expansion of the palm oil industry. Indeed, similar *campesino* negotiations within neoliberal development projects were found in rural *campesino* organising elsewhere in Guatemala (Granovsky-Larsen 2013, 2017). This dynamic represents an interesting tension: women were directly engaging with neoliberal policies in order to subvert another aspect of the postwar development model, that of palm oil.

As has been noted elsewhere, the FONTIERRAS land distribution scheme often provokes debt for landowners who owe money to the fund, and does not always distribute land that is suited to subsistence agriculture (Alonso-Fradejas 2012; Garoz and Gauster 2005; Gauster and Isakson 2007). Consequently, selling is sometimes the only option. Importantly, changing the structure of land title agreements does not necessarily imply that land will not be sold in practice, which has been the case. As one community leader from Chisec, Vivivian, stated, despite land being registered to both men and women, it was still being sold:

Oh yes, they are selling their land, to men from very far, from Zacapa, Petén. Now they are saying that the lands are just for them, but we don't know if in the future they are going to sell them to the palm oil companies (CL 21).

Consequently, land remains a contentious issue. On one hand, land sale disadvantaged women; on the other, women were increasingly organising to ensure that women had access to land titles in order to provide women with economic assets and to help prevent the sale of land to palm oil companies. Arguably, my research only scratches the surface of the problems and tensions associated with land ownership, pointing to an important area for future research.

7.3.4. *Opposing Palm Oil and Political Violence*

I have discussed how environmental disruptions, economic transformation and land ownership are linked to palm oil, and framed in relation to women's suffering and VsAW. Indeed, VsAW were contextualised more broadly, as suffering due to the

disruptions that had materialised as a result of the palm oil industry, and as a form of gendered structural violence. Thus, VsAW were not necessarily understood as being perpetrated against a specified body; rather, it was framed as part of a development model, which had impacts on women in particular. The gendered impacts and sufferings associated with palm oil were related to histories of conflict and legacies of development, rather than individual perpetrators.

Opposing palm oil was widespread, but it also took place to varying degrees. However, people in the FTN were targets of threats and violence as a result of political opposition to the palm oil industry. Opposition and resistance to palm oil by *defensoras* (human rights defenders) and community leaders involved in anti-VsAW work was a key theme that emerged from many interviews in the FTN. For instance, Petrona was a key leader in this regard, and described her struggle with the palm oil company in her community in Chisec. She explained that when the palm company began to operate and take over land in the community, she stood in the road and blocked company trucks from entering. A man from her community, who also opposed to the palm oil company, was attacked in an assassination attempt. She described to me how she had received phone calls from the plantation manager, but refused to back down. She recounted how she was a survivor of domestic abuse; now she is the local representative for the municipal women's commission in her community. Despite continuing to receive threats for resisting palm oil, she continues to play a key role in supporting women in her community as part of the women's commission.

Well, we were four women, there were another three from [another community] that told me that they were going to help and I met with the COCODES of 12 communities. And we started to see what we could do, because already the palm oil company was starting to work and that it was going to destroy our rivers. And I started to question the engineers, given that they were already contaminating our rivers, and their big trucks would pass through our communities, to the point where they almost ran over the children, and they did not respect [our communities], and the big machinery and agronomists were passing through. And I would stand in the road and stop those big trucks and the agronomists and the foremen. They were so big, those agronomists, and they asked me who was I? I was only a simple woman who did not amount to anything. And I told them, that I may only be a woman, but that I had a responsibility, and I can help my *compañeras*, because where were they going to go to bathe and to wash? [They then said:] "What are you looking for in all of this, to fight with us?" This is what they told me (CL 16).

She told me afterwards that the plantation manager had called her on her mobile phone and told her to stop blocking the agronomists and palm oil trucks in the road.

In addition, she recounted that security guards from the palm oil company had shot a man in her community for trespassing, and she cared for him as he recovered. Petrona justified her opposition to palm oil by drawing on environmental concerns, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. She expressed her concerns about palm oil by linking the industry to women's reproductive labour as well. Petrona also emphasised how she felt intimidated and was belittled by the agronomists entering her community, who challenged her authority on the basis of her positionality as a Maya Q'qechi' woman. Yet, she remains a respected community leader, and at the time of my research was still involved in protesting against the palm oil company in her community.

Similarly, Elena, who was elected municipal councillor in Chisec when I began my primary fieldwork trip, was vocally opposed to palm oil in the region. She was very active in organising against the expansion of palm oil in the FTN. While Petrona's efforts were concentrated in her community, Elena worked on a larger scale, on a municipal (Chisec) and departmental/regional level. Elena spoke in palm oil forums, and had invited me to her community, where she invited me to attend a meeting with the local palm oil company. A few months after my interview with her, Elena travelled to Washington, DC as part of a delegation to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to report on problems her community faced as a result of the palm oil company. Upon her return to Guatemala she was subsequently arrested on trumped up charges of kidnapping, but eventually released "because they had no case!" (CL 43). Her case demonstrates the ways in which women are targeted and criminalised for organising in resistance to extractivist activities more broadly in the FTN and in Guatemala, reflecting an important aspect of the relationship between both women's empowerment and resistance in the context of neoliberalism (Cornwall et al., 2008).

The cases of Elena and Petrona are exemplary in that they illustrate how VsAW are understood in much broader context, particularly as a symptom of and as being characterised by agro-extractivist development in the palm oil sector. Further, by organising against palm oil, or opposing the industry in their communities and region, they have been subjected to threats, verbal assaults and criminalisation. Development in the FTN has reproduced social hierarchies inherent to racial and socio-economic inequality in Guatemala, reflective of coloniality. Further, while both Elena and Petrona linked more abstract aspects of VsAW with material realities

of development in their communities, they also illustrated the ways in which they worked to resist these processes.

At the same time, in their resistance, they mobilised the very social norms that women also identified as oppressive, to their advantage. For instance, Petrona emphasised how she cared for the man who was shot in her community; she also referenced the children being in danger as a result of the company vehicles. She justified her position vis-à-vis her role not only as a community leader, but also via the mobilisation of a normative femininity, which was “exerted invisibly and insidiously through insensible familiarization with a symbolically structured physical world” (Bourdieu 2004, 341). Simultaneously, both Petrona and Elena resisted “the paradoxical logic of masculine domination and feminine submissiveness” (Bourdieu 2004, 340) by positioning themselves in opposition to the palm oil industry and the problems it provoked for women, like so many of the women community leaders I interviewed. Petrona and Elena thus mobilised the value of reproductive activities as being central to community well-being and survival, with the aim of improving welfare for all.

To do so, however, they had to unquestioningly mobilise gendered social norms of their communities, perhaps, as a means of mitigating the violence they risked. This paradox reflects symbolic and structural violence as co-existing features of the agro-extractivist development in the FTN. As such, the symbolic and structural aspects of VsAW are highlighted alongside the ways in which their resistance has emerged. Indeed, this also shows how a mobilisation of oppositional consciousness was instrumentalised, as one that is situated in relation to social norms (see: Talcott, 2014). My findings illustrate how resistance to palm oil and VsAW challenges the circulation of common tropes about women as victims of violence; rather, these *defensoras* suggested that women organise around, in resistance to, and despite violences and threats made against them in order to ensure personal well-being and that community livelihoods are sustainable (see Wilson 2008).

Indeed, my findings are associated with a broader trend of violence against environmental and human rights defenders in Guatemala and Latin America. Women, particularly indigenous women have been on the frontlines of environmental struggles in the region. While men have also been targets of political violence, women becoming involved and resisting development are at an increased risk, bearing in mind the socio-cultural dynamics at stake. For instance, the 2016

murder of environmental leader and human rights defender Berta Caceres in Honduras garnered international attention. Similarly, Yolanda Oqueli was targeted in an assassination attempt in 2012 at the La Puya mining protest in Guatemala (see Pedersen 2014). Women involved in protesting the Canadian Marlin Mine in Huehuetenango were also targeted via assassination attempts. Ultimately, the ways in which women in the FTN are targeted or threatened with criminalisation and political violence highlights the broader landscape of political violence against human rights and environmental activists in the region, and also how dangerous confrontation with the status quo can be for them.

More broadly, women opposing palm oil face violence within a broader landscape of intolerance towards women's organising in the region, and in Guatemala. Indeed, one key feminist organisation, *Mamá Maquín* headquarters had been attacked by two armed, masked gunmen in September 2015, shortly after I had returned to London following my first research trip. In the middle of the night, the assailants entered and stole the office computers and files. While the women and child inside were unharmed no one was arrested or charged with robbery in this case. Luciana, a founding member of the organisation, described to me the events of that night:

There were 3 men... that entered into the office of Mama Maquin. It was on September 15 [2015]. And well, it was very early... because September is a little cool, I went to bed early. Then my daughter came in and told me, "Mami", she said. "They are calling from *Mama Maquin*; let's go." So we went running, I didn't even get dressed. "What could have happened?" I said to myself. "Is someone sick?" I didn't even think it could have been such an assault... when we arrived, the women were seated. What happened? (CL 14).

After the attack, the organisation's office was forced to close, but the organisation's members remained active. Luciana is still a key player in organising against palm oil not only in her community, but in the FTN as well. The attack against *Mama Maquín* can be understood in the context of contemporary dynamics of palm oil extraction and gender power relations in the FTN. As a feminist organisation, with a key member opposing palm oil in the FTN, *Mama Maquín* became a target, because of its political and feminist engagement.

Further, the cases discussed above also illustrate how some forms of VsAW 'count' in terms of legal recognition. In Chapter 5, I discuss the postwar VsAW legal infrastructure, which criminalises VsAW. Yet, the threats faced by community

leaders such as Elena and Petrona, or the violence endured by the women of *Mama Maquín* during the 2015 attack, are perpetrated with impunity. Consequently, in these cases, the new laws and their operationalisation may also reflect what Lara Montesinos Coleman (2015) may refer to as the ethical dispossession of rights: the rights have been implemented to respond to a given need (persisting VsAW) but operate within the logic of a post-Washington consensus model of development (see also Coleman 2007, 2013); she thus argues that: “the subjects of rights are comprehended only in relation to the truths of the market”(Montesinos Coleman 2015, 1069). Similarly, this contention parallels Bourdieu’s (1987) argument that the field of law operates so to not challenge the status quo. In this respect, these women, actively challenging postwar neoliberal development in different ways, were rendered invisible before the postwar VsAW legal infrastructure.

7.4. The Gendered Coloniality of Palm Oil and VsAW in the FTN

In the previous section, I discussed the impacts of palm oil in relation to VsAW. Women framed the environmental disruptions, specifically related to water, as provokers of women’s suffering; women’s suffering occurred in relation to an exacerbated burden of social reproductive work. From an economic perspective, because women benefitted unequally in relation to men, palm oil was linked to economic VAW. Because access to land was also very gendered, women sought to prevent the sale of land to palm oil companies not only to inhibit the expansion of palm oil, but also to ensure their livelihoods, empower women and prevent VIF and economic violence. Women’s exclusion from decisions related to land ownership was also framed as a form of gendered violence, in that it reproduced gendered socio-economic hierarchies. Finally, palm oil has been met with resistance, and women have played an important role at the frontlines of many political struggles. Consequently, women’s opposition to palm oil made women targets of political violence, which occurred within a broader landscape of hostility towards women’s organising in the FTN. The gendered impacts of palm oil and the associated violence did not occur in isolation from political, social, economic and historical relations. In this respect, a community leader named Rosa, a respected Maya Q’eqchi’ woman who worked with the DMM and with the organisation APROBASANC recounted, somewhat paradigmatically: “the violence that we women experience is a part of the

500 years of colonialism in our lands. Julia, you have to put this in your thesis” (CL 6).

Importantly, palm oil and its gendered implications were often historically situated in a threefold way: first, in relation to the colonial past; second, in relation to violence of the internal armed conflict and genocide of the 1980s; and thirdly, as an offshoot of political economic dynamics shaped by the previous two factors (see Figure 7.3) These factors were understood as related, as gendered, and as part of colonial legacies that indigenous people still live with in Guatemala today, or what could conceptually understood as coloniality (see Escobar 1995; Escobar and Mignolo 2010; Lugones 2007, 2010; Mignolo 2010; Quijano 2010), which ultimately underpinned the gendered impacts of palm oil in the FTN. Further, the concept of coloniality illuminates how palm oil was understood as inherently violent.

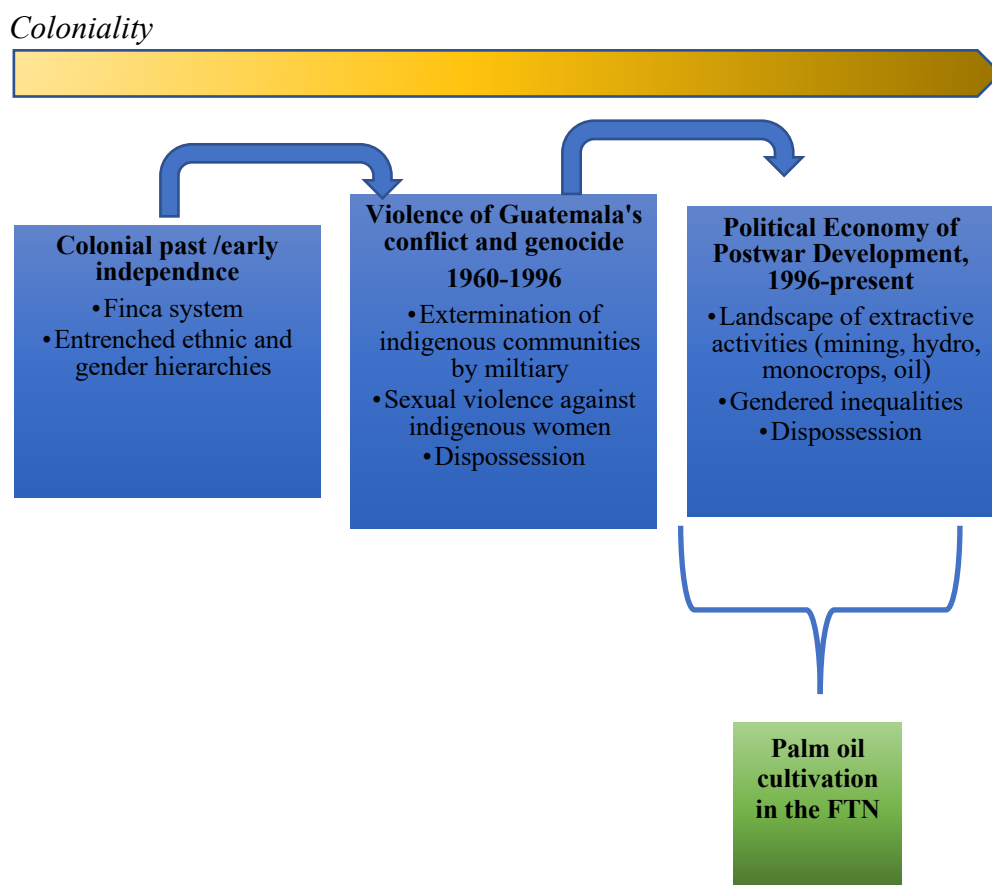


Figure 7.3: Palm Oil in Historical Context

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that agricultural exploitation of indigenous people was commonplace in early years of independence, drawing on a *finquero* (plantation) system that continued into the 20th century. In the FTN, palm oil is cultivated mostly through a modern *finquero* system that arguably parallels historical, exploitative agricultural practices. By contrast, in other contexts, such as Honduras, palm oil cultivation is dominated by small scale producers, who reap possible financial benefits more directly than those working in palm oil *fincas*.⁷⁷ In Guatemala, however, palm oil cultivation emerges in a historical context marked by monocrop cultivation that has typically relied on often exploitative plantation labour: palm oil cultivation thus reflects a continuation of historical practices in the postwar years. Indeed, palm oil today occurs in this broader landscape of coloniality, which I realised was especially salient for indigenous women. I also found that talking about colonialism and its legacies was quite common among indigenous community leaders. For many, though not all, talking about the internal armed conflict and the violences that were endured, entered less frequently into the conversation. I found that in many interviews, discussing the internal armed conflict and genocide was a sensitive topic for many communities, and still today, discussing the subject to an outsider could be a risky business for some. Talking about palm oil, its impacts on communities, and the structural inequalities it reinforces became a way to subvert this challenge.

Further, the expansion of palm oil is illustrative of the same dynamics of coloniality that manifested as genocide and violence during the years of the war, particularly over the course of the 1980s. The cultivation of the monocrop reflects historical land tenure hierarchies, which exclude indigenous populations. This finding was especially apparent when I attended the Sepur Zarco trial in Guatemala City. In February 2016, the precedent-setting case was heard in Guatemala's Supreme Court, presided over by Judge Yassmin Barrios. In this case, 15 Maya Q'eqchi' women brought two former military personnel, Lieutenant Coronel Esteelmer Reyes and former Military Commissioner Heriberto Valdez "Canche"

⁷⁷ While human rights abuses have been associated with the cultivation of palm oil in Honduras, in the Tela Atlantida region, palm oil cooperatives have sought to redistribute economic gains more equitably in communities and among cooperative members.

Asij to Guatemala's Supreme Court to court, in a month-long trial.⁷⁸ The two former members of the Guatemalan military were accused of overseeing the establishment and activities of the Sepur Zarco military base during the internal armed conflict, where the victim-survivors alleged that they were held as sexual and domestic slaves for soldiers on respite at the base. Respectively, Reyes and Asij were sentenced to 120 years and 240 years in prison on charges of crimes against humanity and their involvement in the assassination of 3 men and forced disappearance of another 7 men. They were also charged with reparations to each of the victims and families of the disappeared on March 2, 2016. In delivering her sentence on February 26, 2016, Judge Barrios emphasised the attempt of the military at the Sepur Zarco base to not only degrade women's bodies but to destroy community morale by doing so, resulting in the women suffering with stigma and trauma during the decades that followed.

Over the course of the trial, evidence presented pointed to links between land conflict, dispossession and violence perpetrated against the women living near the Sepur Zarco base, specifically in relation to agro-extractives. In the early 1980s, the local landowning elites were in the early stages of palm oil experimentation as well as sugar cane cultivation. Indeed, expert testimony during the trial revealed that prior to the construction of the base, the local Q'eqchi' community had attempted to gain legal land titles from the National Institute for Agrarian Transformation (INTA), for the land their families had lived on for decades, conflicting with plantation interests. Given that community organising posed a conflict to these interests, the military's response in part was aimed at pacifying the local organisation around land titles through the construction of the Sepur Zarco base and with the assassination and forced disappearances of key community leaders. Indeed, Luz Mendez and Amanda Carrera (2015) argue that the violence that happened at Sepur Zarco parallels violence associated with extractivism today.

Sepur Zarco was also one example of how within the internal armed conflict, sexual violence was linked to issues around land and agro-extractivism, and was particularly relevant to this research. While I did not conduct research in the community of Sepur Zarco, the same legacies of violence perpetrated by the state

⁷⁸ The women were supported by the National *Union Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas* (UNAMG), the legal support organisation *Mujeres Transformando el Mundo* (MTM), *Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial* (ECAP) and the *Ministerio Publico* (MP).

were lasting. Sepur Zarco and the internal armed conflict consisted of a key set of actors: Guatemalan military personnel versus Maya Q'eqchi' women. In contemporary Guatemala, the military may no longer be instigating conflict; instead, Guatemalan owned palm oil companies were often situated at the root of the problems associated with the industry. Nonetheless, for indigenous communities the power dynamics at stake between the conflict and the postwar years exist in parallel: interests often external or contrary to those of communities are reinforced through an internal (Guatemalan) imposition, which, according to many women I interviewed, threatens livelihoods and communities. Furthermore, as a result of the historical situatedness of palm oil, it was often linked to an ambiguous sense of fear and mistrust over the industry. While not all communities faced violence in the war, there was a sense of fear related to the lack of control held by those most directly impacted by the palm oil.

Postwar manifestations of VsAW in Guatemala reverberate with echoes of war; the social and cultural dimensions of sexual violence committed at Sepur Zarco foreground the gendered dynamics of development and VsAW in the contemporary rural Guatemalan context. My findings point to a link between historical legacies of violence and contemporary manifestations of structural VsAW, pointing to the relevance of the matrix approach I present in Chapter 3. In the matrix, I illustrate possible connections between gendered historical legacies of violence, gendered social norms, land and territory, and gendered impacts of the political economy of development. Bearing these axes in mind, the relationships between palm oil, gendered structural violences and the symbolic power of gendered social norms are especially clear, not only in the ways in which VsAW manifested, but also in terms of the ways in which they were resisted. Ultimately, social, political, economic and historical factors foreground the context in which VsAW occur. Furthermore, my findings suggest that the dynamics around VsAW in relation to palm oil and development in the FTN cannot be understood in isolation from the legacies of Sepur Zarco and the internal armed conflict more broadly. Bearing in mind the gendered and violent legacies of palm oil in Guatemala, and given that the violences at Sepur Zarco were so explicitly linked to agro-extractivist conflict, the FTN represents the remnants of legacies imposed by the Guatemalan state-supported development model initiated and facilitated through what expert witnesses referred to as the “destruction of the social fabric” that occurred at Sepur Zarco.

The historical legacies of the internal armed conflict in relation to VsAW today in the FTN were mostly highlighted by NGO practitioners and legal professionals, and less by indigenous community leaders in the FTN. For instance, Alma, who works for the SEPREM, told me that “the *Franja* was very hard hit by the war”, suggesting that those wounds still persist in the postwar years. Exceptions to this trend were Ximena and Elena, both of whom had gained regional, national and international recognition for their activism for women’s and indigenous rights. Another noted exception was Luciana, who I referenced earlier; now in her 60s, she recounted that she fled from Huehuetenango (a different region of Guatemala) to Mexico as a refugee during the internal armed conflict, and was later resettled in the FTN. Luciana explained to me how the women’s collective *Mama Maquin*, of which she was a founding member, had its origins in addressing violence that had been perpetrated during the internal armed conflict against war refugees who had escaped to Mexico. Luciana originally came from Huehuetenango, but reflected on the manifestations of sexual violence she witnessed and heard recounted from women she worked with over the course of the 1980s. She recounted,

We had to go out to the slums to ask people how was the arrival of them to Mexico, what did they suffer. And they told us where they left from... people were killed, the women, they were raped [by the soldiers]. And those who were pregnant, they cut their little babies from their wombs and they put them in their mouths and left them there, dead, with the entire child on their chest or in their mouths. And the people, crying, they told us what happened to them. Some of the people had arrived without clothes, without anything to eat. And it hurts the soul to hear the people telling their stories, because this also happened to my family. The wife of one of my cousins... my mother in-law, they also killed her, her brothers, they also killed them. My sisters left running, without any clothes. And the saddest thing was the other people who had their houses burned down in the night (CL 14).

Luciana explained that the violence to which she referred was perpetrated during the regimes of Lucas Garcia and Rios Montt, and occurred as the events at Sepur Zarco unfolded: it was part of the broader scorched-earth campaigns against indigenous communities in order to facilitate a new model of development in Guatemala over the course of the 1980s.

Importantly, she also highlighted the gendered dimensions of violence that were perpetrated during the conflict, by referencing the sexual nature of violence committed. Once in Mexico, however, she explained that she went, along with her *compañeras*, to the refugee camps to educate and help women victims of violence.

Later, in the early 1990s, Luciana and approximately 25 families were resettled by the government in the community in Nueva Libertad in Fray Bartolome de las Casas. Luciana also discussed how *Mama Maquín* had continued its efforts, and was a prominent feminist organisation not only in her community, but also across Guatemala. Luciana and other women from her community had recently become active in opposing palm oil as well.

The cases of Sepur Zarco, of *Mama Maquín* and of Luciana more individually speak to a broader trend that emerged in the research: the links between coloniality, conflict, development, and VsAW. Indeed, historical continuities did persist, but in ways that challenged the thesis of continuation. New ways of talking about VsAW have emerged in the postwar years. The disruptions of postwar change bear important relationships to the past; but they also reflect new development models and new articulations of those inequalities in contemporary times. At the same time, the ways in which these inequalities manifest or are discussed also play into the social norms that govern rural communities.

Further, more broadly speaking, extractivist activities beyond palm oil cultivation have played a prominent role in postwar development, and have been linked to colonial legacies elsewhere. Palm oil cultivation, then, is situated in this wider context of historical legacies and contemporary violence related to extractive/agro-extractive industries. Indeed, mining, hydroelectric projects, oil and gas, as well as other monocrops such as sugarcane and bananas, have all been contentious. Research has widely documented the negative impacts of mineral extraction in Guatemala and in Latin America, as well as the resistance that this has generated among indigenous populations (Laplante and Nolin 2014; Pedersen 2014; Yagenova and Garcia 2009). Extractivist projects, specifically mining and hydro, have also been linked to state-sanctioned violence, perpetrated by military and/or private security officers employed by companies, and thus, have been viewed as an extension of the same dynamics prominent during the internal armed conflict (Nelson and McAllister 2015; Solano 2015). Consequently, because issues related to gender arose in relation to other extractivist projects in Guatemala, the attitudes associated with palm oil may have reproduced the same anxieties.

As a result, my findings reflect the broader literature of work critiquing this new development model for all the problems it provokes, and its linkages to coloniality and to the history of conflict in Guatemala. At the same time, my findings

also challenge this literature, to the extent that the gendered issues related to palm oil were often tacitly framed in the same logic of social norms that also oppressed women in other ways, demonstrating the symbolic power of social norms in rural communities facing structural transformation. This process, however, also offered a means through which women could draw attention to very material impacts of palm oil they faced, and, at the same time, draw attention to the issue of VsAW in the FTN.

7.4.1. Palm Oil in the Matrix of VsAW

The ways in which palm oil was linked to VsAW also reflects the importance of historical continuities in times of change. Arguably, palm oil represents a new articulation of previous models of exploitation or development, which were rooted in violence, both speaking to and complicating the continuation thesis (Juarez 2015; see discussion in Chapter 3). At the same time, new dynamics are at stake: the postwar years have opened up more spaces for women's political engagement, for instance, through new laws (see Chapter 5). These laws were ineffective for many women in the FTN, but nevertheless they drew attention to and criminalised VsAW.

As the findings suggest, the axis of gendered social norms in the matrix framework was particularly powerful in influencing how VsAW and palm oil were linked (see also figure 7.1). Rural social norms were ultimately foundational. Implicitly, however, the axes of the gendered nature of political economy of development, as well as historical legacies and land and territory, were also linked to the disruptions provoked by palm oil. Consequently, considering VsAW in relation to palm oil cultivation, as the findings suggest, occurs within and as part of the matrix that shapes the different forms of VsAW women face and resist in the FTN. It becomes clear that environmental, economic, land-related, disruptions and political violence all are contextual factors shaping not only life in the FTN, but influence how VsAW is understood or spoken about by community leaders.

Palm oil cultivation constructed the material conditions in which women experienced different forms of violence. Consequently, situating palm oil as violence also implicitly served as a means to deflect blame from male perpetrators: when women linked VsAW to palm oil, they implied that men were not to blame, but rather, the political, social and economic conditions in which they too were

exploited, provoked the acts of violence. Indeed, linking palm oil and VsAW paralleled the ways in which women blamed the pervasive *machismo* for the issue (Chapter 6) in that it followed a similar logic: if *machismo* could be thwarted, then violence would stop. If palm oil could be subverted, violence would also be addressed. Violent men were not framed as the key issue: it was the social, political and economic structures that were at the crux of the problem.

Structural implications of development were thus framed as causal factors of VsAW, but also as specifically gendered forms of violence. On one hand, palm oil cultivation and processing was framed as a form of violence, and VsAW in particular because of its impacts on the environment; at the same time, it was framed as provoking VsAW (particularly economic violence) because of the consequences the industry has in communities. In addition, the uneven nature of the benefits of palm (mostly concentrated in the hands of male breadwinners) was understood to contribute to unequal gender power relations, which in turn shaped social norms that contributed to the normalisation of VsAW. Rather than situate palm oil as a cause of male violence or perhaps VIF, then, it contributes to its normalisation, and reinforces the structural inequalities that exacerbate the conditions in which other forms of violence occur. This dynamic demonstrates how the structural aspects of palm oil intersect with the symbolic power of social norms in the FTN.

Viewed from this perspective, then, linking palm oil and violence becomes a means of women's legitimisation in public spaces and communities, affording an added degree of validity to addressing VsAW within communities themselves. Women could legitimately draw attention to cases of VsAW by linking them to palm oil, without blaming or individualising perpetrators. Further, because communities and organisations in the FTN have already begun to mobilise in opposition to the industry, women have been able to stake a claim in vocalising broader gender issues related to VsAW by linking them to palm oil. This dynamic spoke to the gendered social norms contextual to rural areas. This is not to undermine the claims that palm oil has indeed provoked suffering and problems in communities: palm oil's cultivation is part of a longer trajectory of coloniality and tensions associated with control over land and resources. In many communities, the problems it causes outweigh potential benefits. Nonetheless, engaging critically with the issue, in relation to the social norms influencing community leaders and daily life in the FTN, illustrates that the linkages between palm oil and VsAW are complex.

7.5. Conclusion

In the case of the FTN today, gendered violences in diverse manifestations not only materialise in the context of historical legacies, but rather, also are directly shaped by processes of development, enduring inequalities, social and gender power relations, and other forms of oppression. Furthermore, processes of development continue to shape the ways in which VsAW materialise in contemporary context in the FTN. By incorporating structural violence into a more fluid and flexible approach to understanding VsAW in postwar Guatemala – and putting these into relation with the political economy of development – my findings show that important links between past and present articulations of VsAW in relation to development can be made. The findings suggest that the continuum of violence and historical continuities exist in relation to social norms, the political economy of development, and coloniality. As such, the continuum can be pushed further, particularly in considering the ways in which development plays a role in these cases/interpretations of VsAW in contemporary context.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how structural violence, particularly structural forms of VsAW, are reproduced in the context of development. Because women in the FTN are some of the most impacted by palm oil development in the region, they also experience greater risks of suffering, violence and exclusion. At the same time, structural violence should be understood as being shaped by social norms: the ways in which women explained their suffering was in direct relation to the roles they were expected to perform.

This chapter has both engaged with and interrogated how palm oil expansion in the communities where I conducted my research was understood as an inherently gendered form of violence. The women I interviewed also expressed understandings of VsAW beyond the legal definitions normally attributed to the term, drawing on structural issues provoked by palm oil. Further, women's resistance to palm oil has also exposed them to other forms of violence. Ultimately I have shown that my findings point to continuities with the Sepur Zarco case, pointing to the tensions and complexities of development and peace in the FTN.

8. Conclusion: Paradoxes of Peace in the Postwar FTN

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the manifestations of VsAW in the postwar FTN, and also highlighted how women community leaders in the region confronted and resisted the different forms of violence that women endured. The research was guided by the following questions, rearticulated below in Table 8.1:

Primary Research Questions:	<p>How can we understand VsAW in rural Guatemala in contemporary times?</p> <p>To what extent are VsAW a legacy of the past, and to what extent are they linked to contemporary political economic change? How does this shape resistance?</p>
<i>Sub-Questions:</i>	<p><i>What are the key elements of socio-economic change and continuity in rural Guatemala?</i></p> <p><i>How do women community leaders mobilise and organise to alleviate problems related to VsAW in their communities?</i></p>

Table 8.1 Research Questions

I found that indeed, VsAW should be understood in relation to the colonial past and relations of coloniality in Guatemala. VsAW cannot be understood in isolation from historical factors. As I discussed in Chapter 2, coloniality has shaped Guatemala’s historical, political, economic and social landscape and development trajectory, with important gendered implications. Further, legacies of exploitation of indigenous people in Guatemala by the state have normalised their oppression and exclusion in contemporary times. The widespread poverty in the mostly indigenous, and rural FTN region highlights how despite being a ‘corridor for development’, the benefits of economic transformation (particularly in the agro-extractivist sector) have not reached those most impacted by change. Relatedly, socio-economic change manifested in a twofold way: first, through a rights-based approach to development and through the expansion of new industries and development, such as the palm oil industry, both of which were relevant to VsAW in the FTN.

I have shown that peace in Guatemala has been paradoxical: formal peace has been accompanied by political economic transformations which have had contradictory and gendered impacts on communities. Further, new rights and legal frameworks that have been drafted in the postwar years have recognised the ways in which women have experienced different forms of violence; yet, these have been limited in effectiveness and scope for women living in rural communities in the development corridor, the FTN. My findings also illustrated how VsAW are multifaceted, complex, and sometimes, contextually contingent. Ultimately, I found that understanding gendered violences as a plurality and building on existing continuum frameworks to theoretically conceptualise VsAW in a matrix, helped to disentangle some of the complexities of the issue and situate it in a material context.

In this chapter, I aim to provide an overview of the key findings discussed in the previous chapters, and will also point to lessons learned and further questions the research has generated. This chapter is divided into 3 main sections. First, I will provide an overview of the thesis, and illustrate important linkages and themes that carried throughout. In this section, I will also discuss the findings in relation to the matrix approach I developed. In the following section, I will then discuss limitations to this research, lessons learned, and areas for future inquiry, before concluding.

8.2 The Matrix of Violences Against Women and Wider Implications of the Research

In August 2017, I conducted the final thesis interview. Initially, I had contacted the offices of GREPALMA, the Guatemalan Palm Oil Growers' Association, with an information request for more data on the cultivation of palm oil in the country. Instead of forwarding the documents for which I had hoped, a representative responded by offering me an interview with the organisation's executive director, Susana Siekavizza. The interview, arranged for my final day in Guatemala before my return to London, in its formal, corporate setting in the posh Zone 10 of Guatemala City was a stark contrast to the remote, villages of the FTN where I had been only days earlier. Susana and I discussed some of the gendered issues raised through my research related to palm oil in the FTN, and she advocated for increased regulation of the industry as well as the economic inclusion of women to ensure that all communities could reap the benefits of palm oil cultivation.

Following our meeting, Susana and I reflected also on the broader topic of my thesis, VsAW in the FTN. Susana explained to me that the subject was something that had affected her deeply and personally. She was no stranger to the subject of VsAW: in 2011, her sister, Christina Siekavizza, had been the victim of one of Guatemala's most documented and well-known cases of (presumed) femicide.⁷⁹ This case of femicide was widely covered in news stories in Guatemala and abroad: Christina was the wife of Roberto Eduardo Barreda de Leon, whose mother, a former judge in the Supreme Court, held considerable influence. The case was regarded as an example of the limits of justice for VsAW and femicide in Guatemala, and the reach of legal impunity in the gender justice system (see: Fuentes 2016; Telesur 2018).

Later in my fieldnotes, I reflected on the paradoxes that seemed to present themselves to me in this final meeting: on one hand, rural women of the FTN that I had, only days prior spoken with, continue to find the imposition of palm oil and transformation of the rural economy in their communities to be problematic, an issue still fresh in my fieldnotes and in my mind; further, some had framed palm oil as a form of VAW itself. At the same time, the palm oil growers' association in the country was led by a woman who had quite personally, as she reflected to me in our meeting, been a secondary victim-survivor of femicide. Yet, women I interviewed in the FTN were adamant in denouncing the gendered violences they attributed to palm oil, an industry in which Susana plays an important role. This is categorically not, however, to say that Susana was complicit in reproducing violence, or responsible for the impacts of palm oil in rural communities. Rather, in reflecting on this encounter, I thought instead of the ways in which VsAW are understood in different contexts, among different groups, and as manifesting from varied causes, with misogyny and its related symbolic power permeating in diverse ways, but also universally.

As I have stated earlier in the thesis, Jelke Boesten (2010; 2014; 2017) rightfully argues against exceptionalising sexual violence that occurs in times of conflict and in times of peace, drawing on the Peruvian context as an example. In the Guatemalan case, new laws and commitments to women's rights and criminalising

⁷⁹ I had become familiar with this case when I first worked in Guatemala with the UNAMG, which involved compiling an archive of media coverage of femicide cases, and also when I conducted my Masters research with the support of the *Fundacion Sobrevivientes* in 2013. The *Fundacion Sobrevivientes* had worked to support the Siekavizza family in the legal case.

VsAW, which emerged in the postwar years, do exceptionalise such violence, in that they tend to, in practice, criminalise VsAW as *violencia intrafamiliar*, or VIF and erase other forms of gendered violence that may be historically situated. In practice, VsAW are thus treated as exceptional within the context of the postwar condition; given the legacies of conflict and coloniality at stake, however, VsAW are also historically, politically, socially and economically contingent.

In Chapter 3, I proposed building on existing continuum frameworks (Kelly 1988; Boesten 2010; 2014; 2017; Cockburn 2004; Sanford 2008; 2015) and continuation theses (Camus et al., 2015; Sala 2014) both in Guatemalan and in transnational contexts, to develop a matrix of VsAW. This matrix, drawing inspiration from feminist historical materialist perspectives and geographic research on violence, considers the multifaceted constitution of such violence in the rural postwar FTN. Indeed, in addition to historical continuities, I found that new political economic dynamics played an important role in shaping economic violence and gendered structural inequalities, which shaped VsAW and the ways they were understood. Furthermore, gendered social norms and the symbolic power they carried were powerful in shaping how women resisted and organised, and also how VsAW was understood by community leaders working in the FTN. Importantly, not only do the legacies of the internal armed conflict play an important role in normalising VsAW in contemporary times, but coloniality itself has shaped political, social and economic life profoundly.

Relatedly, I also noted several crosscutting issues within the matrix framework, which emerged through the findings (see Figure 8.1). I found that the postwar VsAW legal infrastructure was influential in giving a name to forms of violence faced by women in the FTN. The issues of *machismo* and symbolic power also shaped how women engaged with VsAW and its alleviation. Further, there was an important relationship between historical continuities (and continuums) and contemporary change noted as well: the postwar political economic and social landscape had been both profoundly shaped by the past, and altered by transformations of the postwar years. Women's political participation was also shaped by each of the axes identified in the matrix, as indicated below.

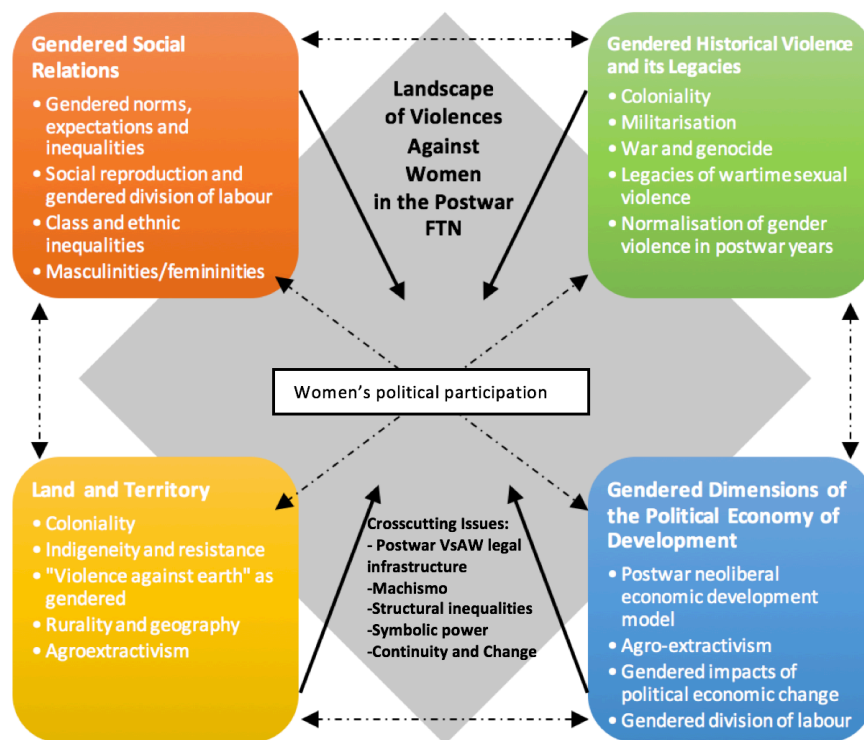


Figure 8.1: The Matrix of VsAW and Crosscutting Issues

The matrix framework informed the analysis in the empirical chapters of the thesis, which explored how VsAW have manifested and been addressed in the FTN, pointing to the multifaceted nature of such violence. In Chapter 5, I discussed the ways in which the VsAW have been criminalised in Guatemala via a new postwar legal infrastructure, and the limitations of the application of the law in rural communities. I found 3 main roadblocks along the *'ruta de denuncia'* most often inhibited women's reporting of cases to formal authorities: the inaccessibility and the ineffectiveness of the legal system, and social stigma and shame associated with reporting.

Given these inhibiting factors, communities adapted to address the contentious issue of VsAW, which had nonetheless been visibilised through the new laws. The VsAW that manifest in the FTN often remain invisible in the formal justice system, as they are not reported or not correctly recorded in the state institutions. Yet, at the same time, women in rural communities have gained increased knowledge of women's rights, which has led to a degree of visibility around the issue. This interaction, then, begs the question: visible for whom, and to

what end? Because many of the community leaders emphasised that the aim of intervention was often reconciliation between partners (particularly in cases of intrafamilial violence, or VIF) community authorities, such as the local development councils, or the COCODEs worked towards this goal. Prosecution of a perpetrator was not only less feasible, given the inhibiting factors, but also, often not desired by women victim-survivors. For instance, from a practical perspective, women were often economically dependent on male partners. Further, local authorities pushed for marital harmony within a traditional family structure. As a result, reconciliation and educating men against committing violence became key aims for addressing violence, rather than incarceration following the state's legal solutions. These aims thus sought to preserve community unity and social structures.

In communities where I conducted my research, material conditions of rural life shaped the vocabulary of violence that emerged and evolved in relation to the judicialisation of VsAW in postwar Guatemala. Relatedly, the judicialisation of VsAW through postwar legal developments has reflected a disconnect from the Guatemalan state to the implementation of women's rights in rural communities, or "...the gulf that exists between elegant laws and the indignities of women's everyday realities, and between being accorded a right and being in any position at all to make use of it" (Cornwall and Molyneux 2006, 1183). In this respect, the judicialisation of VsAW in postwar Guatemala has isolated the issue from material life; in practice, the community leaders I interviewed illustrated the complexities, contradictions and tensions associated with addressing VsAW in rural communities, and how rural women and communities of the FTN had attributed their own meanings to such violence.

These dynamics also reflected the gendered social norms at stake, which I discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6. Here, I illustrated the ways in which *machismo* played an important role in shaping how women understood causes of VsAW, in particular, VIF. Yet, *machismo* was malleable, and could be changed: women community leaders positioned themselves as those who possessed the knowledge to influence this social transformation. However, women also internalised *machismo*, sometimes gossiping about women who participated politically, and framing the *chisme* (gossip) around sexual respectability, and through the lens of normalised femininity reinforced by *machismo*. Following Menjivar (2011), *chisme* also became a form of social control in rural communities:

in the case of the FTN, many women were wary about becoming politically active, for fear of what might be said about them by their neighbours. Interestingly, women who were the subject of *chisme* that circulated in rural communities referred to it as a form of psychological violence, borrowing and appropriating from the vocabulary institutionalised in the 2008 Law on Femicide. *Chisme* was thus rooted in social norms that also shaped and controlled the ways in which women politically participated in the FTN.

In addition, *machismo* was a key theme in my findings, which was understood not only to influence women's involvement, but also as a key cause of different forms of VsAW. Relatedly, *machismo* was linked to alcoholism and women's economic exclusion, provoking economic violence in the FTN. Interestingly, women also negotiated their participation around *machista* social norms, engaging in respectable forms of organising that played into normative femininity. This dynamic was evidenced by the case of women organising to regulate alcohol sales in their municipality discussed in Chapter 6.

Women's economic exclusion also presented itself in terms of the development of the palm oil industry in the FTN. Indeed, as I discuss in Chapter 7, structural change associated with the palm oil industry is often inherently gendered: women experience the shocks of such development in particularly acute ways. The ways in which women related to the gendered impacts of palm oil was filtered through the social norms that were prominent in their communities. While many women referred to palm oil as a form of or cause of VsAW, the justification was rooted in the social expectations intrinsic to their communities. As such, while palm oil could be understood to provoke structural violence, much of this was a result of the symbolic power and violence attributed to gendered social norms. My findings also suggest that while women may experience forms of structural violence as a result of the palm oil industry, they also resist the expansion of the palm oil industry in their communities, drawing on social norms like *machismo* to do so by reinforcing the social reproductive implications of palm oil and agro-extractivism. This in turn also exposes women to added risks, given the political climate in Guatemala.

When I initially set out to conduct my research, I was sceptical of the notion of a continuum to conceptualise violence faced by women in the FTN, and the two key continuum/continuation frameworks identified in Chapter 3. I suspected that the continuum would imply a sense of linearity for such violence, a notion of which I

was and remain critical. Further, I was cautious of theses of continuation in that I did not want to obscure new dynamics of violence, conflate perpetrators, or suggest that somehow, violence could be singularly located in an internal armed conflict. Indeed, taking coloniality into account might suggest that the origins of violence cannot be necessarily located, but at least linked to colonial violences that shaped and endure into the present.

I aimed to illustrate new forms of violence that had emerged in the postwar years, rather than simplify VsAW as a continuation of war in the postwar years. At the same time, however, Liz Kelly's continuum approach to frame VsAW, encompassing a spectrum of violence, from verbal abuse to femicide was useful in illustrating how such violence can be cumulative, and how it can ebb and flow over the course of a woman's life. Relatedly, as I stated in Chapter 5, women mostly spoke about VIF in terms of a "cycle" rather than a continuum. Further, the OMM/DMM, Femicide Tribunal all made use of the language of the "cycle of violence" to explain how violence reoccurs over the course of a relationship: for instance, according to this framework, in the case of VIF, a cycle of abuse may begin with demeaning language from an abuser directed at the victim, which then may escalate into increasingly physical/sexual forms of abuse, followed by apologies and remorse by the abuser, at which point the cycle is set to begin again. This framework reflects how a continuum is rearticulated multiple times in the case of many women victim-survivors of VIF. The continuum or the cycle could be broken by "breaking the silence" or reporting the case to relevant law officials. The role of rights in disrupting VIF was important, discussed further below.

Further, the need for understanding historical continuities, and refusing to exceptionalise violences as Boesten suggests, are also important in contextualising VsAW. In terms of the historical continuum/continuation theses, this continuum reflected in the relationships between land and agro-extractivism, and structural VsAW, noted in Chapter 7. Indeed, structural violence faced by indigenous women in the FTN exists along a continuum of colonial oppressions and interventions, from one epoch to another. As such, the second continuum of violence between war and peace could be understood in relation to the ways in which structural VsAW manifests in the FTN. Further, in drawing on a continuum to connect times of war and peace in Guatemala, violence and its persistence is certainly the thread that blurs such a distinction. Yet, violence has rearticulated itself in these times. There are new

actors, new forces and, as I highlight in Chapter 2, a new, neoliberalisation of the political economic context vital to take into consideration.

In addition, different forms of VsAW intersect with each other, and blur the distinctions between categories of gendered violence. For instance, I explored how palm oil was framed as a form of structural VsAW in Chapter 7; relatedly, women who resisted palm oil and the structural oppressions and violence they attributed to the industry, experienced political violence. Relatedly, VIF intersects with structural violence, particularly in terms of the ways in which women experienced economic exclusion in communities in the FTN. This gendered economic exclusion was compounded by the emergence of new forms of capitalism and the wage labour introduced into communities by the palm oil industry. Women who were economically dependent on spouses were unable to “break the silence”. Further, bearing my analysis in mind, in the case of the FTN, the socio-economic, political and historical conditions of rurality compound the intersections of the matrix of violence: historical legacies of conflict are most acute in rural communities, which absorb the shocks of development most directly. Furthermore, social norms are deeply entrenched in rural communities such that they operate as an important form of social control. Colonial legacies are especially salient given the role of indigeneity in the FTN, as well as the related and enduring social exclusion of indigenous populations in Guatemala.

This is not to say that VsAW are objectively worse in rural areas than in urban spaces; indeed, my project did not focus on VsAW in urban Guatemala and thus I cannot draw such a conclusion. Further, measuring violence as “better” or “worse” reinforces binaristic relationships that I do not wish to reproduce in my project. Rather, situating VsAW in a matrix, and recognising how its intersections are compounded by the gendered everyday of rurality illustrates important relationships between the political economy of development and political economy of VsAW. From an empirical perspective, this research also shows how VsAW in Guatemala have important historical antecedents, is related to capitalism, is formed by social norms, and takes on nuanced manifestations in relation to indigenous groups.

Further, what emerged from the findings was the salience of gendered social norms in the matrix, as well as structural and political economic inequality in shaping VsAW in the postwar years. While history and coloniality were important

underlying factors, in day to day life, the material realities of poverty, the paradoxes of development, women's dependence on men, and *machismo* and its symbolic power, were formative in shaping how women engaged politically in response and in relation to VsAW. Bearing in mind the various intersecting factors that shape the ways in which VsAW materialise, how then was violence resisted?

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, the use of rights and the VsAW legal infrastructure was an important underlying theme that I reflected on throughout my research and in analysing my findings. Indeed, following my discussion of the Peace Accords in Chapter 2, rights and legal frameworks have seemed to constitute a broader landscape of justice and development in Guatemala, particularly in the postwar years. The use of law to legitimise the entrenchment of FDI and extractivist-led development in Guatemala was exemplified through reforms made to the Mining Law (Pedersen 2014). Yet, simultaneously, indigenous groups have also used law and the court systems to make appeals to protect their lands and rights as indigenous peoples (see: Sieder 2015). In Chapter 7, I explain how Elena travelled to Washington to report on problems and abuses related to palm oil in her community. Elena also reported her local mayor for sexist behaviour to state-level authorities, by filing an official complaint with the Public Ministry in Guatemala City.

On one hand, the state has used the law to reinforce its own power and to promote its own agenda and interests in Guatemala. At the same time, indigenous groups have also made use of the law and legal frameworks to challenge the state authority being reinforced through the rule of law. Ultimately, the appeal to rights and law was a recurring theme in my research, and was an important strategy used by community leaders, in complex and contradictory ways to challenge VsAW and oppression faced by women in the FTN.

As stated earlier, women often conveyed the notion that “women have rights now” and therefore, violence could no longer continue as a result of the legal changes in postwar Guatemala. By temporally situating rights as a product of the present, women reproduced notions that previously, women could legitimately and legally be subject to violence – despite the challenges they faced in accessing the legal system in practice. In a way, rights were framed as separate from the people and perpetrators who infringe upon them: men could not harm women in the communities because the rights stated otherwise, not because it was understood to be morally or normatively wrong: rather, such violence is illegal. Consequently, in this

respect, the political was nothing personal: despite *machismo* and social norms that constituted a form of social control, the rights in place were powerful enough to directly contradict these dynamics.

Rights also were understood as encompassing other areas of social life, not limited to women's rights: indeed, rights were also understood in an environmental sense, and in terms of indigeneity as well. In a sense, the rights that had been codified for women were part of a broader postwar legal landscape that afforded increased formal protections for Guatemalans in general. Indeed, community development forums I observed echoed that palm oil development infringed on the rights of communities.

Nonetheless, the engagement with rights also gave women a claim to different rural spaces, such as political forums and meetings – as such, rights were transforming the gendered dynamics of social life in the rural landscape. For instance, community leader Ximena argued that she had a right to be involved in her local COMUDE, not only because she had been elected to be so, but also because she maintained the right to be treated equally to men as a result of legal changes in postwar Guatemala. Consequently, although rights were framed as neutral, and as an outside force that members of rural communities had to respect, they are also intrinsically political: they legitimate participation and challenging of the gendered status quo and symbolic power of social norms.

Because rural life had been so profoundly impacted by postwar development in recent years, and continues to be so, the appeal to the rule of law and rights by women community leaders blurred the distinction between conventional uses of law to address VsAW, and understandings of VsAW itself. These understandings – particularly in relation to economic and structural violence in turn transcended legal definitions. Yet, this interaction with new rights frameworks intersected with existing social norms, like *machismo*. This intersection also interacted with the political economy of development, reflecting the dynamics of the matrix approach at stake in this context.

8.3 Lessons Learned and Areas for Future Research

My findings elucidated the complexities of VsAW in the rural communities of the FTN. In conducting the research, however, I confronted several challenges. For instance, the scope of this project and the time allotted to completion of the doctoral

project limited the extent to which a number of issues could be considered. Firstly, my project only briefly touched on interrogating and exploring the ways in which local development councils, the COCODEs address VsAW in rural communities. The role of the COCODEs was a theme that emerged through the research and analysis, and my knowledge and awareness of community approaches to VsAW beyond the scope of the state justice system was limited prior to conducting the research. Further, in order to be explored further, this research would require a great deal more immersion than the time frame of doctoral studies allows. Indeed, further research should explore in greater detail the role of COCODES in addressing VsAW in rural communities in the FTN and throughout Guatemala. Future research might also include working with other OMMs and DMMs in other rural communities to explore the extent to which the matrix framework might apply elsewhere, perhaps outside of the FTN or in relation to other monocrops or extractive industries.

The theme of alcohol and its relationship to VsAW, particularly economic violence, was important in the research as well. This theme emerged from my findings, and also could not be explored further given the scope of the research. In addition, because alcohol consumption was a sensitive issue in many communities, it was not one I was able to pursue at greater length given the scope of the project: more time devoted to building trust, conducting participant observation, and additional research may be required to explore the issue further in future.

Importantly, a key limitation of my research is that I did not interview men victims of violence or perpetrators of VsAW. Indeed, most of my interviews were conducted with women, but dealt with themes that also impact men: interviewing men about *machismo*, their experiences of palm oil and the transition from subsistence agriculture to wage labour, or the threat of political violence, could elucidate more about the gender power dynamics in the FTN. Yet, in the scope of my research, and with the time limitations in place, I chose to focus on centring women's experiences and the violence endured by women, rather than men. Building on this research, interviewing men about their perspectives would illuminate more about the gendered social norms and political economic relations at stake and might also speak to other constitutions of violence in the FTN region. For instance, in my fieldnotes, I noted how a friend and radio producer in Chisec, who had been vocal about his opposition to the palm oil, had recounted to me that he had been threatened by representatives of one of the local companies, and who had told him that "they

were watching” his movements. Shortly after, he was attacked by masked men and beaten while riding his motorbike; as none of the valuables he carried, such as a laptop, were taken, he perceived the incident as related to the threats he had already received rather than an attack for robbery. Consequently he abandoned some of his activism in the interests of protecting his family from future threats and harm. The role he assumed as protective also relates to gendered social norms highlighted in the thesis; this case may exemplify some of the other ways in which men engage in environmental and political struggles as well, and assume a protector role. Is this role characteristic of other men’s political involvement in the region, and what does it say about masculinity in rural communities, as well as men’s relationship to environmental changes? These are questions I intend to pursue in future research.

Related to this point, palm oil cultivation and its gendered impacts was a central, reoccurring issue area and theme, although the main focus of this thesis was VsAW. As a result, exploring the gendered impacts and dynamics of palm oil (for instance, women’s role in the supply chain) in greater detail exceeded the scope and timeframe of the research, but is an avenue I wish to explore further in future work. This research could be undertaken on Guatemala’s southern coast, or in the Polochic Valley, where there is also a concentration of palm oil plantations. Further, in the communities where I conducted my research, women did not experience the benefits of economic development in the agro-extractivist sector. This may not, however, be the case for all communities impacted by this industry. Exploring the role of women in palm oil would illustrate dynamics of gender, power and inequality in relation to productive labour, and could uncover interesting dynamics. Relatedly, palm oil in Guatemala is controlled by large companies. Yet, alternative forms of economic organisation – such as cooperative organisation in the north of Honduras may offer important avenues for understanding women’s productive labour in agro-extractivism. Additionally, as I was completing the thesis in August 2018, news broke of palm oil workers’ strikes in Sayaxche, Petén, the site of the 2015 ecocide discussed earlier in the thesis. Further research on the workers’ mobilisation may illuminate gendered dynamics of labour and supply chain management as well.

Another sensitive issue that I was unable to explore further, and which arose less in interviews, and more in informal conversations was the role of religion in shaping social norms, and therefore, understandings of VsAW. For instance, NGO workers often critiqued local pastors or religious leaders for being *machista* or for

influencing their congregations. In particular, the rise of evangelical Christianity in Guatemala could be explored in relation to gendered social norms and community relations. Given that religion can be a sensitive topic, more time devoted to building trust and may be required to pursue further research in this area.

Importantly, justice for historic wrongs in Guatemala has been increasingly pursued by indigenous groups in the postwar years. My research briefly touched on the Sepur Zarco case, for instance. Future research exploring this shift and judicialisation of politics is needed, particularly from a gendered perspective. Indeed, such movements may reflect another important paradox of peace: the ways in which indigenous groups seeking justice for historical wrongs draw on what Audre Lorde (1984) refers to as “the master’s tools” in order to deconstruct the so-called “master’s house”. Simultaneously, however, the use of the state justice system in Guatemala by indigenous groups in order to seek punishment and reparations for crimes perpetrated during the internal armed conflict has been a powerful means of re-appropriation of the state and its legal tools by such groups. Exploring this dynamic from a gendered perspective may elucidate more about the ways in which a Spivakian strategic essentialism is drawn on in wider struggles for justice in postwar Guatemala.

Furthermore, the issue of migration is particularly timely in Guatemala and Central America, and its possible links with VsAW beg further questions. In this respect, how does political economic change and its gendered implications shape migration? What role do US-backed policies and frameworks like the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle play in preventing or provoking increased migration? Research on remittances sent to Guatemala, and their impacts on social relations within communities might also illuminate more about social dynamics at stake in communities.

8.4 Conclusion

Ultimately, my research illustrated to me that researching VsAW in the FTN was far more complex than I had initially envisioned. The FTN was a contentious space: development was articulated in the interests of governing elites, and many of its possible benefits were not reaching the most marginal. VsAW in the FTN operate and exist along different continuums, and in what I refer to as a matrix of VsAW.

Further, VsAW manifested in different ways: my project has engaged with manifestations of VsAW as being structural, symbolic, personal (or VIF), everyday, and political.

This research has aimed to address some of the empirical and theoretical lacunae related to the study of VsAW in postwar Guatemala. Indeed, by exploring VsAW in the context of the FTN, my research ultimately uncovered the important relationships between rurality and rights, and the ways in which context is central in shaping not only how VsAW manifest, but how VsAW are understood and addressed by community leaders in the FTN. Ultimately, by aiming to understand the complexities of VsAW in the FTN, my research has spoken to the paradoxes of peace in postwar Guatemala.

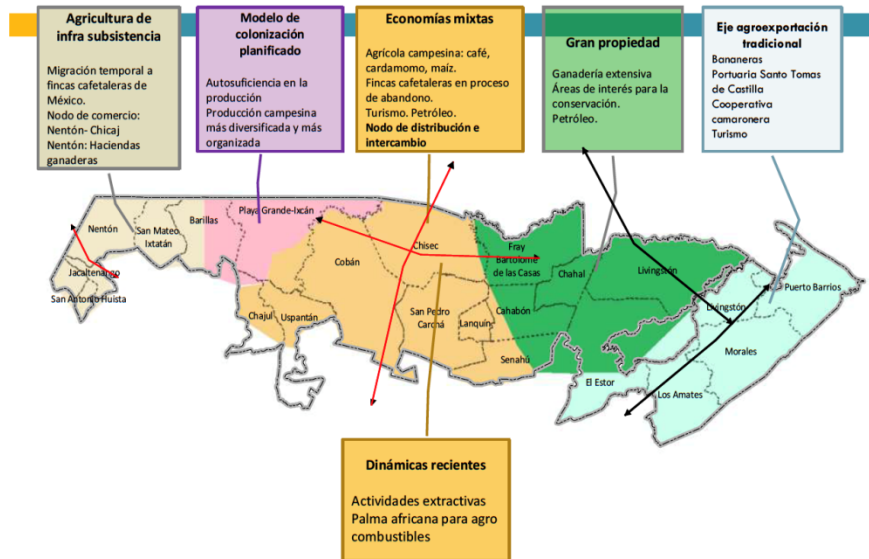
Bearing these findings in mind, VsAW in the FTN is shaped inherently by the realities and the everyday of rurality, which compound the intersections of the matrix. Researching VsAW in the FTN illustrated how the violence women experience is shaped by the structures imposed by development. Yet, these structures also become the context and space in which women are able to resist and address violence in their communities. This dynamic is illustrative of the gendered paradoxes of peace in the FTN.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Timeline for Development in the FTN

Timeline for Development in the FTN	
1954	Counter-Revolutionary Tactics In response to Arbenz's attempted agrarian reforms, the military coup which ousted the latter's government ushered in development plans for ranching and mining of precious metals, as well as development of Sebol, Alta Verapaz (Solano 2012)
1962	Creation of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INTA) through Decree 1550
1964	Settlers are brought to the FTN region through Maryknoll religious order; INTA establishes boundaries of FTN in Izabal, Alta Verapaz, Quiche and Huehuetenango (source)
1970	Guatemalan Congress passes Decree 60-70 to officially establish the FTN as an agricultural and agro-extractivist region for development
1983	Fray Bartolomé de las Casas is officially named a municipality, with funding from the InterAmerican Development Bank
1990s	Resettlement of war refugees in Chisec and Nueva Libertad, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas
1996	Peace Accords are signed by President Arzu While development between the 1980s-1990s was limited in the FTN, the Peace Accords triggered the consideration of constructing a trans-FTN highway in order to facilitate development in the region.
1999	Founding of FONTIERRAS state body
2000-2003	Alfonso Portillo Administration Founding of SEPREM
2004-2007	Oscar Berger Administration - first push towards palm oil in the FTN region
2008-2011	Colom Administration Trans-FTN highway constructed in 2009 Administration of state-sponsored bonus and conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs) 2008 – Law on Femicide passed
2012-2015	Otto Perez Molina Administration
2016-present	Jimmy Morales Administration

Una región heterogénea con procesos diferenciados de ocupación del espacio



NB: Recent dynamics of palm oil extraction highlighted in yellow

Appendix 3: Massacres in Chisec, Guatemalan Genocide

Massacres in Chisec (Source: ODHAG Report Chapter 3 ⁸⁰)		
Location	Date	Force involved
Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	1-82	Military
Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	2-82	Military, PAC (Petrullas de Autodefensa Civil)
Sawachil (caserío), Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	8-81	Military
Setzi (caserío), Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	8-82	Military
Pecajba (caserío), Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	0-82	Military, PAC (Petrullas de Autodefensa Civil)
Las Ruinas (caserío), Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	0-82	Military, PAC (Petrullas de Autodefensa Civil)
San Miguel Sechochoch (finca), Chisec (town), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	3-82	Guerrilla
Xaman (finca), Chisec, Alta Verapaz	10-95	Military

⁸⁰ Chapter 3 of the ODHAG report includes a complete list of all known massacres committed during the internal armed conflict; this list only includes the list of massacres in Chisec (including Raxruhá, which at this point was part of the Chisec municipality); this was a targeted site of massacres due to high levels of guerrilla activity in the region, but also for strategic interests (highway construction, petroleum).

Appendix 4: Letter of Information and Consent Forms*

*Translation from Original Spanish

Letter of Information

The research for this thesis project is directed by Julia Hartviksen, under the supervision of Professor Diane Perrons in the Department of Gender Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom.

What is this study about?

This research project aims to analyse violence against women in the FTN, and the impacts of palm oil from a gendered perspective. Additionally, the project will explore political participation of women.

We request a visit of approximately 1 hour. With your consent, the interview will be recorded with a voice recorder.

What are the risks associated with my participation in this research project?

There may be minor risks associated with participating in this project. These risks include social and psychological discomfort or stress. The information discussed may be sensitive.

All information and all identities of participants will be confidential, unless the participants wish to share their identities. All information from interviews will be password-protected and will be stored in a secure location.

My participation is voluntary.

Although it will be appreciated if you could respond to all questions as honestly as possible, if you feel uncomfortable or do not wish to continue at any point, you can withdraw. You can also decide to have all recorded material deleted.

What will happen with my responses?

Interview data collected may be published in academic publications, or presented in academic conferences, and will be used in the thesis project. All personal names will be anonymised unless you wish otherwise.

Will I receive compensation for my participation?

As a participant in this research project, although you will not receive any direct benefit, your participation will help contribute to ongoing research and understanding of violence against women, the situation of women in rural communities of the FTN, and women's political participation.

To whom can I direct further questions?

You can direct all questions to:

• Julia Hartviksen: j.i.hartviksen@lse.ac.uk

Tel: +502 3234 6181 (WhatsApp)

Skype : JuliaHartviksen

Thank you for your participation in this project!

Consent Form

First

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

1. I have read the Letter of Information and all my questions have been answered.

2. I understand that I will be participating in this study about VAW and development in the FTN, and I understand that I will be asked about my knowledge surrounding the subject, and that the interview may last 1-2 hours.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any moment. I understand that my personal details will be confidential. The interview data collected may be published in academic journals or presented at academic conferences, but will respect my personal confidentiality. If I desire, I can have a copy of the final project..

4. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns, I can contact the researcher via the details listed in the letter of information.

I give my consent to be interviewed for this research project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to this interview being recorded with a voice recorder.

YES _____ NO _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5: Interview List and Reference Code

List of Interview Participants and Reference Code

Semi-Structured Interview Code	
<i>Community leaders/activists</i>	CL #
<i>VsAW Service Practitioners (NGO and psycho-social support professionals)</i>	NGO #
<i>Government and legal officials</i>	GL #
<i>Palm oil industry professionals and experts</i>	PO #

List of Interview Participants

INTERVIEW NUMBER	CODE	DATE	NAME AND PARTICIPANT DETAILS
Interview 1	NGO 1	July 2015	Roman <i>USAID development worker</i>
Interview 2	NGO 2	July 2015	Estela <i>Coordinates a feminist NGO in Guatemala City, involved with Guatemalan women's movement in Guatemala City</i>
Interview 3	CL 1	August 2015	Elena <i>Defensora, coordinates women's resistance in Chisec municipality, works with OMM in Chisec</i>
Interview 4	PO 1	August 2015	Diego <i>Palm worker in Fray Bartolome de las Casas</i>
Interview 5	NGO 3	August 2015	Lorena <i>Works with INCIDE in Fray Bartolome de las Casas</i>
Interview 6	PO 2	August 2015	David <i>Anthropologist, university instructor and researcher with USAC</i>
Interview 7	PO 3	August 2015	Carlos <i>Palm oil company representative in Fray Bartolomé de las Casas</i>

Interview 8	NGO 4	August 2015	Mario <i>Director with INCIDE in Guatemala City</i>
Interview 9	NGO 5	August 2015	Silvia <i>Works with INCIDE in Fray Bartolome de las Casas</i>
Interview 10	LG 1	August 2015	Ester <i>Former Justice of the Peace in FTN</i>
Interview 11	NGO 6	August 2015	Lara <i>Former director of one of the OMM in the FTN</i>
Interview 12	NGO 7	August 2015	Daniela <i>Works with Mama Maquin, a feminist organization with a central national office in Nueva Libertad, in municipality Fray Bartolome de las Casas</i>
Interview 13	LG 2	August 2015	Carlota <i>Lawyer with PDH in Guatemala City</i>
Interview 14	LG 3,	January 2016	Olimpia – OMM interview <i>Former coordinator of an OMM in the FTN</i>
Interview 15	CL 2	January 2016	Luciana <i>Defensora and community leader, founding member of Mama Maquin organisation</i>
Interview 16	NGO 8	February 2016	Alvaro <i>Representative of Rigoberta Menchu Foundation in Guatemala City</i>
Interview 17	CL 3	February 2016	Serapia <i>Defensora in FTN and community leader</i>
Interview 18	CL 4	February 2016	Susana <i>Defensora in FTN and community leader</i>
Interview 19	CL 5	February 2016	Antonio <i>Community leader in FTN, works with Sagrada Tierra and coordinates with CONGCOOP and other grassroots indigenous organisations</i>
Interview 20	NGO 9	March 2016	Blanca <i>Social worker and representative, women's shelter in Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 21	NGO 10	March 2016	Luz <i>Nurse with women's organisation in FTN</i>
Interview 22	LG 4	March 2016	Marcela <i>Secretary at Femicide Tribunal, Coban, Alta Verapaz</i>

Interview 23	LG 5	March 2016	Julissa <i>Social worker at Femicide Tribunal, Coban, Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 24	NGO 11	March 2016	Laura <i>Psychologist in CICAM women's organisation, deals specifically with cases of VsAW</i>
Interview 25	NGO 12	March 2016	Lily <i>Representative of CICAM, community leader and activist against VsAW in Coban</i>
Interview 26	LG 6	March 2016	Alma <i>Representative of SEPREM, Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 27	LG 7	April 2016	Isabel <i>Director of DMM in Chisec and local tienda (shop) owner</i>
Interview 28	CL 6	April 2016	Flory <i>Community activist and defensora and former official from DMM in FTN</i>
Interview 29	NGO 13	April 2016	Valeria <i>Lawyer with Nuevos Horizontes NGO in FTN</i>
Interview 30	CL 7	April 2016	Ximena <i>Community activist, leader and defensora; works with APROBASANC organisation member of municipal council in FTN</i>
Interview 31	CL 8	May 2016	Rocio <i>Community activist, defensora, municipal leader and restaurant owner in FTN</i>
Interview 32	CL 9	May 2016	Celia <i>Community activist and defensora in FTN</i>
Interview 33	LG 8	May 2016	Eduardo <i>Judge in Justice of Peace Office, Raxruha</i>
Interview 34	CL 10	May 2016	Catalina <i>Defensora and community activist; works in local market in FTN</i>
Interview 35	CL 11	May 2016	Teresa <i>Defensora and community activist; works in local market in FTN</i>
Interview 36	CL 12	May 2016	Miguel <i>Community activist and leader in FTN</i>
Interview 37	CL 13	May 2016	Group interview <i>Group interview of two women leaders and organisers of chocolate cooperative project in Raxruhá</i>

Interview 38	LG 9	June 2016	Elisabeth <i>Judge and Justice of the Peace in FTN</i>
Interview 39	LG 10	June 2016	Marco <i>Secretary at Justice of Peace office in FTN</i>
Interview 40	LG 11	June 2016	Alejandra <i>Support worker at OMM</i>
Interview 41	LG 12	June 2016	Julieta <i>Support worker at OMM</i>
Interview 42	LG 13	June 2016	Juana <i>Director of OMM</i>
Interview 43	CL 14	June 2016	Luciana <i>Defensora and community leader, founding member of Mama Maquin organisation</i>
Interview 44	CL 15	July 2016	Mirsa <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 45	CL 16	July 2016	Petrona <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 46	CL 17	July 2016	Reina Elisabeth <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 47	CL 18	July 2016	Floriselda <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 48	CL 19	July 2016	Nelly <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 49	CL 20	July 2016	Ada <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 50	CL 21	July 2016	Viviana <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 51	CL 22	July 2016	Sandra <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>

Interview 52	CL 23	July 2016	Camila <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 53	CL 24	July 2016	Andrea <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 54	CL 25	July 2016	Valentina <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 55	CL 26	July 2016	Silvia <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 56	CL 27	July 2016	Candelaria <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 57	CL 28	July 2016	Maria Isabel <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 58	CL 29	July 2017	Nelly <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 59	CL 28	July 2017	Rebeca <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 60	CL 29	July 2017	Maria <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 61	CL 30	July 2017	Angie <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 62	CL 31	July 2017	Margarita Chuiquin <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 63	CL 33	July 2017	Marta <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>

Interview 64	CL 34	July 2017	Elsa <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 65	CL 35	August 2017	Irma Yolanda <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 66	CL 36	August 2017	Jenny <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 67	CL 37	August 2017	Juliana <i>Community leader and member of women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 68	CL 38	August 2017	Sandy <i>Community leader and member of women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 69	CL 39	August 2017	Maria Isabel <i>Community leader and elected representative, women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 70	CL 40	August 2017	Petrona <i>Community leader and member of women's commission of Chisec</i>
Interview 70	CL 41	August 2017	Ximena <i>Community leader, activist with APROBASANK, elected to municipal council in 2016</i>
Interview 71	CL 42	July 2017	Mirsa <i>Community leader and defensora; elected member of women's commission in Chisec</i>
Interview 72	CL 43	August 2017	Elena <i>Community leader, midwife, elected municipal official in Chisec</i>
Interview 73	NGO 15	August 2017	Karen <i>Representative and researcher with PDH, Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 74	NGO 16	August 2017	Elda <i>Director of Gender Programs, PDH, Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 75	LG 14	August 2017	Alma <i>Representative of SEPREM, Alta Verapaz</i>
Interview 76	LG 15	August 2017	Jorge <i>Judge in femicide tribunal, Cobán</i>
Interview 77	LG 16	August 2017	Isabel <i>Director, Chisec DMM and shop owner</i>

Interview 78	LG 17	August 2017	Antonia <i>Deputy Director, Chisec DMM</i>
Interview 79	LG 18	August 2017	Luis Justice of the Peace, Chisec
Interview 80	PO 4	August 2017	Susana Siekavizza <i>Executive Director, GREPALMA</i>

Appendix 6: Participant Observation Highlights and Focus Groups

<u>Participant Observation Highlights</u>
<u>Monthly Red de Derivacion Meetings – Cobán</u> April-July 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Monthly meetings held in Cobán that bring together network of VsAW professionals in Alta Verapaz, and provide report on key issues related to VsAW in the department (police, lawyers, social workers, MP, NGO professionals, OMM/DMM workers)
<u>Comision de Mujeres (Municipal Women’s Commission) Meetings – Chisec</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- March 2016- April 2016- May 2016- June 2016- July 2016- July 2017- July 2017- August 2017- Meetings of community leaders held in Chisec, discussion of women’s issues and problems of addressing VsAW in rural communities
<u>Palm Oil and Development Forums/Meetings</u> July 2015 Guatemala City August 2015 Chisec March 2016 Raxruhá May 2016 Raxruhá June 2016 Raxruhá July 2017 Raxruhá
<u>Participant Observation – OMM Chisec</u> April-June 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Participant observation in OMM in Chisec

Focus Groups

February 2016 - Raxruhá

- Focus group with male indigenous authorities in rural Raxruha about impacts of palm oil

February 2016 - Raxruhá

- Focus group with men and women indigenous community leaders on Disaster Management Committee about impacts of palm oil

April 2016 – Chisec

- Focus group with women community leaders in Chisec

Appendix 7: Axes of National Politic of Comprehensive Development of women and the Plan for Equal Opportunities 2008-2023
(my translation)

The Axis of Economic and Productive Development with Equality; contains 7 political axes

- 1) Guarantee the integration and application of the principle of equality for women and men, and for Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women, in economic philosophical foundations, principals, values and practices
- 2) Create policies and programs that decrease the impact of macroeconomic policies in the lives of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women
- 3) Guarantee conditions for autonomous participation of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women in the local, national and international economy
- 4) Guarantee that policies, strategies, plans, programmes and economic development projects for women promote their cooperation and are carried out with cultural respect
- 5) Ensure the recognition and quantification of women's contributions to productive and reproductive work in the national economy
- 6) Ensure the creation, promotion, development, and sustainability of economic and productive initiatives by women at the local, national and international level
- 7) Ensure the development of research that informs and orients on the impact of national and international macroeconomic policies in the lives of women

The Axis of Natural Resources, Land and Housing; contains 5 political axes

- 1) Guarantee the access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women to property and possession, use of natural resources, usufruct and rural development
- 2) Guarantee the right of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women to consultation over an action that affects use of natural resources in their territory, based on the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention 169.
- 3) Guarantee full access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women to property, co-ownership, possession, use and usufruct of land
- 4) Guarantee the full access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women to property and/or co-ownership of property, respecting cultural norms, particularly of low-income women and women heads of households.
- 5) Guarantee that Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women have access to comprehensive security, assistance, advice, and humanitarian, psychological, legal and social accompaniment in cases of emergencies and disasters

The Axis of Education and Cultural Sensitivity Equality; contains 7 political axes

- 1) Guarantee the integration and application of the principle of equality between Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women and men, in Education's philosophical foundations, principles, values and practices.
- 2) Guarantee the educational investment, continuation, and coverage of adolescent girls, youth and Maya, Garifuna, Xinka and mestiza women in all levels of the national education system, prioritising women survivors of the internal armed conflict

- 3) Guarantee the elimination of illiteracy among girls, adolescents, youth and Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women.
- 4) Guarantee access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women to training, professional, scientific and technology programmes.
- 5) Ensure the equitable participation of women in different levels of direction and administration in the community, municipal, departmental and national education system
- 6) Guarantee the integration and application of the principle of equality among women of diverse ethnic, cultural and economic identities in the education system
- 7) Guarantee sexual education in all levels of the education system, with respect to cultural, scientific and humanistic sensitivity

The Axis of Equality in the Development of Comprehensive Health with respect to Cultural Sensitivity; contains 6 Political Axes

- 1) Guarantee the integration and application of the principle of equality between Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women and men, in the health systems' philosophical foundations, principles, values and practices.
- 2) Guarantee the participation and equitable compensation of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in distinct levels of direction and administration in the health systems
- 3) Guarantee the access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women to comprehensive health services at all stages of life
- 4) Ensure the recognition of practices of the traditional medicine system, such as the practices of the protection of the health of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women, in coordination with the national health system, in all cycles of life
- 5) Ensure the full access, use, availability, and enjoyment of the policies, plans, programs and projects for food security and sovereignty by Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 6) Ensure the access of women to policies, programs and projects for environmental healing

The Axis of the Eradication of Violence Against Women; contains 4 Political Axes

- 1) Transform the ideology, values, principles, and fundamental practices of the oppression and violence against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 2) Strengthen institutional mechanisms to prevent, address, sanction and eradicate violence against women
- 3) Guarantee the elimination and sanction of all forms of oppression and violence against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in the public and private domain
- 4) Guarantee the application, effectiveness, fulfilment and development international and national legal instruments to prevent, sanction and eradicate all forms of violence against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women

The Axes of Judicial Equity; contains 3 Political Axes

- 1) Guarantee the positivity, observation and application of conventions and agreements, international declarations, to which Guatemala is party, which

- protect and favour the human rights of women and the Beijing Platform for Action resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women
- 2) Coordinate national legislation with international legislation on human rights of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women and promote new laws that promote equality between women and men
 - 3) Guarantee effective, efficient and timely access of women to quick and fulfilled justice

The Axis of Racism and Discrimination Against Women contains 4 Political Axes:

- 1) Transform the ideology, values, principles and fundamental practices of discrimination and racism against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 2) Guarantee the elimination and sanction of any form of oppression, discrimination, racism or segregation against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in different domains of public and private life
- 3) Guarantee the application, effectiveness, fulfilment and development of international and national legal instruments to prevent, sanction and eradicate all forms of discrimination and racism against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 4) Guarantee that Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women who suffer discrimination and racism have citizen, physical, psychological and economic security in community, municipal, departmental and national spaces

The Axis of Equity of Identity in Cultural Development contains 4 Political Axes

- 1) Ensure the creation and promotion of conditions to strengthen an ideology and culture of non-sexist, non-racist peace in Guatemalan society
- 2) Ensure the creation and ample diffusion of programs of promoting formal and informal principles in the philosophy of peace and equity between women and men and between people as the base of democracy
- 3) Guarantee the development of sensitive campaigns that contribute to affirming and disseminating human rights of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 4) Guarantee the development of research programs that contribute to the understanding and elaborating the effects of sexism, discrimination and racism against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in development, democracy and peace

The Axis of Labour Equity contains 7 Political Axes

- 1) Guarantee the tutelary purpose of the Ministry of Labour so to ensure the full application of labour rights of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 2) Revise and reform legal frameworks and administrative laws, so to guarantee the principle of equity and equality between women and men and between Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 3) Guarantee the application of the right of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women to labour security
- 4) Create and enforce norms of hygiene, security, occupational health and recreation, based in the necessities of working Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women

- 5) Guarantee the access to information, training, consultation of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women migrant workers, in the defense of labour rights and the demand of their effective fulfilment between the corresponding authorities and agencies
- 6) Guarantee the full access of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women to the labour market with parity of conditions
- 7) Guarantee the development of training, skills, abilities of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women for their adequate insertion into the labour market and generation of employment

The Axes of Institutional Mechanisms contains 7 Political Axes

- 1) Guarantee the integration of principles of equality before the law, of equity between women and men, parity and cultural identity within structures of institutions and institutional process of design, policy planning, plans, programs and development strategies
- 2) Create, strengthen and promote state and non-state national and international mechanisms that guarantee the advancement, participation and development of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in all life stages
- 3) Guarantee the political autonomy in favour of the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women: SEPREM, DEMI, FNM, CONAPREVI, among others
- 4) Guarantee the strengthening of political autonomy of institutional mechanisms of women at departmental and municipal levels
- 5) Guarantee the institutionalization and application of the National Policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women and the Plan of Equal Opportunities 2008-2023 in policies, strategies, plans, programs and projects in the institutions of the state
- 6) Guarantee the principal of equity between women and men and cultural identity in the institutional process of tracking, monitoring and evaluation of budgetary policies
- 7) Design and implement a national and sectorial system of statistics and disaggregated data by sex and peoples, which provides all classes of information for planning and evaluation of policies, plans, programs and projects referring to Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women

The Axis of Socio-Political Participation contains 7 Political Axes

- 1) Guarantee that the state and its political and social institutions ingrate in its structures, norms, mechanisms, procedures, policies, strategies, plans, programs, and projects the principle of parity and alternability between women and men; and between Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women
- 2) Guarantee the representation and participation, in the making of decisions, of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women for the impacts of the management of national and local development
- 3) Adopt the necessary means to guarantee the full socio political participation and representation of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in the making of decisions and their representation in all structures of power in the local, national and international level
- 4) Guarantee the representation and participation of organizations of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in civil society in decision making processes of the state and foreign policy

- 5) Promote the participation of w Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in the levels of direction in the public sector at the local and national level
- 6) Ensure the integration of the priorities of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in the objectives of local and national development
- 7) Guarantee the representation and socio political participation of organised Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in diverse summits, forums, conventions and international conferences

The Axis of Cultural Identity of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and Mestiza Women Contains 4 Political Axes

- 1) Implement and institutional from the state policies that promote and guarantee the eradication of racism and discrimination against Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women to reach equality and equity in the framework of specific individual and collective rights
- 2) Promote the means to guarantee the autonomy, for the full participation and representation of Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and mestiza women in processes of decision making, in diverse structures and powers of the state and in the formulation and evaluation of public polices, plans, programs and projects
- 3) Guarantee the implementation of cultural identity and the cosmovision of Maya, Garifuna and Xinca women in the institutions and branches of the state and public polices, in the framework of economic, social and cultural rights
- 4) Implement public policies that guarantee that Maya, Garifuna, and Xinca women participate in decision making for administration, defense, protection and recuperation of territory, cultural, natural, genetic goods, and intellectual property

Appendix 8
Copy of Regulation on Sale of Liquor and Alcohol, Chisec

MUNICIPALIDAD DE CHISEC
DEPARTAMENTO DE ALTA VERAPAZ
GUATEMALA, C. A.

EL INFRASCRITO SECRETARIO MUNICIPAL DE CHISEC DEPARTAMENTO DE ALTA VERAPAZ, GUATEMALA, CERTIFICA QUE PARA EL EFECTO TIENE A LA VISTA EL LIBRO VEINTISEIS DE SESIONES DE LA CORPORACION MUNICIPAL EN FOLIOS AUTORIZADOS POR LA CONTRALORIA GENERAL DE CUENTAS DE LA NACION, CON EL NUMERO DOCE MIL SESENTA Y CINCO GUION DOS MIL DOCE (12,065-2012) EN LA QUE SE ENCUENTRA ASENTADA EL ACTA NUMERO 058-2012, QUE CORRESPONDE A LA SESION DE FECHA DIECISIETE DE OCTUBRE DE DOS MIL DOCE, QUE COPIADO EL PUNTO SEGUNDO EN LA QUE LITERALMENTE ESTABLECE:

SEGUNDO: REPRESENTANTES DE MUJERES DE LAS MICROREGIONES QUE CONFORMA EL MUNICIPIO DE CHISEC, ALTA VERAPAZ. El señor Alcalde Municipal procede a dar la bienvenida a cada una de las representantes de mujeres de las trece microregiones que conforma el Municipio, quienes proceden a dar a conocer al pleno Concejo Municipal las peticiones acordadas por la organización de mujeres: 1) Desean ser acreditadas para formar parte en las reuniones del Concejo Municipal de Desarrollo (COMUDE) así mismo contar con voz y voto; 2) Formar parte en las organizaciones y conformaciones de los Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo para el año 2013, haciéndolas saber a cada comunidad por medio de oficios emitidos por el Señor Alcalde Municipal; 3) Entrega de Manual al señor Alcalde Municipal sobre la Política Municipal de la Mujer; 4) Cuando podrán obtener respuesta de sus peticiones; 5) Que rubro o porcentaje se cuenta dentro del presupuesto municipal destinado para la Oficina Municipal de la Mujer; 6) Tener conocimiento que comunidades no aceptan a las mujeres dentro de las organizaciones de COCODE, que ellas buscarán la manera de enlazar comunicación con ellos a manera de conocer sus motivos o razones. Interviene la señora Margarita Osorio Gallego, representante de Mujeres ante el CODEDE, dando a conocer el fundamento legal de sus peticiones según Constitución Política de la República en su Artículo 4 COCODE, dando a conocer el fundamento legal de sus peticiones según Constitución Política de la República. Artículo 2 inciso "f" hace mención que hombres y mujeres cuentan con los mismos derechos, así mismo en Código Municipal. Artículo 2 inciso "f" pidiendo al alcalde que se les tome en cuenta, que sean escuchadas que ya no exista la discriminación contra las mujeres. El señor Alcalde Municipal, manifiesta que esta conciencia de lo ofrecido en campaña, manifiesta estar orgulloso que la máxima representante de las mujeres del municipio forma parte en las reuniones de Codede a nivel departamental, y que está dispuesto apoyar a las mujeres en lo que se pueda. Indicando que en un lapso de ocho días estará dando una respuesta concreta luego de discutirlo con el Concejo Municipal. CONSIDERANDO: que existe un manual del Concejo Municipal de Desarrollo (COMUDE), la cual está aprobada habiendo en ellas reglas claras y concisas de quienes pueden formar parte en las reuniones del COMUDE. CONSIDERANDO: Que Según el decreto 12-2002 Código Municipal en su artículo 33 contempla que, corresponde con exclusividad al Concejo Municipal el ejercicio del gobierno del municipio, velar por la integridad de su patrimonio, garantizar sus intereses con base en los valores, cultura y necesidades planteadas por los vecinos, conforme a la disponibilidad de recursos. CONSIDERANDO: El Alcalde Municipal representa a la Municipalidad ante cualquier institución o empresa y que puede actuar por delegación del Concejo Municipal. Este Concejo Municipal con fundamento en lo considerado, y tomando en cuenta el interés general de las beneficiarias, al resolver por unanimidad de sus miembros ACUERDA: I) Aprobar que las representantes de las mujeres de las trece microregiones que conforma el municipio de Chisec, Alta Verapaz sean acreditadas para formar parte en las reuniones del Concejo Municipal de Desarrollo; II) Enviar notificaciones a cada comunidad para que en un porcentaje del 40% de mujeres formen parte en las organizaciones y conformación de los Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo para el año 2013. Certifíquese: u. cúmplase. Ilegibles: Rogelio Cornelio Cal Juárez, Alcalde Municipal, Manuel Ac. Cacao, Síndico I, Jorge Cucul Caal, Síndico II, Madgilio Bo Coc, Concejal I, Carlos Xol Tiul, Concejal II, Ricardo Tut, Concejal III, Gaspar Ichich Ico, Concejal IV, Gerardo Batz, Concejal V. Certifica Anibal Marroquín García.

Y PARA REMITIR A DONDE CORRESPONDE EXTIENDO, SELLO, Y FIRMO LA PRESENTE CERTIFICACION EN HOJA MEMBRETADA DE LA MUNICIPALIDAD DE LA POBLACION DE CHISEC, DE ALTA VERAPAZ, EL DIA TRECE DE NOVIEMBRE DE DOS MIL DOCE.

Anibal Marroquín García
Secretario Municipal

Vo: Bo.
Rogelio Cornelio Cal Juárez
Alcalde Municipal

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EL INFRASCRITO SECRETARIO DEL CONSEJO MUNICIPAL DE DESARROLLO, DE CHISEC DEPARTAMENTO DE ALTA VERAPAZ, GUATEMALA, CERTIFICA: QUE PARA EL EFECTO TIENE A LA VISTA EL LIBRO CINCO DE SESIONES DEL CONSEJO MUNICIPAL DE DESARROLLO (COMUDE) EN FOLIOS AUTORIZADOS POR LA CONTRALORIA GENERAL DE CUENTAS DE LA NACION, CON EL NUMERO TRECE MIL SEISCIENTOS DIECINUEVE GUIÓN DOS MIL TRECE (13619-2013) EN LA QUE SE ENCUENTRA ASENTADA EL ACTA NUMERO 09-2014 QUE CORRESPONDE A SESION ORDINARIA DE FECHA CATORCE DE AGOSTO DE DOS MIL CATORCE, QUE CERRADO EN EL PUNTO CUARTO LITERALMENTE ESTABLECE:

CUARTO: Propuesta: Códigos de segundo nivel, a cargo de cocode elegido en Precomude: El señor alcalde municipal Rogelio Cornelio Cal Juárez, hace del conocimiento al pleno que se recibió la propuesta del Comité de Mujeres y Comisión Municipal de la Mujer, COCODES de Segundo y de primer Nivel para que se apruebe El Reglamento regulador de venta y funcionamiento de cantinas, restaurantes, cervecerías, tiendas donde se expendan y consuman bebidas alcohólicas en el municipio de Chisec. Esto según argumentan debido a la grave situación de violencia hacia las mujeres en diferentes formas: física, sexual, económica, psicológica. Queremos resaltar la Violencia contra la mujer que se vive en el municipio y las medidas necesarias que se deben tomar para prevenir y sancionar esa forma de violencia. La Ley para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra la mujer, que indica la violencia contra la mujer es aquella que causa daño o sufrimiento, provocada por alguien de nuestra propia familia y que nos daña física, psicológica, económica, sexual y nuestro patrimonio familiar que poseemos. La ley contra el femicidio y otras formas de violencia contra la mujer según el artículo 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, dicen que el Estado debe adoptar medidas para prevenir la violencia contra la mujer. Constitución de la república en los artículo 1, 2, 3 y 4. Lamentablemente las situaciones que se ven diariamente en nuestro municipio, especialmente en el casco urbano y barrios hay más de 25 cantinas, restaurantes y cervecerías, tiendas donde se venden y consumen licores. La mayoría de los casos de violencia contra la mujer se da cuando el agresor se encuentra bajo los efectos de bebidas alcohólicas. Las cantinas se declaran como tiendas de venta de consumo diario. En la mayoría de las tiendas se venden licores sin ningún tipo de regulación, incluso a menores de edad. Causan basura, suciedad, bulla y ofensas a la dignidad de las personas. Las frecuentes riñas y balaceras han cobrado la vida de personas y también accidentes. El reglamento en mención pretende de se regule el funcionamiento de las cantinas, restaurantes, cervecerías, tiendas, o cualquier lugar que se expendan bebidas alcohólicas en el municipio como se cuenta con la presencia de los propietarios de negocios que expenden bebidas alcohólicas registrados ante la Municipalidad de Chisec, el señor Alcalde Municipal explica que es el mediador y que se delega a alguien de los COCODES de segundo nivel para que proceda a leer el reglamento de la forma siguiente:—

REGLAMENTO REGULADOR DE VENTA Y FUNCIONAMIENTO DE CANTINAS, RESTAURANTES, CERVECERÍAS, TIENDAS DONDE SE EXPENDAN Y CONSUMAN BEBIDAS ALCOHÓLICAS EN EL MUNICIPIO DE CHISEC.

a). En las cantinas, cervecería, restaurantes y tiendas queda prohibido: Vender o suministrar bebidas alcohólicas fermentadas o destiladas a menores de edad.

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- b). Se prohíbe el ingreso y permanencia de menores de edad en las cantinas, cervecería, etc. y en cualquier otro lugar donde se vende o consumo bebidas alcohólicas fermentadas o destiladas.
- c). Se prohíbe la contratación a jovencitas menores de edad, ejerciendo actos inmorales o propiciando la prostitución dentro del negocio o atención de los clientes.
- d). Se prohíbe vender y consumo de drogas en las cantinas.
- e). Se prohíbe alto volumen del equipo de música que provoca una contaminación auditiva y molestias a los vecinos cercanos.
- f). Las cantinas, Restaurantes, cervecería, tiendas y ventas de boji, tendrán como horario de funcionamiento: de lunes a sábado de 10:00 am las 19:00 horas pm y los domingos permanecerán cerrados.
- g). Se prohíbe vender bebidas alcohólicas en las tiendas que venden consumo diario, en la cabecera municipal y en las comunidades.
- h). Que se tenga el control de las cantinas, tiendas, cervecerías en las comunidades y en el casco urbano, quienes no tiene licencias autorizadas y serán cerradas inmediatamente su negocio.

- ✓ Las personas que incumpla éste reglamento se harán proceso legal en su contra o aplicar las multas según los artículos 2, 3, 4 de disposiciones reglamentaria para el expendio y consumo de bebidas alcohólicas, fermentadas o destiladas, acuerdo gubernativo 221-2004.
- ✓ i). La Policía Nacional Civil velara por el estricto cumplimiento de las presentes disposiciones adoptando las medidas de orden administrativo y operativo que estimen necesarias.
- ✓ j). La Superintendencia de Administración Tributaria dictar las medidas para el cobro de las multas por la vía administrativa o judicial, así como la cancelación de las patentes, licencia o permiso otorgado.

DE LOS PERMISOS Y LICENCIAS

- k). La manifestación de los líderes y lideresas comunitarias se solicitan a la autoridad municipal y su corporación, no autorizar licencias o permisos para venta de licores del municipio de Chisec.
- l). Se solicita al señor Alcalde municipal por su medio se haga una solicitud a las autoridades de la SAT, para no autorizar licencias o patentes para cantinas del municipio de Chisec.
- ll). Los propietarios de los locales deben evitar alquileres para ventas de licores en el casco urbano y en las áreas rurales del municipio. Posteriormente al culminar con la lectura de dicho reglamento solicita el uso de la palabra la señora Clara Luz Castellanos propietaria de un negocio de bebidas alcohólicas, manifestando su descontento por el horario asignado en dicho reglamento.
 - ✓ Expone otra propietaria de negocios que expenden bebidas alcohólicas de su igual forma manifiesta no estar de acuerdo por el horario asignado manifestando; "nosotros cumplimos con nuestro horario y estamos al día con nuestros arbitrios, varias tiendas también expenden bebidas alcohólicas pero estos no pagan los

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arbitrios que nosotros pagamos y cierran en el horario que estos quieren. Así mismo hay varios negocios que no están registrados incluso de menores de edad que hay de ellos?, después de discutir el reglamento. El señor Alcalde Municipal hace la siguiente pregunta a los presentes; ¿cuántos están de acuerdo que las cantinas cierren a partir de las 10:00 horas de la noche? por lo que ninguno de los presentes responde a dicha pregunta mostrando así su desacuerdo, prosigue haciendo la interrogante ¿Cuántos están de acuerdo que los negocios cierren a las 7:00 de la noche? por lo que el pleno levantan la mano en señal de agrado, habiendo así mayoría de votos por los presentes? De esta forma el señor alcalde municipal expone a los señores propietarios que pueden pasar a la municipalidad a pedir copia de dicho reglamento para tener conocimiento del mismo el cual queda aprobado según su redacción original. Certifíquese y remítase a donde corresponde conste. Ilegibles: Alcalde Municipal, Concejales: Magdilio Bo Coc, Concejales I; Carlos Xol Tiul, Concejales II; Ricardo Tut, Concejales III, trece firmas ilegibles de integrantes del Consejo Comunitario de Desarrollo que conforma el municipio; siete firmas ilegibles y dos huellas digitales de representantes de mujeres de las microrregiones; cinco firmas ilegibles de los representantes de entidades públicas, y privadas, ocho firmas ilegibles de invitados. Certifica y suscribe, Ilegible. Anibal Marroquín García, Secretario Municipal.

Y PARA REMITIR A DONDE CORRESPONDE EXTIENDO, SELLO, Y FIRMO LA PRESENTE CERTIFICACION EN HOJA MEMBRETADA DE LA MUNICIPALIDAD DE LA POBLACION DE CHISEC, DE ALTA VERAPAZ, EL DIA VEINTICINCO DE AGOSTO DE DOS MIL CATORCE.

Anibal Marroquín García
Secretario Municipal

Vo. Bo. Rogelio Cornelio Cal Juárez
Alcalde Municipal

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