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**Reproducing Ladino Dominance:
An Anthropological Study of a
Guatemalan Town**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD
Department of Anthropology
Goldsmiths
University of London
2019

Declaration of Authorship I Kuldip Kaur hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: __Kuldip Kaur _____ Date: 4 October 2018

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First and foremost, I would like to thank my first supervisor, the late Professor Olivia Harris, to whom I owe much of the substance of this thesis. Had Olivia not suggested that I explore my fieldnotes on out-of-wedlock children, surnames and race, this thesis would not be what it is today. I only wish I had finished this thesis for her to read. I will forever be grateful to her for her support and interest in Guatemala's ladinos. I'm just very sorry she never got to read the final product. I'm sorry I never did it in time.

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Abstract

This thesis provides an ethnography of the non-indigenous, provincial middle class of Salamá, the capital of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. It questions the prevalence of the ladino and Indian dichotomy that has characterised Guatemala's ethnic relations for more than a hundred years. It explores the meaning of identity labels among members of three identity groups that constitute Salamá's dominant social and economic sector – *los pueblo/mestizos*, *ladinos puros*, and a local elite, and discusses their identities. Firstly, it addresses Salamateco narratives about who they are in terms of origins and trajectory, exploring what the ethnic category of "ladino" meant to them. Second, it correlates their narratives with historical data to examine why specific events, processes and/or persons are invoked to the detriment of others. Third, it explores how their relationship with indigeneity, both with indigenous peoples around them as well as indigeneity within them, informs practice in relation to marriage, kinship and relatedness and interactions with domestic workers. A focus on narrative, history and practice not only allows for an appreciation of dichotomy – that is, on ladino/Indian relations – but also hierarchy and heterogeneity – namely relations between Salamateco ladinos themselves. This research seeks to contribute to a revitalised anthropological study of dominant groups and to a growing literature on Guatemala's ladinos and on *mestizaje* in Latin America. The thesis contains six ethnographic chapters. Chapter two provides a historical account on the different economic trajectories of Salamá's contemporary middle class and discusses their political affinities over the twentieth century. Chapters three and four attend to *pueblos/mestizos*, chapter five to *los puros*, chapter six to the town's historical planter class, and relations of fluidity that characterise relations between "illegitimate" children and their legitimate kin. The final ethnographic chapter discusses relations between my informants and domestic workers.

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Introduction

This thesis is an ethnography of a Guatemalan provincial town called Salamá, a middle-sized town whose inhabitants predominantly self-identify as “ladino”, which is one of Guatemala’s 24 ethnic groups and has historically taken on the meaning of “non-indigenous”. The thesis discusses the multiple variants and the constant attention to racial distinctions Salamatecos made by addressing the complex manner in which notions about race informed and legitimated their identities and their social relations. Racial categories in Guatemala - as in the rest of Latin America - have always been fluid, malleable, and therefore porous. Salamá’s ladinos presented themselves as “non-indigenous”. Yet, most, if not all, have indigenous “blood” (and/or are of African descent). The historical context of phenotypical ambiguity has led to an impressive investment in the policing of racial boundaries, which is simultaneously compounded by mechanisms to downplay, hide or even deny the “presence” of indigenous (and African) blood. My thesis explores the reasons why and how, through an anthropological focus on narratives of belonging, and identity, and practices of kinship and relatedness. By focussing on Salamateco narratives on “ladinoness” and everyday practices, the thesis will show that local claims about self-identity were rooted particular understandings of history, that they informed marriage practices and sexual relations, and that they were invoked to rationalise and justify practices of inequality. In approaching “race” from the perspective of racial thinking and practices of racism between ladinos themselves and indigenous peoples, and by providing an ethnography on Salamatecos’ identities and their everyday lives, this thesis offers a more nuanced account on Guatemalan ladinos by going beyond previous studies that have focused on ladino racism towards Mayans.

“Ladino” is used to refer to some 58 percent of Guatemala’s 15 million inhabitants who are not “Creole” (its “white” economic and political elite who represent less than two percent of the population) and who are not “indigenous” (some 40 percent) (INE 2013). I will discuss Guatemala’s ethnic divisions, and the different meanings historically attached to the category “ladino” more fully in the following chapter. It is, though, important to note from the outset that after Guatemala’s Independence in 1821, the status of the country’s ladinos underwent a complete inversion. During the colonial period, “ladinos” were a legally ambiguous and marginalised people. Yet within 50 years (1821-1871), ladino economic elites appropriated political space with such effect that after 1871 the Guatemalan state has been a “Ladino state” (Taracena 2003, 44-45). The

heterogeneity of Guatemala's peoples was compressed into two oppositional categories: that of (the dominant) non-Indian "ladino", and that of (the subordinate) "indigenous peoples". Concepts such as "dominant culture", "race/ethnicity" and "nation" became so intertwined with the social category "ladino", that "ladino" increasingly signified "Guatemalan" and vice versa, while the country's majority indigenous peoples became the excluded "Other".

Geographically located in the north-central region of Guatemala, Salamá is the capital and one of eight *municipios* (municipalities) of the Baja Verapaz *departamento* (province) (Map 1). In 2002, its population was 47,274, of which 78 percent self-identified as "ladino" and 22 percent as "Maya-Achi" (INE 2002).

Salamá is not a wealthy town. Most of its residents live in poverty. However, they are not the subject of this study. The thesis focuses on families and individuals who lived primarily in or around the urban area (called the *pueblo*), and who, according to their own accounts, and verified by other Salamatecos, were economically comfortable, and in some cases, extremely wealthy. I discuss below the reasons why I focus on such families.

The thesis explores their narratives of difference, experiences of class and class mobility, who they married and the factors that influenced such decisions, family structures and gender relations, interactions between out-of-wedlock children and their legally recognised kin, as well as relations between middle class employers and domestic workers. The thesis' overriding concern is an exploration of what "non-Indian" meant to my informants, above all because almost all my informants spoke about the existence of indigeneity in their family's past.

Map 1: Baja Verapaz, Guatemala



Source: <http://geology.com/world/guatemala-map.gif>

It concentrates on three broad identity groups, which were locally salient categories deployed by Salamatecos to signal difference between each other.

The first group was composed of individuals belonging to *las familias distinguidas y honorables* (distinguished and honourable families), *de abolengo* (of noble rank), and/or as *las familias principales* (the [town's] leading families). For the sake of brevity, henceforth I refer to its representatives as individuals of the town's elite families. In broad terms, such families represented the region's long-standing planter and business class.

The second group was that of individuals who self-identified with, or were identified as belonging to, the category of *los ladinos del pueblo* (ladinos of the town), and/or *los ladinos mestizos*, which locally meant racially mixed ladinos. Hereafter, I refer to individuals of that group as *los pueblos/mestizos*, and its members were broadly identified with artisanal trade and subsequently the teaching profession.

The third group related to a category of Salamatecos who were locally known as *los ladinos puros*, *los canches* (the whites), *los del sur* (those from the south/southerners), and/or *los del rio Motagua* (those from the River Motagua). Hereafter, I will refer to them as “*puros*” and/or as “southerners”. Historically, most *puro* families had lived in the southern rural region of Salamá, migrating towards the *pueblo* in the late 1950s and 1960s, and were recognised as small to middle sized farmers, dedicated largely to raising cattle.¹

The topics discussed in this thesis, however, were not my initial research questions for those concerned Guatemala's recent armed conflict. Specifically, I went to Salamá to explore the roles ladinos played during the years of state violence and militarisation and their understanding of the conflict. While I do address the political violence, and urban Salamatecos' take on it, it is brief and referred to at times within the context of the other themes, the reasons for which I will now explain.

¹ The above-named categories were by far the most salient, although others existed such as, *originarios de Salamá* (those who had ancestors born in Salamá over several generations), *gente decente* (decent people), *gente de cache* (moneyed people), *gente humilde* (poor people), and *aldeanos* (villagers). It is important to stress that the Salamatecos discussed in this thesis never self-identified as “indigenous”.

Pre-fieldwork Interests

My interaction with Guatemala dates back to 1996, when I first went to the country for a year. After completing a Masters in Latin American Studies, I returned to Guatemala in 1998, and lived in the country until 2001. During those years, I worked intermittently in several indigenous communities, conducting research on the impact of Guatemala's thirty-six-year armed conflict upon the lives of those who survived it.

The conflict officially ended in 1996 but had reached unprecedented levels of violence between 1978 and 1983. During those years, the country's indigenous peoples became the main target of the military's offensives and were murdered in their thousands following an expansion of an extremely fluid definition of who represented the "internal enemy" (see CEH 1999 Vol. I, 183-201, Vol. V, 29). According to the official UN-appointed Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), an estimated 200,000 people were killed during the conflict (CEH 1999 Vol. II, 15), with some 600 indigenous villages destroyed, and over 600 massacres perpetrated, together with the systematic rape of girls and women and the internal and external displacement of over a million people (CEH 1999 Vol. V, 43, 38). To the vindication of victims and survivors, the truth commission concluded that Guatemala's military and state had developed a deliberate policy of "acts of genocide" against specific Maya groups between 1981 and 1983 (CEH 1999 Vol. V, 48-51, Vol. III, 314-423).

One of the Maya groups is the Maya-Achí who reside in Rabinal, a predominantly indigenous municipality that neighbours Salamá. According to the CEH report, between 1980 and 1983, over 20 massacres had been carried out in the municipality, scores of women and girls had been raped, inhabitants had been tortured, countless properties were destroyed, and over 4,000 people (out of a total population of 22,730 inhabitants in 1981) had been murdered and/or disappeared (1999 Vol. III, 360-377).

Between 1996 and 2001, I conducted regular research in Rabinal. I first went to the municipality with the Guatemala City-based NGO, the Organisation for Community Studies and Psychosocial Help (ECAP, its acronym in Spanish), during the pilot stage of a project that continues to this day with victims and survivors of the armed conflict. Subsequently, I conducted fieldwork with Maya-Achí war-widows for my master's dissertation, and later researched the war's impact on local conflict resolution practices,

as well as on grassroots responses to political conflict for a Guatemalan and US research centre. During those years, I often wondered what the ladino population of Rabinal thought about the conflict.

Guatemala's conflict was not ethnic, by which I mean the conflict was not between ladinos and Indians. Indeed, the military high command labelled specific Maya groups as the "internal enemy" only when it was challenged by an increasingly effective armed insurgency in the early 1980s. Nor was it a conflict between a "ladino" military and an "indigenous" guerrilla. The leadership on both sides of the conflict was overwhelmingly ladino, while the indigenous were predominantly the foot soldiers. Furthermore, the military targeted anyone who opposed it, whether they were ladino or Indian. For example, the military responded to *las Fuerzas armadas rebeldes* (Rebel Armed Forces, FAR) presence, a guerrilla faction that operated mainly in the predominantly ladino eastern region (*el oriente*) in the early 1960s, by mobilising over 6,000 soldiers. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 people were killed, the majority of whom were innocent ladino civilians (CEH 1999 Vol. I, 144-145, 168). Indeed, according to the CEH report, the principal perpetrator in the armed conflict was the military, attributing to the Guatemalan state 93 per cent of human rights violations (CEH 1999 Vol. II, 324).

Similarly, indigenous peoples did not exclusively represent the non-combatant opposition to the state. In the 1970s, an impressive popular movement brought together, among others, trade unionists, religious activists, students and academics, judges and lawyers, community leaders and cooperative members, who were Indian and ladino (see Levenson Estrada 1994). The Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC), for example, which went public in 1977, represented a real threat to the state and military by the early 1980s (see Adams 1993, 201; Jonas 1991, 128). Although many of its members were Mayans, CUC was the first national organisation to bring together Indian and ladino peasants (Grandin 1997; Delli Sante 1996). And, while some ladinos were military collaborators, and others joined the guerrilla, at a national level, 17 per cent of fully identified victims of the conflict were also ladino (CEH 1999 Vol. V, 21).

Yet, at the height of the conflict, the military did not target ladinos in the same way it did indigenous peoples. For example, in Rabinal, Maya-Achí represented 99.8 per cent of fully identified victims in the early 1980s, even though at the time ladinos comprised 18 per cent of the town's population. The CEH states,

“The high percentage of victims within the Maya-Achí population shows that the violence in the region did not affect the population equally. It was directed discriminately and primarily against the Maya-Achí. At no moment were Rabinal’s ladinos identified, simply for being ladino, as the insurgent enemy” (1999 Vol. III, 360-62).

The CEH report details the conflict’s historical causes, which it identifies as the inherent consequences of state structures, social inequality, and racism. Simultaneously, it cautions against viewing the conflict as one waged between two warring factions, stressing that such a perspective is:

“not only insufficient but also elusive, since it fails to explain not only the magnitude and significance of the involvement of political parties, economic forces, and the church in the genesis, development and perpetuation of the violence, but also the repeated mobilisations and participations among social sectors who clamoured for social, economic and political change” (CEH 1999 Vol. I, 79-80).

Despite such caution, in the early 2000s there was little scholarly examination on the conduct of ladino peoples in those areas where indigenous peoples had suffered the most, and yet they too had undoubtedly been affected by the conflict. I wondered how Rabinal’s minority ladino population experienced the political violence, and how it understood, justified, and/or rationalised the horrific manner in which the Guatemalan military, and its ‘agents of state’, such as paramilitary groups, conducted themselves. What was the reaction and ideological identification of Rabinal’s ladinos following the military offensives of the early 1980s, when the town was heavily militarised?

Scholarly works to date referred to the historic alliance between ladinos and the state, and to ladino identification, in times of crisis, with the military. Academics pointed out that ladinos were partisans of national culture, and racist towards Indians, and that during the years of acute violence, the military on more than one occasion, took

advantage of local inter-ethnic hostilities.² Yet, the appreciable scholarly literature, above all anthropological, focussed mainly on the conflict's impact upon indigenous peoples.³ In Guatemala City, I had befriended non-indigenous people who worked in human rights. In the rural areas, I interacted almost exclusively with indigenous people, who, as far as I could tell, engaged little with local ladinos except in specific contexts, such as in schools and over economic transactions. In Rabinal, my Maya-Achí contacts rarely spoke about ladinos in the context of the political conflict, understandably concentrating their efforts for legal redress on the military, and local military commissioners and civil patrollers, many who were indigenous, whom they held responsible for human rights violations.

I knew a few ladinos in Rabinal all of whom worked with various NGOs and the Catholic Church, often in solidarity with the Maya-Achí. My initial impression concerning the rest was that they were silent about - and indifferent to - the plight of the Maya-Achí and their mobilisation around cultural and human rights demands. Few participated in commemorations related to specific massacres or involved themselves in the work of local organisations that demanded the exhumation of clandestine cemeteries, or in the construction of war monuments that scatter Rabinal's landscape that serve to preserve the memory of the dead. Moreover, the few ladinos with whom I conversed explained that Rabinal's ladinos, in general, had distorted notions about who the casualties of the conflict were, and whom they held responsible. Also, I was forewarned that I would probably be given short-shrift if I addressed the conflict with them since most felt they had committed no crime, and thus, had nothing to expiate. Nevertheless, given that understandings and memories of political violence create a

² By way of example, Warren writes that the war intensified ethnic distrust. Guerrilla groups targeted ladino landowners, while indigenous people, "assumed that military officers would automatically side with those who were identified as members of the national culture - that is, with the ladinos" (1998, 87). Wilson, whose ethnography is on a semi-urban K'ekch'í community in Alta Verapaz, writes "ladino economic and political hegemony is resented and seen as ultimately based on deceit and skulduggery [among urban indigenists]" (1995, 279). Zur, who conducted ethnographic research in a town in El Quiché, says, "ladinos abuse Indians physically and verbally, calling them 'dirty' and 'stupid'", arguing that ladino racism, "enabled the ladino military machine, like the conquistadores before them, to commit violence on Indian populations" (1998, 35). The CEH report also offers several examples of accrued tensions between Indians and ladinos. In Rabinal, for instance, the report notes that the political conflict exacerbated already existent conflicts between ladino and indigenous communities, "which facilitated the violence against the Maya-Achí", such as when ladinos from two villages denounced and then turned over their Maya-Achí neighbours to the military. The military thanked the ladino villagers by giving them permission to ransack the indigenous village (1999 Vol. III, 366-367).

³ The studies are far too numerous to list completely. For works on the impact of and responses to state violence see Carmack (1988), Green (1993), Stoll (1993), Falla (1994), Zur (1998), Manz (2004); Sanford (2003) for human rights and genocide in indigenous communities; and Schirmer (1998) for an analysis of the Guatemalan military.

plurality of discourses (Nordstrom and Martin 1992; Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Das et al, 2000; Halbwach, 1980), what was the contribution, if any, of Rabinal's ladinos to the "politics of memory"? I wanted to understand what an attitude of "indifference" signified, and why, above all, did ladinos in heavily affected indigenous areas view the conflict as one that did not concern them.

Knowing that my previous work in Rabinal may have hindered efforts to establish relations with its ladinos, I chose Salamá for fieldwork, a town I knew little about, but which was appealing for several reasons. Salamá is a predominantly ladino town which emerged largely unscathed by the political violence. In Volume VIII of the CEH report, the record of those killed in Baja Verapaz concerns mainly Maya-Achís from Rabinal, suggesting that Salamá's civilian ladinos were of no interest to the military or the guerrilla (1999 Vol. III, 138-167). Yet it is contiguous with Rabinal, and in 1983, the military set up a military zone on the outskirts of the town centre.

During the first few weeks of fieldwork in Salamá, I refrained from posing questions directly related to the armed conflict. My previous work in Guatemala had taught me of the need to build trust with locals if they were to share their experiences of the 1980s given the sensitive nature of the conflict. Yet, many Salamatecos had already made the assumption that I was in Guatemala to research the conflict, and locals regularly brought up the subject with ease. Admittedly, the subject was often displaced onto Rabinal. My landlady's cousin, by way of example, insisted I live in Rabinal, and not, as she believed, commute from Salamá. Others enquired if, as a student of anthropology, I was involved in the exhumation of clandestine cemeteries. Many Salamatecos understood "anthropology" to mean "forensic anthropology", teams of which frequently traipsed through their town on their way to Rabinal, and I was often asked when I intended to join them.

Others mentioned the conflict in a fleeting but unnerving manner, such as when an older Salamateco, whose family I had just met, halted me in the street under the pretext that he wanted to lend me a book. Although I had not broached the subject of the conflict with his family, the man warned me that any account of the political violence had to take into account that "it was a war", and that "there were two sides fighting". On another occasion, while shifting through the archives in the governor's office (see below), one of the province's *diputados* (members of Congress) told me to leave "history

where it is, in the past”, because, “no one wants to know about the war anymore, leave it alone”. Several Salamatecos spoke about the conflict like Rabinal’s ladinos. One person, for example, recalled a general indifference (*indiferencia*) among his townsfolk towards the military’s attacks on Indians in neighbouring *municipios*.

Some individuals recalled that they felt “traumatised”, and “terrorised”. They pointed out that people in the 1980s, “lived in fear”. Yet, when I enquired about this state of terror, I was told, “nothing much happened” in the town, because one “lived in shadow of the violence” (*en la sombra de la violencia*), with “the exception of a few selective killings”. An ex-governor of the province, who later also became a key informant, stated that Salamá, “*no se vió afectado*” (was not affected), in contrast to its neighbours like Rabinal and Cubulco, where it was “*más cruda*” (more intense). He stressed:

“Salamatecos saw the violence but not through the eyes of Rabinal’s Indians...we didn’t live it with the same soul as *los indígenas*, we never lost our loved ones like those in Rabinal. Here, there wasn’t much in the way of violence that affected our society”.

Sometimes, I would cautiously advance the conversation but most Salamatecos were reluctant to elaborate. When I mentioned this observation to the person who had helped me establish contact with the current governor to ask permission to work in her office’s archives, he said it was because Salamatecos had me “*bien ubicada*”, in other words, that they had me “well placed”, and that they were suspicious of my motives. Equally, however, it was probably, he mentioned, because most Salamatecos simply had little to say about the violence. After all, it had not affected them.

Then I had two conversations that revealed to me that some people were willing to talk about the conflict, some in detail, and even expected me to write about it, but first I had to learn to ask the right questions. The first exchange was with a doctor in his late 60s who had been tasked with carrying out dozens of autopsies on the dead from Rabinal in the early 1980s. After a medical consultation, he asked if I was in Salamá to research the political violence. I mentioned my interest in Salamatecos’ views on the military’s treatment of Rabinal’s Maya-Achí during the 1980s. The doctor brushed aside my interest, irritated that researchers of both the REMHI and CEH truth commissions had

by-passed Salamá completely, soliciting testimonies only from Rabinal.⁴ He asked if I had met the man employed as governor during the acute years of violence, and if others had named him as a collaborator of the military in the 1980s, attributing to him responsibility for certain deaths. When I responded in the affirmative, the doctor asked, “and what do you think? Is he guilty?” Though I had only been in Salamá a few weeks, several Salamatecos had mentioned, albeit fleetingly, that the ex-governor had been the “brains behind” (*el artífice*) a paramilitary group that operated in the town in the early 1980s. Still, I had no answer for the doctor. He probed again, “but if ‘they’ told you he was guilty, would you believe them?” I responded, “well, I guess it would depend on what I was told”, to which he responded, by slamming his hand on the table, “that is not the answer I was expecting”.

He explained that many Salamatecos were simply “indifferent” to the conflict, while others were very vocal in demonstrating their support for the military, but the townsfolk by and large, whether they were indifferent or not, or whether they condemned or condoned the military’s actions, feared the guerrilla and indigenous involvement with the guerrilla. He derided the position of many Salamatecos who, years later, sought to distance themselves from an identification with the military, “conveniently remembering” the era differently. He stressed, Salamatecos were wrong to be silent or fearful of their political affiliations during that era because those positions reflected “something true about Salamá” (although the doctor was not a native of Salamá himself). He described Salamatecos as “good, honest, hard-working people” and informed me that he wanted me to interview him. However, he pointed out that his contribution would happen only on the condition that I were “telling the truth” (*si usted nos dice la verdad*) about being from an “honest” university, which would become apparent in my ability to treat Salamatecos as worthy subjects on their own terms, and not in relation to indigenous people. He then underlined that a starting point for any analysis was to understand Salamá as a profoundly “conservative, Catholic, militaristic and peaceful town”.

⁴ In addition to the CEH commission, the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHAG, its acronym in Spanish) launched its own project, *The Recovery of Historical Memory Project* (REMHI, its acronym in Spanish) in 1995. ODHAG presented *Guatemala: Nunca Más* on 24 April 1998, while the CEH presented *Guatemala, Memoria del Silencio* on 25 February 1999 (ODHAG 1998; CEH 1999).

The second conversation was a heated exchange with a man called Diego, who was in his mid-40s and with whose family I spent much time in Salamá. Before meeting Diego, I had learned that the paramilitary group operating in the town in the early 1980s had forced him to leave the country, because of his affinities with leftist politics. Diego had returned to Guatemala in the mid-1990s. As the ex-governor's neighbour, Diego often saw me visiting him, and asked why. In response to my answer about discussing Salamá's history with the ex-governor, he responded scathingly, "what truth will he tell you, hiding in his house afraid to confront what he did?" Diego, however, refused to divulge more, stating I had to ask the governor himself.

I decided to ask Diego about the indifference towards the violence against Rabinal's Achí peoples. To my surprise, Diego rebuked me, accusing me of wanting to label Salamatecos as "racist". Angrily, he accused me of being "another foreigner" who was only interested in indigenous peoples. Diego emphasised he had no interest in discussing Salamatecos' attitudes towards their indigenous neighbours, pointing out that if I were interested in Rabinal's indigenous population, I was in the wrong town. He acknowledged that the military had targeted the indigenous peoples, but that that was hardly a new fact, and therefore, my questions were redundant. He pointed out that Salamatecos have always been a profoundly conservative people, but equally brushed it aside, stating that an alliance with the military was in itself also not surprising. Diego's concern was with the ex-members of the paramilitary group, and he told me that he expected me to engage with Salamatecos who had been directly involved in the conflict. It was, he said, my "task to expose them, say what you feel you have to, it's about time someone addressed it".

On the one hand, the doctor was insisting that I treat seriously Salamá's right-wing politics, while Diego was insisting that I expose the conduct of the paramilitary group of the 1980s. The two were obviously connected, referring as they do to the political conflict but despite fleeting references to the violence, no one, other than the doctor, at that time talked in detail. Indeed, it would take many more months before certain Salamatecos spoke at length about the conflict. In the meantime, I paid heed to the doctor's instruction to treat Salamatecos as "subjects on their own terms". Although, this thesis is not focussed on Salamá's Catholicism, conservatism or its military history, it does reflect on how these qualifiers are potent symbols of Salamateco ladinos' connections, identifications and disassociations, sometimes "strategic", with their past,

present, the state and indigenous people, together with other themes that now represent the core of the thesis.⁵ The political violence and Salamateco views on it are addressed, but they are called upon to testify to ladinos' self-understanding of their social and racial position and relations with both the state and indigenous peoples. In other words, the political violence now represents a secondary status in this thesis, called upon to make a point or argument rather than discussed separately.

The Thesis' Key Themes

In the early months of settling into Salamá, two features about the way in which Salamatecos saw themselves as “ladinos” immediately caught my attention, which led to a shift in my research questions. The first related to how Salamatecos were unsure about who should be the subject of my research, if it were not to be, as many assumed, Rabinal's indigenous peoples, the reason being that most Salamatecos understood anthropology, in addition to forensic anthropology, to be the study of “customs” and “folklore”, and to them Rabinal had a healthy supply of both. Explaining to locals that I had hoped that “they” would be the subjects of my research often led to bewilderment, surprise and even bemusement, such as the time when my landlady responded to my presence asking, “and your university sent you to Salamá? How bizarre!” (*!Qué raro!*) Others, upon learning about my interest in “Salamá's ladinos”, sent me elsewhere. One person said, “yes, yes, we have ladinos, only we call them *aldeanos*” (villagers), and suggested several villages that were close to the town centre that I could visit. A local historian who also later became a key informant, told me to go to San Jerónimo, Salamá's neighbouring town, where, he informed me, a museum detailed the history of the town's people, who were “ladinos” but of “African ancestry”.

On another occasion, a schoolteacher named Brígido informed me that if I wanted to research “ladinos” then I needed to be in southern Salamá, not in the town centre. He explained that Southern Salamatecos were “the real ladinos” (*los ladinos de verdad*), because they were direct descendants of Spaniards, making them the “authentic ladinos”, and offered to introduce me to some teachers employed in the south so to

⁵ I have found useful Hall's “common sense language” of “identification”. According to Hall this identification, “is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation”. Hall, however, is against the “naturalism of this ‘definition’”, arguing that “identification” is a “construction, a process never completed – always ‘in process’” (1996, 2).

gain access to the residents of the area. Confused, I asked Brígido if my use of “ladino” was incorrect. Did he self-identify as “ladino”? Did he consider himself a direct descendant of Spaniards, or did he identify with some other category? Brígido stated he was “most definitely ladino”, only that, he clarified, he was also “*algo mestizo*” (somewhat mixed), explaining that he had some indigenous ancestry. According to him, most of the Salamatecos I had befriended thus far were also “*algo mestizo*”, but he warned me not to ask them directly if they were “ladino” lest I offend them. He explained, “if someone says he’s ladino but looks Indian, he’ll get angry because for him it’s still very evident – he still lives it, he’s still not well defined” (*no ésta bien definido*).

The second feature, related to the first, concerned two items of information that I had found in the first few weeks of being in Salamá. The first was an article in a local newspaper called *Mi Terruño* (My Land) from 1995. Its author, Walter Boteo, a Salamateco, referenced an event that had occurred in Salamá in the late nineteenth century whereby Salamá’s “Indian” inhabitants had been obliged to convert to the “ladino” category. In the article, Boteo mentioned his source, a Hugo Conde Prera, who was in his mid-60s and whom I had already met. The second item related to census figures, which I had come across in an extremely dilapidated archive in the governor’s office while undertaking archival research. Salamá today is a predominantly ladino town, but according to census figures, before 1950, more Salamatecos had been categorised as “Indian” than as “ladino”.

With both items in hand, I turned to Don Hugo to ask why had Salamá’s indigenous population left the town. To my surprise, he stated that they had not. Instead, revelling in my astonishment, he explained that the ancestors of Salamá’s ladinos were Indian. He added, as Brígido had intimated, very few locals would admit it while many younger Salamatecos simply would have no knowledge of it. The archival material and article, Don Hugo’s revelation, and the early confusion among Salamatecos concerning who were the “ladinos” in their midst prompted me to delve further into the town’s ethnic composition historically and into how Salamatecos understood their identities and history.

First, it became evident that Salamatecos expressed multiple meanings of “ladino” that were historically rooted and materially informed. Some offered accounts on local history that went as far back as the Conquest, with narratives of processes of assimilation

and/or civilisation. Others spoke about “salient ancestors”, with explanations turning on accounts of racial superiority. Yet others spoke about being “pure Catholics”. Their descriptions related to narratives of “racial purity”. Indeed, Salamateco accounts of identity exposed an array of racial thinking from sixteenth century notions of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood), nineteenth century Lamarckian racial ideas, late nineteenth century notions of “hard inheritance” espoused by scientific racism, and what scholars call today “cultural racism” (see next chapter).

Secondly, their accounts exposed an ambiguous relationship with indigeneity with efforts that sought to ensure and protect “racial purity”, to minimise the effects of “racial mixture” and/or to hide, downplay or even deny their own indigeneity. The invocation of “salient ancestors”, discourses of racial purity and/or mixture, as well as marriage practices, the choice of spousal partners, the micro-policing of boundaries, the control of female sexuality, “passing”, the guarded protection of surnames, and the denial of specific indigenous ancestors, were all, mechanisms, I argue, deployed over generations to distance themselves from indigenous peoples.

Thirdly, while all the people I met were middle class and all identified with the ethnic marker “ladino”, they each endowed the label with different qualities in terms of social origin, historical trajectory, and economic circumstance. Some families spoke about poverty in the past. The males in the families worked as artisans in the urban area, while females worked in small shops and ran cafés. After 1950, access to education allowed this small artisan population to experience upward mobility as males and females increasingly acquired an education and began to occupy, and dominate, positions in schools and local government. Other families only became urban in recent decades, and experienced upward mobility mainly after 1980. They had been smallholding-farming families who resided in the southern regions of Salamá for more than 200 years, migrating to the urban area or its environs after 1960. On the other hand, I met families who were the province’s historically constituted landowning and business elite.

Younger family members (between the ages of 30 and 50) socialised, competed for the same jobs, and adopted similar lifestyles. Notwithstanding many internal differentiations, for the most part they treated each other as equals, in social, if not always in economic terms. Even the historic planter families saw themselves as middle class, having witnessed their own economic decline in recent decades. Yet, for most of

the twentieth century, many described Salamá as a “well-defined”, almost caste-like, society of “two-classes”. As one person stated, on the one hand, there were *familias pudientes* (powerful families), who were Salamá’s elite families, and on the other, *familias humildes* (humble/poor families), represented by artisans and peasants. While acknowledging there existed differences between artisans and peasants, namely that the former were urban and the latter rural, he depicted Salamá as a society divided between an elite class that enjoyed wealth and social status, and peasants and artisans, who did not.

Therefore, I was surprised to learn that despite the diverse trajectories, most of the families were biologically related. The connections became apparent through accounts on out-of-wedlock births. In fact, of the many Salamatecos I met each had been either born illegitimate, born to an illegitimate person, had an illegitimate child, or at least recognised the existence of an out-of-wedlock child/brother/sister in his or her family. Interestingly, accounts on or by illegitimate children exposed an important mechanism through which Salamatecos conceal indigeneity and mark kinship: the manifold workings of a surname.

Fourth, discussions on or with out-of-wedlock children revealed a remarkable fluidity that characterised Salamateco relations, which was often intimate in nature. Salamatecos accounts of illegitimate children bore a striking resemblance to how they spoke about and treated domestic workers. While racial ideologies were invoked to justify and naturalise hierarchies, and to regulate marriage patterns and kinship, the interactions between wealthy and poor Salamatecos led to multiple practices of relatedness. I observed relations between illegitimate children and their legitimate kin. I learned of fathers who had legally recognised their offspring born to their lover, and of cases where biological fathers initially denied their illegitimate children legal recognition but offered it later in life. I listened to the resentment of the descendants of illegitimate children who disparaged the rejection by their biological father’s “legitimate family”. Similarly, I observed work relations between domestic workers and their bosses. Bosses spoke with pride about their generosity, such as assisting in the upbringing of their domestic worker’s child(ren). I learned of two cases in which the domestic worker’s child grew up believing their biological mother to be their ‘servant’, because the employer had adopted them. Domestic workers spoke of their relationship with their employers in terms of gratitude. Some expressed greater loyalty to their *patrona* than to

their mother. Although I also heard stories of women who had been raped (by their *patrón* or a son).

The cases were not unusual. The large numbers of out-of-wedlock children, the presence of domestic workers, and the dense relations in which they were embedded, exposed patterns of gendered relations entrenched in the historical construction of racial and class hierarchies. Salamateco narratives and experiences of kinship offered a view into this locally stratified society, revealing patterns of inclusion and exclusion in terms of who was “the family”, which woman was to be the “wife” or the “lover”, which illegitimate child would be incorporated, and, legally recognised, which would be rejected and forgotten and, above all, according to what criteria. They also made me aware of how the study of a town like Salamá, and its non-Indian peoples, can show how racial ideas are themselves the historical accumulation of practices brought about through contact, interaction, and justification of domination located in the “original” moment of Conquest and the encounter between indigenous peoples, Spaniards and Africans. This thesis does not assume that these ideas are simply a continuation of uninterrupted ideas since the time of Conquest. It does argue, however, that their accumulation, together with the critical role played by the Guatemalan State, particularly in the construction of the ladino/Indian bipolarity at the end of the nineteenth century, discussed in the next chapter, has allowed such ideas to thrive, despite the mutations they have undergone over time.

It was also unnecessary to travel further afield to make such enquiries. As my fieldwork progressed, through the process of interviews, chance encounters, social events, and lengthy informal conversations, I became aware of the dense complexity of Salamateco identities, both historically and contemporaneously, mainly through conversations on family histories, among the many Salamatecos whom I had befriended in the urban area and its surroundings.

My attention, effectively, was drawn to narratives of belonging and history, and practices of kinship and relatedness, an examination of which, this thesis will show, inform Salamateco notions of personhood. Indeed, although the thesis considers violence that relates to hostile force, and “hegemonic crises”, it is more concerned with the “quiet everyday forms of violence”. It addresses those forms of racism based on intimacies and hierarchies, which the sociologist Mary Jackman forcefully argues is another form of

exploitation of one group by another, but which is buttressed more effectively by sweet persuasion (1994).

Introducing Salamá

The urban area, from where I carried out most of my fieldwork, comprises nine districts (*barrios*). *Barrio el centro* (the Central District) was relatively small; one could walk from North to South and East to West within an hour. Located in this hub were the municipality's commercial and economic sector, its large market of Sundays and Thursdays, a mosaic of shops, and several large supermarkets, together with state, non-governmental, church and banking institutions. Surrounding the nine districts was an ever-increasing chaotic sprawl as the urban area expanded into Salamá's rural hinterland, which included some 35 villages and 71 hamlets.

According to Salamatecos, since the early 1990s their town had undergone a dramatic "modernisation", attracting an in-migration of many outsiders in search of work, education, or to set up a business. Before 1995, only one primary school operated in the town centre (although several others functioned in rural villages). There were two secondary schools, of which only one offered vocational training. After 1995, three additional (private) schools began to provide secondary education and the *diversificado* (vocational training courses). Also, three national university campuses – of the state-run San Carlos University, and the privately-owned Mariano Gálvez and Galileo Universities – provided weekend and evening classes in subjects such as law, information technology and business studies. Five petrol stations operated in the town, and Salamá had its own local television channel, which began transmitting programmes throughout the province in the mid-1990s.

The town had always been characterised by "people flow". As we will see in later chapters, during the colonial period, Salamá was a place of flight. After Independence from Spain in 1821, Salamá supplanted Cobán as capital of the Verapaz region. When Baja Verapaz became an independent province in 1877, Salamá became its capital. The town centre has historically been home to outsiders, particularly state officials. In recent decades, the presence of bureaucrats and administrators had increased due to the booming economy, its legal institutions, NGOs and banking services, almost all of which were located in the town centre.

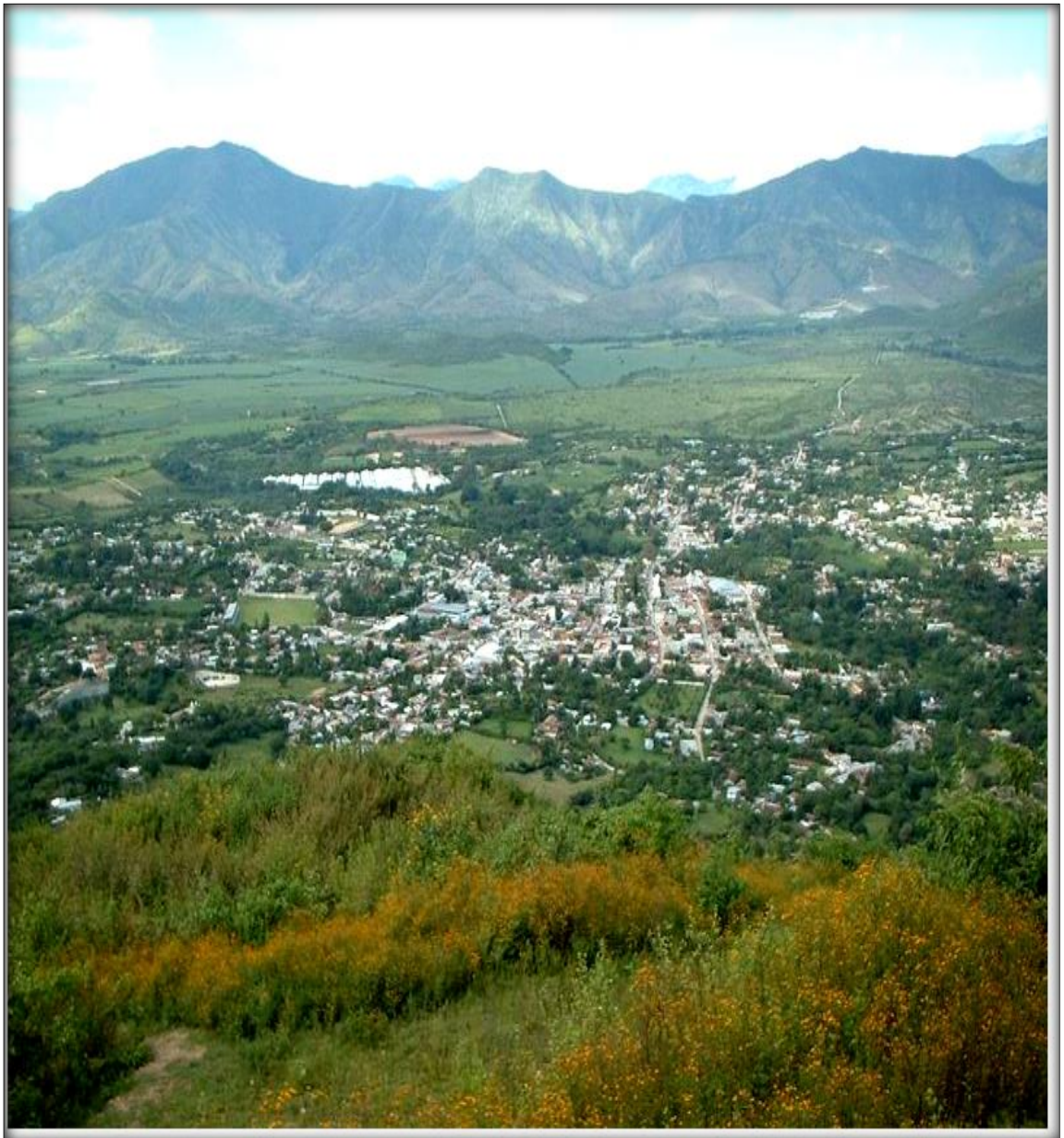
Over a period of 20 years, the urban population had increased threefold: from 6,941 in 1981 to 18,080 in 2002 (DGE 1981; INE 2003). In addition, many people lived in Salamá on a regular basis but resided elsewhere; several lawyers who worked in Salamá during the week and returned home at weekends also occupied the house where I lodged. Of course, many Salamatecos lived in poverty.⁶ They, however, are not the focus of this study, which, as indicated above, concentrates on families who could afford to eat in the town's many restaurants, send their children to the private schools, attend university, own the petrol and television stations, hire others to work for them, and drive around in 4x4 cars.

I chose the urban centre because its population lived near to the military zone in the 1980s. The thesis' focus on middle class Salamatecos, however, was not deliberate, but instead a consequence of the methods I had employed. In my first month in Salamá, I found lodgings in a house in *barrio el Centro* with the help of Doña Roberta, whom I had met in Guatemala City, where she worked as a domestic worker for a family I knew.⁷ Doña Roberta also introduced me to some of her neighbours, two of whom were the sisters, Isabel and Verónica Samayoa. Instructed by Doña Roberta to welcome me to Salamá, Isabel and Verónica, both in their late 20s, swiftly introduced me to their parents and extended family, most of whom lived in the villages, La Concepción and Cachil, some 20 minutes from urban Salamá by car, and in San José, another of the urban area's nine *barrios*.

⁶ A study commissioned by Salamá's municipal office revealed that many Salamatecos, urban and rural, ladino and Indian, live in poverty. The study divided Salamá into three geographical zones: Central, Northern, and Southern. In the Central Zone, out of 19 communities, the inhabitants of four lived in extreme poverty and 15 in poverty. In the Northern Zone, out of 14 communities, the inhabitants of eight lived in extreme poverty while the remaining six in poverty. In the Southern Zone, of 40 communities, the inhabitants of 16 lived in extreme poverty and 24 in poverty (Municipio de Salamá 2003, 39-44). The data was based on the following criteria: earnings of less than 335 quetzals a fortnight (less than 20-25 quetzals a day [¢1.30-¢1.65]); no fixed employment throughout the year; two or less meals a day; lack of attendance in schools; and illiteracy (ibid, 18).

⁷ I refer to Salamatecos with "Doña" for a female, and "Don" for a male, according to the terms of respect I encountered in the field. I rarely used the honorific title with persons younger than 50 years of age but always did with those who were older, unless they specifically asked me not to.

Photo 1: Valley of Salamá



Source: courtesy of <http://www.comitelocal.org/salama/>

In an urban location, I was aware that the anthropological method of “hanging out”, immersed in the life of any one family would be difficult. I arrived in Salamá with alternative methods, one being to participate or offer my services in the *magisterio* (teacher training classes) at the *Escuela Normal* (Normal School, locally referred to as *La Normal*). I knew that ladinos of provincial towns were renowned for occupying the teaching profession, and I believed a presence at *La Normal* would put me in contact with students and teachers. Verónica also suggested that I offer English classes at the

Galileo University's campus in Salamá, whose students were required to sit an exam in English for their degree in Business Studies.

I had asked Doña Roberta if she knew any schoolteachers at *La Normal* and she promptly introduced me to Brígido Soto, who taught the “History of Education” class to *magisterio* students, that is to those learning to become teachers. He agreed to my assisting his classes three afternoons per week, which I did for some six months. Having established contact with the convenor of the degree at the Galileo campus through Verónica, who was also a student at the campus, I gave English lessons to four classes of university students on Saturday mornings, also for some six months. The students attending the *magisterio* were over the age of 16, and those at the Galileo ranged between 25 and 45. The agreement with both local authorities granting permission was that in exchange for assistance at *La Normal*, and English lessons at the Galileo, I could ask students questions related to ladino identity and I had hoped to explore attitudes towards Maya mobilisation, and practices of racism. My intentions, however, did not materialise, mainly because the students were busy. Yet through those interactions, I became acquainted with Salamatecos who became friends and discussants in my research, and who introduced me to their families and friends.

In addition, I decided that until I befriended more Salamatecos I would conduct, during the remaining weekdays, preliminary archival work (in an extremely ramshackle archive) in the offices of *La Gobernación*, the administrative office for the region. Fortunately, I became acquainted with several employees, in particular Leonel Herrera. Like everyone I met in those early days, Leonel enquired about my presence and interest in Salamá. Introducing myself as a university graduate interested in “Salamateco history”, Leonel decided that I should meet the town's historians, or older Salamatecos. He introduced me to Dr Arriola, who was not Salamateco but had practised medicine in the town for more than 40 years; Don Oliverio Gularte, whom Leonel explained belonged to the one of the town's prominent elite families; and Don Benjamín Ramos, recognised as one of town's foremost historians. Like others I met in the first few months, Leonel described Salamá as “a very conservative” town. He insisted I obtain a different perspective from those who were more “liberal” in their politics, and introduced me to a group of his friends who were involved in the promotion of the town's culture and art. Through this network of friends, mainly between the ages of 30 and 55, I met the Hernández siblings (four brothers and a sister), between the ages of 42 and 60, their respective partners, and

children. Also, I met individuals, like Guillermo López Pérez, who had recently finished employment as director of a region-wide developmental project, and Erwin Bendfeldt, who had set up his own environmental NGO which attended to the region's "protected zones".

Within the first three months, I had befriended an array of Salamatecos, almost all of whom were middle class. Interaction with students and teachers at *La Normal* and the Galileo campus, as well as meeting people in the Governor's Office, naturally put me in contact with the town's more affluent sectors. I continued to focus on this stratum of society not only because they were the Salamatecos I initially met but also because, fortuitously, many belonged to families who had resided in or around the urban area since before the 1950s. Even those families who had settled in/around Salamá sometime after 1950, like Isabel and Verónica's extensive family, had a long history of residence in the municipality itself.

Methodology

Fieldwork took place between April 2003 and December 2004, primarily in Salamá's urban centre. My methods and enquiries ultimately led me to families who had been in the area for at least three generations. They represent the majority voice in this thesis. In addition, I have incorporated the views of people who, while not Salamateco, have lived in the town for several decades, and a number of people who live in San Jerónimo, which neighbours Salamá. Many younger affluent Salamatecos resided in San Jerónimo, as well as members of the town's long-standing wealthy families.

In addition to the assistance in *La Escuela Normal* and offering English classes at the Galileo University campus, I carried out 33 interviews with key informants, 16 of which were life histories and the rest semi-structured interviews. The life histories varied in time. Some developed over the entire time I was in Salamá, at times totalling more than 15 hours of recorded interview. Others were between three and five hours. The semi-structured interviews with key informants followed a similar pattern. Some finished within an hour whereas others were spread over several hours. The interviews covered themes such as the political violence, notions of race, how Salamatecos understood the social category "ladino", and family histories. I recorded all but one interview, and the majority were transcribed. As mentioned above, most of the people I knew lived in or

around the urban centre, while others resided in San Jerónimo. I often travelled from the town centre to several villages and San Jerónimo to carry out interviews, and at times remained with the family for several days.

I spent almost every morning in the governor's office working on the archives from Monday to Friday. However, "this working" initially involved the herculean task of sorting out the archives. The archives had been dumped in a corner of the governor's office building, where, exposed to rain, they had begun to rot. Working on the archives began after a lengthy process of attempting to recover the files, clean them, and then place them in some chronological order, which I did with the assistance of Vilma González Milán. I did not train as a historian, and accumulated many notes, even scanning hundreds of files, which upon return to England appeared as chaotic as the state in which I had found them. Hence, here I only use information from the archives for discrete illustration. In addition to the fieldwork in Salamá I spent two months, one prior to arriving in Salamá and another after I had left, in the Central American General Archives (AGCA) in Guatemala City in order to supplement the information I had obtained in Salamá.

A Note on Terminology and the use of anonymity

In this thesis, I use "indigenous peoples", "Indians", and "Maya" interchangeably. Salamatecos used *indígena* (indigenous), *indio* (Indian), *natural* (natural), *nativo* (native), and Maya, and the choice of one over the other often depended on the context. In broad terms, I observed that the use of *indígena* had become more favourable, particularly in a post-conflict society, to *indio*, a term used pejoratively to describe the country's indigenous peoples historically. "Maya", on the other hand, has emerged in recent decades within the context of the Maya movement (see next chapter). Salamatecos rarely used the term.

Concerning themselves, some Salamatecos acknowledged the presence of "Indian" ancestors in their narratives of self-identity. However, as will become clear in subsequent chapters, those ancestors, according to my informants, were not the Maya-Achí, Baja Verapaz's indigenous peoples. Indeed, for my informants, there was a distinct difference between "*indio*", a category that belonged to their past, and "*indígena*", a category that did not.

In addition, it is difficult to assert whether the conceptual labels that Salamatecos offered me form part of everyday local parlance; each group mentioned the marker in order to distinguish itself from the other *when* speaking to me. Some members, particularly those who were labelled *ladino puro* or *ladino mestizo*, believed the distinctions to be irrelevant, in light of recent changes in local marriage practices between their two groups. Others believed the categorisations to be inappropriate. For example, one informant whose parents migrated from Salamá's southern area in the 1960s and who would be described as a *ladina pura* told me "today, I don't think anyone can really talk about purity. We all know that *mestizaje* (that is, racial and cultural mixture), occurred in Guatemala. My education has allowed me to understand this. I'm not a *ladina pura*, I'm a *ladina mestiza*". *Ladinos puros*, however, have been accused of producing inbred offspring. Her mother, who was embarrassed by this phenomenon, thereby encouraging her children not to marry *ladinos puros* from the South, mentioned she preferred to be considered Salamateca rather than *ladina pura*. *Ladinos mestizos*, on the other hand, just wanted to be called ladino for the reason that *mestizo* signalled racial mixture with indigenous peoples.

Concerning the issue of anonymity in this thesis, I have decided to maintain the real first and last name of my discussant, if the information was gleaned from a secondary source, such as details about landholdings that were affected by the Agrarian Reform (see Appendix II). In addition, much information about family births, marriages and deaths were gathered from the *International Genealogical Index* (hereafter IGI), which I consulted to corroborate my discussants' observations or to complement them.⁸ They have not been anonymised. Most of my informants gave me express permission to name them. However, given the sensitivity of some themes addressed in the thesis, I have decided to maintain the anonymity of many, and when I do, I mention that the person's name is fictional.

Thesis Organisation

In Chapter One, I present the central concepts and related theoretical orientations that underpin my empirical research, drawing out their significance within anthropology more broadly, while also explaining why I prioritise the category "race" over "ethnicity".

⁸ *International Genealogical Index* IGI at <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>. I refer to the IGI throughout the thesis, which I accessed between May and July 2007.

Chapter Two provides an outline of the dissimilar economic trajectories of the three groups with the aim to contextualise the main subject of my study: Salamá's ladinos of the mid-twentieth to early-twenty-first century. It also addresses their political affinities over the twentieth century. For the most part the chapter is descriptive.

Chapters Three to Six address what "ladino" signified to Salamatecos. Chapters Three and Four concentrate on *pueblo/mestizos* and their understandings of ladinoness, addressing in particular who was the "Indian" in their narratives of identity and how they spoke about "racial mixture", by focussing on the importance of surnames, specifically on how they functioned as markers of kinship and how they were deployed to conceal fluid processes of biological mixture.

In Chapter Five I focus on *puros*/Southerners, who were smallholding farming families from the southern rural regions of Salamá, who migrated to the urban areas in greater numbers after the 1950s.

In Chapter Six I discuss Salamá's historical planter and business provincial elite and their accounts of race and blood, while also attending to a social fluidity that characterised Salamateco society through a focus on relations between out-of-wedlock children and their "legitimate" kin.

Chapter Seven addresses the nature of entangled hierarchies in Salamá through a focus on relations between domestic workers and their employers, describing relations of intimacy between the three groups, as well as with Salamá's poorer classes.

Chapter Eight provides a conclusion to the work as a whole.

Chapter One

Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations

This chapter considers the conceptual and theoretical literature that underpins and informs the ethnography in the following chapters. It also outlines the principle arguments of the thesis. The chapter's primary focus is to explain why I prioritise the concept of "race", when the Guatemalan state, over the nineteenth century, sought to divest the category of "ladino" from its racial connotations from the colonial period, and when anthropologists in the twentieth century advocated its displacement in firm favour of "ethnicity".

The category of "ladino" is Guatemala's dominant ethnic category not because of ladinos' numerical significance but because of ladino socio-economic and political dominance. The first section below delineates the trajectory of the concept, from a category that once was applied as an adjective to one that became an ethnic classification. It also details why Guatemala retained the category "ladino" when other Latin American countries opted for "*mestizo*", explaining how "ladino", which was one among several categories used to label Guatemala's late colonial peoples of mixed descent, became synonymous with the category of "non-Indian" by the end of the nineteenth century, with a discussion about why anthropologists by the mid-twentieth century argued for the displacement of the category of "race" in favour of "ethnicity". I then discuss why scholars began to seek its reinstatement in analyses of relations between Indians and ladinos in Guatemala. Finally, I detail why I have prioritised "race" over "ethnicity" in this thesis, discussing the works of several anthropologists – foreign and Guatemalan – whose writings have influenced the present study, which seeks to make a contribution to the ongoing scholarly debate.

The Construction of "Ladino" as "Non-Indian"

Guatemala, like Latin America generally, has a large population that is culturally and racially mixed, a phenomenon that has its roots in the early days of Conquest. According to Morner, "no part of the world has ever witnessed such a gigantic mixing of races as the one that has taken place in Latin America [and the Caribbean] since 1492" (1967, 1), which Harris contends, has given the region its "uniqueness as a postcolonial population" (2008, 279). In Guatemala, the mixing includes indigenous

peoples, and peoples from other continents such as Europe, Asia and Africa, and yet a *mestizaje* discourse, which celebrates and promotes a racially and culturally mixed identity has historically been absent.

Although Latin American countries achieved their independence in the early decades of the nineteenth century, it would take many more before the identity of their nations was defined. Garrard-Burnett argues that while the notion of “citizen loyalty to a corporate nation or state” emerged from Enlightenment in late-seventeenth century Europe, in Latin America such notions were only formulated after the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1870, Costa Rica was the only Central American country that had successfully built nationhood, while Guatemala was its most factionalised, divided along political, economic and ethnic lines (1998, 9).

In the early twentieth century, countries such as Mexico, Colombia and Nicaragua, actively adopted the ideology of *mestizaje*, which sought to celebrate the concept of the *mestizo*, a racially and/or culturally mixed person whose indigenous blood, culture and history was to be hailed as a valuable component of nationhood. Its most famous proponent was the Mexican statesman/philosopher, José Vasconcelos, whose book *La Raza Cósmica* (the Cosmic Race, [1925] 1979), promoted “a pan-Latin American embrace of racial and cultural mixture as progressive rather than regressive, as a boon rather than a bane to ongoing deliberations concerning questions of local and regional identity” (Miller 2004, 2). *Mestizaje* was radical in that it explicitly spurned ideologies of positivism prevalent at the time in the United States and Europe, despite Latin American countries having turned historically to Europe as its “model and mentor” (ibid: 7), with its elites seeking to incorporate Europe’s “structures of the nation-state ... and its cultural values of “civilisation” (Wade 2000, 11). The ideology was regarded not only as “antiracist and anti-imperial” but also as more inclusive of a “greater proportion of Latin America’s diverse citizenry in political and cultural engagements than ever before” (Miller 2004, 4).⁹ In fact, Wade has argued that many Latin American elites may have upheld similar

⁹ While the ideology remained positive throughout the twentieth century, recently it has been subject to critique, with scholars arguing that *mestizaje* has been more intent on promoting homogenisation than on celebrating racial/cultural admixture. For example, Knight in the case of Mexico, claims that despite *mestizaje*’s rhetoric, there was always an assumption that the “blood” of the “white” ethnic group was superior and would eventually prevail (1990, 98). Gould states the promotion of the “*raza indohispano*” (the Indo-Hispanic race) by nation-builders like Augusto Sandino came at the expense of Nicaraguan Indians (1998). However, Wade argues that such critiques fail to consider notions of difference. Referring to Colombia, he posits that while *mestizo* can imply “sameness”, notions of “difference” are implicit in “mixture”. He writes, “When mixture is understood as progressive whitening, black and indigenous

attitudes on the degenerative effects of miscegenation as their European and North American counterparts, but “to agree totally, especially with a hard-line innatist eugenics would be to condemn national populations to permanent inferiority” (2002, 66).

While the social category “ladino” disappeared in other Central American countries, from the end of the nineteenth century, Guatemala began to invest it with meanings of a national identity devoid of any racial/culture mixture and fundamentally non-Indian. In this sense, “ladino” was and has always been very different to “*mestizo*”. Although the concept of *mestizo* has clearly operated in ways that undermine the twentieth century ideology of *mestizaje*, it has had the merit of emphasising shared points of origin (Wade 2000). Ladino, on the other hand, does not invoke shared origins. Instead, a consequence of the way it has become the general term to refer to “non-Indians” in Guatemala is that any historical or biogenetic link to the indigenous population can be denied, which undoubtedly is the result of the critical role played by the state in the construction of ethnic difference.

The concept of “ladino” has a long history in Latin America, having travelled from Spain at the time of conquest. Among its several usages in Spain – and its initial use in the colony – was that as an adjective, operating in contexts relating to “linguistic purity” to describe one’s skill and ability to speak Castilian. For example, if a person spoke a polished Castilian they could be described as “*muy ladino* (very ladino)”, and if not, as “*no muy ladino* (not very ladino)” (Adorno 1994, 380). In Hispanic America, “ladino” was applied in contexts to describe non-Spaniards – largely natives but also at times Africans and their descendants – who had acquired certain Spanish cultural traits. For instance, Indian interpreters who could speak Spanish, and/or those who had hispanicized themselves, often after having fled tribute-payment, discarding their indigenous language, dress and religion for Spanish culture, were increasingly described as “ladino” (Adorno 1994; see Lokken 2003 for its application to an African population). As the colony endured, the term’s meaning shifted from adjective to noun, referring in general to all non-Indians who were not Spaniard.

peoples may be classed as so different that they are marginalized or even denied, but they may also be included as potential recruits to mixedness. Even mention of mixture, of hybrid, or of Creole inevitability, reaffirms the difference which is apparently being dissolved in the speech act” (2000, 15).

The socio-geographic policy that defined colonial relations was based on the “Two Republics”, conceived to keep colonizers apart from the colonized. Spaniards lived in *villas españolas* (Spanish Towns), while natives were re-located from their pre-colonial habitats into forced settlements called *pueblos de indios* (Indian Towns) or *reducciones* (reductions), from where Crown, church and individual conquerors could more effectively exact tribute, demand labour, and evangelise indigenous peoples (Martínez Peláez 1990, 455; Morner 1967, 45-52).

The policy in Guatemala favoured, in the long term, the reproduction of indigenous culture. According to Smith, in contrast to other parts of the Americas, this colony’s treatment of Indians as its wards, who lived separated from non-Indians, enabled Indians to maintain much of their culture, albeit affected by the new colonial structures (1990, 74). But colonial society was also notoriously fluid. First, in addition to the presence of indigenous peoples and Spaniards, from the beginning of Conquest Africans and their descendants also entered the ethnic mix, many travelling to the Americas with the Spanish conquistadors as armed auxiliaries or as servants, although many more arrived later as slaves (Restall 2000, 173-5). Second, most Spaniards and Africans arriving in Central America were male. A dearth of women led many to seek sexual relations with indigenous women, and then later with women of mixed descent (Lovell & Lutz 1990, 132). Moreover, there was great movement of different categories of people, which Wortman links to the growth of “free and sometimes illegal trade outside the Hapsburg framework”:

“Children from Indian *barrios*, rural *haciendas*, and *encomiendas* were hired as servants in Spanish homes or as aides to artisans. They learned Spanish trades. Young girls bore *mestizo* children. Their presence and their cheap labour were enough to reduce the demand to import slaves. *Mestizo* and *mulatto* populations rose through the entire period ... *Mulattoes* tended to marry *mestizos* in preference to Indians, and *mestizos* married with all classes. Indeed, in the late seventeenth century, the Creole population accepted the offspring of *mestizo*-Spanish unions as *vecinos*” (1982, 74).

Within that context, “ladino” was but one among several categories applied to persons who were neither Spanish nor Indian, such as the categories of *mestizo*, *mulatto*, *pardo*, and *castizo*, which referred to one’s *calidad* (literally, one’s ancestry but better understood as

“status”).¹⁰ For example, *mestizo* referred to a person of Spanish and indigenous parentage, *mulatto* that of Spanish/African, *pardo* that of Indian/African, and *castizo*, whose one parent was Spaniard and the other *mestizo* (Morner 1967, 58). By the mid-eighteenth century, various permutations and ever-emerging definitions forced the Bourbon state to establish 18 official *calidades* – unofficially, there were more than 40 – which were hierarchically structured in what became known as *el sistema de castas* (the caste-system) (Castleman 2001, 229). According to Stolcke, the concept of *casta* (caste) designated people by ‘blood’, which initially signalled “the bounded nature of inequalities of power and status among Spanish colonizers, the Indians and the African slaves” but eventually referred to an internally differentiated peoples of mixed blood (2004, 387).

Colonial classifications were inherently complex, with meanings differing from community to community and dependent upon who was classifying. In Central America, some *castas* were known as “ladinos”, but *castas* “were not always *mestizos* or people of mixed origins although persons of mixed descent were often known by one *casta* or another” (Smith 1990, 75). T. Little-Siebold observes that in the late colonial period, it was never clear who was defined as “ladino”, although “nothing was clearer than that to be ‘ladino’ was not to be Spanish, *mulatto* or Indian”, and that “ladino” “was not shorthand for *mestizo*” (2001, 117).

In the colony, those who were identified as “ladino” or *castas* were not viewed favourably. Adorno states, “ladino” had both positive and negative connotations. If one spoke Spanish well, its deployment could indicate positive qualities of “prudence and sagacity”. Yet, it also connoted “cunning and craftiness”, above all when applied to mixed-race peoples (1994, 381). Matthew points out that both Indians and Spaniards viewed the *castas* as “dirty, deceitful and cunning...Clerics called them thieves and dogs in sermons” (2004, 197-198).

According to de la Cadena, the unflattering connotations in Latin America generally, were not associated with “impurity”, as the term was later conceptualised in nineteenth

¹⁰ Determining one’s *calidad* was informed by more than just the combination of one’s ancestry. T. Little-Siebold argues that one’s *calidad* in the Spanish colonial world reflected “one’s reputation as a whole”, which itself was determined by a combination of “colour, occupation, and wealth... [as well as] purity of blood, honour, integrity and even place of origin” (2001, 115).

century thinking - when it concerned ideas of miscegenation and *mestizaje* - but with colonial concerns about the transgression of the political order and the ability to avoid classification. That is, colonial authorities were more concerned with the “unruly *political* position that the group represented” (de la Cadena 2005, 266-267; also see Bouysse-Cassagne 1996, 98).

In Guatemala, the *casta*/ladino population was generally considered by both Spaniards and Creoles as “non-active” members of society, a marginalised and dispossessed sector of society (Palma Murga 1993, 287). While Indians were obliged to pay tribute, which, Harris states, rendered them above all, “a fiscal category by which the obligations of the native population to the colonial state were defined” (1995, 354), ladinos/*castas* faced difficulties in securing work and land. According to McCreery, their predicament rested not with Spanish law but with the refusal of Guatemalan elites to grant “mixed-blood settlements” legal status (1994, 35-6). Meanwhile, Indians saw them as exploiters no different to Spaniards and Creoles, and/or as potential usurpers of their lands (Palma Murga 1993, 303).

By the end of the colonial period, Martínez Peláez notes that “ladino” not *mestizo* in Guatemala increasingly became the catch-all term for “non-Indian” (excluding Spaniards), because it allowed for the inclusion of persons of African descent, which *mestizo* did not (1990, 270; also see Pinto Soria 1998, 23). Following Guatemala’s Independence from Spain in 1821, the Republican state reduced the complex colonial categories to a “tri-polar” structure of “*criollo*”, “*ladino*” and “Indian” (Taracena 2003, 33), with the disparate *castas* subsumed into a newly constituted “ladino” category, the reason being that after three centuries of biological mixing, one’s descent was no longer easily determined (Smith 1990, 86).¹¹

In addition, after 1821, the condition of Guatemala’s ladinos changed; previously defined by marginalisation, they now gradually began to assume an intermediary position between the country’s majority indigenous peoples and its creole elites. The reason creoles ceded to ladinos some political and economic privileges was partly because they acknowledged some sharing of blood with ladinos, partly because of their

¹¹ T. Little-Siebold, nevertheless, points out that over the nineteenth century, *castas* did not easily displace their identification with colonial categories in favour of “ladino”. In some locations it was completely unsuccessful, which he argues was the result of state weakness, inefficiency and reach (2001, 106-117).

numerical weakness, and partly because of several ladino regional insurrections during the presidency of Rafael Carrera (1839-1869) (Taracena 2004, 43-44; Pinto Soria 1998, 23-26).¹² Over the next five decades, assimilation policies were directed at ladinos (Taracena 2003, 76-77). Indians, on the other hand, who were viewed by creoles as lacking “intelligence and initiative” were destined to occupy the lower rungs of society (Pinta Soria 1998, 26).

Notwithstanding the complexity of Guatemala’s post-Independence political landscape, the present-day understanding of “ladino” as “non-Indian” acquired its meaning after the 1871 Liberal Revolution. Smith explains that from 1821 to 1871, Guatemala’s primary divisions were between a (white) creole elite, whose identity was based on exclusive European descent and European culture, and the rest of the population, comprised of both ladinos and indigenous people, distinguished by their “non-white blood”. After 1871, the tri-polar structure of creole/ladino/Indian became the dichotomous structure of ladino and Indian, with the creole category subsumed into the former, so that by the mid-twentieth century, and up to the present, the divisions that have characterised Guatemalan society have run along ethnic lines: between ladinos and Indians (1990, 82, 73). The reasons, Smith argues, lay with the promotion of an agrarian capitalism, based on the export of coffee, and later bananas, which not only “reorganised the regional and class patterning of ethnicity in Guatemala” but it also, “created internal divisions within Guatemala that still wrack the present” (ibid, 88-89).

By the late nineteenth century, coffee production that required a seasonal workforce, represented some 50 percent of Guatemala’s exports (Samper 1993, 19). To satisfy the demands of national planters for the provision of a workforce and land, the state passed a series of laws that instituted Indian segregation, limited their citizenship rights, while simultaneously converting them into the supply of unskilled labour (Taracena 2003, 86; McCreery 1994, 11-13). Grandin states, “[M]ore than ever before in the history of the colony or the nation, elites viewed Indians as a labour force to be mobilised” (2000, 111). Coffee planters, with the unequivocal support of the state, targeted “whole [Indian] communities, either through the *mandamiento* (forced labour drafts) or peonage”, devastating indigenous communities (ibid, 127).

¹² In 1820, Spaniards/creoles and ladinos represented 150,000 of Guatemalan inhabitants, a minority vis-à-vis the majority indigenous population of 350,000 (Lovell & Lutz 1996, 402).

Ladinos, on the other hand, were treated differently. Until recently, it was widely believed that even after the 1871 Liberal Revolution, ladinos occupied only an intermediary position (in charge of provincial and town politics), between creoles (in charge of central government), and the subordinate Indians. However, Taracena argues that ladino elites were far from merely agents of the state and coffee planters (2003, 2004).¹³ Ladinos, he contends, were the most dynamic sector after 1821, and that their elites displaced creole hegemony and took control of the state by 1871, albeit by continuing to share economic power with creoles, who were incorporated into their liberal governments. Not only were ladino elites the architects of the 1871 Liberal revolution, which launched Guatemala into its modern capitalist and nation-building era, but they also fashioned a national imaginary in their image by pushing through legislation that privileged Guatemalans who self-identified as “ladino” over the country’s indigenous peoples, dramatically reconfiguring class relations along ethnic lines. Indeed, Taracena argues that ladino liberals were only ever interested in the homogenisation of the disparate ladino group, which included the assimilation of Indians who were prepared to renounce their Indian identity. Despite their attraction to the tenets of liberalism of universal citizenship, and rights to all citizens, the discourse only interested them in theory. Their efforts concentrated on incorporating all “non-Indians” – white Europeans, creoles, Chinese, Arabs, ladinos – into the “ladino” social category thereby ensuring that the “ladino” category lost its colonial racial connotation of *casta* and acquired that of culture, that is of “non-Indian” (Taracena 2003, 33-45, 83-91; 2004: 101-104).

Effectively, Guatemalans who increasingly self-identified as “ladino” assimilated creole ideology rather than challenged it, that is they rejected an ideology based on *mestizaje*. As Casaus Arzú observes, national ideologues never contemplated imagining Guatemala as a *mestizo* nation. While countries that adopted *mestizaje* were advocating notions about the “progressiveness” of miscegenation, Guatemala resisted any identification with “*lo indio o lo mestizo*” (the Indian or *mestizo*), refusing to place any value on a pre-Hispanic past, or in offering Indians a role in the state. Guatemala’s was an exclusionary national project (1999b, 14-15). Instead, the Liberal era opted to avoid naming Indians or *mestizos*

¹³ For a succinct overview of the debate and the scholars involved, see Taracena 2004. For example, Casaus Arzú has insisted that after 1871, creole elites continued to maintain their difference from ladino elites by strategically carrying out marriage alliances with an increasing influx of German families (1999a, 61).

as citizens of the nation. Homogeneity stopped short with those who identified as ladino. The result was increased segregation between Indians and ladinos. As Hale states, ladino - rather than *mestizo* - culture was promoted as national culture, while the Indians remained the "irreparably different and inferior 'other', to be 'improved' but never redeemed" (2002, 502).

In fact, apart from a ten-year democratic period (1944-1954), during which the governments of Juan José Arévalo (1945-1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1950-1954) attempted to reverse the historic unjust treatment of Guatemala's indigenous peoples, the Guatemalan state has excluded, and treated Mayans as the "Other".¹⁴ Ladinos, on the other hand, largely escaped the demands of forced labour, and were privy to experiences of upward mobility, based partly on the exploitation of Indians. According to Smith, after 1871, although the economic circumstances of some ladinos, such as those who lived in the eastern parts of Guatemala, remained similar to those of their indigenous neighbours, in the coffee region and the indigenous western highlands, ladinos increasingly commanded a higher social status over Indians by taking over local politics, becoming the skilled labour force and monopolising middle-class professions. They engaged in the exploitation of Indians to such a degree that Indians increasingly identified ladinos with both "state and class oppression" (Smith 1990, 86-90).

It is, therefore, unsurprising that historically ladinos have identified with the Guatemalan state, considering it promoted their ethnicity, which was to be fundamentally non-Indian. As Nelson notes, only wealthy ladinos have historically had access to state power but *all* ladinos "have a shared sense that the state is their rightful terrain" (1999, 77-78).

¹⁴ Between 1944 and 1954, often described as the "10 years of spring", the government attempted to create a more equitable society by abolishing forced labour, permitting the right to organise and unionise, and implementing a land reform. Guatemala's agrarian reform, Decree 900, was approved in June 1952, by President Arbenz's administration. The reform, one of the most ambitious in Latin America, sought to expropriate all non-cultivated lands of properties of more than 200 hectares, which were to be made available to a landless peasantry (Rojas Bolaños 1993, 101). The reform directly affected large landholdings, many of which belonged to the United Fruit Company, and prominent national elites. It provoked such resistance that in 1954, a CIA-directed counter-revolutionary coup deposed Arbenz, and his "communist" labelled government from office, paving the way for an unfettered era of military governments (see Handy 1994; Adams 1993; Jonas 1991; Gleijeses 1991, 1992; McClintock 1985).

In view of the historical mixing of different persons in Latin America, and because of the phenomena of “passing”, scholars increasingly advocated for the displacement of “race” in favour of ethnicity.¹⁵

In an insightful and self-reflective account on the trajectory of US anthropologists in Guatemala, Smith (1999) explains that a lack of understanding of the analytical categories of “race” and “culture” led to two generations of anthropologists (1940-1970 and 1970-1990) to produce ethnographies that failed to expose ladino racism towards Indians.

The first generation, represented and influenced by anthropologists such as Sol Tax and Robert Redfield, were not only inclined to a Boasian critique of “racial determinism” but also believed in “modernisation theory”, that is, that Indians would eventually be assimilated into “western culture” (1999, 93). Brintnall was one of the few anthropologists who specifically challenged the claims of the first generation, by rejecting their arguments to adopt “ethnicity” over “race”, particularly because of the importance of “*descent*” in determining how ladinos and Indians self-identified and interacted, particularly in matters of marriage (1979, 649).¹⁶ He deserves to be quoted in detail:

“...interbreeding between aboriginal American Indians and the Europeans, as well as “passing” by Indians over the centuries since the Spanish Conquest have created a large group of Ladinos, largely in the lower social classes, who are more “Indian” than “European” in physical appearance. In using this fact as a basis for shunning the term “race” and preferring instead “ethnic group” has engendered a number of important ethnographic confusions, confusions that could have been avoided by retaining the word “race” and specifying its sociological meaning. Specifically, the avoidance of the term “race” has been associated with (1) a widespread failure to appreciate the importance of descent in defining group membership, (2) the false notion among some that because Indians and Ladinos are not “races”, Ladinos are not really “racist” in their interactions with Indians and (3) the erroneous conclusion that because the differences between Indians and Ladinos are merely “cultural” modernisation among Indians must be “Ladinoization” almost my definition” (1979, 641).

¹⁵ In the 1960s, van den Berghe was arguing that “[O]n the average, some 15 to 20,000 Indians probably “pass” as ladinos each year” (1968, 516).

¹⁶ This is not to state Brintnall was alone. Smith argues that scholars such as Melvin Tumin (1952) and Charles Wagley (1968) also spoke of ladino racism towards Indians based on a belief of racial superiority, but that they were either silenced or side-lined (1999, 102, 106).

According to Smith, the second generation of anthropologists, within which she inserts herself, focused on exploitation but reduced it to an analysis of class (1999, 110). She writes,

“very few academics were clear about how culture, race, gender and class defined groups. We lost from our purview the fact that differentiating social constructions (whatever be their bases) were a product of several dimensions (culture, language, class, biology) that explain, defend and reproduce social exclusion embedded in power” (1999, 111).

Indeed, scholars increasingly signalled the difficulties of addressing the issue of “ethnic relations” and social inequalities, when attention is placed on “ethnicity” and not on “race” as a cultural construct. Harrison, who offers a sophisticated overview of the multiple approaches to the problems of inequality and oppressions, argues that “racial determinism” was increasingly attacked after the decline of scientific racism and particularly after the works of Franz Boas - generally after the Second World War. She claims, “ethnicity as, ‘expressive processes of cultural identification’ among subordinate populations in nation-states – became the master principle of classification”. With specific regards to Boas, Harrison states that his treatment of “race” as morphological led him to divest it of its power as a cultural construct. Consequently, anthropologists increasingly adopted a “no-race position” and eventually displaced the notion of race as a concept in itself. “Ethnicity”, Harrison states, “euphemised if not denied race”, leaving anthropologists without any adequate answer to the simple question: if there are no “races in the natural world” then why does racism continue to exist? (1995, 48-53).

“Unsettling” Guatemala’s Bi-polarity

Given the historical construction of “ladinoness”, based as it was on a radical rejection of Indianness, the Guatemalan sociologist Guzmán Böckler, in an influential essay, accused Guatemalan ladinos of being “a fictitious being” (the title of his essay) - an invented people who had created an “empty and opaque” identity (1970, 101-121). Böckler wrote that “the ladino is not a collective being endowed with a project of his own, ‘the ladino’ is still not ‘historizable’ (*historiable*)”; that is, the ladino was not worthy of the historian’s attention because of “his incapacity to imagine a community that is truly a nation” (1970, 120). Böckler rhetorically, and somewhat bombastically, asked why, “has the ladino not been able to participate in a “*we of Guatemalans*.” which incorporates all the country’s population? Probably because this “*we*” lacks a real

existence” (1970, 101), postulating that only the “negative” defines ladinos, that is “by what they are not” (1970, 107).

As the political conflict drew to a close in the 1980s, the uncertainties and ambiguities of ladino identity, and more broadly of Guatemalan nationhood, came to the centre of political and academic debate. Böckler’s position increasingly began to resonate in the works of others. For example, in 1988 and 1989, FLACSO and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FFE, its acronym in Spanish) organised three seminars on ethnicity attended by both Mayans and Ladinos in Guatemala City. The anthropologist Richard Adams subsequently wrote an essay, drawing on material from the transcripts. On the one hand, he wrote, “cosmopolitanism, descent, and an experience of discrimination” informed Maya identity (1994: 534). Ladino identity, on the other hand, was less obvious: “the most consistent thing about it...is that it is far from consistent”. One Maya participant pointed out that the ladino participants talked about economy and development but seemed unable to talk about themselves (1994, 538). That comment resonated with a ladino participant who reasoned: “The most frustrated in our nation may be the ladino... The *indígena* knows himself, knows his roots, knows his Mayan vision of the world... the ladino does not” (1994, 538). Adams argued that the transcripts revealed that ladinos only identified with a “national project”, with no “clear - or at least simple – foundational identity based on ancestry” (1994, 539).

Casaus Arzú’s research on Guatemala’s elite reached a similar conclusion. Asking 110 elite Guatemalans about their self-identifications, 76 percent stated they were white with no indigenous racial mixture, while 24 percent said they were *mestizo* and/or Ladino. Of the latter, some accepted racial mixture in their ancestries, albeit a racial mixture that occurred far back to the early colonial period, while others adamantly stated the contrary (1999, 67). This identity of exclusion – based on who one was not, not on who one was - led Casaus Arzú to conclude that the “Ladino” was, a “fugitive; carrying out a double flight, from the Indian and from himself” (1999, 69).

However, although the heterogeneity of Guatemala’s indigenous and non-indigenous peoples was compressed into two delimited categories: that of (the dominant) “ladino” and (the subordinate) “Indian” since the end of the nineteenth-century, the anthropologist Kay Warren signalled a seeming paradox in relation to Guatemalan ethnic relations and inequality. She noted that there existed a gap “between scholars’

portrayals and people's perception of the enduring character of the indigenous/non-indigenous cleavage and the far more heterogeneous and dynamic realities of everyday life, cultural identities, power relations, and socio-political history" (2001, 90). According to Nelson, however, the identity markers retained enormous weight in Guatemalan imaginaries: "the identity categories of "ladino" and "Indian" ... tend to disappear if looked at too closely yet are still salient as binary oppositions" (1998, 75; also see Casaus Arzú 1992, 197).

Overcoming the ideology of the Indian/Ladino bipolarity represents the greatest challenge facing the contemporary state, particularly now that, after the conflict, it is committed to recognising a multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural country in which indigenous groups be allowed to participate without having to renounce their cultural and ancestral identities and become Ladino (Taracena 2003, 39). Today, Mayans are demanding more representation and participation in the nation, seeking to transform a state that has historically excluded them (Nelson 1999; Warren 1998), while Ladinos are being drawn into processes whereby they are being forced to re-engage and reframe their cultural, "racial"/ethnic and political identities (Hale 2006).

Given the overwhelming evidence on the role played by the state in the construction of the Indian/ladino dichotomy, and scholarly attention to inter-ethnic hostility and racism, ethnographic material that depicts a more nuanced focus on Guatemala's ladinos was minimal. In recent decades, scholars, however, are increasingly turning their attention to Guatemala's non-Indians, addressing Ladino and Creole racism and dominance, and their relationship with the state.¹⁷

Marta Casaus Arzú's *On Lineage and Race* (1995) documents how a clique of 22 elite economic and political (white) Creole families has, some since the Spanish Conquest,

¹⁷ The trend towards prioritising race is similarly visible within other contexts of Latin America. For example, Weismantel and Eisenman (1998), in relation to the Andes, argue that "race", understood as a social construction, and not "ethnicity" offers a more adequate analysis of oppression and explanation of why inequalities continue: "varied references to the consumption of generational memory, to bodily comportment, to bestiality and to purity, each of these statements evoke fields of reference too powerfully physical, essential and inherently degrading to be called anything other than racial". For these authors, a veritable host of racisms exist in the Andean region, making use "of signifiers as various as hygiene, clothing, folklore dances, even male heterosexuality". And that, "the fundamental problem in the Andes lies in the inability of the Indian to become white – or white enough" - a complex problematic which can only be understood by reconsidering race as "a widespread, pervasive and relatively autonomous instrument of social organisation and control" (1998: 121-124; also see Weismantel 2001).

exercised close to total endogamy to maintain its hegemony through marriage alliances with other (white) creoles, despite their *mestizo* origins dating back to the early colonial days. She writes: “the oligarchy is *mestizo* in origin, ladino and ethnocentric in its conception of the world, elitist and endogamous in its family structure and, which ethnically considers itself white, without any mixture of Indian blood” (1995, 23). Consequently, such elites uphold an extremely false perception of themselves (precisely because of their *mestizo* origins), which is, “white in opposition to the indigenous, white because of their genes, white because of their culture, white because of their education, in sum, white by definition” (2005, 400).

Diane Nelson explores how Maya organisations have rendered the state, hitherto controlled by ladinos, a “site of struggle” for both Mayans and Ladinos, since “state-sectors are increasingly forced to respond to Mayan demands” (1998, 4).

Charles Hale, perhaps the most prominent anthropologist working on Ladinos to date, and to whose work I turn in more detail below, investigated their anxious responses to the Maya movement and discovered ladino fears of Mayan organising, and ladino accusations of “reverse racism” in the largely indigenous province of Chimaltenango (1999a; 1999b).

Recently, Hale has put forward an influential proposal about how to analyse Guatemala’s Indian-ladino relations (2006). He notes that Guatemalans who self-identify as ladinos have absorbed an ideology of racial superiority vis-à-vis the Indians (2006, 19). He argues that ladinos represent “a dominant racial group in Guatemala” (2006, 204) and therefore, strongly advocates the need for “race” as an analytical concept to be placed firmly in any analyses on Guatemalan ladino-Indian relations.

Through an ethnographic focus on the *departamento* of Chimaltenango, Hale documents the decline of what he terms “classic racism” and the emergence of a new “cultural racism” among Chimaltenango’s ladinos in the face of Maya ascendancy. His attention to “cultural racism” is developed through the analysis of “racial ambivalence”, which he argues, is

“an incongruity between the way ladinos think about race and the position they occupy in a racialised social hierarchy. Ladinos manifest racial ambivalence when they repudiate racism, express support for the ideals of cultural equality, and

view themselves as practicing these ideals, and yet, maintain a strong psychic investment in their dominance and privilege in relation to Indians” (2006, 19).

Hale argues that a racial formation approach to Guatemala’s Indian and ladino binary directs the focus of research, “*both* to the structured relations of political-economic power and to how people signify these inequalities.”¹⁸ By focusing on structure and signification, Hale states, we can better appreciate the changing nature of racial categories through political struggle, “conceived in this way, racial formation theory provides a powerful guide for the narration of racial processes” (2006, 208). According to Hale, Guatemala’s society is based on a racial hierarchy, one in which Indians are excluded and difference is framed in racial terms (2006, 209).

For Hale racial privilege is “a historically imbued set of symbolic and material advantages that come with having a dominant position in the racial hierarchy”. He writes,

“[T]hese advantages are not earned or actively worked for; rather they are attributes of the dominant position itself, the cumulative benefits of long-term projects of racism. The consideration of racial privilege is crucial because it turns our attention away from specific practices . . . toward an analysis of general relations, a social structure predicated on the fact that in the past Indians generally have been servants to ladinos” (2006, 211).

Meanwhile, the US-trained Guatemalan anthropologist, González-Ponciano (2005) focuses on lower-class urban *mestizos* and their assimilation of inferiority complexes concerning their indigenous ancestries. González-Ponciano posits that the Indian/ladino dichotomy does not consider Guatemala’s real divides. Instead, his argument is that the divisions within Guatemala’s society remain those instituted from the early Independence period, that is between a white elite and the rest of the population. He states that poor ladinos, by denying their *mestizo* condition, have assimilated a white discourse that has been used to denigrate them and Indians. By

¹⁸ The “racial formation” approach was coined by the US scholars Omi and Winant in their seminal book *Racial Formations in the United States* (1986) which focuses on the US racial order of “Whiteness”. Several scholars in the US (Lipsitz 1995) and in Latin America have adopted the approach as a way first, to expose how race is a “fundamental *organizing principle* of social relationships” (Omi and Winant, 1991[1986]: 66) in ideologies of national identities such as official *mestizaje* and *mestiçagem*, and, second, to document both indigenous and Afro-Latin American challenges (see Whitten, 2003; Sheriff 2003). To my knowledge, Hale is the first to adopt the approach in relation to Guatemala’s “ladino racial order” although Taracena’s work cited above also works towards the same effect by showing how “ladino elites” over the nineteenth century mobilised for and consolidated a new racial order as of 1871.

focussing on the racialisation of inequality and the existence of several racialised categories within the poor *mestizo* constituency of his ethnography, he illustrates how racism in Guatemala works to denigrate not only the country's indigenous peoples but also all non-whites (2005, 7-13).

Crista Little-Siebold, in her study on Quezaltepeque, states that her non-Indian and indigenous informants rarely identified with state-imposed ethnic categories, such as “ladino” or “Indian”. She claims that for her informants, identity is situational and fluid as they take different markers of identity such as *campesino*, *machetero*, *misteado*, *indio* and *samba* at different times (2001: 180). Yet she also notes that ladinos continue to have anxieties about “Indian Blood” and the “dark side” of families (2001: 181) as well as continue to rank identities in terms of “blood” and relative degree of “civilization” (2001: 182). Little-Siebold concludes: “by noting the ways people use identity labels, it is possible to observe the fluidity of meanings that are layered on one another (2001: 193).

With all this in mind, the present study seeks to “unsettle” the notion of Guatemala's ethnic dualism through its consideration of Salamateco heterogeneity. If we continue to pay attention to Indians and ladinos as two asymmetrical monolithic groups - culturally different, spatially separate, socially disinterested, and informed by radically different understandings of the past – we obscure the way in which their very identities have been constructed relationally, both temporally and spatially through discursive and material practices. The dichotomy also obfuscates the multiple gradations inherent within each. By probing “Ladinoness”, seeking to understand what it means to those who identify with it, we are able to, as Hartigan argues (in relation to “whiteness” in the US), “loosen (its) powerful hold by challenging the economy of meaning (it) maintain[s]” (1999, 3).

Such a challenge, however, must simultaneously recognise the importance of the symbolic hold and material reality of that dualism in Salamateco lives. It is important to stress that the binary was important to Salamatecos, for whom self-identifying as “ladino”, which they all did, was synonymous to saying they were “non-Indian”, which given the historical construction of “ladino” as “non-Indian” by the state is, in itself, a historically sedimented and hegemonic notion. As Comaroff and Comaroff note, hegemony is “that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies – drawn from a historically situated cultural field – that come to be

taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it...In a quite literal sense, hegemony is habit forming” (1991, 23).

Notwithstanding the contributions considered above, this thesis adopts a different approach in that it seeks to provide an ethnography specifically on ladinos and deals with their identities and their everyday lives. Scholars who argue that ladinos have no historic identity simply conflate ladino with the state, itself associated with modernity. Little-Siebold’s explanation of multiple and situational identities is extremely useful but insufficient in that it only superficially addresses how her informants mobilise their identities through processes of inclusion and exclusion. Hale’s recent focus on structural privilege and ideology is an important contribution, but it helps us little in our understanding of how “ladinoness” is lived and experienced. Attention to exposing racism is undeniably important but, as John Hartigan argues, claims about racism “tell us little about how members of distinct classes relationally construct, negotiate, and police social boundaries; no do they convey all we need to know about how gendered distinctions are learned and reproduced” (2005, 258).

Hartigan (1999, 2005), a US anthropologist who looks at whites in Detroit, is one of a few scholars whose work is part of the trajectory of “marking the unmarked”¹⁹ but who provides a much more nuanced study on his informants. In his ethnography *Racial Situations* (1999) Hartigan argues against relying on “composite views of “race” in a national perspective” (1999, 4) and urges anthropologists to look at “race” as they have done “culture”, that is “as a relentlessly local matter” (1999, 14). By focusing on three neighbourhoods in Detroit where whites represent a minority and are, therefore, hardly the “unmarked” category, Hartigan looks at how “race” matters to his informants, which he states, is always influenced by class background. He writes: “[W]hat I found is

¹⁹ The trajectory I refer to is a scholarship that has evolved into what is now familiarly termed “Whiteness Studies”. Initially, scholars who turned their attention to ‘whites’ particularly in countries such as US and Britain, argued for the need to “mark” whites by displacing the “normative invisibility” they had achieved through the process of marking and racialising Others. By “marking” the “unmarked” scholars turned their attention to demonstrate how whiteness itself represents structural privilege (Frankenberg 1997). However, Rasmussen et al (2001) argue that if whiteness is simply structural privilege then it fails to take into account the many “social divisions within whiteness and among ethnoracial groups” which are better understood through the way “race, gender and class intersect to produce and mediate structural privilege”. And that claims, “about how whiteness functions in society sometimes obscure equally important questions about how different individuals understand, relate to, and negotiate whiteness as an identity and social position” (2001, 12).

that class – a composite of occupation, residential location, and family history – profoundly shapes how whites identify racially. The ways whites perceive the interests and intentions of people of colour, as well, depends upon their class position” (1999, 8). As is the case in my research, Hartigan found that the way his informants assess when “or whether race matters” is a product of knowing which whites are involved in a situation: “[I]ndeed, *intraracial* distinctions are a primary medium through which whites think about race” (1999, 17). He argues against uniform understandings of whiteness: “[A]lthough I recognise the analytic value and political efficacy of designating such an historically determining, powerful ideology of ‘whiteness’ I think an attention to the differences between whites importantly reframes a singular focus on ‘race’ within a critical understanding of its connotations with class and locational distinctions” (1999, 279).

Similarly, Frankenberg (1993) in her ethnography on the “social construction of whiteness” examines “white women’s places in the racial structure of the US”, in order to look head-on [at whiteness] as a site of dominance. She states, that through her focus on those women “race, racial dominance and whiteness emerge as complex, lived experiences, as material rather than abstract categories, and as historically situated rather than timeless in their meanings and effect”. She concludes that “race shapes white women’s lives”, which is a relational category “co-constructed with a range of other racial and cultural categories”, although it is fundamentally asymmetrical “for the term “whiteness” signals the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality and privilege not disadvantage” (1993, 1, 6, 21, 236).

Salamá’s Ladinos

My thesis argues that far from fiction and/or narratives of “nothingness”, as postulated by some scholars cited above, my informants spoke much about who they were. My research is largely concerned with how Salamatecos invoked difference between themselves *as* Ladinos through a focus on three identity groups: elite Salamatecos; *pueblos/mestizos* (urban/racially mixed Ladinos); and *los puros* (racially pure Ladinos). The manner in which Salamatecos explained their and their family’s trajectory exposed different lived historical experiences, based on wealth, occupation, geography, economic circumstance and, experiences of class mobility. Moreover, they expressed difference

through locally informed beliefs in racial ideas. Salamatecos spoke a lot about ancestries. Some even mentioned having ancestors of indigenous (and African) origins, while stating all the while that certain practices reproduced historically have been precisely to minimise miscegenation, to avoid it or to hide it. In fact, which ancestor, and how such ancestor was invoked, was always to underscore their contemporary “non-Indianness”. Salamatecos were many things but never Maya-Achí. And *mestizaje* was not embraced, but several did allude to it.

However, all my ladino informants had strong views on racial mixing with indigenous peoples. As we will see in Chapter 6 on the identity group of *puros*, historically many of its members had gone to great lengths to ensure their progeny did not mix with indigenous peoples. In the early 2000s, the practices had ensured that non-*puros*, especially those who were overtly racially mixed, such as those of the identity group, *los pueblo/mestizos*, admired their purity.

My elite and *puro* informants, for example, spoke in detail about racial purity and/or European ancestors, resonating with works on Latin American elites. Nutini, by way of example, looks at practices of endogamy within Mexico’s aristocracy (2004). He argues that by the 1600s, the earlier practice of conquistadors marrying noble indigenous women had completely stopped, and that by 1750, it was rare for Mexican aristocrats to marry *mestizos*, and when they did, such marriages occurred with persons of light phenotype. However, after Mexico’s Independence, “class barriers hardened”. Nutini writes that apart from a few exceptions:

“Today it is rare to find *mestizo* or marginal phenotypes in the few thousand surviving members of the aristocracy [which is] of Spanish stock, to some extent more recently modified by the infusion of other European stocks, mainly French, Italian, and English” (2004, 57-60).

Martinez-Alier’s work illustrates how belonging to the class of persons of known nobility and known purity of blood in Spanish Colonial America implied social, cultural and economic privileges, which were guarded through the prohibition and regulation of marriage with persons of lower castes. She writes “aspirations to social pre-eminence and recognition demanded racial purity. White upper-class women and their families were controlled by the males of the families and protected from racial “pollution” through marriage or, worse, sex with a black male. Such control was necessary because

the ideal of love as a pre-requisite for marriage constituted a permanent potential challenge to the opposite of racial purity in a multiracial society” (1974, xiii).

Elites likewise invoked notions of purity, but their identity was not limited to discussions on purity, as was the case for *puros*. Rather, it rested on a combination of economic wealth, lineage, contacts, ability to dispatch patronage, and their place in the town historically, which made them distinct from other Salamatecos. I have found de la Cadena’s argument, about Andean colonial classificatory orders, useful for my discussion on elite Salamatecos, although the discussion relates to elites in post-colonial Guatemala. De la Cadena writes that in the Andes not everyone possessed “lineage”. The biologically purest Indian could *lack* lineage compared to biologically “mixed people”, who might have had Inca ancestors. According to de la Cadena, “purity was not always a symbol of superiority...but seems to have been more a moral measure articulated through the classificatory languages of *calidad*, class and honour...in this context, classificatory practices derived from information on an individual’s ancestral and personal social relations” (2005, 265). Elite understandings of “status” were articulated along similar classificatory practices. *Puros* invoked racial purity much more strongly than elites, but they did not possess the combination of *calidad* (literally, the “quality” of one’s racial mixture, see below) class and honour.

Nevertheless, it was striking how *puro* accounts on racial beliefs and cultural practices resembled those of Mexico’s *rancheros* (ranchers). According to Barragán López, that group should be considered a “singular socio-cultural segment of Mexican rural population”, defined as a people who base their economy on cattle, who are small-property owners, working for themselves, exploiting their own labour, that of one’s family and sharecroppers. Barragán López notes that *rancheros* are very devout Catholics, and they have always distinguished themselves as “people with reason”, in contrast to Indians, who are “people without reason” (1990, 75-79; 1986; also see Lomnitz-Adler 1992, 153-185).

According to Farr, whose work focuses on a micro-region in northwest Michoacán, *ranchero* oral traditions trace family origins to Spain, acknowledging a racial mixture with indigenous persons, although this is depicted as a recent phenomenon (after the Mexican revolution of 1910 to 1920). Farr contends that a focus on *rancheros* problematises general Mexican racial terminology, such as *mestizaje* and *mestizo*, because

these terms resonate with colonial values and conventional nineteenth century notions of race, invoking an ideology of “mixture”. In Mexico, *mestizos* are considered “de-Indianised” and “mixed”. Yet Farr writes:

“I have rarely, however, heard the word *mestizo* used by the *rancheros* of this study to refer to themselves. When asked about *mestizo* communities, they refer to formerly indigenous communities, that have gradually become Hispanicized over time, through the “crossing” of Spaniards and Indians. Such distancing from *mestizaje*, even while acknowledging some indigenous heritage themselves, clearly reveals ambiguities and locally-perceived differences around racial identity among what are lumped together and generically referred to as *mestizo* communities” (2004, 4).

In this light, the self-identity and historical accounts of the *puros* of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala, while particular, are by no means unique.

In addition, although *puros* were peasants – whose lives were comparable to those of indigenes in economic terms – they have constantly reaffirmed their “racial difference” to maintain a distinctiveness that is not endowed by social class. González-Ponciano states that Guatemala’s oligarchy has historically promoted an ideology of *blancura* (whiteness) which, in turn, has spawned a “pigmentocratic order” that regulates social mobility allowing those with lighter skin colour to better and further themselves (1999, 15-16). Hale argues that it is precisely this “order” that continues to exert a deep influence on non-Creole Guatemalans: “keeping self-identified Euro-Guatemalans in an ambivalent relationship to Ladinos, shaping internal distinctions among Ladinos, and keeping the divide between Ladinos and Indians intact” (2006, 171). Yet, it is difficult to attribute desire of the *puros* to reproduce “racial purity” entirely or even predominantly to an “elite politics”. Their narratives of race and practices of exclusion have a long local history and internal logics unconnected with overall class domination. The material advantages gained from reproducing convictions of racial purity have been so few that we have to take seriously the notion that such ideas are simply self-sustaining expressions of an overriding desire. Indeed, there was no neat race/class bifurcation between the three groups.

The identity group of *pueblo/mestizos*, for example, meanwhile, spoke about their racially mixed identities, which they readily acknowledged but, as in other historical Latin American contexts, they challenged how they were positioned in society, resonating

with Martínez Alier's distinction between the principles of patrilineality and hypodescent (1989). According to Martínez Alier, although the Cuban kinship system was bilateral, "the racially inferior parent" regardless of sex, determined the racial classification of the offspring of a mixed union, prevailing in such circumstances the principle of hypodescent. She notes that such classifications did not, however, remain unchallenged with illegitimate children attempting to implement a patrilineal principle, arguing that like their legitimate offspring, they too should be considered "white...because it is from the trunk [of the father] that the leaves derive and receive their life" (1989, 17-18; also see Twinam, 1999; Castleman, 2001).

Never the less, scholars such Wade, forcefully argue that *mestizaje* is about a lived process. According to Wade in some Latin American contexts mixed heritage has been embraced rather than rejected because it, "signified personal and intimate links of kinship with relatives... being mixed meant maintaining simultaneous identifications [because] *mestizaje* was an everyday reality for them, a reality of family genealogies, of personal histories, of relationships of sex and of paternal and filial love" (Wade 2005, 253). Scholars note that in addition to ideological discourse, *mestizaje* is also about the "social processes used to procreate, socialise, and position people of mixed racial heritage" as well as "the personal identification of an individual or community with *mestizo* communities" (Smith 1996, 150).

In my local context, however, with a strong local desire to minimise miscegenation, the sexuality of both elite and *puro* women was controlled in order to ensure the reproduction of "racial purity" resonating with several scholarly works have drawn attention to choices of life-style for upper-class women, attitudes and patterns of behaviour of women (Lavrin, 1978), the role of the church and state in regulating sexuality and marriage (Lavrin, 1989) and to the relationship between households and kinship networks (Jelin, 1991). Gutiérrez (1984), in his study of the transformations of the meaning of sexuality in Colonial New Mexico demonstrates the way in which marriage was closely regulated to serve family interest. Family honour was of immense importance. To maintain honour the sexual behaviour of women had to be restricted. Martínez-Alier's excellent work *Marriage, Class and Colour in 19th Century Cuba* (1974) notes the way in which belonging to the class of persons of known nobility and known purity of blood in Spanish Colonial America implied social, cultural and economic privileges. These privileges had to be guarded by regulating marriage with persons of

lower castes. She writes “aspirations to social pre-eminence and recognition demanded racial purity. White upper-class women and their families were controlled by the males of the families and protected from racial “pollution” through marriage or, worse, sex with a black male. Such control was necessary because the ideal of love as a pre-requisite for marriage constituted a permanent potential challenge to the opposite of racial purity in a multiracial society” (1974, xiii). Stolen, in her ethnography of Santa Cecilia, Argentina (1996) illustrates the way in which sexual control is exerted over boys and girls and is particularly reflected in their socialisation. In order to maintain, in married life, ideals of women’s respectability and men’s honour Stolen notes the way Catholic doctrine legitimises the social subordination of women who “are equal to men in *religion* although considered *socially* subject to men (emphasis by author, 1996, 250) She writes that “men are said to be responsible for women’s respectability, which is associated with pre-marital virginity and marital chastity, and their own honour derives in large measure from the way they discharge their responsibility“ (1996, 178; see also Casaus Arzú, 1992).

Despite elite efforts at policing and maintaining boundaries, elite families were biologically related to many of the town’s poorer families. Moral imperatives informed the construction of particular relatedness. Anthropologists have long noted such relationships. Ortner for example, states, in a relationship of power, the dominant often has something to offer and sometimes a great deal. The subordinate thus has many grounds for ambivalence about resisting the relationship (1995).

Sheper-Hughes, for example, argues that cultural domination will remain a feature in the lives of the poor people of Bom Jesus as long as they continue to be plagued by poverty. She says that to believe otherwise, to “admit the opposite, to entertain the idea that patronage itself is exploitative, is to admit that there is no structural safety net at all and that the poor are adrift within an amoral social and economic system that is utterly indifferent to their well-being and survival” (1992: 108). But the “hierarchical and dyadic” relationship which regulates behaviour and action towards “patrones, bosses, superiors and benefactors” (1992, 98) is never one-sided. Bosses must reciprocate. Just because they pay a wage, a pittance at that, this does not mean that they are absolved from their “moral” obligations. She asserts: “If the client is reduced, by the terms of her labour, to an unremitting vulnerability and to a clutching dependency upon her patrona,

the boss, on her part, is morally bound to rescue her client from starvation, sickness, prison and other chronic troubles associated with destitution” (1992, 111).

Mauss in *The Gift* (1990 [1924]) argues that social debt is incurred through the exchange of the gift between moral persons. In contrast to commodities, which are defined in their separation from giver and receiver, gifts are inalienably associated with both giver and receiver. Mauss stated that the gift is never given “voluntarily”. It is an obligation, which is “coupled with an expectation of a particular kind of support at the appropriate time” (1990, 214).

Indeed, as in the case of Mexican society described by Nutini, narratives on illegitimate children and relations between domestic workers and their employers, and a generalised inter-class interaction between men in the urban area, revealed a fluidity between Salamatecos, but one which was defined by an interaction in which everybody “knew their place”. The fluidity of relations resonated with what Nutini has noted in the case of Mexican stratification. He argues that class fluidity is characteristic of class systems that are rigid, “in which people are always aware of status position, as class membership is more ascribed than achieved”. According to Nutini, greater fluidity exists in such systems because “class barriers are much more difficult to breach”, creating a society encapsulated in the saying “*juntos pero no revueltos* (together but not scrambled)” which allows for a, “more relaxed ambiance of social interaction between the superordinate and subordinate sectors of society” (2004, 85-86).

This thesis will show that my informants’ notions of race and blood were informed by several variables, and that notions of race in themselves changed precisely as the variables changed. The ethnographic present was one in which a younger generation, in the context of a post-conflict society, put forward the position that “everyone was *mestizo*” now, a view that Salamatecos below the age of 40 considered less racist, more progressive, and modern. Yet, as I will demonstrate, attempts to identify with indigeneity always rendered it extra-local and/or highly abstract. Either informants failed to name individuals of indigenous ancestry in their families and upheld an abstract notion of *mestizaje* or they identified with an “Indian” who was from outside of the region, historically or in the present.

Scholars have often argued that ladinos only reference Europe in their identifications. My argument, by contrast, is that Ladino identity is not exclusively referenced to Europe, but all references to “Indians” in their family members, whether in the past or the present, were extra-local to Baja Verapaz. The region’s indigenous peoples have been historically the Maya-Achí. They were identified as Baja Verapaz’s inhabitants before the Conquest, and their descendants represent the majority indigenous group today. Yet Salamatecos who identified with one of the three identity groups spoke about their identifications quite differently. Indeed, despite the multiple references to “racial mixture”, be they in terms of “historical imaginaries” or in terms of kinship and family members, the comments, remarks and discussions on who the “Indian” was never related to the Maya-Achí. The choice of non-Maya-Achí Indians, I will argue, allows urban/*mestizo* ladinos to represent themselves as *totally* different from the Maya-Achí, who is the “racialised” Indian.

This thesis will show that Salamatecos uphold multiple meanings of “ladinoness” informed by notions of blood. Though undoubtedly a racist people, they themselves have been simultaneously subject to racism. I believe that rather than a ladino apologist – as one foreign human rights activist described me when he learned that I intended to research ladinos – my understanding of Salamateco ladinos will contribute to a growing literature that seeks to explore and supersede the ladino/Indian dichotomy that has plagued Guatemala since the end of the nineteenth-century.

By understanding race through kinship practices and relatedness this work offers a novel analysis on Guatemala’s ladino peoples. By attending to Salamateco ladinos in a manner they themselves deemed important and also by trying to understand them as subjects worthy of research, I place emphasis on an empathy - required by all anthropologists who immerse themselves intimately in the lives of those they research - with the people with whom I lived, socialised and sought to comprehend during my fieldwork. By looking at race and its workings, I demonstrate not only how racism functions towards indigenous peoples but also its more general dimensions in Guatemalan society, that is a racism which develops through the most intimate of ways.

Chapter Two

The Economic Trajectory and Political Affinities of Salamá's Middle Class

This chapter outlines the economic trajectory of Salamá's contemporary middle class, which was composed of three strata. First, Salamá's long-standing planter families (*las familias distinguidas y honorables* (distinguished and honourable families), *de abolengo* (of noble rank), and/or as *las familias principales* (the [town's] leading families); secondly, *los ladinos del pueblo* and/or *los ladinos mestizos* (hereafter referred to as *pueblo/mestizos*); and finally, *los ladinos puros* (hereafter, Southerners/*puros*). The chapter is concerned with two elements. Firstly, it discusses how and when the families became middle class, and secondly, it considers their political affinities over the twentieth century.

Guatemalan ladinos are often depicted as a monolithic group, representing one half of a binary that has historically enjoyed economic privilege and status over the country's indigenous peoples. Here I will show that, in fact, there existed different economic experiences and identities. The middle class I encountered was comprised of families who spoke of a multitude of different economic experiences, and the economic circumstances of most *pueblo/mestizo* and *puro* families, prior to 1950, were comparable to those of indigenous peoples, who have historically occupied the lowest rung of Guatemalan society.

Some of my informants spoke of poverty, others of state neglect because they lived in an area that the state refused to improve, others spoke of successive purchases of large extensions of land.

According to Don Diego Guzmán, not a member of the elite (and not his real name), Salamá was a "well defined" society of "two-classes" throughout most of the twentieth century. Within one class, he said, there were the "*familias pudientes y honorables*" (powerful and honourable families) who dedicated themselves to agriculture and cattle, and within the other, there were the "*familias humildes*" (humble families), represented by an urban and rural poor. While vast differences existed between the latter two groups, Don Diego explained that unlike the "powerful families", neither group had large landholdings, access to a workforce, or enjoyed positions of social distinction. For Don Diego, fortune and rank distinguished *los pudientes y honorables* from *los humildes*. However, by the

early twenty-first century, family members that belonged to the region's historic upper class regarded many *pueblo/mestizo* and *puro* families as representatives of the same class.

Yet, despite belonging to different classes over the twentieth century, the political affinities of the three groups aligned at several important historical junctures. In many conversations, Salamatecos spoke of how their town was strongly militaristic, anti-communist, and Catholic. They expressed a strong endorsement of the status quo, and an equally strong rejection of leftist politics, especially a politics that advanced economic equality with indigenous peoples.

I will discuss this with a focus on two historic moments that challenged the status quo: the early 1950s of the Agrarian Reform, and the years of acute political violence of the late 1970s and 1980s, with an additional focus on a specific account by *pueblo/mestizos* of the origins of their militarism. The Introduction noted that Salamatecos repeatedly spoke of several qualities of their town and its people: “peaceful”, “Catholic”, “conservative” and “militaristic”. The four were often invoked as free-floating descriptions, although women largely excluded “militaristic” while men never did.

The chapter consists of four sections. Firstly, I address how and when Salamá's planter class became the region's elite through a focus on land settlement, the control of politics, economic activities, and how legislation ensuring the successful procurement of labour for an expanding coffee industry re-constituted elite relations with the indigenous population. The second section concentrates on *pueblo/mestizo* families. I address the expansion of education and their experiences of upward social mobility. Thirdly, I turn to *puro* families with a focus on where they resided prior to migrating to the *pueblo* area mainly from the 1960s, and how they eventually also became members of the middle class. The final section addresses how Salamatecos reacted to the Agrarian Reform of the early 1950s, and their reactions and positions during the acute years of the political violence.

Salamá's Historic Planter Society

The province's wealthiest families lived or live principally in Salamá and San Jerónimo. Both municipalities have large ladino populations, are closer to Guatemala City, and together with Purulhá, have some of Baja Verapaz's best land.

Until 1877, when Baja Verapaz became an independent province with Salamá as its capital, the two administrative provinces that are today recognised as Baja Verapaz and Alta Verapaz were one province, known as Verapaz, a geographic area that was under the control of the Dominican order during the colonial era.

Map 2: The Verapaz Region: Alta and Baja Verapaz



Source: Map No. 9834 Rev. 3 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations May 2004 Cartographic Section. Accessed: <http://www.inmomx.com/inmochapin/images/> (updated 20 July 2006)

Salamá’s history is intimately connected with the Spanish conquest of Alta Verapaz, and with the Dominican order, which successfully subjugated the native inhabitants of Alta Verapaz. As a result, Salamá was incorporated into a territory that the order negotiated for itself from the Crown in the mid-sixteenth century.²⁰ Salamá’s elite stratum emerged after the order’s expulsion in 1829, which left a political vacuum and enabled the purchase of some of the region’s best land.

During the colonial period, the Dominican order had been the region’s sole political and religious authority as well as its principal landowner. While it owned properties in

²⁰ The Dominican order was Central America’s most powerful religious order during the colonial era, notable for its religious outreach, its ability to construct extravagant temples, and its accumulated wealth from *cofradías* (Catholic brotherhoods) and *haciendas* (Jean Piel 1988, 944; also see Remesal 1966 Vol. II, 1163; Saint Lu 1968, 13-17, 87-88; Barrios 1996, 113; Kramer 1994, 142-143; Belaubre 2001, 35; Bertrand 1986, 21-22).

Rabinal and Cubulco, the order's largest landholdings were in the valley of Salamá and its surroundings, which offered a better climate, and contained important rivers (Bertrand 1992, 87). To the north of Salamá's town was the extensive cattle farm, San Nicolás (Map 3).²¹ The Dominicans were also the proprietors of two smaller estates called Llano Grande and Chuacús in southern Salamá, both of which were over 100 *caballerías* (Percheron 1990, 239).²² In addition, to the east of Salamá town lay one of America's most productive *ingenios* (sugarcane plantations), the *hacienda* San Jerónimo, which was purchased sometime between 1560 and 1575. Initially, it measured an area of 164 *caballerías* (c.7,440 hectares), but by the late eighteenth century it measured 473 *caballerías* (21,460 hectares) (Percheron 1990, 239; Castillo Galindo 1989, 41-42, 59). McCreery notes that the plantation by the late 1700s produced "15,000 pounds of sugar a month for the Guatemala City market and for conversion into alcohol", and that the Dominicans were "the richest Order in the colony [controlling] the largest assembly of agricultural holdings" (1994, 45, 77).

Most of Salamá's elite were newcomers to the region and were recognised as the region's new planter class within a few decades, a status that several families held for many generations from around 1830 to at least 1990. Not only did they buy the Dominican land, they also increasingly occupied the political space that the Dominicans had vacated. By the final decades of the nineteenth century the new planter class controlled municipal and province-wide politics, the judiciary, and the administration of public office while it also advanced economically through the monopolisation of professions such as law, medicine, and management. Indeed, the families that my informants recognised as their town's "historic elite" were invoked in terms of their wealth, and their engagement in local politics and state administration.

²¹ Although I have not found the size of San Nicolás, according to my estimates based on its post-colonial divisions (see below), it would seem the estate measured some 214 *caballerías* (c.9,720 hectares). The estate was primarily a cattle farm, as indicated by the mayor of Verapaz, Alfonso Tovilla, who in 1635 noted that San Nicolás had some 4,000 heads of cattle (Tovilla Alfonso (Scholes & Adams) 1960 [1635], 145).

²² The two estates lay in southern Salamá's valley of Chivac (Map 4). According to the General Index of Land, compiled by Gavarrete y Cabrera, a public notary of the central government in 1863, "three *sitios de estancia* and two *caballerías* (that is, some 110 *caballerías*) called Chuacús were confirmed to the Dominicans in 1706 (Palma Murga 1991, 174). It is difficult to know what the use of each estate was, although Wortman claims that Llano Grande was used for cattle raising, and then by the mid-eighteenth century, for sugar cane (1982, 55).

After the Dominican order was expelled from the region, San Nicolás, for example, was divided into landholdings in the 1830s measuring some 35.7 *caballerías* (c.1,620 hectares) each: San Nicolás, Santa Rosa, Llano Largo Quililá, Santo Tomás, and Cachil. The first four divisions became the property of a Manuel Noriega, while Cachil was sold to Plácido Flores in 1834 (Palma Murga 1991, 91, 309). Some two decades later, Cachil became the property of Vicente Sanabria, a newcomer to Salamá who had married Plácido Flores' daughter, Jacinta Flores Sánchez in 1852.

There is no indication that Vicente himself had been a landowner in Salamá. According to one informant, he was originally from Zacapa, a neighbouring province. It is not known if Vicente acquired Cachil through purchase or marriage, but he was the first person of the Sanabria surname to be associated with the estate. To this day, the estate remains in the hands of his descendants, although now the property is much reduced in size due to inheritance divisions and sales (Appendix I: Sanabria).²³

The division of San Nicolás that retained its colonial name became the property of the Leal family. After 1830, and over a period of 30 years, Carlos Leal (b.1780) and other family members acquired a large proportion of land situated to the north of the *pueblo* area. In the early 1830s, Carlos claimed a property called Agua Blanca that was part of the hacienda Santa Rita, of which some 29 *caballerías* were adjudicated in his favour in 1836 (Palma Murga 1991, 44). His son, José María Leal Paz (b.1817), owned El Obraje, which measured 30 *caballerías*, while Francisco Leal Paz (b.1818), had 32 *caballerías* of land called Rincón de Quililá titled in his name in 1860 (Palma Murga 1991, 388). Although the two estates, El Obraje and Rincón de Quililá, were later sold to a person called Jesús Medinilla, who was their proprietor by 1874, José María Leal Paz remained the owner of the estates, San Nicolás, Santo Tomás, and Las Tunas, which he later bequeathed to his son, Mariano Leal Chavarría.²⁴

Corona (b.1871) and Marina Paredes Chavarría belonged to another elite family, the Paredes. Their brothers, David (b.c.1870) and Rafael Paredes Chavarría (b.1884) owned

²³ In Appendix I, I provide kinship diagrams on the five families referred to in this section, noting where possible generational offspring, as well as birth, marriage and death. The information is based on informant accounts as well as data gleaned from the International Genealogical Index.

²⁴ AGBV: 1874 Folio 480; AGBV: 1921 Folio 321.

several properties in Purulhá.²⁵ Meanwhile, another brother, Matías Paredes Chavarría (b.1887) owned Los Ramones in San Jerónimo, which in 1953 measured some 40 *caballerías* (1,185 hectares), which he had inherited from his father, Matías Paredes Morán (b.1841) (Appendix I: Paredes/Mendizábal).²⁶ After Mariano's death in the late 1920s, his wife, Corona Paredes Chavarría, sold San Nicolás to her sister, Marina's grandsons, Joaquín and Alberto Mendizábal Jacinto, whose descendants continued to own the estate in the early 2000s (Appendix I: Leal).

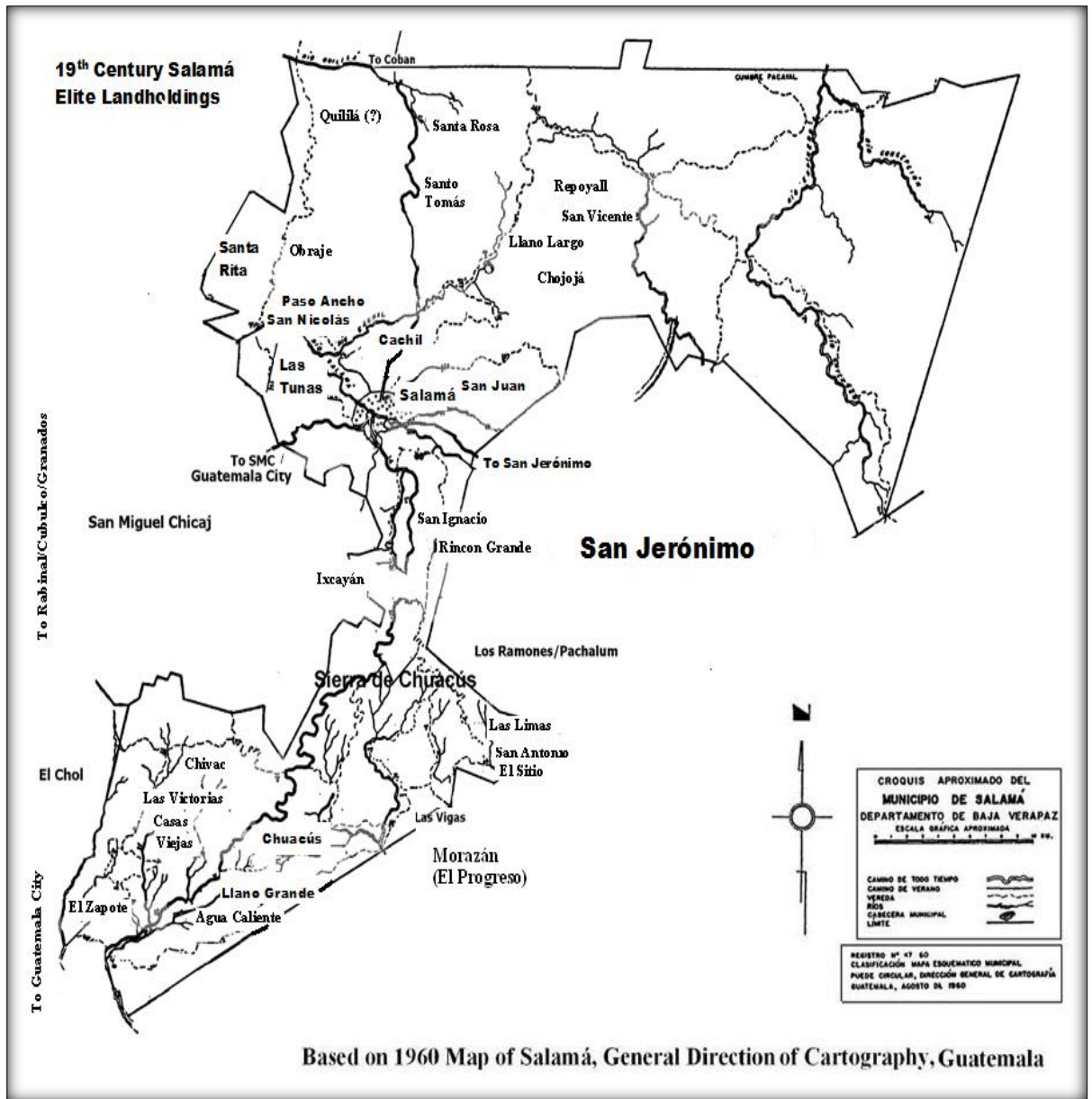
Llano Grande, meanwhile, a previously owned Dominican estate in south Salamá that measured some 110 *caballerías*, became the property of Martín Enríquez Díaz, another newcomer who had come to Salamá from León, Nicaragua. According to the International Genealogical Index, Martín married a María Manuela Morales in 1831 in the *municipio* of Sanarate, which at that time belonged to the southern Baja Verapaz region (Appendix I: Enríquez). Documentation from the Agrarian Reform of 1952 shows that Martín and María Manuela's descendants, who carried the Enríquez surname, still owned the estate, at least in and maybe beyond the 1960s (Appendix II).

San Jerónimo, the vast Dominican sugar cane plantation, was sold in 1835 to an English merchant, Carlos Meany, and a Belizean investor called Marcial Bennett. According to Gudmundson, Meany and Bennett acquired the land at a much reduced price for having supplied the liberal government 1,000 rifles (2004, 253). Given that San Jerónimo's inhabitants had resided throughout the colonial period on land that belonged to the Dominicans, its sale to two individuals turned them into landless labourers. In 1893, the government expropriated the estate, and to reward San Jerónimo's militia that participated in a war with El Salvador in 1903, the government re-distributed to each household small plots ranging from 0.5 to 14 *manzanas* (from 0.35 to 10 hectares). It also gave several larger holdings to "five outside commanders" (Gudmundson 2004, 250-255, 272, see below) (Map 4).

²⁵ AGBV: 1953 Folio 180. For example, the brothers, David and Rafael Paredes, owned the coffee plantations called "Saminin", and Pampá in Purulhá.

²⁶ AGBV: 1953 Folio 180. Los Ramones bordered Salamá's *ejido* land and San Jerónimo during the colonial period, and originally was a territory of some 20 *caballerías*, which belonged to Salamá's Indian municipality and an indigenous family of the surname Ramón, in 1752. However, conflict soon erupted between the two owners, and eventually the Ramones acted as exclusive owner by selling the land to ladinos with no authorisation from the municipality (Bertrand 1986, 98-103). By the late nineteenth century, the estate, now doubled in size, was the property of Matías Paredes Morán.

Map 4: 19th Century Salamá: Elite Landholdings



When, in the nineteenth century, communal land was increasingly divided up and sold to individuals, most Salamatecos, both ladino and Indian, could at best afford small purchases. One list of *tierras denunciadas* (claimed land) for the year 1886, reveals that of the over 200 claims, all of which concerned *ejido* land, the plots ranged from two to 60 *manzanas* (1.4 to 42 hectares), sold at 50 *centavos* per *manzana*.²⁷ Whereas, according to documents relating to land affected by the 1952 Agrarian Reform, 12 elite families

²⁷ AGBV: 1886 Folio 111.

owned 22 properties, the combined size of which represented almost a third of Salamá's territory (over some 500 *caballerías*) (Appendix II).²⁸

Vicente Ramón Sanabria Gularte (b.1885), the son of Vicente Sanabria, for example, was one of the wealthiest men in the region by the mid-twentieth century. In a will dated 1951, his properties included 18 *caballerías* of Cachil, another 18 *caballerías* of an estate called Patal in Purulhá, which incidentally also once belonged to the Dominicans, and another six properties: one in Purulhá; three in Salamá; and another two in Alta Verapaz. In addition, he owned over 500 head of cattle.²⁹

By the 1870s, the planter families had also established themselves as the new political elite. From 1877, when Salamá became the capital of the newly independent Baja Verapaz province, local and provincial politics was henceforth largely run by them.³⁰

²⁸ The figure is drawn from the total extension of Salamá's land (776 km² = 77,600 hectares = 1,724 *caballerías*) and the total size of the estates (516 *caballerías*) listed in Appendix II.

²⁹ The will was found in documentation relating to the claim on Patal in the Agrarian Reform (AGCA: Decreto 900: BV, Patal Paq. 3, Exp. 1). For details on the Dominican ownership of Patal see AGCA: Archivo de la Escribanía del Gobierno y Sección de Tierras: Baja Verapaz, Paquete 4, Expediente 12; also see Palma Murga 1992, 323-4. The family structures of certain elite Salamateco families in the nineteenth century resembled what Le Play called "the stem family", and their inheritance patterns were akin to impartible inheritance. Le Play's characterisation of the 'stem-family' was an intermediary family structure between the 'patriarchal' and 'unstable' family, a system whereby one child, often male, remained with the paternal family while his other siblings moved away (1982, 259-265). According to Fauve-Chamoux, who concentrates on pre-industrial rural southern France, partible inheritance was commonly practiced throughout Europe, but stem families were "associated with practices of impartibility" (1995, 87). Such families were characterised by, "cohabitation of successive generations, stability of private property, non-egalitarian transmission, exclusion of non-heirs (with eventual assistance and protection in case of crisis), and strict authority of the head of the household". Fauve-Chamoux argues that only one (privileged) child, and usually a *chosen* male, received "the domestic and economic unit", while other children were compensated by a dowry (1995, 89). The inheritance patterns have been identified among particular Latin American major landowning families, such as in the case of large properties in nineteenth century Peru, where according to Wilson, after the death of the male owner, properties were divided, with the widow receiving half, and the children taking equal share of the rest. However, eventually, one son, "the heir apparent" would then acquire his mother and siblings' property (Wilson 1984, 307). In the example of the Sanabria family, archival documentation revealed that despite having several children, only Nicolás, Vicente and Jacinta's eldest son, inherited his father's properties. After Nicolás' death in 1912, Cachil was divided into six divisions: half was left to his wife, Cleotilde, and the other half divided between five siblings. However, in 1916, Vicente Ramón inherited his mother's portion of 18 *caballerías* (Archive of the Juzgado de Primera Instancia Civil de Baja Verapaz, Legajo Único: 1859-1939). Although the other four siblings inherited some land, Patal, reveals that Vicente was a privileged heir. By the time Vicente Ramón wrote his will of 1951, the system of impartibility had given way, at least in this family, to partibility, albeit heavily gendered. The will reveals that Vicente Ramón intended to bequeath his sons approximately an equal amount of land, while to his daughters he intended to leave homes, and land surrounding them, albeit of less monetary worth.

³⁰ Before this period, evidence indicates that indigenous governors still had some power, representing Salamá's Indian population. In 1845, for example, Salamá had an indigenous governor of the name Feliciano Fernández who represented his indigenous community in their attempts to retrieve legal titles of Pachalum/Los Ramones, which Feliciano argued had been auctioned to the *naturales* (indigenous) of the town in 1772. AGCA: Archivo de la Escribanía del Gobierno y Sección de Tierras: Baja Verapaz, Paquete 4, Expediente 12; also see Palma Murga, 1992, 323-4).

Scholars agree that after 1871 ladinos increasingly pressured the government for representation in local politics. According to Barrios, in 1906 in the majority indigenous municipality, San Miguel Chicaj, ladinos petitioned the legislature to establish a bi-ethnic municipality demanding half of the functionaries be ladino and the other half indigenous. They continued pressure to such effect that in May 1927 a decree gave ladinos a preponderant role in indigenous municipalities, stating that the first *alcalde* (mayor) and first *syndic* (government administrator in charge of issues relating to the Treasury - *hacienda*) had to be literate ladinos, while the second mayor and *syndic* was to be indigenous (1996, 138-139; see Grandin 2002, 131-138 for the case of Quetzaltenango).

In Salamá, ladinos were already in control of local politics by the 1870s, and probably even earlier, because Salamá already had a large ladino population, the reasons for which I say more in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, not all ladinos had equal access to control of local politics. In fact, it was only elite men who were appointed to key administrative roles. Nicolás Sanabria, for example, became mayor of Salamá in 1883 and 1905 and occupied the position of director of the province's hospital in 1911.³¹ The key council members of the 1883 government were, together with Nicolás as mayor, Gabino Gómez as deputy and Mariano Leal Chavarría as first syndic. All three were part of the landed elite as Nicolás Sanabria owned Cachil, Mariano Leal owned San Nicolás, and Gabino Gómez was an executive lieutenant (*teniente ejecutivo*) in the army who had recently claimed three *caballerías* of uncultivated land in San Guadalupe, in San Miguel Chicaj.³² In 1903, Gabino Gómez became mayor of Salamá, with Nicolás Sanabria appointed as his deputy and David Paredes Chavarría as first syndic. David, we will recall, was Corona Paredes' brother and Mariano Leal Chavarría's brother-in-law. In 1905, Federico Gularte, who belonged to Salamá's most established elite family (discussed in detail in Chapter 5) was elected first syndic.³³ Martín Enríquez served for a short period as governor (*corregidor*) of the Verapaz province in the mid-1860s. His son, Felipe, also became a state functionary, serving as magistrate of Salamá between 1877 and 1889, while his brother

³¹ AGBV: 1881 Folio 490; 1905 Folio 460; 1911, Folio 860

³² AGBV: 1881 Folio 490

³³ AGBV: 1905/1906 Folio 460

Miguel joined the army and was promoted, together with Arcadio Cojulun (who became *jefe político* - governor- of Baja Verapaz from 1878 to 1885), to General in 1883.³⁴

At the turn of the twentieth century, elite men, such as General Pedro Ramos, Mariano Leal Medinilla, Federico Gularte, Francisco Leal Valdéz, David Izaguirre and Nicolás Sanabria all belonged to the Liberal Party, meeting regularly to promote the re-election of their national candidate, Manuel Estrada Cabrera (president from 1898 to 1920). They even set up a newspaper entitled, *Eco de Salamá*, which advocated Estrada Cabrera's re-election, and issued its last number on 10 July 1904, when "its principal objective [which] was to work with decided effort for the candidature of Estrada Cabrera", had been achieved (*Eco de Salamá*, 10 July 1904).³⁵

One phenomenon of the Liberal era was the increasing number of complaints levelled by indigenous communities/persons against ladino authorities, for abusive treatment visited upon them, theft of land, and sundry other reasons. Often complaining to the local authorities in vain, Indians then directed their concerns straight to the president. In a letter on behalf of *el cuerpo municipal* (the municipal council) of San Miguel Chicaj, several Indians accused Martín Enríquez and his sons of land theft, robbery and violence. They wrote:

"In the time of the *corregidor*, don Martin Enríquez, and of the magistrate of Salamá, Don Felipe, son of the first, these functionaries took possession of our title and part of our land. Not happy with this usurpation they established a '*picota*' (a pillory) in the *hacienda* Rincón Grande that was used to whip our fathers. Sr. President we suffer much because of these señores, Miguel, Gregorio, and Felipe Enríquez, to the point that we have been obliged to work with no payment on their *hacienda*, which continues to this day. In 1881, Don Felipe Enríquez and Don Arcadio Cojulun, *jefe político*, forced us through violence to hand over 1,000 pesos claiming that the money was for *mandamientos*; but really it was nothing more than a theft. This family, which has the support of the local authorities, has caused us nothing but abuse; we have suffered expropriations and plunder..."³⁶

³⁴ AGBV: 1889 Folio No. 431. The Enríquez offer another example of the practice of impartible inheritance. Martín Enríquez and María Manuela Morales had at least four sons. Yet only their son, Felipe Enríquez Morales (1840-1917) inherited Llano Grande, as made evident by the owners of the estate in the 1950s, all of whom were Felipe's children, and in one case, a grandson (see Appendix II).

³⁵ We should bear in mind that no more than 10 percent of Salamá's population was literate according to the 1921 census (DGE 1921).

³⁶ AGBV: 1889

Given that Salamá already had a planter class, the effect of the 1877 agricultural law produced a different dynamic with its Indian population than with those in its neighbouring municipalities. McCreery (1994) argues a more pressing problem than land was the need for labour on the coffee plantations. Planters increasingly petitioned the state to implement a system that guaranteed them a workforce, which led to the passing of Decree 177 in April 1877, which specifically targeted indigenous communities for labour.³⁷

Salamá's Indian population was no different to other Indian communities in that it increasingly turned to debt servitude to avoid the labour drafts. However, it appears that, in contrast to Indians in other municipalities, such as Rabinal and San Miguel Chicaj, those in Salamá increasingly opted for indebtedness to landowners closer to home.

Within fifteen years of the passing of the agricultural law, Rabinal and San Miguel Chicaj were converted almost entirely into labour force municipalities, with their Indian population travelling to plantations further afield. Both lacked significant plantations (see EAFG 1995, 51). When in May 1892 the *jefe político* asked the mayors of both towns to report on the number of available workers, Rabinal's reported that there were 1,781 Indian men, between 18 and 50 years of age, available as "*jornales disponibles* (seasonal workers) to protect the agriculture who go to the coast voluntarily in *cuadrillas* (contingencies) of 51 to 200 men". The mayor of San Miguel Chicaj reported back that there were 521 *jornaleros* (seasonal workers).³⁸ The *habilitación* system reached its peak between 1915 and 1925 (McCreery 1994, 225) and this would seem to be fully reflected in local conditions. According to *El catastro de trabajadores del Municipio de Rabinal* of 1924, there were eight *habilitadores* (persons employed to seek out workers for the *habilitación*)

³⁷ The Law abolished indigenous communal property, imposed state levies on indigenous villages, and targeted indigenous people for their labour. It stipulated the time-period indigenes had to work, conditions for exemption, and the demands planters could legally make upon them. All indigenous labourers were legally obliged to carry a *libreta* (workbook) detailing their contract, a record of debts/credit, and days worked. The law also established *mandamientos* (labour drafts), obliging departmental governors to provide labourers to individual planters. The drafts were notorious for hardship and abuse. Indians only avoided them if they accepted a wage advance (*la habilitación*), which converted large numbers into indebted workers (*mozos habilitados*) (McCreery 1994, 186-189, 302; also see Grandin 2000, 127; Taracena 2003, 86).

³⁸ AGBV: 1892. According to the 1893 census, Rabinal's population was 4,792, whereas in 1921 it was 12,474, which is an increase of 7,682 persons (DGE 1921). The 1893 figure can be an indication of mass flight in the late nineteenth century. Its significant increase thereafter suggests, however, that given the numbers of *habilitados*, they were simply not present in the town when the census was taken.

working for twelve different plantations with an astounding total of 3,326 *mozos habilitados* (wage-advanced workers).³⁹

In Salamá, the situation was different. On the one hand, its landowners certainly sought labour outside of the town. Based on a report entitled “Book of taxes for the *Municipio* of *Mozos* of San Gabriel Pansuj, Year 1889”, Salamá’s landowners had paid most of the tax.⁴⁰

Yet not even a decade later, most of the properties had their own *mozos colonos* (resident) or *mozos habilitados* (wage advanced) workers. In 1894, several indigenous *colonos* were granted exemption from *mandamiento* as was the case of Pablo Toj, from San Gabriel, who was “committed” to work for three months on Juan Hernández’s finca, San Ignacio, or the several *colonos* of Cachil and Patal, which belonged to Nicolás Sanabria, or Mariano Cacao, who “owes 30 pesos to Arcadio Izaguirre”, owner of Carmelia, a plantation in Purulhá, or Manuel Cahueque, who was a *mozo* in Rafael Paredes’ finca, El Pampa.⁴¹

Several others were granted exemption from military service because they were indebted *mozos habilitados* on several fincas. Twenty-one *mozos* on Mariano Leal Chavarría’s finca, San Nicolás, were granted exemption from military service for debts between 30 and 116 pesos. In another case of military exemption, there was “a group of señores, *mozos colonos*, inhabitants of the sugarcane finca, Chuacús” who were all *habilitado* with more than 30 pesos and therefore granted military exemption for a year.⁴²

By the mid-twentieth century, there were some 320 *mozo colono* families residing on elite properties, that is more than 3,000 residents, the majority of whom provided cheap or free labour (Appendix II). On Llano Grande, which by the 1950s comprised five properties, some 107 *colono* families resided on three of the five properties. It is very

³⁹ For example, the *habilitador* Antonio Valdizon had 800 *mozos habilitados* for Pantaléon in Escuintla; Pedro Aragón had 700 for the finca Osuna Rochela, in Escuintla, owned by Central American Plantations Corporation, New York; Manuel González had 800 in three different fincas owned by Sociedad Agrícola, Viñas Zapote (600 in Monte Rey, Escuintla; 200 for Los Diamantes; and 6 in El Zapote, Escuintla) (AGBV: 1924, Folio 56).

⁴⁰ Between December 1888 and December 1889, a total of \$17,537.5 was collected from planters for 1,403 *mozos*, who had to pay a tax of \$12.5 for each *mozo* they requested. Of this 1,403, Salamá’s *finqueros* paid for 818 *mozos*, either to work in agriculture or to carry loads mainly to and from Guatemala City (AGBV: 1889, Folio 240).

⁴¹ AGBV, Year 1894, Folio 22

⁴² AGBV: 1906, Folio 460

probable that they were the second or third generation of family members residing on the estates. In 1954, when the agrarian reform's Decree 900 was reversed, Dolores Enríquez Castellanos and her offspring legally sought the eviction of 50 *colono* families who had lived on her estate before 1952. The *colonos* appealed to the authorities, pleading that they be given permission to remain, given that they had lived there since birth as had their parents and grandparents, when Gregorio Enríquez Morales (b.1842) ran Llano Grande.⁴³

The Agrarian Reform affected all the local elite's landholdings, which all measured over 200 hectares. From the 1950s, many elites increasingly settled in Guatemala City. Influencing their decision was perhaps the lack of economic opportunity in the region, combined with the effects of the Agrarian Reform (despite its reversal in 1954). Others remained in Guatemala City after their studies. Before 1950, it was rare for elite women to study. Men, on the other hand, would leave the town for secondary and university education since Salamá's first national secondary school, *La Escuela Normal* (the Normal School), only opened in 1967 (see below). After the 1950s, daughters also increasingly studied and, with their male siblings, were sent to Guatemala City. According to my older elite informants, many chose to remain in Guatemala City, preferring to return to the town to visit parents or older relatives.

Many of those elites who remained in Salamá, according to my non-elite informants, began to experience a notable economic decline in recent decades. Although for this study, it is not possible to know why, according to Guillermo López Pérez (a non-elite, and not his real name) the main reason lay in a lack of investment in their estates and their inability to diversify their crops:

“These [elite] families, despite their social status, no longer enjoy the same economic status they once did. They never really adapted to the evolving changes, to what was going on in their own time. A lot of them based their economy and, of course, their social influence on *latifundismo* (large landholdings). But things changed. Material property was not enough. It's about

⁴³ AGCA: Lista de Fincas Afectadas por el Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz, Llano Grande, Paq. 1A Exp. 7D. In 1954, the counter-revolutionary government reversed Decree 900, and land awarded to a landless peasantry was returned to its pre-reform owners. On many occasions, the conditions and agreement that governed the relationship between owner and *colonos* and/or tenants before the reform were simply re-instated. However, occasionally, owners sought the eviction of their *colonos* who had dared to denounce the land, initiating aggressive disputes. (AGCA: Lista de Fincas Afectadas por el Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz).

business acumen, diversification, and intellectual property nowadays, and these families have resisted change so what we now see is their progressive decline”.

This decline coincided with the upward mobility of *pueblo/mestizo* families, to whom I now turn.

From Artisans to Dependent Employees and/or Independent Employers

Pueblo/mestizo families were heterogeneous, in that they occupied a variety of posts locally, and comprised the bulk of Salamá’s middle class. It is worthy of note that almost everyone with whom I spoke in this category related experiences of poverty, and the trajectory in their accounts from belonging to the town’s poorer classes to becoming members of the middle class followed a remarkably similar path.

For most of the twentieth century, the urban population remained small, growing only towards the end of the period (Table 1). Most *pueblo/mestizos* I met stated that their families had been resident in the town from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and that previous generations had resided elsewhere, in a surrounding rural village, another *municipio*, or another province. When Salamá became the province’s capital in 1877, it offered better education, commerce, and employment opportunities than other *municipios*, so poorer ladinos migrated to the area.

Table 1: Salamá Urban Population: 1921-2002

Year	Total Population	Urban Total	% Urban	% Urban Ladino
1921	13, 548	2, 541	18.7	
1950	12, 618	2, 760	21.8	84.4
1964	18, 704	4, 443	23.7	89.8
1973	21, 913	5, 529	25.2	90.3
1981	23, 414	6, 941	29.6	87.9
1994	35, 612	10, 533	29.5	86.9
2002	47, 274	18, 080	38.2	

Source: (DGE 1921; DGE 1950; DGE 1964; DGE 1973; INE 1981; INE 1994; INE 2002)

In contrast to elites, most *pueblo/mestizos* owned little land over the twentieth century. Many of the men who were born before 1950 worked as artisans occupying a trade,

such as shoe-making, carpentry, tailoring or ironworks, after having received their training at *la Escuela Práctica*, the main school that operated in the town centre in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1955, Salamá inaugurated the “José Clemente Chavarría” *Escuela Federal* (Federal School), which offered primary school education. A decade later, the *Escuela Básica* and the *Instituto pre-vocacional* (Prevocational Institute) opened, offering three years of secondary education. According to Don Hugo, who worked at *la Federal* from 1959 to 1972, the school employed 20 teachers: “ten taught girls in the morning and another ten taught boys in the afternoon”. In 1967, the Normal Rural School No. 4 (*La Normal*) opened, extending secondary school education and offering teacher-training courses (*el Magisterio*). It was the only school of its kind in the province, lower middle-class ladino children from within Salamá, other Baja Verapaz *municipios*, as well as other provinces, like Zacapa and Chiquimula attended, even though, as some recalled, it took a while for parents to appreciate the merits of education. Cristóbal, in his early 50s, raised by his single mother who sold tortillas, and now the owner of a local private school, was part of *La Normal*'s second promotion. He remembered that during the school's early years, parents were short-sighted (*se quedaban truncados*) about the benefits of education and expected their children to leave school after completing the third grade. He was one of only six students in his year, which almost led to the school closing: “The cost of the teachers didn't merit the investment”.

The presence of *La Normal*, however, changed the economic circumstances of many lower income families, and attitudes changed by the 1970s as parents increasingly realised that teacher training offered a long-term viable employment opportunity for their children. By the early twentieth century, *pueblo/mestizos* between the ages of 30 and 50 had mainly trained as teachers, with their children now pursuing further education at university. As the town's teachers, many also owned local businesses, such as photocopy centres, internet cafés, newsagents, general stores, and restaurants. Two men, both of whom had been born into poverty, now were the owners of two of the town's private schools.

Don Leopoldo Ramírez (not his real name) for example, was born in the *pueblo* area of Salamá in 1932 but several generations of his paternal family were born on an estate in Purulhá. He knew his paternal grandfather was a *mozo* on the estate, and that his father worked as the estate's self-taught carpenter. Shortly before Don Leopoldo's birth the

family relocated to Salamá *pueblo* where his father rented a house owned by an elite family: “Where we lived was just a little house and a *corredor*” (passageway).

Unlike his father, Don Leopoldo was given the opportunity to study at the Escuela Práctica. Having completed his primary school education, he left Salamá for Guatemala City at the age of 13, where he found employment as a mechanic’s assistance for four years, and then as a bus conductor. In his early 20s, he returned to Salamá after he secured work as secretary to Salamá’s Justice of Peace and then for the final 25 years of his career as a bank clerk at local Agrarian Bank branch. All his children would later train to become teachers.

Although Don Leopoldo’s children were economically comfortable he, like others, recalled experiences of poverty. Interestingly, such accounts were always invoked through the symbolism of “shoes”, or rather, their absence. Don Leopoldo, for example, recalled that as a pupil at *la práctica*: “we all walked around barefoot (*descalzo*), but in that era we worried little. The people were *humildes* (poor). Really, there were few families who were wealthy”. Don Diego Guzmán, a schoolteacher of more than five decades, declared that the majority of Salamá’s *pueblo* families over the twentieth century were large and poor, and many extremely poor. His father made *marimbas* and gave *marimba* classes to local children, but the work brought in little money. One of nine siblings, Don Diego was given his first pair of shoes at the age of eighteen. He recalled that as a child, his family lived on a diet largely of tortillas: “half of the dough was maize and the other half of *guineo* (a variety of banana)”. Meat was “eaten on Thursdays and maybe Sundays”, and in school, “we walked around barefoot, with patched up (*remendado*) clothing. We wore whatever clothes we had...I was brought up in a *camisón* (a long shirt) until I was six”.

Brígido Soto (not his real name), who was in his early 40s, said that families that lived in the *pueblo* tried to secure a regular income through state-employment, and referred to the families as “*dependidas*” that is dependent, because they were dependent on a state salary. His father became a police officer while Brígido became a schoolteacher and was giving classes at the Normal School when I met him. He also owned a small plot of land, as did many other *pueblo/mestizos*, but the family’s income was largely from his state salary. Brígido recalled that when he attended school as a child, “all the children, except those of the rich families (*las familias pudientes*), walked around barefoot”. He received his first

pair of shoes for his first communion at the age of nine. It was not clear why shoes were mentioned so frequently although perhaps because the families with whom I spoke no longer experienced such poverty it was easier to share that experience.⁴⁴

Don Hugo Conde Prera's upward mobility presents an excellent example of some of those who identified as *pueblo/mestizos*. Born in 1938, Don Hugo was the youngest of eighteen siblings, sixteen who were half-siblings. Don Hugo's mother, upon the insistence of her husband, raised all eighteen. Consequently, the family lived modestly. Don Hugo's father was a tailor and later turned to selling electrical products, while his mother ran a café to supplement the family's income. Don Hugo trained, like other Salamatecos of his generation, at the Practical School to become a shoemaker. He recalled how at the age of, "10 or 11, I can't remember now, but I would study in the afternoon and attend a workshop in the morning where I made the first pair of shoes I ever wore". Then, unlike his siblings, who "when they reached a certain age had to go out to work to alleviate the family's economic situation", he won a scholarship, at the age of 12, to study at Cobán's *Instituto Mixto del Norte Cobán* (Mixed Institute of the North, Cobán) to train as a teacher.

In 1957, he returned to Salamá, now married. His wife was also a teacher who he met in Cobán. Shortly thereafter, they both relocated to Cubulco after Don Hugo was posted there as primary schoolteacher. Two years later, he transferred to Salamá's *la Federal*, and became its Technical Director a decade later. In 1972, he was promoted to Director of *la Normal*. He recalled the respect one acquired from working in education in those years:

⁴⁴ The reference to shoes is interesting for another reason. We will recall from the previous chapter that an earlier generation of anthropologists working on Guatemala advocated the displacement of "race" for "ethnicity". Van den Berghe argued that given Indians "passed" into the ladino ethnic category, and because most poor ladinos were physically indistinguishable from Indians, differences between ladinos and Indians were ethnic, not racial. He wrote: "For most Guatemalans, physical appearance is of little significance except perhaps as a crude indicator of ethnicity. The most commonly used and most discriminating criteria of group membership are home language and clothing, especially footgear or its absence" (1968, 519). Van den Berghe includes footwear in his criteria of markers. Cultural markers, like the female *huipil* and *corte* (blouse and skirt) have long been used to fix and identify indigenous people (For discussions on how indigenous women are viewed as the reproducers of Maya culture, and how the state has exploited their material culture, such as in matters of tourism, see Nelson 1999; Hendricksen 1995). As we will see in the next chapter, when van den Berghe was writing, census takers observed several cultural markers to ascertain one's ethnicity, and a lack of "footgear" was often taken as a marker of indigeneity. Van den Berghe wrote when many of my *pueblo/mestizo* discussants were at school, walking around barefoot. Would he have thought then, if he had gone to Salamá, that they were the children of indigenous parents?

“In those days to teach at the *Federal* was an honour. There was a scaling system and you had to start [teaching] in a village or a smaller municipality, then progress to a departmental capital. The next step was Guatemala City. People looked at us [teachers] as very important people”.

In 1976, Don Hugo became acting mayor, following the death of the elected mayor's wife in the February 1976 earthquake, a post he occupied alongside his responsibilities at *la Normal* until 1978, following his appointment as governor of Baja Verapaz, a post he occupied until 1985. Although he claimed he had not anticipated a career in government, Don Hugo was motivated by a civic duty to modernise Salamá. He was instrumental in the founding of the Normal School, as well as the opening of university campuses in Salamá from the late 1970s. When I met him, Don Hugo was still working in education; he gave classes to soldiers in the town's ex-military zone and was employed as administrator of the weekend courses at the Galileo University campus in Salamá. Of his five children, one held a state job in Guatemala City, another owned an import and export company, a daughter worked as a teacher, a son worked for the Ministry of Finance in Guatemala City, and his other son as Programme Coordinator of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Baja Verapaz.

Up until at least the 1970s, politics, the church, and education were primarily in the hands of elite males. Don Diego recalled the decades prior to the inauguration of *la federal* and *la normal*:

“An important part of Salamá's economy has always been of public employees...people who worked in the Justice of Peace, the Administration of Rents, the army, schools, and public health. About 20 percent were from Salamá, and from very specific families, *la gente adinerada* (moneyed people), and the rest, some 80 percent came from Guatemala, like the doctors, the lawyers”.

From the 1970s, however, men like Don Hugo, (and later women), increasingly took on roles in politics, as mayors and governors, senior roles in the church, and monopolized jobs in state education. In fact, over the last 30 years, a few local families within the *pueblo/mestizo* (and *puro* category) have even superseded the wealth of the town's historic planter class. Interestingly, despite an improvement to their economic circumstances, many *pueblo/mestizos* differentiated their experiences of upward mobility, from those of the town's long-standing wealthy elite.

Rodolfo Fernández Pereira, a Salamateco in his late 50s, lived in Guatemala City, returning to Salamá with his family almost every weekend and during festive holidays. In Guatemala City, he owned a TV cable company, and had even set up a subsidiary in Salamá, which went by the name, “the Star Channel” (*el Star Canal*). In April 2004, he threw a party in honour of his daughter’s 15th birthday, displaying his new eight-bedroom house, equipped with an outdoor swimming pool in *barrio el centro*. Yet, Fernández Pereira’s status was often invoked through the chief qualification of money, as Guillermo López Pérez (not his real name) explained:

“Remember, it’s hard not to think of our town’s wealthy [elite] families as ‘different’...it’s an image that’s been formed over a long period, say for more than 100 years, over four or five generations. The families that my mother regarded as *poderosas* (the powerful ones) were the same my grandmother recognised. And, as a kid, I knew who this town’s rich families were...so it’s hard to forget this...their status, which you must remember, *they* have cultivated for a long time. Now, my daughters, and then my grandchildren, will perhaps witness a different reality because these [elite] families, already say, when I was in my 20s, had declined in economic terms. But their status, well it’s all been a process...it’s taken a long time to consolidate, so it’ll take time for the memory to disappear. In the last 20, perhaps 30 years we’ve seen the emergence of new economic families, but people here treat them differently”.

Indeed, while *pueblo/mestizos* viewed their current circumstances differently from those of the elite, locals also treated the change to *puros*’ economic circumstances in a similar fashion, although the latter generally were much admired by Salamatecos. It is to them I now turn.

Los ladinos puros: from Peasants to Agriculturalists and Tertiary Sector Employees

Puro families had historically resided in the southern rural part of Baja Verapaz. When Salamatecos invoked “the south” they referred to a geographic area along the river Motagua and/or south of Sierra de Chuacús, which included not only southern Salamá but also Granados, El Chol, and even neighbouring municipalities that were not in Baja Verapaz, like Morazán. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, and then shortly after the 1976 earthquake, whole families migrated from the south towards Salamá’s *pueblo* area, their numbers substantial enough for other Salamatecos to describe their arrival as “*una*

avalanche” (an avalanche) or as “*la ola*” (the wave).⁴⁵ Many settled in villages surrounding the town, like Cachil, La Concepción, Los Pinos and Los Limones.

In the south, they were small-landholding farmers with those who owned properties never exceeding five *caballerías* (225 hectares). According to the Balcárcel family, who are the focus of Chapter 6, and who resided in and around the *pueblo*, their father Chilano Balcárcel, owned three *caballerías* of land in the south.

According to documentation relating to the 1952 Agrarian Reform, Claro Véliz Samayoa, another *puro*, was the proprietor of El Jute, which measured around 2½ *caballerías* (c.112 hectares) and owned some 40 head of cattle. Emigdio Véliz Barcárcel, also a *puro*, owned La Soledad, which measured one *caballería* and 10 *manzanas* (c.52 hectares), and owned 29 head of cattle. Similarly, Policarpo Véliz Samayoa owned Las Tintas, which measured just over five *caballerías*.⁴⁶

In contrast to elite families, many of whom by the 1950s were absentee plantation-owners, southerners lived and worked in the south, basing their livelihoods on small-scale agriculture, such as planting maize and sugarcane, although a strong element of their rural identity lay in cattle rearing.

Although the evidence is too sparse to reach any binding conclusion, *puro* narratives on residential patterns resembled Le Play’s (1982) “patriarchal family” identified in nineteenth-century Europe. In his comparative study, Le Play’s patriarchal family was a family structure where children lived collectively on land under the authority of the parents, whose property remained undivided, where family labour was under the direction of the father, and combined multiple incomes. Le Play argued that children remained with parents because of economic demands and considerations (1982, 259-265). So, although the Balcárcel siblings explained that their father, Chilano, owned three *caballerías* of land in Las Vanillas, it is unclear if that was indeed the case, or if he owned one part because he shared the land with three brothers. What was clear, however, was that Chilano lived there with his wife, Luisa, and their nine children,

⁴⁵ The February earthquake, which epicentre was in the river Motagua, left 20,000 dead and over one million displaced (Garrard-Burnett 1998,120).

⁴⁶ AGCA: Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz. El Jute, Paq. 6a, Exp. 7; La Soledad, Paq. 6b, Exp. 9; Las Tintas, Paq. 6b, Exp. 8.

together with his three brothers who had their respective families. In addition, three of Chilano's sons were married. They too lived with their wives, while two of the three already had young children.⁴⁷

Despite owning their own land, many *puro* families in the south were also tenants either on the property of other *pueros* or larger estates that belonged to elite families. In the early 1950s, there were at least 68 tenant families residing on elite-owned plantations in the south, obliged to pay rent in kind and/or cash for the use of their land (see Appendix II). Chilano and his family, together with another 14 tenant families, leased around 80 *manzanas* (c.56 hectares) on Estancia Grande – a landholding that belonged to Eduardo Enríquez Arrúe, measuring some 29 *caballerías* (1,316 hectares) – in exchange for work and payment in kind.⁴⁸ According to his children, Chilano was a tenant partly because there were several families eking out a living on the family-owned land in Las Vanillas, and partly because the land itself was of poor quality, yielding little, which was one of the motivating reasons for the Balcárcels' migration towards urban Salamá.

In contrast to elite families, southerners rarely allowed *mozos* on their land, arguing, as did Emigdio Véliz to counter the expropriation of his property, that “because there is a lack of roads, there exist no means for us to sell our agricultural products, so we can't have *mozos colonos* because we cannot sustain them. For this reason, we earn money on our *fincas* (estates) through tenancy and cattle rearing”.⁴⁹

It is worthy of note that the experiences of many *puro* families like the Balcárcel were completely comparable to those of indigenous people in the 1950s. While many Indians were landless families residing on elite landholdings, as noted above, the terms between landowner and family for the use of the former's land were analogous to those for *puro* families. On Estancia Grande the 15 tenant families were obliged to work for one week per month for the plantation owner, for which they received no payment, as well as

⁴⁷ Similar residential patterns are suggested in the documentation for non-elite southern properties that were affected by Decree 900, although only a few properties were denounced primarily because they were too small for expropriation. However, from those few that were, we learn that several families resided on the same property. El Jute belonged to three siblings, all of whom lived together, with their parents, and their own respective families. La Soledad was the residence of three siblings, their respective families, and parents. Meanwhile, Las Tintas belonged to Policarpo Véliz, who was 57 years of age in 1953. He challenged the claim made on his land by arguing that it did not qualify because of its size and because it belonged also to his five sons, each who lived on the property with their families.

⁴⁸ AGCA: Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz. Estancia Grande, Paq. 1, Exp. 6

⁴⁹ AGCA: Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz. La Soledad, Paq. 6b, Exp. 9.

payment of one *quintal* of each *almud* of their crops. On San Felipe de las Conchas, which belonged to Sara Enríquez Castellanos, 43 *colono* families, that is indigenous families, had to work for two weeks per month for the landowner, in exchange for residence on the land, and use of land for their own crops.⁵⁰

However, the economic circumstances of *puros* did not lead to any forging of a class or political alliance with indigenes and other sectors of the rural peasantry. Instead, *puros* consistently affirmed a difference of social identity and purpose. Although they owned only small plots of land, they took palpable pride in their private ownership. Although some had become tenants, they stressed they were *arrendantes* (tenants), not *mozos colonos*, words synonymous with Indian. In contrast to other sectors of a rural peasantry who mobilised to obtain land from the agrarian reform, *puros* generally opposed both such activity and the reform itself, as did *pueblo/mestizos*. Indeed, not only did they oppose, many actively mobilised in support of the national opposition to the Arbenz government.

Interestingly, in conversations with *puros*, the agrarian reform, and its effects were not the motivation behind their migration from the southern rural region. There were many different reasons. As often stated by my *puro* informants, successive governments had historically ignored the area, investing little in infrastructure, education and health, although in recent decades the state has invested in roads connecting the area more effectively with urban Salamá and Guatemala City.

Chilano Balcárcel and his family left the south in 1962, having purchased a property of nine *caballerías* (c.408 hectares) for just over 6,000 quetzals just north of the *pueblo* area. Eight of his children migrated with him, while one married daughter remained in the south. All the children bar two who migrated were married, and each was given one *caballería* of land on which to form their own households. All except one of the six married siblings' spouses were also from the south.

Families like the Barcárcel remained rural in their attitude and behaviour, continuing the economic practices of the south in their new surroundings, and adhering to the morals that underpinned social life in southern villages (discussed in Chapter 6). Chilano's two

⁵⁰ AGCA: Decreto 900: Baja Verapaz: Estancia Grande, Paq. 1, Exp. 6; San Felipe de las Conchas, Paq. 3C, Exp. 14

brothers and their families also moved north, purchasing land neighbouring their brother's land. Chilano later sold one *caballería* of his land to the son-in-law who had remained in the south. Doña Inéz, his daughter-in-law, left the south in 1962, shortly after marrying Chilano's son, Don Fermín. Two of her brothers left in the late 1970s for the States, while another two moved with their families closer to the *pueblo*, becoming their sister's neighbours. According to Sofía, Dona Inéz's daughter, southern families who moved to the outskirts of Salamá were encouraged to live in close proximity to each other: "in the same way as they were in *el sur*, we are in Salamá. Families from the south are predominant in certain villages (*son las mismas familias que dominan en ciertas aldeas*)".

Interestingly, Chilanos' grandchildren, who grew up closer to the *pueblo*, were also referred to as *los del sur* although many had little personal knowledge of the south itself. While their parents remained rural, agricultural, and broadly uneducated, the children were strongly encouraged to excel in school. The majority of the Balcárcel siblings' offspring whom I befriended either had studied at university or were studying at the time. In contrast to their mothers, younger *puros* often went beyond Salamá to study in Cobán, Guatemala City, and - in the case of Sofía, who won a grant - to Quetzaltenango.

All had varying degrees of professional success and occupied a diversity of jobs. The men generally continued in agriculture. Yet, unlike their parents, they were entrepreneurial and wealthy. Carlos González Rivera, for example, was renowned locally as one of the town's most prosperous agriculturalists, dedicating his activities to tomato production and an investment in crop diversification for a Guatemalan market. Having inherited insufficient land, he turned to the proprietor of the historically elite-owned plantation, San Nicolás, and negotiated the lease of 10 *caballerías*. Eduardo Ascencio, another agriculturalist, became mayor of Salamá in 2000. Women, on the other hand, work largely in the town's tertiary sector, employed in some of the most coveted jobs such as in international and national non-governmental organisations. When I was in Salamá, one was headhunted for the governor's position in the Departmental Office of Governance, a couple worked as directors of developmental organisations, and two held posts in the health sector. The families I met belonged to Salamá's middle class and were considered as such.

Anticommunism, Catholicism, Conservatism and Militarism

Despite the distinct trajectories outlined above, at specific junctures in history, the political affinities of the three groups aligned, which I will demonstrate through a focus on first, the 1950s and the Agrarian Reform, and secondly, the political conflict of the 1970s and early 1980s.

Below, I offer a brief outline of how several individuals from each identity group played a significant role locally during those eras. Evidence strongly indicates that in the 1950s, many locals offered support to a counterinsurgency that ultimately ousted Arbenz and his government. Later, during the 1970s and 1980s, when the military battled a guerrilla and carried out heinous acts of violence against the country's indigenous peoples, among whom were many of Salamá's neighbours in Rabinal, San Miguel and Cubulco, many locals once again aligned with a military, to which they offered full support.

While carrying out research in the newspaper library of the Central American General Archives (AGCA) in Guatemala City in my first month of fieldwork I came across several articles on Salamá. The articles detailed a failed attempt to reverse the reformist programme of the Arbenz regime prior to Washington's internationally promoted operation of 1954. The attempt was launched in urban Salamá in the early hours of 29 March 1953. Front pages of national newspapers of the time ran several spreads on what increasingly became known as "the plot of Salamá" and "*El Salamatecazo*" (Salamá's coup).⁵¹ According to Handy, the rebellion was "tiny and ill-planned", with most of the conspirators quickly identified and arrested, alleging that the United Fruit Company had paid them \$64,000 for staging the coup (Handy 1994, 173).

In Salamá, I encountered very few people who spoke easily about the attempted coup, perhaps because the rebellion led to the arrest of many prominent national anti-communists, among whom was Mario Sandoval Alarcón, who in 1958 founded the violently anti-communist National Liberal Movement (MLN) (CEH Vol. I, 112-113). Ironically, the round-up of anti-communists like Sandoval Alarcón led to their subsequent imprisonment in Salamá's high-security prison.

⁵¹ See for example, *Nuestro Diario*, 24 April 1953; *Noticias de Guatemala*, No. 43, 2 March 1954. Copies found in the *Hemeroteca* of the Archive General of Central America (AGCA).

In another ironic twist, according to Salamatecos, upon his release following the 1954 coup, Sandoval Alarcón labelled Salamá a “communist” town, which infuriated Salamatecos like Juan Fernández Valdés, a staunch anti-communist who became mayor of Salamá in 1954 and later deputy-mayor during Rios Montt’s government in 1982.

Born in 1913, Fernández Valdés, a *pueblo/mestizo*, was a carpenter who had been trained at the Quetzaltenango School of Arts in 1930 (*Expresión* No. 61, 1974). Contesting the accusation levelled against Salamatecos, he wrote several articles in the Guatemala City newspaper, *El Imparcial*, describing Salamá as a profoundly conservative, anti-communist, and Catholic town. In one article, he pronounced, “Communism is the evil (*la fuerza de mal*) that attempts to divide the Salamateco family, sowing seeds of mistrust and unrest between brothers”, urging Salamatecos to resist such temptations (*El Imparcial*, 28 June 1954). In another, he wrote, “Salamatecos were those who without arms rebelled against the communist government with an ardour of patriotism, and while mistaken in their material valour, wanted to show they could save Guatemala, but we did not have the sufficient valour to complete the task at the precise moment” (*El Imparcial*, 14 November 1956).

Don Mario García y García, a *pueblo/mestizo* who had lived in the *pueblo* area his entire life, strongly anti-communist and a devout Catholic, in his late 60s when I interviewed him, was one of the few Salamatecos who not only shared much about the time but also retained vivid recollections of the period. According to Don Mario, several prominent locals participated in the 1953 rebellion, such as,

“Hipólito Escobar, Danilo Ochoa, who was a captain in the army, Isidro Bautista, Hipólito Fernández, from the village, La Laguna, Abraham Reyes, Bonifacio Chavarría, Gilberto Echeverría, Florencio Abigail Mejía, Sergio Escobar Sánchez, and a retired coronel, Manuel de Jesús Juárez”.

Don Mario recalled, “they are all dead now, but they really mobilised (*movían*) many people here against Arbenz’s government”. Several were imprisoned along with national agitators in Salamá’s prison, but others like,

“Abigail Mejía, Sergio Escobar, David Ochoa, and Hipólito Fernández Ventura fled. Abigail and Sergio, and Manuel de Jesús Juárez, one of the principle leaders, fled through Sanarate for Mexico. David Ochoa and Hipólito Fernández fled to Honduras”.

Many returned a year later with the “Liberation Movement”, like Coronel José Antonio Estrada Sanabria, a local elite mentioned above, “who entered with Castillo Armas (President of Guatemala, 1954-57)”. According to Don Mario, Colonel Estrada was later appointed general commander of the military zone of Zacapa: “He was well immersed in the Liberation Movement as well”.

Don Leopoldo was 21 years old in 1953. Like Don Mario, he described himself as a life-long anti-communist. His father identified with an extreme right “*un derechista de los meros derechistas*”, and distributed a right-wing paper by the “PUA, *partido de unificación anticomunista* (Party of Anti-Communist Unity). We never read books but yes, tons read these papers”. Don Leopoldo noted that Salamá has always been an “extremely conservative town”, but qualified the statement with, “look, the people here have always been a bit more intermediary, the parties that have always won here are more centre-right rather than extreme right”.

He added that the prospect of an indigenous uprising never frightened Salamatecos “it’s that our town has always been very militaristic, few if any thought the indigenous could win against us”. He explained that many urban Salamatecos rejected the politics of the Agrarian Reform:

“Look this is a town where people have overcome their poverty. I was born a barefoot peasant (*puramente campesino descalzo*); I entered sixth grade barefoot. But from there I bettered myself... soon I began to occupy a space within society different from where I started. This is my personal accomplishment. Yet what Arbenz tried to do was teach people that they didn’t need to make those efforts. People came here to ask us what we owned, and I believe they wanted to take away what we gained. Many of us didn’t like that ... we feared losing what we had”.

One of the most vocal voices against the Arbenz government was the Catholic Church. Archbishop Rossell y Arellano, “kept up a barrage through pastoral letters and the church paper, *Acción Social Cristiano* (Social Christian Action)”, calling on Guatemalans to rise “against the enemy of God”, which was “anti-Christian communism” (Handy 1994, 175). Gleijeses writes that, “the implacable defence of privilege” spurred those who led the opposition to Arbenz’s reform, who posed as “champions of a Catholic faith threatened by Red hordes, they strove to inflame religious passions, and they received

the full backing of the church” (1991, 210). Don Mario recalled a pilgrimage organised by the Archbishop in 1954 that travelled the country:

“The situation was very delicate when monsignor decided to take out the pilgrimage with our *Señor de Esquipulas*. The pilgrimage came through Salamá. What a world of people. The church couldn’t take them all in. There in front of the Governor and municipal’s offices, the military reserve building, the prison ... and they let all the political prisoners out to see. How the men cried seeing the *Señor de Esquipulas*”.

Because of Decree 900, several properties in Salamá, which were largely elite-owned, were subject to expropriation, as detailed briefly above. Some that belonged to *puro* families were also targeted under the measure. Most of the cases were contested and eventually rejected because they did not exceed the 200-hectare limit, and so did not qualify for expropriation. However, in the south this process inflamed passions among *purros* too.

Passions were ignited almost immediately after the passing of Decree 900. One article warned of a “certain demagogic agitation” among the peasantry of Chuacús, Llano Grande and Los Paxtes (all southern villages, which, according to my informants, were indigenous villages), whose leader, Arcadio Chévez, it was claimed, had told the peasantry, “it is time to carry out the expropriation of affectable land by the agrarian reform, and which various landowners possess in Salamá”. The author of the piece wrote that the call for re-distribution “has ignited like gunpowder” among the unionised agricultural workers, provoking fear among urban Salamatecos. “This situation, like other symptomatic acts, has obliged the neighbours of Salamá to lock themselves in their homes at an early hour, fearing an indigenous invasion on their town” (*El Imparcial*, 29 June 1952).⁵²

Whether it was because his land had become liable to expropriation or because of his Catholic sensibilities, Tranquilino Jacinto, a southerner, mobilised many *purros* in the Catholic movement *El Apostolado de la Oración del Corazón de Jesús*.⁵³ Don Mario recalled:

⁵² The stoking up of such hysteria surrounding indigenous political mobilisation was not unusual in Guatemala. See Adams on the 1944 massacre of indigenes in Patcizia (1992), Nelson on how rape of white women has featured as an “important component of ladino calls to arms against supposed Indian uprisings” (1999, 218), and Hale on the “insurrectionary Indian” (2006).

⁵³ Jacinto, a resident in the village Los Paxtes, owned a property called El Rosario which measured some 6½ *caballerías* (c.295 hectares), and only just exceeded the 200-hectare limit. He strongly opposed inclusion

“Martín Oliva, a weaver (*tejedor*) from Cobán, organised *the Apostle*, an organisation in the south, one of the largest the Catholic Church had. Tranquilino Jacinto was his assistant, the principal organiser. The last Thursday and Friday of every month hundreds of men from the south descended on urban Salamá celebrating *the Apostle*. After Friday mass, they came out of the church, leading a procession through the central plaza and then returned to the church. The organisation increasingly became politicised. Those who opposed Arbenz here in the town took their support from the people from the south”.

The organisation quickly disbanded after 1954, but from 1954 to the 1980s, many locals strongly supported the MLN, the extreme-right wing party of Sandoval Alarcón. Like the 1950s, during the critical years of the political violence of the late 1970s and 1980s, members of the three groups again demonstrated a remarkable affinity in political aspiration, fears, and support. Many were directly involved in the dynamics of the conflict because of their profession, their political affiliations, an interaction with the military, as perpetrators of violence, and/or as relatives of the murdered.

Their accounts indicate that the townsfolk did not have a unified position during the period, above all to local actors. However, they had a strong identification with the military. Salamatecos acknowledged that the military had carried out atrocities, but locals refused to condemn or judge. For example, Father Gregorio Barrenales, a Spanish priest, who arrived in Salamá in 1978, followed shortly by sister Modoalda Prado, a former employee of the “Immaculate College for Girls” in Cobán, Alta Verapaz, were expelled from the town in June 1979 by the government after some locals accused the two of carrying out “communist activities” (Appendix III).

Dr Arriola, from Antigua but who had lived and practiced in Salamá since the 1960s, recalled that the Father espoused strong leftist politics, which “to be honest, he never hid”. Locally, he worked with a small group of lay preachers on matters of justice and economic equality. Dr Arriola remembered that the Father and Sister’s work had little impact on the general population, but on one occasion, he condemned the government and military at the Good Friday mass of Easter 1979: “the *padre* astonished all of us. He grabbed the microphone and out came this tirade against the government. Some remained silent. Others were outraged that he could stain such a solemn occasion”. Shortly after the outburst, the government summoned the pair to Guatemala City and

of his lands in the reform, arguing, “it will lead me to ruin because I will lose the land I have acquired at the cost of many sacrifices” (AGCA: Decreto 900 Baja Verapaz: Las Palmas, Paq. 3, Exp. 2).

both were expelled. After their expulsion, however, there was a mass protest in Salamá. According to Don Mario, Bishop Gerardo Flores from Alta Verapaz had organised a protest to demand the sacking of the governor, whom locals blamed for the expulsion.

Similarly, many Salamatecos with whom I conversed about the 1980s were extremely critical of the paramilitary group that operated in their town in the early 1980s. Locally, it was no secret who were its members. Several belonged to local elite and *pueblo/mestizo* families:

“Geovanni Gularte was the leader. With him was Gumersindo Leonardo Prera, his three sons, Jorge Quiroa, mayor of Salamá from 1978-82, and his sister, Lizeth. With her there were two other women. There was Byron Conde Prera, Mario Arriola, Carlos Sanabria, Martinez and his sons”.

According to local accounts, the group roamed the streets of Salamá in daylight with guns, entering the local hospital in full view of medical staff to complete unfinished murders, and would boast subsequently about their kills. Attributed to the group was the murder of some 30 persons between mid-1979 and March 1982 (Appendix III). On 7 March 1982, on the eve of the general election, Geovanni Gularte Suevern, 24 years old, with his older brother, Pedro Francisco Gularte Suevern, an innocent bystander, were murdered. In 1982, the paramilitary group was disbanded like others throughout the country. Hereon, the army took charge of all military and intelligence operations (CEH, Vol. II, 10). In August 1983, the military opened Military Zone No. 4, on the outskirts of Salamá’s urban area.

Others expressed strong condemnation of the governor of the time. One person called him a “*culebra* and *reptile*” (a snake and reptile), stating the governor had the “defect of being too militaristic”, and that he was “too *entregado* (immersed)” in the political dynamics of the time. Another person called him a *chaquetero* (brown-nose) because he was always too eager to please the military. Others said he had served as a military collaborator. Others defended him by claiming the governor was simply obeying orders, while others claimed he gave orders. One person accused the governor of being “the mental artifice of the paramilitary group”, stating they witnessed him in the streets with the paramilitary group brandishing *una ametralladora* (a machine gun). As one person put it:

“He [the governor] was a functionary, but he went overboard. If I were to speak against him, god help me, he’s still treated today with great respect. Many people, well more *la gente copetona* (wealthy people), respect him because he was the director of *la Normal*, he did much for the education of this town. But he was more than just a collaborator of the military, and to this day he is still a collaborator”.

In the late 1990s, the governor was nominated for the “Distinguished and Loved Son of the Town” award, given by the municipal authorities to those who “have served with dignity the town that gave them birth”, but the nomination was rejected after several locals reminded the committee of the governor’s shady past as a military collaborator.

Several of the younger generation (below the age of 40) recalled their participation in military-sponsored events because of their parents’ support of the military. Several women I befriended, for example, were beauty queens of the military zone. According to Dr Arriola, the military planned activities in the town, inviting locals to participate. It set up clubs, offered a monthly happy hour and organised beauty queen contests: “it wasn’t a wholehearted confraternity but there was friendship between the town and the army”.

Some recalled that they felt like the army’s “hostages”, while others were angry that officers dated local women. Some complained that a military authority had taken over local politics, which made local civil servants feel “inferior”, but many people were simply not too concerned about the military’s presence because they felt “protected”. The governor of the time explained, “it’s that provincial capitals were protected. Even if people believed that they were not, the police headquarters, the judiciary, the municipal and governor’s offices were protected. In this way, yes, people felt more controlled, but the military was here for their protection”.

In contrast to *pueblos/mestizos*, who upheld ambiguous understandings of the political violence and about the general atmosphere in the 1980s, and elites, whose sons were part of the paramilitary group, *puros* were categorically regarded as families who were *simpatizantes* (sympathisers) of the military. The Balcárcel siblings, mentioned above, had been members of the MLN political party historically, and their conservatism and devout Catholicism certainly precluded any historic alliance with the guerrilla or indigenes, although admittedly, they never spoke about either in the context of political and revolutionary mobilisation nor express views about the violent acts against the latter

in the 1980s. At least, such views were not shared with me. Nor had any of the Balcárcel men joined the military in an official capacity.

However, in the 1980s, they were recognised as a family that had constructed “*mucha amistad* (a great friendship)” with particular military officials, like the coronel of the military zone, Alvaro Barahona Escobar (1984-85). In an interview with Don Eduardo and his daughter, I asked if the family, as others had told me, had a “good relationship” with the military:

Don Eduardo: it was *regular* (so, so)

Veronica: No *papa*, it was very good. You know why, don't you remember Sofia was the queen (*la reina*) of the zone?

Don Eduardo: Yes, we had a good relationship. Barahona and my brother became very good friends (*se hizo amigo de mi hermano*).

Veronica: with all the Balcárcel

Father: Yes, and with lots [of people] in the town...

Veronica recalled that the town generally “*lo querían mucho* (liked him a lot)”, and that there existed a “certain mutual appreciation (*cierto aprecio, mutuo*)” between the townsfolk and the officers. She explained that the military, mainly after 1985, attempted to involve itself with civil society through social events and that the town had been receptive: “the military had a lot of power, and it won the respect of the people with this authority”. She recalled that when Sofia was beauty queen, “*sacamos provecho de la situación, verdad? por ser ella la reina* (we [the Balcárcel family] took advantage of the situation while she was the beauty queen)”. Apparently, the family obliged Sofia to ask coronel Barahona to pave the road from the villages to the town centre. According to Veronica: “He replied, ‘you’ve asked me, so I’ll do it’. From day to night there was the road paved”.

In contrast to other parts of Baja Verapaz, the military’s presence in Salamá, according to locals had little impact on their town because there existed an historic affinity between Salamatecos and the military. According to Don Hugo Conde, the experience of 1953, when several Salamatecos were imprisoned or fled the town, convinced locals to identify with anti-communism and a rightist ideology.

Dr Arriola stressed that Salamá had always been a militaristic town. Like Don Leopoldo, he pointed out that many Salamatecos had little interest in politics. “Most were generous people, disposed to helping others”, but that there were others who were “strongly anti-

communist, addicted to the right, and they had great relations with the country's military authorities, gaining important posts here in the town". He recalled that in Salamá, people on the left (*de tendencia derechista*), remained on the margins, quiet, revealing little about their political views".

Don Mario pointed out that although younger Salamatecos would have little recollection about military family members, "ask the older ones about their ancestors and almost every family in this town has had family in the army. They'll say, my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather was there, and not just that he was a soldier, but a captain, major, coronel, etc". Apparently, the town was renowned for having produced the "famous Salamateco Battalion" that gained its reputation because of its participation in a war with El Salvador.

According to Don Romeo Bendfeldt Periera, who had worked as a barber for most of his career, and was elected mayor of the town in 1970, the military had "confidence" in Salamatecos precisely because Salamatecos were "very just" and "sincere". The "Salamateco man", Don Romeo stated, was "real, a complete man". Presidents of the country regularly selected their bodyguards from the town. Indigenous people, on the other hand, were,

"the opposite ... disloyal, prone to betrayal and lacking in obedience. You see with the Indian, well they (the military) never had that confidence. It's that the Indian vacillates too much, he changes his attitude from one moment to the next".

Given the accounts of ancestors in the military, I was surprised to learn that for my interlocutors - and here I stress, it was only the *pueblo/mestizos*, male and over the age of 60 (neither *puros* nor elites made references to it, either because they had not heard of it, or did not identify with it) - their references to militarism were borne from a much earlier era. According to almost every local historian, Salamá's militarism was a characteristic that had been transmitted generationally from the pre-Conquest Indian of Tezulutlán.

It was Don Hugo Conde who first pointed out the association between Salamá and its militaristic history when he said, "but they (the qualifiers of militarism and peace) come from a much earlier period". According to Don Hugo, they were *essential* characteristics

that Salamatecos, “since the time of the peaceful Catholic conquest that I spoke to you about on your first visit” have transmitted generation after generation. He mentioned that “Salamá is a peaceful town”, its people being so “peaceful” that their town is called, “*el valle de la paz*” (the valley of peace).

Don Hugo illustrated that Salamá’s history is “so fantastical it touches more the realm of legend than history” (*tan fantástica casi hasta toca lindes de leyendas que historia*). It was a history that began with the “resistance of the vigorous Indians” and it involved Fray Las Casas’ successful subjugation of “our Indians”.

“Our Indians were warriors and strategic although their weapons were inferior to those of the Spanish but still the Spaniards failed to conquer them. The angry Spaniards, faced with continual defeat, eventually let the priests conquer the area. Our Indians were docile when Fray Bartolomé, defender of human rights, conquered the area but they were also intelligent and forced the priests to learn their dialect. The priests spoke of only one God and began to teach songs and through their curiosity our Indians joined them (the priests)”.

Don Matías López, another local historian, who had worked as secretary in the Municipal Office for over 20 years, presented me with typed notes on Tezulutlán on our first encounter, which he proceeded to read out loud to instruct me on Salamá’s militaristic history.

Don Benjamin Ramos San José, with whom I conversed several times, founded *Salamá en Letras* (Salamá in Letters) in 1962, a local newsletter that ran for over two decades. Born in 1934, Don Benjamin became a schoolteacher, employed at a school in San Miguel Chicaj for 22 years, and then at Salamá’s *La Normal*. He described himself a deeply Catholic man and wrote extensively in the newsletter about Salamá’s various churches, the history of the town and villages’ saints, and the town’s Catholic religious festivals, which made it all the stranger when in our first encounter he told me that it was going to be my “task to tell us who we are”.

In our first interview, he said that Salamá has always had “*gente muy guerrilleada*” (warrior-like people) and went into detail about the word “Tezulutlán”, which he explained, meant the “Land of the Owl” but had been mistakenly called other things (Tucurutran, Tecolotlán and then Temescales) before it was definitively, although temporarily, called Tezulutlán.

Locally, “Tezulutlán” has had considerable popular usage. The flag of Salamá, for example, was referred to as the “Flag of Tezulutlán” (*Salamá en Letras* 1963, No. 15). According to local legend, its two-headed eagle (below right), was traced from stele found by the Dominican friar, Las Casas, during Conquest, and where the town’s main church, San Mateo, was later erected (*Zamora Chen, Mi Terruño* 1994, No. 5).

Photo 2: Flag of Salamá



Source: <http://www.inforpressca.com/salama/escudo.php> Accessed: 12 June 2006

Social entities, organisations, and private businesses also appropriated the appellation. In 1963, a local women’s basketball team called itself “Tezulutlán” (*Salamá en Letras* 1963, No. 15). In that same year, a national journalist, visiting Salamá for its annual September *fiesta*, Paz García, described Salamá as “the city dressed up in royal clothes. This territory of *Verapaz del Sur* (that is, Baja Verapaz), conquered by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, conserves still its raging blood and the legitimate valour of “Tezulutlán”” (*La Prensa Libre* 26 September 1963). Dr Estrada Sanabría, an elite, named his sawmill in the town centre, “Tezulutlán”. In recent times, the owner of a local private school called it *Colegio Tezulutlán*, while a joint Guatemalan and European Union development project for Baja Verapaz from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, was locally known as *el proyecto Tezulutlán*. When I asked the project’s director, Guillermo López, why that name had been chosen, he said:

“officially our project was called ‘ALA, 94-88’ but that meant nothing to the people here, so we thought it better to give the project a name that locals recognised...we decided on a name that gave the project the stamp of *our* local identity” (his emphasis).

“Tezulutlán” referred to a specific territory in Alta Verapaz during the time of Conquest, and meant “Land of War”, although according to Saint-Lu, no such territory existed with that name (1968). “Tezulutlán” was “more a designated area rather than a real appellation” and only retrospectively was referred to as “Tezulutlán”. The name was a corruption of the word “Tocolotlán”, which had its roots in the Nahuatl word for “owl” (*tecolotl*). Although the territory was given various names, such as the interchangeable names of “Teculutlán, Tocolotlán, Teculatlán and T’culaclán”, to the Spaniards it always meant “Land of War” (Saint-Lu 1968, 50-51). Matthew, in her study on the participation of Mexican auxiliaries in the conquest of Guatemala, mentions the participation of several auxiliaries in the Dominican order’s mission to pacify and evangelise the area’s inhabitants (Matthew 2004, 92). Otto Stoll suggests Mexican auxiliaries, accompanying the conquistador, Alvarado, named the area Tocolotlán, or “place of owls” and that the Spanish missionaries erroneously called it “Tezulutlán” (cited in Recinos 1950).

Despite no reference to its specific location in colonial texts, Saint-Lu places it in the Upper Polochic, in a *municipio* that today goes by the name of Tucurú, in Alta Verapaz, and, which was inhabited by the Maya-Poqomchí (Saint Lu 1968, 50-55; also see Barrios 1996, 109-114; van Akkeren 2000, 11). According to the Dominican colonial chronicler, Friar Antonio de Remesal, Tezulutlán was one of a few territories that remained unconquered in Guatemala by 1537 and was “*el coco de los españoles*” (the Spaniards’ bane), for “three times they tried to conquer the area but with no success” (1966 [1619] Vol. I, 309).

Early colonial chroniclers, who like Remesal were Dominican, wrote much about “Tezulutlán”, which gained legendary status because the territory was placed under the Crown’s control not by Spanish conquerors but by the Dominican order. According to Remesal, writing several decades after Conquest, Bartolomé de las Casas, the most famous and controversial of Dominican friars, took charge of “pacifying” Tezulutlán after Spanish colonists challenged him to prove that America’s natives could be subjugated without the use of violence, following Las Casas’ vociferous critiques against their use of violence, and his severe criticism of the *encomienda* system (1966).⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The *encomienda* was a policy instituted by the Spanish Crown that awarded Spanish colonists (the *encomendero*) a formal grant of indigenous families from whom the *encomendero* could exact labour and produce in exchange for their conversion to Christianity. While initially implemented by the Spanish

The Dominican enterprise lasted ten years (1537-1547). Saint-Lu (1968) states that the decade was a “period of implantation”, which consisted in neither “direct action nor immediate success but involved a long and secret process of ‘diplomatic investment’ beginning in the areas that were already under control”, such as Rabinal, which facilitated the Dominicans’ entrance into Tezulutlán in May 1544 (1968, 13, 87-88).

By 1547, Las Casas had successfully re-settled Tezulutlán’s inhabitants into a *pueblo de indios*, which resulted in the Spanish Crown renaming the area – now much larger than the original “Tezulutlán” – “True Peace”, that is “Verapaz”, in 1547 (Remesal 1966, Vol. II, 1163). The Crown also granted the Order the two demands it had stipulated as conditions in its willingness to pacify Tezulutlán. In a signed contract on 2 May 1537 between Las Casas and Maldonado, Governor of the City and Province of Guatemala, it was agreed that upon success, no Spanish colonist would be allowed in the region after the pacification of the natives, and that the region would be placed under the exclusive control of the Order. Referred to as the “*lascasian*” policy, the Dominicans became Verapaz’s sole authority for almost three centuries (Saint Lu 1968, 15-17).

Effectively, Tezulutlán was never in Salamá. And it was Rabinal’s Maya-Achí peoples who assisted the Dominican entrance into Tezulutlán. Having worked in Rabinal prior to carrying out fieldwork for this thesis, I never once heard anyone make any reference to Tezulutlán, unlike several locals in Salamá.

To the best of my knowledge, the first Salamateco who wrote about Tezulutlán was Manuel Chavarría Flores, whose book entitled, *Tezulutlán*, was published in 1936 when Chavarría was 23. Chavarría Flores was the grandson of Arcadio Cojulún, who had served as the region’s governor in the 1880s. We can assume, therefore, that he belonged to Salamá’s wealthier stratum. Like other elite Salamatecos, Chavarría left Salamá after he completed primary school education. In later years, he taught at Guatemala City’s *Escuela Normal*, and after graduating in philosophy, took up a lectureship at the University of San Carlos, travelling to Switzerland for post-graduate studies and later to Columbia University’s Teachers College in New York (1953 and 1954 respectively). Serving as Guatemalan ambassador in several countries, he was

Crown, Las Casas’ denunciations of abuse and exploitation compelled the Crown to eradicate the system and ban native enslavement in the 1542 New Laws (Kramer 1994, 186-187).

remembered in Salamá as “*el doctor y filósofo*” (the doctor and philosopher) and the “great educator” (Gularte Cojulum unpub’d, 9, 59; *Salamá en Letras* 1963 No. 18).

Chavarría’s *Tezútlán* is part ethnography and part magical realism of the indigenous peoples of Verapaz. The first chapter, *La Tierra Bravía* (The Fierce Land) describes an epic battle between the natives, whom Chavarría describes as “dignified descendants of Atlantic mythology” and the marauding conquerors during the days of Conquest, and the former’s eventual submission to the Spanish Crown, which was successfully accomplished, he notes, not by the Spaniard’s sword but by the “dulcet” words of the Dominicans and their convincing arguments of Catholic doctrine.

Chavarría describes the indigenous peoples’ fierceness, which he states was the result of their close relationship with nature, converting them into fierce and brave beings. As landscape and body became one, he writes, “Nature itself made them brave (*corajudos*), by the force of the sun, rain and the climate’s harshness. The tough and fierce land moulded them into centaurs (*los moldeó centauros la tierra agreste y bravía*)”, from which they developed a “bellicose instinct...the tribes fought for land, for dominance. War, invasion, the conquest of races ... for them it was a vital imperative”. It was that bellicosity that converted them into an unexpectedly formidable opponent for the Spaniards, who were no match for the warrior Indians for thrice the Spaniards tried and failed to conquer. Yet, despite such defeats, the territory eventually was placed under the control of the Crown, with its people finally “tamed”, as they let their “tower of Babel” to pierce “the blue shield that covers the face of God” allowing themselves to hear the “*la palabra de bondad del apóstol*” (the Word of the Apostle). Consequently, the “Land of War” was no more, and the territory was renamed, True Peace, that is, “Verapaz” (Chavarría Flores 1936, 16-18).

It would appear that two decades later, for a growing number of Salamatecos who joined the ranks of the teaching profession, the events that took place in Tukurú during Conquest became an enticing “origin” story for their militarism. While it is not clear if Chavarría’s text was a direct influence, the 1960s generation not only appropriated the narrative, but over the next two decades in local newsletters, poems, essays and verse, dealt incessantly with the topic, with Salamatecos repeating, plagiarising and embellishing each other’s work, as well as that of Chavarría’s and Remesal’s. The crucial

difference, however, was that whereas Chavarría never identified Tezulutlán's location, from the 1960s, Salamatecos always placed the Land of War in Salamá.

Mejía Leonardo, writing in the same vein as Chavarría, described the submission of the pre-Conquest Tezulutlán Indian in a piece entitled "Euphoric Tribute" published on Independence Day (*Cachil* 15 September 1958):

"Bestiality was enraptured in your race. Reason appeared in the verb. The word was the Pentecost of a new legend. Advent of the knowledge of the Holy Spirit ...

Salamá: vast valley (my emphasis). The splendour of that scenario of heroism and tragedy.

What novelty ... a defeat. You (the Spaniard) were no match for the indomitable race. Blowpipes and hammers! Arches and darts! Crossbows and arrows! Obsidian. The beating of shells and drums. Strategy and boldness. Audacity and strength. Synthesis of Indian virility!" (*Cachil* 15 September 1958).

Like Chavarría, he concludes with the scenario of submission, which Don Hugo explained to me was "an invitation", never an invasion, "our Indian invited Las Casas". Only now, he places the famous battle firmly in Salamá.

Don Benjamin offered me many copies of *Salamá en Letras* with articles on Tezulutlán, which he and dozens of other locals wrote about over the following years with obsessive attention. In its first edition, Don Benjamin wrote a poem on Tezulutlán, entitled Salamá:

"Salamá, with your cobbled streets,
your millenarian *ceiba*;
you may not be rich,
Yet a City! From the heavens you are protected.
...
Bartolomé de las Casas witnessed your birth
Difficult as it was, *for your people were fierce* (my emphasis)
Yet, for the great love he had for you
Fray Bartolomé convinced you" (*Salamá en Letras* No. 1, 1962).

In a collection of poems dedicated to each of Baja Verapaz's eight municipalities, entitled *Los Ocho Plumas de Tezulutlán* (The Eight Feathers of Tezulutlán), his poem on Salamá reads:

“There in the distance I still see, *the warrior that your people were* (my emphasis)
And today still wanders the figure of Fray Bartolomé,
in our homes, our streets, in the air, and in our people,
in whom I see the saint’s spirit, who, making the sign of the cross,
left our ambience pregnant of true peace” (Ramos San José 1975, 13).

Pueblo/mestizo discourse on militarism was imbued with values of obedience, authority, and loyalty which emerged from a long trajectory from the *indio bravo* (fierce Indian) to the *Salamateco militarista* (the militarist Salamateco). Even in the 1990s, accounts of Salamá’s historic *tradición militarista* continued, as when Cristobal Reyes de la Cruz wrote in 1997 that Salamá “has an illustrious history on many levels, surpassing when it comes to the military” (*Mi Terruno*, No. 3, 1997).

In April 1997, the Military Zone was disbanded, and replaced with the Battalion of Engineers for Construction, which was still occupied when I was in Salamá by military personnel but who now dedicated themselves to development.⁵⁵ By the turn of the twenty-first century, public opinion towards the military in general had changed.

Viewing itself as a modernising liberal elite, not only were younger Salamatecos not interested in the concept of a “militaristic Salamateco” but many disliked the military itself, arguing that the left was now seen in a more positive light. Many rejected an older generation’s emphasis on conservatism and authoritarianism. The owner of a private school, a *pueblo/mestizo*, pointed out his dislike of civic-military festivals of previous years, content now to see that they had been replaced with civic ones alone. Younger women, whose sisters once dated officers and other military personnel in the 1980s, looked elsewhere for husbands. For them, military men were too authoritarian.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the economic and social trajectory of the three identity groups of this thesis. As we saw, the Dominican order’s withdrawal from the region was critical to the emergence of a new landed elite. The expansion of education in the provincial capital was vital for *pueblo/mestizo* families to experience upward mobility

⁵⁵ In December 1996, the guerrilla factions of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG, its acronym in Spanish) and the government signed the Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace, which concluded a 36-year period of militarisation and armed conflict. The peace negotiations resulted in eight substantive accords that committed the government to socio-economic reforms, the recognition of indigenous rights, multiculturalism, and demilitarization (see Sieder 1997).

from artisans to state employees and local small business people. The state's neglect of the south of Salamá, combined with the region's poor land motivated *puros* to leave the south for the *pueblo* area and its surroundings.

Despite the differences in trajectory and historic context, when I was in Salamá, the families of the various identity groups viewed each other as all belonging to the town's middle class, even when there were significant differences in wealth between families. They worked with each other, socialised, talked admiringly of each other and even married each other. Thus, even though my *puro* and *pueblo/mestizo* informants spoke about being *mozó*, tenants, and so on, the fact that they did not align with indigenous peoples cannot be explained unless factors other than class are considered. Equally, *puros* and *pueblo/mestizos* could have challenged the elite, but instead aligned with them over a strong identification with Catholicism, anti-communism and militarism.

Having established the historical development of these three identity groups, we can proceed to consider the internal differences between middle class Salamatecos based on concepts of blood, family patterns and marriage, which will be examined in greater depth in the following chapters.

Chapter Three: Ladinos of the town/racially mixed ladinos: The Genuine and Authentic Salamatecos

This and the next chapter focus on *los ladinos del pueblo/ los ladinos mestizos* (hereafter *pueblo/ mestizos*). *Pueblo/ mestizos* comprised the bulk of my interlocutors and represented a sizeable part of Salamá's middle class. Of all the exchanges I had with Salamatecos concerning who they were and what "ladino" meant to them, *pueblo/ mestizos* were the most complex. In contrast to *puros*, who claimed they were only of Spanish descent, and elite Salamatecos, who placed importance on specific ancestors from Europe to differentiate themselves from other Salamatecos, *pueblo/ mestizos* offered accounts from a qualitatively different starting point. Many spoke about racially mixed identities with Indians, although, as I will illustrate in the next chapter, the acknowledgment betrayed unease, evasion, equivocation, and/or contradiction.

This chapter provides a historical survey of *pueblo/ mestizo* accounts, attending in particular to the ethnic composition of the valley of Salamá. The chapter addresses how and why Salamá's ladinos became the dominant ethnic group by 1950, when for some four centuries the town had been predominantly "Indian".

From the early colonial period to the present, there were two half-century periods when Salamá's ethnic composition changed. The first was between 1750 and 1800, when "non-Indians" began to represent a sizeable minority of the town's population. The second was between 1900 and 1950, when its "Indian" population declined dramatically. I will show in this chapter that during the colonial period, Salamá became more ladino because it was home to an increasingly heterogeneous and mobile population, much of which did not originate in the region itself, and that in the twentieth century it would seem an ethnic shift occurred whereby a significant number of the town's "Indians" came to be classified as "ladino" by 1950.

The treatment of the history outlined below emerged from conversations with *pueblo/ mestizos*, who referred to "moments", "events", or the "constitution of the town's peoples" to explain certain features of their present-day understanding of "ladino". While often confusing, and at times contradictory, those identifications contained some elements of certifiable fact (that is to say, there is evidence that supports those claims).

In addition, *pueblo/mestizos*, unlike other Salamatecos, easily acknowledged, if not embraced, a *mestizo* identity. My initial conversations with *pueblo/mestizos*, revealed that many readily adopted an identification with the *mestizo* category. For example, Orlando Ramirez, a *pueblo/mestizo* in his early 40s, described Salamatecos as “a beautiful mixture of races”: indigenous, Spanish and African.

Don Erwin Bendfeldt (not his real name), a local historian, in his late 60s, called *pueblo/mestizos*, “*las familias salamatecas genuinas e autenticas*” (the genuine and authentic Salamateco families), because of their longer historical presence in the region compared to *puros* and elite families. He traced Salamá’s position within Guatemala’s geography, describing certain villages in Salamá as “totally indigenous” *netamente indigena*, whose inhabitants, he pointed out, were *familiares* (relatives) of Rabinal and San Miguel Chicaj. In the south of Salamá, he explained, “all that area around the River Motagua”, was populated by persons who were “totally ladino” (*netamente ladino*), who were descendants of Spaniards:

“Here, in and around the town centre, the people are *mestizo*. Now, don’t forget, Salamá is the epicentre of Guatemala. In the highlands, there are *indios*, below in *el oriente* (the east) we have ladinos. We’re (Salamá) right in the middle, the *mestizo*, representing the mixture (*la mezcla*) of Guatemala’s divisions”.

And yet, when *pueblos/mestizos* made references to “Indian” in their narratives, the “Indian” was never Maya-Achí. In addition, the historical record of their town reveals that an increasingly heterogeneous population, of Mexican Indians, Maya-Achí, Africans, and Spaniards, and a racially mixed population of their descendants, inhabited the valley of Salamá from at least the eighteenth century, classified or self-identifying according to different categories in different time-periods. The record also shows that many who increasingly joined the ranks of “Ladino” - a term which by the late colonial period had served as a catch-all for a variety of persons who never were, were no longer, or who are not now “Indian” - did so in response to coercive economic regimes. In fact, the history of the region has always been characterised by (both the colonial and republican) state attempts to fix, contain, and separate populations, in turn generating population movements, subsequent cultural and racial mixing, and the changing of identities. Yet not one of my interlocutors ever alluded to that aspect of economic coercion as a principal motivating reason for their ancestors seeking refuge in the “ladino” category.

This chapter has three sections. Firstly, I deal with population statistics, showing how Salamá's ethnic composition has changed since the late colonial period. Secondly, I detail Salamatecos' accounts on the "original" inhabitants of their town. Finally, I discuss the colonial period, describing how and why, in contrast to Rabinal and Cubulco, more Ladinos emerged in Salamá to illustrate why in the twentieth century, Salamá's Indians dramatically declined.

The De-Indianisation of Salamá's Population

We recall from the previous chapter that the Dominican order's successful conquest of Tezulutlán in Alta Verapaz resulted in its control of the Verapaz region until it was expelled from the country in 1829. We will also recall that it had negotiated with the Spanish Crown a prohibition on Spanish colonists enabling the order to be the region's sole religious, political and economic power (Saint Lu 1968, 15-17).

The natives who lived in the region before Conquest were the Maya-Achí-speaking peoples. They were resettled into Rabinal (founded between 1537 and 1542) and Cubulco (probably in the same period) (Bertrand 1989, 148; van Akkeren 2000, 14).⁵⁶ Salamá's founding date is unclear but occurred sometime during López de Cerrato's governorship (1548-1555), the first president of the recently formed *Audiencia de los Confines*, who arrived in Guatemala to ensure the implementation of the 1542 New Laws.⁵⁷

One of the consequences of the order's presence was that by the early nineteenth century, in contrast to other parts of Guatemala, there were very few "non-Indians" in the region.⁵⁸ For example, on the eve of Guatemala's Independence from Spain in 1821,

⁵⁶ Bertrand estimates that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, only 8-9,000 Achí had survived out of an original population of some 60,000, whose numbers were reduced catastrophically through European contact (cited in Museo Comunitario 2003, 33).

⁵⁷ The 1542 New Laws sought to eradicate the *encomienda* system and prohibit Indian slavery. The *encomienda*, which was instituted in Guatemala shortly after Conquest in 1524, was based on a formal grant of Indian families to a Spanish colonist (the *encomendero*). The system was sanctioned by the Spanish Crown who gave *encomenderos* full authority to exact labour and produce from the natives in exchange for their Christian conversion. However, the system became a way for *encomenderos* to amass riches while becoming notorious for Indian abuse and exploitation. Bartolomé de las Casas, one of the most famous and controversial of Dominican friars, waged such an intense campaign against the system that it forced the Spanish Crown to take action by implementing the 1542 New Laws (Kramer 1994, 186-187).

⁵⁸ In this chapter, I prefer to use the category "non-Indian", which includes both the category of "Ladino" and "Spaniard", unless a particular category has been specified by an author. During the late colonial period, "Ladino" was increasingly a catch-all term that referred to an array of mixed-race peoples, which did not include "Indian" or "Spaniard" (see Chapter 1).

ladinos and Spaniards represented some 15 percent of the country's population (McCreery 1994, 33-35). In eastern Guatemala, by 1770 they constituted some 40 percent, and even in some indigenous highlands, like Quetzaltenango, they comprised 20 percent of the total population (Solórzano Fonseca 1993, 27). In Verapaz, on the other hand, in 1816, out of a total population of 78,768, non-Indians only represented some six percent (4,808) (Bertrand 1986, 21).

Population statistics for 1812 - when compared with the 1816 total population – show that most of that six percent lived in the Baja Verapaz region (some 3,356 - 70 percent) (Table 2 and 3). What is more, over half of them (1,758) resided in Salamá (Table 2), while a further 1,150 resided in the southern region (Table 3).⁵⁹ Furthermore, Salamá, in contrast to Rabinal and Cubulco, had far more non-Indians: 28 percent, in contrast to 5.2 percent and 0.5 percent respectively, despite all three representing Baja Verapaz's Indian settlements during the colonial period.

Table 2: Non-Indian Population: Salamá, Rabinal and Cubulco 1767-1816

Year	Salamá	Non-Indian	% Non-Indian	Rabinal	Non-Indian	% Non-Indian	Cubulco	Non-Indian	% Non-Indian
	Total			Total			Total		
1767	3,971	300	7.5	4,447			2,853	4	0.1
1769				4,628	128	2.7	2,793		
1776	5,282	439	8.3	5,188	186	3.5	3,295		
1795	6,409	1,200	18.7						
1812	6,367	1,758	27.6	8,081	428	5.2	4,000	20	0.5
1813				6,597	447	6.7	3,838		
1816	7,016			6,118			4,543		

Source: Bertrand (1986, 8-9, 11, 19)

⁵⁹ During the colony, several other settlements emerged in southern Baja Verapaz, which represented the valley of El Chol. I discuss the area in Chapter 5, when I discuss *los puros* who identified their roots in that region.

Table 3: Spanish/Ladino Population of the southern valleys 1767-1812

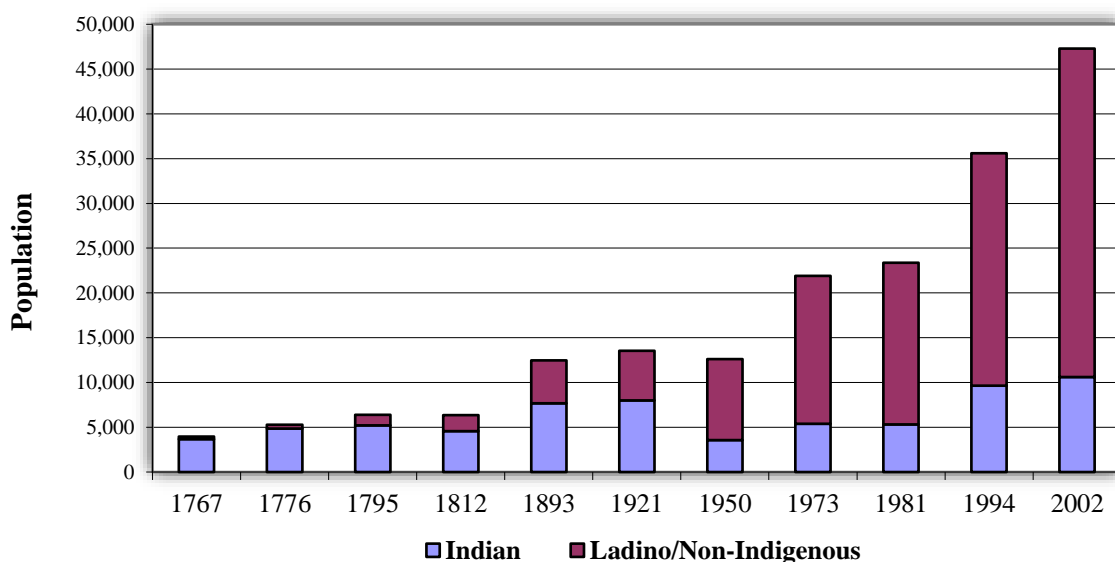
Year	El Chol	Non-Indian	% Non-Indian	Chivac	Urrán/Saltán
				Total	Total
1769*	260	102	39.2	693	733
1776†	717	682	95.1		
1812†	2,300	1,150	50.0		

Source : *Cortés y Larraz (1958 Vol. II, 33). † Bertrand (1986, 19).

Note: For the 1812 census, Bertrand states it included the population figures of all the valleys (1986: 19).

Also, Salamá’s ethnic make-up - unlike, once again, that of Rabinal and Cubulco - experienced a complete inversion over a period of 235 years. As is evident in Figure 1, in 1767 “ladinos” represented some 7.5 percent of the total population, whereas in 2002, they constituted 78 percent. Conversely, the Indian population declined over the period, from 92.5 percent to 22 percent.

Figure 1: Population of Salamá by Ethnic Group 1767-2002



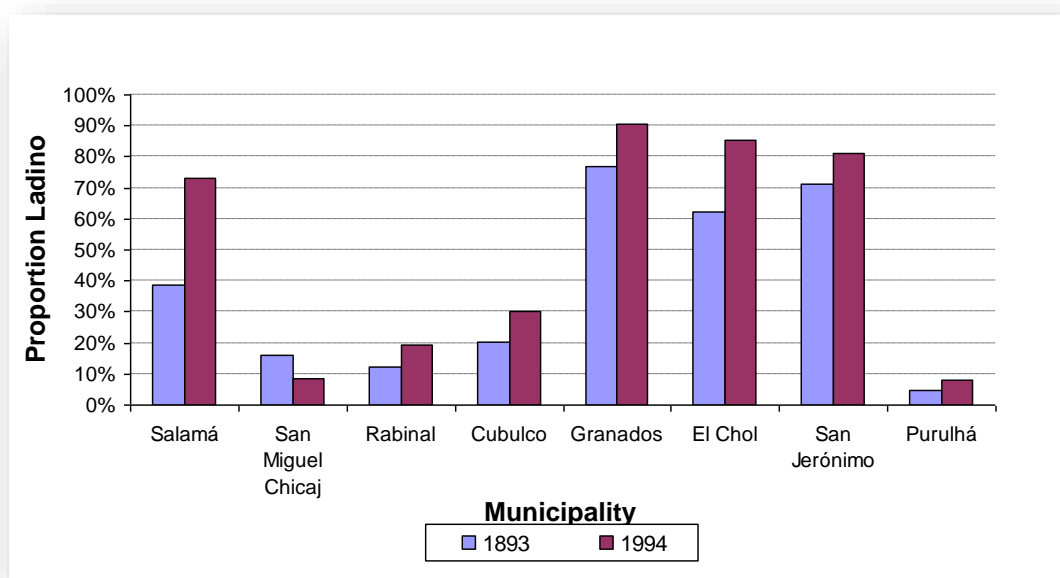
Source: For 1767-1812, Bertrand 1986, 8-9, 11, 19.

Figures for 1893 taken from 1921 Census (DGE 1921; DGE 1950; DGE 1973; DGE 1981, INE 1994; INE 2002)

Census data indicate that Salamá’s population change by ethnic group has followed a different trajectory compared with all its neighbouring municipalities. Figure 2 shows the proportion of the population responding to the description of “Ladino” in 1893 and

1994 in Baja Verapaz’s *municipios* (consult Appendix IV for further statistics). The greatest change in population change occurred in Salamá where the percentage of “ladinos” increased from 39 percent in 1893 to 73 percent in 1994, while the data also revealed that the greatest fall in Indian numbers occurred between 1921 and 1950: from 59 percent to 28 percent (Table 4). That is, over some 30 years, the Indian population almost halved in number, from 7,987 to 3,573, while the ladino proportion increased from 5,561 to 9,045. For sure, the ladino population grew in Baja Verapaz’s other towns (except for San Miguel Chicaj), but the change was not as dramatic.⁶⁰ Granados, El Chol, and San Jerónimo were all predominantly ladino in 1893, whereas in the other, largely indigenous towns the ladino population grew relatively little compared with Salamá.

Figure 2: Ladino/Non-Indigenous Proportion of Total Population by Municipality: 1893 and 1994



Source: Figures for 1893 taken from 1921 Census (DGE 1921; INE 1994)

Note: San Miguel Chicaj and San Gabriel Pansuj were two separate *municipios* in 1893. In 1935, the latter was annexed to the former, so I have added the 1893 population of SGP to that of SMC (Barrios 1996, 138).

⁶⁰ I suggest that San Miguel’s Ladino decline is because of its proximity to Salamá, leading its Ladinos to live increasingly in Salamá. However, El Chol has a strikingly different history. In 1697, a number of Choles from Petén were re-located there and placed in a *pueblo de indios*. Unable to adjust to the new habitat, their numbers were reduced dramatically, with the survivors soon absorbed into a Ladino environment. Bertrand notes, “only its name reveals that once it was a *pueblo de reducción*” (1989, 172; 1980, 244).

Table 4: Population Figures 1921 and 1950: Salamá

	Total Population	Indian	% Indian	Ladino	% Ladino
1893	12,484	7,622	61	4,822	39
1921	13,548	7,987	59	5,561	41
1950	12,618	3,573	28	9,045	72
Decrease/Increase (1921-1950)	-930	-4,414		3,484	
	Total Population	Urban	% Urban	Rural	% Rural
1921	13,548	2,541	19	11,007	81
1950	12,618	2,760	22	9,858	78
1950 Indian	3,573	430	12	3,143	88
1950 Ladino	9,045	2,330	26	6,715	74
Decrease/Increase	-930	219		-1,149	

Source: DGE 1921; DGE 1950

We will recall from the Introduction that in the first few weeks of being in Salamá, I found a modest amount of historical material in the Governor’s office that related to registered monthly births and deaths of Salamatecos by ethnicity between March 1893 and 1924. The information revealed that at least until 1924 more new-borns in Salamá were categorised as “Indian” than “Ladino”.

For example, from March 1893 to December 1924, 83 percent to 60 percent respectively babies were registered as “Indian”. In 1924, the only year that offered an overall count, out of 518 births, 333 (64 percent) infants were registered as “Indian”, and 185 (36 percent) as “ladino”. Clearly there was a steady decline in babies registered as “Indian”, but they still represented a majority (see Appendix V).

From 1924, however, the ladino proportion of Salamá’s population began to outnumber that of the Indian proportion. According to national censuses, for example, of Salamá’s total population of 12,484 in 1893, 39 percent (4,822) were registered as “ladino”, a percentage that increased to 41 percent in 1921 (out of 13,548 Salamatecos, 5,561 were

“ladino”), and then to 72 percent in the 1950 census (out of 12,618 Salamatecos, 9,045 were ladino).⁶¹ From there on, “ladinos” always outnumbered “Indians”. By 2002, 36,657 (78 percent) of 47,274 registered Salamatecos self-identified as non-indigenous/ladino (INE 2002).⁶²

At first glance, the changes in Salamá may not appear remarkable. At a national level, Guatemala’s indigenous population declined from 65 percent in 1893 to 39 percent in 2002 (Adams and Bastos, 64). Admittedly, the decline has excited controversy, particularly from within the Maya sector. Cojtí Cuxil, for example, criticized Guatemalan censuses for being “biased operations” with the intent to “eliminate indigenous people”, asserting the decline reflected more a deliberate policy of under-representation (unofficially, it is often claimed that Mayans represent between 60 and 80 percent) (cited in Adams 1998, 1). Others, however, have challenged such assertions. Adams, for instance, argues that governments had little incentive to under-represent the country’s indigenous population given national demands for forced labour, at least until 1944 (which I explain further below) (1998, 4).

Despite this more recent controversy concerning national ethnic figures, Early, in the 1970s, had discovered anomalies with the 1950 and 1964 censuses (1974). He argued that both censuses failed to ascertain the true numbers of Guatemala’s indigenous population, but it was his belief that this was more the result of misclassification. Census takers in those decades were often (ladino) schoolteachers who, because they were already working in villages, could easily obtain the information. But the teachers were not trained in census-taking, and they lacked funding. Only since the 1994 census, has it been official practice to ask interviewees how they self-identify. In 1950 and 1964, interviewers used what was called “social judgement (*estimación social*) of the local area”. That is, one’s ethnic identity was established based on the interviewer’s (often-prejudiced) judgement. For example, if a person wore western clothing and lived in a community where many spoke Spanish it was likely the interviewer classified that person as “Ladino”, even if the person self-identified differently. In such circumstances, Early

⁶¹ (Figures for 1893 taken from the 1921 Census (DGE 1921; DGE 1950)).

⁶² Prior to 1964, Guatemalan censuses offered its citizens two ethnic categories from which to choose: “Ladino” and “Indian”. In 1964, “Ladino” was replaced with that of “non-indigenous”, because the latter was regarded more inclusive and neutral (Taracena 2002, 36). I use “Ladino” for 1893 and “non-Indigenous” for 1994 to reflect census categories for those years.

states, misidentification could emerge, but that was “primarily a problem of cultural contact and not deliberate falsification by the government” (1974, 107, 113).

Nevertheless, from the late nineteenth century, Guatemala’s agro-export economy did bring about changes to the ethnic composition of Guatemala’s landscape, largely because of population movement. According to Smith, both Indians and Ladinos migrated to the plantation region, but Indian migration was much higher (1990). The population growth of the coffee region between 1893 and 1921 was twice that of Guatemala and most migrants came from the impoverished eastern parts of Guatemala. Consequently, the ethnic composition of areas that once had significant indigenous populations were irrevocably changed because of their out-migration. By way of example, Smith notes that in the eastern province of Zacapa, the Indian share of the total population was 41 percent in 1893, 19 percent in 1950, and only 11 percent in 1964, indicating a high rate of out-migration to the west (Smith 1990: 86, 95 f/n 16).

Van den Berghe argues that persons who sought work in larger cities or on plantations – in contrast to those who remained in their villages or towns of birth - underwent a process of passing into the Ladino category (1968). In an analysis of provincial census statistics from 1940 to 1964, van den Berghe highlights three phenomena: firstly, that in the heavily Indian highlands, the ethnic composition changed little. Second, in the eastern provinces where Indians represented between 10 to 20 percent of the population, the minority was absorbed into the Ladino majority. Third, he pointed out, five provinces that had Indian majorities of 52 to 73 percent in 1950 had experienced declines of 18 to 12 percent by 1964. Four of those five provinces were in the plantation region. Considering indigenous peoples primarily migrated there, the population statistics should have reflected an increase in the “Indian” census category. Instead, they registered a decline, which van den Berghe attributed to “passing” in that many people who once were categorised as “indigenous” now either saw themselves or were regarded as “ladino”. In that era, van den Berghe estimated some 15,000 to 20,000 indigenous persons were passing for Ladino yearly, largely because of geographical mobility. He also wrote that the indigenous person who remained “in his village or town of birth almost never passes; the one who goes to work in a larger city or on a large coffee plantation frequently becomes accepted as ladino after a few years” (1968, 516-518).

At first, I believed that the ethnic changes in Salamá were the result of Indian out-migration, but then I realised that that was highly doubtful unless we accept the notion that an equal number of ladinos entered it. Also, as noted in the previous chapter, most of Salamá's indigenous population remained in the region, residing as landless peasants on elite plantations. Barring an epidemic that exclusively affected indigenous people, or a high indigenous mortality rate, was the ethnic change the result of misclassification?⁶³ While it is possible some indigenous persons were misclassified, it is improbable so many were, especially since once Salamatecos were given the option of self-identification in later censuses, the indigenous proportion would have increased. Such was not the case.

A partial answer finally came from Don Hugo Conde, one of the town's principal historians, who was introduced in the previous chapter. Don Hugo was in his mid-60s when I met him. Not long after finding the monthly census statistics, I showed him the material and asked how some 80 years ago, Salamá was a predominantly "Indian" town and yet, today was largely a "ladino" town. Where had the town's indigenous population gone? To my surprise, Don Hugo explained that the ancestors of Salamá's current residents were once predominantly "Indian", which, he pointed out, was a "remarkable" fact given that Salamatecos no longer remembered or had opted to forget or had simply never learned such a fact about their town's history, referring specifically to a younger generation.

He added that the ethnic change was the result of an "edict" passed in the late nineteenth century by a *jefe politico* (regional governor) called "General Beteta" who had obliged Salamá's residents to become "Ladino". Don Hugo recalled that as a young boy he heard Rabinal's ladinos hurl insults at those from Salamá by calling them *Ladinos de Beteta* (Beteta's ladinos). The slight, he explained, was to remind Salamatecos they were not "authentic ladinos" but simply "redressed Indians", that is Indians in disguise. The Salamateco, Walter Boteo, who heard the account from don Hugo, wrote about it in a local publication that implored locals not to be violent or racist in a post-conflict environment towards indigenous peoples because all Salamatecos were indigenous:

⁶³ There was a high indigenous mortality rate, as is evident in Appendix I. However, the indigenous population remained a majority as is evident in the 1893 and 1921 censuses.

“... there are also historical aspects worthy of analysis. According to *profesor* Hugo Conde Prera, at the end of the last century a peculiar event occurred in our town, greatly influencing the reorganization of our society. It was when a General Beteta governed as *jefe político*. In Rabinal, a conflict broke out when its inhabitants demanded their town be designated the province’s capital. Naturally, this had little appeal to General Beteta for he had no desire to travel further to administer his duties. In Guatemala City, the government passed an edict stating the capital had to be located where there were fewer *indios*. Therefore, General Beteta ordered the inhabitants (*vecinos*) of Salamá to shed their *traje típico* (indigenous dress), drop their *dialecto* (indigenous language), and relinquish their indigenous surnames.⁶⁴ As such, the capital remained in its current place, but our ancestors became ladinos by a simple *Betetazo* (a Beteta coup).

... our ancestors had typically indigenous surnames...General [Beteta] enforced those we have today. We cannot deny this *mestizaje* in our environment. Yet there is a third component that runs through our veins, that of African blood, thanks to the black Jamaicans transported here by the Dominicans who left their descendants in San Jerónimo and Salamá, which is also a noticeable feature among the majority of Salamateco families.

In other words, Salamá’s *mestizaje* contains three components: Indian, ladino and black Jamaican. Perhaps for this we are such a singular people”, (Boteo, *Mi Terruño* September No. 1 1995).

Effectively, according to Don Hugo, the ethnic demographic changes were indicative of “passing”, whereby a large proportion of Salamatecos were obliged to shift from the “Indian” to “Ladino” category, which as a phenomenon in Guatemala was not so unusual, as discussed in Chapter One.

My informants who were below the age of 50 did not know about this event, corresponding with Don Hugo’s assertion that younger Salamatecos had never been taught this fact about their town. Several over the age of 50, however, supported Don Hugo’s account. Some, for example, recalled having read Boteo’s article, while others had heard of the event themselves although they disputed some of Beteta’s instructions. Don Alejo Irizarry who was also in his mid-60s, born in Rabinal but who had lived in Salamá for more than two decades, accused Salamatecos of “being shameful” for denying they were *Ladinos de Beteta*. According to Don Alejo, many Salamatecos may have “passed” into the ladino category but they remained biologically indigenous:

“Beteta was recalcitrant, dictatorial. At the time, there were too many *indios* here, say 80 percent. So, with a decree from the government he stated, ‘on 1st January

⁶⁴ The word “*dialecto*” instead of “language (*idioma/lengua*)” is a common way ladinos refer to indigenous languages to belittle their status.

you are commanded to throw away your indigenous dress and dress like Ladinos'. But change the surname? I don't think so. That's a juridical change, that's against the Constitution of the Republic! How could one change his surname from say Cahuec to Perdomo? Do you think the Perdomo would have allowed that? Salamá has always had families *de rango abolenço* (of distinguished rank), like the Gularte, the Sanabria. They weren't going to let the *indios* take their surnames".⁶⁵

Don Diego Guzmán, in his late sixties, stated that his grandfather had told him when he was a child that "our family's ancestral surname (*nuestro apellido ancestral*) was Indian", and that his grandfather was allegedly one of the Indians forced to change his surname as commanded by Beteta. He explained, "Guzmán' is not my real surname, or better said, it shouldn't be my surname".

Documentary evidence indicates something akin to this event did occur. First, a General Luis Beteta was appointed governor on 30 April 1877, presumably the first of the newly independent Baja Verapaz, of which Salamá became capital on 4 March 1877.⁶⁶ The evidence also suggests that in the months following his appointment something corresponding to ethnic shifts were encouraged, challenged, and/or attempted. For example, on 5 July 1877 President Rufino Barrios (1873-1885) communicated to Salamá's *jefe político*:

"you will not oblige the *indígenas* to military service, for it is their choice. Neither will you oblige them to dress as Ladino, for it is their choice. You are also reminded that those who dress as Ladino are not subject to the *mandamiento de mozos* (labour drafts)".

In another note, sent by central government on 30 August 1877, the *jefe político* was asked to investigate accusations against the mayor, Leonardo Valdéz. Allegedly, Valdéz was trying to stop, "*naturales* who seek to dress the same *traje* (clothes) as the Ladino, to such an extent that one of them has written a formal letter to the Presidency demanding action against this measure".⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Cahuec" is a common Maya-Achí surname from Rabinal. "Perdomo" belonged to a wealthy ladino family from Rabinal. "Gularte" and "Sanabría" are two surnames associated with elite Salamateco families, as noted in the previous chapter.

⁶⁶ Archive of Salamá's Municipality Office (hereafter, ASM): 1877 Archivo 44

⁶⁷ Archive of the Governor's Office, Baja Verapaz (hereafter, AGBV): 1877 Folio 370. The category "*natural*" has been used in Guatemala to refer to indigenous people.

Perhaps, as Don Hugo claimed, the “modernising” governor, Beteta, wanted Baja Verapaz’s capital to be predominantly ladino. However, the evidence also suggests that there were competing projects among local elite families, who put up resistance to such conversions, such as mayor Valdéz, probably because he supported local planters who also required indigenous labourers. The exchanges further indicate that (some) Indians wanted to convert. Don Hugo and others may be correct in asserting that an assimilation of Indians into the ladino category occurred because of an imposition, but the effects of the already noted new economic measures from 1877 surely swayed some indigenous people to seek refuge willingly in the ladino category.

The evidence is evidently too sparse to reach any firm conclusion. It is also difficult to appreciate why state authorities would have desired to carry out a mass conversion given the demands of an agro-economy. Nevertheless, according to the comments of one person, writing in a local publication at the turn of the twentieth century:

“Baja Verapaz is populated by two different races (*razas*): *los aborígenes* and those who call themselves ladinos. However, this distinction is being destroyed daily; there are populations like Salamá...which have forgotten their primitive dialect and whose inhabitants have assimilated in language and customs. There remains, however, Rabinal, a town of *indígenas* very attached to their ancient traditions, deferential to their witches and *zaborines* (soothsayers) as is the case with Cubulco” (*La Baja Verapaz* 1 February 1905).

It is worthy of note that in the late nineteenth century, the indigenous inhabitants of San Pedro Sacatepéquez (a municipality in the country’s western province of San Marcos) asked President Barrios to declare them “Ladino”. Although it was an exceptional demand, undoubtedly underscored by complex reasons, on 13th October 1876, President Barrios declared San Pedro’s indigenes “*Ladinos por decreto*”, (Ladinos by Decree), stating that henceforth, they were to wear “only the clothes that correspond to the ladino class”. The decree was abolished in 1935, converting San Pedro’s “Ladinos” once again into “Indian” (Rodríguez Rouanet 1993: 14). The example certainly illustrates the tenuous nature of ethnic categories in Guatemala, but I have mentioned it because anyone visiting San Pedro will notice that the *municipio* is predominantly indigenous. Such is not the case with Salamá. To outsiders, and above all to Salamatecos, Salamá is a ladino town. The 1950 census indicated a decline in Indian numbers, from which it never recovered. In the 2002 census, 36,657 (78 percent) of 47,274 registered Salamatecos self-identified as Non-Indian/Ladino (INE 2002).

Below, I will offer an explanation for the shift, but it must still remain provisional. The accounts provided by my interlocutors about a “mass conversion” in the nineteenth century, as well as the commentary in 1905, are revealing. I suggest that a conversion did take place, but not one as instantaneous as suggested by Salamatecos like Don Hugo.

There can be no doubt that the effects of the 1877 and 1934 laws that targeted indigenous labour must have been a strong disincentive for many Salamatecos to want to remain “Indian”. However, given that other Indians, like those in Rabinal, did not undergo a similar conversion it is in itself not a sufficient argument. I suggest the shift occurred precisely because Salamá’s Indians after Conquest were not native to the region, and that their descendants had undergone complex processes of assimilation and acculturation to such a degree that by 1950 the descendants of many - who once identified or were identified as “Indian” - no longer were identified or self-identified as such. In fact, I believe Salamá’s inhabitants have always demonstrated a pragmatic identification with state categories, shifting from one to another when they no longer saw the benefit of a particular identification.

Salamá’s “Original” Inhabitants

The reference to indigeneity led to further enquiry with my interlocutors. I asked Don Diego if he knew of other Maya-Achí ancestors. To my surprise, he told me that “Salamá’s *‘indios de antes’* (Indians of before) were *mejías*...that is they were Mexican, never indigenous (*indígena*). How can I explain this? You see, our traits, *our origins* are Mexican”. Don Leopoldo Ramírez, of the same generation, stated that Salamá’s oldest urban *barrio*, La Alcantarilla, was inhabited first by Cholula Mexicans, after Friar las Casas settled them there, and that they spoke “*mejicano*”. Don Beto Gularte, a decade older than Don Leopoldo, claimed that Salamá’s “main indigenous families were from Teguantepec in Mexico”. He recalled that by the 1930s few families dressed in Mexican attire, but that Salamá’s Indians, like other indigenous groups, were identifiable by their particular dress, which included “These great big skirts (*unas faldotas*) and white blouses. Don Diego concurred by stating that Salamá’s indigenous women wore a “white blouse with long checked purplish skirts (*moraditas de cuadritos*), wrapped around the waist”, and that the men were renowned for wearing a particular style of hat, exclusive to Salamá, and that their surnames were Mexican, such as the surname “Mejicano”.

While I at first thought Salamateco intentions to suggest that they were not Maya-Achí as farfetched, given Maya-Achí were the original occupants of the area, historical evidence does validate their claims. Mexicans had indeed settled in Salamá. However, there has been much confusion regarding who were Salamá's "original" inhabitants, both by locals and outsiders. For several decades, local writers claimed Salamá's ancestors were Pipil Indians. No doubt, they had been influenced by a book written by the Swiss doctor, Otto Stoll, who travelled to Guatemala to practice medicine but who turned his attention to the country's languages. Stoll visited Salamá in April 1883 and discovered that among the town's Indian population there were "expressions" of a language that resembled the "Azteca" language of Mexico. It led him to conclude that Salamá's original inhabitants were "Pipil Indians", who had been living in the region *before* Conquest (1958 [1884], xix-xxi, 12; also see Solano 1969, 187-189).

Celso Narciso Teletor, a priest native to Rabinal, for instance, wrote in a local journal that "the founding of Salamá is not known with exactitude but it is known that the Pipiles from Mexico passed through these regions and therefore, the people spoke the dialect Pipil, although at present there are no longer any vestiges [of these people] and even less of their typical dress" (*Cachil*, 1958). Nery Sandoval, in a monograph commissioned by the Municipal Corporation of Salamá in 1960, wrote regarding "the primordial race of Salamá ... there has been much confusion". Seeking to clarify the issue, he explained that while some Salamatecos had claimed "that Salamá's original inhabitants were pipiles", others believed "that they were Kakchiqueles", while "others believed that they were of the Maya-Quiché family that occupied Guatemala from the Pacific Coast region up to the valley of Rio Motagua". Alluding to Stoll's book, Sandoval stated that "because the Pipil language was in existence in the area, it is clear that from before the Spanish Conquest of America, the Mexican Indians who spoke the corrupt language in the same way as children speak (because Pipil means child) ... settled in the region of Salamá (Sandoval, 1960).

The Pipil were Nahuatl-speaking people who had migrated from Central and South Mexico sometime around 800 A.D. They had mainly settled in El Salvador and Nicaragua, while others installed themselves in Guatemala (see Fowler 1985, 37; Campbell 1985, 11-12; Dary 2003, 39; Stanislawski 1996). The name, "Pipil", was assigned to them by Mexican auxiliaries who, accompanying the conquistador, Pedro de Alvarado from Mexico into Central America, encountered a language that they

recognised, but which sounded “childish”. Thus, they named it “Pipil” which means child in Nahuatl (Stanislawski 1996, 411). During the colonial period, Spaniards distinguished between the Nahuatl spoken by Pipiles, which became known as *la mexicana corrupta* (corrupt Mexican), and the Nahuatl spoken in Mexico, known as *la lengua mexicana* (the Mexican language) which, alongside Spanish, functioned as the *la lingua franca* (Matthew 2004, 174-175). The distinction would seem to indicate that some during the colonial period also believed Salamá’s inhabitants were Pipil. Cortés y Larraz, for example, the Archbishop of Guatemala who visited Salamá in 1769, described Salamá’s Indians as, “*naturales* (natives) [who] speak a very corrupted Mexican language” (1958 Vol. I, 295).

Several modern scholars also appeared to agree with Stoll, in that Salamá’s inhabitants were “Pipil”, although to confuse matters, they argued that the Pipiles had been placed there *after* the Conquest (Fowler 1989: 59; Dary 2003, 38, f/n 3). The linguist, Lyle Campbell, for example, commented that President Cerrato, who had liberated over 10,000 enslaved Indians in the 1550s, settled some in Salamá, and that they were Pipil (1972, 205).

However, Stoll and the 1950s and 1960s local generation that he had influenced were mistaken. Salamá’s original inhabitants were not the Nahuatl-speaking Pipiles who had lived in the Central American region for centuries *before* Conquest or even *after* Conquest. That is, they were not the descendants of the wave of Nahuatl-speaking Indians who had migrated from Central and South Mexico from around 800 A.D.

They were Nahuatl-speaking natives who had come at that time from Central Mexico after Conquest. Campbell, who in the early 1970s declared Salamá “a Pipil town” (1972, 205) reached a different conclusion a decade later in his quest to solve “the controversial question concerning the Nahuatl [language] of Central Guatemala” (1985, 1).

According to Campbell, the Nahuatl language spoken in Salamá “has often been assumed to be Pipil but which turns out to be in origin post-Conquest and from Central Mexico” (1985, 1). Campbell reached his conclusion having studied various colonial manuscripts and compared them to the assembled vocabulary provided by Stoll. The philological evidence revealed that the language in Salamá correlated with a linguistic development that had only occurred in the Nahuatl of Central Mexico, and not in the

Nahuatl spoken by the Pipil, who had left Mexico several centuries before. His conclusion was that Salamá's Nahuatl speaking inhabitants were from Central Mexico and could only have been settled in the town after Conquest (1985, 936-938). Further evidence of Salamá's original inhabitants comes from Gavarrete y Cabrera, a public notary of central government in 1863, who referred to Salamá as a "colony of Mexicans" (Palma Murga 1991, 417).⁶⁸

Though there is no evidence on why Cerrato placed them in Salamá, Campbell cites an "oral tradition", collected by Lehman in 1920, that offers one reason:

"[T]he valley of Salamá was soon after the conquest the property of a Spanish woman from Tuxtla Grande, in the state of Veracruz, who brought many Mexican Indian families into the valley. The Indian immigrants brought their own indigenous attire from Tuxtla and kept it" (1985, 939, my translation).

Salamá's Colonial Population

In addition to that early Mexican Indian population, the Dominican order also brought Africans into the region. As noted in the previous chapter, the order owned several properties in Baja Verapaz, the largest of which was San Jerónimo, an estate that measured some 21,460 hectares by the late eighteenth century (Percheron 1990, 239), which produced large quantities of sugar for a Guatemala City market (McCreery 1994, 47, 77).

Although the Order relied on indigenous labour to tend to its cattle and crops, its desire to produce sugar led to the importation of African slaves. By 1625, there were some 85 African slaves working in San Jerónimo. During its most productive stage in the eighteenth century, the number of slaves was between 400 and 700 (Castillo Galindo 1989, 71-2, 75; Cortés y Larraz 1958 Vol. I, 294). On the eve of Guatemala's independence, there were 1,499 individuals living in San Jerónimo, 557 of whom were slaves, 237 *livertos* (free *pardos*, see below), and 705 Indians (Gudmundson 2001, 257).

⁶⁸ In addition, although I never came across anyone with the surname "Mejicano", as indicated by Don Beto above, after consulting the web based *International Genealogical Index* (hereafter, IGI), I found that the surname "Mejicano", written at times as "Megicano" or "Mexicano" was familiar in Salamá and, to a lesser degree, El Chol. ⁶⁸The IGI reveals that an estimated 146 individuals were born and/or christened with the surname between 1761 and 1887. It also provides information on another surname indicating Mexican provenance: that of "Oaxaja", written at times as "Guajaca". An estimated 171 individuals of the surname were born and/or christened in Salamá between 1760 and 1888.

Shortly after Conquest, Indian communities were provided land for subsistence; colonial authorities provided each *pueblo de indios* with *ejido* (communal) land. The official area was 38.7 *caballerías* (roughly one square league; approximately 1,750 hectares), although communities were allowed to increase their possession by applying for *composición* land (idle land that belonged to the Crown). Rabinal and Cubulco received their official amount, while Salamá's Indians obtained 21 *caballerías* (953 hectares) (Bertrand 1992, 82-85). Why Salamá received less is unclear, although it may have been because its population was smaller than those of Rabinal and Cubulco in the early colonial period. De Pineda noted in the late sixteenth century, there were "no more than 30 *vecinos* (inhabitants) in the valley" (1908 [1594], 447), whereas Rabinal, according to Remesal, writing in the early seventeenth century, had some "500 hundred *indios* between them Christian and gentiles" (1966 [1619] Vol. I, 364).

Both populations – African slaves and their descendants, and Indians – were manifestly controlled. Indians, after all were obliged to pay tribute, and provide labour. Some Indians, however, rejected the colonial system, sometimes through rebellion, although a more effective and immediate form was flight. In Baja Verapaz, Bertrand comments, many would escape to the valley of Salamá (and the southern valleys, see Chapter 5), the reasons being that its population was small, and the Dominican *haciendas* were there where they could hide (1989, 167; 1986, 7).⁶⁹

In addition, non-Indians increasingly found the town attractive because a major highway for the movement of goods and peoples ran through it. The colony's official commercial route – *el camino real* (Royal Road) - stretched from Santiago de Guatemala (presently Antigua Guatemala) to Cobán, through Salamá and Rabinal, up to Rio Dulce and the east coast (Percheron 1990, 242). Salamá, in contrast to Rabinal and Cubulco offered more freedom: it had less overt systems of control and was strategically located on a main thoroughfare. Over time, it became a place of flight and refuge.

⁶⁹ Owners of *haciendas* and *latifundios* welcomed the presence of that mobile population. According to Martínez Peláez, during the colony the Crown not only prohibited ladinos from seeking land in *pueblos de indios*, but also refused them their own land, a double-pronged attack known as the "agrarian block". With few places to go, many ladinos had no choice but to seek land and work on large agricultural complexes, which also contributed hugely to their economic success (1990, 365-397; also see McCreery 1994, 39; Bertrand 1989, 168-169). Colonial authorities, increasingly aware of what *hacienda* owners were doing, began to oblige them to report on the number of Indian tributaries, Ladinos, and escaped Indians (Bertrand 1986, 17).

An illustration of that freedom is found in Cortés y Larraz's commentary on Salamá's Indians. In 1769, the archbishop visited Salamá in his countrywide pastoral visits, where he was informed that some 100 husbands had abandoned their wives, and that of the town's 900 tribute-paying families, only 400 - some 1,300 individuals - lived in the town. The other 500 families – a significant number and clearly more than 1,300 individuals - not only refused to pay tribute but also lived “dispersed and in abandon...wandering from *hacienda* to *trapiche* (sugar press) at their own liberty with no fixed domicile”, and that when questioned by the priest, they, “threaten [him] that they will live elsewhere” (1958 Vol. I, 295-296).

We do not know if some of those “wandering” Indians joined the ranks of the ladino. However, by that period, a noticeable non-Indian population had emerged. Cortés y Larraz mentions that some 42 Ladino families – comprising around 300 individuals – lived in the town (1958 Vol. I, 296). The archbishop simply refers to the individuals as “ladino”, illustrating his use of the more composite term that was applied in that period to those who were not Indian, nor Spaniard (as outlined in Chapter 1). However, it is also probable that such individuals were noted by a racial category known as one's *calidad* (literally, one's ancestry), above all in parish records given priests often held a more intimate knowledge of localities (T. Little-Siebold 2001, 115).

According to Terga, whose research draws on colonial parish records, in 1776 there were 493 ladinos in Salamá, 37 of whom were Spaniards - it is interesting that for this period, Terga includes Spaniards within the rubric of “ladino” - and the rest of *calidad parda* (1988, 77). The use of the category *pardo* would seem to correlate with the ethnic composition of the town in that period, given the introduction of Africans, and the still small presence of Spaniards. However, Terga also uses the category *mulatto*, which usually referred to persons of African/Spanish descent/parentage (see Terga, 1988, 81). According to Gudmundson, however, colonial records suggest that in San Jerónimo the terms *mulatto*, *pardo* and *ladino* were interchangeable: “colonial officials used, in the same document, and even at times in the same folio, the terms ladino, *pardo* y *mulatto* as synonymous, different to Spanish and American Spanish” (2001, 257).

At the turn of nineteenth century, the population of Baja Verapaz like the country's demographics more broadly, had irreversibly changed. Salamá's non-Indians by 1812, we will recall, represented some 28 percent of its total population. For more than 150

years, Salamá (Rabinal and certainly Cubulco, see Table 1 above) was almost exclusively “Indian”, but from the eighteenth century, ladinos and Spaniards began to make their presence felt. One of the principal reasons for their increase was that despite the Dominicans’ tight rein over Verapaz, their economic ventures and desire for labour would paradoxically lead to a greater non-Indian population.

A further *ladinoization* of Salamá’s inhabitants occurred in the nineteenth century, when the town increasingly became the administrative and bureaucratic centre of Verapaz.⁷⁰ Moreover, in 1829, the new Republican regime expelled the Dominican Order from the country. The sale of its land profoundly affected the social and political structure of the region, one important consequence of which was the emergence of a new landed elite. A related development was the gradual privatization of communal land in the name of modernisation, such that by the twentieth century, according to McCreery, Salamá had lost “its Indian character”; most of the Indian *ejido* land had disappeared (1994, 45).

Nevertheless, I would also suggest that the *ladinoization* of Salamá’s Indians only occurred because of a longer process of acculturation and assimilation. Admittedly, Salamá’s Indians remained the majority ethnic group in the late colonial period (72 percent in 1812) and the late nineteenth century (61 percent in 1893). It would seem that the descendants of those Mexican Indians, whatever their ancestries by the late eighteenth century - given their small numbers at the beginning of the colonial period there must have been inter-marriage with the Maya-Achí - retained two qualities. First, a distinctive “Indian” identity because they remained the majority, and secondly, a linguistic identity differentiating them from other indigenes in the region, given that they continued to speak Nahuatl several centuries after Cerrato settled their ancestors in Salamá, as observed by Cortés y Larraz in 1769 and Stoll in 1883.

It would also seem that despite retaining an “Indian” identity Salamá’s Indians also became more “Europeanised” than their neighbours. When Cortés y Larraz observed that Salamá’s Indians spoke a “corrupted Mexican language” he also noted “but they all know and understand *castellano* (Spanish)” and that in the local school, “they all know how to not only read and write but also to sing the ecclesiastic verse” (1958 1, 295-296). Indeed, it seems the Dominicans’ presence led to both the emergence of a larger “non-

⁷⁰ In 1833, Salamá replaced Cobán as the province’s capital, until 1877, when Verapaz became two provinces (Barrios 1996, 131).

Indian” population by the end of the colonial period, and a gradual Hispanicization/Europeanization of its Indians.

I suggest that Salamá’s Indian-turned-Ladino inhabitants have always demonstrated a pragmatic identification with state categories. During the colony, some Indians fled their *pueblos de indios* to avoid paying tribute, joining the ranks of “ladino”. However, for many there was an economic incentive to remain “*indio*”, because although “Indian” and “tribute” were synonymous, Indians were not solely defined by tribute. Being *indio* meant also having access to the land of their *pueblo*, and to proceeds from livestock held in their *cofradías* (saint-worshipping societies) (see Taylor 1974, 387-413). With the increasing privatisation of *ejido* land in the nineteenth century, and the economic measures that targeted indigenes for their labour, it would seem that Salamá’s Indians no longer saw an incentive in identifying as Indian.

Anthropologists have demonstrated that indigenous identity is deeply embedded in notions of “community”, which plays a central role in its reproduction (Watanabe 1992; Wilson 1994). They note that colonialism fragmented pre-Columbian communities, primarily because of Indian re-settlement into *pueblos de indios*, but also that this resettlement created profoundly localised cultural loyalties, which in the long-term favoured the reproduction of indigenous culture and language, albeit changed by the new colonial structures (Smith 1990, 74). Indians in their *municipios* began to respect their own sacred mountains, and *cofradías*. Even when the government increasingly demanded communal landholdings be privatised, a sense of community remained ethnically important to rural Indians. Adams states, “community not only provided a physical reference with the past, present and future”, because place and communal lands were important as permanent points of reference, but also because it provided a protected social milieu where characteristics, such as dress, language and particular modes of conduct could be “constantly practiced, publicly reproduced and changed when necessary” (1993, 210-215).

Such arguments are consonant with the experiences of the Maya-Achí inhabitants of Rabinal and Cubulco, who were also subject to the privatisation of their lands and targeted for labour, yet who have retained a strong sense of their indigenous identity today (see Navarrette Pellecer 2005: van Akkeren 2000). This is also reflected in population figures: in 1893, Rabinal’s indigenous population was 86 percent, and in

1994 it was 81 percent, while Cubulco's was 80 percent and 70 percent respectively (Appendix IV). The experience of Salamá's historic Indians effectively contrasts with the experience of other rural indigenous peoples. Salamá was a predominantly Indian town in 1893, but no longer by 1994.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to provide a historical overview of Salamá's ethnic composition and its changing demographics from the early colonial period. In broad terms, a "ladino" population, by which I mean persons who were not residents of *pueblos de indios* and who were not paying tributaries with access to the town's communal lands, began to increase after 1750. They were persons who incorporated themselves under the rubric "ladino": *castas* as well as Indians who increasingly fled the payment of tribute, relinquishing their "Indian" identity, seeking refuge in Salamá (and Baja Verapaz's southern valleys). The combination of a Mexican Indian population and their descendants living in Salamá, the Dominican Order and its *haciendas*, the introduction of African slaves, and the arrival of Spaniards, all created a heterogeneous society in colonial Salamá, parts of which was itself increasingly racially mixed, affecting Salamá's demographics in ways different from those in Rabinal and Cubulco.

The growth of Salamá's ladino population, both in the colonial period, and thereafter, particularly between 1921 and 1950, was largely in response to coercive measures drawn up and enforced by the state, both colonial and republican. Salamá's history not only illustrates the active role of the state in fixing categories but also the inevitable outcomes produced by such systems of classification. Historically, as Salamá's Indians have successively shifted from the category of "Indian" into "Ladino" they have done so in response to boundaries and limits imposed upon them. While coercion seems to have played a significant role in the process of "passing", accounts signalling the state's role, and individuals' decisions based on such criteria, were absent in the narratives in my *pueblo/mestizo* informants' understandings of "ladino".

Many *pueblo/mestizos* with whom I conversed knew something about their town's colonial history, albeit in very broad terms. However, they never asserted their ancestor[s] were part of that heterogeneous and racially mixed population that emerged noticeably in the town in the eighteenth century. Others declared their "Indian roots"

were “Mexican” and mentioned that a “General called Beteta” in the late nineteenth century had forced their ancestors to become Ladino. Yet Salamá’s Indians did not “disappear” because of a singular event becoming “*ladinos de Beteta*”. Nor were the “Indians” in Salamá’s ancestries only “Mexican”. Those were selective appropriations of, and identifications with such history.

Chapter Four

Symbolic Importance of Surnames

This chapter deepens our focus on *pueblos/mestizos*. It addresses their relationship with indigeneity, through a consideration of surnames, and of non-legal unions between elite men and poor women.

In my initial conversations with *pueblo/mestizos*, the only Salamatecos who acknowledged Indian ancestry, I was told that I would encounter few people who would speak in positive terms about an indigenous ancestry. According to 42-year-old Guillermo López Pérez (not his real name), the term “*ladino*” was, above all, an ethnic qualifier. He stated that most Salamatecos were “racially mixed” and, therefore, should be categorised as *ladinos mestizos*. He believed that an educated younger urban population, more liberal and progressive, like himself, would identify as *mestizo*, because “nowadays, it’s simply racist to deny one’s *mestizaje*; *ladino* means non-Indian, but *mestizo* means Indian as well”. Yet, he clarified that only few locals would accept the identification because locals were loath to acknowledge an indigenous ancestry, preferring instead to say they were “*ladino*” with its implied meaning of “non-Indian”:

“Here, no one will tell you they’re indigenous because they’re considered the most marginalised population, uneducated, who live in isolated, sub-human conditions and in poverty. Many don’t want to be associated with them [Indians], maybe because of their pride or their egocentrism, but there’s no denying it that racially speaking, indigenous blood runs through all our veins”.

Erwin Bendfeldt (not his real name), like Guillermo in his 40s, similarly said he was *mestizo* and then pondered, “well, I guess I am” (*pues, me supongo que sí*):

“Look, since the time of the colony we’ve believed that being indigenous is the same as being inferior. Our *ladino* society has placed itself in a superior position whilst the indigenous has always been inferior. Maybe we don’t want to be seen as inferior, but it’s more than that. You see, I don’t want to be indigenous, so I say I’m *ladino*, but if you look at us we actually don’t look indigenous or *ladino*. Look at us - we can be anything. So, we define ourselves as a community of *ladinos*. We defend being *ladino* because we’re nothing!”

Don Diego Guzmán spoke at length about what he called “Salamá’s *mestizaje criollo*”, that is its own ‘organic form of racial mixture’, which for him meant “*ladinoized indios* [who]

married other ladinoized *indios*”.⁷¹ As a self-identified *ladino del pueblo*, by which he meant that he was born in the urban area, where he had lived his entire life, Don Diego stated he married a woman from San Jerónimo of African ancestry, which is why his son today is a *mestizo criollo*. Yet, he added that few people would speak positively about an indigenous ancestor: “(Salamatecos) will tell you they don’t speak a Mayan language, don’t wear indigenous clothes, don’t practice Mayan religion, they’ll use *un sinfín de razones* (an endless list of reasons) to say they’re not Indian. They’ll say they’re ladino, but they don’t know what this means”.

The unease was never more evident in the way *pueblo/mestizos* spoke about their out-of-wedlock status and the denial of a surname. I first became aware of the local importance of surnames through discussions with Salamatecos about out-of-wedlock children sired by rich men to poor women often from pre- or extra-marital relationships, whose presence in Salamá was widespread. As we will see in Chapter 6, elite men largely married elite women. However, despite feeling assured that their children were born into “stable homes”, over the twentieth century, elite men played a critical role in the destabilisation of non-elite families. Not only did they engage in pre-marital and extra-marital sex with poorer women, fathering many of their children, but also, with few exceptions, they would leave the upbringing of their biological child to the child’s mother and her kin. Although out-of-wedlock children existed in all groups, the majority belonged to the *pueblo/mestizo* category.

Scholars on Guatemala’s ladinos have long commented on how surnames are important to them, mentioning that ladinos who have indigenous surnames are often stigmatized (see Gillin 1951, 51-68; González-Ponciano 2005, 22). Yet very little is said about how they are mobilised, or what underscores their invocation.

In Salamá, they were revealed to be locally informed symbols that purported to contain knowledge about “ancestral histories”, that is, one’s *antecedentes*. Surnames functioned as the matrix through which status and wealth were mediated. They determined how

⁷¹ Bouysse-Cassagne and Saignes note that “*criollo*” comes from a word identified with cattle and the verb “to raise” (*criar*). At the beginning of the colonial enterprise it was used as an adjective, relating to territory: it was synonymous with “American...applied to all the groups who defined themselves by the place of birth, from the Europeans to the “*indios*”, obviously going through *mestizos*”. Only later did one social group appropriate it – the white European elite born on American soil (1992, 23). Don Diego’s use of the word is in its descriptive, not substantive (that which relates to race), sense.

Salamatecos positioned themselves vis-à-vis others, while serving as the yardstick of who was ‘respectable’ and who was not. Interestingly, surnames, not phenotype, were invoked as significant markers of difference; they were considered better signifiers of geographic origin, occupation, class, and ancestry. They were invoked to fix and/or mark others, particularly one’s indigenous ancestry, even if that person no longer identified as indigenous. They were manipulated to conceal one’s indigenous background, brought up to underscore one’s claims to “racial purity” and, for elites, they were markers of kinships, invoked to downplay the fluidity of biological mixture (see Chapter 6).

This chapter’s focus, therefore, is not on naming practices *per se* but on what surnames signified to local Salamatecos. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (2006) argue that names are never “mere assignments”, but markers that can reveal information about one’s gender, kinship, origins, geography, religion and much more. They argue that names are connected to one’s self-identity and are entangled in the lives of others. Sociality, for example, emerges through the practice of naming, while processes of “recognition or inheritance” are implicit or explicit in the act of naming (2006, 3). A name also becomes identical with a person, creating the ability for it to fix an individual or a member of a social group. Yet, it also has a “commodity-like value” in that individuals can detach themselves from their names, and cross boundaries. That is, they can be “a powerful political tool for establishing or erasing formal identity”. Indeed, the authors argue that names can express “core elements of one’s person”, and can be indicative of processes of “power, agency and responsibility” (ibid, 5).

This chapter consists of three sections. I first offer some legal considerations concerning out-of-wedlock children. Secondly, I outline in broad terms the manner in which Salamatecos spoke about surnames, discussing through one example, how the spotlight of dubious ancestry fell on those who identified with the *pueblo/mestizo* category. Finally, I present a detailed case study that spanned four generations concerning illegitimacy and surnames.

Out-of-wedlock Births and the Law

While I do not have statistics on the number of out-of-wedlock births, I was surprised at the extent to which Salamatecos mentioned their presence within their families, a

phenomenon that appeared widespread and openly acknowledged.⁷² Perhaps the most striking example of openness was when, unknown to me at the time, I had left a book that someone had lent me in the house of a family I had recently visited. I later saw the daughter of the family in a coffee shop who returned the book. I apologised, informing the woman that I had not realised I had misplaced the book while mentioning the name of the man who had given it to me, to which she replied, “oh don’t worry, he won’t mind, he’s my father”. Clearly seeing that I was embarrassed, she added “oh no, he’s my father but *no me reconoció* (that is, he did not legally recognise her). We don’t talk”. At the time, it seemed peculiar that the woman had shared highly personal information in a public space, even if she demonstrated no unease in divulging it. However, as discussions progressed with Salamatecos on accounts of identity, family history and kin relationships, I realised that not only did many openly talk about out-of-wedlock children, but that the latter also knew in many cases who their biological father was, and that that knowledge was also common among a broader population.

Kuznesof (2005) states that throughout Latin America, families formed through legal marriage – that is, “an institution that is essentially patriarchal, based on a system of monogamous marriage, and focused on reproduction” – were far from the norm, with out-of-wedlock births ranging from 30-60 percent from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century (2005, 859-860). Until 1877, Wertheimer (2005) writes, marriage law rested on Spanish precedent, which distinguished between “legitimate” and “illegitimate” children, with the former representing the “respectable” family formation, and the latter not. With the Catholic Church and state politics closely intertwined, children born within a marriage enjoyed rights to inheritance, the father’s surname, and access to government posts, while those born outside of marriage were denied the same rights (2005, 389-390).⁷³

⁷² National statistics, however, are revealing. According to Wertheimer, in an informative essay on adulterous concubinage in twentieth-century Guatemala, in national censuses, respondents are asked to identify with one of five “civil status” categories: single, married, “united” (unmarried but living together), widowed or divorced. If total monogamy existed, then the total number of attached (married or united) women would equal the number of attached (married or united) men. Yet, he found that in the 1964 census, attached women outnumbered attached men by over 23,000 (that is, some six percent of attached women may have been sharing the same man). In the 2002 census, attached women outnumbered attached men by 190,000, suggesting that perhaps 18 percent of attached women were sharing men. The pattern, Wertheimer observes, is replicated in all censuses from 1945: “women predominated in married, united, widowed, and divorced. Men predominated only in the “single” category”. Wertheimer states that adulterous concubinage is one among several “factors contributing to the imbalance”, but he stresses that is, nevertheless, a significant one (2005, 384-385, 420).

⁷³ Spanish law recognised seven categories of illegitimate children. The “elites of illegitimate children” were called “natural” children, whose parents faced no legal impediments to marriage but were unmarried.

From the late nineteenth century, however, the sheer number of out-of-wedlock births coupled with their lack of legal rights increasingly obliged Latin American ideologues and policy makers to address the phenomenon (Miller, 1991). In Guatemala, Wertheimer argues, efforts to secularise the law and to address “social equality, family equality, women’s rights, and the best interest of children” resulted in changes, which within 70 years meant that fathers could “recognise” their out-of-wedlock children “with unprecedented ease” (2005, 379, 397).⁷⁴

According to Wertheimer, the changes were initiated in Guatemala’s new Civil Code of 1877, which legislated that “marriage” was henceforth defined as a “civil contract”, that the law only recognised marriages performed by civil authorities, and that civil registrars, not parishes, were to record marriages and births (2005, 391). The Code also included three new amendments. Despite retaining the distinction between “legitimate” and “illegitimate” children, the Code stipulated that illegitimate children could enjoy some inheritance rights; it provided fathers with the legal right to recognise the paternity of their “illegitimate” offspring; and it granted “illegitimate” children the legal right to claim their paternity through filiation suits. The Civil Code of 1933 further stated that in the absence of a will following a father’s death, all children, regardless of their status as “in” or “outside” children of the marriage, had equal inheritance rights. The 1945 Constitution not only reinforced the change, but that same year, Guatemala’s Congress ordered civil registrars to henceforth omit references to the legal status of the child: children were no longer to be registered as “legitimate” or “illegitimate” (ibid, 395-397). Yet, as stated in the 1964 Civil Code, it was ultimately the father’s choice should he want to legally recognise his child outside of the marriage, although children could demand their legal recognition in a Family Court (Civil Code, 1964, Art. 210).

While the instruction to omit the legal status of out-of-wedlock births from registration sought to remove the stigma of “illegitimacy”, and since it was the father’s choice to grant legal recognition, some children were rarely legally recognised. In the many cases I encountered, illegitimate children who sought the recognition of their paternity in Court

Following them was a “rogues” gallery of illegitimacy: products of adultery; of concubinage; of “direct-line-of-descent” incest; products of “transversal” incest; clerics’ children; and prostitutes’ children” (Wertheimer 2005, 395). According to Wiesner Hanks, out-of-wedlock children whose parents were unmarried but who could legally marry were afforded more inheritance rights than those of parents who could not marry, such as the offspring of priests or those born of an adulterous relationship (2001, 41).

⁷⁴ It is important to highlight that others have argued that gender equality featured little in the changes to family and marriage law in most Latin American countries (see Miller 1991, 79).

and/or contested claims to inheritance centred only on collateral or generational kin of the same class position.⁷⁵ Those sired by rich fathers to poor mothers rarely challenged or were granted legal recognition. Born to poor women who worked as seamstresses, shop assistants and/or domestic workers, as well as on plantations, their status was made evident by the fact that they were registered at birth with only one surname - their mother's.

It is understood that a legally recognised child is one who has two surnames: one from the father and a second one from the mother; that is ideally her paternal surname. Guatemalan new-borns have to be legally registered in the municipal records of the locality in which they are born. Up until 1995, children who were refused legal recognition by their biological father were registered only with their mother's surname. This made their status immediately apparent. If the mother was illegitimate herself then the same maternal surname was passed onto her child. It was only with the passing of Decree Law 38 in 1995 that a single mother of an illegitimate child could register her offspring with her own two surnames (Civil Code, Art. 4, 2).⁷⁶

While not exclusive to the *pueblo/mestizo* category, most out-of-wedlock births were from there. Although, like other middle Salamatecos, marriage defined the long-term relationships of many younger *pueblo/mestizos* (under the age of 50), they themselves were either born out of wedlock and raised by single mothers or were the children of illegitimate parent[s]. The reasons for this are undoubtedly complicated, but it could be that historically *pueblo/mestizo* women were in more contact with elite men, either because of their work and/or because they lived in or around the *pueblo* area, which increasingly became the residence of some elite families, while for others it is where they owned their businesses. While I met some *puro* women who also gave birth to children out of wedlock, they were fewer in number. This might have been because in the past they were more protected from elite men, living spatially segregated in southern Salamá on small self-sufficient farms where families upheld a strong belief in chastity and marriage, vis-à-vis *pueblo/mestizos*, who were less Catholic and not spatially segregated (see next chapter).

⁷⁵ The cases of illegitimate children sired by poor men to poor women are not discussed in this chapter.

⁷⁶ I would like to thank Diane Izaguirre who lived in San Jerónimo for bringing this to my attention.

Although poor men certainly sired out-of-wedlock children, the many examples that were shared with me concerned children fathered by rich men, born to poor women. That indicates that an impressive biological relatedness did not only exist between elite families through marriage (see Chapter 6). It also existed between elites and non-elites through non-marriage. Elite families may have ensured their offspring married like with like, but their men were biologically related to many (previously) poor families from pre-marital and/or extra-matrimonial relationships. One elite man even boasted, “illegitimacy is perhaps the origin of most of Salamá’s families”. Another who had fathered three out-of-wedlock children stated when I expressed surprise at the biological relatedness between Salamateco families from dissimilar historical trajectories: “well yes, it’s a chain, it’s a chain, in one way or another, we’re all related here (*es una cadena, una cadena, de una forma acá todos somos parientes*)”.

In addition, as we will see Chapter 6, some elite women also had children out-of-wedlock. They were expelled from homes or expected to leave Salamá for their pregnancies but were ultimately provided some form of social and economic assistance from their kin. Poor single mothers were not only abandoned by their lovers and expected to raise their children alone but also socially stigmatised.

Don Hugo Conde mentioned that in Salamá there has always “existed a large presence of single mothers”. He recalled the way in which social institutions in the 1970s reacted strongly against single mothers. “In the church”, Don Hugo said “they were denied access, the *padres* (priests) called them sinners”. According to Don Hugo, “it was really difficult changing the mentality, the locals were very, very conservative, you know they were full of prejudices”, explaining that single mothers were subject to a double rejection: on the one hand, by their lover, and on the other, by society.

Given the societal attitudes towards single mothers, my informants noted many single mothers abandoned their children often to the care of their parents. Yet, the paradox was that among Salamatecos a single mother who rejected her child was criticised even more, with the onus on her to “prove herself” to society. For example, the owner of a local private school, who was raised by his single mother stated that his mother “regained” her reputation precisely because she brought up her children single-handedly. Single mothers who abandoned their children, he noted, were in

“a situation that wasn’t well looked upon, but in the long run it depended on the mother’s behaviour, if a mother abandoned her kids in search of another marriage well people would criticise her, but if she worked hard towards their education and general well-being, then she was eventually considered a good person. Society had to see something positive in that mother, because you know that mothers abandon their children, it’s tremendous”.

Locally, out-of-wedlock children were known as *niños no-reconocidos*, non-legally recognised children, *ilegitimos*, illegitimate children, *bastardos*, bastard children, or *naturales*, natural children. They were positioned vis-à-vis their biological father’s family as *hijos/as afuera de matrimonio*, children outside of the marriage, as opposed to *hijos/as de matrimonio*, children of the marriage. Family members, talking about family and kin relationships would invariably mention that either their father has/had fathered children outside of the marriage, that they themselves had/have half-brothers/sisters, and/or that they themselves were or their mother/father was born out of wedlock.

While conversations on illegitimate children highlighted the social fluidity between different classes, as we will see in Chapter 6, their narratives also exposed that out-of-wedlock children ultimately felt robbed of their rightful surname, which in a town like Salamá, signified the denial of social status. It was frequently said with regards illegitimate children was “forget the inheritance, s/he never even got the surname!”

Markers of Shame/Markers of Pride

There was a widespread assumption among Salamatecos that ladinos felt embarrassment and shame of their indigenous surnames, and consequently hid them. Don Haroldo, a local historian and teacher, was critical of the practice. In the mid-1950s, shortly after he completed his studies, he married a woman from Cobán, Alta Verapaz, whose paternal surname was “Caal”, a Maya-Q’ekch’í surname. He recalled that at the time some of his friends reprimanded him, “for bringing an Indian back to Salamá”. In those years, he said, marriage between ladinos and Indians was considered a “taboo”, but his wife was not indigenous:

“My *suegro* (father-in-law), you see, had an indigenous surname (Caal) but he wasn’t indigenous. He was the son of a man who married a German woman, mixture of Indian with German. Who knows how that happened, perhaps it was the Indian’s revenge, but he (the father-in-law) was already totally *ladinoizad*’ (*tal vez era venganza del indígena, pero el ya era totalmente ladinizado*).

While Don Haroldo stressed his wife was “totally *ladinoized*”, her surname exposed her indigenous ancestry, which, he claimed, his children were not ashamed to identify with: “all my children took the surname with pride, they appropriated it (*lo agarraron*), my kids used it in the house”. Interestingly, his reference to “the house” may have been just an accident of speech but several Salamatecos, discussing the matter, often alluded to Don Haroldo’s children, claiming that rather than “appropriating” their maternal surname, they hid it *publicly*. One person, who attended school in the same years as Don Haroldo’s children, recalled:

“More so the girls than the boys, well, they were ashamed to give ‘Caal’ as their surname. They would give their father’s two surnames. But their father’s [second] surname didn’t correspond to them. The one that corresponded to them was ‘Caal’. It’s very common here that people do this. It’s a vanity, a vanity that makes us ashamed to identify with the indigenous side of the family”.

Debora, who I return to in detail below, offered similar observations. She explained that it was customary for Guatemalans to write in full one’s paternal surname but sometimes initialise their maternal surname. Some ladinos with indigenous surnames, however, often did the reverse:

“look, I have a friend whose name is Isabela Cahuec Alonzo. The custom is for ‘Cahuec’, to be written and ‘Alonzo’, to be initialised, so it should be ‘Cahuec A’. But Isabela always wrote it the other way, as ‘C. Alonzo’. Why? Because she didn’t want anyone to know she was indigenous”.

On another occasion, Debora shared her irritation with the secretary at the Public Ministry. The secretary had learned that the surnames of Debora’s mother-in-law were “Ramos Sis”, the latter a recognisable indigenous surname. She was surprised that Debora, an educated middle-class woman, had chosen to marry a man of indigenous ancestry. What is more, the secretary intimated that Debora’s mother-in-law surely manipulated or hid her surname “Sis”, by saying she was “Ramos de Aguilar (Ramos, wife of Aguilar)”, which is a customary practice in Guatemala whereby women upon marriage displace their maternal surname for that of their husband. Although Debora insisted that her mother-in-law never hid her surname, she stressed that the secretary’s attitude resonated within the wider society: “here in Salamá, what you have to understand is, to be indigenous is like having an illness. No one wants to be indigenous, but, for some, unfortunately, the surname gives it away”.

According to Sanabria, indigenous naming practices and indigenous names began to disappear in Hispanic America after Spanish colonisation. In the Andean region, for example, local naming practices before Conquest consisted in mothers bequeathing their names to daughters, and fathers to their sons, a practice which was inscribed firmly in “a widespread system of parallel descent, inheritance and gender relations”. By the mid-colonial period, however, “the use of (predominantly Spanish) surnames was widely entrenched as an intrinsic part of personal identity” (2001, 139). In Paraguay, observe Turner and Turner, attempts to create a “distinct Paraguayan national ethnicity” led to the incorporation of Guaraní surnames into a “*mestizo* naming system”, so that “both the indigenous naming system and Paraguayan history and social structure [reflected] a specific marker of ethnicity and social class” (1993, 139).

In Mesoamerica, the Spanish Crown, wanting to sever indigenous attachment to their pre-colonial identities, instructed authorities after 1646 to tell indigenous peoples that they had to “take or be given” a Spanish surname (Maxwell 2004, 179). Consequently, according to Restall, many indigenous groups, such as those in Mexico and Oaxaca, completely lost the practice of naming their children with indigenous names. However, he notes, Mayans were “exceptional in that, although they adopted Spanish first names and titles of nobility, they maintained their own system of patronymic surnames, based on male lineage, which has persisted widely until today” (2005, 127).

This is evident in Guatemala, and especially in Baja Verapaz, where certain surnames are recognised as belonging to different Maya groups resident in different *municipios*. In Rabinal, for example, several Achí men took on Spanish surnames after Conquest to show their allegiance to the new powers, while the clergy imposed others, but to this day, argues van Akkeren, the Maya-Achí transmit surnames that belong to particular lineages which pre-date the colony (2003, 44-45).

Effectively, in Salamá, as in Guatemala generally, there are indigenous surnames as well as non-indigenous surnames. Salamatecos claimed that ladinos and Indians could be identified by their surnames: a person with an indigenous surname was indigenous, whereas one with a non-indigenous (European) surname was ladino. In Baja Verapaz, for example, the surnames *Ixtepec*, *Cabueq*, *Chen*, *Xitimul*, *Adqui*, *Temú* and *Tecú* are recognised Maya-Achí surnames, while *Bol*, *Boj* and *Caal* are Maya-Q'ekchí surnames.

However, a person with an indigenous surname does not always self-identify as “indigenous”, while a person with a non-indigenous surname may do so. For instance, several Salamatecos had the surname, “Bol”, “Boj” or “Caal” but they did not consider themselves indigenous nor did Salamatecos around them; family members saw themselves and were treated as ladinos. Similarly, some locals who had non-indigenous surnames self-identified as indigenous. Carlos Solís Marroquín, an employee of two decades in the province’s Statistics Office, recalled interviewing a woman for the 2002 census. She wore no indigenous attire, spoke Spanish, and both her surnames were non-indigenous – Morales Vargas. Yet, he pointed out, when asked with which ethnic category she identified – Ladino or indigenous – she stated the latter. According to Solís Marroquín, surnames were unreliable markers of one’s ethnicity. I, therefore, asked him, how one’s ethnicity could be determined simply by a surname considering the bipolarity of Indian/ladino surnames exposed contradictions. He explained, as did others, that surnames never functioned as markers of ethnicity. Instead, they specified one’s “degree” or “lack” of indigenous blood, at least in Salamá, and other Baja Verapaz *municipios*, thereby indicating one’s *antecedentes*, ancestral history.

Locally, surnames were hierarchically structured and aligned with class and race. Surnames such as *Gularte* and *Sanabria* indicated European ancestry and were generally identified with the local elite class. As we will see below, elite families claimed their lineages were associated with a common ancestor. Whenever Salamatecos referred to persons with surnames like *Balcárcel*, *Samayoa*, *Vélez* and *Luna*, their comments invariably concerned persons from southern Salamá, that is, *puros*. The importance of their surnames rested upon claims to racial purity.

Salamatecos who did not belong to either above category were generally assumed to have common surnames, which in many cases, allegedly exposed an indigenous and/or African ancestry. For example, surnames such as *Pérez*, *Guzmán*, *Soto*, and *López*, some Salamatecos claimed, were the result of Beteta’s edict in the late nineteenth century because the families had no biological connection between them. On the other hand, Salamatecos distinguished surnames such as *Ramos*, *San José*, *De la Cruz*, *De los Santos*, and *Trinidad*, as originating from within the slave population of San Jerónimo, and were, therefore, associated with African ancestry. Their prevalence, it was pointed out, was the result of an imposition by the Dominican order, because similarly they belonged to families that had no biological connection between them. Together with ladinos who

had visibly indigenous surnames, it was upon them the spotlight of dubious ancestral history was fixed.⁷⁷

Given this situation, it was not surprising that those who have common surnames aspired to have non-common surnames, especially when one person explained to me that in Salamá, “the surname limits you (*el apellido te encierra*). So, you simply don’t want it. For this reason, many people here are embarrassed of being indigenous”.

Guillermo López Pérez, for example, who now belongs to Salamá’s middle class, informed me that his surname López, “was a very generalised surname”, giving the impression that probably “many indigenous people adopted it when they were forced to convert to ladino”.

Guillermo was 42 years of age when I met him. He lived some ten minutes by foot from the *pueblo* in a house he shared with his wife, their three children, and his mother. His only brother and family lived next door.

The two siblings were raised by their mother, after their father died when Guillermo was 11. Paralleling the economic circumstances of previous generations of *pueblo/mestizos* discussed in Chapter Two, Guillermo’s upbringing was poor. He recalled that the family lived in poverty before and especially after his father’s death. His father worked first as a mechanic, and later as chauffeur of the doctor I have already mentioned, who was also Guillermo’s godfather. After the father’s unexpected death, Guillermo’s mother, left with the care of two sons, “sold home-made ice cream to schoolchildren outside the school building”.

Guillermo had ambitions to join the military, but his godfather convinced him to apply for a university scholarship. It was the early 1980s, and parents with the economic

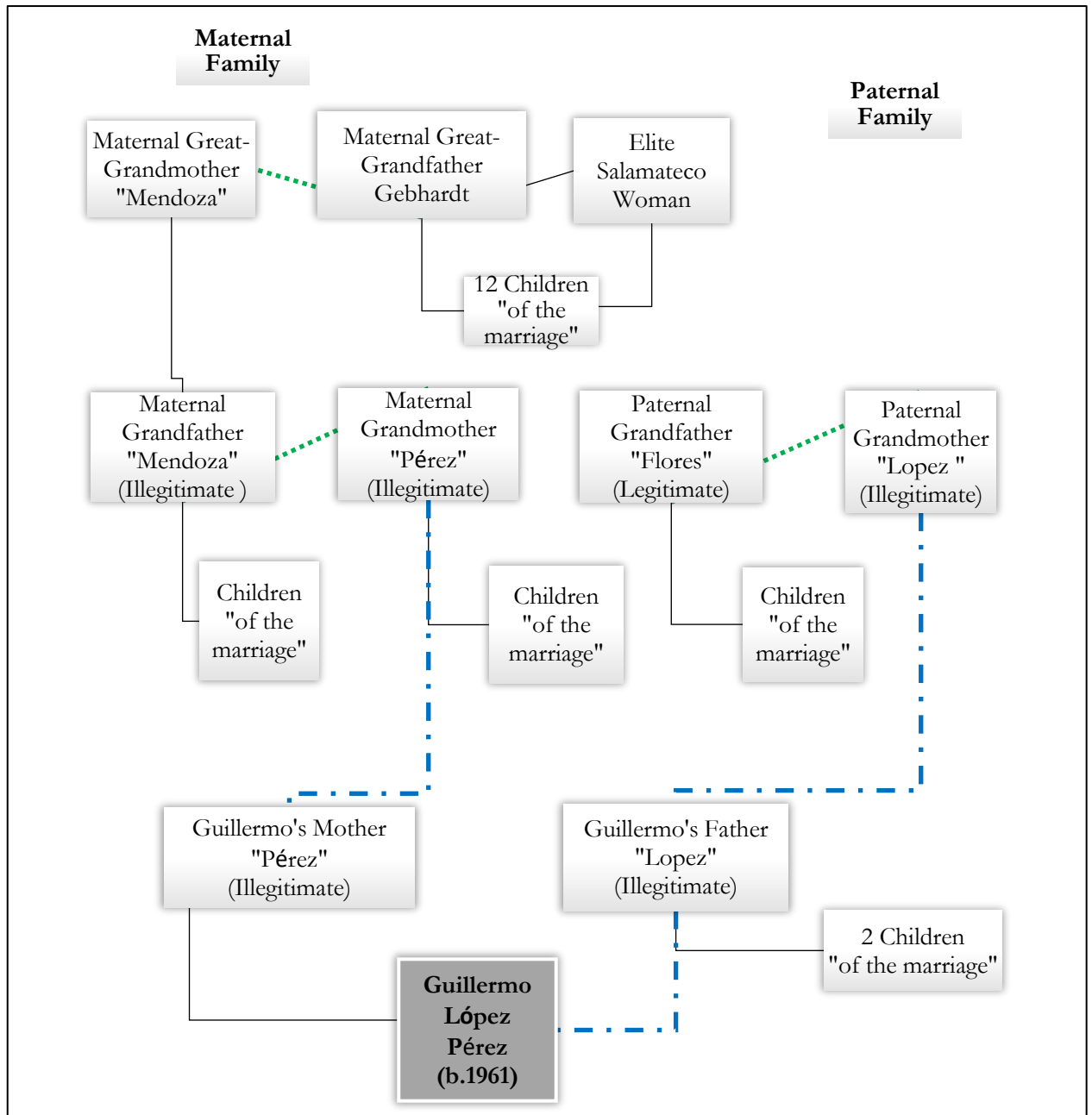
⁷⁷ The distinctions resonate with other contexts where surnames determine one’s “biological background”, above all, when phenotype in itself is a poor indicator. Azevêdo et al. carried out a study in the northeastern state of Bahia, Brazil in the late 1970s, to determine its inhabitants’ ancestry. Their study concluded the existence of three broad categories of surnames. “Devotional surnames”, which were described as associated with saints, religious symbols and/or ceremonies in the Catholic Church, belonged to descendants of African slaves who had adopted the surnames through baptism. “Animal or plant surnames” were usually associated with indigenous peoples, while the remaining surnames, which indicated a “common ancestor” were associated with a European population, whose members could be traced to “common ancestors” (1980, 360-363; also see Sans 2000, 158-159).

means increasingly removed their children from Salamá, while teachers encouraged students from poor families to apply for scholarships to study elsewhere because of the paramilitary group that operated in the town.

Guillermo studied agronomy. He returned to Salamá after completing his degree a married man. In Salamá, he found work easily in several developmental projects, money from which he invested in land and crops. In the mid-1990s, he became director of a province-wide development project.

In discussions with Guillermo about his family, he stated that “an abnormal normality of illegitimacy” characterised his family, and that his family’s history was a “little *enredada*” (entangled). Guillermo and his brother were not “children of the marriage”, because his father was already married to another woman with whom he had three children when he began a relationship with Guillermo’s mother. The father, however, faced no legal impediment to legally recognise the paternity of his two sons (see above); both were registered at birth with their father and mother’s surname, “López Pérez”, as is the customary practice in Guatemala (Kinship Diagram 1).

Kinship Diagram 1: Guillermo López Pérez and ancestors



His parents, however, he pointed out, were “*hijos bastardos*” (bastard children), adding, “curiously, or should I say it’s not so unusual, so were their parents”, highlighting that “illegitimacy” characterised many families across generations. His father, of the surname, “López”, was denied his paternal surname, “Flores”, and his mother, was denied her paternal surname, “Mendoza”.

Guillermo’s maternal grandfather and maternal grandmother were also out-of-wedlock births and were similarly denied legal recognition. Though they had a daughter together – Guillermo’s mother – they never married or settled down together and Guillermo’s mother was registered at birth with her mother’s only surname, “Pérez”. Both Guillermo’s maternal grandparents then abandoned their daughter, who was raised by her maternal grandmother.

Guillermo explained that having abandoned their daughter, the grandfather settled in Petén while the grandmother went to Guatemala City where they each formed new families. Guillermo explained that his mother has half siblings “but only of the father” as well as “but only of the mother” but “legally they don’t exist because there’s no surname in common, they’re my aunts and uncles in inverted commas, as I put it”.

In contrast to an older generation of *pueblo/mestizos*, who often spoke deferentially about the town’s elite (see Chapter 6), Guillermo’s attitude was scathing, probably because his maternal grandfather of the surname “Mendoza”, was the illegitimate son of one of Salamá’s wealthiest men of the early twentieth century. According to Guillermo, his maternal great-grandmother was the elite man’s “concubine”. Employed as seamstress in his clothing store, she entered an adulterous relationship with her employer and was soon pregnant. Guillermo explained: “it was typical of one those relationships where the powerful man of the town impregnates a young, humble, pretty woman and then doesn’t recognise her child”. He pointed out that there were out-of-wedlock children “*regados*” (spread) all over Salamá, and many had been sired by some of the town’s “greatest *caciques*” (chieftains).

Having stated that it was likely he had indigenous ancestors Guillermo lamented that his grandfather’s illegitimate status denied his family the “surname de *más alcurnia*” (of noble lineage). He explained that the elite surname, “Gebhardt” (not the real surname), which his grandfather would have had had he been legally recognised, was “a German surname

that no one can doubt...it's like someone would say 'that family, now they're definitely not indigenous'".

Guillermo was not alone in talking about parents and ancestors who had been refused legal recognition. Like others, he placed much emphasis on a biological connection with an elite man, even though in many cases legal, and social, recognition was denied. While it is true that in some circumstances, elite men legally recognised their out-of-wedlock children, which locals attributed to their "honourability" (see Chapter 6), in the many cases I encountered, such as that of Guillermo's mother and grandfather, they did not. Likewise, while I learned of several cases where locals went to a Family Court to demand their father recognise his paternity, I rarely encountered such examples among poor Salamatecos when it concerned an elite man. The only example I was recounted related to Don Alejo and Celso, all of which was spearheaded by an elite man.

I asked Debora why was it that people mentioned so obviously that they were related to elite families, considering there was an absence of a kin relation and no legal or social recognition. She responded, it was their "connection with the upper classes" (*su vinculo con el abolengo*). As we will see next, Debora's family made the same connection. However, she did not see the irony in that she and her family were doing the same.

Celso, Don Alejo and Debora

Celso Osorio Xitimul, the eldest of three siblings, was born into a poor family in Rabinal in 1938. His mother, Macaria Xitimul, was an indigenous/ladino (see below) woman, and his father, Tomás Osorio, a poor ladino. Tomás died when his children were still very young so Macaria raised her children with the help of her mother, Paula Xitimul. Celso attended school in Rabinal, where apparently, he was "discovered" by a German who was conducting a nation-wide tour of schools and who offered Celso the opportunity to study at his college in Guatemala City. There, Celso excelled in his studies and was later awarded a scholarship to study engineering at Mexico's Monterrey Institute of Technology. When he graduated in 1968, he returned to Guatemala and settled down in Guatemala City, where he married and had three children.

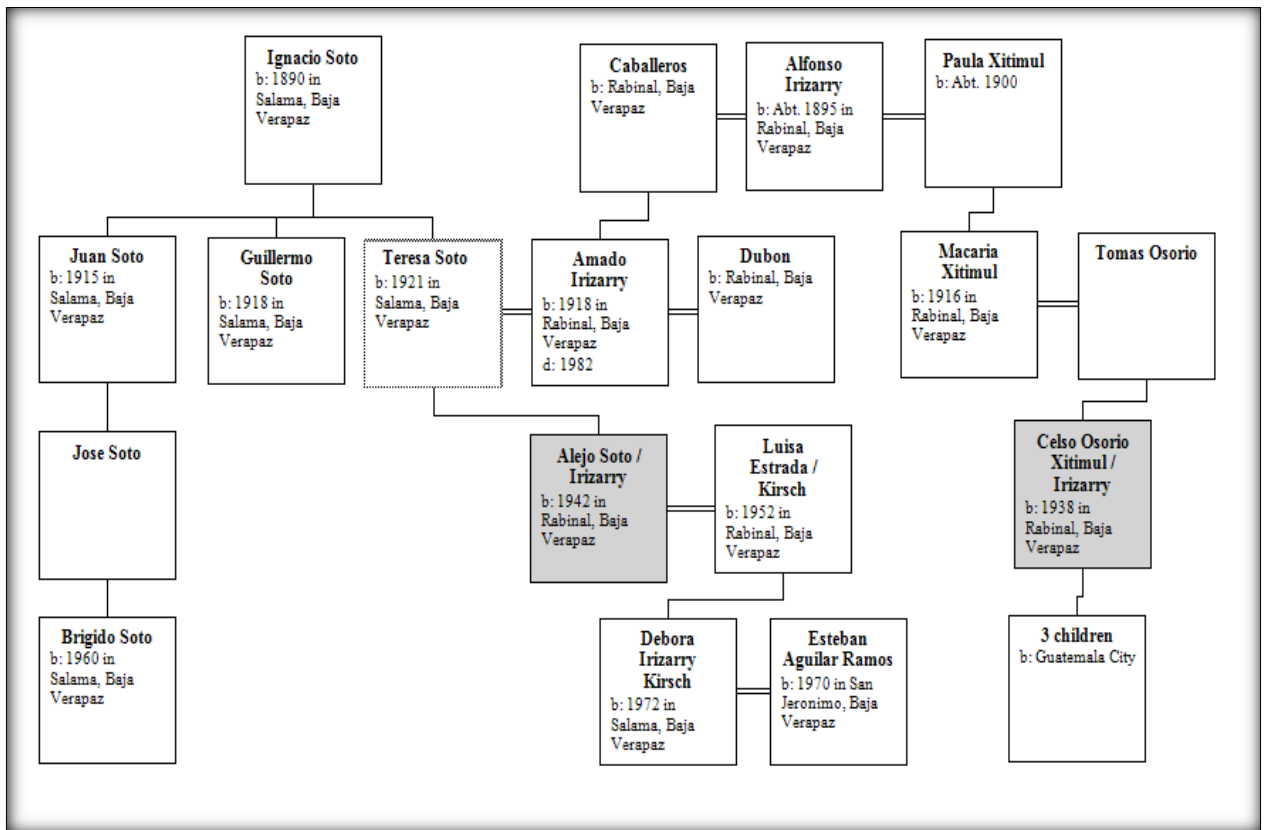
Also living in Rabinal was Alejo Irizarry Soto, Celso's cousin. Don Alejo, born in 1942, grew up in an economically comfortable ladino household. He trained to become a

teacher, although when I met he had left the profession to work on different projects for various international NGOs (Kinship Diagram 2).

According to Don Alejo, the Irizarry had formed part of Rabinal's small ladino population from at least the beginning of the nineteenth century. Various family members had historically been involved in local politics, and Don Alejo's grandfather, Alfonso, owned an estate of six *caballerías* in Camalmapa, San Miguel Chicaj. When I met Don Alejo, he and his wife, Luisa Kirsch Estrada, had been living in San Jerónimo for two decades. They had three daughters, one of whom was Debora, with whom also I had several discussions about family and identity. In the early 1970's, Don Alejo and Luisa moved their family to Salamá where Debora was born in 1972, but shortly after, the family immigrated to the United States, where her two sisters were born. The family returned after a decade and settled in San Jerónimo. Apart from the years in the United States, where Don Alejo and Luisa worked in a factory, Luisa had dedicated much of her life to raising her daughters, although recently she had opened a convenience store.

Don Alejo and Celso were related because they shared the same grandfather, Alfonso Irizarry (see Kinship Diagram below). However, Don Alejo's father, Amado Irizarry Caballeros, and Celso's mother, Macaria Xitimul, were half-siblings. Macaria's mother, Paula Xitimul, was born at the turn of the twentieth century into a poor indigenous household, and like thousands of poor Guatemalan women and girls, found work in domestic service. At the age of 14, she began work in the Irizarry household, where Alfonso also lived, her *patrona* (female boss)'s eldest child, who was also in his teens. In an all too common scenario regarding female domestic workers, Alfonso had sex with Paula. Don Alejo, who was relating the account, said it was rape, when he stated that his grandfather, Alfonso, "raped" (*la violó*) Paula, and pointed out that young (particularly wealthy) unmarried boys, "of course, have sexual needs", and that it was condoned and even expected by parents that their sons "*practicaban con la ayuda*" (practiced on the help). The sexual encounter between Alfonso and Paula led to the birth of Macaria, Paula's only child, and Alfonso's first-born.

Kinship Diagram 2: Irizarry/Xitimul Family



Don Alejo became aware of Macaria after his grandfather, Alfonso, pointed her out to him: “he told me, ‘she’s my daughter, *pero de india*” (but of an Indian woman). According to Don Alejo, Paula continued to work in the Irizarry household while she was pregnant, during which months, Alfonso started courting the woman who became his wife, of the surname “Caballeros”. Don Alejo highlighted the assumed gender, class and ethnic disparities between Alfonso and his future wife, on the one hand, and Paula on the other, stating that, “my grandfather then fell in love with my grandmother but now in a *decent way*”. Don Alejo recounted that when his grandmother’s parents went to the Irizarry household to discuss their daughter’s marriage to Alfonso, they said, “we know these things happen (that is, sex between domestic workers and their employer’s son[s]) but we want Paula out of the house”. Shortly before Paula gave birth she left the Irizarry household, and not long after, Alfonso married Don Alejo’s grandmother, with whom he had four children, the eldest being Don Alejo’s father, Amado Irizarry Caballeros. All of Alfonso’s children “of the marriage” were registered at birth with the paternal surname of both parents, “Irizarry Caballeros”. Macaria, their half-sibling, was registered at birth only with that of her mother’s, “Xitimul”.

Don Alejo knew little about Paula's fate after she left the Irizarry household although, according to him, Paula and Macaria remained in Rabinal taking up residence on the outskirts of the town rather than return to Paula's parental village. According to Don Alejo, Macaria was raised a *ladina*, because "she was my grandfather's daughter", an assumption by Don Alejo that Paula would adopt a ladino identity for her daughter simply because she was the daughter of an elite man. Macaria's three half-siblings, with their mother, however, "despised" (*detestaba*) both Paula and her daughter.

In later years, Macaria married Tomás Osorio, described by Don Alejo as a "poor ladino", because, Macaria "was illegitimate with indigenous blood", and so she was only worthy of marrying "a village ladino, he wasn't very important in status, ignorant, he couldn't speak well, with no education. It's what we call a ladino from the mountains". The Irizarry also rejected their three children, the eldest of whom was Celso.

Nevertheless, at school, Don Alejo and Celso became "friends", because Don Alejo recognised Celso as his "grandfather's grandson". The friendship, Don Alejo pointed out, continued into adulthood with the two families acknowledging the biological relatedness. Debora, Don Alejo's daughter, for example, resided with Celso and his family while studying law in Guatemala City.

Don Alejo spoke with great pride about Celso, informing me that not only had he attended university in Mexico but also that upon his return to Guatemala, Celso had become a very successful engineer. It was in that context that Don Alejo raised the subject of Celso's surname.

According to Don Alejo, prior to receiving his graduating certificate, Celso returned to Guatemala and asked his biological grandfather, Alfonso, for the surname that had been denied his mother, Macaria. Don Alejo explained that Guatemala's Civil Code allows both fathers and grandfathers to grant legal recognition, and that because Celso, who was an "exceptionally gifted man", he deserved to have a surname that was of "noble and pedigree rank". Don Alejo, who spearheaded the whole venture so that Celso's maternal surname "Xitimul" be replaced with "Irizarry", stated "for us it was a matter of pride, right? He had to have our surname. Yes, he was worth a lot in his own right and all that but he was indigenous". Don Alejo appealed to his grandfather and argued in Celso's favour: "I told him, 'this boy is of great importance because he's outstanding,

he's intelligent, this boy *has* to be Irizarry'. I insisted because, well, he (Celso) *deserved* it'. Don Alejo's advocacy succeeded because Alfonso accepted the request. Alfonso also agreed to legally recognise Celso's two siblings, which the sister accepted, but the younger brother, described as "a rebel" by Don Alejo, who "didn't care much for the surname", rejected.

I was curious as to why Celso asked for the surname. After all, children who were registered at birth with one surname were stigmatised but Macaria, not Celso, was born out-of-wedlock. Celso was registered at birth with both his father, Tomás, and mother's surname: Osorio Xitimul. I never met Celso, or his children, all of whom lived in Guatemala City. I was initially offered an introduction, but the timing never worked out, and then Don Alejo had realised that the personal matter was perhaps not his to share. In addition, by that stage of fieldwork, several Salamatecos had indicated that asking certain ladinos about an indigenous ancestry could cause offence so I was reluctant to meet him.

In addition, Celso was Alfonso's only grandchild to attend university, and he was also wealthier than Don Alejo. None of Alfonso's grandchildren, born to his legally recognised children, could match Celso's achievements. Yet by replacing "Xitimul" with "Irizarry", an act that reversed Celso's achievements for an ascribed status, suggests that Celso actively sought to remove his association with indigeneity. It is worth noting that the request occurred before the issue of Celso's graduation certificate. Those familiar with Guatemala will know that Guatemalans enjoy publicly exhibiting their education certificates, often on the walls of one's office. The certificate is also a public display of one's surname[s].

Let it be clear that Don Alejo was not divulging Celso's story to highlight the fate of domestic workers. Nor was it to reflect upon the rape of young indigenous girls by ladino men. The account emerged because according to Don Alejo, poor ladinos, the only Guatemalans who could feasibly have indigenous surnames other than indigenous peoples themselves, were embarrassed and ashamed of their indigenous ancestry. They would, therefore, attempt to remove any such overt identification, namely the indigenous surname (about which I say more below).

Notwithstanding Don Alejo's belief, it is worth considering that "shame" figured less in Celso's reasoning than an explicit understanding of how racism operated towards indigenous peoples in the 1960s. Guatemala of the 1960s and 1970s was a far more racist country than when I was there in the early 2000s. Indeed, according to Hale, during those years, Indian and ladino relations were underscored by a "classic racism" (2006). Dr Arriola, who settled in Salamá to practice medicine in the late 1960s, recalled that Salamatecos "had an olympian disgust" (*un desprecio muy olímpico*) towards indigenous people, directed also at San Jerónimo's people of African descent, although it, "wasn't as bad towards them, not as strong, but there was still a certain kind of repulsion".

Whatever the reason, Alfonso's decision to legally recognise his three grandchildren born to his daughter, Macaria Xitimul, illustrates that the "Irizarry" surname, once as a marker of exclusion where Macaria was concerned, now became a marker of inclusion for her children. Despite sharing blood with the Irizarry, Macaria was labelled as the "daughter/sister but of an Indian woman", with the use of "*india*" signifying the derogatory way Macaria was perceived, in opposition to her half-siblings, all of whom were legally recognised.

By changing his maternal surname "Xitimul" with "Irizarry", Celso could, if that was his objective, erase a past that revealed his indigenous ancestry. Unfortunately, it was not possible to ascertain if such a move was motivated by shame, or because of acute understanding that any aspirations to move up in a society with an indigenous surname would have met obstacles because of the society's ability to shun or penalise indigenous persons. Despite not knowing the reason, the surname change does indicate that Celso was also complicit in the reproduction of prevailing sexist and racist attitudes towards indigenous peoples and particularly indigenous women by replacing the maternal surname with which he was born.

Debora, I learned, had been critical of her father's insistence that Celso be given the Irizarry surname. She reflected, "after all those years with my father obsessed with blood, and then it suddenly didn't bother him and only because Celso was so intelligent". Debora, Don Alejo's daughter, was 32 when I met her. She lived with her husband and their two children in San Jerónimo. Her husband, Esteban Aquino Trinidad, was a successful agronomist who was at the time working with a German NGO, while Debora was a lawyer at the Public Ministry office in Salamá.

Debora spoke at length about the “long speeches” (*largos coloquios*) to which her parents subjected their three daughters in their childhood and teens, with her parents delineating who and who not they could date. According to Debora, her parents placed much stress on their daughters marrying men whose wealth matched their origins: “my dad would tell us we had to *fijar* (identify) his *calidad*. He always put a lot of emphasis on social class”. She remembered that her father constantly reiterated that his daughters were never to marry an indigenous man: “he’d say that they have customs totally different to ours, which would make us feel uncomfortable. He’d say, ‘look, what if your *suegra* (mother-in-law) is Indian and you throw a party and she turns up in a *corte* (the indigenous skirt)?””. She recalled that her parents placed as much attention on indigenous customs as on the claim, similarly expressed by other locals, that Indians resented ladinos:

“My dad used to talk lots about *las costumbres* (indigenous customs), their (indigenous) clothes, their manner of eating, their surname. The second thing was that he’d say Indians are very resentful. All that history that the Indian has lived, experienced...he’d say, it’s made them resentful towards ladinos, and we would have to face that even if, say, my husband said he loved me”.

She also recalled that her mother referenced one’s skin colour as well as blood: “my mum would say, ‘I’ll tell you girls, don’t marry someone with dark skin because your children will come out *moreno* (brown skinned)’ and, ‘remember, that blood never breaks (*que la sangre no se rompe nunca*), so choose carefully whose blood you want for your children””, by which I assume she meant that blood was permanent.

Debora pointed out that she thought differently to her parents. Despite sometimes sympathising with their attitudes and beliefs, she was uncomfortable in “globalising”, by which she meant, reducing, a person’s identity to “their race”. She stated she often challenged her mother’s views: “my mum says, ‘she’s pretty but *morena* (brown),’ which to me is wrong so I ask, ‘why the *but?*’” For Debora, each person had their “individuality” although, she recognised her upbringing still influenced her:

“I was allowed to interact with whoever I wanted; obviously to a certain point...it wasn’t as controlled as in my parents’ day. But still, you grow up thinking that even if one’s profession is the most important thing to you, you’ll

end up looking at your future husband's profession and his family's background (*antecedentes*) because you don't want to upset your parents".

Much to her parents' initial consternation, Debora married Esteban, who was of indigenous and African heritage. She made a distinction between *calidad* and *cualidad*, noting that while her parents placed emphasis on the former, that is one's status, for Debora, the "quality" of the person, such as his personality, "not where he is from" was far more important. Her parents' response to her marriage choice was initially one of disappointment. However, they relented after she explained to them that it was "four generations back in my husband's paternal family that there was a black ancestor", that it was his maternal grandmother who was indigenous, and that neither of Esteban's two surnames was indigenous.

Debora was also dismissive of her parents' characterisation of "indigenous blood" and its biological potential to bring about a fall in social standing, offering instead an economic perspective:

"Blood is blood. There's 'O' positive, 'O' negative, and people make a big deal about it, as if it can infect you (*te infecta*). I don't think that it's blood *per se* (as to why ladinos discriminate against Indians) but what *las costumbres* represent. If you were to say my surname is 'Xitimul', then it reveals discrimination, no status, slavery, all of which in our society is negative".

Debora's teen recollections, however, were not surprising to hear. After all, Don Alejo went into detail with me about his family's local status. He claimed he was only of Spanish descent, and shared various credentials that supposedly substantiated the importance of the Irizarry surname in Rabinal: "Four generations back from my grandfather, my ancestor came from Euskadi, you know that's in the Basque region of Spain". He stated that the Irizarry family had its own *escudo familiar* (family coat of arms) "registered with the Spanish herald". While conceding that he was never particularly fond of them, Don Alejo also inherited from his grandparents some "Catholic figurines", one of which was "a figure of Christ, and some angels, small in size but beautiful", which each generation "from my first ancestor some 200 years ago" bequeathed to the eldest son. Despite belonging to the upper class, the family was not wealthy, "upper class but poor" (*de clase alta pero pobre*), after Don Alejo's grandfather had

squandered much of the family's wealth through gambling. Nevertheless, Don Alejo stressed his family was still respected because, "what's always mattered here is one's surname, one's *antecedentes* (ancestral history), not money".

Talking about his marriage to Luisa, Don Alejo stated that to avoid "contamination" with indigenous people, cousins married cousins: "I've married my cousin. I have three or four cousins married with other cousins. There are marriages of Estrada with Irizarry, Irizarry with Estrada, it's no longer repeated that much but before it wasn't unusual". Don Alejo acknowledged that his family had stringently policed their boundaries: "Yes, we've discriminated against the Indian. It was important not to interact (*relacionarnos*) with them. We had to safeguard our blood (*mantener nuestra sangre*) because, if not, we'd have lost our pedigree" (*nuestra calidad*).

And yet, surprisingly Don Alejo, unlike Celso, was registered at birth as an out-of-wedlock child. His parents, though lovers of several years, were unmarried when he was born. His Salamateco mother, Teresa Soto (b.1921), registered his birth in the municipal office only with her surname, Soto.

Unlike the many out-of-wedlock children I encountered in Salamá, Don Alejo was not raised by his maternal kin but by his *paternal* grandparents. His father, Amado, left Rabinal not long after Don Alejo's birth to live in Puerto Barrios, a city on Guatemala's eastern coast, while Teresa, his mother, settled in Guatemala City. This was most unusual in Salamá, the only such case I encountered of an illegitimate child being raised by his paternal grandparents.

According to Debora, Amado, Don Alejo's father, was the only son of four children, so when Amado left Rabinal, his parents reasoned that if they were to lose a son, they would prefer to raise their grandson. Don Alejo mentioned that he viewed his paternal grandmother as his "mother". He grew up in Rabinal in the company of three aunts, and doting grandparents, all of whom were Irizarry.

At the age of 18, Don Alejo set out to change the status of his birth. He went to Puerto Barrios and demanded his father give him "the surname that corresponds to me", that is his paternal surname, Irizarry. He explained, "for me, one surname meant nothing. I

didn't want to be known in society with only the one (that of his mother's surname, Soto). I didn't want to be seen as *ilegítimo*".

He recalled disdainfully that his father did not resist his son's demand, "because those things never interested him", by which he meant that his father had reflected little on having subjected his son to an unnecessary stigma of having gone through his 18 years as an out-of-wedlock child. After the legal process of name change, Don Alejo owned both his paternal and maternal surname: Irizarry Soto.

Given that there was stigma attached to illegitimacy and that Don Alejo's *paternal* grandparents had raised him it is understandable that he would want his father to legally recognise him, even if that occurred 18 years after his birth. But surprisingly, they were not the reasons that motivated him to seek out his father, or at least not the only reasons, which became apparent when I learned that Luisa, Don Alejo's wife, had also been born out-of-wedlock, registered at birth with only her mother's surname, Estrada.

According to Debora and Don Alejo, Luisa's father was a bureaucrat who had worked in Rabinal for a few years, during which time he impregnated Luisa's mother but then did not legally recognise their child. He later settled in Guatemala City where he married another woman. Luisa was raised as an out-of-wedlock child until the age of 16, when shortly before she was due to marry Don Alejo, he insisted that she go to her father in Guatemala City and demand that he legally recognise Luisa's paternity.

Unlike Don Alejo, Luisa had never met her father and knew very little about her paternal family. So, when I asked Debora why the Kirsch surname was important to her parents, she referred to the stigma attached to illegitimacy. But, in addition, she also mentioned that her father wanted Luisa to be known with the Kirsch surname because it was German. In a very public way, the name would then reveal Luisa's ancestry. She further explained that while two non-indigenous surnames exposed one's legitimate, non-indigenous status, which was important to navigate Salamateco, and Guatemalan, society, for Don Alejo's daughters to have two surnames that were recognisably "European" and not common, "Irizzary Kirsch", indicated status and class. Debora stated: "for my dad, it wasn't the same that I was known as 'Debora Irizarry Estrada' or even as 'Debora Soto Estrada' than 'Debora *Irizzary Kirsch*'". When I pointed out though

that her mother had never had a relationship with her father or his kin, Debora brushed that aside because it was the surname that was important, not the kin relatedness:

“The most important thing here is a surname, it’s more important than your economic wealth. A surname gives you your social status. Everything here depends on who you are and where you’ve come from. It’s about your *antecedentes* (ancestral history) and that’s evident in your surname. A surname has everything to do with blood”.

However, rather than a surname revealing one’s ancestral history, it is more precise to say that a surname had the ability to mask a multitude of ancestral truth. Not only did Celso change his surname to hide the fact that his mother’s surname was Xitimul, but Don Alejo’s surname, Irizarry, enabled him to ignore a reality of his maternal surname, Soto.

Don Alejo may have professed to be of “Spanish descent”, having placed much emphasis in his discussion on when his paternal ancestors arrived in the region, with their small figurines but he had purposefully left out much about his maternal family, two of whom I also knew.

Don Alejo’s mother, Teresa Soto, it transpired, belonged to a poor *pueblo/mestizo* Salamateco family. Two of her relatives were Brígido, who was her great-nephew, 40 years old, whose classes I assisted at the Normal School, and her brother, Don Guillermo, who was in his early 80s. Brígido’s grandfather, Juan, and Don Guillermo were Teresa Soto’s brothers. Therefore, they were Don Alejo’s maternal uncles.

Admittedly, Brígido never pointed out the biological relationship with Don Alejo, even though he knew I met Don Alejo and his family regularly. In fact, had Don Alejo not mentioned on one occasion when he met me that he, “had just popped into” the house of “his mother’s family” I would not have learned that Don Alejo and Brígido were related.

In earlier conversations with Brígido and his granduncle, Don Guillermo, I learned that the Soto family had lived in poverty in previous decades. Don Guillermo and his brother, Juan, were known locally for making fireworks, but the business folded when manufactured products entered the market. Brígido’s father, José Soto, became a police

officer. Brígido was the youngest of several siblings. He was, however, the only one of five siblings who became a teacher in his teens. His four older male siblings, who also were teachers, studied in their 30s because they had left school at an early age to help supplement the family's income. Indeed, the depiction of the family's past economic circumstances, family members' occupations, and experiences of upward mobility were like those of other *pueblo/mestizos*.

Also, Don Guillermo, on one occasion, spoke about the extraordinary Beteta case of the late nineteenth century, when Salamá's Indians had been forced to become ladinos, a command to which he believed his grandparents had also been subjected. His wife, he indicated, was born an out-of-wedlock daughter of a German businessman, who owned a large general store in the first half of the twentieth century in the town square, and a poor woman who was the German household's servant.⁷⁸ Indeed, like others who easily spoke about illegitimacy, Don Guillermo in our first conversation pointed out to me that his wife had "German blood" but that she was a servant. Given Don Guillermo's recollections of the family's economic circumstances and his reference to Beteta, it is highly likely that Don Alejo's maternal ancestors were indigenous.

And yet, Don Alejo expressed with great conviction that he was "only of Spanish descent". Other than *puros*, few of my interlocutors were as resolute in such claims. Brígido, for example, was the first person to point out to me the local distinction between *ladinos mestizos* and *puros*, signalling he most definitely identified with the former category. While he acknowledged he knew little about his forbears, Brígido viewed himself as *mestizo*. However, when I shared Don Guillermo and Brígido's comments with Don Alejo, the latter dismissed them by stating he knew little about his maternal "*parientes*" (relatives). In that regard, his attitude paralleled that of other Salamatecos who had experienced upward mobility, and who alleged their ancestries were *de abolengo*, while simultaneously displacing a discussion of certain family members, even when it concerned a mother (see below), if such persons disrupted a narrative of "blood purity".

⁷⁸ Whether he was German, or a descendant was not explained although in the early twentieth century, according to a census taken in 1928, there were nineteen non-Guatemalans of French, German, Swiss, Italian, Mexican, Spanish and American nationality residing in Salamá (Archivo de la Gobernacion de Baja Verapaz, Copiador 1928, Folio 401).

Equally, Debora, when asked if she agreed with her father concerning his claims about the family's "purity", stated: "I can't say my family has no indigenous blood because who knows. Sometimes I don't believe my father; sometimes I believe I'm *mestiza* but my dad told me who my grandparents were and their parents, and there are simply no indigenous people there".

The above illustrates that while there was stigma attached to illegitimacy, a far greater taboo was that of an aspirational ladino's identification as "indigenous", which can be made evident in the surname. Debora explained that had her father's paternal surname been Indian, such as "Xitimul", then he would not have demanded the name: "my father always said he didn't want to be known in society with just one surname but if his paternal surname (Irizarry) had been indigenous (say, Xitimul), he would have preferred only one".

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed *pueblo/mestizos* born out-of-wedlock. The sexual relations between married or single elite men with poor women created several effects over the twentieth century, which undoubtedly defined gender, racial and class relations. Poor Salamateco women found themselves in extremely precarious and powerless situations when subjected to the predatory advances of local powerful men. The nature of asymmetrical power relations was made evident in that poor women were frequently abandoned with little economic support or legal recognition of their children. Not only were such women left to raise their children alone, they are also subjected to societal prejudices and stigma, which are only mitigated if they "proved themselves" to society, that is by showing that they were morally worthy as women by raising, not abandoning, their child[ren].

However, in this society where European surnames commanded social status, illegitimate children repeatedly told me that what they most resented was the denial of the surname, even when their out-of-wedlock status was the product of a highly asymmetrical gender relationship, underlined by extreme class and racial prejudices. Indeed, it would seem that the fulcrum of Salamateco personhood was based on surnames. In contrast to social fluidity, which was invoked in terms of kin relatedness (see Chapter 6), notions of rights, privileges as well as ascribed status were invoked in

terms of blood and surname. In sharing their accounts of who their kin's elite biological father was, an upwardly mobile community of *pueblo/mestizos* exposed that rather than displace, increasingly took on the same characteristics, ultimately converting them into complicit agents in support of the very divisions that historically excluded them.

“Illegitimacy” was present in all three identity groups. However, of the three, *pueblo/mestizos* were the ones upon whom the spotlight of ancestral history was fixed. In Salamá, despite claims that Salamatecos embraced their *mestizness*, by which they meant they acknowledged an indigenous ancestry, the manifold ways in which they spoke about the surname, and its multiple functions locally based on denials and manipulations, illustrated that few were comfortable embracing indigeneity.

Indeed, as outlined in the previous chapter, Salamá's history revealed heterogeneity and complexity but most of my informants only spoke about Mexican Indians, their “original Indian” heritage. As we will see in the next two chapters, unlike elites and *puros*, who spoke much about “origins”, *pueblo/mestizos*' accounts on who they were reflected “movement”. This was not, however, about movement towards “diversity”, despite a history illustrating an extremely fluid and rich context, but about a movement away from “origins”, which for them was once Mexican Indian but no longer.

Chapter Five

The Pure Ladinos: The Real and Authentic Ladinos

This chapter concentrates on *los ladinos puros*, known locally as *los canches* (the whites), *los del sur* (those from the south/southerners), and *los del rio Motagua* (those from the River Motagua). Here, they will be referred to as *puros*/southerners.

The most striking claim made by *puros* was that they were exclusively of European stock, namely Spanish. They argued they were most definitely not indigenous, nor *mestizo*; at the same time, they were not historically regarded as elite Salamatecos. In contrast to elites and *pueblo/mestizos* – many of whom displayed unease about their racial and culturally mixed identities – *puros* asserted that indigenous blood and culture were unambiguously absent in their family trajectories. While many *pueblos/mestizos* claimed they were the “genuine and authentic Salamatecos” – because their ancestors had resided in Salamá the longest – *puros* were regarded as the “real and authentic ladinos” because of their “uncorrupted” Spanish blood and culture. These were families whose Spanish forbears had supposedly settled the rural region of southern Baja Verapaz, where since the colonial period they lived in relative isolation from urban Salamá and other large settlements. Geographic isolation, endogamous marriage practices combined with the reproduction of a “Spanish rural culture” provided *puros* a narrative of *absolute* difference from indigenous peoples – evident in their accounts of racial purity with respect to racially mixed persons – together with a discourse of social cohesiveness, resulting from a historical policing of their social borders through strong condemnation of miscegenation.

From the late 1950s, many *puro* families left the south, primarily for economic reasons. This chapter discusses their and their children’s accounts of racial identity, primarily through an analysis of marriage and kin practices, while also considering how such narratives have changed in the context of migration and upward mobility.

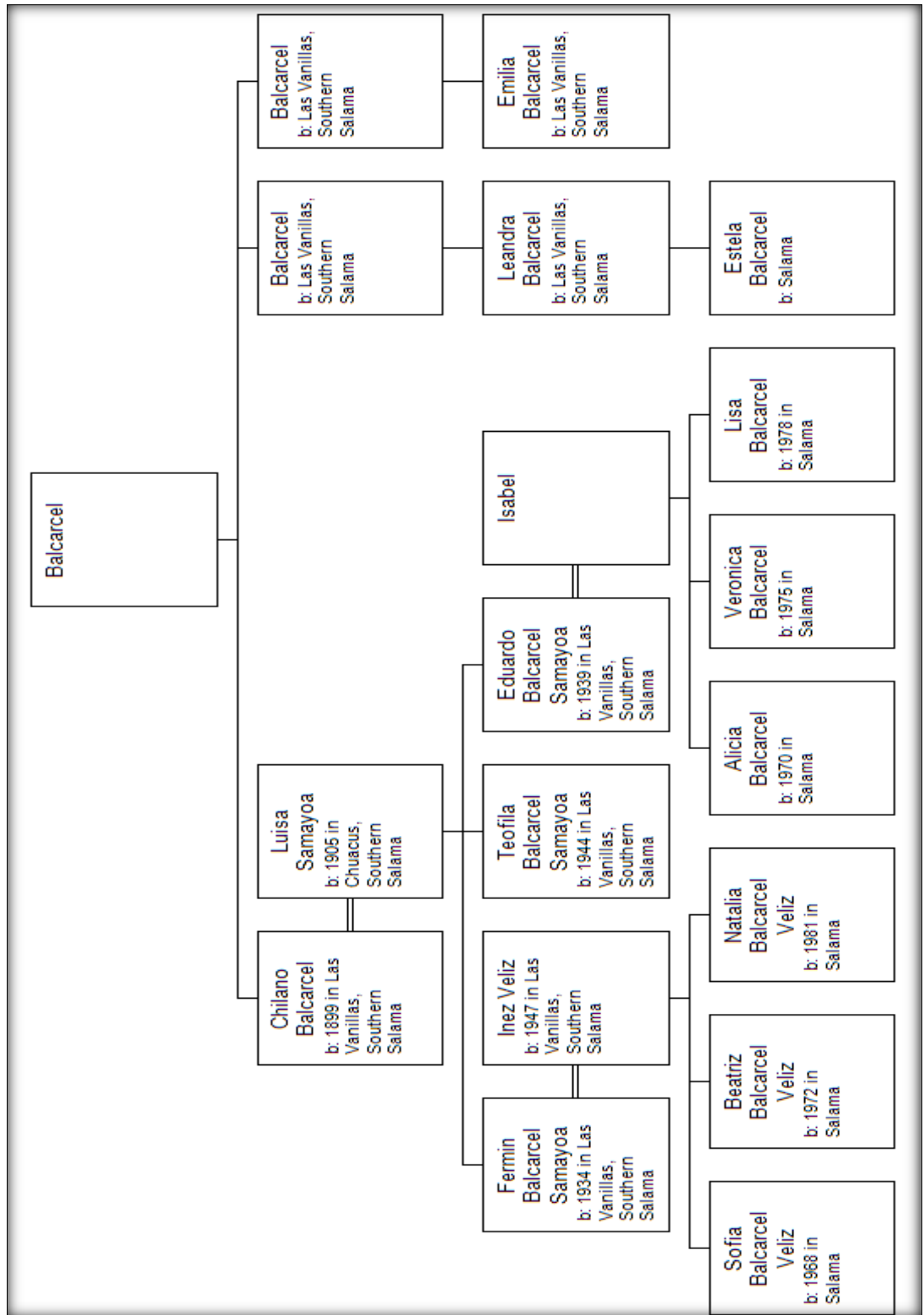
The chapter has one central argument. According to non-*puros*, *puros* were the “original racially mixed” peoples of the region. However, historical evidence suggests that although the southern region was from the late colonial period home to persons of different ethnicity and biological heritage, the ancestors of *puros* had a palpable and strong investment in boundary exclusion. From the late eighteenth century, it would

seem that persons who inhabited the southern region reproduced a closed “micro-society”, the boundaries of which not only enclosed them from indigenous peoples but also from persons of known racial mixture. Indeed, I suggest that it is largely thanks to their historical geographic isolation that *puros* in the present were able to transmit a narrative of racial purity. Considering *puros* were peasants – whose lives were comparable to those of indigenes in economic terms – they constantly reaffirmed their “racial difference” to maintain a distinctiveness that was not endowed by class. Their narratives of race and practices of exclusion had a long local history and internal logics unconnected with overall class domination. The material advantages gained from reproducing convictions of racial purity were so few that we must take seriously the notion that such ideas are simply self-sustaining expressions of an overriding desire.

My attention on *puros* is largely based on interviews and conversations with the Balcárcel, a formidably large family whose members resided in and around urban Salamá.⁷⁹ A family of nine siblings, eight of whom migrated with their parents - and those who were married with their spouses – the Balcárcel migrated in the early 1960s from southern Salamá to a village some 20 minutes by car from Salamá town centre. The siblings’ deceased father, Chilano Balcárcel, migrated with two brothers and their respective families. I engaged with five of the nine siblings, between the ages of 58 and 80, and befriended several of their children, between the ages of 25 and 45, as well as some of Chilano’s nieces and nephews and their children (Kinship Diagram 3).

⁷⁹ I have changed both surnames and first names in this chapter to respect the anonymity of family members.

Kinship Diagram 3: the Balcárcel Family



Given that *puros* spoke of a trajectory originating in the rural south, that region is my initial focus. I first address briefly non-*puro* accounts and then provide a brief historical overview of how, and by whom, the region was populated during the colonial period. I then turn to how it was “imagined” by *puros* and to the way in which they spoke of their identities, particularly with respect to their racial beliefs and practices of exclusion, above all concerning marriage. I also address how non-*puros* spoke about *puros*, which was often in glowing terms, illustrating how a broader population generally esteemed “European blood”. I finally turn to the context of urban Salamá, discussing how a younger generation, born and raised in the *pueblo* and its environs, educated and upwardly mobile, has transformed many of the practices that informed life in the south.

Racialising “the south”

The “south” where *puros* previously resided was described as a dry and mountainous expanse of land, through which runs the River Motagua, and it was recognised for having been settled by “Spanish families” (Map 5). As one person stated, “it’s the same *franja* (stretch of land), those from the south are all from the same families of Granados, El Chol, from the river Motagua, *descendientes de españoles*” (descendants of Spaniards).

According to recent official statistics southern Salamá was home to a significant proportion of the *municipio*’s rural population. In 1994, there were some 65 villages in the region, inhabited by 11,606 persons that represented approximately a third of Salamá’s total and almost half of the municipality’s rural population (46 percent).⁸⁰ According to the census identification of the ethnic composition of the village inhabitants, some 62 percent (7,165) were ladino, while 38 percent (4,441) were indigenous. The statistics are revealing in that a significant number of indigenous peoples also resided in the south. According to my *puro* informants, that was the result of recent migrations to the region. Historically, they claimed persons of almost exclusive Spanish stock inhabited the region.

⁸⁰ According to the 1994 census, Salamá’s total population was 35,612, of which 25,079 was rural (INE 1994). The statistics are based on data obtained for the 1994 census, which consisted of a list of all of Salamá’s villages, their overall population count, as well as each village’s ethnic composition, together with a map of Salamá showing each village’s location. I cross-referenced the statistics with the accompanying map in order to ascertain which villages lay to the south of the Sierra de Chuacús, as well as each village’s demographics, while conferring with my informants to ensure that my identification of *puro* villages was correct. I thank Sandra González Samayoa, who was director of GTZ’s regional office in Salamá, Baja Verapaz, for the statistical information.

Elite and *pueblo/mestizo* Salamatecos referred to them as *los puros*, Southerners or “whites”. Like *puros*, they imagined *el sur* as an area where only a “rural Spanish culture” thrived, the reasons for which were different from those of my *puro* informants. According to non-*puros*, southerners’ claims to racial purity were the result of endogamy after exogamy, that is that *puros* “became” racially pure *after* the fact of racial mixture. They stated that *puro* presence in the region dated back to the early colonial period. Don Leopoldo Ramírez argued that *puro* racial purity “has been a journey, over many years since the early days of the colony”. He recalled that in the past he and others in the *pueblo* often called them “*los indios blancos*” (the white Indians) and/or as “*los amarillos*” (the yellow people), the latter deployed so as “not to offend them [*puros*] by calling them *indios*”. For Don Leopoldo, *puros* were the “original *cruzados* (literally, crossed)” by which he meant they were the “original” racially mixed persons, who were not Spaniard, nor indigenous. Sometime during the colonial period, according to Don Leopoldo, *puro* families had received *tierras realengas* (royal lands) from the Spanish Crown, and it was only after several generations of practicing endogamous marriages that *puros* became “pure” rendering them today persons of “white skin with blue eyes”. Juan, a 40-year-old schoolteacher (also a non-*puro*), had no doubt that *puros* were “racially pure”. He believed their purity was the result of a preponderance, and strength, of European genes:

“...the people of the Rio Motagua were a community who, because of the influence of their blood, the influence of their genes, the European type eventually dominated the indigenous characteristics that were part of this mix. Their *mestizaje* started to dissolve as the European genes prevailed and today, well they’re tall, their features are totally European, they have blonde hair, and many have blue eyes”.

Guillermo López, another non-*puro*, stated that it was widespread knowledge among Salamatecos that *puros* had married only other *puros*. He pointed out that many in the urban area often mocked *puro* marriage practices, by claiming that their offspring was “inbred”: “what you’ll notice is that for those from the south there’s a series of alternation of the same surnames, Samayoa Véliz or Véliz Samayoa, Véliz Ascencio or Ascencio Samayoa”.

Interestingly, the accounts by non-*puros* do partly resonate with historical evidence. While it is unlikely that southern Baja Verapaz had a significant “racially mixed” population - or any other residents for that matter - shortly after Conquest, the area’s

population began to grow mainly in the seventeenth century and people of multiple heritage resided in the area.

We will recall from the previous chapters that the Dominican order during the colonial period had monopolised much of Baja Verapaz's best land, while the region's Indian population was settled into the *pueblo de indios* of Cubulco, Rabinal and Salamá. To the south of the Sierra de Chuacús, however, lay the valley of El Chol, an area, which in the colonial period contained several smaller valleys: Saltán, Urrán, and Chivac.⁸¹ There, the Dominicans owned Llano Grande and Chuacús, but "Southern Baja Verapaz" was of little interest to them partly because of the land's quality, which was dry and mountainous, and partly because of its distance from the *pueblo de indios*. The area also contained no communal land belonging to indigenous peoples.⁸²

However, precisely because the order discouraged non-Indians from entering the region under its control (McCreery 1994, 46), the south, which was not, became an area of refuge. With an absence of overt controls, the area became a place of flight for Indians who were fleeing the demands of tribute (from within Salamá, Rabinal and Cubulco, and other neighbouring areas), as well as for those who preferred not to become indebted on Dominican landholdings (Bertrand 1989, 167). There, states Bertrand, those who were fleeing would have encountered a growing number of Spaniards, who were "not Spanish aristocrats or high functionaries, but people of a lower social status who had come to America", seeking land north of Guatemala City (1989, 167; 1992, 93, 98).

Indeed, by the late colonial period, persons of Spanish descent lived in the area but so too did Indians and poor *castas*, as attested in Cortés y Larráz's observations of the region in his visit of 1769 (1958). If the inhabitants of Salamá appeared an unruly and defiant bunch of wayward nomads (as noted in Chapter 3) the archbishop depicts those to the south of Salamá as beyond redemption. Cortés y Larráz asks of those in the

⁸¹ Today, the area is known by the following names: El Chol became the town of El Chol; Saltán and Urrán became Granados; and the valley of Chivac, which was located in southern Salamá, was renamed La Canoa (Barrios 1996, 132-135).

⁸² Several indigenous *principales* (heads) who belonged to the towns of Rabinal and Cubulco possessed extensions of land in the area but by the eighteenth century had sold them on to non-Indians. See Bertrand for an extensive example relating to the ownership and sale of several such properties (1992, 94, 98; also see Palma Murga 1992, 170, 467-477).

south, “how can these people have so little love for their parish?” For him the valleys, home to an undifferentiated mass of Spaniards, *castas* and Indians,

“are a collection of people who live without order, without domination (*sin sujeción*), without the ministries of justice, without priest, without church and therefore, without limits that can contain them...fugitives from their towns about whom it’s impossible to gather any information. And, if you try they change their name, deny their origins, lie about where they’ve come from and hide their status. They come and go as they please, which produces unthinkable degrees of disorder...marry however many times they please, polygamy clearly failing to satisfy them.

In these valleys there exists a most powerful breeding ground (*hay fundamento mas poderoso*) than in other places for similar excesses; because here they are a mixture of promiscuous Spaniards, ladinos and Indians who all live in the same *trapiche*: the Spanish are extremely disrespectful; the Indians are equally fearless, the ladinos are concealing and astute; they all wander around naked hanging out at all hours of the day and night, without God, without church, without King, without shame and without honour, from which the only consequence I am able to deduce is to abstain from all reflection” (1958 Vol. II, 34-35).⁸³

It is interesting to note, however, that while persons of different ethnicity increasingly settled “the south”, the evidence does suggest that those of Spanish descent either began or continued to police their boundaries stringently to minimise miscegenation. Terga (1988) provides data on the socio-racial designation of the inhabitants of El Chol and its valleys gleaned from marriage and baptism registries. One survey of an 82-year period (1685-1767) indicates the presence of 659 non-Indians in El Chol and the valleys, Urrán and Chivac. Of this total, 607 adults and children were Spaniards; 33 ladinos; 10 *mulatto*; six *mestizo*; and three *pardo* (1988, 64). A second survey covers 24 years (1778-1821). Out of 1,639 non-Indians, 1,580 were Spaniards or “almost Spanish” (*casi español*); 22 ladinos; 19 *castizo*; 17 *mestizo*; and one non-Indian who was married to an *india* (*ibid.*, 74).

Terga also provides information on marriages, showing that those of Spanish descent largely married between themselves, although some “Spaniards” married non-Spaniards. According to my calculations, 446 marriages took place between 1778 and 1821, of

⁸³ For Cortés y Larraz, the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs lay with the owners of the *haciendas*. It was they who allowed these soulless people “to persevere in this way, permitting liberty of conscience only because of their own [the owners’] need for labour” (1958 Vol. I, 295, 296), and within Baja Verapaz the archbishop pointed the finger directly at the Dominican order.

which 403 (some 90 percent) were between “Spaniards” and “almost Spaniard”, and 43 were between one “Spanish” spouse and a “non-Spanish” spouse.⁸⁴

In other words, approximately 10 percent of all marriages were inter-racial.⁸⁵ Their incidence could be indicative of the emergence and growth of a “racially mixed population” in the south. However, I am inclined to think that such unions were limited, and that their numbers contracted, because of the preponderance of those classified as “Spaniard” or “almost Spaniard”. It is entirely plausible that those who were “non-Spaniard” attempted to marry up, thereby “whitening their ancestry”, and eventually “passing” as “Spaniard”, with the offspring of such unions being re-assimilated into the majority “Spanish” population.⁸⁶

According to Bertrand, by 1812 there were some 2,300 inhabitants in the valley of El Chol, half of whom were non-Indian, and the other half, indigenous (1986, 19) (Table 5).

⁸⁴ Terga himself did not provide the estimates. He offered, instead, a list of marriages, detailing who married whom. At times, one’s *casta* is noted, as is sometimes a man’s profession. I studied the list of marriages between 1778 and 1821, assuming that an “unmarked” person was “Spaniard”.

⁸⁵ The remaining 43 marriages were between: 11 *ladina* women and Spanish men; six *mestiza* women and Spanish men; two *castiza* women and Spanish men; two indigenous women and Spanish men; nine *ladino* men and Spanish women; five *mestizo* men and Spanish women; eight *castizo* men and Spanish women. There are no marriages for this period recorded between an indigenous man and Spanish woman (Terga 1988, 67-74).

⁸⁶ Based on the data for interracial unions, it would seem that “Spaniards/almost Spaniards” never married persons of African descent, given no persons are marked “*negro*”, *mulatto* or *pardo* in Terga’s survey for 1788-1821. On the other hand, marriages with persons of “indigenous descent” demonstrate a generational process of “whitening”. Joseph Longino Reyes, for example, was the marked *mestizo* son of Alexo Reyes, a Spaniard, and Juana Piox, an *india*. He then married Josefa Decideria Tejada, and their five children were marked as *castizo* (offspring of *mestizo*/Spaniard). Had their five children then married “Spaniards”, it is likely that their progeny would have entered the category of “almost Spaniard”, which seems to relate to the offspring of parents who were labelled *castizo*/Spaniard, as in the next example. Juan Ventura Rosales married the *mestiza* Manuela Reyes, one of whose parents had to be indigenous. Their son, Florentino Rosales, marked as *castizo*, married Juana Ortiz, a woman of Spanish descent. Their offspring is then marked “*casi español*” (Terga 1988, 73). Albeit sparse, this evidence supports Stolcke’s argument about Spanish attitudes towards the “blood” of persons of African and indigenous descent in colonial Spanish America. She writes that in the colonies the principle of *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) categorically set apart “African blood”, which was considered “contaminated with slavery”, and therefore, indelible. Positions towards “indigenous blood” were less harsh because it was believed that “Spanish blood” would prevail after three generations of *mestizaje* (2004, 379).

Table 5: Spanish/ladino Population of the southern *valles* 1767-1812

Year	El Chol ±	No. of Spaniards/ladinos	% Spanish/ladino	Chivac ±	Urrán/Saltán ±
1767*	260	102	39.2%	693	733
1776†	717	682	95.1%		
1812†	2,300‡	1,150	50.0%		

* Source: Cortés y Larraz (1958 Vol. II, 33). † Source: Bertrand (1986, 19).

± Total Population. ‡ For the 1812 census Bertrand states that it included the population figures of the valleys (1986, 19)

While the few accounts offered by non-*puros* about *puros* do resonate with historical evidence, in that the area was inhabited by persons who were not only of Spanish stock, the evidence also suggests that the ancestors of my informants had a very serious investment in protecting against miscegenation from an early period. In addition, notwithstanding the complexity of the historical account outlined above, *puros* simply did not identify with that complexity. For them, their ancestors had come from Spain, had reproduced racial purity over generations, and *el sur* was a region exclusively inhabited by persons of Spanish descent, until recently.

Spatial Relatedness and Practices of Exclusion

Most *puros* who had grown up in the south believed indigenous peoples to have been absent from the region. Don Fermín, one of the Balcárcel siblings who was 28 years old when he left the south, recalled it as “*netamente canche*”, that is he remembered the south as being “totally white”. He acknowledged that recently new migrants had entered the region, following the increasing out-migration of *puros*, but claimed that “whole villages” were still occupied by *canches*. His sister Doña Teófila, who was 18 when the family migrated, stated that youngsters rarely saw indigenous people, to such an extent that when they did, “we’d get scared. It was rare we came across any”.

Doña Leandra was one of the few southerners who found it difficult self-identifying as “Ladina”, “*pura*” or even “*canche*”. Admittedly, “*puro*” was often a term (*ladinos puros*) attached by non-*puros* to southerners. In one conversation she stated she “could not” identify with the above three categories. I had initially understood her position as a

refusal to want to “racialise” herself, when, in fact, she sought to transmit that she was “only of Spanish ancestry”. Doña Leandra asked what “ladino” meant to Salamatecos. When I responded that several had explained it signified “non-indigenous”, she stated she was “happy” to identify with the category. I then mentioned that several others had said the category also included racially mixed persons, and acculturated Indians, at which point Doña Leandra dis-identified herself. As far as identifying as *puro* and/or *canche*, she pointed out that southerners, at least those born in the south, recognised each other instead by the village of their birth and surname: “we knew that the González were from Las Vanillas, the Samayoa from Las Tintas. The surname ‘Véliz’ is from El Amate, while ‘Balcárcel’ is from Los Amates”, and that entire villages were populated by persons of specific “Spanish” surnames.

In the next chapter, I discuss narratives on race shared by elite Salamatecos. We will see that some invoked words and concepts such as “whitening” and “dilution”. Such accounts or attitudes were entirely absent from the accounts of my southern interlocutors, because for them there was simply no “indigenous blood” to “purify”. My *pueblo/mestizo* informants, as noted in the previous chapter, equivocated, felt embarrassed about an indigenous ancestry, and/or even attempted to hide it. *Puros*, on the other hand, spoke with great pride about who they were. On several occasions, I asked family members if they had ancestors who were indigenous or of African descent, but surprisingly the enquiries did not cause offence or discomfort. *Los del sur* spoke with a conviction I rarely detected among non-*puros*, even elite Salamatecos, some of whom often claimed ignorance about named individuals thought to possess indigenous/African blood and who could complicate their narratives of non-miscegenation. *Ladinos puros* stated they were a strictly orthodox Catholic patriarchal people, who had reproduced only their Spanish heritage and blood, a certainty underscored by arguments that they have historically kept their distance from indigenes and racially mixed persons, geographically and in marriages.

Southerners’ beliefs resonated partly with the sixteenth century ideology of blood purity - in that they often pointed out they had no “indigenous ancestors”, only Catholics – and partly with more modern versions of race – in that they spoke about phenotype and physical characteristics (Stolcke, 2004). While non-*puro* Salamatecos like Juan believed in the strength of “European genes”, *puros* upheld the opposite conviction, in the strength

of “indigenous blood”. Doña Emilia, who was in her 60s, had left the south in her early 20s. She explained why *puros* kept their distance from racially mixed Ladinos:

“In the south, if there was an ugly person we’d say *media camisa* (literally, half shirt). *Media/media* (half/half) people would arrive with their wives and settle there but the *canches* (whites) never married them. My father was strictly against it. He used to say “*se les revuelve la sangre*” (the blood mixes). You see the blood of the *indio* is dense and *puiente* (strong), ours is more *aguada* (lighter) and weaker, and my father would say if you marry a *media/media* your child will be more *indio* because of the strength of their blood”.

Although Doña Emilia was unsure why racially mixed persons (*media/media*) were called “half shirts”, she claimed the “strength of indigenous blood” lay in its capacity to change one’s physical characteristics, like the colour of one’s skin. She referred to non-*puro* skin colour to make her point, recalling that her grandparents and parents were particularly insistent on ensuring the reproduction of “white skin”:

“It was a cultural question [condemning miscegenation], which they’d start sowing in your mind (*van sembrando*) from a young age – this emphasis on the colour of one’s skin, it was the most determining thing. My grandmother would say it was to uphold (*mantener*) the characteristics of the families”.

Doña Leandra stressed that *puros* were “strictly forbidden” from marrying non-*puros* because “we were told it would *desmejorar* (worsen) the family, *degenerar pues* (I mean degeneration)”. When I asked what she meant by “degeneration”, she stated: “It’s that we’re Catholic (*somos católicos*); many around here [urban Salamá] are not so much”. On the one hand, Doña Leandra’s words can be interpreted in cultural rather than racial terms, in that she could have been expressing disapproval of *pueblo/mestizo* religious practices. (I had been told by several *pueblo/mestizos* that many *pueblo/mestizos* often practiced - albeit in the confines of one’s home and not publicly - a form of Catholicism that incorporated indigenous practices). Yet, such statements were also invoked to differentiate themselves from indigenous persons in racial terms. By claiming they only practiced an orthodox Catholicism – with a categorical non-incorporation of indigenous religious practices – *puros* were in turn effectively stating they were only of Spanish descent. The older generation of *puros* rarely self-referenced as *puros*, but it is worthy to note that when they stressed they had no indigenous and African ancestors, they did so by impressing they were of “only Spanish descent and only Catholic”.

Their convictions of racial purity were underpinned by arguments that they had historically married only other *puro* residents of southern Baja Verapaz. In fact, their accounts pointed to a strict endogamy, which at times, given the small number of *purros* themselves, resulted in marriages between relatives. Indeed, when *purros* spoke about a “relative” – referred to as *un pariente* or *familiar* (both of which signified, a biologically-related member of one’s family) – it often seemed as if “relative” and “southerner” shared a coterminous relationship.

Such understanding, no doubt emerges partly from the geographical proximity of family residences, partly because of practices of intermarriage – as much between blood and non-blood relations – and partly from the nature of family structures, whereby family members (grandparents, sons and wives, their offspring, and unmarried siblings) resided in the same property (if not household). In addition, the combination of close living and the nature of extended families, which resulted in an interaction between non-biologically related families through the presence of wives, must have fortified the sense of group identity. This is certainly the impression southerners gave me in their narratives of differences vis-à-vis indigenous peoples as well as other ladinos. That is, *purros* were defined by a spatial relatedness.

Let us take the example of Doña Inéz, who married Don Fermín, a Balcárcel sibling, when she was 15 and he 28. They were neighbours in that the property of Doña Inéz’s father bordered that of Chilano’s, becoming friends and later spouses because of this proximity. Doña Inéz’s parents were related. She explained: “my mother came from a wealthy family and my father from a poor one. But it didn’t matter because my maternal grandfather and my paternal grandfather were cousins”. According to the four women who were born in southern Salamá – Doña Inéz, Teófila, Leandra, and Emilia – second cousin marriages were common. Doña Leandra noted, “there are many marriages within the family. It’s a custom that has been practiced for a very long time”.

Equally common were marriages between one’s maternal and paternal relatives. Such was the case in the marriage of Doña Inéz’s brother who married Don Fermín’s niece, who happened to be the daughter of his eldest brother. Doña Inéz’s daughter, Sofía, who was born and raised in central Salamá, and aware of the marriage practices in the south, stated:

“in the old days parents travelled the banks of the river Motagua to find husbands and wives. Many of my paternal relatives are married to my maternal relatives. I’m an aunt many times. For example, my cousin’s daughters call me aunt; my grandmother’s cousin is my aunt”.

Doña Teófila, on the other hand, indicated that of her father’s siblings, two sisters married two brothers from the village Chivac, another two brothers married two women from families from La Canoa, and one brother, and sister married a man and woman from Zapote. Her father was from Las Vanillas, while her mother was from Chuacús. All the villages are located in southern Salamá. According to Doña Teófila, it was regular practice for the parents of her parents’ generation to be explicitly involved in who married whom. When one sibling found a spouse in a village, it was common for another sibling to find his/her spouse from within the same family or village.

Such marriage practices were far from unconventional, with the consensus among my southern discussants being that they were conducted in such a manner to avoid miscegenation. Sofía remembered how, as a young girl, her grandmother was often “*con pena*” (anguished) that her granddaughters could one day choose to marry an indigenous person, particularly given they now lived in the urban centre: “she would say to us, I prefer my granddaughters marrying a relative (*un pariente*) than an Indian”.

We will recall from Chapter Two, *puro* accounts on residential patterns in southern Salamá resonated with the patriarchal extensive family structure, which featured “continuity, lineage, authority and tradition” (McIssac Cooper 1999, 18), which no doubt, also contributed to an understanding of a close association between “relative” and “*puro*”. That is, *all puros* were relatives, an understanding certainly not expressed by elite or *pueblo/mestizo* Salamatecos about themselves or others, even though, as noted in the previous chapter, many locals were biologically related. On the one hand, marriages created a network of relations, “connecting” many families. On the other hand, residential patterns and the geographic proximity of families produced a sense of social relatedness. *Puros* mentioned the several facets, acknowledging connections in their identifications as southerners, which, as we will see, they attempted to emulate in the urban Salamá.

In addition, southerners often invoked relatedness to displace and/or obfuscate internal wealth disparities between families, often claiming that marriage concerns, and group

cohesion overrode them, also placing emphasis on the group identity so that it effaced any possibility of a class alliance with other sectors of a rural peasantry, like poor indigenes and other Ladinos.

On the one hand, as outlined in Chapter 2, some families were wealthier than others. The Balcárcel, for example, became tenants, while another four families resided on Emigdio Véliz Balcárcel's property, La Soledad. Southerners claimed that such disparities in wealth between families were often subordinate to group cohesion and "familial bonds" (*los vínculos familiares*). Doña Inéz stated above that her mother came from a wealthy family, but her father did not. Chilano's wife, Luisa, was born out of wedlock. Her maternal grandparents, I was told, were extremely poor. Although the evidence suggests that Chilano was hardly wealthy himself, his family was relatively wealthier than Doña Luisa's family. However, according to southerners, one's economic circumstances were not a primary determinant in marriages. According to Doña Emilia, "as children we were told to always look for a good family, which for my grandparents meant a Catholic family with a good reputation. It never had anything to do with money. The emphasis was always on the *antecedentes*, the ancestral history".

It is equally important that the narratives about indigenous people of elite Salamatecos and *pueblo/mestizos* displayed a marked difference to those upheld about *puros*. An older generation of southerners – in contrast to *pueblo/mestizos* – was educated only to primary school level. The south lacked secondary school facilities, and the distance between the south and central Salamá precluded children from receiving further education. In many regards, *puros* were no different economically from the region's indigenes. Yet in conversations with non-*puros*, it would seem *puro* "Spanish" cultural practices and descent set them clearly apart.

While indigenous people were described as "folkloric", attached to a culture that "deified ancestors", *puros* were individual property owners, uninterested in the collective use of land, a stereotype with which indigenous people were routinely labelled. *Puros* were also ardently Catholic, and *pueblo/mestizos* regularly mocked southerners by calling them "*los católicos rematados*" (die-hard Catholics). Their women, thanks to their "Spanish descent", were deemed beautiful. One person stated, admiringly, "you can easily distinguish them (the *puros*). They stand out. They have fair complexions, are tall with

blue eyes and their women are beautiful”. I never met any southerner with such features, but it was the image invoked when non-*puros* spoke about them. My elite interlocutors often described *puros* as *campesinos* (peasants), and one person used the word, “uncivilised” (*salvaje*), but he considered them honourable and respectable people, lacking in hubris and pretension. According to the elite man, Don Beto Gularte, “There’s a lot of honesty in those communities (of the south). They’re extremely honourable. *Esas familias son de buenas obras, son muy dadas* (these families carry out good deeds and are very generous)”. Others made fun of the older generation’s antiquated spoken Spanish, which they claimed to be the result of isolation in the south. Yet, such characterisation was very rarely derogatory in tone.

The views expressed by *pueblo/mestizos* and elites as well as those of *puros* themselves reinforced a quite favourable sense of difference from both indigenes and other ladinos. Spanish stock, phenotype, and orthodox Catholicism, together with private ownership of land, independent farming, and a strong identification with cattle rearing were invoked. Spatial isolation, endogamy, knowledge of the different families, together with living near each other, provided a sense of group cohesion, the boundaries within which disparities of wealth were displaced in favour of “familiar characteristics”.

In fact, their micro-society in the south was underpinned by the ideology of “*de buenas costumbres, de buenos antecedentes y de no ser indígena*”. As Doña Inéz explained, “*de buenas costumbres*” (of good customs) referred to Catholicism, that is a spouse had to be Catholic. “*De buenos antecedentes*” (of good ancestral history) meant that the spouse be known to other *puros*; that is, that each spouse’s family also be from the south. “*De no ser indígena*” is self-evident; that is, that the spouse must not be indigenous. Indeed, *puro* accounts about life in the south, the policing of boundaries, identity, marriage, the gender ideology, and sexual morality, resonated with those of what Weber termed a “status group”. That is, not a class but a “community”, underscored by notions of a common life-style, a social esteem and honour accorded by others, as well as a tightly restricted boundary excluding those who do not belong, maintaining difference through accounts of inferiority.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ According to Weber, “In contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined ‘class situation’ we wish to designate as “status situation” every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honour*. This honour may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the

In the context of urban Salamá, the characteristics that had historically defined southern *puros* were transformed. We can explain such transformations partly because many *puros* were critical of endogamy, partly because the continuation of such practices was regarded as out-dated in the context of urban life and modernisation, and partly because concerns about internal group cohesion were overridden by aspirations of upward class mobility. In turn, the transformations have had an impact on the reproduction of a racial identity premised on an exclusive Spanish ancestry.

The decline of *de buenas costumbres, de buenos conocimientos, y de no ser indígena*

Chilano Balcárcel and his family left the south in 1962. Interestingly, many non-*puro* Salamatecos even attributed their town's more recent modernisation to the "hard work" of that group. *Pueblo/mestizos* often disparaged elite families who, despite owning extensive lands, rarely used them productively. Others spoke about *puro* economic success as if it were related to their "Spanish descent and culture". Don Beto Gularte stated that *puro* success lay in their "hard-work, disciplined nature" and family unity. Indeed, the latter was often the most admired *puro* quality among non-*puros*. When I asked him why Salamá's indigenous families had not enjoyed a similar upward mobility, given their economic position was comparable to that of *puros* 50 years ago, Don Beto responded, "ah, it's that *los indios son perezosos*" (they're lazy). He then pointed out that *puros*, "*traen otra cultura, es distinta gente, traen la cultura y la sangre española*" (they bring a different culture, they are different people, they bring Spanish culture and blood). One person described "indigenous blood" as "an illness", while others spoke much about indigenous "resentment", and they were routinely depicted as "lazy". When urban Salamatecos spoke about *puros*, they were likewise essentialising and racialising cultural characteristics, as if their "Spanish culture", moral qualities, hard work, and disciplined nature were all borne of their "Spanish blood", features with which I doubt very few *puros* would disagree.

We will recall from Chapter 2 that a younger generation of *puros* that was born and raised in and around the *pueblo* area had in recent decades experienced noticeable economic mobility. That was but one of several notable features of social change.

most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognised as a status qualification, but in the long term it is, and with extraordinary regularity" (2001, 186-7).

In contrast to their parents, a significant number of younger *puros* preferred to live in the urban centre, often after marriage, although they had replicated their parents' proximate residential patterns. Don Diego Guzmán, who was 62 years of age and who had lived his entire life in the urban *barrio* of San José, recalled the transformation of his neighbourhood: "Sometime around 1990 San José suffered a huge avalanche of *los del sur*. At first, they settled in villages like Cachil and La Concepción but later their children began to build homes here [in San José]. One part of San José is now entirely occupied by them". According to Beatriz Balcárcel, who lived with her married brother and his family in San José, the residential patterns "favoured the reproduction of family values". Endorsing the accounts provided by the older generation of life in the south, she noted:

"Another characteristic, perhaps because of the former, is that we all know each other. We're a big family, but we have this particular characteristic that we know each other as relatives, even if the family relationship is distant, we recognise and relate with each other. You see families from the south go to great efforts to not lose our family bonds. Families here (that is, *pueblo/mestizos*) don't have this".

Younger *puros* recalled that there had been significant pressure on them not to marry non-*puro* Salamatecos, particularly from grandparents, who sought to influence their grandchildren from marrying *mestizos*. Verónica stated that even those of her generation were warned about the dangers of miscegenation. She recalled her grandfather often said, "remember that the children receive the prize or punishment for what the grandparents did" (*recordarte que los hijos también reciben el premio o el castigo de lo que hacen los abuelos*). Perhaps it is telling that such an injunction resonates with the biblical dictum that, "the sins of the father shall be visited upon the sons unto the third and fourth generation". Verónica explained that she interpreted her grandfather's injunction in relation to blood purity.

Although grandparents like Chilano Balcarcel and Luisa attempted to instil the south's norms and practices in their children, their grandchildren, now living in urban Salamá, had different expectations. In fact, the generational transformations were evident as much among those who came from the south as those who were born and raised in urban Salamá. The distinct expectations of parents – who preferred their children to be educated – as well as the effects of urban life – these were now nucleated families – underpin the significant differences between grandparents, parents and their offspring.

Moreover, according to my younger female interlocutors, many *puro* parents still try to encourage their children to marry only *puros*. Beatriz stated,

“...lots of our people (*nuestra gente*) refuse to lose their identity. We still unite (*combinar*) our families [through marriage]. For example, there are many here in Salamá, born in the south or whose parents are from the south, who prefer to marry men and women whose roots (*antecedentes*) are also from the south – even now, after so many years”.

However, echoing the claims made by several non-*puros* about *puro* inter-marriage, Doña Inéz was critical of the way marriages were conducted in the past, as well as the gender ideology that underpinned them. Doña Inéz married at the age of 15 in 1962. While she “chose” her husband, it was common practice for parents to “suggest” possible spouses, as in the case of her mother, whose marriage was “arranged” by her grandparents. Doña Inéz said, “she [her mother] was told who was suitable for her (*quien la convenía*)”. In addition, parents often insisted daughters marry in their early teens, with virginity being highly regarded and parental control over female sexuality particularly strong.

Unmarried women who became pregnant were punished, often through ostracism or by being “banished” from the village. Doña Teófila stated, “being a single mother here (that is, urban Salamá) isn’t really a problem. Yes, it creates gossip, but there (in the south) it was a real problem. The whole village would turn against you. They would say “*perdió la honra*” (she lost her honour).

Doña Inéz was also critical of women being made to marry at a young age. Given the lack of educational possibilities in the south, she noted that parents believed that their involvement in finding their child a “good spouse” was the “only certificate (*título*) they could give their children”. Unmarried women over the age of 20 were often considered “past it”. Yet, referring to her 22-year-old daughter, Natalia, she remarked, “it wouldn’t occur to me she’s too old. I look at her and think she’s still my baby”. While her eldest daughter Sofia had married at the age of 25, Beatriz her other daughter was still unmarried in her early 30s, and neither she nor her parents appeared concerned. Doña Inéz had not forbidden her daughters from dating men before marriage. Most of the Balcárcel siblings’ children, particularly the women – both married and unmarried – dated several people before opting to marry, unlike their mothers, all of whom married at a young age. The older members of the Balcárcel family endorsed Doña Inéz’s attitudes, given there appeared to be no significant difference between the cousins of

the younger generation in terms of differing experiences of parental control and individual liberties.

Doña Inéz also disapproved of endogamy, disliking the practice of relatives marrying relatives. As already noted, her own parents were cousins, and she criticised the “blood relation”. For Doña Inéz, the fact that her parents were related “was enough of a reason for my mother to love him [her father]”, arguing her grandparents did not have to force an “amorous” relationship for the “familial bond” to exist. She stated:

“I’ve seen cousins marry cousins, uncles marry nieces, and some children are born with problems. I suppose it’s because of the same consanguinity (*supongo por la misma consanguinidad que hay*). I believe our parents, grandparents, controlled marriages to keep the families together but I think it’s based on ignorance. I say to my daughters, ‘of course, I’m going to respect someone who is my cousin. It’s enough of a reason to love him’. I’ve always thought this way, so much so that I didn’t marry a relative (*un mi pariente*)”.

Yet it is worth pointing out that Doña Inéz did not condemn the beliefs that underpinned both the gender ideology and the need to control of female sexuality. That is, she said little about *puros*’ desire to want to reproduce a Spanish racial purity. Nevertheless, in urban Salamá, it has been impossible to sustain it. Many younger *puro* females I came across had not married *puros*. One of Estela’s cousins married a woman from the south, but she and her brother married urban Salamatecos. Estela stated neither she nor her brother allowed “ours parents to manipulate us”. Sofía married a man from Quetzaltenango whom she met in Salamá. Asked if she had ever considered a spouse from the south, she responded that she viewed such men as “really *macho*, in the sense that he’s the one who works, he maintains the house. The woman’s role is in the house and nowhere else. He makes all the decisions”. She also mentioned that she had no desire to marry a relative:

“as a kid I found this really strong [her grandmother’s preference for her granddaughters to marry a relative if the alternative were an Indian or a person of mixed-blood]. I didn’t want to marry a relative. Maybe because of my education, maybe because I grew up in the centre, but I didn’t think it was right”.

The younger *puro* choice of spouse, however, has not always been unchallenged, with parents still expressing concerns about one’s skin colour and “ancestral history”.

Verónica and Lisa shared that when their elder sister asked her parents for permission

to marry, they only agreed after her future husband brought his parents and grandparents – both maternal and paternal - to reassure the family that he was not indigenous. The reason was that their sister’s husband was from El Quiché, which is a largely indigenous province, and the parents “wanted to reassure themselves” (*quisieron asegurarse*) that the family was ladino. Estela, by contrast, spent four years trying to convince her parents to allow her to marry an urban Salamateco: “you see, he was ladino, and *algo clarito* (of somewhat fair skin) but he had dark hair”. Estela recalled that on the night before her wedding her mother asked: “if I was sure I wanted to marry him. She said, ‘think about it because if he leaves you, you won’t have a home to come back to’”, the implication being that *pueblo/mestizos* did not respect the sanctity of marriage in the same way as *puros*.

However, although there were significant changes in the marriage patterns of younger *puros*, beliefs based on race were still important to them. Younger *puros* largely belonged to the middle class, and generally married within the same class. Younger female *puros* were no longer interested in marrying only *puros* primarily because they did not identify with the *gender* ideology underpinning such unions. Yet, despite their class aspirations and experiences of upward social mobility, their own notions of race continued to play a significant role in their choices, except that those notions were now tightly aligned with the language and associations of class.

Let me illustrate this through the example of Sofía. In our discussions, Sofía positioned herself as someone who did not share the same racial ideology as her parents. I had asked her what she thought of the accusation that *puros* were more racist than other Salamatecos. When I had first arrived in Salamá, and shortly after I had been informed of the distinction between *ladinos mestizos* and *ladinos puros*, several urban Salamatecos had suggested I go to the south. One person, who lived in Salamá but who was not a Salamateco, who worked for the Catholic Church and a developmental organisation, was particularly insistent I go to the south by pointing out that if I wanted to understand “ladinos” then I needed to grasp “their racism” and a good starting point was with *los ladinos puros*.

Sofía claimed that her parents’ conviction of “racial purity” was a misconception: “purity doesn’t exist in Guatemala. We’re talking about 500 years. They may think they’re pure, but at these heights (*a estas alturas*), they’re not”. She also corrected me

when I asked if she recognised the distinction of certain urban Salamatecos between themselves and *puros* by calling the latter *ladinos puros*: “I don’t think we should use that word, *puro*. I don’t think people use it. ‘Ladino’ yes, but with a certain influence of *mestizo*, right? It’s a question of *mestizaje*. I see myself that way, a *mestiza*”. She stated there was “a tendency” among Salamatecos to express disdain towards Indians, although she pointed that, unlike in the past, such expressions were becoming rarer. She believed that because of her particular trajectory, she was more attuned than many others to the ways of indigenous peoples. Sofía had studied in Quetzaltenango, having won a bursary. The degree she opted to study was designed mainly for “indigenous groups”. Her classes, she recalled, had very few ladinos:

“...so it gave me the opportunity to know more about indigenous culture, their reasons, their ways of being, and conduct. When I was in the Normal School, I remember that Indians were treated differently but I don’t see them or treat them that way because of my experience at university”.

However, when I asked if her husband identified as *mestizo* in the way that she had described herself, I detected a particular anxiety, which I often detected among non-*puros*. Sofía’s husband was from Quetzaltenango, and like her cousin – Verónica and Lisa’s elder sister – Sofía had to convince her parents that her husband had no indigenous ancestors. Like her cousin’s husband, Sofía’s was darker in complexion. Although, as noted above, I never came across *puros* with “blue eyes, and blond hair”, they generally did have a fair complexion. The skin colour of Sofía’s husband, therefore, had caused her parents some concern.

As for Sofía, however, when I asked her whether she considered her husband ladino or *mestizo*, she stated he was “notably ladino” (*notablemente ladino*). When I enquired about what “notably” meant, she explained, “well, that means he’s just totally ladino. I mean the physical characteristics tell you. You have it immersed in your personality if you’re indigenous or not”. When I asked again if her husband would self-identify as *mestizo*, she responded that he *should* because he was Quetzalteco. However, given that he was middle class, *if* he had any “indigenous blood” it was because of ancestors in the past. Indeed, among the younger *puros* there was an assumption that an indigenous ancestry (*puros* never spoke about the possibility of an African ancestry) was a thing of the remote past when one was middle class.

In other words, Sofía was content to self-identify as *mestizo*, at least to me, because it was a political position. Given that her parents' narratives had always focussed on an exclusive Spanish ancestry, hers was a position which identified with Guatemala's historical demographic trajectory rather than with her family's "lineage". This new identification with *mestizaje* resonated with that expressed by a general younger educated urban population, and Sofía's position seemed to indicate that younger *puros* were also influenced by the *mestizaje* discourse that has emerged in post-conflict Guatemala; its invocation seemingly coupled with a desire to be seen less racist and more progressive towards indigenes (see Hale 2006).

However, considering there were "no real Indians" in Sofía's ancestry, the identification was easier to make. This was my impression, because when the same identification concerned her husband, who obviously could not adopt the same discourse of "racial purity" as invoked by *puros*, she equivocated with qualifications of "should", "notably", and how Guatemalans have their ethnic characteristics "immersed in their personalities". In fact, it seemed to me that she preferred not to consider the matter. Had it not been that many other Salamatecos responded with a similar underlying anxiety in discussions about their ancestries I would have understood Sofía's response as simply peculiar to her. Sofía also mentioned, like several other *puros*, that should her two young children one day decide to want to marry an indigenous person, she would "have no problems". In light of how she responded to my question about her husband's ancestry, such a position, however, may be premature. It is also a development of questionable qualities because it seems entirely divorced from the politics of the armed conflict.

It is worthy of mention that in the mid-1980s, Sofía – like two of her cousins in subsequent years – became beauty queen of Salamá's military zone for one year at the age of 17, shortly before she left for Quetzaltenango. At the height of the political conflict in the early 1980s younger *puros* were mainly in their early teens or younger.

Sofía's role as beauty queen involved representing the military zone at social events and public ceremonies. According to Sofía, although her father kept a watchful eye on her, he did not oppose her newfound role because *mi papa siempre fue de esa línea* (my father was always this way inclined, that is identifying with the military). She also recalled that there was little rejection of the military among the general Salamateco populace: "many

of my friends went out with the officers. Going out with an officer in those days was like a status, like, wow, he's an officer!" (*como un estatus así como puchicá este es oficial*).

I asked Sofía if her family members had discussions about the violence against the indigenous, and if so, what were their attitudes. She stated:

“I don't think the town really understood what was going on. Rabinal was hit but, and there were some problems here, but I think no one really thought they were that bad, and that we were part of it (*nadie hizo conciencia que eso era un problema tan grave, y que nosotros tomamos parte*). I kind of remember that we didn't really reflect much on it”.

Although Salamatecos often claimed they knew little about the political violence because the military mainly targeted Rabinal's Maya-Achí, according to my calculations, some 33 people were killed in their town, the majority of whom (24) were indigenous who lived in outlying villages (see Appendix III). 12 of those 24 belonged to the village Tempisque, which is next door to villages *puros* inhabit, with six of them dying on 7 September 1981 in a massacre carried out by the military (CEH Vol. VIII, 1999: 138-167).

Given her age when she became beauty queen, it is understandable that Sofía would not recall conversations. In any case, parents probably protected children by not talking about the violence. Also, given her father and his brothers' trajectory, we can appreciate Sofía, like her two cousins, entering such competitions with enthusiasm. However, two decades later, I asked Sofía if she felt any regret or discomfort with regards her role as beauty queen, particularly considering the truth commissions' reports. Interestingly, she answered the question through a personalised account of her interaction with a military official: “I have no complaint (*no tengo ninguna queja*), the military was very respectful with me, the commander was a very disciplined person who appreciated me. They were all respectful”. Sofía answered my question by displacing her answer into a context of coquettish and/or sexual behaviour. That is, Sofía sought to transmit to me that her interaction with military personnel had not tarnished her reputation, sexually. She had no such experience, unlike many of her friends.

It is worthy of note that Sofía spoke about the 1980s as if it were a “normal” situation and spoke about her role as beauty queen within the context of what represented

“decent behaviour”. She did not address how Salamá has become a militarised society, in which the military, in the wake of horrific acts of violence against their indigenous neighbours, attempted to befriend civil society, who in turn legitimised its presence through the very symbolic act of offering it their daughters.

Sofía was among the progressive Salamatecos I encountered. She was one of my most forthcoming interviewees on racism and ladino relations with indigenous peoples. Not only did she identify as *mestiza*, she also decried her parents’ emphasis on racial purity, and was critical of the gender ideology that existed in the south. Yet her narratives on the political violence, and her emphasis on what was relevant, illustrate that this new identification with *mestizaje* is – albeit, a consequence of the armed conflict – disconnected from it. At least to me, it seems it was not based on a critique of that period in history through a re-working through of how they understand the military, and their own role.

Conclusion

This chapter’s principal objective has been to outline the trajectory of *los puros*. In the past, evidence suggests the ancestors of the *puros* who I befriended belonged to families that had an investment in practicing endogamy to reproduce Spanish blood and culture. It is interesting to note that for some 250 years, *puros* held steadfast to notions of racial purity, but now - through an internal and external critique of their endogamous practices, and because of a broader politics of ladinos identifying with a *mestizaje* discourse – many are embracing a discourse of racial mixture.

Whereas in the south, *puros* placed an emphasis on Catholicism, and *antecedentes* (ancestral history) to keep indigenous and racially mixed persons at bay, urban *puros* placed an emphasis on class. However, the decline in a desire to reproduce endogamy – premised on notions of “good customs, good ancestral history, and not to be indigenous” – has not resulted in the displacement of the latter criteria. The accounts of younger, urban *puros* as to who they would marry and why showed that racial notions were still important to them, but also that now class and race were closely aligned. However, they did not express such beliefs through any recourse to a terminology of *calidad*, or *casta*, which were terms deployed by elites, as we will see the next chapter. Furthermore, by drawing on narratives of endogamy, *puros* have “purified” their history from a

complexity that characterised the southern regions of Baja Verapaz during the latter parts of the colonial period.

There is in Guatemala a common adage used by poorer ladinos: “I may be poor, but at least I’m not Indian”. Such an attitude is strikingly characteristic of *puros* who have historically shared a similar condition and interests with poor *non-puros*, but who because of the attribution of distinctive ancestries and the longstanding maintenance of a particular culture, adopted a different politics. Even now, within a process of discernible cultural and economic change, this past continues to underpin a particularism within wider ladino society.

Chapter Six

Salamá's Planter Class: Salient Ancestors and Marking Kinship

This chapter concentrates on the final identity group, Salamá, and San Jerónimo's upper stratum, whose members were referred to - mainly by non-elites - as *las familias distinguidas y honorables* (distinguished and honourable families), *las familias de abolengo* (families of noble rank), and/or as *las familias principales* (the principal families), hereafter referred to as "elite" families.

While *puros* claimed they were exclusively of Spanish stock, and *pueblo/mestizos* offered accounts about acculturation and assimilation, and signalled they were descendants of Mexicans and not Maya-Achí, elite Salamatecos, spoke about racial superiority by asserting they protected their *calidad*, and warded off "degeneracy", in their denunciations of miscegenation. Yet their discussions were not about *purity* of European blood *per se*. Many acknowledged the presence of indigenous (and African) blood but it was of little significance. Their status was based on a combination of wealth, good stock, ability to dispatch patronage, and their place in the town historically.

Underscoring their convictions of superiority were references to the first European who had arrived in Guatemala, the "salient ancestor", and the importance of their surnames.

While all Salamatecos I met talked about the need to police boundaries, such arguments were quite pronounced among elites, probably because they saw themselves as a "racially superior" minority living among a mass of Indians and racially mixed persons. They alleged that their identity – their character – derived from person(s) who had travelled from a European country in the nineteenth century, a salient ancestor. Constant references to their ancestor's arrival, combined with the invocation of terminology, such as *la calidad*, enabled elites to distance themselves from accusations of racial mixture, which, according to them occurred in the colonial period, and from which they had largely shielded themselves, all the while sharing material culture to underscore the provenance of that ancestor.

I first became aware of the importance of surnames through discussions with Salamatecos about out-of-wedlock children sired by rich men to poor women often from pre- or extra-marital relationships (as discussed in Chapter 4). Salamatecos from poor backgrounds, many of whom were characterised by "illegitimacy", were by default

classified as *las castas*, that is of mixed descent. Considering elite men had fathered many illegitimate children, I would have thought that the attention afforded the latter would have included an acknowledgement by elites that they had family members who were racially mixed. Illegitimate children were mentioned, but only in relation to forms of relatedness - in that a moral imperative existed to assist their poorer family members - or in narratives to signify difference. Elite men, in most cases, denied illegitimate children their paternity by denying them their surname, effectively excluding such children from their narratives of “purity”, underscored by arguments that, despite sharing blood with the poorer classes, their own “lineages” remained untainted. Indeed, as I will argue below, surnames, not blood, were the marker of kinship.

However, it is important to point out that a moral imperative resulted, on several occasions, with a social fluidity that characterised inter-class relations. Indeed, an exclusive focus on boundaries, on elite female conduct and the control of their sexuality, vis-à-vis husbands’ double standards, which I also attend to below, often leaves unexamined that social fluidity. While discussions about “family” and “kin” revealed different family patterns and marriage practices, they also exposed the manifold practices of relatedness that existed between poorer and wealthier families. The chapter, therefore, further argues that while elites worked at maintaining boundaries they also allowed much fluidity across them. Illegitimate children and/or their children were the vectors of greater class and ethnic fluidity, in that they moved in and out of different social classes for they were the sons/daughters and/or grandchildren of poor women and elite men.

This chapter consists in three sections. First, I detail elite marriage practices in Salamá through a focus on one family, the Gularte family, which was viewed by many Salamatecos as their town’s most “distinguished family”. When I was in Salamá, I met several members of the third and fourth generation. From conversations with them it became clear that family members have been connected through marriage to several of the region’s principal elite families. Secondly, I discuss elite Salamateco views on race, and their narratives vis-à-vis their illegitimate kin. Finally, I turn my attention to how elite women who dishonoured their families by having out-of-wedlock children were treated, showing how similar attitudes towards elite men who fathered many out-of-wedlock children were missing, and concluding with a focus on social fluidity between elite families and their out-of-wedlock kin. Although most of the examples of non-legal

unions between elite men and poor women related to elite men and women from the *pueblo/mestizo* category, as illustrated in Chapter 4, the example below concerns a *puro* family.

The Gularte Family and Marriage in the 19th and 20th centuries

As noted in Chapter 2, many historic planter families had a presence in the region from at least the early nineteenth century. They purchased much of the region's best land and controlled local and provincial politics from at least the 1870s if not earlier. In addition, in a manner typifying elite behaviour, families like the Enriquez, Paredes, Leal and Sanabria, all of whom were mentioned in Chapter 2, reproduced and consolidated their wealth through strategic marriage alliances by finding marriage partners between each other's family. This is in keeping with the scholarly literature, which shows that kinship networks and marriage practices are key tactics deployed by elites to reproduce wealth and status, and to control crucial economic resources (see Shore 2002, 12-13; Lomnitz and Pérez-Lizaur 1984; Casaus Arzú 1992).

The surname, Gularte, first appeared in Salamá in the 1840s when Antonio Gularte (born Goulart da Silva, 1822-1901) arrived in Guatemala from Portugal. The surname was quickly associated with the previously owned Dominican estate, Chuacús, in southern Salamá, that measured over 110 *caballerías* (Percheron 1990, 239). According to two of Antonio's grandsons, whom I met, Roberto (b.1918) and Oliverio Gularte (1925-2003), it was unclear how their grandfather acquired Chuacús. However, they pointed out that their grandmother, Josefa Arriaza Morán (b.1831), whom Antonio married in 1847 (Appendix I: Gularte) belonged to a propertied southern Baja Verapaz family from at least the eighteenth century. Both surnames "Arriaza" and "Morán" that Josefa carried related to the purchase of several large estates in the latter half of the eighteenth century (see Palma Murga 1991, 90, 466; also see Terga 1988, 62-67). According to the two grandsons, their grandfather was a cook on a ship sailing to the Americas. Apparently, arriving in Guatemala, Antonio travelled to Salamá with the then President of Guatemala, Rafael Carrera (1839-1869), for whom he cooked, and it was the President who had suggested to Josefa's father that he marry his daughter to Antonio.

Chucacús remained in the hands of the Gularte family until at least the 1920s, when, evidence suggests, it was sold.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, as one informant stated, the family was “very dynamic, always on the lookout for better lands”, and different members of the family remained in possession of large extensions of land, while simultaneously occupying important roles in public office, like other elite families. Antonio, for example, was mayor of Salamá in 1886.⁸⁹ In the early 1900s, his youngest son, Federico Gularte Arriaza (1869-1959), Roberto and Oliverio’s father, settled in San Miguel Chicaj, after having purchased a five-*caballería* estate (225 hectares) called El Porvenir and became mayor of the *municipio* in 1909.⁹⁰ In 1923, Federico sold the estate to the Herrera Company, and relocated to San Jerónimo, after purchasing a six-*caballería* (270 hectares) estate called San Lorenzo.⁹¹ In 1935, he also became mayor of Salamá.

Roberto and Oliverio Gularte Cojulún, a generation later, purchased a 40-*caballería* estate called Rincón Grande in 1949 in Salamá, which they sold a decade later. In 1952, Roberto was appointed mayor of San Jerónimo. Six years later, Roberto left Salamá, and became manager of Hotel Centenario for 24 years.

His brother, Francisco (b.1914), left Salamá to become a member of Congress between the years 1947-48 and 1966-70, and later served as magistrate of the “Tribunal of Accounts”. Their brother, Pedro (1992-1993), managed several large coffee plantations in Alta Verapaz, where he met his 15-year old wife, Inge Suevern Ochoa. After 1959, Pedro and Doña Inge settled on Santo Domingo, a *finca* of six *caballerías* in San Jerónimo, which it seems, was purchased from Abundio Maldonado (see below), Pedro’s cousin.

⁸⁸ According to data from the 1952 Agrarian Reform, Chucacús was divided into two, with just over 84 *caballerías* sold to a United States resident called, David Lowsley Staples, who used the estate as a large cattle farm, although he himself was an absent owner. Members of the Paredes family, the Paredes Alvarado, bought another 22 *caballerías* (see Appendix II).

⁸⁹ AGBV: 1889 Folio No. 431

⁹⁰ AGBV: 1905/1906 Folio 460

⁹¹ McCreery argues that at one stage, large landowners proposed creating whole villages with resident workers who would then be legally bound to work in the large plantations. The proposals were scrapped when landowners realised a seasonal workforce coming down from the highlands could meet the plantations’ needs (1994, 187). However, from all accounts, El Porvenir was precisely a settled *finca de mozos* with a workforce legally bound to the Sociedad Herrera & Cia Ltd. In 1953, when the property was claimed during the agrarian reform, the *mozos* stated that they had been using the land since 1923 without payment of rent, in exchange for which they were obliged to go as “*cuadrilleros*” to Pantaléon (AGCA: Decree 900: BV, El Porvenir Paq. 4a, Exp. 8).

Though the data is sparse, precluding a conclusive argument, evidence suggests elite families were prolific, having between five to ten children in each, with a high life expectancy. Antonio Gularte, for example, died in 1901, at the age of 79. He and Josefa had seven children. Agustín, their eldest, fathered 10 children with Luciana Franco Soto, who died at the age of 106. Antonio and Josefa's eldest daughter, Cleotilde, gave birth to six children. Her son, Vicente Ramón Sanabría Gularte, had 12 children. Antonio and Josefa's youngest son, Federico, died at the age of 90; his wife, Leonor Cojulún, died at 93. They had 13 children, all but one of whom survived into adulthood to have children of their own.

In addition, the data suggests that elite men married in their mid to late 20s, and sometimes later, but rarely younger, while elite women, who could be, at times, at least ten (or more) years younger than their spouse, often married in their late teens to early 20s. Yet, it was not unusual for elite women to also marry at a later age. For example, Agustín Gularte Arriaza (b.1848) married the 19-year-old Luciana Franco Soto (1858-1964) when he was 29. Their son, Angel Gularte Franco (b.1878), married Carmen Paredes Carrera (b.1886) when he was 26 and she was 18 in 1904. However, Angel's twin sister, Soledad, also married in the same year, at the age of 26 (*Eco de Salamá* March 1904). Agustín's brother, Domingo (b.1861), married Josefa Izaguirre de la Cruz (b.1862) in 1891, when he was 30, and Josefa 29.⁹²

It is difficult to ascertain why some elite women married in their mid to late 20s, but older female siblings of large families may have been expected to take care of their younger siblings. The number of children elites had, after all, often meant that a significant age disparity existed between the eldest and youngest child, with the age configuration being such that when the eldest were ready for marriage, many had siblings who were young children or still babies.

Cleotilde (b.1853), for example, Antonio and Josefa's first-born daughter, married when she was 28 in 1881, when her two younger siblings were seven years of age suggesting that Cleotilde wed when the twins were no longer a burden to their mother. She married

⁹² Other examples include Felipe Enríquez Morales (1840-1917) who married Concepcion Castellanos (1860-1900) when he was 40 and she was 20, but their daughter, Maria Luisa (1883-1962), married Adalberto Saravia Castillo (1882-1944) in 1909 at the age of 26, while another daughter, Maria Sara (1896-1976) married Edmundo González Gomez in 1926, at the age of 30.

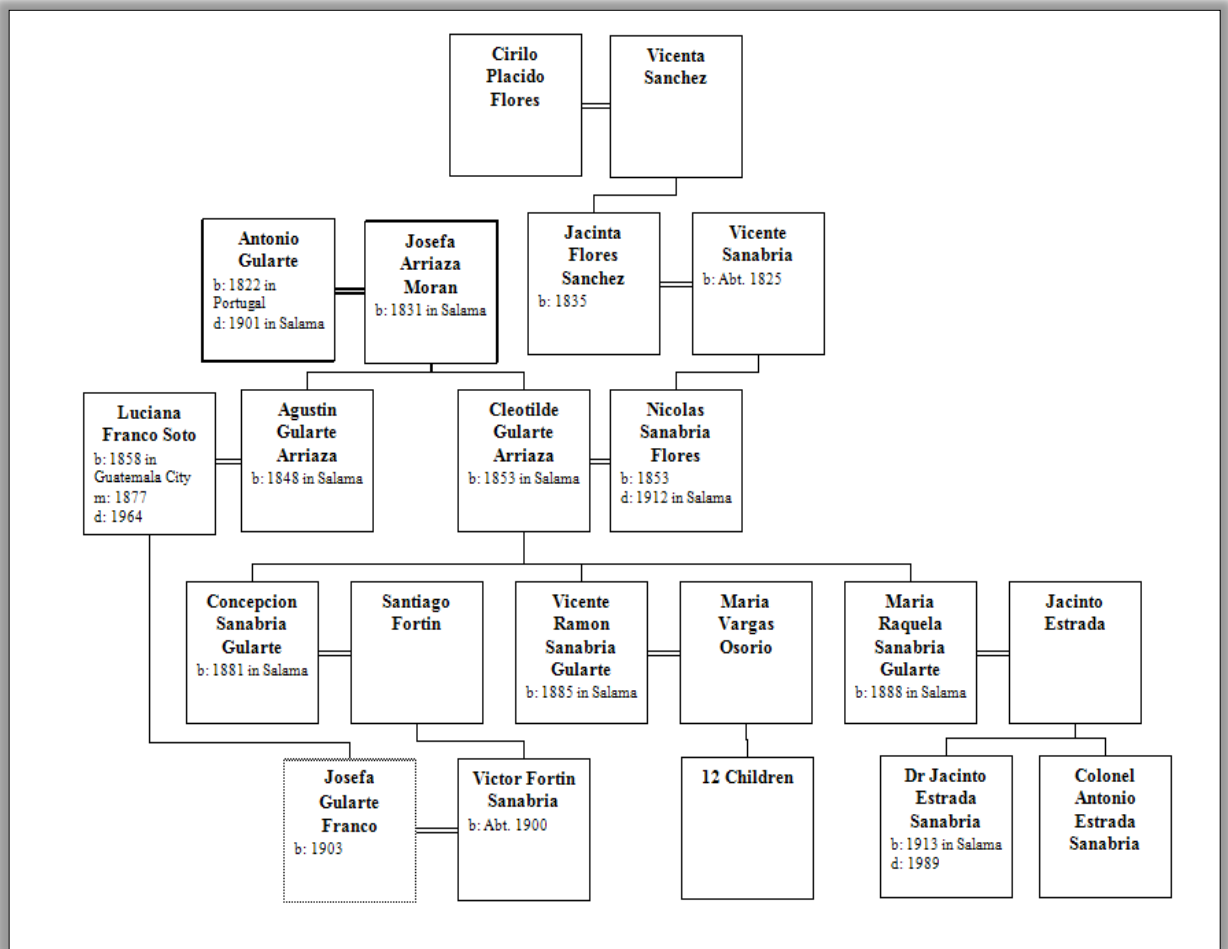
Nicolás Sanabría Flores, who was Vicente Sanabría and Jacinta Flores' eldest son. The marriage connected two of the town's wealthiest families: the Sanabría and Gularte. Cleotilde and Nicolás' daughter, María Raquela, in turn, married Jacinto Estrada, the owner of the estates, La Esperanza and Santa Rosa in Salamá, which measured a combined 67 *caballerías* (3,040 hectares). Their sons, Jacinto and Antonio, became a doctor and military officer respectively. In addition, Jacinto owned a hotel in Salamá called El Tezulutlán, and a timber yard, which was supplied with wood from his plantation, La Esperanza. Antonio rose to the rank of colonel in the military and, in 1955, became director of the National Police. Another of Cleotilde and Nicolás' daughters, Concepción, married Santiago Fortín, who owned the properties, Los Cimientos and Pantin in Purulhá (see Kinship Diagram 1 below).

According to non-elites, the marriages of the planter class were marriages of alliance, which also exposed intra-familial marriages. According to Guillermo López Pérez (not his real name), a non-elite, "there's a public acknowledgement here, not in *vox populi*, but still, that many [elites] married family members. If you were to study them, you'll find that many are inter-related". Don Leopoldo Ramírez (not his real name), who was in his late 60s, opined:

"this is how it was in the past (*así se acostumbraba*), they married people of the same descent, the same social class. I don't think we (non-elites) looked at it as exclusionary. You just knew you weren't of the same class. Many married their cousins of the second grade, but it was all about their honour. Very few families were like this, the rest of us generally weren't."

Although, I encountered few examples of this kind, that of the marriage between Victor Fortín Sanabría and Josefa Gularte Franco illustrates that given that the former married his grandmother's niece, who was the youngest daughter of Cleotilde's older brother, Agustín Gularte Arriaza, such marriages existed (Kinship Diagram 4).

Kinship Diagram 4: Sanabría/Gularte/Estrada Marriages

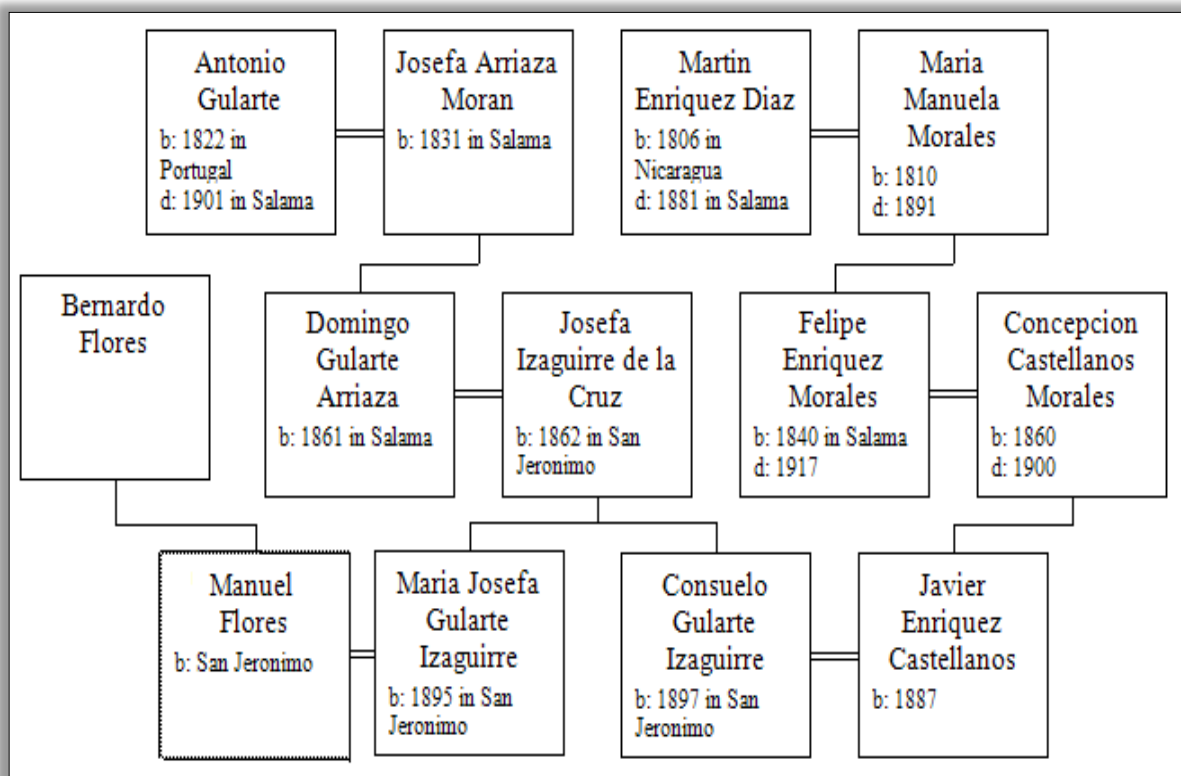


Source: International Genealogical Index

Domingo Gularte (b.1861), Cleotilde’s brother, married Josefa Izaguirre de la Cruz in San Jerónimo in 1891. One of their daughters, María Josefa (b.1895) married Manuel Flores, whose father, Bernardo Flores, worked as administrator of San Jerónimo (Kinship Diagram 5). According to Gudmundson, among the land distributions following the expropriation of San Jerónimo in the late nineteenth century mentioned above, the government also awarded several large extensions of land to “five outside commanders” among whom was Bernardo Flores (2004, 250-255, 272). Flores received six *caballerías* of some of San Jerónimo’s best land called San Lorenzo. Manuel Flores later inherited the estate which he sold to his wife’s uncle, Federico Gularte Arriaza, in 1923, when the latter relocated his family from San Miguel Chicaj. The marriage between Manuel and María Josefa once again illustrates the strategic connectedness of the local elite families. So too does that of María Josefa’s sister, Consuelo, who married

Javier Enriquez Castellanos. Javier was Felipe Enriquez's son, owner of the estate, Llano Grande.

Kinship Diagram 5: Enríquez/Gularte/Flores Marriages



Source: International Genealogical Index and Salamateco Informants

Meanwhile, Domingo and Cleotilde's younger brother, Federico Gularte (1869-1959), married Leonor Cojulún Leal (1880-1973). Leonor's mother was Prudencia Leal Chacón (b.1848) who belonged to the long-established "Leal" family mentioned in Chapter 2, while her father was Arcadio Cojulún Cardona, who had served as Baja Verapaz's governor from 1878 to 1885 (Kinship Diagram 3). Federico and Leonor had 13 children. In 1923, he relocated his family to San Jerónimo from San Miguel Chicaj after selling his property to the Herrera Company, who put it under administration of Demetrio Ericastillo, who was a major in the army, and incidentally, the husband of Federico's niece, Soledad Gularte Soto.

Meanwhile, Federico's eldest daughter, Josefa Gularte Cojulún (b.c.1900) married Abundio Maldonado. Abundio's father, also named Abundio, arrived in Salamá from San Marcos in the late nineteenth century to work in the office of Administration of

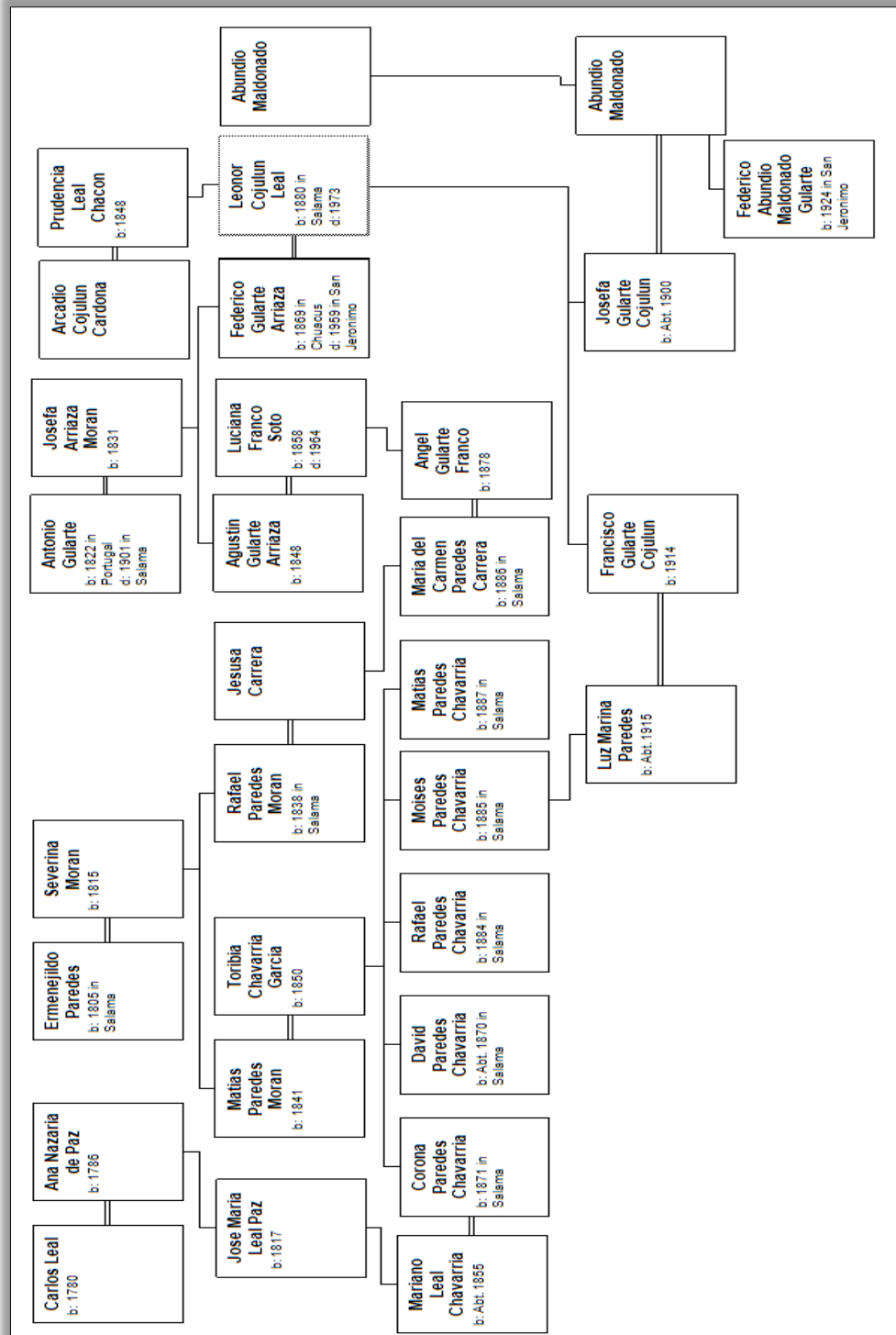
Rents. In 1889, the government awarded him a six-*caballería* estate called San Domingo, which had also once constituted a part of the San Jerónimo *hacienda*.⁹³ His son became governor of Baja Verapaz in 1952, while his grandson, Federico Abundio Maldonado (b.1924), became a member of Congress in 1955, and then served as mayor of Guatemala City from 1978 to 1982.

Prudencia was also Mariano Leal Chavarría's cousin; their fathers were brothers. Mariano's marriage to Corona Paredes Chavarría connected the Leal and the Paredes (Kinship Diagram 3). The Gularte were also connected with the Paredes. Agustín and Luciana's son, Angel Gularte Franco (b.1878), married María del Carmen Paredes Carrera, whose father, Rafael Paredes Morán was Corona's paternal uncle. Francisco, who was Agustín's nephew, married another Paredes female, Luz Marina Paredes. Francisco and Angel were cousins, although given the disparity in age between their parents, there was a 36-year difference in age between them (Kinship Diagram 6).

Indeed, with a focus on one family alone, we can appreciate how the town's planter families not only owned large tracts of land, were each other's neighbours, at least in the urban area (where, by then, they also took up occasional residence), worked at times with each other, bought land from and sold land to each other, but also married into each other's families. Let us now turn to how elites spoke about notions of blood and race.

⁹³ AGBV: 1889: Folio 240

Kinship Diagram 6: Gularte/Leal/Paredes Marriages



Source: International Genealogical Index; Local Informants

Salient Ancestors: *la calidad, las castas and las costumbres*

Despite the claims that Salamá's elite families had experienced socio-economic decline in recent decades, as mentioned in Chapter 2, and despite their reduced presence in the town, elite and non-elites still referred to them as a distinct group. There was, however, a strikingly different attitude towards them among older and younger non-elites. The former demonstrated an un-tempered language based on deference, while the latter were much more candid. While members of the elite over 55 years of age recalled their heyday, their non-elite counterparts remembered their presence, power and status. Both spoke about the normative structures that defined everyday life. Younger elites and non-elites – between the ages of 30 and 55 – spoke about their own youth being largely defined by the older normative structures. Younger non-elites recalled exclusionary practices to which they had been subjected while their elite counterparts referred to their parents' precepts and how they have since challenged them.

According to Don Diego Guzmán, a *pueblo/mestizo* (not his real name), upper class Salamatecos generally represented the Catholic Church. On Sundays they were easily distinguishable because each family had its own *banquito* (pew) at the front: "the church looked for the most serious persons of the community, if you want, those who were untouchable in their behaviour (*intachables en su conducta*), those who were the most honest (*recto*), the ones who had set a good example in the community". Don Diego listed several names of "untouchable" families and indeed, these were elite surnames, such as Gularte, Paredes and Sanabria. He noted that there were three important acts which had normally been carried out by elite members of society: "The church rewarded those families for their good behaviour, they were in charge of the crucifixion, the descent (*el descendimiento*) and there's a particular act here in town which they were always asked to do, it's the unction of the señor". Indeed, the highly symbolic act of anointing Christ's feet was without fail carried out by an elite member of Salamá's society.

Elites were often asked to be patrons of local institutions. The charitable Association for the Elderly is named after Joaquín Mendizábal Jacinto, owner of the San Nicolás estate, who, when alive, was its principal patron. Jacinto Estrada Sanabria, another elite, was asked to be the patron of the Association of Cattle. Older Salamatecos recalled the social dances that separated elites from the masses: "there were *bailes sociales* (social

dances) and *bailes populares* (popular dances), and very few families were invited to *los sociales, allá solo las familias de abolengo*” (there, only upper-class families).

Elites who had carried out some good deed or worked for Salamá were recalled fondly. Joaquín Mendizábal, for example, shortly before his death in the 1990s gave his 30 odd *mozos colonos* a *manzana* each of land: “he gave a piece to the *mozos* and his sons got the rest. He would always say he needed to help the people who had helped him, it weighed on his mind that something terrible would happen to them after his death”. Manuel Gularte Cuéllar made “great efforts”, in petitioning the government to have the still-unfinished road from Salamá to Guatemala City, via La Canoa, to be built, for which he was rewarded by being given the title of *hijo predilecto del pueblo* (Distinguished Son of the Town).

Deference did not preclude criticism, but it was always reserved and bespoke of an order that was simply taken for granted. Don Adolfo Bendfeldt (not his real name), who was in his late 60s when I met him, belonged to an educated class that had benefited from state education from the 1950s. He grew up in a household where “he wanted for nothing”. His mother, a divorced devout Catholic, was economically well-off and brought up Don Adolfo and his brother with financial ease. His family often socialised with elite families. He and his brother were invited regularly to birthdays, weddings and christenings. Yet he recalled the social differentiation between elite families and his own:

“for example, Don Ramón (Sanabria) and Dr Amadeo (Izaguirre)...these two men really had a superiority complex. When they walked into the municipal office, or doctor’s surgery, we all had to stand up. If they walked down the street, you had to get off the pavement. If you were from San Ignacio (a village in Salamá particularly noted for its racially mixed persons) worse, and if you were indigenous, worse still. My mother brought us up to respect them. She told us, ‘if you see them, you take off your hat and say hello. If there’s no room on the pavement you move’. Too much superiority complex, you really saw their *prepotencia* (arrogance) come out in sports. Even in that they had to excel”.

On several occasions, non-elite men poked fun at elite masculinity. Don Leopoldo Ramirez said: “the thing with *esas familias* (those families) is that the men have never worked like real men (*como verdaderos hombres*). They just used to oversee the work of others, and that, well it’s a screwed-up post” (*ese puesto esta fregado*).

Guillermo López Pérez, a *pueblo/mestizo* in his 40s, recalled how girls were exclusionary when he attended the Federal School: “they really only hung out with people of their own class. It was like you weren’t worthy of their *confianza* (trust), their friendship and of course, it was an insult to them if you tried to fall in love with them” (*los intentos de enamoramiento*). However, he, like others of his age, was less deferential. As mentioned above, his was a particularly scathing analysis. He called them “parasites” and “*haraganes*” (lazy good-for-nothings) and mocked their claims of “racial purity” while simultaneously claiming that elites were all inbred, which resulted in, “some of their offspring being retarded (*atraso*), you know, it’s mainly intellectual, they’re not really bright people”.

Referring to the twin sons of an elite man who had recently returned from the United States, Luis, also in his forties, said: “look at them. They’re just the same as all of us (*son iguales*). They still have lots of land here, but they don’t know what to do with it. They’re less prepared (educationally) than others. They even go to the US and do the same crappy jobs we have to. There’s no difference today”.

The three qualifiers - *de abolengo*, *distinguido*, and *honorable* – characterising elites were, I learned, mutually inclusive and often synonymous: to be honourable, you had to be *de abolengo*, and that made you *distinguido*. According to Don Adolfo, the criteria that rendered a person “elite” concerned their “behaviour”: “*una vida pues correcta, ni para un lado ni para otro sino que vertical*” (a decent life, neither looking to one side nor the other just a vertical life). He added that their religiosity certainly made them “very honourable”. However, he, like others, always referred to their “blood” and “ancestry”. He asked rhetorically, “the word ‘honourable’ comes from honour, doesn’t it? And *el abolengo* well, that’s their ancestry” (*su descendimiento*). Don Adolfo explained that elites: “conserved their honour, *su sangre pues*” (their blood). He pointed out: “look, *la sangre se puede degradar pero ellos conservaban su honor*” (blood can become degraded, but they conserved their honour). And stated,

“they weren’t only honourable because they set a good example, or even that *they* believed they had special blood (*se creian de una sangre especial*), but it’s that it’s even corroborated in their physiques. Their women are white and beautiful”.

Indeed, there was a striking consensus among older and younger non-elites in the belief that elite Salamatecos were only of European descent, and that they had protected their

lineages from the stain of indigenous blood, as illustrated in the words of Don Leopoldo: “Let’s take the Gularte family. Now, they’re particularly special because all the Gularte are of the same family tree, and they only mix with people of their own type”. When I asked if what he meant by “mixing” to be social, in work and/or in marriage, he responded, “oh no, we all knew each other and we all spoke to each other as friends but for marriages they married their own”. As stated by many Salamatecos, elite marriage practices were carried out to the distinction of racial purity *and* wealth vis-à-vis Salamá’s poor, who were not only Indians, but also *puros* and *pueblo/mestizos* and other poor ladinos.

The terminology deployed by elites, such as *la calidad* (one’s social status), *las costumbres* (indigenous customs) and *las castas*, depended upon where one was born and raised. Don Alejo, for example, who we will recall from Chapter 4 and who grew up in Rabinal, made frequent references to *las costumbres* (indigenous customs), probably because he was born in a *municipio* where the Maya-Achí population is dominant, while elite Salamatecos cited *las castas*, perhaps because their town had a preponderance of mixed-race persons. Both, however, often spoke about *la calidad* (status), in that they safeguarded it through strategic marriages, highlighting that protecting one’s *calidad* was as important as not marrying an indigenous person. One elite man, in response to a query about whether wealthier Salamatecos considered marrying an indigenous person who had “passed” into the ladino category but who was wealthy quite vociferously stated:

“Look, I’d bet you the Gularte would never have allowed it. However well-dressed the *Betetiano* (of Beteta’s ladinos, an acculturated Indian, see Chapter 3), they’d never give their daughter to a Xoná, Calel. Just because you change your dress, doesn’t mean that a ladino *de pura sepa y de pura sangre* (of pure sap and pure blood) will accept the other. Beteta’s instructions were simply a civil disposition, a legality before the authorities, but nothing more. A traditional Indian simply became a ladinoized Indian but the Indian is still an Indian...changing one’s clothes is one thing, but one’s factions don’t change. You know, the Indian is short, he has the Mongolian spot, the shape of his eyes, the hair, the mouth, all that doesn’t change...it’s a *tontera* (stupidity) to think otherwise. It’s always been important here to identify one’s *calidad*”.

Some elites categorically denied the presence of non-European ancestors, while others accepted its reality, acknowledging that it was a fallacy to speak about “racial purity”. Concerning the former, however, when it came to named individuals, who might well

be thought to possess indigenous (or African) blood, and who could complicate their narrative of non-miscegenation, members of the current generation claimed ignorance as a means of avoidance. It was surely too much of a coincidence that named individuals of whom they claimed ignorance strongly pointed to an indigenous (and/or African) background. These positions were particularly prevalent among an older generation that would invoke a European ancestor to claim racial purity and depict a society in which racial boundaries were tightly controlled.

Let me illustrate with the case of Amalia Acosta Ramos. Doña Amalia was born in 1940 and belonged to a large family whose presence in Salamá, she explained, dated back to the mid-1860s, when her paternal great-grandfather, with two brothers, arrived in Guatemala from Europe. I had first met Doña Amalia in another elite household when she was informed that I was interested in Salamateco accounts on relatives and ancestors. Perhaps for that reason, when we met for our first interview, she produced historical details about her great-grandfather and his two brothers who had travelled to Guatemala and spoke in some detail about their presence in Salamá. Among the artefacts was her paternal great-grandfather's death certificate, on which it stated the country of his birth. Her paternal grandfather, she noted, was a clockmaker, a profession he inherited from his father from Europe, but in Salamá, he worked as a manager on an estate in Purulhá. His wife gave birth to seven daughters and two sons, one of whom was Doña Amalia's father. Her paternal grandparents were "excessively religious, *todos eran cristianos*" (they were all Christian), the reason for which, she explained, five of their daughters never married, dedicating themselves instead to "the church", where they regularly played the piano, made embroidery and performed recitals at elite gatherings.

Doña Amalia stated that she grew up in a house, which her great-grandfather had purchased: "*la casa de mis bisabuelos que fue de generación en generación, esa es donde nosotros vivimos*" (my great-grandparents' house passed from generation to generation, it is where we all lived). The house lay on a large plot of land in the centre of town, on which, different sections were built to accommodate successive generations. Although Doña Amalia no longer lived there, she had raised her children on the complex, having become a widow at a young age. Doña Amalia, however, pointed out that her family was not wealthy: "*y éramos no una gente pudiente, se puede decir nosotros éramos humildes*" (and, we

weren't a wealthy family, you could say we were humble). Yet, she insisted the family belonged to Salamá's elite stratum:

KK: "so would you say your family occupied the same economic level as say, the Gularte family?"

Amalia: economically, no, but in terms of social status we were the same. We spent our summers and holidays on their *fincas*. I grew up socialising with the Sanabria.

KK: So, money wasn't that important for one to be considered elite?"

Amalia: No, well yes, but look, we were of the upper class because of our ancestor (*de clase alta por nuestro antepasado*) but we weren't wealthy (*gente adinerada*). But we weren't part of the "casta" either. Our ancestor came from a noble caste (*nuestro antepasado venían de una casta noble*). Let's say, we conserved our blood, we protected ourselves from *las castas*".

KK: Why would you want to do that?"

Amalia: My father would say if we didn't, it would stain our reputation (*manchaba la reputación*). We descended from a decent family, so we couldn't marry anyone with an indigenous surname, if we did we'd end up falling in with the Indians" (*íbamos a caer con los indios*).

According to Doña Amalia, *las castas* referred to people who were "not defined" (*sin definición*), which signified *pueblo/mestizos* given that was how some of the latter also referred to themselves. Doña Amalia's maternal surname, however, was "Ramos", which was associated with people of African and indigenous descent from San Jerónimo, where incidentally Doña Amalia's mother and grandparents were born. I had met several people who had the same surname, and one even mentioned that he was related to Doña Amalia. However, when I asked Doña Amalia if her maternal grandfather was of African and/or indigenous descent, she stated she knew little of the Ramos "because after my mother's death we no longer interacted with any [Ramos]", although she did highlight that her maternal grandfather was an aspirant to be president of Guatemala, was a renowned general in the Guatemalan army and was particularly respected in Baja Verapaz. The subject was then closed, which could be indicative of one having fallen out with their maternal family. Yet, in Salamá, where everyone I met made much about the supposed symbolic significance of surnames, her earlier descriptions about "protecting their *calidad*", and not being "part of the *castas*" not only contradicted the reality of her African ancestry but surely, she also knew this.

Don Edgar, in his late 60s, showed me a book called "*La Cueva de Polifemo*" (Polyphemus' Cave) by Gerardo Guinea (1977), in which the author recounts the journey of several Europeans to Guatemala. Don Edgar explained that some 10 years

earlier an eye specialist with whom he shared a surname gave him the book: “he had the same surname as me, but I told him, ‘I’ve not come to your surgery because we share the same surname. I’m here because of your specialism’”. Don Edgar added that he informed the specialist that he refused to use his surname “to get ahead”, that is, he was not seeking any preferential treatment from the specialist, but that he “let him know” that he believed his surname gave him his “*character*” (character). Apparently, the specialist “appreciated my point of view”, and offered him the book: “he said, ‘take the book, and make your own conclusions about where your surname comes from’”.

Don Edgar directed me to a page where the author describes the voyage of a person of the same surname as his from Switzerland to Guatemala in the mid-1840s. After allowing me a few minutes to peruse the page, he explained:

“This ancestor of mine came from Switzerland, as it says in the book. All Guatemalans of the same surname are descended then from this branch of the genealogical tree of this surname, only one branch” (*entonces un solo tronco del árbol genealógico de esa familia, un solo tronco*).

Don Edgar then asked me rhetorically if I knew where “Pereira”, his maternal surname, originated from. He responded: “I’m not certain but there aren’t many ‘Pereira’ in Guatemala. But if you look at Brazil there are many, and where did they first come from? From Portugal”. Indeed, Don Edgar was certain that his ancestry was German/Swiss and Portuguese.

In a previous conversation, Don Edgar talked about the fact he had fathered two children “outside of the marriage”, as did his father, who fathered three. When I pointed out that perhaps there were, therefore, some indigenous ancestors, and that he could not consider himself “only European”, he conceded that he had “indigenous relatives”, because his father “had many affairs and one woman was indigenous”, adding, “he never took care to assure that the women he had affairs with were of the same quality befitting his position”. But, according to Don Edgar, while “there is [therefore] some *degeneración* (racial degeneracy) in my family”, it was “only on my father’s side, because the children were not of the marriage” (*de fuera del matrimonio*).

Elites who acknowledged miscegenation, on the other hand, explained it away through a discourse about one’s *calidad*, and the superiority of European genes. They claimed that

the combination of one's class, their cultural and social capital, as well as the presence of a European ancestor, signified that racial mixture was minimal and of very little consequence. Given their economic status by virtue of their marriage options, indigenous (and/or African) blood was ultimately wiped out.

On one occasion, I was surprised to cause offense when I suggested to an elite man, Don Rodolfo Gamboa (not his real name), that he surely had indigenous ancestors considering his maternal surname was Kakchiquel, associated with the Maya peoples from Quetzaltenango, where incidentally his grandfather was born. Correcting me, Don Rodolfo stated that his grandfather had been a key participant of the 1871 Liberal Revolution, for which he was rewarded with the post of governor of Baja Verapaz, and that he was a very "cultured person" (*my culto*), having promoted the musical collective that later became known as Salamá's School of Music. He added that his maternal great-grandfather had been a lawyer, and that his grandfather's brother was a renowned engineer, who had "designed bridges, town squares and markets in Baja Verapaz". Moreover, Don Rodolfo pointed out that his grandfather had been the "main architect" of "Ladinos by Decree", only this time in Cubulco and Rabinal, implying that his maternal family, composed of generals, lawyers, engineers, could not have been indigenous, despite the contrary, evident in his surname.

Don Rodolfo spoke in more detail, however, about his paternal grandfather, whose surname was one of the province's most renowned, stating that his family originated in the area with that first ancestor. He recounted that his brother had travelled to Portugal in 1956 to learn more about his grandfather, who arrived in Salamá in the mid-nineteenth century. In Portugal, the brother met various cousins, whose grandmother informed him that indeed two close relatives had journeyed to the Americas "one went to Brazil, the other came to Guatemala", and that his grandfather was "born on the Island Fayal, in the archipelago of the Azores in the old empire of Portugal".

On one occasion, Don Rodolfo loaned me a memoir written by his brother, in which he mentioned their father's five "*aventurillas*" (little adventures) with the daughters of the *colonos* (resident workers) on their father's estate, all of which were "extra-matrimonial affairs". The mother of one child, for example, "grew up in the (father's) house, and one says she was his (the father's) nanny" (*china*). I assumed that given Don Rodolfo had five half-siblings he would have acknowledged indigenous and/or African ancestry within

the family, to which he responded: “well, yes of course, but they [his half-siblings] were all children “outside of the marriage”. Don Rodolfo’s father had offered to legally recognise his five “outside of the marriage” children but on his deathbed, when the children were already adults and married. Indeed, the denial of an elite surname to the five children had not only marked them as “illegitimate” children but they were also denied a social status while Don Rodolfo’s lineage remained “untainted”.

Don Rodolfo, however, did point out that his sister-in-law had indigenous ancestry. When I expressed surprise at an elite man marrying a woman of known indigenous ancestry, he clarified:

“Well, look, it’s as if I dropped a drop of blue blood here. There’s a lot of colour that dilutes, so it’s not the same as the original colour. It’s the same with generations. Her grandmother was Indian, but then in comes some European blood, and because of this *calidad*, she wasn’t going to go backwards. And eventually, with her own children, because now there are different bloods, the little there is of Indian blood becomes diluted, over time, through history, and through the mixture of other surnames (*porque ya hay muchas sangres que el poquito de sangre indígena se diluye en el tiempo, la historia y dentro del contagio de otros apellidos*). And, because of her economic position, her importance, the matter of her grandmother’s blood, well, it’s forgiven. Eventually, what is indigenous is diminished, lost” (*lo indígena se queda disminuido, perdido*).

I had already met Don Rodolfo’s sister-in-law, Doña Lena Adenauer (not her real name), who was in her 70s, and her daughter, Elisa, in her early 50s. They both lived in San Jerónimo, although Elisa spent much time in Guatemala City, where her daughter, who was born out-of-wedlock, lived.

During my first encounter with the two, Doña Lena recounted that her late father was “half German and half English”, while her late mother, “half ladino and half Q’ekch’” (the main Maya group that resides in Alta Verapaz). At the time, the declaration about her indigenous grandmother struck me as odd, not so much because Doña Lena had shared it, but because it was divulged so quickly. Often, with other elites, such disclosures either never happened, or any countenance of biological admixture with indigenes was vocalised within a generalised acknowledgment that everyone “was a bit Spanish, Indian, African” in Salamá. That she mentioned who precisely her ancestors were, however, was not surprising. My elite informants generally began their conversations delineating ancestors, knowing I was interested in “ladino identity”.

I spent several hours over various days conversing with Doña Lena and Elisa, with the former recounting her life in San Jerónimo after she married Pedro, an elite Salamateco man in the early 1950s. She told me that her father, born in Alta Verapaz, married a ladino woman, whose mother was Maya-Q'ekchí, also from Alta Verapaz. Her paternal grandmother was from England and her paternal grandfather German. Both were living in Germany when at the turn of twentieth century, they emigrated to Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.⁹⁴

The parents had six children, the youngest being Doña Lena, who was born in the late 1930s. She grew up in Alta Verapaz on her father's 30 *caballería* coffee estate, and met Pedro, her future husband, at the age of 14 when he was employed as the administrator of a neighbouring coffee estate. They were married within a year and Doña Lena settled in San Jerónimo.

Interestingly, although Doña Lena informed me about her indigenous grandmother, few of my informants knew this. Once, conversing with Guillermo López about local elites, I mentioned that Doña Lena's maternal grandmother was Q'ekchí. I was surprised at his shock, when he repeated, "*no me digas!*" (you don't say!). On another occasion, while chatting with one of Elisa's relatives, Sofía, whose grandmother was an illegitimate child fathered by Elisa's grandfather (see below), I was told that Doña Lena had intervened and stopped one of her children from marrying an indigenous person from Alta Verapaz. When I asked why, considering Doña Lena's grandmother was Maya-Q'ekchí, Sofía at first believed I had misspoken. She later insisted I had misunderstood what Doña Lena had said. Considering Sofía's grandmother was the illegitimate daughter of Elisa's grandfather, she probably knew little about Doña Lena, although, as we will see below, the two families interacted with each other over several generations and viewed each other as family.

On the other hand, everyone who mentioned Doña Lena knew of her German and English ancestry. Doña Lena's son belonged to the paramilitary group that operated in the town in the early 1980s. Conversations with Salamatecos about Doña Lena's son often turned to discussions about Doña Lena herself. Locals mentioned her German

⁹⁴ It is well documented that in the nineteenth and twentieth century, Alta Verapaz received an influx of Germans, many of whom were male, who married or fathered children with Q'ekchí women (see Terga, 1991).

and English ancestry, her German paternal surname, her height (she was over 5'8"), and her fair skin. My informants recalled how they would see her "galloping on horseback", overseeing the work on the family's estate in San Jerónimo, which she largely ran, and how, in the words of one person, she was a "refined and elegant" woman.

Given Doña Lena's surnames were "Adenauer Ochoa", her paternal English grandmother's surname, "Smith" was not evident. And yet, locals knew her grandmother was born in England, which signified that the family, like other elites, ensured its disclosure within their local society. Knowledge about Doña Lena's indigenous ancestry, of the surname "Bol" that her mother and grandmother carried, was, as her brother-in-law, Don Beto, stated above, "wiped away".

In one of my exchanges with Doña Lena, she spoke about a domestic worker, which was not strange since at that stage of my fieldwork I was enquiring into domestic help within middle class Salamateco households. After several decades of service, the domestic worker died in Doña Lena's home and she was later buried in the family's burial plot. Whether or not he was the only person beyond the immediate family who knew about Doña Lena's indigenous ancestry, Don Lico was the only person who mentioned it to me.

In March 1981, Don Lico's son was murdered at the age of 34 by Doña Lena's son. According to local accounts, Don Lico's son, who was also a member of the paramilitary group, was shot after he was caught boasting, while drunk in a bar, that he intended to reveal the names of the victims the paramilitary group had killed. After Don Lico shared in some depth his pain at the lack of justice for his son's death, and the lack of local sympathy because his son was a "civil collaborator of the military", he mentioned that Doña Lena's mother was indigenous. In the 1970s, he stated, he was employed to build an oven on her tobacco production plantation. He asked if I knew that Doña Lena was 'somewhat' (*algo*) indigenous. He continued "well then, that's where I met her (Doña Lena's) mother. They wouldn't say she was her mother...no, they hid her, saying she was the servant". Don Lico's was a particularly unpleasant account, obviously because of his son's death at the hands of Doña Lena's son. He called her "ugly" and stated that while many people in Alta Verapaz had German traits, noticeable in their "factions and behaviour", they were the "sons and daughters of common indigenous women" (*pues, indias comunes y corrientes*). Nevertheless, since he was

Salamateco, raised within a context where locals praised and esteemed “European blood”, Don Lico could not help but add:

“Each to their own, but they [Doña Lena’s family] told people she was only German and English. Well that blood certainly ended up refining the family (*terminó refinando la familia*). And, she doesn’t look Indian because, you know, German blood is strong, so it weighed much more than indigenous blood” (*la sangre del alemán es fuerte ... entonces pudo mucho más que la sangre de los indios*).

I never asked Doña Lena whether her mother was the domestic worker, who may or may not have been the woman who was buried in the family’s burial plot. Yet, it is revealing that Don Lico’s only recourse to demean Doña Lena, particularly in a society that so profoundly rejects indigeneity, was to expose who her mother was.

Single mothers, elite largesse and elite men’s out-of-wedlock children

Although marriage defined elites’ long-term relationships, some women opted for single motherhood. Based on the data in the kinship diagrams above and in Appendix I, for example, some women, and undoubtedly a minority, remained single, but still opted to become mothers. Furthermore, the data reveals that they usually became pregnant in their late 20s or even 30s, suggesting that it was a calculated decision.

For example, Ana Gularte Arriaza (b.1855) gave birth to her only son, Vicente Gularte, when she was 31. Francisca Sanabria Flores, who was born in 1857, gave birth to her out-of-wedlock son, Ambrosio Sanabria, in 1885, when she was 28. Meanwhile, María Asunción Paredes (b.1846) gave birth to her only child, María Sara Paredes, in 1886 when she was 40 years old. When I was in Salamá, I knew three elite women who were also single mothers. While it is impossible to know what motivated women in the past to opt for single motherhood, their contemporary counterparts placed much emphasis on male infidelity, particularly elite men’s proclivity to engage in several extra-marital affairs, stating that while they preferred to remain alone, they still wanted a child.

The three women were in their 50s when I met them. One woman had given birth to her only daughter when she was 32, another, also to a girl, when she was 30, and the third was 34 years old when she had her only son. All three highlighted the age when they became pregnant, stressing their pregnancy was their decision. Loretta Hernández (not her real name) said she deliberately sought out an ex-lover whose marriage proposal

she once spurned, even though he was married at the time. The three women placed an emphasis on “choice” and differentiated themselves from poorer women in the town whose single parenthood they regarded as the result of “teenage folly”. Although it is impossible to know the motivations of their nineteenth-century predecessors, the age at which those women had their children outside of marriage suggests they exerted some control and choice over their decisions, although undoubtedly, it was at a cost to themselves and their child[ren].

After all, the predicament that often befell such women was like that of *puro* women in that my elite discussants made it very clear that, at least in the past, parents did not treat their unmarried pregnant daughters kindly. One elite man, in his late 60s, explained that his aunt had an illicit affair with the resident carpenter on her father’s estate. The carpenter was later told to leave Salamá, having been “chased off the plantation” by her brothers, but the woman, after the family learned that she was pregnant, was disinherited and banished from her parents’ house. My interlocutor stated:

“he (the father) sent her (the aunt) first to the servants’ quarters, and then after she gave birth she was made to live in town, although for the rest of her life she was still provided for...but no one visited her, not my uncles nor my grandparents, she was disinherited” (*ya la desconocieron*).

As is evident in the above quote, while elite women were treated harshly for their out-of-wedlock pregnancies, they were still cared for. For example, Loretta, one of the three elite women I knew, who became pregnant in the early 1980s, talked about how her parents were “angry and disappointed” upon learning about their daughter’s pregnancy. They made her remain in Guatemala City, where she worked as a psychologist, not only for the duration of her pregnancy but also for the first few years of her child’s life to avoid stigma and shame in Salamá. But despite their disapproval, Loretta’s parents provided financial support. They built Loretta and her daughter a house in Guatemala City. Also, according to Loretta, her daughter had experienced little disadvantage as a child born outside of marriage. Loretta’s daughter was in her early 20s, a middle-class woman who was in her final year at a private university. Loretta’s parents had bequeathed her land in Salamá, she owned two flats, which she leased for rent, as well as a stationary shop. Her daughter also always socialised within the Hernandez family networks.

Elite men, on the other hand, who fathered many out-of-wedlock children were treated with great respect. Their behaviour was simply depicted as a characteristic of *el bombrio* (machoness). Locally, one's machoness was to state "I have three, four, children outside of my marriage". For example, I was told several times the story of a *jefe político* of Baja Verapaz who allegedly had sired more than 40 children in the area: "he only touched a woman and she'd be pregnant. He had a woman in every barrio".

Elite men who legally acknowledged their out-of-wedlock children were described as "honourable". For example, Don Adolfo stated that he recognised the paternity of his children who were not of his marriage. When I asked why, he stated: "is it not the sign of a noble character, of a *caballero* (a gentleman) to recognise all his children?". His father had done the same:

"in that regard he was decent, for example, all his lovers were of the same economic status, but he did have one woman who was from that village, Chaguite, where everyone looks the same (the implication being that they were *puros*, who because of their endogamy marriage practices allegedly looked physically similar) and another, who was an *indita* (an Indian woman). He dressed her up as a *ladina*, but even to her children he gave his surname".

Wives, on the other hand, were expected to do "the honourable thing" by accepting a husband's infidelities, and in some cases, were even expected to allow his children into her household. Indeed, while we saw above that the surname was a marker of kinship, much fluidity existed between different classes. As one person stated, the reason behind this was that in "Guatemala, in Salamá, there's a principle we uphold as a highly valued moral, which is that it's a sin to deny your blood".

Don Rodolfo Gamboa stated that his father had sired five out-of-wedlock children, all of whom regularly visited their father's estate when they were young, indicating that Don Rodolfo's mother knew about her husband's pre- and extra-marital affairs and even tolerated them by allowing her husband's offspring with other women into her marital home. Don Rodolfo mentioned that his "illegitimate" half-siblings had "received the protection of my father and mother" and that his parents "had helped them in the way they could". Don Rodolfo even pointed out that his parents had attended each child's first communion and wedding:

“My parents celebrated Agustín’s marriage in San Miguel Chicaj. My mother accompanied the *senora* Julia (Agustín’s mother). Elsa was the second (pre-marital child). She was born in Llano Grande, and her wedding was celebrated with my mother’s blessing. Luisa was the third, also loved by my mother. Her marriage was a model marriage, a perfect patriarchy. Tomas and Ana were born after my father was married, or at least they are the ones we knew about”.

Don Rodolfo’s mother was never portrayed as a wronged woman and his father was never described as a disloyal husband. According to Don Rodolfo, his mother responded to her husband’s infidelities like other elite woman, that is, in a “decent way”.

Indeed, according to several men and women, wives who “accepted” their husband’s “outside” children were respected even more for it, in that it was imperative to maintain the family unit, for which women were responsible. In addition, my elite informants placed much emphasis on their “largesse” towards their “illegitimate” biological relatives. The largesse of women towards their husband’s poorer offspring was viewed in a positive light in their role to “assist” and “help” poorer Salamatecos. As Don Rodolfo put it, his mother treated her husband’s out-of-wedlock children well because of “*entrega, y su moralidad pues*” (her submission, well, her morality).

One of the five half-siblings was Luisa Samayoa who married Chilano Balcárcel, who we will recall from the previous chapter. The interactions across generations offered a revealing example about social fluidity between classes in Salamá. The Balcárcel lived in Southern Salamá before 1960, migrating to reside close to Salamá *pueblo* in 1960. Luisa was the third out-of-wedlock child sired by Don Rodolfo’s father, whose family belonged to one of Salamá’s wealthiest families of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Her mother, Juana Samayoa, was the daughter of a tenant farmer who lived on the plantation that belonged to Don Rodolfo’s father in southern Salamá.

At the age of 29, Don Rodolfo’s father married his mother, equal in status and wealth, who gave birth to 11 children. Of his 16 children, only the 11, born within the marriage, were registered at birth with their father and mother’s paternal surnames. The other five, including Luisa Samayoa, were registered as out-of-wedlock children, with only their mothers’ surname.

Don Rodolfo’s father died in the early 1960s, and Luisa died in the early 1990s. Yet, when I was in Salamá, members of each family spoke about how the two families, the

Balcárcel and the Gamboa, had enjoyed a social interaction over successive generations. My acquaintance with individuals from both families occurred roughly at the same time. I never witnessed the two interact but when a member of one family heard I knew the other, that person always mentioned that Don Rodolfo's father was Luisa's biological father. Don Rodolfo and his siblings of the marriage, for example, referred to Luisa as their "sister".

Members of the Balcárcel family would point out that when Luisa was younger, she spent time on her father's estate, and that her father and his wife attended Luisa's wedding. The social interaction continued with Luisa's children and even her grandchildren. Sofía, Luisa's granddaughter, stated that she had grown up "knowing" who her maternal great-grandfather was because the two families regularly interacted. Sofía explained that the Gamboa were invited to various Balcárcel events, such as Christmas, religious festivals, and wakes. For example, after the Balcárcel migrated to urban Salamá in the 1960s, they celebrate annually a religious festival unique to their family in mid-June, and Don Rodolfo and his siblings, as well as their children, often attended. Sofía pointed out that "*un reconocimiento familiar*" informed the interaction, in that there was a recognition between the two families of a blood relationship. According to Sofía, she enjoyed the same relationship with the Gamboa as she did the Balcárcel, "despite my grandmother not being recognised". She referred to Lisbeth Gamboa, Federico's granddaughter, as her "dad's cousin", stating, "I have the same relationship with them (the Gamboa) as I do with my dad's cousins in the Balcárcel family".

Nevertheless, there were significant variations in the way both families interacted. Despite the social contact, Luisa's out-of-wedlock status, and undoubtedly, her class position, marked her. Although she shared blood with Don Rodolfo and his legitimate siblings, Luisa and the other four out-of-wedlock children were treated differently, a point stressed by several Balcárcel family members. Sofía's considerations towards the Gamboa, it would seem, were far more positive than those provided by the older generation, that is, Luisa's children, who had a clearer recollection of their and their mother's interaction with the Gamboa.

For example, Doña Teófila, Luisa's daughter, described the relationship between the Gamboa and Samayoa as one that her mother had cultivated. After Luisa's death, Doña Teófila stated the relatedness between the two families had diminished significantly;

invitations to weddings, Christmas and even the annual religious event became more sporadic. Doña Teófila said:

“my mother was related to the Gamboa, we weren’t. She wasn’t given the surname and we were never treated the same as them [the Gamboa]. With the Balcárcel we know who our grandparents were and where we come from. Our relatives (*nuestros parientes*) are the Balcárcel. The Gamboa have their family and we have ours”.

Shortly before his death, Don Rodolfo’s father offered to legally recognise his five out-of-wedlock children. Luisa was the only one who rejected the offer. She was in her 50s, and, Doña Teófila explained: “my father just didn’t see the point by that stage”. The legal measure of changing Luisa’s “illegitimate” status related more to a perception among elites that what their poorer kin desired was “social status”. Don Rodolfo’s father was not offering any material inheritance given he had already divided out his money and land to his children of the marriage. He was bequeathing his surname, which, admittedly, carried weight in Salamá because of its association with one of the town’s distinguished family. As noted in Chapter 4, surnames served as a major form of social capital in Salamá, particularly concerning claims about European blood and lineage. Yet, the Balcárcel family were a *puro* family from southern Salamá who believed they were only of Spanish descent, and Luisa’s out-of-wedlock status had not prevented her marrying into Balcárcel family, which in the south and in the urban area was treated with much respect. Nonetheless, Doña Teófila noted that her grandfather’s offer to legally recognise Luisa was because “it played on his mind, was he not from a good family?” (*Lo tenía en su conciencia, ¿no era el de una familia buena?*).

The fluidity that characterised the Gamboa and Balcárcel relationships was not unique in Salamá. Several other family members spoke about some form of contact and assistance they received or gave. Forms of patronage, generational interaction and the fluidity intrinsic to the relationships described above were similarly present in many other cases I came across.

The relationships and interactions also revealed the extent to which class and racial differences were taken for granted by the elite class and normalised by the poorer classes, who on all accounts appeared rarely to contest paternity or filiation. Carlos Solís, for example, stated,

“Everyone here roughly knows his/her ancestry. Now, as for illegitimate children they perhaps don’t know all their forebears ... usually they know more about their mother’s kin and not their father’s. They’re not part of the father’s family home in the same way, but the children of the marriage often know their father’s children outside the marriage. In many cases, the [illegitimate] children get to know the father’s children of the marriage, especially if he has given them his surname. Of course, there’s a rivalry between the two women [wife and lover] but not openly towards the children. And, usually the father or his children of the marriage will offer the illegitimate child some help, perhaps not economic but yes, moral help. You see if the father has recognised his outside-of-the marriage child he does it thinking that the child will feel better knowing he’s from a stable home (*un hogar formado*), and yes, he’ll think, “he’s not-of-the marriage but I’ve recognised him, and I’ll give him my support”. Or, the son or daughter of the marriage will say, “he’s my brother, so I’ll give him my moral support”.

Conclusion

While *pueblo/mestizos* lamented the denial of a surname to them, elites spoke of them with great pride. For the latter, it would seem that by simply invoking the “salient ancestor”, there existed an implicit mechanism to convey that no miscegenation, or mixture of little consequence, had taken place in their families. In fact, the attention afforded the salient ancestor, in contrast to the fleeting mention of a person of known indigenous/African ancestry, signifies that elites placed more attention on specific origins, and that biological admixture featured little within their narratives.

Given their arrival occurred in the not-too-distant past, knowledge about who that first ancestor was, who he married, his profession, the marriage of his children, and of future descendants, and particular cultural practices constituted a vital repertoire of information for their current descendants. Salamatecos in the larger society also knew much of this information, indicating that its transmission occurred as much outside families as within them. Conversely, similar knowledge about a person of known indigenous/African ancestry was not seemingly transmitted as much between family members as among the public.

Fears of “degeneration” informed my elite informants’ marriage practices, their need to police their boundaries to safeguard the purity of their ancestries, conditioning their social behaviour. Whom one married, one’s ancestors, what one owned, where one lived, and with whom one socialised, all produced for elites a distinct identity different from the multitudes of other Salamatecos around them. Moreover, their obsessive

attention to specific surnames, which operated like a talisman, eclipsed a reality of racial admixture within and outside the marriage.

In a sharply racially differentiated society, with the persistence of a cultural myth of degeneration, albeit modified by a younger generation, elite Salamatecos invoked blood and the importance of a surname in defence of status and privilege. The changing socio-economics of the town has seen a previously distinguished elite increasingly displaced by a successful new affluent class, which, in turn, is restructuring old divisions. Despite the common adage, frequently invoked by an older elite generation - “before it was all about the surname, not money – today it’s all about money and not the surname” – it is very unlikely that the very features that define status and privilege, invoked in blood and surname will or can change so quickly, especially since *pueblo/mestizos* actively appropriated the very practices that had excluded them historically.

The above-described behaviours allow us to evaluate not only relatedness but also a fluidity that was based on a moral imperative that underlay the construction of that relatedness, which was expressed not in terms of blood but in terms of kin relations, all of which was underscored by a paternalistic discourse towards poor Salamatecos. The fluidity that characterised social relations between persons of different classes had several effects, the first of which was that it produced a comparative lack of snobbery on the part of Salamá’s elite towards the poorer classes, combined with an impressive acceptance of social hierarchies among those who belonged to the poorer strata of Salamateco society.

In addition, elite and middle-class women were expected to be obedient and tolerant, with the acceptance of their husband’s infidelities and his illegitimate children viewed as “honourable”, underscoring collusion in their own fates as well as those of their poorer counterparts. Elite male behaviour, however, was legitimated by the fact that he was given full rein to uncensored sex with poorer women. His behaviour was normalised by Salamateco society’s explicit acceptance of such behaviour, expressed in terms of gratitude and honour if, in later life, he chose to acknowledge by law his children.

Chapter Seven

Relations of Intimacy and Differentiated Reciprocity: Patrones y Domésticas

This final ethnographic chapter continues the discussion of the entangled hierarchies that permeated Salamateco society opened in the previous chapter on fluidity. The focus below is on domestic workers (referred to hereafter as domestic(s) and their relationships with their employers). As with the previous chapter, this one is concerned with the complexity of social interaction between persons of different class, the production of intimate relations, underscored by inequality, and the changing conditions of life.

At the turn of the twenty-first century in Guatemala, there were around 300,000 people employed in domestic service, of which some 98 percent were women, with indigenous women representing some 50 to 70 percent (HRW 2002: 48-50). As in other parts of the world (see Tronto 2002), domestic work in Guatemala is perceived to be one of the most demeaning jobs. Unsurprisingly, those who carry out this employment are largely female and disproportionately indigenous, belonging to the poorest sectors of Guatemalan society. In fact, Maya women have been associated with the profession since the early colonial period to such a degree that at present there is a certain identification of them and domestic work. One Guatemalan intellectual noted, “every Mayan woman is frequently considered to be or to have been a ‘servant’ or is treated as one” (cited in HRW 2002: 50).

In Salamá, domestic work is a highly class-related, racialised, and gendered profession. Every wealthy household I knew had domestic help. Live-ins were generally, but not exclusively, Maya women while live-outs were largely, but not entirely, poor ladino women. The former came from Salamá’s neighbouring indigenous municipalities and provinces whereas the latter lived in Salamá’s urban area and its neighbouring villages.

The structural and ethnic shift had also been accompanied by a modification in language. An older generation of Salamatecos that largely employed live-ins referred to their domestics as *servientas* and/or *muchachas* (servant/little girl) whereas their younger kin, who hired live-outs, called them *la doméstica* and/or *la empleada* (the domestic/employee).

The chapter first explores how a focus on domestic workers and their employers reveals how people are socialised into their local world and how relations of inequality are lived, rationalised and experienced, exposing divisions of gender, class, ethnicity, race and everyday culture. On the one hand, the live-in domestic/employer relation, which is mediated through paternalistic, and maternalistic relations is often exposed in scholarly works as oppressive and exploitative because of the live-ins absolute surplus value.⁹⁵ With regards to live-outs, on the other hand, it is assumed that they enjoy greater freedom because of the flexible nature of their job. The chapter argues that both live-in and live-out domestics are indeed subject to exploitation. While live-ins subsist in semi-feudal conditions and live-outs operate in market relations, both receive a pittance of a wage for their labour, with very few legal protections and worker's rights enjoyed by other waged earners in the country.

A growing body of literature deals specifically with domestic workers and their employers. All the authors concur that the work is degrading, exploitative and demeaning given its nature, but my focus on the ethnography of domestic work also draws out its ambiguities for both domestic workers and employers, its ambivalences, and the entanglement that arises through the relationships. The chapter discusses the intimate relations and fluidity that characterise these relations. It argues that despite the fundamentally economic nature of the relationship, the domestic is often spoken to or about within a context of fictive kinship, and gift-giving. Live-ins are treated as "members of the family". They are offered guidance, unsolicited advice and help. Employers believe they are "looking after" and being "charitable" towards their

⁹⁵ Maternalism, while paralleling paternalism, deploys different tactics, since its workings are less overt and imbued with the quality of kindness (King 2007). Maternalism has its origins in paternalism, an expression of power in a pre-modern era. Paternalism involved a familial relationship whereby masters saw themselves in a parental role, offering their protection and guidance to servants - treated as childlike and dependent and incapable of making independent choices - who in return were expected to demonstrate filial loyalty and obedience (Rollins 1992, 48-50). Personalism evolved from the unorganised, non-regulated nature of domestic service, in part a historical legacy of an occupation profoundly determined by its association with the corporate, patriarchal household (Kuznesof 1989). Although under capitalism, power is "materialistic", in that relations of dependence are concealed since power is seen to be over commodities rather than persons, domestic workers have been historically subject to personalistic power. By this, Anderson explains, power was openly acknowledged with the obvious means to obtain the worker's dependency (Anderson 2000, 6). According to King, maternalism involves a complex *emotional* dynamic that develops between the employer and employee. The employer offers a kind and nurturing role, but ultimately this remains a relationship of power (2007, 17). Kindness, she argues, simply conceals personalised power: "the employer maintains control and fulfils his/her desires not by physical coercion but by emotional pressure". Rather than promoting resistance, it encourages acquiescence (2007, 34). After all, as Hom states, in the familial setting, self-interest is stigmatized in favour of love and care. Nevertheless, as scholars note, such fictions of filial relations that result in the infantilising of the domestic worker combined with patronising attitudes of maternalism are degrading for the employee (Rollins 1992, 173; Anderson 2000, 144).

domestic workers through the practice of gift-giving. Anthropologists have long noted the ways in which economic relationships are often framed in kinship terminology (see Schwietzer 2000).

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, bosses never denied the social, economic and personal disparity between themselves and their domestics. Yet they also spoke about practices of charity and benevolence. Because the work was carried out in the house, it implied a process of duty by the employer towards the employee. Indeed, the construction of intimacy, expressed through a language of fictive kin, was not a mere concealment of exploitation. Years in the same employment gave way to paternalistic, and maternalistic attitudes. Bonds of intimacy arose because of the duration of work, and the paternalistic/maternalistic nature inherent in the relationship, while oppressive and exploitative, was mediated through acts of benevolence. Indeed, in the eyes of my middle-class informants who had experiences of live-ins, there existed a morality of exchange, underscored by a duty on the part of the employer towards the live-in.

The chapter consists in four sections. First, I will outline briefly the legal position of Guatemalan domestic workers, and some scholarly considerations regarding the work. Secondly, I address the situation of live-ins, concentrating largely on employer accounts about their domestic workers, mainly because my fieldwork was with middle class Salamatecos and not the poorer classes. I then offer a detailed case study of Roberta, a domestic worker who offered an extensive account mainly because, while my research in Salamá focussed on middle class Salamatecos, I had befriended Roberta in Guatemala City where she worked. Her narrative exposed exploitation, inequality and abuse of power. The third section discusses the shift from live-ins to live-outs with a brief explanation as to the possible reasons why.

Legal and scholarly considerations

Domestic workers are an extremely heterogeneous group. Domestics not only wash clothes, clean houses, and cook meals. Many also care for children and the elderly. They are instructed on what they can and cannot do, where they are allowed to sleep (if they are live-ins), in what part of the house they are to sit, where and what to eat and whom they can and cannot speak to. They are dragged into conversations as ‘confidantes’, serve as “chaperones”, listen to the woes and concerns of their mistresses and often are

expected to relinquish their own concerns for those of their mistress' family. Domestic, particularly young ones, are subjected to sexual, psychological and/or physical violence, are treated as infantilised persons, their bodies are controlled, regulated, and “improved”, they are given unsolicited advice and guidance on how to conduct themselves.

Domestic work is one of the world's oldest professions with roots in both slave and feudal economies (Romero 1992). In the last two decades, domestic workers have become the focus of scholarly attention. Noted in all these works is the personalised nature specific to this particular form of wage labour, a relation of work rooted in power differences and control that is it is a vertical relation of uneven exchange. (Rollins, 1985, Romero, 1992).

It is often argued that women with no other options enter the occupation. They almost always experience an invisibility in their place of employment, where they are ignored and denied privacy and autonomy. Similarly, worldwide, they have experienced an invisibility in law. Very few domestic workers make a living wage. They are denied health insurance, overtime and sick pay, holiday payment, incremental raises, severance pay, social security, and protection from discrimination given that many face sexual, psychological and/or physical violence, for which they have little legal recourse. Domestic workers have been historically voiceless, and socially devalued, and have experienced difficulties historically demanding societal and legal recognition for their work and working conditions.

In Guatemala domestic workers are accorded exceptional treatment in Guatemala's Labour Code. In contrast to the Code's attention to other professions, its sections on domestic service have remained unchanged since its adoption in 1947. Its different treatment is underscored by the Code's separate section to domestic workers. Exclusive treatment is justified according to the following arguments: domestic work is carried out in private households; it involves an intimate relationship between employer and employee that is not comparable to other occupations; and household obligations have no time limits. In short, this results in the denial of key labour rights such as an eight-hour workday, rest on Sundays and national holidays, a minimum wage as well as a contract. Indeed, the Guatemalan state relinquishes its control over these aspects of work, leaving it to the employer and domestic worker to negotiate the needs of the

former (see HRW, 2002: 19-21), although often it is the former who lays down the rules and the latter who has to accept them.

Scholarly research on domestic workers highlights the uniqueness of their profession (see Rollins 1985; King 2007; Tronto 2002). Their work is carried out within the walls of private homes; it is looked treated as a different kind of wage labour. Employers rarely consider their own private homes as “work-sites”. Instead, a home is place for rest, family and leisure. In addition, domestic labour is highly personal; not only do domestic workers clean homes, cook and wash clothes but they also take care of children and/or the elderly. It is associated with women’s natural expressions of love for families, therefore, it is deemed the natural employment of women.

It is often said that paid domestic work is work “like no other”, the reason being that the household is a different kind of institution from the market. As such, it endows the profession with a unique quality: the “personal” relationship between employer and employee, at the heart of which lies the ideology of maternalism. Its effects are two expressions of power not evident to the same degree in comparable professions: first, the personalism of domestic work allows the employer to *extract more than just labour*. As Rollins states, “a personal relationship is part of the job in domestic work, and the worker is hired not only for her labour but also her personality traits” (1985, 156). King (2007), for example, in her research on migrant domestic workers found that employers placed more value on emotional characteristics, such as being a good listener, a good nurturer, motherliness, and serving as confidants, than on the worker’s competence with the tasks of the household. King concludes that the domestic worker’s “personability” is significant in her saleability in the market place, that is, “the person is for sale not just the tasks she can perform” (King 2007, 38-39). Additionally, since the working relationship within the household is much more intimate than in a market, and because the employee’s workspace is not a public space but the employer’s private space, the employer wields considerably more control over the employee, and “noncompliance is often emotionally and psychologically charged” (Tronto 2002, 37).

From Friendship to Gratitude: Bosses and their Live-in Domestic Workers

In most cases, live-in domestic workers were not originally from Salamá but from neighbouring municipalities and provinces, principally Purullhá and Cobán. Employers

often hired them from poor families such as resident labourers (*mozo colonos*) who resided on their or their relatives' plantations or recruited them through personal networks or word of mouth. They were all defined by similar characteristics: live-ins initiated work in their childhood or adolescence and several were still working for the same family after more than a decade, and in some cases had died while still residing in their employer's house.

The Hernandez was a family that I knew well in Salamá. They were five siblings between the ages of 40 and 65. All but two lived in Guatemala City. Their parents had died in the 1990s, leaving no will or testament, which led to the children dividing their parents' properties and businesses after their mother's death. Jorge, the youngest sibling, who was in his early 40s, lived in Salamá permanently, inherited the family house, where he and his wife, and three children resided, as well as an appended shop, which was run by his wife.

All the siblings had homes in Salamá - even those who returned from Guatemala City frequently - but I often found them, sometimes with their wives and/or children in Jorge's house, presumably because previously it had been their parents' home. The house was styled along an old Spanish-style colonial house. There were several rooms surrounding a patio and a large courtyard in the middle. The house's only other permanent resident was Lupe, short for Guadalupe, an indigenous domestic worker who looked after Jorge's three children, practically ran the household, cooked, cleaned, and worked often in the shop alongside Jorge's wife.

When I knew the siblings, Jorge's eldest son was 10. Many domestic workers are often hired shortly before or after the female of the household gives birth to her first child, who is brought into service to clean and cook, while her *patrona* dedicates herself to her child. Lupe, however, did not enter Jorge's house when his son was born, but some 40 years ago. In fact, I learned that she had started service shortly after Jorge's birth, effectively, having initially entered the house to work for his mother, she now worked for Jorge's wife, and looked after, among other duties, their children.

One of the siblings, Federico, recalled that he was eighteen when Lupe started work. When asked where Lupe was from, interestingly, Federico did not know, believing she was from Purulhá but unsure. He was convinced his mother knew, after all, she was

initially Lupe's boss. On this occasion, Federico acknowledged the power inequalities between the Hernández and Lupe by drawing attention to her invisibility in a locally stratified world in which surnames represent a potent form of social capital when he said, "you know? I don't even know her surname".

It was unclear if Lupe received a wage. I asked a few times but never got an answer, presumably because the siblings thought it did not concern me. On one occasion Federico and his sister were describing the equitable and harmonious way the siblings distributed their father's properties and businesses after their mother's death. The conversation reminded Federico, who said to his sister, "remember, we had to decide who was going to have Lupe". Shocked, I blurted out, "so Lupe was part of the inheritance?" According to Federico, who was equally shocked at my presumption, that she was not "part of the inheritance", but "part of the family. What were we going to do, throw her out? She had no family, nowhere to go, *we* had to look after her". He explained that the siblings agreed that whoever inherited the family house, would also take in Lupe. He added that it was highly likely that as a family member, Lupe would also be buried eventually in the family plot.

Such an assumption, however, was not entirely devoid of truth. After all, I had encountered two examples already whereby the live-in had been buried in her employer's burial plot. One person, in his 40s, stated that he, his wife and two children, only relied on live-outs, but that he grew up in the presence of an indigenous woman whom he called "*nana*" (grandma). On another occasion, a woman who came to Salamá from Cobán following her marriage in her teens to an elite man, recounted how her parents had sent her to Salamá with one of their live-ins for company. Both live-ins, after death were buried, in the first instance, alongside her mistress, and in the second, alongside her *patron* (male boss), both in the family's burial plot, exemplifying not only the nature of servitude to which live-ins are subjected.

Indeed, Lupe's service in the Hernández's household revealed several aspects pertaining to the relationship between live-ins and their bosses. First, bosses often knew very little about their live-ins despite the years of service in their households. None of the Hernández siblings, for example, knew Lupe's age. Federico, who was 60 when I knew him, believed she was a few years younger than him when she first arrived at their house. Admittedly, such lack of knowledge can be because Lupe's relationship was with

their mother, her boss. That the siblings did not know her age or her origins reflects the personalized nature of such relationships, but it also exposes the opacity of Lupe's life 'before' she came to work for the Hernandez, as well as her life "outside" of the Hernandez family given no one knew if she had any current relationships with her own family, assuming that she would eventually be buried in the Hernandez burial plot.

The difference in knowledge that the two parties held about one another exposed the asymmetry inherent in the relationship of live-ins and employer(s). Whereas the fact of living in their employers' home, sharing everyday experience, caring for children, the sick or the old, resulted in an intimate knowledge of the family, employers rarely knew much about the families of their live-ins. Like the burial, it reflected an absence of context attributed to the worker and a confirmation of a reality: these women had been removed from their own families, and their lives had been conditioned quite completely (though not always) by their incorporation into their employers' homes.

This incorporation was evident in the example of Lupe, and many other domestic workers I encountered as live-ins. But it also revealed the intimacy developed over years of service between live-ins and the household. Salamatecos who lived near Jorge's house who I knew never mentioned Lupe, but Don Haroldo, their neighbour, who was godfather to one of siblings did. In a conversation about his domestic workers, which I turn to shortly, Haroldo stated Lupe "carries weight" (*ella manda*) in Jorge's house, and that "*tiene una palabra que se obedece*" (her word is obeyed) because of her "*antigüedad*" (her seniority). According to Haroldo, the effects of time and residence over generations led to an intimacy to which Federico also alluded. None of the siblings, Haroldo stated, would ever refer to Lupe as the "servant" or "employee", or even "*muchacha*" (little girl), a derogatory term deployed by an older generation. Admittedly, I never once heard the siblings refer to Lupe in such terms. According to Haroldo, the length of Lupe's employment in the Hernandez household was not unusual in Salamateco households.

Don Haroldo and his wife had also employed several live-ins over many decades. Don Haroldo and his wife, whose six children were married and had left the family home, employed a live-out who worked once a week to clean the house and wash their clothes. Years before, however, they had employed several live-ins starting from when Emilia had her first child.

Although the family had hired several live-ins before shifting to live-outs because their children no longer lived in the house, Haroldo only spoke about Reyna, who he described as “*pura indigena*” (pure indigenous). Emilia was originally from Cobán, Alta Verapaz, where she met Haroldo, and so it was from there all her live-ins were hired. Reyna began work for Haroldo and Emilia in the mid-1960s, at the age of 25, and stayed with the family for eighteen years.

Don Haroldo recalled that Reyna had initiated work with a six-month old baby called Lourdes: “she arrived with her baby and then left with her when Lourdes got married”. Effectively, Lourdes was raised in Haroldo and Emilia’s house, the former explaining that the family looked after both, especially Lourdes, “with clothes, medicine, and education”. Haroldo recalled that Lourdes completed her secondary school education: “if she had wanted to study more, I wouldn’t have minded paying. But she fell in love and left”.

Reyna and her daughter left Salamá when Lourdes married. Don Haroldo remembered that her boyfriend initially “came to ask me for her hand, because I was her uncle”. Apparently, when people asked Lourdes where she lived, she would inform them, “with *tío* Haroldo. It was funny. But you know, I was the mayor, and then the governor and so it was good for her that she told people I was her *tío*”. Having grown up her entire childhood in her mother’s workplace, Don Haroldo recalled that Lourdes initially called him *papa* but his wife insisted Lourdes call him *tío* (uncle): “she would call me uncle. It wasn’t hard for her to do. She heard my nephews calling me *tío* and so started doing the same. It couldn’t be any other way”.

While Don Haroldo’s account highlighted that for some children of domestic workers, there existed the possibility of gaining social status for the simple reason of working for a particular family, it also exposed the inevitability and the dangers of entanglement, in that calling him father would have been far too risky given that in most cases that could have been true.

Federico and his brother joked about how some of their friends had teased them about having had sex with Lupe. Federico said: “she was younger than me, but I didn’t touch her” pointing to the well-established norm that indigenous girls were often hired to perform “duties” beyond those of cleaning and looking after children. Don Haroldo,

talking about Lupe, joked: “yeah, I tease Jorge. I tease him saying that she’s his mother, ha, ha”, insinuating that Lupe had had sex with Jorge’s father, and that Jorge was in fact, Lupe’s son.

Indeed, the sexuality of domestic workers rendered them vulnerable, therefore, on two counts. First, motherhood made them vulnerable to the men who father their children (in their employer’s household or outside it) while also exposing them to difficult decisions regarding the lives of their children. In addition, many are sexually abused by their employers or their sons (we will recall the case of Celso’s grandmother, who had been “raped” by Don Alejo’s paternal grandfather). And even if such abuse has not taken place, they were often tainted by the very possibility of this happening without having recourse to compensation or denouncing a crime. Or quite simply, such eventualities were feasible and therefore always a distinct possibility.

Another case relates to Heidi with whom I lived for several months as a paying tenant. Heidi had been widowed since 2000 and described herself as a “housewife”. She and I, however, were not the only two people who lived in the house. In fact, the presence of several others, some of whom were live-ins, and their fascinating interactions with Heidi prompted me to ask her about her views and relationships with domestics.

Heidi, born in the late 1940s, was originally from Purulhá, and settled in Salamá with her husband and two sons in the late 70s. For some 10 years, she dedicated her time to the care of her family. When her sons left the parental home in the late 1980s, Pedro, who was nine at the time, became Heidi’s live-in. When I was in Salamá, he was still living at Heidi’s only now so too were two of his siblings.

Heidi lived in a German-styled house that had been built shortly before her husband’s death. Unlike other houses in the neighbourhood, hers stood out as one belonging to a family of wealth. Surrounding it was a well-groomed porch and garden, with a newly painted white fence demarcating her property. The front two doors led into to a large, open-planned living room with various items of furniture arranged around a TV and music sound system. Leading from the walls were five doors, four of which led into four bedrooms, each with their *en suite* bathroom. The fifth led into the back garden, where her son was building a swimming pool. And, to the left of the living space was a fitted and designed kitchen and dining room.

Heidi and I occupied two of the four bedrooms. A third belonged to her son who returned to Salamá sporadically from the military. The other son rarely visited and never stayed. The fourth room's occupant was Alicia, Pedro's eighteen-year-old sister. Pedro, on the other hand, slept outside of the house in a small wooden-walled shed with a corrugated iron roof, with an older brother, Eddy. It was located close to the door leading into the garden. Attached to the side of their shed was a shower and toilet.

Eddy had been sharing Pedro's lodgings for three years. He had arrived in Salamá to work in Heidi's son's taxi company, for which he received a wage although meals and lodging were discounted. Pedro also received a wage, from which, when he was younger, was discounted, "the cost of clothes, shoes and such things", clarified Heidi. Gradually, however, he was paid his entire wage. When I was in Salamá, he was training to become a mechanic, courtesy of Heidi's son who paid for an apprenticeship. Alicia's presence, on the other hand, was recent. She arrived shortly before I moved in, after her parents had agreed to send her on the condition that Heidi pay for her to be enrolled on a secretarial course. She was Heidi's live-in.

It was interesting to observe the relationships of the three siblings with Heidi. Pedro and Eddy wandered in and out of the house with great ease. Heidi and Alicia made their breakfast, lunch and dinner. Alicia cleaned the house and washed clothes. When I returned to the house in the evenings, I often found the three siblings on the sofas watching television with Heidi or outside in the garden engaged in some conversation. Guests rarely came to the house. However, when for example, Heidi's brother or another relative turned up, Alicia was expected to serve them, but she always did with Heidi. In addition, Pedro and Eddy were always invited to eat with the guests, as was Alicia.

Heidi's relationship with the siblings was unusual, not only because Pedro was a live-in when most live-ins are female, but also because all three siblings lived with Heidi. Also, unlike other domestic workers, Alicia did not work all the time. Occasionally, she woke up later than Heidi, and sometimes missed breakfast altogether. Sometimes when I asked Heidi where Alicia was, she would simply state, "oh, who knows, probably still asleep", or "she said she had a headache and went back to bed". Alicia carried out the same tasks as Heidi, although only Alicia washed the clothes. On two occasions, the siblings' mother visited, with another two children. She was treated in the same manner

as say, Heidi's brother when he visited. That is, as a guest. Their conversations indicated Heidi knew much about the family. Indeed, much about the peculiar relationships between Heidi and the three siblings revealed an interaction I had observed in no other Salamateco household.

The conversations between them, the joviality, the sharing of food, the friendship between Pedro (and Eddy) and Heidi's son, as well as Heidi's interactions with Alicia were indeed indicative of relations based on constructed trust and fondness. In contrast, I rarely witnessed Lupe chatting and joking with the Hernandez even though I spent much time hanging out with family members in Jorge's house.

As mentioned above, Pedro was nine when he arrived in Heidi's house. Although she was vague on the point, I gleaned that maybe Pedro's parents either lived or worked on the estate owned by Heidi's mother. Sometime in the late 1980s, Pedro's sister, at the time heavily pregnant, turned up at Heidi's door with a husband who had been shot. Who shot him, and why was never revealed. However, they sought out Heidi's husband, who was a doctor, in clandestinity. Heidi's husband treated the man, while Heidi took care of Pedro's sister. She nursed her for 40 days and shortly thereafter, with a healed husband, Pedro's sister left Heidi's household with her family. Not long after, Pedro's parents sent him to Heidi.

I had assumed that Pedro's parents sent him because of the family's poverty, but I was corrected. Heidi said, "the family's poor but not to such an extreme. No, Pedro was sent as a thank you" (*un agradecimiento*) for the care of Pedro's sister and brother-in-law. Heidi explained that when Pedro's sister was with her "she saw I worked hard. I had my little farm (*finquita*) with its cows, chickens and some pigs. My husband was always outside, in his clinic, so they sent me Pedro to help me". And, as in the examples mentioned above, Heidi adopted a language of kinship when talking about Pedro and Alicia, if not Eddy, who was treated more as a lodger. Pedro was referred to as a "son", and her two sons considered him "a brother":

"when they [the sons] used to come home, they'd play with him. My husband took him everywhere. My sons never treated him as an inferior person (*de menos*). If we went out for lunch, Pedro came along. My sons know that Pedro has been my company and they saw how he used to be with their father, so they love him".

Heidi mentioned that Pedro treated her as “a mother”. After her husband’s death in 2000, she gave Pedro, now 20 years old, permission to return to his parents, implying the prerogative was hers alone to let him go, not Pedro’s to leave. However, Pedro “chose” to stay, because he considered Heidi as “his mother”. Given that she was now alone, “he wanted to keep me company, he said if I got ill or something he’d be here”. Alicia also was treated as a “substitute daughter”. Heidi stated that while she appreciated Pedro and Eddy’s presence, she had always wanted a “daughter”, and had asked Pedro’s parents to consider sending one of their two younger daughters. That is when Alicia arrived in the household.

Nevertheless, despite treating Pedro “as a son or brother”, Heidi pointed out: “but let’s not forget that Pedro’s job here was to help me on my little farm. His room was outside, his bath. That’s where he slept”. Concerning Alicia, she was brought into the house because Heidi wanted a “daughter”, but Alicia was not that: “of course I treat her like a daughter. I don’t have to order her around. I don’t like to act that way, but she knows what she needs to do and if there’s something I don’t like then I tell her, and she shuts up”.

A notable aspect of her interactions with the siblings related to her expectations of Alicia. Heidi’s sons lived elsewhere, and her husband had died. She had no relatives in Salamá. She had been raised in a world where domestics not only cleaned houses, washed clothes, worked as nannies and cared for the elderly, but also where they were the “company” of older women, particularly of those whose children had left home, or who had been widowed or divorced.

After her husband’s death, Heidi stated she became a “pariah” with the very families she and her husband had once socialised. Friends stopped calling and invitations became sparse, which she believed was the direct result of her widowhood:

“here, a woman for only being a widow or divorced, well we’re not respected because they [the other wives] think we make ourselves available to all men (Heidi was not alone in expressing such attitudes. Several women whom I befriended, wealthy, some educated, who had been widowed expressed the same). I used to be friends with the other doctors’ wives. As soon as my husband died, forget it. It’s an ugly situation. The situation would change if I were to get married again”.

The neighbourhood in which Heidi lived was largely inhabited by poor Salamateco families although her own house was a picturesque middle-class house, contained with a white fence on the principal road into Salamá. Although she interacted with her neighbours, Heidi often kept her distance, except with Roberta (see below). Her neighbours, many of whom I had befriended, described her as a recluse. However, through my acquaintance with them, and from conversations with Heidi, I learned that they were subjecting Heidi to a perverse form of social control, often spying on her, meddling in her affairs, and gossiping about men she had allegedly slept with, all because they were intrigued and envious of this woman of wealth who was their neighbour. They recognised that Pedro was “like a son” but many questioned Eddy’s presence.

Therefore, Alicia was hired not only to assuage Heidi’s loneliness, but also to serve as her chaperone, and confidante. Whenever Heidi left the house on some errand, Alicia accompanied her. Heidi often talked to me about her treatment by her neighbours, but on many occasions, I arrived home to find her talking in detail also to Alicia. Alicia was not only the live-in in that she cleaned, cooked, and washed clothes. She also accompanied her mistress everywhere, listened to her woes, and assuaged her loneliness.

However, unknown to Heidi when Alicia was first hired, was that the latter had a boyfriend back home. When I was at Heidi’s, Alicia had only returned home twice for one night. On one occasion, I returned to the house to an almighty atmosphere of sulkiness – on Alicia’s part – and anger – on Heidi’s. I heard that Alicia’s boyfriend had arrived earlier at the house. Heidi was not only angry that Alicia had not “informed” her about him, but also that she had snuck outside to see him. Over the following weeks, Alicia and Heidi were at loggerheads. Heidi insisted that if Alicia were to see her boyfriend again, she had to ask her for permission, stating that Alicia’s parents had placed her in Heidi’s care. While I never witnessed the two express their disagreements in open confrontation with each other, their positions on the matter were evident: Heidi complained incessantly; Alicia sulked. The tension escalated to such a point that Alicia decided not to pursue the secretarial course. She returned to her parents, where no doubt she could see her boyfriend more easily. Alicia’s brothers, after all, insisted with Heidi that her parents knew off the relationship and that their sister intended to marry the man at some stage.

Alicia's departure is revealing, particularly in relation to how obligation and duty is constructed on the part of the mistress, and loyalty and dependency concerning the domestic live-in. Whereas Lupe and Reyna's presence in their respective employer's house was intertwined and intercut through years of dependency, Alicia's was not. Assumptions abounded regarding how long Lupe was to continue in their employment, and even concerns about how she would be cared for after her employer's death were expressed. Heidi's relationship, on the other hand with Alicia was underscored by a familiarity that normally characterises live-in/employer relations where the former has lived in the service of the latter for many years and decades. Presumably, the quickly established intimacy was based on the fact Alicia was Pedro's sister. On one occasion, I asked Heidi if she intended to hire Ruby, Alicia's younger sister. Her answer revealed her expectations of Alicia, which were informed by world-view that her socialisation as a wealthy woman had permitted her to construct: "I don't know, I think the younger one (Ruby) also has a boyfriend. Well, that's not convenient for me, that they get married and leave me (*así no me conviene para que me dejen y se casen*). I'll just be alone again". Clearly, Heidi's position reflected a deeply imbued sense that the role of poor Guatemalans was to prioritise the concerns of their employers to the detriment of their own lives. Alicia's intention, on the other hand, eventually to marry her boyfriend, illustrated she had no such misgiving about her role in Heidi's house, which was ultimately to be short-term.

The arrival of Pedro's sister at Heidi's house more than 15 years ago with a wounded husband locked Pedro's entire family with Heidi into cycles of expectation, loyalty, duty and dependency. Pedro's long-term residence with Heidi, the money Heidi's son had invested in him, and the latter's intention to eventually manage his businesses together with Pedro, signified that Pedro, Heidi, and her son, were bound in varying ways. But Alicia and Eddy were not. On many occasions, when Heidi's son returned at weekends, and expected Pedro and Eddy to help in his chores, like for example, in the construction of the swimming pool, Pedro always complied. Many times, Eddy simply absented himself. Alicia had returned home. Nevertheless, when I returned to Salamá briefly in 2005, I found a 16-year-old Ruby working in Heidi's house.

The way employers spoke about their domestics reflected an intimacy developed over the years of service, which, according to my wealthy informants, was an expression of the inclusion of the women into the homes and families. But the inclusion, nevertheless came at a price. The women had, after all, been removed from their family and kin

networks, and their own place of birth. Years of little contact with their own families, such as in the cases detailed above, revealed the two-sided nature of the employer/domestic relationship: intimacy, familiarity and sentiment alongside incorporation, coercion, hierarchy and inequality.

Let us now turn to Roberta, who had worked her entire life as a domestic worker.

In this final section on live-ins, I will provide the perspective of the only domestic worker I befriended, Roberta. Roberta was Heidi's neighbour, and while in Salamá, I spent much time with her. I knew Roberta before I began fieldwork; she was employed as a domestic worker for a family I knew in Guatemala City. In fact, Roberta helped me find my first lodgings when I initiated fieldwork in Salamá, and then suggested I become Heidi's tenant when I decided I no longer wanted to live in the centre of town.

Roberta was married and had one son who had graduated in medicine in 2004 in Guatemala City. In contrast to Heidi's house, Roberta's revealed the poorer side of Salamateco society. She and her husband, Mario, owned a small plot of land on which were constructed two block buildings with corrugated iron protecting one, and a thatched roof on the other. She and Mario lived in one, which consisted in a bedroom, small kitchen and tiny living room. Opposite, the other building was largely used a storeroom, and at times a bedroom. Behind the two buildings were an outside toilet and shower, and an outdoor kitchen housing a large wooden stove.

Born in 1953 in the province of Escuintla, Roberta, a ladino woman, was one of seven children, and grew up in an extremely poor household. She began to work "for others" at the age of seven, carrying water to and from a river for wealthy households before school, and then after school, she made *tortillas para ajenos* (tortillas for others). At the age of nine, Roberta began work as a part-time nanny for a woman in town, and then, a year later, she went to Guatemala City for the first time as a live-in domestic. She recalled that her mistress mistreated her to such a degree that her parents took her back home after six months. Between the age of 12 and 18, she returned to Guatemala City, once again to work as a live-in nanny for a woman who had three children, but when she was 18, the employment terminated after the family had decided to immigrate to the United States. Roberta returned to her hometown and worked for several years on a tobacco plantation.

At the age of 21, Roberta entered Lola's household, and had worked there intermittently for three decades when I met her. Lola's husband was also from Escuintla. When Lola was pregnant with their first child, he asked Roberta to consider full-time live-in domestic work. Initially, Roberta stated, she "cleaned the house, washed and ironed the clothes and cooked the food". After Lola had her second child, a daughter, Roberta increasingly took care of the children. When Lola's daughter turned 14, in 1990, Roberta's services were no longer required, and she returned to Salamá to her husband and son.

However, in 1996, Lola's husband became ill, and Roberta resumed domestic work, only now to assist in the care of the husband, as well as in the general chores of the household. Given her two children were now at university, Lola agreed with Roberta that she work for 15 days a month. Although Lola's husband died in 2003, Roberta continued to work for her, but now on an extremely flexible basis; Lola would call Roberta for specific events or occasions, such as at Christmas, Easter, or for birthdays.

Lola had a large family: a mother, siblings, and their children, and several aunts and uncles. She entertained often, and Roberta could spend from 10 to 20 days at a time at Lola's and then not return for a few months. When I was in Salamá, she received a wage of 50 quetzals a day: "I've just come back. I was there from Saturday morning and returned Tuesday, and she gave me Q200. The time before that I was there 15 days and she paid me Q600".

Roberta met her husband, Mario, in 1973, while she was "out partying" in Cobán, during the period she worked on tobacco plantations. Mario worked in the municipal office of Salamá as a telegraph operator. They dated for three years, and then in 1976 she settled in Salamá with Mario. Roberta had already been in Lola's employ two years. She would return to be with Mario at weekends, and sometimes for longer periods over Easter and Christmas. In 1977, she gave birth to their son. She stated that after the 40-day nursing period, she returned to Guatemala City, leaving the upbringing of her child to Mario, who lent on the help of his parents. She would return to Salamá every weekend. When I asked her about having to spend more time raising another woman's children, she stated she had little choice in the matter. Mario's job paid little, and Roberta had only completed her primary school education.

For some 13 years, Roberta saw her son irregularly until 1990, when she returned to Salamá, dedicating her time to making food and catering for large events, like weddings and graduation parties. In addition, she made and sold bread locally. In her many years of domestic service, Roberta had learned to cook well. When she was as a live-in nanny at the age of 12, initially the job was only to look after her mistress' one-year old son. However, "the child was very quiet and didn't bother me much, so I started to clean the house. It wasn't my task, but I did it". Later, her mistress handed her a cookbook: "she said, "look, here's a book, browse it, if you see something that you'd like to eat, cook it". I remember the first meal I ever cooked was minced meat with vegetables and rice". Over the years, and particularly in Lola's house, Roberta perfected her cooking, believing it was the principal reason Lola retained her services; her children loved Roberta's food. Nevertheless, commissions for preparing food were infrequent, and Roberta made little gain from selling bread.

The way in which Roberta spoke about her experiences of, and attitudes towards, domestic service were interestingly revealing. First, she was perfectly aware of the intrinsic exploitation in such work. Roberta at times spoke critically of the inherent exploitation in the domestic/employer relationship. In relation to her current employment, Roberta mentioned that at first, she had only gone to clean the house, wash and iron the clothes, and cook. Yet as her employer's children grew, Roberta gradually took over their care. "Now, I'd say to her that they'd have to pay me for all those years of work that they didn't pay me for the care of the children. (*ahora yo le digo ahora me tienen que reponer todos los años que no me pagaban a los patojos*)".

She recognised the vulnerability and sexual exploitation. When Roberta turned 12, she took up a job as a live-in domestic worker in Guatemala City. For ten quetzals a month (about £3.50) she would wake up at five in the morning, make the breakfast for her employer, her husband and their two children, wash the clothes, make the beds, make the meals and clean the house. She slept on a mattress in the sewing room and was given very little food to eat. Roberta commented, "they didn't even have a service room (*un cuarto de servicio*)."⁹⁶ For six months, Roberta worked without receiving her wage; her mistress had informed her that she regularly sent her wages to Roberta's parents, which Roberta later discovered was untrue. On one occasion the same person who suggested

⁹⁶ In Guatemala, middle- and upper-class homes often have a service room attached to the house, called *un cuarto de servicio*, which are the live-ins sleeping quarters.

that Roberta work in this house visited the family and saw the conditions in which Roberta was living. He subsequently visited Roberta's parents and "demanded", as Roberta put it, of her father "that he tell the family to return her, because there they are killing her of hunger". Roberta's father did as he was told and asked her employer to return Roberta. Soon thereafter, Roberta was on her way back to her parents.

She was also keenly aware of the vulnerability to which young girls were and are exposed while in the employment of domestic work. For example, Roberta recalled how on one occasion, her mistress had asked her to miss school to take care of her children, while the former travelled to another town. Roberta was expected to arrive at the house at 6am to prepare the children for school. She recalled arriving only to be greeted by her mistress's husband who followed her into the kitchen and then, Roberta remembered, "*me jaló* (he pulled me)" and threw her to the floor. She struggled, escaped and ran home where she told her mother. The *señora* later turned up at the house demanding to know why Roberta had abandoned her children. When Roberta explained that "Don Cheme tried to abuse me", her mistress confronted her husband who responded by claiming Roberta had invented the whole episode. The mistress, Roberta recalled, accepted her husband's version.

However, according to Roberta, such acceptance was not because there was a "friendship of trust" (*una amistad de confianza* [between spouses]) but because a wealthy person's account of events was worth more than a poor person's: "some are worth more and others are worth less (*unos son mas y otros son de menos*)". Indeed, when Roberta outlined the distinction between "people de *usted*" and "people de *vos*" she was highlighting her awareness of the class distinctions between herself and her *señora*, and the way in which pronouns function in Guatemala as markers of distinction. Roberta recognised it was irrelevant whether her employer believed her or not. Roberta was a *gente de vos*, her class status precluding any effort on the part of the *señora* accepting Roberta's version of events to those of her husband's.

Roberta explained that one of her employers dressed her up in a uniform "which is the only thing I didn't like" because "I would have preferred to wear my own clothes". She understood the motives behind such actions: "they would say it was so that we could take care of our own clothes but later in life I realised that it was to distinguish one from another" (*era para distinguirlo a uno*).

She was also aware where to do that kind of work. She was loath to work for anyone in Salamá. She told me she had her dignity (*dignidad*), that is Roberta refused to work in Salamá because it was “home”, the place where she did not want to be looked upon as a “servant”. Employers may have wanted to hire live-ins to protect their privacy and live-outs from Salamá for similar reasons, but clearly domestic workers also wanted to work at some distance to not be tainted with the work “at home”.

In addition, Roberta recognised the nature of the work in that it led to a fragmentation of family. With her work commitments at Lola’s house, and her family back in Salamá she realised that over the years her attention to her parents was infrequent. However, she did not displace the loss of family relations onto Lola’s family. While she often used an expression of fondness with the children, she made it clear that her relationship with Lola was *patrona/empleada*.

She noted, however, with a deep sense of sadness that over the years having gone back and forth to Guatemala City, had made her own relations with her family difficult. She mentioned that her relationships between her parents and siblings were fragmented: “It’s because of the poverty. I love my family but maybe it’s because some of us grew up here, others there we don’t really know each other”.

Roberta never referred to her current employer or her children in kin idioms, although she frequently spoke of them affectionately. However, with regards to her previous employment and in relation to her younger sister, who was also a domestic worker, and who had also left the parental home at a very young age, Roberta framed both relationships in kinship terminology. Roberta’s sister, for example, had worked for the same employer for 33 years. Roberta mentioned that at first, she looked after “the *señora’s* children and now she looks after the grandchildren”, and noted that her sister loved her employer more than she did her own mother:

“it’s only right (*es justo*). The woman treats my sister like her daughter and my sister sees her as her mother. In fact, my sister would give *her* life for the *patrona’s* children because for her (the sister) she sees them as her own. She was young when she left. My mother always says to my sister that she feels more love towards her *patrona* than her own mother because my mother never gave it to us, you see, as little girls we went from the house”.

However, in addition to her understanding of exploitation and the inequalities inherent in domestic work, Roberta acknowledged that due to the nature of the work, which at first involved long absences as a child from her family, and subsequently, long absences from her husband and son, she struggled to construct and maintain a life outside of work which, over the years, has rendered her own most intimate relationships fragmentary. In fact, she often looked upon it as her respite, a world to which she could retreat to escape her monotonous, and sometimes unbearable life in Salamá. She recalled, often with great sadness at her own predicament in Salamá that after many years of living between Salamá and Guatemala City, she often found it difficult remaining permanently in Salamá. She said:

“I miss them in the city, I *need* them. Sometimes Mario and I don’t have anything to talk about, and he gets depressed and then I need to leave. I’ve never lived with him all the time and sometimes I get afraid that I will never be able to. So I know that even though Lola and I aren’t great friends she is doing *me* a favour by calling me back. Sometimes I need to run away from Salamá and the only place I have is Lola’s house in the city”.

Let us now turn to live-outs.

From Live-In to Live-Out: the End of Charity?

In contrast to their older kin, younger Salamatecos (often below the age of 40 but sometimes 50), hired live-outs. Although I am not proposing that there exists a linear movement towards the exclusive employment of live-outs – both live-outs and live-ins were present in Salamá - there was a tendency among younger, educated women to opt for the former. Moreover, middle class ladino women had no qualms in hiring poor *ladino* women. Although there existed a strong conviction that Maya women served ladinos, Debora, whom we will recall was Alejo’s daughter, poignantly stated: “poverty has increased in Salamá (evidently only for some people) and it [poverty] doesn’t take race into account”.

With few working opportunities, poor ladino women/girls were increasingly doing the work that middle- and upper-class ladinos would not do, but which indigenous women had historically done. Live-outs were largely drawn from a pool of poor ladino girls and women from within Salamá. They were employed to carry out specific tasks, such as cleaning, washing clothes, and/or, like their live-in counterparts, hired as nannies.

A typically well-educated married couple that employed a live-out was Debora, and her husband, Esteban. Debora worked in Salamá's Public Ministry Office; her husband was an engineer, who worked for an international NGO. They lived in their own home, a short distance from Debora's parents but next door to Esteban's maternal grandparents and had two children. Debora hired Maria, who worked from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. when she returned to work a few months after giving birth to her first child, five years ago. Maria was hired as the nanny, although she was also the house cleaner. As the children got older, Maria began to take them to and from school, feed them before and after school, while continuing to clean the house. She was paid 350 quetzals (about £26) a month.

Another typical couple was Ida and her husband, who was one of the Hernández siblings mentioned above, who alongside Jorge lived permanently in Salamá. Ida had a university degree in business management and had previously worked for a region-wide developmental project. When I knew her, she was unemployed, having decided she wanted to spend time raising her son. Her husband owned and ran a petrol station. Ida hired Julia shortly after she gave birth to her son in 1999. Ida looked after her son while Julia cleaned the house from 8am – 12 noon, for which she was paid the wage of 400 quetzals a month.

Live-outs were not defined by the “mutually dependent relationships” that characterised the live-in domestic/employer relationship. Such relationships, after all, were constructed over many years of work, during which intimate relations also inevitably emerged. Living on a meagre income, live-outs, however, would seek to create circumstances through which forms of patronage could exist. For example, some would offer their children to provide extra help for no pay. Employers, on the other hand, sought to retain the loyalty of the “flexible” worker, by sometimes giving gifts. As Debora said, “it's hard to find a good *empleada*, domestic worker” and often expressed that she was fortunate in finding Maria. Effectively, live-out domestic work is neither purely ‘traditional’ nor ‘rational’ in a capitalist economic sense.

Nevertheless, the employment was flexible, and uncertain. The very nature of the interaction made it difficult to construct lasting intimate relations. Julia, for example, had worked for Ida for four years. She often sent her 11-year-old daughter, Melissa, to Ida's to help with the care of the little boy. I regularly saw Melissa at Ida's house playing

with Ida's child. Sometimes, Ida would leave Melissa playing with her son while she went out for some errand. I once asked Ida if she paid Melissa for her assistance to which she replied, "no, I buy her school books and sometimes give Julia some extra money for Melissa's clothes". However, Ida's husband often complained of the extra expenditure as the son grew up, particularly after he began school. Indeed, there was a critique generally levelled at younger middle-class women. In contrast to their mothers, their older relatives, and oftentimes husbands, viewed some as lazy. After all they had fewer children, lived in smaller households, and therefore, had less work, which the women, according to their older relatives and husbands, could do themselves. Eventually, Ida's husband complained so much she fired Julia.

Both live-in and live-out domestics were subject to exploitation; both received a pittance for a wage, and the difference each earned was minimal. Maria, Debora's domestic, earned 350 quetzals. Meanwhile, Debora and Esteban's combined monthly income was 18,000 quetzals (about £1,350). Live-ins certainly earned less.

Don Alejo's *muchacha*, Manuela, on the other hand, a live-in who had been working in the Irizarry household for 18 years, earned 200 quetzals (about £15.00) a month but she incurred added costs to her employer precisely because she lived with her two children in the household. In Salamá, there was an abundant supply of cheap labour. For sure, in contrast to the live-ins, live-outs stopped work when they left their employer's home. They were not on call for up to 16 hours a day. Yet younger Salamatecos still could hire them if they so choose. So why not?

The option for a live-out, I suggest, reflected a changing reconstitution of the Salamateco "modern self".⁹⁷ This new modern self-related to different concepts of privacy. In contrast to their mothers, who generally had more than five children, who did not work outside of the home – although many attended to small family businesses – the younger generation opted to marry later and have fewer children. Wealthy younger Salamatecos also preferred different household structures. Their parent's homes were extensive, in which resided many people – parents, children, maybe the presence of

⁹⁷ See Bannerjee for an interesting analogy relating to dominant actors in Colonial Bengal who as adults, and in retrospect, began to present a particular kind of representation of domestic servitude, imbued with a sense of self-critique, which they viewed as a requirement in their articulation of a "modern self" (2004, 130).

illegitimate children, adopted children, other relatives, such as grandparents, at least one live in domestics, maybe two, as well as farm labourers and gardeners. Younger Salamatecos tended to live further away from their parents. Many, including women, were educated, and held professional jobs, and preferred a more nucleated setup, one which included the parents and children alone. And this younger generation, particularly its females, did not want to employ live-ins.

In addition, younger Salamateco couples often had different financial concerns. Every middle-class family I met sent their children to the local private schools and wished later to send them to the private universities. In contrast to their parents, they wished not to be drawn into lengthy mutually constituted relationships, which would have involved a long-term investment in their domestic worker. For example, when I asked Debora why she preferred a live-out to a live-in, she explained: “well, I can’t afford to look after a *domestica*, which normally means feeding her, buying her clothes, and if she has children, *oh dios mio*, well you’d have to take them on as well”. Yet they were also resistant to invite live-outs to live in their homes precisely because they came from Salamá. Live-outs are employed to carry out specific jobs and were not drawn into the dynamics of the household.

This new “modern self” was reflected in the change of terminology. For example, Debora stated that she would never call her employee “*muchacha*” or “servant”: “for me, both are very derogatory (*despectivo*). No, I won’t call her that. Well, legally the work she does is defined as domestic work, so she should be called a domestic worker”. Indeed, Debora explained that she had a strictly professional relationship with her employee, which was legally defined and regulated. I never once heard a younger Salamateco refer to his or her domestic worker as a servant. The most common term used was *empleada*. In contrast to their parents who still called their workers, “servant” or “little girl”, younger Salamatecos called them “domestic workers” or “employees”, which conforms more closely to their newly evolved ideas of being modern. Simply put, you cannot be modern *and* have a servant.

Conclusion

A focus on the domestic/employer relation allows for an understanding of the entangled webs and socialisation of Salamateco and Guatemalan society. It is clear that

these relationships are connected to systemic exploitation and oppression. Yet, the domestic/employer relationship also defies generalisations. Live-out domestic workers are subjected to similar exploitation as their live-in counterparts. Yet the latter experience domestic servitude in a different way. As I have indicated, some domestic workers live their entire lives in their employer's home, having initiated work from a very young age, where they are rendered invisible and powerless. Some are forced to give up their children; others are subjected to sexual advances. Almost all have their bodies and movement controlled by their employers.

Yet it also reveals the levels of inter-class and ethnic intimacy. As with the illegitimate child/biological father dynamic, inequalities between poor and rich are naturalised. On the one hand, domestic workers rarely draw attention to the intrinsic asymmetry that characterises this form of wage labour. The domestic worker like Roberta understands the inequality and oppression inherent in the labour, but also recognises the intimacy expressed through gratitude, loyalty and indebtedness to her employer. The employer, in turn, downplays the oppressive nature of the relationship drawing attention to her kindness, charity, and care of the domestic worker. It is in this light that the domestic worker-employer relationship, filtered in cases of long-term employment, highlights the myriad ways in which social hierarchies are accepted, and negotiated.

Indeed, a focus on domestic workers reveals how wealthier ladino males and females are socialised into a world through their relationships with such workers. The presence of domestics in one's house reproduces the social hierarchy and socializes individuals and groups into its everyday realities. The wealthier learn that they can rely on the poor to do their dirty work and care for their personal needs. Young wealthy males learn that they can turn to poor young women to practice one's sexual needs. The poor, on the other hand, learn what the hierarchy really means: in their own bodies, through the work they do for the other and as witnesses to the privileges of class.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The core argument of this thesis is that Salamá's ladinos were heterogeneous in social class and cultural identity. This has been shown through a focus on the town's middle-class represented by three identity groups. Yet while the middle class was heterogeneous in character as well as being dynamic in that over generations there was appreciable social mobility, bipolarity towards Indians remained throughout.

While my informants referred principally to the twentieth century, the formation of Salamá's elite occurred during the century before. Between 1821 and 1871 several new surnames appeared in Salamá, and many of those are still referred to today as the town's "honourable and noble" families. With the advent of Guatemala's modern nation-building and capitalist process in 1871, it was they who established themselves as the town and province's socio-economic and political elite. They maintained their distinction principally through marriage alliances, which excluded not only Indians but also the poor "racially mixed" as well as poor "racially pure" ladinos.

Pueblo/mestizo families had resided in and around Salamá for many generations but at least since the early decades of the twentieth century, they had all lived in the *pueblo* area where past generations had sought work as artisans. In contrast to the landed class and *puro* families, over the twentieth century *pueblo/mestizos* constituted the bulk of Salamá's growing urban population. Their accounts revealed that many family members were or had been employed as teachers, a profession which increasingly offered subsequent generations the experience of upward mobility. In contrast to elites, however, many *pueblo/mestizos* also spoke of poverty.

Puros, on the other hand, had resided in the southern rural region of Salamá where they were small farmers, dedicated largely to cattle raising. From the 1950s and 1960s, many migrated closer to Salamá *pueblo*. While an older generation that was born and raised in the southern region did not speak of poverty as such, older *puros* often alluded to the lack of state infrastructure in the south as one of the principal reasons for their migration. Equally, although others did not consider them as a wealthy class in the past, many of the first generation born closer to the *pueblo* area were encouraged to study, and later occupied middle class professions.

We can identify three clear periods that restructured the economic stratification of Salamá's families, with elites as beneficiaries of the 1871 Liberal state, *pueblo/mestizos* after 1950, and *puros* after 1980. Although families of all three groups were contemporarily considered as middle class Salamatecos, over historical time they had undergone strikingly different economic experiences.

Salamá's hierarchies did not correspond to any neat class/race bifurcation. Elites legitimised their social position because of their racial purity, but *puros* were also considered pure in European blood even though they were *campesinos*. Similarly, whilst the social capital associated with a surname generally coincided with economic capital, that was not unerringly the case. Many families which Salamatecos consider to be high status were not wealthy at all.

None the less, over recent decades, and particularly following the end of the violent civil conflict, Salamá has experienced an explosion of modernisation, principally channelled through education. Today both *pueblo/mestizos* and *puros* represent Salamá's middle class. Elite and *puro youth* are challenging the racial classifications upheld by their elders, and this has been resulting in significant changes to marriage practices. Such an evolution is particularly visible among elite and *puro* women, who were increasingly choosing educated *pueblo/mestizos* for their marriage partners. One of my female informants characterised these changes succinctly when she said that in the past "it was all about the surname and not about money, whereas today it's all about money not the surname".

Within Guatemala and beyond the country, there have been heated scholarly debates over which social group is the most intractable with respect to promoting racism. Casaus-Arzú has made the influential argument that it is the Guatemalan oligarchy, which describes itself as 'white' despite visible evidence to the contrary, that is the most committed to a racist politics (1995). Nevertheless, in the context of Salamá it seems very clear that although both *puros* and elite Salamateco families historically attempted to reproduce "racial purity", it was the *puros* who were the most rigorous in protecting a 'white' status, free from association with the indigenous.

The thesis has also shown that notwithstanding their manifold heterogeneity in other aspects, from the mid-twentieth century the political affinities of all the three groups

converged strongly over the twentieth century through their identifications with anti-communism, militarism, and Catholicism. When, as in the 1950s and 1970s, the state was in crisis, Salamá overwhelming came out in support of a military and government that supported a rightist agenda. The overall consequence of these phenomena is a profile that combines alignment and fluidity in a complex, and sometimes contradictory, connectedness.

Here, we have paid particular attention to such a complexity of entanglements and incorporations from a number of historical, social and cultural perspectives, including language of fictive kinship and relations of intimacy. The reproduction of a racially distinct groups involved boundary maintenance through the control of female sexualities and identities were invoked in reference to blood and surname.

Through our review of kinship, we have seen how race works through the operation of inclusions and exclusions. These determine who constitutes the family; which woman is the wife, the lover, the concubine. They also effectively mandate which child will be incorporated. Equally, illegitimate children might not be part of the family home, but they are included in a variety of other ways.

Through kinship and relatedness, namely marriage practices, out-of-wedlock birth and relations with domestic workers we have shown how society was simultaneously exclusionary and fluid, perhaps most acutely when relations were intimate, and especially with respect to domestic workers.

Of course, it has been a central feature of the modern state from the 1870s to adopt and promote an ideology of modernization, whether liberal, radical or conservative. Central to such a political endeavour has been the effort to displace colonial categories. However, this thesis has shown that many such categories are still vitally present. Concepts of “blood”, for instance, were extremely salient in my ethnographic data. Moreover, such narratives strongly influenced practice in terms of ordering relations, kinship, and justifying unequal relations. Symbolism of blood played a significant role in the way Salamatecos spoke about their and Indian identity.

Despite the complexities inherent in the trajectories of the three identity groups, my informants’ explanations on their ladinoness and difference from Indians were all

racially inflected. They were based on who had no Indian blood, who had the most and who had the least, drawing on racial ideologies that have played a significant role in the construction of difference in Latin America since the time of the Conquest.

Terminology like *dilución*, *degradación*, *degeneración*, *la costumbre* and *la calidad* and “pure Catholics” as a proxy for “blood purity”, were strikingly prominent among my informants.

This study has also provided an account of the two major sites of my research: the issue of contemporary narratives about the past and identifications, and how they related to historical ‘evidence’. Salamá’s – and to some extent, the region’s – history has occasionally been outlined here in some detail because the historical record was necessary to understand the current complexities and the very profile of the town. It has helped to demonstrate how over time categories denoting ethnicity have been slippery and context bound. Equally, through history and some of the extraordinary features of local popular historiography, we have shown how attempts to define purity have always implied impurity, mixing and complexity. Naturally the identifications made by my informants were highly selective, and they evidently exhibited hierarchies of relevance. But this was and is not a simple matter of prejudice; such imaginary practices feed strongly into important debates about how people relate to and identify with history(ies) and how they place their own family history within it. It is to be hoped that the material and analysis of the present work has contributed to enriching such discussion beyond providing new material on an overlooked society of Guatemala.

The historical evidence unearthed here illustrates a richer and much more complex history than that held in the popular mind, either through oral history or through the school curriculum. It includes a town inhabited by Mexican Indians, Maya-Achí, Europeans and the Dominican order. On the one hand, the historical overview illustrates how categories with which people identify shift in quality but, on the other hand, also how one relates to the categories generations later, by which I mean, what is remembered and what is not. Salamá’s history demonstrates a long process of different identifications, processes of passing, assimilation, and miscegenation.

As has been illustrated in each of the ethnographic chapters here, my informants made highly selective appropriations. The *pueblo/mestizos* differentiated themselves from Indians through discussions about mixedness *and* the idea of civilisatory improvement,

that is through Catholicism. They spoke less about (but did not omit) their kin members, past and present, and spoke more about particular historical moments which gave rise to their identities – Catholicism and modernity, Mejicanos, and Tezulutlán Indians. *Puros* differentiated themselves from mixed-blood ladinos and Indians through references to pure Catholicism, Spanish ancestry and skin colour. Their narratives indicated a “purification” of the south, which historically was far more diverse in its settlement of people of different ethnicities. Elites, on the other hand, identified their own roots as being in the nineteenth century, stressing the importance of a salient ancestor. Their narratives revealed convictions that any history preceding the nineteenth century was not theirs. That is, the region’s colonial history was simply not one with which they identified.

As elsewhere in Guatemala, the history of this region has always been characterized by attempts to fix, contain and separate populations. Yet it is precisely the attempts to do this that generated population movements, such as the escape from coerced labour or coercive social systems resulted in migrations and subsequent mixings and changing identities. It is a striking fact of this research that my informants did not identify with this.

Indeed, all my informants offered accounts on identity with a profound paradox between past and present. The past was, for some, indigenous, but the present and by extension the future - reversion was inconceivable - was indisputably non-indigenous. This disconnection with their past highlighted the reality of extreme unease with indigenous blood, despite many younger Salamatecos expressing the view that they had embraced *mestizaje*. Efforts to eventually extirpate an indigenous presence were exposed through the various ways locals spoke about surnames, which were zealously guarded by the elite class, and *los puros*, while highly desired by *pueblo/mestizos*. In contrast to elites who spoke much about “origins”, and *puros*, who offered a fixed notion of identity, *pueblo/mestizos*’ accounts on who they were reflected “movement” but not one towards “diversity”, despite their history illustrating an extremely fluid and rich context but about a movement away from “origins”, which for them was “Indian”.

All, except in one case, made distinctions between themselves and their indigenous neighbours, the Maya-Achí. Even *pueblo/mestizos*, who provided substantively different accounts about their “ladino” identity, in that they did not reference themselves or

largely to Europe, differentiated themselves from the Maya-Achí. They did this by claiming their original ancestors were from Mexico, while referencing a pre-Conquest Indian of Tezulutlán, in their narratives of militarism. Yet their references were highly selective. As we have seen, the “Indian” who featured in their accounts was always relegated to the past, he was not local, he was at times, valiant and brave, like the Indian of Tezulutlán, he was Mexican, and crucially, was one who had undergone a transition of assimilation and miscegenation. Like elites and *puros*, *pueblo/mestizos* were also extra-local.

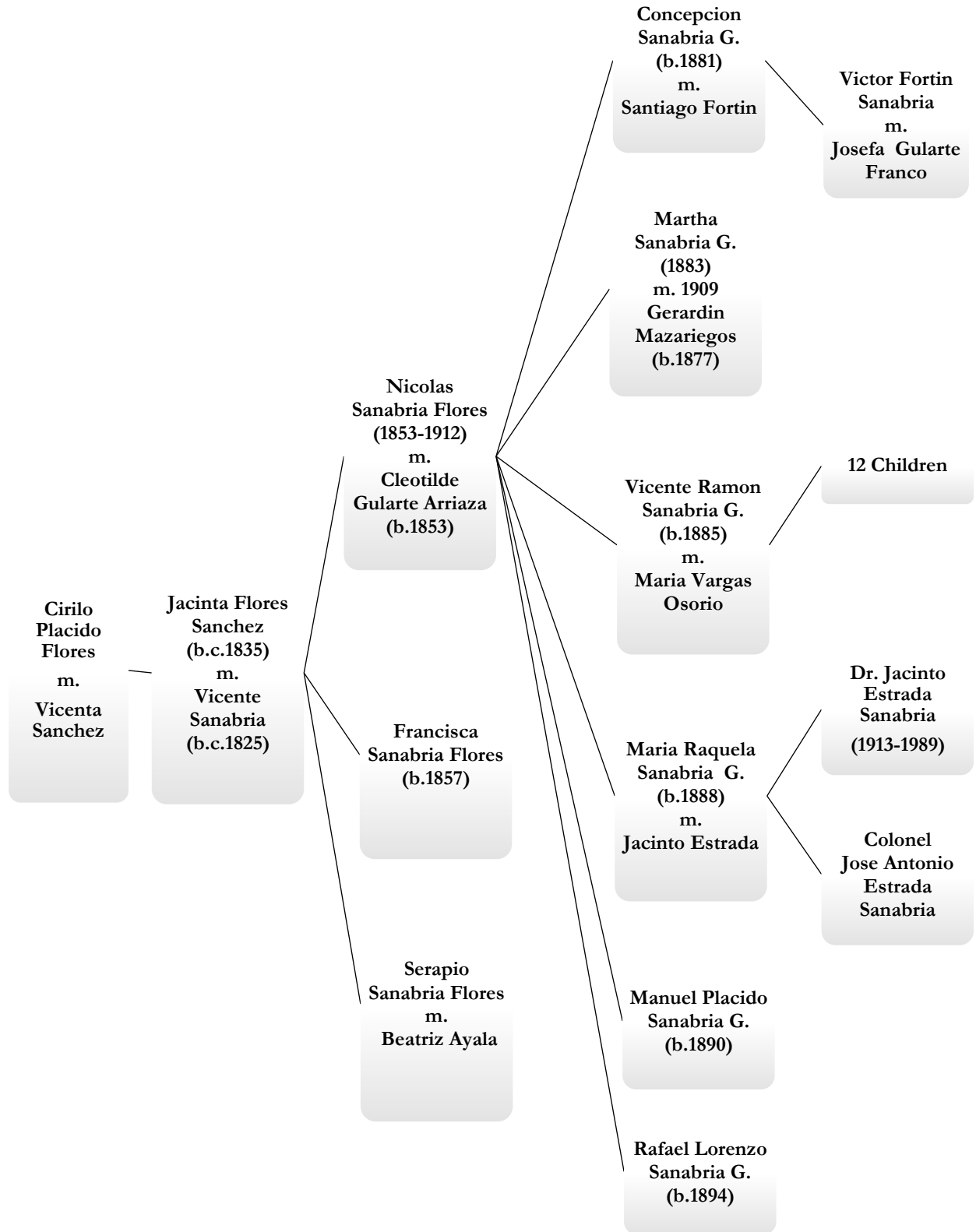
Given that many, if not all, of these groups had Maya-Achí ancestry, with the ancestors of many identifying as “Indian” only a few generations ago, it is clear that many of Salamá’s ladinos racialised the attribution of social class from the early twentieth century. My informants never identified as *indio*, *indígena*, *natural*, and/or as *nativo*, all of which translate to “indigenous person”. They also never identified their predecessors as *mozos* which to Salamatecos was synonymous with “indigenous”. In their constant attempts to differentiate themselves from Maya-Achí persons, Salamatecos would point out that their parents/grandparents were artisans, while for others whose parents/grandparents worked plantations, they were “tenants”. Others, meanwhile, made references to coats of arms, birth certificates and/or geographic isolation. While the construction of difference has a long history, stemming from Salamá’s Indians not being native to the region, the manner in which laws after 1870 targeted indigenous peoples - in our case, the Maya-Achí - converting many into indebted, landless and impoverished workers, particularly reinforced notions of racial difference. Even if the vagrancy law similarly affected many poor rural ladinos, the Maya-Achí became, for the Salamateco ladino, the unskilled, manual labourer. Class was racialised in that now only indigenous people were *mozos*.

Such a historical perspective has been vital to disentangle modern and contemporary attitudes and patterns of behaviour that might otherwise appear as simple and shallow profiles of prejudice. Whether practised to the end of maintaining a longstanding social hierarchy or with the purpose of establishing cultural distinctiveness, such attitudes do not obey a simple analytical binary that is still at the heart of much scholarly writing on Guatemala. Yet without the rich material derived from dozens of interviews conducted in ethnographic research, it would likewise have been impossible to discern the precise

manner in which binaries of real and imagined inclusion and exclusion did, indeed, prevail within the multi-faceted contemporary whole.

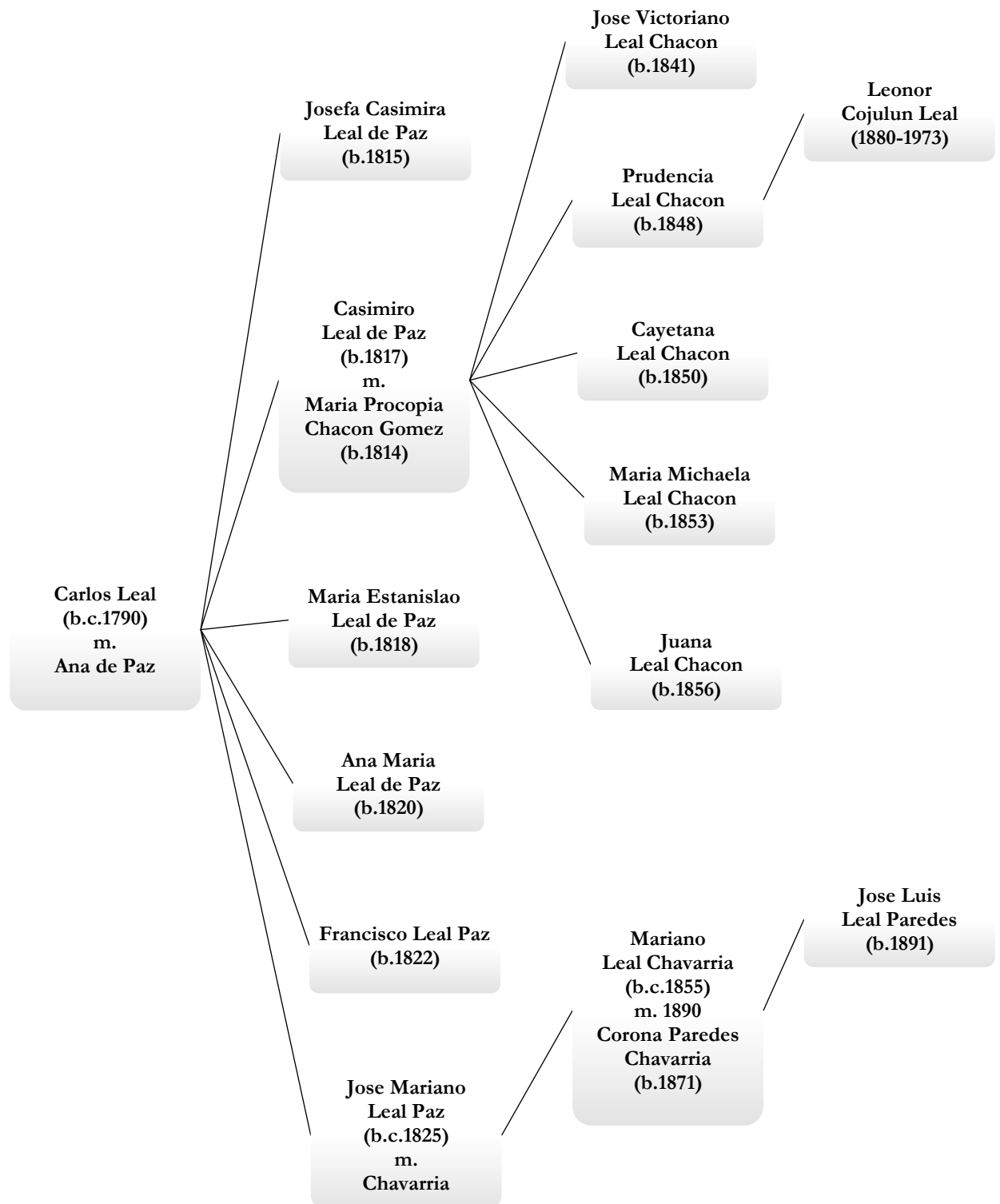
Appendix I
Principal Landed Families: Salamá and San Jerónimo, 19th and 20th-century

Kinship Diagram 1: Sanabría Family



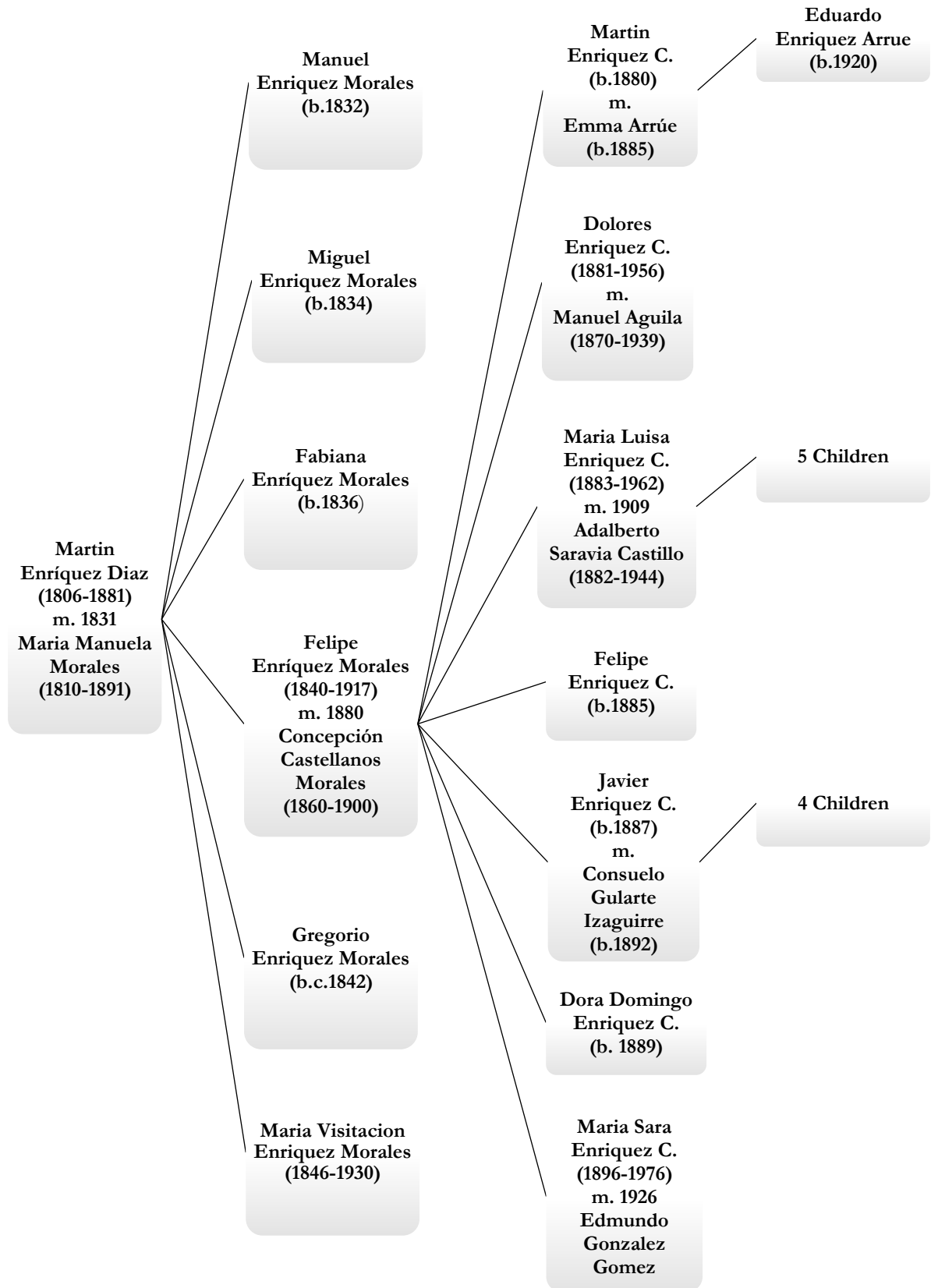
Source: *International Genealogical Index*: Country, Guatemala: Surname, Sanabria; Local Informants

Kinship Diagram 2: Leal Family



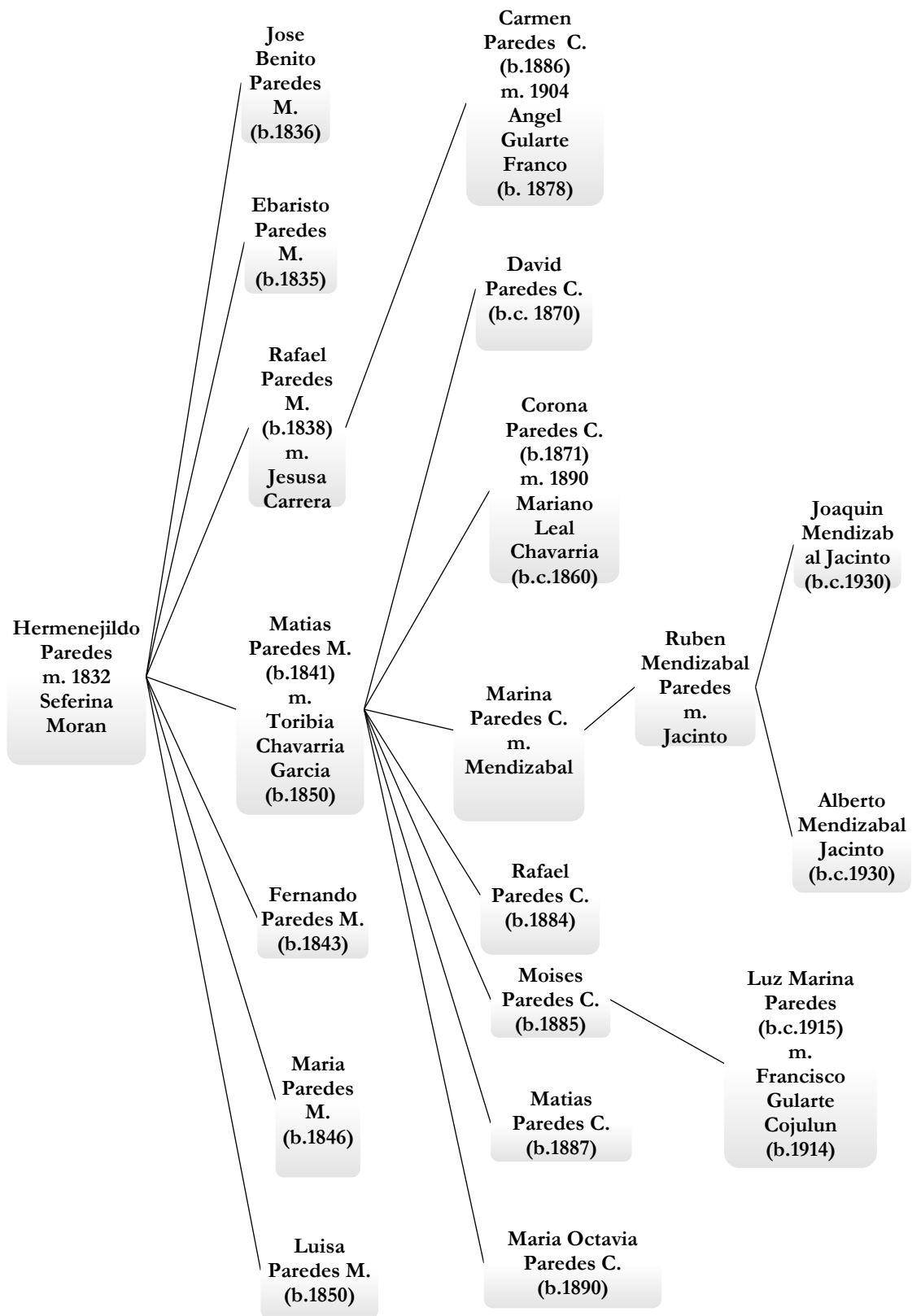
Source: *International Genealogical Index*: Country, Guatemala: Surname, Leal; Local Informants

Kinship Diagram 3: Enríquez Family



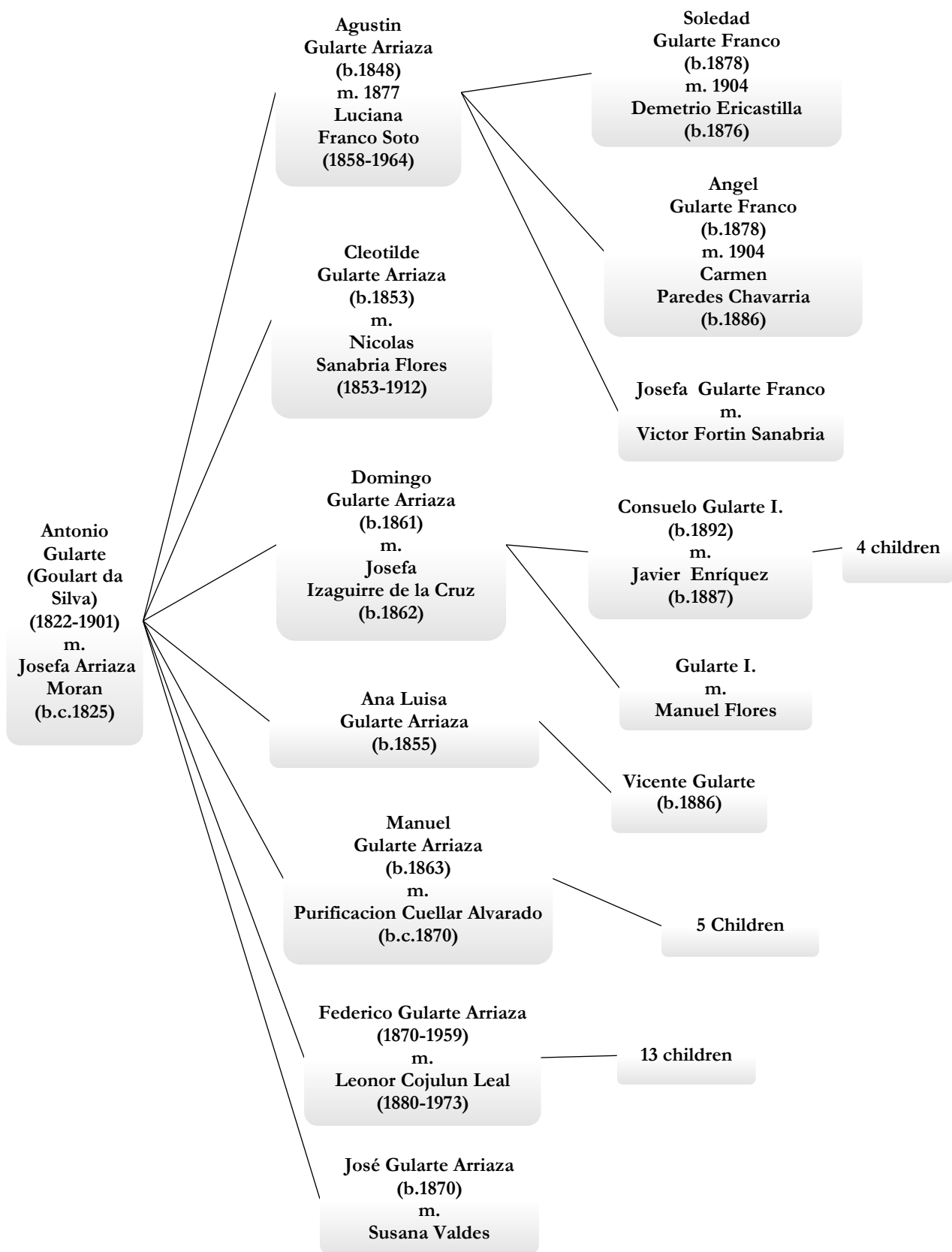
Source: *International Genealogical Index*: Country, Guatemala; Surname, Enríquez; Local Informants

Kinship Diagram 4: Paredes/Mendizábal Family



Source: *International Genealogical Index*: Country, Guatemala: Surname, Paredes, Leal, Jacinto; Local Informants

Kinship Diagram 5: Gularte Family



Source: *International Genealogical Index*: Country, Guatemala; Surname, Gularte; Local Informants

Appendix II
Salamá: Principal Landed Estates, Economic Activity, and Workforce c. 1952

Finca	Owner c.1952	Approx Area⁹⁸	Economic Activity	Approx. Workforce	Payment
La Esperanza	Jacinto Estrada Sanabria	27 <i>cabs</i> , 35 <i>manz</i>	Forest Land		
Santa Rosa	Antonio Estrada Sanabria	40 <i>cabs</i>			
Santo Tomás	José Santa Cruz Ríos	40 <i>cabs</i> , 23 <i>manz</i>	100 heads of cattle	50 <i>campesinos</i>	Payment for use of pasture land: 3 quetzals per head of cattle
Paso Ancho	Matías Paredes Chavarría	10 <i>cabs</i>			
San Nicolás	Joaquin Mendizábal Jacinto	12 <i>cabs</i>		30 <i>colono</i> families	
Las Tunas	Alberto Mendizábal Jacinto	10 <i>cabs</i>			
Cachil	Ramón Sanabria Gularte	18 <i>cabs</i>	c.500 heads of cattle		
Rincón Grande	Oliverio and Roberto Gularte Cojulun	39 <i>cabs</i> , 53 <i>manz</i>	50 heads of cattle 12 <i>manz</i> of maize /frijol and 8 <i>manz</i> fruit	30 <i>colono</i> families	1 week's work for owners Paid 5 <i>centavos</i> Each family has use of 3 <i>manz</i> each
Las Limas	Chavarría & Leonardo	29 <i>cabs</i>			
Southern Landholdings					
Agua Caliente	Rubén & Cornelio Cuéllar Estrada	2 <i>cabs</i>			
Ojo de Agua	"	1 <i>cab</i>			
Llano Grande	"	1 <i>cab</i>			
El Zapote	"	½ <i>cab</i>			
Las Palmas, Santa Isabel	"	3 <i>cabs</i> , 3 <i>manz</i>	Cattle	8 <i>colono</i> families	Use of 2 <i>manz</i> per family Worked 6 <i>tareas</i> for boss

⁹⁸ Land measurements (taken from Stoll 1993, 37)

Cuerdas	Manzanas	Caballerías	English Equivalent	Metric Equivalent
1			.108 acres	0.044 ha
16	1		1.736 acres	.703
1, 033.3	64.58	1	112.12 acres	45.374 ha

Finca	Owner c.1952	Approx. Area	Economic Activity	Approx. Workforce	Payment
Chivac	Julio Tarano Villatoro and Siblings	64 <i>cabs</i>	Sugarcane Finca: 100 <i>cargas anuales</i> for internal market. Cattle Farm: 400 cattle in winter; 700 in summer	115 <i>colono</i> families	23 families work for owner: 15 days per month. Payment: 10 <i>centavos</i> per day 64 <i>colonos</i> work on own products 28 families live in woodlands
Chuacús	David Lowsley Staples	84 <i>cabs</i> , 19 <i>manz</i>	Cattle Farm: over 300 heads	30 <i>colono</i> families	
Chuacusito	Paredes Alvarado and Siblings Paredes Turcios	22 <i>cabs</i>	Not Used By Owners	22 tenant families	Rent of 10 <i>cuerdas</i> for 8 <i>centavos</i> per month
Llano Grande					
Las Cañas	Javier Enríquez Castellanos & Consuelo Gularte Izaguirre	7 <i>cabs</i>	Not used by owners.	25 tenant families	Tenants from village of Estancia Grande Use of pasture land
Los Angeles	Dora Domingo Enríquez Castellanos de Cuéllar	9 <i>cabs</i> , 36 <i>manz</i>	Cattle Farm 100 heads	14 <i>colono</i> families & 6 tenant families	
Llano Grande	Dolores Enríquez Castellanos & Manuel Aguila	28 <i>cabs</i>	Coffee: 6 <i>manz</i> Sugarcane: 3 <i>manz</i> 20 cows Grazing Land: 3 <i>manz</i> Pasture: 4 <i>cabs</i> Forest Land: 18 <i>cabs</i> Unusable Land: 4 <i>cabs</i>	50 <i>colono</i> families	2 weeks per month Payment: 3 <i>centavos</i> per day without food

Finca	Owner c.1952	Approx. Area	Economic Activity	Approx. Workforce	Payment
San Felipe de las Conchas	Maria Sara Enríquez Castellanos & Edmundo Gonzalez Gomez	38 <i>cabs</i>	Cattle Farm: 180 cows 1 <i>cab</i> of sugarcane, coffee, rice, maize	43 <i>colono</i> families	2 weeks per month for owner in exchange for use of land
Estancia Grande	Eduardo Enríquez Arrue s/o Martín Enríquez Castellanos	29 <i>cabs</i>	44 <i>manz</i> : Sugarcane, maize, frijol, coffee and rice. Grazing land: 2 <i>cabs</i>	15 tenant families	1 week per month for <i>finca</i> - no payment Rent: 1 quintal of each <i>almud</i> of their crops Use of 80 <i>manz</i> by tenants

Source: Archivo General de Centroamérica: Lista de Fincas Afectadas por el Decreto 900 (landholdings affected by Decree 900): Baja Verapaz:

La Esperanza/Santa Rosa: Paquete 2, Expediente 2
Santo Tomás: Paq. 4A, Exp. 2
Cachil: Paq 7, Exp 7
Rincón Grande: Paq. 3C Exp. 13
Chivac: Paq. 4A Exp. 6
Agua Caliente: Paq. 1 Exp. 4
Chuacús: Paq. 3A Exp. 6
Chuacusito: Paq. 5A Exp. 1
Las Limas: Paq. 2 Exp. 2
Llano Grande: Paq. 1A Exp. 7D
San Felipe de las Conchas: Paq. 3C Exp. 14
Las Cañas: Paq. 1A Exp. 8
Estancia Grande: Paq. 1 Exp. 6
Paso Ancho, San Nicolás, Las Tunas, AGBV: 1953 Folio 180

Appendix III
Political Violence, Salamá and San Jerónimo, Baja Verapaz: 1979-1990

Date	Victim(s)	Location	Method	Actor(s) Responsible	Source
6 June 1979	Padre Gregorio Barrenales	Salamá	Expelled from Country	Guatemalan Government	CEH 1999 Vol. III: 85
Jun 1979	Sister Modoalda Prado	Salamá	Left Country		Local Source, Salamá
21 Jul 1980	José María López	San Juan	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Local Source, Salamá
22 Aug 1980	Hugo Amilcar 23 years old	Body found in San Jerónimo	Torture, Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Local Source, Salamá
18 Sept 1980	César Augusto Elías García 21 years old From Granados	Body found in San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
29 Sept 1980	Carlos Ovidio García Catalan 22 years old	San José	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
23 Nov 1980	Julio Sis Tista 23 years old	Tempisque	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
23 Dec 1980	Alejandro Morente Reyes 28 years old	<i>pueblo</i>	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
10 Jan 1981	Leonidas Florencio 22 years old	La Union Barrios	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Local Source, Salamá
8 Feb 1981	1. Cesar Augusto Estrada 2. José Javier González Balcárcel	<i>pueblo</i>	Forced off <i>La Libertad</i> bridge in Salamá. Beaten to death after crash	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)

Date	Victim(s)	Location	Method	Actor(s) Responsible	Source
28 Mar 1981	Juan Francisco Prera Aldana 34 years old Military Collaborator	<i>pueblo</i>	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
30 Apr 1981	Fulvio Alirio Mejía Milian	<i>pueblo</i>	Forced Disappearance	Armed Group	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
May 1981	Carlos Ramos	<i>pueblo</i>	Arbitrary Execution	Armed Group	Local Source, Salamá
May 1981	Santos Rodríguez 23 years old Law Student (USAC), Guat. City	<i>pueblo</i>	Arbitrary Execution		Local Source, Salamá
26 Jun 1981	Desiderio Alonso López	San Jerónimo El Astillero	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
27 Jul 1981	Ciriaco Tista de León	El Chaguíte	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
7 Aug 1981	Cayetano Velazquez	Las Limas	Arbitrary Execution Salamá National Hospital	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
7 Sept 1981	1. Roberto Cuc Sis 2. Lino López Tista 3. Miguel Sis Sis 4. Tomás Sis Iboy 5. Cristóbal Toj Ramírez 6. Macario Toj Ramírez	Tempisque	Torture and Massacre	Military	CEH 1999 Vol. III: 147

Date	Victim(s)	Location	Method	Actor(s) Responsible	Source
18 Sept 1981	Five Unidentified Bodies	San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
9 Oct 1981	Luis Che Ramos	<i>Barrio</i> Santa Elena	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
13 Oct 1981	Zoila Concepción Morales Franco	<i>pueblo</i>	Forced Disappearance		Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
8 Dec 1981	1. Cristóbal Pineda 25 years old 2. Byron Arnulfo Conde Estrada 21 years old	<i>pueblo</i> Bodies found in ravine in San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
9 Dec 1981	1. José Ángel Tista Canahui 2. Adrian Sis Tista	Tempisque	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
28 Dec 1981	José Javier Fernández	<i>pueblo</i>	Forced Disappearance	Unidentified men	Yearly National Police Report 1980-1981 (AGBV)
19 Feb 1982	Cayetano Tista y Tista	Las Limas	Forced Disappearance	Unidentified men	Yearly National Police Report 1982-1983 (AGBV)
7 Mar 1982	1. Geovanni Gularte Suevern: Head of Paramilitary Group; <i>policía judicial</i> 2. Pedro Gularte Suevern	San Jerónimo	1. Torture Arbitrary Execution 2. Torture Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Local Source, Salamá

Date	Victim(s)	Location	Method	Actor(s) Responsible	Source
13 Aug 1982	2 Unidentified Bodies	San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1982-1983 (AGBV)
15 Aug 1982	Five Unidentified Bodies	San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1982-1983 (AGBV)
26 Aug 1982	One Unidentified Body	San Jerónimo	Arbitrary Execution	Unidentified Men	Yearly National Police Report 1982-1983 (AGBV)
1983	Pedro Sis Tista	San Nicolás	Arbitrary Execution	PAC	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 164
19 Oct 1984	1. Victoriano Sis Tista 2. unidentified Victim	Tempisque	Arbitrary Execution	Armed Group	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 166
March 1990	1. Francisco Tista Sis 2. Lino Tista Sis 3. Eleuterio Tista Sis	Cumbre Santa Elena	All brothers 2 killed One disappeared	Military	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 143
18 May 1990	Emilio Bachan Tista	Tempisque	Arbitrary Execution	Military Commissioner	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 164
30 Jun 1990	Félix de León Sis	Tempisque	Arbitrary Execution	Unknown	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 167
August 1990	1. Juan Bolbito Bachan 2. Eulalio López Tista 3. Felipe López Tista 4. Marcelino López Tista	Cevadilla	1-3: Arbitrary Execution 4: Forced Disappearance	Military	CEH 1999 Vol. VIII: 142

Appendix IV
Ladino/Non-Indigenous Proportion of Total Population by Municipality: 1893 to 1994

Baja Verapaz	1893 Total	Ladino	1921 Total	Ladino	1950 Total	Ladino	1973 Total	Non-Indian	1994 Total	Non-Indian
Salamá	12,484	4,822 (39%)	13,548	5,561 (41%)	12,618	9,045 (72%)	21,913	16,530 (75%)	35,612	25,977 (73%)
Rabinal	4,792	596 (14%)	12,474	890 (7%)	11,855	2,783 (24%)	20,393	3,863 (19%)	24,063	4,599 (19%)
SMG	4,256	1,120 (26%)	3,264	1,043	3,803	271 (7%)			17,244	1,483 (9%)
SGP	2,886	25 (1%)	2,253	146						
Cubulco	8,166	1,645 (20%)	12,792	2,015 (16%)	13,976	4,382 (31%)	20,374	6,395 (31%)	28,368	8,503 (30%)
Granados	3,062	2,348 (77%)	4,071	2,861 (70%)	5,865	5,080 (87%)	8,326	7,838 (94%)	9,934	8,984 (90%)
El Chol	1,892	1,181 (62%)	2,722	1,330 (49%)	3,886	1,690 (43%)	5,363	4,352 (81%)	6,958	5,954 (86%)
Purulhá	7,297	348 (5%)	7,552	461 (6%)	10,418	796 (8%)	14,551	1,110 (8%)	20,504	1,623 (8%)
San Jerónimo	4,666	3,321 (71%)	4,386	1,006 (23%)	3,892	2,974 (76%)	7,142	5,616 (79%)	12,199	9,911 (81%)

Source: Figures for 1893 taken from 1921 Census (DGE 1921; DGE 1950; DGE 1973; INE 1994)
Note: San Miguel Chicaj and San Gabriel Pansuj were two separate *municipios* in 1893. In 1935, the latter was annexed to the former, so I have added the 1893 population of SGP to that of SMC (Barrios 1996:138).

Appendix V
Monthly Births/Deaths Salamá: 1893-1924

Month/Year	Births				Deaths			
	Indian	Ladino	Total	% Indian	Indian	Ladino	Total	% Indian
1893								
Mar 1893	25	5	30	83.3	9	3	12	75
Aug 1893	33	13	46	71.7	17	4	21	80.9
1894								
Mar 1894	32	8	40	80	5	4	9	55.5
Sep 1894	28	11	39	71.7	9	7	16	56.2
Nov 1894	23	8	31	74.1	17	3	20	85
Dec 1894	30	4	34	88.2	7	5	12	58.3
1897								
Jan 1897	26	14	40	65	22	8	30	73.3
Feb 1897	36	8	44	81.8	8	8	16	50
Apr 1897	47	13	60	78.3	0	0	0	0
Aug 1897	44	15	59	74.5	23	13	36	63.8
Nov 1897	28	11	39	71.7	28	10	38	73.6
1922								
Jan 1922	57	19	76	75	24	6	30	80
Feb 1922	37	9	46	80.4	11	1	12	91.6
Mar 1922	31	8	39	79.4	24	5	29	82.7
Apr 1922	22	8	30	73.3	24	3	27	88.8
May 1922	21	12	33	63.6	15	5	20	75
Sep 1922	19	21	40	47.5	18	19	37	48.6
1923								
Jun 1923	30	17	47	63.8	12	11	23	52.1
Jul 1923	17	19	36	47.2	16	3	19	84.2
Aug 1923	23	14	37	62.1	14	6	20	70
Sep 1923	41	21	62	66.1	16	7	23	69.5
1924								
Jan 1924	41	20	61	67.2	18	10	28	64.2
Feb 1924	32	11	43	74.4	28	9	37	75.6
Jun 1924	30	12	42	71.4	21	3	24	87.5
Jul 1924	31	16	47	65.9	17	7	24	70.8
Nov 1924	14	12	26	53.8	9	7	16	56.2
Dec 1924	25	16	41	60.9	8	2	10	80
1924	333	185	518	64.2	177	81	258	68.6

Source: Archive of the Governor's Office, Baja Verapaz (AGBV)

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