ONLINE SINS AND OFFLINE SEX: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON THE SEXUAL AGENCY OF ADOLESCENTS IN QUETZALTENANGO, GUATEMALA

Master thesis International Development Studies Ingrid Gercama
ONLINE SINS AND OFFLINE SEX:
An explorative study on the sexual agency of adolescents in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala
Ingrid Gercama, July 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Abbreviations

SNS’s  Social Network Site(s)

Glossary

*Prueba de amor*  Freely translated: test of love. Word to describe the premarital sex a boy can ask of a girl when in a romantic sexual relationship as a ‘prove’ for her love for him.

*Noviazgo*  The Guatemalan word for the period of romance prior to engagement and marriage.

*Cafes del Internet*  Public places in Guatemala where people can connect to the internet after paying a small fee.

*Perra*  Literally translated as bitch. Guatemalan slang for a promiscuous (and often sexually active) girl.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Quiero, a la sombra de una ala,
Contar este cuenta en flor:
La niña de Guatemala,
La que se murió de amor

I want, in the shadow of a wing,
To tell this flowering story:
The girl from Guatemala,
The girl that died for love
José Marti

At the 19th of January 2013 I arrived in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala for the second time in my life. When I visited the country the year before, I had discovered that I wanted to immerse myself in the world of Guatemalan adolescents and that I wanted to learn as much as possible about their desires, ideas and worries. The second time around, I arrived with a more clear set aim: I was interested to see how Guatemalan youngsters would reflect upon and think about their best kept secret: their own sexuality. I believe that young people are important for international development, the fight against inequality and marginalization since half the world population is under twenty five. Besides this significant percentage of youngsters in the population as a whole, ninety per cent of them live in the developing world (Herrera 2006). It is therefore extremely important to do research on ‘the special position of exclusion of children in development countries ’and their ‘multiple childhoods’’ (Young & Barret 2001, 141).

I think that, in accordance to Nieuwenhuys (2004), it is important to recognize young people’s agency and ability to act: youngsters are not ‘passive recipients’ and their agency needs to be acknowledged (206). When connecting this argument to the topic of my study: youth sexuality, it can thus be said that it should be recognised that adolescents have power over perceptions on their sexuality. In a highly religious and paternalistic society as Guatemala, many rules and behavioural pattern influence how youngsters shape their sexuality. On the other hand adolescents, just as any other social agent, are also influenced by
and make use of those same dominant cultural norms and values surrounding sexuality against which they sometimes rebel. Adolescents often do not agree with these traditional and morally paternalistic ideas on how to behave sexually and they will find a way to exert a certain amount of power over their own lives.

What, exactly, happens when there is a discrepancy between cultural norms and values and adolescent desires? What can adolescents do to reach their goal: do they have power enough to act and debate or transform these cultural norms and values? Or do they have no 'room to manoeuvre' at all? In my thesis it will become clear that youngsters in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala experience difficulty when debating, acting and deciding about their own sexuality. Yet, what they cannot acceptably discuss or play out in the machistic, hierarchical and paternalistic offline society, they sometimes can online. The Internet seems to be functioning as some sort of youth platform where the adolescents can talk about taboo issues and discuss ideas about love and sexuality. Although certain rules and behavioural patterns also apply in this online space, it seems to be a place where youngsters can act out their own constructed images.

One sexual act can have life changing consequences; one moment of sexual engagement in itself can destroy or create the future of a young person. It is therefore my opinion that academic and social research of issues of sexuality is of vital importance for the body of scholarly work on youth agency that has come to the stage since 1995 with the focus on Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (Eerdewijk, 2007). With my thesis on Guatemalan adolescent views on sexual relationships I want to contribute to this body of knowledge.

Ingrid Gercama – 4 July 2013
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH MOTIVATIONS AND RESEARCH LOCATION

In this chapter I will explain why it is important to do research on youth perceptions of sexuality. In the first section I will mainly focus on the social and academic relevance of my research. In the second section I will introduce and contextualize my research location. Although I have separated the relevance of my research and the location of my research into two distinct sections, where relevant, I chose to mix the two topics with each other.

2.1 Research motivations

In this section I will explain why research on sexuality and especially youth sexuality is relevant and desired in the field of international development. Hereafter, in the second paragraph I will address the relevance of research on youth perceptions and cultural constrains of youth sexuality in Guatemala. In the third paragraph I will clarify why I choose to do research on the connection between (perceptions of) youth sexuality and adolescent Internet use.

2.1.1 International agreement on Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights

In 1994 the 4th International Conference on Population and Development (ICPC) took place in Cairo. The ICPC called for universal importance and focus on issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) (Glasier, Metin Gülmezogly, Schmidt, Moreno, Look 2006: 1595) and started to take into account the importance of young people’s sexuality (Eerdewijk, 2007, 12). The acknowledgement of the importance of (youth) sexuality in the international development world is growing since then. This is ground-breaking in many aspects: to many cultures young people are not supposed to be sexually active and to talk about adolescent pre-marital sex is still a big taboo (Eerdewijk, van 2007). Many cultures will therefore ignore the notion of youth sexuality: young people, according to them, don’t have sex.

Reproductive health following the ICPD means that one should have ‘the ability to reproduce, to regulate their fertility’ whilst being in ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being’ and ‘to enjoy sexual relationships’ (UN, 1994). This broad conceptualization of the concept of sexuality and reproduction emphasizes the importance of a healthy, satisfying and enjoyable sexual live (Germain, Nowrojee, Pyne 1994 in Eerdewijk,
The idea is thus that reproduction is intrinsically linked with sexual health. To understand reproduction one needs to look into sexuality because reproduction flows out of and is influenced by sexual activities and relations (Eerdewijk, van 2007).

Every boy and every girl in every culture all over the world will be confronted with biological changes in their bodies during adolescence. Adolescence is, in that sense, universal. The meaning that is ascribed to these biological changes differs socially, culturally and historically (Rubin 1984; Dehne & Riedner 2001: 14 in Eerdewijk, van 2007). It is clear though that, somehow, sexuality is central in the world of young people all over the world. To put it differently, the liminal period of adolescence is characterized by the ‘upsurge of sexual drives, the development of sexual values and the initiation of sexual behaviours’ (Moore & Rosenthal 1993: ix in Eerdewijk, van 2007).

That youth sex is nowadays seen as an important part of international development debate may have been rather progressive; the conceptualisation of the notion of youth sex that is used in the debate however is still quite conservative. Sexual relationships of adolescents are generally perceived and portrayed as problematic (Oishik & Dutta 2011 & Hedge 1988 in Comaroff & Comaroff 2011, 268). Often adolescent sexuality is emphasized by looking at teenage pregnancies, the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the lives of young people, under aged prostitution, illegal sex trafficking and illegal abortion and so on (Ibid.). Youth sexuality is seen as threatening to the whole society (Diouff 2003, 3). Also, adolescents are often seen as innocent victims that need protection because they do not have the agency to change their fate (Oishik & Dutta 2011, 341). The fact that young people in the global South might have sex while well aware of the possible consequences and in order to enjoy themselves is hardly being taken into consideration.

2.1.2 SRHR infringements in Guatemala

Sexuality is private and far from unproblematic in the Central American republic Guatemala and serious violations of human rights and Sexual and Reproductive rights are occurring on a daily basis. Because of the infringements of these rights in Guatemala it seems logical to do research on issues of sexuality in the country. In the report ‘Embarazos en niñas y adolescentes, un delito que perseguir en Guatemala’ [translation: Pregnancies in girls and adolescents, a crime that haunts Guatemala] written in 2012 by the United Nations Population Fund and the CERIGUA (Centre for Informative Reports on Guatemala) the scale of problems related to sexuality have become more visible then ever (CERIGUA & UNFPA
2012, 1). Guatemala is among the countries with the highest number of teenage pregnancies: in 2012 25% of the countries births have been of adolescent mothers. With around a hundred girls between the age of 10 and 18 years that get pregnant every day, Guatemala is said to have a serious juvenile fertility problem (Ibid. 2). Another grim problem is the daily occurrence of sexual crimes and sexual violence against Guatemala’s children and adolescents. Miguel Ángel López from the National Commission against the Abuse of Children (CONACMI) states that in 2011 alone 11000 cases of sexual violations have been committed against boys and girls (Ibid. 11). Guatemala occupies the first place among Latin American countries as the country where most sex crimes against the population have been reported (Ibid. 12). Other sexual problems the country struggles with are the high number of child prostitutes, the appearance of child pornography and the trafficking and sale of under aged children and adolescents (Ibid.). Also a big problem for national health in Guatemala is the high number of HIV/AIDS cases: it is estimated that some 70 000 people are infected with HIV in Guatemala, one of the highest rates in Central America (Replogle 2005, 623).

Because of international development focus (and pressure) on SRH and because of the acknowledgement of sexuality related problems on a national level, in 2005 Guatemala’s government decided to make sexual education obligatory in the country’s classrooms. The Law on Family Planning\(^1\) was enforced in 2009 and is supposed to provide education on and facilitate access to modern birth control methods (IPS, 2009). With the Law on Family Planning the Guatemalan Ministerio de Salud (Ministry of Health) wants to guarantee the sexual and reproductive health of its citizens (Noticias, 2009). Although this law has been implemented for almost five years now, sexual education is often not given at all or punctuated with moral disagreement (CERIGUA & UNFPA 2012). For example, the high number of teenage pregnancies is an indicator shows a severe lack of access to and quality of sexual education in the country (CERIGUA & UNFPA 2012, 1).

The focus on SRHR of the Guatemalan government, CERIGUA, CONCMI and the UNFPA on sexuality and development is not surprising given the context as described above. Sexual problems as teenage pregnancies, violation and others can keep people trapped in a poverty circle and need to be combatted (CERIGUA & UNFPA 2012, 1). The previous brief analysis indicates that youth sexuality is far from unproblematic in this country and shows that heavy infringements of Sexual Health and Reproductive rights are daily matters in Guatemala and

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\(^1\) Ley de Acceso Universal y Equitativo de Servicios de Planificación Familiar y su Integración en el Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Productiva
have a profound effect on the development of the country and its youth. Research on youth sexuality, therefore, I believe, is necessary and socially relevant for Guatemala.

2.1.3 Internet and sexuality: academic relevance

In my research I will make a connection between youth perceptions of sexuality and Internet use. It is relevant to make a connection between Internet and adolescent sexuality (and their sexual agency) since Internet has begun ‘to transform older modes of knowing, experiencing and organizing sexuality’ (Brichell 2012, abstract). Because of intense usage of the online community by adolescents worldwide, the Internet is a good setting to do research on expressions of adolescent sexuality. The interrelation between Internet, sexuality and social power and adolescent agency has only been addressed implicitly and unsystematically (Brichell 2012). Therefore I want to more systematically research expressions of sexuality by adolescents in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala in their online lives.

2.2 Research location: Guatemala and Quetzaltenango

In this section I will introduce the reader to the location my research was situated. I will, in the first paragraph, contextualize Guatemala and highlight some important characteristics of the country that need to be taken into account. In the second paragraph I will introduce Quetzaltenango, the city I did research in. The third paragraph will introduce the Internet as a research location.

2.2.1 Guatemala: important historical events and ethnic composition

Any researcher in Guatemala should take into consideration that Guatemala is an ethnic melting pot and that the country has recently terminated a 30 year period of civil war (1960’s – 1996). Around 60 % of Guatemala’s population is ladino (Mixed Amerindian-Spanish & European) and the other 40% is indigenous (K’iche, Kaqchikel, Mam, Q’eqchi and other Mayan and indigenous non-Mayan groups) (CIA fact book 2001). This is an important given, especially because of the extent in which sexual violence and collective memory of sexual violence in the civil war has affected the indigenous community. Of the 100.000 women that were raped in the civil war, the majority was indigenous; they were being accused of collaboration with the paramilitary and therefore punished by state military or simply raped because they were the ‘internal enemy’ of the state (Patterson-Markowitz et.al. 2012: 83). Indigenous people are, although making up 40% of the country’s population, often subjected
to racism and marginalization and often are less economically privileged than ladino’s (Rasch 2011, 123).

2.2.2 Quetzaltenango: ethnic melting pot and the hub for education

I conducted ten weeks of research in the city Quetzaltenango in the province of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. This city was ideal for my research in several ways. Quetzaltenango, locally often referred to as ‘Xela’, is situated in the South-West of Guatemala and is the second biggest city of the country. It is the increasing urbanization rate of Guatemala that makes it important to do research in an urban setting (UNICEF 2005, 120). Quetzaltenango, moreover, is an important city for secondary and tertiary education. Because of its sheer size and geographical location (for many Guatemalans closer by than Guatemala City), and the relatively safe atmosphere compared to the more dangerous Guatemala City, many students move (or commute) to Quetzaltenango where they are able to attend secondary schools or university.

Being an important education hub and a large, important city, makes Quetzaltenango an interesting place to do research because citizens of every layer of Guatemalan society are represented in the city. In Quetzaltenango urban and rural, poor and rich and indigenous and ladino people live together. Quetzaltenango, finally, is especially interesting for my research because of the ethnic mixture of the city population. The most recent public census (2002) made by the Guatemalan government shows the diverse ethnicity: 47,7% of the population in the department of Quetzaltenango is ladino and the majority indigenous (22,2% Mam and 29,2% K’iche) (Gobierno de Guatemala 2002). Although most of the indigenous live outside of the city, they commute to Quetzaltenango for example to sell their goods or receive education, thus making the city bicultural. Currently, 1 in every 20 adolescents in Guatemala is migrating from their hometowns to cities (UNICEF 2005, 120). Quetzaltenango, in conclusion, is a highly culturally mixed city, and a therefore a good research setting to do research on both ladino as indigenous ideas on sexuality.

Quetzaltenango is divided in various zonas (see map 2.1). My research was mainly located in zona 3: the district where most of the secondary and tertiary education institutions are situated. Zona 3 is the biggest district in Quetzaltenango. It is commercially very important for the city because it hosts the daily market. The market spans over several roadblocks, and local farmers sell their products during the daytime. Another important district for my
respondents was *zona 1*. District 1 is the city centre where many adolescents would relax and hang out in the central park. District 1 is also the more rich and sophisticated area of town with many restaurants, bars and Internet café’s. *Zona 1* and 3 are the most central and most lively districts of Quetzaltenango.

Map 2.1 Map of the *zonas* of Quetzaltenango (Credits: La Ruta Maya)

Image 2.1. *Zona 3* – the market district in Quetzaltenango.
2.2.3 Quetzaltenango’s youth and Internet use

Next to the geographical location I just described I also want to introduce the Internet as an important, yet virtual research location for my thesis. In this paragraph I will make an assessment of adolescent usage of the Internet and show how, where and why they use the Internet. Adolescents in Quetzaltenango spend many hours of their leisure time online and frequently connect to the Internet: I therefore see the Internet as an important platform to study the working(s) of adolescent agency.

Depending on their socio economic status, my respondents would connect to the Internet at home on their own computer or in a café del Internet (Internet café). To go online in a café del Internet would cost between 3 to 6 Quetzal (approximately 0,30 eurocent to 0,60 euro cent) an hour. My indigenous respondents indicated more often to connect in a café del Internet then my ladino respondents. Guatemala’s biggest telephone companies Tigo, Claro and Movistar would also offer USB-connection to dial up to an Internet connection: this connection costs around 100 Quetzales (approximately 10 euro) a month. Additionally, the majority of my ladino respondents told me that nowadays they use their cell phone to connect to the Internet.
Adolescents in Quetzaltenango frequently use the Internet to look up information, to communicate with friends, to listen to music or watch movies and to visit Social Network Sites (SNSs). Boyd and Ellison (2008) explain that Social Network Sites are: ‘web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system’ (211). Because both Facebook and Twitter where amongst the most used SNSs in my research, I will mainly focus on these two SNSs. Adolescents in Quetzaltenango would use these SNSs to communicate with each other, to debate about schoolwork, to upload music or pictures or post photos. And, some way or other, to express their sexual selves.
Image 2.2. In this image Maribel drew her online life (RES2). Maribel often uses Twitter and Facebook to talk to her friends or distant family. She uses her cell phone or computer to connect to the Internet and often listens to music or talks about homework or plans to go out when she goes online.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

3.1 Research questions

In my research I aim to get a better understanding on the following research question and sub questions:

How is sexuality, in connection with cultural notions, perceived by (indigenous and ladino) adolescents in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala and how do these adolescents use the Internet to express agency related to these ideas of sexuality?

Sub question 1: How do adolescents in Quetzaltenango perceive their own sexuality?
Sub question 2: How is adolescent sexuality shaped by cultural forces in Quetzaltenango?
Sub question 3: How do adolescents in Quetzaltenango use the Internet to express agency on these ideas on sexuality?

3.2 Operationalization

In this part I will explain how I operationalized several of my core concepts I will use throughout my thesis.

Sexuality In order to create a theoretical approach that I will be able to use I need to sophisticatedly connect sexuality and love with each other. In contemporary academic research the debate on the relation between love and sexuality is often reduced to a ‘what’ causes ‘what’ debate: does love causes sex or does sex causes love? (Beach & Diamond 1977; McKinney & Sprecher 1991). In academic research sexuality is often seen as ‘erotic arousal’ (Reis 1986b), for ‘reproduction’-purposes (Beach & Diamond 1977, 3) or ‘conscious psychological/ erotic arousal’ that can be accompanied by ‘psychological actions’ (Strong & De Vault 1988). Love on the other hand is more often described as a desire to enter a close relationship with the other. Love in McKinney and Sprecher is: ‘the constellation of sensations, emotions and cognitions that an individual associates with the desire to enter or maintain a close relationship with the other’ (1991, 27). Sex is thus more often seen as a passionate interest in someone’s body, whereas love is often seen as a passionate interest in one’s personality (Reit 1949 in McKinney & Sprecher 1991).
In my research, I will follow Reiss (1981) and understand love and sexuality as intimately connected. I will use Reiss’ distinction between body-centred sexuality and person-centred sexuality (Reiss 1981, 275). Reiss uses the concept of ‘body-centred sexuality’ to describe sexuality without love and affection but to merely achieve pleasure. ‘Person-centred sexuality’ was developed to describe sexual acts with an affective basis (Ibid.). By making use of Reiss theoretical distinction I will be enabled to do research on both sexuality and love and to make a distinction between the both.

**Adolescents** I believe that the categorization of adolescents, or youth as such, is socially constructed (Ariès 1962 in Young and Barret 2000, 141) and that this life-phase is experienced differently in all cultures (Holloway & Valentine 2000 in Ibid. 141). However in order to make the adolescent population of Guatemala researchable a certain demarcation had to be established. In my research the definition that UNICEF uses to describe adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean will be employed to demarcate the category of adolescents in Guatemala. UNICEF categorizes adolescents as people that are aged between 12 to 18 years old (UNICEF 2001).

**Agency** When writing about agency, I believe it is important to reason from the standpoint that ‘(a)ll individuals (...) have the moral capacity and responsibility to act for themselves’ (Asad 2000, 30). The agentic behaviour that is the result of this moral capacity and responsibility manifests itself as ‘capacities, competencies and activities through which [actors] navigate the contexts and positions of their life worlds fulfilling many economic, social and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual/collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives’ (Robinson et al. 2007, 135). Finally, when we have established that agency is a non-discriminating capacity that results in certain behaviour, it is also important to see that agency has a certain empowering and action-enforcing characteristic. Actors with agency can ‘produce’ cultural discourses by creating, resisting and (re)producing dominant ideological discourses (Spyrou 2008).

3.3 Secondary Schools

In order to reach both ladino’s and indigenous boys and girls between 12 and 18 years old, I decided to do research on high schools. In the previous chapter I already introduced
Guatemala, Quetzaltenango and the Internet as research locations. In the following paragraph I will provide a detailed description of a more practical location: namely the two secondary schools I did research in. Both of the schools were situated in district 3 in Quetzaltenango. In order to have a reliable sample that reflected the complex and ethnically diverse composition of Guatemala’s society, I decided to do research in both a publicly funded as a privately funded secondary school. In general, private schools give better education and cost more to attend than public schools. This excludes many students: as previously stated, although 40% per cent of total population is indigenous, and they are often the ones stuck in poverty and so do not have easy access to good education.

3.3.1 Escuela Experimental y de Aplicación Doctor Rodolfo Robles

From the 30th of January until the 28th of February I did research at the Escuela Experimental y de Aplicación Doctor Rodolfo Robles. The school was established in 13 September 1977 in order to create ‘a solid pre-university formation to prepare adolescents for their life in the labour force’ (Website URL3) The school is attended by 972 students: 601 in diversificado en 371 in nivel básico Escuela Dr. Rodolfo Robles offers secondary education in two levels: Básico and Diversificado (See table 3.1 for an explanation on the Guatemalan school system). Most of the students of the school lived in Quetzaltenango, or neighbouring cities or towns like Totonicapán or Momostenango. The establishment is affiliated with and founded by the private and prestigious Universidad Rafael Landívar.

Photo 3.1 & 3.2 Pictures of the Escuela Experimental de Aplicación de Doctor Rodolfo Robles

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2 From now on called Rodolfo Robles, as the students call their own school.
The Guatemalan secondary school system
(in order of advancement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Age of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Básico</td>
<td>The first 3 years of secondary education</td>
<td>12-15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversificado</td>
<td>The final 3 years of school education at secondary school</td>
<td>15-18 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Explanation of the Guatemalan school system (source: Classbase.com)

Rodolfo Robles is a privately funded high school: the school is consequently slightly exclusive in practice because parents have to pay 4250,- Quetzales (approx. 425,- EUR) a year for education in the first three grades and 4500,- Quetzales (approx. 450,- EUR) per year for the last three grades. Because of the high level of school fees (excluding for example school uniform, books and other school materials), 70 of these 972 students have a scholarship that enables them to study. Rodolfo Robles is a Catholic school leaded by Jesuits. Education on this school has a strong moral Catholic focus and several courses are punctuated with religious ideas.

3.3.2 Escuela Normal Bilingüe Intercultural

The second part of my research, I conducted in the Escuela Normal Bilingüe Intercultural Kitijobál K’iche’ Tijonelab’ (ENBI). The ENBI is a public, non-religious and bilingual (K’iche and Spanish) high school. The ENBI was established in order to provide bilingual education to guarantee the preservation of Mayan culture in the departments of Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán and Sololá. All the courses in the school are taught in both Spanish and in K’iche, the latter being the Mayan language of dominance.

The ENBI’s primary goal is to educate their students to become teachers in Indigenous communities. They highly value their traditions, language and the indigenous Cosmovision. ENBI is especially focussed on educating their indigenous students about their own traditions and it employs only indigenous teachers. So, in practice, most of the students of ENBI are indigenous, and indeed I have not seen any ladino student at this particular school.

In order to understand the social reality of particularly my indigenous respondents it is important to realize that many of them commuted to the ENBI. Although the majority of my respondents at the Rodolfo Robles were born and raised in the urban area of Quetzaltenango, many of my indigenous respondents were born and raised in the wider rural area of
Quetzaltenango. Some students even commuted from communities in different departments of Guatemala causing them to travel up to a few hours a day.

Photo 3.3 Photo of the front of the Escuela Normal Bilingüe Intercultural (Source: Panoramio.nl)

Photo 3.4 The second school building of the ENBI in the campo [translation: country side] (Source: infosurhoy.com)
3.4 Units of analysis, respondents and sampling method

3.4.1 Sampling method

As pointed out in section 3.3 I did research at a private Catholic school (Escuela Experimental y de Aplicación Doctor Rodolfo Robles) and at a public, non-religious bilingual\(^4\) school (Escuela Normal Bilingue Intercultural Kijijobál). I selected these schools in a non-random manner (Bryman 2008): these were the schools in which the director gave me permission to conduct research. In each of these schools, I selected two grades wherefrom I would draw my respondents. As said before, I chose for the grades 3th Basico and 3th Diversificado because of the age composition of these grades. The classes I did research in where non-randomly selected by the managing board of the schools (or teachers) based on availability and schedule. This might have given my sample a bias: the teachers or direction might have selected the best and most obedient classes in order to impress me. However, due to the rules of the managing board I had no choice; I could not select classes myself.

In order to select suitable respondents for my research I again used a non-random sample (Bryman 2008). Because of being in schools during school time, my assistant (at both schools a teacher or employee) went to the selected classes and asked for volunteers. Before they went to the classes I gave my assistants clear instructions on how inform the volunteers on the content of my research. By using this non-random selection method I know that I probably have a bias in my sample: probably the most outspoken and relatively open people applied. I do still believe this to be the best possible way to select my respondents in the given circumstances. And, as it proved, my respondents where all very open and positive about my research and talked openly about difficult taboo issues that surround the topic of youth sexuality. A less-biased sample might have made such discussions far more difficult and might have lessened the scope of my research.

3.4.2 Unit of analysis and respondents

How then did my sample look like in the end? In order to learn more about the offline and online expressions (and the interrelated meanings of these expressions) of adolescents in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, I have selected both male and female respondents from between

\(^4\) Bilingual in Spanish and K’iche: the local Mayan language of dominance.
12 to 18 years old\(^5\). The variety and heterogeneity of my research sample was composed in such a way that it reflects the complex social reality in Guatemala. I have chosen to highlight and take into account the same variables (gender, age, education level and ethnicity) as UNICEF did in their national rapport on youth reproductive health in 2005 (22).

I have focused my research on both girls and boys because I believe gender to have a profound influence on perceptions of sexuality. The interaction between boys and girls in the process of (sexual) identity shaping is very important (Tolman 2012). Another important factor is the ethnic variety of Guatemala’s population. To be able to talk constructively about youth sexuality in Quetzaltenango, I wanted to include both ladino and indigenous boys and girls. Indigenous, although making up 40% per cent of the population are often subjected to racism and marginalization and often are less economically privileged than ladinos (Rasch 2011, 123). The ethnic and gender composition of my respondents’ sample is illustrated in table 3.2 and chart 3.1

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\(^5\) As said in Chapter 2, sexuality is central in the world of adolescence worldwide: it is the periods in with children undergo physical changes that awaken their status as sexual being. For the goal of this research, namely to learn more about ideas of sexuality and the forces that have influence on these ideas, adolescents thus make a suitable research group.
That the majority (96%) of my respondents were religious is shown in the chart below (Chart 3.2). A little more than half of my respondents is Catholic (51%), another 36% are Evangelical, and 5% indicated they adhere to Christianity. When comparing the variables of religion with ethnicity, it becomes apparent that in my sample, the distribution is fairly even (See Table 3.3.)
Another variation I have included is the amount of education that my respondents have received. I selected students at year 3 Basico (approx. 12 to 15 years old) and year 3 Diversificado (15 to 18 years old) (see table 3.4). I selected both years because I believe that age (and education) can have a tremendous effect on the how young people perceive their sexual identity. I also interviewed four students about their previous adolescence period from the Universidad Rafael Landivar in order to pre-test my questions and survey. As indicated by the tables, in the end I interviewed more girls than boys and more adolescents from the diversificado level. Although the variables are not a hundred per cent even, I tried to establish a sample that most truthfully represents the total body of adolescents in Guatemala.
Table 3.4 Education level of my respondents’ sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Básico</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversificado</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Research methodology and methods

3.5.1 Methodology

In my research I made use of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. In order to achieve reliable data I believe that certain triangulation of methods (Bryman 2008) is necessary. Also, when doing research with adolescents, it is important to select ‘appropriate research strategies’ in order to ensure that youngsters are enabled to ‘have (...) input into the research design and processes’ (Young & Barrett 2001, 141). It is important to make ‘research techniques (...) child-friendly and participatory’ (Ibid.). This is even more important when doing research on youth sexuality because of the taboo status of the topic; youngsters are often not asked to give their opinions on their own sexuality and these voices, according to me, need to be made visible. In my research I wanted to make sure that my respondents’ opinion was made visible since I was interested in their own ideas and opinions on their sexuality.
3.5.2 Methods

3.5.2.1 Interviews with adults: An exploration of cultural and normative ideas in Quetzaltenango

Firstly, to orientate myself with my research setting, I wanted to find out more about the undereining normative and cultural ideas on youth sexuality in Quetzaltenango. Therefore I did eight interviews with adults of different positions and institutions that have some sort of “power” over shaping ideas of sexuality (see table 3.5). I selected these adults by using the snowball sampling method (Bryman 2008, 184). I established good rapport with a professor of the Universidad Rafael Landívar and he helped me to establish contact with other interesting respondents. Because of time constrains I do not pretend to have captured all that is important for the shaping of youth sexuality. However, I did get manage to establish a reliable image of cultural norms and values on youth sexuality that prevail in Quetzaltenango.

The semi-structured orientation interviews took approximately an hour. I spoke with the interviewees about several themes related to youth sexuality. Firstly I asked them about ascribed gender behaviour and roles that exists in Guatemala. Secondly, I wanted to know more about the (non-) existence of sexual education in Quetzaltenango and the opinion of the interviewee or the entity (NGO, Church, School etc.) on the topic. Thirdly, I asked questions about the use by adolescents of contraceptives, STD’s and HIV/AIDS and abortion. After this I asked for an opinion on the theme of teenage pregnancy and violence against youngsters and women. Because of the interviews being semi-structured, many other topics have been touched upon as well.

Table 3.5 List of adult respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession and organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Aquilar</td>
<td>Female doctor and teacher of a course on sexual education at a local university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>University professor of a course on sexual education and mother of two girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doña Luz</td>
<td>Indigenous women and mother to three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge Luis</td>
<td>Children’s judge: specialized on youth and sexual abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xandra</td>
<td>Indigenous leader, works for Association Miriam, a NGO focused on sponsoring promising indigenous youth in scholarships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luisa</td>
<td>Works for SOS, a NGO that provides a home for sexually abused children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Ortiz</td>
<td>Priest and teacher at an all-boys Catholic school. He also rallied against the government when it was made public that sex education was to be obligatory at all schools in Guatemala.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referent Dolores</td>
<td>Evangelical pastor of an evangelical church in Quetzaltenango.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2.5.2 Further cultural and normative research: media analysis

In order to delve deeper in cultural ideas, taboos and morals that powerful entities allocate to the concept of youth sexuality, I did a media analysis of several (local and national) newspapers, education material, policy documents, NGO mandates and national laws. I selected these media in a non-random manner: I researched the material that was available to me and applicable to my research. I analysed all of my media sources whilst in the field but did not confine myself to only use media that were published within the 3 month frame of my research. Because of the importance of several events that happened in Guatemala in the past (i.e. the implementation of the law on sex education in 2009 and the religious protest against the law) I needed widen the scope of the analysis. See for a detailed overview of use media table 3.6.
Table 3.6 Summary of media used for research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Research period or publication date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspapers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Prensa Libre (national)</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Quetzalteco (regional)</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Diario (national)</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal documents and policy documents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ley Planificacion Familiar [Law on Family Planning]</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual statistics of Education (Ministry of Education)</td>
<td>November 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on abortion (Capítulo III, Del Aborto, Código Penal de Guatemala, decreto No. 17-33)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational material</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educación para el amor (Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala) Tomo 1</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educación para el amor (Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala) Tomo 1</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formar el Corazon. Clarificación de valores [Forming the heart. Clarification of values] (Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala [Conference of bishops in Guatemala])</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuando amamos nos parecemos a Dios [When we love, we resemble God] (Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala)</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.5.3 Youngsters at schools: the main trajectory

In this research I wanted to make sure that my respondents’ voices were taken into account and that their opinions were heard. Youngsters, according to me, cannot be treated as ‘passive recipients’ and their agency and knowledge needs to be acknowledged (Nieuwenhuys 2004, 206). In order to guarantee the inclusion of adolescent opinions I followed an individual trajectory with each of my respondents. I started each conversation with asking them to fill in a small introductory and exploratory survey about their ethnic identity socioeconomic position. I also asked questions about their Internet use in this survey: the amounts of time spend online and the behaviour they exerted.

Thereafter, I asked my respondents questions in a semi-structured fashion about how they experience their own sexuality. I started the interviews by asking about their online behaviour. In the second part of the interview I asked my respondents how they felt about certain topics and what, according to them, where the effects and causes of certain societal developments. I asked my respondents questions about machismo, gender patterns, contraceptives, teenage pregnancies, marriage, romantic relationships, abortion and homosexuality.

To obtain more triangulation and thus a more credible social research (Bryman 2008), I organized six focus groups. I did three focus group on each school: so, six in total. I did two focus groups with only boys, two with only girls and two with both boys and girls together.
In these focus groups I made use of participatory research tools (PRA-tools) because these tools are being recommended for facilitating the (often denied) agency and ideas of young people. With PRA-methods that where highly experimental and ‘fun’ in nature I allowed my respondents to ‘construct accounts of their lives in their own terms’ (Holloway and Valentine 2000, 8). PRA-tools makes that adolescent experiences are heard on a creative and effective way (Anderson 2001, Hill 2004 en Kellet 2005 in Dentith et.al. 2012). Also, the PRA-groups enabled me to reflect on the knowledge I had learned during my one-on-one interview sessions.

Photos 3.6 en 3.7 PRA-workshops at the Rodolfo Robles

Participatory methods are a good way to de-construct taboo issues as sexuality. In the participatory group meetings I made use of three different methods. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) stated that PRA is a method that can be used to ’locate practice within frameworks of participants knowledge, in relation to social structures, and in terms of social media’ (in Dentith et.al. 2012). Conscious of this, I started by letting my respondents make a mind map. I asked them to draw themselves in the middle of a piece of paper and then to draw their online lives. This assignment was able to inform me on what my respondents actually do online. Secondly, the assignment also served as an informal and fun ‘icebreaker exercise’.

In the second assignment I divided the school board in four flats and drew four different faces on the board: one happy looking girl, and one happy looking boy, a sad looking girl and a sad looking boy. After this I handed out 6 green post-its and 6 pink post-its. I asked them to reflect on what bad female behaviour is in a love relationship, and what good female behaviour is. Also I asked them to reflect on negative male behaviour, and positive male behaviour. Afterwards I asked them to write these reflections down on the notes. When they finished writing they came up to the school board to put the post-its in the right category. Afterwards two volunteers grouped the messages in order to see if there would be some sort
of a consensus, or interesting outcomes. After the sorting we debated more about the notes and their position.
Photo 3.10 en 3.11 Outcomes of the second PRA-method used at Rodolfo Robles.

Additionally, I handed out a variation on the PRA-methods known as the 'problem tree'. I tailor-made a sex education tree: I constructed a tree with apples and a place for the youngster to draw their own image. In this drawing I asked them to individually fill in the sexual education they received and the knowledge they had on the subject. Firstly, they had to fill in what, according to them, were the effects of not receiving sex education. Thereafter I asked them to put in the apples of the tree what would be the best way to give sexual education: where does it need to be given, what topics should be addressed, at what age and who should
teach it. Hereafter they could draw a picture of themselves and put them in the amount and topics of sexual education they have received. I believe these PRA-methods as being very important for my research because of the unique and surprising insights they gave me about the life worlds of adolescents in Quetzaltenango.

3.6 Ethical considerations

When doing research I took the following ethical guidelines in consideration: anonymity and confidentiality with my research findings and conversations, reciprocity, informed consent and the safety of my respondents (Sumner & Tribe 2012, 40). My respondents were able to
stop with the research at any time and were, prior to participating, explained about the topic of my research. I have coded my results to make them completely anonymous and all the names in my research are pseudonyms. I was open about my ideas and stance points on sexuality to offer some sort of reciprocity.

An ethical reflection I need to make is about privacy and plagiarism of some of my research materials. Since I did an extensive amount of research on Internet and on SNSs I have used and (re)produced many texts, photos, and statements of my respondents. I asked my respondents for permission to use this material, but I am not sure if they were completely aware of the fact that I could search in their online history and had access to many life changing and personal attributes. I tried to solve this ethical problem by (nearly) only reproducing material that I found on secondary and thus public sites. I also anonymized names and other attributes that reveal the true (SNS of offline) identity of my respondents.

3.7 Limits and restrictions

Because of the limited amount of my research period, it was impossible to completely enter the lives of my respondents and get access to all their desires and ideals concerning sexuality. I was often introduced as researcher affiliated with the Universidad Rafael Landívar, and thus made a teacher-like impression on them. Often youngsters would in first contact, provide me with socially acceptable answers. This is reflected in other child’s based research: children ‘often try to please researchers by telling them what they assume adults want to hear’. This can result in ‘stereotypical presentations of reality’ that hardly reflect adolescents desires and ideas (Punch 2002, 328 in Spyrou 2008). However, a few informal talks reassured that neither parents nor teachers would ever read their answers, often made them more comfortable. Also, I believe the Internet to be a complementary setting because the Internet is a ‘less adult-controlled social setting’ (Spyrou 2008). This can contribute to different and more truthful responses.

My position as a white, female foreign adult meant that it was difficult to adopt a locally accepted gender role. When interviewing especially boys, I often heard sexually tinted jokes and insinuations. In general I had better rapport with my girl respondents because of being female as well. It is thus important to reflect that my own gender, just as race, class and ethnicity had on my research (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 353).
Teenage sexuality is a taboo in the Guatemalan society, and youngsters would often have difficulty to express personal statements about the topic. In order to be able to talk about teenage sexuality, it often proved constructive to address adolescents’ active sexuality by asking about teenage pregnancies. This ‘trick’ was also discovered by Jacobijn Olthoff in her research on teenage sexuality in Lima, Peru (2006). Likewise, a comparable research by UNICEF in 2005 stressed the ability of youngsters to talk about sex freely when addressing teenage pregnancy (81).
CHAPTER 4
THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

Before continuing on to the analysis of my thesis, I will first embed my research in theory. I will start with conceptualizing sexuality by explaining the contemporary academic debate on the definition of sexuality and the relation of the concept with ‘romantic love’. After this conceptualization I will introduce social constructivism theory to show how sexuality is not just a biological given but constructed within Guatemala’s culture. I will use symbolic interaction theory to explain that the meanings ascribed to the construct of sexuality are established by human interpretation. The sexual scripting theory from Simon and Gagnon (1984) hereafter, gives me a toolbox to interpret how and by whom ideas of sexuality are constructed in Quetzaltenango. With help of scripting theory I can see how debate and interrelations between the self and cultural structures shape the actual behaviour of a person. In the second part of my theoretical framework I will start to introduce theories in order to show how the concept online community (or Internet) can be used when explaining adolescent sexuality. I will firstly use the Media Practice Theory (Brown & Steele 1995) to explain how adolescents express their sexuality online and how they shape their own sexual identity online. I will also use this theory to see whether or not, and how, adolescents in Quetzaltenango are applying learned online behaviour and identity in their offline lives. To explain that Internet can be seen as a ‘setting’ or ‘stage’ where teenagers act out different ‘roles’, I will use the performance theory of Ervin Goffman (1959). I use Goffman’s theory to find out whether the characteristics of Internet (f.e. relative anonymity, lack of parental supervision etc.) have influence on expressions of sexuality in comparison with expressions and notions of sexuality in my respondents offline lives. Do adolescents for example play out different sexual roles online then in their offline lives? And how do their peers (and other actors) react on these images?

4.1 Theories on sexuality

4.1.1 Social Constructivism & Symbolic interaction

Sexuality is both socially constructed and symbolic. Social constructivism is a useful theoretical framework that believes that reality is socially constructed and is not just something natural (Tuana & Morgan 2001, 223). The social construction of a natural entity as sexuality ‘is the result of the impact of human interactions’ or ‘consists of an event or object
that emerges simply out of social practices’ (Ibid.). Following this thought, it is true when one states that sexuality is as much a ‘human product as are diets, methods of transportation, systems of etiquette, forms of labour, types of entertainment, processes of production, and modes of oppression’ (Rubin 1984, 149).

Ideas of sexuality are thus not solely biological and individual matters but they are socially constructed by humans in a society (Vance 1999). This standpoint illustrates that to understand sex and sexuality one not only has to look at sexual practices and acts and individual subjectivities but also needs to take into account ‘norms, beliefs and ideals’ that other people have about sex (MacPhail & Campbell 2001: 1614 in Eerdewijk, van 2007). Sexuality thus is a social construct that is formed by the emersion of cultural ideas and prescribed behaviour and individual ideas and behaviour that together form the actual practice of sex (Parker, Heard & Carballo 1999: 420 in Eerdewijk, van 2007).

On the contrary of the biological deterministic view that sees sex as a being purely biological and a natural force, social constructivism’s ideas on sexuality and sex state that behaviour and ideas on sex must be explained in their social and historical context (Rubin 1984). Social constructivists do no deny the existence of biological importance when explaining sex: surely men and women have different reproductive organs and therefore experience sexuality in a different way. However how these biological differences are explained can only be interpreted by looking at social and historical forces that dictate certain prescribed ideas (Ross & Rapp 1997, Di Leonardo & Lanaster 1997 in Eerdewijk, van 2007). Sex is not static but socially and trans-historically changing (Foucault 1978 in Rubin 1984: 149). By using social constructivism in my research I can account for the fact that meanings of sexuality differ worldwide and are influenced by cultural notions, ideas and values.

Furthermore, all sexual behaviour is symbolic since ‘humans act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them’ (Longmore 1998, 44). Symbolic internationalism states that these meanings are shaped by social interaction and interpretation (Ibid. 51). Sexual behaviour is acted out with a variety of activities with different meanings. Sex can for example be exercised in order to become a mother or father, in order to attain pleasure, to have fun, to exercise power or for creating intimacy (Ibid. 44). How we (and others) relate, understand and experience these activities is symbolic: ‘how we are sexual – where, when, how often, with whom and why – has to do with cultural learning, with meanings transmitted in a cultural setting’ (Fracher & Kimmel 1992, 473 in Longmore 1998, 44). By adding
symbolic interactionism to social constructivism I will be able to state that ideas on sexuality and sexual identity are constructed through social interaction and interpretation by actors in a certain society. Interaction between persons can, I believe, be studied and by doing this I can learn more on how cultural ideas and other dominant notions on sex and romantic love can influence the sexual identity of a person.

Although symbolic interactionism assumes that a group has large influence on the individual and in a way moulds the individual (Ibid. 51), the theory also creates room for human agency. Although the self is embodied in structures, it is ‘not bounded but constantly renegotiated’ (Robinson 2007). Although the sense of self and identity is developed through interaction with other people and structures, beliefs and culture, there is room for change and the shaping of self-identity. Still, an individual cannot be understood outside certain structures that shape behaviour: f.e. age, gender, race and sexual orientation (51). This shows the importance of taking into account both structures and agency when doing research: they both cannot exist but interdependently from each other. I believe this to highly relevant when doing research: and although I want to uncover the agency of adolescents when shaping their sexual identity, I will never forget to take cultural (and other dominating) ideas into account.

4.1.2 Sexual Scripting

I will start to break down the concept of sexuality by using the Sexual Script Theory formulated by Simon and Gagnon (1984). In this theoretical framework the authors state that in order to better grasps the multidimensional concept of sexuality, scholars should break down the concept into three dimensions (called scenarios or scripts): cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts and intraphysic scripts (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 97). I will use this deconstruction since it provides a good way to learn more about a person’s sexual identity and the interrelation of someone’s sexual identity and the social structures that influence the raw desires, fantasies and intentions of a person. Thus to pay attention to both agency and structure I assume that ‘social cultural and individual factors’ contribute to shaping my respondents ‘sexual script development’ (Stokes 2007, 170).

Firstly, what is meant by the term ‘script’? Simon and Gagnon use the term to make an assessment of how behaviour is produced in social lives. They believe that most of social life is shaped by instructional guides that provide guidance as an operating syntax (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 97). In order to get any kind of behaviour, something resembling scripting
should occur: the way a person acts, is determined by the selection of scripts in different situations. These three dimensions together shape the subjective understandings of each person about his or her sexuality (thus, his or her individual sexual script) and determine the person’s choice of sexual actions (Stokes 2007).

4.1.2.1 Theory on cultural scenarios in Guatemala

In the following section I will explain each of the three scenarios or scripts, and particularly for the first one, also apply this scenario in the Guatemalan context. The first one, the cultural scenario refers to the collective meaning attached to the concept of sexuality. Cultural scenarios are ‘guidelines for sexual behaviour, and exist at the level of society or culture’ (Gagnon & Simon 1982 in Stokes 2007, 170) and the ‘syntax that stimulates behaviour’ (Lacan 1977). These guidelines are often formulated by powerful entities like ‘e.g. mass media, peers, family, and religious institutions’ (Ibid.). These instructional guides show the requirements and the practice of specific roles in a society: the way these roles need to be enacted needs to reflect the content of appropriate cultural scenario’s (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 98).

Cultural scenarios that have an impact on adolescents in Guatemala are diverse and omnipresent. For example, the gender role distinction Machismo vs. Marianismo, has a big influence on youngster’s perceptions in Quetzaltenango (Brusco 1995 & Stevens 1973). Machismo refers to the power ‘that men exercise over women in many instances of live’ and the ‘celebration of men’s strength and virility’ (Olthoff 2006: 82). Machismo creates the idea that women are ‘weak and vulnerable’ and in need of protection of men (Fuller, 1993; Steenwijk, 1995 in Olthoff 2006, 83). Marianismo describes the way women should behave. Women are considered to be ‘spiritually holy’ and ‘mentally strong’ and therefore ‘morally superior to men’ (Ibid.84). Also, they are taught of as superior to men because of their ability to give birth. Motherhood is an important notion in Marianismo. Men, through marianismo, are ‘childish, irresponsible and sinful’, but cannot be blamed for this because ‘this is simply how they are’ (Ibid. 84).

Another element of the cultural scenario relevant in the Guatemalan context are behavioural patterns a youngster should live up to. The adolescents’ age and the societal category they are placed in have influence on their perceptions and behaviour. As already stated in the introducing chapter, youth as a cultural category is often seen as ‘not yet adult’ (Nandy 2007, 57) and ‘still in an imperfect transitional state on the way to adulthood, normality and full
socialization and humanness’ (Nandy 2007, 57). Adolescent should be ‘fully innocent, beautifully obedient and self-denying’ (Nandy 2007, 67) in order to show acceptable behaviour for youngsters. Because of this young people’s opinions in Guatemala are not being asked for (Hawkins & Meshesha 1994 in Eerdewijk, van 2007). Adolescents are disqualified in opinion making positions because of the viewpoint that they are inferior to adults and therefore have not yet fully developed opinions and are not considered to be fully participating citizens (Oishik & Dutta 2011). Inherent in this way of thinking is the view that adolescents are ‘innocent victims’ that need protection because they do not have the agency to change their fate (Oishik & Dutta 2011, 341). There is still a great need to intervene into the realm of young people’s morals, behaviour and dispositions (Herrera 2006, 1426) Young people are being perceive by cultural scenarios as 'morally immature' (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006, 267) and 'underdeveloped' (Nandy 2007, 65) and need to be educated in order to become rational human beings. Summarizing: age, gender, religion and education are all cultural moral shaping ‘institutions’ that have influence on youth perceptions of sexuality.

Additionally, several other cultural scripts have influence on youth perceptions of sexuality. For example the lack of sexual education in national school system and indigenous discrimination toward access to schooling and knowledge in general are important structures that have effect on sexual identity (CERIGUA & UNFPA 2012). Also, religious and moral emphases on reproduction and heterosexuality have a prominent influence on youth perceptions of sexuality (Replogle 2005, 622).

The second scenario as mentioned above is the intraphysic script. This scenario exists of the management of desires as experienced by the individual and the linking of individual desires to social meaning (Gagnon & Simon 1984: 100). The intraphysic script is described by Simon and Gagnon as a way of reorganizing reality in order to make this reality more closely interrelated with the actors’ ‘multivoiced’ and ‘multilayered’ wishes (Ibid). The intraphysic is thus describing the way actors think about their behaviour, desires and fantasies.

The interpersonal scripts are the application of specific cultural scenarios in specific social contexts. Interpersonal scripts are formed by debate between the cultural scenario’s and their own fantasies, intentions and desires (intraphysic script) when adolescents (or for that matter whoever) interact with others (Carpenter 1998, 158 in Stokes 2007). Interpersonality can be described as ‘the process through which appropriate identities are made congruent with desired expectations’ (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 99). This is logical: actors respond to the
outside world and it are the ‘representations of self and the implied mirroring of the other that facilitates the occural of a sexexchange’ (Ibid.). The interpersonal scripts dictate the actual behaviour and actions of the actors.

The scripting theory serves to better understand sexual identity and to show how people shape their actual sexual behaviour. How does the interplay between the different scenarios take place and how is decided which identity will be presented? So, when taking the power of hegemonic ideas on sexuality in account, I would like to do research on the agency of young people. I will define agency as: his or her ability to act in the world and to feel like she/her can will things and makes them happen’ (Tolman 2002, 6). I believe that this agency can be found, when analysing sexual scripts, in the shaping and constructing of sexual identities and self-presentations and the negotiation of sexual double standards and unequal gender arrangements (Stokes 2007).

4.2 Sexuality and Internet-use: theoretical connections

Several studies have focussed on the construction of identities and presentation of self by youngsters (mostly girls) in their online lives (Stern 2002, Mazarella, Polak 2006, Stokes 2007) and the expressions and constructions of sexuality on the Internet (Brown & Stern 2002). According to the literature, youngsters (mainly girls) participate in ‘a wide range of social activities’ and research has been done on what and why and how they behave online: from email messaging to moderating chat rooms to offering web design (Lenhart & Madden 2005 in Stokes 2007) and being active in social networking sites (Stokes 2007) to even creating cultural content by producing home pages and e-zines and blogs (Stern 2002, Kearney 2006, Polak 2006, Borntree 2005, Takayoskhi et. Al. 1999 in Stokes 2007).

The amount of research on girls and their online sexuality is thus well accounted for. However, almost no research has been done on the gender differences when shaping sexual identity online and the interaction between boys and girls in the process of identity shaping (Tolman 2012). Also the focus is primary on white girls (Stokes 2007, 172). I will follow Stokes in the idea that the ‘black girls’ ‘use of home pages to explore their sexuality has been overlooked, and deserves attention’ (Ibid.). I will not only focus on the use of home pages though but will take a breather focus and will inductively research how Internet is used by including both Quetzaltenango’s indigenous and ladino boys and girls and how they form and debate their sexual identities online.
4.2.1 Media Practice Theory

To make a connection between Internet and sexuality I will use the Media Practice Model (MPT - a media effects model established in mass media communication) to research how adolescents ‘choose, interpret and interact with media based on their emerging identity’ (Brown and Stern 2002). I will also use this theory to research if there exists interaction between identity forming online and the relation of this identity formation in a person’s offline live.

MPT states that the way media (and thus Internet) is used, is influenced by 'social cultural factors such as gender and race and other conditions of lives such as family life, friendships, peer culture and religious backgrounds and beliefs’ (Brown, Steele, Walsch-Childers 2002, 98). This idea corresponds with the ideas of social constructivism, symbolic internationalism and scripting theory: a person cannot be seen as separate from his background and his behaviour and expressions are influenced by multiple structures. But at the same time, a person can resist or negotiate these structures and has the possibility to exert agency. MPT believes that adolescents take their own life histories and perceptions online and the way they use the Internet and interpret content online is influenced by their offline lives (Ibid.).

The MPC is a dynamical process that sees media as part of cultural production process that happen in everyday life (Brown & Steele 1995, 556). The model is heavily focussed on identity creation and formation and states that 'teen's sense of who they are shapes their encounters with media, and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves in the on-going process of cultural production and reproduction' (557). Brown and Steele call for a more dialectical viewpoint on identity forming: they state that identity is not only an 'accomplished fact' that cultural practices represent, but identity is also to be seen as 'production' that is always in process and debate with cultural practices (558). When making use of the MPC model, one could argue that adolescents are influenced by media and at the same time use media to shape their identities. Identity is thus not only formed by structures, identity is also produced because of using Internet. This is important for my research: does an adolescent’s sexual identity change because of using the Internet? And how does that process work?
4.2.2 Performance Theory

In order to study the (assumed) shaping and (re)producing of identities (and thus sexual identities as well) that is predicted by the MPC, I need to take the internet as spatial environment where youngsters are playing out their sexuality. To do this, I make use of the performance theory of Ervin Goffman (1959). I will use Goffman’s theory in order to understand the online shaping of identity and the assumed agency that is connected to the processing of ‘cyberself-ing’ (Robinson 2007). In this section, I will first present a brief overview of the theory and then I will explain the relevance of the theory for the study of adolescent expressions of sexuality. This is important in order to see whether or not the online space, is any different from other offline-spaces where youngsters form and play out their sexuality. Are youngsters ‘playing out’ different sexualities online and how is this related to dominating ideas on sexuality offline? Can expressions of sexuality in the online community be seen as ‘rehearsal of’ new and different offline ‘sexual scripts’ (Stokes 2007)?

In his often cited work in *The presentation of Self in Everyday life* (1959), Goffman developed a theoretical framework to understand how interaction between humans can be interpreted as theatrical performance. According to him, everyday life is framed and performed (Schechner 1988). Goffman (1959) studied the self and identity making of the self as ‘the process of dramatic interaction that produces multiple selves for multiple performances’. Goffman defines a performance as ‘all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers’ (1959, 22). Because a person will always enact a character or provides an image that will be credible and acceptable by others in different situations, different selves can appear (Robinson 2007, 96). A person will shape his or her personality in order to ‘convey an identity consistent with the expectations of the audience’ in order to have a successful performance (Ibid.).

According to Goffman, the situation, place or stage where a person is ‘acting’ out an identity, can be subdivided in three stages; front stage, back stage and outside or off stage. Goffman states that social roles are prepared ‘backstage’ and then enter the main stage area: the ‘front stage’ (Schechner 1998, 41). Front stage is characterized by the place where the performance is played out before an audience. It is here that the favourable aspects of the conception of the self are accentuated (Treviño 2003, 36). Backstage on the other hand is the hidden or secret space or region where ‘information that might discredit the fostered impression is controlled.
and kept secret’ (Ibid.). Members of the audience cannot penetrate this place (Ibid. 36). Offstage is the ‘space’ where the audience and the performers meet when they are not involved in a performance (Ibid.).

Like offline self-ing, cyberself-ing is rooted in interaction and can therefore be linked with symbolic interactionism theory. We can then see that performance in the spatial setting of the Internet for example takes place though the language used in messages and postings (Robinson 2007, 106). When relating the ‘stage’ of Internet with sexuality and the offline live, how do we relate the three stages of Goffman with the experiencing of sexuality? And what does this mean for identity shaped online? It can be said that that Internet is a ‘highly futuristic virtual environment’ in ‘which the self is liberated from … socialization processes’ (Hillis 1999, viii). In previous academic research on identity formation online, respondents stated that they have ‘multiple selves’ and that they are able to easily change these online identities (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009, 105). This implies that adolescents are able to exert more agency online, because they are able to more freely choose their online identity. I am wondering, is this also true for the youngsters in Guatemala? This also gives rise to a more theoretical question: is the performance theory applicable and useful to research expressions of online-sexuality?

4.3 Sexuality in the online community: setting a stage for identity negotiation?

In this research, I want to understand how adolescent girls and boys in Quetzaltenango use the Internet in order to perform sexual scripts and how and where they construct their own sexual identity. Could it be that the Internet is a setting (or, as to stay with Goffman, a ‘stage’) where young people can act out and try out new ways to talk and think about sexuality (Hasinoff 2012, 6)? Digital communications makes it easier, is the idea, to ‘explore one’s own sexual desires and critically reflect on the expectances associated with them’ (Döring 2000, 880 in Hasinoff 2012, 8). Does Internet enable young people to ‘express their own authentic points of view’ (Ibid.), and is it thus a setting where a high level of youth agency can be found? Maybe powerful and moral shaping structures do affect the adolescent less online and can the Internet be seen as a spatial setting in which debate is possible and new things can be tried out. Can digital media be seen as ‘a potential source of social support and powerful identity resource for marginalised groups’ (Ibid. 6 & 8, Boyd 2008)? I believe it is important to research ‘why certain kinds of voices are used in particular settings (…) and not
in others’ (Spyrou 2008). Voices of youngsters are not fixed and need to be seen as a social given (Ibid.).
CHAPTER 5

ADOLESCENTS AS ROMANTIC ACTORS: NOVIAZGO, TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND MARRIAGE

In this chapter I will begin with interpreting how adolescents in Quetzaltenango think about themselves as romantic actors. Because I use an agentic approach in this thesis, I will start showing how adolescent’s desires regarding sexuality are experienced by the adolescents themselves. I will also show that these desires are constantly being linked to social acceptable meaning (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 100). The dual process of the managing of desires and on the other hand internalized cultural guidelines and behaviour syntaxes shape adolescents actions and desires and is therefore important for my research (Ibid.). It is important to give attention to adolescent agency and the desires of youngsters: how do adolescents deal with certain disagreement of cultural ideas and how do they try to ‘wiggle’ their own ideas and desires in to a cultural shaped context? Because I believe that youngsters are not ‘passive recipients’ and that their agency needs to be acknowledged (Nieuwenhuys, 2004, 206), I will usually “symbolically” give them the first say in my thesis. This means that in every chapter the reader will firstly and foremost read what their opinions and desires are, and only thereafter discover the cultural scenarios that play a role in the shaping of sexuality.

In this chapter I will reflect on how the youngsters’ desires on sex and love are presented and how both these and cultural norms shape youth behaviour. I will also address how adolescents in Quetzaltenango behave themselves in regard to sexuality. Do they have agency to manifest their own wants and needs? I will conclude this chapter by stating that although cultural ideas and values have an immense influence on the youngsters, adolescents also have a certain ‘room to manoeuvre’ between the internalized cultural ideas on noviazgo, marriage and premarital sex and their own wants and needs.

5.1 Adolescent’s desires and insights: to love or to study?

When a child reaches adolescence, love, sex and romantic relationships will occupy a more prominent place in their lives than before. It is natural and predictable that the youngster will find him or herself more and more interested in his or her peers (same or opposite sex) in a more sexual and romantic way. This inalienable fact of life is not limited to Western societies,

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6 In the last chapter I will refrain from this stylistic format. For the ‘flow’ of my argument, I will firstly explain how my respondents are influenced by cultural scenarios.

7 Noviazgo is the Spanish word use to describe a romantic relationship stage that comes before marriage.
but can be seen as a universal ‘rite de passage’ that takes place in a culturally non-discriminating fashion (Moore & Rosenthal 1993: ix in Eerdewijk, van 2007). However, the way cultures and societies perceive both love and sex is very diverse (Eerdewijk, van 2007). It is therefore interesting to see how Guatemalan adolescents, and other powerful norm shaping institutions and beliefs in this society, perceive adolescent love, relationships and (education on) sexuality.

I will illustrate that it is often difficult for adolescents to make their intraphysic desires and motivations explicit. Even for themselves, their desires are often formulated in a covert way and punctuated with cultural norms and values. This is logical since their intraphysic script is formed by ‘the management of desires as experienced by the individual and the linking of individual desires to social meaning’ (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 100). As a researcher I will try and strip what the adolescents feel they need to say with what they actually do and desire and thus introducing a more emic view that is as close to their lived reality as possible.

When asking my respondents if they would like to be involved in a romantic relationship, they would often answer that they would not want a boy or girl friend at this moment in their lives. ‘After graduation’ or ‘when I have an adequate level of education’ \(^8\), ‘when I finish studying’ \(^9\), were given as appropriate times in an adolescent’s life to start getting romantically involved with someone. Youngsters in Quetzaltenango talk and dream about relationships and love just as much as any other adolescent and believe themselves to be very capable to have a relationship with whomever they fall in love with. How can it then be that all my respondents down right claimed not be old enough to be in a relationship but, at the same time, telling me they have girl or boyfriend? Does romance not play a role in their lives at all or is there more behind these statements of not ‘being ready’ for love?

5.1.1 The dangers of having a boyfriend – pregnant bellies and broken dreams

It is interesting to see that the majority of the adolescents I interviewed started emphasizing the possible (negative) effects of a love relationship at their age instead of the relationship itself. This negativity is for example illustrated by the answer of Diana to my question why she wasn’t romantically involved with anyone: ‘Having a child is not just anything’ \(^10\). It was often said that a respondent would choose not to be having a relationship because ‘if a girl

\(^8\) Maria – RES28 – See transcript A24.
\(^9\) Estefani – RES30 – See transcript A27.
\(^10\) Diana – RES46 – See transcript C1
already has a boyfriend in a few months the girl will get pregnant”11. Why would the youngsters immediately assume that having a boy or girlfriend would lead to pregnancy? The danger of having a relationship, had to do with having a sex: romantic relationships were equated and complicated with having sexual relationships because of unprotected sex. Reality has shown adolescents that a girl, when engaged in a noviazgo, often gets pregnant. The girls I interviewed often stated that teenage pregnancy leads: ‘to see your dreams crumble’ or ‘broken dreams’ and ‘obligated marriage’12.

When a girl gets pregnant or a boy got a girl pregnant, the socially most desirable outcome, often is marriage. An honourable boy needs ‘to take responsibility’ when he makes a girl pregnant. Taking responsibility, according to the youngsters, often meant that the boy had to marry the girl. Maria demonstrates her knowledge on the topic: ‘my mother always told me that when a girl gets pregnant, a guy has responsibilities, that he marries her to show his responsibility’13. Boys and girls however seem of two minds about the social obligation to marry when pregnant – stressing it is the moral thing to do but at the same time suggesting that teenagers are too young to marry. ‘I believe that I do not want to have to marry because it is an obligation. It is not for love that they marry, but more because they are expecting a child’, ‘I want to marry for love’ says Gloria, expressing her dreams for marriage14. If teenage pregnancy actually often leads to obligated marriages is not something I can confirm and more research needs to be done on this topic.

When talking about teenage pregnancy or early marriage, both common phenomena in Quetzaltenango, my respondents would always come up with the effect of pregnancy on the study program of a teenager. The link that was often created by my respondents between teenage pregnancy and a girl’s ‘broken dreams’ is deeply rooted in the idea that there are only two possible life paths an adolescent girl can follow: either she become a parent, marries and does not study, or she studies and marries late. This idea is expressed by Gloria: ‘Something that we as women hear more and more … do you want to study? Then do not have a boyfriend. Do you want a boyfriend? Then marry and do not study’15. Because of these premeditated and predetermined life paths girls are more often forbidden to have a relationship than boys and they more often emphasise ‘not wanting to have a boyfriend’.

12 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI and of the Rodolfo Robles.
14 Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.
15 Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.
Girls are more affected with the negative consequences of getting pregnant than boys because they frequently will need to stop studying and take care of their husband and/or child\textsuperscript{16}. Boys are not (or much less) confined to the home and the care of a child. Therefore, girls more often than boys would state that the result of getting pregnant would be ‘broken dreams’ or ‘the reason that they would not complete their studies’ and thus also lead to not being happy and a dim and poor future.

5.1.2 Marriage, raising a child and lack of education: youth fear for adult responsibility

Teenage pregnancy and marriage were not a desirable outcome of an adolescent (sexual) relationship and it was often expressed that ‘getting pregnant’ or ‘getting someone pregnant’ was as a real threat to their future. The link between having a romantic relationship and ‘broken dreams’ and ‘being a high school drop-out’ is illustrated by Christina: ‘I want a boyfriend when I have an academic degree … When I have work and can maintain myself. If I have a boyfriend at my age (read: 17 years old) it is more sure that I will not study. Because I will not be thinking of my studies… I will have a boyfriend when I go to university. Because then I can maintain my children...’\textsuperscript{17} Christina states that having a relationship can, according to her, only been done when one has sufficient education (and thus the prospect of a good paying job) to take care of children. Christina, I believe, here, is not truly talking about having an innocent relationship with a peer, but taking about having a serious type of relationship (read: pregnancy and marriage). I will argue that adolescents when stating not to be ready for an romantic relationships, talk about not being responsible, capable nor ready for raising children and marriage and not about having an romantic relationships with a peer per se.

I would explain this seeming discrepancy by pointing at the likelihood that my respondents use two different ‘types’ or ‘classifications’ of relationships. When they speak about not being ready to be in a relationship: they actually say and believe that they are not ready for pregnancy and marriage. This is also confirmed by the UNICEF research that stated that more than half of the adolescents they interviewed stated that they did not consider themselves ready for marriage (2005, 125). By acting out romantic behaviour and the formulation of romantic desires in their day to day life I think that adolescents do consider themselves ready for a certain type of relationship. Adolescents think they are not ready for a

\textsuperscript{16} The connection made between youth sexuality, pregnancy, marriage and academic development is also noted by UNICEF in their research on adolescent sexual reproductive health (2005, 71 & 79 & 96).

\textsuperscript{17} Christina – RES36 – See transcript A24.
serious and committed relationship – because having a relationship in the Guatemalan society often means unprotected sex and pregnancy and sometimes even marriage. This viewpoint is strengthened and emphasized by cultural norms and values that believe romantic relationships to be serious and important parts of society\textsuperscript{18}. The way youngsters present their desires is thus linked with what they believe to be culturally acceptable roles (Gagnon & Simon 1974, 100). In the following examples I will show that adolescents do not believe them to be ready for a certain kind of commitment in a romantic relationship (i.e. pregnancy and marriage) just yet, but believe to be ready for a different kind of commitment.

Andres told me that the weekend before I interviewed him, he went to a wedding: [where] ‘the boy was 17 and the girl was 16, so it was actually kind of sad... But she was pregnant, so they had to\textsuperscript{19}. Leonardo, also states that he is not ready for marriage: ‘I do not want to marry at 18; I want to do well in my life, study in the university, graduate and then marry’\textsuperscript{20}. Whether or not marriage is actually enforced when adolescents get pregnant does not diminish the fear for getting pregnant and having to marry. This was obvious when interviewing my girl respondents as well: ‘In my community, there are girls who marry at my age, 14 years ... I almost did not know what to say when my parents told me that a girl that was in primary school got married... I am scared... Because she was very good at studying. When I heard that she got married, I got scared, because she was one of the best students in my year’ says Christina\textsuperscript{21}. ‘She was only 15 years old and already has a baby... ’, says Estefani about her friend in her community, suggesting that a girl at this age cannot be ready to become a mother. Adolescents thus stated very clearly not to be ready to marry or/and take care of a child.

5.1.3 Sexual education as the solution?

Although youngsters are supposed to wait until marriage to become sexually active and state not to be ready for the consequences of unprotected sex – they have sexual relationships. Adolescents will not wait with sex until they are married, no matter what the cultural norms are, state my respondents. Mariano expressed this, by stating that ‘eighty per cent of the people here have sex before they get married’\textsuperscript{22}. In the rapport of UNICEF it was shown that according to the ENSMI (Encuesta National de Salud de Materno Infantil – National Survey

\textsuperscript{18} See paragraph 5.2.1.
\textsuperscript{19} Andres – RES50 – See transcript D2
\textsuperscript{20} Leonardo – RES12 – See transcript E6.
\textsuperscript{21} Christina – RES36 – See transcript A24.
\textsuperscript{22} Mariano - RES21 – See transcript E14.
on Maternal Infantile Health) in 2002, 12% of the respondents had their first sexual experience before they turn 15 years old. 30% of the respondents indicated that they had their first sexual experience between 15 and 17 years old (UNICEF 2005, 63). When looking at the data of UNICEF and statements of my respondents it is impossible to conclude that youngsters always stay virgin until marriage. The previous data shows that although youngsters should wait, they do not. Sex thus plays an important role in adolescents’ relationships.

‘They (read: cultural entities: parents, religion etc.) say that... sex is not good and that they (read: adolescents) have to wait until their marriage... but they just won’t. So I mean they shall educate them’, says Andres. The quote of Andres shows a trend in my research: adolescents believe that sexual education is an important tool that needs to be handed to adolescents, since they have sex anyway. The idea that sexual education is a tool to succeed in life is also expressed by Gloria who states that when youngsters do receive education, this helps to ‘achieve their dreams’. Sexual education can help youngsters because it makes the existence of sex in romantic relationships tangible (See image 5.1 for an example of this tangible effect). This argument is legit as it shows that sex is an important consideration to be taken into account when involved in a romantic relationship and the previous discussion on responsibility and commitment.

In Quetzaltenango adolescents do not often receive sexual education and, according to one of my respondents this leads to ‘desperation for wanting to know more about the theme’. The lack of education, would lead to other problems like ‘disintegration of the family’, ‘a broken future’, ‘bad quality of life’ and ‘abortion’, ‘quitting studying’. Daniel illustrated this by stating that: ‘It is important (i.e. to receive sexual education) to get to know more about these themes, because they are at base of everything that a person will accomplish in the future’. Another indigenous respondent told me that not receiving sexual education ‘causes a lot of

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23 Andres – RES50 – See transcript D2
24 The sexual relations that Andres (and my other respondents) talked about were person-centered and not body-centered – sex is generally even for the youngsters only connected and accepted in romantic relationships (Reis 1981, 273).
25 Gloria – RES34 – See transcript A11
26 Although I have not yet introduced online expressions of youngsters, I chose to make a stylistic break and introduce this example in a section on offline expressions on the topic of sexuality. This particular online expression perfectly illustrates my point of view and is therefore presented in order to support my argument here.
27 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI and of the Rodolfo Robles.
28 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI and of the Rodolfo Robles.
29 Daniel – RES 40 – See transcript E28
damage in the life of an adolescent’. Knowledge about sex is thus seen as important for adolescents to have uncomplicated romantic relationships. Why is knowledge on sex then seen as ‘empowering? According to my respondents they should be educated because without this information they would ‘make wrong decisions’ and the girl would get pregnant. 

Youngsters state that sexual education is important for them: it enables them to make informed decisions about their sexuality. Because youngsters have sex regardless of cultural condemnation, they believe that society has to equip the youngsters with the knowledge that is necessary in order to have them have safe and educated sex.

![Image of EDUCACION SEXUAL](https://example.com/education_image.png)

Image 5.1 Found on the Facebook profile of Chicas Bien Putas (Translation: Girls that are whores or slutty girls). The image says: ‘Sexual education. Stupid guy + stupid girls = pregnancy. Smart boy + stupid girl = adventure. Stupid guy + smart girl = marriage. Smart guy and smart girl = sex and fun without complications’.

What would adolescents then like to learn about sexuality? My respondents often informed me that they would like to know more about the adequate age they can start having sex. The topic of age came up several times. Criticism for example was that parents ‘judge a minor that has sex because he or she does not have the adequate age to be having relations’.

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30 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI and of the Rodolfo Robles.

31 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI.
young person is underage, they do not get good sexual education and therefore they go out unprepared. On the other hand, there is a lot of debate on what then is the adequate age to have sex. Many of my respondents expressed the want and need to be educated on ‘what age they can start having sex’. Jenifer told me more about when someone is supposed to be ready by stating ‘that she has a neighbour that got married at 18: already mature enough for what she is doing’. Youngsters often know that their peers (or they themselves) have trouble with waiting until marriage. Asking about more clear guidelines on the topic of age, may thus be a way of the adolescents to address the problem that they are not supposed to be having sex, but knowing that this is not realistic and asking parents and other institutions to take them serious.

My research so far has led to some important points regarding sexual education and the viewpoint of youth on this theme. Firstly, the youngsters see sexual education as a tool to make more informed (and thus better) decisions for their future when being engaged in a romantic relationship. In their current situation though, adolescents do not receive sexual education and do have sexual relationships. This makes that adolescents lack the power to make informed decisions on their (sexual) behaviour. Secondly, because of expressing the need to be educated on these issues, youngsters show that they believe themselves capable of making (informed) decisions and to act responsibly regarding their own sexuality. Denying them sexual education, and thus the power to decide on in informed and educated way about their sexuality, is seen by the youngsters as morally wrong and as damaging their futures.

5.2 Cultural ideas on family life, noviazgo and marriage

What are then the cultural norms and values that have influence on adolescent sexuality in Guatemala? The idea that all romantic relationships are thought to be ‘non fit’ for young people is being emphasised by strong religious influence in the Guatemalan society. According to the religious viewpoint: marriage, noviazgo, and family life are intrinsically linked together and cannot be seen separately from each other. These religious ideas are often normalized in the Guatemalan society and have influence on the viewpoints of the youngsters and their parents. Because of the non-acceptance of adolescent romantic relationships, youngsters will have difficulty with stating that they do believe themselves ready for a certain

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32 PRA groups with the girls of the ENBI.
34 For more information on the lack of sexual education in Guatemala see subparagraph 5.2.2.
kind of love. In the following chapter it will become clear what cultural scenarios exist on sexuality and youth.

5.2.1 Family as the holy unit and the importance of motherhood, virginity and procreation

Most Evangelical and Catholic churches state that the sole purpose of a relationship between men and women is to marry and start a family (CEG 2006, 28). This idea is very well illustrated in image 5.1: that is used in a Catholic guidebook for sexual education of adolescents. The image basically tells adolescents ‘how to make a family’. It tells the youngster that his or her parents met each other when they were students. The parents had many ‘special’ friends in order to discover with whom they would start dating. After this period they started becoming boyfriend and girlfriend and then they got married. This example shows that a romantic relationship is to be taken seriously, because when starting a relationship, one should already be prepared to marry each other. This example is particularly interesting because it reflects the ideas the adolescents have: a relationship is directly linked with education and school and a relationship could best be started when studying. The idea that noviazgo is something serious is reflected by my respondents. However, they do not think that all romantic relationships should immediately lead to marriage. Adolescents (mainly girls) for example believed that their agency was to be found in their power to decide to have or not have sex with their boyfriends. I will stress this point more extensively at the end of this chapter.

Marriage, according to the church is: ‘a holy connection between men and women’ and is ‘unresolvable’ with the only goal: ‘procreation and being faithful to each other’ (CEG 2006, 46). The main goal of marriage, according to the Catholic and Evangelical Church, is to keep the human race alive (Ibid. 30). The Churches desires that noviazgo should function as ‘the time that comes before the marriage and serves as preparation for this marriage’ – a relationship should be seen as ‘a school of love and chastity’ (Ibid. 2 – 55). For the Church, an important starting point is that abstinence should be practiced in teenage relationships (Ibid. 31 & interview Reverent Dolores).

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35 The Catholic Church and Episcopal Conference of Guatemala propose an alternative approach to governmental sexual education and propose the initiative of ‘Education for love’ (Educación para el amor). The education system should be based on values wherein the family, abstinence, fidelity and procreation are the main pillars (CEG 2007, 65).
36 EXP-1.
The idea that a marriage’s most fundamental goal is to procreate and start a family says something about the way churches (and thus also often the parents) see youth sexuality. As Father Ortiz, priest and teacher in a Catholic all-boys school in Quetzaltenango, told me ‘sex should not be practiced ni fuera ni antes el matrimonio [not outside and not before marriage]’\(^{37}\). Reverend Dolores confirms this way of thinking by stating that ‘sex outside marriage is a sin’\(^{38}\). It is considered as morally and religiously wrong to have sex before marriage. This viewpoint is reflected in youth perceptions: in the 2005 research on youth sexuality of UNICEF, close to half of the urban adolescents that were interviewed believed it was important to be virgin before marriage (121).

Virginity is foremost the most important valued virtue for girls: the vast majority (65.5\%) of adolescents in the UNICEF report believed that girls need to stay virgin until marriage (Ibid.)\(^{39}\). Adolescents reflected this ideal but did not all agree with the idea that sex outside of marriage is supposed to be a sin per se. A girl has a certain room to manoeuvre: according to the youngsters, a girl is socially allowed to give her virginity to her boyfriend when engaged in a long-term, stable romantic relationship. Reiss uses the concept of ‘body-centred sexuality’ to describe sexuality without love and affection but to merely achieve pleasure. ‘Person-centred sexuality’ was developed to describe sexual acts with an affective basis (Ibid.). Reiss’ concepts can be used to describe the growing adolescent acceptance of girls’ person-centred sexuality. This means, simultaneously, that body-centred sexuality is not yet accepted: sex outside a loving relationship, merely to obtain pleasure, is not permitted according to my respondents (Reiss 1981, 275). However, I do believe that the idea of ‘sex outside of marriage is a sin’ is starting to become less static.

\(^{37}\) EXP-1.
\(^{38}\) EXP-2
\(^{39}\) Half (53\%) of the respondents of this research also thought that boys need to stay a virgin until marriage (UNICEF 2005, 73).
5.2.2 Religion & education on sexuality

Andres, who was quoted earlier on society’s need to accept the fact that youngsters have sex and that education is needed, explicitly made the connection between the lack of education and the ideas of religious institutions. ‘What has to do a lot with that is the religion. Because they say that... sexual education is not good and that they have to wait until their marriage... but they just won’t. So I mean they shall educate them’, he states. Religious leaders are afraid that education without religious values will lead to ‘permitting’ adolescents to have more ‘free sexual relations as long as they protect themselves’’ (Noticias Christiana 2009).

Dolores, reverend of an Evangelical Church in Quetzaltenango states her displeasure with the governmental sex education. ‘The way the state wants sexual education to work is not good, it is a perverse way of thinking – here is a condom. That is really not done. It is very sinful and cannot be done’.

‘As a church, and myself in this case, we publicly opposed ourselves (read: against the law that makes sexual education obligated in Guatemala’s classrooms) in

40 Andres – RES50 – See transcript D2
41 EXP9
some media because I saw the law [i.e. the Law on Family Planning] and it is a law in which I cannot read the word of God’, confirmed Father Ortiz.  

The presumed losing of values because of sexual education is also brought forward by adolescents. However, a closer reading shows that what the adolescents really mean is that partial or biased and not sexual education as such, leads to adolescents loosing values. ‘What happens often in my community, is that the children… They do not know much about sexual education… Maybe only how to prevent a pregnancy… The forms… They have been notified… But however, because at home they do not talk about it… They will go and try it… because it is bad to talk about sex… If you do not advise them, they will go and try it out… what it is to have intimate relationships’ confirms Christina. This connection between education and experimentation is also noted by researchers of the national research on youth sexuality by UNICEF in 2005 (125).

5.2.3 Parents and schools: Shame as a heritage from the past

Among the most powerful influences the adolescents experience is the disapproval and negative attitudes of their parents regarding their sexuality. This is indicated by Gloria: ‘You always have to think about what your parents are going to say’. As indicated by my respondents, parents have a strong influence on their lives and often ‘forbid’ the youngsters to start a relationship. Often, parents will not give their daughter permission to date because they believe that it ‘will distract from studying’ or will lead to them leaving school too early. Parents influence adolescents’ ideas about the supposed limit of choices they can make about their future: or ‘a girl cannot study and marry’ or a girl does study and does not have a boyfriend. Adolescents echo their parents in this sense: they also believe that studying is important and that often a boy or girl friend can lead to mayor distraction.

Several developments play a role in parental aversion of adolescents’ sexuality. Firstly, parent’s religious believes have influence on adult perceptions of youth sexuality. Often religious ideas dictate that abstinence is the best possible solution for teenagers. Secondly, parents are also influenced by their own youth and often reflect on their children with knowledge of their pasts. It is therefore logical that parents worry over their children: when

42 EXP-1.  
44 Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.  
45 Estefani – RES30 – See transcript A27.  
their generation was young often contraceptives where not available and sex was even more a taboo issue than today. Teenage pregnancy and a ‘lost future’ where, in their days, the immediate and unavoidable consequences of teenage sex.

Secondly, the fact that youth sexuality is a taboo issue does not help parental-adolescent conversation and parental counsel. Ana Soto, teacher and mother of two young girls, told me that ‘they (i.e.: parents) do not talk about sexuality at home, because it is considered dirty. They will just tell you not to do it’. However according to her, this ‘is changing a little. But it costs. Because someone can say... But to translate it to my girls... And… Imagine, giving them a condom when they are fifteen years old. It is going to be very difficult. It will be shocking for my husband. If he will give it... I don’t know. It is the change of role (i.e.: from teacher to parent and the other way around)... From the viewpoint of a parent who is the person who needs to educate the children it is a little bit difficult’. Dr. Aquilar, doctor and mother, stresses the changes that occurred since she was young: ‘ten years ago we started talking about the topic. It has changed a lot since I was in college, and in school I remember, we talked about menstruation, and that was all. And I was ashamed and I felt horrible.. Only menstruation at 12, 13 years. We talked about it, but not more than just about the menstruation... Right now, I think, in the first grades of the primary school they put a little more importance in the topic. My daughter is questioning more and more. Ok. As a parent, if they ask you... because you are not accustomed, and ‘ai, when my daughter asks me if feel... that I use my words to explain about it... but it is difficult’.

It seems the schools are more or less the extension piece of the home. Teachers, echo the words of the parents, even though they are obligated by the government to talk about all the types of contraceptives and give value-free sexual education. Information however often will be limited and inadequate: teachers might name modern methods of contraception (i.e. condoms, the pill etc.), but might at the same time also morally condemn them and talk about the harm they might bring. Ana Soto illustrates this by stating that schools tend to not give sexual education in an attempt ‘to protect the school. Because the parents would be

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47 I derived this idea of generational influence from Jacobijn Olthoff who did extensive research on the opinions and desires of both parents and youngsters in Lima, Peru (Olthoff 2006).

48 EXP3

49 EXP3

50 EXP2
scandalized. They will say... ahhh, you are promoting the use of contraceptives. You are promoting that my daughter has sex.51

5.2.4 The reasoning behind cultural condemnation on adolescence romance

When parents and Church state that youngsters are not ready for a relationship they implicitly state that adolescents are not to be trusted with premarital sex. Powerful religious ideas on the sanctity of family life and female virginity have a strong effect on the youngsters and their parents. The emphasis of abstinence and pre-marital virginity show that the best solution for youth sexuality is in fact that they should not have sex at all. There is thus a certain mistrust with the topic of youth sexuality – culturally it is believed that adolescents are not to be trusted with the topic because it is potentially ‘dangerous’ and ‘troubling’ when taking place outside the marriage (Diouff 2003, Hedge 1988 in Comaroff & Comaroff 2006, 265). Adolescents in the eyes of norm shaping institutions need to be protected against making mistakes (Oishik & Dutta 2011, 341). Girls are therefore considered even more ‘dangerous’ and in need of more control than boys since they can get pregnant. Because of this concern parents will often ‘forbid’ especially their daughters, to have a boyfriend.52

Youth sexuality is seen as something ‘wrong’ because youngsters, in the eyes of cultural and normative actors, ‘are still too morally immature’ to be able to handle such situations (Dutta & Oisik 2011). Whereas young people see sexual education as a mechanism in order to make better and more informed decisions and perform more informed behaviour, cultural entities see this education as a way of shaping and forming and even forbidding youth behaviour. Education is brought forward as another way to prevent young people from being sexually active. This perfectly reflects the idea that young people need to be educated about what is normal and what not – because they are thought to be morally incapable to act in a just way (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006, 26). Youth needs to be taught how to behave and if they don't, they are a potential or even perpetual danger to society (Diouff 2006).

Parents and religion believe that the best age face to have a romantic relationship is when an adolescent is already graduated. This is essentially an economical argument: it is said that when graduated the youngster is old and mature enough to raise a child (this is also seen in Olthoff 2006). Furthermore, youngsters are then seen as mature enough to make their own decisions (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011, 341). Since noviazgo, sex and getting pregnant are

51 EXP3
52 Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.
equated with each other, this is not a strange viewpoint. When an adolescent has a degree, he or she is able to take care of a child and is therefore mature enough to make moral and educated decisions about having a boyfriend and thus having sexual relationships.

5.3 Love and Internet use: adolescents’ expressions on love

There thus exists a discrepancy between the adolescent want and need for knowledge on issues of sexuality (UNICEF 2005, 125) and the believe of cultural entities that adolescents are too morally immature (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006) to be involved in debate and education on sex, and sex in general. Cultural entities believe that adolescents are in need of protection against knowledge, practice and debate on sexuality (Oishik & Dutta 2011). The idea that a youngster can be an able and informed romantic and sexual actor is not shared by cultural entities and therefore youngsters need to find another ‘space’ or ‘scape’ where they can debate certain ideas and act out certain desires. Can the Internet be seen as a space where youngsters express this behaviour?

Love, relationships and how youngsters should behave themselves in romantic relationships are amongst the most debated topics on Twitter and Facebook. Both the boys and the girls in my research frequently posted posts, commented on status updates or posts or posted photos about love and relationships. When asked directly about being responsible enough to have a boy or girlfriend, my respondents would often react negatively, but online – on their Facebook and Twitter accounts – they would talk openly about love and relationships. As José put it: ‘so many people on Twitter talk about ‘you are the love of my life and other slimy things’.

Firstly, it is interesting to see what adolescents express online. All my respondents daily posted quotes about love on their Facebook or Twitter. In these quotes they talk about how a relationship should be, who they love (See image 5.2) and what is good and bad behaviour in a relationship (see image 5.3). Also, they share quotes, pictures and sentences about love that are made by peers or copied from secondary sites (see image 5.4 of the Twitter site Frases de chicas [translation: Girls sentences]). Adolescents also commented on posts or status updates (See 5.1.3) and like certain sayings that refer to ideas about love (See 5.3). Often,

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53 José – RES18 – See transcript E11.
54 Secondary sites are websites that are publicly available. Normally adolescents need to ask permission to the owner of a profile to see the content. Secondary sites though are open for everyone. The Admin of an secondary site does most often not show his or her real name and therefore experiences a certain anonymity.
they would *tag* their friends (or boy or girl friend) in a photo or saying that explicitly said something about expected romantic behaviour. Other people would comment on these *tags* and would state their point of view. Also my respondents told me that often, when in a romantic relationship, the couple would need to publicly announce their relationship on their SNS (See 5.2). Youngsters can also indicate which secondary sites they like looking at and indicate what hobbies they have and how they like to spend their leisure time.

Image 5.3 I love my girlfriend too much :3. (Twitter account José – RES11).

Image 5.4 Photo on the Facebook of Gloria saying ‘Love is not having a girlfriend or kissing or having sex. Love is loving, taking care of, respect and to spend time with someone’. Several comments were provided. The first person said: ‘Really…. Right and necessary’. The second person: ‘That is always true provided the two feel the same love and are not jeopardized by no one’. The third person stated: ‘you are so right. Love is not a game but a very important decision in our life’.
Image 5.5 I am not jealous, but remember. That ours (read: relationship) also started with a friendship. (Facebook profile Gloria).

Image 5.6 You and me = Love, found on the Facebook profile of Juan.

Image 5.7 Frases de chicas @DichosDe Mujeres [Translation: Girls sentences@SayingsofWomen]: ‘Every woman likes it when her boyfriend takes photos with her’.
Also, Internet has been named as a place by adolescents where they would turn to in order to look up information about their sexuality. This behaviour shows that when teenagers do not receive education on sexuality or experience freedom to talk about with for example their parents; they will start looking at other places to get this information. As adolescents clearly indicated, they believe that knowledge on their sexuality equals power. Youngsters believe themselves capable of handling taboo information and believe that they should be handed certain knowledge in order to cope with their romantic and sexual relationships. Because of the fundamental disagreement on the capabilities of actors, it is interesting to see that young people exert agency. They cannot get education on or debate about fundamental issues for their development at home or at school or in the Church – but they can get information on the Internet. Jenifer states that the Internet is where she looks up ‘what changes we will have in our adolescence and what precautions we need to take’. I will follow Boyd in stating that the Internet can thus be seen as ‘a potential … powerful identity resource for marginalized groups’ (Boyd 2008). Youth in Quetzaltenango looking for information about sex, fits this description.

Because of the cultural restraints and aversion of youth love and sexuality, youngsters change context in order to be able to express and discuss their ideas and desires of love and romantic relationships and thus exert agency. In order to be able to express and practice agency over issues they themselves see as of vital importance for their development and dreams, young people need ‘knowledge, power and a place where they can safely discuss [these] issues’ (Dyson 2010, 250). Adolescents in Quetzaltenango are denied knowledge and power on issues of sexuality in their offline lives, and thus seek a different space in where they do have a certain power and knowledge: the Internet (and especially SNSs). Thus, when young people are being ‘silenced’ and kept in the dark because they are thought to be morally incapable and too young to receive this kind of information, and they themselves do see the importance of, they can exert certain agency by changing ‘scapes’ or ‘spheres’. Youngsters perform certain behaviour online they cannot play out in another spatial setting than the Internet by posting certain messages and pictures (Robinson 200, 106). The changing of context to make certain topics negotiable is also illustrated by image 5.8 where a boy asks his peers at what age they masturbated for the first time. Behaviour like this would not have been tolerated in the offline society. The Internet is thus a Gofmanian ‘stage’ where young people can act out and try out new ways to talk and think about sexuality (Hasinoff 2012, 6).

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Image 5.8: The text written across the image asks: ‘At what age did you meet Manuela?’. The boys who react on this image state: ‘At 10 years old’, ‘hahaha at 10 years old’. ‘At 14 years old’ and last ‘who is Manuela?!?! MRSERJ xD I don’t know her’. The picture asks people at what age they begin seeing ‘Manuela’. This is a Latin-American way of asking at what age one masturbated for the first time.

Image 5.9: An example of how youngsters talk about sex and love. The image shows a form to be filled out for a job application as girlfriend. Several questions are being asked in order to see whether or not a girl is a possible match. For example: Do you have friends that want to try having relations with you? Have you been unfaithful? Or even: Will you have anal sex? – Found on the Facebook account of: Lucia (RES3).
Online expressions of love can be either transforming or confirming ideas of cultural entities. As seen in image 5.2 a certain conformation takes place: as in saying, love is an important fact of life that can not to be taken lightly. The comment of the boy that stated that ‘love is not a game’ shows the influence of cultural ideas on love and sexuality. However, youngsters and especially men and women together, would in the offline context never been able to talk about topics of love and sex in open fashion\(^{56}\). A good example of online accepted and offline inappropriate language is the question about anal-sex in image 5.7. This hence shows that the Internet can be seen as a platform in where youngsters can exert behaviour that in the offline society is not acceptable. In the next chapter the interaction between culture, adolescents and the Internet as a ‘sphere’ to exert cultural non-acceptable behaviour will become clearer.

\(^{56}\) Men and women do not often share a moment or place in which they could debate about topics in the Guatemalan society, stated Luisa. Luisa is a youth psychologist that is specialized in youth sexuality and child abuse. She told me that in Quetzaltenango, it was very uncommon to have men and women in the same room to discuss and talk about topics. Especially taboo issues (f.e. condom use) would always be addressed in separate male and female workshops.
Adolescents in Quetzaltenango believe themselves able to have romantic relationships and they have sex. However, they do not believe themselves to be ready for the responsibility of marriage and pregnancy. Unprotected sex thus complicates love relationships: to go from a safe relationship toward pregnancy and marriage, one first needs to have unprotected sex. Youngsters themselves thus, following this argument, have the power to decide whether they will make a relation serious – they can ‘decide’ whether or not to give into having unprotected sex and thus complicating a relationship and jeopardizing their future. Contraceptives seem to be the perfect solution for youngsters not to get pregnant and at the same time experiment with their budding sexuality – however, it is not that easy. Many myths and constrains still prevent young people from using contraceptives. When interpreting what my respondents said about contraceptives, one is struck by a fundamental dilemma they express: they want to know all there is to know about the subject, yet hesitate to act accordingly and combine a wish for knowledge with argument against the use of contraceptives. The cultural pressure seems to be at the heart of this dilemma.

In this chapter I will expound how adolescents perceive contraceptives and show their (intraphysic) desires on the topic. Hereafter I will show the cultural guidelines that my respondents follow and have internalized in order to act in a culturally appropriate manner. I will also show how the debate between intraphysic and cultural scenarios shapes their (interpersonal) online behaviour regarding contraceptives.

6.1 Youth dilemma: pregnancy or contraception?

It was difficult for my respondents to overtly express the need for acceptation of contraceptives. That this logical is illustrated by theory of Simon & Gagnon that shows that a person, in order to perform a socially acceptable sexual role, needs to manage his or her desire and align them with culturally acceptable roles and patterns (1974). The alignment of adolescents’ wishes with cultural requisites can easily be detected in the following section: my respondents constantly softened their wish for the use of contraception by one the one

57 Although my respondents would not directly confirm that they were sexual active to me and always spoke about other people and in the third person, this does not mean that adolescents between 12-18 years old are not sexually active in Guatemala. Numbers, estimations and the fact that 25% of Guatemala’s pregnancies are teenage pregnancies, beg to differ.
hand showing that contraceptives are mechanisms to prevent teenage pregnancy and at the same time condemning them.

The managing of desires is illustrated by Adelita who states that a condom prevents teenage pregnancy, but girls do not use it because ‘one has to have enough majority in order to use them’, Adelita. A good example of this moral conflict that youngsters experience, are several myths adolescents brought forward when talking about contraception. Contraceptives, according to my respondents, are harmful for the physical well-being of a person and do not provide full protection. Often my respondents would say that the use of contraceptives (mainly the pill) would cause cervical cancer or ‘do harm to the female body’. Another suggested effect that was brought forward is female infertility (Dr. Aquilar & CEG 2006). My respondents also often stressed the fact that contraceptives do not provide full protection against pregnancy or diseases and use this as an argument not to use contraceptives. During an informal conversation Pépe provided such an insight when stating: ‘Yes, using a condom can sometimes stop you from making someone pregnant, but it does not stop el Sida (AIDS) from getting to you. You know it is like this, the cells of a condom are square and the cells of the AIDS virus are round. So the AIDS can actually penetrate trough’.

Often adolescents expressed the desire to know more on how to use contraceptives (especially condoms). ‘Mostly when one uses the condom... you have to know well how to use it good, because if you put it on the wrong way... the girl can get pregnant... and if a lot of air stays in, she can also get pregnant... It will break’, explains Adelita. The emphasis on knowledge is also reflected by Christina: ‘If they do not have the knowledge it does not work. The structure of a condom breaks easily... If someone does not have knowledge they can become pregnant... ’. Although youngsters do not explicitly express wanting a more acceptable position of contraceptives they do ask for education on them and therefore their desire is easily detectable when reading ‘between the lines’. The quotes above also show that adolescents do indicate contraceptives as a mechanism to prevent pregnancy. Although

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60 Adelita – RES – See transcription A10.
61 Informal conversation with Pépe (11-02-2013).
64 Why do these youngsters hardly talk about HIV/AIDS or other STD’s that can also have a permanent and real influence on their future and do they only talk about teenage pregnancy when asking about contraceptives? This probably has to do with the general idea that only teenage pregnancy leads to a general drop-out of education and thus, not a very bright future. Another explanation may be that STD’s
contraception would be the perfect solution to fulfil adolescents’ wish to be sexually active and not to get pregnant (or make someone pregnant), social and religious aversion prevents the normalcy of the methods. The condemnation of these methods prevents adolescents to be directly pro-contraceptives.

6.2 Cultural scenarios: legal obligations, education and contraceptives

As seen in the previous section, adolescents have internalized and are influenced by cultural scenarios and often choose appropriate positions and opinions that are made ‘congruent with desired expectations’ (Simon & Gagnon 1984, 99). However, what are these scenarios and by whom are the guidelines for appropriate behaviour formulated? Firstly, and contextually, it is important to know that in 2009 the Guatemalan government adopted the Family Planning Law. The law has as goal to legally ensure the non-discriminatory provision of family planning methods (Article 1 Family Planning Law). Not only should the Guatemalan government provide ‘consultation, education about sexual and reproductive health’ but also ‘the provision of family planning methods’ (Ibid.). To ensure the education on sexual and reproductive health, the law also made legally mandatory for schools to give education about traditional and modern methods of family planning (Article 15 Family Planning Law)\(^{65}\). The law and the attached legal obligations and promises falsely make the assumption that contraceptive use is normalized in the Guatemalan society. In practice this is not true and the morality of the methods is still very much debated.

6.2.1 About Sins and Sex: contraceptives and the Church

Strong opponents of contraceptives in Guatemala are the Catholic and Evangelical churches. This is illustrates for example in Catholic schoolbooks of sexual education (that are often used in Quetzaltenango), where the promotion of contraceptives is described as a worldwide Western conspiracy of international SRHR promoting organizations. The Western world promotes this secular and anti-life propaganda that according to them ‘puts God at the margin of life and considers the birth of a child as a threat’ (CEG 2006, 41). They believe that international organizations promote contraceptives, abortion and sterilization to prevent overpopulation. Religious leaders state that SRHR promoting international organizations are perceived as diseases that only promiscuous adolescents (or homosexuals) will be confronted with: ‘normal’ sexually active teenagers will not be exposed to these problems (UNICEF 2005, 114).
spread morally wrong ideas about what ‘the reproductive health and sexual and reproductive rights’ of young people should be (Ibid.).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Illicit contraceptives according to the Catholic and Evangelical Church</th>
<th>Legitimate methods of birth control according to the Catholic and Evangelical Church</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Abortion</td>
<td>- Cycle count</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sterilization and Vasectomy</td>
<td>- Measuring body temperature</td>
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<td>- The pill</td>
<td>- Dialogue</td>
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<td>- Hormonal injections</td>
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<td>- Hormonal gel’s</td>
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Table 6.1 Illicit and licit contraception according to the Catholic and Evangelical Church
(source: CEG 2006, 33, 40, 49 & interview Reverend Dolores)

Both the Catholic Church as the Evangelical Church state that the best contraceptive method is abstinence. According to the Bible, family life and matrimony are considered sacred institutes. God put people on earth and created the difference between man and women so they could reproduce and procreate. Therefore reproduction can only happen in the marital life chastity is seen as an important asset (CEG 2006, 30). Because Christianity promotes the sanctity of life and family, the use of contraceptives is highly condemned on the ground of being ‘against life’ (CEG 2006, 41).

The churches do recognize the need for prevention of teenage pregnancy and offer natural ways of controlling female fertility (i.e. counting of cycle or abstinence) (Ibid. 31). Churches even make a difference between two categories of birth control: illicit and legitimate ones (See table 6.1.). Reverend Dolores stated that condoms and other non-natural prevention mechanisms are ‘a sin’ and that it is ‘not possible to use them’.

It should be clear that even using these licit methods should only be done in the sanctity of marriage. Both Catholic as Evangelical religions are also afraid that the free distribution of contraceptives as ordered by the Guatemalan state will lead to ‘permit’ adolescents to have more ‘free sexual relations

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66 Family, in the eyes of these cultural scenarios, is always portrayed as: ‘biparental, ladino, urban’ and ‘based on a matrimony with Christian values with 2 to 3 children’ (UNICEF 2005, 40).

67 EXP-1.
“always and when they protect themselves” (Noticias Christiana 2009). Following Diouff (2003), I believe this to be heavenly influenced by the idea that youth sexuality is something ‘dangerous’ and something that therefore should not be promoted.

Abstinence is culturally most accepted and fits the idea that youngsters should not practice sexuality at all: it seems the best solution to deal with the sexual budding of adolescents – although they might feel these changes in their body, they are thought to be not ready to deal with the consequences. Cultural scenarios do not believe the youngsters mature and responsible enough (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011) to engage in debate about sex and protection against the negative consequences of sex. Educating adolescents about prevention, will, according to cultural entities, have a reversed effect because it will make adolescents more promiscuous. Since adolescents do not have the moral capacity to handle information about contraceptives, the best way, according to parents, teachers and religion is to forbid the youngsters to have romantic or sexual relationships and promoting the sacredness of virginity, the purity of abstinence and the value of chastity.

6.3 Adolescent online agency in facing the moral dilemma on contraception

Adolescents often do not agree that contraceptives are not important and morally wrong but see them as methods to prevent negative consequences of the sex they will have anyway. Youngsters, however, do not often get information about contraceptives because of the lack of sexual education and are often indoctrinated by the idea that contraceptives are bad and harmful because cultural scenarios deem youngsters to be too ‘immature’ and too young and contraceptives too ‘morally wrong’. Because of cultural condemnation and disapproval it is often difficult for youngsters to express that they do see contraceptives as mechanisms to prevent teenage pregnancy. How, then, are these cultural norms and intraphysic wishes translated to (interpersonal) online behaviour? In their offline lives youngsters more often confirm to cultural scenarios and say they do not use contraceptives. However, do they make use of that same ‘sexual scripts’ (Stokes 2007) in their online lives?

Online, on their Social Network Sites, youngsters debate about contraceptives and their effects. Talking about contraceptives is often done in jokingly fashion (See image 6.1 & 6.2). This shows that adolescents, even in a ‘free’ space as the Internet still have difficulties expressing their own views on contraceptives. By talking about these topics, adolescents, however, do express agency. Anthropologist Oscar Verkaaik illustrates the way that humour and fun can be mechanisms through which young people imagine and act out their agency.
(2004). The way youngsters talk about contraceptives shows that there exist different rules in the online world: not everything can be put online and some topics can only be addressed in a joking fashion. Even though, the youth audience that prevails online has different expectations from the offline audience certain rules on behaviour do still exist in a youth dominated sphere as the Internet.

Image 6.1: ‘For every broken condom, two people learn how to pray’ – Muñecas Sexys

Image 6.2: ‘Pepito, what is the difference between a grave and a condom? Pepito: The grave protects those who are leaving, and the condom protects those who are coming… ’. – Muñecas Sexys
[translation: Sexy Dolls].

74
Image 6.3 The disputed tweet of Meely. The tweet text says: ‘My love @Andersitoo7 How beautiful was it to give you my virginity :\)’.

Peer critique is an important characteristic of the Internet. The idea that the Internet is a ‘highly virtual environment’ where ‘self is liberated from … socialization processes’ (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009, 105), is contradicted by the following example of Meely. Delving a bit deeper into the characteristic of the Internet as a relative moral and cultural judgment free space, I asked my respondents what, according to them, cannot be said online, many of my respondents referred to a girl called Meely. At 26 July 2012 Meely, a girl from Guatemala City, tweeted that she had lost her virginity, causing a general moral riot against herself (See image 6.3). My respondents told me explicitly that one cannot put that online and scorned Meely for putting ‘private’ information online. Because of the high value of female virginity, this is a socially acceptable reaction of the youngsters. It still is interesting to note, that even though many adolescents in Guatemala loose their virginity before they enter marriage- it is not accepted by peers to talk about this online.
CHAPTER 7

GENDER ROLES REVISED: FROM THE ‘HOLY MARY’ TO THE ‘BAD GIRL’ TOWARD A MORE OPEN GENDER DIVISION

Gender plays an important role in the shaping of youth sexuality in Quetzaltenango. In this chapter I will show that girls (and adolescents in general) have specific desires and intentions (intraphysic scenarios) when it comes to gender related behaviour. Also, I will show that their desires are always linked with the concern for cultural approval and therefore not often explicitly enacted or expressed. With the example of the prueba de amor I will show how both boys and girls are supposed to act in the Guatemalan society and how they perceive these gender roles. I will thereafter show what requirements specific appropriate roles in the Guatemalan society dictate and how these requirements influence adolescent behaviour. Concluding this chapter, I will show how youngsters (and especially girls) debate different gender roles online and show that different cultural scenarios can be chosen (interpersonal behaviour) in different social contexts.

7.1 Adolescent’s perceptions on gender: prueba de amor and female virginity

A theme that often recurred during the interview sessions was the infamous prueba de amor: the test of love. The prueba de amor is something a guy may asks of a girl in a romantic relationship - the boy will ask the girl to have sex with him in order to show the amount of love she has for him. The example of this ‘test’ shows how (unequal) power relations on the base of gender are shaped in the contemporary Guatemalan youth society. When a boy asks a girl to have sex with him, this is not an easy decision for the girl. Her virginity, as said, is her most valued virtue. It is thus important to see that the prueba de amor is risky business for girls. Not only do ‘women get pregnant because of the famous pruebas de amor’ as stated by Luis, but they also lose their virginity and with this her ‘good girl’ image and social privileges that are attached to that status.

Jenifer shows the cause of Louis’ statement when saying that boys often want the ‘test’ to be done without a condom or protection. When Encarnación was talking to her friend about the prueba de amor, this friend told her: ‘I am not going to do it with a condom, it is something nasty, and something he does not like... He wants to do it the natural way’. Girls because of

68 Luis – RES17 – See transcript E10.
70 Encarnación – RES31 – See transcript E17.
having to do the 'test' without protection often see it as a very real and valuable demonstration of their love. ‘Some guys say “give me the test of love”… [and then] she, because she loves him, gives him this… and then they leave her and she is stuck with a baby’ says Jenifer, explaining possible consequences of giving a boy the test of love without protection. These ‘love tests’ thus have the potential to be life changing for both girls and boys.

Girls although do have some agency on their own faith: they are the ones to decide whether or not to give the boy the prueba de amor. ‘I have a friend who asked me: ‘My boyfriend wants me to give him the prueba de amor.’ And I told her, look, you have the decision to give it to him or not. He is not going to make you do it; because you have the decision in your hands’, says Encarnación, illustrating the choice a girl has. ‘A lot of girls say that men ask for the prueba de amor... If someone does that, it is because she wants to… but sometimes the guy leaves her, when she falls in love’, said Gloria, indicating the difficulties that can occur when a girl decides to give away her virginity. When looking at the quotes in the previous section, it seems as if girls have the power to decide whether or not they are having sex. This power is not purely positive however and has a downside to it. Girls because of this ‘power’ and cultural gender patterns, are considered to be the responsible and persistent ones when it comes having sexual relationships.

7.1.1 Gender and contraceptive use: good girls vs. bad girls

The idea that girls have the power to decide whether to have sex or not is explicitly mentioned by the adolescents. A girl, namely, can make the decision on becoming a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ girl. My respondents believe that ‘good girls’ in Quetzaltenango stay virgin and do not ‘make passes on’ boys. ‘Here they think that until a girl is going to marry, she has to stay a virgin’ states Mariano to show that virginity is important in Quetzaltenango. The idea that good girls stay virgin is reflected in the qualitative and quantitative national research of UNICEF on the reproductive health of adolescents in Guatemala (2005, 94). It is interesting at the same time that Mariano stresses the fact that ‘they think’ that a girl should stay virgin. This shows that although cultural scenarios do want girls to stay virgins – not all seem to agree with this.

72 Mariano - RES21 – See transcript E14.
Bad girls on the other hand, have had sexual experiences and ‘throw themselves in the way of the boys’\(^{73}\). ‘I have seen girls that look for situations like that or put on clothes they are not allowed to put on... They make the boy fall in the trap of the girl...’ states Estefani, to show the responsibility of a girl not to dress too provocative\(^{74}\). Another example of female bad behaviour is the quote of Adelita: ‘girls that only want to have fun with the boy... they only want to do it to pass time’\(^{75}\). According to Gaby, this is bad behaviour: ‘they do not respect their own body or that of other persons’\(^{76}\). A good girl, according to Toñito, ‘respects’ and a bad girl does not\(^{77}\). These quotes show that a ‘good’ girl does not have sex and respects her body by not having sexual intercourse: a ‘bad’ girl on the other hand is responsible for making passes at the boys and seducing him into having sexual intercourse.

Culturally (and in theory), the woman has got the power to become either a bad girl or a good girl. She is deemed to have the power to decide whether or not she has sex by stating ‘until this point and no further’\(^{78}\) or only ‘besitos y abrazitos’ (kisses and hugs)\(^{79}\). This idea is reflected and confirmed in the report of UNICEF: a woman has to be in control of her sexuality and need to be the one to say no to sex (UNICEF 2005, 108). Gloria showed me how she believed herself ready to have a boyfriend: according to her being involved with someone did not necessarily have to lead to pregnancy. ‘For me it happened (red. having a boyfriend), and it did not have an effect... This compromise, I do not have to say yes to. I do not have to be misled... yes I have heard those sweet words... but, you do not have to give that compromise! Do you want to have a boyfriend? It is like a threat or a temptation, the way they (i.e.: parents) put it...’\(^{80}\). Gloria very cleverly identified a discrepancy with the fear of parents: having a relationship does not immediately mean trouble, because as a woman you have a certain power: the power of your virginity and the power to say no.

Boys on the other hand do not need to stay a virgin and a certain double standard exists: men who date many women are tough and a girl who dates many men is a perra (Guatemalan slang for a promiscuous girl). This leaves the girls in a vulnerable position as Adelita puts it: ‘The boy makes the girl feel special, until the point that she gives him her virginity. After he

\(^{74}\) Estefani – RES30 – See transcript A27.
\(^{75}\) Adelita – RES – See transcription A10
\(^{76}\) Gaby – RES13 – See transcript E7.
\(^{77}\) Toñito – RES19 – Interview E12.
\(^{78}\) Estefani – RES30 – See transcript A27.
\(^{79}\) Adelita – RES – See transcription A10
\(^{80}\) Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.
takes it, he tells her that she was not a virgin and goes and talks about it’. Boys thus have more freedom when it comes to sex than girls and are allowed to have more sexual relationships than girls. Although a girl always has the ‘power’ to give her virginity, she cannot be a good girl and a bad girl at the same time – her agency is thus limited.

Girls need to be morally strong and are considered the safe keepers of youth sexuality. They thus have the power to decide, but what then happens when a girl decides to give her virginity? Is she able to use contraceptives? Presenting a condom before having sexual contact is for a girl, culturally not done. A girl will be considered promiscuous and is often accused by her male partner of having slept around. This double gender standard is difficult for women to overcome and is also illustrated with the general idea that men are considered superior to women (machismo). ‘When a girl does not want to do it without a condom, the guy just waits for someone else to come by who does do it without condom’ because ‘guys do not like condoms’ says Jenifer. The dilemma is obvious, puts Dr. Aquilar: ‘it is the mistake of women when she gets pregnant, but it is also virtually impossible for women to use contraceptives. Men will look bad at you’. Women cannot use or instigate the use of condoms but at the same time are being held responsible and have to live with the consequences of unprotected sex.

‘Women may not decide about her own sexuality in the Guatemalan society’, says Dr. Aquilar. Although the girls are supposed to be the responsible partner (according to cultural ideas), practically, it seems they do not have the power to decide about contraception use. Because of this double standard many girls do not ‘talk about the theme... because it is a sin’. Some girls did express discomfort and sadness about the theme: ‘there are many [read girls] that want to use it... [the ones] who do not want to use it are the men!’ . Some girls expressed the desire that not only women were to be responsible for using protection. The intraphysic desire of girls (as exposed above) that is directed against the cultural appropriate scenario is important: they are exposing a disagreement with cultural ideas. However, they have internalized cultural norms and values and have difficulty with debating a different and new sexual script.

81 Adelita – RES – See transcription A10
83 EXP-2
84 Adelita – RES – See transcription A10
7.2 Gender roles unravelled – *Machismo* and *Marianismo* & girl stereotypes

How boys and girls behave, reflects to at least some extent the content of appropriate cultural scenarios of *machismo* and *marianismo*. The Latin American concepts of *Machismo* and *Marianismo* (Brusco 1995; Olthoff 2006; Stevens 1973) were in fact the underlying principles in the previous analysis: boys are considered irresponsible and sinful (Olthoff 2006, 83), and therefore the girls needs to make sure not to ‘make passes at the boys’; girls are culturally considered to be more morally and mentally strong (Olthoff 2006, 83). Therefore girls are given the responsibility of guarding youth sexuality – and thus culturally considered responsible for the usage of contraceptives. The idea that girls are better equipped to say no against premarital sex, springs from the assumption that girls are ‘morally superior to men’.

These cultural gender roles emanate a mixed message that affects the debate about youth sexuality. Girls can either be ‘good girls’ or a ‘bad girls’: the more promiscuous and sexually active a girl seems, the more likely she is to be labelled a ‘bad girl’ (Olthoff 2006, 83). It is extremely difficult for a girl to be a ‘good girl’ while at the same time having sex, dressing provocatively or flirting with boys. A girl cannot be a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ girl at the same time. The difficulty the girls expressed regarding giving their boyfriends the ‘prueba de amor’ showed the inability for a girl to do ‘bad’ girl behaviour (i.e.: having sex) whilst being a ‘good’ girl. When a girl gives her boyfriend her virginity, her position as ‘good’ girl is endangered and she can easily shift from being a ‘good’ virgin to a ‘bad *perra*’. Having sex is influenced by existing gender roles, values and ideals: youth sexuality in Guatemala cannot be understood without considering gender based cultural scenarios.

7.3 Shifting context: online gender identity testing, transforming and conforming

Although youngsters seem to have internalized gender specific roles, their interpersonal online behaviour and their reflections on contraceptives and responsibility show that they often debate and desire a new and different ‘sexual scripts’ (Stokes 2007). Girls in Quetzaltenango would often post photos of themselves on their SNS posing provocatively and wearing revealing clothes. Secondary SNS *Lindas Chicas del Quetzaltenango* (translation: Beautiful Girls from Quetzaltenango), provided a good insight in the way gender roles where being challenged online. *Lindas Chicas de Quetzaltenango* is a Facebook account were girls in and around Quetzaltenango were rated by male peers for the way they dressed...
and looked\textsuperscript{86}. Several of my respondents liked this site, thus stating that they are or where looking at this SNS. Images 7.1 and 7.2 show examples of how the grading of the girls was actually done: a provocative picture of a girl was posted and all men were asked to give approval of her bodily features or appearance by giving likes. The girl with the most likes was the prettiest and popular: however, according to me, the girl with most likes often was the girls with the most provocative outfit.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Image 7.1:} ‘How many likes for her?’ - \textit{Lindas Chicas de Quetzaltenango}

\item \textbf{Image 7.2:} ‘How many likes for her?’ - \textit{Lindas Chicas de Quetzaltenango}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{86} Interesting is also that the admin of this profile, is actually a girl.
When I asked my respondents about why girls post provocative pictures of themselves online, the most general answer was the lack of self-confidence of these girls: they would seek attention of boys. This is telling, as it shows that Facebook or Twitter is the platform where, apparently, this can be done. In society, girls cannot seek attention of boys because ‘they will be seen as ‘bad girls’” says Nico87. A disagreement with this online behaviour was expressed by the adolescents: they often stated like Gaby: ‘I don’t like it... They upload very feo88 photos...’89. However, even though there exists disapproval, adolescents still posted and looked at those photos online. This discrepancy only illustrates that because of the taboo-ness of debating sexual gender patterns, youngsters found it difficult to admit this online posting of sexual tinted photos: this behaviour does not ‘reflect the content of appropriate cultural scenario’s’ (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 98).

Image 7.3: ‘Being a virgin these days is something you have to be proud of. You are like a unicorn’. The admin asked the obvious question: ‘O Would this be true?’

Men in the previous examples are not being graded and act so to speak conform to the role they are given by machistic ideas and norms. Image 7.4 also shows an example of how boys and men are invited and stimulated to act in line with ‘typical’ male behaviour. The male gender role is also being debated online. Although more often girls than boys are debating and online transforming their own gender categories, the gender role of boys also seems in need of transformation. It seems to be the wish of especially girls that boys change their

87 Nico – RES12- See transcript E6
88 Literary translated feo, ugly means non-beautiful. Here feo means ugly as in non-fit and culturally not accepted photos.
behaviour; however, the male gender role is more often confirmed than transformed girls’ online behaviour.

Image 7.4. The image states: ‘A man is not the guy who has 50 women, but the one that only want, protects and respects just one’ (Source: Facebook site Soy Soltero y Que? (translation: I am single, so what?)).

Can we then say that these girls are all ‘bad girls’? Or does it mean something different? Can girls be ‘bad girls’ online and ‘good girls’ offline? Are girls debating a wider range or a new category instead of being seen as just the ‘bad’ or the ‘good girl’ (Stokes 2007)? I believe that girls indeed express different behaviour in their online lives than in their offline lives: they are debating a more open gender role (script) online. Girls are supposed to act as ‘good’ girls, as ‘virgins’ and ‘saint like’ in order to be socially valued as women in Latin American societies (Olthoff 2006: 83). Online, however, this dichotomy is constantly challenged (Stokes 2007). Girls can ‘play out’ another type of role: ‘the whore’ or the ‘perra’, ‘the bad girl’ (Stokes 2007) whilst still being seen as a ‘good girl’ in the offline society. Images 7.3 and 7.5 illustrate the desired flux of the ‘good’ girl with the ‘bad’ girl image. I believe that girls want a certain opening in the dichotomy of ‘good’ vs. ‘bad’: they want to show that girls can and be a ‘good’ girl and at the same time have certain elements of a ‘perra’ without being judged and treated as one.
In offline society this ‘sexual script’ (Stokes 2007) is impossible, online amongst peers, however, the manifestation of these ‘multiple selves’ (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009, 105) might be a little more acceptable. This interpersonal behaviour thus shows that girls can apply specific scenarios in different social contexts: they can act out different roles online and offline. (Hasinoff 2012: 6). Because of the youngster’s inability to be or do or even talk about how they want to be, behave and act, they change context: they use the Internet (and especially SNSs) to act out a different sexual scripts or gender roles (Hasinoff 2012, 8).

90 Gloria - RES34 – See transcript A11.
CHAPTER 8
HOMOSEXUALITY, ABORTION AND PORNOGRAPHY: TABOO ‘TO THE MAX’

It has become very clear by now that sex, sexual education and contraceptives are subjects not openly debated in Guatemala, but that adolescents feel a need to exert agency over these fields. It also has become clear that youngsters found a platform (the Internet) where they can act out different behaviour and debate about issues of sexuality. In this chapter I am going to explore what their views are on even more taboo issues, and whether the Internet played a similar role in this respect. I concentrated on three strict taboo issues: homosexuality, abortion and pornography. I grouped these three themes together in order to get a better grasp of how youngsters would deal with strict taboo issues that are influenced by strong disapproving cultural norms and values. As said: cultural scenarios are ‘guidelines for sexual behaviour’ and the ‘enactment of’ all behaviour ‘need to reflect the content of appropriate cultural scenarios’ (Simon & Gagnon 1984, 98). The society my adolescents were raised in does not accept these four themes, opposes them strongly and leaves no room for different opinions: it is often not even accepted to talk about these topics. Does the internet in these cases also provide a space here as well for more or less free discussion? And if so, do adolescents use this relative freedom to interpret and interact differently online? Or do we see the same strong cultural condemnation of these topics as in the offline world?

Firstly, I will show why adolescents feel a strong condemnation against these topics. Secondly, I want to discuss how adolescents manage their desires: what do they think about these four themes and how do they express their opinions on the subjects? Thereafter, I will address the interrelatedness of social structures and youngsters desires, fantasies and intentions (Stokes 2007, 170) and illustrate the interpersonal behaviour and interaction that flows out of this debate.

8.1 Cultural ideas: Religious and societal condemnation – a solid moral formation

Adolescents’ ideas about homosexuality, abortion and pornography are heavily influenced by strong ‘guidelines for sexual behaviour that exist at the level of society or culture’ (Simon & Gagnon 1982 in Stokes 2007, 170). My research suggests that cultural scenarios in Guatemala regarding these themes severely limit the room for adolescents in Quetzaltenango to select a different script. It is difficult for my respondents to construct a different view regarding these themes since this view always needs to be ‘congruent with expected desires’
(Gagnon & Simon 1984, 99) in order to have a successful social performance. In the next paragraph I will show what cultural ideas have a strong opinion on the taboo issues as indicated by my respondents.

8.1.1 Abortion: the murder of your own fruit

‘Two years ago there was a girl in a school ... One day she did not arrive at the school and was found dead. The teacher told the police that the doctor said it was because she had a fever ... They did not believe her. They found the girl lying with a dead fetus in her clothes. She was only 12 years old’ said Dr. Aquilar. Her story about the sad reality of this young girl shows the highly moral taboo status of this topic, but also touches upon another aspect: abortion is illegal and punishable in Guatemala. The law formulates that abortion is ‘the death of the product of conception’ at ‘any point of the pregnancy’ (Article 133 Código Penal). If a women (or in this case a girl) ‘commits the crime’ of abortion, she will be punished with an imprisonment period of 1 to 3 years (Art. 134 Código Penal). Abortion is thus highly illegal and even punishable according to the Guatemalan government and legal system. What do other actors state? In general Guatemalan society is very much against the concept of abortion (Guttmacher 2005). To abort a fetus is considered morally very wrong and against the life ‘God gave to humanity’ (CEG 2006).

8.1.2 Homosexuality: a threat to a machistic society

Like abortion, homosexuality is considered non-apt for adolescents because it is morally wrong and unnatural. ‘In our society, being homosexual is very difficult. ‘It is almost as if homosexuals are delinquents’ said Cecia Soto, who teaches sexual education at the local university. The quote by Cecia Soto indicates that it is not very easy to be homosexual in Quetzaltenango: ‘they are often discriminated against and experience a lot of violence’. Cecia indicated that this has a lot to do with the influence of machismo in the society of Quetzaltenango. According to this cultural gender scripts men should be strong, potent and heterosexual (Brusco 1995; Olthoff 2006; Stevens 1973) and often homosexuality is therefore associated with femininity. As Cecia states: ‘At daytime you cannot see that they are gay. In the night-time however, in the centre of Quetzaltenango you see many gays, and in the morning... They do not look gay. Then they are not feminine at all... In the night, yes, they

91 EXP2
92 Capítulo III, DEL ABORTO, Código Penal de Guatemala, Decreto No. 17–73
93 EXP3
94 EXP3
make themselves look like girls’. This equation of homosexuality with female behaviour can be diverted from the *machismo* thinking that equates homosexuality with non-male behaviour (Schifter 1999).

Homosexuality is mainly described as male to male love, or at least, it is mainly the male to male relationships which are seen as problematic. Father Ortiz for instance stated that ‘lesbianism is almost non-existent’ in Quetzaltenango. This must be because male homosexuals pose a more serious threat to the machistic values than female homosexuals. Cecia Soto for example says: ‘You almost have no lesbians over here. It is weird....’. ‘They don’t have it (homosexuality) that much in women... Because women... The lesbian is with a lesbian. They do not chase after other heterosexuals’. Although she contradicts herself saying there are no lesbians and yet appreciating that at least lesbians do not chase one another, her statement demonstrates that lesbians are not seen as a societal threat to masculinity as homosexuals are.

Homosexuality is not only dismissed in terms of its colliding with machistic values but is also condemned by religious beliefs. Listening to Reverend Dolores, it becomes obvious why homosexuality is such a taboo issue in *quetzalteco* society. Dolores states that according to her Evangelical church homosexuality is a perversion of the devil: ‘if you are not born woman then you are man’, and to act differently is perverse and non-biblical. Also she states, homosexuality is actually never really proved scientifically. This idea is shared by the catholic Father Ortiz. He adds that homosexuality is comes from a bad upbringing and not being brought up with love and respect.

The idea that male homosexuals are more dangerous to society because they disturb the normal way of things and they can corrupt children is also expressed by Padre Perez. He states that ‘if a man does not want to marry, fine, do not marry. But do not do harm to other persons. They can even adopt children right now. I am sorry but no, how can a child not have a mother and father? He continues: ‘if one is gay, he can opt to live alone. A homosexual should respect that men and women are complementary... If he feels attraction to other men
he should say no... You will not persuade me because I am a man and I can decide myself. Father Ortiz feels that they should find professional help.

8.1.3 Pornography: late night searches and bad values

Adolescents are perceived as too young (Nandy 2007, 65) to deal with morally difficult topics, and therefore is pornography seen as morally dangerous for youngsters. This reflects the general idea that adolescents are not yet able to decide for themselves and need to be protected from several societal phenomena (Oishik & Dutta 2011, 341). Luisa, youth psychologist, states that ‘many adolescents get up at night very late to search for pornography... Or they download porn, because it draws their attention’. Both Reverend Dolores as Father Ortiz expressed strong disagreement with pornography and states that this was bad behaviour for youngsters and that they should be taught values on the subject and to be prevented from exerting bad behaviour.

8.2 Adolescent voices on strict taboo issues: conformation & replication

In order to better grasp the relation between intraphysic scripts and the cultural script I asked my respondents about their feelings and desires regarding taboo topics. I did not specify the themes but let the youngsters come up with taboo topics and issues on sexuality. The three themes they themselves came up with when asking about taboo and ‘bad behaviour’ in sexual relationships were: homosexuality, abortion and pornography.

8.2.1 Homosexuality: discrimination and machismo

In general my respondents had a hard time talking positively about homosexuality. The following quote of Luis has proven to be quite typical: ‘For me personally, I have no problem with them, but because of my religion I cannot agree because of Genesis in de Bible. The Bible says that God created a man and a woman to procreate and live together. And not women and women and men and men, is not something good because it is not. I have talked with God for whole my live and God has never said anything about it. So for me it is a family

99 EXP1
100 EXP8
101 Lesbianism was only named by one of my female respondents: in general homosexuality is connected to men and not to women. Although, most of my respondents, expressed to be at peace with the fact that there are homosexuals, they immediately react when they are to be connected with homosexual behaviour. I believe this to be because of the macho Guatemalan society where in female like behaviour, that is, according to social actors, is connected with homosexuality is seen as weak and unacceptable (Brusco 1995; Stevens 1973).
problem. But in Guatemala they give a lot of problems to the people who are like that... They violate them for the simple fact of being so... This is one of the biggest problems of Guatemala, racism. Luis’ quote is interesting because it embodies the combination of internalizations (i.e. homosexuality is bad, because a men and women are supposed to procreate) and the desire to open up the debate. Luis combines this traditional belief regarding homosexuality with his own view: that he personally has nothing against homosexuals. Put in more general terms, my respondents internalized social ideas about homosexuality, but they also expressed desire of opening up the debate about the normalcy of homosexuality. They rejected discrimination against homosexuals as a kind of racism.

8.2.2 Morally wrong male behaviour: pornography

Pornography was often brought up when I asked my respondents questions about sexuality. According to them pornography is always forbidden and morally wrong. Both girls and boys stated that secretly watching pornography is a strict male business. The following phrase sums up the youth' thoughts when referring to pornography: ‘Well... girls do not do it so much, they are watching videos... that they should not been watching because it is illegal’, states Adelita. The admonition that they ‘should not be watching it’ (Pablo, Adelita) shows the moral idea that is behind this standpoint: a young person should not be watching pornography, because it is morally unjust.

Age is also an important factor concerning pornography. Maria illustrates this: ‘I was watching some guys of around 10 years old... they were watching photos and videos of pornography...they were laughing at pornographic images... yes, that is a problem... that they are that young... and that they can see it’. Referring to pornography Adelita states: ‘There are persons that use the Internet in a bad way, for example to look at pornographic videos, or.... To look at websites for adults... that... those are the disadvantages, because online they do not ask for your age... ’

8.2.3 Abortion: a last resort measure of just a deadly sin?

Abortion, of the three taboo issues my respondents came up with themselves, seem to have been the one that brought about the strongest feelings. They were quite vehement in their

102 Luis - RES17 – transcript E10.
103 Adelita – RES – See transcription A10.
104 Pablo - RES20- See transcript E13
arguing. Although they see teenage pregnancy and forced marriages (as in marriages not for love) as a very real threat for their future, abortion to them is simply not an option. According to my respondents, to have an abortion is committing murder, and even of the lowest kind. It is ‘the worst form of murder, because you are purposely killing your own child’\textsuperscript{107} says Ana. ‘The boy does not want to take that responsibility... many people abort... and that is bad because the baby is not guilty..’, Ana states to show the moral wrongness of abortion. ‘I am against abortion because they ... can be children, but they can have a life... And I have seen videos and everything about abortions and you can see how the babies are... trying to fight for their lives....’ says Andres to express his aversion of abortion\textsuperscript{108}. According to my respondents, abortion is something very bad, and something that under no circumstances can be considered good. When one gets pregnant, she has to act responsible and take care of their ‘mistake’.

8.3 Online agency and taboo issues: a platform to debate and test

What happens when cultural guidelines are very rigid on some topics and adolescents are unable to ignore them or when they simply agree with them? How is the interpersonal behaviour shaped when cultural scenarios and adolescents’ own fantasies, intentions and desires agree? As we have seen in previous chapters, the internet is a space where adolescents often are enabled to change their identity (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009: 105) and try out new ways to talk and think about sexuality (Hasinoff 2012: 6). Do youngsters also interact differently online with regard to the more taboo themes discussed in this chapter?

Surprisingly, despite being strict taboo topics, adolescents did talk about them online. Online on Facebook and Twitter, youngsters talk about these phenomena and look at them. Often, photos about unborn babies and dead fetuses where posted online and a surprising amount of adolescents would react and debate about the picture. Also, online, (mostly on secondary sites) pictures of (half-naked) girls where posted online with the text ’if you do not press like you are gay’ written over the text (see image 8.1). Posts about abortion and homosexuality online would ask for some kind of confirmation of existing cultural syntaxes (see image 8.2). It turns out that youngsters, as Döring says need to ‘critically reflect on the expectances’ (Döring 2000, 880 in Hasinoff 2012, 8) that their peers have. Peers would want confirmation

\textsuperscript{107} Ana - RES1 - See transcript B4
\textsuperscript{108} Andres – RES50 – See transcript D2
of existing structures of *machismo* and use the societal refusing of normalcy of homosexuality in order to obtain typical and desirable male behaviour.

Image 8.1: The text written across this image says: ‘If you do not give us a *like*, you are gay’. Juan Perez commented on the photo: ‘If they are virgin, I will give a like to every one of these pretty girls’. This in a way is a double confirmation of typical male *machismo* behaviour.

Image 8.2.: The text written across this image says: ‘Are you against abortion? Give a like 😊’. The girl that posted this image makes use of a sad smiley to state her opinion on the topic.
Image 8.3. Shows the header of the secondary Facebook account Chicas Bien Putas (translation: Girls that are whores or slutty girls). It shows the soft pornographic content that my respondents liked.

Pornography however, is a more complex issue: there is the general idea that adolescents at this time in their life are too young for this – adults however, are considered to be mature enough to make the decision to, or preferably not watch porn, pornography. In relation to pornography, adolescents brought up ‘age’: adults were able to watch pornography, however, youngsters not. They did convey a mixed message though. While rejecting the notion that pornography is fit for young people, they were active in this matter in a certain way. How strong the aversion to pornography is according to social and cultural structures, young people do seem to feel the need of looking at that kind of pictures. During my fieldwork I often noticed how boys and girls who were shouting the loudest about condemning pornography, at the same time liked Facebook or Twitter sites with soft or more explicit pornographic content (see image 8.3). Girls more often than boy post explicit photos of themselves online. My respondents expressed severe disagreement with this and told me that girls ‘cannot do that’.

The previous chapters have all closed with examples of youngsters’ online expressions as also used above. With these examples I have showed that adolescents have a certain room to manoeuvre when they do not agree with cultural moral protectionalistic ideas about their own sexuality. Young people thus show a certain amount of agency by changing ‘spheres’ and
contesting or (re)producing cultural norms and values. With this image strongly establishes, I can now proceed to a more general conclusion and theoretical reflections.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUDING NOTES: SNSS AS HIGH LEVEL AGENCY PLATFORMS – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ‘TECHNOSCAPE’

In this chapter I will discuss the conclusions of my research and give an answer to my research question: *How is sexuality, in connection with cultural notions, perceived by adolescents in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala and how do these adolescents use the Internet to express agency related to these ideas of sexuality and love?* To formulate a truthful answer to the previous question, I conducted social and participative research for a period of three months with 47 adolescents (from 12 to 18 years) and 8 adults. In order to find out more about these youth perceptions I did six PRA-workshops, 47 semi-structured interviews and surveys and extensive media-analysis. To get a more general idea of prominent cultural norms and values on youth sexuality I interviewed eight adults and interpreted several media sources. Because of my focus on online agency of youngsters I also spend a high amount of time doing media-analysis on the SNSs of my respondents.

In this concluding chapter, firstly, I will give a summary of how youth sexuality is perceived by adolescents in Guatemala. I will summarize their (intraphysic) desires and intentions and show how their “raw” desires are always evaluated with and compared to appropriate cultural roles; this part will focus mainly on the offline expressions on sexuality. Secondly, I will discuss how cultural norms and values (cultural scenarios) affect these perceptions. Thirdly, I will show how youngsters use the Internet to express agency regarding their own perceptions on sexuality. Throughout the whole chapter I will make connections with theory and at the end I will give recommendations for further research on youth sexuality and agency.

9.1 Youth perceptions of sexuality: offline desires and behaviour

My research has uncovered the disagreement of adolescents in Quetzaltenango with the idea notion that they are too young or too immature to be able to experience their sexuality. In the Chapter 5 we saw that youngsters believe that they are able romantic actors because they do engage, despite parental and religious critique, in romantic relationships and have sexual relationships. It was also argued that adolescents demand sexual education so they can make more informed decisions about their sex-life. Data also indicated that youngsters, although not explicitly telling me, are often sexually active. Adolescents express being ready for love and romance by selecting different ‘sexual scripts’ (and thus different identities) in order to
talk extensively about the topic online (Stokes 2007). These different sexual scripts manifest themselves when adolescents act out behaviour that they would not be able and allowed to exert in the offline society.

In Chapter 6 we saw that adolescents believe that contraceptives are means with which they can stop their (sexual and romantic) relationships from becoming ‘dangerous’ (Diouff 2003). Contraceptives where highlighted by the adolescents as a way to prevent relationships from becoming too serious because they help girls not to get pregnant. Youngsters, as also illustrated in the first chapter, did believe that they are ready for love, sex and relationships, but not for having and raising a child and marriage. The internalized debate of adolescents on the morality and usefulness of contraceptives cannot be seen separately from cultural scenarios on the topic. This is in line with what Gagnon and Simon argue when they state that a person’s ‘intrapsic script’ is characterized with the ‘management of their desires’ and the social appropriate way to act upon this (Gagnon & Simon 1984, 100). In order to make their behaviour convey ‘an identity consistent with the expectations of [whatever] audience’ (Robinson 2007, 96), the selection of their desires with cultural appropriate ways to act is something youngsters have difficulties with.

The seventh chapter showed that girls have a particularly vulnerable position in Guatemala’s society: they are seen as the ‘safe keepers’ of youth sexuality. Because of cultural scenarios of machismo and marianismo, girls are supposed to safeguard their virginity and to make sure that boys do not take their virginity prior to marriage. My respondents, both boys and girls, reflect this and state that girls are the responsible gender category. At the same time, though, girls’ statements and their online behaviour show that they do not think it is fair that they can only behave as either a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ girl and they are arguing in favour of a third less strict ‘category’. In short, girls’ desires do not match with cultural rigid roles and they debate a new ‘sexual script’ (Stokes 2007).

Chapter 8 taught us what adolescents do when cultural guidelines are very rigid on topics (like homosexuality, abortion, masturbation and pornography). As we have seen, the internet is a space where adolescents are enabled to change their identity (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009: 105) and try out new ways to talk and think about sexuality (Hasinhoff 2013). And indeed, youngsters also discuss about these taboo issues online. However, there still exist rules and adolescents are criticized when talking in a more open way about rigid taboos.
I want to conclude this section by referring to a quote by Verkaaik (2004, 250) who said that adolescents in Quetzaltenango ‘simultaneously contest, negotiate, and deepen social inequalities based upon gender (…) and religious affiliation’ in their lives. My research shows that adolescents in Quetzaltenango also ‘contest, negotiate, and deepen’ their supposed role as an ‘adolescents’ or ‘youngster’. They do not agree with that they are too immature and too young to be able make decisions about their own sexuality.

9.2 Cultural norms and values on sexuality: hierarchies of age, gender and love

Cultural scenarios shape the collective meaning attached to the concept of sexuality: they manifest themselves as ‘guidelines for sexual behaviour that exist at the level of society or culture’ (Stokes 2007, 170). Cultural ideas and norms that are formulated by powerful entities like ‘peers, family and religious institutions’ believe that youngsters should behave according to certain rules and patters (Lacan 1977). Although there are several ideas affecting how youngsters should behave sexually, I believe that the two most important cultural influences are based on age and gender.

With respect to age, the script says that adolescents should refrain from getting sexually or romantically involved with someone or even talking about issues of sexuality. The script of the social category ‘adolescents’ is seen to be: ‘unknowing and underdeveloped’ (Nandy 2007, 65) and therefore in need of paternalization and education. Youngsters are seen as too immature and too young (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011) to be able to make well informed and morally right judgement and should therefore refrain from having and talking about sex.

Gender roles and ideas (cultural gender scripts) about how boys and girls should behave also have a certain paternalizing influence: girls and boys should behave in a certain way to be culturally accepted. A girl’s virginity is highly valued in the society of Quetzaltenango and shapes her behaviour. In the previous chapters it was argued that girls’ statements and online behaviour show that they do not think it is fair that they can only behave as either a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ girl and that they are debating for a third ‘category’. Girls desires do not match with cultural rigid roles and they debate a new ‘sexual script’ (Stokes 2007).

During my argumentation I often made references to the 2005 UNICEF research on reproductive health of youngsters in Guatemala. Often, UNICEF sees the same cultural trends and ideas as I did. They see the same discrepancies between the idea that youngsters have and the cultural norms but do not discuss the paternalizing influence that cultural scenarios may
have over adolescents. UNICEF thus not takes into consideration that adolescents also can be seen as able actors capable to act and change their own faith. This is in disagreement with the standpoint of Asad that I use in my thesis. I believe, following Asad, that ‘(a)ll individuals (…) have the moral capacity and responsibility to act for themselves’(Asad 2000, 30). That UNICEF does not live up to Asad’s idea is logical, since UNICEF, as a paternalizing agent itself, believes that adolescents are part of the population whose wants and needs are to be taken into account, but also believe that youngsters have special requisites (Diouff 2003) and that they need to be protected (Oisink & Dutta 2011, 341). The report and also my research touch upon the difficult friction between adolescents as ‘able actors’ and ‘in need of protection’.

9.3 Online expressions of adolescents on sexuality: positive & negative developments

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Internet (and especially the SNS’s) is often being used by the youngsters in order to express disagreement with cultural scenarios. Adolescents in Quetzaltenango thus select a different spatial area in order to be able to express their opinions on cultural ideas about sexuality that areas seen as morally wrong in the offline society. The denial of power and knowledge in their offline lives, leads my respondents to seek a different space in which they do have a certain power and knowledge: the Internet (and especially SNSs). Online, adolescents address issues and act out behaviour that they often cannot discuss or perform in the offline society. This means that my respondents select different ‘sexual scripts’ in different social contexts: they select a different identity online than they would offline (Stokes 2007).

This development can be seen as empowering: the youngsters believe that they are capable and morally strong enough for taboo topics and therefore exerting behaviour like the above can be explained as agentic behaviour. As illustrated in the second chapter: agentic behaviour are the ‘capacities, competencies and activities through which [actors] navigate the contexts and positions of their life worlds fulfilling many economic, social and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual/collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives’ (Robinson et al. 2007, 135). Although this agency might be empowering: the results of this agency might not always positive. I believe that, more research needs to be done on the possible negative and positive effects of Internet use on youth sexuality in a society where heavy condemnation of youth sexuality prevails.
Although the Internet is a place where adolescents can act out different sexual identities than in their offline life, the space is not devoid of rules. It is thus not true that the Internet is a ‘highly virtual environment’ where ‘self is liberated from … socialization processes’ (Turkle 1995 in Robinson 2009, 105). Adolescents in Quetzaltenango do agree with cultural scenarios that for example abortion and homosexuality are unfit and morally wrong topics and confirm these scripts online. It was striking that when they sometimes neglected this, negative peer critique and thus negative peer agency would be the result. It is thus important to note that even in this relative free space, youngsters still have to live up to certain rules and restrictions. The way the Internet is used is still ‘influenced by social cultural factors such as gender … and other conditions of lives such as family life, peer culture and religious backgrounds and beliefs’ (Brown, Steele, Walsch-Childers 2002, 98). Adolescents still need to convey an identity consistent with at least the most powerful expectations of the audience’ in order to have a successful ‘performance’ (Robinson 2007, 96). Although the audience online is a different one than the audience offline (from adults to adolescents), there are still expectations to be met.

When youngsters explicitly show an identity that the audience, in this sense their peers, do not find credible and acceptable, the online performance cannot be successful (Robinson 2007, 96). I believe that negative peer critique often results in youngsters confirmation (or the reproduction) of cultural norms. Because expectations are still to be met, actors with agency can ‘produce’ cultural discourses by creating, resisting and (re)producing [i.e. and thus conforming] dominant ideological discourses (Spyrou 2008). Although the pressure to meet expectancy is less high as in the offline lives (front stage), and higher that in their mind (backstage): a certain pressure still exists in this offstage performance (Treviño 2003, 36).

The use of secondary sites and fake profiles is another indication that the Internet is not a space where complete freedom can be exerted: by making their profiles anonymous, adolescents protect themselves from bad criticism from peers. It was quite common for my respondents to operate under a false name or identity when posting about highly controversial topics. Also, many of my respondents were looking at what I would call ‘secondary SNS’s’. Many of my respondents for example were looking at SNSs that were called ‘Munecas Sexys’ (‘Sexy Dolls’) and ‘Lindas Chicas del Quetzaltenango’ (‘Pretty Girls from Quetzaltenango’). These are websites made by admins on Facebook or Twitter that post pictures, status updates and photos under a covert name in order to not conceal one’s own identity. So, even though
youngsters are more empowered in their online lives, cultural scenario’s still have a big influence on their online sexual behaviour.

9.3.2 Food for thought: theoretical reflections and research recommendations

Concluding, adolescent online agency in the field of sexuality is an important and highly diverse topic where on more research is necessary. Before proposing some recommendations for future research I will shortly reflect on the usefulness the theories I used for doing research on sexuality. I have extensively showed that cultural structuralism and the scripting theory (Simon and Gagnon 1974) are extremely important for research on sexuality: both theories have proven to be very useful to uncover paternalistic and moralizing cultural structures that are often internalized by adolescents in Quetzaltenango. As seen, youngsters’ perceptions on sexuality are heavenly influenced by cultural notions and values. It would be therefore extremely interesting to see to how adolescents’ online behaviour in societies that are heavenly influenced by restricting cultural notions on sexuality (e.g. Guatemala) can be compared to the behaviour of adolescents that are coming of age in a society where sexual liberty matters most (e.g. The Netherlands).

Symbolic interactionism proved to be important to see how social interaction between several actors (youngsters, adults, religion, teachers, peers etc.) shape adolescent sexual behaviour. When taking the importance of social interaction for sexual behaviour in mind, it would be interesting to research what influence parental and other adult presence will have for adolescents’ online sexual scripting (and thus agency)? The Internet is gaining popularity with parents and other important cultural entities: online interaction between adults and youngsters should be explored more extensively.

To connect Internet with sexuality, I made use of the Media Practice Theory (Brown & Steele 1995). With the MPT I wanted to explore whether or not an adolescent’s offline sexual identity would change because of online behaviour. I believe the MPT to be extremely useful to see if youngsters actually apply new identities in their everyday lives. More in-depth research should be done on the extent to which adolescents’ online (sexual) agency influences their (sexual) offline identities. Do adolescents actually express a different sexual script in their offline lives because of being exposed to different kinds of sexuality in their online lives? And what are the positive and negative consequences of this exposure?
Also, I used the performance theory of Ervin Goffmann (1959). Although Goffman’s theory does not explicitly focus upon sexuality, the theory has proven to be very useful. According to Goffman everyday life is ‘the process of interaction that produces multiple selves for multiple performances’ (1959). Because of using the performance theory I could make an assessment of the internet as a ‘space’ where youngsters can play out a different sexual self than in the offline society. That rules on behaviour still apply online is in correspondence with the idea that a person still needs to ‘convey an identity consistent with the expectations of [whatever] audience’ (Robinson 2007, 96). I believe that in this thesis the division of the stage of internet in front, back and offstage has not been addressed very extensively. Although I have hinted that the SNSs can be seen as ‘offstage’, more research should be done on this division and implications of this division. I believe that there is still a lot to be explored that on the characteristics of the Internet and the types of performances that are acted out on this youth platform. Also, more research needs to be done on the advantages and disadvantages of this relatively open ‘technospace’ and the ethics and methods of doing research in this high tech research ‘location’.
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# ANNEXES

List of respondents:

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- Low grade female ladino
- Low grade male ladino
- High grade female ladino
- High grade male ladino
- University students
- Low grade male indigenous
- Low grade female indigenous
- High grade female indigenous
- High grade male indigenous
- Experts