Sahagún as worldmaker

An epistemological approach to the gender bias in colonial Mexican documents

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Cover image: after page 26 and 27 of the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1981, 65)

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The end-result presented below is the outcome of making many choices. Creativity is a process and the further removed from the original questions, the more creative, interesting and deeper to the core they get. This research goes back to origins of conceptions, which is one of my personal research interests. Other elements I could incorporate in this research are my interests in everyday life, commoner classes and general social life of Mesoamerican people, but also of the early modern period in Europe which is related more directly to my own roots. I am grateful to Maarten Jansen, Aurora Pérez and Araceli Rojas for introducing me into Mesoamerican life, theoretically as well as literally; Rosemary Joyce for her scientific inspiration; the Rodenburg and Kuipers family for supporting me throughout my study; and I am especially thankful to Steven and Poes for providing me with company and motivation to be able to think, read and write.

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

Sixteenth-century ethnohistorical documents are together with archaeological and iconographical data the key sources for researching the social life in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. Especially the Florentine Codex, a sixteenth-century chronicle, provides indispensable detailed descriptions on social, political, religious and moral aspects, and more specifically on everyday life of commoner and elite classes, modes of behaviour, gender, rituals, beliefs and language of native society at time of conquest. It deals with aspects not literally visible in archaeological remains, and the few surviving chronicles are therefore used in archaeological studies to confirm or complement reconstructions of pre-Columbian society. Hence, these accounts are essential for an inclusive understanding of native culture and the social life of past peoples in Mexico.

Ironically, most of these colonial manuscripts are written and painted áfter the conquest, either by Spaniards or informants under Spanish supervision. As a result, this representation of Mesoamerican society we use in archaeology was first filtered through a European lens within a Christian conceptual framework. Getting past Spanish influences results in a complex epistemological query, in which the worldviews of Mesoamericans, sixteenth-century Spaniards and modern researchers in turn affect the representations and (re)constructions of ancient Mesoamerican society. This thesis deals with this interplay of worldviews in interpretations and colonial sources, with a focus on gender.

Gender? Yes, when the Spaniards settled in the New World they brought not only guns and germs, but also men with certain presuppositions and

expectations at hand on men and women's roles and relations. The Spanish writers of colonial documents were primarily male, based on their European patriarchal paradigm. This may have lead to a colouring of interpretations by means of gendered assumptions and prejudices, formed by the colonists' own patriarchal culture and experiences. Especially the way gender is portrayed in the documents may have been influenced by this; the descriptions of women's lives are based on a male perspective and understanding. This research focuses on the Florentine Codex as a main example. This account is repeatedly cited in studies on post-classic Mesoamerican social life and gender conceptions in particular. Gender relations are described directly and indirectly in this document, by linguistic usage, categorising and relating, and by making differences between masculine and feminine activities, appearances and typical behaviour.

The subject of gender is often affected by paradigmatic, political and personal oscillations, and it deals with historically complex themes such as thoughts, values, morals and ideals. There is in modern research no clear consensus on pre-Columbian gender notions and relations. This is why it is worth to tackle this subject; there is still much to contribute to this matter. It will be visible throughout this thesis that this research deals with interpretations and is therefore situated on subjective ground. In this respect, diverging views and ways of interpretation will be incorporated, but which may lead consecutively to an ambiguous view of past gender relations. Being not too determined, these views can be materialised in further research in specific areas, time periods or archaeological sites and in relation with additional data.

Besides some apparent Catholic insertions, the interpretations influenced by fray Bernardino de Sahagún, the writer of the Florentine Codex, are not concretely taken into account or analysed when using this source for reconstructing pre-colonial society. In general culture histories or text books the ideas on gender written by Sahagún are directly applied on Nahua society (e.g. Carrasco 2011). In more specific studies on gender, the idea of a male bias is often mentioned in the beginning of the text (e.g. Brumfiel 2001, 286; Carmack et. al 2007, 443), but it is eventually not taken into account in concrete terms, nor is the actual influence of the male writer well investigated. Klein (2001) mentioned the presence of a male bias, did not address this concretely, but found ways to skirt it by including data from other time periods or cultures in ancient America. Joyce (2002, 117-9) further mentions the influence of the generalised,

incomplete character of the Florentine Codex, and she and Burkhart (2001) tend to be more careful in using the gendered interpretations made by Sahagún.

But what exactly is this gender bias? Can we actually find visible Spanish influences on Mesoamerican gender ideas in this document? And if so, did Sahagún recorded gender relations differently than they were, due to his conceptual framework? Consequently, how does this influence our current interpretations on gender in Mesoamerica? These are the problems that will be analysed in the coming texts. This research provides a start for the critical examination of gendered representations, and it explores the male bias in the Florentine Codex in a systematic way using the theory of Nelson Goodman (1978). It proves to be useful to tackle specific problems by going back to the origins, and understand how and why it came into being. To challenge this, the aim of this thesis is to approach how Sahagún constructed his knowledge on native gender relations, including a consideration of the intentions of the chronicle. From here we might be able to gain additional insights in native society.

To understand the Spanish conceptual frame, this thesis incorporates syntheses of general notions and ideals on gender in early modern Spain. According to the thesis of Nelson Goodman (1978), this knowledge can function as a general, normative frame of reference on which Spanish writers reflected and phrased their conceptualisations of the people, things and practices they encountered in the New World. Goodman presents several processes on which these so-called ‘worlds’ are made out of other worldviews, which are applicable on the Spanish chronicle to reveal the cognitive processes involved in creating an image of Mesoamerican culture. To be more concrete, the writer of a document could have left things out, emphasised certain aspects, or restructured gender roles in different categories, relating it alongside his culturally rooted preconceptions. Furthermore, the reason and by what means the knowledge is selected and presented is guided by whom it was read and for what purpose. Regarding the document as an attempt to instruct indigenous people with Christian notions, allows us to understand the knowledge formation in the document, from which we can tackle biases and provide a new approach to handle the information.

Hypothetically this would mean that if we understand these well-investigated Spanish gender conventions, we can decode and filter out the

practices that deviated from the Spanish notions, leading us to traditional pre-colonial or acculturated Mesoamerican practices. However, comparing the two geographically separated cultures on a generalised level resulted in detecting profound similarities between the gender ideology described in the Florentine Codex and life in Spain at that time. A separation between Mexican and European concepts cannot be made without proficient information on gender in Mesoamerica. Secondary disciplines and sources are definitively needed to confirm or reject statements made by Sahagún. For this, personal and communal documents written by native people at time of contact will be analysed. These texts hold an equivalent character and provide comparable themes and insights on gender and connected intangible subjects. These can be used to analyse some continued traditionally rooted gender ideas, and to which Sahagún's interpretation can be evaluated.

The Florentine Codex is a rich source, providing detailed insights on matters that cannot be found otherwise. Seen the scarcity of surviving written and painted documents on Mesoamerican life, it is vital to extract as much information as possible from this document. As an example the focus of this thesis is on descriptions and notions of gender. The incorporation of Goodman's scheme enables us to understand how gender interpretations in the Florentine Codex are created out of the familiar Spanish conceptual frame. By analysing of what the Spanish conceptions on gender are composed, the intentions of the document, processes of knowledge creation and complementary texts with native experiences, we can begin to explore why the chronicler incorporated certain descriptions; what was emphasised and what was left out; how the data is presented; how gender roles and man-woman relations are portrayed, identified and categorised; and what relations are made between the old and new world in the document. As a result, deeper insights on pre-colonial gender relations will be visible and it enables us to look more critical and in concrete ways to the document before we typify something as a Mesoamerican gender category. In all, this research provides a start to tackle the gender bias in the Florentine Codex and comparable colonial documents, and suggests a critical systematic examination for the use of colonial sources in research on ancient native societies in Mexico.

1.1 Methodology

As described above, several steps have to be taken and various kinds of information have to be drawn up before the analysis of the sources. First, the reason behind the creation of the Florentine Codex has to be analysed: to whom was it addressed, why was it written and what was the purpose of the document? The intention and addressee of a writing guides the way the contents are presented and selected. It is also connected to the worldview of the writer and addressee. This leads us to the second element of this thesis: Spanish-Christian ideas on gender relations, embedded in a European patriarchal paradigm on gender relations. It is vital to understand the general ruling gender perspective of Spanish men to notify expressions of this view in the documents about Mesoamerican culture.

To be acquainted with the early modern Spanish norms on gender, which had a more or less similar general origin throughout Europe, historical literature will be studied. Gender history in this area is much better known and elaborated than in ancient Mesoamerica. A major work used in this thesis is the book *Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* by Cissie Fairchilds (2007). Her book is a synthesis of previous studies on gender in the early modern period, while building her arguments on primary sources. The latter is important, because throughout the history of a discipline, certain assumptions are formed without discerning its origins and development. Especially the roots of the hegemonic patriarchal thoughts and practices in Europe are crucial for our understanding of this view. When dealing with a historical study on gender, an extra criticism has to be paid towards the time period, the author and his or her background and views on gender. The same goes for a discussion on the gender debate in Mesoamerica. These subjects, including a theoretical approach on gender, will be elaborated in chapter 2.

The line of research continues with an analysis and comparison of Florentine Codex excerpts and the native colonial documents, on the way gender relations are portrayed. The texts and themes are chosen because of their relation to gender conceptions and the mutual comparability. However, it does not exclude that other descriptions in the Florentine Codex, either directly or not related to gender, are not influenced by gendered interpretations of Sahagún. The themes picked out form the main focus of chapters 3 to 5 and are respectively: socialisation during childhood, where the cultural notions on gender

are transmitted and educated; marriage and possessions, the primary relation between the two sexes and their relation to each other expressed in possessions, inheritance and roles; and the last main chapter is about division of labour between men and women, and gendered work. These subjects correspond to identity-forming aspects such as age, social relations and occupation.

The native sources will provide traditional insights of native inhabitants which are used to complement the Spanish interpretation to be able to detract biased interpretations. This will be done conform the processes of worldmaking presented by Goodman (1978). A focus is laid on what is left out, how men and women are categorised, and where links are made to typical Christian-European concepts, metaphors, definitions or stereotypes. This will be discussed in more detailed in chapter 1.3. The next chapter will describe and critical examine the sources used in this research.

1.2 Primary sources

When speaking about colonial documents from Spanish America, one is easily predisposed towards chronicles, codices and letters of conquistadores. This is the corpus that is generally used to reconstruct Mesoamerican society, but to which several constraints and problematic issues are attached, one of them being the focus of this research. This thesis researches the Florentine Codex as a main example, occasionally affirmed by the Codex Mendoza which shows a similar image. These are the Spanish sources; written, and coloured, by Spaniards, as well as documents supervised and immediately influenced by them. As an alternative there is another corpus of sources: the native colonial documents. These are local documents written by individuals or small groups of native Mesoamericans and most of the time written in an indigenous language. These can be petitions, complaints, testaments, land documents and letters. The information from the native documents will be compared to the Florentine Codex to affirm or reject the statements made in the Spanish chronicle. The problems and uses of the native documents will be explained below, followed by an analysis of the Florentine Codex, and after that follows a discussion on the incorporation of these sources in this thesis.

The documents written by native inhabitants during the colonial period, to be found in local municipalities, is a relatively unfamiliar source in Mesoamerican

research. This genre of colonial documents presents glimpses of the lives of individuals during colonial rule. The documents deal mainly with typical colonial disputes on land, taxes and abuses, but also continuous testaments, texts on inheritance, love and crime. It is a very rich ethnohistorical source in which not only nobles, but also non-elite individuals were able to record their experiences and opinions through a notary. The native administrative sources are exceptionally interesting because they are written by the indigenous people themselves, showing a more original view from the inside. It reveals emotions, behaviour, expectations and it provides insight in individual daily lives or communities, including their possessions, social relationships, ways of living, daily struggles, and of course gender relations, gendered activities and individual expressions of the hegemonic gender ideology. These subjects and thoughts are very difficult to find in the prehistoric past, but along the lines of cultural continuity these documents provide insights in traditional views and the colonial process. However, this optimistic introduction to these sources is not without flaws, as will be elucidated below.

Some of the native documents are published and translated for students to analyse in for example *Colonial Lives (*Boyer and Spurling 2000) and *Dead Giveaways (*Kellogg and Restall 1998). One that focuses exclusively on Mesoamerican native documents is *Mesoamerican Voices* (Restall et al. 2005). These books consist mainly of a brief elucidation on the social and political backgrounds of the particular document, or even no introduction at all, and the rest is for the scholar to interpret. These published documents embody only a few of the actual bulk of native manuscripts, so a certain selection of documents is made in the books. This is often not clearly explained in the introduction, only Boyer and Spurling (2000, 4) mention that they did not want to achieve encyclopaedic coverage, but to show the temporal and spatial diversity in colonial times. The selection made in the *Mesoamerican Voices* also gives the impression of a combination of regular documents but which embrace many exceptional, noteworthy or unusual examples of specific aspects of society. Therefore, the choice of documents is already slightly biasing a general view.

The reasons to incorporate these books in this research instead of analysing the original documents, is that the aforementioned books provide a translation of the documents from Nahuatl, Mixtec and Maya dialects (and sometimes Spanish) to English. The original texts in the indigenous language can

often be found in other books or articles. It would be important to use the original native text, but this was not possible due to personal insufficient linguistic skills and time. Nevertheless, working with this translation provides an adequate start for research. This introduces a first obstacle in the use of these sources: language. Different meanings could have been read from the documents by the translators. Several ideas, values and opinions are moulded into a language with different words which might result in a slightly different meaning than the original intention of the author. Fortunately, the publications of the documents inform us on the respective changes the translators made, for example with notes on choices of formulations. Furthermore, some difficult interpretable native words are left in the indigenous language and several unclear excerpts are transcribed in the publications, often adding punctuations and clarifying words between brackets. A few texts have been literally translated, while others tend to be more interpretive. Sometimes the documents were not translated by a modern scientist, but already by Spaniards in colonial times. These influences have to be taken into account when using indigenous sources.

From modern research we turn to the colonial effects on the documents. The documents appear within two decennia after the conquest, which already implies at least a generation of Spanish introductions and intermixing. First of all the drawing up of such documents shows a European tradition. It can be stated that already the writing in alphabetic script implicates Spanish presence and interaction in that respective native community, and an introduction in Spanish tradition, rules and customs. From then on, the native inhabitant had to mould his or her ideas and problems in this European model. These, and its effects on the writings, are visible in the documents.

The introduction of writing petitions and testaments also meant that the document was addressed to someone who can read this alphabetic writing, which in turn affected the issues described in the documents: leaving inappropriate opinions out, showing-off Christianity, favouring or impressing the reader, or exaggerate for personal gains. Petitions and complaints were mainly addressed to Spanish officials, while testaments or personal matters were to read by the priests. The writing of such documents could be individual, but was mainly a communal activity where several members of a village came together, including local nobles and the town council, a notary and occasionally Spanish officials or priests (Restall et al. 2005, 113). Some natives learned to write and/or to speak

Spanish and took the role of notary or interpreter, but often Spaniards were present in the court or during the writing, influencing what was written down or not.

An example is a recording of a debate in Tlaxcala (1553). The text initiates with: “they assembled there in the *cabildo* (council) the magnificent lord Alonso de Galdo, Corregidor in the province of Tlaxcala for his majesty, and the interpreter, Miguel Cardenal, Spaniard [...] It was done before us, Fabián Rodríguez, Diego de Soto, and Sancho de Rozas, notaries of the cabildo of Tlaxcala” (in Restall et al. 2005, 131). It shows the different people behind the making of the manuscript. As a side note to the theme of this thesis, all documents are signed by male council-members or notaries, for these two occupations are based on a European model. The Spanish model implemented on the native communities distinguished between men and women and their access in public offices and meetings. Together with the initial reason to write the document, the aforementioned procedures influence how these novel practices and procedures intersect with the daily livings of individual men and women. So these writings were indirectly, not literally visible in the documents, affected by the Spanish interaction, presence or guidance, and the interpreter or addressee.

Knowing the realization of the documents in general, does not guarantee that this is always visible in the particular cases. Due to the signatures and the nationality implied by the name, we might be able to see if Spaniards were present, but it is not always clear. Next to this, the context and local circumstances are not always known. This leads to questions as: why and by whom is the document written, what is the interest or motivation, and to who is it addressed? Furthermore, the situations in the documents only show a particular moment in time, a small part in the long process of colonisation and change. However, we are able to see traditional aspects in that the native person still has a calendar name or writes in the indigenous language, showing a consistent bond with their own tradition and Mesoamerican traits. Almost all documents used in this thesis are originally written in Maya, Nahuatl or Mixtec and therefore it is likely that, together with the language, traditional notions are expressed as well.

To investigate the colonial Spanish influence on the way gender in Mesoamerica is conceived in the primary sources and consequently modern research, the iconic Florentine Codex or *Historia general* will be analysed as

main example. This accessible chronicle is one of the focal sources for (pre-Columbian) Nahua culture and is investigated extensively. This is also a reason to prominently incorporate this source in the analysis on biases. Despite the fact that the book is written some decades after the conquest (book I in 1547, León-Portilla 2002, 115), Sahagún wrote about pre-colonial Nahua practices that were still present in the colonial period. It encompasses a thorough description in Nahuatl and Spanish on native society and beliefs, including conceptions on gender and morality. The latter theme is critical in relation to ontology and worldmaking (Overing 1990, 604).

It can be stated that the Florentine Codex might not eventually differ much from the native documents since it is written in Nahuatl and drawn up on the hand of indigenous informants. However, exactly the Spanish mediator and his interpretation define the difference in the two groups of documents. Sahagún's Christian introductions are many times literally visible through the use of words such as 'idolatry' or references to the 'omnipresent god'. Other influences and biases that may be unconscious and less clear might also be embedded in the document. If a Spanish public was addressed, the native customs had to be translated in comprehensible terms to be understood by Westerners. The goal of the book also influences what is written and how. Thus to understand the possible gender biases in the chronicle we do not only have to criticise Sahagún's influences, but also ask questions about the document itself. Therefore a similar source study provided above is useful for the Florentine Codex. The following paragraphs will analyse briefly the scope of the book and its meaning in the colonial period. This background is crucial to understand the way the data is selected, guided and presented in the manuscript.

Bernardino de Sahagún was a Franciscan missionary born around 1499 in Sahagún de Campos, Spain (d'Owler and Cline 1974, 186). Not much is known about his education, except that he went to the University of Salamanca, a centre where the Spanish renaissance was clearly present. Here he learned the disciplines he applied in his exploration of the New World: linguistics, grammar, moral theology and philosophy (León-Portilla 2002, 38-9). These foci come back in the Florentine Codex. After his study he went to the Franciscan order, and in 1529, eight years after the Spanish Conquest in Mexico, Sahagún and his associates went to Veracruz to put their missionary training in practice. The goal

was to spread the Word of Christ and to convert the indigenous population to a Christian moral lifestyle.

During his more than sixty year stay in Mexico, Sahagún was more or less integrated in the Mexican society and knowledgeable of Nahua culture, language and environment. Sahagún received the command of the head of the provincial Franciscan order "to write in the Mexican language all that which may seem useful for the indoctrination, culture and religious conversion to Christianity among the natives of New Spain, to aid the workers and missionaries toward their indoctrination" (d'Owler and Cline 1974, 187-8). This announced certain subjects to deal with in what eventually would lead to the encyclopaedic, ethnographical *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España,* finished in twelve books around 1568. Through penetrating the thoughts, beliefs and religious practices of the Nahua, the indigenous religion and idolatrous practices could be eliminated, and Christianity could be built on its foundation.

The most important way to reveal this, is by understanding the native language. According to de Alva et al. (1988, 10) Sahagún's prime objective was to provide extensive examples of texts in the Nahuatl language, which could in turn illustrate the Nahua ways of speech to other missionaries who used the native communication system for Christian indoctrination. Furthermore, the moral focus in the document can be a result of the goal to make the people "peaceful, loyal subjects of the Crown" (de Alva 1988, 41) instead of only imposing Christian belief. For this reason, customs had to be examined to extract deviations from the European norm and insert the new ideology. As will come up in this research, Christian moral codes and ideas on gender are intrinsically related. Another reason for the drawing of the document, as Sahagún writes in his introduction, is that there are "many idolatrous things in our presence without our understanding of it" and the Florentine Codex makes this visible for fellow-missionaries in that they don't miss it. It shows that religious components are interwoven and embedded in daily practices.

Knowing the reasons behind the writings, it is expected that it would have circulated and be extensively used throughout Mexico by other missionaries. There are earlier drafts of the *Historia general* (see discussion of its evolution in d'Owler and Cline 1974) and some examples and similarities in other books, which might have been used as copies, but are interpreted as preliminary versions of the Florentine Codex. Exact copies are not known, only transcriptions

or parts of the books are reproduced. The making of copies and the adding of information by native Mexicans is mentioned by Sahagún in the prologue. The book used today in culture history studies might therefore not be the first or the final version of the Florentine Codex.

Then, how did Sahagún became informed on Nahua culture and how did he decide what was needed to incorporate Christian morality in the native culture? The most important means to investigate Nahua culture was to learn the indigenous language and to have close contact with the native inhabitants of Mexico. A step further, Sahagún started to control the flowery speech (*huehuetlatolli*) to be able to communicate with higher consultants (Primeros Memoriales folio 70r, Sullivan & Nicholson et al. 1997, 294-5). Sahagún systematically collected data and used questionnaires that the Aztecs could answer in their own way (León-Portilla 2002, 259-61). In this way, the story, content or topic to be told was already more or less predetermined by Sahagún.

Sahagún's methodology, also incorporated in his chronicle, might have guided the information displayed in the Florentine Codex. The propositions of the Florentine Codex (to penetrate the ancient religion, obtain texts for Nahua vocabulary and register Nahua culture) determines for a large part the methods and outcomes of Sahagún's research. Through questionnaires, the friar had put emphasises on certain subjects, left themes out, focused on certain answers, restricted information, which could therefore lead the respondents to specific answers they normally wouldn't find important or thought about it in that way. Knowing the goal of the chronicle, we can observe what information Sahagún wanted to extract from the native people. Also of interest is what he did not find interesting to know for his goal: aspects not recorded in the document does not exclude its presence in native society.

Next to the questionnaires, the friar received help from high-class Nahua informants. These were the best students from the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco whom were educated by Sahagún himself and would assist him by writing his ethnographic and linguistic works (Nicholson 2002, 22-3). The informants were still Nahua, but educated in European ways. Therefore, they wrote and reconstructed the Aztec culture according to their own views, but moulded in a European conceptual frame. As M. Joyce (in Joyce 2002, 103) writes: "decades of Mexica informants responding to the old Franciscan

Sahagún's protoethnographies successively learned from these questions themselves how to tell him the stories in the forms his culture could hear".

Because of the high-born assistants of Sahagún, it is expected that mainly the upper class life of central Mexico is portrayed in the document. Yet, sometimes the commoners are described, but in both cases Sahagún mentions the class of the people being portrayed. So can this local display of Nahua culture be applied on the whole of Mexico and for all classes? Another sixteenth-century missionary in Mexico, fray Diego Durán (1971, 287), provides insight in this matter: "I speak of the illustrious and noble people because I must confess that there was a coarse lower class […] it is my opinion that, no matter how beastly, they practiced their religion and its precepts well, though not with the refinements of the noblemen and lords". This indicated that the essence of certain practices and conceptions are similar throughout classes, but because of differences in wealth and accessibilities it differed a little. Furthermore, Mesoamerican culture went through an equal development with a probable similar origin, sharing ways of subsistence, economy, division of labour, social organisation, characteristic tools, traits and beliefs recognisable throughout the area. Because of this, it is expected gender conceptualisations on a social-civic level were also generally similar throughout Mesoamerican geography.

Furthermore, the nearby Spanish presence, the chaos, deaths and drastic change due to the conquest might already have an influence on the daily life after the arrival of the Spaniards. As is visible in the native administrative documents and testaments, Spanish technology and products were introduced, Roman law, churches and indoctrinations, political conflicts and of course different cultural aspects practiced by the intruders. Converting the native population meant that many practices intertwined with religion and cosmology had to change as well or were restricted. However, regarding the strength of century-old embedded traditions and memory, the customs could still have been addressed by Sahagún and his assistants through speech and questions. So the information on the colonial period is written by Sahagún as eye-witness, but the post-classic Nahua life is depicted on account of second-hand interpretations. The question is which ones are affected by Spanish culture and which are not.

This thesis is not aimed at rejecting the data represented in the Florentine Codex or to show that it cannot be used as a liable source. De Alva (1988, 39) sees Sahagún as being aware of his conceptual and methodological

assumptions and “taking into consideration indigenous cultural reality to the extent his own prejudices permitted”. This might be visible in practices and ideas that deviated from Christian conventions. With respect to the indigenous experiences expressed through keeping narratives in-tact, learning the language and penetrating culture by native informants would in modern days be categorised as an emic approach. As Joyce (2002, 119) complement: the document is written up with help of various Nahua noblemen through a process of communication and dialogues, therefore these voices are inherent with traditional meanings and “can be revoiced as echoes of the original Aztec speakers”.

In all, the reasons why the texts for the Florentine Codex came into being is not to provide an extensive account of new knowledge about Mesoamerican culture, but attempted “to explain Aztec society in such a way and to the limited extent necessary to enable the work of conversion” (ibid.). It is important to acknowledge that Christian indoctrination did not only mean the insertion of Christian religion, but also includes moral appropriate behaviour, social order, and ideas on sexuality, virtues and sins. The chronicle provides examples of societal aspects that were recognised by Sahagún and formed in even more comprehensible interpretations for other friars to understand these aspects of Mesoamerican tradition as well. From here the friars could improve and fulfil their tasks as converters by imposing auxiliary Christian ideas in Mesoamerican customs.

Then, how are the individual native sources combined with this generalised version of society presented in the Florentine Codex? The latter source describes a gender ideology; normative and idealised behaviour. This corresponds with the summarising and broad sketch of early modern European views on gender, which are also normative in character. Most likely, this depicted ideal deviated from actual behaviour. Nevertheless it provides insights in societal ideals, morality and social organisation, and it reflected exemplary behaviour of the higher social classes.

On the other hand, the documents written by native Mesoamerican, often written by lower class people, show the actual practices that did not always concur with normative expectations. The documents of native inhabitants reveal a scattered account of personal experiences and individual practices of gender from specific Mesoamerican communities on a particular day, whereas the

Spanish sources depict a generalised view drawn up from Central Mexican noblemen. Furthermore, this thesis will distinguish between higher and lower classes, since this is an area where approaches to gender differ. The individual documents will not be used to detract grand narratives as representing the whole of Mesoamerica, rather to show local examples of the norm, the existence of variable possibilities, expressions of the general view and the local diversity of this culture area. Comparing actual practices and differences of this ideology written in the small-scale native documents within the large-scale ruling social norms can shed light on ways of construction, negotiation and enactment of gender and identity. With this, a balance and relationship is made between the general and the specific, society and individual, ideology and practice.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The Florentine Codex will be analysed along the lines of Nelson Goodman's ways of worldmaking (1978), or the cognitive processes of creating knowledges. Prominent in his work, and followed in this thesis, are the philosophies of relativism and constructivism, which views perceptions as constantly preceded by conceptions. Objects, cultures, people and data are interpreted within a paradigm, a frame of reference, or a worldview, which prefabricates assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, or metaphors by which the data is interpreted. That is, we use existing descriptions to describe another, linguistically as well as conceptually. "No set of objects speaks except through a voice we provide," as Joyce (2002, 117) poetically states. Presumptions on objects and practices are therefore derived from references to our own world. This should not be regarded as true or false; to be able to understand certain past actions and conceptions, we have to refer to our conceptual frame (Overing 1990, 605). We need similarities, resemblances and references to our world and describe it in those terms so that we, but also others from our culture, can equally understand it. For example, if a Spanish public was addressed in the Spanish ethnographic works, the native customs had to be understood by a Western public, and fit within the paradigm for the readers to make sense out of it.

The idea of pluralism is that there are various conceptual schemes, each with its own local notions on truth, rationality and knowledge derived from previous experiences, interests, personal insights, religion, education and/or

cultural transmission. Being aware of this multitude of worlds is crucial in the anthropological disciplines. It can be applied on interpreting and understanding other peoples, cultures and practices like Joanna Overing (1990) has showed in her use of Goodman's work, but it can also be relevant for what researchers do and how they handle data in science. As archaeologists, we create narratives out of ancient material and mould it into writing (Joyce 2002). A post-modern vision is the recognition that archaeologists (re)construct the past with contemporary knowledge, and where the paradigm and views of the researcher influences interpretations (Corbey 2005). The same can be applied on the Spanish chroniclers, often seen as the first ethnographers, as they interpreted, wrote down and constructed Mesoamerican culture.

To let go of the criticism on relativism that this idea of worldmaking is in itself creating a knowledge, is that this research uses Goodman's approach more as a tool to search for the reasons behind the realisation of scientific narratives, instead of defining a true view or reality. It can be used to give an impression of the line of interpretations, or the systems of descriptions, that are used for understanding other periods or cultures within, in this case, the early modern European conceptual scheme. It is also not intended to try to stand above all worldviews and attain the grand narrator's view to penetrate all worldviews. The European worldview is in this respect also a world more or less created from a contemporary conceptual frame. However, the ideas written by the native Mesoamericans and the opinions expressed by the sixteenth-century friar are real views. This puts constraints on derived outcomes and guides interpretations only in limited divergent ways. Following Overing (1990) this research deals less with what is written, but instead focuses on how people come to understand other cultures and how the image of Mesoamerican culture and gender conceptualisations came into being.

The idea of a multitude of worlds allows us to acknowledge other ways of conceiving, and not holding on to our own view as the only true knowledge. "The narratives that archaeologists begin to construct in the field, lab, and classroom enter formal texts as echoed voices. These narratives are themselves engagements with already voiced dialogues from our disciplinary history and discourse about the past from outside the discipline" (Joyce 2002, 2). Just this awareness of practices of worldmaking makes us take into account that views differ throughout places, and also through time, and shows that our rooted

assumptions are not always empirically grounded. A pluralist view helps us to look over the boundary of our own worldview; it makes us aware of our own ways of handling data, definitions we use, which together with viewing data from different perspectives makes an inquiry more eloquent. This also fits in the different perspectives captured in the native and Spanish documents, which together contribute to the rich and plural views that existed in the past.

The concept of gender fits in as well, since it is an ambiguous concept, shifting throughout time, cultures, paradigms and individual notions. The dominance of men over women is often held as an axiomatic truth, embedded in patriarchal European roots, and therefore often overlaid on other cultures. However, there is currently no consensus on the origins of sex difference in relation to a hierarchical constitution; "patriarchy is not a uniform feature of human societies" rather it is dependent on the activities that yield status in a society (Wood & Eagly 2002, 704-5). Many variations on the cultural meanings of men and women exist in the world. Therefore this research takes this dichotomous male-dominance view as yet another paradigm, rather than as universally or naturally innate. On the other hand, it does not exclude that a similar model was present in Mesoamerica as well, or that the past was rigorously different or even oppositional compared to today.

However, the concept gender as defined today was not a word in a Mesoamerican language, and it also might not have been the major definer in social status as it was in Europe. This research will follow Stockett (2005) and Joyce (2000a) who include other social variables, interrelated with gender, leading to the construction, negotiation and enactment of identity and social organisation in Mesoamerica. Their synthesis has let this idea to stand more closely to the way one's place and role in Mesoamerican society was defined. In other words, it uses gender as one part of an assemblage of factors that compose one's identity. An elaboration on this and the debate on gender in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica will follow in chapter 2.3.

To continue with Goodman's approach in this research: what processes are involved when interpreting another culture? Goodman argues that all these conceptual worlds are derived from existing worlds, the one of the interpreter, and which are therefore mere other versions of knowledges. As showed above, the first thing that is done in this thesis is to understand the European writers' normative views and experiences in relation to the concept of gender. This

normative image is expected to have functioned as a frame of reference, or the 'ready-made world' in Goodman's words, to interpret Mesoamerican culture. Goodman (1978, 7-17) illustrates some of the cognitive processes that are involved in worldmaking from, and related to, other versions of worlds. A first principle is that identification depends on categorisation and association. This involves processes such as predicating labels and names, re-grouping into classes and sub-classes, sorting into kinds, making connections, in other words: composing and decomposing.

A second act of worldmaking is weighing. Some aspects belong to one world, but may not be present or identified as such in another. It might also be the case that these are missed because they were sorted as irrelevant in the culture of the interpreter. This process includes a creation of hierarchical classifications, from emphasising certain elements to leaving others unmentioned. As will be visible later, this is highly linked to ideas of values, projecting known values on new categories in the other culture. This is in turn related to the third aspect: ordering. This process does not always involve hierarchies, but also chronologies, dichotomies or orderings within orderings. As stated above, identifying aspects from another culture involves relating it to classifications, orderings and groupings from the known world. An aspect of the new culture is put in a known group because of its relation to the specific identity of that grouping, nevertheless the original meaning of that element. The organisation in that specific class is then coupled to the preconceived status, associated emotions and meaning of the grouping. This ordering also involves language, in particular words and definitions, which can differ even among dialects.

Another way of worldmaking involves deletion and supplementation, filling out and filling in. With a certain goal in mind, we "find what we are prepared to find (what we look for or what forcefully affronts our expectations), and that we are likely to be blind to what neither helps nor hinders our pursuits" (Goodman 1978, 14). Certain aspects are not picked up when they do not fall into the known expectations derived from the frame of reference. When something does not seem familiar it might be supplemented by a better known feature, equalling certain practices or objects with known ones. Certain things taken for granted might not be noticed, while in other worlds it is an accentuated part of life. A fifth and final process of creating knowledge pointed by Goodman is deformation.

Aspects can be deformed, corrected or smoothed out, all to make it fit within the worldview. In chapter 3 to 5 this abstract description of worldmaking will be put into practice and in more concrete terms in relation to male and female categorisations.

Mentioning all these processes does not mean that these are always or entirely involved. Rather, it provides a start of a systematic study of the Spanish version of the Mesoamerican world and how Sahagún produced this knowledge, and from which our version of Mesoamerican gender notions is derived. Some questions we can ask on the Spanish documents: What did not fit in the Spanish worldview? Where do gaps exist; what is left out? Where do we see European supplementations or Christian ways of ordering? Is a similar ordering in male and female categorisations placed on Mesoamerican culture? Do we see relations to the Spanish world? Are European stereotypes, assumptions and metaphors used in female descriptions? Throughout the reading of the documents more related questions came up, which will be elaborated in the respective chapters. Again, the main concern is: in what way did the Spanish writer interpreted native gender relations from his own frame of reference?

1.4 Concluding outline

The thesis stands in the middle of the debate on Mesoamerican gender relations, by critically assessing the use of sixteenth-century colonial documents as representing traditional Mesoamerican life. It focuses on the early modern Spanish, Christian and masculine backgrounds of the primary colonial sources which shine through the texts as a bias from which modern researchers try to reconstruct post-classic gender relations in Mexico. Analysing the ways of how people come to understand other cultures, offers an original approach which goes back to the core of the data and the creation of knowledge on gender. The method provided by Goodman's ways of worldmaking can also be extended to present-day research, on how we as archaeologists, anthropologists and historians construct the past within a particular frame of reference.

First of all, specific ideas exist on gender and the differences, horizontal and vertical, between men and women. This will be the focus of chapter 2, as an extended introduction of the research with a focus on gender throughout time (pre-colonial, colonial and modern periods) and space (Mesoamerica and

Europe). Definitions, modern assumptions and personal ideas in research on gender and the sexes will be treated in chapter 2.1. This is followed by a discussion of the current state of knowledge of gender relations in Mesoamerican research, to show the gaps and problems and to which this research will contribute (chapter 2.2). The hypothesis of this manuscript, derived from relativist philosophy, is that the Spanish male chroniclers coloured the information on gender in colonial writings with gendered assumptions and prejudices based on their own sixteenth-century patriarchal and Christian conceptual frame and experiences. The origins of these culturally rooted preconceptions on men and women will be sought in chapter 2.3, to understand the possible framework on which the Spaniards reflected and phrased their conceptualisation on Mesoamerican people.

Chapter 3 to 5 form the main part on gendered life phases represented in the Florentine Codex and native colonial manuscripts. The combination of these two sources reveals new considerations and shows their different roles in the reconstruction of Mesoamerican gender relations. Each part focuses on one gendered theme in relation to others aspects that compose identity: age, social relations and occupation. First the Spanish knowledge and practices concerning the particular theme will be outlined. This makes up the normative prefabricated cultural conceptions on gender that might be propagated in the chronicles and on which Mesoamerican practices were reflected. It makes us aware of the background of the Spanish writer, for his experiences, knowledge, definitions, stereotypes and categories are used to understand the unknown culture in Mexico in known terms.

In the second part of each chapter the information provided by Sahagún is analysed on the way gender relations are portrayed in his chronicle. At the end, the native sources will provide traditional insights of native inhabitants which are used to complement the Spanish interpretations to be able to detract biased interpretations. This will be done conform the processes of worldmaking presented by Goodman (1978). A focus is laid on what is left out, how men and women are categorised, and where links are made to typical Christian-European concepts, metaphors, definitions or stereotypes.

The conclusion approaches the gender bias in more concrete terms, how the Spaniards coloured our current representation of Mesoamerican gender relations, how man-woman relations are portrayed, identified and categorised,

and which aspects are accentuated or left out. To clarify again, this research is not really about what is described, but how people come to understand other cultures and how the image of Mesoamerican culture and gender conceptualisations came into being. In addition, with the comparison of the native sources, some interpretations by Sahagún can be affirmed or rejected, revealing new ideas and confirming existing conclusions on tradition gender ideas. This will all be brought in relation to the current debate on gender in Mesoamerica and results in a critical note for contemporary researchers in constructing a gendered past with colonial sources.

Chapter 2: GENDER IN TIME AND SPACE

In the last decades, gender has become an important research subject among the social sciences. In archaeology it has proven to be a fruitful way to approach ancient societies, especially in Mesoamerican archaeology with its abundant variety of sources and elaborate depictions of men and women. Then what do these 'engendered studies' add to the current knowledge corpus of Mesoamerica? How does an engendered archaeology differ from other archaeologies? As an extended introduction, this part being especially focused on gender addresses the current academic debate on gender in Mesoamerica, as well as gender in the social sciences in general, and situates this thesis in it. The chapter ends with early modern European notions on gender to understand the background of conceptualisations and practices of the Spanish colonists, as a set-up to the main analysis in chapter 3 to 5. As a general character throughout this chapter and thesis, ingrained assumptions will be rethought from biology to social constructionism; from duality to multiple genders; from universality to multivocality; and from normative ideologies to a focus on identities; back and forth from Western researchers, colonial Spaniards and native Mesoamericans.

2.1 A gendered framework

Studying gender is often taken as similar as feminist studies; focusing on women in society. The reason for this is that most feminist researchers see women as

neglected in history. There is truth in this, since women were mostly not dealt with in Western historical documents, did not play important roles in the highly researched public and elite spheres or were oppressed in society and therefore not visible. This is also caused by predominantly male researchers that often described history from their own perspective and with men in the forefront (firstly criticised in archaeology by Conkey and Spector in 1984). This research challenges the dominant Western cultural assumptions concerning gender and departs with the acknowledgement that "ancient women and men were equally innovative and intelligent, thus their contributions to our reconstructions of the ancient past are equally important" (Ardren 2008, 5). In the last decades, research in ancient Mesoamerica shows a shift towards the incorporation of female and male activities, instead of previously more generalised as assumingly a male-centred representation of society.

Gendered studies of the past decades show some general characteristics, which are also incorporated in this thesis. In these studies exists a disagreement of the role biology plays in the constitution of gender; it has the character to reject unproven previous assumptions on the social past, mainly Western ideas projected on the past; it reinterprets data and traditional interpretations; it uses various kinds of sources, generating new ideas and questions; and there is an agreement to show different perspectives, precisely because gender is unfixed and multidimensional (Ardren 2008). In all, engendering research provides an approach that comes closer to native conceptualisations and experiences of the world.

Contrarily to the first line of this chapter, this research does not focus exclusively on women in Mesoamerica. Archaeology and history is about people in the past; both women and men are the major constituents of (past) societies, each with specific roles and contributions. So substituting the word 'people' by 'men and women' makes the research more specific and inclusive. Looking at the genders separately in what they do, how they experience life and also their mutual interactions, will provide a more thorough insight into the building blocks of society. Gender is often characterised as the basic category of social structure of a society and deals with cultural traditions, division of labour as essential for social organisation and relations, economy and activities, personhood and agency, ideology behaviour and morality, appearance, material, power and status; in other words all kinds of aspects that "provided the machinery of

complex societies" (Ardren 2008, 2). In this respect, to understand a culture is to consider both sexes, which literally peoples the past. This provides different angles, and holistic, plural as well as individual experiences that enrich our understandings of ancient life.

Looking at men and women separately consequently indicates that men and women are two different components of society, however the mutual relationships between the two sexes is of main importance as well. This leads us to a clarification of the concept of gender used in social and historical sciences and this thesis. Gender is here defined as socially and culturally constructed ways of behaviour according to one's biological sex (Marchbank & Letherby 2007, 5). This definition includes a normative view on expected behaviour of gender categories, as well as how individual men and women conceive themselves, and the meanings they ascribe to the other sex. This normative view falls under the term gender ideology, which is defined as general conceptions in a society regarding expectations and ideals of characteristic behaviour and appearance as expressions of male and female categories (Stockett 2005, 567). Next to a general ideology, this thesis shows that gendered behaviour and expectations vary in different social life phases and classes.

Using the term gender as cultural expression of one's biological sex implicates a social constructionist/cultural relativist view, while including an underlying biological and evolutionary origin. These are two contrasting views on differences in men and women, where the former sees biological differences as having an unfixed meaning throughout cultures, while evolutionary psychologists perceive the physical attributes as the main reasons for gender differences. Some differences in the sexes have been explained by physical attributes: women are restricted for certain functions by their reproductive activities, and males' physical strength provides the least effort for resource provision. However, not all gendered activities can be explained biologically (e.g. expressed differences in male and female clothing or manners) and it is also related to specific contexts, social structure and the environment. This biosocial perspective is pointed by Wood and Eagly (2002). Their cross-cultural analysis on sex differences in nonindustrial societies reveals a considerable variation of the conception of gender throughout cultures, but also some profound similarities on sexed division of labour that might be defined as near-universals.

The larger part of research on gender deals with gender differences and divisions of labour in relation to power and status. This results in the emergence of gender roles, another definition used in this thesis, being the expected "psychological characteristics that equip [people] for the tasks that their sex typically performs" (Wood and Eagly 2002, 701). The authors continue that the association of women with domestic activities generates "the associated skills, values, and motives [that] become stereotypic of women and are incorporated into the female gender role." The same goes for men who mainly are involved in resource acquisition. This in turn guides social behaviour, which is mediated by education and socialisation processes (ibid.). In addition, this idea fits in Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender as an activity, something that has to be performed and through its repetition, imitation and reproduction it becomes conceived as 'natural', which in turn guides gendered behaviour.

This theory is not only focused on gender and sex, but deals with identities. Identity, as post-modern research subject in archaeology, refers to a shared similar character of a group of persons, while at the same time refers to its distinctiveness (Fowler 2010, 353). Fowler continues that identities exist in various scales, and similarities and differences between the identity categories show up through social interaction. Of further importance is that specific identities allow access to, for example, particular locations, opportunities, events, and/or status. Gender and sex can be regarded as some of the aspects that constitutes one's identity. Mauss (1973) further notes, that through reiteration, the way one behaves becomes characteristic, or even stereotypical, of that social group. The body, as locus of identity formation (cf. Fischer and Loren 2003, 225), is then used to show others one's identity, by ways of moving, activities, hairdress or costumes (these aspects are also described in the Florentine Codex). As the theories of Mauss (1973) and Butler (1991) suggest, gendered behaviour is imposed by culture as regulatory regime. Therefore identity categories are repeated by society, interaction, education and rituals.

However, as seen above, physical differences in the sexes does guide a certain division of activities from which gender roles, stereotypes and behaviour is generated. Also, specific tasks carried out by one gender can become characteristic of that gender's identity. First it has to be stated that there are some specific activities carried out predominantly by men throughout cultures, metallurgy and hunting (see Wood and Eagly 2002, table 1). Next to this, most

activities are variably carried out by men and women, for example agricultural activities and crafting, which do not require a specific physical advantage characteristic of male or females. An example, the *rebozo* typical for Mesoamerica has shown to be of excellent use to carry infants on the back of women while women work the *milpa* and provide subsistence (figure 2.1). The conclusion that can be made here is that cultural or social conceptualisation has to be taken into account, and that only few activities are biologically determined and universal. Restrictions can be adapted by tools, and cross-gendered activities occur. Therefore views about sex and gender "are framed and mediated

Figure 2.1 Two Mixtec women and a man working the maize field in Tijaltepec, Oaxaca. The left woman is carrying her child on her back (Photo by Paul van den Akker).

by the social institution of gender" which results in different conceptions and discourses on gender throughout paradigms, cultures and social settings (Knaak 2004, 304).

Then, how came the association of status and power attached to gender categories? The biosocial thesis theorises it as follows: "to the extent that men and women are biologically specialized to efficiently perform different activities, the sex that can more readily perform the activities that yield status and power is advantaged in a gender hierarchy" (Wood and Eagly 2002, 704). So, the vertical differences between men and women have to do with culturally ascribed values to certain activities and products. In many nonindustrial cultures with a

hierarchical division in gender, the women are most likely to be subordinated; this includes a lack of resources, authority, lesser education, literacy and health care (Wood and Eagly 2002, 710; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). This is named patriarchy, defined as a social system in which men are dominant in relation to women (Holmes 2007, 2). Marchbank and Letherby (2007, 11) add that it implies a fixed situation, in this system is no space for the female struggle, there is only subordination of women. Evolutionary psychologists argue for universality of patriarchy in societies due to male's orientation to compete for dominance and females' dependency on resources provided by the man, while cultural constructionists argue that expressions of this vary throughout cultures and depend on external factors (Wood and Eagly 2002, 710). There are various cultures known without gender inequality and others with a matriarchal model (see ibid.; 711). This means that there is currently no consensus on the universality or culturally determinant of patriarchy in societies; it is a prevalent but unpredictable feature in cultures.

This introduction to gender, which also functions as background for academic reconstructions of gender in the past, shows that this concept is ambiguous, multidimensional, unfixed and having context-specific cultural expressions in human societies. Furthermore conceptualisations and perceptions of man-woman relations in other cultures are subject to value-based associations and experiences. This thesis argues that this was also the case with the culture contact of Europeans and Mesoamericans. Since gender expressions are not universal, expectations of women's behaviour or men's appearance would have differed in Europe from Mesoamerica. It is a matter of where emphasises and values are put, which might not only differ throughout time and space, but also within a specific gendered convention.

A gender bias can be defined as one's "own evaluation of the relation between the sexes", consciously or unconsciously (Milton 1979, 53). There exist little systematic and precise studies on the definition or concrete effects of a gender bias in archaeology, anthropology or history. The common idea of a male bias is the substitution of men as the normative actors, while women were included as well (Brown 1983). However, as this thesis will show, this view appears to be more complex and it depends not only on the sex of the author, but also his background, beliefs, experiences, ethnicity and age. An illustrative example on how cultural presumptions on gender and values shape

interpretations in research comes from influential ethnologist Franz Boas on 'primitive art' of the Northwest Pacific Coast people. His research on the symbolic meaning of art concludes that men make the more symbolic art, having "a certain degree of realism and is full of meaning", while on the other hand there is the woman's art which is formal and "had, at most, pattern names and no especially marked significance" (Boas 1955, 183). Here we see the Western male researcher's influence, coming from a society where men's work is valued higher and who have generally a higher status in relation to women, which resonates in this case in values, power and importance. His ideas that women do not serve a certain use and are incapable for important production was assumed to be similar in other cultures.

In contrast to Boas' interpretation, female Northwest Coast decoration was in fact 'full of meaning' as well; it referred to myths, represented clan identity and social status, and functioned as decoration (according to Tutchone Ukjese van Kampen, personal communication 2010). Based on and referred to his worldview, Boas placed and shaped his own conceptions and values on the world of the native Americans, not looking further than his familiar presumptions, a focus on male informants, missing or leaving out the things that were not important in his view, and putting a known ordering and weighting on the world of 'the Other' for explanation. In this case, Boas' interpretation was based on his own frame of reference, while in the native society, headed probably under a different worldview, it was conceived differently. A comparable example is the assumption of men associated with the crafting of prestige items (Joyce 2004, 309), while later we will see that also noblewomen in Mesoamerica practiced featherwork or embroidery. A similar process might have taken place in the Spanish sources. Therefore a critical examination of the Spanish worldview plus ideas on values has to be known when approaching Spanish interpretations.

2.2 Gender in Mesoamerican research

This thesis follows Rosemary Joyce, who is one of the leading archaeologists on gender in Mesoamerica. Her expertise in engendered research and archaeological theory are expressed in foci on the social aspects of Mesoamerican society, such as children, the body, social status and material culture as negotiating men and women's place in society. Especially her focus on

the way knowledge is created through archaeology and her focus on Mesoamerican gendered identities fits in this research. Several starting-points for the text in this thesis were pointed by her, but not elaborated in concrete ways, such as the Spanish reformulation of unintelligible Mesoamerican features in their own terms to convert the natives to Christianity easier, and the conception of femininity as a universal category, and that these two concepts blurred our current views of Mesoamerican gender relations. Because of this, the sixteenth-century documents show “lesser or distorted mirror images of Europe” (Joyce 2000a, 1). She argues to look for distinct features, which is exactly what this research does: looking for differences in Spanish-Mesoamerican similarities with the help of insider views from native documents.

What are the general ideas on gender in Mesoamerica in current academic research? There are two hypotheses on pre-colonial gender relations: binary gender divisions based on complementarity or hierarchy. Here again the debate goes between an equal differentiation among men and women and the question of a patriarchal model, in concert with the role of biology in gender as discussed above. Current topics on gender mainly focus on cosmology, man-woman power relations; studies of the body, associating burials with gendered grave goods; and on work and division of labour (Ardren 2008). Ardren mentions, moreover, the shift from finding women in history towards the conceptualisation of gender in the past.

Recent gendered studies argue that gender in Mesoamerica was more complex as previously thought, it was multidimensional and unfixed. Another important movement leads towards incorporating other aspects that make up identity, instead of seeing gender as the major constituent of identity (Joyce 2002; Stockett 2008). The different relations of gender within social life phases, sexual status, class and work will be treated in this research as well. Also book 10 of the Florentine Codex divides persons’ characteristics not only in gender, but also in life phases from boy to old man and relations with each other, such as stepmother or sister-in-law each with different expectations and duties. In addition, life stages of early modern European women are often categorized according to the supervising men: first the father, followed by the husband and then the son.

Because of Joyce’s insights presented in this research, it is useful to position her arguments in the gender debate in Mesoamerica. Joyce contributed

to a definition of gender in Mesoamerica as a fluid potential and as performance (sensu Judith Butler). Gendered performances and activities consequently lead to being representative for a specific category of gender. This is also visible in visual representations, either persons' appearance or iconography and figurines. So for example, weaving did not only show others this woman's feminine identity, but also that she is young, marriageable and probably of noble origin (Joyce 2000a, 11). This illustrates the important shift in engendered archaeology that focuses on gender as not the only signifier of identity; it is an assemblage of age, class, profession, and sexual status, among others (see also Stockett 2008). Furthermore Joyce (2002) is at the forefront of an archaeology that encourages multivocality in scientific approaches and interpretations. Her concrete interpretations on how gender was conceived in the Mesoamerican past will be discussed below.

Notwithstanding the multivocality of engendered research, there are some consensi on gender in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. The principle is that differences between male and female identities are evident in burial practices and in pre-colonial depictions of gendered garments, hairdresses, names and regalia on vases, figurines, murals and codices. From the late formative period, the only firm conclusion that can be made concerning differences in gender is that weaving and spinning were typically female occupations (Joyce 2000a, 53). This continues in the Classic Maya period, where figurines show women in cloth and food production, animal care and nursing children (Joyce 2000a, 68-9). Joyce adds that male images are depicted on thrones, as musicians, hunters and warriors and involved in ritual sacrifice. Furthermore the richly painted vessels support these activities and extend the female activities to serving men with attributes and food and therefore contribute in rituals (ibid., 70-71). The genders are differentiated here by garments and hairdresses symbolising masculine and feminine identities. Along with the scattered character of the archaeological record, this image of the past is rather essentialised and focused on a division of labour. It shows a very static, binary and normative view on gender. More archaeological examples and studies are coming up that add exceptions to these idealised views.

On post-classic Mexican gender models researchers are still debating the gender complementary or hierarchical character of man-woman relations. A complex social stratification in societies can make researches expect, and

therefore see, gender as hierarchically organised as well (de Lucia 2008). The same goes for binary divisions in cosmology projected on the two sexes. However, the attribution of a parallel gender system in the Mesoamerican past prevails in current research (for example Joyce 2000a; Kellogg 2005; McGafferty 2009). In a relativist perspective, these interpretations depend on the researchers' experiences, associations and emotions to interpret the character and values of the archaeological and iconographical record. For example, images of male deities and warriors that defeat female supernaturals, or Sahagún's description of women destined to spend her life in the home might to some researchers be associated with subordination, but on the other hand we do not necessarily have to interpret this in terms of generalised gender ideologies. It is a matter of values and experiences: did this woman work there as the most efficient way to survive, as naturally posed on by cultural tradition or was she there submissively under control of the husband? Furthermore, we have to acknowledge that other aspects influenced this woman's position as well.

Rosemary Joyce (2000a) among others argues that dualistic models of gender are too essentialist and simplistic. Although these models provide ways of analysing grand narratives, they leave no sufficient room for variability and contextuality in diverse Mesoamerica. Recent studies on gender in Mesoamerica have shown that the Western assumptions of binary divisions are misguiding and that Mesoamerican gender was far more complex and might not have adopted a strong dualism in the conceptions on gender (see Stockett 2005). For example, Joyce (2000b, 474) includes celibates as a third gender present in ancient Mesoamerica, and McGafferty and McGafferty (2009) discussed more ambiguous genders. It makes the use of these models dubious. Stockett (2005) argues to focus instead on small- and large-scale identities and to reject a reliance on one of the two models to explain Mesoamerican gender relations and practices. According to her, these models rest on a Western understanding derived from a binary division of labour and deal only with a normative ideology.

This is true in the case of the Florentine Codex which shows a simplistic and normative ideal on gendered behaviour as we will see. However it deals with 'good' and 'bad' characteristics for which the latter might serve as a deviation from the ideology. Variables, and therefore deviating practices, from a gendered norm only make sense within a general framework. In Mauss' (1973) or Foucault's (1977) classic models of society, individuals are always formed in, and

relative to, a generalised ideal or cultural regime. Therefore, taking into account that deviations did occur, individual practices are in either way affected by this norm: whether people act according to the ideal, or they rebel against it, it all influences their life in some positive or negative way. Furthermore, these ideals show insights in the behaviour of high class citizens, which served as examples or inspiration for the rest of the people. Normative gender roles show an ideal social organisation, but it does not give evidence that this was in fact practiced by all classes (note the difference between rural and middle class in Europe). As we will see below, even in patriarchal society there are places, classes and age groups that are more equal among sexes. So gender conventions are dependent on the person, group identity, class, status, profession but also the local or broader gender ideology.

Moreover, Joyce does not recognise hierarchical patterns that would reflect a life of oppression for Mesoamerican woman. Acknowledging other views on the past, she provides an additional way of reading the past, where “women’s lives were celebrated from before birth and after death” (Joyce 2002, 104). In this viewpoint, public Classic Maya art is interpreted as presenting “women as the creators of culturally valued and economically significant products through the transformation of natural resources into the food and textiles necessary for subsistence and ritual” (Joyce in Hendon 1997). O’Connor (2010) adds the nature-culture transformation of male semen into offspring.

However, women in Europe had a similar repertoire of weaving, cooking and nursing. Why wasn’t their work interpreted or valued as such, and why were they subordinated? A psychological reason for this is that it did not contribute to the public sphere and thereby did not receive benefits from the broader economy (Wood and Eagly 2002, 714). In Western societies, status is built on wealth, possessions, authority over people and public contributions to society. As stated above, the sex that performs the activities, including the products, that are most valued in society, yield status and power. Therefore this research argues that associated values, on work, products, moral characteristics, either native, Spanish or modern, influence the way we interpret gender identities. These values are embedded in deeply ingrained assumptions and origins which impacts values, and the background of what is valued in society, but also the original ideas of male and female. The following subchapter will dive into the background of European assumptions on men and women.

2.3 Introduction to gender in early modern Europe

The main bulk of information for this chapter comes from the book *Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* by Cissie Fairchilds (2007). Her book is a synthesis of previous studies on women in the early modern period, while building her arguments on quotes from primary sources. The main ideology about women in this period is drawn from books and writings by early modern intellectuals and philosophers debating about the nature and role of men and women; diaries; letters; proverbs; petitions; and laws among others. Especially of interest is that Fairchilds shows contrasting views on gender, from either feminist men to conservative women. The gender conceptions are mainly made up from elite thoughts, while on the other hand exerts of diaries show insights in commoner women's daily life and experiences.

There are some critiques and annotations to take into account when researching gender in history. A main bias of patriarchal societies is that the data is often one-sided, written about and by men. For example, women were often neglected from education and therefore they rarely learned how to read and write. This indicates that her experiences are also rarely written down and therefore unavailable for historians. Furthermore, the ability to read and write was also class-dependent. The ones who wrote the historical documents had a certain higher position in society than for example the peasants who were most of the time not literate. In this respect, we might argue that the historical documents display thoughts of experiences from higher classes, and this social group was therefore also the subject of the texts. In addition, these ideas and writings were only available for a select group of people and would not reach the lower classes. Can this patriarchal paradigm which is extracted from these documents then also be applied on other social strata? These are questions that cannot easily be answered, and are not discussed in the book of Fairchilds. Yet the word 'paradigm' does indicate that a large part of society shared a similar discourse and refers back to the discussion above: to what extent do ideologies influence individual practices?

Contrarily, the historical sources show many variations on the perception of men and women's roles. Conceptions about gender differed throughout time, space and class, and ranged from views where women are not even human (e.g.

Valeus Acidalius) to writings where women were seen as superior to men (Fairchilds 2007, 19-20). So did the actual realities and practices from this paradigm varied as well? The main data show philosophical ideas pointed by some intellectuals in the early modern period, which are quite scattered and fragmented presentations of society, and might not always represent actual practices in daily life. For example, ballads written in Spain in the early modern period show a repression of women, while actually, many aristocratic women wielded considerable power at that time (Cruz 1996, 71). Vicente (1996) shows a negative idea men had of women's work, while women still practiced their work with others who might have adopted another view. Furthermore it is difficult to interpret whether these activities, experiences and snapshots described in historical documents occurred occasionally or exceptionally.

As is the case with gender modes in all kinds of cultures, it deals with ideals, stereotypes, norms or specific characteristic depictions of the sexes. We might say that thoughts about gender described in historical documents are depictions of socially and morally acceptable and often ideally desired ways of behaviour for the sexes conform the ruling paradigm. For example, a perfectly behaving woman ought to be silent, obedient, modest, dignified, skilled and hardworking, does not go to public areas or mingle with others. This is a view that was a general ideal, as even a prescription of behaviour, but how many women could actually possess all of these qualities? And did everyone agree with this model of perfectionism?

Certain ideals exist in society to reach ultimate salvation, success, wealth, survival and to be accepted in society, respected by others, have opportunities for marriage, jobs and networks. Fairchilds however gives many examples of females that behaved against the order or were involved in other practices. Biblical gendered texts were interpreted differently, clichés were attacked or stereotypes not followed. It is difficult to perfectly holding on to a certain ideal; as in every complex society of this extent there are exceptions and antitheses. We cannot expect that every woman obeyed her husband submissively, or that every man was feeling strictly superior over his wife. The documents show that women occasionally had influential professions, men might often take care of the children. Views differed in other regions, from town to countryside, and wealth and opportunities affected deviations of ideologies and realities.

Nonetheless, if a person ruled out this ideal, disgrace and rumours were spread, affecting one's reputation and status and this again influenced for example job opportunities, likewise people were expelled, humiliated or punished (compare Butler 1991). Sometimes the hegemonic ideology is also used against someone, in for example crime, where women play with the notion that she is 'but an ignorant woman' acting under guardian of the husband, assuming the man was the one responsible of the mistake because he did not supervise or moralised her well (Fairchilds 2007, 287). The same goes for a dramatic or exaggerated representation of society made by women, complaining while making the message more effective. In this respect, the intention and addressee of the writing had to be understood. It shows that actual practices are relative to the ideology.

So a gendered history deals with a ruling conceptual frame, which explains normative practices, ways of reasoning and a general trend in society. However, it is also interesting to take notice of other views. These can be seen as deviations, but are still related to, shaped, and embedded in this social norm which affects a person's life. A general description of the hegemonic ideal on gender roles and behaviour will give an idea on how and on what base the Spaniards conceptualised men and women. It also includes some divergent views, to reject complete stereotypical and simplistic representations of the patriarchal ideology in early modern Europe. This research takes the Spanish gender ideology as situated in the minds and everyday behaviour of Spaniards, conform Mauss' *habitus* (1973), which was then brought overseas.

2.3.1 The patriarchal paradigm

The early modern period, 1500-1700 AD, as traditionally defined by historians, is the transitional period between medieval and modern Europe, while this intermediate is lacking clear influences of the former and later period (Casey 1999, 1). The beginning date roughly coincides with the discovery of the America's and the opening of a world economy. To understand the European ideas on gender, the practices and conceptions the Spaniards were used to have to be analysed. This worldview serves as a frame or background on which gender relations in other cultures are reflected, related to or even interpreted in similar categories. So what was the gender paradigm of the Europeans that came to the New World? What ideas on gender and related practices were the

colonists and priests used to in their own country? Where were these ideas based on, and what ideals did they bring?

The most applied gender concept on Christian Europe is patriarchy. Fairchilds (2007) points the term 'patriarchal paradigm' which she defines as the traditional notions sustained by the Church, and which are deeply embedded in laws, institutions and social customs. These notions, absorbed in early modern European society, characterise women as inferior to men, less intelligent and susceptible to sin for which they had to be placed inside and under authority and control of the male heads of the family (ibid., 3; 7). In this respect, domestic activities were not much valued, or perceived as important and useful. It shows the backgrounds of the stereotypical division between men and women as socially accepted; men operated in public spheres and women had to be occupied with household duties.

But where do these ideas come from? This traditionally held view was seen as defined and reaffirmed by the Bible, nature and science:

> *"The truth of this doctrine seems clear upon consideration of the wits of the world's first woman: for once God made her with his own hands, so sound and perfect in her sex, it is obvious that she knew much less than Adam [...] the reason that the first woman did not have a great wit is that God made her cold and moist, which is the systemic makeup for fertility and childbearing and that which contradicts knowledge"* (Huarte 1575, in Soufas 1996, 177).

> *"The male principle in nature is associated with active, formative and perfected characteristics, while the female is passive, material, and deprived, desiring the male in order to become complete"* (Aristotle, in Fairchilds 2007, 13).

Earlier scientific beliefs in early modern Europe derived from ancient Greek writings. Views on women were explained according to their sexual organs as being only partly developed human beings in relation to men (Fairchilds 2007, 12-3). Fairchilds further notes that male superiority is defined by nature, according to Aristotle who observed that male animals were dominant in relation to females as well, including more intelligent, stronger and more attractive. Men

felt themselves as physically and intellectually stronger than women and were therefore more capable to be head of the household and leaders in society.

An important passage of the well-read Bible was Adam and Eve, which had considerable influences on gender ideas. There are different versions, which all can be interpreted differently according to one's personal interests. The larger version of Adam and Eve shows understandable reasons for people to assume men as superior to women, where God told Eve: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Fairchilds 2007, 10). Fairchilds continues that the promotion of equality of people in the Bible seemed to be ignored, selected or replaced by similar more patriarchal accepted chapters, such as Eve created out of the rib of Adam and forcing him to sin, instead of the shorter Genesis version which endorses equality (ibid.). Further, New Testament texts show the importance of men over women, their easy inclination to sin and the barring of women from public spheres, including the church (Fairchilds 2007, 11). Eve was conceived as a prototype for female characteristics: the tension to sin (sexually), her incapability and unintelligence, and the need of a man to make her complete and keep her restraint. This was reaffirmed by societal practices where the wife had to stay home and not go alone outside, where she could mingle with other men or be exposed to sinful activities.

It shows the patriarchal paradigm placed on social life, which was in some way accepted and taken for granted because of tradition and repetition. Other options were not really known or possible; society worked well with this division of labour, space and rank. As an early feminist author, Christine de Pisan advised in *The City of Ladies* (1404-5) that women should obey their husbands and fulfil their ordained social roles because they were good in it and God created these strong points, while taking in mind that they are also capable of fulfilling other roles (Fairchilds 2007, 18). In addition, civic humanists stressed the positive characteristics of women for motherhood and caring for the family, contributing to a proper functioning of society (ibid.). Later this was affirmed by more natural and scientific arguments, where men's physical strength made them more suitable for hard work and in the public sphere, where women's natural roles made them good mothers at home (Fairchilds 2007, 30). So early modern Europeans based their knowledge and gender conceptualisations on ancient philosophers, scientists and the Bible. In this way, their ideas and practices were god- and nature-ordained, and therefore the most proper way of function of society.

This generalised image of early modern society can serve as an idealised framework that was situated in the back of the Spaniards' heads. These ideas might have made up the conceptions behind the perceptions in the New World. However, one might argue to what extent this view was known or agreed with by all civilians of this society. In chapter 3 to 5, Spanish ideas on specific gendered themes will be elaborated and actual practices and different views will be taken into account. Still, as stressed before, the practices and individual ideas are shaped within this social framework. In what way Sahagún shared these notions and to what extent this paradigm influenced his interpretations will come forward in the analysis.

Chapter 3: THE GENDER OF CHILDHOOD

The classic interpretation is that right after birth, the future life of the baby is already set according to the sex and the parents' activities. Throughout cultures, the gender of a person determines many aspects of a person's identity and life, his or her behaviour, tasks, appearance and expectations. Not many studies have been devoted to childhood in archaeology, while it is an essential life phase where the foundation is laid for gender in society and where cultural standards and gender norms are transmitted.

What follows after birth is the socialisation process, which is vital for the reproduction of culture, social order and especially to equip boys and girls with their future life tasks and associated behaviour and roles (Wood and Eagly 2002, 710). The gendered differences at youth are forced upon them not only by the parents, but also by social institutions and religion, which prepare them for their sexed roles within the framework of their specific culture. The cultural categories are maintained through education, cultural transmission, social interaction, rituals and constant replication of the behaviour that constitutes one's identities (cf. Mauss 1973). Mauss adds that the reiteration of these identity-specific behaviours in turn becomes characteristic of that social group and serves as an indication of recognition by and for others. Socialisation processes are complex and involve observational learning and role modelling, with the mother and father, neighbouring community members, and influential nobles as examples of normative behavioural codes. This process, together with division of labour, is a

widely shared social convention in cultures (Wood and Eagly 2002, 706) and shows a similar line in both Mesoamerica and early modern Europe.

The major publications of the Florentine Codex and Codex Mendoza are often used to provide insight in gendered divisions of labour, childhood and the education from parents to sons and daughters in Mesoamerica. The birth ritual is mostly cited to provide insights in post-classic gender differences. These documents show some clear Mesoamerican traits, but might also have been imbued with Spanish ideas on gender, duality and stereotypes. It is necessary to firstly understand what the Spaniards were familiar to, and to what background they wrote down and interpreted Mesoamerican childhood and gendered education. With this we are able to glimpse in the process of knowledge creation by the makers of the documents; the presuppositions and pre-conceptualisations of gender norms brought from Spain based on experiences during childhood and normative behaviour posed upon by their own society's cultural framework.

3.1 Coming of age in early modern Europe

In Europe, from birth on the infant's sex influenced the future life of the child majorly. If the baby was born a male, a certain destiny was already laid upon him, what his rights and duties are, what his work will be, et cetera. The same goes for girls:

> "For as soon as she is born a woman she is confined to idleness at home [...] and, as if incapable of functions more important, she has no other prospect than needle and thread. Further when she has reached the age of puberty, she is delivered over to the jealous power of a husband, or she is enclosed forever in a [convent]" (Henricus Cornelius Agrippa 1509-1529, cited in Fairchilds 2007, 20).

According to Agrippa, children were taught as early as possible their social roles and future functions in society. The quote also demonstrates the importance of biological changes that affects the life stage of the girl. Agrippa explains that these life stages bring certain restrictions and tasks, and are headed by different male supervisors: the father and later the husband. Fairchilds (2007, 37) has noted similar stages of childhood in Europe: with the first one lasted from birth until age six or seven, here children were considered "animal-like and incapable

of true intellectual thought." After (and during) this stage they were already trained in Christian morality through the bible and learned to carry out small tasks.

At the age of six or seven, most boys from wealthier classes were educated at school. In general men were more likely to be literate and educated than women in at least the early modern period (Fairchilds 2007, 42). Boys were educated in future professions and were expected to be hardworking to provide for his wife and children and to become a strong head of the household (Fairchilds 2007). Girls on the other hand were likely taught at home by the mother where she learned household activities, practiced weaving, learned to be a virtuous Christian, and was conveyed other female characteristics. According to Fairchilds, the education was appointed to make the daughters good marriage candidates, which was seen as the ultimate state of a woman, under control of the husband. Later it was expected of the women that she would be dedicated to the care of her family, moralise the children, assist their husbands and make the family live 'in prosperity' (Vicente 1996, 129). At the age of twelve, the daughters were strictly kept and taught at home; it was considered the time when the woman's lustiness developed, and the family could not risk the daughter to be deflowered before she got married (Fairchilds 2007, 46; Casey 1999, 204).

To conclude, we see that in the first stage of early modern life an apparent division between boys and girls was determined. This separation was reproduced by tradition and education and expressed by a gendered division of place, activities and expectations. A difference in prospects was already made with boys going to school while the girls were kept at home. The home was seen as a subordinate place in where the girls were confined to household activities which were seen as unimportant, in contrast to the public sphere where boys could eventually negotiate and enhance status, wealth and power. This also states that the ideal destiny of a woman was to spend her life in the household, to marry and most of all to provide the husband with heirs. This was an ideal view held in Spain, which was essentially similar throughout classes. Even though it might not always have coincided with reality, it is a vision that can be held as aspiration, and the view influences behaviour and consecutively how this is conceived.

3.2 Mesoamerican birth ritual and socialisation

In Mesoamerica, birth also puts a certain destiny on the child for its future role in society. During labour, the midwife practiced the birth ritual, where it is said that the umbilical cord of the boy and girl are buried in the place where they will perform their duties for the rest of their lives. According to the Florentine Codex (book VI, chapter 31) the midwife buries the baby girl's umbilical cord by the hearth. Then Sahagún's interpretation follows: "thus she signified that the woman was to go nowhere. Her only real task was the home life, by the fire, life by the grinding stone." This stereotypical view of linking the woman to the domestic sphere, however, was also embedded in Mesoamerican culture; the midwife also speeches to the newly born woman:

> "You will be in the heart of the home, you will go nowhere, you will nowhere become a wanderer, you become the smouldering fire, the hearth stones. Here our lord plants you, buries you. And you will become fatigued, you will become tired; you are to provide water, to grind maize, to work hard; you are to sweat by the ashes, by the hearth. [...] And it meant that her very duty was drink, food. She was to prepare drink, to prepare food, to grind, to spin, to weave" (Sahagún book VI chapter 31).

The girl was in this way welcomed, prepared and advised for her role in her future life.

For boys the future duties were likely ordained. The baby's umbilical cord was dried and saved to be buried in a field were battles were fought. This is written in the account of the midwife (ibid.); the boy would probably die in the battle field or be captured and offered to the deities. The house where the boy was born was mentioned by the midwife as "only the place of your nest" but, she continues, "you belong out there; out there you have been chosen. You have been sent into warfare. War is your reward, your task." Another typical men's job is agriculture. Among the present-day Maya the umbilical cord of the boy is dried and buried in the *milpa,* the maize field (O'Connor 2010, 491). Also the gender roles are made clear there today by giving the boy miniature farming tools and the girl cooking utensils or *masa* (basis for tortillas) when they are a few months

old (ibid., 500). Obviously the modern situation does not allow warfare as a major profession.

These gendered divisions assigned by birth are complemented and reiterated in the Codex Mendoza. A midwife is painted with a cradle from which a line diverges into two groups of little indicators (*insignias*) for boys' and girls' activities (figure 3.1). Although there is no description accompanying the insignias, we can easily draw from the birth ritual that the spindle, the broom and the mat are destined for the girl, and the craft tools, arrows and shield are indicators of ideal male professions.

The ritual shows a definition of men and women's place and work. Since this division of labour is similar to early modern Spanish conceptions, it is uncertain whether the gender aspects of the ritual are traditional Mesoamerican or interpreted in a Spanish conceptual frame. It is important to note that there is only a mentioning of division of labour and associated place between boys and girls. This is what was seen as having a biological origin throughout cultures (see Wood and Eagily 2002). This means that everything else that makes up the identity categories – status, relations, modes of behaviour and appearance – was still left open. The snapshot of this ritual is short and normative in character: it explains the idealised or culturally appropriate *main* duties of the males and females and not the *only* ones. There were obviously much more economic activities practiced than the ones depicted here.

Figure 3.1 The birth ritual (Codex Mendoza, folio 57).

Furthermore, we have to acknowledge that this ritual and the speech of the midwife is a formal symbolic utterance, which makes statements on idealised gender roles instead of having a function or evoke and order specific acts (cf. Rappaport 1999, chapter 2). The ritual makes prospects of a person based on his/her sex, but it does not literally determines his/her life. As Rappaport (1999, 26-27) further notes, a ritual is neither functional nor substantive, it rather entails something. In this respect, the utterance of the midwife can be conceived as a reiteration and maintenance of social order divided in each sex acting out their culturally distributed activities.

Joyce (2000a, 156; 2000b) complements that this sexual differentiation by birth was not enough for constituting gender; the children had to be transformed into socially defined identities. The newly born were seen as raw materials, which had to be shaped through life cycle rituals into fully valued adults (ibid.). Instead of biologically maturing, Mesoamerican children underwent recurring rituals that made them grow up. Each subsequent life phase included specific gendered ways of behaviour, tasks, costumes, ornaments and hair dresses that showed other people their age, sexual status and identity.

Next to the rituals, the parents shaped their children to fit in the idealised gender paradigm. Girls were educated by the mother and boys by the father, and each life phase shows accompanying economic tasks, behaviour and appearances that lead eventually towards adulthood (Codex Mendoza folios 57-62). The images are neatly separated into the two genders. The parents shaped their children to fit in the idealised gender paradigm. Through work and ornaments we can see that boys and girls shifted through the phases towards adulthood. In this latter stage the girl in the Codex Mendoza is getting married and is depicted weaving, the boys are more elaborately depicted becoming warriors, priests or craftsmen.

The Florentine Codex included advisory speeches from nobleparents to their sons and daughters. In the book ‘The people’ of the Florentine Codex, Sahagún (1981, 2-3) describes his ideal virtues of young women: “the daughter [is] untouched, pure, a virgin. The good daughter [is] obedient, honest, intelligent, discreet, of good memory, modest, respectful, revered, well reared, well taught, well trained, well instructed, prudent, chaste, circumspect.” Furthermore other statements on maidens, girls and related family positions deal with chastity, piousness and virginity while the description of bad characteristics generally

deals with evilness, talking, stupidity, sexuality and dishonour. All these characteristics show ideals, and closely resemble stereotypical Christian ideas concerning chastity and virginity which are repeatedly mentioned in the Florentine Codex. Important to note here, is that no word for 'virgin' exists in Nahuatl. This European word is substituted by the Nahuatl word *ichpochtli*, which indicated the life-stage of young women between adolescence and an adult status, in other words, before she was married (Overmyer-Velázquez 1998, 15; Burkhart 2001, 93). This again shows the importance of sexual status and life stages in gendered identities.

The division of labour in childhood is described in practice in only one of the analysed native colonial documents. In a testament of Juan Cutz from Motul, dating to August 1762, is stated: "I give to my daughters, Luisa Cutz and Josefa Cutz, one house-plot that is to the east of the town on the road to Cibalam. It shall go to both of them at the time when they are ready to spin thread there; then they will take possession." (in Restall et al. 2005, 147-8). Here spinning is the expected task to perform as a fully-educated women and might therefore be seen as a metaphor for female adulthood. So from this stage on they are qualified to live in this house and be able to make a living while contributing to the state-economy with their cloth production. Here it is also preordained that Juan Cutz' daughters' main economic activity will be weaving. Likewise Juan Cutz transfers one houseplot to his other daughters as well, and he leaves his sons four *milpas*, which in turn might show a similar division of labour, divided into two genders, based on their ordained activities.

More insight into children's education and the establishment of gender categories is written in the Nahuatl Tetzcoco dialogues. An excerpt of the Dialogues (in Restall et al. 2005, 220-3) provides reflections of two native women on the change that occurred due to the arrival of the Spaniards. According to Restall et al. (219-220) the document is recorded by a Franciscan friar in the 1570s and focuses on noblemen and –women. In the Dialogues an elder woman talks to another woman about the times before the conquest and how the people and situation have changed. The speech of the woman is imbued with nostalgic elements, memories of the time before the Spaniards and the negative opinions of the contemporary situation they found themselves in. What is reoccurring in the documents is the moralising character, this is again probably the main reason why this dialogue is recorded.

The speech of the women is imbued with Christian influences confirming the biased state of the document. The text refers to a temple in pre-Hispanic times as “still just demon’s temples” and the gods were “demons who were false gods.” It might have been edited by the friar, changing native gods with more Christian-appropriate utterances, it can show the woman’s conversion, or she tries to please the friar with her current religious knowledge. With these examples, we have to take into account that other concepts might have been influenced as well, since (mnemonic) narratives about the past are always told from a contemporary, in this case colonial, perspective (Ochs & Capps 1996, 25).

In relation to this chapter we turn to the words of the women concerning the education of children. The older woman mentions that the contemporary children were becoming naughtier, and bad behaviour was increasing. It shows that in pre-Hispanic times children were educated in a way where fear, obedience and respect were greatly valued. The boys were educated in temples, they learned “how to do battle, or how to hunt, how to shoot a blowgun” focusing again on warfare, but also on hunting and fishing. Others were taught different crafts such as featherwork, mosaic, goldsmithery, codex painting, drum and rattle, divination, or cultivation.

Furthermore the document states that the girls were taught within the house in their own quarters: “no men, no matter who it was, entered there; taking care of them (the girls) was the exclusive domain of the elderly noblewomen”. And “all the different things customarily done among women” were educated, such as “sweeping, sprinkling, preparing food, making beverages, grinding maize, preparing tortillas, making tamales” and also weaving, spinning, embroidering and dyeing. According to the woman this way of teaching was shared among all layers of society: “the commoners were taught in the same way; the youths were raised in the school at the youths’ house, and the girls at the women’s temple.” Again, not only a division between genders was made on account of activities, expectations, but also by place. What we see is a clear separation between boys’ and girls’ education location, and this is later expressed through a separation in working areas.

To conclude, what is just analysed is the constitution of gender in the first period of a child’s life, from birth until the stage of adulthood. This socialisation process deals with the transfer of cultural patterns, including gender roles, to next generations, which is seen by the education of girls by their mother, and advices

from father to son. We see that in the first stage of childhood the prospects and future duties of the infants depended on their sex, the first constituent for the concept of gender. From this an idealised prospect was made on what the person will do in his/her life and where s/he will perform the specific economic tasks. Here a second element of gender is addressed: the division of labour. According to these principles, the routes of these new members of society were outlined; the paths are literally depicted in the Codex Mendoza (figure 3.1).

The birth ritual refers to a general gender ideology and also indirectly entails this. The division of labour and place in the birth ritual symbolically (re)institutionalises and reproduces the idealised gender roles and social order. It is a form of repetition which constitutes gender differences and adheres to existing characteristics of gendered identities. So it does not have a literal function or determines specific acts, but only through the subsequent lifecycle rituals and education these differences were really put into practices. The constant repetition of the gender ideals, and the practice and imitation of gendered labour and behaviour during socialisation of boys and girls, entails the maintenance of this ideology. Within this ideology, and together with their social status, life phase, age, day of birth, appearance, behaviour, activities, the boys' and girls' gendered identities were formed and constructed. This process and education of boys and girls was parallel, although boys and girls were separated by appearance, place, activities and behaviour. Childhood ends with official participation in society, here girls are depicted in marriage and weaving, and boys went to war, bringing in practice their ordained tasks which in turn become characteristic of their identities.

The analysed excerpts of native documents concerning childhood and education show a focus on gendered work (to be elaborated in chapter 5). Not only has the Florentine Codex showed a focus toward a binary segregated education and a prospect of gendered division of labour, also the native persons in the colonial documents. The spatial segregation between boys and girls was emphasised by the place of education; girls were strictly kept in a separate building than boys. This is succeeded by the ultimate place of where boys and girls will perform their duties; house-plots as contrasted to agriculture fields were divided among girls and boys respectively. In short, gender in Mesoamerica was constituted by sex, work, appearance, place, education, and is at first sight, or as an ideal view, ordered in two genders.

3.3 Parallel childhoods

In general, the socialisation of children and constitution of gender in Mesoamerica has quite some parallels with Europe. The most obvious similarity is the separate treatment of persons based on their biological sex from birth on. As is shown, becoming adults and performing one's economic roles in society was very important for the societal welfare. Boys and girls were kept apart and were taught different roles in European or Mesoamerican society according to the ruling gender ideals. The birth ritual and life cycle rituals were apparently Mesoamerican, but the ideas of division of labour and place was of great familiarity to the Spaniards.

So what do these similarities between European ideals and the descriptions in the colonial documents mean in the process of knowledge creation by the Spaniards? As a reminder, the goal of the Florentine Codex is the explanation of native practices and customs which served as an entry-point to which Christian belief and morality could penetrate Mesoamerican culture without too much deviation and distortion from the existing social order. This recurs in that recognisable aspects of Mesoamerican society were picked out by Sahagún in his description of social life and formed in even more essential and comprehensible interpretations. In this way, these aspects of Mesoamerican tradition could be understood by other friars as well, to improve and fulfil their tasks as converters.

The native inhabitants were seen as savages, weak, unintelligent and in conspiracy with the devil. In the Spaniards' viewpoint, a rigorous moralisation was needed to integrate the natives in an appropriate Catholic lifestyle. A virtuous life did not only consist of praying the rosary, but also includes social order, ideas on sexuality, and the virtues honesty, modesty, chastity, diligence and others as opposed to sin. Many of these ideals might have been shared with the ruling elite in Mesoamerica to keep their people in control. In this respect we see many emphasises on morality in Sahagún's texts, with which he tries to understand Mesoamerican ontology and from there extrapolate and impose auxiliary Christian ideas in Mesoamerican customs. However, important to understand is that these are ideals and normative standards, and it was not possible for everyone to maintain a strict virtuous life.

Christian virtues are closely attached to male-female relations and gender roles as seen in the outline on early modern gender notions. Social order

depends to a great extent on gender division, at least in early modern Europe. Women had to be kept inside to prevent sexual provocations and chaos, and to make them work incessantly for their family and subsequently the common welfare. With similar outcomes, boys had to be educated to develop working skills to provide income and resources. It shows that these virtues are incorporated and practiced in this division of labour, place and education.

Attempts to teach Christian morality to the indigenous men and women had to take place as early as possible. The socialisation process during childhood aims at the preparation of the children for behaviour, duties and tasks as disciplined adults. For this reason, the flowery speeches (*huehuetlatolli*) from nobleparents to their sons and daughters were incorporated extensively in the Sahaguntine corpus. Since nobles already had an exemplar function for the rest of society, their children had to learn pre-eminently to behave as virtuous Christians. To write down these parental speeches which had already some of the religious virtues in it, allowed the friars to 'improve' the lessons with catholic phrases to convey moral behaviour to the native children. From here the native worldview can be gradually indulged with male ideals derived from the Catholic Spanish world. Gendered identities are cultural-specific and the described traits and associations - females with chastity and males with diligence - show typical European categorisations.

If we place ourselves in the position of the Spaniards, seeing so many similarities at first sight: women placed in the home, doing female tasks, we would think that in Mesoamerica a same basis of gender was drawn from the natural subordinated and weak state of women. This idea follows the main criticism of Stockett (2005) in the use of gender. She argues that it is generally assumed that the division of labour consequently implied one's status in society from where the overall position and relation of men and women was stemmed. This is often used in extension of a classification based on binary oppositions, from domestic and public sphere to subordination and equality, depending on a Western gender model.

Indeed, the reasons behind the division of labour depicted in the Florentine Codex are not mentioned, and Sahagún only mentions the expected professions of the genders. It is pictured as a task, a duty or a reward, which was derived from the sex of the infant and was drawn on experience and cultural customs. It is not clearly visible in the documents that Mesoamerican discourses perceive

women as incapable for work in other areas. The same goes for the strict segregation of girls' and boys' education in both cultures. Especially the girls were kept strictly apart from boys. It is not clearly explicable whether this was more or less a ritualised liminal phase of a rite of passage on the socialisation of women, or imbued with a more European vision where women were excluded from men because of their assumed lustiness. So the information presented in the documents does not reveal clear indications about the relations between the two sexes, how it was valued in society, how they should behave to each other, one's gendered status and identity, *et cetera*. We might also say, that because this reasoning is not mentioned, that it was taken for granted and assumed biologically innate by the Spanish author.

The parallels at first sight should not restrain us to make further interpretations on typical Mesoamerican traits and a possible European gender bias. Are there (underlying) differences in the similarities in the construction of gender in childhood that could show us typical Mesoamerican customs? Rosemary Joyce marks an important difference which she interpreted from the Florentine Codex: instead of in Europe life goes by biological stages and aging, Mesoamerican growing-up deals with the monthly rituals or rites of passages, described in the Florentine Codex, in which children become more and more like adults. Both boys and girls participate in these rituals. It shows that in Mesoamerica the gendered identities are not solely related to biological sex, but are culturally constructed and negotiated.

Furthermore, the Codex Mendoza and Florentine Codex do not mention a separate woman's education. This, while the native women in the Dialogues mention the widespread 'women's temple' or 'quarter' being established in higher and lower classes of society. This, while the Codex Mendoza only shows an in-home teaching with household tasks for girls, educated by the mother. After the socialisation process, the girls were getting married, while boys received further education in the *calmecac*. The depiction in the Codex Mendoza coincides with European ideas in which women are not capable of education, and marriage was the only and ideal fate of women. An education for women did not fit in a European gender paradigm and was therefore not accentuated or deliberately left out in the description of Mesoamerican life. On the other hand, this education was strictly for women, no men could enter, and therefore neither the informants of Sahagún. This male bias indicates that there might have been more strictly

female institutions where male informants and colonists could not enter, not knowing what happened there or could possibly write about it in the chronicles.

Next to this, Sahagún describes rituals where boys and girls were dressed up and sexually charged songs were sung, indicating that young adults show off their sexual status and attractiveness (Joyce 2000a, 157; 159). Where the girls in Europe were strictly kept at home to secure the girl's virginity and chastity, young adults in Mesoamerica performed and danced in public. This would have clearly collided with the Spanish idea of chastity and the sacredness of marriage. Joyce adds that more sexual activities are probably left out of the descriptions provided by the Sahagún's male informants, since these would not coincide with the chaste Christian standards of constrained sexuality which the Spaniards wanted to imply on the native society. Together, these examples show that certain stereotypical ideas are emphasised and omitted due to the Spaniards own ideas on gender and ideal women's roles, embedded in European notions.

Chapter 4: PROFESSIONS AND PRACTITIONERS

Division of labour is one of the most researched themes on gender throughout cultures, and often conceived as the basis of general gender conceptualisations. A separation of tasks between men and women is a near-universal element of societies and is most likely based on women's restrictions during pregnancy and nurturing, and men's physical strength. Furthermore this division was vital for the social order of the society and economy. As shown above, an ideal division of economic activities was guided by a person's sex. The transition of a child to adulthood means that the activities learned during youth will become economic practices. This stage is accompanied by another identity, social status, duties, behaviour and expectations, and became together with the professions characteristic for its practitioners. Weaving for example, is conceived as a metaphor for women in Mesoamerica (McGafferty and McGafferty 1991). Furthermore, it is a subject that differs throughout social classes. So a sexed division of labour involved more than just a segregation of place and tasks among men and women.

To be able to detect possible influences of a Christian-Spanish worldview on Sahagún's representations of men and women in Mesoamerica, we need to know what Sahagún's experience on a gendered division of labour was. What was the ideal, and why? Are European categorisations involved? And how did this came back in the representations? With the incorporation of some actual

experiences and local practices of the norm we are able to see whether this ideal was representative for the whole of Mesoamerican society or not.

4.1 Spanish townswomen and peasant wives

During childhood, women were prepared for duties in and around the house. They rarely received education and several jobs and opportunities were blocked because of their female sex. Chapter 3.1 shows the idealised conviction that women in early modern Europe were conceived as less intelligent and incapable for tasks other than domestic activities, and work was something only men did. According to an early modern German guildsman:

> "Masculine sex is one of the indispensable basic preconditions for admission to a guild. The entire social order [...] is based upon each sex taking on those tasks which are most fitting to its nature" (in Fairchilds 2007, 151).

This was rooted in biological and religious assumptions that women were by nature confined to household activities. As Jean Bodin stated in his treatise about politics:

> "Now as to the order and degree of women, I meddle not with it; only I think it meet them to be kept far off from all magistracies, places of command, public assemblies, and counsels; so to be attentive only unto their womanly and domestical business" (in Fairchilds 2007, 348).

And so women were barred in most guilds and intellectual, religious and public positions; her rights, citizenship and place in the law were not clear; and certain activities were restricted for women because of the cultural suppositions that women had obligations towards her family wherefore she should not spend time on the streets and be economically independent (Fairchilds 2007). Several autobiographies of women indicate their fear of being caught for sneaking off to the church, because this would show others that she was neglecting her household duties (Bilinkoff 1996, 24). This idea was not only accepted by men, but also acknowledged by most women. These ideas were reaffirmed through

societal practices which proved in turn that women were not capable to act in these spheres.

A female view of gender relations can be extracted from a confessing document for the inquisition drawn up by a Spanish woman of 35 years old (Mexico, 1598, in Holler 2000). She was unmarried, occupied with needlework and she taught girls to do the same. At the start of the interrogation she had to mention all her family members provided with name, place of birth and death, and profession. Her Spanish male family members were neatly described with professions such as blacksmith, farmer, saddler, physician, merchant or having a certain function in the army. A description of the women did not include any mention of a profession, or it was either said they "had no profession," one time added with "other than raising their children". This shows that in Spain women did normally not have a certain acknowledged occupation other than housewife. It was a custom to not mention the task as housewife, so it was almost the same as having no job. Even this woman takes for granted that the female occupation did not need to be mentioned, or it was not written down by the notary. This shows that it was conceived, and with leaving out the economic contributions she made with spinning and work around the house, confirmed, that early modern women did not have a profound function or purpose in economy and society.

Was this view similar throughout different life stages and classes of society? It seems as if the historical interpretations on gender conceptions in early modern European society were made up on the hand of mainly elite sources, writings of intellectuals, scientists or persons who were able to write. Thus was this view on women and gender derived from their own experiences within their class? A sixteenth-century Dominican provides insight in this matter and wrote in his *Defence of Women* (1559):

> "Every woman [artisan] does as well as a man in looking after her [business] affairs and organising her life [...] And if we wish to speak of country women, we will see that they are in no way inferior to their husbands. For they intent on the same basic rural tasks" (Bruni da Pistoia, cited in Fairchilds 2007, 28).

This statement is in agreement with the hypothesis shown before, in which cultural values on work determine one's social status.

Approximately 80 per cent of the population in the early modern period lived in rural areas (Fairchilds 2007, 127). It seems as if this strict confinement to the home deals mainly with middle and higher classes of early modern society. Women in the countryside had much more duties than just cleaning, weaving, cooking and nursing. She was responsible for a large part of the work in the field, the vegetable garden, the farmyard and the dairy including the processing and storing of its products (Fairchilds 2007, 130). Rural girls were least likely to receive formal education, their destiny was to be a good peasant wife. This required skills in "hoeing, weeding, making butter and cheese, harvesting, preparing and spinning flax, sewing, cooking, laundering, raising livestock and children – [which they learned] simply by watching and helping their mothers" (Fairchilds 2007, 43). Next to that they grew fruits and vegetables, raised bees, made candles, made medicines and cure and care for the sick (ibid., 73). Furthermore they contributed to the largest part of household cloth production in society, nevertheless it was not recognised as contributing to the broader public economy.

There were several side jobs such as selling of goods, run on errands, and working as servants. Some women looked for more opportunities in the villages and cities. As Fairchilds suggests, there was not enough housewife work to fill a whole day in the home; the house demanded little cleaning, and cooking consisted for the most part of boiling soup (2007, 133). So not only men contributed as single cost winner income for the households, especially in the rural area both men and women contributed to the commonwealth and often self-sufficiency of their households in early modern Europe. As Bruni da Pistoia shows, gender conceptions in rural areas were less strict and patriarchal than in other social layers.

This doesn't mean that women in towns and elite houses did nothing more than cooking, weaving and cleaning. We see similar gender ideas, expressed in variable activities. For example rural families were more self-sufficient, the women's duties were translated in housework for own use, while families in cities relied more on products from shops and the crafting and selling of goods and labour. Crafting also fell in the category of housework since this was mostly done at home; for women it was described in terms of duty, and for that reason seen as different or lower in rank than male artisans (Vicente 1996, 129; 131). In the towns, domestic activities were translated in typical women's trades, such as

domestic service, laundressing, unorganised selling of homemade products on the market, door-to-door commerce, buying and storing food, clothing, linen, furniture and other household needs (Fairchilds 2007, 145). Furthermore traditional and accepted women's works were midwifery, brewing and curing, and often she would deal with affairs of the husband's guild and the family administration (ibid., 155).

As with all norms there were exceptions. Some women did not marry or were self-supporting, some became prostitutes, another started a career as writer or scientist, and against all conventions women could also held high offices in politics, war or religious practices (Sánchez and Saint-Saëns 1996). Women born in noble families could exert political power in form of rulers (Isabella of Spain, Elisabeth of England), or servants in noble households, but always when they had a relation with a man in such position. So women had some more opportunity to roll into the work when their husbands or fathers worked there already. The most accepted deviation from the ideal was becoming a nun or domestic servant. Going to a convent or domestic service was a legal and accepted escape from the normal ideal of a family economy, but it also put women under the dominance and decisions of men. Her traditional main specialities were teaching, and caring for the poor and sick.

What we can conclude here is that there was a hegemonic view on gender, which was translated in class-related comparable economic activities and behaviour. Furthermore we see that the economic activities carried out by women encompassed more than the stereotypical depiction of weaving, cooking and cleaning. Variations of these normative duties existed depending on class and social context, but also activities that deviated from the social norm of female appropriate behaviour were practiced. Despite the economic importance of these tasks, women's work was not much valued because of the vision that it did not make much contribution to society and economy.

Remarkable is the opinion of Bruni da Pistoia, stating that women in the countryside were more on the same position as men. History and archaeology mainly retrieve data for constructions of the past from higher classes of society that leave more traces and written documents. This, while the largest part of society lived in rural areas, leading a slightly different life. The reasoning behind da Pistoia's statement is that men and women practice the same daily and economic tasks. The power relation between men and women is based on the

tasks they carry out. So in a heuristic view: the way certain economic and daily activities are valued in society is one means that affects the status of the practitioners, and therefore the equality or inequity between the genders, classes or social groups (cf. Wood and Eagly 2002).

In Western vision, farmers are seen as lower in rank than craftsmen, weavers lower than goldsmiths and domestic tailors lower than skilled embroiders. The prestige of the labourer depends on the products and how these are valued in society. For example, things that are rare and not often included in daily use might be conceived as valuable. This idea might be similar throughout societies, but the amount of resources and products make a cross-cultural difference in these values. So the weaving of cotton clothing for daily use is undervalued, while a high-quality embroidered costume results in more respect for the maker. Arguments concerning this aspect in sexual stratification are based on the idea that women's work was hidden in the home, making products for the household and neighbours. In this respect, their products were not seen as contributing to the broader economy and therefore received little recognition and less status (Wood and Eagly 2002, 714). This might also be extended to social values, morality or behaviour as will be shown later. Thus a Western conception on values might have influenced the way certain activities and ideals were portrayed.

4.2 A typical Mesoamerican division of labour?

What we have seen in chapter 4 is that noblemen and –women were confined to certain tasks on account of their sex, laid upon them by cultural tradition. Vice versa, it is also the profession and tools that defines the person acting as signifiers for male and female identities. Since the post-classic period, the Aztec state expanded into a large empire based on militarism and a thriving state-economy. The second part of Codex Mendoza shows the tribute that each conquered city-state in Mesoamerica had to pay. Hundreds of cloths and costumes, labour-intensive crafts and tons of food had to be produced several times a year for the Mexica rulers. During adulthood, men and women had to contribute together to the demands, which constituted their daily routine for a large part, if not whole of their lives. What division of labour is made in the Florentine Codex? Does it coincide with the practices in the native documents?

How are men's and women's roles portrayed? Are these interpreted in Spanish stereotypes, expectations and ideals?

Sahagún's informants recorded the advising *huehuetlatolli* of the parents to their daughter, speaking of 'very womanly tasks' such as sweeping, grinding maize and weaving. Florentine Codex Book VI chapter 18 (translation in Restall et al. 2005, 208-12) continues with "look well to the drink, the food; how it is prepared, how it is made, how it is made well; the essence of good drink, good food, the essence of what is called one's birthright. This is the property that belongs to our lords, the rulers." The way this text present noblewomen's duties composes the impression that these women had quite an important task. It was almost revered, highly ordained, and respected what she did, and she had to do it the best she can; it is her birthright, she has to be proud of doing this duty. Furthermore she has to start working in the middle of the night, without desiring the pleasure of sleep, which shows a high appreciation to diligence.

Another important aspect for women was the broom. However, sweeping is also included in the teaching of the boy, related to religious practices: "(the lord) holds vigil for the sweeping, the cleaning, the ordering of things. It is the pleasure of our lord. And he takes care of, he takes charge of and holds vigil over the incense burner, the offering of copal incense." Sweeping is transformed into ritual cleaning, of honouring the god(s), showing women's contribution to religion. However, the typical woman's task is here headed under the speech to noblemen.

The high devotion to the basic subsistence task and working hard is also expressed in the speech of the parents to the son: "If you dedicate yourself exclusively to nobility, if you do not look after the furrows, the ditches, how will you feed people?" (Florentine Codex book VI chapter 17). Other things he should be responsible for is the pack frame, the rattle and drum for the 'omnipresent lord', knowledge of artisanship and above all for the sowing and planting of the fields and trees. The importance on war mentioned during birth ritual is not mentioned in this speech, and only emphasised in the Codex Mendoza. So working hard, instead of an easier life as wealthy nobleman, is encouraged and the omnipresent focus of the speech. It shows male's capability and expectation of a life where the man is responsible of work.

Even though the grinding of maize and making of tortillas requires a day length of work, there were other tasks a noblewoman could carry out. "Open your

eyes wide as to how to become an artisan, how to be a feather worker, how to make designs by embroidering, how to choose colours, how to apply colours, like your sisters, your ladies, our ladies, the noblewomen." As an extension or advancement of spinning and weaving, embroidering and featherworking were also ascribed to typical noblewomen's work. As said before, weaving and spinning can be used as a metaphor for women in Mesoamerica. These high-quality embroidered costumes are typical for elites, while lower-classes were assumingly less involved with featherworking. Also in the eyes of the Spaniards, exotic colours, feathers and precious stones were gratefully valued, and therefore also its production and producers were assigned to a higher-valued category.

Another variation or extension of weaving activities is described in a native testament from the Mixtec region, Teposcolula, drawn up by Lucía Hernández Ñuquihui, dating to June 1633 (in Restall et al. 2005, 143-6). Despite the late date, the calendar name and the Mixtec language in which the testament is written, still shows a link to traditional Mixtec customs. Lucía was a well-off woman ruling over a small community named Dzumañuu. After the transfer of heritage, a list follows with her inventory, which consists next to pesos only of wool, cotton, yarn, decoration, finished *huipils* and other clothing. This can be interpreted, according to Terraciano, that this woman was a producer and/or a trader in cloth, which was a profitable sector in colonial Mexico. The document states that her husband had three mules, which can imply that her spouse took part in this trade and transported the cloths to other parts of Mexico and beyond, which was a common business in pre-Hispanic and colonial Mesoamerica (Restall et al. 2005, 143).

As showed above, the European division of labour is different throughout social classes. The normative division of labour presented during the Mesoamerican birth ritual is based on informants from the noble class. The parent's speech to the daughter also includes: "Because you are a noble, look carefully to the spindle whorl, the weaving stick, food and drink." Does this mean that these were typical noblewomen's activities, while lower classes had other specific tasks? The largest part of Mesoamerican inhabitants, however, lived in the countryside. Was their life and division of labour different than nobles like in Europe?

A small impression of the life outside the cities is provided by an early native document, a census of a *calpulli* (organisational unit), dating to 1540 (in

Restall et al. 2005, 96-100). It describes the houses and land owned and supervised by the baptised nobleman Martín Molotecatl. Each household is assigned a piece of land and a certain amount of tribute they have to pay to Martín. Parallel to early modern Europe, the agricultural fields were divided into estates which were owned by noblemen. This land was divided into smaller pieces which were worked by common peasants who could also sell and inherit it, but had duties towards the manor owner (Fairchilds 2007, 128). To continue, the native document describes the inhabitants, their relations and their professions. There are native and Spanish influences visible: some natives have been baptised and have Spanish names, others kept their native names and some "are not married in the church".

The following excerpts provide us with information on division of labour of the different inhabitants of Martín's houses: "Martín Molotecatl says: "the women do hired work, since I always give them the cotton, and the men cultivate the land." "She [Ichpochton] helps with grinding the maize with the *metate*." "All he [Ohuatl] does for it is go on errands, and also the woman helps with spinning cotton." "All he [Xochitl] does is cultivate the fields of Martín Molotecatl, and his wife helps with the yarn." "Here is her [Catalina Xocoyotl's] field: five *brazas* of irrigated field, for which she helps with making yarn from the cotton Martín Molotecalt delivers and cultivates Martín's fields." It shows again a similar division of labour, in which a separation is made between male and female economic contributions to the tribute.

This document shows an example of communities that where omnipresent in the Valley of Mexico. At first sight, the most important tribute items are allocated generally by gender; women take up the tasks to make cloth while men work on the fields for maize and other resources. As is seen in present-day Maya community the men are concerned with the resources as well, while women work it into products (O'Connor 2010). McGafferty and McGafferty (1999) also state that Mesoamerican women's identity is negotiated through her important function as creating art from nature. The document analysed above state literally that Martín provides the women with cotton, which they produce into yarn and cloths. The same might be inferred for the men that grow and harvest the maize, while the women grind it to produce *masa* and tortillas.

The Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1981, 51-53) describes further professions of the common woman, which are seamstress, spinner, weaver, cook and curer.

Furthermore Sahagún makes short descriptions of commoner women. His portrayal of the mature common woman include the characteristics “brave, like a man” and “[she] endures things like a man”. Apparent gendered associations are written here, with expected male characteristics (braveness and courage) to describe deviating behaviour of a woman. This idea was certainly held in Europe, although it is not possible to say if these characteristics where exclusively signifying masculine identity in Mesoamerica as well. It also shows that Sahagún was a little confused of women having these qualities, they could only be explained with masculine characteristics. Interestingly, there is only a chapter devoted to the commoner women, not to the men. Sahagún exceptionally picks the women out and dedicates a chapter to them, with only five stereotypical professions described. So lower class women had a different identity than noblewomen, which was also the case in early modern Spain.

Next to this he also dedicates a chapter to evil women, the carnal woman, hermaphrodite and the witch, which were common stereotypes in Europe at time of the inquisition. It is uncertain how Mesoamericans dealt with these traits or if these were categorised as such, nevertheless they were recognised in Mesoamerican society by Sahagún. Other deviating qualities of women are categorised according to expectations based on Spanish experiences, such as the easy seduction of women by the devil to explain bad behaviour, or the association of witchcraft with female physicians. The bad physician is associated with witchcraft, described as a stereotype witch: “[She is] a doer of evil. She bewitches – a sorceress, a person of sorcery, a possessed one”, she kills people and makes them sick with potions, and she practices fortunetelling (Sahagún 1981, 53). The woman on the image clearly shows the Christian concept of the devil. However, this profession is actually revered in Mesoamerican communities, it is a woman with knowledge of the calendar and the spiritual world. Also again the talking skills of the female procuress are addressed: “She induces, seduces with words, incites others. Adroit of language, skilled of speech, she is a fraud” (ibid. 94). Stereotypical women’s characteristics such as gossiping, witchcraft en the female seductress are present in the Florentine Codex.

Another example of how this stereotyping worked is shown in a Mixtec testimony describing an interrogation of a husband, his wife and her lover (from Chalcatongo 1581, in Restall et al. 2005, 161-3). The document tells that the woman attempted to kill her husband with the help of another man. The

testimony ends with the respective wife who declares before the *alcaldes*: “It is cruel, nobles, the devil deceived me.” Here we see the adhering to Spanish stereotypes and the incorporation of the Christian devil which would compensate or explain her deeds to the Spanish *alcalde*.

To continue with women’s professions, in book 10 women are painted as merchants and sellers (to be recognised by the hair and clothing), while the texts describes these professions as male. The images refer to women as sellers of tortillas and tamales (cooking); maize, limestone, amaranth, chillies, gourd seeds, fruit, atole, chocolate, and beans (cooking products); capes, feathers and dyes (weaving); and merchants in herbs and tobacco (curing). They all have to do with the near-universal female activities in the cooking, weaving and curing spheres. Furthermore we can conclude that these were commoner’s trades, and did not coincide with the female domestic ideal known by Sahagún. The speech from parents to noblewomen includes: “do not trade, do not deal as if in the market place,” which is placed in the same line as “do not become a commoner; do not lower yourself” (Sahagún, book VI chapter 18). Again, women from lower classes had other professions than idealised noblewomen’s behaviour. A Spanish influence was the claim by the Tlaxcalan *cabildo* in the 1550s: “And the women who gather dye in the marketplace are to gather dye no more” (in Restall et al. 2005, 130-3). This introduction shows the Spanish view where women are expected to be only attentive to her domestic duties, as seen in the previous subchapter.

Overall, we see again a stereotypical division of labour where women are ordered in cloth and cooking spheres and men cultivate the agriculture fields or go on errands. Cloth production did not only include weaving and spinning, but was extended from all kinds of decoration to eventually the selling of it. Commoner classes were involved in trading, while featherworking and embroidery was typical for noblewomen. The previously mentioned daily economic tasks for subsistence and tribute are neatly divided into husband and wife. However, in the case of widowhood, this model had to be adapted. Widow Catalina Xocoyotl not only spins, she also cultivates the fields of Martín Molotecatl. Another deviation from the stereotyped norm is mentioned in the Codex Sierra in which a man was involved in weaving: “This cloth was made by Tomás de las Cuevas there in Oaxaca” (in Restall et al. 2005, 89). It is disputable

if this was a special high-skilled craft and therefore fell in a different category than home-made cloth by housewives.

It is obvious that the few tasks described above do not make up all economic possibilities in complex Mesoamerican society. The native documents and testaments provide additional information on the reality of this ideal and broadens our account of gendered activities in Mesoamerica and variations that occurred. However, there existed ideally typified female occupations, while conspicuously there was no typical 'manly task' mentioned. In what way can we therefore speak of a dual gendered division of labour if men did not have specific tasks that defined their identity? Again, as this thesis argues, a focus is laid on a person's profession. Due to her reproductive attributes, women were less often involved in long-distance travelling, war and other heavy labour. Also, because it is an innate feature, the specific professions are more or less fixed and therefore became characteristic for females. Childbearing and associated household tasks and crafts connected and identified women with each other, which resulted in a strong shared feminine identity. We can furthermore argue that infertile females or women without offspring had the ability to involve in other occupations, with associated identities. This coincides with Joyce's theory of the presence of a third, celibate gender.

Men had less (physical) fixed and identifiable tasks, as perceived in the documents, from which we can conclude that their identity was more dependent on their profession. For example, people with the same professions congregated in the neighbourhoods or 'communities of practice' (sensu Wenger 2000) in Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlán. In codices, priests and warriors are often depicted with a distinguished appearance. In addition, tools and economic attributes could also be a part of a masculine or feminine figurine or depiction, which contributes to the display of their identities, and, as stated before, weaving can be seen as a metaphor for women. Seeing identities as constructed by multiple aspects, the profession of a person, apart from gender, was a major element of identity categories in Mesoamerica. This might also be a reason why Sahagún incorporated neatly structured definitions of people with specific professions, while in our current (or gendered) paradigm we are easily tended to see only gender as a major definer of identity.

4.3 Beyond cleaning, cooking and weaving

As seen above, the gendered divisions in Mesoamerica were very reminiscent to the European division of labour. It is also present in other cultures, which lead researchers to argue for a biological foundation of gender-based task divisions (see Wood and Eagly 2002). In early modern Europe it was assumed that women were by nature incapable for work other than domestic activities. Next to this, the household work, cooking, weaving while nurturing her children was not recognised as valued in society. The superficial similarities encountered in Mesoamerica by the Europeans, could be seen as reiterations of known stereotypical practices and would therefore encourage and strengthen Western assumptions. If we project ourselves in the colonist's position, seeing a similar division and convention as in Spanish culture, we might assume that female's weakness and men's superiority were equally seen as similar from their known world. However, this idea is not clearly traceable in the two Spanish documents because no reasoning or meaning behind the observations is written down. Looking deeper in the way gendered activities are portrayed reveal a different character.

So these similarities in the division of labour could serve as an entry-point in which extended gender conventions from Europe were inserted. Sahagún was not trying to make an all-embracing description of Mesoamerican life. His goal was to convert the natives into a Christian lifestyle, which includes knowledge of good and bad characteristics and an orderly civic structure, leaving no room for deviations or small-scale practices. In the meantime, the fellow-friars had to understand native deviations in their own terms to replace them with European conventions. As an exemplary model, the most important and essential aims to make the natives loyal subjects of the Crown and the Church were worked out: how men and women should behave, what was not allowed, and what was expected of them according to their sex. A western and Christian thinking is structured in dualistic terms and therefore idealistic, based on European values and categorisations in virtue versus sin. Sahagún extended the existing division of labour with European assumptions on female characteristics, such as a restriction for women from further public occupations or a focus on women's chastity. The division of labour could function as the basis for further gender conceptions expressed in a male-female hierarchy, not only in modern interpretations, but also in the colonial period.

Next to the aspects assumed to be ideal characteristics for women as seen through Sahagún's eyes, there is no clear evidence on how women and men conceived each other in traditional communities. The parental advices on boys' and girls' duties described in the Spanish document can be interpreted in diverging ways. The typical women's activities described as her 'birthright' can be interpreted as highly valued: divinely ordained and destined for the greater good. On the other hand it can be interpreted in European ways; with domestic duties as a naturally innate trait of womanhood for she is not able to perform other, more public and higher-valued tasks. The same goes for the description on sweeping, which is compared to ordering. It can be interpreted as women having a higher function in rituals, something not allowed in European society, or as a duty ordained by God where women are neatly ordered into the home or the church where she would be only devoted to the omnipresent lord. The nobleman's duty to 'feed people' might be addressed to a general good, or more specifically to support his family and wife.

What Sahagún's intention with these ambiguous descriptions actually was is disputable. It shows on the one hand our current input on interpreting gender relations, and on the other hand it might have been explicitly left this way by Sahagún to provide missionaries with a Mesoamerican entry-point to insert European meanings. The midwife's speech or the parents' socialisation process was most probably more elaborated and variable than it appeared in Sahagún's account. In creating a new worldview for the Mesoamericans, made from European ideals, certain existing characteristics were picked out and emphasised, while ideas deviating from the European convention were not replaced or rejected when it did not fit Sahagún's expectations of men and women's capabilities.

Compared to the Western views, noblewomen were addressed in a rather positive way. Diligence is appreciated and shared in Mesoamerican and European standards. Women who work hard are in this respect masculinised and therefore more valued in a Western perspective. It is also related to the end product of the work. The Spaniards were astonished by the beautiful cloth produced and worn by noblewomen, which were made with exotic dyes and high-valued goods such as feathers, previously unknown in the European hemisphere. We might state that the noblewomen together with their products were put in a different and higher category as women who make cloth at home for their

household members. So here we gained more insights on Nahua women due to a comparison or relation between European and Mesoamerican perspectives: they were at least conceived differently than women in Spain.

The cloths and food produced by middle and lower classes of society were also important. These were valued economic activities, as seen in the tribute accounts, because these were used to pay taxes and therefore contributing to the welfare of the realm. Sahagún (and the Spanish Crown) regarded the work made for economy and tribute as 'real' work, in contrast to household duties, and he therefore conceived women on a comparable level as working men, and they were even respected for their contributions to the broader economy. Again, this is a perspective which is relative to Sahagún's vision and ideas on values.

A neat division of labour was necessary for having a stable economy based on repetitions and traditions The naturally expected professions of women are domestic activities and care for the family, men were more intelligent to do the 'real work', in Spanish terms. In this respect, there was only one good division of labour. Obviously not all professions and activities could have been drawn in the limited volumes of the Florentine Codex. However a selection between what is written and what is not has been made; how professions and characteristics are categorised and what is repeatedly emphasised. So, the compact view of Sahagún displays mainly the expectations of women and men's traits from his own experience, either as an ideal or because he did not expect and believe in other possibilities for success.

Chapter 5: PARENTS AND PARTNERS

As described above, the Codex Mendoza shows that girls' childhood stops at being married; she does not receive more education and is kept somewhat on the background while in her rare portrayals she is occupied with weaving. In the meantime the boys receive more education and the learning process towards priests and warriors is elaborately depicted. Also in Christian tradition childhood stops for girls when they were given in marriage. It started the beginning of adulthood and parenthood, the newly-weds were separated from the control of the parents, and could start their own family. During childhood the boys and girls were kept carefully separate, but when they became adults they were united and formed the most intimate connection between a man and a woman: the marriage.

In anthropology, the best way to study a society is by looking at the mutual relationship between two persons, which may be seen as "the smallest building-block of society" (Eriksen 2001, 49). What better to study the matrimony as such a relationship? In Mesoamerica, unions between a man and woman were depicted in codices already in pre-colonial times. This relationship was of uttermost importance for the economy, political arrangements, and the establishment and transmission of cultural tradition. In Europe, marriage was one of the most important Christian institutions, and patriarchal discourses were embedded in this union. How is the relationship between Mesoamerican men and women interpreted by the Spaniards?

5.1 Holy matrimony in early modern Spain

As from the medieval period on, marriage consisted of a partnership of a man and a woman, and was mainly geared to economic opportunity (Casey 1999, 30). In Europe, adhering to Christian tradition, to be wedded was seen as the ultimate state of being of a man and woman. In early modern Spain the average age of marriage was 23 or 24 years old (Casey 1999, 30-31). Through matrimony, a couple became one legal entity, to provide for their own survival and the economy, and it was crucial for the European commonwealth; it was seen as the "cornerstone of the social order" (Casey 1999, 211).

The household that the partners created was also an important political unit, in which the husband was the only recognised citizen who represented his family in law and administration, and he was also liable for crimes of his family members (Fairchilds 2007, 70). The wife therefore was not really conceived as citizen, only as a subordinate to the head. It shows that wifehood was the social life phase in which a women had the least privileges and freedom; the woman's legal rights declined after she was committed to her husband. In contrast, unmarried women above the age of 25 could handle most legal and commercial activities without a man's permission (Poska 2000, 315). The Castilian law made place for widows and unmarried women to act on behalf of themselves in certain circumstances, where wives were mainly dependent on their husbands. However, a married state occurs more often than unmarried civilians.

Being dependent on the husband as head of the household also laid income and property in hands of the man. Fairchilds (2007, 282) states that in Spain, "wives could not buy anything apart from daily necessities without their husbands' permission," and the husband could easily disapprove certain purchases if he wanted to. In early modern Spain the law dictated:

> The husband should be the master and have control of all the property afore-said, and be entitled to collect the income of the whole, including what the wife gives, as well as that given by him, for the purpose of supporting him-self, his wife, and his family, and to preserve, defend, and protect the marriage well and faithfully. Still, the husband has no right to sell, dispose of, or waste the donation that he gave his wife, or the dowry which he receives from her, as long as the marriage lasts [...] (Partida IV, title XI, law 7, in Korth and Flusche 1987, 401).

The focus lies on the control of the husband to support and manage his family. Korth and Flusche further state that the law in this period dictated that the wife could sue her husband if he squandered the money (ibid.).

Managing a family also entitled the husband to control the transmission of property and heritage. This was usually done in the form of testaments, a practice rooted in Christian ideas of piousness. Fairchilds (2007, 35) mentions that property generally descended through male heirs, but Castilian law stated that all legitimate children were to share in the parental inheritance, regardless of their sex (Korth and Flusche 1987, 398). A writer in 1627 explained this:

> "The common custom of mankind held it to be absolutely unfair that women, being more fragile and leisured, and less apt for work and earning a living, should be left disinherited and poverty-stricken" (López Bravo in Casey 1999, 200).

In practice, men often divided the heritage among their sons, while women usually divided the property equally to sons and daughters (Fairchilds 2007, 120-1).

Casey pays much attention to dowries in his book on the social history of early modern Spain (1999). He states that in a society where wealth became more important and as a form of status, appropriate marriage candidates and inheritance was essential to secure the family name to later generations. The marriage of daughters became to a greater extent an economic business for material security. Possession was mainly in control of the husband, but the dowry remained the woman's *propria patrimonio*, next to other private or household goods (Korth and Flusche 1987, 398).

Widows, in turn, had a distinctive status in early modern society. Many women outlived men because of the lesser risks of domestic life. When the husband died, the widow received the whole or half of the dowry back, making her relatively wealthy (Casey 1999, 28). Also Castilian legal codes provided widows to administer their own property, be recognised as head of a household and be able to handle legal and administrative tracts without a man's permission (Poska 2000, 315). Remarriage was not encouraged; the ideal practice of a widow was to spend her last years in religious institutions or women's groups, devoted to prayer and charity (Fairchilds 2007, 107). Younger widows were more

likely to remarry since they could still be helpful to the economy. Together, this chapter shows that it is critical to take in mind that a woman's position and identity is dependent on her marital status.

Also of importance, marriage started the beginning of parenthood. Important to take in mind when analysing women is that in this period, when a woman married at age 24 and died around 40, she might have spend all her married life either pregnant or nursing the baby (Fairchilds 2007, 79). According to the sources used by Fairchilds, pregnancy sanctified women and cancelled out their sins. After a woman was married, she was situated in another life phase, accompanied with specific duties and expectations. It was the stage in which women were predominantly under control by men, and therefore seen in patriarchal views as the best state she could be in. It meant that she was restricted to the household and had generally no control over her property. In addition, parenthood and domestic duties would keep her from sinning and mingle with other men in public. In European conceptions, and literally said by God to Eve, as female archetype, is that the ideal destiny of a woman was to marry, be ruled by the husband and to provide him with heirs (in Genesis 3:16).

5.2 Mesoamerican matrimony

An important life stage throughout cultures is becoming an adult, being a full and active member of society. The age of fifteen (indicated by fifteen depicted dots in the Codex Mendoza) marks this turning point: a next phase of the children's life in Mesoamerica. From this moment on the Codex Mendoza shows again changing elements of the persons and has a different organisation. Still today in Mexico, when a girl turns fifteen, a feast is held to introduce the girls as adults in society. The original meaning of this *quinceañera* is to celebrate that the girl is sexually an adult and therefore ready to marry (Palfrey 1997). According to Durán (1971, 292), young men in ancient Mesoamerica had to wait to marry until the average age of twenty. Sahagún (1981, 126) complements that the boys had to finish their training or education before they were ready to get married.

Giving birth was one of the most important outcomes of a unified couple. According to Restall et al. (2005, 216) women were honoured for giving birth; it was seen as a heroic deed and it was compared to battle. Sahagún (book VI, chapter 33) writes: "when the baby had arrived on earth, the midwife shouted;

she gave war cries, which meant the woman had fought a good battle, had become a brave warrior, had taken a captive, had captured a baby." This puts the woman in the same line as men in relation to their natural sexed attributes. In Europe, a pregnant woman is highly esteemed as well, and even said to be in a state of holiness. Pregnancy is one of the distinctive differences that sets a woman apart from men, but this Mesoamerican metaphor equals men's and women's deeds.

The moral education of the children by the parents is elaborated in the record of advice about marriage, from noble parents to their daughter:

> "Do not give yourself to the wanderer, to the restless one who is given to pleasure, to the evil youth. Nor are two, three to know your face, your head. When you have seen the one who will endure with you to the end, do not abandon him. Grab him, hang on to him even if he is a poor person" (Sahagún book VI, chapter 18).

> "If you are still not pure, if already you are a woman who has been persuaded somewhere, you will never be at peace with people, for it will always be remembered of you; it will always cause your misery, your suffering. Never will you achieve peace or tranquillity. Your servant, your spouse, will always be suspicious."
> "Never at any time abuse your servant, your husband. Never at any time betray him; as it is said, do not commit adultery" (Sahagún book VI, chapter 19).

So where in chapter 4 the boy's advices focuses exclusively on work and diligence, the girl's speech is pre-eminently focused on modest behaviour and dress, prudence, chastity and sexuality. The Christian categorisations of women associated with sexuality and men with work shine through. Burkhart (2001, 101) notes in another Spanish documentation of *huehuetlatolli* (in the Olmos-Bautista collection) the emphasis on the obedience of wives to the husbands, where the boy's advice was focused towards his competence to support a wife and family. However, this is not clearly expressed in the Florentine Codex.

The advice on adultery shows this practice as the worst thing a person can do. It is also one of the Ten Commandments. Virginity and monogamy are encouraged and very elaborately emphasised by the mother. It shows again great similarities with a Christian appreciation of virginity before marriage and

monogamy. However, in the pre-colonial Codex Borgia one of the marriage prognostications is also focused towards adultery (figure 5.1). A specific combination of numerals in the calendrical names leads to the prospect of a higher risk of infidelity in this marriage. The image shows a serpent in the place of the man's penis as a symbol for his deceit, and he is depicted while touching

Figure 5.1 Pre-Columbian marriage prognostication warns for adultery (Codex Borgia f. 59, famsi.org).

the breast of a naked woman. The symbols of darkness and sun, another vessel with a serpent, and arrow and shield are associated with negative connotations (Boone 2006, 78; 82-3).

To continue, Sahagún (1981, 11-12) writes about the ideal roles and social expectations of middle-aged women: "[she is] a parent, with sons, with daughters, with a husband; married, wise," and "the mature woman [is] respected, revered, dignified – a woman of the home. She works; she never rests [...]" Here it is stated again that the assumed or ideal status of a woman is emphasised as related to the home, being married and having children. The woman in relation to the domestic sphere is a common concept. During the birth ritual and childhood education, girls were already instructed with domestic tasks and her prospect was to spend most of her life near and within the house (chapter 3.2).

Biological interpretations argue that women had to stay close to the house because of their weak state during pregnancy and for the education and safety of her young children. Even in a Maya language there is one word (*na*) to signify

both house and mother (Restall et al. 2005, 224). *Cihuatlatquitl* in Nahuatl literally means ‘woman’s property’ or ‘woman’s things’ and is often used in a broad sense as everything related to the house (Lockhart 1992, 70). The house and especially the (separate) kitchen are regarded as a typical woman’s place. In a feminist perspective it can be seen as a place where women’s power is re-enacted; social relations are maintained; food is prepared as the basis for subsistence, feasts and rituals; and welfare and cultural traditions are continued; which shows that the home does not necessarily have to be conceived as an isolated and oppressing place for women (Christie 2006; Robson 2006).

The next excerpt of the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1981, 1) coincides with a European view as well. The father is described as “the source of lineage, the beginning of lineage” and “a careful administrator [of his household]” next to having an exemplary role to the family and he cares for his family. A good mother cares for the children and “she serves others”. Furthermore, mother and father both taught the children, as seen in chapter 3, and again laziness is seen as a bad virtue. What resonates in this description is the father as head of the household, standing above his family. The ‘care for his family’ might be interpreted as element of affection, or as supporting the family with his income. On the other hand, the serving done by the woman can be interpreted as serving her husband, being dominated by him, or in general to the help and provide products for the community. Again, diverging interpretations can be extracted from these ambiguous statements.

It is possible that some ideas were similar, converged or were interpreted by Sahagún in relation to his own culture. The following practices are more likely to be interpreted as Mesoamerican because they diverged from Christian notions. A colonial Nahua source mentions a practice termed *montequitl*, which deals with the living together of a couple before they marry and where the future husband had to carry out labour for his future father-in-law (Kellogg 2005, 109). In this instance, sexual intercourse might have happened before the marriage, which indicates that this was not exclusive for married couples in Mesoamerican tradition (Kellogg 2005, 73). Although the term is mentioned in a colonial document, the term is Nahuatl, which indicates a pre-colonial concept.

Furthermore, men of noble origin could have more wives than one, seen from a document from the Cuernavaca region, dating to as early as c. 1540 (in Restall et al. 2005, 96-100). It describes the subdivision of a neighbourhood or

political unit (*calpulli)* where Martín Molotecatl is described with having five wives. His son has two spouses. Spanish influence has already set foot on the ground, but since polygamy is unacceptable in Christian tradition, this custom should be Mesoamerican. However, not all noblemen are described in colonial documents as having more than one wife.

A last native document concerning marriage provides some personal experiences of a married commoner woman (testament of Ana Juana, Tlacuilocan, 1580, in Restall et al. 2005, 138-9). The following excerpt can be interpreted as adhering to two gender ideologies. Ana Juana states:

> "And here is what I say concerning my husband named Gabriel Itzmalli, who is a great villain. [...] I do not know how many debts he has. He never gave me anything at all, not money, nor telling me "poor you," as did the three who died, two of whom were my spouses, because we worked together to make a living."

The Spanish idea of a husband supporting his family and poor incapable wife with income may be applied here. But on the other hand the document shows that the couple worked together, providing both a part in their joint survival. The parallel activities learned during childhood converged through marriage to constitute an important economic unit, a new household and it contributes to the maintenance of their lineage. A focus on diligence and work is clearly expressed in the native documents, and constitutes an important aspect in marriage.

The testament of Ana Juana further shows, that she kept her possessions very separate from her husband because he borrows money and keeps things for himself, which does not fit into her previous experience of living together. It cannot be concluded from this case if this is an example of an introduction of European notions posed upon men's behaviour, or a deviating personality of the husband. Yet it shows a native woman's view of a marriage that consists of a co-operation of a working man and woman. Furthermore, her possessions state an independence from her partner, as opposed to the expected supporting role of the husband in Europe.

5.2.1 Testified possessions

This subchapter will go deeper into man-woman relations as expressed in possessions, as is greatly reported in the native testaments. In patriarchal

society, the power relation between men and women is partly expressed in ownership. Described in the previous chapter, men often controlled the possessions of the family, which reflects the woman's dependence on her husband. The independence and female rights described in the testaments below do not coincide with the ideas on marriage of early modern Spain.

Colonial Mexican testaments constitute a large part of historical documentation and provide insight in past lives, possessions and rights. They were mainly written by Mesoamerican nobles but priests also encouraged lower classes to write last wills. Testaments can be interpreted as a Christian tradition drawn on Roman civil law, but Terraciano (1998, 113) mentions a pre-Columbian Mixtec tradition of a practice that can be interpreted as last wills, written in the Florentine Codex:

> "It is said of the Mixtecs, that in the time of their idolatry, when one was about to die, s/he summoned the diviner, the advised one. Before him/her one told all, before him/her one placed all which one had done, all which one had performed - one's faults, one's good to others, one's harming of others. Perhaps one had stolen, perhaps one had taken something from someone. One told all, concealed nothing, hid nothing. And the diviner or the healer commanded the sick one to make restitution to people, to return property and belongings to people." (Sahagún book 7, chapter 34).

The described contents are present in many of the colonial testaments. Notable are the Christian introductions, expressed in the addressing of God or holy trinity at the beginning of each document. With adding expressions of Christian belief to confess and settle one's place in heaven, this practice was easily transformed into a testament following a European standard.

Cline (1998) presents a colonial confessional manual and guide for priests to query the natives about their faith and sin, including the only found model testament for indigenous people in Mexico, written by fray Alonso de Molina. It makes us again realise to take note of the Spanish bias, both by the drawing up of the document, the data that is limited and preformed by standardised questions, and because of the (male) notaries who had to write, interpret or translate the wills. Speaking in front of a Spanish official or Catholic priest also

made certain restrictions to what the indigenous man or woman had to, was expected to, or could not say.

The consequences of Spanish patriarchal implications are also noted by Cline (1998, 20), for example the witnesses during the writing of a testament had to be mature men, according to Molina. Another gender implication is drawn by this author: the manual inclines the notary to address the men as “hermano mio” and the woman as “señora”, showing a kind of closer and equal relationship between the men, and a discrete, distant approach to the women. In the model testament for notaries, one question is: “How large was the dowry of [his] wife when she was betrothed and married” (folio 59v). First of all it assumed the male testator, and on the other hand the tradition of dowries (or a practice associated with it) is addressed. Again this example makes it difficult to distinguish between pre-colonial practices or already adopted or acculturated European concepts.

The last wills of both men and women in colonial Mesoamerica were documented. Several conclusions can be made concerning the possessions and power of men and women. The passing on of heritage and inherited land and material was very important in Mesoamerica, and some documents clearly state that Spaniards were not to buy a mnemonic piece of land. Men and women inherited all the possessions of their family members; it was carefully described and distributed, mostly evenly among sons and daughters. There is no clear preference for boys who obtain inheritance, rather the heritage one receives is dependent and related to the work and division of labour. Girls and boys receive land to continue their work, and tools that might be useful to fulfil their duties. In addition, there existed a concept of ‘woman’s land’ (*cihuatlalli*) or ‘woman’s room’ translated in some testaments. It is a pre-Columbian concept, but it is unclear what it is. Some scholars have related it to land or houses passing through the female lineage (Anderson et al. 1976, 6).

That the transfer of heritage was independent of sex is illustrated in the testament of don Gabriel de Guzmán (from 1591 in Restall et al. 2005, 106-113). His oldest son now rules over Achiutla. His second child, a daughter named María, “should enjoy the cacicazgo and señorío [Achiutla] in her lifetime. After her death, it is my wish that my son don Francisco will inherit it from doña María, his sister.” Gabriel de Guzmán ends with: “All of them should inherit equal parts, one no more than the other.” It also implies that the inheritance of rulership is in this case based on the age of the child, instead of the gender or profession.

Another testament from the Mixtec region, Teposcolula, is drawn up by a woman of lesser noble origin named Lucía Hernández Ñuquihui, dating to June 1633 (in Restall et al. 2005, 143-6). In agreement with the interpretation made by Terraciano that this woman operated in long-distance cloth trade with her husband, this document also shows that the woman kept her inventory separate from her husband, indicating her independency or even ownership of the business. Not only women of higher status were independent in owning property and passing on of heritage, but also lesser ranked women. Furthermore there is no difference between women who are widowed or married; the property of husband and wife is separated.

5.4 Chastity over submissiveness

Arriving at the ultimate relation between men and women, we are able to make some conclusions on local pre-colonial gender relations and the way it is portrayed by Sahagún. With the information from chapter 4 and the emphasis on work in the testaments, we can state that a marriage was mainly about working together for subsistence. Both economic tasks were equally contributing to tribute payment for a broader economic contribution, and the same goes for an equating of a noble male warrior and women's giving birth. In respect to ownership, men did not have a higher function or control in the family, possessions were separated and often shared. Boys and girls received an equal share of the inheritance. In this respect, compared to female's low rank in early modern Europe, we can say that women in Mesoamerica had fewer restrictions and were conceived on a similar level as men on at least the household level and in social-civic spheres.

As already noted before, Mesoamerican notions on sexuality are somewhat repressed in the Florentine Codex. Monogamy and virginity is firmly encouraged in the mother's speech to the daughter, but this also means that these cases occurred, otherwise there would have been no necessity to stress and educate it. Burkhart (2001, 99) noted in her essay on sexuality in Nahuatl documents that the theme of chastity was more emphasised than the subordination of women in marriage. Chastity and prudence are indeed the more pervasive themes in the Florentine Codex. Burkhart's argument for this is that all native inhabitants, nevertheless their sex, were seen as weak, less spiritual and susceptible for sins.

A polygamist man for example was therefore put on the same weak line as a sinning woman. The importance of a gender hierarchy in Europe “collapsed in New Spain under the weight of more salient hierarchies of power – Spaniard over Indian and Christian over pagan” (Burkhart 2001, 100).

However, it can also be interpreted as if sexual virtues were valued higher by the Franciscan friar than submissiveness of women. Christian ideas are interwoven with gender and moral order. In respect to the goal of the Florentine Codex, there might have been a greater need to change sexual ethics in Mesoamerican society than the submissiveness of women who were already practicing their work in-home. The sexual rituals, sex before marriage, and polygamist practices the Spanish friars encountered were unacceptable in Catholic ideology and had to be eliminated for moral and social order. This was done by inserting Christian sexual ethics in the socialisation of men and women through advisory speeches, and since women were expected to be the most sinful in this matter, their education was mostly devoted to this subject. That the latter idea of a deceitful woman was not a common metaphor in pre-colonial contexts is illustrated in the marriage prognostication (figure 6.1). In the Borgia Codex we see the husband taking the lead in touching the breast of the naked woman, instead of the wife as instigator and symbol for sexual ‘sin’, as so embedded in Christian thought.

Next to taking certain ideas for granted as Mesoamerican, there are also similarities between gendered practices of Spain and Mesoamerica. One of which is the testament, at first sight very European, but a Mesoamerican counterpart pre-existed. Also adultery was in pre-Columbian times associated with negative connotations. In addition, some Christian virtues might have been shared by the nobles for social order. In the Florentine Codex (book VI chapter 18) Sahagún wrote: “The words with which they [the parents] would advise them [the children] were very good.” It shows an agreement of Sahagún with Mesoamerican notions. On the other hand, Burkhart (2001, 90) sarcastically notes, “one has to wonder, however, whether the gods in preconquest times cared all that much about a person’s sex life”. In all, the Christian ideas on virginity and chastity for women were clearly accentuated by Sahagún.

Chapter 6:
CREATING THE NEW WORLD

The response to the question *did* the Spaniards influence our current knowledge on Mesoamerican gender relations?' is self-evident. '*What* knowledge did the Spanish writers influence?' is less easy to answer. To challenge this, the aim of this thesis was to approach *why* the Spaniards wrote the chronicles and *how* they constructed their knowledge on Mesoamerican gender relations (sensu Goodman 1978). For the latter question an understanding of the composition of the Spanish worldview was needed. With the inclusion of Spanish ideals and categorisations, and native colonial examples, it was possible to make cross-cultural comparisons on gender concepts and detract Spanish ideas from the Florentine Codex by researching why the writers incorporated certain descriptions, what was emphasised and what was left out, how the data is presented, what categorisations are used and what relations are made between the old and new world. With this method, we can formulate careful conclusions on gender in Mesoamerica and the colonisation process, and make critical notes for the further use of these colonial documents. It makes a reasonable start to retrieve more information from these scarce and indispensible descriptions to learn more about post-classic society.

Even though taking a stance that gender roles and expectations are culturally constructed and would therefore differ in the two geographical isolated cultures, the first aspect we stumbled upon when researching the colonial documents were the similarities between Mesoamerican and early modern

European gender conceptions, categories, practices and ideals. Overing (1990, 604), making use of Goodman's ways of worldmaking, states: "it is only through the systematic examination of the production of knowledges, both theirs and ours, that we can then begin to unfold differences between those knowledges." 'Ours' can be interpreted here as European-Christian notions. The difficulty lies in our incomplete knowledge of 'their' Mesoamerican conceptualisations, since there are very few references to these intangible aspects of society in other media than written sources from the pre-Hispanic period. If we remove known typical Spanish ideas from the colonial documents, there is little that remains. The idea that certain practices and concepts are shared is not taken in account here, nor is it always evident where the author's interpretations come in. Nevertheless, native colonial documents provide us with written experiences, emotions and realities of men and women to compare with the interpretations made by Sahagún.

With the incorporation of Goodman's scheme on the creation of knowledge and worldmaking, it was possible to understand why there are so many similarities written in Sahagún's documents and see through how the information came into being and how it was presented, to arrive at native Mesoamerican gender notions. However it was still difficult to find concrete examples of processes of worldmaking in the texts. Several ideas were ambiguous and could be interpreted in diverging ways, in European and in Mexican concepts. On the other hand, this might also be exactly a way for the Spaniards to divert these Mesoamerican statements into Spanish morals. As always, additional data is needed to fill in the gaps or to compare with sixteenth-century descriptions. Yet, the method presented in this thesis provides a good start for further research with Spanish sources to tackle the gender bias in the representation of Mesoamerican society in a systematic way.

6.1 Making sense of similarities

A common practice throughout the conquering of the New World was the placement of Spanish customs, ideas, buildings and laws upon existing indigenous institutions. Examples are the *encomienda* system relying on the *altepetl* and the existing tribute system (Horn 1998, 62-3); the indigenous temple and sacred places were rebuild and transformed in Christian loci (figure 6.1);

parishes were based on native communities; Castilian law was placed on indigenous society including men's ruling positions; and Catholic saints and holy days were placed on native gods and converged with existing feast days. The Spaniards were creating a new ideal world, suitably named the New World or Nueva España. At work here is Goodman's (1978, 6) theory that novel worlds are always remade from other, already existing worlds, in this case the Spanish-Christian worldview. The similarities are then 'different so-and-sos [that] may be the same such-and-such' (ibid., 8).

Two important aspects had to be included: first the understanding of Mesoamerican patterns in Spanish terms, and secondly the native inhabitants had to understand the Spanish practices in their ways. "European introductions worked best when they converged with indigenous practices or precedents, when they made sense to the new converts" (Restall et al. 2005, 175). But before this, the patterns had to be recognised and defined by the Spaniards by (re)interpret-

Figure 6.1 A Catholic convent build on the sacred foundations of a Mixtec temple in Achiutla, Oaxaca (Photo by the author).

ting the practices in more comprehensible concepts from their own worldview. This could only have been done through their existing knowledge that allowed the native models to be interpreted in Christian terms; the perceptions of native customs were preceded by European conceptualisations. The result is that many elements of the described society resemble Christian concepts, but were in fact

based on native models. It is as if a mould pre-existed in America, which the Spaniards filled in with the most important notions from their own culture. In this respect they tried to create a perfect world that was slightly in agreement with native ideas to keep the original inhabitants under control.

The same theory can be applied on the Florentine Codex. Only with the explorations of underlying reasons that lead to the realisation of the Spanish chronicle were we able to understand why there are so many European-sounding themes picked out for the document. The most important reason is that the document was created as a guide for other missionaries to convert the natives to Christianity and its associated moral lifestyle. It therefore must have been understood by other Spaniards, but still had to relate to Mesoamerican practices and words. So what information was needed for this indoctrination? First of all the practices that deviated from a Christian moral order had to be incorporated to be substituted or formed towards a more acceptable model. The practices that did not fit in Sahagún's ideal picture were considered idolatrous and savage, and had to be eliminated or substituted. As Sahagún noted in his introduction, there are many of such things embedded in daily practices and conceptualisations of the native inhabitants.

Gender is a concept which is embedded in the social structure of society and intrinsically related to Christian tradition and morality. Therefore this concept cannot be addressed as a single aspect, and is in this case interwoven with Christian thoughts. "The connection between ontology and morality is critical to the understanding of most knowledges, and of their creation" (Overing 1990, 617). This, and Sahagún's speciality in moral theology, might have been a reason why morality and normative behaviour is so prominently present in the Spanish chronicles. It helped him to penetrate Mesoamerican knowledge and to insert Christian morality on its foundations. In this sense, the social aspects of the native culture that were addressed in the document had something to do with Christian virtues and were deviations from, or appropriate foundations for, a Western ideal.

Sahagún mainly interacted with the elite class of Nahua society. This class generally serves as role models in moral behaviour and appearance for their people. Roughly speaking, their main task is to rule their people, make sure they pay tribute and take care that this happens without chaos. Stern argues that

gender plays an important part as the basis of social order during the period of conquest:

> "Theorists have observed, from cross-cultural and comparative historical perspectives, that gender constitutes a near-universal touchstone in constructions of group identity, historical memory and origin myths, and socially legitimate power. In times of flux or transformation, moreover, the assertion of gender roles as a natural order to which society must return or through which society will recover its historic moorings imparts an apparently fixed quality to gender [...] The cultural constructions tend to naturalize gender and to reassert proper gender roles as the basis of social order and well-being" (Stern 1995, 297).

Sahagún shared the ideal of an ordered society, in which the native inhabitants served as economic, spiritual and moral subjects of the Crown and the Christian God. And in his viewpoint the behaviour and roles of men and women were of uttermost importance to create an ordered society and an efficient economy through a strict division of labour. This includes the themes that recurred in the document and therefore picked out for analysis in the main part: roughly summarised under the terms diligence and chastity.

These virtues are related respectively to a partition between male and female. An emphasis is put in the document on presuppositions and stereotypical roles of men and women derived from a Christian-Spanish conceptual frame. This is visible in the assumed characteristics for men and women, where bad women are associated with sexual activities and girls' education is focused towards virginity, chastity and monogamy. Men have no descriptions linked to sexual ethics, his advice and characteristics are in turn principally related to diligence as opposed to laziness. It does not only show ideals, but it also means that exceptions to this norm occurred, otherwise there would not been such an instruction to lead the inhabitants to the right path.

It further shows that a gender bias cannot only be explored through researching ideas on gender, because these are inherently related to other social aspects, values and beliefs. In the Florentine Codex, only essential aspect are picked out that fit in the ideal world of Sahagún, perhaps as emphasising existing norms, or as new ones to be imposed by the Spaniards. The descriptions in the

Florentine Codex are generalised and show idealised examples of behaviour. The native documents and additional studies suggest the actual practices of this standard, and also deviations from it. In this sense, we can state that Sahagún makes a different representation of the actual Mesoamerican notions by means of accentuating, replacing, deleting and categorising differently the native notions.

6.2 Categorising men and women

The processes of worldmaking that are most visible in the Florentine Codex are categorising, weighing and deletion. For Sahagún's own and the readers' comprehension, specific characteristics, professions and places are coupled to gender categories from Spanish society. This ordering of gendered aspects occurs in a hierarchical way (weighing), and in horizontal grouping. In relation to values and ideals known from Spain, these two ways of worldmaking appeared considerably interesting to reveal information on Mesoamerican gender conceptions. Next to Sahagún's translation of Mesoamerican culture in more intelligible terms, there is his goal to construct a new worldview on Mesoamerican foundation. Here he used ideals from his own culture to supplement and build forth on existing notions, and the process of deleting unacceptable practices from Mesoamerican tradition is involved. A systematic description of Sahagún's ways of worldmaking will be presented below.

The Spaniards came across various professions, appearances, behaviour and persons in Mexico, which were interpreted with presuppositions and associated with expectations from European gender categories. Therefore the Mesoamerican counterparts were used as points of departure for descriptions and categorisations made in the Florentine Codex. An important encounter was the division of labour where women are associated with weaving and cooking activities. These tasks took place mainly in and around the home. From here, Sahagún made the connection with female's submissiveness and more profoundly her sexual and public restrain which was associated with the home. At this juncture, recognisable aspects were picked out and composed with known gender roles.

Subsequently, the domestic female role was associated with expectations of inferiority, weakness, the need of a husband for support, unintelligence and a

restraint to prevent sexual sin. These were common characteristics in the category of femininity made by European men. A same way of interpreting is often done by modern researchers. Sahagún's description of the home as the ordained place for women is in modern research associated with an inferior, isolated and repressed life of women. That this connection is misplaced is proven by the native documents, where men and women contributed with equally valued activities to the economical welfare; commoner women had important functions in the marketplace and men did not have control over the woman's property.

Male and female categories in Europe are hierarchically ordered, in power, societal contribution and value. With this background and way of interpretation we can make a relation to the situation in Mesoamerica, and how gender roles are portrayed by Sahagún. We have seen that female's submissiveness is less prominent in Sahagún's description of women, while sexual ethics are more present. Several analogies are made between men and women which reveal a Mesoamerican status with respect to one another. The capturing of warriors and the giving birth of the noblewoman are equated, resulting in a similar value of the two genders' tasks. The same goes for the equal treating of the women's weaving and cooking tasks, compared to the man's work on the agriculture field and their contributions to the broader economy. Women are often associated with diligence and working hard by Sahagún, which are manly characteristics in European terms and therefore valued higher by the Spaniards. This includes the appreciated exotic decorations made by the woman as well. These activities are in this matter positioned in a higher category than the Spanish woman's in-home weaving. Thus women were put on a similar level as working men, together with the attached Spanish positive reception.

Another extraction can be made from the categorisation of commoner women by Sahagún. She is ideally described as having courage, and being brave like a man. Furthermore she contributes to the economy and trades in the market, the public sphere. These are considered manly personalities and activities in a Spanish viewpoint, and the valued meaning of this category is therefore equally transferred to the Mesoamerican woman. Even though the general activities in the cooking and weaving spheres associated with women, the commoner woman might have had a very different life and associated identity than the noblewoman.

That a separation by social classes for gendered identities is necessary is also visible in the differences between peasant- and townswomen in early modern Spain. In Western societies, status is built on wealth, possessions, authority over people and public contributions to society. The presented cross-cultural theory on gender hierarchy states that the sex that performs the activities, including the products, that are most valued in society, gains status and power. From the Florentine Codex we can only make a comparison of a gendered status in terms of European values, since it is uncertain which activities and products were valued in Mesoamerica. An exception occurs when Mesoamerican products or activities are placed alongside each other, such as the capturing of captives with a female giving birth.

With the tasks and characteristics moulded in two European categories of male and female, what are other European gender biases in the representations of men and women in the Florentine Codex? The gendered expectations guided the description of men and women to a limited and stereotypical account. The goal of the chronicle to impose a moral and ordered society on Mesoamerica resulted in the repetition of ideal gendered characteristics to describe male and female's role in Mesoamerica, mainly diligence for men and chastity for women. The noble class as instructors and role models for Christian norms distorted a more realistic view of the larger commoner section of society. Sexual rituals and ethics are left out, since these would not coincide with the chaste Christian standards of constrained sexuality which the Spaniards wanted to imply on the native society. In addition, adhering to the definition of identity, one's identity and gender allows access to events, places and characteristic information. In this respect, typical female places and activities are not described if the male informant could not enter this place.

Furthermore, with the help of the native documents, we were able to find deviating realities from Sahagún's ideological representation. As opposed to patriarchal Spain, the marriage was mainly focused on the working together of husband and wife for subsistence, each contributing their part. Both economic tasks were equally contributing to tribute payment for the broader economic contribution, and the same goes for an equating of a warrior and a woman's giving birth for nobles. In respect to ownership, men did not have a higher function or control in the family; possessions were separated and often shared. Furthermore, women were not always and only a symbol for sexual sin, and seen

the sexual tinted rituals and pre-marriage sex, chastity and virginity might not have been of uttermost importance in a girl's education. Both boys and girls received education and mothers and fathers were involved in the teaching of their offspring. So in this respect, compared to the restrictions in early modern Europe, we can say that women in Mesoamerica had fewer restrictions and were more equal to men in the household and social-civic spheres. It shows Spanish stereotypes and expectations in the Florentine Codex, and an emphasis on aspects that might not have been important in native tradition.

The Florentine Codex does give many clues to a binary division of genders. However neither Goodman's theory nor the native documents can attain the origins of another view, since it deals with deeper conceptualisations. We cannot deny a woman's identity and place is related to weaving and the home in Mesoamerica, which is reaffirmed in grave goods, iconography, metaphors, origin stories and in linguistic definitions. Furthermore, appearances, hairstyles, the marriage, sexual attributes, and figurines and the native documents showing a division of labour between men and women, argue for a division of the two sexes. However, an emphasis is put on the division of economic tasks, while one's identity also consists of other less fixed attributes. One category as representative for all men, or the idea that all women weave is proven too simplistic.

The words 'spheres' and 'customarily' might be better terms to approach gendered categories. The latter term is also used by the elder woman in the Tetzcoco dialogues. In contrast to the 'domestic sphere' the term 'weaving and cooking sphere' broadens our assumptions on female activities existing solely of weaving and spinning cloth, and it is not attached to space. 'Customarily' points to these activities as typical for women and their identity, while it doesn't exclude women to participate in other activities or men performing in feminine spheres. So customary women's spheres include all activities having to do with the making of products from resources: gathering dye and fuel, the purchase of weaving and cooking utensils in the marketplace, making designs, the manufacturing process into products, decorating, embroidering, featherworking, co-operating, until the wearing, selling in the market, and its function in rituals and feasts. In this extend, the relation of these activities are moved away from the domestic area which is often associated with oppression and isolation and a subsequent lower status. The inferior position of women is not prominently visible in the Florentine Codex,

and depends on our own assumptions and European ideas of subordination as related to the home. The categories and experiences from the native documents provide sufficient information for a more parallel relation of men and women in Mesoamerica compared to early modern Spain.

In all, we can conclude that Goodman's systematic study of ways of worldmaking has provided us with a considerable understanding of the realisation of the Florentine Codex, how certain gender ideas are interpreted and categorised, the background of decision making and ways of selecting data. This has leaded us to more insights into gender relations in post-classic Mexico. Also, our understanding on colonisation processes is enlarged with the making of a new world from the ideals of an existing world. However, additional data is necessary to be able to reject the Christian normative view on gender relations presented in the Florentine Codex, because Goodman leaves us with ambiguous interpretations, uncertain similarities between Christian and Mesoamerican ideals, and the choice between a process of accentuating or supplementation, to separate a probable Mesoamerican origin from Christian conceptions. To tackle these problems in further research, additional data is needed. When applying data from the Florentine Codex or making analogies with archaeological remains, the approach presented in this thesis is worth to deal with the possible biases.

6.3 Subsequent research

This research provides a start for further studies that make use of Spanish colonial sources in the reconstruction of past Mesoamerican society. Not only representations of gender are influenced by the Spanish author, but other aspects of society might be affected as well, such as Christian assumptions on general ideologies and morality, the way animals are portrayed, Christian ideas on heaven and hell and other dualisms. Going to the backgrounds of the Spanish worldview and processes of worldmaking enables us to see through more ideas in the document that are taken for granted. This can also be extended to the result of these assumptions in modern scientific interpretations. Especially gender assumptions influence modern interpretations, and this might be the same for ingrained ideas on values, good and bad, or other dualisms.

These value systems have proved to be of importance in the descriptions of gender relations. In this respect, associated values on work, products, moral

characteristics, either native, Spanish or modern, influence the way we interpret gender identities. How can we retrieve this? One means can be the analysis of how different persons and professions are depicted in relation to others. Rulers are depicted with more attributes and decorations, showing wealth and power. An example is the definition of *toltecah* (highly skilled crafters), which is used as a highly valued metaphor or associated with an esteemed group that stands above the commoner level.

The original idea for this thesis was to research the role or effect of Spanish colonisers and Christianity (and their chronicles) on traditional Mesoamerican man-woman relations and categories. The conclusions of this research can also provide for a start into this subject. The often neglected native colonial sources can be of use in this matter, for example, a systematic way to research this is to analyse a chronological series of native colonial documents from the beginning of the conquest until the end of the colonial period to see to what extent the Spanish worldview influenced native gender relations. In this respect, a further search for native colonial administrative documents, its translation and analysis is encouraged to reveal additional detailed information on the native inhabitants' experiences.

Furthermore, a linguistic study on gendered words can give additional insights in native gender conceptions. In Nahuatl there are two prefixes that can make a noun male or female: *oquich*- for masculine and *cihua*- to make the word feminine. There are exceptions that provide insight in pre-Columbian gendered activities or gender relations, such as *pilli* and *tecuhtli*. *Pilli* does not include a masculine prefix while it deals with a (male) prince. The same goes for *tecuhtli* which means lord. So it is assumed that this occupation is for men. It is however possible to include the prefix *cihua*-, making it *cihuapilli*, meaning 'princess', or making *cihuatecuhtli* meaning 'lady'. In this respect, a female can be an important ruler, but it is assumedly a male occupation.

Unfortunately the linguistic aspects are understudied in this research while the use of words had a profound influence on the way gendered ideas and persons are described. Researching Spanish introductions and loanwords provide insight in gendered concepts that existed or were transformed into a new meaning. The adoption of Spanish with for example its male pronoun as generic might "frame societal understanding of male and female and thereby produce and maintain gender inequality" (Wood and Eagly 2002, 700).

Next to ideological and conceptual influences, more tangible influences were present due to the Spanish arrival, such as tools, food and techniques. Especially the changes near the home might have influenced the woman's life, time-expenditure and status, such as the influence of other cooking products next to traditional ingredients, the mill as a major time-saver: what did this change for the original life and role of the woman? Furthermore, the role of the woman in the transmission of cultural tradition or adoption of Spanish ideas is an interesting study area. Cross-cultural studies show the women's roles as being the most conservative. In all, this study provides sufficient input for generating further research with comparable themes, sources and methods.

Abstract

The Florentine Codex is used in many studies to provide information on Mesoamerican social life, and as complementing and reaffirming archaeological data. However, the information in the chronicle has been filtered through a masculine lens and interpreted by a Spanish friar. To understand the possible influences of Sahagún's representations of Mesoamerican gender relations, Goodman's ways of worldmaking (1978) will be applied. This theory provides insights into the processes of knowledge creation which helps us to make sense of the way Mesoamerican culture is presented in the document. The inclusion of a description of early modern Spanish gender roles and ideals reveals, and urges us to rethink, the Spaniard's and our own conceptual framed assumptions on gender categories. Next to this, additional data is needed to confirm or reject statements made in the Spanish document: colonial native documents will be compared and complemented, as providing insider views, experiences and practices of the ideal described in the Florentine Codex. Furthermore the purpose, application and addressees of the Florentine Codex guided the represented information towards an attempt of creating a new world made out of the ideals from a Western male worldview. Understanding how the new world is created out of the familiar Spanish conceptual frame, and of what this view is composed of, provides insight in how gender roles and man-woman relations are portrayed, identified and categorised and why specific aspects are left out or accentuated. Knowing this, and the realisation of the knowledge in the document, enables us to look more critical and in concrete ways to the document before we typify something as a Mesoamerican gender category.

Samenvatting

De Florentine Codex is een belangrijk document in onderzoek naar het sociale leven in Mesoamerika, en wordt gebruikt ter complementatie en bevestiging van archeologische data. De informatie in de kroniek is echter gefilterd door een koloniale lens en geinterpreteerd door een Spaanse mannelijke missionair. Om de invloeden van Sahagún te begrijpen, wordt Goodman's 'ways of worldmaking' (1987) toegepast. Deze theorie geeft inzicht in universele processen van het creeëren van kennis van andere culturen. Het helpt het ons te begrijpen hoe de man-vrouw relaties in de Mesoamerikaanse cultuur is beschreven. Elk onderwerp gaat vooraf aan een beschrijving van vroegmoderne Spaanse gender relaties en idealen. Deze informatie dient om de aannames en achtergronden van Sahagún's beschrijvingen te doorzien en het zal ons aansporen om bepaalde vanzelfsprekende aannames te herdenken, inclusief ons eigen denkkader. Daarnaast is additionele data nodig om de interpretaties in het Spaanse document te bevestigen of juist te weerleggen. Dit wordt gedaan door de informatie van inheemse koloniale documenten te vergelijken met de Florentine Codex. Deze documenten bevatten beschrijvingen van de inheemse bevolking, van hogere en lagere klassen, en geven ons zo een indruk van ervaringen and conceptualisaties die meer richting de realiteit van de traditionele Mesoamerikaanse samenleving gaan. Samen wordt er geprobeerd om te begrijpen hoe de nieuwe wereld uit de reeds bestaande Spaanse ideeënwereld is gecreeërd. Verder heeft het doel, de toepassing, en de geadresseerde van de Florentine Codex de informatie geleid richting een poging om de Nieuwe wereld te maken vanuit de gender idealen van het Westerse denkbeeld. Hierdoor zullen we zien hoe de gender verschillen en man-vrouw relaties zijn geportretteerd in het document, hoe deze zijn geïdentificeerd en gecategoriseerd, en waarom bepaalde aspecten benadrukt zijn or weggelaten. Dit heeft weer invloed gehad op onze hedendaagse wetenschappelijke ideeën over gender in Mesoamerika. Als we deze invloeden kunnen doorzien en we begrijpen hoe de Florentine Codex tot stand is gekomen, kunnen we kritischer naar dit document kijken voordat iets getypeerd wordt als een Mesoamerikaans gender categorie.

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