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A Cobweb of Oppression

A Minor Field Study of Women's Conditions in Present-day
Bolivian Politics

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the obstacles for women's political participation in ethnically diverse present-day Bolivia, taking into account the intersecting identities of class and ethnicity. Postcolonial feminism has been criticising the way feminism treats women as a category encompassing differences within the category, and thereby ignoring significant factors affecting the social positioning of the woman as a social subject. An intersectional approach is used in this study in order to shed light on the obstacles that women face based on their multifaceted identity. Nancy Fraser's remedies for social equality – recognition and redistribution – are discussed. Political participation at the civil society and municipal level is studied in four municipalities with different characteristics. Interviews are conducted with city council members and organisation members. The obstacles for political participation are shown to depend heavily on class and ethnicity, and the specific obstacles for indigenous women are pointed out. An intersectional analysis is found to be necessary in a diverse society like Bolivia in order to design effective strategies for eradication of gender inequality that will take the political system one step closer to a truly inclusive democracy.

Key words: Bolivia, gender, ethnicity, class, intersectional analysis

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Preface

They seek what we all seek – a stable sense of boundaries of the self and the collective. For a way to balance the competing demands of nature and culture, self and society, local and global, change and tradition. We struggle in managing the larger forces that surrounds us. Identity, balance and self-determination are the anchor points for universal human rights.”

- Alison Brysk (2000:xv), *From Tribal Village to Global Village*

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1 Introduction

In this study I will cast light on the problems, challenges and contradictions that in many cases form the political context for women in a Latin American multiethnic society. My case is present-day Bolivia where I spent four months executing field work for this thesis. My objective is to problematise the category “women” and to look closer at what interests are to be found within this group. The intersection of the categories of *ethnicity* and *class* with the category of *gender* will be paid attention to in order to make an intersectional analysis. Such an analysis will bring to light the complication of designing gender equality politics favouring all women in a society and possibly alternatives can be pointed out.

1.1 The Indigenous Women of Latin America

The indigenous women in Latin America are suffering from being excluded socially, economically and politically. The intersection between the two categories woman and indigenous is rarely emphasised, which results in making them “invisible”, leading to a more severe marginalisation of the group. Women and indigenous people, as two separate groups, are still facing harsh discrimination in the Latin American societies. Although, indigenous and women’s movements are growing stronger, now being able to articulate their demands thanks to a large mobilisation and international conventions (Radcliffe 2002:149ff). In this context there is a risk for the indigenous women being “left behind” as “indigenous women fall between the edifice of rights constructed by the states and political movements of the region” (ibid. 2002:149). Considering these conditions it is important to investigate what possibilities the indigenous women have to strengthen their position in Latin America.

The Latin-American countries with their many different ethnical groups, and other marginalised groups, will need to be sensitive towards the various needs of these groups. Jean Grugel argues (2001:31); “[...] the processes of democratization must go beyond establishing formal citizenship towards making them meaningful even for groups traditionally excluded from the polity, such as ethnic or racial minorities, women and the very poor”. In the case of Latin America there is a substantial democratic deficit due to limited political participation and influence over the policy-making. In this context it is of great importance to question the democratic processes and draw attention to the inequalities in society. For democracy to reach consolidation and become legitimised it is necessary to work towards social, economical and political inclusion (ibid.: 28, 170).

To understand the political claims of the indigenous woman it is important to

comprehend her multifaceted identity. Many voices are raised today opposing a universal female category, and in the Bolivian case it is crucial to add the indigenous one (González 2000:37). The indigenous identity is often more important to these women resulting in them identifying the oppression of the ethnical group as more serious, or more urgent, than the oppression of them as women. But recently they have started to affirm the necessity of reconstructing more equal relationships between men and women. Consequently they are facing two different struggles; one with their ethnical community giving emphasis to their indigenous identity, and the other within the community trying to change traditional oppressive elements (Lorente 2005:10f).

Bolivia is, due to the large indigenous population and political initiatives emphasising participation (Postero 2007:127), a suitable country for a field study with the aim of investigating the problems and possibilities for the indigenous women to reach political participation and inclusion in the political processes. However, it can be questioned whether these national political initiatives consider the ethnical variable, and if attention is paid to the *various* needs and interest of women. It is therefore necessary to investigate whether an increased participation of women has actually helped putting the interests of indigenous women, as well as middle and upper class women, on the political agenda.

1.2 Statement of Purpose

The aim of this study will be to investigate the possibilities for incorporating the demands of women as a group into the political agenda of the state institutions¹. I will look at the problems of finding a balance between addressing different demands due to different economical and cultural realities. I wish to look into whether it is possible to continue addressing gender issues from a generalising perspective where women are seen as a group with common interests, or if it is necessary to differentiate the politics on the basis of other intersecting identities. My study and analysis will investigate similarities and differences in women's political participation and their interests and demands, taking into account the importance of the categories "class" and "ethnicity" and today's political situation. Therefore, my investigation aims at answering the question:

¹ The focus of my investigation changed when I arrived in Bolivia due to the change of government a year before my arrival and the following rearrangements of state institutions and the changed focus of work by the *Viceministerio de Género* (Vice Ministry of Women's Affairs). My original aim was to "investigate the possibilities for incorporation of the demands of the indigenous women in the political agenda of the state institutions today permeated by feminist ideas". Considering the present-day situation (when the new government has decolonisation and creation of a pluriethnical state high on their agenda) and my purpose of investigating the necessity of differentiating the gender politics it seems more constructive to look at women as a group in a context where class and ethnicity is of great importance, than looking specifically at indigenous women and their possibilities for political participation. It is also explicitly stated by the government that they wish to distance themselves from feminist ideas (see chapter 5.4). Another reason for not choosing to part from a focus on the indigenous women as a group is related to Gayatri Spivak's criticism of how the privileged academic postcolonial critic takes part in the exploitation of women in non-western societies, voluntarily or not (Lundahl 2006:222).

- *What are the obstacles for women's political participation in Bolivia today?*

This may be a very general question, but I argue that in an era when human rights (and women's rights) continue to be implemented all over the world it is important to keep discussing and investigating empirical cases with policies presupposing women as a group with similar needs and interests. The question is also interesting and important in a political situation like Bolivia's, which is highly politicised and fragmented with politically charged and incompatible discourses (see chapter 4.2).

1.2.1 Scope of Work

I will investigate what obstacles women are facing on an institutional level and in civil society². I will look closer at certain municipalities and there focus on the municipal political institutions and civil society organisations operating within these municipalities. This focus will give a broader understanding of obstacles for political participation and of Bolivian women's interests. It will also shed light on the possibilities and difficulties of aggregating women's demands to higher levels within the institutional system.

Based on this I have formulated some questions corresponding to the two levels of interest to help guide me in my research:

- Are women's organisations common or do women mainly participate in mixed organisations?
- Do women express their demands and interests in accordance with their multifaceted identity?
- What are the obstacles for women's participation in civil society organisations?
- Are women recognized as a group with common demands and interests within political institutions at the municipal level?
- Is there a distinction between the different kinds of demands and interests women have within political institutions at the municipal level?
- What are the obstacles for women's participation in the municipal institutions?

1.3 Who is Indigenous?

The confusion of concepts and terms in the Bolivian context has been a challenge during the field work. Terms can have different meanings in different geographical areas, and may also vary between social contexts. Discourses

² Civil society understood as the space between the individual and the state that is taken up by associations and social activity. By many seen as crucial for democracy being the space where civic action takes place, and being a way for organisations and individuals to hold the state accountable (Grugel 2002:93).

change gradually, causing shifts in the understanding of terms and labels used to describe groups of people (compare Alvesson & Sköldbberg 1994:279ff).

No universal definition of indigenous peoples exists because of the legitimacy problem. Today the matter of defining indigenous is an issue since indigenous groups in many cases should be granted cultural rights and access to land according to international conventions. For indigenous groups the labelling matter is highly central in the struggle for identity and rights, and is supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 (www.minorityrights.org). “Consciousness of your indigenous identity” is said to be a fundamental criterion (Postero 2007:123). The United Nations and the ILO Convention 169 highlight some aspects of being indigenous that are often used as reference points: historical continuity with pre-colonial societies; strong link to territories; distinct social, economic or political systems; distinct language, culture and beliefs; form non-dominant sectors of society; identify themselves as different from national society (www.minorityrights.org).

In the Bolivian context labelling is highly politicised. Terms have varied with the national political project, international discourses and with the strength of popular movements³. Ethnic categories have throughout history been imposed on the indigenous peoples in Bolivia. These are very problematic due to the positive or negative values ascribed to them and their socially constructed nature (Widmark 2002:63ff). Charlotta Widmark (2002:65) argues that “there is often a difference between ascribed versus experienced identity”. Life style, rather than lineage, settles someone’s identity (ibid.). Being indigenous in Bolivia does not refer to one certain set of values or cultural implications. This due to the diversity of ethnic groups and how their definitions relate to other discourses (Postero 2007:86, 89f). Furthermore it is more or less possible to change identity by changing how you dress, place of residence, language and/or working conditions (Postero 2007:28). Today the terms *indígena*, *originario* and *campesino* are used when referring to indigenous people. *Indígena* means indigenous and is used to refer to indigenous peoples in general and is the term that the lowland peoples most commonly use for self identification. *Originario* is mostly used for the Aymara and Quechua peoples and implicitly refers to their belonging to a territory. *Campesino* literally means peasant and was introduced at the time of the revolution in 1952, when the indigenusness of the indigenous people was seen as an obstacle for the modernisation project. Today the term is mostly used when referring to the Aymara or Quechua peoples (originally from the Andean region) (Postero 2007:10ff, 50; Widmark 2002:66, 69f.)

³ “Popular” will in this study be used in the Latin American sense, referring to middle or lower classes implying more a class connotation than an ethnical or cultural one. The popular movement includes poor, peasants and workers. In the Bolivian case most of these people are indigenous (Postero 2007:233).

2 Theory

My theoretical framework will shed light on the recent feminist debate on how to relate to and theorise around the fact that the concept of women as a category in many cases is deceptive. There has been vast criticism towards what has been called a “white-middle class-feminism” based on its ethnocentric way of describing women’s lives, needs and interests. This criticism can be called *postcolonial feminism*⁴ and will be the foundation of the theoretical framework. I believe it can shed light on the complex identity of indigenous women in Bolivia and the struggle that they are facing. The intersection of various identities, and the consequences of *intersectionality*, is highlighted in the postcolonial feminist literature. I will emphasise the complexity of identities by including the recent writing on intersectionality that has had an important impact on gender studies (see de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:7f). *Culture* and *identity* are two central concepts within postcolonial feminism and highly central in the Bolivian political context. Therefore I will discuss these concepts, incorporating postmodern/postcolonial theories. Finally I will introduce Nancy Fraser’s distinction between *redistribution* and *recognition* as a means of politically dealing with difference in a situation of democratic deficit. The advantages and problems of her reasoning will be outlined.

2.1 One Sex – Different Kinds of Oppression

The term *postcolonialism* refers to colonialism still having an impact on social, political and economic life. The impact can be noticed not only in the countries that were colonized, but have effect on global as well as domestic relations. Postcolonialism addresses the relationship between culture and imperialism. By questioning patterns of thought postcolonial theorists intend to “think beyond” the identities and limits that are the heritage of colonialism (Eriksson et al. 2002:14ff). Criticism of essentialism⁵ through deconstruction of concepts and analytical categories has been the focus for postcolonial scholars, and is what appealed to the feminist scholars who believed that feminism tended to lapse into essentialism. In this encounter postcolonial feminism was born (Fraser &

⁴ This theory building has also been called postfeminism, poststructural feminism and postcolonial feminism (see Eriksson et. al. 2002; Fraser & Nicholson 1989; Lundahl 2006; Yuval-Davis 1997:118) In this thesis I do not treat the theory building ”deep enough” to get to the importance of the differences between them, why I here choose to call it postcolonial feminism which is most commonly used.

⁵ With essentialism I mean when a category is given importance in a wider historical perspective than in the specific historical situation where it appeared and was relevant (Lundahl 2006:226).

Nicholson 1989:84). The feminist analytical perspective has, since the rise of “black feminism”, been combined with postcolonialism because of the intimate relationship between gender discrimination and racism (Eriksson et. al. 2002:23).

2.1.1 Women – a Contested Category

The critique of feminism has been harsh when it comes to its way of emphasising the “sameness” of all women and how women are characterized as a group on the basis of a shared oppression. Conflicts, contradictions and differences are drawn into the light by the postcolonial feminist scholars. The essentialist assumptions that have been made by what has been called “western feminism” rest upon a theory that does not take historical and cultural diversity into account making it possible for the theorist to falsely universalise features of her own social and historical context. A feminist project has been to legitimise the idea of a cross-cultural *sisterhood*. This has not been possible without repressing differences among women and understanding other categories (class, ethnicity etc.) as subordinated gender (Fraser & Nicholson 1989:92, 97). Structural and historical parameters should be considered, leading up to non-western women’s particular needs and interests. A critical stand is held towards feminism as a common ground for struggle and the interest of liberation from the patriarchy as universal. Women are oppressed in different ways and to a different extent, also within the same society (Mohanty et. al. 1991:7f; Yuval-Davis 1997:8).

The feminist movement at a global level is not only criticised for emphasising sameness, but also for the way it describes women in less developed countries. Reference is made to the creation of an “otherness” where the non-western woman has been victimized and in need of “salvation” from the oppression of the patriarchy (Eriksson et.al. 2002:24). By doing this the category “non-western women” is being created and becomes essentialised and ascribed characteristics, and there is a risk of creating false differences between western and non-western women as well as false similarities within the category of non-western women (Mohanty 1999:196f; Lundahl 2006:221f). From the critique of the sameness and the otherness we can conclude that what it means to be a woman in respect to needs and demands has to be problematised. The category “women” cannot be taken for granted and ascribed a certain gender identity (Lundahl 2006:203).

2.1.2 A Struggle for Equality on a more “Fluid“ Basis

Postcolonial feminism is nonuniversalist. The essentialist category “women” and gender identity has been exchanged for a more complex and plural outlook on social identity. Now gender is being treated as *one* important aspect of social life, amongst others. Oppression of women will have to be seen as an endless variety of similarities. This implies that theory and analysis need to be more complex; explicitly historical and culturally specific (Fraser & Nicholson 1989:101f). Feminist concerns such as division of labour, the domestic sphere and reproduction will thus have to be sensitive to local contexts. The value ascribed to these concepts will vary with time and geography. Division of labour by gender

might exist in all cultures, but how the content of this division is valued depends on the context (Mohanty 1999:203f).

Gender discrimination cannot continue to be the narrowly defined object of study of feminism if the aim is to include women globally. For many women gender discrimination is not a superior reason for subordination in society. For many women the feminist struggle is connected to the struggles of their communities against racism, economic exploitation etc. A more inclusive feminism needs to take into account other kinds of discriminations and obstacles for political and economical inclusion and equality (Johnson-Odim 1991:315).

The postcolonial feminist project needs to find ways to act, interact and co-operate with various political actors in a context where women cannot fight for equality on a narrowly defined feminist basis since men also suffer oppression (Yuval-Davis 1997:117). The complex conjunction of struggles that a non-western woman is facing has to do with multi-positionality. When feminists have become conscious of the different positionings⁶ of women between and within societies more effective strategies can be formulated (ibid.:118, 120).

A common and serious objection to postcolonial feminism is that it makes it difficult to discuss the problems that many women in a patriarchy actually share. By consulting statistics we can easily establish that women face domestic violence to a much greater extent than men, and get paid relatively lower salaries. While other theories might be born out of philosophy, feminism originates from reality and demands of political practice (Fraser & Nicholson 1989:91). It is essential that feminist theories are grounded in “the real world”. Feminist theory has a political responsibility (Eduards 2005:7). This can explain the frustration among postcolonial feminists. Theorists continue to create space for the critical nature of feminism within the borders of postcolonialism in order to not lose touch with political activism. Gayatri Spivak offers a solution to this dilemma in what she calls *strategic essentialism*, which can be seen as a compromise between essentialism and constructivism. Her solution suggests that essential categories must be allowed to be used when they serve a specific purpose. This purpose being the identification of a problem a group has in common, and from this temporary alliances between people facing the same oppression can be established (Landry & MacLean 1996:204f; Lundahl 2006:226).

Postcolonial feminism does not imply that the values emphasised in the west (e.g. freedoms, human rights and democracy) should be neglected. What is desirable is a critical outlook on eurocentrism and its claims to have the right to interpret, and the way western values are applied in foreign contexts (Eriksson et al. 1999:47). It might be necessary to highlight that postcolonial feminist scholars do not wish to underestimate the fact that there is a fair amount of “universality” in women’s oppression. Without a movement organised around the struggle against sexism women’s special needs and interests might become invisible. According to Cheryl Johnson-Odim (1991:319) “the fundamental issue for third world women is not generally whether there is a need for feminism, i.e., a general movement which seeks to address women’s oppression, but rather what the

⁶ Class, gender, personal differences etc. will result in different *positionings* of individuals within the collectivity (Yuval-Davis 1997:44).

definition and agenda of that feminism should be” and she continues (1991:326) arguing that “we must challenge a feminist perspective to envisage a human-centred world, in which the satisfaction of **human** [my emphasis] needs, justly met, is a primary goal”.

2.2 Intersectionality – Giving Meaning to Several Identities

The importance of intersecting identities is said to have been born in the late 1980s because of the conflict over racism within the women’s movement. The intersection and interaction of gender and ethnicity now began to be thoroughly investigated (McWhorter 2004:55). The evolution of postcolonialism and its focus on the concept of culture has been criticised (principally by Marxists) since it is said to make economical relations and inequalities invisible. There is a tendency in western feminism to not pay attention to the several identities that might be central to the subordination of the political subject. It draws attention to the fact that behind the category “woman” there are many identities influencing the woman’s social position and political possibilities (de Reyes & Mulinari 2005: 15, 24; Eriksson et al. 1999:21). Since a few years *intersectionality* is the medicine for the shortfalls of postcolonial feminism and a strategy for the incorporation of categories like ethnicity, class and sexuality in the analysis (Lundahl 2006: 226f).

Postcolonial theory emphasises that every individual is affected by the fact that she is a member of many different collectives, this influencing her feelings of solidarity with different political groupings and will thus be determining for her political actions. Women’s struggle needs to be understood through the added dimensions producing her reality and political context (Johnson-Odim 1991: 314; Lundahl 2006: 227f).

2.2.1 Categorisation as Oppression

According to postcolonial theory identities and analytical categories are mobile, in contrast to essentialist perspectives that tend to give them fixed positions. The influence of ethnicity on a political subject can only be understood with respect to other positionings that the same subject holds (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:60). Hence, the construction of inequality is complex, and analysis should focus on power relations without giving preference to a certain analytical category (ibid.:38f). In fact fragmentation and categorisation are seen as instruments of construction of unequal power relations between people. It is seen as a way of naturalising differences (ibid.:127).

Instead of creating essential categories a multidimensional and dynamic analysis and understanding of power is seen as necessary from an intersectional perspective. The transformative nature of the meeting between different identities or categories needs to be implicit in an analysis that wants to understand how inequality is constituted. Gender will always be transformed by other intersecting categories (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005:99, 123). Intersectionality is thus seen

to have potential to change feminism at its core through a critical understanding of the complex construction of power (ibid:87). Another advantage of the intersectional perspective is how time and space are problematised, which will prevent inadequate generalisations being made and respect will be paid to the specific context (de los Reyes 2006:39).

In this study gender, ethnicity and class will be the three categories focused on. To understand how the three categories act together as power structures it is important to focus on the effects ethnic and class asymmetries will have on gender as a differentiated category.

The new consciousness of cultural factors and sensitivity for difference have led to postcolonial feminism being called a feminist version of multi-culturalism – something that has proven to be problematic (Yuval-Davis 1997:118). Nira Yuval-Davis' (1997:11, 25, 125ff) answer to how to construct feminist political mobilisation based on a non-universalist theoretical notion is *transversal politics*. She means that this is an attempt to find an alternative that will not situate itself at any extreme on the universalism/relativism-scale. This idea is mainly based on dialogue – a dialogue that recognises and respects the different backgrounds and positionings of the participants. Here experiences can be exchanged and a multi-cultural type of solidarity can be created. The dialogue will not be boundary free, and therefore some conflicts of interest will not be reconcilable. The bottom line is that “*the boundaries of a transversal dialogue are determined by the message, rather than the messenger*” (ibid:131).

2.3 Culture and Identity

The concept of culture has been questioned and debated in respect to essentialism by the postcolonialists. This debate concerns the process of globalization and its effect on the approach to concepts such as *identity, ethnicity and culture* and how they have been given new meanings and have been politicised (Eriksson et al. 1999:14).

Multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism, political projects of states all over the world today, have been criticised for essentialisation of cultures in attempts of conserving them. This criticism is based on the understanding of culture as operating both within social and spatial contexts, and also depending on the time dimension. Hence, cultural traditions and customs are not seen as something fixed but as a resource – an internally contradictive one – that can be used differently by individuals from the same culture depending on their specific power positioning within the group (Yuval-Davis 1997:43, 55). Of course traditions and customs can survive the passing of time, but often they will undergo more or less radical changes and they might just as well end up being symbolic markers of identity (ibid.:41).

The notion of culture is connected to the idea of “imagined communities”. By dividing the world into “us” and “them” this community can be maintained (Yuval-Davis 1997:16, 23). The postcolonial view of culture is based on social constructivism which does not imply an underestimation of culture’s meaning to

people and cultural difference as something deep and real. But instead of human cultures being something constant they are seen as constantly undergoing recreation and renegotiation of imaginary boundaries between “us” and “them” (Benhabib 2002:7f).

Culture has become a contested concept within the feminist discourse. In the multiculturalist era Susan Moller Okin (1999:11, 17, 23) argued that the defending of cultural rights might be a setback in the struggle for women’s emancipation. She claims that most cultures are patriarchal and that minorities claiming group rights tend to be more patriarchal than the surrounding society. Will Kymlicka (1999:34) comments on Okin’s way of reasoning, pointing out that just as multiculturalists might be obscuring the struggle for gender equality, feminists sometimes are blind to issues of cultural difference.

2.3.1 The Constantly Reconstructed Identity

The concept of identity refers both to a personal (the unique self) and a collective (belonging) dimension. Just like “culture” is seen to be a non-essentialist concept by the postcolonialists, so is “identity”. Identity does not exist within the individual. It is constructed, and constantly reconstructed, through socialisation. Identity constructing is seen as a *process* through which the human being exercising certain practices will take on a certain identity. A person’s identity will be decisive for what resources are accessible to her and what possibilities for agency she identifies. Thus total rupture in the reconstruction of identity is not possible and there will always be certain continuity in the transformation of one’s identity (Widding 2006:18; Widmark 2002:65f).

Postcolonial theories have aimed at deconstructing metanarratives⁷ of categories such as gender, ethnicity, nation, class and sexuality which constitute collective identity (Lundahl 200:204). Through deconstruction scholars want to highlight the fact that categories are never “pure” and cannot easily be held apart. Identities are often fluid and cross-cutting (Minh-ha 1999:225; Yuval-Davis 1997:44). This due to the fact that “a social formation has so many structured differentiations, potential categories of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and alienation, the self is seen potentially very complex, shaped through many attachments” (Cockburn 1998:212). Instead of what everyone has in common (common consciousness) it has been argued that it is the plurality of identities and the crisscrossing threads of discursive practices that are holding society together. Thus a person’s identity is complex and heterogeneous and she can participate in several discourses simultaneously (Fraser & Nicholson 1989:88f).

⁷ A *metanarrative* relates to a category that is accepted and inscribed with essentialist ideas which are not contested. Such a metanarrative becomes the foundation from which definitions of other phenomena will be defined (Lundahl 2006:204).

2.4 Redistribution and Recognition

In Bolivia multiculturalism and the widespread poverty are prioritised issues on the political agenda (see chapter 4.2). With this in mind I want to introduce Nancy Fraser and her two-dimensional conception of justice (Fraser & Honneth 2003:3). She questions the liberal concept of democracy and argues that social equality is a prerequisite for a true democratic society (Fraser 2003:151).

Inclusive citizenship⁸ depends both on socio-economic resources and on rules and regulations concerning naturalization, which will ensure easier access to the collectivity and citizenship rights to some categories of people than to others (Yuval-Davis 1997:23f). This inequality corresponds to class inequality and status hierarchy which are two stratifying structures in society. From these structures two injustices spring; socio-economic injustice and cultural or symbolic injustice (Widmark 2002:78). Fraser (2003:235ff) argues that different remedies are required for the different kinds of injustices. These are, according to her, *redistribution* and *recognition*, and she stresses the need for a dualist perspective.

Fraser (2003:8f) argues that today's neoliberal political climate has led to a political agenda focusing on identities and demands for recognition at the expense of economical demands for redistribution. She argues that the two remedies should not stand in opposition to each other but complement each other.

The categories of gender, ethnicity, and class are by Fraser (Fraser & Honneth 2003:21ff) described as a two-dimensional social division, compounded by both social status and class. The two kinds of oppression are often intertwined and strengthen each other (Fraser 2003:181). The two remedies are seen as equally important since recognition is not seen as reducible to a phenomenon subordinated to redistribution. Curing one injustice will not automatically treat the other (Fraser & Honneth 2003:2). The remedy for economic injustice includes for example redistribution of incomes, restructuring of the division of labour and democratisation of investment decisions. These remedies will always lead to a decreased differentiation between social groups. Cultural injustice can be "cured" by cultural or symbolical change such as revaluation of "despised" identities and cultural products and the valuing of cultural diversity. The remedies for recognition treat processes that will change the societal representation of inferior identities towards positive recognition, but will also strengthen the differentiation between groups. This is another reason why it is necessary to address redistribution and recognition simultaneously (Fraser 2003:181f, 194f, 210).

⁸ *Citizenship* here defined in a wider sense encompassing civil, political and social rights and responsibilities (Yuval-Davis 1997:24).

3 Method

3.1 A White Young European Female Researcher

My approach in this study, and my outlook on the world and social science in general, rests on a social constructivist approach to reality. This means that human beings as individuals create reality at the same time as it has a profound impact on us and constitutes us as individuals (Blomquist 1996:24). I believe that experiences can be shared and recreated which makes me believe that through explicit account for the research procedure the results in principle can be reconstructed, although intersubjectivity will be somewhat affected by the human factor (compare Lundquist 1993:52f).

During the fieldwork I became more and more conscious of the consequences of my own person. In a society where ethnicity and class have come to be determining for the limitations and possibilities for people, these factors also affected my interaction with the Bolivian people I have interviewed. Since social life is what social sciences aim to investigate the researcher is a part of what she is investigating, which will inevitably affect the objectivity of the study. It is not possible to ignore the fact that underlying social structures will more or less unconsciously affect the researcher and her interpretations of social life, as well as these structures will affect the behaviour of respondents in their meeting with the researcher (May 1997:19, 24, 35). As I agree with this and the anti-foundationalism that social constructivism rests upon, the problem that relativism poses to scientific research will have to be considered. I am not aiming for the objective truth or fixed meanings in the respondents' testimonies. Rather the nuances, similarities, differences and paradoxes are of main interest (see Kvale 1997:201).

When doing research on women a female researcher is by feminist scholars seen to have the possibility to function both from her oppressed situation, and from her privileged position as a scientific researcher (May 1997:38). This became obvious to me during my field work in Bolivia. It is very importance to be aware of power structures in society, and what implications a certain identity has on social life. I extended my stay in Bolivia⁹ in order to get a deeper understanding of these matters before I started to conduct interviews. I needed to

⁹ The Minor Field Study scholarship requires that field work to be carried out during 8-10 weeks.

be very sensitive to what expectations people had on a white young woman and foreigner. I am convinced that all these factors influenced the answers I got and how I have interpreted them. Ethnocentrism is difficult to avoid, but being aware of its pitfalls they can be avoided to a greater extent by developing cultural sensitivity which implies acknowledging biases (Leslie & Storey 2003:130). But as Paulina de los Reyes and Diana Mulinari (2005:126) argues; “a methodological approach based on intersectionality carries the feminist and postcolonial premises of a positioned knowledge production” [my translation from Swedish].

3.2 Method during Field Study

When considering and choosing method in social science there are no simple answers. It depends on the problem that is to be investigated and conditions of the research context (Denscombe 1998:9). Therefore I will aim at explicitly explaining choices I made as I approached the theme of my study.

This study is a case study. I want to investigate obstacles that could depend on social, economical and/or psychological factors in the specific context, which is why a case study is more suitable than to rely on a larger amount of data that would be of a “shallower” nature. A more in-depth research will shed light on more profound, more accurate, explanations of connections between variables (Andersen 1997:19; Descombe 1998:41f).

I have chosen to use interviews extensively. To really understand the oppression women are facing and their obstacles for political participation I have been looking for a deeper understanding of the respondents’ realities and everyday experiences, interpreting their stories in relation to the theoretical framework (see Esaiasson et al. 2003:280; Kvale 1997:9, 13). Another important reason for using interviews in the Bolivian case is of the political situation (see following chapter). Much has changed the last year after the change of government, making it difficult finding printed resources that can reflect the consequences of this. In order to increase the validity of my study it has been important to me to triangulate (see Denscombe 1998:102ff). Observations and printed resources have been important in order to “test” my interpretations of the collected data towards other material.

3.2.1 Feminist Research

Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson (1989:101) argue that the postcolonial feminist researcher needs to be flexible before the specific task at hand. The method to be chosen and the categories that are to be used need to be adequate for the specific historical and social context, and multiple categories might have to be considered. I have designed my study in line with this and other feminist critique asking for incorporation of various dimensions of oppression and arguing that

research should be conducted in wider social, economical and political contexts (May 1997: 40f). The analytical categories that will be my main focus are gender, ethnicity and class. How I have related and made choices with respect to the wider context will be explained in the next subchapter.

I agree with anti-positivists arguing that knowledge is not a politically neutral product (May 1997:79). My study is most likely affected by my values in the choice of theme, problem and focus. Also feminism (as a social movement *and* within social science) itself is both an explicit and implicit political project aiming to enhance women's power and status through problematising the relationship between gender and power (Randall 2002:109f).

3.2.2 Two Levels of Political Participation

In this study four research units have been chosen because of differences in historical, social and political circumstances. While doing general research and talking to informants I realised that there are underlying factors that are determining for my area of interest and that possibly would give me different answers to my question. In order to shed light on geographical and cultural differences I considered lowland/highland location and rural and urban location in my choice of municipalities.

A large part of Bolivia's circa nine million inhabitants live in the two big cities *La Paz* and *Santa Cruz de la Sierra*. Because of their size and importance in domestic politics I choose to study them. In the highland where La Paz is situated, and in the same department¹⁰ (departamento de La Paz), I chose a rural municipality; *Pucarani*. The other rural municipality is located in the same department as Santa Cruz de la Sierra (departamento Santa Cruz); *Concepción*.

At the civil society level I aimed at identifying organisations that are seen as important and rather influent on issues concerning gender, ethnicity and class (see appendix 5 for a list of organisations). By asking informants, city council members and people working for organisations I managed to identify civil society organisations important for my study. It is important to mention that the size and scope of work of organisations seldom overlap perfectly with the size of the municipalities. I made sure to choose organisations that work in the kind of environment that is typical to the municipalities of interest. In La Paz, since it is the capital, many organisations work on a national level, yet their influence and activities are often concentrated to the capital area.

3.2.3 The Interviews

This study is based on interviews with 8 informants and 40 respondents. The informants are consulted "experts" that I interviewed mainly in the beginning of

¹⁰ Bolivia is divided into 9 departments (departamentos).

the field work since the purpose of these were to collect information and testimonies about the current political situation in general and the particular context of my area of interest (see appendix 1 for list of informants). Some informants had been identified and contacted before arriving in Bolivia, and some were pointed out by other informants (snowball sampling) (see Esaiasson et al. 2003: 286). The respondents have been city council members or representatives for organisations. Some interviews with representatives of the past and current gender politics have also been conducted to reflect historical tendencies. When choosing respondents I aimed at getting the best possible variation in respect to the categories gender, ethnicity and class¹¹. However, in the municipal institutions the hegemony was striking and only in La Paz I was able to find the variety I had hoped for. This fact is, however, an interesting observation.

The interviews conducted with the informants did not follow any specific script since there was no reason to ask them the same questions. Instead I prepared questions according to their expertise (see Esaisasson 253f). Interviews with respondents were carried out differently because the respondents themselves and their thoughts are the objects for analysis. These interviews were carried out according to the idea of a semi-structured interview (also called qualitative interview, see Kvale 1997; Denscombe 1998:135). A thematically constructed interview guide consisting of topics that were to be discussed was made based on the theoretical framework and the research questions (see appendices 2 and 3). This guide was revised and updated when I got in closer contact with the Bolivian reality, but the essence of it was maintained in order to be able to compare the answers (see Esaisson et al. 2003:234).

My knowledge of the political and social situation in Bolivia proved to be very important (see Krag 1993:177). It is important from two aspects: to balance tendentious sources (see Esaiasson et al. 2003:312f), and for me to be able to ask the “right” questions and be able to have initiated discussions (Kvale 1997:138f). I also tried to avoid the problem of tendency by interviewing people from different ethnic backgrounds, different classes, men and women.

I contracted a native Spanish speaker to transcribe my interviews. To control the quality of the transcriptions I have checked them towards the recordings (see Esaisson et al. 2003:294). During the analysis I have also consulted the complementary notes I took during the interviews to refresh my memory of the situation and the context of the interview (see Kvale 1997:153f). The quotes in this study are all my translations from Spanish. This is frustrating at times since some nuances will always get lost in translation.

The time consuming analysis of the 40 interviews (with respondents) has been done by categorising their content (compare Esaiasson et el. 2003:295). The

¹¹ Understanding oppression in its context is the idea of intersectionality and why a variety of respondents become highly important. “Talking about women without talking about men, is like clapping hands with one hand only” (Yuval-Davis 1997:1).

categories were derived from the theoretical framework and from themes that had constantly been brought up by respondents during the field work.

I have worked by the principle of informed consent (Scheyvens et al. 2003:142f), and all respondents have agreed to their names being published.

3.2.4 Observations and Written Sources

During my field work it became clear to me that “politically correct” discourses set the tone of many of the respondents’ testimonies. Also the study of power structures is of such nature that non-verbal information is important since the respondents are part of the structures and might not be able to be critical to their multifaceted manifestations¹². There is also disinclination to testimonies that might undermine someone’s power position (see Denscombe 1998:165; Esaiasson et al. 2003:333f).

I participated in meetings and work-shops, and was generally attentive during my interviews and visits at organisations and institutions. Observation was based on passive participation (Esaiasson et al. 2003:335). Notes were taken in order to have material for analysis (see Holme & Krohn 1991:131). Interviews and written sources constitute my main material, and the observations are used principally to complement respondents’ testimonies.

The intersection of gender and ethnicity has been paid attention to by several Bolivian social scientists during the last decade, so there is a good amount of literature on the theme. In Bolivia I collected relevant books and other printed materials that have been incorporated in my study.

3.3 Development Studies and its Dilemmas

A huge challenge for me, and any person doing research in a foreign country, was to understand the culture and the social codes (see Krag 1993:70ff). To make a successful interview I had to have an idea of the respondents’ reference frames and what kind of language to use before the interview, or quickly adapt to the situation at hand. Because of the current political conflict in Bolivia, my ethnicity also became central in the meeting with respondents. I had to develop a skill to parry this with as much finesse as possible. A quote by María Megarí, indigenous woman and co-researcher, will illustrate this problem: “[...] [N]o more foreign women are going to come and ask us questions; now it is an indigenous woman like us that is going to ask them.” [my translation from Spanish] (Diakonia 2006:51). Foreign researchers’ answer to this is that their position as outsiders is

¹² I believe that power has various dimensions and that its manifestations are not always perceived (see Lukes 2005).

valuable and that the cross-cultural aspect fosters a wide range of perspectives which is desirable for a detailed understanding of complex development issues (Scheyvens & Storey 2003:6f).

It is a fact that I entered the local society relatively high up in the hierarchy, which had various implications. Fortunately I had reflected on this before arriving in Bolivia as I did find myself in situations when my presence was questioned (at one occasion I was verbally attacked when I attended a meeting in order to make observations) (Scheyvens et al. 2003:149; Murray & Overton 2003:18). Being aware of historical and political matters, being tolerant and patient made my field work successful.

4 The Bolivian Context

A certain understanding of history is necessary since the outcomes of antecedents determine current distributions of power and influence (Postero 2007:9). This is certainly true in the highly fragmented and conflictive Bolivian society. The Bolivian conflict is based on ethnic and economic factors and can be directly traced back to the days of colonisation (Widmark 2002:73). I will in this chapter give an overview of the social, economical and political reality in Bolivia. With the change of government in 2006 when Evo Morales and his party *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement Towards Socialism, MAS) assumed power, with the support of more than half of the population, institutional power relations were substantially altered (Le van Cott 2003:751ff). This has had vast effects on the politics of gender equality, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

4.1 A Diverse Population and Economical Injustice

Consulting Bolivian population statistics can be quite surprising. Being treated as a minority the indigenous peoples of Bolivia actually make up a majority of the population adding up to approximately 60%¹³ (Postero 2007:3). Another striking fact is the poverty. 2004 the rate of the population living below the poverty line had reached 68.4%, making Bolivia the poorest country in Latin America. 40% of the total population were found living in extreme poverty, while the same rate for the indigenous population was 52% (Postero 2007:3; Observatorio DESC 2006: 23). Here it is also important to take note of the great economical inequalities in Bolivia (Sida 2006:7). Three main reasons for Bolivia's poverty and inequality have been pointed out: growth depends on natural-resource-based exports, low productivity and difficulties for the poor to improve their human capital (ibid.:7).

4.1.1 Racism and Discrimination

Today's social and economical inequalities have to be understood in relation to the Bolivian history of institutional racism. There is an enormous problem with

¹³ The exact number varies with the source due to the identity being a highly politicised issue (www.minorityrights.org). The number used here is based on self identification. According to the 2001 census the exact percentage of indigenous population is 62.05 % (Lee van Cott 2003:752)

racism and discrimination in Bolivian society. The targets for this treatment are almost exclusively poor people that are often of indigenous origin, hence making the two categories of class and ethnicity mutually reinforcing (Widmark 2002: 59). The discriminatory treatment of these people has its roots in the era of the colonisation, but has over the years been reinforced through various political ideas on how to deal with the indigenous people (Postero 2007:28ff).

Today Bolivia has an anti-discrimination legislation, but discrimination is still highly prevalent on all levels of society. Political exclusion depends on an underlying power hierarchy which will continue to justify unequal access to political participation (Postero 2007:147, 224). This power hierarchy is also exclusionary outside the political sphere making “[s]ubordinated groups [being] forced to structure their understanding of the world through the model of the dominant group” (Widmark 2002:66).

4.1.2 Neoliberal Reforms Deepening Difference

Due to macroeconomic problems, such as high inflation, Bolivia had to accept a new development policy agenda imposed by the World Bank in the 1980s. This agenda was severely criticised and was later redesigned in order to incorporate a local form of sustainable development. These neoliberal reforms did stop inflation, but did not have positive effects on economic growth and enhanced social exclusion and poverty. Differences between the poor majority and the wealthy minority became more apparent (Lee Van Cott 2003:769; Petras & Veltmeyer 2005:175, 183).

A process that ran parallel with the structural adjustment agenda was the radicalisation of the social movements. The political participation of the peasants was strengthened and the issue of ethnic identity was a central reason for organisation. As a reaction to the agenda of the international financial organisations a new political project is born – the construction of the multiethnic state (Linton 2005:36; Petras & Veltmeyer 2005:179).

4.2 Social Movements and Popular Mobilisation

In December 2005 Evo Morales and his party *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) won the national elections by absolute majority (51.1%). He is the first president of indigenous origin that the country has ever had (La Razón 19/12 – 2005). The coming to power of MAS can be seen as the result of mobilisation and organisation of the popular sectors that have been observed in the Bolivian society during several decades. They have been organising around demands concerning cultural recognition and a more inclusive political representation challenging the traditional relationship between state and civil society. The

ambition of their struggle has been to end centuries of structured inequalities (Postero 2007:1f).

Another important reason for mobilisation is the fact that democracy in Bolivia has not been able to deliver. The international cooperation's mission has for decades been to spread the word of democracy worldwide. Doing this it is important that people actually perceive that adherence to democratic values and rules result in a positive difference in their lives (Moghadam 2005:42f). This has not been the case for a majority of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia fostering general frustration with the non-responsive, non-representative state. No political party had delivered significant political and economic inclusion despite promises and rhetorical recognition. The exclusion and inequalities in society have reduced the quality of democracy. The indigenous social movement surged as crucial articulators of political dissatisfaction (Lee van Cott 2003:753, 758, 769, 775).

The mobilisation is mainly based on the ethnic identity, but the fact that many of the organisations within the social movement originally are peasant unions indicates the close relationship between ethnicity and class. *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB) is the most important contemporary highland indigenous organisation and has an agenda and a discourse that involve both class and ethno-national demands, which reflect the dual basis of exploitation of the indigenous population (Lee van Cott 2003:761).

4.2.1 The Multiethnic State

Plurinationality has been demanded by the indigenous popular movements since the early 1980s. In the mid 1990s the constitution was amended making Bolivia officially a *multiethnic* and *pluricultural* nation (Postero 2007:124). This implies that traditional law is to be respected and traditional indigenous organisations are to be granted legal status (Brysk 2000:259). A form of indigenous citizenship was introduced granting collective ownership of territories (Postero 2007:124).

The government has moved from segregationist politics during colonisation, to an assimilationist stance since the independence 1825, and finally to the recognition of a multicultural state in the 1990s. The former state reforms had the explicit "civilising" goal where the aim was to "wash off" native cultural expressions and incorporate the indigenous peoples in the nation-building project (Linton 2005:64; Widmark 2002:68). Poverty was to be fought by cultural integration and class came to be seen as the exclusive base for exploitation (Widmark 2002:70).

After twenty years of mobilisation by the popular movement, its institutional consolidation leading to socio-political change is the most important explanation to the election 2002 which resulted in a major improvement in the representation of the indigenous population. The indigenous-movement-based political parties together managed to get 27 % of the vote, which led to substantial changes within the cabinet such as speeches in indigenous languages (Lee van Cott 2003:751ff). This election was the starting point of a confrontation between the two Bolivias;

the included minority and the excluded majority. Today Bolivian politics is much more confrontational (Lee Van Cott 2003: 774f).

4.2.2 The Constituent Assembly

The social movements have used institutional channels in their struggle for many of their demands, and they also demanded a constitutional assembly (called *la Constituyente*) to rethink the model of the state in public deliberations since the popular sectors argued that the political model favoured the traditional elite and denied representation to the people. The hope is that a re-writing of the constitution will change and alter power structures (Postero 2007:2f, 17, 231).

The 6th of August 2006 representatives had been elected and the constitutional assembly began its work. One year later the results were to be presented and a referendum was to decide whether a new constitution was going to be accepted (news.bbc.co.uk). However *la Constituyente* has already faced major problems due to the turbulent political situation in the country and no results have yet been presented (La Razon 7/8 - 2007). Today's political climate is characterised by instability and lack of even a minimum of consensus (Sida 2006:29).

4.3 The Rift between Highlands and Lowlands

The difference between highland and lowland also implies differences between indigenous peoples, in fact the most fundamental distinction is that between highland and lowland groups. This identification can be so strong that it often outweighs differences in national identity of native groups residing in different states (Brysk 2000: 6). In Bolivia 36 ethnicities are to be found and there are lots of differences between their cultural expressions and their organisational structures (news.bbc.co.uk; Lee van Cott 2003:760). Traditionally the Aymara and Quechua peoples reside in the highlands and the other ethnic groups in the lowlands. But it would be to simplify reality to say that they still live divided this way since migrations have changed this pattern. The outcome of this is a natural complexity and diversity of the attitudes of the indigenous peoples towards political matters (Widmark 2002:56).

There is a big debate concerning autonomy in Bolivia today. The eastern lowland departments of the country (la Media Luna) are crying out for a higher degree of autonomy. But it is still uncertain what regional autonomy would imply in terms of responsibilities and resources (Sida 2006:29). The change of president has led to increased ethnical and regional divisions making the question of autonomy central. It is embedded in a debate that sometimes is very polarised and permeated by fundamentalist ideas (ibid.:28).

4.4 Diversity in Cultures – Diversity in Gender Roles

The Andean culture and philosophy is characterised by the concepts of reciprocity and complementarity (Enriquez 2005:98). The Aymara and Quechua peoples live by and practice a certain logic called *cosmovisión* (cosmovision) which affect their lives both at the private level and at the societal level¹⁴ (Linton 2005:38). This is true also for the gender roles in Andean culture. The concept *chacha-warmi* is used and practiced by many of the highland indigenous people and implies the complimentary unity of man and woman with a normative meaning of egalitarianism (Harris 2000:170, 179).

It has been argued by indigenous women that *chacha-warmi* works well when it comes to productive responsibilities, but that there are unequal relations between women and men concerning political and social participation that needs to be challenged for them to be able practice influence over public decisions affecting them. However, they argue that these inequalities need to be addressed from a communitarian perspective¹⁵ (Farah et al. 2006:53ff). Whether it is cultural diffusion (hispanitation) (see Layme 2002:47) that has undermined an originally androgynous system, or if *chacha-warmi* always has had a tendency to favour men (Harris 2002:172, 179) I will not discuss further here. Rather I want to highlight the fact that Andean culture implies a base for gender relations which will have to be considered when investigating indigenous women's realities and when working with projects addressing gender inequality in the Andean context.

¹⁴ Conflicts concerning natural resources in the last decade have all had their roots in cultural conviction since private ownership is not compatible with the *cosmovision* (Linton 2005: 38).

¹⁵ This problem is an example of the complexity of the construction of a multicultural state that Bolivia is facing today. Because of this the *Asamblea Constituyente* was formed in August 2006 in order to design a new, more inclusive constitution.

5 Women's Political Participation

In the research material a general way of how the categories class, ethnicity and gender influence the positioning of social subjects in the Bolivian society can be identified. Therefore I will discuss general tendencies before looking closer at political participation in civil society and at the municipal level and further the obstacles for women that are emblematic there. These levels are closely connected to the trends at the national level why this level is also discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Intertwined Oppression

Being poor and marginalised has become part of the definition of an indigenous person, both according to themselves and to others (Linton 2005:65). With roots in colonial times the class structure is combined with structural racism. The indigenous people will be looked upon as poor with little education, while the mestizos and whites are associated with the upper-middle class. Income level corresponds, in the vast majority of cases, to a certain set of culture, identity and education (Widmark 2002:62, 66). Accordingly, poverty becomes a multi-dimensional concept corresponding not only to lack of economical resources, but also to political marginalisation (ibid.:67). This fact has been highlighted by many of the respondents saying that the political system has always been exclusionary to the poor people. Not until MAS was formed – being the institutional political instrument of the popular movement – have the poor been able to access the institutional sphere. This explains why the class factor has brought people with different ethnicities together. Alina Canaviri (Bartolina Sisa) states: “Even though there are different ways of living within the same organisations, we fight together. We respect each other!” The respondents observe that today's political situation is very confrontational as a result of the popular movement's close connection to an ideological struggle. This is supported by James Petras and James Veltmeyer (2005:215f), who argue that the indigenous factor can not easily be isolated from class since the indigenous movements, through history, take part of what is predominantly a class struggle.

The importance of the ethnical factor shall not be underestimated though. Today the government is working towards a multicultural model in order to value and encourage cultural diversity, which has been one of the major demands of the popular movement. I daily observed racism and the middle and upper class distancing themselves from indigenous people, especially in the lowlands. Almost all of the indigenous respondents told stories about how they feel uncomfortable

and discriminated in interactions with non-indigenous people. Guadalupe Perez (Colectiva Rebeldía) says:

[...] [M]ulticulturalism is just poetry, the political parties are only aiming at alliances with equals. [...] It takes a great effort to really meet with “the other” and to open up to “the other”, and that is still only poetry in this country, pure discourse. There has not been a socialising process, an educative process, a comprehension process, that would help understanding what it means to meet and interact with another culture.

5.1.1 Machismo – the Fetters of Culture

The subordinated position a woman holds in Bolivia stems from *machismo*. Women are expected to defer to their husbands and fathers (Postero 2007:179). Consequently women are made responsible for the domestic sphere, which gives them less possibilities of participating in the public sphere generating political structures (Fraser & Nicholson 1989: 94). Many women I have interviewed pointed out that the men do not count on them to participate politically. They do not even consider them capable of doing so. The respondents argue that a man has better self-esteem than a woman because of her lack of education. Indigenous woman Enriqueta Huanto (AMAQ) explains that her mother had to fight very hard for the family to accept that she wanted her daughter to study. The usual objection is that there is no need for a girl to study since she is just going to get married anyway.

Many indigenous people argue that indigenous communities where the concept of *chacha-warmi* is practiced are more egalitarian than the surrounding society. This is highly contested though, and while some respondents agree with this others (both indigenous and non-indigenous) argue that this is not true since it is observable that the women work harder than the men and that women do not participate politically to the same extent as men. However, it is true that the indigenous communities have a more communitarian outlook on social life in general (see chapter 4.4).

5.1.2 Solidarity – Between Whom?

Considering the intersection of the categories class, ethnicity and gender, and how they reinforce each other, the indigenous woman in Bolivia is subject to multiple subordination. In light of this the idea of the universal sisterhood that feminists have tried to substantiate can be questioned. Gender issues can be seen as somewhat secondary since the oppression based on class and ethnicity is experienced as more basic (compare Fraser & Nicholson 1989:93).

Florentino Barrientos (CSUTSB) does not believe in solidarity between women from different classes since the indigenous women “feel more like a man from the same class; it is much easier to cooperate with men who have the same history”. This statement is aligned with postcolonial feminist voices warning of false polarisations between men and women (Johnson-Odim 1991:321). Having in

mind that discrimination of the popular classes and racism is still very evident in Bolivia, there is no solidarity between women as a group. Lucy Poma's (Bartolina Sisa) words should be understood in that light:

We have lived the problems of discrimination, the racism, and all the worst to be found in our society. As women we have been struggling within our families as well as politically in the society. We have shared many struggles – not one!

5.2 Experiences from Civil Society

The impact of cultural differences between indigenous cultures and the western inspired mestizo culture can be observed on the civil society level where indigenous men and women tend to participate in civil society within mixed organisations that belong to the popular movement. The indigenous culture is communitarian and therefore it is natural for the indigenous woman to seek participation with her collective, as opposed to standing up for her individual interests and rights that is the field of interest of the majority of the NGOs (see Postero:179, 183f). When it comes to women's organisations there are both indigenous women's organisations and women's NGOs that are supposedly open to all women, but in reality mainly middle and upper class women participate in the NGOs. The female indigenous respondents all say they have not sought participation in civil society "to quarrel with the men". Gloria Ajpi (CEADL) states: "The indigenous women have identified that their worst enemy is not her husband, it is not the man, but their economical situation." Despite this there are quite a few indigenous women's organisations, but these have a different agenda and/or a different organisational structure than the NGOs (Coordinadora de la Mujer 2006:50ff). Some of them are a kind of subdivision of a mixed organisation and true for all of them is that their main emphasis is on collective rights and practical needs and interests. In contrast, Teresa Soruco (AMUPEI) explains that the NGOs have mainly worked with gender equality interest and individual rights. Regional interests are articulated more by the indigenous organisations than the NGOs. Alina Canaviri (Bartolina Sisa) says: "[...] [T]hey have always decided in our names, and they have always spoken from an urban perspective." The regional perspective is highly important for indigenous organisations due to the different needs in the city and in the countryside.

The indigenous woman is just as any Bolivian woman suffering gender oppression, and therefore they have interests and needs overlapping the collective/individual dichotomy, although it can be hard for them to express them. Tensions arise when one identity requires certain rights not compatible with the rights claimed by the other (see Radcliffe 2002:167).

5.2.1 Feminism = Women Oppressing Men?

It is recognised by postcolonial feminist that third world women are more likely to express demands that have to do with the national economic development such as work, education and health, and not directly linked to their gender identity. Feminist interests linked to equal opportunities for men and women are not seen as the most urgent, consequently third world women tend to not feel included in the international feminist agenda (Johnson-Odim 1991:320ff). This in line with Lucy Poma's (Bartolina Sisa) feelings for feminism:

When we talk about gender equality we distance ourselves from feminism. Maybe we never shared those ideas that only address what it includes to be a woman and nothing more. What we are looking for is equality, parity and rotation. Maybe we do not share even one word with feminism.

This statement relates to the widespread misunderstanding of feminism that I encountered at several occasions when talking to people from the popular movement. Feminism is understood in *opposition* to machismo. They believe that the feminists want revenge on the men and reach better positions than men, which goes against their cultural logic of living in harmony with nature (read man and woman to be equals) (compare Lundahl 2006:223).

The misunderstanding of feminism reflects the resistance towards the women's NGOs that have been working with human and women's rights. In the eyes of the indigenous people, the messages the NGOs are spreading are often seen as imperialistic. Problems can also be identified when these NGOs, which generally have good economical resources and knowledge, cooperate with indigenous organisations. Through my own observations and respondents statements it can be said that the workshops the NGOs offer often do not correspond to the needs of the indigenous women. The language used by the presenter is often too complicated and they do not learn anything practical, something they need. There is a lack of communication between these two groups of women (see also Postero 2007:139, 155, 171; Petras & Veltmeyer 2005:210). This is an example of how the universal sought by feminists have collided with the particular when applied in real life. Gloria Ajpi (CEADL) says:

As a NGO-worker I have to admit that I knew better how to sell the theory than reality. It is a problem that needs to be recognised. They paid us to convince the people with the theory of gender equality. One wanted them to listen, but one never wanted to listen to the women.

Even though many attempts of spreading the words of feminism have failed and even created antagonism, the idea of gender equality has been addressed by indigenous organisations that are organising workshops, which discuss the concept of gender and machismo in order to make people aware of unfair gender structures. It is important to note that for indigenous women it is important that also the men participate. Many respondents argue that they can see how the work with the gender concept is starting to empower women, but there is a long way to equality, and particularly so in the countryside. Jesús Mamani (Coordinadora de

la Mujer) says: “The women in the countryside do not know their rights. Domestic violence is accepted there.” So accordingly to feminist scholars there is a need for feminism, although a feminism incorporating various injustices (compare Johnson-Odim 1991: 315).

5.2.2 Time as a Resource

The urban/rural factor seems to be important for women’s possibility to participate in civil society according to many respondents. Rural women (read indigenous) usually have more children and have had less formal education due of lack of accessibility and machismo generally making them timid and less likely to participate in organisations. Time is also an important factor. Eva Melgar (OICH) states: “Us women triplicate in work activities. We take care of the children, we do domestic work, and we work in the fields. It is complicated being a mother, wife, housekeeper and an active organisation member!” The husband is said to be a great obstacle for participation because of his suspicion and him not wanting the woman to leave the home alone. Most of the indigenous women I have interviewed are divorced, widows or tell stories of how they have had to confront and fight with their men to be able to join organisations. Many of these problems are also to be found in the city, but there the women tend to be less controlled by their husbands (see Widmark 2002:57).

Participation in civil society is also believed to vary with self-esteem and knowledge. Teresa Canaviri (Red-Ada) argues that indigenous women do not have enough understanding of the public sphere.

5.3 Women – Newcomers in the Municipal Council

On the civil society level women generally participate in different organisations depending on class and ethnicity. Then how is female participation constituted and functioning at an institutional level in a political system that in a democracy is meant to be representative?

The representation of women in the municipal councils is over 30% in all the municipalities in this study:

- La Paz: 4 women (1 indigenous), 7 men
- Pucarani: 2 women (2 indigenous), 3 men
- Santa Cruz de la Sierra: 5 women (0 indigenous), 6 men
- Concepción: 2 women (1 indigenous), 3 men

They all reach the minimum limit for female participation stated by law (www.bolivia.gov.bo), but it is important to have a closer look at the “quality” of women’s participation from an intersectional perspective.

Low education levels are characteristic for Bolivia in general, but more so for women and the indigenous women. The education level varies with ethnicity, and education level used to correspond also to the identity of the political

representatives (Widmark 2002:67). When MAS was formed the popular movement got their political instrument, and through this participation of indigenous peoples in political institutions increased radically. Many of the MAS representatives I met did not have much experience of party politics.

William Stelzer (city council member, Santa Cruz de la Sierra) makes derogatory remarks about the fact that so many indigenous people, and especially women, do not have the proper education for participating in political institutions. The racist undertones in his statements correspond to the dynamics within the city councils several respondents talk about. In both cities, La Paz and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, male and female council members say that indigenous women face problems because of their lack of education. They either do not participate actively, or they act in accordance with the more experienced men. There is a problem of professionalism being interconnected with the middle and upper classes (compare Postero 2007:147).

Associated with the lack of education is the lack of language proficiency. Most indigenous people are bilingual, but women have more problems mastering Spanish since they in the rural areas do not often interact with people outside of their communities. This fact is a problem for these women in the institutional politics, and is also a reason for discrimination (see Widmark 2002:61). In Pucarani I met a female indigenous city council member that hardly spoke Spanish and that could not read. Gabriela Niño de Guzmán (city council member, La Paz) states that because of lack of education indigenous women are not able to participate on equal terms in political arenas. She, as a professional, has much better possibilities for participating, even though the machismo still prevails.

5.3.1 Dormant Local Gender Equality Politics

The gender equality politics was not well developed in any of the four municipalities in this study. In both cities there are special gender commissions, but none of them could present any strategical plans or alike. The main focus for the two urban municipal councils was to help women that suffer domestic violence.

In the rural municipalities there were no gender commissions, but many ideas of how women's needs would be met. Gender equality was something rather new on the political agendas and discussions on how to design gender equality politics were said to be ongoing. The needs of women were considered homogeneous in these municipalities, and the main focus was domestic violence and development of women's economical activities.

5.4 Politics of Gender Equality at the National Level – Aggregated Problems and Possibilities

My investigation has focused on the civil society and municipal levels and what obstacles and possibilities for women's political participation can be observed there. But of course these levels depend on and are incorporated within the state apparatus. Hence I find it important to have a closer look also at how gender equality politics is executed at a national level and what tendencies are to be found. Many of my respondents have direct or indirect experience from the work carried out by the current and former government so their statements together with a few additional interviews I carried out with people who are and have been involved in politics at the national level constitute my material for this part of the analysis.

It has been stated by the Swedish Development Agency (Sida 2006:11) that implementation of the Institutional Strategic Plan of the Vice Ministry of Women's Affairs is low and therefore technical and administrative institutional capacity needs to be strengthened. Sida also highlights that there is a lack of political vision and that the women's movement¹⁶ is suffering from internal divisions, something indicated in my research as well. Due to today's political situation with the cultural question being a top priority of the MAS-government, differences among women with respect to ethnicity is clearly noticed and has had fundamental importance for the rearrangements of the Vice Ministry of Women's Affairs that after the change of government has incorporated new areas of responsibility, and is now called the Vice Ministry of Women's, Generational and Family Affairs (Viceministerio de Asuntos de Género, Generacionales y Familia). Ana Laura Durán, head of the Unit of Gender in the Vice Ministry, explains the reorientation:

All the reflection that has been made with respect to gender issues have come from outside [Bolivia] with a western vision, but while coming from the outside one has also been able to observe that in our cultural identities there is an intrinsic reflection around gender and rights. The change in this new process is that our vision is based on our cultural identities where the issue of gender equality is not exclusively a women's issue, but has to do with childhood, youth, elderly people and disabled people. This new vision has to do with more than only the woman; it also deals with all what a woman is connected to. In daily life a woman is always connected to a family, to a community.

The new discourse that is adhered to by the new government emphasises the collective struggle. It is highly stressed that they do not want to base political strategies on theories, but on the social struggle that the social movement is

¹⁶ It might not be accurate to speak of a women's *movement* in Bolivia. It has been stressed by respondents that it is more a matter of scattered women's organisations than a movement. Though I will use this term when speaking of women's organisations in general.

carrying out. Everywhere in Bolivia today people are talking about *el cambio* (the change) that the change of government and the empowered social movement have introduced. The aim is to change the deeply rooted colonial and elitist structures that have marginalised the indigenous population ever since the Spaniards arrived in Bolivia. The reorganisation of the Vice Ministry is criticised though, heavily by NGOs but also by some women within the base organisations. It is said to have lost importance within the state apparatus, and some argue that it is a backlash, that gender issues are now treated together with several other areas in need of attention. This shows that it is too simplified to believe that women from the two different “camps” are in strong opposition and that they have reached consensus within their own group.

Although the divisions within the women’s movement become clear in the case of the constituent assembly. A few NGOs working with gender equality issues launched a nationwide project called *Mujeres en la Constituyente* (Women in the Constituent Assembly) that has been synthesising a proposal of what needs to be incorporated in the new constitution. They carried out workshops all over the country, both in rural and urban areas, and made the proposal out of the conclusions from these workshops. But the indigenous women’s organisations have chosen to distance themselves from this proposal arguing that the proposal only reflects the urban women’s interests. Instead the indigenous women have produced a proposal together with other indigenous organisations that they believe are working on the basis of their cultural perspective, taking their particular traditions in account. Constituent assembly member Lidia Choque (MAS) explains that there is a clear division between rich and poor in the assembly where the rich women clearly defend the interests of their own class. There is no cooperation between women as a group in the assembly according to Lidia and she says: “As indigenous people we have to be united, man and woman. The struggle in the assembly is hard on us poor people and we have to all work together.” But in reality the divisions might not be so clear-cut. During my time in Bolivia I saw material from the *Mujeres en la Constituyente*-project laying around in many of the offices of indigenous organisations, and while visiting a workshop organised by Bartolina Sisa the “urban women’s proposal” were distributed to the participants without any comments that implied rejection. The postcolonial understanding of culture and identity as non-essentialist concepts can explain what here can seem like a contradiction. Culture and identity are constantly transformed and can be part of various discourses simultaneously because of their crosscutting nature. Every person has a certain possibility to redefine reality, and through this discrepancy between discourse and agency our understanding of the world can gradually change (see Fraser & Nicholson 1989:88f; Cockburn 1998:212; Yuval-Davis 1997:43, 55).

The episode mentioned above is not the only contradiction that is to be found in the area of gender equality politics. Ana Laura Durán at the Vice Ministry argues that they are in the beginning of a long process and that contradictions are inevitable now in the beginning of *el cambio*. It is however argued by women that used to be involved in the making of gender equality politics that there are

not necessarily that many contradictions – that women actually have quite a few areas of interest in common. *Political participation, sexual and reproductive health care, fighting violence and education* are said to be important themes for all women. All groups of women I have spoken to highlight the problem of female participation in such a hierarchal and patriarchal state as the Bolivian. Diana Urioste (Coordinadora de la Mujer) says that the quotation law reinforcing a 30% female participation has led to a much higher rate of participation, and she argues that the indigenous women as well as the urban middle and upper class women have benefited from this law. From her experience a lot of indigenous women suffering from domestic violence have been taking advantage of a law introduced by a former government, making it possible to report. Urioste also argues that the fact that many urban women have felt excluded from the gender equality politics has to do with lack of government presence in many rural areas of Bolivia, making it impossible to reach these women.

5.4.1 Hostility towards the International Conventions and NGOs

During my stay in Bolivia I rarely met people that did not believe that *el cambio* is positive and necessary for a more democratic and inclusive institutional system, and the creation of politics that truly will work towards the eradication of poverty and the recovery of indigenous dignity. People from the NGOs and people directly involved with former governments also argue this, and they believe that they can understand the resentment the new Vice Ministry is expressing towards the NGOs and policies derived from international conventions. But they think the fact that the new government does not want any contact with the experienced NGOs is unfortunate, and so is the interruption of the implementation of the Vice Ministry's institutional plan for public politics. Diana Urioste (Coordinadora de la Mujer) explains the aversion:

They have conceptually amalgamated neoliberalism and all that has to do with gender and human rights because of ideological reasons, making politics in line with international conventions neoliberal proposals. We are now slowly trying to dismantle this perception and I think we are getting there. But it is going to take some time.

During the 1990s the international human rights resolutions and the Women's Rights conference in Beijing 1995 came to influence Bolivian gender equality politics. Diana Urioste argues that thanks to these resolutions the conjuncture was very favourable when convincing the government to create laws that would help protect and favour women. The international cooperation also played an important role in the implementation of such policies through their pressure on the governments, according to Maria Elena Burgos (former civil servant at the Vice Ministry of Women's Affairs)¹⁷. But the new Vice Ministry blames both the

¹⁷ The Bolivian state depends heavily on the International Cooperation. 1/3 of the state's public spending comes from external resources (latinamerika.nu).

international resolutions and the NGOs for being way too individualistic and theoretical in their approach. Ana Laura Durán argues that there was no contact between the public policies and the Bolivian reality and women's real needs. Lucy Poma (Bartolina Sisa) says: "International conventions do not have much impact, neither Beijing, nothing. No peasants and indigenous people get together there, that is where the women from the NGOs get together to talk for other women. But we do not buy that!" This exemplifies the problems of a too rigid idea of what it means being a woman. Gender discrimination can not be isolated from politics (see Johnson-Odim 1991:317).

Diana Urioste and Maria Elena Burgos both believe that maybe it is not so much the message but the *messenger* that is the problem when it comes to disagreements on international resolutions. They also believe that there is a problem with the popular sectors not participating at an international level, and that it is time for everybody to start working with human rights from an indigenous and class perspective. Also the international cooperation seems to put less pressure on the government at the moment with regards to following up the resolutions the state has ratified. Despite disagreements, one can observe what Gayatri Spivak calls *strategical essentialism* where women are working together across ethnicity and class differences (see Lundahl 2006:226). In the civil society NGOs and base organisations are still cooperating, and a similar trend at a national level is coming up according to several respondents. They believe that there is a strong resentment in the popular discourse, but at a more practical level women can work together on certain issues and that the NGOs have valuable knowledge and experience. A lot of the issues that are to be found in the ex Vice Ministry's action plan are still carried out. The task of the new government, according to Maria Elena Burgos, is now to: "[...] widen the social and geographical coverage of public policies, the state needs to give more possibilities."

6 A Twofold Origin of Obstacles

According to Nancy Fraser's (2003) reasoning on social equality the obstacles for women's political participation in Bolivia today seem to be of the nature that the two remedies – recognition and redistribution – are needed in order to reach true political inclusion.

Women as a collective do have some interests and needs in common due to the patriarchal structure and the *machismo* in the Bolivian society. Interests like sexual and reproductive rights, education and a general strategy for making both women and men aware of oppressing patriarchal practices, are shared both by the indigenous and non-indigenous women. They all correspond to women's subordinated status in society, and recognition would thus be the remedy by which public politics should be designed (see Fraser 2003:235ff).

Through an intersectional perspective I have in this study showed how class and ethnicity together with gender are factors that are reinforcing leading up to indigenous women's specific positioning. Accordingly they are facing not only the obstacles for political participation mentioned above, but also the obstacles that correspond to their class and ethnical identity. The lack of economical resources and racial discrimination adds to their gendered subordinated societal positioning. Consequently recognition on its own would not be enough to rectify indigenous women's subordination. Through Fraser's reasoning (2003) redistribution will have to be combined with recognition in order to deal with the two kinds of obstacles indigenous women are facing; obstacles corresponding to both gender interests and practical interests.

The concept "feminisation of poverty" highlights the fact that women are more exposed to poverty than men. It also implies the need for the feminist movement to widen their agenda and strategies. The feminist movements run the risk to become an elitist movement not being able to realise the intersection of various identities, thus marginalising indigenous women (see Gonzales 2000:65).

Postcolonial theory highlights the importance of time and space in the analysis, and focus on these factors has been fruitful for this study because of Bolivia being so diverse and the historical moment being so politically dynamic. Having chosen to study various geographical contexts I got a much better outlook on the political and social situation. Because of this I have been able to make balanced generalisations. The intersectional perspective has also made it possible to analytically show how women as a socio-economical and political group is created in a specific local context.

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Appendix 1 – The Interviewed

Informants

Gloria Ardaya	CIDES, 19-12-2006
Denise Arnold	ILCA, 13-12-2006
Pamela Calla	Universidad de la Cordillera, 15-1-2007
Javier Fernández	Coordinadora de la Mujer, 13-12-2006
Claudia Ranaboldo	RIMISP, 21-12-2006
Maria Eugenia Rojas	ACOBOL, 15-12-2006
Milton Soto	Diakonia, 14-12-2006
Johanna Teague	SIDA, 11-12-2006

National Politics

Maria Elena Burgos	Woman's Viceministry 2000-2006 (same as above but it changed names with the change of governments 2006 and are now not only working with gender equality), 13-3-2007
Lidia Choque	Constituent Assembly member for MAS, 4-2-2006 Ana Laura Durán Viceministry of Gender and Generational Matters, 16-3-2007
Maria Elva Pinckert	President of AMDECRUZ (Municipality Association of Santa Cruz, 14-2-2007

City Council Members

Rosario Aguilar	La Paz	Movimiento sin Miedo, 21-12-2006
David Barrentos	La Paz	MAS, 22-12-2006
Gabriela Niño de Guzmán G.	La Paz	Movimiento sin Miedo,

		19-3-2007
Lucia Quiñonez	Pucarani	MAS, 25-1-2007
Edwin Huampu Espinoza	Pucarani	MIP, 25-1-2007
Lucia Jimenez de Limachi	Pucarani	MIP, 26-1-2007
Wiliam Stelzer Jiménez	Santa Cruz de la Sierra	ADN, 7-2-2007
Carol Visgarra Guillén	Santa Cruz de la Sierra	MUP, 16-2-2007
Oswaldo Peredes	Santa Cruz de la Sierra	MAS, 5-3-2007
Justo Seoane (alcalde)	Concepción	MAS, 13-2-2007
Benita Mariela Machicado	Concepción	MAS, 12-2-2007
Juana Elida Herrera	Concepción	MAS, 12-2-2007

Organisations

Gloria Ajpi Jalja	CEADL, 18-1-2007
Florentino Barrientos	CSUTCB (secretary general), 19-1-2007
Alina Canaviri	Bartolina Sisa SC, 9-3-2007
Teresa Canaviri	Red Ada, 13-3-2007
Maria Chacon Lira	CICC, 2-3-2007
Deniz Contzeúllar	OICH, 12-2-2007
Elena Crespo	Red Ada, 13-3-2007 15-1-2007
Alejandra Fajarda	AMUPEI, 15-1-2007
Andrea Flores	OMAK, 17-1-2007
Estebán Gallego Barcaya	CONAMAQ (commision of land and territory),
Jacinto Herrera	FCUCB, 4-3-2007
Enriqueta Huanto	AMAQ, 16-1-2007

Josefina Huayllas	CONAMAQ (commision of education), 12-1-2007
Jesus Mamani Mita	Coordinadora de la Mujer, 16-3-2007
Patricia Mara	Plataforma Contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres, 5-2-2007
Eva Melgar Posiabo	OICH, 2-3-2007
Tereza Nomina Chiqueno	CEPESC (gender equality commision), 3-2-2007
Guadalupe Perez	Colectiva Rebeldia (President), 6-3-2007
Lucy Poma	Bartolina Sisa (both at national level and particularly in La Paz), 20-12-2006
Teresa Soruco	AMUPEI (President), 22-1-2007
Miriam Suarez	Casa de la Mujer (President), 15-2-2007
Diana Urioste	Coordinadora de la Mujer, 19-3-2007
Hugo Vega Franco	OTB/Pucarani, 25-1-2007
Marina Wasagel	CIDOB (gender equality commision), 6-2-2007

Appendix 2 – Interview Guide: Organisations

Introduction

- Age
- Education
- Family status
- Ethnicity
- Organisational/political background

Oppression

- What is the most fundamental reason for women's oppression? (In society and within the organisation)
- Why do women organise in their own federation? Is it to voice their opinions within the same political agenda, or are separate concerns addressed?
- Are the issues stressed by NGOs seen as important?

Division of labour and capital

- What is the division of labour between men and women?
- Is certain labour valued above other?
- What do the men do while the women are working in the (street begging etc.)?

Women as a group

- Is the oppression of groups according to class or ethnicity secondary to the oppression of women?
- Is there a women's movement? Or is class and ethnicity too differential?
- What to you think of the proposal for "la constituyente" that the NGOs have developed?
- Are their divisions between the lowlands and the highlands within the women's movement?
- How would you define indígena/indigenous?

Representation & the political agenda

- Has the increased representation of women helped prioritise women's interests?
- Can women, as a group, feel represented by female representatives?
- What are the possibilities to address women's issues within the new government?
- Is mainstreaming desirable and is it possible?
- Are the ways of working with gender equality issues within the government different from the strategies in civil society?

Feminism

- What does the term feminism mean to you?

- Can the feminist struggle be linked to the struggle against racism and economic exploitation?
- Is there a risk of the issue of women's oppression being forgotten without feminist or women's organisations?
- Is there necessarily a conflict between human rights and cultural (indigenous rights)?

Complementarity

- What does reality look like in relation to the ideal of complementarity?
- How do you relate to chacha-warmi?

Organisation

- How have you benefited from participation in this organisation?
- Is there a risk that some women will never have the possibility to organise? Is your organisation able to speak for them?
- What do you think about the connection between organisation and identity? Does this strengthen your identity? Does it exclude others, or are you able to combine your commitment to the issues of this organisation with others?
- How do you perceive the relationship between indigenous and non- indigenous people? Has the organising made ethnicity and class differences more fluid, when attention is paid to others issues?
- Who are the financers and are they able to influence the agenda?

Closure

- Tell me a little more about your ideas, experiences and expectations regarding gender issues.

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide: Municipalities

Introduction

- Age
- Education
- Family status
- Ethnicity
- Organisational/political background

Women as a Group

- What are the differences between women in your municipality?
- What different interests and needs do the women have?
- Do they all experience the same oppression?
- How important are ethnicity and class differences for women?

Women policies

- What do you focus on in order to improve women's situation and possibilities? What is the main issue?
- What do you believe is the greatest obstacle for empowerment of women?
- Are the men involved in any way?
- Can the same policy affect all women or is there need for more detailed policies overlapping different socioeconomic categories?
- Is there designated space for issues of gender equality in this municipality? Is there need for a particular women's policy?
- Which are the material and ideological circumstances contributing to women's, if this is the case, subordination?
- Is there a discrepancy between national guidelines and voices from civil society in your municipality?
- Are you familiar with the international conventions? What is your opinion of them?
- How do you hope to achieve the same results for poor women as for the middleclass?
- How do you communicate with women of your municipality? Do you cooperate with organisations – which organisations? Do they have different methods for working with these issues?
- How is your work affected by the change of government?

Representation

- What has the representation of women been historically?
- Has the increased representation of women helped prioritise women's interests? If so, which are their interests and needs?
(- As a woman – what are your possibilities to impel these issues? Is there a severe macho culture in the city hall?)

- What have been the effects of quotas? Anything positive?

Feminism

- What does the term feminism mean to you?
- In which terms are issues of gender discussed in the municipal council?
- What is the impact of chacha-warmi?

Identity policy

- How has the identity policy affected issues of gender equality?
- Is unity falsely perceived within the ethnic group?
- How do you operate in such a reality fraught by the importance of class and ethnicity? Is the category of gender regarded as less important?

Closure

- Tell me a little more about your ideas, experiences and expectations regarding gender issues.

Appendix 4 – Map of Bolivia



Source: www.worldatlas.com

Appendix 5 – Women’s Organisations

The following kind of women’s organisations and organisations with female participation are to be found in the Bolivian society:

- *Organizaciones campesinas de mujeres* – Women’s peasant organisations; are organized and work parallel with the men’s organizations.
- *Organizaciones indígenas* – Indigenous peoples’ organisations; mixed organisations where women participate.
- Non governmental organisations; work with, and carry out research on problems women are facing in society. Heavily influenced by international conventions and the human rights discourse.
- Feminist groups; two currents: reformist and radical feminism.
- *Clubes de Madres* – Mothers’ clubs; small neighbourhood organisations that are canalising resources necessary for daily life.
- Workers’ unions and smaller workers’ organisations that are found in the urban areas, e.g. housekeepers’ organisations.
- Women’s professional associations
- Organisations for women in the public sector; e.g. politicians.

Source: Coordinadora de la Mujer 2006 (p. 50-57)

The organisations I have been in contact with can be found within the four first kinds of organisations as stated above. Although the boundary between one type and another is not always as clear. That is for example the case when it comes to NGO’s and feminist groups. Bearing this in mind I have here classified the organisations I have met with:

Women’s peasant organisations and peasant organisations (mixed)

- Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia - Bartolina Sisa (FNMCB-BS) – is really a part of CSUTCB.

- Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB)

- Organización Territorial de Base (OTB)/Pucarani – OTBs were actually formed by law as a part of a state led decentralisation project. This kind of organisation could possibly be placed somewhere in-between the institutional and civil society level, but since they have mainly attracted peasants and indigenous people and have become a chance for them to get more politically involved I choose to interview a representative in Pucarani where not many other organisations are working.

Indigenous peoples' organisations

- Organización de Mujeres Aymaras del Kollasuyo (OMAK)
- Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ)
- Asociación de Mujeres Aymaras del Qollasuyu (AMAQ)
- Central de Comunidades Indígenas de Concepción (CICC)
- Organización Indígena Chiquitana (OICH)
- Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB)
- Coordinadora de Pueblos Étnicos de Santa Cruz (CEPESC)

Non governmental organisations

- Coordinadora de la Mujer
- Articulación por la equidad e igualdad (AMUPEI)
- Casa de la Mujer
- Plataforma Contra la Violencia hacia la Mujer
- Centro de Estudios y Apoyo al Desarrollo Local (CEADL)
- Red de Trabajadoras de la Información y Comunicación (Red-Ada)

Feminist organisations

- Colectiva Rebeldía