Men, Machos and Masculinity

− A Qualitative Study on how Bolivian Women's
Organizations Approach Gender and Masculinities

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Abstract

This paper examines understandings of gender with an emphasis on masculinities among Bolivian feminist and women´s organizations. The specific aim has been to find out to what extent their understandings of gender include masculinities, and if so, what are their agendas and political positionings in relation to their work with men and boys. Finally, the study has examined what impact the feminist and women's organization´s political claims have on their relations with each other, and with activists and organizations engaging men and boys in Bolivia. The study is based on 10 in-depth interviews with feminist and women´s rights leaders. Field research was carried out in the cities of La Paz, El Alto, Sucre, Tarija, and Santa Cruz in January and February 2019 with complementary interviews in October and November the same year.

This study makes clear the great complexity of Bolivian society at all levels: historical, political, social, cultural, economic, and moral. This complexity was manifested in the various interviews carried out with the Bolivian feminist and women's organizations under study, in which numerous competing visions, ideas, opinions and thoughts were presented in regard to what has shaped Bolivian society, what is actually happening there, and how best to deal with it. Consequently, they presented different understandings and ideas with regard to gender, the work with men and masculinities and in regard to their relation to one another and to other social actors in society. Not only have the organizations under study chosen to give priority to different explanatory factors and accompanying political struggles, they have also developed these in different ways. The results show that their worldviews and political positions are in conflict with and to different degrees opposed to each other.

Keywords: feminism, indigeneity, masculinity norms, hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy, gender equality, machismo, decolonial feminism, new masculinities, Bolivia.

Popular Science Presentation

Until recently gender has been a one-sided approach focusing exclusively on women as the discriminated group, while little attention has been directed to men's gendered conditions. However, by the end of the 1980s one started to recognize men and masculinities as gendered subjects, thereby broadening the spectrum of feminism and gender studies. From then on, it is possible to identify the rise of ''critical studies on men'' or ''masculinity studies'' as a subfield to gender studies. A masculinity perspective encompasses engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence. It recognizes men as explicitly gendered and consequently important agents of change in regard to gender equality. Until recently, the masculinity perspective has been weak in previous gender equality work in Bolivia, yet a shift seems to be emerging.

This paper examines understandings of gender with and emphasis on masculinities among Bolivian feminist and women´s organizations. The specific aim has been to find out to what extent their understandings of gender include masculinities, and if so, what are their agendas and political positionings in relation to their work with men and boys. Finally, the study has examined what impact the feminist and women's organization´s political claims have on their relations with each other, and with activists and organizations engaging men and boys in Bolivia.

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Reasons for having exceeded the word limit

This study is somewhat longer and more extensive than stipulated. Bolivia is one of the most ethnically and socio-culturally diverse countries in Latin America. In order to illustrate this and to provide a comprehensive picture in regard to how Bolivian women's organizations approach gender and the work with men and masculinities I found it necessary to include different types of women's organizations in the study rather than just one. I could have left out some of the interview quotes in order to make my thesis shorter, however, the quotes are carefully selected and very rich in information. Consequently, it is my belief that they contribute with fundamental information in regard to the subject at hand and in regard to the Bolivian context in general. All in all, they certainly strengthen the analysis and make this thesis richer and more comprehensive.

Preface

" We live in a society where in the majority of cases the best fathers have been the absent ones, those who have left, those who have not appeared. The other fathers, those who are present, have in large part been a spectacle of violence and irresponsibility. We do not want to be unfair and we do not forget the few who, whether they were or are here today, are well aware of the value of their close and tender presence, they will provide us testimony of the amount of insults they had to carry on their shoulders for carrying their infants, for not having had time for drunkenness, for not having had money for the brothels"

– Maria Galindo (2001, xxi), From Machos, Varones y Maricones (My translation).

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Over the past decades Latin America has witnessed significant advances regarding the inclusion of gender equality in central governmental plans and programs in order to provide systematic solutions to the problems faced by women in political, economic and social life. However, rates of violence and discrimination against women as well as femicide – the intentional murder of women because they are women – remain alarmingly high (Becker, 2019). Simultaneously, challenges relating to men's gender roles are becoming increasingly visible, most notably regarding men's and boy's mental and physical health, employment status, school attendance, criminal engagement, perpetration of violence and substance abuse (Bannon & Correia, 2006: 4-5; Connell, 2001:13). The processes of modernization and globalization and their corresponding socio-economic and cultural changes – e.g. women's insertion into the labor market and the impact this has had on daily life, gender roles, and traditional dynamics in the family as well as the emergence of strong feminist movements questioning male privilege in public and private spheres— has led to a powerful shift in gender relations in Latin America. The previous images of superiority and strength associated with masculinity and "machismo" have been eroded and today many men are facing serious problems of identity and self-esteem – commonly referred to as the so-called "crisis of masculinity" (Vigoya, 2003: 28; Segato, 2011). This has in some cases caused men to seek affirmation of their masculinity in other ways, for instance through domestic and social violence and/or verbal harassment and sexual abuse, limiting not only their welfare and developmental opportunities but also those of their partners, families and society at large (Fuller, 2018; Bannon & Correa, 2006: 38). Another response to this rapid pace of change has been the increasing amount of men's groups in which men analyze the imposed roles and try to find new ways of "being a man", based on the ideas of social justice and equality – the so-called "new masculinity" (Fuller, 2018; Bannon & Correa, 2006: 38).

Until recently gender has been a one-sided approach focusing exclusively on women as the discriminated group – the "victims", while masculinity as a gender construct has been largely absent from the development and gender literature and discourse (Hearn & Collinson, 2018: 1). Men have been seen as the "perpetrators" – an obstacle to women's development and little attention has been directed to their own gendered conditions (Hearn & Collinson, 2018: 1-2). This has resulted in a lack of recognition of that many men, especially those who do not live up to heteronormative ideals of masculinity, also suffer from the consequences of gender inequality. However, during the last two decades there have been concerted attempts, primarily

through feminist, gay, queer, and gender scholarship, to examine how men and masculinities are equally as gendered as are women and femininities (Fuller, 2018). Consequently, development agencies, scholars and the media have begun to advocate for a broader inclusion of gender issues, recognizing that gender equality is not only a women's issue, and, in order to achieve gender equality and to change perceptions about women and men, and persons with other gender identities, it is crucial that men engage and are included in gender equality work (Hearn, 2015; Sida, 2016).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the work on masculinities can be traced back to the end of the 1990s (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016). Since then studies on masculinities from a gender perspective in the region have advanced in the quantity and quality of their production of data, debates and theoretical contributions. During these two decades it has been discussed that men and masculinities in the region are extraordinarily diverse and that there are rigid social, historical and cultural expectations related to masculinity that affect both women and men (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016). There has been a growing and accumulated production of books and articles on men and masculinity, especially in countries such as Chile, Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil (Vigoya, 2003).

In this development some research institutes, academic institutions and NGOs have played a key role. For instance, the Brazilian organization ProMundo founded in 1997, which is now a global consortium with member organizations in several countries. Another example is the Mexican Academy of Men's Gender Studies (AMEGH) (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016). Furthermore, the support of some United Nations agencies, particularly UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as the global network MenEngage, have been relevant in the construction of research lines and a political agenda (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016).

However, although there have been significant efforts to involve men and boys in challenging power dynamics and gender inequalities in Latin America, especially in areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights and violence against women, there are still many challenges persisting (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016). For instance, there are divergent understandings of the nature and extent of men's and boys' roles in the gender equality agenda. There is a lack of dialogue and exchange between activists and organizations engaging men and boys and the feminist and women's movement and their efforts toward gender equality (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016; ProMundo, 2015: 8).

There are tensions between a feminists sector that believes that working with men and boys is fundamental for the advancement towards gender equality and a feminist sector that has serious doubts about the relevance of working with men, since those are the once that have held most of the power and privileges (Aguayo & Nascimento, 2016: 211; ProMundo, 2015: 8).

The latter feminists are critical to the presence of men in the field of gender studies since they argue that it leads to a loss of focus on the underprivileged position of women and girls. Some women's organizations fear that the focus on men and masculinities for gender equality will deprive them of resources and depoliticize what they have achieved after centuries of feminist struggles (Hearn, 2015: 41; Tjeder, 2002). Due to a great demand for limited resources there is an ongoing battle of financing between organizations working with men and boys and women's rights organizations. Women's rights organizations are in general severely under-financed and at the same time the amount of "pro-feminist" and "pro-gender" organizations engaging men and boys is increasing. During the last years there has been a general increase of financial support to gender equality at a global scale. However, despite this, support to women´s rights organizations is decreasing at a global level (Sida, 2016).

This thesis will focus on the specific case of Bolivia. Bolivia, like many other countries in Latin America, is struggling to come to grips with extremely high levels of gender-based violence and discrimination, ranging from sexual harassment, domestic violence, assault and rape to intimate femicide and the silencing of women in public and political contexts. The rates of gender-based violence in Bolivia are among the highest in Latin America and they are increasing in comparison to previous years (Sida, 2017; Becker, 2019). Whether rates are actually increasing or whether the increase is the result of progress with regards to increased access to information, statistics and data remains a divisive topic (Sida, 2017). According to The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2019), Bolivia has the third highest rate of femicides in Latin America, with a rate of 2.3 femicides for every 100,000 women in 2018, and the highest rates of femicides in South America (ECLAC, 2019). Down to the present, perpetrators frequently evade accountability (Becker, 2019).

An increasing amount of research show that the involvement of men and boys in gender equality work has long term effects on gender equality in a variety of ways, for instance decreased levels of crime and violence and increased acceptance for gender equality among men and boys (Sida, 2016; Hearn et al., 2015: 122). However, until recently, the masculinity perspective has been weak in previous gender equality work in Bolivia, yet a shift seems to be emerging.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

The masculinity perspective has recently gained attention in Bolivia, despite the fact that the work with men and masculinities in Bolivia can be traced back to the 1980s, through the initiative and work of the pioneer local mixed-gender organization CISTAC. Today there are several development agencies working with masculinities as part of their gender equality work in the country. For instance, since January 2018, the international organization ProMundo is running an ambitious masculinity program in Bolivia together with the Swedish Development Cooperation (Sida, 2019).

There is a wide variety of women's and feminist organizations in Bolivia: indigenous women's organizations, institutionalized feminist organizations and radical autonomous feminist organizations among others. Consequently, it is of interest to found out how these established women's and feminist organizations approach the work with men and masculinities for gender equality. This is of high importance considering the severe problems of gender inequalities, hypermasculinity and gender-based violence in Bolivia. While several actors have recognized the need to involve men and boys in gender equality work there are no research on how Bolivian women's organizations approach the work with men and masculinities. I believe that it is very important to find out the different perceptions in regard to the work with men and masculinities among women's and feminist organizations as this is probably one important key how to successfully deal with the problem of men's violence against women among others.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to examine which understandings of gender, with an emphasis on masculinities, are present among feminist and women´s organizations in Bolivia. The specific aim is to find out to what extent their understandings of gender include masculinities, and if so, what are their agendas and political positionings in relation to their work with men and boys. Finally the study aims to investigate what impact the feminist and women's organization´s political claims have on their relations with each other, and with activists and organizations engaging men and boys in Bolivia (LGBTQ, human rights, and pro-feminist mixed-gender organizations - often male-dominated).

Consequently, the research questions are the following:

1. Which gender discourses inform the different women's/ feminist organizations in Bolivia?
2. To what extent do these discourses include masculinities, and if so, what are the women's agendas and political positionings in relation to their work with men and boys?
3. Which implications do their political claims have on their relations with each other and with activists and organizations engaging men and boys in Bolivia (LGBTQ, human rights, and pro-feminist mixed-gender organizations, often male-dominated)?

In order to deepen the knowledge around these questions, I have carried out in-depth interviews with ten feminist and women´s rights leaders, from a diversity of feminist and women's organizations in Bolivia, including indigenous women's organizations, academic feminist organizations and autonomous radical feminist organizations. The interviews were conducted in January and February 2019, with complementary interviews in October and November the same year.

My intention has been to explore and understand, through a constructivist lens, which gender discourses, with an emphasis on masculinities, influence the feminist and women's organizations in Bolivia. Hence, the interest lies in their viewpoints, experiences, and perceptions and not in denouncing some opinion as more true and others as false. This will be done by attempting to do justice to the way the groups experience the world and what is at stake for them, focusing on their rhetoric, political practice, ideological formations and goals.

Throughout the paper many references are made to "indigenous women", "institutional feminists" and "radical feminists", I believe it is important to mention that I do not see these categories as homogeneous groups. In fact, the empirical results presented in the analysis suggest the eradication of any universalizing claims about women's experiences both between and among the different categories of women's organizations. Yet, this is also a paper about women who choose to organize as women, holding a belief that women share some fundamental needs that should be fought for collectively. Consequently, in order to understand these three categories of women's organizations thinking and action, some generalizations are not just inevitable, but in this case also desirable.

The outline of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 begins with a background on the Bolivian political, economic and sociocultural context followed by an overview of the evolution of feminism and women's movement in Bolivia in which the three main currents within the Bolivian feminist movement will be offered. In Chapter 3 the theoretical perspectives utilized in the thesis will be presented and in Chapter 4 the empirical material used and how the study was conducted will be given. Thereafter, in Chapter 5 the findings and analyzes will be presented followed by a discussion and concluding remarks.

2. Setting the Scene

In order to be able to understand the reality and experiences of the women under study a background information about the conditions they live under is necessary. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter will provide an overview of the economical, political and sociocultural reality in Bolivia. The second section will give a background to the evolution of contemporary feminist and women's movements in Bolivia and provide a context for the analysis and final discussion. The focus will be on the feminist debates developed within the framework of the government "Movement Toward Socialism", formerly led by Evo Morales.

2.1 Bolivian Context

In order to situate this study properly, it is important to highlight some significant characteristics of Bolivian society. First of all, its cultural, ethnic and geographical heterogeneity in comparison to countries such as Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica among others which are relatively homogeneous. According to the last census of 2012 (INE, 2013), indigenous people represent 62.2% of the total population which is the largest indigenous population in Latin America and one of the highest percentages of indigenous people in the world (Becker, 2019). There are 36 recognized indigenous groups in the country as well as an Afro-Bolivian population. The two main indigenous cultures are Aymara and Quechua. According to the census data, they make up approximately 80 percent of those who identify themselves as indigenous (INE, 2013). Other dominant indigenous groups are Guarani, Chiquitano and Moxeno. Aymara and Quechua dominate the highlands and valleys whereas Guarani, Chiquitano and Moxeno inhabit the lowlands and tropical regions (Kaijser, 2014).

Secondly, like many other countries in the region Bolivia is marked by centuries of historical and internal colonization and there are considerable social and economic contrasts. Socioeconomic conditions have varying impacts on the country's population, depending on social class, ethnic group, culture, region, gender, and rural-urban differences.

Accordingly, Bolivia has a long history of class- and ethnic-based struggles, which have come to characterize the country's political, economic and social development (Postero, 2010).

Moreover, there is a continuum of certain hegemonic models that are reproduced daily from social institutions, especially state, legal, family, educational and religious institutions, as well as a continuum of cultural transmission via social media, television and radio. These institutions represent deeply embedded patriarchal structures and practices resulting in rigid social and cultural expectations related to masculinity and femininity (Galindo, 2014; Postero, 2010). Since colonization, Bolivia has been influenced by the Catholic Church - a majority of Bolivians are devout Catholics or belong to evangelical Christian groups (Kaijser, 2014; Monasterios P., 2007: 24). Until recently Catholicism was the official religion in Bolivia. Freedom of worship is now guaranteed, yet, the Catholic Church and other Christian religious groups still have a lot of influence in Bolivian society. In this way the Church has confabulated with state power in everything. Some public schools still teach religion, the Church exercises plenty of non-church related activities (exerting political influence), and the Judeo-Christian concept of family is integrated into the country's constitution and in all judicial law (Galindo, 2006).

Like many other countries in the region, Bolivia went through a democratization process and a neoliberal turn in the 1980s after years of dictatorships (Monasterios P., 2007; Gisbert & Mesa Gisbert Jose de Mesa, 2007). As part of the neoliberal democratization process, which included a deregulation of the state and privatization (characterized by policies aimed at economic growth by foreign investment, production of export and privatizations) there was a disputed attempt to respond to the cultural diversity in the country which led to that neoliberal multiculturalism being strongly promoted. 'Multiculturalism' was designed to function in harmony with the hegemonic project of neoliberalism, postmodernity and capitalism, and it has, at least in Latin America, fulfilled its purpose (Burman, 2011: 68). During this time the conditions for the majority of the indigenous population and the poor did not improve (Burman, 2011: 68; Slotte & Habram, 2010; Monasterios, 2007: 34). Continued and accelerated economic inequalities characterized this period. Structural adjustment programs resulted in less income

and fewer resources for the majority poor as well as increased levels of formal unemployment, the boom in the so-called informal economy (Slotte & Habram, 2010).

However, during the past decade, the country has witnessed radical changes. In 2006 Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, entered office. Evo Morales came to power riding on a wave of fierce popular protests against previous, neoliberal regimes and the influence of Western capitalism. He has since then led the country with his socialist party "Movement towards Socialism" (MAS) – a broad coalition of unions, indigenous and popular movements in which the process of decolonization (liberation from imperialist patterns), nationalization of natural resource industries (hydrocarbons and mining) and a radical intercultural democratization are represented (Monasterios, P, 2007: 33; Kaijser, 2014: 87).

As part of the decolonial rhetoric the country's constitution was radically rewritten in 2009 and Bolivia was rebranded as a "plurinational and intercultural state" in order to manifest a revalorization of indigenous cultures that had been deemed subaltern or denied by colonial power (Burman, 2011: 69). Consequently, autonomy and legal status to indigenous nations and the recognition of indigenous cultures, languages and customs were incorporated into the country's new "plurinational" constitution, moving indigenous subjectivity from a marginalized position to center stage, to become a key condition for political legitimacy (Burman, 2011: 69).

Indigenous – predominantly Andean – concepts and traditions have been rearticulated and incorporated into the new constitution as part of the (government's promotion of indigenous culture and traditions. Accordingly, indigenous concepts are frequently referred to in the Morales government's decolonizing rhetoric, for instance the principle of *Vivir Bien* "to live well" in harmony with the community and the environment with respect for *Pachamama* "mother earth" (Kajsner, 2014: 94). As part of the constitutional reforms the government has also introduced gender politics based on the ideology of gender complementarity *Chacha-Warmi* (Man-Kvinna) – the Aymara model of gender relations, which will be further developed in next chapter (Burman, 2011: 82-3).

The inclusion of indigenous concepts into national politics can be seen as an attempt by the government to move away from the neoliberal politics characterizing Bolivia in the 1980-2000 (Monasterios, P, 2007: 33; Burman, 2011: 68-9). Yet, it has opened up a space for discussion, negotiation and the articulation of criticism. Critics have accused MAS for co-opting aspects of

indigenous identity for its own interests and not applying its gender agenda within the national borders and a serious attempt for environmentally friendly politics (Burman, 2011: 69).

All in all, the plurinational constitution characterized by dynamics and policies of decolonization has been highly celebrated both within Bolivia, and around the world, especially among indigenous rights activists. Statements such as "the most important social laboratories in the struggles against globalization in today's world" and "a break with 500 years of Andean apartheid" are just some of numerous statements made by international sympathizers (Farthing & Kohl, 2014; Monasterios P., 2006: 12-14).

During Evo Morales' almost 14 years as president (2006-2019), Bolivia has witnessed several positive changes, especially for the indigenous and poor people. The new plurinational constitution has played a significant role in improving the rights and pride of indigenous people and in paying respect to local cultural practices (Burman, 2011: 69). It has contributed to an increased and highly visible participation of representatives from indigenous and popular movements in decision-making bodies which has been of great symbolic and practical importance (Kajsner, 2014: 68). This has been accompanied by extensive welfare programs for low income families, children and seniors (Valdes Bastidas, 2018: 1). Moreover, Bolivia has witnessed good economic growth – it has gone from a low-income economy to a lower-middle income economy, and a remarkable reduction of poverty due to investments in education, health and basic sanitation (Sida, 2017).

Yet, many problems persist. Bolivia continues to be ethnically, politically and geographically divided (Kajsner, 2014). There is a historical division between the "white" population and the indigenous population. Although the indigenous groups are united to some extent there are tensions between people from the lowlands and those in the highlands and these tensions have increased during Morales' time in office. Today Bolivia has an anti-discrimination legislation, but discrimination and racism is still highly prevalent in all levels of society (Postero, 2010). There is also a demographic division between the "white" and the indigenous population (Kajsner, 2014: 69). The latter live mainly in the western Andean highlands where they, to a large extent, are living as farmers whereas the richer "white" population live in the eastern lowlands. In the eastern lowlands you find the economic center of the country with its large natural resources of gas and oil. Politically the country is divided in the same way that it was before Morales' socialist government, which rose to power through the support of the indigenous population in the Andean highlands while its opponents were the country's historical elite. The historical elite are the ones that have benefited the least from Morales' politics, and

this has led to an increased tension between the different groups and regions of the country (Kajsner, 2014: 69). Another important feature to note is that Bolivia continues to be considered one of the peripheral and less relevant countries of the region - until recently it has been the the third poorest country in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti and Honduras (Sida, 2017; Huber et al., 1998: 41). Given this, one consequence is that the Bolivian academy (education sector/university) is not as extensive as that of other countries in the region, which has implications on the Bolivian society in the form of low innovation levels, low uptake of technologies, and effects on national policy making etc. (Sida, 2017).

2.2 The Evolution of Feminism and Women's Movement in Bolivia

As earlier indicated, Bolivian society has since colonial times been characterized by deep social divisions between the creole elite and the indigenous majority living in colonialized conditions. These divisions are also reflected in the Bolivian women's movement and have come to define the framework of feminist political change and political campaigns in the country throughout most of the 20th and 21st Centuries (UNDP, 2014: 2). Consequently, the Bolivian women's movement is marked by deep-rooted ethnic, class and ideological diversities. These diversities have created obstacles to women's solidarity throughout history and continue to challenge the Bolivian women's movement today (UNDP, 2014: 8; Monasterios, 2007).

At times women's groups and movements have been united around certain topics only to fall back into arguments and debates with one another. There is a historical division between the institutional women's movement composed of middle/upper-class urban women and the indigenous and peasant women's movement which since the very start has claimed that feminism do not include their demands and ways of seeing the world (Aillón, 2015: 24-5). The indigenous and peasant women's movement has been aligned with the popular-sector movement for decades, engaging in hunger strikes, street protests and barricade movements in defence of land, their culture and labour rights (Monasterios, 2007; Aillón, 2015).

On the other hand, the women's movement composed of middle-class urban women have advanced a feminist movement through NGOs, different political parties and collective organizations, especially since the 1980s (Aillón, 2015: 16; Monasterios, 2007: 35). The middle-class feminist movement has promoted women's human rights, gender-sensitive policymaking and the integration of women in politics and development, working closely with

international donors (Aillón, 2015: 24). This development of feminism in the 1980s meant a professionalization and institutionalization of significant sectors of the feminist/women's movement is generally referred to as "NGOization" due to the considerable rise of feminist NGOs – serving as intermediaries between the state and civil society (Monasterios, 2007: 33-4; Aillón, 2015: 15). These new NGOs were often composed of women with strong class-based collective identities: university educated, "white/mestiza" and middle-class women. Another main characteristic of these women is that they built their demands on the principles of UN conventions, rather than in dialogue with Bolivian women about their needs. Furthermore, they relied heavily on external funding (Aillón, 2015: 15).

As a reaction to the increasingly institutionalized and homogeneous feminism in Bolivia new conflicts and tensions arose. This time between the so-called *feministas autónomas* (independent feminists) – mainly shaped by the radical anarcha-feminist collective *Mujeres Creando* (Women Creating) – and the *feministas institucionalizadas* (feminists linked to an organization or institution) (Monasterio, 2007: 34; Aillón, 2015).

Throughout this time, which coincided with neoliberal politics, the indigenous and peasant women's movement were overshadowed by the other feminist and women's organizations (Monasterios, 2007: 33-34). It was not until the time of Evo Morales that they began to gain more power and influence in Bolivian politics.

Feminism under the "Process of Change" led by Evo Morales

Evo Morales' rise to power drastically affected the dynamics within the Bolivian women's movement since indigenous and peasant women's groups moved into an influential position and assumed a place within the Bolivian parliament and constituent assembly, a level of participation that was extraordinary (Monasterios, 2007: 33; UNDP, 2014: 8). This is largely because of the fundamental role these women's grassroots organizations played in the social mobilizations that destabilized the neoliberal order, which led to Evo Morales rise to power (Monasterios, 2007: 35). These women came to play a key role in transforming national politics (Rousseau, 2011: 11).

At the same time, middle-class advocates for gender equality, associated with the feminist movement through NGOs, different political parties and networks, saw their influence decline (UNDP, 2014). This was partly due to the government's negative attitudes towards many NGOs – claiming that they represent foreign agendas and thus do not have political legitimacy in

Bolivia (Aillón, 2015). Consequently, female middle-class advocates for gender equality have had to realign their political stances in relation to the challenges of decolonization and radical democratization represented in the platform of Morales' party *Movement Toward Socialism* (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) (Monasterios, 2007; UNDP, 2014: 8).

Due to the emerging prominence of indigenous and peasant women's organizations in the new political process, middle-class gender advocates had to involve women from all sectors of society, and hence indigenous perspectives, in the creation of a coordinating platform on women's rights (Coordinadora de Unidad de Mujeres Constituyentes de Bolivia). The aim of this platform was to find consensus on a women's rights agenda to be adopted by the new Constituent Assembly approved in the January 2009 referendum (Monasterios, 2007; Rousseau, 2011:11-13). Hence, both indigenous women's organizations and middle-class feminist NGOs influenced the content of the new constitution, yet in a context filled with frustration, mistrust, and changing power dynamics (Rousseau, 2011: 5; UNDP, 2014: 18; Monasterios, 2007). All in all, the contribution of the indigenous and feminist movements at the constituent assembly produced a very progressive constitution from the point of view of gender and ethnicity. Many gender specific claims were put forward not only by the feminist middle-class NGOs in representation of "all" Bolivian women but also by the indigenous women's movement representing specifically indigenous women (Rousseau, 2011: 6). For instance, the elaboration of the Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence (law 348), which passed through in 2013, the No. 189 Law on domestic workers' rights, which is in force since 2013, and the elaboration of the rule of parity and alternating of candidates on electoral lists, recognized during the period 2009-2010 (UNDP, 2014, Rousseau, 2011: 19).

However, at the centre of these relations between feminism and the current government there is a debate that positions the concept of gender equality against the category of "depatriarchalisation" meaning that the first is a neoliberal intervention that does not understand the Andean notion of gender complementary and reciprocity – Chacha-Warmi. Indigenous and peasant women tend to relate patriarchy (the subordination of women) to colonialism and thus see an emancipatory potential in the 'decolonizing politics' of the Evo Morales administration (Aillón, 2015; Burman, 2011: 90).

The categories of decolonization and depatriarchalisation derive from postcolonial studies and were put in the debate by radical feminist collective *Mujeres Creando* through the slogan "You

can't decolonize without depatriarchalizing!". These categories, as well as the slogan, were accepted by the state since they were deemed fully functional to its indigenous and de-colonial rhetoric in which a critique of racism, eurocentrism, sexism, capitalist individualism, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism is brought forward (Burman, 2011: 89; Aillón, 2015: 19).

The Morales administration and indigenous intellectuals, align to the governmental project, appropriated the slogan "You can't decolonize without depatriarchalizing!" to give it their own interpretation, associating patriarchy with colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Thus, arguing that in pre-colonial societies there was no patriarchy, but rather a relationship of complementarity between women and men (Ybarnegaray, 2012: 153; Burman, 2011: 69). Hence, one cannot "decolonize without depatriarchalising".

Mujeres Creando and other radical-autonomous feminist groups have acted as a strong critique of the association between patriarchy and colonialism, arguing that patriarchy existed long before colonialization. According to them, 'Andean patriarchy' is concealed by indigenous notions of a non-hierarchic complementarity between men and women (Chacha-Warmi), as promoted the Morales administration and indigenous intellectuals (Burman, 2011: 69; Ybarnegaray, 2012). Thus, challenging the fundamental assumption that decolonisation would automatically bring about depatriarchalisation (Ybarnegaray, 2012; Burman, 2011: 70). Furthermore, they have acted as a critique of the MAS government in general, denouncing what it considered the instrumentalization of women by Evo Morales's government (Rousseau, 2011: 21-22).

These women are neither subscribed to the "gender equality" discourse promoted by the international institutions and feminist NGOs, which according to many resulted in actions aimed at combating the symptoms and not the causes of inequality: patriarchy. Nor do they conform to the government's argument that decolonialization is the way to combat patriarchy, a belief endorsed by many of the indigenous and peasant women. At the same time, female middle-class advocates for gender equality seem to fear that the work done in the 1990s and early 2000s to engender the state and public policies might be lost with the rise of indigenous power due to its insistence on the value of gender complementarity "Chacha-Warmi". Accordingly, they fear that the 'decolonizing politics' of the Evo Morales administration would abandon indigenous women to their 'traditional' silenced subordination within male dominated structures through an act of recognition of and respect for cultural difference. (Burman, 2011: 69; Rousseau, 2011: 21-22). Consequently, the feminist debates that have taken place since

2006 – the questioning of the gender approach (or its use) and the subsequent implementation of the depatriarchalisation category in state policies – has not solved the larger discussion whether there is an emancipatory potential for women in the current process of revaluation of indigenous culture and identity initiated by the Evo Morales administration. Thus, there is a continuing debate in the Bolivian society on how to create alliances between women in order to build a common agenda.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter is based on a combination of perspectives that have emerged from feminist, gender and masculinity studies. The theoretical framework is applied as an analytical tool in order to understand and explain the data collected from the interviews. The aim of the first section of the chapter is to provide an opening discussion of feminist perspectives on gender and to lay the foundation for an understanding of why masculinities needs to be approached with a feminist perspective. It addresses the concepts of sex/gender, gender and subjectivity, intersectional factors in gender inequality, and finally hegemonic masculinity and subordinated masculinities. The other half of the chapter provides a description of de-colonial feminism with a specific focus on de-colonial perspectives on gender. I believe decolonial feminism can shed light on and help us understand the complex identities and struggles of Bolivian women.

3.1 Men and Masculinities in the Context of Gender Studies

The theoretical debate within women's and gender studies accelerated and gained widespread use in the 1970s, and since then there have been many contributors to the field of gender studies with different backgrounds, opposing views and different perspectives on sex and gender. The role of biological gender differences and thus the role of sexuality in the analysis and explanation of women's social status has been a constant dispute within the field.

Gender as a category of analysis was introduced in the 1970s. The early studies focused on unveiling the relations of masculine dominance over women, in a context of binary, opposite and universal divisions: man/woman, male/female. These early studies were strongly influenced by modern social theories inclined towards radical social analysis that were influential at that time. By the end of the 1980s the "modern" paradigm was replaced by

poststructuralist perspectives on gender which meant a move away from binary understandings of gender to more intersectional perspectives (Mohanty, 2003: 4; Jansdotter & Wetterberg, 2004; 9). This allowed analysis to emphasize how people are simultaneously positioned – and position themselves – in a diverse set of categories, such as ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality (Christensen and Jensen 2014, 69).

By this time, the term gender gained more acceptance as a category of analysis which clearly distanced itself from simple biological divisions of male and female (Jansdotter & Wetterberg, 2004: 7). There was a change from "women's studies" to "gender studies" which meant that one started to recognize men and masculinities as gendered subjects, thereby broadening the spectrum of feminism and gender studies. From then on, it is possible to identify the rise of ''critical studies on men'' or ''masculinity studies'' as a subfield to gender studies (Jansdotter & Wetterberg, 2004: 9; Rodríguez, 2017: 91-2). The emergence of masculinity studies was primary due to the important theoretical contributions of sociologists and theorists such as Raewyn (formerly R.W. or Robert) Connell, Michael Kimmel and Jeff Hearn, all three belonging to the so-called "profeminist" studies of masculinities (Neira 2012: 34). Connell's famous book "Masculinities", originally published in 1995, was a pioneer in creating the intellectual agenda and the field of study "men and masculinities". Although masculinity studies raise certain differences with some currents of feminism, certain commonalities exist, and may be summed up around:

> […] analysis of the harmful effects of patriarchy on men and women, and the fallacy of essentialising man as a universal subject of history and culture. Masculinity studies seek to understand men in terms of their particularities and their historical specificities, pointing out the contingent nature of manhood (Dueñas, 2000: 28, my translation).

According to Connell (2005) the presence of men and masculinities as a *"subfield"* of gender studies has allowed us to explore how the power dynamics of masculinities and femininities have produced the subjugation of many – not just women – thereby opening the door to new subjects, built in the middle of multiple oppressions and privileges. Equally, it understands the construction of gender identities as embedded in social practices shaping gendered power structures. Hence, gender is defined in terms of standard rather than normative behaviour (Connell, 2005). Connell defines gender as a "configuration of practice" and the emphasis should be placed "on what people actually do, not on what is expected or imagined" (Demetriou, 2001: 340).

The masculinity perspective is informed by feminist, gay, queer and other critical gender scholarship. It has brought with it the analytical contributions of Black Feminism and intersectionality, postcolonial and decolonial feminism (Tjeder, 2002; Neira, 2012: 5), which contribute with constructivist, norm-critical, anti-essentialist perspectives on gender, allowing us to grasp the complexities of gendered power relations (Crenshaw,1991; Connell, 2005: 70-1). Consequently, the development of masculinity studies has allowed the progressive elimination of the arbitrary essentialization of men as equated with the "exercise of power" with the status of "perpetrators/oppressors", in order to give way to a view in which the understanding of the multiple aspects of social subjectivities and gender relations are valued in their just cause (Rodríguez, 2017: 91-2). For instance, in Connell's book *Masculinities* (1995) a clear intersectional understanding of gender is present; he writes:

> "Because gender is a way of structuring social practice in general, not a type of practice, it is unavoidably involved with other social structures. It is now common to say that gender 'intersects' – better, interacts – with race and class. We might add that it constantly interacts with nationality or position in the world order […] white men's masculinities, for instance, are constructed not only in relation to white women, but also in relation to black men."

(Connell, 1995: 75, cited in Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 68)

Although Connell prefers the use of "interacts", he is well aware that gender is continuously produced and reproduced in interplay with other social categories. His work is acknowledged for the serious attention paid to differences, inequalities and hierarchies between men (Christensen & Jensen). The masculinity perspective has contributed to a broader understanding of oppression as a de-essentialized system that is part of larger global processes, in which social subjects – in accordance with the conditions that allow them to develop – struggle for recognition in society. Understanding the characteristics in which masculinities are constructed, developed and transformed, turned out to be fundamental in aiding understanding of the social structure in relation to gender (Connell, 2005; Neira 2012; Rodríguez, 2017).

Masculinities are diverse, through time and place, and are made natural through repetition of cultural practices, consequently they are understood as a historical, constant and performative process. Connell defines masculinities as follows: "masculinities are configurations of practice structured by gender relations. They are inherently historical; and their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social

change." (2005; 43-44). In this sense, knowledge of masculinities is understood to arise within the project of knowing gender relations, hence it is inherently relational to femininities and vice-versa (Connell, 2005: 81). Connell notes: "Masculinity as an object of knowledge is always masculinity-in-relation" (Connell, 2005: 43-44).

3.2.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

While the diversity of men and masculinities have been stressed by several scholars, Connell argues that recognizing diversity in masculinities is not enough, stating:

> "We must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity" (2005: 37).

Consequently, Connell (2005: 37) conceptualizes dominant types of masculinities together as "hegemonic masculinity". In so doing, he introduces a certain level of generalization, without playing down the importance of understanding "in situ" the diversity of masculinities. The concept of "hegemonic masculinity" developed as a response to the limitations of the sex role theory common within early masculinity studies (Berggren, 2014: 233-34). Connell, among others, recognized several theoretical limitations with "sex role theory", for instance that it didn't take into account the question of social change and the issue of men's power and women's subordination (Bergqvist, Demitreou, 2001: 337). Accordingly, drawing on feminist theories of patriarchy and the marxist Antonio Gramscis concept of hegemony, Connell expanded the role theory to include a structural dimension – emphasising men's structural privileges – and strived to render visible men's oppressive practices across many different domains of social life (Berggren, 2014: 234; Messerschmidt & Connell, 2005: 831).

The concept of "hegemony" is a specific form of dominance, attained through relative consensus rather than regular force, even if underpinned by force. It refers to "the relations of societal power, ideology and the domination of 'common-sense', the taken-for granted, what appears 'natural' or 'normal'" (Hearn et al., 2015: 590, Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 62-63). The consensus is one that is built among those who benefit from the promotion of masculinity, as well as many of those who are oppressed by it, notably women, as well as marginalized or

subordinated masculinities – gay, working-class and poor (Hearn et al., 2015: 113-14). According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally political, economic and cultural in addressing the processes of constructing common-sense realities. Hence, it is a combination of cultural ideals and institutional power collectively (Hearn et al., 2015: 590). Hegemonic masculinity is, as much for women as for men, a "cultural ideal" that is constantly promoted by civil society, and rewarded by women's interests, attentions and efforts to replicate this ideal in their male relatives and associates (Hearn et al., 2015: 114; Demitrou, 2001: 342).

As stated by Connell (2005: 71):

> "To grapple with the full range of issues about masculinity we need ways of talking about relationships of other kinds too: about gendered places in production and consumption, places in institution and in natural environments, places in social and military struggles."

These "gendered places" promote the collective ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Since hegemonic masculinity does not rely on direct violence, but on discursive and cultural persuasion, it is dynamic and open to change (Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 62-63). Consequently, when conditions within these gendered places change, hegemonic masculinity is said to do the same (Connell, 2005: 71). Connell and Messerschmidt argue that it is "perhaps possible that a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man might become hegemonic, as part of a process leading toward an abolition of gender hierarchies" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 833).

Connell´s concept of "hegemonic masculinity" has had an enormous impact on the field of gender studies. It has been widely used and debated and has, over the years, been refined. Though there are various definitions of hegemonic masculinity, a common contemporary perception of the concept is described as: "A set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy." (Hearn et al., 2015, 113).

By emphasizing this dimensions of the concept, it serves as an analytical tool to identify those attitudes and practices among men that perpetuate gender inequality, involving both men's domination over women and the power of some men over other men (often minority groups

such as gay men) (Hearn et al., 2015). Connell´s concept implies that men as a group are always superior to women, and inherently benefit from this, something that Connell calls "patriarchal dividend" (Hearn et al., 2015: 113). Yet some men, at the same time, are superior to other men, thereby acknowledging the plurality among masculinities. According to Connell, in every given society there is one dominant hegemonic masculinity, while other forms of subordinate or marginalized masculinities, or less powerful yet patriarchal-minded masculinities, stand in varying kinds of intricate and ever-changing relationships with each other (2005). According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 844-846), the heterogeneity of masculinities can be understood as a system of hierarchy where dominant masculinity norms serve as the norm on which all other masculinities are measured. Yet, the hegemonic masculinity is situated at the top of the hierarchical chain and consists of ideals of a man which only some men, if any, are able to meet (Hearn et al., 2015: 114).

Connell argues that men do have a 'choice' about whether or not to actively occupy oppressive positions vis-à-vis women and other men, however, their ability to do so may be constrained by a lack of exposure to other ideas and information (Hearn et al., 2015; 113).

3.2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity and Feminist Theory

Connell's formulation of the concept "hegemonic masculinity" represents, without a doubt, the most influential contribution to studies of men and masculinities. Similarly, the concept has played a fundamental role in linking masculinity research to feminist studies (Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 60). The relationship between feminism and masculinity studies has been debated by numerous academics and activists.

Feminists have criticised the general tendency among masculinity researchers to focus exclusively on the internal hierarchy among men, without including men's patriarchal dominance over women in the analysis – a lack of a profound understanding of how men's relation to and perception of women is related to the construction of masculinities and the other way around (Tjeder, 2002: 488; Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 63). Consequently, there is a concern among feminists that men's liberation is a way for men to extract benefits from feminism without giving up their basic privilege, a modernization of patriarchy, not an attack on it. There is widespread feminist criticism concerning the "new father", the sensitive man", and other images of a kinder, gentler masculinity (Connell, 2005: 41).

A variety of texts have specified problems with hegemonic masculinity when it comes to power relations; between men as well as between men and women – Demetriou, 2001; Hearn, 2012; and Christensen & Jensen, 2014, to name a few.

The complex relationship between men's patriarchal dominance over women and the internal hierarchy among men has been a cornerstone in the theory of hegemonic masculinity. Consequently, the concept is based on two interrelated and inseparable dimensions: male dominance and oppression of women; and hierarchical classification of masculinities. The sociologist Demetrakis Z. Demetriou has suggested speaking about this as external and internal hegemony (Demitreou, 2001: 341). However, combining these two dimensions in one theoretical framework has received critique from several scholars – among them Christensen & Jensen (2014).

Christensen & Jensen argue that this is problematic since it inhibits a nuanced and complex understanding of masculinities, stating that "it seems peculiar to take an interest in the complex gender relations concerning the hierarchies among men and at the same time assume a clear-cut patriarchal gender order vis-à-vis the relations between men and women.". Yet, they argue that, by treating these two dimensions separately, one can avoid this problem and achieve a more nuanced analysis. Drawing on examples from gender equality regimes of the Scandinavian welfare states, they stress the existence of dominant masculinities that do not in an unambiguous way contribute to the reproduction of patriarchy (2014: 70-71). However, they recognize that men's violence against women exists in these societies as well, though the men who use violence do not conflate a hegemonic process with a gender stereotype. Hence, they suggest an approach of hypermasculinity to describe this phenomenon rather that "hegemonic masculinity". Stating that "violent and sexist masculine values and practices may be, but are not, necessarily hegemonic in a given culture (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). Similarly but contrastingly, they shine light on contemporary masculinities where men support and practice gender equality while simultaneously contributing to the exclusion of women, thereby reinforcing patriarchy. In this sense, they argue that contemporary masculinities are rarely either equality orientated or oppressive towards women, but highly complex, unstable and contradictory. They go on to argue that the patriarchal dimension – men's dominance over women – might not always be relevant to studies of men and masculinities, arguing that in some contexts it may be relevant and even beneficial to focus only on the hierarchical power relations and differences between men (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). Briefly, they suggest that "much

could be gained from treating external and internal hegemony as two different dimensions that sometimes coincide and sometimes do not", in order to avoid a reductionist and dichotomous distinction between masculinities that reproduce patriarchal oppression and masculinities that do not. With this they aim to pay attention to, identify and explain, not only to where hierarchies (patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity) coincide, but where dominant forms of masculinity do not legitimize men's power over women (Christensen & Jensen, 2014: 72).

Hearn et al. (2015) have a slightly different understanding of the relationship between men's patriarchal dominance over women and the internal hierarchy among men. According to them, it is fundamental to treat these dimensions as interrelated and inseparable: "it is essential that interventions with individual men should focus on the male privileges that stem from the patriarchal social order and change in practices and beliefs of men, whilst contributing to an overarching goal of change in the configuration of masculine ideals" (Hearn et al, 2015: 122). A further implication of considering the dimensions as interrelated and inseparable is that working with women to secure change in social norms is made fundamental in creating an environment in which there can be sustained change among individual men (Hearn et al., 2015 123). Moreover, Hearn et al – similar to Christensen & Jensen – also touch upon the issue of nonhegemonic masculinities exercising violence, noting that – many times – destructive and exaggerated masculinities can be found among socially marginalised men in urban slums. However, in contrast to Christensen & Jensen, they argue that these men are not entirely separate from hegemonic masculinity, in that they emerge out of the relationship between hegemonic ideals and (some) men's ability to meet them (Hearn et al, 2015: 114). Hence, they stress the importance of always analysing both hegemonies in relation to each other in order to avoid victimization and the legitimization of violence.

To conclude, the identification and questioning of the conditions under which masculinities and femininities take shape – in distinct national and subnational contexts around the world – provides important clues to power relations and specific masculinities and femininities practiced in certain national contexts, and is perhaps the most important contribution of masculinity studies to the field of gender studies. In tracing these power relations and specific forms of masculinity, Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has proven to be a particularly useful tool (Christensen & Jensen, 2014, 61).

The suggestion of a situated and reflexive reading of the construction of masculinities in specific social contexts, suggests the eradication of any universalizing claims about the category of men (Hearn et al., 2015: 114-15; Connell, 2005). In short, there is a need to understand the content of hegemonic masculinity in different settings, "not trying to establish connections where there are none, but analytically separating the effects of each system of oppression and the intersections that are the most prominent in certain contexts, trying to problematize the conceptual tensions between social structures and the agency" (La Furcia, 2015, cited in Rodríguez, 2017 (my translation)).

Consequently, the question of men's patriarchal oppression of women must remain an open, empirical and contextual question. It is my belief that the concept of "hegemonic masculinity", due to its flexibility, opens important doors and possibilities for gender and masculinity researchers to further develop the theoretical framework, in order to grasp changes, nuances, complexities, ambivalences, ruptures and resistance. I believe that the strength of "hegemonic masculinity" lies precisely in its flexibility – the use of it can be tailored to specific local contexts, leading to more nuanced and trustworthy pictures.

3.3 Decolonial Feminist Theory

The great influence of postcolonial feminist theories of intersectionality within gender studies has led to a trend of gender theorists moving away from methodological nationalism and eurocentric understandings of gender to understandings of the globalization of gender, shifting the focus from individual-level gender differences to "the patterns of socially constructed gender relations" (Connell, 2014; De los Reyes, 2012: 14-15).

As recognized by Connell (2014):

> "Gender analysis is then involved in a global political economy of knowledge", further he identifies "global imperialism left no culture separate or intact, not even the culture of the imperialists. The colonial encounter, continuing as the encounter of contemporary communities with globalized power, is itself a massive source of social dynamics – including intellectual innovation."

It is global dynamics of knowledge now explored by decolonial feminists from the Global South that this section will focus on.

Parallel to the theoretical development by black feminists in the US, and connections between feminist and postcolonial theory from the 1980s and onward, the 1980s saw a rise of decolonial feminism emerging from women in the global South (Mohany, 2003: 5).

The necessity to decolonize feminism emerged from multisited struggles with colonization and imperialism and is therefore rich and heterogeneous (Velez, 2019, 391).

It is based on the experiences located in Latin America, Africa and Asia, which implies talking about the overlapping of sexism, racism, heterosexism and capitalism as multiple systems of domination that cross subjects, and placing feminist politics in the histories of colonialism and imperialism (Mohanty, 2003: 5).

To account for the oppression of women and men in post-colonial societies, decolonial feminists saw the need to question both masculinist and eurocentric discourses, as well as to decolonize feminism and to strip it of its canonical Western concepts (Mohanty, 2003; Lugones, 2007).

Hence, they analyse the concept of coloniality to deconstruct Western essentialised notions of sex/gender and race/ ethnicity that have become normalised and hegemonic, while also providing a space for the voices and experiences of non-Western women and the productions of local knowledge; theories and methodologies.

When decolonial feminists speak of "the West", it is not understood in the sense of a uniform territory but as a denominator of a cultural sphere emerging from a political-economic network with relatively coherent ideological underpinnings. In a similar fashion, decolonial feminists pay attention to the role of the nation state in enforcing hegemonic understandings of gender and sexuality (Mohanty, 2003).

Additionally, one of the main focuses for decolonial feminists is to create coalitions and politics of experience with other women of color and (post)colonial people toward liberatory decolonial projects i.e. to rewrite and rethink the history based on the specific locations and histories of struggle of such people, and on the day to day strategies of survival they apply (Mohanty, 2003 52; Velez, 2019: 392). De-colonial feminists refer to this as "geo- and body-politics of knowledge" (Roshannoval, 2014: 43). The aim is to create cross-cultural and anti-imperialist collations that animates the differential mode of women while rendering more acute the strategies of women of color and post-colonial women against racialized, gendered oppressions of colonialism and global capitalism. Their emphasis on reading interdependent differences

within women of color theorizing resists the homogenizing tendency of superficial engagement that defines Third World scholarship as a unified genre of thought defined solely in terms of its critique of feminism's racism (Roshanoval, 2014: 41). Consequently, the idea of coalition politics contrast itself from the belief in a "universal", cross-cultural sisterhood which has been promoted by the so-called "white/ Western feminism", in which women are seen a united group on the basis of a shared oppression – patriarchy. The idea of universal sisterhood implies a strong emphasis on gender as the main category of analysis at the expense of other social categories such as class, ethnicity and sexuality, and it fails to relate patriarchy to other systems of oppression such as colonialism, capitalism etc. Consequently, repressing differences among women and the multiple forms of oppressions (Mohanty, 2003; Roshanravan, 2014: 41).

3.3.1 Decolonial Feminism and Postcolonial Intersectionallity

The distinction between postcolonial theories of intersectionality and decolonial feminism is somewhat ambiguous. They exist in the same time and both are contributing to the broader concept of decolonialization (De los Reyes, 2012: 15, Mohanty, 2003: 19). Yet there is a tension between postcolonial theories of intersectionality, as an institutionalized field of academic study, and decolonial feminism, as a more disobedient constellation of knowledge projects of decolonization and resistance (Mohanty, 2003: 19).

Decolonial feminism, especially as it has been developed by Latin American feminists, is deeply influenced and shaped by postcolonial and intersectionality theory, which was primarily developed by US feminists of colour such as Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldua and more contemporaneously by Kimberle Crenshaw, Patricia Hills Collins and bell hooks (Velez, 2019).

Accordingly, there are deeply shared resonances between these thinkers and traditions due, in large part, to their commitment to the "intersectionality question", like arguments about the class, race, colour, and sexual dimensions of gender in the building of feminist theorizing and and praxis (Velez, 2019, Mohanty, 2003: 5).

However, in an effort to further the analyses of oppression given by postcolonial and intersectional theory, decolonial feminism unveils how coloniality undergirds the oppressive categorial logics identified by intersectionality by interrogating their source and imposition (Velez, 2019: 392).

Consequently, through a decolonial perspective of difference one does not only analyse the intersection of categories like race and gender in describing the oppression of indigenous and other women of colour but one also recognizes that the oppressive racialization, gendering, and sexualization of bodies is a colonial imposition (Velez, 2019; Connell, 2014; 557).

Hence, although decolonial feminism and postcolonial feminist theories of intersectionality have a lot in common, decolonial feminists raise critical questions regarding intersectionality and its underdeveloped and inadequate engagement with the question of colonialism (Velez, 2019).

Perhaps the clearest argument is found in the work of María Lugones (Velez, 2019). Lugones emphasizes the importance of posing the coloniality question to theoretical accounts of feminism as well as to feminist practices and perceptions. She states that: "Even though understandings of the relation between colonization and racialized gender oppression have been part of the formulations of Women of Color feminisms, it has not been clear how colonization has affected the meaning of 'woman.' (Velez, 2019).

Additionally, decolonial feminists have criticized intersectionality for its terminology to theorize oppression. Arguing that "intersection" assumes the separability of categories of oppression, thus hiding the inseparability of oppressions (Velez, 2019: 395). Arguing that there is a risk with intersectionality of falling back to the *"categorical logic of binary thinking"*, leaving the categories of oppression intact rather than disrupted (Velez, 2019: 393). Consequently, decolonial feminists advocate the language of fusion and intermeshing over intersectionality, since they argue that it is capable of defeating categorical logics and proliferating possibilities of resistance. Thus, pursuing an analysis that furthers the insights of intersectionality and attempting to dismantle categorial logics (Velez, 2019: 393).

3.3.2 Decolonial Feminist Perspectives on Gender

It is in the construction of decolonial feminist knowledge that various authors have problematized the coloniality of the relationship between power and knowledge and its repercussions on current gender relations in contemporary post-colonial societies.

Decolonial feminists questioning of Western understandings of gender is fundamental to the process of decolonisation, such that women challenge the coloniality of gender and create a space for the productions of local knowledge; theories and methodologies. Decolonial

feminists' challenging of gender is not about returning to some idealized precolonial past, but a process of decolonization by deconstructing gender categories and questioning their historical construction and imposition, re-evaluating gender in its contemporary sociocultural context (Lugones, 2007).

One of its most prominent advocates is the Argentinian decolonial feminist and sociologist María Lugones, who developed the concept "coloniality of gender" in order to shine light on the deep entanglement of the dehumanizing, racializing, and gendering processes of colonization (Verez, 2019: 396, 399). She writes that *"[u]nlike colonization, the coloniality of gender is still with us; it is what lies at the intersection of gender and class and race as central constructs of the capitalist world system of power."* (Lugones, 2011, cited in Velez, 2019; 399).

Her theoretical work on the coloniality of gender marks a great achievement for decolonial feminisms taking the space opened up by intersectionality as the point of departure. It highlights the material and epistemic conditions for the generation of the categorial logics that intersectionality seeks to critically question and identify (Verez, 2019: 398-99).

Lugones's concept of coloniality of gender builds upon the crucial concept of the "coloniality of power", developed by one of the leading decolonial theorists, Aníbal Quijano. However, Lugones complicates his understanding of coloniality of power by noting that it imposes values and expectations on gender as well.

Hence, Lugones (2007) proposes the understanding of gender arrangements as a colonial invention that – like race – was established in the colonies to exercise domination over the populations and establish a modern hierarchical dichotomous distinction between men and women in which women became defined by their subordinate relation to men in all categories. Accordingly, gender as a social and historical construct was not an organizing principle in pre-colonial societies. Lugones explains that the Western gendered system, as imposed by colonisation and maintained by the coloniality of gender, reflects patriarchal control over women's identity and their production of knowledge. Hence, Lugones argues that the colonization process must be read in terms of the duality of domination in which coloniality of power and coloniality of gender are articulated; the imposition of race accompanied the inferiorization of the indigenous and the imposition of gender accompanied the inferiorisation of indigenous women (Lugones, 2010).

In contrast to the view of pre-colonial genderless societies, the Argentinian decolonial feminist and anthropologist Rita Segato, another major figure of Latin American decolonial feminism, argues that there was a gender system in precolonial societies, however a different one with less fixed gender categories. Her research suggests that pre-colonial conceptions of gender were complex and structured differently from European conceptions. Accordingly, hierarchies already existed between men and women in the precolonial world, hierarchies that could be read in terms of gender as a patriarchy of "low intensity". However, during Spanish conquest and the colonial regime indigenous cultures, including its gender order, were reshaped and replaced by new patterns of masculinity and femininity in a modernizing process. The binary gender system was imposed which, in turn, led to the introduction of the idea of heterosexuality, on the one hand, and the replacement of a low-intensity patriarchal system of social organisation by one of high-intensity characterized by simplified, dominance-oriented, and often violent masculinity as the hegemonic pattern, on the other (Rodríguez, 2017: 92).

The examples above show how the recognition of the relationship between colonization and gender has polarized decolonial gender analysis. The argument of pre-colonial genderless societies has been harshly criticized by several decolonial and postcolonial theorists for both an inaccurate account of precolonial society given that lots of evidence shows that there were hierarchical gender relations already in precolonial societies (Connell, 2014: 556; Silverblatt, 1995). Others argued that replacing an essentialism of bodies with an essentialism of culture helps to legitimize postcolonial patriarchy (Naryan, 1998; Segato, 2011; Connell, 2014: 556 etc.). Powerful men in post-colonial societies can and do argue that they do not have any responsibility when it comes to gender inequalities as they are rooted in colonialism, opposing gender equality and accusing feminism of being a neo-colonial intrusion (Connell, 2014). However, despite the disagreements around the existence of a gender system prior to the Modern colonial project, the various positions of decolonial feminism seem to coincide in the need to reveal the relationship between coloniality and patriarchy, in order to understand how gender relations are constructed in the post-colonial societies (Rodríguez, 2017).

Since no one can deny that precolonial societies were brutally transformed by colonialism, and within this process gendered violence played an influential role in the shaping of colonial and postcolonial societies (Connell, 2014: 556).

As illustrated in the words of Connell (2014: 556):

> "Colonization itself was a gendered act, carried out by imperial workforces, overwhelmingly men, drawn from masculinized occupations such as soldiering and long-distance trade. The rape of women of colonized societies was a normal part of conquest. The colonial state was built as a power structure operated by men, based on continuing force. Brutality was built into colonial societies."

The alarming levels of gender-based violence in postcolonial societies is now a central issue in global feminism, from international policy forums and governmental programs to local research and action agendas (Connell, 2014). A decolonial feminist orientation understands gendered-based violence and discrimination, such as sexual assault and femicides etc., as part of colonial violence and attends to the combined processes of racialization, gender division, and heterosexualism in modernity. Decolonial theorist such as Rita Segato (2011), María Lugones (2007) and Amina Mama (1997) have all been producing interesting work investigating the link between gender violence and the shaping of colonial and postcolonial societies and its effect on the life of third world women, especially indigenous and coloured women (Connell, 2014; 556).

All in all, perhaps one of the most important contribution of decolonial feminism is the recognition that gender dynamics take specific forms in colonial, neo-colonial and postcolonial societies because they are interwoven with the dynamics of colonization and globalization, and that a consolidated "Southern" gender order does not exist – neither before nor after colonization. Rather there is a diversity of gender orders within contemporary post-colonial societies, which are characterized by, borrowing the words of Jane Bennett, 'relative chaos, gross economic disparities, displacement, uncertainty and surprise' (cited in Connell, 2014: 556).

Decolonial feminists have been able to show that the making of masculinities and femininities and negotiation of gender relations is bound up with the vast and continuing transformations of postcolonial society as a whole – shining light on the diversity of femininities and masculinities under construction simultaneously within one national territory. Concluding that gender cannot be analysed separately since it is intermeshed with the changing structure of power and socio-economic shifts, internal migration and urbanisation, struggle over land and resources, and the struggle against racism and neoliberal imperialism etc.

Consequently, several decolonial theorists have argued that the feminist strategies against, for instance, gender-based violence developed in the global North, do not apply to the context of

colonial, neo-colonial and postcolonial societies, because these strategies presuppose a stable and well-functioning state and a coherent gender order (Amina Mama, 1997 & Nina Laurie, 2005, stated in Connell, 2014: 556).

4. Methodology – A Qualitative Approach

The thesis is based on a comparative case study concerning how Bolivian feminist and women's organizations approach gender with an emphasis on men and masculinities. The field study was carried out during four months: January- February 2019, and October-November 2019 in the cities of El Alto, La Paz, Tarija, Sucre, and Santa Cruz. The aim of the study is to find out how the concept of gender is being articulated among different types of women's and feminist organizations and how their understandings of gender relate to their general attitudes towards working with men and masculinities for gender justice. More specifically, the aim is to find out whether their understandings of gender are translated into political strategies that include men and masculinities, and if so, how are men and boys involved and targeted.

In total, ten semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted. The subjects of the interviews are the leaders or founders from different women's and feminist organizations.

Consequently, in order to answer my research questions a qualitative research method has been applied since a qualitative method is useful in order to get a rich and in-depth understanding of the Bolivian context and the women's motivations, value systems, attitudes, aspirations and concerns. Accordingly, the interest lies in the subjective viewpoints of the women included in the study (Scheyvens, 2014: 66).

I chose to set up this study methodologically as collective case study in which particular organizations have been examined to give insight into how women's organizations approach the work with men and masculinities. Obviously, this means sacrificing the richness of a comprehensive case-study for the advantage of comparison. However, I have tried to get some of the depth found in individual case studies by conducting in-depth face to face interviews with the founders of each organizations.

In order to obtain the information required to answer the research questions, written as well as oral sources are used – the written sources have been first and secondary data.

4.1 Data Collection: Oral and Written Sources

Oral sources

My research project is manly based on oral sources. Oral sources are considered especially rich sources in order to obtain a deep understanding of how the women's organizations experience the world and what is important to them.

The oral sources have mainly been in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews but also by listening to radio channels (some of the organizations have their own radio channels in which they discuss certain topics related to gender and women's rights) I selected the episodes where topics relevant to my study were discussed.

In total ten semi-structured in-depth interviews have been carried out with the founders or program managers from ten local feminist and women's organizations; three indigenous women's organizations, five institutionalized feminist organizations (NGOs) and two radical autonomous feminist organizations. A criterion for selection was that the organizations should be led by and constituted by women. The interviews lasted between one and a half to two and a half hours. In addition to the interviews I have also done some field observation by participating in meetings, conferences and workshops organized by the different organizations.

Throughout the interviews I gained invaluable knowledge about the context in which the different organizations operate e.g. the complexity of the Bolivian political, economic and socio-cultural context. Furthermore, I could verify that among the organizations under study, there are great tensions due to strong cultural, social and ideological differences. Every interview presented a space for new and deepened insights and helped to continuously sharpen and develop the interview questions as well as research questions (Scheyvens, 2014: 75-76).

Written sources

In addition to the interviews I have used first and secondary data containing documents and written material. The first data has been produced by the different women's organizations themselves in form of reports, audio-visual materials, educational material and so on. Whereas the second data has been in the form of academic literature, reports, articles, policy documents and the web.

The first data written sources have been produced by the different organizations themselves both in the form of official documents like reports, newsletters, articles and books made for a wider public. As well as internal ones, mainly educational materials, internal reports and documents etc. I got hold of the official material through their websites, national newspaper (some of my informants are writing opinion pieces for national newspapers) as well as through several visits to local bookshops and libraries (some of my informants have written books related to their work as feminist activists and leaders of women's organizations). The non-official material was provided to me by my informants while visiting their organizations and I was sometimes permitted to search in their archives. These different sources have enabled a fuller and more nuanced picture of the organizations approaches to gender and masculinities as well as their relations to other women's and human rights organizations, and their relation to the state and foreign development cooperation agencies. These written sources have served as a valuable complement to the oral sources.

Luckily many of my informants and their organizations have been productive in producing written material. However, the access to written source material was uneven. In cases where there was very little written information, I chose to do supplementary interviews and sometimes visit and attend some of their meetings and workshops in order to learn more about their work.

4.2 Sampling Method

The sampling method is one of Maximum Variation which is deemed suitable since I aim to ensure as wide a variation as possible and make different perspectives visible. Maximum Variation sampling approach is a type of purposeful sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012: 419).

The organizations were selected or looked for in a strategic way based on pre-selected criteria so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions of the study. The aim has been to sample for heterogeneity – to include different types of women's organizations in the study.

The sampling of informants was initially done through mapping of organizations in accordance to certain criteria, namely women's rights organization or feminist organizations composed by women and working primarily for women - sharing a commitment to address gender inequalities in society and to improve the life conditions of women and girl`s. In order to get as broad coverage as possible I chose to include different types of women's organizations;

radical autonomous feminist organizations, indigenous women's organizations, and institutional women's organizations (NGOs). There was no requirement that they had to work with men and masculinities, since what is of interest is to find out about their understandings of gender, and their general attitudes toward the work with men and masculinities for gender equality.

The focus has been the founders or leaders of the organizations, rather than the base; the women who are the object of the groups' politics or beneficiaries of the group's programs, though these at times coincide which will be shown below (Patton, 1990: 183; Bryman, 2012: 418-422). However, although my intention was to interview the leader or founders of each organization, it sometimes proved difficult due to them being very busy and unreachable. Hence, in these cases I chose to interview program managers instead. A general condition throughout all interviews has been that the informants should have worked or been engaged with the organization for a long period of time and that they are well versed about the organization's overall work.

4.2.2 Research Units

Interviews have been conducted with personnel from 10 local feminist and women's organizations in the cities of La Paz, el Alto, Sucre, Tarija and Santa Cruz since the organizations have their head offices in these cities.

As earlier indicated the focus has been on the leaders and/or founders of the organizations and not the so-called "base" or "beneficiaries" of the organization's programs and interventions. I believe that studies focusing on the beneficiaries, the "other" (the indigenous, poor, young or old, etc.) has already been done sufficiently by others whereas investigating which gender discourses are present among leaders and members of women's organizations is a topic that has received little attention. The feminist and women's organizations are grouped into three categories: indigenous women's organizations, radical feminist organizations and institutional feminist organizations (NGOs). These three categories will be presented below.

Indigenous Women's organizations

The characteristics and similarities of the indigenous women organizations are that they struggle for social, economic and political rights of indigenous and peasant women with the

final aim to organize them and to promote their rights. Their work is based on a community perspective working mainly in rural areas and urban conglomerates were the majority of the population are of indigenous origin (mainly Aymara or Quechua). Consequently, the leaders and members themselves represent the category they struggle for. The organizations and their members practice and promote their culture with its distinctive customs and values. For instance, the majority of the women are wearing the 'traditional' outfit consisting of pollera (wide gathered skirt), bowler hat, manta (shawl) and two long braids connected by tullmas (long, braided hair bands). Consequently, their work and objectives are strongly influenced by indigenous (Aymara and Quechua) cosmological visions in which reciprocity and complementarity are the guiding principles (Chacha-Warmi and Ayni). Furthermore, they present a strong decolonizing rhetoric. The majority of their members do not explicitly declare feminist loyalties, and some disassociate themselves from feminism since they consider it a colonial invention. They are grassroot or social organizations part of the bigger indigenous movement in Bolivia.

However, it is important to acknowledge the diversity contained within this category. For instance, they differ in regard to their political positioning and their relationship with other civil society organizations, with the Bolivian State and foreign development cooperation agencies among others.

Radical Feminist Organizations

The radical autonomous feminist organizations are first and foremost characterized by their autonomous character, which means that they are not depending on external financing or other kind of support for their work. They have anarchist tendencies and their work is more oriented towards activism such as protests, demonstrations and voicing their general opposition to authorities. Moreover, they present a strong rejection to instructional forms of feminism and the Academy. These two groups are the founders of the slogan: "You can't decolonize without depatriarchalising (dismantling patriarchy)!". Similar to the indigenous organizations, the founders and members of the autonomous radical feminist organizations also represent the category they are fighting for since they are actively taking part in the struggle. In addition, these organizations have an explicitly self-labelled feminist agenda (the majority of these women clearly consider themselves to be feminists). Furthermore, they are urban based organizations. They are heterogeneous in their composition and cannot be said to represent any particular section of society such as peasants or indigenous, urban or rural, working-class or

middle-class, and so on. Accordingly, they are composed of women from highly different backgrounds, social classes, sexual orientation and education levels. However, these organizations differ in regard to their political positioning, ideological formations and goals as well as political strategies. Furthermore, their relation to other actors in society vary.

Institutional Women's Organizations

Finally, the institutional feminist organizations (NGOs) are the largest group present in the study. They demonstrate similarities such as being dependent on donations, financing and external support. The organizations have a human rights and gender perspective interwoven into all their programs.   They are composed of women with academic degrees and specializations in different fields of study, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, administration and social work, and they receive a salary. The personnel of these organizations are mainly white/mestiza urban middle/ upper-class women. Consequently, in contrast to the other categories of women's organizations they do not represent the category they are working for. The majority of these organizations have an explicitly self-labelled feminist; accordingly, the majority of its members consider themselves to be feminists. However, the feminist NGOs differ in regard to their political positioning – some are more liberal whereas others are more radical – as well as in regard to their programs, projects and strategies.

Although the organizations within each category are mostly presented in conjunction with each other in the analysis I will highlight when there is a distinction between them.

4.3 Transcribing and Analysis of Data

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed simultaneously through an iterative process in which I moved back and forth between data collection, research questions and analysis searching for common themes (Scheyvens, 2014: 75). This first label coding is commonly referred to as "topic coding", "in vivo" or "descriptive coding" (Punch, 2014: 174).
This initial coding proved fundamental in order to get the analysis started and enabled me to get a feel of the data. I marked the identified themes in different colors, which I used to code the material, in order to obtain a clearer overview and a better understanding of what themes could be regarded as the most central. After having summarized the segments of the data, I moved on to a more analytical and interpretative coding in which the material was more

carefully analyzed, interpreted, conceptualized and interconnected (Punch, 2014: 174). This second phase of coding is referred to as "analytical coding" or "pattern coding" and takes the analysis of the data from a descriptive level to a conceptual or theorical level (Punch, 2014, 176). This phase of coding requires some degree of inference beyond the data; hence theories were applied in order to understand and explain the material.

Since the focus of the study is to understand which gender discourses, with an emphasis on masculinities, influence the different women's organizations I found this type of coding very useful since in relies on words. Furthermore, I found it particularly useful in highlighting the diverse voices of the women under study.

4.4 Limitations, Biases and Reflexivity

All the interviews were held in Spanish. Due to my long engagement with the Latin American region I consider my command of Spanish, spoken and written, to be at an advanced level hence I had no problem in communicating with interviewees and understanding written material. However, translation always involves the loss of some levels of meaning which should be recognized. For instance, it was very common that my interviewees used a lot of slang and metaphors to explain their ideas, motivations and concerns. These metaphors and slang are not easily translated into other languages, yet I have placed a lot of emphasis in the translation to get as close to their original meanings as possible.

Another limitation to note is that Bolivia continues to be considered one of the peripheral and less relevant countries of the region. Given this, one consequence is that the Bolivian academy (education sector/university) is not as extensive as that of other countries in the region like Argentina, Chile or Brazil, Consequently there are very few academic text produced in regard to feminism and the women's movement in Bolivia as well as text or studies in regard to men and masculinities. Therefore, it was a struggle to find secondary data in the form of academic literature regarding these subjects.

Another issue important to mention was the unwillingness by some of my informants to collaborate during the interviews, due to their rejection of everything related to institutional feminism and the academia, especially Western academics and scholars. Accordingly, I felt a rejection by some of my informants due to my nationality and social origin; a white, Swedish, academic middle-class female living in central Malmö.

Consequently, I experienced very different forms of relationships to different organizations. The organizations that were most accepting of my background and that were very generous in sharing their thoughts and ideas were the middle-class feminist NGOs. These organizations are used to work and cooperate with international organizations, donors and regularly receive interns and volunteers from all over the world. In this case I felt it was an advantage to be Swedish since Sweden is one of the most important donor countries in Bolivia and recognized by many for its gender equality work in the country. The ones that most resisted giving me access were the radical autonomous feminist collectives, of which one stated: "we don't want to be a chapter in any book". Yet, I was let in thanks to persistence and timing. When I showed my genuine interest in their organizations, by mentioning that I had read several of their books, articles as well as listened to their radio channel and watched their TV-program, they slowly changed their attitudes. Somewhere in between were the indigenous women's organizations. These organizations showed a general interest and curiosity in talking to me and were very generous in providing me material and information.

Finally, I am aware that the information the women shared with me is undeniably related to their perceptions of me and my relationship to other actors. For instance, during the interviews with the feminist NGOs I sometimes notice that since I am Swedish and since the Swedish cooperation agency is a recognized donor in the country, they wanted to say the "right" things in a search for a future cooperation and funding. Similarly, I am aware that my own relationship to these women's and feminist organizations was not neutral. Having grown up in Sweden – one of most egalitarian countries in the world – I have a certain idea of feminism and gender equality and sometimes this idea conflicted with the discourses and political strategies of the organizations. However, although I sometime found it hard, I tried to be neutral and not let my own ideas and values influence the interviews and the analysis too much.

5. Analysis

Based on the theoretical framework this chapter provides an analysis of the feminist and women's rights organisations under study. The first section presents the findings from organisations working with masculinities, whereas the second and third section give insight on how feminist and women's organization, who have not implemented a masculinity perspective, approach the work with men and boys. Finally, the last section answers the question: Which implications do their political claims have on their relations with each other and to other

movements and organizations? for instance, the LGBT movement, the international cooperation, the state, and the academia.

5.1 Women´s Organizations Working with Men and Masculinities

The institutional feminist organizations all recognize the importance of working with men and masculinities for gender equality. Accordingly, their work includes not only women but also men, as they emphasise on how relations between men and women shape and are shaped by gender. They have systematically integrated a gender perspective and women's human rights approach into all work areas.

Three of the five feminist NGOs are since January 2018 part of the masculinity program lead by ProMundo together with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Furthermore, they have all received trainings by the local NGO CISTAC (the only organization working exclusively with men and masculinities in Bolivia). While they are diverse in approaches and strategies, they all address problems with men's violence against women, sexual violence and unequal gender relations. Moreover, they share the understanding that the masculinity perspective is not about shifting focus from women to men but rather to expand the focus to include men in order to make their work more efficient and achieve better results. Through workshops; roleplays, discussion groups, and production of educational materials they aim to stimulate a self-reflective process and raise consciousness about how harmful gender norms affect not only women but also men. This is done to spur internal changes and relations to others.

The following sections will outline the different organizations' reasons, motivations, attitudes, positionings and strategies in regard to the work with men and masculinities.

5.1.1 Reasons and Personal Motivations

Throughout the interviews it became clear that feminist NGOs in Bolivia working with men and masculinities is a rather new phenomenon. It is in the recent years that some organizations have started to work specifically with men and masculinities. Several of the institutional feminist organizations acknowledge that a few years back they were not interested in working with men and masculinities, yet they have come to recognize it as both important and useful. Hence, it has come to be an important component of their work to eliminate violence and to

create a peaceful coexistence. In the words of one of the informants, *"(…)today it is unthinkable for us to work against gender violence without an active participation of men; analyzing and questioning the causes and consequences of patriarchy on them, their partners and families and society in general"* (M2).

Informant M1 noted:

> "It was not long ago since my own organization and the feminists with whom we articulate, said "we do not work with men, we are not their mothers, if they want to work, then work!", And then we realized that it is good to get to know them, to work together. It is a challenge for men and women to see the problem of patriarchal power with all its attributes. And, therefore, that is the challenge of transformation; it is one of the main challenges for feminisms and also for men in their struggles against heteronormativity and traditional masculinities."

According to the informants the main reasons for engaging men and masculinities are that they have identified masculinity norms as a core problem in relation to violence against women and sexual violence. All of five NGOs work with violence prevention projects, among others, and have identified a need of generating programs for men and boys with the aim of breaking patterns of traditional gender norms or, as identified by them, *traditional masculinities*. In these changes they view the work with men as a strategy that will benefit women, but also acknowledge that gender roles and norms are produced and reproduced in social relations among all and therefore they have more than one target group. For instance, informant M1 notes that their priority has always been, and will always be, women, and that coworking with men is just a strategy to achieve their goals.

All five of the feminist NGOs under study mentioned that an earlier challenge – which can successfully be achieved through the work with men and masculinities – has been to counteract that men feel threatened by women's newly acquired visions and demands, which in the past has led to conflicts and, in some cases, increased physical violence in the relationship. Informant M3 states:

> "It is very problematic. There is a lot of machismo in this patriarchal society. Several men show jealousies and insecurity in relation to their partners attending our workshops, since they are afraid that they will be abandoned by their women due to their newly acquired knowledge about their rights. Consequently, some of the women who participated in our workshops were exposed to increased violence in their homes. This made us realize that it is not enough to work exclusively with women, men need to be targeted as well."

Informant M1 similarly notes:

> "Very often, as women undergo these programs and shift their understandings of gender equality, there are some risks especially in communities where norms are deeply entrenched. To avoid exposing our participant to danger it is essential to also work with their male partners and families in order to create a community of support that fosters healthy gender norms and relationships".

Furthermore, the feminist NGOs working with masculinities believe that it is important to include men in gender equality work, since their voices are needed to pass on a more "modern" vision on gender equality to future generations. They all agreed upon that solely addressing women to achieve gender equality unfairly burdens them with the task of uplifting themselves out of their own oppression. And, by not including boys and men feminist NGOs undermine their own purpose as it limits their impact. Therefore, they center women and women's rights in their work by engaging men and boys to acknowledge the role they play and work to change communities. As illustrated by informant M3:

> "The truth is that by only empowering women we are missing something, right? because if we empower women; make them economically independent, but at the same they keep on adding hours of care and household work it means a double work burden for women, on account of their gender, and we don't want that! Denying such fact would be like working against women's rights, and it cannot be like that! (…)".

Furthermore, all the institutional organizations stressed the need to work on masculinity issues with the women themselves, since women do also reproduce the macho culture, for instance through stereotypical attitudes towards other women and in raising their children. Consequently, as indicated by informant M2 the relational perspective has been important and helpful for the women themselves to be more self-reflective and self-critical about their work and practices. Informant M4 provides an example of how women are part of reproducing the macho culture:

> "Once, I small talked with one of our beneficiaries after a workshop and she commented "my son isn't feeling good, he's not well married, because his wife doesn't wash his clothes, my son comes home tired and she has no prepared him dinner, my poor boy!" This is an evidence that the "machismo" is very present in women as well – they are still in a process of change. In theory they may say "that's how I would like to live", but when they refer to other women – for instance their daughter-in-law – they may question that person for not fulfilling traditional roles."

Another example of how machismo is present in women as well was manifested by informant M2:

> "There are successful women arguing that women are victimizing themselves and that it is up to every individual to decide for themselves whether to change their situation or not. This false perception has to do with one's origin, class and identity these women are simple not interested in discussing. Another example are women in positions of authority, they arrive at these positions because they copy the macho attitudes and behaviors of men, that is, to be cold, calculating and aggressive. I believe one of our biggest challenges is how to deconstruct the "macho" woman".

Additionally, according to the feminist NGOs working with masculinities, the women beneficiaries of the organization's programs have in many cases themselves asked the organizations to include their husband and children in the workshops and trainings since they have recognized that it is not enough to become aware of their rights if their partners are uninformed, violent and ignorant. "Our experience is that most women welcome sharing in healthy, non-violent relationships, and often encourage their husband's participations in such programs." (M1).

Interestingly, some of the informants mentioned that in some cases the men themselves have voluntarily turned towards them seeking information and help to change their violent behavior. M4 explains: "There are men who have approached us in search of support to change sexist and violent attitudes and behaviors, because they do not have a place to change because they admit that they are violent and do not want to lose their home or their partner."

This section has exemplified why feminist NGOs have chosen to work with men and masculinities. The following two sections will focus on identified risks and obstacles as well as their political positioning and working strategies.

5.2.2 New Masculinities

The feminist NGOs working with masculinities have all clearly expressed that they work with masculinities primarily as a strategy to improve their work with women. They believe that the process of change starts by making men aware of their privilege and their destructive behaviour and attitudes. Throughout the interviews the organizations working with masculinities

frequently referred to traditional or hegemonic masculinities and femininities. When probed around the alternative to traditional masculinities, respondents presented an ambiguous picture.

Some referred to the idea of "new masculinities", but clearly stated that it was from a feminist perspective. For instance, as explained by informant M4: *New masculinities from a feminist perspective have to do with new ways of being a man. These new masculinities have to be based on new relationships, including a change in the configuration of masculine ideals."*

Whereas other were outright critical to the concept. Informant M1 illustrates this well:

> "New masculinities is a concept in construction, I believe that "new masculinities" is something highly ambiguous (it has a lot of different meanings) and it is rarely referred to from our feminisms, we work with men for the rights of women, we do not appropriate the term since we feel that many times the idea of new masculinities is locked within men and hence not in relation to women and the power relations."

Instead she argued that the changing of behaviors and the creation of new possibilities have to take place in collaboration with women, and from a perspective of change not only on a personal level but also on a societal and community level.

A similar critique to the concept of new masculinities was presented by informant M2:

> "We do not use the concept of new masculinities because we believe it is a lack of political positioning, what new masculinities can we promote if what we are trying to dismantle is a system of domination, it is not to change for another system of domination."

Moreover, another critique was present pointing at the tendency of men "once again" taking the focus from women:

> "Today it is a trend to talk about emergent, new or alternative masculinities, however, I have a list of emerging femininities, but that list will have to wait until debates concerning different forms of femininities have a public and generate forums, debates and meetings" (M2).

Regardless of what concept they use, they all express the wish to end violence and sexism and to transform traditional masculinities toward more humane, less oppressive, and non-violent masculinities. Briefly, they aim at going beyond superficial change and transform cultural behaviour and issues of power based on unequal relations between men and women as well as between women.

5.2.2.1 Victimization

While there is a general agreement among these organizations that working with men and boys is a necessary part of achieving gender equality (they have faith that change in men is possible), at the same time they show a lot of suspicion, tensions, and lack of confidence in regard to the work with men.

All of them criticized a tendency among men to victimize themselves. They referred to these men in several different ways for instance as "postmachistas", "machos illustrados" and "neomachistas". According to my interviewees what these men have in common is that they believe that they are different from traditional masculinities/machos – they think they know better or are better than the hegemonic, violent masculinities. They basically focus on correcting inequalities – positioning themselves as vulnerable and disadvantaged – only focusing on their suffering and pain – and complaining that they also suffer from inequalities. They want a change at an individual level, but without giving up the privileges they hold at the expense of women. According to informant M2, *"postmachistas are like the more soft and empathetic face of traditional machos, and thus they may be even more dangerous"*. In the words of informant M1:

> "The feminist collective, we feminists, we have to stay suspicious in regard to the work with men and masculinities, because if we lower the weapons, if we lower our criticism we will end up having "machos illustrados" "soft men" who appear very beautiful because they use very nice words, and because they are not tough and violent".

Another manifestation of this concern can be found in the quote below:

> "It is very important that men who discuss the issue of masculinities, in addition to discussing the pain of being a man, in discussing the heavy weight of carrying all the privileges of being a man, and the oppression they face, it sound crazy, they have to recognize that they cannot discuss personal experiences without transcending to the political, without going beyond their personal experience of being a man, because otherwise they reproduce the patriarchal system and all the institutionality that sustains it" (M1).

This ties into the long-standing worry among feminists that men's liberation is a way for men to extract benefits from feminism without giving up their basic privilege, a modernization of patriarchy, not an attack on it as noted by Connell (2005: 41) and by Tjeder (2002).

5.2.3 Political Positioning and Strategies

Having established that feminist NGOs cannot solely focus on women, and that women must be seen in relation to men, the NGOs do not emphasize men's psychology alone. On the contrary, many respondents spoke of structural factors. They aim to move beyond an exclusive focus on women's individual self-improvement and toward transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities. According to the informants this entails engaging groups in critically examining, challenging and questioning gender norms and power relations that underlie visible gender gaps. Some of the organizations work with masculinities based on mixed groups whereas others organize both separate and mixed groups. These organizations have emphasized the importance of the group facilitator also being a man since this helps men to open up and reflect, thus creating a space where they can raise awareness and generate a change in men, but always oriented to a positioning of a social change, where men and women are seen in relation to each other. Informant M1 explained it as follows:

> "In the first phase of the programme we believe it is essential to work only with men, yet what is questionable is the content and the political positioning of these contents, does it remain only at the individual level, does exclude the women? if it does not include an approach of social transformation it becomes not only harmful but unhealthy, because it is like rotating around the wound. We believe it is important to look at oneself as persons, but also as collectives through a feminist intersectional analysis of gender; ethnicity, class. After the first phase of the program we saw a need to do mixed groups with both women and men, to make alliances and collaborate in order to create a common agenda."

The organizations that only work with mixed groups explained that it was because they found it difficult to make men come to the workshops, but also because they prioritise creating spaces for women only. As explained by M3:

> "Basically, our program is structured for 11 sessions, among which there are 3 sessions aimed at masculinities, in which women and some men participate. But what really interests us is to have specific sessions allowing us to work only with women. A greater participation of men would be perfect and phenomenal according to me; but if we don't succeed with that, the women participating in sessions will transmit their acquired knowledge within their families so that the "Program P" and the appreciation of active fatherhood will be implemented in their homes anyways."

5.2.4 Men as Gatekeepers

As already indicated, working with men around gender stereotypes and challenging socially accepted behaviours is considered as a strategy that benefits women, that is, working with men

for the benefit of women, both on an individual and structural level. Men are considered as gatekeepers or allies to women's development rather than co-beneficiaries and co-protagonists in gender equality. As illustrated by informant M3:

> "Our strategic goal is not to work with masculinities for the advancement of men's rights and well-being, but the exercise of women's rights. We believe that the work with men is a strategy that could work to permit the liberation of time for women, allowing them to exercise economic activities."

All in all, the feminist NGOs working with masculinities emphasize the questioning of patriarchy, i.e. male dominance and oppression of women. Assuming a clear-cut patriarchal gender order vis-à-vis the relations between men and women. Consequently, by applying Connells concept of "hegemonic masculinity" to the analysis one can argue that the feminist NGOs working with masculinities strongly emphasis the external hegemony i.e. men's dominance over women. By making men aware of this domination and the severe consequences it has on their female partners and families they will be able to make men change their behavior and become more respectfully, non-violent and nondominant. Informant M2 notes: *"the last thing we want is to make men victims since women are the ones who have carried the heaviest burden throughout history, rather the focus is to make men conscious in order to change!"*

By emphasising men's structural privileges – and striving to render visible men's oppressive practices across many different domains of social life – they hope to reach change. Consequently, they show an understanding of how men's relation to and perception of women is related to the construction of masculinities and the other way around. They argue that there is great potential in not only making men aware of their relationship to women, but of making women aware of how their attitudes toward others may reinforce macho culture and hegemonic masculinities. By doing so an enabling environment can be fostered in which sustained change among individual men can take place. Yet, an understanding of the characteristics in which masculinities are internally constructed, developed and transformed, which have proved to be fundamental in aiding understanding of the social structure in relation to gender (Cornell, 2005), is rather absent in the work of these feminist NGOs. By emphasizing the external dimension of Connells concept "hegemonic masculinity", it serves as an analytical tool to identify those attitudes and practices among men that perpetuate men's domination over women. However, they seem to care less about the power of some men over other men the "internal hegemony" - i.e. the oppression of minority groups such as gay men. They recognized that men are also

negatively affected by patriarchy, but they do not consider them as victims, but rather they understand men as fundamentally linked to power¸ organized for domination, and due to their privileges, they do not have much desire or motive to change patriarchal relations. As stated by M1: *"Men are the ones who hold the power and privileges at the expense of women and these men are often not willing to give up those privileges."*

5.2 Indigenous Women´s Organizations

The indigenous women's organization do not identify themselves as feminists since there is a general idea in Bolivian society, although slowly changing, that the word feminism and a feminist position means lesbianism, hatred, and an opposition to men, as put by respondent V2:

> "We do not name ourselves as a feminist organization, although we work primarily with women. In Bolivia, for many people, feminism is considered a radical trend led by the feminist collective *Mujeres Creando* – and that it is strongly rooted in various sexual orientations such as lesbianism; It is also very common to associate feminism with androgyny. We work for the unity of family - harmony within the family, men are our partners, we fight together. Consequently, the concept of feminism may cause some confusions."

5.2.1   Eurocentric versus Indigenous Concepts

None of the indigenous women's organisations work with the masculinity perspective and their approach to it was more critical. One of the reasons why the indigenous organization do not work with the masculinity perspective is that they consider it an imported eurocentric concept that is too academic and abstract and not apt for Bolivia's indigenous and rural population. As illustrated in the quote below:

> "Now I'm going to be very honest, when I first heard about the masculinity perspective I got tired - another theoretical concept that NGOs introduce and which no one understands, why don't we talk directly about the deconstruction of patriarchy? Masculinities are just one of many other words used by NGOs. I do not like when NGOs put words in my mouth, I will not travel to rural areas to talk bullshit, I go there to talk about the deconstruction of patriarchy!" (V1).

Instead, the Andean concept "Vivir Bien" (literally "to live well") was emphasized, which refers to a desire to live in balance and harmony with nature, in which men and women are understood as being equal and complementary. Vivir Bien includes the concept of Chacha-Warmi - the Andean notion of complementarity between man and woman: of the married, heterosexual couple as the fundamental social subject in society, and of female and male forces as the

opposing but complementary constituents of the cosmos (Burman, 66-67). As well as the concept of Ayni (reciprocity between families and people in general. These concepts constitute the life philosophy of Andean people in which reciprocity, solidarity and justice are applied between men and women, and in an equitable relationship with Pachamama (Mother Earth). The indigenous women's organizations reassess the value of indigenous concepts, such as Ayni and Chacha-Warmi, as a strategy to create a peaceful and equitable society. As indicated by informant V2:

> "We want to create a culture of peace by applying the concept of Ayni – that couples (husband and wife) mutually help and complement each other in in their domestic duties, in the fields, as parents, and in community life."

In a similar fashion informant V3 explained:

> "The masculinity perspective has not influenced much here. I believe that it is a very European concept. Here we talk more about "Vivir Bien" which includes both men and women and the whole community in relation to Pacha-Mama. We work together, always from a community perspective. That is why the concept of masculinities has not become something important here, we do not understand what they mean with it."

5.2.2   Women as Agents of Change

Their strategy is to work exclusively with women, and they emphasize women as important agents for change. They believe that unleashing the potential of the female population as drivers of economic growth, as principal investors in savings, health and education, will work as a force for catalyzing development outcomes and efficiencies. Hence, the women's families and their whole community will eventually benefit from their newly acquired empowerment and the relation between husband and wife will automatically improve. In this sense the pace of reform is considered to be determined by women's personal empowerment alone, without considering their social relations to men (a non-relational gender approach).

The three organizations attend to the issues of gender equality and reduction of violence as a question of empowerment of women in rural areas both on an individual as well as on a structural level. For instance, they provide training and workshops in economic management; accounting, leadership, politics, and education. As well as public policy advocacy to improve access to services; education, health etc. The interviews show that these organizations use the economic aspect as an incentive to arouse interest in both women and men in relation to the trainings and workshops – to attract men as allies to women's development, since it has been

identified that scarce economic resources is closely related to violence against women, consequently these organizations conclude that violence against women decreased as the family economy improved. As indicated by informant V2:

> "The women who have participated in our training workshops have been able to improve their household economy (through improved fruit harvest etc.), consequently several men in the community have changed their attitudes toward women participating in the workshops. Instead of being suspicious they have started to support them, and we were able to see a positive change in husband's attitudes toward their wives."

In relation to men informant V1 noted:

> "To talk about men as perpetrators "the bad ones" is not the way to change them, change in men will take place when women are empowered; educated and generate income to the household."

5.2.3 Violence Came with the Spaniards

An important work for the indigenous organizations is the prevention and eradication of violence against women and machismo. They argue that violence against women and machismo came with the Spanish colonization, since individualism and materialism were violently established at the expense of the reciprocity and solidarity characterizing the pre-colonial communities. These organizations give as a contemporary example the change in attitude and behavior of rural men who migrate to urban conglomerates, they become more violent, macho, individualistic and materialistic. Illustrated by informant V2:

"A striking phenomenon is that the men in rural areas of the highlands who have not yet migrated to the city show greater support and solidarity with their partners. This phenomenon occurs because in the rural areas indigenous communities are still practicing the philosophy of Ayni which is reciprocity."

Their understanding of gendered-based violence and discrimination as part of colonial violence is in line with Decolonial feminist understandings of gender violence. However, their rather extreme argument of a violence free and equality oriented precolonial society is an argument that has been harshly criticized by several decolonial and postcolonial theorists for both an inaccurate account of precolonial society given that lots of evidence shows that there were hierarchical gender relations already in precolonial societies (Connell, 2014: 556).

5.2.4 Masculinities - Shifting Focus from Women

Throughout the interviews it became clear that the indigenous women's organizations have a very limited knowledge regarding the masculinity perspective in gender equality work. For instance, some showed a reductionist view about masculinities, thinking that it has only to do with men's identity; men's psychology and not understanding masculinity in relation to women. When I explained what this perspective implied, they said they were not interested, because men do already receive enough attention. Consequently, the indigenous organizations were highly skeptical to the inclusion of men and boys in gender equality work since they believe that it would shift focus from women to men. This is illustrated by informant V1:

> "It is very possible that we are mistaken, but we believe that women deserve more priority and need more time for themselves. The men already have plenty of time for themselves; they play football, they hang out in the pub, they participate in municipal meetings etc. ... but the women? Perhaps we are wrong, but now the women have a safe place, just for themselves, where they can share experiences and thoughts, therefore we have made this priority."

Additionally, in some cases, the women supported norms that reinforce stereotypical gender norms instead of tackling underlying structural problems. For instance, an informant from one of the indigenous women's organizations stated, when talking about a workshop they organize to improve self-esteem among women:

> "One of the aims of the workshop is to encourage women to take care of themselves and pay more attention to their personal and physical appearance; to look beautiful, to keep clean, wear jewelry, beautiful clothes and so on. This will not only make them feel better about themselves, but it will also reduce the risk that their husbands' sheet on them or abandon them" (V2).

This statement manifests the strong cultural norms within Andean cultures in regard to women's physical appearance in which there are a number of social norms in regard to women's clothing and hairstyle. These social categories fall on women, but not on men. Men have the right to wear any type of clothes, whereas women, in order to be respected, need to be nicely combed and dressed in traditional clothes (Galindo, 2014: 127; Burman, 2011).

All in all, the indigenous womens organizations did not challenge the binary, opposite and universal divisions: man-woman, male-female, because they believe in their ultimate biological underpinnings. Among some of the informants there was a clear essentialist reasoning about gender roles, a naturalization of gender difference. These women seem to want to abolish

hierarchy between women and men (end patriarchy), but not difference itself – because Chacha-Warmi (complementarity) is based on difference.

5.3 Radical Feminist Organizations – A decolonial critique

The radical women's organizations have an outspoken feminist standpoint. Yet, they distance themselves from a "Western" vision of feminism by re-defining feminism to include a set of struggles and rebellions of women both on individual and collective level to face and disobey patriarchy. Informant F2 described calling herself a feminist because:

> "(…) the word feminism works like a thermometer of rebellion; when a woman tells you that she agrees with everything, but please don't call me feminist, she is making an illusion that it is possible to negotiate with patriarchy in order to maintain her social position and status that she thinks she occupies."

The radical feminists base their categories of analysis and theories on an intuitive rather than academic feminism. That is: emphasizing the emotional, intuitive side of knowledge. they expressed an organic worldview in which feminism is understood as something global and non-essential; *there is no society, culture or region where feminisms do not exist* (F1). This view stands in contrast to the notion of a "universal sisterhood" promoted by "white/Western" feminists in which feminism is viewed as an all-encompassing inclusive nation in which difference can be resolved through benevolent terms as "recognition", "understanding", and "dialogue" (Ang, 1995: 192). As noted by Ang:

> "(…) too often the need to deal with difference is seen in the light of the greater need to save, expand and improve or enrich feminism as a political home which would ideally represent all women. In this way, the ultimate rationale of the politics of difference is cast in terms of an overall politics of inclusion: the desire for an overarching feminism to construct a pluralist sisterhood which can accommodate all differences and inequalities between women." (1995: 203)

This vision of "dealing with difference" is strongly criticised by decolonial and postcolonial feminists, since they argue that it implies that "these differences must comply with feminism's (…) essentialising frame" (Kirby, 1992 stated in Ang, 1995).

Furthermore, the radical feminists share the understanding of feminism as being an anti-systemic struggle in contrast to sectoral struggles. Finally, their feminism is based on the idea

that "You cannot decolonize without depatriarchalizing (dismantling patriarchy)". In the words of informant F2:

> "Feminism has no essence; it is not an essentialist struggle. There is a very large complexity and plurality of feminisms with many differences, but from my point of view the general horizon of feminism is *depatriarization*."

Moreover, they make a clear distinction between gender theories influenced by neoliberalism and those influenced by feminism, of which they understand the former as reducing gender to a series of rights without confronting patriarchy, where they see the roots of the problem. As explained by informant F1:

> "There is a big difference between a gender discourse and a feminist discourse, on the one hand, you have a very large set of NGOs that work from the gender category from the neoliberal project, such as the rights discourse, "right for". And then you have, I believe, the most important feminist discourse of Bolivian society, which is *depatricalization*."

In a similar fashion, informant F2 explains that:

> "What equality can we speak of in a society where not only is no woman equivalent to any man, but neither is a human being equal to the other. Patriarchy translates into thousands of hierarchies. Consequently, the liberal idea of gender equality results reinforcing the white middle-class man as a measurement and model for all human beings."

5.3.2 Gender as a Category of Analysis and attitudes towards the masculinity perspective

The radical feminist organizations have a critical relationship to the category of gender, due to several reasons which will be shown below. One of the organizations have chosen not to use the category of gender whereas the other uses it with the aim of doing away with binary gender divisions altogether. Their understanding of gender are translated into their attitudes towards this masculinity perspective, in which one of the organizations has actively chosen not to work with men, whereas the other work with masculinities, yet from a different point of view than the previously accounted for feminist NGOs.

Informant F1 argued that it is the gendering that needs to be challenged by feminists, with the long-term goal of doing away with binary gender divisions altogether:

> "When I explain how I identify myself, I prefer to say only my name and maybe Aymara, feminist, lesbian because they are identities, but my body, what is my body!?It is not an identity, it is a reality. Accordingly, we do not deal with gender as an identity category!"

Yet, they apply the concept of gender with the final aim of doing away with it altogether. My informant explained it as follows:

> "It is not that we don't talk about gender, we talk about gender, gender does exist, gender is a social cultural construction on bodies. The feminine gender for women and the masculine gender for men, it is a hierarchical, macho and an unfair social construction, consequently we see the gender imposed on our bodies as prisons. Gender is the opinion, the social construction that is made to imprison bodies. So that exists, but we have to fight it, we have to name it! But one shouldn't talk about it like now we want diversity like queer people say, we can't - it would be like building more prisons! So they don't understand us and tell us that we are transphobic, that we are homophobic, shit! Such ignorant assholes! They do not understand, they do not understand! What we are saying is that gender exists, but we must fight against it, so how can the LGBT-movement consider the so-called gender identity a great achievement? How can that be a social conquest? A social conquest, another chain, another jail! I mean shit! and of course we start to speak, and they call us "those trans-phobics who hate trans". Fuck damn! What they do is to exercise misogyny, what they do is affirm the heteronormative world."

Consequently, informant F1 explained that they do not work with masculinities because they are critical to the assumption of gender as separation and difference, arguing that as long as we keep on dividing people into different categories based on sex and gender – man-woman, transman-transwoman etc. – no real change can ever take place. Instead they argue that one must start with a sense of the whole. Accordingly, she and her organization have consciously distance themselves from the masculinity perspective since they believe that it does not confront patriarchy. They accuse the masculinity perspective of lacking a holistic picture and for reproducing an analytical and theoretical reductionism, since patriarchal relations, as a prevailing social system, are not only about the relationship between man and woman but also has to do with other systems of oppression such as capitalism and colonialism. Hence, they prefer not to use the concept of masculinities, because "the work with masculinities does not affect patriarchal power relations; in contrast it uses them and recycle them, the work with masculinities is nothing else than a therapy for men!" (F1). However, the organization is based on a community approach that does welcome men to participate in certain activities.

In contrast, informant F2 consciously distanced herself from the gender category because she believes that there are too many conceptual confusions around it. She argues that:

"The gender category has been stripped of its political meaning, its content has been taken away, it currently means working with women and also with men, without calling into question political, economic and social structures that lead to a confrontation between and among these systems".

With this critique of the one-sided focus on gender as her point of departure, she urges the need for an intersectional approach:

"I do not use the gender category and there are several reasons why. According to me, gender is a very problematic concept around which there are many epistemological and semantic confusions. Hence, when there are so many confusions around a concept one is obliged to do many clarifications before applying it and thus there is a risk that is loses its effectiveness and that it ends up producing very limited and problematic analyses.This is one of many reasons why I don't use the gender category. And, the problem with the gender category, which I have seen in many places, among them Bolivia, is that, when the gender category is emptied of the questions of class, cultural origin, sexuality and skin color it becomes a category functional to a class model – predominantly the white university-educated middle-class."

However, although she does not use the category of gender, she uses the categories of woman/women, man/men, and masculinity(s)/femininity(s): *"I work simultaneously combining everything around the idea and concept of "woman" and "women" and the idea and concept of "man" and "men" always simultaneously, I am always working on both!"*

5.3.4 Common Points of Critic

5.3.4.1 New Masculinities – A "Recycling of Machismo"?

If the feminist NGOs showed an ambiguous relationship to the concept of "new" "emergent" or "alternative" masculinities, the radical feminists were consistently outright against it "we think it is criminal" (F2). They argue that it does not take structural factors into account since it is only focusing on change on a personal level: "All these words, in the end it is just changing name of the same thing, power relations are not questioned, the privileges of men are not questioned, their social, political and cultural privileges are not questioned!" (F1). Informant F1 continues:

"In a society as perverse as ours, many times a man who changes diapers mechanically happens to have more worth just because he is a 'good father', but in practice many parents who do

change diapers still kill their children if the son is homosexual. Then we have not changed the system of power relations and privileges of the patriarchal macho structure. The good dad checklist should not be checked whether he changes diapers or not, but on how he builds his democratic values, how he builds his equal values of respect."

F2 gave a similar critique:

> "The border between a man and a woman is not biological, but social and historical. I am very critical of what is called the movement of the new masculinity since I strongly doubt its critical capacity. The masculinity condition carries a heavy weight on its shoulders that does not dissolve with workshops, hormone pills, or with transvestism."

The radical feminists recognized that the masculinity perspective has become something "trendy", yet they questioned its actual meaning. The risk with a concept or perspective becoming a trend (in e.g. academia, human rights activism, government, international agencies) is that all of a sudden there are so many different ways of using the term and understandings of it so it becomes difficult to grasp in common terms. Accordingly, they argued that the masculinity perspective has become depoliticized. Therefore, some of the organizations have chosen not to talk about "masculinities", because there are too many confusions around it "*the concept of masculinities can be very confusing; I'm definitely not sure what it is about or what it tries to address*" (F1).

Informant F2 mentioned that talking about diverse masculinities does not necessarily mean that they are "new" but that it seems easier to talk about something "new" than understanding the diversity of masculinities:

> "It is fundamental to work with men and masculinities, to create alliances with men etc. However, I am highly skeptical to the discourse of new masculinities and I will tell you why. I am skeptical because there is not enough analysis of the "old" masculinities, of traditional masculinities, why are they still so present and legitimate within Bolivian society? How are they maintained and reproduced? What are their weaknesses, and what are their capacities to change or reaffirm themselves? I believe that before beginning to speak about "new masculinities" it is necessary to have a good overview of what is going on in society and why. I'm very skeptical to the idea of new masculinities - I do not believe in imposed agendas!"

According to informant F1, new masculinity is nothing else than a "recycling of machismo":

> "(…) gay men do organize, but they organize in a chauvinist (machistamente) and sexist way in the so-called 'New Masculine' Movement. Everything related to the idea of "new masculinity" is profoundly misogynist and macho, and just as toxic as the old one! Gays and some groups of men who are in crisis organize themselves in what has been called the new

masculinity, these groups are bullshit and are just serving to reinforce the machista culture, and to "rescue" men at a time when feminism questions them… and, there you have all those NGOs that work with new masculinities, having to calm the distress and anxiety in them; why don't they just let them remain anxious?! So that they in the end start to organize themselves! No, instead one can witness one organization after the other, including feminist NGOs, introducing curses and workshops about masculinity. What for!? For men to calm their anxiety caused by women getting empowered. This is nothing else than a "recycling of machismo" and many NGOs contribute to it."

5.3.4.2 Patriarchy and Machismo, do men have to organize?

The radical feminist organizations understand patriarchy as "(…) a historical system of oppression in which women are oppressed but also oppressive, although not in the same way as men, because above them there will always be an oppressive man and below every oppressed man there is an oppressed woman and under the most oppressed woman there are no men" (F1).

Consequently, according to the informants, matriarchy can never measure up to patriarchy. Likewise, no man is a victim of patriarchy, even though it hurts men. If patriarchy is understood as a system, machismo is understood as a behavior. They recognize that machismo is as much present in rural versus urban men, white versus indigenous, middle-class versus working-class, and right-wing versus left-wing: *That is why we have that graffiti that says: "Nothing resembles a right-wing machista more than a left-wing machista, and the indigenous are the same pistol!"* (F2).

As indicated by informant M2:

> "Men's horizon for change does not go beyond their interests as adult males, whether they belong to one social class or another, whether they belong to an original culture or not. What interest them are the things from the front door of the house and outwards, because those are considered important things, while the things that have to do with the front door and inwards are de-valued at the expense of women."

Interestingly they did also bring up that "non-traditional" men do also reinforce patriarchy and macho behavior, giving the example of homosexual men:

> "Many times, homosexual men do not question machismo, although the macho society are rejecting them, they themselves reproduce machismo in their relationships with their partners. Sometimes through violence, sometimes racist discrimination, economic or sexual exploitation" (F1).

Both of the radical feminist organization recognize the urgent need for Bolivian men to question patriarchy and the machismo within them, although not as allies to women's developments, but rather they need to organize themselves and "*assume commitments to the feminist struggle as militants, not as feminist supporters*" (F1). Similar to the feminist NGOs they show a concern that men will take focus from women and not recognize the long history and struggle of feminism. As indicated in the quote below:

> "We call men to become feminists and to build with us a theory about their bodies in patriarchy, but we will start from what is already advanced, without making invisible women who dedicated their lives to work on these theories and practices for humanity. We can build next to each other. Why so much fear and shame to join forces along thoughts and theories created by women? Aren't we, the women, supporting and fighting alongside men for theories created by men?" (F1).

They show a skepticism in regard to men's will to and capability of changing, as illustrated in the quotes below:

> "If the macho culture is destructive to women it is much more destructive to men, but that does not mean that men are not responsible for their actions and are the poor victims of machismo. No! that not what we want to say. What we mean is that men should also fight against this violent culture, but we understand that they do not fight because they have some privileges, hope to have some or have come to believe that they will have some." (F2).

5.3.4.3 Masculinities – A Neocolonial phenomenon

Colonialism and coloniality were mentions several times during the interviews. When the radical feminists talked about colonial structures, they talked about it as a remote past that has validity and prolongation in contemporary structures of domination – "the colonization did not only arrive with the Spanish ships" (F2). In this sense:

> "Questioning patriarchy is not only about questioning relations of power between men and women, but also the questioning of the capitalist system, the production systems which are exploiters, questioning extractivism; natural resource depletion and environmental degradation, and of course also the systems of thought that is coloniality and coloniality is not what the Spaniards brought us, today coloniality translates into models, so when they talk to us about new masculinities, I would say that it is pretty much a colonial act" (F1).

Consequently, their political projects are based on resisting gender and sexual violence at the intersection of colonialism, racism, and global capitalism – a decolonial feminist perspective.

5.4 Potentials for coalitions and solidarity among women's organizations

5.4.1 Coalitions Between Who?

Bolivian independence from Spain retained the racist separation between European-identified white and mestizos and indigenous peoples. The experience of a rural indigenous working-class woman is certainly different from the experience of a white/ mestiza middle-class university educated woman living in an urban area. In light of this, the idea of the universal sisterhood as pushed for by white/Western feminists can be questioned. For some of my informants the questions of gender can be seen as somewhat secondary since the oppression based on class and ethnicity is experienced as more basic. For instance, as shown earlier there is a concern among the indigenous women that new "white/Western perspectives" will overtake their own cultural values. Thus, their struggle centers on reassessing the value of indigenous concepts – a decolonizing project, and in some cases, this is considered a more urgent issue than those related to their being women. This relates to decolonial and postcolonial feminist voices, for instance Ang argues for a politics of particularity as an alternative to the idea of universal sisterhood. Politics of particularity do away with the ambition of an universal representation of all women's interest and accepts the principle that "feminism can never ever be an encompassing political home for all women, not just because different groups of women have different and sometimes conflicting interest, but more fundamentally because for many groups of "other" women, other interests and identifications are more important ant politically pressing than, or even incompatible with, those related to their being women" (Ang, 204).

Moreover, some of the informants expressed that they prefer to work with men who share the same story rather than with white middle-class women who have a very different story. This is manifested in the statement below by one of the radical feminists, as well as the fact that for some women other systems of oppression; such as capitalism and imperialism, are more pressing that gender oppression.

> "There is no cooperation because women we spend our time competing, fighting, envying each other instead of supporting each other, discussing politics and having strength. No, instead women who belong to the bourgeois class, women who are white, women who have a political party, or women who are envious of other women instead of joining, what they do is to fight, dispute and divide. Feminism today, our feminist collective is rejected by other feminisms, it is defamed by other feminisms – we are denied existence! That is why we do not give interviews because we are fighting with our communities with our sisters and brothers and those who come to fuck with us are the other feminists who have never had a proposal and are envious, they are angry that Indians from a place like Bolivia – the ass of the world – they are very angry that

bright ideas emerge from this process. They are racist, they are colonialists, they are bourgeois, they are classists! In fact, we prefer to work with men, although they are sexist and lazy to organize themselves, we prefer to fight with siblings, colleagues despite that...because we are clear about one thing and that is that in Bolivia we have to overcome neoliberalism!" (F1).

This view was shared by informant M2 (radical feminist):

"We do not work based on alliances with organizations, we work on the basis of alliances between women and that is very different. There are identity sectoral and institutional organizations who have a closed agenda, most of these organizations are co-opted by the government, parties or international NGOs. We are not interested in these alliances because nothing will happen with these alliances, they are impossible! but we are interested in building alliances between women's sectors."

These two statements are aligned with some decolonial and postcolonial feminist voices arguing that it is impossible to create a feminism that will represent all women. Feminists inhabit different sociohistorical spaces, wherefore the idea of "universal sisterhood" can be understood as an act of symbolic violence, disguising the fundamental structural imbalances established by historical processes such as colonialism, imperialism and nationalism. According to Audre Lorde, difference conceived in this eurocentric vein "will always be ground for hostile division rather than creative engagement" (Lorde 1984, cited in Roshanravan, 2014: 56). Hence, the statements made by V1 and V2 refer exactly to this – that these types of alliances are "impossible" because they do no change anything, on the contrary they reproduce patriarchal hierarchies between women.

According to informant V2, unity among women is not necessary and she even doubts the very possibility of creating unity among women. Instead she argues for coalitions among women for a common struggle – *despatriarcalization* (dismantling patriarchy):

"I do not believe in some kind of idealised unity. I do not believe that unity is such an important thing or even possible. I believe that the important thing is depth, the capacity to propose things and the ability to organize, but not the ability to unite. It seems to me that the more *kaleidoscopic and* complex the scenario is, the more expressions there are and that is desirable. The horizon is the common struggle of "despatriarcalization" and the understanding that "You can't decolonize without depatriarchalizing!"

This statement is aligned with the decolonial feminist proposal of a politics of coalitions across nondominant communities for a collective struggle against a matrix of systems of oppression (Roshanravan, 2014: 44; Velez, 2019: 391). While recognizing that women are differently

located historically and culturally, they aim to identify common arenas of struggle from which women can collaborate against the common enemy; the racialized, gendered oppressions of colonialism and global capitalism (Roshanravan, 2014: 55). The multiplicity is never reduced, yet they make their political commonalities more easily identifiable than their methodological differences. Since decolonial feminists seek to affirm and build coalitions among racially devalued ways of thinking, they are distancing themselves from the traditional white/Wester knowledge-production within academic disciplines (Rosganravan, 2014: 42). My informant identifies *despatriarcalization* as the common struggle, understood as a process inherently related and dependent on the process of decolonization. She refuses to collapse the complexity and heterogeneity of women into a totalized, unified genre of thought, rather she sees the heterogeneity as something highly valuable.

5.4.2 Relations Between Women´s Organizations and Mixed-Gender Organizations Working with Masculinities

As interviews have shown throughout this study, there is a lot of suspicion in regard to male activists, movements and male-dominated organizations engaging men and boys in Bolivia (LGBTQ, human rights, and pro-feminist mixed-gender organizations). They criticize them for not taking sufficiently into account men's oppression of women, and to copying feminist theories and concept without any deeper reflections and without recognition of the long work and struggles behind these. And, hence reproducing patriarchal relations instead of fighting them. This tension is reflected in the quote below:

> "The gays, queers, and trans people are also attacking our bodies (women's bodies), but is seems hard for women to realize that! because these attacks coming from gays, from queers, from trans people…if you notice who stands out in the world of trans? They are not the trans men who share with us the body of the woman, they are not the ones who shine, those who speak, who are looked at etc., in the world of entertainment, of the media, such as intellectuality and the academia, the trans that shine are the feminine trans and what do they have in common? their body of men with heteros, with machos, with males. So, these organizations and movement are not questioning patriarchy, they are reinforcing it!" (F1).

Informant M2 poses a similar critique:

> "Since many years back men's groups in La Paz have been focusing on men and masculinities from an ethnocentric vision, but also from an approach in which there is no participation of women in their reflection. This made us realize that one again it was necessary to be loyal to

our category of analysis "gender" and start to include the reality of men in the analysis, but always in relation to women and the patriarchy which privileges men over women."

Yet, some of the NGOs were less critical and urge for an increased cooperation with several different actors:

"What is missing is to continue developing strategies and alliances with other organizations; LGBTQ, human rights, pro-feminist and women's organizations, in order to expand the work with men and masculinities. We have trouble getting to everything as it is now, we need support and alliances. We are only working in one district, in El Alto. We want to expand the work with masculinities!" (M3)

5.4.3 Obstacles to Link Arenas of Struggles

Depatriarchalization was mentioned as a common struggle by several of my informant's both indigenous, radical and NGO women. However, my interviewees identified several obstacles for successful coalition building. For instance, the radical organizations argued that one of the root causes to the problem within the Bolivian feminist movement is the strong influence of Western feminist gender and human rights politics and the related promotion of leadership and empowerment, as indicated by informant M1:

"A problem that we have identified about women's groups is the fact that they are afraid of working together with other women, due to a fear of envy, a fear of conflicts and discussions that are usually more harmful than fighting with men. One focus of our work is to continue working on these fears and problems among us, women. I believe the gender policies and the promotion of leadership and empowerment are the reasons to this problem– now all women want to be leaders, but not the base. They are applying the patriarchal and hierarchical criteria of leadership which characterize the "masculinist model", according to us this is not the way to go."

A similar opinion was by informant M2:

"Look, I think that in Bolivia a very important challenge is to understand that feminism is not a project about human rights, feminism is a project of social change. So I think that this project has to be explained, because it is a project that has not been explicitly explained politically, so I believe that there is a need for that formulation to come out, but I believe that it is a matter of maturity, it is a matter of promoting that be explained."

Several of the organizations, including some of the NGOs, despite working with foreign development cooperation agencies, mentioned that the international cooperation does many

times reinforce and make the tensions between women's and feminist organizations worse. As illustrated by informant M2:

> "There are still those susceptibilities, that need to be changed, here we have a common purpose, we should not be suspicious of each other, for the time being there is still too much suspicion, and unfortunately cooperation continues to foster suspicion and division, they apply the logic of "divide and rule" (*Niccolo Machiavelli*) because it works!"

Informant M1 explained:

> "It is a challenge to be able to emphasize a cause without losing a comprehensive perspective of the struggle for depatriarchalization. And this is very hard for us because we are an NGO, and I say that with pride in a time where there is a trend to contemn and look down on NGOs, and you have to fight a lot with cooperation, which tries to prioritize only certain issues".

Moreover, another obstacle mentioned was the "cultural feminism" present among indigenous women's organizations. Cultural feminism is the ideology of a "female nature" or "female essence", in which an effort is made to re- validate and redefine undervalued female attributes (Alcoff, 1988: 410-11). In contrast to the minimizing of gender differences, which characterizes poststructuralist perspectives on gender, cultural feminists are committed to the preservation and valuation rather than diminishing of gender differences. Accordingly, they present a tendency towards essentialist conceptions of gender (Alcoff, 1988: 410-11). The majority of the informants from the feminist NGOs brought up this as an obstacle to the creation of coalitions among women since they argued that this view distracts them from the real meaning of feminism and the concept of gender. Informant M2 explained it as follows:

> "I think there are as many feminist currents in the country as we are different women, but the principles and ideals are very similar, if not the same, we are united by the agenda of *despatriarcalization*, and despite the different forms of working with it we have found a priority objective. Yet, the interference of political parties demobilizes and empties the content of this work, that is a constant threat. Another danger is cultural feminisms with their emphasis on costumes and traditions which distracts us from the sense of feminism and gender as a category of analysis, enhancing and promoting camouflaged "macho" norms and costumes."

Informant M1 makes a similar comment:

> "The Aymara-centric ideology and tendency, which values an essentialist and static understanding of culture, and social gender relations based on notions of "complementarity", a construction that ignores the specific demands of women, assumes the absence of gender conflicts and justifies situations of discrimination under the argument of a rights-based approach based on "uses and customs.""

Criticism of NGO terminology

"I do not speak your language, I do not speak your language! and with that I don't refer to Swedish or English, I refer to your "NGO language", I don't speak it!" (F2).

I believe this quote, made by one of the radical feminists, summarizes this chapter very well, in which a dissatisfaction and distrust of these type of organizations; NGOs and foreign development cooperation agencies and their academic theories and concepts such as "gender equality", "human rights" and "new masculinities" is expressed. Since they associate them with white middle-class European thought and knowledge that do not respond to their realities: *"The European and North American women escape my sight, my instinct, my perception, my sensibility and my immediate complicity"* (F1).

As a critique of theoretical standpoints from the West and of universal, essential and reductionist understandings of "women" and feminism, the radical feminists and indigenous women emphasis the building of their own concepts, methodologies and theories based on their distinct reality and experiences. This way of reasoning; to rewrite and rethink the history based on the specific locations and histories of struggle of Third World women, clearly resonates with the proposal of decolonial feminism to "de-colonialize" feminism (Mohanty 52; 392 Velez, 2019).

6. Conclusions

This study makes clear the hyper complexity of Bolivian society at all levels: historical, political, social, cultural, economic, and moral. As examples, we can mention different social strata and cultures, in which one can observe great differences between the urban and rural population. It is also important to mention the strong influence of indigenous cultures in Bolivian society, which is different from other countries in the region. Additionally, there is also a wide diversity within these indigenous groups, providing a great cultural and social mix in Bolivia. Moreover, it is important to mention the classism that exists in Bolivian society which was manifested in the interviews carried out with the Bolivian feminist and women's organizations under study, in which various competing visions, opinions and thoughts were presented in regard to what has shaped Bolivian society, what is actually happening there, and how best to deal with it.

From this diversity of perspectives, the three groups of women's and feminist organizations under study have drawn different conclusions of how to develop their own diagnosis of the situation in their society and how best to engage with it. Consequently, they presented different understandings and ideas with regard to gender, the work with men and masculinities and in regard to their relation to one another and to other social actors in society. These different understandings are translated into different work strategies and solutions to the problems. As the results have shown, feminist NGOs privilege gender, the indigenous organizations, race and class, while the radical feminist organizations combine class, gender, and race in a creative and flexible way. Not only have the organizations under study chosen to give priority to different explanatory factors and accompanying political struggles, they have also developed these in different ways. Their worldviews, agendas and political positions are in conflict with and to certain degrees opposed to each other.

Among all the organizations interviewed, it is feminist NGOs that work more systematically and academically with masculinities, likewise one of the radical organizations also works with masculinities, but in a more intuitive and empirical way. Contrastingly, the other radical feminist organization rejects the work with masculinities because they believe that the masculinity perspective does not challenge patriarchy but rather reinforces a binary understanding of gender. In contrast, for indigenous organizations, the concept of masculinities has no value whatsoever.

It should be noted that feminist NGOs primary focus is on questioning patriarchy, including activating men to raise awareness about their destructive behaviors and attitudes and make them conscious about the harm it has on their families and partners; this work has a unique purpose, to improve the quality of life of women. It can be concluded that, just by including men in these programs, does not mean that they have a masculinity perspective, since a masculinity perspective means basing the analysis on both the reality of women and the reality of men – and the complexity of various types of subordination; understanding the complexity of the hierarchy of power.

There is a tendency in these organizations to return to the essentialization of the category man, categorizing him as responsible for the problem, oppressive and guilty; hence it is questionable whether their work with men and boys really has a masculinity perspective. Some of these organizations work with masculinities based on mixed groups and others on separate and mixed groups. The risk of working only with mixed groups, is that it is very easy to compound the problem by blaming and pointing to the men as oppressors and responsible for the problem, even more so when the facilitator is a woman, this generates – in the end – rejection of the workshops by the men. However, it must be recognized that some feminist NGOs have also found spaces to make groups only for men, where the facilitator is a man and this helps men to open up and reflect, hence creating a space where you can really raise awareness and generate a change in men, but always oriented to a positioning of a social change, where men and women are always seen in relation to each other.

Although several organizations studied have included the masculinity perspective in their work, there is suspicion and distrust in regard to the work with men. For example, often mentioned is the fear of victimization by men, that they do not recognize the work and struggle carried out by feminist women, and use concepts and theories developed by these women without proper reflection and recognition. There is also a doubt on the ability of men to really change, it is important to mention that several of these organizations mention that it is very difficult to achieve this goal because men are comfortable with their privileges given to them by patriarchy. Due to the above, there is a tense relationship between women's organizations towards organizations where there is a greater presence of men working with masculinities, such as LGBTQ organizations, and men's groups among others.

Most of the organizations under study emphasize the importance of the context, the structural aspects, mentioning as an example the criticisms the pose towards "awareness" campaigns that in the end, according to these organizations, end up being mainstream and trendy; since it could generate a slight change in men i.e. changing diapers, help in the kitchen, do housework, etc. but deep down these men remain comfortable and privileged by their condition as men and do not question the patriarchy, and in the end these men do not change their personal and democratic values. In the words of one of the informants, *"[w]hat is the use of a man washing the kitchen, changing diapers, and carrying his infants, if the same man would kill or reject his son if he came out as gay? "*.

To conclude, the work with masculinities in Bolivia can be traced back to the 1980s, through the initiative and work of the pioneer mixed-gender NGO CISTAC, various attempt have been taking place since then to create dialogue with feminist women in regard to the work with men and masculinities, although they did not have the expected success. However, it took until recently – in the last 5 years – for there to be a real interest in working with the theme of masculinities within feminist NGOs, and it coincides with work on masculinities gaining prominence internationally. Hopefully, the initiative for these organizations to work with masculinities is a genuine one; they have recognized men and masculinities as explicitly gendered, they have recognized men as important agents of change in regard to gender equality, and that it is essential to involve men in order to achieve real change. But one cannot neglect the possibility that some of these organizations, since they heavily depend on funding from international cooperation, have an opportunistic tendency in order to obtain greater funds. Having an indicator of masculinities in their programs does not necessarily indicate a real perspective of masculinities.

What kind of common ground is possible?

Bolivian organizations (especially radical and indigenous) should not close themselves and show rejection of everything that comes from outside of Bolivia, it is recommended to look at Western concepts as a resource rather than a rulebook, considering that these concepts are flexible, and using creativity, these can be applied optimally on the reality of Bolivia.

International cooperation is recommended to take a more pragmatic stance, it is necessary to reach a common agreement between international cooperation and Bolivian organizations; the international cooperation must not adopt a morally didactic stance – moral lesson giving – and would do itself credit by adopting a more constructive stance in which an in-depth analysis of the Bolivian context is present to avoid increasing the tension already existing in Bolivian society. It is also recommended that cultural impositions of the countries of origin of international cooperation should be avoided, because, perhaps, the desired results will not be achieved and/or will generate rejection, mockery or indifference by Bolivian organizations – and especially Bolivian society in general, since the message will not be relevant or generate interest due to cultural differences and differences in the socio-historical reality of Bolivia compared to other countries.

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8.1 Appendix – Record of informants

Institutional Organizations Working with Masculinities	Indigenous Organizations	Radical Feminist Organizations
M1	V1	F1
M2	V2	F2
M3	V3	
M4		
M5		