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What were the consequences of Jeanine Áñez's presidency for violence against women in politics in Bolivia?

A single case study of violence against women in politics in Bolivia

By Anna Danielsdottir

Abstract

This study investigates the consequences that female descriptive representation, at the highest executive political position, had on violence against women in politics. More specifically it looks at Jeanine Áñez's presidency and its impact on violence against women in Bolivia. The research question guiding the research is *What were the consequences of Jeanine Áñez's*

presidency for violence against women in politics in Bolivia? The unexpected presidency of Jeanie Áñez in 2019, presented a perfect opportunity to investigate the relation between VAWIP and female chief executive representation, two research areas which remain understudied in comparison to other aspects of female descriptive representation. The research is designed as a single case study, using interviews to collect data. Five women were interviewed, using Pitkin's concept of political representation to analyze the results. The exact consequences and the extent of the consequences of Áñez's presidency remain unanswered and the research calls for further research. However, the study finds that Áñez does not appear to have minimized violence against women in any way, and was perceived as the enemy of women in politics rather than their ally. She appears to have both empowered women to participate in politics, and encouraged women to stay away from politics.

Key words: Violence against women in politics, Bolivia, Jeanine Áñez, Women's political representation

Words: 9

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1. Intro

Violence against women in politics (from here on VAWIP) has received increasing attention in recent years by scholars and policy makers. What has previously been seen as natural aspects of the political career, is now understood as gender based violence threatening democracy. A common tool used by governments has been gender quotas.

However, as Aranda Friz (2020) points out VAWIP is not merely a symptom of the lack of women in the political sphere, but a deeply rooted cultural and political view. Bolivia is an example of this. Bolivia stands out globally as being the first country to explicitly prohibit violence against women in politics by law (Restrepo Sanín 2023). In Latin America Bolivia is amongst the leading countries when it comes to legislation concerning the inclusion and protection of women in politics, using gender quotas which require 50% presence of women in almost all levels of Government.

Nevertheless, female politicians still experience resistance and violence to a high degree in today's Bolivia. Bolivia has thus far only had two female presidents, both serving as interim presidents. The first woman to take power as a president in Bolivia was Lydia Gueiler in 1979-1980 (Skard 2014 : 209-218). Jeanine Áñez is the second woman to become (interim) president in Bolivia 2019, taking over after Evo Morales who was forced to resign as president in a politically tumultuous time in Bolivia.

It has been suggested that the presence of women in parliament has a positive symbolic effect on women constituents (further discussed in section 4.1). Female political chief executives may have an even greater impact on women's possibilities to be politically active as they arguably have more power and visibility than female members of parliament (Alexander & Jalalzai 2020). This thesis aims to investigate the impact Jeanine Áñez's presidency has had on violence against women in politics (in Bolivia).

The research question of this thesis is:

What were the consequences of Jeanine Áñez's presidency for violence against women in politics in Bolivia?

Sub-questions that further guides the research are:

- *Has there been a change in how women are perceived or treated in politics before and after the presidency of Áñez?*
- *Has there been a change in how women perceive themselves in politics before and after the presidency of Áñez?*
- *What did Áñez do during her presidency for women in Bolivian politics?*

1.2 Aim & relevance

The aim of this study is to investigate what implications a female political chief executive might have had on female politicians in terms of VAWIP. In contrast to the vast literature on women's representation in politics and its impact on female constituents or society at large, few studies examine the effect women's representation has had on women already present in parliament or the political sphere. Even fewer studies look at female political leaders and their impact on VAWIP.

In this light the aim of this thesis is to further investigate the Bolivian context, which in terms of VAWIP is paradoxical. The research question of this thesis is both broad and ambitious considering the scope of the study. This study does not pretend to provide all the answers to the research question. Nevertheless the research question in itself is important as it illuminates another approach to VAWIP in the Bolivian context. The aspiration is to provide some knowledge of the possible impact that a female presidency may have on how women are viewed and treated in politics, and inspire further and more extensive research on the topic. The relevance of this research lies in contributing in a small way to the work for equal rights for all, and for a Bolivia where women are seen as equals to men in politics and treated accordingly.

1.3 Definitions and scope

The time frame of this thesis is limited to the period of Jeanine Áñez's presidency (which began 12/11- 2019) to present day. All the consequences of Áñez's presidency might not have presented themselves yet. However this study does not intend to speculate on future implications, but confines us to look at the already visible effects. The study is geographically limited to Bolivia, however does not focus on any specific region in the country or political entity.

1.3.1 What is meant by “women in politics”?

As acknowledged by Restrepo Sanín (2022), women in politics mean different things in different studies. This study uses Cambridge dictionary's definition of politics which classifies politics as “the activities of the government, members of law-making organizations, or people who try to influence the way a country is governed” (Cambridge Dictionary n.d). Although Wineinger (2023) among others points out that transgender and non-binary individuals are also subjects to VAWIP, “women” in this study refers to cis women, as most of the literature available appears to use this categorization. The word “female” is thereby used in this research.

1.3.2 What is VAWIP?

Violence and harassment against politicians is not uncommon and almost seen as part of the job description (Restrepo Sanín 2023, Quintanilla Zapata 2012 : 5). VAWIP, however, differs from “regular” violence against politicians, as it is a form of gender based violence. Women can be subject to both “regular “ violence and VAWIP.

Krook and Restrepo Sanín (2020) explain VAWIP as a process consisting of three levels. VAWIP originates from structural violence based on misogynic political ideas that categorize the political sphere as belonging to men and women belonging to the private sphere. It is expressed as cultural violence which normalizes the behavior. Examples of VAWIP as cultural violence are sexist jokes, blaming the victim (women) for being raped or harrassed and reducing women to merely their physical appearanc ignoring their intellectual capacity and talents. The cultural violence culminates in symbolic violence which internalizes and establishes these ideas as

accepted traditions and cultural values in the society. Ultimately this leads to the understanding that women have no place in politics. The end goal is to keep women away from the political sphere, preserving male hegemony (Krook & Restrepo Sanín 2020, Rojas Valverde 2012).

There are various definitions of VAWIP. Krook and Restrepo Sanín (2020) identify five forms of VAWIP. These are physical, psychological, economic, sexual and semiotic or symbolic violence.¹ The UN Women instead tends to link VAWIP primarily to electoral processes as opposed to viewing VAWIP as a phenomenon present at all times in the life of a female politician (Restrepo Sanín 2020).

It is important to notice that the term “violence” is understood in its broadest form in the context of VAWIP. In other words it does not only refer to physical violence. It can also involve harm or threats towards her family and friends. This means that VAWIP can be difficult to detect sometimes. It is thus important to understand VAWIP as a process of continued aggressions of different forms, and not merely focus on specific events, as the whole context may be lost doing so (Restrepo Sanín 2023, Krook & Restrepo 2020). In addition, VAWIP is also intersectional. Women of color face different and more violence than their white colleagues (Kuperberg 2018).

¹**Physical violence** aims to physically harm the victim whereas physical harassment refers to non consensual physical proximity. The unwanted proximity does not necessarily have to be sexual. It could also involve being physically restricted, for example being locked in a room. **Psychological violence** implies causing psychological trauma, for example being exposed to threats. Psychological harassment refers to discriminating slander. **Sexual violence** entails non consensual sexual acts whereas sexual harassment implies unwanted sexual comments or invitations. **Economic violence** refers to property damage whereas economic harassment means for example refusing to pay salaries. **Semiotic or symbolic violence** is most common on the internet. It attempts to question or delegitimize female politicians. Examples are sexualized pictures (Restrepo Sanín & Krook 2020).

2. Background

2.1 Jeanine Áñez

Jeanine Áñez is a Bolivian lawyer, tv-host and politician. Prior to becoming interim president she served as a senator for 10 years representing Beni, one of the nine political and administrative departments of Bolivia. Jeanine acted for the opposition criticizing Evo Morales and his leftist party MAS (Movimiento Al Socialismo). She is considered ideologically right wing conservative. On the 12th of november 2019 Evo Morales resigned, accused of fraudulent elections². Áñez was assigned the role of interim president after the candidates before her, all allies to Evo Morales, resigned. She was 5th in the line of succession. Her presidency has been acknowledged as constitutionally correct by international agencies. Having been postponed several times, new elections were held on the 18th of October 2020. Luis Arce, ally to Morales, was elected new president. Áñez's presidency continued formally to 8th of november 2020 when Arce was announced as the new president of Bolivia (BBC 2019).

Áñez received quite a lot of criticism during her presidency. Some of it was related to the pandemic and the consequences of lockdown for the society. Her government was also criticized for using excessive violence against civilians and accused of organizing a persecution of political allies to Evo Morales. Having said that she would not run for president in the new elections she, nevertheless, announced her candidacy during spring 2020, only to withdraw it later. In 2022 Jeanine Áñez was sentenced for 10 years in prison for allegedly having organized a coup to overthrow Evo Morales. According to Áñez, her conviction is a result of political persecution (The New York Times 2022).

² Evo Morales was accused of election fraud when announcing himself as winner in the 2019 election (candidating for his 4th term as president, going against the term limit of 3). This gave rise to violent demonstrations and great political tensions. A few weeks later Morales was forced to resign. This led some to believe that the election was not a fraud, but a coup d'état to overthrow Morales (who had been president for 13 consecutive years). The country is still divided between those who believe the political chaos in 2019 to have been caused by a fraud or coup d'état (McFarren, Arnade 2023, Wolff 2020).

2.2 Legal framework

This section will only focus on the national framework for VAWIP. There are however both regional and global conventions that further obligate Bolivia to take action against VAWIP. Much of the parity politics is embedded in the new constitution from 2009, implemented during the presidency of Evo Morales.

Summarized, the constitution establishes the equal right to political participation as well as access to power for both men and women. It addresses the right to participate politically at all levels, on equal terms for both genders. All types of discrimination are prohibited, gender based violence being mentioned explicitly. In addition to the constitution Bolivia also has a number of laws that specifically target the descriptive representation and discrimination of women in the political field.

The most famous one is law 246³ which explicitly prohibits harassment and violence against women in politics, implemented 2012. Prior to that the laws 018 and 026 already existed, implemented 2010, which establish gender quotas for women ensuring their descriptive representation at all levels of government. These require that 50% of the representatives in parliament must be women. They also implement a system of alternance which ensures that both women and men reach leadership positions.

Law 045, implemented 2010 and 348, implemented 2013, prohibit all forms of discrimination, specifically mentioning racism and violence against women. Law 2096 calls for the depatriarchalizing of the government at all levels, ensuring gender parity at a deeper level. This is the newest law and was aggregated in 2018 (UN Women 2023 : 21-33).

2.3 What is the situation in Bolivia?

In April 2023, UN Women Bolivia released a report analyzing the state of VAWIP in the country during the years 2020-2021. It primarily looks at VAWIP during the two elections that were held at the time, but also makes general remarks. In the report they conclude that VAWIP is

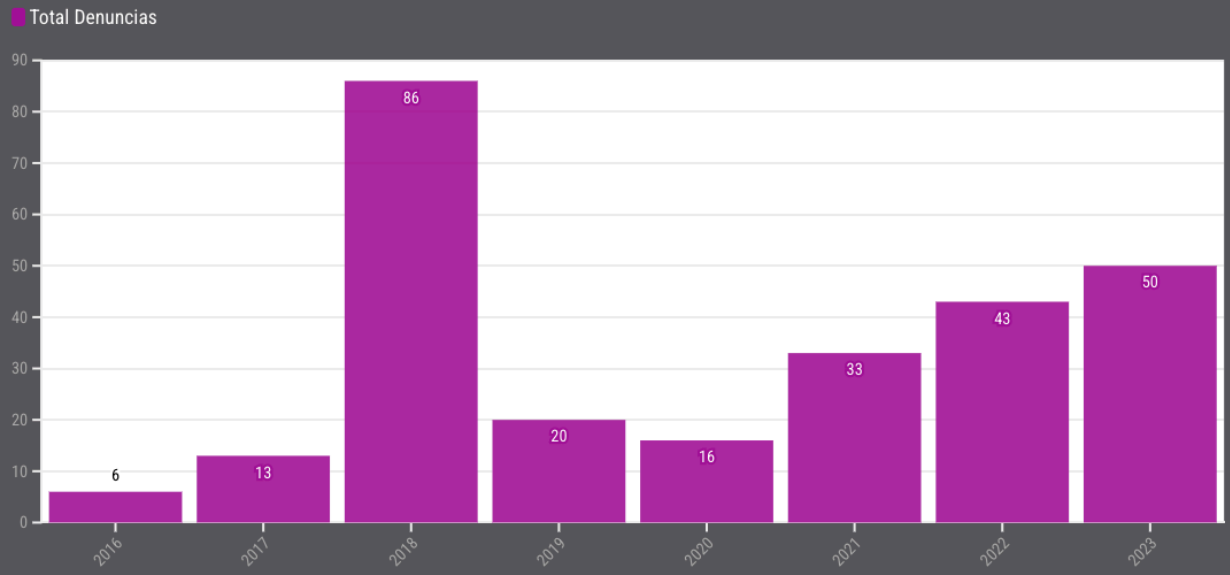
³ The Bolivian law, expressed in law 243 divides VAWIP into two categories: political harassment (acoso político) and political violence (violencia política). Political harassment refers to acts of persecution, being pressured, threatened by one or several people. Political violence refers to physical, sexual or psychological aggression. For both categories the acts are aimed at politically active women in any sense or their friends and family. It can be direct or indirect actions. The law identifies 17 forms of political harassment and violence against women. (ONU 2023 : 28)

still prevalent at all levels, particularly at the municipal level. VAWIP in terms of harassment and threats expressed online (Ciberacoso) increased. Female candidates for the executive positions such as mayor were below 15% (UN Women 2023 : 17, 41). The political turbulence from 2019 and the pandemic appears to have further polarized the political elite. Party alliances were favored at the expense of solidarity and cooperation among female politicians. Apart from using VAWIP to keep the male hegemony at a status quo, women were also used in the conflict between the political parties, for example using them as scapegoats or to gain popularity (UN Women 2023 : 42).

In a more general notion VAWIP in Bolivia is not expressed so much in physical violence, compared to regional and global examples (Kishi 2021). Instead more subtle and at times complex measures are taken, to the extent that the victim herself might not even recognize it as VAWIP (UN 2023 : 41-43). Typical examples are the wrongful use of the legislation, such as the gender quotas and alternance law. Male politicians tend to include their female relatives or other women allied to them, to reach the gender quota requirements. These women preferably have no experience or interest in political work, and the men are thus left alone to take political decisions. As opposed to choosing or including professionally qualified and interested women, who might have an opinion (Restrepo Sanín 2022). A politician from one of Bolivia's municipalities, El Alto, explained women's current situation in politics as “In El Alto the woman participates but doesn't decide” (“En El Alto la mujer participa pero no decide”). This indicates that descriptive representation thus far has had limited impact (Alianza por la solidaridad 2018 : 35).

Included below is a graph from OEP (Organo Electoral Plurinacional) demonstrating the recent statistics of reported incidents of VAWIP in Bolivia from 2016-2023. Denuncias means reports, and Acoso y Violencia política means political harassment and violence.

Denuncias por acoso y violencia política que se registran en los Tribunales Electorales Departamentales y el Tribunal Supremo Electoral: Gestiones 2016 hasta 2023



Fuente: Observatorio de Paridad Democrática – TSE, datos al 29 de diciembre de 2023, [Descargar los datos](#)

3. Theory

This thesis uses Pitkin's theory of political representation. She is considered one of the most influential thinkers within political representation, with her work the *Concept of representation* (1967) being cited over and over again. Although there are newer theories on political representation (See for example Saward 2010) most of them are based on Pitkin's concept. She is used or referenced in several texts on women and politics, including VAWIP. Scholars tend to focus on one specific dimension, most commonly descriptive or substantive representation. However, Pitkin argues that the dimensions are interconnected and should thus be used together. Schwindt-Bayer (2005) confirms and re-emphasizes this in a comparative study.

Pitkin's concept of political representation combines definitions and conceptualizations from previous scholars, creating a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Pitkin 1967). According to her, political representation is about making present the constituents' voices and perspectives heard (Dovi 2015). Her concept consists of four different perspectives on political representation. According to Pitkin it is important to consider all four views and treat them as a unity (Schwindt-Bayer 2010).

3.1 Formalistic representation

Formalistic representation describes the institutional framework for representation. It also describes how the representatives are allowed to exercise their power. What is evaluated in this perspective are the rules for authorization and accountability. How representatives got to their position, for example elections, and the mechanisms available to constituents to hold their representatives accountable. The actions of the representative are determined by the institutional framework. The individual and their actions are thus not evaluated, but the institutional structures are, as these are what guides the representative (Dovi 2015).

3.2 Descriptive representation

Descriptive representation evaluates the extent to which representatives resemble the constituents. This could for example be in terms of physical appearance, ethnicity, background, occupation, age or gender. By sharing certain characteristics with the constituents the representatives are seen as representing or “standing for” these constituents. It is thus primarily about different types of people being represented, e.g women representing women. Similar to formal representation this concept does not assess how the representatives behave but rather who they are representing and the quantity of representatives for each group of constituents. A common concern is the inequality in descriptive representation between men and women in politics (Dovi 2015).

3.3 Substantive representation

Substantive representation refers to the actions taken by the representative for the represented. The extent to which they act in the interest of the constituents. Unlike the above mentioned views on representation this concept does evaluate how the representative behaves. How well they represent the constituents. Theorists are divided between whether mandates should do what they think best or have to do exactly what the constituents wish. According to Pitkin, substantive representation is the most important aspect of political representation (Dovi 2015).

3.4 Symbolic representation

Symbolic representation describes the meaning or value that a representative provides for the represented. The main interest is how the representatives are perceived by the constituents. If they feel represented, rather than if they actually are represented in terms of for example legislation or physically. The evaluation of symbolic representation tends to build on intuition rather than facts according to Pitkin. She also points out the difference between following a leader and perceiving the leader as an accepted and respected symbol (Dovi 2015). Generally

symbolic representation is not seen as a component of its own but rather a dependent variable or consequences of the three other aspects of representation (Lombardo & Meier 2013).

4. Conceptual framework

4.1 Women and representation

For a long time women's descriptive representation was in focus, academically and politically. The core idea was that if only women were allowed into the political sphere, gender parity would be established automatically. One of the most influential theories within this line of thinking is the critical mass theory, introduced by Oliver, Marwell & Teixeira (1985) particularly amongst policy-makers. One example of this is the amount of gender quotas that have been implemented worldwide by more than 100 countries, including Bolivia and various other Latin American countries (Krook & Norris 2014).

Research on women's descriptive representation and its connection to substantive representation has found mixed evidence. Studies have shown that women legislators tend to act in the interest of women to a larger extent than men (Lawless 2004, Sue & Wilcox 2014). It is not always the case however. Critics argue that there is no set list of "women's interest" or that all women want to act in the interest of other women. There are a diverse range of women with different backgrounds and their needs and interests will vary accordingly. Childs & Krook (2009) instead suggest thinking in terms of critical actors. As opposed to assuming automatic correlation between women's descriptive and substantive relationship. This theory emphasizes the importance of who the individual is and its interests, rather than assuming that gender is an essential component. Merino Casallo (2022) exemplifies this by stating that not only left-wing politicians and women act for women, and not all women and left-wing politicians act for women.

Mackay (2008) also points out the role that institutional settings play in women's substantive representation. As mentioned in section 2.3, the mere inclusion of women in political positions does not imply that they will automatically have any real power or impact. It is thus crucial to understand the internal structures and practices that occur in the political sphere at whichever, to understand the policy outcomes. This approach is called "thick description".

The relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation has been less studied, but is increasingly gaining more importance in the literature. There are mixed findings (Lawless 2004, Gilardi 2015, High-pippert, & Comer 1998, Burnett 2011). Several studies seem to find a relation between the increase of women in politics and women wanting to engage politically. Others focus on the complexity of symbolic representation. Shirin (2017) discusses the importance of aesthetics and appearances in politics. Arguing that the symbolic representation lies in the aesthetics as well. Yet, other research finds that impact limited. Liu (2018) finds that the symbolic impact, seeing women political executives as role models or inspiration has had the opposite effect on women constituents in East and SouthEast Asia. They are less encouraged to participate politically.

4.2 Female political executives

Compared to female legislators, women in the executive branch are more varied in their attempts to pursue legislation favorable to women and they also do it to a lesser extent. This seems to depend on the personal traits and background of the chief executive as well as the country context. Being ideologically aligned with the feminist movement appears to have an impact. As with women in the legislative branch, Latin America is one of the leading regions when it comes to the number of women executives (Jalalzai 2013, 2020, O'Brien & Housholder 2020).

O'Brien & Housholder (2020) question whether it is the job of the chief political executive to represent a particular group and their interests, but perhaps rather the legislators responsibility. In this view emphasis should be put on women in the legislative branch rather than the executive. On the other hand they also raise other perspectives which argue that the failure to exclude women from the executive position is a loss of potential and development for the country. In line with several others (Mansbridge 1999, Alexander & Jalalzai 2020) they also mention the symbolic impact of only having male chief executives. It is arguably the most visible political position and largely associated with a lot of power. It signals that only men are allowed or belong to one of the most powerful positions of a country.

Considering this, the symbolic power of a female chief political executive could be expected to be greater than that of female members of parliament. The executives are more

visible and the symbolism of having reached the most powerful position is impressive (Alexander & Jalalzai 2020).

Wahman, Yildirim and Frantzeskakis (2021) analyzed the presidency of Joyce Banda in Malawi, 2012-2014, and her symbolic value for women in politics. They investigated her impact on the parliamentarians and not on the constituents. Similar to Añez she did not reach power through election. It 'fell upon her' after the sudden death of the president when she was the vice president. This meant that her political position was weak to begin with and contested. The study concludes that representation of female executives can have a positive effect on women in politics. It also discussed the possibilities of a backlash. Becoming chief executive broke the ultimate barrier for a female political career, and was thus likely to have an extra impact on female politicians. And quite so, female members of parliament were heard more often in the parliament during her presidency. However her loss of popularity might lead to a rebound negative effects for the women in Malawian politics.

A regional example is Dilma Rousseff in Brazil. Her presidency has come to be known as the 'Dilma effect'. She included many women in her government, as ministers, including key posts (3 out of 4). Her policies were not groundbreaking, but rather an extension of previous policies by Lula. Nevertheless they were beneficial policies for the female constituents (Jalalzai & Dos Santos 2015). Female politicians appointed by Rousseff felt more comfortable and seen in her government, in comparison to Lula's government who arguably delivered on substantive representation for the women of Brazil (Jalalzai & Dos Santos 2015). It appears that Rousseff also inspired women to run for the elections of 2012 where an increase in female participation was noticeable. Dilma Rousseff erased the idea that women were outsiders in the political arena. Some argue that her political success was more a result of Lula's party politics than a consequence of her being a woman in a top position (Jalalzai & Dos Santos 2015). Michele Bachelet is another example from the region who is seen as having had a positive influence on women constituents' lives. Her impact is however also questioned for not having been revolutionary or extent (Stevenson 2012).

4.3 VAWIP

As described in the background VAWIP stems from patriarchal views on gender roles. Increasing the descriptive representation of women is often thought of as the solution to VAWIP. This view is shared amongst women members of parliament in Europe (IPU 2018). In her book (2020), Krook does not discard the possible impact women in politics may have in terms of changing the work environment within the political sphere. However, she highlights the importance of using various methods to eradicate VAWIP, both general ones as well as specific ones targeting each type of VAWIP. Raising awareness is one important measure. Making the issue visible may be empowering but also frightening. If focus is not put on enforcing the law and formulating it specific enough, there is a risk of the law being a powerless paper product. Critics point out that using law enforcement as a solution misses the point that there should be a structural system change in the society (Krook 2020 : 217-230).

5. Method

5.1 Research design

This research is designed as an explorative single case study. It is an intrinsic case study in the sense that the primary research interest is the case in itself, considering the rarity of Bolivia having a female president and the country's high ambitions when it comes to women's equality in the political sphere. A qualitative design was preferred to a quantitative one as the research question looks for experiences and perceptions. The design is context bound, which allows for in-depth analysis of the issue at hand as well as flexibility in terms of research methods (Robson & McCartan 2016 : 149).

5.2 Research method

Interviews were chosen as the sole method in this study. The goal of the interviews was to investigate the personal perceptions and opinions of the interviewees on the possible effect of the Áñez presidency on VAWIP in Bolivia. Semi-structured interviews were used as it allows room for unexpected topics (Punch : 174-175).

The document analysis and second hand data was focussed specifically on one of the research questions; *What did Jeanine Áñez do about violence against women in politics?*

Although effort was put on making the interviewees comfortable, it is still possible that the interviewees have adapted their answers based on their perceptions of me as an interviewer or other circumstances, unknown to me, leading to biased views (Robson & McCartan 2016 : 285).

5.3 Data Collection

Five women, with connections to politics, were interviewed. Three of the participants were representatives from three Bolivian NGOs which all work with violence against women in politics. The fourth participant is a former co-worker at the ministry of government (ministerio del gobierno) who worked during Jeanine Áñez's presidency. The fifth interviewee is an architect and local politician in her municipality, a small village in South of Bolivia.

Each participant was interviewed once for 30-45 minutes. All interviews were held online. The intention was to hold them via Zoom, however due to technical difficulties with Zoom they were held through Whatsapp instead. Three of the interviews were held with the camera on, whereas the remaining two interviews were held without camera, following the preferences of the participants. Only the voices, no camera footage, were recorded. The recorded interviews were transcribed later.

The sampling of the participants occurred in two ways. During the time the interviews were conducted I was an intern at the Swedish embassy in Bolivia. The representatives from the NGO:s were known to the embassy and I got the contact details from my supervisor at the embassy. The two remaining participants were found through personal contacts. The intention was to have a sample size with women from different backgrounds and experiences, but with knowledge of VAWIP in Bolivia or personal experiences of it. Male participants were not included in this study.

Conducting interviews online, as opposed to meeting face to face poses certain challenges but can also be beneficial. In the context of this study conducting interviews in person was not possible in terms of geographics, time and finance. Authenticity is more difficult to verify in online interviews. There might also be more distractions during the interview (Busher & James 2016). However all the participants were known to me to some extent and their identity could therefore be verified by me. Possible outside influences in the interview situation out of reach for the camera scope and audible contact can be neither denied nor verified.

5.4 Data analysis

The data was analyzed using the thematic coding approach, first described by Boyatis (1998). The data was first labeled and organized according to different themes, using theory-driven codes (Braun & Clarke 2006). This means that themes were taken from Pitkin's concept of representation and the codes derived from these themes. The approach consists of 6 steps.

The first step is familiarizing oneself with the data. I first conducted all the interviews and later familiarized myself with each interview separately. This was done in two steps. First I transcribed each interview in Spanish. The original transcripts are exact and without punctuations as these can risk changing the meaning of the words (Braun & Clarke 2006). Punctuations were later added to the quotes seen in this thesis in steps 4 and 5, to make them easy to read. When all interviews were transcribed I went through them again. This time I looked up specific words and translated Bolivian expressions to English, to make sure that I had understood them correctly. Lastly I read through the entire data set, adding comments on the sidelines for possible codes.

The second step entails coding. In this step I used online color markers in Google Drive. The initial plan was for the codes to emerge inductively. However, as I familiarized myself with the text in the first step it made more sense to use a deductive approach. The codes therefore emerged based on Pitkin's concept of representation. The coding took a semantic approach which means that the data was analyzed and coded according to what was described, rather than trying to find underlying meanings of the data (Braun Clarke 2006).

The third step was organizing the data according to themes, which in my study were already pre specified according to Pitkin's four views of representation. I opened a new document to create a new structure of the data set according to these themes. The original transcripts remained unedited but coded with markers. In the new document I both summarized the data set and used large chunks of quotes from the interviews when organizing the information.

The fourth step implied reviewing the coded data set and the themes, which was done in two steps (Braun & Clarke 2006). I first reviewed the coded data, refined it by sorting out which data to include in the coded categories and reorganized it accordingly. I kept the same main themes throughout the process. In the second step the entire data set with the initial coding was reviewed again. This was done to ensure that the themes correctly represent the data set (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The fifth step was refining the new data set. In this step I primarily focused on choosing which and how many quotes to include. In this step I also translated the quotes to English using the online source *Spanish dictionary*.

The sixth step was the final step and involved writing the final analysis so that it could be included in the study (Braun & Clarke 2006). In this step I reviewed each theme separately as well as the analysis as a whole.

5.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations taken in this study have been guided by Robson and McCartan (2016).

5.5.1 Interviews

The first consideration regards the circumstances under which the interviews were held. In line with the feminist perspective, the power dynamic in an Interviewee-interviewer relationship was considered and intentionally minimized as much as possible. It is inevitably the researcher who holds the power in terms of what to do with the information given by the interviewees.

It was thereby of high importance to ensure that the interviewees were well informed of the aim and purpose of the study, and how the data was going to be used. They were provided with this information both in the invitation letter as well as prior to starting the interviews. It was

also important that they consented in advance to being interviewed and to the interviews being recorded. A special consideration was taken to the possibility that sensitive topics might arise during the interviews as VAWIP can cause emotional reactions. Although the participants do not face any immediate danger participating in this study, precautions and extra consideration has been taken in terms of not including the names of the interviewees. Instead they are referred to as participant 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 in the results, see section 6. However, their professional background is included to a degree to give some source context of the results.

5.5.2 Positionality

Another important ethical consideration to be made is the positionality of me as a researcher. I am a 23-year old nordic, caucasian girl doing her bachelor thesis. During the time I conducted the interviews I was an intern at the Swedish embassy in La Paz, Bolivia. The participants were all Bolivian professionals and older than me. Based on who I am and my background as well as (who) the participants (are), there might have arisen biases affecting the results of the interview study. Especially considering the cultural differences (Punch 1995 : 174).

5.5.3 Translation

The Interviews were held in Spanish and all sources are either in English or Spanish, which are not my native languages. However both are languages that I manage well and practice continually. I translated the contents of the study by myself with the aid of a trusted digital translator (Spanish dictionary) to avoid misinterpretations as much as possible. In the case of specific Bolivian expressions, I asked my Bolivian friends for the exact definition. Nevertheless, there is a possibility of misinterpretation or inaccuracy in the translation.

5.6 Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that ought to be taken into consideration. To begin with, the sample size is small, both in quantity and in terms of perspectives and experiences represented. This has affected the study in two ways. The internal generalizability

decreases with a small sample and scarcity of perspectives and insights (Robson & McCartan 2016 : 369). Although the intention behind the sampling was to gather different experiences and perspectives there might be a bias caused by the method used to find the interviewees.

The sample size is however a problem that cannot be fully erased as a sample of this kind is never complete nor can all perspectives and experiences ever be represented. In this case the sample size was restricted because of time constraints and lack of participants willing to be interviewed.

Flexible designs, such as this one, pose various risks to the validity and reliability of the study. To increase the validity of the study it is important that the researcher remains true to the data (Robson & McCartan 2016 : 462, 170-171). The interviews were thus recorded to facilitate correct transcripts. The results were also analyzed with an open mind with the intention to avoid bias. This possibility of bias can however never be excluded fully as researchers are always affected by their surroundings and background to some extent (Robson & McCartan 2016 : 170-171). In terms of reliability I as a researcher have tried to be as honest as possible with my methods, describing them in detail to demonstrate how I conducted this study. Triangulation, using a multimethod approach to confirm the same result would have increased the validity.

Common critique of case studies is that they do not allow for generalizability as they depend entirely on context (Punch 1995 : 145-146). I argue that this study may still contribute with some insights, despite being contextual, considering that female chief political executives and VAWIP as research areas still remain small. As Restrepo Sanín (2023) puts it, qualitative research is needed to provide data for qualitative research.

Lastly, I as a researcher am limited in that I lack experience in conducting studies. This may particularly have affected the interviewee as it is a craft that cannot only be studied but has to be practiced. Careful planning and preparation was done before the interviews to get the best possible results (Punch 1995 : 171-174).

6. Results

6.1 Formal representation

As mentioned in the background Jeanine Áñez was not elected to the presidency and her claim to power is debated. In the interviews the participants questioned or objected to the legitimacy of Áñez's presidency, using words such as “undemocratic”, “unconstitutional” and “fishy business” [algo como que de fato]. All but one participant, described the resignation of Morales and Áñez's interim presidency as Coup d'etat, [Golpe de Estado]. One participant described the government as a “ Totally anti-democratic coup government” and “an absolutely traitorous, perverse, bad, violent, criminal government that criminalizes and penalizes popular social movements”- Participant 1. When asked to analyze the consequences of Áñez's presidency, some of the interviewees said that had it been a “democratic government” the outcomes might possibly have been different, meaning the impact on VAWIP.

The extent to which Áñez held actual power as president was also questioned by the participants. There seemed to be a general understanding amongst the interviewees that Jeanine Áñez was being used by her male colleagues. That she was perhaps not the one making the political decisions but her male colleagues. This does not only appear to have affected her credibility as president but also her substantive representation according to the interviews. Some described her becoming president as being “put there” or “chosen” by her male colleagues. Symbolic reasons (which will be discussed further down) and having characteristics as submissive and passive were mentioned as reasons to why she got the presidential role. All but one of the interviewees denied Áñez having become president according to the constitutional succession.

“There was an obvious incursion of men and there was the government minister who apparently was the one who told her (Jeanine Áñez) what to do, and that's where the government

was wasted at a time when it could really mean a change for the country and especially for women in the country.” - Participant 2

“Women are used for political purposes, for that image of women as loving, frail and tender, they are used. So for me this woman Jeanine Áñez has been used to save a situation and establish power in an arbitrary way of an entire group that has basically assaulted power” - Participant 3

6.2 Descriptive representation

When it comes to descriptive representation the participants voiced different opinions. One participant said that there was hope initially that having a woman as a president would finally change things for women in politics and women in general, which indicates some feeling of being represented in terms of gender.

“Before president Áñez there were already many women in politics but it was a great hope for all Bolivian women to have a female president because if I am not mistaken it is more than 30 or 40 years that we have not had a president (woman). That was the hope that in addition to an ugly moment a woman, whoever she is, would take charge of that”. - Participant 2

Other participants did not feel represented or identify themselves with Jeanine Áñez. Having dyed her hair blonde and caring a lot for her appearance and beauty, distanced Áñez from “normal” women according to the interviewees. She did not resemble them or live the reality of most Bolivian women, and was therefore not relatable. As one participant put it her looks and lifestyle highlighted issues of race, class and gender.

“It was the image of “The woman”, a beautiful woman that does not represent the group of all bolivian women. We bolivian women are small, we are brunettes, really, I do not have anything blond” - Participant 1

“ A woman with dark skin but blonde hair. So here everything that is the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity and class is mixed and crossed. She is a woman, she is very religious, and she is morocha [brown] like us but she is blond, so she is not so much like us anymore. ” - Participant 3

One participant said that it was first when Jeanine Áñez was prosecuted and incarcerated that she became more relatable. That she was too, in the end, a Bolivian woman, and also felt the consequences of the patriarchy and the injustice of the judicial system. The interviewee however wanted to make it clear that she did not feel sorry for Jeanine, seeing that she tried to make women return to old gender roles and also contributing to greater poverty, especially amongst women (according to the participant).

Some of the women also suggested that descriptive representation is not really important. That having a woman in a political position does not automatically imply change for women. The importance instead lies in the ideas and perspectives of the person in power, and this according to the participants does not depend on gender necessarily.

At a municipal level change is visible, however, depending on the gender of the leadership. One participant said that people generally have a narrow idea of the popular movement and change having to come from the top. But according to her there are a lot of women in the neighborhoods and villages that are critical of the patriarchal structure and possess the power to change. She even referred to the case of Jeanine Áñez's presidency as an example of the danger it might be for women in general having the wrong person with the wrong values at the top.

“The first thing to say and recognize is that being a woman does not guarantee anything. We tried it and it did not help us. On the contrary to (positive) change it allowed the setback in several ways. So this (having a female executive) does not guarantee you. It is not an automatic question you are a woman and being a woman will change the situation, it is not so automatic. I don't know if I ever thought “and what if it was a woman who takes over”. I would think a lot more in general and integral global terms, than to say “oh a woman has to lead”. It should be someone with meaning and integrity, with political sense and own thoughts of working for well-being for collective growth” - Participant 1

6.3 Substantive representation

None of the 5 interviewees reported any evident or visible actions taken (substantive representation) by Áñez and her government to improve the situation for women in politics. One interviewee said that Áñez had attempted to take action for women in Bolivia, and mentioned a new law passed during her presidency (which she could not remember exactly) that concerned women and violence, but “she [Áñez] did not succeed 100%” - Participant 2.

According to the same interviewee, lack of official or real autonomy (in her opinion), the pandemic and the short time period of her presidency are some explanations for her lack of action. The results from the interviews speak of a political persecution of politicians from the Evo Morales-led government. Although specific details are not mentioned, participants speak of houses being burned, violence and harassment. The political persecution was not only aimed at women but against both sexes. Considering that the affected victims were politicians of both genders allied to Evo Morales, suggests that it was not necessarily a case of VAWIP. Nevertheless it had a negative impact on the women affected by the persecution.

“This (referring to the progress made in regards to women in politics) is not the subject of effective exercise of politics, this started in some way before the presidency of Jeanine Áñez, so for me there have been no substantive or effective changes, nothing” - Participant 4

Some talked about an increase in violence against women in general, and also particularly against women in politics. One participant said that violence was the nature of Áñez’s government, it was the way in which they solved conflicts and ruled the country. Female political authorities in the countryside were, according to one participant, most exposed to political violence during Áñez’s presidency as they were more visible in the villages, the face of the municipalities. *“Las que tenían la cara social de la gestión municipal”- Participant 4*

“Yes, there was a lot of violence towards the authorities in general, that is, towards women, towards men. They burned houses, chased them, they harassed them, that is what Áñez did ... during the time and period that this lady has lasted in the presidency, [she] has never

done anything to support women's situations of violence, she has exercised much more violence against women ... [she] used violence to force them [her female colleagues] to resign. And I am certain of it because I received the reports and complaints" - Participant 4

"The violence was terrible, the violence that was committed against the female deputy senators ... I remember that the television showed Adriana (a senator during Áñez's presidency) and how they had teared her blouse open" - Participant 1

Lastly, when asked about the statistics from OEP, seen in section 1.2.3 none of the participants seemed to automatically connect the increase in VAWIP and resignations to Jeanine Áñez's presidency but rather pointed at the malpractice of the alternance law, which forces women to resign, and a general increase amongst female politicians to report incidents of VAWIP.

6.4 Symbolic representation

When it comes to the symbolic representation the interviews indicate mixed effects. Some of the participants witness positive impacts from having Áñez as a president and her governance. One such impact is having inspired other women to engage in politics or to climb higher in their political careers. This inspiration seems to have sprung both from a sense of empowerment, seeing that a woman can reach the political elite and that women are the only ones that can be counted on in times of crises.

As one of the participants put it *"it was shown that women are those who wear the pants"*- Participant 2. However, the inspiration to continue to be politically active also seems to have come from disappointment and realization that women, who do not surrender to the male dominance, really are needed in politics. Another observation that was mentioned was the way women in politics were treated. The participants who had worked for the ministry of government during the transition period experienced and accounted for a better treatment of women in politics by their co-workers, in the beginnings of Áñez's presidency. The reason being the presence of a woman at the top. This effect seems to have been only temporary. According to the interviewee the effect stopped when Áñez announced her candidacy for the coming elections.

“Yes, I could say that having already had a Female president in Bolivia, it has encouraged us a little in a certain way also to lose the denial too, it has generated an impulse, to call it so, that women are also capable, that we women have to be in the political sphere because of our gender.” - Participant 5

Others attested to negative consequences in the sense that the participants found that *Áñez* had only worsened the situation for women in politics. Both interviews and the analyses from CEPAL report a religious discourse, which emphasized traditional gender roles and the virtue of being a mother, implying that women do not belong in the political or public sphere, but rather in the private space of home. The lack of substantive representation seems to have affected *Áñez's* symbolic representation. Feelings of being let down and not being able to trust women to help each other in contrast to the feeling of empowerment and urge to engage more in politics were expressed by two of the participants.

“I think it affected negatively. One, to realize that if you want to have a share of the power as a woman, you have to sell yourself. It is the message that in the end has remained. Another message that has remained is that if you are a woman and you want to be in the political arena, you have a position of power but in the end you are the one who pays for the broken dishes. Another lesson that has been given has been that I am a woman, I am in power but I do nothing for my peers, for other women” - Participant 3

There were also beliefs that the reason she was “put” in the position of becoming the president was due to symbolic reasons. Women are perceived differently than men, more caring and perhaps less ruthless or cold.

“But the way men have decided that this woman should become the president of a nation that has not chosen her, also shows us that women in politics are very convenient. Convenient to lower the tone of violence, to lower the tone of discontent, to lower the tone of illegality. It is what that woman has done. She, as many women in politics in our country, was being used. Used for a political purpose.” - Participant 3

7. Discussion

The study results are mixed.

Beginning with the first question: *Has there been a change in how women are perceived or treated in politics before and after the presidency of Áñez?*

The results indicate that VAWIP continued during Áñez's presidency. According to the statistics from OEP, VAWIP increased slightly during her presidency, and the resignations peaked in 2021. Now, none of the participants confirmed that women were treated or seen particularly differently when asked directly, but rather stated that VAWIP prevailed and had not decreased. Except for the one participant that had witnessed a positive change at first, which had later vanished.

They explained the increase in resignations having to do with the alternance law. The increase in the number of VAWIP reports reflects a recent trend of women reporting more and more, rather than the actual cases having increased. Yet, on the other hand two participants had a very strong perception that violence had definitely increased during Áñez's presidency, referring to the political persecution. This event affected both men and women from the opposition and was primarily politically motivated. It should thus not automatically be considered as VAWIP.

That being said, there might have been incidents of VAWIP during the persecution, where the motives were not primarily political. As mentioned in the background, section 1.3.2, "regular" violence and VAWIP are often intertwined and women are victims of both. The incident which was briefly mentioned by one of the participants of a senator having had her blouse ripped open on TV might suggest VAWIP.

As for the second question: *Has there been a change in how women perceive themselves in politics before and after the presidency of Áñez?*

It appears that Jeanine Áñez ensued quite limited sense of empowerment amongst female politicians, in terms of figuring as a role model. She appears to have motivated some women to further engage politically both by acting as a "worst case scenario", inspiring them to want to do a better job than her. But also showing that women are capable. Her religious and conservative rhetoric could possibly have refrained female politicians from fighting for a career. This could

explain the low number of applicants to the executive positions found in the UN report (2023). The study has not found any real evidence of this, but rather speculates based on the results.

Lastly the third question:

The participants were at large in agreement that she did not do anything for women in politics. Although one participant had some notion that Jeanine had implemented a policy which regarded women but not VAWIP per se. She could not remember the law specifically however. There were no specific mentionings of VAWIP or women in politics.

Yet, as mentioned by one of the participants in the results, policy changes takes time to implement and Ñez was merely an interim president. Her head mission was to ensure that a new election could be held. In addition the pandemic took place in the beginnings of her presidency which arguably stole a lot of focus from other things. Mentioned in the conceptual framework, section 4.3, Bolivia's issue is perhaps not the legislative framework but rather the poor implementation of it. Policy changes are perhaps not to be expected but rather internal normative regulations such as codes of conduct for the parties or disciplinary conversations. If any measures of the sort were implemented they were not widespread as none of the interviewees had noticed anything.

One main issue for Ñez was her formal representation. She was not elected, and took on the responsibility during very turbulent times. This in turn came to affect the entire perception of her. Even though she is a Bolivian woman and arguably represented women descriptively. She was not perceived as one of “us”, but rather as one of “them”. She was seen as someone who had sold her integrity to the male hegemony to get to the position she was in, instead of having defeated the male hegemony. Thus symbolically she did not represent women in politics either, instead she had surrendered to the male game. Her conservative and religious rethorics further fortified this image. In terms of substantive representation she was one of the perpetrators. She herself allegedly exercised VAWIP on her female colleagues.

Yet, at the same time the interviewees seemed to agree that she had been used, which could imply that she herself was subject to VAWIP. This raises the question of her autonomy as president. According to the interview results she did not make the decisions but was merely used. This could possibly explain the lack of actions taken by her government against VAWIP, if she was not the one making the political decisions. On the other hand Evo Morales is a male and was

the one to implement most of the regulation against VAWIP seen today, with the help of feminist local organizations. It could also just be a personality trait and lack of interest within Áñez to act in solidarity with her fellow colleagues.

Her possible lack of autonomy and real power could also explain why there did not seem to be any real increase in VAWIP, indicating a backlash, which is commonly connected to women gaining more power. The male colleagues did not see her as a threat. The results can either be interpreted as demonstrating the importance of formal representation. However they could also indicate that women chief executives are not necessarily essential or automatically good for battle against VAWIP, which is argued in the critical actor theory.

To conclude, female politicians still experienced VAWIP during and after Áñez's presidency, part of it exercised by the president herself, who forced colleagues to resign. Violence directed at politicians increased during her presidency, but not necessarily VAWIP. The extent of her symbolic representation is difficult to establish. While there were experiences of feeling empowered and inspired. There were also strong perceptions of Áñez having symbolized the regression of women's political life. How many that identify with either of these two perceptions is unknown. The study has not found any more specific consequences but sees the need for further research.

The failure to implement the current legislation regarding VAWIP demonstrates how well ingrained and institutionalized the misogynic gender roles are in Bolivian society. Besides a need for reinforcing the political institutions in Bolivia, hard work needs to be done in terms of changing the cultural beliefs regarding gender norms in the country. Although this study can conclude that Áñez was not a very positive influence for VAWIP. The idea that a women chief executive might inspire real cultural change should not be discarded entirely. A lot indicates that her formal representation was a huge issue in terms of getting women and men to trust and respect her. This being said, this study cannot at the same time not say that as long as women are elected as chief executives positive changes will follow. Further studies will have to be done to investigate this, when the opportunity comes. Further research on specific impacts and the extent of the impacts is also encouraged as the findings in this thesis are vague and should merely be understood as indicators rather than hard data. Quantitative methods ought to be considered to establish actual causal relations.

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9. Appendix

Interview guide

Pregunta de investigación:

Cuáles son los impactos que ha tenido la presidencia de Jeanine Áñez para las mujeres en la política en Bolivia?

1. ¿Cómo ve usted la situación para las mujeres en la política, comparado con cómo era la situación antes de la presidencia de Áñez?
 - a. Ha habido algún cambio significativo en cómo se ve/trata las mujeres en la política?
 - b. Ha habido cambio en cómo ellas mismas están actuando o percibiendo su rol como políticos o el rol en general de la mujer en la política ?
2. Según un informe de ONU mujeres (2023) las denuncias de violencia política contra la mujer han aumentado desde 2016. Según usted esto se debe a que más mujeres están denunciando, algo que no se hacía tanto antes, o porque los casos de violencia política contra la mujer han aumentado?
3. ¿Ha hecho algo Áñez específicamente (bueno o malo), como presidenta, para cambiar la situación para las mujeres políticas?
4. ¿Ha influenciado algo el hecho de tener una mujer presidenta en como se ve o trata las mujeres en la política y como ellas mismas ven su rol en la política, en general en el país?

Letter of invitation

Estimada xx

Mi nombre es Anna Danielsdottir y estoy realizando una pasantía en la embajada de Suecia en La Paz. Actualmente estoy haciendo un estudio sobre la presidencia de Jeanine Áñez. Más específicamente, estoy investigando las posibles consecuencias que ha tenido la presidencia sobre la violencia política contra las mujeres en el país. Le escribo para preguntarle si podría/quisiera hacer una entrevista sobre el tema. La entrevista será usada en mi tesis de bachillerato. Las respuestas del estudio serán anónimas. La entrevista se haría virtualmente a la hora que le convenga a través de zoom.

Si tiene más preguntas sobre la tesis o la entrevista en específico, no dude en escribirme.

Atentamente, Anna Danielsdottir