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Future teachers and social change in Bolivia: between decolonisation and demonstration

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Continuity & change in twentieth century Bolivian (teacher) education: from indigenous denial to Education For All

'I think a country does not become rich because they have mines full of gold. It is preferable to say that countries make progress when education is given priority'
(Member of the national rural teachers union CONMERB, 83:14)

4.1 Introduction

On a cold and rainy afternoon in La Paz, I meet with a senior teacher trainer in the canteen of the urban Normal. While warming our hands on a cup of coca tea, he started to talk: *'I was born in the highlands in an indigenous family. We spoke Quechua at home, and my parents worked as farmers and servants of a richer and land owning, Spanish speaking family. I am the oldest son, so I was sent to the village school'*. He stopped for a sip of tea, before continuing to tell about his memories of early days in school: '*For a long time, I did not understand what the teacher was saying, as she only spoke Spanish. The first few weeks were exiting, but then I started to get bored. I was sitting next to the son of the upper class family who my parents worked for. So what I did, was just copying the stripes and circles he was drawing in his notebook. I did not really get the point of it. Only when I started to become friends with the neighbouring Spanish speaking boy, slowly I started to learn to understand Spanish. This is when I came to understand that those stripes and circles is what people also call 'letters'. Later on, I started to learn how to write myself'* (108). Regardless of this unfair start to his education career, he is now a very passionate and engaged trainer at one of the biggest teacher training institutes in the country.

Education in Bolivia has historically developed from a unifying and discriminatory system to a slowly changing, more open, intercultural and multilingual type of schooling that, in line with a wider global push for Education For All since 1990, aims to provide relevant education to all its citizens. The story above of the older trainer exemplifies the importance of relevance of education for all students. While education has the potential to contribute to processes of societal transformation, educations impending role in society is not unproblematic either, since *'millions and millions of children in Bolivia, and in the whole world, are concentrated every day in classrooms. Nowhere is it so easy to reach massive amounts of people as in schools. But you know, every day they listen to nonsense, so it is a waste of time'* (Cuban researcher based in La Paz, 65:6)[70]. Although Bolivian reality in schools is more nuanced, the point made is valid in the sense that education's potential is clear, but it has not always been a political priority.

[70] The numbers indicated between brackets refer to the codified and anonimised transcriptions of interviews in the data analysis programme Atlas Ti.

As a basis for the analysis of the contemporary education situation and new decolonising education reform in chapter 5, this chapter explores the most important developments in Bolivia's educational history until 2006, or *before Morales*, and pays specific attention to the teacher education sector. After a condensed examination of Bolivia's education context until the 1990s, the chapter continues to discuss the rationale, mechanisms and implementation challenges of the Intercultural and Bilingual education law of 1994, a reform that internationally was given close attention due to its innovative nature at the time. The chapter paints the picture of a changing education context in the twentieth century that started off from a strong indigenous denial in its initial approach, while developing slowly into a more inclusive education system towards the beginning of the 21st century.

4.2 'Modernising' education in Bolivia (1900-1952)

Historically, Bolivian education has been aimed at linguistic and cultural assimilation – or *castellanización*[71] – and the incorporation in modernity of indigenous groups (Drange, 2007). A first official attempt to ensure free and mandatory (primary) education through the constitution was made in 1880. Throughout the last part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century, teacher training institutes, often referred to as Normales, were created in various countries in the Latin American continent. Most institutes were free of charge, public, under the control of a MoE and did not provide university degrees. The creation of these institutes was closely related to the construction of national identities and a unified nation state, and with this ideal in mind teachers were trained accordingly. In Bolivia, the first initiatives toward the education of teachers took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. There are recounts of teacher education initiatives in 1835, which is remarkable considering that '*on this side of the world the first Normales were established in 1839 in the United States and in 1842 in Chile the first Latin American Normal was created*' (Talavera Simoni, 2011: 16). However, due to a lack of finances and experts in this field, nothing concrete was established (interview (anonymous) historian UMSA, 25:4).

Elite resistance and political instability obstructed any systemised education for indigenous population groups (Taylor, 2004: 7)[72]. By the end of the nineteenth century, the first (rural) indigenous educational initiatives – '*escuelas clandestinas*' – arose, without any governmental support (UNNIOs, 2004: 11-12). The clandestine use of bilingual education, using the indigenous mother tongue to learn the Spanish language, was a pragmatic and insubordinate measure in the context of an exclusionary education system (Taylor, 2004: 7). In 1905 an endeavour was made to establish a nation wide and centralised education system; the 1905 law promoted teacher training, a primary and secondary curriculum, commercial and technical education and education availabilities for girls and indigenous people. Perspectives on the rise of indigenous education in the first half of the twentieth century vary. One the one hand, most authors refer to education in that period as a state controlled attempt to 'civilise' indigenous communities, and destroy indigenous identities and traditions. The state ensured its own interests – a unified and modernised Bolivia – through education (Taylor, 2004: 8), and made '*productive peasants out of the*

71 Translated literally this would mean something like 'enspanishment' of the population, aimed at imposing the Spanish language and culture.
72 Since the land and mine owning elite classes depended on the cheap labour of the indigenous population, they feared the 'liberating effects' of literacy (Soria 1992 in Taylor 2004: 7).

indigenous peoples'. Schooling was organised in a dual system, where 'urban education' was separated from 'rural education' (Drange, 2007).

The 1908 'General Education Plan' of Sanchez Bustamante initiated a new phase of the liberal education project (Talavera, 2009: 62). The 1908 Plan was different from the 1905 one in that it sought to create two different types of Normales: urban and rural ones. At the time of the creation of Bolivia's first Normal in Sucre in 1909, Franz Tamayo's ideas and the new the liberal Plan of 1908 gained ground and instead of a unified education system, a differentiated system of both teacher training and other levels of schooling was constructed. As an illustration of a contradictory and complex liberal paradigm, a MoE official in a Parliamentary speech recalled the danger of putting a book or a rifle in the hands of the indigenous, because with any one of these weapons the *indio* could leave aside its natural occupation as a farmer and that way disturb the political system' (Talavera, 2009: 64-65).

In June 1909, the first Bolivian teacher training institute '*Escuela Normal de Profesores y Preceptores de la Republica*' (now called '*Universidad Pedagogica*') was created in Sucre, by a foreign Belgian educator named Rouma. This 'mission Rouma' has been critisised – particularly by the European educated *indigena* Franz Tamayo – for being too European centred and for disqualifying the capabilties of indigenous people (Del Granado Cosio, 2006; Lozada Pereira, 2004; Talavera, 2009: 64-65). The institute started with 28 students, first only men and in the second year a 'co-education system' was created for female teacher students. Also in other Latin American countries foreigners were involved in the creation of teacher training institutes: Argentina in Venezuela; and Spain in Mexico (Rama, 2004). In the period of 1915-1917 several other Normales were created in the surroundings of La Paz and Cochabamba. In 1917 the same Belgian man Rouma was also involved in the founding of the Normal Simón Bolíviar in La Paz, the main case study of this thesis.[73] The Belgian mission expanded with other missionaries who operated under the control of Rouma between 1910 and 1948. '*With Rouma, Bolivian schooling for a long time has been one of the most advanced of the continent*', however reinforcing the divided urban-rural system by creating different and less successful Normales in rural areas (Talavera, 2009: 67).

Alongside these developments, several indigenous education initiatives developed in the beginning of the twentieth century, mostly in rural communities. The indigenous population viewed literacy teaching as an important step towards their liberation and they also wanted to reproduce the traditional *ayllu* system, which was based on collective agriculture and kinship relations. On the other hand, Brienen argues that we cannot view the development of indigenous education as a simple '*indigenous attempt to ward of the state's modernisation or as a state attempt to destroy indigenous culture*'.[74] He shows how the school actually functioned as a bridge between the state and the indigenous communities, with '*school teachers becoming representatives of the state in the communities, and representatives of the communities in the state*' (Brienen, 2002: 645-646). On the 2nd of Augst 1931 –

[73] The Simón Bolívar institute served under the authority of the 'Ministry of Public Instruction' (Del Granado Cosio, 2006), and it was created then to train secondary school teachers (Talavera, 2009: 67). The Normal Simón Bolívar was closed down for a period of 12 years from 1932 to 1946 because of the socio-economic effects of the Chaco War with Paraguay. Interestingly, it already had ties with the University Mayor de San Andres (UMSA) in this first period (25:4), which would (unsuccesfully) be repeated between 2000-2005 (see chapter 6).

[74] In his later work (2011: 320), Brienen claims that – rather than being victims of state led modernisation attempts – the indigenous communities were actually active agents in bringing 'modern' schooling into their communties, with the clear rationale of wanting to participate in 'modern society'.

which would later become the National Day of the Indian – the most famous and influential rural Normal in Warisata was established.[75] This teacher training institute was created in collaboration with the surrounding communities, and its students mostly came from this area. As a response to Tamayo's earlier critiques on the Belgian founded Normales, the Warisata institute did not merely copy a European model, but instead it created its own model focused on 'productive education', or education for work, now forming one of the pillars of the new ASEP law. The founder Elizardo Perez, a student who graduated under Rouma in Sucre, wrote down the historical development of the creation, functioning and the final destruction of the institute in 1940 (Talavera, 2009: 74-75). When the state realised that the development of local authority over schooling was inconsistent with their policies of (cultural) assimilation, the *escuelas-ayllu* and the *Normal de Warista* were forcibly closed down (Regalsky and Laurie, 2007: 235; Taylor, 2004: 8; UNNIOs, 2004: 12). The closure of Warisata was not only caused by elite fears of the *indigenal* education, as in this same period the first disputes between groups of teachers arose (Talavera, 2009: 75). The still ongoing cleavage between the mostly urban 'normalistas' (teachers trained in Normales) who strive for a unified system and the predominantly rural normalistas that struggle for indigenous forms of education is thus not only a recent struggle, but originates in the 1930s and 1940s of the last century.

4.3 National revolution, the *Código* and the *Escalafón* (1964-1960)

According to Paz Estenssoro, the 1952 revolutionary leader, a new kind of education was needed. The 1955 education reform – pushed through by the MNR (Regalsky and Laurie, 2007: 235) – envisioned diversity in terms of class, rather than ethnicity, culture or language. Baud explains that this is a form of irony, since '*these Bolivian reforms, revolutionary as they were, tended to address the rural population as peasants, not as Indians. After 1952, Indians were accepted in the nation as exploited masses, not as a culturally different population*' (Baud, 2007a: 29). Where the 1905 education reform sought to 'civilise' the indigenous part of the population, the 1955 '*Código*' reform aimed to assimilate indigenous people – by then named *campesinos* – into the dominant culture.[76] Regalsky and Laurie (2007: 242) argue that education since the 1955 reform only intensified ethnic boundaries between different groups in Bolivian society. Moreover, the teaching at that time was teacher-centred, based on memorisation techniques and especially relevant to an urban context (Drange, 2007).

In this period, the so-called *Código* was developed by an educational reform commission, including the MoE, the Ministry of Rural Affairs (for indigenous education), researchers from the university, and the urban teachers union[77]. One of the main goals mentioned in the *Código* was to create a single national identity. In contrast, the reform reinforced the two parallel education systems reflecting an urban/rural divide; the MoE was responsible for the (better equipped) urban system and the 'Ministry of *Campesino* Affairs' for the rural *Educación Fundamental Campesina* system. Interestingly, the two systems strived for different goals, and reflected a rather racist dualist system. Urban primary education promoted individual development, independent

[75] The Warisata experience was influential in the creation of (among other institutes) the second case study of this thesis, the Normal in Paracaya *'Ismael Montes Ascencio Villarroel'* in 1948 (Lozada Pereira, 2004).
[76] Similarly, the educational reforms of 1969 and 1973 promoted one national language (Spanish) and culture.
[77] According to Talavera 2011: 181 the urban unionists were the main authors of this document, resulting in a document that mostly reflected the urban educational context and not so much the rural one.

learning, as well as personal and social responsibilities. The rural version aimed for personal hygiene, literacy, vocational goals, more efficient agricultural practices, civic consciousness and national folklore (Taylor, 2004: 9-11).

With regard to teacher education, the *Código* established that the Normales were the only institutions in the country that could train teachers and provide them with a diploma (Del Granado Cosio, 2006: 12-13). A new wave of the creation of Normales took place after the Revolution into the beginning of the 1960s, both in urban and rural area's '*in order to guarantee the formation of principal subjects [the new teachers] that would valorise and reproduce the revolutionary reality*' (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 41). As a breeding ground for contemporary ideas about the ideal teacher in Bolivian Normales (see chapter 8), the *Codigo* stated how teachers needed to have a strong *compromiso social*, a social commitment. Article 95 for instance mentioned how: '*Normales are oriented to train a type of professional teacher with a broad cultural awareness, scientific preparation, a technical-pedagogical capacity and a social susceptibility with regard to collective problems and elevated moral conditions*' (quoted in Lozada Pereira, 2004: 43). The 1955 *Codigo* also established that the state, for her part, had to guarantee employment once a teacher had obtained the national teachers title. Therefore, teachers need to subscribe to the *escalafon*, which is a 'vertical' seniority or grade scale that ever since has been one of the main objects of defence of union struggles.[78] New teachers can registrar after they have completed their obligatory first two (in the case of urban students) or four (for rural students) years of working 'in province'.[79] After obtaining the official title, teachers receive payments and welfare arrangements from the state. In order to ascent in category (nowadays running from five to zero, followed by the last category *'al merito*'), teachers' need to complete an exam for the first three categories and are automatically promoted to the last categories.

Because of large teacher shortages at that time, article 234 of the *Codigo* authorised that all *Bachilleres* could teach at primary level and all University graduates at secondary level. They only had to pass a 'capacity exam'. After five years of working experience, these teachers could registrar as well to the *escalafon* as *'maestros interinos*' – a special scale for untrained teachers that comes before the first scale of the graduates (category 5) (CTEUB, 1957-2007; Del Granado Cosio, 2006; Lozada Pereira, 2004). In 1962, estimates of the total number of teachers vary between 12,762 (according to government at that time) to 9,551 (according to UNESCO), with respectively 45.4% and 47.9% of them being *interinos*. From this period on, (future) teachers organised at a collective level to struggle for a lower approbation grade for the entrance exam. The current demonstrations and hunger strikes of applicants, who try to push the MoE to let them enter the already full Normales because they have gained this minimum grade, thus have strong historical roots.

4.4 Education under military rule and transition back to democracy (1964-1990)

The military governments integrated the two parallel education systems back into one system for formal education, with a national curriculum (Taylor, 2004: 11-12), but in reality the two subsystems remained separate. During the 1970s a conductivist pedagogical reform gradually

[78] I use the term 'vertical' scale here, to contrast it with the 'horizontal' system of salary promotion that is for instance used in Mexico, which rewards teachers for extra training and professional development rather than only the years of experience (Tatto et al 2007: 156-157).

[79] Nowadays, *all* graduated teacher students have to work for two years in a remote area in order to enter the *escalafon*.

transformed practices of teachers, with a focus on memorisation and copying of contents, this way deprofessionalising teachers' roles. Teachers criticised the military rulers alienating and 'antinational' education policies and pressed for a more inclusive system at the second National Pedagogical Congress in 1979 (Talavera Simoni, 2011: 10, 147). Interestingly, in the broader Latin America region education systems were on the rise (late 1970s and 1980s). Illiteracy rates went down, enrolment rates went up and the number of female students rose relatively strong. Paradoxically, in this same period there were remarkable reductions in government spending on education. Governmental budgets for education dropped and many teachers lost their jobs. The 1980s saw concurrent social unrest and economic instability, which led to a crisis of the (rural) education system. Both unions and peasant social movements pressed the state to reform the education situation (Regalsky and Laurie, 2007: 242).

During military rule from 1964 onwards, government policies for teacher training aimed at a unified (integrating urban and rural teacher education), hierarchical and 'depoliticised' teacher education system. The number of humanities subjects was brought down, and pedagogical classes were added. The Higher Institute of Pedagogy was created to compile statistics relating to the teachers force (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 21). This reform was called the 'contra-reform' by teachers, since in their eyes it counteracted their union movements and it thwarted all revolutionary ideals of the former reform. These hierarchical structures become clear when looking at the different titles used: at primary level teachers were called '*maestros*'; at secondary level '*profesores*'; and at higher education levels *'catedraticos*' (or '*cate*'), or '*licenciados*' (or '*lice*'). During my stays, I realised how much this hierarchical structure is still in use. Teacher students consequently addressed their trainers with '*cate*' or '*lice*' and when they found out I was also teaching at my University in the Netherlands some even used these terms when they turned to me. In 1967 teacher students started a '*Revolución Normalista*', which was '*a pedagogical movement that sought to change both the contents and the organisation of teacher education, in which students would have a bigger say in the determination of the politics of teacher education*' (interview 86:1 with a senior teacher trainer, currently employed at the MoE). In 1970, a massive and first time National Pedagogical Congress was organised, with participation of teachers (Talavera, personal communication May 2011).

The agreements never made it to an implementation phase, because of the *coup d'etat* and the beginning of a seven year dictatorship of Banzer in 1971. In 1975 the educational 'Banzer law' together with the 'law for Normales of 1975' were launched. Both university autonomy and teacher union activities were abolished. Teacher training was aimed at national security and the creation of '*a nationalist state, order, work, peace and justice*' (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 49). Self-development of teachers, a 'research spirit' and permanent evaluation and control were seen as important elements. According to a MoE official in 1995, since this period of dictatorship '*teachers are no longer great teachers, they have turned into mere unionists*' (Chavez 2007 in Talavera, 2009: 76). The law separated normal school administrative functions from technical schools. Party members and union leaders saw openings to enter management positions in this new structure (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 21). Drawing from the data of this study, we can see how Banzer's law laid many of the foundations for the structure of teacher education as organised under the 1994 reform; the

training is six semesters long, organised in both urban and rural Normales, with a concentration of decision-making power at the MoE.[80]

Until 1982, children were punished at school for speaking their own languages rather than Spanish (Albó and Anaya, 2003: 36). As a result, indigenous groups have lost many of their cultural and linguistic traditions (Albó, 2005). After the return of democarcy, the first elected government (Siles Zuazo 1982-1985) initiated the 1982 National Education Plan, including the first large scale literacy program SENALEP. Leaving behind linguistic homogenisation in educational planning, indigenous languages were taken into account as being both beneficial mother tongues in educational settings and contributions to national culture (Taylor, 2004: 14). In the first years of the 1980s, a National Plan of Action for Education was designed, that was part of the regional UNESCO Principal Education Plan for Latin America and the Carribean. These plans aimed for a minimum of eight to ten years of education, an elimination of illiteracy and improving the quality of education through reforms (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 22-23).

The following elections in 1985 gave way to the neoliberal government of Victor Paz Entenssoro, and a severe economic crisis meant an increase in foreign influence and increased levels of foreign aid in the education sector. A situation of severe economic crisis, massive debts and hyperinflation was to be 'cured' by Jeffrey Sachs' shock treatment of the economy, with devastating social effects, particularly for the already marginalised (Klein, 2007: 178-179), severely affecting the social sectors, including education. Due to rising poverty levels, many children were taken out of the classrooms because they had to help their parents raising the family income (Talavera Simoni, 2011: 154). Teachers' salaries were decreased severely, a situation that lasted from 1983 to 2003, which has pushed the teachers' unions into a defensive and 'salarial' attitude (Talavera Simoni, 2011: 12-13). Teacher training institutes still mushroomed, especially in the rural areas. During the 1980s, the teacher training system was further separated, distinguishing between rural and urban teachers. Moreover, the problem regarding *interinos*, or untrained teachers, remained to exist and became a more pressing issue (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 22-23). The MoE published the white (1987), pink (1988) and blue booklets (1988), respectively describing the pre-project of the upcoming education reform (of 1994), the various meetings and documents around this pre-project. Finally, the blue booklet discussed a diagnotic of the teacher education situation in the Normales. It pointed out how the administrative structures established through the 1975 Normales Law had several shortcomings: a vertical and badly communicated top down decision-making process; a disturbed implementation process as well as a lack of coordination of the urban and rural sub-systems (the 'blue booklet' (1988) in Del Granado Cosio, 2006: 22-23). From the 1980s on, small scale initiatives (some by the state, yet mostly by NGOs that aimed to fill the gaps left by the government) paved the way for the 1994 Reform (Van Dam and Salman, 2003: 23). The international interference in the (teacher) education sector was extended into the decade of the 1990s, with the preparations and creation of the 1994 reform.

[80] This situation still resembed the organisational structure of Normales until the first implementation of the new ASEP Reform's structure of five years of study in Februari 2010.

4.5 The 1994 Education Reform – Intercultural & Bilingual Education for All (1990-2005)

At the beginning of the 1990s, and being part of a wider global movement to reach Education For All, Bolivia was the first country in Latin America to make intercultural education an official state policy 'not only for indians', but for all children, according to the Bolivian researcher Albó (in Drange, 2007: 1). The rationale behind *Educación Intercultural y Bilingüe* (EIB, Intercultural and Bilingual Education) was to provide indigenous children with the self-esteem, security and creativity to achieve better results, while maintaining their communities' cultural values and practices (Albó, 2005). In this way, new generations could strengthen their cultural identity, of cultures that were about to perish and establish a better foundation for entering into intercultural encounters (Albó 2004:42 in Drange, 2007).

There seem to be different opinions on when, how and by whom the first proposals towards EIB were initiated. Different actors claim different starting points. The most often mentioned version starts in 1988. In this year a pilot project for EIB was started by the MoE and UNICEF (PEIB 1988-1995), with the support of the Swedish development cooperation (D'Emilio, 1996: 26). The Project-EIB (PEIB) showed a shift from monocultural and multicultural educational ideologies to a pluricultural ideology, at least for the role of language in education (Taylor, 2004: 14-15). This programme was partly inspired upon an earlier EIB project in Peru, supported by the German development coopration agency GTZ (called PEEB-P, 1979-1990).[81] Another source mentions that in 1989 the urban teachers' union CSUTCB presented the document '*Towards an intercultural and bilingual education*', which was influential in further developments of the PEIB (UNNIOs, 2004: 13-14).

After several failed attempts to initiate the reform process under the MoE, a task force (ETARE – *Equipo Técnico de Apoyo a la Reforma Educativa* – technical support team for the education reform) was created in 1991, which fell under the Ministry of Planning and Coordination. ETARE was comprised predominantly of highly qualified Bolivian experts, assisted by external consultants, and received World Bank financial support and technical assistance. However, there were several disagreements between ETARE and the World Bank – who demanded an emphasis on curricular and pedagogical changes rather that administrative and institutional ones – but these were resolved in mid-1993; how remains unclear (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 9-13, 15). Taylor argues that this reform differed from other Latin American education reforms because it specifically called for transforming two dimensions of the education system concurrently; not only the curricular-pedagogical approach but also the institutional-administrative dimension (Taylor, 2004: 17). This might be explained by a focus of ETARE on the former and a WB focus on the latter dimension.

Time apparently was running short. The EIB reform was officialised in 1992 (*Decreto Supremo* 23036) in a rush, without a validated EIB curriculum and without genuine grassroots participation. According to Taylor, the government felt pressure to officialise EIB coming from increased mobilisation of indigenous movements and because of the (early) signatory of the ILO

81 Bolivian linguists and anthropologists were trained in Peru and an agreement with the Peruvian government in 1990 gave access to textbooks and methodological guides. In Bolivia, around 114 rural schools were reached through the training of supervisors, directors and teachers at the national, regional and local levels. Different opinions seem to disagree on the number of schools reached in this pilot project (for instance 114 schools according to Albó & Anaya 2003: 43; D'Emilio 1996: 24; and Nucinkis 2004: 2; and 140 schools mentioned by Taylor 2004: 14,15).

169 Convention concerning the rights of indigenous and tribal populations (Taylor, 2004: 16-17; D'Emilio, 1996: 25). Following the 1992 Pedagogical Congress, the MoE created a National Education Council (NEC) with participation from teachers, parents, the Catholic Church and universities (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 17). Though the NEC played an important role in the developments of the new Education Law, a teacher and curriculum developer claimed how all NEC results were '*thrown in the dustbin*' by the MoE, which in his view made this a fake process of teacher participation that was '*undemocratic*' (8:35). Although there were some structural differences between the ETARE and NEC, in July 1994 the education reform became law (*Ley* 1565).

Textbox 3. Education Reform 1994

- Main goals were to improve:
  - quality and efficiency
  - relevancy
  - coverage and equal access
  - permanence of educators in system
  - equal gender rights
  - individual and collective identity development
- Main 'tools' to reach these goals:
  - Intercultural and Bilingual Education (EIB)
  - Student-centred teaching and learning methods ('constructivist' approach to education; teacher is facilitator of learning process)
  - restructuring of education, teacher training and administrative systems
  - prioritising primary education
  - popular participation mechanisms (*Juntas Escolares*)
- Two main 'pillars': interculturality and popular participation
- Five crosscutting themes: democracy, gender, environment, health and sexuality.
- Curriculum divided in two parts:
  - *Tronco común* = common core; EIB national curriculum.
  - *Ramas complementarias diversificadas* = complementary diversified branches; determined by local educational authorities.

Sources: (Speiser 2000; Contreras and Talavera 2003; Taylor 2004; Van Dam and Poppema 2005, Van Dam 2006)

Textbox 3 shows a clear alignment between the 1994 Reform and tendencies in global education reforms (see for instance Altinyelken, 2010). The Reform focused on primary level education, a combined approach for quality and access for *all* children, it encouraged gender equality and introduced student centred/constructivist teaching and learning methods. In line with these international discourses[82] largely focusing on 'inclusive education', the Bolivian education reform sought ways to include all children – including children from different cultural groups, and especially girls and disabled children – in the education system (Canessa, 2006: 189-190; Contreras 1999 in Taylor, 2004: 28). The 1994 law was followed by a set of regulations on popular participation in education in 1995. Special 'boards of education' (*Juntas Escolares*) were organised by officially recognised local community based organisations (*Organizaciones Territoriales de Base*). Again in line with global developments, emphasis was given to monitoring the quality of education: in a period of eight years the SIMECAL (System of Quality Measurement, 1996-2002) was created and ended again, mostly due to political reasons – since there was little progress in

82 The 1990 Jomtien International Education Conference and the ILO 169 Convention on popular participation inspired this new discourse (Regalsky & Laurie 2007: 242; Speiser 2000: 226).

the implementation of the Reform – and 'institutional malfunctioning' (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009: 40-41). Still today, teachers are well aware of the influence of international reform 'conditions' on the 'neo-liberal' and 'imposed' 1994 Reform. For example, a (urban female) teacher trainer argued, and her agument was confirmed in other interviews, that '*Law 1565 stipulated the state only to take care of primary level education, which was a recommendation from the World Bank, from outside. In the new law they will take this out, and focus on secondary and university education as well*' (13:102).

Reforming Teacher Education 1990-2000: slow implementation and challenges

In the first period from 1994-1997, some initial attempts were undertaken to change the institutional structures of the Normales. Teacher education institutes in rural and urban areas were 'unified' in terms of their administration and status (Del Granado Cosio, 2006), aiming to put an end to the 'balkanisation' of the education system in Bolivia.[83] Out of the 25 institutes in existence then, 23 created an Academic Institutional Project document, which were revised by the MoE. Only eight institutes were selected to enter the process from *Escuelas Normales* into *Institutos Normales Superiores* (INS), with decentralised administration at the level of the *prefecturas.*[84] The juridical instrument that accompanied the Reform initiatives for the Normales '*Estatuto Nacional de Formación Docente*' was approved in 1997, and pressed for a '*democratic, participatory and socially committed*' teacher training that would: '*strengthen the valorisation of the teaching profession as a dignified and crucial profession for Bolivian society*'; '*strive to be a vanguard in educational innovations*'; and offer '*permanent opportunities for (peer) evaluation and in-service training*' (*Estatuto Nacional de Formacion Docente*, quoted in Del Granado Cosio, 2006: 38-39). Besides, a plan for an 'institutionalisation process' was created (and since 2006/2007 taken up again, which is discussed below). Nonetheless, these intentions were not concretised (Del Granado Cosio, 2006). The transformation process was slow and difficult, particularly because the Normales had '*established practices far removed from the teaching and learning processes*' (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 22-23). Moreover, an evaluation done by the MoE showed how in Simón Bolívar the curriculum and intercultural education were interpreted in various ways, there was a lack of cooperation between teacher trainers and trainers received a lack of guiding materials to implement the 'abstract and theoretical' ideas of the reform (Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia, 1999: 25, 28).

At the end of the 1990s, the MoE together with the CEPOS, GTZ and international consultants started the project P-INSEIB (*Proyecto de Institutos Normales Superiores de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe*), in which eight Normales were targeted to become INS-EIB (Von Gleich, 2008: 95-97; Delany-Barmann, 2010: 187). From these eight Intercultural and Bilingual Normales, four specialised in the Quechua laguage, two in Aymara, one in both Quechua and Aymara and one in Guaraní. Teachers were trained here to teach in indigenous languages and to teach Spanish as a second language (Van Dam, 2007: 10). The projects were supported by GTZ and later also by UNICEF and DANIDA (Denmark). The objective of PINS-EIB was to '*implement a sub-system of Intercultural and Bilingual teacher education to improve primary education in the fields of Quechua and*

[83] This term 'balkanisation' was introduced by Mario Yapu in his *En tiempos de Reforma Educativa* report, quoted in Lozada Pereira 2004: 76.

[84] The institute in Paracaya (this study's second case study) was not selected for this first process, Simón Bolívar in La Paz (case study one) was, although it did not hand in an Academic Institutional Project document (Del Granado 2006). The Ministry decided to include this institute in the transformation process due to various reasons, according to Lozada Pereira (2004: 107), being its location in La Paz; the large numbers of both students and trainers; and the protagonist role of the Simon Bolívar as a site of contestation/ gremial resistance.

Aymara' (Albó and Anaya, 2003: 201-202). Evaluations on the progress of the P-INSEIB project have been relatively positive, with regard to the internal capacitating of the trainers and the development of more relevant curricula (Von Gleich, 2008: 101). However, after conversations with some parties involved in the training of teacher trainers, such as the Spanish development cooperation AECID, some critical concerns were revealed as well (the programme is further discussed in chapter 5). A staff member for instance explained how the majority of the teacher trainers that received training to update their knowledge and pedagogical skills had already left the Normales due to massive reorganisations (81).

The first large scale evaluation in 1998, concluded that none of the institutes understood or implemented the 1994 curriculum and the management was brought back to the central level of the MoE. Studies also showed several Normales operated inefficiently with few students and often irrelevant curricula. The MoE started a new reform phase. It converted the oldest training institute in Sucre into a pedagogical university and selected sixteen training institutes to become part of the National System of Teacher Training as an INS. They worked towards reforming their curriculum, administration and exam system (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 23). It took until 1999 before some actual changes were taking place at the level of the Normales. Although changes proceeded slowly, some positive developments were noticed in several INS, and specifically in INS-EIB, since the 1994 reforms (Van Dam, 2007; Concha 2002 in Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 24). The EIB-institutes started to use the new curriculum, which was created in 1999. The administration and enrolment system were 'modernised' (Albó and Anaya, 2003: 201) and the number of new applicants rose. By 2002, the PINS-EIB graduated over 4,000 teachers who were able to teach the intercultural curriculum bilingually (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 24).

From 2000 onwards, the government started to launch several reform programmes for the teacher education sector. One of them was the *bachillerato pedagógico* (pedagogical baccalaureate); a teacher training programme in the last two years of secondary education. This project was the result of an earlier successful project for indigenous women in Mizque, Cochabamba. It was designed in the rural Amazon and Andes regions, to find an alternative to the large number of untrained *iterinos*. Also, it was designed to give young rural youth an opportunity to receive their training closer to home. Graduates must work for two years in a rural area and may continue their training at an INS afterwards. The teachers unions were not in favour of the creation of these institutions (Albó and Anaya, 2003: 205). Regardless of these efforts, Nucinkis (2004: 12) states that 23% of the teachers at bilingual schools are still untrained *iterinos*.[85] Moreover, even during interviews with MoE officials in 2007 and 2008 it was expressed that *iterinos* still form a pressing issue.

In that same period, from 2000 onwards, the government initiated a programme through which the administration of part of the Normales was taken up by both public and private Universities. An additional attempt to structurally change the (teacher) education sector was to expand access to the teaching positions from solely those who held a teacher training school degree, to all professionals with four-year university degrees. All prospective teachers would have to pass a competency test. These reform initiatives aimed to eliminate the historic monopoly that Normal school graduates held within the teaching community, but these were met with fierce

85 For further critical remarks see Nucinkis 2004: 30-31.

resistance at the institutional level of the Normales, as is elaborated in chapter 6. These issues were highly debated and the continuation of the 'monopoly' of *normalistas* (graduates from the Normales) in the teaching profession is up to today a point of discussion, resistance and demonstrations. This is an illustration of how struggles about continuity and change are also played out in the education sector (see chapter 6).

Critiques on the 1994 law

Many of the critiques on the 1994 reform emphasise the contrast between policy and implementation, and consequently reflect how the political attempts for transformation were met with resistance and continuity of practices in educational reality (UNNIOs, 2004: 15; Van Dam, 2006). This section discusses the main critiques from the literature combined with interview data, which will help to frame and understand current challenges with regard to prospective implementation of the ASEP law. [86]

With regards to bilingual teaching, the reform resulted in *'the right to bilingual education for all whose mother tongue is other than Spanish'* (Speiser, 2000: 227). Protests of *Mestizo*-parents against bilingual education of their Spanish-speaking children influenced this one-way implementation. These parents feared that their indigenous-speaking children would not learn the Spanish language when they would be taught in their mother tongue in the early years of schooling (Contreras 1999 in Taylor, 2004: 20; Van Dam, 2007: 24; Van Dam and Salman, 2003). Similarly, indigenous parents were afraid that education in local languages would only serve to keep their children backwards. This resistance appears quite logical when bearing in mind the three most mentioned arguments of rural parents as to why their children *should* go to school: to learn how to read and write – so as not to be betrayed by urban traders; to learn other skills and assets than solely agricultural ones; and (especially stressed by community leaders) the need to acquire 'the power (and language) of the other' (Regalsky and Laurie, 2007: 236-237). Although participation in rhetoric was very important, in practice there was minimal involvement of teachers, parents and civil society groups (unions) in the Reform process (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 1).

Similar to the outcomes of this study for the present ASEP law, D'Emilio noted a wide variety of teachers reactions to the 1994 reforms; '*from passive compliance to militant defence of EIB, and even from tacit [resistance] to active boycotting*' (D'Emilio, 1996: 56). The majority of teachers went through an initial stage of scepticism; some experienced the advantage of better communication with students through bilingual education, while other mono-lingual teachers feared their positions (D'Emilio, 1996: 57). So-called 'pedagogical assistants' – teachers with an extra training and higher salary than school directors – were sent into schools by the MoE to help implement the reform. These pedagogical assistants were trained to introduce the content of the reforms into schools and train teachers on site. This resulted in numerous conflicts and thus the work of these 'assistants' was abolished. Teacher unions' resistance has been based on ideological ideas (of working against the reforms because they are part of a neoliberal package deal) and because their social rights got under discussion (Speiser, 2000: 237; Contreras and Talavera, 2004b). A possible fear for change and the 'unknown' new teaching styles might have triggered resistance as well (Talavera Simoni, 2011). A teacher trainer and member of the La Paz teachers' federation

86 Lozada Pereira warns that we need to take into account how many of the evaluations and critiques developed then and later on were neither neutral nor objective, because of personal involvement and/or political and ideological perspectives (Lozada Pereira 2004).

explained two main reasons for the union to resist the 1994 law, being firstly a lack of participation of '*the most crucial actor in educational change, the teacher*' and secondly, because '*the Law 1565 responded to the neoliberals, to the IMF, the World Bank*' and was thus seen as an 'imposed' law (48:18). Talavera explains how Bolivian teachers are caught in between two fires; having to navigate between pressure from resisting unions and actual changes in their teaching practice (1999: xxxii).

The epistemological ideas behind the reform are based on constructivist theory, which – among other ideas – emphasises the need to build knowledge based on the existent context and knowledge of the student (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 130). Some authors stress the usefulness and appropriateness of (radical and social) constructivist epistemologies to understand knowledge construction and processes of learning as both '*socially mitigated but personally constructed*' (Reagan, 2005: 8-10). Others, however, criticise the constructivist philosophy of knowledge to have been hijacked by international powerful actors and aid agencies whose (indirect) aim is to disseminate child-centred pedagogies. These child-centred pedagogies, which were also part of the 1994 Bolivian Reform, according to Tabulawa are part of a global spread of 'capitalist democracy'. With their 'technical rationality' and false 'value-neutrality', these student or child-centred pedagogies have been promoted in various contexts as a one-size-fits-all solution to making education 'more democratic', and students better suitable for an individualised market-led society and economy. These measures are often justified in terms of educational and cognitive terms, such as the improvement of learning outcomes and efficiency, yet there is no evidence of this (Tabulawa, 2003: 9-10).

Regardless of this (international) push for constructivist, child-centrered and participatory learning processes, and the intended tranformation into an intercultural and bilingual education, the practice in Bolivian schools continued to be teacher-centred, using memorisation techniques, a traditional banking approach and leaving problem-solving competencies underdeveloped (Speiser, 2000: 236; Regalsky and Laurie, 2007: 236). This situation was illustrated by a former teacher and school evaluator, now working at one of the CEPOs. '*Since the [1994] Education Reform, I visited schools in my function as a technical supervisor for the Reform, and it is a shame…to be honest we do not teach the children to think, we teach anything but how to think for themselves. For example, a teacher explaining about the digestive system of the body, he would for instance draw on a piece of paper, paste it to the Blackboard and say: students, this is the digestive system, and he would stop there. He immediately looses all the interest from the students, they will not even look at the drawing. You see, this is what is lacking, teaching to think, to think reflexively, critically*' (24). Even up to today in some areas this low quality education situation continues to exist, as a Bolivian researcher explained: '*One month and a half ago I visited many schools in the Northern Highland region, and it was really depressing to see the outdated teaching practices in classrooms, with zero biligualism. There is nothing of that now. They have returned to teacher centred teaching, so we have a very serious recession'* (61:15).

While the newly promoted intercultural teaching about local indigenous culture was less associated with an old fashioned banking approach, and allowed more room for the creativity of teachers (De Koning, 2005: 53), the concept of interculturality has not been sufficiently operationalised and has remained *'a slogan with little concrete meaning, a general discourse that is highly*

political but at the same time conceptually poor' (Speiser, 2000: 227).[87] A first step towards interculturality in Bolivian education, according to Speiser, is '*to clarify one's own [cultural] position and to question the values attributed to different possible positions*' (2000: 231), a position that is currently reflected in the 'intra-cultural' dimension of the new education reform (see chapter 5). However, a narrow focus on the 'own identity' mirrors a lack of a critical approach to education, in which students learn how to *reflect* on their own (and other) cultures, norms, values and power relations (Van Dam, 2006: 7). Van Dam and Salman (2003: 24) added to the debate that within teaching materials, cultures were only portrayed in relation to traditions and rites rather than daily activities. In addition, the *ramas difersificadas*, which should contain the context specific part of the curriculum, were not fully developed everywhere (Nucinkis, 2004: 47; Van Dam, 2006). The incorporation of the new educational initiatives in textbooks has been a long and difficult process, thus leaving many teachers without these new materials (Albó, 2005: 15; Nucinkis, 2004). These new materials did not always reach the teachers and, even when new textbooks were provided to them, there was a lack of teacher manuals and further guidance (Van Dam, 2006). While in the initial process of textbook development representatives of different indigenous groups were participating (Nucinkis 2004), the textbooks were still developed through a centralised top-down approach, with only limited participation from teachers in the validation process of the textbooks, when they had already been written (Van Dam 2006).

The elaboration of a new teacher education curriculum for primary teachers similarly was a long and complex process that lasted for almost a decade (1989-1999). Most of the work was done in 1996, but it took until 1999 before it was made official. The *'Diseño Curricular Base'*, or principal curriculum design, was only designed for the training of primary level teacher students (Lozada Pereira, 2004:77, 129). In the years that followed, a team of national and international experts and educators, led by Nicole Nucinkis, worked on a revised text for the basic curriculum for primary level teacher education. The document was finished in 2004, but according to Nucinkis it has never been used in practice (personal communication, November 2008).

Regardless of the reform initiatives in the Normales (mostly after 1999) teacher education predominantly continued to function according to former traditions and laws (Drange, 2007). In 2000, the German organisation for development cooperation GTZ signalled that gender inequalities, in relation to interculturality, were not addressed in teacher education practice at the same level as they were expressed in the materials. Moreover, PROEIB researchers showed the persistence of old-fashioned 'vertical' teaching methods, and the tensions and restrictions for genuine participation of guaraní organisations in Normal Superior schools in the Orient and Chaco regions (Alcon 2001 and Arispe 2003 in Albó and Anaya, 2003: 203). Albó and Anaya also stated that the majority of the teachers who graduated from an INS-EIB do not teach afterwards in bilingual schools for different reasons. Often, they end up working in an urban setting, where living and working conditions are better than in rural areas (Albó and Anaya, 2003: 203-204). Also, the hiring of new teachers, done by *Directores Distritales*, is said to be based on political and personal preferences rather than educational skills. The new teachers who do end up teaching in remote areas, often lack classroom experience and an understanding of the local context and language (see also Tatto, 1999: 18).

[87] Interculturality is conceptualised in the 1994 reform as a 'relationship of respect and appreciation for different Bolivian cultures that transcends regional and national borders' (Anaya 2002 in Taylor, 2004: 18).

Photo 3. Two girls in grade 3

Photo 4: A fifth grade urban classroom

4.6 In conclusion: towards the creation of an endogenous Bolivian education reform

Historically, education in Bolivia has been tightly linked to the reproduction of class differences as well as open and hidden forms of discrimination and exclusion, particularly of indigenous groups. The start of Bolivian teacher education was foreign driven, with the first Normal created in Sucre in 1909 by a Belgian missionary. During the 1930s, alternative forms of indigenous education and teacher training were developed, particularly in the highland village of Warisata, but soon these were closed down. During military rule, the urban-rural divided system was further reinforced and the institutional basic structure of today's Normales was created. The 1994 Reform for Intercultural and Bilingual education was an attempt to overcome exclusionary and homogenising forms of schooling. The reform process was complicated, lengthy and only to a limited extent successful. Teacher education was left behind during the initial implementation phase; to fill these gaps, some (short term) international initiatives took place to improve teacher education quality. The 1994 Reform did open up space for other discourses and various forms of resistance to these plans arose. Many teachers resisted the envisioned pedagogical and managerial changes in their daily practices and they did not receive proper support. Parents often perceived (and often still see) education as *the* way out of poverty and therefore preferred their children to learn Spanish, the 'Modern' language of business. Moreover, social movements, including teachers' unions, felt left out of the creation of a largely 'imposed and neo-liberal' reform. In conclusion, the actual implementation of the 1994 Reform was a thinly disguised assimilationist approach to culture, offering relational skills to indigenous peoples but allowing *Mestizos* and the indigenous populations to communicate only through *Mestizo* cultural norms and language (Spanish). EIB's ideology cannot fully develop if only rooted in educational policy (and not in daily life, such as media, street signs etc), especially when limited to elementary education (Albó 2002 in Taylor, 2004: 29; Van Dam and Salman, 2003: 25).

When Morales became president at the end of 2005, one of his first decisions was to do away with this 'foreign' education law, to create a new Bolivian-owned reform for decolonising education. The *emergence* of new 'indigenous' discourses (Fairclough, 2005: 931-932) that aimed at a revaluation of indigenous cultures, languages and rights had already started in the 1990s and was taken to the political arena by emerging political movements, including the MAS of Evo Morales. After a democratic victory, intellectuals in the new government under Morales developed a new political direction inspired by Latin American coloniality discourses for the entire education sector, including teacher education, slowly working towards a new hegemonic

policy discourse (Fairclough, 2005: 931-932). The historical education context described in this chapter has thus led to the current political perception that '*a revolution in education*' is needed, as the new ASEP law proclaims.