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An education system in turbulent times – clashing views on decolonising Bolivian (teacher) education

'We radically need to change these modern types of traditional, disciplined and therefore violent forms of banking education, and start to pay attention to the mind and the body, not to obediently sitting still in classrooms, but to movement and play, to [cultural] expression, rituals and emotional intelligence. Education is not just about pure rationality, but about emotions, feelings and thus... our totality as human beings'
(Bolivian sociologist Saavedra, interview in May 2010)

5.1 Introduction

On Friday morning, 24 October 2008, a cold and empty lecture room in the *Monobloque* building of the Universidad Mayor de San Andres in the centre of La Paz slowly starts to fill. A rather mixed crowd, consisting of primarily Bolivian scholars, policy-makers, social movement leaders and students, as well as academic colleagues from Brazil, gather for a chat or finds their seat. Being one of the organisers of the seminar on '*Decolonisation and Education: reflections from Bolivia and Brazil*', I get a bit nervous about the absence of our two main speakers of this morning: the former Minister of Education Felix Patzi and his Vice-Minister at the time, José Luis Saavedra. The seminar is supposed to begin in about five minutes and I soothe myself by remembering that punctuality is a flexible concept in Bolivia. To our relief, we see Patzi coming out of the elevator wearing sun glasses and a black *sombrero*, and carrying his notes for the speech he is about to give. Without Saavedra being present, nor responding to our phone calls, we decide to start the meeting. '*Since 2006, and initiated from within the Ministry of Education, Bolivia has put a stamp called 'decolonisation' on its politics',* Patzi addresses his audience, *'Decolonising the education in Bolivia means reflecting on both the organisation of education as its contents. A fundamental problem in Bolivian education is the enormous inequalities, since people's educational opportunities are determined by their race, ethnicity, culture and language, resulting in a separate urban and rural system. Content-wise, decolonisation means we need to change our curricula in order to change our mental constructions that are based on a Eurocentric vision and to revalue the knowledges and conceptualisations of the indigenous populations*'. Precisely as Patzi rounds off his speech and apologises for his early departure due to other obligations, Saavedra enters the room. Presumably, the broken relationship between these two academics, after their short period as MoE colleagues, has resulted in this unwritten agreement to avoid each others' company.

In Saavedra's talk, the limits to the decolonisation approach are added to the debate, since '*decoloniality in itself does not provide a proposal. An authentic decolonising proposal can only emerge from those that were actually colonised, the indigenous populations.*' While not in full agreement to all elements of Patzi's position, Saavedra presents a corresponding vision of what decolonising Bolivian education would mean in practice. '*On the institutional level, decolonising education means opening up traditional educational environments, so that the whole community around the school becomes a pedagogical space for learning. At the curricular level, decolonisation means deconstructing the modern and colonial segmentation of educational disciplines, and departing from a holistic comprehension of reality, an epistemology of complexity, which is how indigenous populations see reality.* Saavedra concluded by stating how '*most importantly, we need to realise that at the level of human attitudes affection and values are crucial, as the main teaching technique should be through dialogue'.* Both Patzi's and Saavedra's views are embedded in the broader coloniality debates discussed in chapter 3, and both speeches show the diversity in interpretations of what decolonisation of education actually means.[91] As this chapter will show, this conceptual vagueness forms a pressing issue for the successful implementation of the new ASEP law for decolonising education.

The ASEP reform is part of Morales' politics of change and education is seen as the core vehicle for a thorough social, political and economic restructuring of Bolivian society. The Bolivian government has tried to construct a progressive reform in terms of its ideological underpinnings and a sector wide restructuring of the education system in cooperation with a range of civil society groups. The ASEP reform's close engagement with the idea of decolonisation has its roots in the ideas of coloniality theory. ASEP re-imagines education for, among other concepts, critical analysis and '*vivir bien*' – to live well enough – which can be connected to the debates on critical pedagogy of a social justice oriented education (see chapter 2). Many Bolivians see ASEP as an articulation of the Plurinational Constitution's and National Development Plan's more general goals (see for instance a reflection on the National Development Plan in Yapu, 2009: 51-52). Together these initiatives offer a new definition of citizenship, as education is an important factor in forming students' relationships with the world around them. ASEP can be considered a powerful part of the state's 'agenda for change', taking up articles 77-107 which constitute a considerable part of the constitution (which consists of a total of 411 articles).[92]

This chapter deals with three processes of (envisaged) transformation in the current Bolivian (teacher) education system and the various and clashing views on this project: firstly, the new education law entails a radical, ideological and epistemological reorientation of Bolivian education (and society) under the header of 'decolonisation'; secondly, these initiatives take place in a shifting context of continuous struggles between the government and civil society actors – with important roles for the MoE (Ministry of Education), the Normales, the teachers (urban) union and the indigenous education councils; and finally, while the new reform builds on earlier attempts to improve educational quality and relevancy there are serious foreseen challenges for the implementation process. I first outline the main characteristics of the new ASEP Law and

[91] These quotes are based on fieldwork notes and the 'Memorandum of the International Seminar', that can be retrieved from http://educationanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/memorandum-del-encuentro-internacional-sobre-descolonizacion-y-educacion.pdf.

[92] In this sense, the new Plurinational Constitution forms the legal basis for the re-founding and transformation of the Bolivian nation.

secondly the specific developments (so far) in the field of teacher education. This is followed by an introduction of the main actors that are relevant for this thesis and their respective views and power struggles in relation to the creation and implementation of this new law in the field of (teacher) education. Finally, I elaborate on the anticipated obstacles for the execution of the ASEP law and its new education pedagogy and curriculum.

5.2 The road to decolonising the Bolivian education system

The most recent available statistics show both a promising and alarming situation for the future of Bolivian education. In 2008, Bolivia's public expenditure on education accounted for 5.8% of its Gross National Product, which is just above the average public spending of 5% in the wider Latin American region (UNESCO, 2011: 349). On the global Education For All Development Index (EDI) Bolivia ranks 78 (out of 127 countries) and is considered a medium EDI country (UNESCO, 2011: 278). Bolivia is estimated to reach the Universal Primary Education goal by 2015 and is also likely to achieve the EFA literacy goal in 2015, according to UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report (2011: 80). Over the past decade (1999-2008) there has, however, been little change in the enrolment, survival, drop-out and repetition rates in primary education, as around 94% of Bolivia's children are enrolled in schools and approximately 80% of them continue to complete their primary education (UNESCO, 2011: 60).[93] Thus, there are still Bolivian children that miss out on education, or fail to complete their educational career once in school. These educational inequalities in Bolivia can be attributed to factors including ethnicity, gender, urban/rural descent, geographical location and wealth.[94] This challenging context forms the background to which the new ASEP law has to be implemented.

Between March and early June 2006 a first proposal for a new education law '*Avelino Sinani y Elizardo Perez*' (ASEP) was shared and discussed with 332 local civil society institutions. Consequently, it was officially started up during the National Educational Congress in July 2006, in which 26 organisations participated (Drange, 2007: 4). The first proposals for a renewed education sector were born in the educational commission of the constitutional Assembly from mid 2006 onwards (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009: 67-69). This resulted in a long process of consultation and approval that continued throughout the period of this research, until the ASEP law was finally approved in congress on 20 December 2010. This section aims to provide a broader understanding of Bolivia's new education reform 'Program' (the content and the innovative policy) by also looking at the 'Program Ontology', or *how* this policy was designed and works (Dale, 2005; Pawson, 2002). The *process* of how subjects interpret, negotiate and familiarise or reject the ASEP law is called the 'program mechanism' and is discussed in the sections on the new Law and power plays below, as it is rather this programme mechanism that triggers change, than the actual 'programme' (the ASEP law) itself (Pawson, 2002: 342). This section first introduces the most important developments for the entire education sector, while the next section elaborates specifically on the consequences of the ASEP reform for teacher education.

[93] Net Enrolment Ratio in primary education is the number of children of official primary school age who are enrolled in schools as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population. UNESCOs statistics show a slightly decreased NER from 95 in 1999 to 94 in 2008.
[94] See UNESCO's GMR website,
http://public.tableausoftware.com/views/PageFourNew/Pg4Dash?:embed=y&:toolbar=no&:tabs=no.

Morales' first Minister of Education, Felix Patzi, was one of the creators of the first versions of what now constitutes the ASEP law for decolonising education. In his controversial efforts to create a decolonising education system, Patzi pushed for diminishing the role of the Catholic church in education, or for an end to a 'Catholic Doctrine' in Bolivian education, which resulted in fierce protests from Catholics and evangelicals alike (Postero, 2007). The approved version of the ASEP law still refers to a '*secular, pluralistic and spiritual*' education model, as it '*promotes mutual respect and coexistence between peoples with different religious backgrounds*' (Article 3.6, ASEP law, 2010b). While some see a danger of worsening tensions between different ethnic and religious groups (see below), Article 3.12 stresses the need to '*promote peaceful coexistence and the eradication of all forms of violence in education, for the development of a society based on a culture of peace, with respect for individual and collective rights for all*'. The division between rural and urban Normales, according to Patzi, *'reflects the differentiation between Indians and whites'*. Therefore, he asserts, *'decolonisation, as we defined it at the Ministry of Education, in practice means unifying educational institutions into one system, to put an end to ethnically defined separations.* [95] The law makes reference to broader debates in Latin America and beyond of education for liberation (see chapter 3), as Article 3.14 states Bolivian education aims to follow a '*liberating pedagogy*' as it encourages personal development and a critical awareness of reality '*in order to change it*'.

These new policy lines for a decolonised education system are embedded in the ancient indigenous, and primarily Andean spiritual values, or *cosmovisión*. This concept of *cosmovisión* for instance came up during an interview with an indigenous social movement leader: '*The law Avelino Siñani is telling us that the indigenous wisdom, their cosmovisión, is the strength of Bolivia. It is the essential basis of Bolivia, and the discourse of President Evo says the moral base of Bolivia is with the indigenous peoples*' (14). Indeed, the ASEP law refers to an education that '*develops knowledges and expertise from the worldview [cosmovisión] of indigenous peoples, peasants and afro-Bolivians, in complementarity to universal knowledges, to contribute to the integral development of society*' (Article 3.10, ASEP law, 2010b). More specifically on this *cosmovisión*, Article 3.13 specifies that education should build from and promote the ethical and moral values of the plural society, including for instance '*ama qhilla, ama llulla, ama suwa*' – do not be lazy, do not lie or steal, and '*suma qamaña*' or the earlier mentioned notion of '*vivir bien*' (to live well). Bolivian education, then, is based on '*the values of unity, equality, inclusion, dignity, freedom, solidarity, reciprocity, respect, complementarity, harmony, openness, balance, equal opportunities, social and gender equity in participation, welfare, responsibility, social justice, distribution and redistribution of social goods and products to live well*' (Article 13.3, ASEP law, 2010b). At a discursive level, the law thus covers all three dimensions of Frasers' conceptualisation of social justice, including distribution (the economic dimension of justice), recognition (the cultural dimension of justice) and representation (the political dimension of justice) (Fraser, 2005a; Fraser, 2005b). With regard to 'gender justice', similar to the gender-equity emphasis in the former 1994 Reform (chapter 2), the current government gives considerable (discursive) weight to issues of gender.[96]

[95] Source: 'Memorandum of the International Seminar', that can be retrieved from http://educationanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/memorandum-del-encuentro-internacional-sobre-descolonizacion-y-educacion.pdf.

[96] A number of constitutional articles for instance refer to gender equity, including 8, 11, 14, 15, 26, 48, 58, 78 and 79 (relating directly to education), 104, 147, 172.22 (gender equity in parliament), 210, 270, 278 and 402. Similarly, the ASEP education reform includes Articles 3.13, 4.2, 4.6. 5.7 and 10.5, which all directly refer to the importance of gender equity.

More specifically, the reform is built around the following four pillars, as identified by the Bolivian MoE: 1) decolonisation; 2) intra- and inter-culturalism along with plurilingualism; 3) productivity; and 4) communitarian education. While the government uses these four categories, the data of this study shows there are various interpretations of each pillar, lowering the prospects for creating a strong new curriculum, at least for the moment. In the interest of gaining an understanding of Bolivia's current educational and political processes, explorations of these concepts follow.

'Decolonisation' can be seen as an umbrella-pillar. The official explanation of decolonising education is *'putting an end to ethnic borders that influence opportunities in the area of education, work, politics and economic security, where no one is privileged on the basis of race, ethnicity and or language. It also signifies to avoid favouring conceptualisations of the Western world as if they are universal, yet valuing the knowledges, skills and technologies of the indigenous civilisations, both of the Amazonian and Andean regions*' (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006). Another official definition of decolonisation as used in the area of public policy is in line with the discourse of the ASEP law: '*Public policies need to be created based on values, principles, knowledges and practices of the Bolivian people; the actions of civil servants need to be oriented at preserving, developing and protecting cultural diversity through a intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual dialogue'* (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009). Specifically, ASEP rejects parts of the 'colonial' education reform of 1994, which was developed in Bolivia with cooperation from international consultants (see chapter 4). However, supporters of the law see ASEP as a continuation of an emancipatory educational process, that already started with the intercultural and bilingual reform of 1994 (96: 25), and others – such as La Paz's teacher union – perceive it as a mere copy of the 1994 reform with some 'indigenous additions' (49:17). However diverse the interpretations and reactions to this reform, it is clearly a response to the need for a Bolivian-owned reform, as the former section showed how different groups of actors believe the 1994 reform was created – or 'imposed' – without enough genuine participation of civil society and teachers.

ASEP's second pillar builds on the 1994 reform's use of the concepts of inter-culturalism and bilingualism. The new form of inter-culturalism is linked to the notion of intra-culturalism. Rather than a narrowly-defined (American and European) notion of multiculturalism (Delany-Barmann, 2010: 186), or what Hale (2002) called neoliberal multiculturalism, the ASEP reform builds on Latin American social science and educational literature on the concept of 'interculturalism' and has developed the interrelated concepts of inter- and intracultural education. While inter-culturalism offers students skills in relating to other cultures, intra-culturalism engages reflection and growth of one's own identity. Various MoE officials and Bolivian academics have assured that the two aspects being part of a single pillar is very intentional, as neither can be successful in defining a plurinational citizenship without the other. Intraculturality is defined in Article 6.1 as '*promoting the restoration, empowerment, development of and cohesion between the cultures of the nation and indigenous peasant, intercultural and Afro-Bolivian populations for the consolidation of the Plurinational state, based on equity, solidarity, complementarity, reciprocity and justice.*' The law continues to state how the national curriculum incorporates the various knowledges of the different worldviews' (*cosmovisiones*) of these nations and communities. Secondly, interculturality is defined as '*the development of interrelationships and interaction regarding the knowledges,*

skills, science and technology belonging to each culture, which strengthens their own identity but also an equal interaction between all cultures in Bolivia and with the rest of the world' (Article 6.2, ASEP law, 2010b).

As the most practical part of ASEP, plurilingualism exemplifies the inter- and intra-cultural process: students will learn the native language local to their area, Spanish and a foreign language (most often this will be English). Even though the (approved) law still talks about a plurilingual (teacher) education system, it is no longer trilingual. Depending on the context of the school, the first language of instruction will either be Spanish or an indigenous language (in cases where more languages spoken by different students, a communitarian committee will decide upon the language(s) of instruction). In addition, all students have the right to learn a foreign language and all teachers will be taught sign language (article 7, ASEP law, Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia, 2010b).

Productive education, the third pillar, offers Bolivians a new type of engagement with the local and national economy. As the previous education reform geared students toward either technical or humanistic education, ASEP bridges the two. Under the new reform, students will finish secondary school with a technical-humanistic degree, allowing them to utilise either practical knowledge which can apply to the workforce, or to produce intellectually through attending university. While this is the practical application, productivity will also theoretically enable any secondary school graduate to produce new knowledge in whatever area they go into, through processes of critical analysis and reflection. Ideally, this critique will allow students to bring innovative change to the country, to be engaged in every sector, including economic growth. Another way productive education is explained, for instance by an indigenous movement leader, is by emphasising the function of education to create workers that have the skills and motivation to use '*the countries enormous potentials in the agricultural production or the production of hand-crafted goods*' (96:23). Nevertheless, vagueness still exists as in how to intepret this third conceptual pillar. An urban local governmental officer (and ex-teacher and teacher trainer) explains: '*in the rural areas people often confuse the idea of productive education with learning how to grow potatoes. They do not captivate the real essence of what it means; it also implies an intellectual production for people, to construct their own knowledge. This has to be worked out very well in the new curriculum design.*' He continues by saying how '*it is the same with adding intra- to interculturalism. For the community, it will just remain interculturality as long as it is not clear how this should work in the reality of the classroom.*'(72:19)

Communitarian education is perhaps ASEP's least defined and fourth pillar. While it relates to the larger, non-school community, it is not entirely clear to everyone how it does so. The three general interpretations are that either: the community actually plays a recognised role outside of the school day, which is especially important as Bolivia's schools operate on half-day schedules; schools engage indigenous community values and invite 'guests' from the community into the classroom; or some combination of the two. This has implications for the role of the teacher as well, particularly in rural communities, since '*the teacher is not only there for the student, but also for the family. This is the new teachers' profile, the practice of education is not only between the four walls of the classroom, but in the community, in the neighbourhood*' (14:16, quote from an indigenous movement leader, presently an official in the MoE). This centrally puts even more pressure on the quality of teacher training in order to prepare teachers for such an encompassing future role. Crucial in relation to communitarian education is the engagement of '*an equilibrium between the human being and nature in the individual and collective, to live well in the community*' (author's emphasis, Proyecto de Ley,

2007). The environment, or Mother Earth, is central in ASEP's vision of an integral education (see also Introduction).

Perhaps equally as important as the pillars and the law itself is that it applies to every formal education setting, from private, public and *de convenio*[97] schools, as well as from kindergarten through all post-secondary schooling. Special attention is being paid to those who had been falling out of the system previously, and thus educational institutions offering different levels should be created in remote areas, as well as for disabled students everywhere. There are three different 'forms' of education: regular education (from early childhood to secondary levels of schooling); special education (for people with special needs) and alternative education (for those who cannot participate in the regular system); and finally higher and professional education (Article 8, ASEP law, 2010). The different levels of the administrative structure of the education system include the: Ministry of Education and Culture; General Directions for Pluricultural Education; Departmental Directions for Education; Zone Directions; Nuclear Directions (cluster of schools); and Educational Unit Directions (*Consejos Educativos Comunitarios*). The ASEP reform organises the regular education system in three main educational levels:

1) **Early childhood development** in the form of '*Educación inicial en familia comunitaria':* 0-5 years; physical, affective, artistic, symbolic, spacio-temporal development.
2) **Primary education** – '*Educación primaria comunitaria vocacional*': 6-11 years; including maths, languages and communication, natural sciences and social sciences.[98]
3) **Secondary education** – '*Educación secundaria comunitaria productiva*': 12-17 years; focused on integrating theory and practice (*'educación integral*') of science, humanism, technology, ethics, spirituality, arts, physics and sports, as well as 'vocational and productive training' in the areas of productive technological sciences, human sciences, medical sciences and artistic sciences, physics and sports. In order to narrow the gap between rural and urban education, boarding schools and *'tele-centros'* in rural areas and marginalised urban areas will be constructed (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006; ASEP law articles 12-15).

The 'sub-system' of higher or tertiary education – '*Educación superior de formación professional*' – includes all (public and private) higher education institutions – including military, police and teacher education colleges. For all institutes, including the Normales, Technical Colleges, Art Colleges and Universities, it is obligatory to incorporate indigenous knowledges and technologies into 'modern knowledge'. Public universities are obliged to decentralise their faculties to rural and remote areas in response to the needs of each region (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006; ASEP law articles 28-30). The specifics of the new ASEP law for the *'formación de maestras y maestros*' (teacher education) are now explored.

[97] *De convenio* schools are cofounded by the state and private institutions which are often religious. Because of this funding scheme, these schools offer free attendance.

98 The natural sciences should be directed at demythologising 'Darwinist racism', dismissing social inequalities constructed by society. Social sciences contents should relate to indigenous civilisations, their sufferings due to the process of the 'conquista' (colonial rule) and new tendencies with respect to sociocultural diversity (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006).

5.3 Cleaning up the snakes breeding place: decolonising teacher education[99]

In contrast to, and as a result of, the lessons of the implementation process of the 1994 reform (chapter 4), the Normales are the first institutes to be transformed according to the new policy guidelines. The Normales are perceived to play a crucial role in the foreseen transformation processes. The new system is defined as *'unified, public, free of charge and diversified. [It is] unified with regard to the professional hierarchy, pedagogical and scientific quality without the division between an urban and rural system, [and] diversified in the sense that it responds to the productive economic, socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics of indigenous populations of each region on Bolivian territory'* (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006). In anticipation of the approval of the new law six months later, in June 2009 a special decree (*Decreto 156*) was established to already begin the transformation of the Plurinational system of teacher education (106:1). The teacher training institutes are still called Normales in daily speech, however the institutes changed names recently and are now officially called '*Escuelas Superiores de Formación de Maestros y Maestras*'.[100] These higher institutes of teacher education will provide students with a *licenciatura* degree, equal to the university *licenciatura* degree, as becomes clear from this section from the National Congress of Education in 2006: *'The 'Institutos Normales Superiores' will be transformed into 'Escuelas Superiores de Formación de Maestros' and post-graduate Pedagogical University that all dependent on the Ministry of Education. The higher teacher education institutes grant a 'licenciatura' degree after 5 years of study. The New Law respects and guarantees the 'escalafon' as a major conquest of Bolivian teachers'* (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006).

Thus, contrary to global tendencies to shorten teacher training, Bolivia's new law installs a longer teacher education trajectory of five years in total, equal to other university level *licenciatura* degrees. Most teacher students seem to be happy with receiving a higher degree, but many of them are not content with the longer period of study. Teacher trainers need to have a *licenciatura* degree and management staff are obliged to have at least a Masters degree (Article 35, ASEP law, 2010b). There are some concerns about the fact that Normales can provide a university-like degree of *licenciatura*. One trainer and management staff member of the (private) Catholic Normal explained that '*those who can give licenciatura degrees should be the universities, not the Normales. But here we can see the power of the unions, they do not want all Normales to become Pedagogical Universities, because they say then the profession will be open to anyone with a licenciatura. So they want Normales to provide licenciatura degrees that are comparable to the university licenciaturas*' (90:17). This quote reflects wider concerns over which institutes should be allowed to give out university degrees, which is closely linked to the discussion on the 'opening up' of the teaching profession to all university graduates. The unions continue to struggle for an exlusive right of Normal-graduates (*normalistas*) to teaching jobs, which is further elaborated in chapter 6.

The discourse on decolonisation, intra-, intercultural and plurilingual education, communitarian and productive education are reflected in chapter III of the ASEP law that deals with higher and professional education, including teacher education (Articles 31-40, ASEP Law, 2010b). Textbox 4 provides an overview of the core principles and objectives of the ASEP reform for the field of teacher education.

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[99] This title is inspired on an idea from a Bolivian researcher, who stated that if colonisation is a snake, the *Normales* would be its hotbed (114:11).

[100] Throughout the thesis I use the term Normales to refer to the teacher training institutes, like is common in Bolivian daily speech and debates.

Box 4. ASEP's principles and objectives for Teacher Education

Principles (Article 32), Teacher Education is:

1. unified in terms of professional hierarchy, pedagocial and scientific quality;
2. intercultural, intracultural and plurilingual;
3. public and free, it is the state's prime financial responsibility and supreme role;
4. diversified, in terms of its curriculum and institutional implementation, because it responds to the economic, productive and sociocultural characteristics as set in the framework of the Plurinational Curriculum.

Objectives (Article 33), Teacher Education should:

1. train critical, reflexive, auto-critical, innovative and research oriented professionals, who are committed to democracy, social transformations and the full inclusion of all Bolivians in society;
2. develop an integral training of (female and male) teachers with high academic quality both in specialised subject matters as in pedagogical matters, on the basis of an understanding of the reality, the cultural identity and the socio-historical processes of the country.

Source: (Ministerio de Educación, ASEP Law 2010b)

As set up in the 1994 Reform programme, the initial training starts with an 'introductory' semester, called *nivellación*, aiming to get all students to the same level. Students who started before February 2010 followed a programme of six semesters after *nivellación*, with all semesters running for approximately half a year. Since early 2009, new batches of students have started in the new ASEP system of five years. These five years include 5,000 study hours (1,000 hours per year), equalling 300 credits (or 60 credits annually). The first two years are dedicated to a general training. During the second year, 360 hours are dedicated to an elected specialisation. The last three years are fully focused on the specialisation of the student teacher (102:2). In contrast to earlier documents of the ASEP law, in its final version the law no longer expects *all* teachers to be trained in a tri-lingual system. However, all teachers will be trained in sign language.

The image (6) illustrates the core principles, relevant concept and focus areas of the new curriculum for primary level teacher students. The five boxes include the subjects of each of the five years of training. A full elaboration of these subjects/disciplines is still being developed (at the time of writing – January 2011). The new curriculum includes subject matters such as traditional medicine, and 'food and nutritional security', in line with this extended role for teachers in communities. The new curriculum also has a clear political agenda, as it expects future teachers to 'decolonise politically', as they are trained in their first and second year in subject matters including '*cosmovisión*', 'political ideology', 'decolonisation' and 'communitarian mathematics' (La Prensa, 22-12-2010).

Photo 5, The new curriculum for primary teachers, source: http://www.laprensa.com.bo/noticias/22-12-2010/noticias/22-12-2010_1220.php.

5.4 Teachers' and trainers' in-service training

According to the new policies of the MoE: '*teacher education is a gradual and continuous process of personal and professional development*' (Medinaceli, 2007). In response to the need for better trained and 'updated' teachers and teacher trainers alike, in Bolivia the importance of in-service training was already established in 1997. Under the current government, teacher education is organised in three phases: the initial (pre-service) phase; the permanent (in-service) phase of conceptual and practical training; and the third phase of continuous training, provided at various academic institutes. According to a Ministry official who is responsible for the permanent and in-service training programmes, '*the projection of training the in-service teachers is backed up constitutionally with article 96.2 of the Plurinational constitution, which states teachers are obliged to take part in continuous actualisation programmes*' (106: 2). Articles 39 and 40 of the ASEP law also include the right and duty of teachers to take part in in-service training programmes (Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia, 2010). He continues by sketching the scale of the foreseen activities: '*There are about 120,000 teachers in service now, including 17,000 untrained teachers ['interinos']. [...] The Ministry will centrally organise the offer of thematic courses for which teachers can subscribe voluntarily. [...] In contrast to the sporadic courses now offered by the Ministry and NGOs, the new courses will be in line with the new law's central policy lines, for example about how to implement decolonisation in the classroom. [...] We will generate a corresponding regulation, for instance for UNESCO who have a proposal for in-service training now. We are also still working on the role of the Pedagogical University [in Sucre], and the role of possible other existing or new universities, even foreign univeristies. [...] We will also control more closely the work of NGOs, because there were some instances of falsified papers and degrees. [...] But we will not homogenise and centralise all training possibilities, bearing in mind the diversity of this country'* (106: 3 - 106:6).

From this quote, it seems the MoE is aiming to develop new in-service training opportunities and to coordinate those initiatives that have existed so far. A young teacher in an interview told me that this coordination was absolutely needed, since she was spending – and in her eyes partly wasting – her money on different, but not officially recognised, training programmes and workshops by NGOs, because of a lack of a coordinated and officially certified system (128). Plan International, CEBIAE[101] and Save the Children, among others, were mentioned by a MoE official as NGOs working in the area of in-service training for teachers and trainers (106:8). Simultaneously, both the MoE as well as the urban Normal were in contact with the regional organisation Convenio Andres Bello for their training programmes for teacher training staff.[102] Some of these programmes had already started for the trainers of Simón Bolívar in 2008, and it was not yet clear as to what scale the Convenio Andres Bello would take up similar programmes for teacher trainers in other Normales. Despite these initiatives, many teachers complain of a lack of opportunities for in-service training, particularly outside of the urban areas.

During a presentation of a MoE official at an international seminar in October 2007 in La Paz, a strategy to implement these long-term training plans (in the period 2008-2011) was presented. The strategy included the creation of 'permanent training centres' as well as

[101] Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativas, see http://www.cebiae.org/.
[102] Convenio Andres Bello is an international and intergovernmental organisation that works in a number of Latin American countries, including Bolivia, to 'strengthen and develop educational, scientific, technological and cultural integration'. See http://www.convenioandresbello.org/.

Pedagogical Universities in various regions, that would enable teachers to continue their professional development through the accomplishment of various university degrees (ideally the *licenciatura* is followed by a masters, PhD and Post-Doc title) (Medinaceli, 2007).[103] However, a MoE official mentioned in May 2010: '*we are in a transformation phase, we still have to define and create regulations on permanent and continuous training. There are various things missing, but we are proceeding*' (106:11). Various interviews and observations confirmed that to date, little has been done to implement the in-service teaching programmes on a nation wide scale.

5.5 Using Cummings InstitutionS framework for contrasting 1994 and ASEP reforms

Cummings theorisation of the InstitutionS of education (see introduction to Part IV) is relevant for providing an overview of the differences and continuities between the 1994 Reform (discussed in chapter 4) and the current ASEP reform, and their respective policies for the teacher education arena. Cummings framework has, however, some limitations for its application to this study. Cummings developed a framework in which he compared the various historical education models of different hegemonic states. He also develops a set of core principles that aim to help understand and compare different models of the InstitutionS of education, including: the period of genesis; the pedagogical ideal; the representative school; the scope; its dominant learning theory; the school and classroom technologies; the institute's administration and administrative style; the unit costs and source of finance (Cummings, 1999: 423-424). I draw from and adapt part of Cummings' comparative principles, in order to compare the impact of the two most recent Bolivian reforms on teacher education institutions (see Table 4). Different from Cummings principles, I included 'Scope' into 'Ideals' to avoid an overlap I see in his analysis. Also, I changed 'Administrative styles' into 'System of accountability' and I left 'Unit costs' out because of a lack of clear data that could make any valuable statements on that issue for this case. Moreover, drawing from Tatto's work, I added 'resistance and counter-patterns' into the table, as these tendencies are crucial in understanding the current field of Bolivian teacher education (TE).

Over the past few years the (envisaged) role of the Bolivian government has changed considerably from the way it was described by Regalsky and Laurie (2007: 239-240), as '*a foreign power that has spoken a foreign language and has given urban answers to rural problems with schools functioning to legitimate the state criollo hispanicizing hegemony through its hidden and explicit curricula*'. With ASEP, the MoE has designed a counter-hegemonic project for decolonisation, which aims for social justice – or to *live well* – for all Bolivians, and recognition and inclusion rather than an expulsion of indigenous values, knowledges and languages. In that sense, it can be considered a 'revolutionary reform', which seeks not only to produce genuine improvements in people's lives, but also to build popular political capacity (Rodriguez-Garavito et al, 2008: 24). While Bolivia's new constitution and the ASEP reform work toward addressing historical social injustices, especially concerning the marginalisation of indigenous populations with regard to economic distribution, political representation and socio-cultural recognition processes, the decolonial ideas are certainly not uncontested, as will be now elaborated.

[103] And those teacher trainers that I spoke to whom were indeed working toward a Masters or PhD, were often not comfortable enough to share this with their colleagues, and most of them asked me to keep this information secret, or as '*a surprise*', as one trainer assured. This might have to do with the fact that it is not an easy nor a fast process to obtain a Doctors title in the Bolivian social sciences context, as one respondent explained.

Models of Teacher Education	1994 Education Reform 1565	1994 policies on TE	2006-2010 Reform ASEP	2006-2010 policies on TE
Period	1992 – 2010	Mostly after 1999	Developed since 2006, approved December 2010	Institutionalisation process since 2007; new 5-year TE programme since 2010
Ideal	Intercultural and Bilingual Education	PINS & PINS-EIB (chapter 4)	Decolonised, Inter-/intracultural/pluri-lingual, productive and communitarian education	Integral system for all *Institutos Superiores de Formacion Docente* (chapter 5)
Representative school	–		Warisata	Warisata
Learning theory	Constructivism, Vigotsky	Constructivism Vigotsky	Freire, Action research, coloniality theories of knowledge	Freire, Action research, coloniality theories of knowledge
School and classroom technologies	Child-centered, participatory, core & additional curriculum	Child-centered, participatory, core & additional curriculum	Community involvement, productive education, core & additional curriculum, problem-based learning	Community involvement, productive education, problem-based learning, action research methodology
Administration	Quasi-decentralised	Administration by MoE or University	Quasi-decentralised	MoE still central role in policy making, planning. Normales (again) have relative autonomy.
Source of finance	MoE, foreign funding (including WB, IMF, UNICEF, GTZ, AECID, NL)	MoE, foreign funding (including GTZ, AECID, UNICEF), institutional income	MoE, foreign funding (Basket*)	MoE, institutional income, small part of Basket
System of accountability	Parental Councils	Student Federations	School, community, municipal and departmental committees	Student Federations, community involvement (chapter 5)
Resistance or counter-patterns	Unions, parents, SIMECAL Quality evaluation	Problematic transformation of Normales 1994-2005	Urban teachers union, groups of parents, anti-Morales politicians, church etc.	Powerplays in the TE field (chapter 6)

Table 4, Models of Teacher Education, adapted from Cummings (1999: 42)

** The Basket Fund is a largely unconditional fund (12 million US $ per 4 years) from the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Spain for the Bolivian Ministry of Education.*

5.6 Main actors and their views on education reform

Having set out the main characteristics of the new ASEP law in the (teacher) education field, I now introduce the main actors involved in the Bolivian governance mechanisms of the area of teacher education, and I analyse the tensions and power struggles between those actors and their positions with regard to the ASEP reform project for decolonising education. As set out in the theoretical chapter 2, I draw from Dale's understanding of the pluriscalar nature of educational governance (2005), by taking the national level policy making of the ASEP law as a starting point, while simultanously engaging with the importance of processes and actors above and below the state level. Since actors are involved at various levels and with varying resources, changes cannot be attributed to any single actor or scale. So, with the above information about the various actors in mind, this section discusses the – sometimes conflicting – points of views and struggles over the new ASEP law.

Normales

Presently, pre-service teacher education in Bolivia is provided in 27 Normales, or as they are now labelled ESFMs (*Escuelas Superiores de Formación de Maestras y Maestros*), as well as in 20 smaller scale Academic Units (UAs), which are dependent on a larger ESFM institute and that are created to serve those living in more remote areas. The two private and religious Normales will be closed down, and new ones have been opened. An indicative overview of the current institutes is provided in Table 5.[104] The table shows both Normales (ESFMs) and UA's. Where foundation years are missing, in most cases this means that these institutes were (re)created recently, without any specific data available. The last column indicated the urban and rural *location*, and not so much its focus area, as currently all Normales are supposed to be unified under one system. While there is no official division between urban and rural Normales in policy narratives anymore, in reality these differences are still influential and relevant for the purpose of this research.

In general, there is little contact and exchange between these institutes, except for contacts between the management staff during official meetings organised by the MoE (36:2, 62:20, 122:12). According to the regulations for Normales of 1997, the organisational structure of every institute consists of three levels: a consultative; an executive; and an operational level. At the first level, each institute has a consultative board. Yet, they are not only given different names, they also function differently in the various institutes. Reports from the period before 2006 showed for example the hierarchical/vertical advisory boards in the institutes that were administered by universities (and that were financially dependent of these universities) in the period 2000-2005. In Warisata, this was one of the main reasons why the contract for external administration of the University San Francisco Asis was not prolonged in 2003 (Yapu in Lozada Pereira, 2004: 125-126). At the second level of executive power the General Director carries responsibility with regard to the training and professional development of the teacher trainers' staff, and internal evaluation mechanisms. Thirdly, at the operational level there is an Academic Director – whom is responsible for curriculum development – and an Administrative and Financial Director (36:2, 67:18). Earlier research criticised the organisational management

[104] This overview is more indicative rather than precise data, since it was difficult to acquire data on the presently existing, closed down or to be closed down Normales.

structures in general to be bureaucratic and centralised (Lozada Pereira, 2004), which was confirmed by respondents of this study, as is discussed in chapter 7.

In an evaluation report from the MoE (1999), the urban institute Simón Bolívar was described as the leader in processes of resistance and the 'permanent conflict' between the government and Normales in the period between 1997-1999. The evaluation took place during a turmoil period in which the MoE had just announced the Simón Bolívar would be administered by the public University (UMSA – see chapter 6). Yet a small number of teacher trainers did not resist or refuse to accept all governmental policies, as they also saw the benefits of the involvement of the University. A number of teacher trainers in recent interviews similarly spoke out against their unions' attitude of resistance to the new Reform plans, arguing that not all of their colleagues supported this position of refusal of the La Paz union (7:2). Thus in line with Tatto's claim mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, we cannot judge either of the Normales included in this study as homogenous, particularly not in terms of their political stance and attitudes.

	Table 5, Teacher training institutes: ESFMs and UAs	Department	Foundation	Urban-rural location
1	**ESFM Riberalta**	Beni	1965	Rural
2	**ESFM Clara Parada (Santísima Trinidad)**	Beni	1976	Urban
	UA: San Ignacio de Moxos	*Beni*	–	
3	**ESFM Marsical Sucre/Universidad Pedagogica**	Chuquisaca	1909	Urban
4	**ESFM Franz Tamayo (Villa Serrano)**	Chuquisaca	1961	Rural
5	**ESFM Simón Bolívar de Cororo**	Chuquisaca	1966	Rural
6	**ESFM Ismael Montes (Vacas)**	Cochabamba	1946	Rural
7	**ESFM Manuel Ascencio Villarroel (Paracaya)**	Cochabamba	1948	Rural
8	**ESFM Simon Rodriguez Carreño**	Cochabamba	–	Rural
	UA: Cercado, Villa Tunari, Tarata, Sacaba	*Cochabamba*	–	
9	**ESFM Simón Bolívar**	La Paz	1917	Urban
10	**ESFM Warisata**	La Paz	1938	Rural
11	**ESFM Bautista Saavedra (Santiago de Huata)**	La Paz	1938	Rural
12	**ESFM Mariscal Andrés de Santa Cruz de Calahumana**	La Paz	1958	Rural
13	**ESFM Antonio Jose de Sucre**	La Paz	–	Urban
14	**ESFM Vila Aroma**	La Paz	–	Rural

15	**ESFM Tecnologico Humanistico El Alto**	La Paz	–	Urban
	UA: Caranavi (Simón Bolívar), Ancocagua, Corpa (Mariscal Andres)	*La Paz*	–	
16	**ESFM René Barrientos Ortuño (Caracollo)**	Oruro	1965	Rural
17	**ESFM Ángel Mendoza Justiniano**	Oruro	1970	Urban
	UA: Corque (Angel Mendoza), Machacamarca, Pampa Aullagas (Rene Barrientos)	*Oruro*	–	
18	**ESFM Puerto Rico**	Pando	–	Rural
	UA: Cobija, Filadelfia	*Pando*	–	
19	**ESFM Franz Tamayo (Llica)**	Potosí	1961	Rural
20	**ESFM Andrés de Santa Cruz**	Potosí	1971	Rural
21	**ESFM José David Berrios**	Potosí	1938	Urban
22	**ESFM Eduardo Avaroa**	Potosí	1985	Urban
	UA: Atocha (Eduardo Avaroa), San Luis de Sacaca (Andrés de Santa Cruz)	*Potosí*	–	
23	**ESFM Enrique Finot**	Santa Cruz	1959	Urban
24	**ESFM Multietnica intercultural Concepción**	Santa Cruz	–	Rural
25	**ESFM Plurietnico del Oriente y Chaco**	Santa Cruz	–	Rural
26	**ESFM Rafael Chavez Ortiz**	Santa Cruz	–	Rural
	UA: Vallegrande (Enrique Finot), San Julian (Rafeal Chavez Ortiz), Charagua (Plurietnico)	*Santa Cruz*	–	
27	**Juan Misael Caracho (Canasmoro)**	Tarija	1938	Rural
	UA: Tarija, Gran Chaco	*Tarija*	–	
	PRIVATE INSTITUTES: CLOSING DOWN			
	Normal Catolica Sedes Sapientiae	Cochabamba	1956	Urban
	Normal Adventista	Cochabamba	1971	Urban

Sources: Del Granado anexo 1ª, Lozadae Pereira 2004 anexo 1, website of the viceministry of higher education[105]

[105] Websites: http://ves.minedu.gob.bo/ves/index.php?ID=dgmaestros and http://www.dgfm-bo.com/pages/escuelas/beni.ph, last visited 20-04-2011. From the above mentioned institutes in the table, I have visited five in total: the Simon Bolívar in La Paz, the (private) Normal Catolica in Cochabamba, Manuel Ascencio Villarroel in Paracaya, the Universidad Pedagogica (which is 'treated' as a Normal and not a university, but with extra training possibilities) and the Normal of Warisata. Simón Bolívar is the main case study, and Paracaya is a secondary and additive case, as was discussed in chapter 4. See also Appendix 7 for two maps on these institutes' locations in the departments of La Paz and Cochabamba.

The Normales are usually large institutions with more than a thousand students. Both rural and urban institutions tend to have very little equipment, poor libraries and, at least in rural areas, boarding school systems that allow students from remote areas to take part, as is elaborated below. Besides the management and administrative staff, there are two other important groups of actors in the institutes: the teacher trainers and the teacher students (see part IV).

Funding mechanisms of Bolivia's Normales

Teacher education in Bolivia is public and funded from the National Treasury. It is, however, not easy to acquire (reliable) data on finances.[106] This was confirmed in the MoE evaluation report of 1999 for the case of Simón Bolívar, where data on the annual spending and budget were not retrieved (1999: 22-23), and the external evaluation of Concha et al (2002: 22) claiming how '*there is confusion about the financing of infrastructure and equipment of the Normales*'. In recent interviews with MoE officials of the financial department of the MoE, it became clear that salaries of teaching, management and administrative staff are still paid through the MoE, from the funds of the National Treasury. The infrastructure and water, gas and electricity bills of the institutes are financed through the municipal levels (112:1, 113:1), or through the external resources of the Basket fund.

Normales also generate sources of income themselves. The 2004 UNESCO report findings still reflect the situation today, where these resources range from (international) donations to – particularly in rural Normales – income through renting out (class)rooms, the selling of agricultural products (produced on the premises of the institute) or payments from students and staff to cover electricity and other bills (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 156-157). Besides these forms of income, the data of this study discloses how a considerable part of the institutes' budget is raised through the payments for certificates and other formal paperwork. In two rural institutes (boarding schools) students affirmed that they also had to pay for their daily costs, but that services were insufficient; there were complaints of a lack of functioning and clean sanitation facilities, very small rooms and a low quality of nutrition. Currently, the MoE evaluates the spending of the Normales, through annual 'POA's' (*Annual Operation Plan)* that examine the income (from the Treasury as well as own resources) and expenditure of each institute (112:1). However, the budget reporting of Normales has been criticised for being rather 'rough estimates' including 'unregistered spending', rather than '*reflecting the real financial situation of the institutes*' (Concha et al, 2002: 47). In 2004, Lozada Pereira's report revealed how political pressure, teachers' unions' leading roles and consequent conflicts determined the way finances were distributed among the various institutes. The increase of the budget of Simón Bolívar in La Paz was, for instance, higher than rural and Amazonian institutes (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 102-103).

Overall, there is little foreign investment in the teacher education system, except for smaller investments in some Normales (such as laboratories and libraries) paid from the budget that the MoE receives from the 'Basket Fund' of the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain and Sweden

[106] Lozada Pereira (2004) provides some data of the period right after the 1994 reform: the amount of money spent on teacher education increased from 4.511.282 US$ in 1994 to 6.880.810 US$ in 1999, while interestingly changes in teacher education only started to take place after this period, which leads us to assume that investments have increased since.

(101:6). A MoE official from the financial department mentioned that between 2007 and 2010, the MoE received about 10 million US dollars through this Basket Fund, and a small part (which he could not trace down) of that was invested in improving the facilities of some Normales (113:1).

When having a closer look at how foreign organisations provided funding and support in Bolivia's teacher education system, we can observe how already in 1972 and the following year, UNESCO and UNICEF organised two seminars for the improvement of the quality of in-service teachers (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 47). After UNICEFs role in the reform process of the 1990s, they now run a project for pre-service, in-service and long distance training on EIB in the Amazon region. In this region, there is still a lack of trained teachers, particularly for the secondary level of education (interview with a former MoE official now working at UNICEF (3:1)). The Spanish international development cooperation agency (AECID) cooperated with the MoE in a quality improvement programme for teacher trainers at the Normales from 1999 onwards, in 21 Normales and with 1,011 teacher trainers (81). The involvement of AECID in this initiative ended at the end of 2007, as the MoE was supposed to take over the responsibilities of this programme (AECID, 2007). I did meet some teacher trainers and management staff members that were enrolled in the AECID programme, but many of the participants had left the Normales. A Normal Director told me they had to leave because these participants were not *normalistas* but 'University-teachers' that participated in this programme during the University administration in some Normales. When Normales became autonomous again, many of these trained participants accordingly had to leave the teacher education sector (64:4). Two AECID staff members (89) and a MoE official verified this statement (Del Granado Cosio, 2007). While Lozada Pereira's report states it was not the (relatively small) increase in budget of the rural Normales that made changes from 1999 onwards, but rather the programmes and interventions of foreign actors (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 161-162), the report also mentions how (international and national) consultancy reports on the 1994 reform critique these forms of foreign funding in Normales to have been badly distributed nor widely used (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 119). In line with this last observation of Lozada Pereira, I encountered only a few, small scale, examples of cooperation with or donations from foreign donors in the Normales I visited.

Student teacher federations

In Normales, student teachers are (supposed to be) represented through representative bodies called student federations. On its website, the MoE for instance proclaimed how in the beginning of 2010 several of the student federations were involved in negotiations with the MoE on issues such as transparency and anti-corruption in the Normales, the delivery of equipment (computers, sports facilities), and incentives for further studies, among other things (Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia, 2010a, 8 February). However, in both the urban and rural institute, students complained of a lack of accountability, contribution fees that 'disappeared' and a general feeling of malfunctioning of these federations. During the fieldwork period 2010, elections for a new federation were planned for in the urban institute, '*after three years without a functioning representative body*' (student teacher 103:8). In these elections, different student parties present themselves, like the one in Photo 6, in the Normal Enrique Finot in Santa Cruz. It was reported in both institutes that once these 'student fronts' are elected, they often do not (or, cannot) live up to the promises of their electoral programme. One student explained that this was due to the power relations

between the federation and the management. A radically different point of view came from a Ministry official in an interview in 2007, who talked about a 'dictatorship of the students', commenting how – when indeed functioning – student federations had significant power both in relation to staff and other students. '*I am sure they [student union leaders] use this power more for their own interests, which is neither beneficial for the majority of students nor the quality of teacher education*' (76:17).

Photo 6. Representatives of a student party present themselves at the Normal Enrique Finot in Santa Cruz

Below, I briefly introduce the nature of Bolivia's national teaching force, which also resembles the main characteristics of the teacher trainers and teacher students at the Normales.

In-service Teachers

According to the statistics of the Bolivian MoE (2009) Bolivia has 137,817 teachers, with 60% women and 40% men. There are 122,294 primary and secondary level teachers or school directors, and 11,321 have administrative or official functions. In total, 4,202 teachers work in Normales, including trainers and administrative personnel. Between 2005 and 2009, the national teachers' population increased by 10.5%, from 125,820 teachers in 2005 to 139,134 teachers in 2009. Of all teachers, 59% work in urban areas and 41% in rural areas. According to the MoE, 16% of Bolivia's teachers are said to be 'young' (below 30 years), 31.32% between 30 and 40 years old; 26.03% are between 40 and 50 years old; and 26.84% are aged above 50.

Due to a lack of good retirement arrangements, a fairly large group of relatively 'older' teachers see themselves as forced into continuing their work. According to the teacher unions, teachers (and teacher trainers in Normales alike) see themselves forced into continuing to work at a relatively old age, because there are no good arrangements in place for when they stop. Various respondents connected this lack of retirement arrangements to a deteriorating educational quality and outdated teaching styles. In addition, they linked it to the fact that there is a surplus of trained primary level teachers now; because on the one hand, the older generation continuing working, and on the other hand, the training system does not seem to respond to the needs of the education system by training too many primary level teachers, while failing to deliver enough secondary school teachers (13:113).

Contreras and Talavera (2004a: 64) provide an overview of the composition of the Bolivian teacher force having the following characteristics: there is a growing 'feminisation' of the teacher profession; a strong indigenous presence; continuing deterioration of their socio-

economic status; continuing poverty among teachers; it is often a second career choice; many teachers have extra jobs, inside or outside of public and private schools; and often Bolivian teachers come from a marginalised background. My fieldwork research confirmed this situation in which a majority of Bolivian teachers have other jobs (such as taxi drivers, waiters, guards, child care workers), or they run second turns (often in private schools) in the afternoons and evenings. Being forced into extra jobs leaves them little or no time to prepare their classes, or for *actualización* (updating professional knowledge). Due to changed entrance regulations and a pessimistic economic situation, many teacher students are not young secondary school leavers anymore, but people with former studies and professions that seek a secure job opportunity (see chapter 7). The growing group of older students often have family responsibilities, leading to child care problems, especially when both partners are studying and working.

School, community, municipal and departmental committees

Being an important part of the new law, and part of the decentralised system, community participation is organised through '*Concejos Educativos Comunitarios*', including parents, teachers and community organisations. They change their formation every one or two years. These school councils are responsible for (local) educational management and the delivery of quality education for all (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 2006). Already since the 1994 Reform, parents gained relative power in the context of primary and secondary schools committees. They help, among other things, with organisational aspects of school feeding programmes, cleaning school premises and organising festivities, but they also keep an eye on the work of teachers. According to Van Dam (2007: 6), in some cases, tensions arose between these school councils and the teaching staff, because the councils accused teachers of bad performance or issues such as sexual intimidation. Although the school councils were also meant to have educational roles, so far, this is often limited to the cleaning of classrooms or preparation of school meals. At the municipal level, the so-called *Núcleos* (schools clusters) can develop joint projects for the improvement of educational quality, which are then funded partly by the MoE and partly by the municipality. Within the cluster, there is usually one 'head school' which provides a group of other smaller schools with facilities such as a library, media centre and a full eight year primary education programme (Van Dam, 2007: 7, 10). While teachers' salaries are arranged at the central administrative level, the nine departmental education sections (*Servicios Departamentales de Educación – SEDUCA's*) are in charge of managing the local assignments of teachers' positions. In general, there is little connection between the schools, SEDUCA's and the Normales, as discussed in chapter 7.

Ministry of Education of Bolivia

The MoE is a powerful actor in a centrally organised education system. It is the main driver behind the new Education Reform. The mission statement of the MoE in the new Plurinational state is to '*design, implement and execute politics of inclusive, equitable, inter-intracultural, plurilingual, scientific, technological and quality education strategies, with social participation on the basis of a territorial, communitarian-productive and decolonizing Plurinational education system.'* This is followed by their vision statement,which states '*the Ministry of Education ensures a productive, communitarian and quality education for everyone with socio-cultural relevance, contributing to building a just society, and a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature that supports the development of the plurinational state, to live well (vivir bien), through strengthening educational management'* (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010c). The teacher

training department (*Dirección General de la Formación de los Maestros*) is part of the vice-ministry of higher education and professional training.[107] The MoE carries the main responsibility for the teacher education system (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 181; Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010b).

There exist internal differences in the MoE on interpretations of the rationale and ways to implement the new ASEP Reform for decolonising education. The ex-minister, who was still in her position when interviewed, acknowledged that resistance was not only coming from teachers and their unions, but also from people within the MoE itself (46:2). According to some authors, the MoE remains an island with a lack of touch with reality (Van Dam, 2006); and an institution with a lack of coordination and clear strategy (Nucinkis, 2004: 51). This position was confirmed by an ex-teacher trainer, who explained how the MoE itself is still a very conservative institution, at least in regard to some officials who have stayed on since the change of government (8:43). In interviews in 2007 and 2008, several MoE officials expressed their concern and sometimes disapproval, for instance of the 'indigenous and rural' focus of the reform project, or the fact that Normales would be allowed to hand out university-level degrees (76:7). One MoE officer for instance shared that: '*the problem with this new law is that is only takes the indigenist point of view as a reference, and it bases everything on the experiences in Warisata in the 1930s. It is too much focused on changing educational management to become more communitarian, and its lacks a proper pedagogical paradigm*' (76:9). Because we had interviews in 2007, 2008 and 2010, the openly negative attitude of this person eventually changed over time into a milder, and even a mildly supportive, stance to the ASEP law. Perhaps a growing cluster of pro-ASEP staff members, and thus some institutional pressure, had to do with this change. These interpretations stand in stark contrast to another group of officials in the MoE, by now perhaps the majority, who strongly support the new ASEP reform. For example, a former social movement leader, now working in the MoE, is a strong ASEP ally. He affirmed the MoE had a strong political role in the development and promotion of the new decolonising policy lines.

Combined with interview data, the analysis of actor maps provides some interesting insights into the position of the MoE and the existing power plays in the field of Bolivian teacher education (for illustrations see Appendix 6).[108] Around half of the drawing respondents focused on the key role of – and power plays between – both the MoE and the teachers' unions (see for example Actor maps 2 and 3, Appendix 6). These maps were typically drawn by academics and policy makers, but also some of the trainers. In most of these latter maps, the MoE takes a central position, while teachers unions were placed in a similar position and size, while respondents would illustrate the tensions and power struggles between the two. Interestingly, the

[107] Other vice-ministries include: Vice-ministry of Primary and Secondary Regular Education; the Vice-Ministry for Alternative and Special Education (including adult education, specialised education for diabled students and (post)alfabetisation programmes (Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia 2010c). The Teacher Education department recently created its own website (http://www.dgfm-bo.com/pages/normas/pag_01.php), with a potentially interesting (but not yet fully operating) digital space for sharing information.

[108] I invited 34 of the respondents to schematically draw out an overview of the way they viewed the main actors, their relative power and their relationships in the specific field of teacher education. In the interviews, when entering the discussion on the main actors in the field of teacher education, I asked respondents to take over my note book and pen instead of only speaking about their ideas. Usually, this was a point in the interview where people opened up more. With my notebook and pen in their hands, people tended to take up their teacher-role, really trying to make me understand their points of view. Since the conversations were recorded as well, I could also use the transcribed recounts later on as a further explication of the drawings. Of the 34 respondents who drew an actor map, 14 were teacher trainers, 8 student teachers, 4 policy-makers, 5 academics and 3 social movement members.

other half of the respondents, being mostly teacher students and teacher trainers, position themselves centrally as core actors in the field (see for instance Actor map 1, Appendix 6).

As illustrated in Actor map 4 (Appendix 6), one of the MoE officials responsible for teacher education explained how the MoE has actually lost a lot of its decision-making power. She pictured the MoE of Education and its Teacher Education Department ('*DGFD*') almost falling off the page of the note book, perhaps accidentally reflecting how the MoE now finds itself in a position '*with its back to the wall*' because of the pressure from the unions, and to a lesser extent from parents and other civil society groups – positioned in between the MoE and the unions. She reflected, '*we are on the sideline with all these social movements, we have to find consent for all decisions but in many cases we do not even create a consensus, we are just forced to take a decision'* (6:26). Actor map 4 shows the central position of the union (*confederación*), whom on the one hand '*do not present proposals for improvement of the quality of education*' (on the left side), while on the other hand they want to '*take back their decision-making power*' in the Normales. Particularly with respect to struggles around the number of students that should be allowed to enter the Normales she felt the MoE is losing its strength (6:27). Clearly frustrated, she continued to talk about the difficult position the MoE finds itself in, especially with regards to the conflict with (the urban) teachers' union: '*the quality of teacher education is low, and why? Because there is no time to work on proposals, all the time we have to resolve conflicts'* (6:27).

Hence, the MoE not only struggles internally, but even more so externally with various actors who resist the new education reform. Based on analysis of interview data and the Actor maps, various groups of educational stakeholders are resisting the ASEP reform, including: the urban teachers union; parts of the teacher corps that are not well informed and do not feel ownership of the new plans; some groups of parents; the political opposition and 'old' elite/oligarchs in the lowland regions; the Catholic Church; conservative forces within universities; and private education institutes.[109] However different the positions of these actors might be, they share a fear that the current government plans will clash with their own interests and power positions. In an interview, an ex-Minister of Education explained how creating a coherent new policy based on consensus was one thing, but the most pressing and difficult challenge was to overcome the disintegration at the national level, and the resistance to the (then proposed) new law (46:6).

Teachers' unions

In terms of the representation of in-service teachers, Bolivia has two main teachers' unions: The *Confederación de los Maestros de Educación Rural de Bolivia* or Rural Teachers' National Confederation (CONMERB); and the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Educación Urbana de Bolivia* or Urban Teachers' Union (CTEUB).[110] Only CONMERB is a member of Education International.[111] All teachers are obliged to join the teachers' union (urban or rural, depending on their location) and (automatically) donate 0.5% of their salary to the unions (Contreras and Talavera, 2004b; Regalsky and Laurie, 2007). Education International in their online barometer show the following facts on trade union rights (in general) in Bolivia: '*Government workers can form trade unions. Some*

[109] These results came out of the drawings I asked various respondents to draw in response to questions concerning the most important actors and their position towards the new ASEP law.
[110] See CTEUB's website http://www.cteub.com/, CONMERB has no website.
[111] http://www.ei-ie.org.

25% of workers in the formal economy are union members. Mediation is required before a strike or lockout begins. Strikes in public services are banned but do occur, most commonly strikes by teachers, health care and transportation workers' (EI, 2007). Bolivia's teachers' unions have proven to be powerful players in the field of (teacher) education. Similarly, in Mexico, the power of the teacher union lies in the fact that teachers work under very poor conditions and have a low (societal) status (Tatto et al, 2007b: 145).

For a long time the relationship between Bolivia's teachers' unions and the government has been, and to a large extent still is, mildly speaking, uneasy. This was, however, not always the case. From their creation around 1909 (Anaya, 2009: 14), roughly until 1960, the teachers' unions and government '*interacted on an equal basis and brought about pedagogical initiatives and proposals*'. The military dictatorships, the financial crisis of the late 1970s and the neoliberal political direction (including Structural Adjustment Programmes) afterwards provoked a defensive attitude of the teacher unions, fighting rather for their salaries than for educational quality issues (Talavera Simoni, 2011: 11-13). The unions have played strong roles in reform processes in the last two decades, while the focus on workers' rights and salaries has remained. The resistance from the side of the urban union largely continues to date, but the rural confederation supports the new ASEP reform, as will be shown below. In addition, we have to recognise that while all teachers are automatically subscribed to one of the unions, the union's demands and strategies are not necessarily supported by all teachers at their 'base' (Anaya, 2009: 43). Even though the central level representatives of the national rural teachers union (CONMERB) strongly feel that the new law was created in close cooperation with them, the experience of talking to various (rural and urban) teachers shows how even living up to Fraser's 'ordinary first level of representation' is in reality a huge challenge (Fraser, 2005a; 2005b). Participation of teachers in the creation of the law in effect means the participation of higher level representatives of the unions, and as a result many teachers do not feel engaged. The findings show that even when a participatory discourse is implemented, by including representatives of societal groups, this still does not necessarily mean all members of these groups have a sense of ownership over the process.

For this study, I have particularly engaged with respondents from the urban federation of the teachers union in La Paz, because of their relationship with the Normal Simón Bolívar. According to one of the union leaders in an interview in October 2007, '*this is the most important federation of the whole country, both because of its high number of affiliates, between 4,000 and 5,000, and because of its organisation and combative attitude. This union works from a Trotskyite perspective, and all leaders are part of the Revolutionary Workers Party*' (79). In another interview the unionist continued to explain how for this La Paz federation, it is currently a tough battle to maintain their independent union position (of resistance to current government plans), since the national CTEUB is closely aligned to the Communist Party, which co-governs with the MAS. '*We feel like a lonely drop in the ocean*', the unionist explained, since the COB and the mining unions, and even the national teachers unions, have become '*officialistas*'. According to the La Paz unionists, the large 'officialista' unions are controlled by, and work in conjunction with, the governing party MAS (49).

The feelings of ownership of the rural union's active members stand in stark contrast to the resistance that is felt by the national urban teachers union; and even stronger in the Trotskyist inspired La Paz section of this union. The urban union was also invited to all national level

reform meetings, but they have left the conference table many times. The urban unionists do not support the plans for further decentralisation that are proposed in the Law, as this would place too much power in the hands of parents and local organisations, threatening both teachers' autonomy and a unified education system. Also, they fear that a pluricultural, communitarian and productive education will exclude those living in urban areas and even lead to new forms of exclusion. Besides, an urban union leader was very critical of the design process of the new teacher education curriculum, as those that were invited by the MoE were paid 10,000 Bolivianos (around €1,000), '*while as a senior teacher I only get 1,500 Bolivianos per month. We are thus very sarcastic when the government states the curriculum was created on the basis of indigenous knowledges. These indigenous 'connaisseurs' were paid 10,000 Bolivianos, that is a shame! In a national congress we decided that from the union we would put sanctions on those that participated in this process with the government*' (49). An ex-teacher trainer who participated as a curriculum designer confirmed that he faced great difficulties when trying to gain access to a new position as a trainer in a Normal again, as he was often 'vetoed' out of application procedures (8).

The La Paz unionists specifically oppose the plans for decentralisation of the education system, already started in the 1990s and continued to some extent in the ASEP law. Decentralisation, the union leader explained, on the one hand gives too much power to parental commissions to decide on teachers' positions, while on the other hand, it '*will lead to a very unequal division into tiny pieces of the pie, called education*'. It is feared that with departmental and local forms of autonomy, '*everyone will organise their own type of education*', leading to a splintered national education system, in which '*poorer regions will consequently have lower quality education*'. Moreover, '*the right wing old elite, and via them the transnational corporations will take over control of Bolivian education. Like everywhere in the world, they want education systems to decentralise and privatise, but we need a centralised system*' (49). From a more distant point of view, it is interesting to conclude that this last argument is actually very close to the current governments' aims through ASEP, and it seems the same argument is used for different sides of the debate.

However, in contrast to a general negative and conservative image of the urban union, after conversations with their national level head quarters in La Paz, I think a more nuanced view is appropriate. For example, financally supported by Education International, the national urban union has constructed its own reform proposal in order to generate further discussions on the design of ASEP. This response, titled '*Schooling to liberate the country*', was published along with an analysis of the differences and commonalities between the governments' views and the urban unions' views on ASEP (CTEUB, 2006; CTEUB, 2007).[112]

There are, thus, close ties between the unions and the Normales. There is a particularly (in)tense relationship between the countries largest Normal Simón Bolívar and the radical teacher's federation of La Paz. Studies on the situation of Normales before 2006 repeatedly state how political conflicts and the powerful position of unions hindered the realisation of a number of governmental plans (see for instance Del Granado Cosio, 2006; Lozada Pereira, 2004). One union leader of the federation in La Paz explained this relationship: '*We see the Normal primarily as part of the federation, and when its suits them, they follow all our instructions. But when it does not suit them well,*

[112] This analysis called '*Debate sobre la educación Boliviana*' presented a long list (102 pages) discussing all articles of the 1994 reform. These initiatives were financially supported by Education International, the global teachers unions federation: http://www.ei-ie.org/.

they distance themselves from the federation and take their own stance'. The unionist continued to explain how this resulted in a conflict over participating in the design of the new ASEP teacher education curriculum, which they do not support.

One unionist explained the conflict between the La Paz federation and the urban Normal over participating in the design of the new ASEP teacher education curriculum: '*We as the urban union, we rejected this new law. So when the Ministry saw we would not collaborate in their curriculum design, they started to personally invite some individuals at Simón Bolívar. The Normal should have obeyed the resolution of our union, but instead they have sent delegates and so the Ministry could say Simón Bolívar participated*' (49). The union leader was clearly unhappy with these independent developments of the Normal they had supported in their struggles against University administration just a few years ago. Viewed from the perspective of a trainer and delegate of the Normal, the situation is even more complex because of internal struggles within the institute. The trainer explains why, according to her opinion, participation in these meetings is still important: '*I was sent to represent this Normal in a congress on the new law and its curriuclum, and the directorate of this institute rejects the proposal. I think this is dangerous because once we do not accept it, it will just be imposed on us, and imposition is not good at all. This will not help us to change. Contrarily, when we stay involved along the way we can influence, and come to a consensus*' (urban teacher trainer 13:4).

The unions, and particularly the attitude of this La Paz federation, received critique from the various academics I interviewed. For instance, a University lecturer in political sciences and former director of the Simón Bolívar under its University administration between 2000 and 2005, shared his critique, that is rooted in '*an educational and political frustration, because we have not been able to put an intercultural education renovation in practice. We did not know how to seduce the unions, although I get more and more convinced that our unions are not seducible, there is no way we can have an affective relationship with them, as they only work from a logic of struggle, and not from a logic of dialogue*'. Clearly frustrated, he continued to state '*the union is like a dinosaur. It does not belong to this world anymore, it should be in a museum, but instead, they continue to live among us'*. He further critiques the COB and the teacher unions to carry on with a national ideology of unification and homogenisation originated in the 1952 revolution, while '*this has been substituted with a diverse and intercultural state model. The union thus loses its position, as they continue to believe in a homogenous education and society*' (23).

Since many teachers do not have enough access to information about the policy developments, they follow their union leaders in their opposition to the law. An urban union leader for instance told me that they organise weekly Wednesday-evening sessions in their union recidence called '*casa social de los maestros',* these meeting are for their members to discuss current issues in the education sector, including the new law, as: '*they need to have a good knowledge basis to be able to debate this law. Sometimes, teachers just follow their union leaders who represent them at the national level. But this is not how it should be, in order to fight, our bases need to be convinced of something, and its our duty to educate them in this direction*' (49). An Ex-Minister of Education explained the polarisation of the urban and rural unions through their respective visible actions: '*It's very difficult. For instance, now we have demonstrations. On the one hand there are road blocks from the side of the rural teachers who ask for approval of the law, and on the other hand we see the urban teachers marching the streets to hinder approval of the law'* (12:17).

In summary, the unions have a relative, powerful role in negotiating, changing or resisting government policies, as well as their influence in the placement of staff at Normales. The unions are, nevertheless, far from two homogeneous organisations for urban and rural teachers, and internal differences have led to various strategies of departmental and local confederations (46:5). An indigenous MoE staff member in an interview in May 2010 brought forward how power relations are slowly shifting: '*it is no longer only the Ministry and the unions who decide on the [teacher] education sector, now there are also other actors [like the CEPOs] involved. The power the unions once had in deciding which students, trainers and directors were placed in Normales is now broken with the institutionalisation processes*' (115:6). At this point in the interview we heard a loud blast outside the building. The urban teachers' union was protesting outside the MoE and teachers used dynamite to enforce their demands. Loud exclamations were repeated over and over again: '*we are against decentralisation! We demand higher salaries!*' In an attempt to maintain the validity of statement he just made, my interlocutor replied *'but its only a few, most of them are at work*'.

Indigenous Education Councils – CEPOS

Civil society organisations – and particularly indigenous movements – play an important role in the Bolivian education sector, particularly since the 1990s. The *Consejos Educativos de los Pueblos Originarios* (CEPOs – Indigenous Councils for Education) were established in 1994. The CEPOs represent Bolivia's numerous cultural and linguistic communities and their current organisation is based on long historical roots. The movement has been financially supported by the Netherlands and Denmark.[113] Already during the former 1994 Reform process, but similarly right now, the CEPOs have a genuine influence on policy plans, representing the indigenous populations' educational needs. The CEPOs support the new Reform in its focus on revaluing the various indigenous cultures and languages in education. According to the CEPOs, they too have been main protagonists in the creation of the new law, including the key pillars of communitarian, productive and pluricultural education.[114] A CEPOs representative expressed their engagement with the design of ASEP law as follows: '*This reform is the first real experience with how society really participates in the formulation of educational politics. Various societal groups were involved, such as teachers, professionals, parents, the catholic church and even the military'* (96:19). The CEPOs are also currently engaged with the design of the curriculum for teacher training institutes. According to a member of the CEPO in Sucre (CENAQ), there are seven different CEPOs from different regions working on their curriculum proposals, and these are then merged together with input from the MoE. It is interesting to note that both the leaders of CONMERB and the CEPOs emphasise their foundational roles in the creation of this law. Although the CEPOS seem to have gained important influence on educational policies these days, it remains an issue for further research to analyse what space is available for, and negotiated by, this and other civil society organisations in order to create change and improvement, towards more equitable educational and societal opportunities, respect and tolerance and in general a higher level of social justice in society.

[113] This was the case until the time of writing, when Denmark continued their funding while the Dutch future funding is insecure considering the political decision of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to phase out the donor relationship with Bolivia.

[114] For more information see www.cepos.bo.

International and religious organisations

Chapter 4 already described a variety of international and, importantly, regional actors involved in Bolivian education. Bolivia has long been a so-called 'donor darling'. Numerous international NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and international donors have been, and to some extent still are, involved in Bolivian development processes. NGOs – often funded by the Catholic Church – became active in Bolivia in the 1970s. Similar to other Latin American and Southern countries, the government of Bolivia for example accepted the educational projects in remote areas of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.[115] Major non-governmental players in the education field (especially with regards to the 1994 reforms) were UNICEF, UNESCO, GTZ (Germany), SIDA (Sweden), DANIDA (Denmark), Finland, World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Inter-American Development Bank, JICA (Japan) and the Netherlands.[116] For example, UNICEF supported the development of teaching materials (Laurie et al, 2003: 480), GTZ and AECID (Spain) supported intercultural and bilingual teacher education, and DANIDA offered their support particularly in the Amazonian region.

Many of the NGOs who started to work in Bolivia in the 1970s were funded by the Catholic Church. Historically, the church has played a role in providing primary, secondary and higher education, including teacher education in two private Normales. However, at the time of writing, the final document of the ASEP law enforces the closure of the two religiously oriented (and the only two private) Normales, since all teachers should be trained in a neutral and non-religious way (Ministerio de Educacion de Bolivia, 2010). This is supported by some teacher trainers (8;13) who see the current private education system, of around 10% of the schools, as very unequal and unwanted. However, other teacher trainers are themselves closely involved in religious education institutes, such as *Fe y Alergía*. They explained how most of the religious schools were already part of the public system, while they adopted a parallel curriculum that was closely linked to the 1994 reform. In the current context, the church has a fairly big role in the education sector in Bolivia, although their role in the education sector is becoming more limited with the ASEP law that aims for non-religious and public education, triggering protest from the side of the religious organisations.

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[115] This protestant US based missionary organisation sought to evangelise more effectively through the instruction in and development of indigenous languages. Additionally, USAID's PER-1 (1975-1980) and the World Bank's PEIA (1978-1980) also conducted bilingual education programmes. The first programme to genuinely develop indigenous language skills through education was carried out by the Catholic Comisión Episcopal de Educación (CEE) in 1981 (Taylor 2004).

[116] Considering that this research is part of the Dutch funded IS-Academie programme (University of Amsterdam and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), I briefly outline the role of the Dutch in Bolivia here. Bolivia has had relations with the Dutch government since 1941, when the Dutch representative was positioned in Buenos Aires. Yet, it took until the return of democracy in 1982 before diplomatic relations became a bit warmer. In the second half of the 1980s a Dutch development office opened in La Paz, which became an embassy in 1993, with an independent ambassador since 1997. The Dutch government is at the time of writing still one of the major international donors in Bolivias education sector, yet considering the changing policy directions of the new Ducth government the continuation in a similar form is very questionable. With the aim to enhance sustainable development, and in order to improve overall economic growth and the lives of the poor, Dutch aid so far has focused on several sectors including education, water management, environment, agrarian productivity, good governance and support for the constitutional assembly.
http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/Reizen_en_Landen/Landenoverzicht/B/Bolivia/Betrekkingen_met_Nederland, last accessed on 25-01-2010. Currently, Bolivia is being phased out as it is not longer one of the partner countries of the Dutch government.

According to the (WB funded) study of Contreras and Talavera, in the 1990s the role of multilateral banks and donors was important, yet there was also Bolivian leadership and the degree of local ownership was '*sufficient to do away with any former perceptions that multilateral banks and donors imposed the reform*' (Contreras and Talavera, 2003: 2). Nonetheless, with the present government perceptions of a 'foreign imposition' of the 1994 Reform seeming to have gained ground, the WB and IMF do not play a significant financial role anymore in the education sector. The World Bank's last big project on 'Education Quality and Equity Strengthening' closed in 2006.[117] Although various MoE officials and non-governmental actors spoke of 'no cooperation at all' with the Bank any more, the World Bank 2009 Report on the Status of Projects in Execution reports a (small scale) project to support access and quality of secondary education at the Municipal level of La Paz (World Bank, 2009). New forms of cooperation between the World Bank and MoE were established during 2010, '*but only on the initiative of the Ministry'*, a MoE official explained*, 'and not with the idea of them [the World Bank] telling us what to do'* (115:9). The World Bank is currently, in some cases, accepted as a 'strategic ally' if they agree to finance the Ministries' initiatives. As an illustration of this, the World Bank provided finances for an international seminar on decentralisation in the education sector in May 2010 (115:9). The Interamerican Development Bank (IADB) continues to play a role in the external funding of Bolivian education proposals. It supported a range of Reform programmes of the 1994 Reform and continued to finance a programme for Child Friendly Schools in 2007, a Microenterprise and training programme for women in 2008, and a US$200,000 funding for institutional support to the MoE in 2010.[118] The MoE currently works on a proposal for financial support from the IADB on Productive Communitarian Secondary Education, which includes support for institutional reform, teacher training, diffusion of the new Reform's advantages in communities and evaluation.[119]

Thus, although Bolivia aims for a genuine Bolivian education reform now, it does not mean foreign assistance is thrown out of the window fully. According to UNESCO (2011), in 2007-2008 Bolivia was still one of the largest recipients of aid to education in the region with US$72 million, together with Brazil (US$85 million) and Nicaragua (US$71 million).[120] Both the 2004-2008 Multiannual Operative Programme (POMA) and the 2010-1014 Strategic Institutional Plan of the MoE, that is aimed at increasing the quality of education, uses the (unconditional) 'basket funding' of US$92 million donated by the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Spain for a period of four years (106:8)[121]. Besides, several small scale international initiatives still continue. For example, in March 2010 a team of Belgian, German and Austrian experts came to La Paz to train teacher trainers for a couple of days on special needs education (La Prensa, 18-03-2010b).

[117] http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?Projectid=P006204&theSitePK=40941&piPK=73230&pagePK=64283627&menuPK=228424 last visited 26-03-10.
[118] For more (financial and project) details, see IABD's website on former and current funding in Bolivia for the education sector: http://www.iadb.org.
[119] See IADB's website, http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project,1303.html?id=BO-L1071. The Ministry of Health and Social Development prepares a funding proposal for Early Child Hood development: http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project,1303.html?id=BO-L1064.
[120] See also the regional overview of the Report for Latin America, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001914/191433e.pdf.
[121] The current Basket funding runs from 2010-2014.

Since 1996 the research institute PROEIB-Andes, located at the premises of the Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS) in Cochabamba, was created with funds from Germany (GTZ). The fact that these university studies in EIB have been created shows an interest in this theme from Bolivian-based academia as well (Nucinkis, 2004: 21). In 1998 a master course in EIB was started, in cooperation with the UMSS, and this still runs to date. Between 1998 and 2008, 132 students subscribed to the programme and 110 completed their degree. Of these students, 98% identifies as indigenous. The majority of the graduates continued working in universities or Normales, while others reported to be working in government positions, NGOs or as consultants (Limachi, 2008). Besides, the institute cooperates in various research projects with countries in the region, such as Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Argentina. In 2007, the leading role of GTZ stopped, yet the institute continues to exist. Their main aim is to *'strengthen intercultural and bilingual education from the perspective of, with and for the indigenous populations, in order to respond to the necessities and demands for more and better education in a context of more and more indigenous political participation.*'[122] However, a MoE official in May 2010 claimed that '*PROEIB ANDES is not a priority for us anymore. We stopped the cooperation in 2006. In our view, they do not exist anymore*' (106:13). At first I was surprised by this lack of connection because of the apparently logically shared goal of intercultural and bilingual education. However, interviews revealed that the political rationale that PROEIB-ANDES was a product of the former 'imposed' reform and was therefore not suited to the new reform plans (89; 106). Considering the need for more conceptual clarity on the new concepts used in ASEP, more (academic) and Bolivian-based research on the various power plays and implementation challenges of ASEP, as well as a need for highly qualified EIB teacher trainers, this is a missed opportunity.

In sum, the role of foreign actors in the field of education in Bolivia has changed and diminished over the past few years. I think the following quote from a Bolivian academic explains this new situation and role for international donors: '*if international development cooperations want to provide a helping hand [in terms of finances], they are very welcome, but their logic has to change, it has to be in line with our new logic of education*' (61:34). A former social movement leader now working in the MoE adds to this how current policies are '*all initiatives of the Ministry itself*'. He continued with, '*if there is [external] financial support, we are the ones who decide. We are looking for strategic allies, not for those that do not support or undermine our national political strategy*' (115:9).

The picture I have provided so far of the power struggles in a polarised and heterogeneous field, leads me to discuss the actual and foreseen implementation challenges of the ASEP Reform.

5.7 Challenges to implement the ASEP reform in practice

This section discusses a range of envisaged challenges for the implementation of the ASEP law. First of all, Bolivia's MoE maintains the position that ASEP has been created by educational actors themselves. Moreover, it has used this position to differentiate ASEP's creation process from the 1994 law, which was mostly built by high-up government officials and foreign consultants, with some consultation from civil society groups. Embracing the decolonial opposite, then, would mean an intense amount of participation by the people at the 'bottom' of

[122] Information from interviews and from http://www.proeibandes.org/.

the educational power structure, being teachers, their unions, parents, administrative staff of educational institutions and social movements.

Fraser's three-dimensional theory of social justice (Fraser, 2005a; Fraser, 2005b) is helpful here to analyse in how far social justice is indeed part of both the policy programme (the actual law) as well as the programme ontology (Pawson, 2002: 341-342) of ASEP, or the process of the creation of the law together with its prospect for implementation. Fraser's theory of social justice (see also chapter 2) starts from the principle of 'participatory parity', which is appropriate for my analysis of the difficulties of genuine participation and ownership of ASEP at different levels. Representation, the political dimension of social justice, does not only deal with the first level ordinary-political misrepresentations (denying full participation as peers in social interactions). It also deals with a second level boundary-setting mechanism of misframing in the context of globalisation, criticising the framework in which the national state is the sole political space that excludes marginalised groups from any influence. According to Fraser, there is a third meta-political level of misrepresentation, where the majority of people are excluded from participation in meta-discourses that affect them. Because the Bolivian *government* is representing all Bolivians in the meta-political level of ALBAs Declaration meetings (see chapter 3), within these ALBA processes there is a lack of a genuine participation and ownership of educational actors at the local level. ALBA is a supranational development, which has little to no connection to the lives and work of the Bolivian educators I spoke to. My fieldwork outcomes coincide with this analysis, revealing discontent in regard to low levels of participation in the design of ASEP.

While the government maintains that the ASEP reform was not exclusively designed by experts and officials, numerous teachers described the opposite. For example, during the 2006 National Education Congress – with 26 organisations and 628 delegates – the urban teachers union, among others, left the meeting. Many of the delegates felt the '*government was forcing their proposal and ideology on the Congress 'in communist style' without giving possibility for debate*' (Drange, 2007: 4). This illustrates the gap between the government's participatory discourse and educators' own experiences. Respondents confirmed that rather than honest teacher ownership and reform design through participation, they felt that the ASEP law has again been imposed from above. While the government defines participation as central to the process of decolonisation, its own analysis of decolonisation, to some extent, calls into question its own actions. This relates to what Jansen describes as an aspect of 'political symbolism', using 'participation' as a process of legitimisation of policies, rather than an instrument aimed at successful implementation (2001b: 207). While emphasised at the discursive level of the ASEP law, Fraser's third political dimensions of social justice (representation) in practice does not work very smoothly yet. In this sense, the process of national level frame-setting has been only partly successful, as only the representatives of the rural union and the CEPOS feel genuine engagement with the new law, while many of the (mostly urban) teachers experienced a lack of involvement in decision-making processes (Fraser 2005a). In this sense, we can see a difference between a participation-oriented Programme of the ASEP law and a Programme ontology that does not fully carry out the principle of parity of participation as described by Fraser (2005a).

There were also signs of a more quiet form of teacher opposition to the reform, dictated by an unbroken political support to the indigenous president Morales and an unwillingness to openly critique his 'politics of change'. As a result, some of the MAS supporters might have

refrained from speaking up against the education reform or the surrounding discourses, even if they had disagreements with it. This is not an uncommon thing among MAS supporters, claims sociologist Mamani, as in some circles it is considered a 'moral sin' to speak against Evo Morales, '*as people's support is not critical, its just idolatry*' (in Dangl 2010: 33). This seriously questions whether teachers will do their part for the implementation of ASEP, if they continue to feel a lack of ownership of the law that the government describes.

The education law also aims to strengthen 'recognition', or Frasers' cultural dimension of social justice, as it aims to include historically marginalised and indigenous people by supporting their cultural logics. However, some of these people are much more interested in engaging with the cultural logic that they have learned to engage with for centuries, often referred to as 'modern' or 'Western' culture, or what Sleeter terms the hegemonic 'culture of power' (2009). An ex-minister of education and academic in La Paz explained that through Bolivia's process of colonisation, a cultural, political and economic hierarchy came into being, which has been a strong force in society ever since. The current state of consciousness of Bolivia's indigenous population imagines their future as part of the modernising approach to development rather than the coloniality approach. Many Bolivian teachers and academics explained that students and their parents are interested less in the decolonisation project and rather in the project identified as 'colonial' by the Morales administration, which offers personal economic success through engaging in 'colonial' hierarchies, such as (Spanish) language, geography/migration and 'modern' cultural norms. The decolonial project is unwanted by some, as it is seen as an imposition into their lives, and since impositions could be considered colonial tactics, the design process and prospects for implementation of the reform, or the ASEP reform ontology, could be considered the same way.

This is a position which should be respected, as Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in the Latin American region and many indigenous peoples, and those in rural areas, are the poorest of the poor. These marginalised groups simply want to make sure that their children grow up to have a better life than they have had. Similar to parents' opinion in the 1990s, this often means focusing on Spanish in school rather than their indigenous language, as well as supporting migration to the cities and effectively contributing to indigenous assimilation into *Mestizo* culture. Exploring these parental positions on 'modernity' and perceptions of 'development' through education, as well as the (lack of) governmental engagement, needs further study. True dignity, which has been a central part of the indigenous demands in Bolivia, must be tied to significant improvement at the material level. Postero (2007: 22), based on the work of Fraser, convincingly argues how Morales' followers thus not only want their president to enact a politics of recognition, but also a politics of redistribution.

Another major challenge is the need to create a universally accepted curriculum as part of the ASEP reform. Even if the curriculum is adapted to be locally relevant, according to a MoE official, there is a lack of capacity among indigenous groups to systematise their cultural heritage (1:10). In addition, many are concerned with the lack of knowledge of indigenous languages of teachers, in regards to full implementation of the plurilingual character of education. There are not enough teachers able to teach (in) native languages (see chapter 7). Another complicating factor is that some of the indigenous languages only have an oral tradition, which supposes a problematic relationship between the use of Spanish and those languages in the classroom.

An additional issue of concern is the general sense of uncertainty and an impasse in the education sector. Ever since the previous education reform of 1994 was repealed by the Morales government soon after it took power, teachers faced great insecurity regarding what guidelines to follow and how long they would have to wait for new ones to be introduced. When discussing these reflections with an educational scholar, he both confirmed and expressed his frustration: '*In this context of change that we are living in, it is inexplicable that after more than four years of a government-of-change, we still do not have a new alternative political orientation. There is a total absence of public policy to accompany these proposed plans in education. What also worries me is the fact that after these four years, we also do not have an approved curriculum […] only some rough drafts'* (114:8). This has serious implications, not only for the way teachers feel about the unclear situation now, but also for the way they judge the new law. As explained by an urban teacher trainer who has been involved in the curriculum design process, '*for the design of the new law we work against the old law, but we are still paid by it…there is a lot of uncertainty and this leads us into a crisis'* (8:33). A MoE official added in the absence of a curriculum, '*everyone does what he wants. There is an institutional and academic chaos, but this is also because of the many societal conflicts*' (76). For many teachers, this situation of 'chaos', 'impasse' or 'crisis' has simply meant continuing with the last policy with which they were familiar – either that of 1994 or an earlier reform under which they were trained as a teacher. This justifiably frustrates many teachers, as they are in a state of limbo, unsure of what the future reform will bring and how to approach changing their curriculum.

Yet, some of the teachers in favour of ASEP are already starting to act on the new ideas in their classrooms. An urban teacher trainer for instance argued: '*I completely agree with the new law. It is true it has to be made more profound, and though there is resistance from others [other teacher trainers], I already work with these ideas'* (9:59). Moreover, one of the rural teacher training institutes that favours ASEP, for a while organised weekly meetings with its trainers to discuss strategies to implement the ideas brought forward in the policy plans (see chapter 7). Because of the above mentioned impasse, however, this is not the general trend. And while these exceptions do paint a somewhat more positive picture of what the future could bring with regard to implementation of the law, it is questionable whether these 'early' interpretations by educators, without having any training, clear (conceptual and practical) guidelines or educational material provided, will indeed contribute to the envisioned policy outcomes. Thus, for most of the teachers the simple lack of knowledge about the new reform is a pressing issue related to their opposition. As the concepts in ASEP are very theoretical, a strong understanding of it requires some kind of engagement with the subject matter. While teachers are generally aware of the new discourse, there is no clarity about the meaning of the concepts embedded in the reform. The definitions of ASEP's pillars remain vague, especially in regard to the classroom.

There is a lack of communication between the MoE and schools, allowing teachers to take issue with the law for the simple reason that it has not been clarified to them. Moreover, as the reform's opposition is quite passionate, it brings its reasoning to the teachers, as was exemplified for the case of the La Paz teachers' federation above. Therefore, some teachers have access only to oppositional sources of information and know very little about the full process or contrasting points of view. In conversations with La Paz teachers, this stark opposition to reform resulted in their participation in protests. However, once informed about the content of the law, one teacher explained her regret of attending the protests. While part of her opposition was

resolved, in that she is now aware of the contents of ASEP, her experience emphasises what many teachers have gone through. Various other teachers reject the law for that same reason.

Another issue in debate is around the question whether ASEP fosters unity (as it is intended) or creates stronger social divisions. The ASEP law, in its (discursive) approach, aims to overcome any form of discrimination, considering the current goal of *vivir bien para todos* (to live well for everyone) without discrimination (Article 1 of the ASEP law, MoE, 2010b). According to the first Minister of Education under Morales, the new law aims to overcome the historical division between rural and urban education, by unifying, for example, all teacher unions and teacher training institutes rather than maintaining the urban-rural divide that has existed throughout Bolivia's educational history. A MoE official added to this, how '*the new law aims for a unifying education, yet with its particularities at the local, regional and departmental levels. This means that we should combine unity with diversity in our vision of maintaining the integration of the country*' (44:2). On the other hand, an urban teacher trainer expressed criticism that is shared by a group of other resisting actors, on how he thought the new law, instead of unifying the Andean and lowland region and rural and urban areas, actually reinforces regional divides. '*The law is very biased, because it carries the name Avelino Sinani, and he was an indigenous man who lived there [in the highlands]. So teachers from the east of Bolivia do not accept this. It is not a Bolivian law, but a law for the Andean world. But who supports it? The rural teacher, because they have been the principal actors in the creation of this reform.*' (10:5). These types of reactions that interpret some form of positive discrimination from the new law are both understandable and expected, and perhaps reflect the tensions between universalistic and particularist interpretations of whose approach is valid (Wallerstein, 2000), with the current government claiming validity of the decolonisation project based on historical structures of discrimination and exclusion for centuries in a row.

In line with the critique of the potential to create wider divisions, is a fear of a reverse form of discrimination. As with any type of essentialism – or simplification of the cultural and ethnic complexity – the current approach carries the danger of 'idealised indigenous-ness' and the demonisation of everything non-indigenous. Moreover, the strategic use and emphasis on Andean culture implies another serious danger, of what Postero calls *andinocentrismo*, or Andean-centrism (2007: 21). Instead of the historically marginalised position of indigenous groups, in turn some now fear exclusion and discrimination for those groups that do not necessarily feel part of the decolonising, communitarian and productive education plans: urban middle class citizens, people that do not identify as indigenous and people from outside the Andean region. The media play a critical role in criticising the new law as an '*ethno-centric and racist intent of the indigenous movements to impose ideologias indianistas [Indian ideologies] in the cities*' (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009:57). According to the opposition of the new ASEP law, it is too focused on rural areas. Communitarian education, in their view, is less relevant to the individualised environment of the cities. What follows is the question of whether this ASEP law is then as inclusive in its application as it – at least discursively – aims to be. Still, there is an urgent need to overcome the deep historical structures of discrimination against indigenous peoples in Bolivia. An indigenous movement presents his side of the story – or, his side of the tortilla: *'Evo, our president, uses a discourse saying that the moral base of Bolivia now lies with the indigenous groups, because we want to eradicate corruption, and all those bad things that have damaged us. You see, now the tortilla is turning upside down. Before, we were considered stupid, ignorant illiterates, but now, we are the strength of Bolivia*' (14:6).

Finally, one of the biggest challenges is the successful transformation of teacher education as part of the reform project. The Normales are widely perceived to be crucial for successful implementation of any reform, not excluding ASEP. However, the teacher training institutes are not easy to change, as I will discuss in the following chapters 6 and 7.

5.8 Concluding considerations: a bumpy road to decolonisation

Since 2006, the field of Bolivian education, and teacher education more specifically, is subject to various processes of (envisaged) transformation, as mentioned at the start of the chapter: firstly a radical, ideological and epistemological reorientation of Bolivian education under the header of 'decolonisation'; secondly, the continuous attempts to improve the quality and relevancy of education for all; and thirdly, a context of continuously shifting power relations and struggles between the government and other education actors, most importantly the teachers (urban) union. While ASEP's 'program mechanism' (Pawson 2002: 341-342) – being the various supportive and resistant interpretations of the ASEP law by a range of Bolivian actors in the education field – both works for and against Morales politics of change, the actual 'ASEP Programme' itself (Pawson, 2002: 342), is also significant as it defines a new and influential ideological discourse of decolonisation and *vivir bien*. In this sense, a new hegemonic government discourse is taking shape, while at the same time it is being interpreted, mediated and defied by those that have to move these ideals into an educational reality. The Bolivian (teacher) education sector has entered a process of *recontextualisation* (Fairclough, 2005: 931-932), as different strategies are developed by various actors and at different scales to enforce or resist the new discourse and related ASEP policy initiatives. Considering the amount of resistance to the ASEP law, it is unfair and perhaps too early to speak about a new hegemonic discourse of decolonising education. Nevertheless, the MoE and other proponents of the law are developing strategies to disseminate and implement parts of this new law. In terms of the *operationalisation* of these new discourses (Fairclough, 2005: 931-932), the indigenous discourse together with the decolonisation discourse has materialised in written policy texts of the National Development Plan, the new Plurinational constitution and the ASEP Reform.

ASEP engages new approaches to teaching and learning, as is exemplified by Saavedra's quote at the start of the chapter about education as something that should deal with 'the totality as human beings'. The main objectives of educational decolonisation in Bolivia are the opening up of different knowledges toward cultural/linguistic diversity and the creation of a critical awareness to function as an instrument of liberation of marginalised groups (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009). To some extent designed in cooperation with social movement actors, intellectuals and progressive political leaders, the reform agenda envisages to go against 'Western', 'European' or neoliberal ideas that, until present, dominate many education systems worldwide. The envisaged result is a transformative restructuring or deconstruction (Fraser, 1995) of the education system, together with the revaluation of 'original' or indigenous knowledges (Walsh, 2007a; 2007b) and values through education; an approach that shows similarities to the ideas of Freire when he was involved in decolonising the education system of Guinea-Bissau (1977).

The Normales come out as a complex arena – or strategic selective context – where different power relations are played out. This chapter has shown a mainly centralised system of teacher education with the MoE that primarily finances, guides and (only to some extent)

controls the Normales. The interviews and actor maps reveal a central role for the power struggle between the MoE and the teachers unions, especially the urban federation of La Paz, placing the Normales at the frontline of socio-political struggles. The power of the MoE in the Normales is being limited, negotiated and mediated by the supportive or resistant influence of unions and social movements such as the CEPOs. At the same time, the relative power of the unions is also being 'attacked' through the processes of institutionalisation, which aim to strengthen the transparency in Normales. In summary, the Normales are important institutes in the wider education sector and many actors have a stake in what is taking place inside them.

Bolivia's recent decolonial approach is both unprecedented and contested. Perhaps not unexpectedly, considering the radical nature of the new ASEP reform, there is considerable resistance – from teachers, the urban teachers' union, from parents, from within the MoE, from the church, and the old elite including political leaders of the low lands and middle class citizens in urban areas. From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, while the MAS adopted a 'war of position' and a 'war of manoeuvre' itself in gaining state power in 2005, through social reforms such as ASEP, the current Bolivian government is currently aiming to create a counter-hegemonic 'culture of power'. However, in doing so, it seems to be caught up in again in a new 'war of manoeuvre', now defending its new decolonial position against the opposition to this 'revolutionary reform'.

It appears that the education sector in Bolivia is not only in an impasse, the system is also trapped in a prolonged crisis. A former teacher trainer and curriculum developer explained this as follows: '*when things are in crisis, you have to turn it around. It is like having fever: either you get well or you die. I do not think we [the education system] are dying, we are going to try to cure ourselves, but more open discussions will be inevitable*' (8:33). The chapter showed how the tense political situation and long process towards consensus on the specifics and practicalities of the new education reform results in a 'sense of waiting' for new policy directives to come, at a time when social tensions are rising. Moreover, there are concerns around the feasibility of the creation and implementation of the new inter-/intracultural and plurilingual curriculum. This impasse also relates to the growth of opposition due to a lack of communication and information sharing between the MoE and other educational actors, feeding into feelings of insecurity and resistance, particularly on the side of teachers who find themselves in a vacuum. While some teachers continue to work with the 'old' reform guidelines and curricula, others relapse into the traditional teaching practices adopted prior to 1990s. Moreover, many parents still see indigenous languages and cultural references in schools as unwanted aspects of the new governing approach, as they argue that their children need to learn the dominant language (Spanish) in order to reach upward social mobility. According to the government, ASEP has been designed with complete participation of civil society, but many actors – including many teachers – disagree. In addition, debates are ongoing as to whether the new law will foster unity or create deeper divisions in Bolivian society. Linked to this issue is the potential risk of a reverse form of discrimination and exclusion of non-indigenous societal groups.

For reasons like these, it is important to question whether ASEP is an imposition into the lives of the Bolivian population, and subsequently whether decolonisation can be considered legitimate as a new 'imposition', as it is perceived by some actors. Important for this study, is the

recognition that the present decolonisation politics of Evo Morales do not necessarily reflect the lived experiences of more and more urban lower class and middle class indigenous groups, whose identities are very hybrid and complex (Albó in Kohl, 2010: 11). This wide range of tensions and critiques are triggered by the fundamental contradiction of a state led 'imposition' of Bolivia's decolonising and endogenous path to development, which is perhaps not perceived as legitimate or appropriate by the entire population. Or, as formulated by Postero (2007: 20), it might be a misleading utopia to portray the indigenous people, and Morales' project for decolonisation as the new answer to neoliberalism and global capitalism. Nevertheless, Postero argues, the idealist utopian visions based on Andean culture employed by Morales' government effectively negotiate spaces for socio-political transformation, as they derive from traditional (indigenous) narratives to create a widely accepted perception of appropriate and possible forms of social change. However, and as shown in this chapter, this effective strategic essentialist strategy carries the danger of reverse discrimination and Andean-centrism (Postero, 2007: 1) or rural-centrism. The opening up of these spaces or niches for change in the context of the Normales is further taken up in the following two chapters.

In conclusion, the road to Bolivia's 'imagined' decolonised education system *and* society is long and particularly bumpy, given the radical and transformatory nature of ASEP, the multiple interpretations and multiple interests involved in (any) education system, including an opposition from those that may support Morales' wider political project, yet are wary about a potential negative impact of the new education route on either their children's upward social mobility, or their own already overburdened tasks and routine matters in the classroom. Once again, Bolivian teachers are faced with a new reform framework. Yet, it remains to be seen how far teachers are able and willing to really function as 'soldiers of liberation and decolonisation' in a highly sensitive context of both old and newer socio-political divisions and tensions.