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

Lopes Cardozo, T.A.

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Profesores '*de vocación; de equivocación o de ocasión*'? The unused potential of Bolivia's future teachers' aspirations

'There are people who actually want to become a dentist, but out of opportunistic reasons they enter the Normal, because this gives a secure salary. But these teachers with a 'mistaken vocation' (equivocación) do not work with enthusiasm; they are not excited when their students have achieved and learned something. I think these are teachers by mistake, because they do not care if students learn or not'
(First year rural student teacher in Paracaya, 29:17)

8.1 Introduction

The above observation from a first year student in the rural institute points at the thin lines between a teacher students' 'real vocation', a 'mistaken vocation' (*equivocación*) or an 'opportunistic opportunity' (*ocasión*) – the latter being a purely economic motivation. At the Normal of Warisata, in a group interview with three second year students, one student similarly commented how '*we say 'maestros de ocasión' (opportunistic teachers) to those that only come here to later on receive a secure salary, and a secure job*'. His classmate continued with *'vocation is actually a really important factor, you are born with it, it makes you want to change the future; which is why you have to prepare yourself'* (69:13). These discussions all relate to the societal, political and personal perceptions of what an 'ideal teacher' in the Bolivian context should look like, what her/his roles should be (both in urban and rural contexts), as well as future teachers' motivations as teachers – '*de vocación, de equivocación, o de ocasión*'.

Considering Bolivian teachers' crucial role in promoting, mediating or resisting processes of educational, societal and political transformation, as well as their heavy responsibilities, there is a need to understand these roles and perceived responsibilities. The chapter therefore starts by providing an overview of the multiple expected roles of teachers in Bolivia, in both rural and urban contexts. Due to the continuing divide between urban and rural Bolivian education and the differing roles for teachers in both contexts, students' preferences to work in an urban or rural context are analysed. The chapter continues by describing the various perspectives of what constitutes 'an ideal Bolivian teacher' by various educational actors, which links to both *internal* and *external* aspects of the teachers' identity (see introduction to Part IV). An understanding of *what* teachers are supposed to do and what an ideal teacher looks like, provides a necessary foundation for the following discussion on *why* students want to become teachers. Consequently, the chapter continues to develop an understanding of the more general motivations to enter the teaching profession. The perceptions of different actors are discussed and analysed according to a

typology of future teachers' motivations and illustrates how students' own motivations differ significantly from the common view of teachers' motivations by other key actors in the field. This chapter suggests that the teacher education system, as it functions now, largely ignores, and often fails to stimulate, a vocational attitude and social responsibility among students, which is commonly viewed as one of the key characteristics of the 'ideal Bolivian teacher'.

8.2 Teaching in rural and urban communities – roles and preferred locations

According to the ETARE pre-project for the 1994 Reform, the 'new teacher' had many roles, including '*the capacity to carry out educational research, to implement the outcomes in the classroom, with intelligence and creativity, own innovations and styles of teaching and optimizing its role as a trainer/guide* [*formador*]' (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 74). This perception of 'teachers as researchers and innovators' in the classroom is again reflected in the recently developed education plans for decolonising education and is taken a step further to the socio-political level. The ASEP policy discourse expands teachers' agency – in terms of their obligations, authority and autonomy (Vongalis-Macrow 2007, see chapter 2). In contrast to global tendencies that 'reterritorialise' teachers' agency to a limited teaching-for-the-test role, the Bolivian government emphasises their social and political responsibilities as a '*soldier of liberation and transformation*'.

As was shown in chapters 2 and 5, there are other trends that were initiated in the 1994 Reform that are still carried out, such as participation of the wider community in school management and a certain degree of decentralisation (the level of decentralisation is relatively limited in the final document of the law). Drange (2007: 5) points out that what this potentially means for the role of a teacher, is that they are no longer the only person influencing the school. Parents and community-based grass-root organisations, liaison committees and school management boards are all supposed to take part in the development of schooling and to analyse the needs of the school community in order to find solutions to any emerging problem. This includes both the decentralisation of decision-making and a shift of responsibility for infrastructure and the daily organisation of the school toward the municipal level. The municipality therefore receives resources from the national budget according to the size of its population. The urban teacher confederation in La Paz strongly resists the former and present decentralisation plans, as well as the influence given to parents and local organisations (see chapter 5). In an interview with members of the rural union at their headquarters in La Paz, a more favourable attitude towards the ASEP policy plans was expressed, as they consider a certain amount of decentralisation and community involvement as beneficial to teachers' work (83). It is too early to make any consistent statements about the actual implications of the ASEP policy for teachers' roles as mediators between the state and the community, yet it seems that decentralisation will, in some form, remain part of the Bolivian education system.

Although the new ASEP law aims to bridge the historical division between rural and urban education in Bolivia, in reality this divide is still very relevant and influential within the lives and work of teachers. The director of one of the rural Normales, for instance, elaborated on the different roles urban and rural teachers need to be prepared for: '*The urban teacher is simply made for the classroom. We [rural teachers] integrate more with the community, with civil society. In some cases the teacher is a judge, an official of the civil registration office, a teacher can have the function of a nurse, so we train these types of teachers, not just for the classroom, but so she/he can help the community where she/he will work*' (67:12). In

contrast, an urban academic director thinks that not only rural teachers, but also urban teachers need to be aware of, and engaged in, society and the wider school community. She continued to say how *'we for instance pay attention to the environment, which is a universal problem, and other values that have to be strengthened within the future teachers. This is needed for the youth to improve their self esteem, their identity'* (17:8). In the interview, she explained how a strong teacher identity – based on principal values (such as care for the environment, respect for each other and elders) – is a necessary prerequisite for any teacher in order to fulfil their roles. Although new policy lines aim to overcome the rural-urban divide and unify teacher education in all Normales, there is no consensus on how this dual education system could be addressed. It is, therefore, still a reality for those who enter the teaching profession. Hence, we now turn to discuss students' preferences for their future job locations.

Understanding the multiple and changing roles of teachers in various contexts will help to comprehend students' preferences for future job locations and motivations discussed below. With the aim to map students' preferences to work in urban or rural schools, the survey included the open question '*please describe the three main reasons why you would want to work in a rural or urban context*'? These answers, together with data from interviews in which I asked similar questions, help to understand students' main motivations for their choices about future job locations. As explained before, being a teacher in Bolivia is one of the most popular careers for young people, because of the *relative* good working arrangements. I now discuss the different roles and conditions for teachers working in rural or urban contexts and link to that the preferences of student teachers for urban or rural future job locations.

Teaching in a rural community

Teachers in rural areas face specific difficulties. As in many other countries, in the so-called rural 'multigrade' schools just one or two teachers have the responsibility to teach all grades (72:26; 111:3). Moreover, as was mentioned by the rural Normal director above, teachers in Bolivian rural areas are often considered as important community members, having multiple additional social roles such as (local) lawyers, conflict-solvers and even as doctors. While teachers face enormous responsibilities, it is questionable whether they are fully prepared for these tasks through their training. Several students explained to me how they saw language as a barrier between the teacher and the students, especially when, as a teacher, you are not familiar with the local language spoken (see chapter 7). However, not all students agreed that in rural schools, all children speak Spanish. Some students argued that in some cases children only speak Aymara (in the highland area). One urban teacher student told of how she had visited a rural school, where the children spoke in Aymara, while the teacher did not understand them. '*They laughed at him. There was not much trust, and they accept a teacher who speaks Aymara better*' (19:51).

In addition, working and living conditions in remote areas are relatively more difficult than in cities, because of a lack of (clean) water, electricity and communication and travel services. Still, a significant number of the urban students included in the survey (39%) explained that they preferred working under such conditions. In their eyes, being a teacher in a rural area creates real opportunities to teach something valuable to children and to live closer to the environment (often referred to as *la Pachamama* or Mother Nature), because of the relative tranquillity of rural life and/or because education '*is much more needed*' in rural areas. For example

Cecilia (the urban female student teacher introduced in the former chapter, whom already worked as an *interina* – or untrained teacher – in a rural school) values the fact that there is '*much more to do*', and '*much more to change*' in rural areas (18:6). Indeed, there is a lack of (qualified) teachers in remote rural areas.

For 79% of the rural students included in the survey, working in a rural area seems more attractive than working in a city. Some rural students mentioned that they preferred the small scale community life to the individualistic and hurried urban lifestyle. Also, whilst urban students stated to prefer working in a city because of being used to the urban way of life, many rural students want to continue living in rural communities, because of more tranquillity, cleaner air, living closer to nature and 'friendlier communities'. Interestingly, rural students' ability to speak an indigenous language was brought forward as a reason to later on work in rural schools. Similar to their urban colleagues, several rural students argued how being a teacher in a rural school is more needed and more important. The survey answers of rural students also showed how some students liked the better status of the teaching profession and teachers' key role in rural communities. A few students also mentioned a higher salary – in the form of bonuses – as a reason to become a rural teacher.

The following part of an interview with two rural young female teacher students (TS), who had just started their first week at the rural Normal, reveals some interesting views on their future job preferences, as well as their personal situations and motivations (29:26 a+b):

Interviewer:	*'Would you prefer working in a rural or urban school later on?*
TS A:	Here at the [rural] Normal, most people who subscribe come from a rural place themselves. For us, it would be all right to work in rural place, or even in a very remote area, because we are used to this, and we like it. For us, to go to a city would be uncomfortable, we would feel a bit saturated, without enthusiasm. There are so many things that would affect us. [...]
Interviewer:	*And what about you?*
TS B:	For me, it would not matter; I would adjust myself to living in a city or in a rural place. But I think that here in the Normal they prepare us more for the rural areas [...] and the most humble people who most need it live in the rural areas. There people need it most, there you can really do something, you can talk about sex education, there are so many things they need. I would prefer to work in the rural context where people really need it.
TS A:	And also, that they value your work as a teacher more, when you go to the rural area [...].
Interviewer:	*And do you already have a specific place where you would prefer to work? Maybe in this area, or in another part of Bolivia?*
TS A:	I want to go to the tropics (*el trópico*).
TS B:	I would prefer to go to a remote place, for instance at the border somewhere, my wish is to get to know and work in Beni, Guayaramerín, Riberalta.
TS A:	My wish is to go far away as well, to places I don't know, because a better opportunity for this you will not get. I do not know the tropics; therefore I want to go there. Then I can go fishing with my students.
Interviewer:	*And working in those places would also imply living there, right? What do you think about that?*
	I will adapt myself to every place. I would take my son with me. And my husband, I would leave him behind.
TS B:	I think it hurts to leave behind your family, in reality it will hurt, but if you have these 'life opportunities', it is all right, to get to know these places.
Interviewer:	*Yes, I understand, for me it is also a great opportunity to be here in Bolivia, but I also miss my family sometimes.*
TS A:	You suffer, but you also learn. Because you have more time, you think a lot. And if you cannot sleep, you are left with your thoughts. When you are far away, you value more what you have.'

This extract seems to shows various reasons for preferring to work in rural, or even very remote, places. The reasons included are familiarity with the rural context, wanting to help those students

who 'need it most', but also wanting to get to know other parts of the country and, possibly, even to get away from a difficult family situation and husband.

However, various rural students also raised concerns with regard to working in a rural area. A third year student at the rural Normal Warisata mentioned how preferring to work in a rural context does not necessarily mean staying there forever: '*We also have this idea to excel more, because in the most remote rural areas the education is not like in the cities. For example, in the city you can give your classes and at the same time prepare yourself scientifically at the University, but in rural places it is not like that. You spend all your time there, dedicated to your job, to your house, to the work you have to do the following day, the students, all that. We do not have so much accessibility'* (68:18). Several urban students similarly expressed their doubts and fears about the (obligatory) two years 'in province': they fear a lack of materials; a lack of communication; missing their family and friends; and difficult living conditions, having grown accustomed to living in the city.

Others told how they see these two years as a valuable experience, yet they wish to return to working in a city afterwards. This argument is backed up by the survey answers of urban students explaining they want to live and work in a city for various reasons, including: to stay close to their family; to keep on studying; other career/work opportunities; better access to internet and libraries, and educational material; and because of being used to the 'urban way of life'. Various students also disclosed that they did not want to work in a rural area because of a lack of knowledge of local languages and a number of female students mentioned having children and not wanting to leave the city (and family) because of that. Thus, the majority of students with a rural background themselves recognise the difficulties of a future job in a rural school, but they, nevertheless, still see it as their preffered job location.

Teaching in an urban area

It would be unfair to state that the work of urban teachers, on the other hand, is easy. Teachers working in urban contexts also face difficulties. Urban teachers see themselves forced to work in two or three '*turnos*' (morning, afternoon and evening shifts) in order to pay for the expenses of their families. A teacher working at a school in a 'poor' neighbourhood in La Paz explained some of the other problems of the urban students. She was used to teaching children in the centre of town, where they would '*listen and learn much better*'. She related her current students' '*disobedience and laziness*' to the lack of support from parents in poorer neighbourhoods. Another teacher similarly explained how numerous parents have to work all the time, or even live abroad, to gain money. Teachers complained about homework that '*is never done*' and expressed their worries about children being left alone by parents.

In contrast to the motivations to go 'far away' of the two girls from the interview presented above, their urban colleagues more often referred to the difficulties of raising their children alone, without their family (who often live in the city) to help them out. Also, in relation to the transcribed conversation above, I often heard variations of the 'noble' argument to 'bring good quality education to the rural and humble poor', like in the conversation with the two students A and B above. Although this seems like a noble stance at first sight, one might question the patronising or even discriminatory ideas behind that view in some cases. Like this urban student who mentioned in his survey that he wanted '*to help the poorest rural people to escape ignorance*'

(U-134). Perhaps these patronising ideas still come from an education system in which teachers function as reproducers of hegemonic racism (Canessa, 2004). From a SJTE point of view (see chapter 2), training institutes should stimulate students to critically reflect on their motivations behind future choices and to make future teachers aware of potential patronising and discriminatory attitudes, as will be elaborated in the following chapter 9.

8.3 Views on the ideal Bolivian teacher

As set out in the introduction to part IV, various actors' perceptions are part of the *external landscape* of teachers' identities. In addition, following from Tatto's interpretation of Cummings, teacher education institutes are driven by their idea of the ideal teacher. Yet, there is little written about the various perceptions of what an 'ideal Bolivian teacher' is, nor how this is perceived in the Normales. In the surveys and interviews I conducted with students, teacher trainers and other education actors, I included the open question '*what are the three most important characteristics of an ideal teacher*'. As explained in the introduction to Part IV, based on relevant literature (e.g. Jansen, 2001a; Palmer, 1997) and the data I gathered on Bolivian perceptions of the 'ideal teacher', I designed three related analytical 'ideal' characteristics, including: A) *professional*; B) *socio-political;* and C) *ethical-emotional.*

Bolivian policy views on the ideal teacher

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the first Belgian-led teacher training institute in Sucre had an ideal image of the Bolivian teacher as being an 'apostle' of education, with a great sense of vocation and service to the community (Lozada Pereira, 2004: 67). This notion of the teacher as an apostle is still visible in the discourse of both students and trainers today. However, the old education paradigm of 'exposition-assimilation-repetition' was replaced by the 1994 Reform with an alternative education paradigm of 'experience-reflection-action'. The 1994 reform envisioned a new, and more comprehensive, idea of an ideal educator. Normales had to prepare teachers not only for the transmission of knowledge, but for a wider societal task of stimulating the construction of knowledge, values and attitudes in their students (Ipiña in Lozada Pereira, 2004: 71). In many countries formal teacher training and teacher development solely focuses on the 'teaching role', based on one particular context – the educational institutions – leaving aside other possible areas in which teachers can develop, such as training outside the school, cooperative learning within communities, awareness raising on socio-political issues and so forth (Torres del Castillo, 2007: 9). Particularly in the Bolivian context of a rapidly changing socio-political context, and a strong civic engagement in politics and societal issues, teachers can potentially be influential elements in reproducing, resisting or promoting educational as well as societal processes of change. Currently, the ASEP law employs a rather extended idea of the 'ideal teacher', as it continues and further reinforces the 1994 Reform principle of teachers-as-reflective researchers, while seeing teachers as crucial agents in the wider socio-political project of 'liberation and decolonisation'. The new law envisages an active pedagogical *and* socio-political role for teachers as agents of change. As such, the new curriculum for teacher education for instance includes new subject areas such as '*State, ideology, politics and education*', and '*Education for eco-ethics, eco-justice and socio-communitarian-ethics*' in the first year (see Photo 5 in chapter 5).

Before a consensus was created on the final approved version of the ASEP law in December 2010, interviews with various MoE officials showed a range of ideas on the ideal

teacher. Historically the MoE has been famous for its rapidly changing staff and this tradition has continued over the past years, recently with an influx of MAS politicians, as well as former social movement members, into governmental institutions. An often made joke when I mentioned I had interviewed the Minister of Education was '*did you get to speak the minister of yesterday, of today or of tomorrow*?'. A result of a mixture of 'old' and 'new' governmental officials inside the MoE, and the fact that the new 'ASEP discourse' was slowly becoming institutionalised in the MoE, I realised that there is a somewhat vague image of an ideal teacher among policy-makers. The emerging discourse related to the ASEP law is starting to become stronger, but still exists next to the prevalent views from staff that were there before Morales, aligning with the 1994 Reform images of an ideal 'professional' teacher, rather than ASEP's ideal image of both a professionally and socio-politically committed teacher. The last ethical-emotional dimension of an ideal teacher can perhaps be best connected to the ASEP law's references to the need for education to foster '*ethical-moral, spiritual and affective capacities*' (Articles 5 and 13, ASEP law 2010), but receives less emphasis than the socio-political dimension.

A government officer who has been working for years in the teacher department of the MoE provided me with many rich details on processes inside the MoE and within the Normales. In line with the 1994 Reform idea of a professional-vocational Bolivian teacher, she explained how: '*a good teacher has always been characterised as an apostle of education. While his salary does not count, she/he has to be a dedicated teacher, a teacher who knows its subject. A teacher has to be a person in the school, someone who writes texts, who has been in the teaching profession for many years. Another important aspect is that a teacher should dedicate her/his time to the youngsters, not only to the school but also to other types of activities. So that is an ideal teacher, like I said, an apostle, a well prepared teacher, a reflexive teacher, but also someone who takes time for extra curricular activities, and with much time available to young people'*(6:8). In my conversations with this policy-maker, it became clear she was clearly frustrated with the decades of demonstrations on the need to increase teachers' salaries.

While many actors agree on the fact that teachers should not (only) fight about their salaries, this primarily professional perspective on a good teacher is contrasted by a former Minister and prominent developer of the new ASEP law. He brings the decolonisation ideology into the ideal teacher-discussion and represents many of the new officers that joined the MoE after 2006. '*A decolonial teacher [...] is skilled for a multicultural population, a teacher needs to speak three languages, he needs to be aware of other conceptualisations, other knowledges, and indigenous communities. And, we need teachers particularly for secondary education, focused on productive areas, which implement an ideology that is neither bureaucratic nor focused on increasing wages only. This is a huge defect, we have to break down this system, we need people that are politically informed, that have a non-salary oriented, non-colonial and productive attitude, that is really important'* (12:21). These ideas are reflected in policy documents, which seem to focus on both teachers' professional and socio-political responsibilities. In an official presentation by a MoE official in October 2007 (Medinaceli, 2007), an ideal teacher was for instance portrayed as: 1) having profound content and didactical knowledge and skills; 2) being a researcher and producer of knowledge; 3) being reflexive and to show solidarity; and 4) being respectful to all students and the pluricultural society. These views seem to incorporate the image of an ideal teacher by social movements that also emphasise teachers' socio-political role.

Social movement and union ideas of the ideal teacher

An interesting view on the ideal Bolivian teacher can be distilled from the demands coming from a range of social movements and institutions that were consulted in the context of the educational commission of the Constitutional Assembly from August 2006-December 2007. According to these demands, teachers need to show a '*greater social commitment*' and a new reform should encourage the formation of '*patriotic teachers that would work eight hours a day*' (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009: 66-67).[139] An indigenous movement leader who was connected to various CEPOs organisations and now works inside the MoE, defined the socio-political characteristics of an ideal teacher; he/she needs to have a '*political profile*', a '*political clarity*' and is '*contextualised in reality*'. He continued by stating that: '*a teacher needs to be competent as well, I mean that he needs an integral training, he should not just be a mathematics teacher, but he also should be well aware of other situations that are relevant to our lives, he has to understand that in Bolivia we do not only have nine departments, but that we have 36 indigenous groups, and a teacher should also understand that diversity is a potential. So, we want a teacher who is contextualised with his/her diversity, a plurilingual teacher; we no longer want to have monolingual teachers. We also want teachers who are constantly connected to scientific research, and that she/he also knows how to work with new technologies. How can a teacher who does not know how to work with internet be helpful, when this is the reality of its students?'* (14:13). This quote is important, as it reflects very well the new policy image of the ideal Bolivian teacher who is not only aware of the local reality and needs of the community, but who is also knowledgeable in her/his subject and at the same time politically informed and committed to the job.

In former chapters it became clear how unions have quite some influence on what goes on in the Normales, while at the same time unions' perceptions of an ideal teacher have an influence on teachers' identity formation process. In other words, the unions' idea of a good teacher counts, yet it does not affect every teachers' multiple identities in a similar way. While all teachers are paying a contribution to the unions, they do not necessarily also identify directly with the ideology of the unions (see also chapter 5). I heard very different responses from teachers to the urban unions' points of view. In addition, and similar to the influx of social movement leaders into the MoE, I also met former union leaders now working within the MoE. In the Bolivia since Evo Morales, the clear boundaries between social movement/union ideals and government standpoints have somewhat faded, or at least created internal tensions over what an ideal teacher should be.

Nevertheless, particularly within the urban teachers' federation of the city of La Paz, a strong sense of distance and dissatisfaction with government ideals is felt. A female urban union leader told me how teachers in Bolivia need to survive with a low salary, bad working conditions and low status. It is therefore very difficult for them to fulfil their duties in an ideal manner. *'The government only provides the necessary, and our vocation as teachers needs to prevail, we need to be apostles, but we are human apostles, we have to eat, to dress ourselves and live as well'* (79). This union leader clearly feels she is treated unfairly by the government. In contrast, in my conversations with the rural union leaders, there was sympathy with the ideal teacher as represented in the ASEP reform, since '*teachers need to be immersed in the political, social and cultural context of our populations*.' Another rural

[139] The general idea behind a longer working day for teachers was to extend their work from the five hours in the classroom to another three hours, which could be used for preparation, training and peer reflection. However, this should be accompanied by higher salaries, because as long as teachers see themselves as forced into having multiple jobs to support their families it remains unrealistic to expect even longer working hours.

union member agreed and stated how one of the biggest challenges for teachers now is to work with the multicultural society of 36 different indigenous groups, and that teachers need to be trained in different languages. Pointing to teachers' professional development, they also highlighted the need for permanent training for in-service teachers in various locations, as rural teachers often have to travel a long way to locations where that training is provided (83). In summary, the rural unions align more closely with the policy image of the ideal teacher than the urban union.

Student teachers' perceptions of the ideal teacher

Both in interviews and surveys, the teacher students in the Normales most often referred to *professional* characteristics of an ideal teacher, followed by the *ethical and emotional* characteristics and finally, the *socio-political* characteristics were mentioned less. In this section I will highlight some interesting variations between the survey and interview answers. Firstly, a wider variety of answers are given in the surveys, which can be explained by the larger number of students included in the surveys as opposed to the interviews. In the interviews there was the opportunity to ask for clarification or further elaboration of the answers, which was not the case in the survey responses.

Firstly, with regards to the professional characteristics, the surveys and interviews show a similar picture. In both institutes, the following characteristics were seen as crucial ones for an ideal 'professional' teacher: being an expert in the subject/theme; being '*actualizado*' [up to date]; being patient; being responsible; having an attitude toward innovation/research; being punctual, dynamic, pedagogically capable/innovative; and finally having a vocation, which was mentioned relatively often. Secondly, concerning the ethical and emotional characteristics, we can see how there is a consensus among students on the importance of good interpersonal relationships (*relaciones humanas*). In the interviews this was most often explained as a good relationship between teacher and student (non-authoritarian, loving, caring, affective), but it was also related to the relationship between teachers and the wider community, teacher-colleagues and parents.

Finally, in relation to the (less often) mentioned socio-political characteristics, we see that most students mentioned a social commitment (*compromiso social*) as being an important quality (both in surveys and interviews). In addition, students commented on the need for an ideal teacher to have a 'realistic' awareness and understanding of society. Rural students often added to this that a teacher should be able to have a commitment to, and relationship with, the community she/he works in.

Nevertheless, this study shows how Bolivian teacher training often fails to develop these three dimensions. Various students shared their concerns about '*very basic subject matter training*' (132). Besides, there were complaints about trainers not being up-to-date, while in-service teachers have very little opportunities to stay '*actualizado*'. In relation to the second category, this chapter will argue how teacher training fails to stimulate a latent pedagogical-vocation and societal commitment of a group of students. And thirdly, students in their internship periods, as well as recently qualified teachers, expressed how they felt unprepared to emotionally deal with the various family problems that children are faced with (absent parents, alcoholism, abuse). In-service teachers also show resistance to new reforms, because of the emotional hardship of having to deal with new policy lines without sufficient training and support. Thus, there is somewhat of a divergence between the policy image of a professional and socio-political

committed teacher and students' image of an ideal teacher primarily being a professional, but very importantly also fulfilling ethical-emotional capacities, and to a lesser extent a socio-political commitment.

Teacher trainers views on the ideal teacher

The answers given by the trainers in interviews on the three main characteristics of an ideal teacher show many similarities with students' views. This outcome is supported by what Clandinin et al (2009) call the 'interwoven identities of teacher students and teacher trainers.' When we compare the answers of students and trainers we can see how they seem to use similar terminology to describe the professional characteristics of an 'ideal teacher'. Due to the use of comparable wordings, it is possible to argue that 'having a vocation' and a 'social commitment' is part of a larger discourse on an 'ideal teacher' used in the Normales. More or less in accordance with the current policy image, firstly relative importance was given by trainers to the professional characteristics and secondly to the socio-political characteristics of the ideal teacher. In contrast to the students, less attention was paid to the ethical-emotional part.

To illustrate this, a female rural teacher told me about the enormously heavy and important tasks of rural teachers, for whom a social commitment is a requirement: '*The future teacher has to play an important role of a cultural, political and economic leader in the communities. He/she has to solve problems, be a doctor or even a lawyer sometimes. […] In the community where I come from, for my uncles, my grandparents and my parents, they feel very good when the teacher takes up the role of having a genuine leadership in the community. But when a teacher comes with an authoritarian attitude, you do not have this possibility, there is no democratic space opening up then. […] Also, a teacher needs to be a critical individual who is informed about all realities of the education system, from the macro to the micro level and the institutional level. How else is he going to analyse these realities?*' (32:14). In both rural and urban contexts it is very important for a future teacher to know how to 'live together', according to this male urban trainer: '*For me the most important thing is that a teacher learns to be, to know and to live together. We have not understood well enough what the meaning of community is, like Paulo Freire says. Do you know Freire? [Yes, I do] OK, so he says in his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed, that […] we all have to unite to find something common, that is where the word community comes from. When a teacher does not understand the meaning of 'living together', when he does not learn to live in a community, he will never become a [ideal] teacher. We cannot think that a teacher lives in the stratosphere, or like a satellite in another place, while his work is here, he cannot be in another place. Therefore, a teacher is the only professional that has to be immersed in society, particularly his home, he sometimes has to move this, or even place it at a second or third level, because his first level of work should be with the community'*(47:33). This idea of a sincere community engagement of teachers was often expressed by trainers, and particularly in the rural Normal.

Relatively few trainers talked about the ethical and emotional sides of an ideal teacher. Compared to the importance given to human relations by students, in interviews with trainers this issue was mentioned only twice. In addition, students often argued how teachers should work against discrimination or work toward equal treatment and respect. This issue was less discussed by the trainers, but also not totally ignored. One rural male trainer and academic director explained how he interprets the issue of interculturality in this respect: *'We have students here from the cities, from the interior, from the Valle Alto, of all places, and people speaking Quechua. But interculturality first of all means that they have to identify themselves, and to value who they are, but with respect and tolerance toward the other. They should be sensitive and humble, but always with a spirit of personal growth. If*

you are Quechua that is fine, if you are an urban citizen or from the provinces, that is also fine, but you should not stay there. Personal growth, what does this mean? To continue studying based on the realities we live in, that teachers form teams to work together, to get a 'licenciatura' or 'maestria' or 'doctorado' degree. Interculturality is large, it is wide, and this is what future teachers should have. Intercultural means to have relationships with all people around you, with parents, other teachers, directors, authorities and students'. (36:12). This quote, although not representing a majority perspective, links closely to the new ASEP Reform ideal, that is strongly supported by the directors of the rural institute (chapter 6, 7).

Other educators' perceptions of the ideal teacher

To continue with 'all people around you' mentioned in the quote above, what do other (educational) actors say about the characteristics of an ideal teacher? The responses of primary level in-service teachers' again focused on professional and social characteristics of the ideal teacher, paying little attention to teachers' ethical-emotional sides. A female urban principal told me: '*What we look for in a teacher is that he is innovative, permanently up to date and a leader*'. When asked what she meant with 'being a leader', she replied: *'A leader in all aspects, that a teacher knows how to lead a group, how to introduce a subject, how to delegate tasks, how to develop various types of competencies of students, these types of leadership is what we are looking for. That a teacher is democratic, participative, pro-active, that she/he uses different learning strategies that are adequate'* (13:74). Another urban female director emphasised the societal role of teachers: *'Teacher training has to deal with values a lot, because we teachers are a mirror of society, and students mirror us*'. I asked what types of values she was thinking of: *'Responsibility and ethics are very important, [the teachers] have to be very well prepared because, like I said, the Normal only gives the minimal part. Teachers leave the Normal unprepared. [...] Today we do not have the well prepared teachers of the old days anymore. I graduated from the Normal in Sucre, that was an institution, and I don't know if today there are still the same strict teachers. Thanks to them they trained us with much responsibility and ethics, to teach human beings. But now youngsters do not take it as serious as before, with the same responsibility that they have. [...] Teaching means a lot, and we are not just teachers anymore, we are also counsellors'* (60:2-60:4). These quotes lead us to believe that school principals are in favour of a 'strict' and somewhat 'traditional' ideal teacher. Linked to the earlier described negative image of teachers' training in the Normales, is the idea that 'education used to be better in the old days'. This societal stereotypical idea of an unprepared teacher who cares more about salary issues than the educational quality of an ideal teacher, relates to this negative and to some extent nostalgic viewpoint, and was confirmed in my conversations with parents, market sellers, taxi drivers and others.

An urban father and member of a parents association explains why he thinks teachers should be stimulated to do a better job: *'Within society, a teachers needs to show more interest, to really get to know the different issues at the level of the families, to understand the children and what their domestic problems are; and to create more confidence between teachers and students. I think that is the biggest problem in society, it is a vicious circle in which teachers, parents and all other members of the society need to have better communication, but that is not the case now. […] A teacher needs to be dynamic, and well prepared. During the classes teachers go out to make photocopies, and that is a shame. In the meantime the students loose all their attention and start to play. I tell the teachers they have all afternoon and all night to prepare the classes. [...] They also should be at the school at 8 in the morning or earlier, many teachers are too late.'* (57:10, 57:22) This father's view echoes the professional image of an ideal teacher being engaged with the direct community, being fully prepared and up-to-date with the latest training and innovations, and punctual.

There is, thus, consensus on the importance of the professional characteristics of an image of an 'ideal Bolivian teacher'. In addition, current policy-makers and social movements especially emphasise the socio-political roles and trainers seem to follow that line of thought while students emphasise the importance of ethical-emotional aspects of a good teacher. Similarities in the use of words and concepts by students and trainers appear to point toward a common discourse in Normales on what an ideal teacher should look like. It seems that the current decolonising education discourse of ASEP has been influential in the narratives on teachers' socio-political characteristics, as agents of change, particularly in the rural Normal and rural teachers union, and for the new staff of the MoE. The ASEP 'policy image' of a teacher that is capable in all three dimensions of 'the ideal teacher' seems to partly conflict with student teachers' own (personal and professional) identities, that do not so much emphasise the socio-political roles. As stated in chapter 4, this 'identity conflict' lies at the heart of the implementation problem of educational reform in most developing countries' (Jansen, 2001a: 242), in Bolivia having resulted in a partial implementation of the 1994 Reform (see chapter 2) and an envisaged troublesome implementation of the ASEP law (see also chapter 5).

8.4 A categorisation of teacher's motivations

Internal and external perceptions of *the ideal teacher* and *her/his roles* are intrinsically linked to teachers' motivations for choosing their profession. Both in the surveys and in the interviews I included an open question on '*why do you want to become a teacher*?' Drawing from the outcomes of the data on Bolivian students' motivations, I slightly adapted Welmond's categorisation (see introduction Part IV) and constructed a tripartite typology of teacher motivations that are particularly relevant to the Bolivian context, including: 1) **economic**; 2) **pedagogical-vocational**; and 3) **socio-political motivations**.[140] Figure 9 illustrates how the different codes I used in Atlas Ti, to analyse interview transcripts, were grouped together into this typology. In a similar manner, I categorised the answers given in surveys.

Under economic motivations, I purposefully placed 'learning the English language'. Reasons mentioned for this motivation included, for instance, a better chance to get a good teaching position, as there are few (trained) English teachers. In addition, students also referred to the need for English teachers in private institutes and better opportunities to study or migrate abroad (to the US). Similar reasons were mentioned by this urban English teacher student: *'The quality of education is very low. I want to escape this country; therefore I want to study something in tourism, to go to another place. But in the meantime, they are not going to accept me in a University over there [abroad], or I would have to be an endowed person, because only they can go, students from the higher class, children from businessman or corrupt people, only they can get the scholarships'* (21:19). Parents' stimulation to send their youngsters to a Normal is also related to the economic security and welfare benefits of the teaching job. This chapter will show how these and the other economic and material motivations although prevalent, are not the sole motivations of students to become a teacher. In contrast to what would be expected from the existing literature on Bolivian teachers, most students also expressed to have more ideologically based pedagogical and socio-political motivations. Figure 9 illustrates how pedagogical types of motivations are linked to having a 'pedagogical-vocational

[140] My first and second categories correspond with Welmond's first and second-plus-third categories, and I added the socio-political category because of its relevance to analyse Bolivia's current envisaged role for teachers as agents of change. See also the introduction to Part IV.

motivation', while the socio-political motivations includes what many respondents called a '*compromiso social*' – a societal commitment. Both a pedagogical-vocational motivation, as well as a socio-political commitment was mentioned by different actors to be crucial characteristics of an ideal teacher. People's motivations, like their hybrid identities, are not static and can change according to their understanding of society. Considering Bolivia's changing socio-political situation, this chapter aims to understand future teachers' motivations at this point in time.

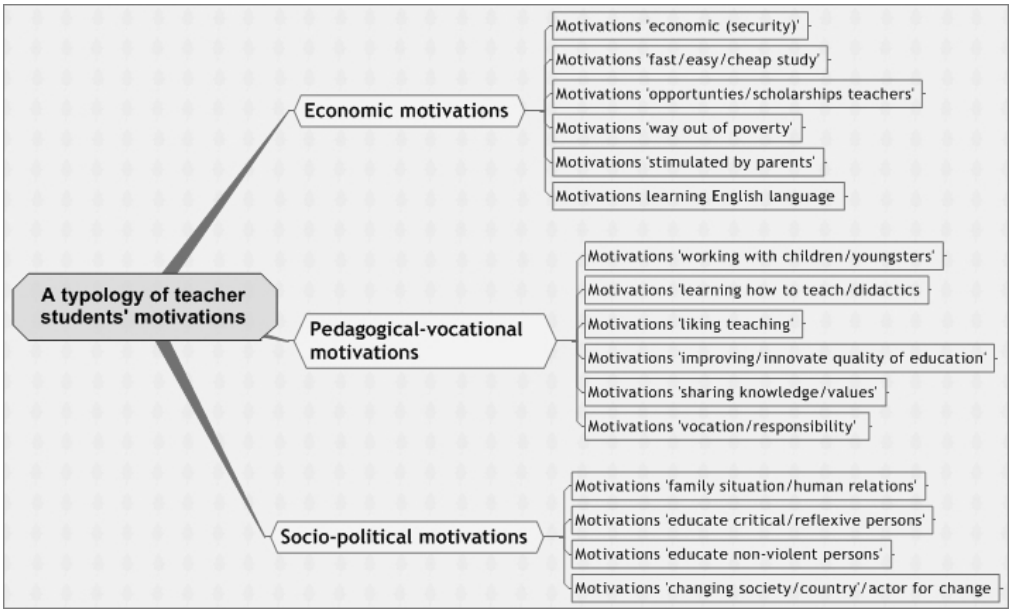


Figure 9: Categorisation of students' motivations

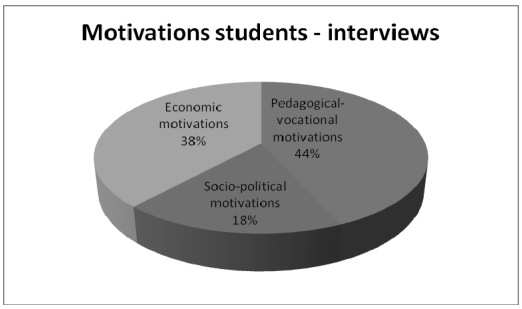
8.5 Perceptions of future teachers' motivations

According to the general public opinion, as well as several authors, in Bolivia a particular desire to teach is frequently not a motivation to start the teaching career (Canessa, 2004: 190; Contreras and Talavera, 2004a; Speiser, 2000: 228-229; Torres del Castillo, 2007: 13; Urquiola et al, 2000). A secure job position, salary and welfare arrangements are important – and understandable – reasons to enter the profession in the Bolivian context of low economic growth and opportunities. However, this is not the complete picture. The following section aims to provide a more nuanced view on future teachers' motivations to become a teacher.

Student's motivations – more than economics!

Figure 10 provides an illustration and an indication of the types of answers given in interviews with student teachers and the proportions of each type, based on my analysis and interpretations of these answers. Interestingly, these outcomes contrast the general negative view in Bolivian society and literature that students are only driven by economic motivations. Students claim to also have pedagogical-vocational or socio-political motivations and, similar to students' perceptions of the 'ideal teacher', with somewhat less weight given to the socio-political dimension. Responding to interview questions can have the effect of answering with 'politically correct' answers.

Figure 10, students' motivations (interview data)



So, while this figure might represent a too positive picture about students' level of vocation and societal commitment, it still helps to demonstrate that students do not *only* have economic motives. The difference between students' latent educational and socio-political motives and the perceived lack of vocation in dominant discourses, is what I call the unused potential of Bolivian future teachers as actors of change.

Figure 10 illustrates how the majority of students gave a pretty balanced answer when talking about their own motivations, as they included pedagogical-vocational, economic and socio-political reasons in their replies. With regard to the economic or 'opportunity' motivations, a young male urban student mentioned that besides his future work as a teacher '*which is only for a couple of hours per day*', he also wants to work in commercial publicity, *'which I can also do in just a few hours'* (20:7). In contrast to the more material motivations, many students also used terms such as 'development', 'progress', 'innovations' and 'improvement' in their answers, related more to the pedagogical and socio-political categories. The quote of a rural student, for example, shows a strong social commitment: *'We have had so many years of discrimination, also within education, and therefore I have chosen to become a teacher, to improve Bolivia, technologically, culturally. Especially because we are here in Warisata, we deal with intercultural and bilingual education. I speak two languages, both Castellano and Aymara'* (68:1).

I found an interesting difference between the answers in interviews (see Figure 10) and surveys outcomes. In the interviews I did not only ask for people's personal motivations to become a teacher (as in the surveys); I also asked about the motivations of the majority of students in their Normal. When the questions were depersonalised, students almost always referred to the majority of students having economic motivations – a secure salary, fixed job positions, welfare arrangements (18:9, 28, 10) – to become a teacher. In several interviews, students came up with an estimation of how many students entered 'with vocation' – this was mostly estimated between 10 % and 30% – and a majority of students who entered for other (economic) reasons (e.g. 21: 14). However, from the surveys a rather different picture emerged, because only a small minority mentioned economic motivations as their reason to become a teacher. When writing things down black-on-white, students were perhaps tempted to give even more 'politically correct' answers. Besides, it should be considered that students' perceptions are not only based on their own experiences in the Normal, but that their images of economically motivated colleague students might also be strengthened and influenced by a national discourse of a negative image of teachers.

Other actors' perceptions of motivations of students

Most teacher trainers' believe that the majority of students enter the teaching profession because of economic motivations (including job security; a way out of poverty; short and easy study; having status in a community) and just a minority because of pedagogical-vocational or socio-

political reasons (for instance working with children; improving educational quality; or to change society). A rural trainer for instance mentioned: '*There are very few students who come here because of their vocation. That is what I have observed. [...] Perhaps because of economic motives, they go to the Normal'* (32:2, 32:5). Another urban trainer added: *'I recognise with much clarity those students that have a vocation to become a teacher, and those that arrived here because of opportunity. I estimate that this [the division] is more or less fifty-fifty. You notice their level of profoundness of the theme, the interest to get to know their theme. But I will do some research on this, and I will have a better judgement at the end of the semester'* (50:13/14). Likewise, an urban school director explained how: '*in our country being a teacher is easy, because we have a fixed salary. So they have a job, a salary, but when they start teaching I noticed that in some cases teachers do not implement changes. In contrary, they turn to use more and more traditional teaching, and here you can see that there is a lack of vocation to change. […] From my experience with students coming here for their practical training, in general terms I think that 40% do have a vocation to be a teacher, and the others become teachers because of the secure work'* (55:4). A researcher, indigenous movement member and former teacher trainer argued that most students who want to become teachers are sons and daughters of peasants, and only few have parents that are middle class workers or politicians. '*Therefore, we came to understand that education is one of the building stones of colonisation. Why? Because at least you have to become something in life, meaning to leave life as a farmer, and because of this conviction, even out of inertia, people try to enter the Normal'*(24). Although similar estimates of other respondents vary quite a bit, they all indicate a consensus on the idea that most student teachers have a lack of vocation for their future job.

Another rural trainer voiced a more positive view and explained his strategy to 'develop vocation': '*To find out about students motivations, I share with them my own trajectory when I meet them for the first time, my life testimony as a teacher in different parts of the country, and I provoke them to explain what their motivations are, and most of them say yes, they have an interest, a vocation'* (33:7). When asked about their own motivations as trainers, they often referred to vocation being their main reason to work as a teacher (trainer). An interesting finding from the perceptions of teacher trainers is that although vocation is maybe seen as a crucial characteristic of an ideal Bolivian teacher, it can actually be 'learned' or developed. This means that, if stimulated by teacher training, those who decide to become teachers out of necessity can also gain a sense of vocation from their job. A former teacher trainer explained how he saw his role in stimulating a vocation among his students, revealing an exceptional but promising example: '*I started to show them a feeling for the teaching profession, I tried to generate more interest and value for this profession […] I even exaggerated to them saying that the job of a teacher is more important than that of a doctor. A doctor saves lives, and cures diseases, but a teacher can also save lives! […] when I resigned from the Normal it was heart-warming, many students came to say goodbye and one told me 'you have helped us to love our profession, I did not want to become a teacher, but now I love the job'*. He told me this was one of the best things he experienced as a trainer. He continued in a more serious tone, stating that '*I see that many of my colleagues do not do anything like this. But,* he added more positively, '*I think students are flexible, they can generate real spaces of change, of compromises, of educational transformations'* (24). The following transcription from a feedback-discussion, with a group of rural teachers on the preliminary outcomes of this research in April 2010, provides further insights into how 'vocation' can be 'learned' (121):

Fem TT A: A lot of the students are here out of necessity, or because their parents want them to. Many youngsters do not have a cause in life; they just want a secure job. But, we have to work with them; we have to engage with our societal values. The majority now recognises where they come from, we all start to recognise our identities. And for me...my vocation only came with time...

Fem TT B: But, we also have young people that really want to become teachers, they come here after having committed some mistakes in life, and they turn out to be the best students.

Male TT A: Having a vocation is not necessary, because you can 'catch' (*grabar*) it later on, you have to become aware of what you are doing and the things around you, a teacher needs to continue to innovate.

Male TT B: I feel a bit uncomfortable when I hear my colleagues ask why students come here if they have no vocation. Because... I never had a vocation myself when I started. I never thought I would become a teacher. But we have to develop, a teacher can never be the same as its students, he/she always has to be better. A teacher always needs to innovate.

Male TT C: There are two criteria with regard to teachers' vocation: '*hay maestros que nacen y maestros que se hacen*': there are those that are born with it, and those that have to learn it.

While most trainers agree that 'having a vocation' actually matters, either from the start or later on, being a good teacher is not necessarily the same as having a vocation, as good quality teachers also require a proper training, sufficient (pedagogical and financial) support and opportunities for peer reflection and professional and personal development. In contrast to trainers' discursive emphasis on the importance of helping to develop student' vocational commitment, this is only put into practice by a small minority of trainers.

Thus, while vocation is considered as something that can be developed, my research shows that often this stimulation does not lie at the core of teacher training practices. Teacher education fails to cover a potentially important part of future teachers' development. This idea of an unused potential was confirmed when I discussed it with a Director of an institute in Santa Cruz: 'a *good proportion of the students indeed have a vocational tendency. Maybe our training is too formal now, too technical. Until now we have focused the training on the processes of teaching and learning, which made us ignore the other affective and personal part. Actually, I think that in order to encourage a vocational attitude we should continuously strengthen their enthusiasm and affection* (122:17). In contrast to these views of the Bolivian teacher trainers that vocation is something that can be developed 'from the outside', Palmer (1997) claims how vocation should not be imposed, as it should come from within. I consider both points of view as valid and a possible solution to combine these insights would be to pay more attention within teacher education to the self reflection of student teachers on their own motivations and roles. Or, in Palmers' words, there is a necessity of an 'inward connection' during teaching, to the 'teacher within', in other words an acknowledgement and awareness of the complex *internal* identities of a teacher. From the literature on critical and social justice oriented teacher education approaches (including Clandinin et al, 2009; Palmer, 1997; Walkington, 2005; and Zeichner, 2009) we can also learn that there is a need to create (safe) spaces within teacher training for student teachers to reflect, actively challenge and discuss amongst themselves their personal identities, motivations, their practical experiences (in the framework of the PDI course – see chapter 7) and their future roles.

A young female teacher who graduated ten years ago from the urban Normal, talks about her ideas of vocational teaching: '*it depends, some teacher dedicate their life and soul to teaching, and others not, maybe because they are tired. Some teachers are very old and they cannot stop working because their pension is*

not arranged well. Also, teachers who follow courses and update their knowledge should be rewarded for that. My friends make fun of me, because I always follow extra courses in my spare time, they tell me to stop spending my money on it. But I tell them I do it out of love for my work' (119:21). This extraordinarily motivated teacher is an exception to the rule, yet she highlights certain structural issues that hinder teachers' continuous vocation, including a lack of pension arrangements for older teachers and an absence of structural teacher support and in-service training (as highlighted in chapters 6 and 7).

In relation to the last type of socio-political motivations, a former teacher now working in an international organisation argued that the main problem with students' limited pedagogical-vocational and socio-political motivations, is the absence of discussing Bolivia's reality in the training and the lack of a stimulating/evaluating environment for teachers when they have entered the 'security of the profession' (see also chapter 6). '*Students aspirations just stop when they receive their title, and they are assured of a job by the government. There is no political orientation. For trainers it's similar, their ultimate aspiration is becoming a trainer at the Normal, and then that's enough, then they only have to wait until retirement.* (3:14) This also links to what I call the missed potential, which so far is not taken up properly in the training structures for teachers.

Finally, and contrary to an attitude of apathy of a large group of teacher trainers (see chapter 6), I would like to end this section by showing the existence of the aspirations of a trainer and a student teacher to be(come) an actor of change. An urban trainer told me a teacher '*needs to be an actor of social change, a teacher has to stimulate changes in the societal context, and from their search for a change in an associated community which relates to the thought of the children and the youth. And from here also promote learning situations, and this way the community we work in can also develop, gain new knowledge, new technologies. In order to do so, I am looking for a new teacher profile, based on these characteristics; maybe a teacher should be like a mediator'* (43:13). The following quote from an urban teacher student similarly illustrates my point: *'A teacher has to open up panoramas. In our society, I think we need teachers who teach children to reflect, who can think for themselves, who do not reproduce, who know how to enter a discussion also with their teacher. That is my dream, that they do not accept just how things are. It is like...since we were children we have been taught to be passive, and many children think like that: 'I cannot succeed'. We have to motivate them more, and to help them and show them that they can, that what you start you also have to finish, that you are perseverant, that you can change your own reality, and by doing so also your surroundings. An educated population is a population that thinks. And they will be critical about their reality and transform it'* (19:34). Conversations like these made me realise the issue of 'future teachers as agents of change' is not something that exists only in discourse and literature, but is also recognised as a potential reality by educators in the field and is therefore the topic of the next chapter.

8.6 Concluding reflections – An unused potential

The ASEP law aims to bridge the historical division between rural and urban education in Bolivia. However, in reality this divide is still very relevant and influential in the lives and work of teachers in either rural or urban contexts. In the Bolivian context of inequality and poverty, particularly in rural communities, teachers have an huge responsibility as they often fulfill multiple pedagogical and social roles as varied as being a classroom teacher for multiple grades, a conflict broker in the community or someone who gives medical or judicial advice to less educated community members. Teachers in rural areas thus face specific difficulties of having to fulfill these multiple additional social roles, as well as coping with more difficult living conditions

due to a lack of (clean) water, electricity and long travel distances between both family and training opportunities. Urban teachers', on the other hand, also face various difficulties. They see themselves forced to work in two or three shifts in order to pay their bills, while they also consider their job more difficult because of a lack of parental and community engagement in children's education.

Bolivia's political discourse on the ideal teacher (for the ideal citizen) has shifted from a more professional teacher image (in accordance with the 1994 Reform), to an image of a teacher who is professionally capable, emotionally prepared and ethically committed, while also taking her/his socio-political responsibilities seriously. But, is it realistic to expect all teachers – urban and rural – to be professionally and emotionally fully prepared and dedicated to their job, while at the same time functioning as active '*soldiers of Bolivia's liberation and decolonisation*', as Evo Morales would like to see (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010d)? Bearing in mind the difficulties of both rural and urban teachers' jobs mentioned above, this is perhaps a utopia if similar stuctural obstacles remain to exist. In email conversations with Ramiro, he reflected that Evo Morales often uses '*radical expressions and a bit shocking metaphors*', but he often gets misinterpreted by Bolivian media. According to Ramiro, it is in the personality of Morales to want to break through existing '*schemes and structures*' of '*ignorance and marginalisation*'. Hence, by calling teachers Bolivia's 'soldiers of change', '*he does not so much refer to taking up arms or defending ourselves with arms, but the fight [he refers to] is about looking forward, and to do everything we can from within our position [as teachers]*'.[141] In a historical analysis of South African policy images of '*teachers as liberators*' at the end of Apartheid (1980s), Jansen argues how we could draw the policy lesson that '*new images of teachers, however compelling in political terms, do not translate into new ways of teaching and learning*'. He continues to explain how '*the image of teachers as liberators was perhaps an effective tool for mobilising teachers and students politically but it certainly did not change the ways in which the system functioned educationally*' (2001a: 243). Though the data of this study similarly shows how most of Bolivia's future teachers and their trainers have not adopted the new 'extended' policy image yet, this study also illustrates how the changing Bolivian socio-political context enables changing profiles and identities that might have a transformative impact on teacher students' future practices, as it already does for some of the exceptional decolonising and inter-/intracultural oriented trainers, including Ramiro.

Why, if being a teacher in Bolivia seems such a challenging job are so many young students and professionals so determined in wanting to enter the teaching profession? The common thought about Bolivia's teachers motivations in Bolivian society are shaped along the lines of an absence of alternatives and a way out of poverty. My research shows that indeed many students opt for the teaching profession because of material and economic motivations, which is, considering the socio-economic status of the majority of the Bolivian population, a logical and valid motive. Nevertheless, the general negative view in Bolivia of students *only* entering the Normales because of financial reasons should be nuanced as both interviews and survey results revealed how both urban and rural students also expressed various kinds of pedagogical and socio-political related reasons for entering the teaching profession.

This chapter demonstrated that there is a potential – yet unused – pedagogical-vocational and socio-political aspiration among the students at the Normales. Instead of blaming the

[141] Personal communication with Ramiro (introduced in chapter 1) in May 2011.

majority of (future) teachers themselves for a lack of commitment and vocation to the teaching profession and socio-political transformation, which is a commonly used argument, I argue that the structural constraints of the (pre-service and in-service) teacher training system fail to address and stimulate teachers' motivations to provide good education and become actors of change; Bolivian teachers miss a permanent source of support to help them stay motivated and updated, while they face low social status, a deficient pre-service training and the challenge to combine multiple jobs at the same time. Building on the SJTE debates, *ideally* teacher education programmes would stimulate students to become motivated, reflexive and critical teachers by creating spaces within teacher training to reflect, actively challenge and discuss amongst themselves their personal identities, motivations, practical experiences (in PDI – see chapter 7) and future roles (including Clandinin et al, 2009; Palmer, 1997; Walkington, 2005; Zeichner, 2009). Relating back to the SRA and critical education theorists, this active challenge and reflection will help students to avoid merely fitting in to the existing structures and uncritically following the beliefs and attitudes of their trainers. The current ASEP law, and particularly the PDI-course as discussed in chapter 7, brings a (still largely unused) potential for this type of reflection.

As a conclusion to this chapter, I would like to emphasise that – in contrast to the existing negative views of Bolivian teachers' lack of aspirations – we should not forget about those who have a (latent) motivation to be (come) a good teacher and actor of change. In Part V we will turn to look at the possibilities and constraints for teachers' agency, bearing in mind this strategic selective context (Part III) and the complexities of teachers' identities, motivations and roles (Part IV).