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Machismo and *mamitas* at school: Exploring the agency of teachers for social and gender justice in Bolivian education

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Machismo and *mamitas* at school: Exploring the agency of teachers for social and gender justice in Bolivian education

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Abstract:

Historically, Bolivian society and education system are characterised by marginalisation based on poverty, ethnicity and gender. The central objective of the Morales government is to redress this imbalance and create a society inclusive of all Bolivians so that they can 'live well'. Our paper illustrates how, whilst the international development agenda sees gender equality as an important element for an egalitarian education system, the latest Bolivian education reform gives gender equality diminished importance in favour of the focus on interculturality. Applying an analytical framework that uses social justice theory and a strategic relational approach, this paper explores the agency of teachers to effect social change in relation to gender inequalities in Bolivia. Our research approach is embedded within the interdisciplinary field of international development studies and used mostly qualitative techniques to examine teachers' strategies to act towards gender equality.

Key words: Bolivia, inclusive development, gender justice, teacher agency, education

Introduction

Bolivia is a country of exceptional cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity (Pareja 2003), including a large indigenous population – over 60% of Bolivian's identify themselves as indigenous (Drange 2011) - however, this diversity has historically been ignored. The education system, which is the focus of this article, has long contributed to the historical marginalisation of indigenous citizens, and even more so for female students. However, the current context in Bolivia is one of great political change and the Morales government has introduced a rhetoric of societal transformation and equality to end the centuries' long marginalization of the indigenous people. On taking office in 2006, the Morales government set about integrating indigenous rights at the heart of the agenda and, in January 2009, they put in place a new constitution, which secures greater rights for indigenous groups. At the time of writing (October 2014), the Morales government had celebrated its third democratic victory and continues its political strategies of 'decolonisation'.

With this push for radical, structural, societal and educational transformation, Bolivia is marking an exceptional alternative route towards development (Lopes Cardozo, 2011; 2012) that stands in stark contrast to mainstream and neoliberal-inspired global tendencies, see introductory chapter of this special issue (Gupta, Pouw and Ros-Tonen). Bolivia's National Development Plan (NDP) is aimed at a '*sovereign, dignified, productive and democratic Bolivia where everyone can live well,*' whereby 'living well,' or *vivir bien*, is defined as establishing social justice through '*access to and enjoyment of resources and material assets; affective, subjective and spiritual realisation; in harmony with nature and the wider community*' (Ministerio de Planificacion del Desarrollo, 2006-2010). In a move to achieve this in the education sector, the government abolished the 1994 Education Reform Law (LRE) developed under the previous administration, on the grounds of its being 'too neoliberal' and 'foreign-driven'. In 2010 a new 'revolutionary' education reform was ratified - the Avelino Siñani Elizardo Perez (here on referred to as

ASEP) reform – which places indigenous rights and knowledge at the heart of the education system. The ASEP education reform seeks to decolonize education through a communitarian, productive and intercultural and intracultural education.[1]

But where, in this social justice model is the recognition of gender inequality and gender justice? While the LRE of 1994 had a clear, central focus on gender justice, the ASEP reform speaks a discourse of 'decolonisation' and inter- and intra-cultural education. Although in some ways this progressive model is more inclusive, it is mainly embodied through indigenous rights, and little discursive (let alone material) weight is given to the idea of gender equality. In line with this shift of attention, academic research in Bolivia tends to focus on intercultural education, and gender equality in schools is often overlooked. Yet gender inequalities in Bolivian society are still pronounced; Bolivia is a strongly patriarchal society in which *machismo* is deeply entrenched and the education system retains subtle processes that repress equitable gender relations (Kollins and Hansman 2005), an observation which is confirmed by our own more recent observations.

With regards to Bolivia's political discourse, the new ASEP education reform integrates gender equality using the idea of *complementariedad* or complementarity. Seen as part of the process of decolonization as also stipulated in the PND, the idea of *chachawarmi* is based on the Andean notion of gender complementarity (in Aymara, *chacha* means man, and *warmi* means woman). This conceptualisation sees the "married, heterosexual couple as the fundamental social subject in society, and of female and male forces as the opposing but complementary constituents of the cosmos" (Burman, 2011: 66-67). Men and women are perceived as two halves of a whole, in which each has a distinct role to play in the household and society. The man represents the public face of the household; going to work, attending community meetings, speaking for the family etc., whilst the woman is the silent partner who is expected to stay home to look after the house and the children. This chachawarmi model is presented

as rather different from a 'western' conceptualisation of gender. As Widmark notes, with acceptance of the male dominance in this model being the public face and voice of the family, it incorporates a risk that girls and women will continue to be marginalised (Widmark, 2007).

Despite being perceived as contradictory, the discourses of gender equality and bilingual and intercultural education are closely interrelated (Luykx, 2000; Widmark, 2007), as both ultimately strive for social justice, which is, after all, central to the government's vision. The ASEP reform envisions teachers as the 'soldiers of change' to guide these social transformations (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). Teachers are challenged by this new reform to promote a multiple perception of diversity, focused on commonalities, rather than a potentially segregationist form of intraculturalism (Howard, 2009). Teachers should be central to any education reform as they play a central role to its success or failure; their role is both instrumental and the main barrier to implementation (Drange, 2011). If the Morales government hopes to enact social change through teachers' agency, it important to secure the support of teachers, as well as the appropriate support to enable them to fulfil this role (Lopes Cardozo, 2011, 2012, 2015).

This paper sets out to explore the role of teachers in stimulating change for social justice and inclusive development, using the lens of gender equality in the classroom as focus of our analysis. The first section provides an exploration of the methodological and theoretical inspirations, looking at the mechanisms at play in teachers' agential role in relation to gender justice. The second part gives an insight into the historical role of teachers within the Bolivian education system and the active role they have played implementing change, situating our analysis in its historical context. The third section further applies the theoretical framework as a lens from which to analyse observations from the education sector in Bolivia, exploring teachers' perceptions and actions towards gender equality in the classroom. The objective is to gain an insight into the complexities of the position of the contemporary

teacher and the various mechanisms that come into play and direct or limit their agency in contributing to processes of social justice.

Methodology

This paper draws on a long-term academic research engagement of the researchers, with varying levels of experience of working in Bolivia, ranging from a few years to a number of decades. In addition to this longer-term involvement, the paper draws on additional in-depth ethnographic data gathered between June and September 2012. Data gathered relevant to this article includes semi-structured interviews with 26 in-service teachers, and 3 head teachers at secondary level across 3 schools. The schools were selected to give a cross section of Bolivian society. Two were urban schools, located in La Paz. One school is slightly more prestigious, and relatively well funded (47 teachers, a male head teacher and more than 900 students). The second urban school is attended by children from lower socio-economic backgrounds (370 students in total and 29 teachers, of whom 18 teach at the secondary level, and a female head teacher). The third school was a rural institute (465 pupils and 20 teachers, with a female head teacher). Two representatives (one male, one female) from the Ministry of Education were also interviewed, while the article additionally draws on a range of longer-term (formal and informal) conversations with policy-makers, teacher unions and teachers, as well as documentary analysis, that informs our knowledge of the (transforming) political discourse and teacher practices.

Non-participatory classroom observations (5 in total) were conducted in each of the schools across a range of subjects and with student of different ages. Less formal observations of sports lessons were collected throughout the time spent in the schools. Finally, four focus groups were conducted with groups of students (between 9-32 in number). The focus groups consisted of 32 13-14 year olds (17 boys, 15 girls), 10 14-15 year olds (2 boys, 8 girls), 9 13-14 year olds (3 boys, 6 girls), and 11 15-16 year olds (2 boys, 9 girls). In keeping with the methods used in this research, qualitative data analysis was

used to explore and identify the main themes and findings of the investigation. The specific references made to individual interviews tend to reflect more widely held opinions, unless stated otherwise.

Theoretical Foundations

While building on the theoretical notions of inclusive development as presented at the start of this special issue, we also draw from a range of interdisciplinary theoretical sources for the analytical framework of this paper, with the concept of social justice as its core premise. The ten aspects of inclusiveness presented in the work of Gupta, Pouw and Ros-Tonen in this special issue, firstly help to argue for the relevance of our topic of study – *inclusiveness* through gender and indigenous equality in access *and* quality of Bolivian education - and secondly provide a grounding for our choice for a social justice inspired analytical lens. From an inclusive development perspective, we view education as situated at the core of Bolivia's social, political and economic processes of in- and exclusion of marginalised citizens. We thus acknowledge that education and education actors (and hence, analysis of educational processes) are inherently embedded within a broader Cultural Political Economy context (Robertson and Dale, 2014).

In order to help us to then understand the agency of teachers, and underlining that a focus on inclusiveness needs a relational approach (Gupta et al, this special issue), we draw from the Strategic Relational Approach as developed by Hay (2002) and applied to analysing education (Lopes Cardozo, 2009, 2011; Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). In the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA), structures and agents are treated analytically as separate entities that are at the same time closely connected through a dialectal relationship between them (Hay, 2002b; Jessop, 2005). Applied to the education arena, teachers can be understood as strategic and political actors, and studying their *agency* in processes of societal transformation is particularly imperative in contexts of high inequalities such as Bolivia (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). Building on the SRA, we aspire to conceptualise an understanding of teachers' (un-

)conscious use of the strategic space for manoeuvre enabled through particular structural constraints and opportunities – their *agency* – in relation to processes of societal and educational change. Teachers' *agency* is defined for this research as their space for manoeuvre as political strategic actors, in a multi-scalar and strategically selective context, to develop intended or unaware *strategies* that work to enhance or obstruct processes of social inclusion and (gender) justice.

Robertson and Dale (2013) argue how the focus on social justice in the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) frameworks has been a fairly meagre one, as these strongly emphasised the (obviously very important) distribution of access, but failed to consider other important dimensions of social justice which are critical to education constructively transforming society. Building on this argument, we argue that any educational framework that attempts to seriously work towards an objective of inclusiveness would need to consider responsibilities around what Fraser (1995, 2005) has termed the cultural (recognition), political (representation) and economic (redistribution) injustices. Nancy Fraser, a trained philosopher who takes a critical feminist perspective, asserts that in order to reach 'parity of participation', not only the often assumed economic solution of redistribution should be targeted, but equal importance should be given to socio-cultural remedies for better recognition and political representation in order to ensure 'participation on par with others, as full partners in social interaction' (2005: 73).

Others have also made the case for applying a social justice analytical lens to explore (inequalities in) education. Keddie, for instance, (2012: 15) claims that "Fraser's model should not be offered as an ideal of justice that is static and uncomplicated but rather as a productive lens for thinking about and addressing some of the key ways in which different dimensions of injustice are currently hindering the schooling participation, engagement and outcomes of marginalised students." Furthermore, Tikly and Barrett (2011: 3-4) argue how in developing contexts a social justice approach, drawing on the work of

Nancy Fraser and Amartya Sen, "can provide a fuller rationale for a policy focus on education quality than that provided by a human capital approach with its emphasis on economic growth or by the existing human rights approach with its emphasis on the role of the state in guaranteeing basic rights."

Our analytical framework moreover builds on the insights of critical pedagogues who help us to theorise the reproductive and/or transformative functions of education/educators in society. According to Bourdieu (2001: 37-8), without taking into consideration gender roles as generally adopted in societies, it is impossible to understand the processes of social, or cultural, reproduction in education. Social reproduction theory, then, refers to the mechanisms present within our societies, which influence and generate cultural hegemony, and perpetuate social exclusion and marginalisation of for instance indigenous of female members of society (Bourdieu, 2001). This process has been repeated throughout Bolivia's historical education experience leaving large groups of both women and indigenous people as the subaltern socially, politically and economically marginalised from mainstream society and powerful positions. Educational institutions, when dominated by male thought and patriarchal traditions, may perpetuate traditional gender roles and entrench patriarchal values in each generation of school-going children (Leach, 2000; Kabeer, 2005). Giroux's work (1995, 2003a, 2003b) helps us to view teachers' roles and agency as 'public intellectuals' in reproducing or resisting such pedagogical and societal processes of in- and exclusion. As such, we argue that teachers' understanding and perceptions of gender equality, as closely embedded within societal perceptions an norms, is important to understand their respective their (lack of) agency and strategies.

Combining Frasers' theory with various insights of scholars working on the relation between education (policies, politics and practice), gender and transforming/reproducing social (in)justice (Connell, 2012; Robertson and Dale, 2013; Young, 2006; Bourdieu, 2001; Giroux, 1995, 2003a/b; Kabeer, 2005; Leach,

2000), we have developed three interrelated analytical dimensions specifically relevant to analyse education's function towards social justice and gender justice goals.[2] These are:

1) Redistribute access to safe educational opportunities and resources;
2) Recognise diversity through a relevant and gender-sensitive curriculum and pedagogy;
3) Ensure fair and transparent representation and responsibility in educational governance.

Firstly, an education that would work towards *redistribution* of resources and opportunities can foster more equal educational opportunities for all (male and female) students. But access is just one piece of the puzzle and in some cases, participating in the school system, may reinforce the dominant societal gender roles for children since the school environment parallels and potentially underpins the gender norms found in the wider society (Chisamya et al., 2012). Secondly, *recognition* in and through education would mean to rethink strongly (ethnic, gender, linguistically) segregated schools as well as strong biases in textbooks. Recognition could be fostered by following a critical and gender-sensitive intercultural pedagogy which respects minorities as indigenous rather than identifying them as 'infiltrators', and a pedagogy that stays away from uncritical and stereotyping forms of multiculturalism (Davies 2011: 13, 17, 34; Keddie, 2012: 9) that do not take into account issues of religion, race, class or gender. And thirdly, political *representation* should ideally be fostered through a fair gender, ethnic and linguistic representation at multiple (supra- and sub-)national scales of educational governance. Hence – social justice should not just be conceptualised as a means 'to education' (access), but also 'in and through' education – or how teaching and learning processes and outcomes reproduce certain (socio-economic, cultural and political) inequalities.

In short, these theoretical insights from the SRA (Hay), social justice and gender justice theories (Fraser, Keddie) and critical pedagogical perspectives (Bourdieu, Leach, Kabeer, Giroux) help us the unravel processes of social reproduction or transformation, and teachers' roles within those. Teachers are hence

situated and dialectically relate to the strategic selective, cultural political economy context, and can potentially (sub-)consciously act to perpetuate *or* transform gender roles and stereotypes.

Historical context: How Bolivian teachers developed their agency

Before we can analyse the current status of Bolivian teachers' agency in relation to gender justice, we first need to provide at least a brief analysis of teachers' historical roles in Bolivian education and society as teachers in Bolivia have played a substantial formative role in shaping the current education system. The collective agency of the teaching unions has historically been strong, influencing policy, salaries and working conditions. Since the first public education reform in 1905 and throughout the twentieth century, teachers' collective actions in Bolivia have been aimed at achieving working conditions in order to establish teaching as a profession. Their organized battles contributed to the formation of a professional identity and helped to develop some of the unique, central characteristics of public education system in the country. All this occurred as a result of the weakness of the state to fulfil its obligation to support public education (Talavera, 2011).

The 1905 educational reform included the foundation of the first (European-led) teacher education centre (*normal)* in Sucre in 1909, which was initially intended to educate professional teachers for the whole country. However, it soon became clear that the educational system would be divided into separate 'urban' and 'rural' systems, keeping indigenous education in a (rural) silo (Talavera 2011). Though in the first year only men entered the *Normal* school, female students soon found a place and by 1913, just four years after the foundation of the institute, women comprised 50% of the total school enrolment (Aillón, 2009: 89).

Training for rural (and mostly indigenous) teachers saw an important moment in the 1930s, when the Warisata *Normal* School was founded. This school was a model for indigenous education, and spread its influence to other parts of the country. Although highly successful, the experiment was fought by urban

teachers acting from within the National Council of Education. Warisata was forcibly closed down after a decade, driven by this resistance, as well as the realisation by the state that an indigenous education system worked against their strategy of '*castellanización*' (or hispanicisation) of its citizens. During the first half of the twentieth century, education was still only accessible to the 'elite' classes, and only one fifth of the population was literate in 1900 (Contreras, 1999). Although indigenous leaders demanded education for indigenous groups, and the 1905 Education Law did mention access of indigenous students to schooling, this was only effectuated after the 1952 revolution, when they were finally recognised as Bolivian citizens. By this time around 30% of the population was literate (Klein 2003).

The government had led teachers to believe that those who were professionally trained would be protected by the same working rights as people who joined the military. However, they failed to fulfil this promise. Consequently, by 1915, teachers in La Paz had organised themselves in a union to demand their professional rights, an historical event that would be repeated many times afterwards. In 1930 they won the right to participate in decisions that affected the education system and in 1935 they founded the Federation of Urban Teachers of Bolivia. However, by the mid-twentieth century, only one-third of all teachers – both urban and rural - had been trained at a *Normal* school. Hence, there were various different 'categories' of teachers - urban, rural, indigenous or 'un-trained' (*interinos*) – and as such the system remained incoherent and disjointed.

After 40 years of fighting for their rights (1915-1955) the Bolivian Education Code of 1955 allowed teachers' participation in the creation and implementation of education policy. Unfortunately, this Code was repealed under the 1994 Education Reform Law and with it, the rules that legitimated teachers' participation in education beyond the classroom. This change in policy resulted in strong resistance among teachers to the innovative pedagogical proposals laid out in the Education Reform Law of 1994. The teachers' unions (particularly the urban one) maintained that the 1994 reform process lacked

participation of teachers and was imposed by foreign ('neo-liberal') actors. Similarly, teachers currently complain about a lack of genuine participation, ownership and a lack of information about the new ASEP Law, which reduces rather than improves teachers' trust in government policies. In applying an SRA lens, we can observe that while fighting for professional recognition, Bolivian teachers displayed a unique sense of agency. This historical analysis of teachers' strong collective engagement with politics and professional rights, illustrates the close interaction between teachers as (both individual and collective) strategic actors in a transforming socio-political and socio-economic 'strategic selective context'.

Due to the lack of data, and a general lack of literature on this topic focused on the Bolivian case, it is hard to elucidate clear gendered tendencies in our historical analysis of teachers' agency. Still, it is fair to state that gender roles in the Bolivian context are largely dictated by the idea of *machismo*, which was influenced by the legacy of the Spanish colonial rule and the influence of the Catholic Church, which restricted the rights and space of women. Hence, women in Bolivia have long occupied a private, home- and family-oriented role (Smeall, 1994). While the explanation of *chachawarmi* given above shows how the Aymaran notion of gender is embraced by the current administration, the idea itself embodies a similar limitation of space for women (Widmark, 2007). This legacy can still be seen in Bolivia today, where women often end up taking double responsibilities, both for the housework and childcare, while often also going out to work. The teaching profession is one of the most female-dominated professions in the country, yet female teachers are rarely in high administrative positions. Our paper responds to this lack of research dealing with gender equality in and through education in the Bolivian context, and more specifically a lack of understanding of teachers' roles within such processes, hence this paper now proceeds to analyse what we have found about teachers every day practices in schools.

Teachers' current agency in relation to three domains of social justice

This section discusses the Bolivian context in relation to education and gender (in-)equalities, and analyses how teachers, as strategic political actors, interpret and react to the three dimensions of social and gender justice within this context: redistribution, reconciliation and representation.

REDISTRIBUTION

The education policy reform of 1994 had considerable implications for the education sector and teaching professionals. As mentioned above, this brought to an end the influence teachers had over education policy. In their place, advisors were brought in from UNICEF and UNESCO to develop the new education policy, which placed a particular emphasis on gender equality. The objective of the LRE was to initiate a positive process of change towards a more equal society (Pareja 2003) and to ensure education is "intercultural and bilingual, so as to honour the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the country in an environment of respect between all Bolivians, men and women" (Ministerio de Educación y Culturas 1994; authors' translation). Outside Bolivia, the LRE was heralded as an exemplary educational reform, developed in conjunction with pedagogues and education specialists. However the LRE was also criticised for its colonial and neoliberal nature and execution (Heijnen, 2010). Certainly this is how it was seen by many Bolivian teachers, many of whom felt it was pressured from international actors that lent such centrality to the concept of gender equality. As such, the reform was met with mixed reactions from teachers and many strategically refused or (sometimes unconsciously) failed to implement the proposed changes (Lopes Cardozo 2009). It was the perception of the LRE as neoliberal that both compelled and enabled the Morales government to reject the policy in 2006.

Nonetheless, the inclusion of gender equality at the heart of the LRE has left an impression of awareness of gender equality among teachers, but without a true understanding of the complexities of the need for gender responsive pedagogies. Beyond the teachers' opposition to the 1994 LRE mentioned above, many of the ideas laid out in the policy documents were not carried into practice, and the reform was

limited to primary level, leaving many teachers at secondary education without the tools to apply gender responsive pedagogies in their classrooms.

Furthermore, the shift in focus away from gender equality was also partly justified by the high level of parity in educational enrolment, which is 0.99 at primary level and 0.93 at secondary level education (UNESCO 2013). The high overall coverage and gender parity in primary education is emphasized by the Bolivian government as evidence of gender equality within the education system. However, significant educational inequalities persist within the country, through gender, geography, ethnicity and language. For instance, whilst only 1% of men in urban areas have not received any secondary education, this is thought to reach as high as 34% of women in rural areas (PNUD, 2010). This emphasis on gender parity may further embed gender inequalities through the education system, by addressing redistribution without tackling recognition or representation. Given that teachers interviewed frequently equated *access for all* with gender equity, without the training for gender responsive pedagogies that could have been expected under the LRE, teachers are left repeating their habitual attitudes and strategies, which do little to redress gender norms in the classroom.

The close connection between parity of access and gender equality for Bolivian teachers, and society as a whole, is embodied by the events in Cochabamba in January 2012. The famous all-boys *Colegio Bolivar* was compelled to open its doors to girls for the first time in nearly 100 years following demand from the families of hopeful female students. Single sex institutions have been banned under current legislation, yet many single-sex schools continue to exist through the country. When the families sought to enrol their daughters in *Colegio Bolivar*[4] before the start of the school year, they found themselves rejected by the parents of the boys and forced out of the queue. The girls' parents then approached SEDUCA,[5] which ordered the school to enrol the girls (El Deber, 2012). Although this was met with outcry from parents of current and future students, the girls were able to attend the school. While teachers have

been reported to generally support this act for coeducation, the contrasting hostile attitude of the families against this opening up of access to female students helps demonstrate the level of patriachalism and *machismo* present to this day in Bolivia. Interestingly, most teachers who were interviewed perceived the family, and not necessarily schooling practices, as having the most important influence on the continued patriarchal nature of Bolivian society. Teachers often mentioned how the enrolment of these girls in *Colegio Bolivar* demonstrated how education in Bolivia is gender equal. However, this only addresses access, as a narrow aspect of redistribution, without acknowledging the mechanisms at play *within* the education system that may perpetuate gender inequalities (Apple 1979, Leach 2000), to which we now turn.

RECOGNITION

The second analytical dimension addresses recognition of diversity, here defined as the use of a relevant, gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy. Drawing, for instance, on Giroux's work (2003b), teachers' agency can potentially create transformative classroom environments. Central to their capacity to do this, and to act as the 'soldiers of change' the government envisions them to be, is their perception of gender equality as well as their awareness of the various implications of hidden messages (or a so-called hidden curriculum) on gender issues. Once teachers are more aware of such mechanisms, according to Giroux, Leach and Kabeer, there are certain strategies teachers can adopt to ensure their classrooms are more gender equal. This section will analyse whether teachers in Bolivia use such strategies and act to redress gender imbalance in the classroom or act through habit, thus risking perpetuating gender norms and reproducing social behaviours in the classroom through their intuitive strategies. In doing so, it is important to take into account the multiple and conflicting identities of teachers, recognising that they do not form one single homogenous group; perceptions will vary between each individual teacher and form part of a reflexive process. In addition, and drawing on the

SRA, we constantly need to consider the sometimes restricting and sometimes enabling environment teachers are position in and react to.

Co-educational institutions have been mandated in the Bolivian education system since the LRE was introduced in 1994, although some single-sex institutions continue to exist. The fact that coeducational institutions have been compulsory in Bolivia since 1994 was repeatedly emphasised by teachers and ministry officials as proof of gender equality in education in Bolivia. While there is significant discussion as to the benefits of coeducation, particularly for girls who often perform better in female-only environments (see Park, Behrman, Choi, 2012), in Bolivia, coeducation has been chosen as the path towards gender equality. The Director of Regular Education felt that it shows how "little by little it is being recognised that men and women […] are equally capable." However if coeducation is to be followed, it is important to use appropriate strategies and pedagogies.

To date, this legislation is more representative of mixed education than co-education, as noted in the CBDE report on Sexist Education (Arteaga, 2011). While mixed education refers to boys and girls studying together in the same classroom, taking the same subjects, and submitting to the same evaluation, coeducation holds as its objective the disappearance of discriminatory mechanisms, implying a fundamental shift in organization across the school, the curriculum, activity design, and classroom relations (Arteaga, 2011). Since this has implications at both the classroom level and the administrative level, true coeducation reflects both gender recognition and representation within the education system. UNESCO (PNUD 2010) identifies materials, teaching quality and school infrastructure as the most important factors which influence educational outcomes. Teachers' actions and strategies are likewise fundamental for coeducation to be effective. Coeducation needs a critically applied, gender responsive pedagogy in order to truly address boys' and girls' rights within education (Giroux 2003a/b), by embracing the idea of developing an "all-encompassing gender approach" (FAWE 2006: 9). This

involves teachers to apply a gender lens in lesson planning, teaching methods, curricula materials, language[7], seating arrangements and classroom management, as a strategy to make their classroom more gender equal.

Teachers also need to examine their expectations of their students, as these play an important role in influencing (be it positively or negatively) students' future aspirations (Luykx 1999; Kabeer, 2005), thus acting to reproduce or deconstruct social norms (Bourdieu, 2001). A was demonstrated in our interviews with teachers, they sometimes have different expectations of what their students will be able to achieve on leaving school; opportunities are much more limited for girls than boys, despite teachers' views that the girls seem to study harder and often achieve better grades. Teachers' actions are likely to be influenced by such attitudes. For example, in one of the schools, a (female) Philosophy and Psychology teacher had introduced an element of sexuality education into the class; for 2 weeks the students were charged with the care of an egg, to take care of as their 'baby.' At the end of the two weeks the students reflected on the process; this class was observed during the ethnographic research. The students were grouped in pairs of one girl and one boy and then in class they discussed 'How being a parent has changed my life.' When asked to reflect on the experience, the boys spoke of the financial responsibility of having a family whilst the girls focused on the emotional and physical experience thereby reproducing traditional gender roles. This could have been an opportunity to use a gender-responsive strategy to discuss gender roles and social stereotypes; however, in this instance the teacher reproduced rather than deconstructed traditional gender roles.

Lesson planning and resource selection presents a key opportunity for teachers to explore gender responsive strategies and play a transformative role. A study carried out by the CBDE (Arteaga, 2011) of textbooks in use in 8 schools around La Paz showed that from an analysis of 1168 pages there exist only 81 non-sexist phrases demonstrating the absence of equality and equity. Furthermore, the investigation

showed there were more images of horses in textbooks than women. Textbooks developed in partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF for the LRE, which did include some level of gender-responsive pedagogical material, have been withdrawn and banned by the current government for being too neoliberal (Education and Emancipation expert, Dutch Embassy). Although the Ministry of Education proposes to develop new textbooks under the ASEP reform, this had not been done at the time of research and is still on-going at the time of writing. However, given the discursive emphasis on inter/intraculturality, it is likely that gender-responsive pedagogies – either in textbook development or teacher training approaches - will receive little emphasis. In fact, very little exists in the way of official textbooks at all; instead teachers included in our study tended to use whatever course materials they can find to structure their lessons, whether it be old textbooks or resources from the internet. Whilst this is not comprehensive, this can be taken as an indication that many teachers do not apply their strategic agency through the use of a gender lens when selecting resources.

We also analysed how the curriculum is potentially another mechanism through which to preserve the cultural and economic hegemony and to reproduce a dominant, patriarchal culture (Apple, 1979). To give a more gender just interpretation of the subjects of history and culture, female figures can be brought in to the study of subjects, particularly through discussion of female artists, authors and historical figures. This was addressed in the LRE, as several respondents mentioned how gender was brought into the classroom under the previous reform. As one art teacher explained "in my subject we reclaimed female artists; so, for example, I would say 'look, it's not just men.'" This teacher went on to stress how this was not given room in the ASEP reform. However, this discussion indicates that teachers are aware of this, but act mostly within the confines of the prescribed curriculum. In this way their actions are more 'reproducing' rather than 'transformative,' as they follow the curriculum despite the fact they recognise the importance of questioning this male-centred curriculum.

These rather limited strategic actions employed by in-service teachers demonstrate, on the one hand, the restricted interpretation of dimensions of gender equality in schools. On the other hand, teachers mostly reproducing strategies seem to be informed by a largely 'conservative' strategic selective context. Whilst our data illustrated that while in most cases teachers believe their actions to be gender equal in terms of providing *access to* male and female students, their actions inside classrooms continue to be largely dictated by societal norms. The teachers themselves are products of a patriarchal society and often seem to subconsciously reproduce these within the classroom. At the time of research, the teachers involved in the investigation were for instance not or to a very limited extent aware of how seating patterns and curricular materials could influence gender (in)equality in the classroom. As such, although girls and boys have an equal legal right to access *to* education, access *within* education is still problematic, as the education environment in Bolivia is strongly influenced societal gender norms, perpetuated within both student-teacher relations and student-student relations.

REPRESENTATION

The final dimension of analysis used with our framework is that of representation. For the purpose of this paper, this refers to the extent to which the possibility to express a voice, take part in decision-making and have responsibility in educational governance is fairly divided between the two genders. From an inclusiveness perspective, in order for gender and social justice to be achieved, all groups need to be represented within the wider education system, as well as within the classrooms.

According to the literature (Leach 2000; Kabeer 2005), male thought commonly dominates the traditional schooling system across the world. As reflected above, school hierarchies tend to be male dominated, curricula are male-centric, male teachers discriminate against female pupils and gender stereotypes are often reinforced as girls are prevented from taking certain subjects on the grounds of their sex or are assigned the cleaning duties. In this way, as Leach (2000: 342) states, "the school acts as

an effective means of reproducing and legitimating the existing social and political order." As a key site of socialisation, the school system may reinforce such dominant gender roles for Bolivian students (Luykx 1999).

In Bolivia, teaching is still regarded as a female profession with women making up over 60% of the trained workforce (Urquiola *et al.* 2000). Despite this, the education system in Bolivia continues to be largely shaped by male politicians and administrators, and male teachers tend to take a more dominant position within educational governance. Institutions such as the Ministry of Education, education management, school directors, parents' associations and unions are all largely dominated by male figures. This trend was observed in the course of our research, whereby the majority of teachers' syndicate representatives at the three schools were male, despite the fact that women outnumber men in the teaching profession. At the school level, male teachers, although fewer in number, are still more likely to occupy the positions of authority and on a day-to-day basis the women occupy the caregiver role. For example, in the schools visited the women were responsible for organizing the supplies in the teachers' room such as tea, coffee and sugar and provide *empanadas*[8] or biscuits. Luykx (1999) similarly observed that female *normal* students were commonly assigned less prestigious and skilful tasks, such as cleaning, and the more prestigious tasks were given to the male students. Whilst there are more women in positions of authority within the education system than would have been seen previously, it is still often felt that men can perform positions of authority better than women (CIDEM representative, interview 2012).

Bourdieu (2001) posits that working environments are occupied with groups functioning as quasi-families with the person of authority (a male head teacher, for example) overseeing the junior staff (teachers, assistants, secretaries), largely comprised of females. In this way social norms and structures are reproduced in schools, and further perpetuating male domination (Bourdieu 2001).According to the

teacher respondents included in our study, in Bolivia, the family environment teaches children from a young age that there is a place for women and a place for men, or as one teacher put it: “girls to be in the kitchen and boys for the world outside.” Teachers spoke of how girls are expected to help around the house, cooking, cleaning and washing, whilst the boys and men do not help in any way. One female teacher stated; “to the boy [parents] say, ‘son, you don’t have to help in the kitchen because you are a boy”. Another female teacher told me, “parents say ‘son, you can go out’ but to you they say it is dangerous because you could get pregnant.” Collectively, teachers emphasised the family environment as the strongest influence shaping attitudes and gender norms in children. Consequently, as girls are brought up helping around the house, they are eager to help when teachers need a task done. A female teacher said “there are girls who are always ‘me, me, I will do it, I will fetch it, I will do it,’ and it’s because at home they are like this too, since they are little they have to do everything.” While most teachers reflected on how attitudes from home were transferred into the schooling space, few teachers displayed an understanding of how their actions and agency in the classroom might help begin to redefine existing gender norms.

The division of responsibility and authority can already be seen at the student level. In one of the schools in this study, out of a total of 370 students, there were 280 girls and just 90 boys enrolled. However, from the total number of 17 class presidents, 10 are boys and just 7 are girls. So, in an environment where girls clearly outnumber boys, the male students are still more likely to take positions of authority and dominate the school environment. Teachers observed that boys are more likely to put themselves forward for these positions and girls are more likely to undertake the chores, such as distributing materials and cleaning the board. These reflect deeply ingrained behaviours are transmitted to children from within the family as well as within day-to-day classroom practices, where girls are expected to carry out household tasks and boys are given more freedom to play and leave the house/classroom. Many teachers demonstrated a tendency to blame the family for this and overlooked

the potential role they could play in beginning to break this division of gender roles and change attitudes gradually in coming generations. The social reproduction that occurs through the division of labour in the home and school (Bourdieu 2001), also mirrors the Aymara model of c*hachawarmi* which the government promotes as their model of gender equality. This again raises the question how much support teachers will receive from the education system, in terms of their training, the curriculum, materials etc, to address gender inequalities, both for themselves and for their students.

This pattern is replicated in rural areas where, even though the teaching profession is largely perceived as female, male teachers are more dominant in rural schools. Numerous factors combine to make working in rural areas difficult for female teachers including access, safety and an 'all-boys club' attitude. One female maths teacher shared her experience:

> "When one does one's years of work in the provinces […] we leave the city and there some of the directors, more than anything, are looking for men to make up the football team. So maybe then, yes, at some point when I want to go the provinces I was discriminated against and they said 'I want a man, I do not want a woman'"

This reaction could stem from two sources; one that he wanted to maintain the male dominance and team spirit in the school and secondly, that he wasn't expecting a woman to apply for the position of maths teacher. Bourdieu (2001: 94) has similarly shown how parents and teachers often "direct [girls] away from certain careers regarded as masculine."

In order to address this significant imbalance of female representation within educational governance, institutions, and subject divisions, the government needs to encourage progression of women away from their expected roles and subjects, into positions of authority. However, in following the *chachawarmi* model, it seems more probable that teacher's are guided to maintain the status quo when it concerns issues of misrepresentation for female teachers and students.

Conclusion – teachers' limited agency as change agents

In this chapter, we have focused on teachers' agency to function as actors that either reproduce or transform an existing patriarchal Bolivian education system and society. In our analysis, and inspired by a broader attempt to look at 'inclusive development approaches,' we applied a strategic relational approach in combination with a social justice lens, to uncover the various and interconnected redistributive, recognitive and representational dimensions of social and gender (in)justice in and through teachers' work. Although the focus of this paper is on teachers as key actors in the educational scene, we acknowledge that a whole school approach for a gender-equitable learning environment involves school leadership, teachers and students working together to develop a culture of caring that builds girls' self-confidence and supports girls' academic learning (UNGEI 2013). This view recognises that if schools, and the education system more broadly, begin to open up as spaces where women can excel and progress, taking positions of authority, this may help adjust hegemonic patriarchal views on gender norms for both boys and girls in schools.

From the above, the overall impression is that the Bolivian teachers included in this study, sometimes consciously and often unconsciously, continue to act in line with, and reproduce, a mostly patriarchal system. The actions of teachers for gender equality as analysed along the three dimensions of redistribution, recognition and representation described above, show that in the majority of observed cases, teachers employ limited individual or collective strategic actions to stimulate greater gender justice in the classroom. Important to note is that the intention of this paper is by no means to blame teachers for their (lack of) actions, but rather to highlight the need for measures to be taken to capacitate teachers to be aware and aim to act towards gender equality and social justice. In addition, teachers' limited agency should be understood in relation to the structural challenges they face, including high levels of *machismo* in Bolivian society, a male-dominated system of (educational)

governance, limited gender-sensitive training for teachers, and, specifically for female teachers, the double burden of income-earning and care-giving for the.

As our theoretical section highlighted, teachers are key to the success of any reform and in order for teachers to apply strategic actions for social justice in the classroom, critical and gender responsive pedagogies need to be introduced to support this process. The government establishes teachers as 'soldiers of change', but what type of 'change' should these public 'soldiers' strive for? From our analysis of the current political discourse, gender equality has been marginalised from the debates, and hence it seems unlikely that the government would actively support teachers to 'fight' for greater social and gender justice in and around their classrooms. Moreover, for teachers to feel comfortable and engaged with the current reform process, it would have been beneficial to maintain higher levels of participation in the design phase as well as current implementation stages, as has been the historical precedent in Bolivia before the LRE. The government, from a social and gender justice perspective, has an obligation to teachers to capacitate and empower them through training to ensure that Bolivian education genuinely serves *all* students, as the reform sets out. Without adequate support, teachers will struggle to break the cycle of gender inequality seen in Bolivian society.

Notes

0. All authors have had equal contributions to the paper, regardless of the order of appearance of author names.
1. Building on the 1994 reform's use of the concepts of inter-culturalism and bilingualism, the new reform includes both inter-culturalism, which offers students skills in relating to other cultures, as well as intra-culturalism, which engages reflection and growth of one's own identity (Lopes Cardozo, 2011).

2. We are conscious that an analytical framework that includes a multidimensional social justice lens should not be about simplifying a complex reality. Perhaps obviously, each context requires a specific approach, which will consequently influence the ways in which equity is addressed and prioritised in terms of redistributive, recognition or representative measures (Keddie, 2011: 13-15).
3. Which may influence their willingness to help girls and boys respectively, and ensure they are actively involved in the discussion. In other words, this refers to parity of participation which is further elaborated in the next section.
4. Bolivar School.
5. The local education authority.
6. As a gendered language, Spanish contains masculine and feminine nouns, adjectives and pronouns, which often incorporate ideas relating to gendered behaviour, gender roles and social norms. Not only does language contribute to reinforcing gender roles (see Cooley 1902; Mead, 1934), grammatical gender influences our interpretation of the world in relation to gender (Boroditsky cited in Prewitt-Freilino et al., 2011). Prewitt-Freilino *et al.* (2011) have shown that in countries which speak gendered languages, a lower level of gender equality is evident. Therefore, the language employed by teachers in the classroom may have an important impact on the students' understanding of gender roles and perpetuate social norms.
7. Pastries

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