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Building Women's Solidarity to Advance Women's Rights in Bolivia

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Abstract

This paper takes a historical look at the deep-seated ethnic and class divisions between women in Bolivia. It also examines the cultural challenges that help explain the status of women in Bolivia and the obstacles women face to become politically active. It provides the theories of decolonization and depatriachalization as practical ways Bolivia can move past their colonial and patriarchal history. It also looks into what feminism means overall in Latin America and what strategies Latin American women have used to make change for women. It then provides a political history of Bolivia from 1994 to the present giving the political context needed to understand the case studies. Three case studies are presented offering different strategies Bolivian women have used to make change for women. The analysis proposes which strategy is the most successful at making change for women in the Bolivian context. The conclusion offers a summary, as well as provides the connections between the literature review and research section.

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Introduction

Bolivian women, like women from all over the world, have been contesting patriarchy for decades, but in countries like Bolivia that have deep-seated ethnic and class diversities, I have always wondered how do women make change for women?[1] That question is the overall theme and driving force of this paper and through this paper I explore how women make change for women in Bolivia.

Like most third world countries, Bolivia has suffered from colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy; nevertheless Bolivia has made some bold efforts in the past decade to try to undo their colonial and imperialist history. Bolivia has elected its first indigenous president who has transformed Bolivia into a socialist country, has rewritten its constitution to make Bolivia a plurinational state to include indigenous peoples and has ended its friendly relationship with the United States to prevent further foreign interference. But Bolivia has had a harder time undoing Bolivia's patriarchal history. In Bolivia women are divided not simply based on ideology, but on deep-seated ethnic and class barriers, which brings me to my research question, which strategies are the most successful at overcoming historical, cultural and political obstacles to advance women's rights in Bolivia?

Because of Bolivia's deep-seated ethnic and class barriers, gender-based strategies are not enough to accomplish change for Bolivian women. Bolivia is unique as it has one of the largest populations of indigenous peoples in Latin America, approximated between sixty and seventy percent. Even though indigenous people make up the majority of the population in Bolivia, they have been ignored and discriminated against throughout Bolivia's history.

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[1] I will frequently use the term "make change" throughout my paper and what I mean by "make change" is any kind of change that will improve women's lives, including politically such as by passing laws to protect women and increase their political participation or culturally by changing mentalities and challenging gender roles.

Indigenous women have been discriminated against the most as they are discriminated based on their ethnicity and gender. In Bolivia, like most third world countries, one's ethnicity is linked to one's class, so indigenous women have been the most powerless group of people throughout Bolivia's history. For these reasons, conducting research on Bolivia at the present time is quite fascinating, as Bolivia has transformed politically with the election of Evo Morales who has giving indigenous women political power for the first time in Bolivia's history, which has changed the dynamics between women's groups in Bolivia. Because indigenous women make up the majority of Bolivian women and have recently gained political power, I focus on indigenous women throughout my paper. With a focus on indigenous women, I argue that the most successful strategy for organizing Bolivian women that takes into account historical, cultural and political obstacles, is a strategy that combines law and grassroots work and has the ability to create solidarity among women, build alliances among diverse women's groups, and uses numerous mediums to affect change and has autonomy.

In order to answer my research question, I start with my literature review that is made up of four parts. In the first part, I discuss the historical obstacles that have resulted in the deep-seated ethnic and class barriers between women. In the second part, I examine the cultural challenges that help explain the status of women in Bolivia and the obstacles women face to becoming politically active. In the third part, I discuss what I call "theoretical praxis" that is based on decolonization and depatriachalization, which are both needed in order to move past Bolivia's colonial and patriarchal history and promote women's status. In the fourth and final part of my literature review, I examine what feminism has meant to Latin American women and what strategies women in Latin America have used to make change for women. Following is my

methodology where I clarify why I chose my case studies and explain the criteria I will use to analyze them. I also discuss my research methods and the field research I conducted in Bolivia.

Next is my research section, which I start by discussing Bolivia's political history from 1994 till the present to give a better understanding of the political context women in Bolivia are working with. In addition, Bolivia's political transformation to socialism is crucial to understand, as it has changed the dynamics between women resulting in indigenous women having political power, which is unprecedented in Bolivia. In the second part of my research section are my case studies where I examine three strategies of how women can make change for women. The first case study is on the law of Popular Participation, which represents the strategy of law; the second case study is on Mujeres Creando, a grassroots organization that represents the strategy of grassroots work; and the third case study is on the Coordinadora de la Mujer, an non-governmental organization that represents the strategy of combining law and grassroots work. The third part of my research section is my analysis on all three case studies where I examine each strategy based on certain criteria and select which strategy I believe is the most successful in the Bolivian context. The final part of my thesis is my conclusion, where I make all the connections this paper has to offer between my literature review and research section.

<div align="center">**Literature Review**</div>

II.   Historical Challenges

This section is made up of two parts that discusses the ethnic, class and ideological diversities that have created obstacles to women's solidarity throughout history and continue to challenge women's movements today. The first part is focused on ethnic and class diversities; it gives a historical background to women's status in Bolivia, as well as a background on the relationships between women of different ethnicities and economic classes. The second part,

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colonialism and feminism, discusses the results of colonialism that still affects indigenous

peoples today as well as explains the hesitation indigenous women have to becoming feminists.

i. *Ethnic and Class Diversities*

The divisions between women based on ethnicity and class in Bolivia can be traced back

to the 1920s. From the very start, forging alliances between women of different classes and

ethnicities was practically impossible; women did not relate to each other based on their gender,

but instead focused on ethnicity and class. Ximena Medinaceli, a Bolivian historian, examined

Bolivian legal documents from the first two decades of the century, and pointed out the way in

which women were designated by law (Stephenson, 1999, 13). Upper class *criolla*[2] women were

referred to as *señora*[3], *cholas*[4] dressed in a *pollera*[5] were referred to as *la mujer*[6], and indigenous

women from the rural countryside were referred to as *la indigena*[7]. These three terms, *senora,*

mujer and *indigena* were extremely loaded terms with each having its own meaning and purpose.

First, the term *senora* does not emphasize a relationship to the body; instead it emphasizes a

relationship to civil and social relations so *criolla* women escape any emphasis to their gender

and race. Second, the term *mujer* is directly associated with a body so gender is the focus, but it

has no reference to race. Third, the term *indigena* is associated with both gender and race. This

labeling system Marcia Stephenson, an academic and the author of Gender and Modernity in

Andean Bolivia, describes the relationship between gender, class and race as:

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[2] Criollas are descendants of the Spaniards and a part of the elite that holds economic and
political power. Criollas are often referred to by the indigenous as "los blancos" meaning the
whites. I use the terms criollas and upper class women interchangeably throughout my literature
review.
[3] Senora is the formal and polite way of saying woman.
[4] Cholas are working women who dress in a particular way with a pollera (see below) and are
either mestizas (mixed race between indigenous and Spaniards) or indigenous.
[5] Pollera is the Bolivian traditional skirt mostly worn by Cholas.
[6] Mujer is the informal way and impolite way of saying woman.
[7] La indigena means the indigenous woman.

> "These hierarchical representations of women introduced the body as an increasing presence endowed first with corporeal and second with racial significance. This illustration calls attention to how women as women were interpellated by virtue of their embodied relationship to the racially and economically bounded category senora. As a result only certain women were legitimated as women within the state" (Stephenson, 1999, 13).

Indigenous women and *cholas*, which throughout the years have become interchangeable terms[8], rejected the state and its discriminatory practices and began to perform resistance practices. *Cholas* would find images and objects, such as the *pollera* that had been used for discriminatory purposes, and transform them into symbols of resistance and pride. *Cholas* had a clear agenda; they wanted to stop the depoliticizing of the relationship between women in upper and working classes, which was based on a owner and slave relationship and they wanted to challenge traditional gender roles which were based on what was considered natural and biological. Civil society[9] saw *cholas* as radicals since they were calling for political and social transformation (ibid).

Discrimination between women took an extreme turn when the dominant nationalist discourse blamed Bolivia's racial impurity for its backwardness and believed Bolivia would not modernize until its population was homogenous. A famous writer, Alcides Arguedas, wrote in 1936,

> "If there had not existed the predominance of Indian blood, from the beginning the country would have provided a conscious orientation to its life, adopting all kinds of perfection in the material and moral order and today it would be at the same level as those nations more favored by waves of immigrants coming from the old world" (Arguedas, 1909).

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[8] Indigenous and cholas have become interchangeable terms, as cholas are indigenous, if not fully, then partially. The only difference between the terms is indigenous refers to rural indigenous women and cholas refers to urban indigenous women. For the rest of this section I will only be using the term cholas.

[9] I use the term civil society to refer to traditional Bolivians who do not want to change or challenge gender roles. Traditional Bolivians are mainly men, but also include traditional women usually from the upper class.

This nationalist discourse widened the divide between criollas and indigenous women even more. Indigenous women were seen as backwards and as a national problem. *Criollas* were given more respect than prior to the nationalistic discourse and were given a sense of national and public responsibility because the healthy future of the country was now dependent on them. *Criolla* mothers were perceived to be teachers because they were responsible for the future generations of men and they would educate their children by setting an example with their own behavior (Stephenson, 1999, 19).

Many *criollas* argued that women could be "natural" teachers as mothers as well as "social" teachers as a profession and began to fight for women's right to an education and for the right for women to work, specifically as teachers. One of their arguments was that female teachers knew best how to educate girls on their fundamental roles as mothers. Another argument was that schools were the extension of the home and were understood to be children's second homes, because female teachers were ideal, because they could be children's second mothers and treat them with "tenderness and motherly care" (ibid, 21). Civil society (refer to footnote 9) who did not want women's roles to change, disagreed and governmental officials attempted to pass a decree that would not allow female teachers to get married. This decree never passed showing how most people did understand motherhood and teaching to be complementary roles instead of separate roles. This left women desiring access to both education and a profession and an increasing number of young women entered the teaching profession.

This desire of *criolla* women to have access to both education and a profession grew into the desire for full civil and political rights. Even when they fought for gender equality, they made sure not to challenge hegemonic and patriarchal assumptions such as it was in women's nature to be housewives. They chose to argue from the perspective that women were "separate but equal,"

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in other words women were equal to men but are made of a different "nature." *Criollas* insisted

that gaining rights would not change or ruin their femininity because they were proud to be

mothers and wives. They claimed "home is everything to us because there is our kingdom; in it

we await our partner" (Medinaceli, 1989, 55).

      Even though women claimed to be extending their traditional gender roles, conservative

and religious men were appalled and saw this activism as a direct threat to their submissive

criolla women and threatened to replace them with *cholas*. The newspaper *El Labaro* published

the warning and threat in 1936 stating,

> "If the women of your class, if the young lady of your social circle no longer is a women
> with the virtues that attract, nor with the innocent charm that makes an impression, what
> follows is another 'man,' more corrupt than the first. You will have to look to the lower
> class, to our very womanly women, to our cholitas, who, together with the pollera, will
> retain the femininity that is natural and necessary in order to inspire the love that the
> masculine ones do not" (Villanueva y Saavedra, 1970, 54).

This is a clear example of how not only the government, but also civil society (mainly men)

pinned women against each other based on class and race. Because *criolla* women were standing

up for their rights, men identified them as rebellious and untamed, so men took away the respect

they had giving them and were now attracted by the "backward" women they had been so against

(Stephenson, 1999, 22).

      After Bolivia lost the devastating Chaco War to Paraguay in 1935, Bolivian women were

hopeful for national reforms that would lead to women's progress, but there was no alliance

between women of different ethnicity and class, so their agendas differed. *Criollas* claimed that

their motherhood was not only connected to their children in the domestic (private) sphere, but

also to the nation as a whole in the public sphere and wanted to "legitimate their presence and

participation in the public arena" (Stephenson, 1999, 27). They claimed that as mothers "they

were committed to the reconstruction of the nation and to those efforts that would ward off future

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conflicts" (Stephenson, 1999, 26). Once again, they did not challenge patriarchal assumptions and worked within them for the opportunity to speak about politics and demand the right to vote. By using the notion of motherhood and women's "natural" duty as guardians of the nation; they created a connection between the domestic sphere and the political (public) sphere.

> "This maternalist discourse in its double articulation as "natural" and "social" consolidated a notion of the feminine based on racist and classist values because it recreated existing social relations at the same time as it authorized the reproduction of dominant values and the hegemonic moral code within the family and society" (Stephenson, 1999, 28).

The maternalist discourse had a two-fold consequence. The first was that it reinstated the traditional family hierarchy where the man is the head of the household and the women's duty is to be a mother and wife. The second was that the upper class women claimed to be the symbolic mother of the nation, which would make the working class women the "daughters" or "children." This symbolic notion was dangerous and came with loaded terms, by seeing and calling working class women girls, daughters and children, it put working class women in a subordinate position in which they were dependent, in need or moral guidance and essentially categorized them as minors who are not deserving of the same rights and privileges as other citizens. These loaded terms were understandably very insulting to working class women, yet they are still used today in the same context (ibid, 29).

The *cholas'* post war agenda differed greatly to the agenda of *criollas* and started with the basic notion of citizenship. Cholas wanted Bolivian citizenship; they wanted to have all the same rights as the elite. They claimed that they deserved it due to the sacrifice they had made to the nation by losing their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers who fought in the war. *Cholas* were also not interested in women's suffrage since they did not really care about voting every four years; they wanted citizenship to be able to live a normal life without all the limitations and

restrictions of not being a citizen. In addition, *cholas* found the *criollas* fight for the right to work, specifically as teachers, to be irrelevant to them since they had been working. Working was not an option for them; it was a necessity. *Cholas* had never been confined to the domestic (private) sphere since they had to work in order to survive. The only way a woman could be a housewife was if she was privileged and belonged to the upper class (ibid, 30).

Cholas also disagreed with *criolla* women's overall beliefs. They did not agree with *criollas'* notion of womanhood or believed in the popular saying that men and women were "separate but equal." *Cholas* were much more independent than *criolla* women: they commonly made higher wages than their husbands or partners and were often the head of the household. In addition, gender roles were not so clear and distinct in working class families because men and women often had similar or the same jobs such as cooks, bakers, shoemakers, maids, tailors, seamstresses, so there was more of a sense of gender equality. And because of the war, many *Cholas* had to work traditionally male jobs because of the high number of mestizo[10] and indigenous men that had been killed. *Cholas* also rejected the institution of marriage, for reasons based on the belief that the church is corrupt, that marriage is a form of colonialism and that marriage is based on sexist ideals. They believed that by refusing to participate in a tradition such as marriage they would be rebelling against the state and society. Instead they practiced the Andean tradition of cohabitation with their partners (ibid, 31).

The divisions between *criollas* and *cholas* still exist today as they continue to have separate agendas and opposing beliefs. The maid and Madame relationship between *criollas* and *cholas* continue to be prevalent in Bolivia. In addition to ethnic and class divisions, in the next

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[10] Mestizo are people of mixed race, usually mix of indigenous and Spaniard.

part of this section, colonialism and feminism, I explain the ideological divisions that presently exist between Bolivian women.

ii. Colonialism and Feminism

For indigenous women[11], their history starts long before Bolivia's colonial days and Independence Day. The indigenous women's struggle is different to feminist[12] struggles; feminists have the luxury to simply be concerned with gender, but indigenous women do not have that luxury. The most important difference between indigenous women and feminists is what they are fighting against. The feminists' priority is to combat patriarchy and indigenous women's priority is to combat colonialism. Anibal Quijano, the sociologist who developed the theory of "coloniality of power" has defined colonialism as,

> "Un patrón mundial de dominación dentro del modelo capitalista, fundado en una clasificación racial y étnica de la población del planeta que opera en distintos ámbitos. La colonialidad es una estructura de dominación y explotación que se inicia con el colonialismo, pero que se extiende hasta hoy día como su secuela" (Ochy Curiel, 2007, 94).

> [Global domination within a capitalist framework based on racial and ethnic classifications of people worldwide. The coloniality is a system of domination and exploitation, which began with colonialism, but the consequences are still seen today]

Since indigenous women's priority is not combating patriarchy, they are not considered to be feminists. Yet indigenous women do acknowledge the existence of patriarchy and believe that colonialism instigated patriarchy, which is now negatively affecting all women, including indigenous women.

> "For indigenous women, colonization has involved their removal from positions of power, the replacement of traditional gender roles with western patriarchal practices the

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[11] Including cholas, as cholas are all indigenous, if not fully then partially.
[12] I will be using the term feminist to describe women who considers herself a feminist, no matter of what ethnicity or class she belongs to.

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exertion of colonial control over indigenous communities through the management of women's bodies and sexual violence" (Hunhdorf, Suzack, 2010, 1).

During colonialism, European men commonly used the strategy of "bettering a race" by having sex with and impregnating indigenous women in order to :improve" the indigenous race and eventually getting rid of the indigenous race altogether. This strategy led to tremendous exploitations and violations, "las mujeres fueron siempre instrumentalizadas para satisfacer el apetito sexual del hombre blanco" [The women were always used as a tool to please the sexual appetite of the white man] (Ochy Curiel, 2007, 98).

Indigenous women have many valid reasons as to why they are hesitant to consider themselves feminists or participate in feminist movements (Castillo, 2010). One of the reasons indigenous women, like many women of color, reject feminism is due to its historical connection to Western upper and middle-class women. They recognize feminism as only addressing the problems of Western women or *criollas*, which are very different and often irrelevant to indigenous problems.

> "Their political actions lean towards different directions: The fight for recognition of the history of colonization, the recognition of their culture, towards an economical redistribution, as well as the questioning of a racist and a segregationist state, the questioning of the indigenous patriarchy, and the pursuit to be autonomous as women and as indigenous people" (Masson, 2006, my translation).

One of the many ways colonialism has affected indigenous cultures and communities is the imposition of western gender roles and patriarchal social structures. Hence some indigenous women view feminist movements that fight for gender equality as a threat to traditional indigenous practices and social structures. Some indigenous women also believe that the feminist agenda undermines more urgent indigenous issues, including the shared struggles they have with indigenous men (Castillo, 2010, 318).

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In Bolivia, the debate between essentialism and ethnocentrism is common when it comes to comparing indigenous women's movements and feminist movements. Essentialists see culture as homogenous with shared values and customs and often reject the ideals and practices of Western cultures. Ethnocentrics are liberals who see culture as a problem since culture is often used as the reasoning behind human right abuses, such as religious or traditional practices that harm women. Because of this negative view they have of culture, they believe everyone should have the same rights without differentiating by culture which often leads to assimilation and integrationist policies (Castillo, 315, 2010). Indigenous women's perspective has been attacked and critiqued by feminist movements for being too essentialist and conservative and indigenous women have responded by critiquing feminist movements for being ethnocentric, racist and reproducing unequal social relations.

Since indigenous peoples make up the majority of the population in Bolivia, their cultural and spiritual beliefs are essential to understanding as they help explain Bolivia's political context, especially in Bolivia's current state with an indigenous president. In addition to historical challenges that have separated Bolivian women based on ethnicity, class and ideologies, Bolivian women have also had to face cultural challenges that further limits women's alliances and limits women's political participation. The cultural challenges discussed below are challenges that exist in the present Bolivian context and will be further analyzed to show how these cultural challenges affects women in my case study section.

II.   Cultural Challenges

In this section I examine two crucial concepts: chachawarmi and machismo. These concepts are crucial because they help explain the status of women in Bolivia and the obstacles women face to become politically active. Even though I put chachawarmi and machismo under

the same category, I want to clarify that I am not proposing that chachawarmi as a belief system

is a problem, the problem lies with how chachawarmi is applied which limits women to a certain

space and to certain jobs and responsibilities. Furthermore as discussed in the historical

challenges section, Bolivian women are divided based on ethnic and class barriers, so these

cultural challenges do affect women of different ethnicity and class on different levels. It is safe

to say that chachawarmi mainly, if not exclusively affects indigenous women or women who live

or work in rural communities. Machismo affects all women, no matter of ethnicity or class, but

ethnicity and class can play a role of how severe machismo affects women.

i.   *Chachawarmi*

Aymara, the largest indigenous group in Bolivia, believe in the notion of

complementarity, which is "expressed in a cognitive sequence of opposition, symmetry, and

subsequent unity of gendered pairs, is a central factor in the Andean epistemology" (Pape,

2008, 6). Gendered pairs can be seen in all aspects of life, not only in human beings but also

in the universe as a whole; the sun and moon, the two halves of the human brain are all

considered to be either masculine or feminine. Gendered pairs are understood to produce

society and they must work together in symmetry to for society to work efficiently. Out of

complementarity, comes *chachawarmi*, the belief that individuals are not considered

members of the community until they are married. The *chachawarmi* is made up of a union

between a man and a woman and this union becomes the social person, so the man and

woman becomes one complete social being. The union between man and woman symbolizes

the unity of masculine and feminine aspects of fertility and production. In addition men and

women should complement each other in a non-hierarchic manner, so fathers are not heads of

the household and all household decisions should be made between spouses (Burman, 2011,

79). Complementarity therefore does not construct two exclusive spheres according to one's gender, instead it claims the duality of gender should be represented in all spheres, sometimes with different tasks performed according to one's gender (Rousseau, 2011, 18; Canessa, 2005).

Aymaras understanding of gender is performative, meaning gender is differentiated by what men and women do rather by what they are (Canessa, 2005). As abstract as complementarity and *chachawarmi* may seem, they are implemented in everyday life such as in the household "where the *chachawarmi* couple performs symmetry and unity through the gender division of labor" and are used as the fundamental organizing principle (Pape, 2008, 46). Household work, as well as work in the community, are gendered: each sex is assigned certain tasks, such as men build and women cook. In addition to work, spaces are also gendered where each sex is assigned certain spaces to use and work out of, such as the kitchen is for women and the shed is for men.

This gendered assignment of work and spaces is an obstacle when trying to increase women's participation in politics since politics is seen as a place for men, not women. In addition, the notion of individuality is not historically known or accepted by indigenous cultures and is seen as a foreign notion, which makes fighting for indigenous women's rights much harder since they are seen in unity with men, so their wants and needs are understood as being the same as men (Pape, 2008, 49). One of the struggles indigenous women have had to face is finding a good balance, even though it does not have to be equal, between fighting for indigenous rights and women's rights. The fight for indigenous rights has been a priority since colonialism; indigenous peoples have been fighting for autonomy, which would lead to self-determination and self-governance within their territories. The fight for women's rights has more

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recently been added to indigenous women's agenda since patriarchy is understood as being a consequence of colonialism. Indigenous women have found a way to connect the two struggles. They believe the fight for indigenous autonomy is essential because once they are autonomous, women will have a key role in defining their social positioning and gender identity and will have the freedom to stray away from patriarchy, neoliberalism and individualism (Rousseau, 2011, 10).

ii.   *Machismo*

Machismo is an essential concept to understand the Bolivian context as it clearly explains the cultural obstacles women face to advance women's rights in Bolivia. Machismo is not the translation of patriarchy in Spanish, but machismo is understood to be the Latin American version of patriarchy that stems from colonialism. Machismo is deeply linked to Latino culture and has infiltrated all areas of Latino society including the home, the work place, politics and the minds of men, women and children. In the most basic form, machismo is based on the exaggeration of masculine characteristics and the belief of the superiority of men. Machismo may be defined as "the cult of virility, the chief characteristics of which are exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relations" (Stevens, 1973, 315). Machismo is found in all ethnicities and classes in Bolivia, even though it may differ slightly between ethnicities and classes.

Studies have shown that machismo is developed on two characteristics, aggressiveness and hypersexuality, and believe that the main cause for machismo is due to an inferiority complex: "Machismo, then, is a cultural trait to satisfy the psychological need resulting from the inferiority of complex in men" (Ingolsby, 1991, 59). Men try to hide their feelings of inferiority

by subordinating women, avoiding feminine characteristics and exaggerating masculine ones. So in Latino culture, men must display both aggressiveness and hypersexuality in order to be considered a "real man." Aggressiveness is demonstrated by proving physical strength, never being afraid, exercising verbal and physical abuse on others and drinking large quantities of alcohol. Hypersexuality is demonstrated by sleeping with as many women as possible, and preferably with virgins. Men are meant to conquer women and the more they conquer the more manly they are perceived by society. Men are encouraged to deceive young women and when they are successful, they are proud of themselves and are celebrated by other men. Men are constantly bragging about their conquest so everyone can know how manly they are. Their goal is not to find a permanent love but to conquer women and to satisfy the vanity of men. "Ella ama, pero él conquista" "She loves, but he conquers" (Giraldo, 1972, 298.) Even though marriage is still very common in Latino culture, marriage does not get in the way of men's promiscuity. Men are encouraged to have at least one girlfriend on the side, in addition to other casual sex partners. As a popular saying goes: "la que se casa es la mujer" "the woman is the one who gets married" (Giraldo, 1972, 297). When men are married they must prove their sexual abilities by reproducing many children and as quickly as possible. Latino society believes that men are very sexual beings that naturally have a higher sexual drive than women, which is why women, including their wives, must be understanding to their husbands cheating ways. As another popular saying goes: "El lugar de las mujeres es la casa pero los muchachos son de la calle" [Women belong in the house, while men belong in the streets] (Giraldo, 1972, 298).

Another aspect of machismo that creates an obstacle for women is restricting women's freedoms. Women must keep their virginity until marriage and once they are married, their freedom is very limited. The reason for restricting women's freedoms is based on jealousy.

Jealousy is an essential part of machismo since it stems from both aggressiveness and hypersexuality. Latino men are extremely jealous because they know how other men act and think. They do not trust their mothers, sisters and partners with other men, which prompts men to be very protective over the special women in their lives. They know how they treat other men's mothers, sisters and wives and do not want any other man to treat the women in their lives that way (ibid, 298).

Men and women consciously or not support machismo, which causes a major obstacle for women's rights movements and makes the fight for women's rights a struggle in Latino cultures. As mentioned earlier, machismo has infiltrated the minds of men, women and children. Latina women participate in supporting machismo by expecting men to act in a macho way. Many women do not respect men who do not act in a macho way and often believe that men who do not act in a macho way must be gay. In addition Latina women raise their children based on machismo ideals and teach their daughters to be servants to their fathers and brothers. Latina mothers give no household responsibilities to their sons and give all household responsibilities to their daughters in which their daughter must clean up after their brothers, do their brothers, laundry, cook for their brothers etc. Latina mothers raise their daughters to be wives at a very young age while their sons are allowed to live freely enjoying their macho ways. Furthermore Latina mothers, allow and encourage their sons to be sexually active at a young age and demand their daughters to remain virgins until marriage. Latino fathers also perpetuate machismo with their children. Latino fathers are tough on their sons and do not allow for any sensitivity or display of emotions, while they expect nothing but sensitivity and emotions out of their daughters who fathers believe require their protection (Giraldo, 1972).

Parallel to machismo is marianismo, which is a concept that stems from the Virgin Mary

as a virgin and as a mother. Marianismo is based on the belief that women are semi-divine, spiritually and morally superior to men and also follows a strict division of labor according to gender. Marianismo is another obstacle as it calls for women to be submissive, dependent, sexually passive, and should endure physical punishment from men, in other words women must be dominated. Marianismo derives from machismo because machismo needs women to be and act a certain way in order for it to exist. For example, the belief that women should keep their virginity until marriage, causes men to be very protective over the women in the lives, as well as boosts their ego every time they do succeed in getting a woman to sleep with them: "Indeed, can there be a macho without a virgin to seduce, an inferior to protect, a submissive to dominate, other men to protect one's sister from?" (Ingolsby, 1991, 59). Machismo and Marianismo is a recipe for domestic abuse and explains the high rates of domestic abuse in Latino families, "a man's' jealousy and aggressiveness explains the reasons for domestic violence and why men attempt to murder unfaithful women" (Giraldo, 1972, 298, my translation).

As I have discussed the historical challenges that face Bolivian women's solidarity and the cultural challenges that limit women's political participation, the following section discusses the theoretical "solutions" to these challenges. These theoretical solutions directly respond to the historical and cultural challenges women face and attempt to use theory and apply theory to everyday life. These theoretical solutions are the driving force for the progression of women's rights, as well as for the increase in women's political participation in Bolivia.

III.   Theoretical Praxis

This section I decided to call theoretical praxis meaning that decolonization and depatriachalization are two theoretical frameworks that have moved from academia and books into political discourse and onto the streets. Decolonization and depatriachalization have become

popular terms in Bolivia that are used and spoken about by the government and women's groups.

Decolonization is a theoretical perspective that is the backbone to Bolivia's current political

context as it explains the process Bolivia has been going through since the election of Evo

Morales. Women have taken this opportunity to included depatriachalization on Bolivia's agenda

by connecting the two theories and declaring that decolonization cannot happen without

depatriachalization.

i. Decolonization

Every country that has been colonized has gone through or is going through a process of

decolonization and Bolivia is no exception. The most basic understanding of decolonization is

the reversal of colonial order, which entails "undoing the wrongs of history, and releasing

colonized subjects from domination, injustice, and oppression" (Howard, 2010, 177). Bolivia's

independence in 1825 was very different for the creole elites in comparison with indigenous

peoples since for indigenous peoples that independence never led to autonomy. Indigenous

peoples were not even included in the 1825 independence and were not given basic rights such as

Bolivian citizenship.

> "From the standpoint of the Bolivian indigenous and peasant movements, decolonization
> involves over-throwing the exploitative, unjust, and discriminatory order that persisted
> beyond independence from Spain and into the twentieth century; it evokes a range of
> related meanings from liberation to emancipation, democracy, and autonomy" (Howard,
> 2010, 177).

Like in most states that have been colonized, the effects of colonialism do not disappear

after independence and persist in Bolivia in the form of social-cultural hierarchy (Johnson, 2010,

140). Bolivia suffers from a typical case of internal colonization: "internal colonialism is a form

of socioeconomic-cultural domination based in capitalist hegemony and racism, and historically

exercised by local and regional governing elites over subaltern groups" (Johnson, 2010, 140).

Internal colonialism is based on the belief that one group of people is inherently superior to others and there is a shift of power from foreign colonial powers to domestic power of one group over others. The domestic power group uses their power over their domestic population through local structures and dynamics: "The unequal balance of power that continues in Bolivia- social, political, economic, gender, linguistic, cognitive- impedes any genuine "respect" or "dialogue" on the part of those in control: the structure itself remains intolerant and propitious only to a mono-cultural dialogue" (Johnson, 2010, 142).

Due to internal colonialism in Bolivia, ethnic diversities are taken to extreme measures of racism and discrimination, which is why decolonization in Bolivia needs to take place not only economically and politically, but also mentally: "decolonization is about shifting the epistemological center, allowing new forms of knowledge to evolve and be recognized" (Howard, 2010, 177). Furthermore decolonization not only leads to indigenous rights but also leads to depatriachalization. Bolivia's decolonization path is essential for the pursuit of women's rights since it challenges traditional ways of thinking and attempts to restructure society as a whole, including gender inequalities.

ii.   *Depatriachalization*

The basic feminist understanding, particularly in the third world, is "Sin despatriarcalización no hay descolonización" [Without depatriachalization there is no decolonization] Feminists all over the world, including in Bolivia, believe that patriarchy and colonization are deeply linked:

> Societies which have been colonized, even if they are currently independent, do exhibit a deep influence of colonial patriachalism, a result of the combination of pre-colonial patriarchy in addition to the one introduced by colonialism. This is why it is crucial that a decolonization process should first include that of depatriachalization. If not, those decolonized will continue to live under patriarchy. (Lagarda, 19, 2012, my translation)

Furthermore patriarchy and colonization need each other in order to survive and strive, so to get rid of one would require getting rid of both: "The process of decolonizing a state from itself, as well as to decolonize its own society, is a monumental endeavor which should be accompanied by an effective process of depatriachalization" (Chavez, 15, my translation). In addition to patriarchy and colonization being linked, capitalism is also believed to reproduce and encourage patriarchy for reasons such as the gendered division of labor, the feminization of poverty, prostitution, human trafficking and the list goes on.

In order to discuss depatriachalization, patriarchy must first be defined, as:

> A form of political, economical, religious, and social organization, based on male dominance and leadership, through which male predominance is established as a natural status overcoming women; husband over wife, father over mother and children, as well as the father's line of descent over the mother's. (Celiberti, 94, 2012, my translation)

Like Machismo, patriarchy is based on a superiority and inferiority relationship where the masculine gender is superior to the feminine gender. The male domination over females comes in all types of forms through exploitation, discrimination and violence. Since patriarchy affects society as a whole, depatriachalization looks to get rid of patriarchy in all aspects of life, from the private sphere such as the home, to the public sphere such as in politics. Furthermore patriarchy is a socially constructed system; it is not a natural human phenomenon. Even though patriarchy as a socially constructed system appears all over the world, it adapts depending on the culture, such as machismo in Latin American, so patriarchy is not a fixed system.

Since patriarchy seeps through all aspects of society, depatriachalization has an immense agenda that tries to change society from every aspect. Depatriachalization can be defined as:

> The ongoing struggle against colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, and all what represents the element of patriarchy. The continuous struggle against all exclusive social standards, racists, segregationists, sexists, extractivists, in order to create a new way of living, not just nationally, but internationally as well. (Salguero, 2012, 120, my translation)

The feminist agenda of depatriachalization has clear objectives: progress for women, women's empowerment, gender equality, progressive changes in society, change in mentalities and structural changes. Progress for women entails equal opportunities and equal access to opportunities. Empowerment for women implies more political participation from women, women's rights, and more women in government positions. True depatriachalization seeks equality not just between genders, but also among all social categories including age, culture, and race. Structural change and change in society are linked, requiring society to move away from colonial, patriarchal and machismo ideals and customs. Finally, structural change entails the incorporation of human rights, "a solidary state which defends feminism is responsible for implementing a comprehensive legal policy, which encourages and promotes women and gender equality" (Lagarda, 31, 2012).

Since the driving question to my thesis is how do women make change for women? After having discussed the Bolivian context specifically, the following section will explore how women in Latin America overall have made change for women. The following section will frame the Bolivian context, adding to the Bolivia-specific challenges that face women, by offering general strategies women have used in Latin America that will help evaluate the strategies women have used in Bolivia.

IV. Latin American Women

In this section I discuss feminism in Latin America to show the historical relationship between women and political parties. From the beginning of feminism in Latin American feminism was linked to socialism and leftist parties. Bolivia is no exception and in Bolivia feminism is still linked to socialism, as my case studies will show. The first part labeled feminism in Latin America also gives a framework to the second part labeled Latin American

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women's strategies where I give examples of women's groups in several Latin American countries that have succeeded in making change for women. These examples helped me select the criteria needed to analyze my case studies.

i. *Feminism in Latin America*

Feminism in Latin America has been said, by scholars such as Duarte, to have begun in the 1970s as a movement that was initiated out of the context of military dictatorships. Maria Elena Valenzuela, a prominent feminist sociologist, gives a reason as to why feminism began during the period of military dictatorships. She explains that military states embody patriarchy: "The Junta, with a very clear sense of its interests, has understood that it must reinforce the traditional family, and the dependent role of women, which is reduced to that of mother. The dictatorship, which institutionalizes social inequality, is founded on inequality in the family" (Tobar, 2007, 130). Latin American women began to link the struggles against dictatorships and authoritarianism in general to the struggle against patriarchy, which guided them to create slogans such as: "Women give life, the dictatorships exterminates it." "In the Day of the National Protest: Let's make love not the beds." "Feminism is Liberty, Socialism, and Much More." (Tobar, 2007, 131). As the last slogan suggests, from the very beginning of feminism in Latin America there was a relationship between feminism and socialism. Scholars such as Julieta Kirkwood express that, "it is not part of the [feminist] project to deny the reality and validity of the analysis of class domination. On the contrary, a feminist analysis, which exposes the economistic bias of class analysis, enriches it" (Tobar, 2007, 131). She adds that in order for feminism to be successful, it must link the struggle against class and sex oppression simultaneously (ibid).

Women have played a vital role in many Latin American revolutions whether they leaned to the left or right. Due to state repression and human right abuses by dictatorships, women began to form groups of resistance; women who were rightwing aligned themselves with the Catholic Church and women who were leftwing aligned themselves with left and national liberation movements. Rightwing women tended to be more traditional and they embraced their roles as mothers and wives. Leftwing women tended to be militantes; women who work within leftist party organizations whose main priority are to fulfill the leftist political agenda. Even though militantes' priority was clear, they still had feminist beliefs, since in leftist organizations totalitarianism, authoritarianism and sexism were questioned, which pushed many women who had previously focused on class struggle toward feminism (Duarte, 2012, 156). Yet militantes were criticized by liberal feminists, who were mainly of the bourgeois class that adopted Western feminist ideals, for sacrificing their feminist ideals for revolutionary purposes (Friedman, 542, 2009). Liberal feminists believed patriarchy was the root of women's oppression; therefore liberal feminists saw militantes as impure feminists who were inherently subordinate to the men in their leftist parties. Militantes in return saw liberal feminists as a bourgeois distraction to the deeper issues that came from the right wing dictatorships and class struggle and felt that an analysis on class in addition to gender was fundamentally necessary to understanding Latin American society (Chinchilla, 1991, 295).

During the 1970s, Leftwing women were also concerned with the Catholic Church in addition to the dictatorships. It was no coincidence that Latin America overall leaned to the right as it is a predominantly Catholic region. There was a clear link between the Catholic Church and the Rightwing parties. Leftwing feminists "pointed to the links between the state and the church and unveiled the ways in which the religious hierarchy contributed to the reproduction of

feminine subordination by perpetuating and reinforcing the role of women as self-sacrificing, passive, and submissive" (Duarte, 2012, 156). The Catholic Church asserted that feminism was alien or inappropriate for Latin America and argued that "women were destined, by nature and divine plan, to be self-sacrificing and self-abnegating vessels of virtue and guardians of family and public morality" (Chinchilla, 1991, 294). The Catholic Church also believed that feminism lead to materialism, individualism and egotism, which all clearly goes against what the Catholic Church believed women should be. Leftwing feminists, especially militantes, challenged traditional gender roles promoted by the Catholic Church.

Even though women were as involved and as passionate about revolutionary goals as men, sexism still existed within leftist parties and women were expected to be supportive and obedient to the men who were the ones that were granted leadership roles while the women had logistical and organizational roles that kept them submissive (Gago, 2007, 17). Leftist parties have accepted and included women in their political struggles and often need women on their side in order to get elected. Militantes believe that once they win the revolution, the leftist government they helped get elected will feel indebted to women for the vital role they played in getting them elected. Yet leftist governments have been criticized of exploiting women for the needs of the revolution and have been for accused of using strategies that will keep women satisfied without making significant changes, such as:

> Reducing women's battles to a "theme" among many others; organizing them into sectors and hierarchies (the famous feminine "branch," or women's section of political parties), with a ranking system that assures that women's objectives are not the top priority of any political program; simplifying what is demanded or championed to a question of quotas (candidacies on party lists and distribution of other political positions as the only concept of equal opportunity); and marginalizing the spaces where the personal is political (sexuality, the sovereignty of the body pleasure) or making invisible the domestic and informal economy, in which women predominate. (Gago, 2007, 17)

Yet some academics such as Norma Chinchilla and Sujatha Fernandes, believe that women are more politically active and are more discussed in the public sphere when there is a leftist government. For example President Hugo Chavez and President Evo Morales have both claimed to be women-friendly presidents who have both made political steps in promoting women's rights. President Hugo Chavez refers to women as "revolutionary mothers" and President Evo Morales presents women as combatants and fighters (Fernandes, 2007, 3900).

During the 1980s, out of Latin America's transition to neoliberalism and democracy, new political actors emerged, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who challenged the rightwing and leftwing parties by representing another option. Liberal feminists aligned themselves with NGOs, which led to the term institutionalized feminism. Institutionalized feminism is a feminist strategy that has been embraced by Westernized liberal feminists that consists of mostly bourgeois and college-educated women. Institutionalized feminism led to new governmental structures such a ministries and institutes for women. In addition, institutionalized feminism created careers such as feminist professionals who worked to and prioritized changes in public policies and laws above grassroots work. Scholars such as Sonia Alvarez claims that institutionalized feminism was the beginning of a process she calls individuation;

> The growth of individual leaderships, distanced from the grass roots, that aimed to provide popular organizations with "experts" and "counselors" who emphasized empowerment from a gender perspective. These figures frequently sought an active role in formal politics and advocated gender quotas and gendered changes to laws. (Duarte, 2012, 157)

NGOs embody institutionalized feminism and consider themselves experts on topics such as development and gender, so they often work with governments as advisors and policy makers. They also offer specialized services for women that the government does not offer, such as

microcredit and women's reproductive health services, as well as increase social awareness of women's issues and promote a gender neutral discourse.

NGOs and institutionalized feminism led to a loss of radicalism, as liberal feminists were mainly concerned with policy changes and gender mainstreaming which required the support of civil society including men, meaning they had to "soften" feminist language and carefully choose what policy changes would be the most accepting. This softening was due to the eagerness of feminist that wanted to engage a state that was supposed to be open to citizen pressure. This softening led to: "NGOs being forced to standardize their language in accordance with the universalizing criteria of the United Nations and to follow the agendas set by donors, which are not always mindful of the priorities of local organizations" (Duarte, 2012, 157). Nevertheless, NGOs and institutionalized feminism in Latin America did lead to cultural transformations, challenged gender inequalities and added gender discourses: "however, within liberal feminism there is still a strong resistance to the demands of those who are different from the sectors that make up the majority of this hegemonic feminism, be it in terms of race, sexual preference, class status, or cultural identity" (Duarte, 2012, 158). In other words, liberal feminists have failed to incorporate an intersectional analysis of society that is not limited to gender, but also includes race, ethnicity, class, sexual preference, and cultural identity, which is desperately needed in Latin America as it is such a diverse continent, racially, ethnically and culturally. As Duarte openly states: "It is not an exaggeration to say that there is a clear monopolization of feminist discourse by a white, urban, middle-class elite with a heterosexist discourse. This feminism is more present in the media, has won greater public space, and enjoys better access to economic resources" (Duarte, 2012, 159). And since liberal feminist have gained more publicity they are very carefully to not allow any radicals to stain their public image.

This section on Latin American feminism is important to my study as it gives a framework to analyze my case studies, as my case studies represent institutionalized feminism, leftwing rebels, and NGOs. The following section provides examples of feminism in practice, in other words examples of women making change for women. These examples provide strategies women in Latin America have used to make change for women.

ii.   *Latin American Women's Strategies*

I provide some examples of strategies Latin American women have used to empower women. Each example is presented by the country and does not follow a timeline. Furthermore the examples chosen come from both leftwing and rightwing countries since most Latin American countries have throughout their history gone back and forth between political parties. As I have found in many distinct cases throughout Latin America, in countries that have some overlapping contexts with Bolivia, a broad strategy seems to emerge which is spreading awareness and focusing on a common goal to create solidarity between women of different ethnicities and class.

Peru is similar to Bolivia as it also has a large indigenous population and has similar cultural, political and economical challenges to women organizing. An organization that has been able to make change for women by women in Peru is the Instituto de Mujeres Peruanos "Maria Jesus Alvarado" (Institute of Peruvian Women "Maria Jesus Alvarado or IMP). IMP was established in the honor of Maria Jesus Alvarado, a Peruvian rebel feminist who worked as a writer, journalist and social activist. IMP works with urban women who live in the *pueblos jovenes* also known as shantytowns that are on the outskirts of cities such as Lima. *Pueblos jovenes* are "marginal zones are large pockets of poverty newly populated areas lacking water, sewage, electricity, schools, health centers or any facilities that would make life more livable"

(Carr, 1990, 459). IMP was disappointed with the sexism in leftist parties and became convinced that women must organize and create their own organizations. IMP are declared feminists and believe feminism is the path to transforming society. Most of the women in the IMP are college-educated middle to upper class women who volunteer after their workday. Even though the women of IMP are from middle to upper class they believe that the "feminist movement remains isolated if it stays elitist" which is why they have chosen to use the education they were fortunate to have to raise awareness of the women of *pueblos jovenes* whose main concern is survival (Carr, 1990, 460).

Even though the women of *pueblos jovenes* have busy and have tiring lives, they were still willing to attend workshops organized by IMP in the 1980s. The first workshop started with discussions on questions such as "Is Peru a poor country? What are women like?" and topics such "women are important, the right of women to decide whether to become a mother, customs and beliefs that confuse women, motherhood and work, community organization and women's participation" (Carr, 1990, 460). These discussions developed awareness and offered women ideas of how to change their current situations. The influence of the workshops were seen quickly, "by the third workshop, the women had on their own, organized childcare for children under two, this enabled mothers to take turns watching their children and participate in the discussions more easily" (Carr, 1990, 460). And when the government reduced the amount of food given to women for their manual labor, the group of women who had been attending IMP's workshops, organized together and stopped working. Other women from the community who did not attend the workshops joined them, which resulted in the reinstatement of the original amount of food given. This experienced revealed to the women the strength of a united effort and "they

began to initiate concrete actions from a feminist perspective organizing with a greater autonomy

and solidarity" (Carr, 1990, 460).

Venezuela has had similar divisions between women as Bolivia; coalition building

between women was nearly impossible, as coalitions never represented women from all classes,

fortunately Venezuela has found a way to breach the divisions between women to make change.

Coalitions were mostly made of up professionals, labor leaders and middle class political

activists, which resulted in the exclusion of poor women. An organization that was successful at

bridging the divisions between women was the Coordinating Committee of Women's NGOs

(CONG), which was formed in 1985. The CONG was a complete alternative to traditional

organizing and was:

> Developed in reaction to women's experience of political marginalization, the CONG
> brought together feminists, professional women, popular women, and women from left-
> wing parties under a new kind of pear organization that was both an umbrella and a
> network NGO. (Friedman, 2000, 201)

CONG's structure was highly innovative as it allowed for each NGO member to preserve its

autonomy from CONG, the umbrella organization, as well as from all the other NGO members.

"CONG completely rejected the hierarchical, centralized model of political organization" so

CONG was determined to maintain a decentralized and nonhierarchical structure. CONG was

successful at bringing together feminist group and nonfeminist women's groups and its official

motto was "unity within diversity" (Friedman, 2000, 203).

The CONGs ability to preserve its heterogeneity and give all parties autonomy is due to

their unique structure. The feminists of CONG took the lead in creating the structure, which was

based on "bringing together women's organizations to exchange information and work on

common projects without interference in the specific workings of any member group"

(Friedman, 204). The CONG was understandably hesitant to allow political party activists to

join, since CONG was opposed to mainstream politics and were fearful that their decentralized

and nonhierarchical structure would be threatened. The CONG wanted to limit memberships to

only women that are affiliated with an NGO, but realized that many of the NGOs were affiliated

with political parties, so they allowed party activists.

The CONG did not feel the state was threatening their autonomy since they received little

funding from the state, which prevented the two from ever having a traditional clientelistic

relationship. The CONG is an example of how ethnic and class divisions between women can be

broken or at least put to the side in order to make change. As Magdalena Valdevieso, a member

of CONG put it best:

> Perhaps the principal achievement that has come in Venezuela in terms of women's
> organizations is the Coordinating Committee of Women's NGOs. It has been a meeting
> space of very diverse organizations and had a very demotic organization, which allowed
> for dialogue between "pure" feminists and political feminists and nonfeminists, and
> religious groups and cultural groups, and groups which were focused on other things.
> Morevoer, it has been an important interlocutor with the government. (Friedman, 2000,
> 208)

As impressive as the CONG's ability to gather and organize women from all backgrounds;

change for women could not be made unless CONG had a relationship with the state. The state

had advisory commissions where many women of the CONG sat on these commissions and took

active roles. An example of the collaboration between the state and CONG was the

commission's first task, which was to help collect data needed for the governmental report for

the Nairobi Conference in 1985.

Chile's population unlike Peru, Venezuela and Bolivia is mostly of European descent

with a very a small indigenous population, yet they all have a similar relationship between

feminism and socialism.

> The feminism that emerged in Chile in the 1970s and 1980s was indeed intimately
> linked to socialism and the political aspirations of the Latin American left of the time.

Yet, despite this clear connection with socialist ideals feminists of the period very seldom used the label of socialist as part of their political identity. (Tobar, 2007, 132)

Even though, women in Chile did not have the same dynamics as the women in Peru, Venezuela and Bolivia concerning ethnic barriers, Chileans still had troubles organizing women across political party lines. In 1983, a group of sixteen women formed the organization called Mujeres por la Vida (Women for Life) who was the only organization that succeeded in organizing women across all political party lines at that time. The sixteen founders of Women for Life represented a full spectrum of political parties, but had an understanding that even though they each came from different political parties they would not represent their political party in an official way within the organization. The founders of Women for Life declared it a feminist organization and their objective was to unify women within the opposition political parties that existed during Pinochet's dictatorship. Fanny Pollarcolo, one of the sixteen founders stated that Women for Life's mission was to "inspire the spirit necessary to unify the opposition, to overcome the ineffectiveness of the men," a clear political and feminist mission (Baldez, 2003, 263). On December 29, 1983, Women for Life held its first rally in the Caupolicán theatre downtown Santiago, which resulted in being a massive rally with around 10,000 women participants. The Caupolican rally represented diverse issues and interests from all the opposition parties including the Democratic Alliance, the Popular Democratic Movement, human rights groups and feminist groups. The Caupolican rally was unique because it: "catalyzed the formation of a broad-based, multisector women's movement. Women had formed separate organizations prior to this point, and many of them had participated in the general protests, but not in a coordinated way under a single banner" (Baldez, 2003, 263). Prominent feminist sociologist Maria Elena Valenzuela described Women for Life as "the reference point for political organizations on women's issues as well as the most important arena for convening and

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discussing the social mobilization of women" (Baldez, 2003, 263). Unfortunately the unity that was accomplished in the Caupolican rally did not last and Women for Life did split along political party lines. But the women in the opposition managed to overcome divisions once again and created the Coalition of Women for Democracy, an organization whose mission was to enforce the adoption of women's demands on the incoming democratic government, but they were never able to recapture the Caupolican rally.

Argentina has similar dynamics as Chile as it has a population of mostly European descent and a very small indigenous population like Chile, as well as Argentina also suffered from a violent military dictatorship like Chile. One of the most famous women's groups in Latin America that formed in 1977 during Jorge Rafael Videla's military dictatorship in Argentina is the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, a group of older women with no political experience. Popularly known as the Mothers of the Disappeared or Las Madres, was a purely human rights organization whose mission was to get the state to "guarantee the return of their loved ones and punish the military who had violated the sanctity of the home and family" (Safa, 1990, 362). Las Madres were focused on a human rights agenda as they did not seek political power for themselves; all they were seeking was justice. Las Madres refused to identify themselves or align themselves with any political party or ideology including feminism. They asserted "Nosotros no defendemos ideologias, defendemos la vida" [We don't defend ideologies, we defend life] (Safa, 1990, 362). Las Madres marched and protested every Thursday at the Plaza de Mayo, where the principal seat of government is in Buenos Aires, wearing a white kerchief and carrying pictures of their missing children. The Junta did not know how to respond to the protests and to tried to discredit Las Madres by referring to them as madwomen. Las Madres continued to protest, march, publish petitions, organize trips abroad and seek collaboration with other human rights groups. Las

Madres succeeded in organizing larger demonstrations in 1981 and 1982 that received international publicity, spreading awareness internationally of the violent and unjust nature of Jorge Rafael Videla's dictatorship. Las Madres received funding from international human rights groups, as well as governments such as the United States during the Carter administration. Their international publicity and funding from abroad is one of the reasons Las Madres is one of the most well known women's groups in Latin America. By the end of the Jorge Rafael Videla's dictatorship in 1986, Las Madres were weakened by internal disagreements and split into two, Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo- Linea Fundadora (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Founding Line) and The Asociacion de Madres de Plaza de Mayo (The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Association). Las Madres has inspired women all over Latin America and groups similar to Las Madres has been founded in countries such as Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

All four examples, Intituto de Mujeres Peruanos (IMP) of Peru, Coordinating Committee of Women's NGOs (CONG) of Venezuela, Mujeres por la Vida of Chile and Las Madres of Argentina have all found strategies to create solidarity between women of different ethnicities, classes and ideologies to make change for women. Most of them (IMP, CONG and Mujeres por la Vida) are declared feminist organizations, but Las Madres reject any political or ideological labels which is a dynamic also seen in Bolivia as discussed in the previous sections. Most of them (IMP, Mujeres por la Vida and Las Madres) focus on one common goal: IMP focus on bettering the lives of women in the *pueblos jovenes,* Mujeres por la Vida focus on organizing women against the dictatorship, and Las Madres focus on fighting for their family members' return or information on what happened to their family member, however CONG has a broader feminist agenda. All four aim to spread awareness on the causes they have chosen to dedicate themselves to. The purpose of this section is to only provide examples of how women make

change for women, but also these examples of strategies helped me to create my criteria to analyze strategies used in Bolivia as I discuss in the following section.

Methodology

In order to answer my research question, "which strategies are the most successful at overcoming historical, cultural and political obstacles that have prevented women's solidarity in Bolivia?" I have chosen three case studies, each representing a different strategy of how change can and has been made for women in the case of Bolivia. My first case study is the law of Participation Popular as it is the first Bolivian legislation to have a gender-mainstreaming component and represents the strategy of using law to make change. My second case study is on Mujeres Creando, a well-known grassroots, radical, anarchic and feminist organization who represent the strategy of grassroots work to make change. My final case study is on the Coordinadora de la Mujer, a feminist non-governmental organization who represents the strategy of using both the law and grassroots work to make change.

I had the privilege of travelling to Bolivia this summer and conducting field research. I was in Bolivia for a total of two months where I conducted numerous informal interviews with random people I met on an everyday basis. I would purposely mention my thesis to everyone I met, which was an easy task as everyone wanted to know the reason I was in Bolivia. I purposely spoke about my thesis to anyone and everyone because everyone had an opinion on my topic, which helped me understand the true effects of the strategies in my case studies. Also, everyday people had helpful suggestions of where I could find resources to conduct research, which I would not have known of as a foreigner in the country for the first time. Some people I met were so intrigued by my thesis topic that they made the time to take me to places such as the library of the University of UMSA, the library of La Paz, the headquarters of Mujeres Creando, and

bookstores. Overall, these informal interviews provided me with priceless information and a greater understanding of the Bolivian context that I would have not had the privilege of having if I had not travelled to Bolivia.

In addition I conducted formal interviews with Mujeres Creando and the Coordinadora de la Mujer. I presented myself as a University of San Francisco Masters student who is conducting research for her thesis. I interviewed one female staff from each organization who were welcoming and happy to be interviewed. I had a set of about twenty-three questions prepared for both interviews, but as I was interviewing Mujeres Creando I realized that most of my questions do not apply to them, as they are a radical, anarchic feminist organization, so I had to improvise. Overall my questions revolved around understanding the organizations and how they believe they are making change for women.

For my first case study on the law of Participacion Popular, I relied completely on secondary sources such as books and journal articles. I also relied on the impressive field research conducted by I. Pape, an academic and development consultant who published her study in the Latin American Perspectives under the title of "This Is Not a Meeting For Women: The Sociocultural Dynamics of Rural Women's Political Participation in the Bolivian Andes." For my other two case studies on Mujeres Creando and the Coordinadora de la Mujer, I relied mostly on primary sources such as the interviews I conducted, their websites and resources they gave me that they had published. I have included relevant quotes from the interviews I conducted and have chosen to provide the original Spanish text with the English translation, for bilinguals who appreciate having text in the original language as I do. Also, I am using pseudo names for the two women I interviewed for confidentiality purposes.

The purpose of my research is to find which strategies are the most successful at overcoming historical, cultural and political obstacles to advance women's rights in Bolivia. In order to attempt to measure change and how successful one strategy is over another, I propose that the strategy that affects the greatest amount of people and uses the largest amount of mediums would inevitably make the most change. With this in mind, I have selected four important attributes a strategy should have: the ability to create solidarity between women with different ideologies and from different ethnic and class groups, build alliances with diverse women's groups, uses numerous mediums and has autonomy. The first two attributes are essential since they overcome the obstacles I have discussed in my literature review and are specifically aimed at the Bolivian context. I selected the third attribute of using numerous mediums because I believe real change requires structural change and a change in society such as a change in mentalities. In order for a strategy to effect real change it must use numerous mediums aimed at both structural change and a change in society. Finally, the fourth attribute I selected, autonomy, I believe is needed because autonomy assures genuineness and a commitment to society without any outside and foreign influences or pressures. I will analyze my case studies based on these criteria and indicate why strategy I believe is the most successful in the Bolivian context.

Research Section

I. **Political Background from 1994-Present**

I begin my research section by giving a brief political history of Bolivia from 1994 till the present since I believe Bolivia's ever-changing political situation is crucial to understanding why Bolivia is on its current political path and explain women's political status. I have chosen to discuss Bolivia's political history starting from 1994 since the law Participation Popular that was

passed that year. Participation Popular is the starting point for my research section, as I believe it was the first real step in promoting women's rights and has opened up the path for more gender mainstreaming laws to be passed. In this section I discuss Bolivia pre-Evo Morales period of neoliberalism. Next I discuss Evo Morales rise to power covering both the 2002 and 2005 elections. I continue by examining Evo Morales' promise to decolonize in practice and end with how the election of Evo Morales has affected women.

i. Bolivia Pre-Evo Morales

Bolivia, like most colonized countries, has had a long and complicated political history. Haunted by coups throughout most of its history, Bolivia held the record for the most numbers of governments of any modern country until 2000 (Kohl, Bresnahan, 2010, 6). Since 1985, Bolivia had been following neoliberal principles until Evo Morales was elected in 2005 and "had undertaken a series of political and economic reforms that sought to reduce the size of the state" by cutting social services and by privatizing (Gregoire, Zagorski, 2008, 20). Bolivia had become a World Bank model due to the so-called "success" of its macroeconomic policies that caused the inflation rate to decrease. Former president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada dedicated his first term, from 1993 to 1997, to following the neoliberal policies set out by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Under President Lozada's political project called the Plan de Todos (Everyone's plan), he passed two groundbreaking laws, the Law of Capitalization and the Law of Popular Participation. The first law, the Law of Capitalization, was focused on the Bolivian economy and partially privatized five state-owned industries: oil and gas, telecommunications, airlines, electricity, and railroads. The second law, the Law of Popular Participation, was focused on Bolivian democracy and divided the country into over three hundred municipalities that would receive a total of 20% of the GDP and were each in charge of

allocating their own budgets to social services in their community. The Plan de Todos, was quite a clever yet contradictory plan, as Kohl states:

> The important innovation of the Bolivian Plan de Todos was that it simultaneously attempted to reconcile the demands of subnational regions for greater autonomy with those of international institutions for open markets. The Plan allowed regions to gain some degree of autonomy and financial resources to embark on local projects through the Law of Popular Participation, while multinational firms would gain access to Bolivia's natural resources through the Law of Capitalization and related economic policies. (Kohl, 2002, 453)

The following president, president Hugo Banzer, from 1997-2001, continued to implement the Plan de Todos and privatized two water companies, as well as granted deals with Britain's BP, Brazil's Petrobras, Spain's Respol and the United States' Amoco to "explore the Bolivian gas reserves resulting in some of the world's lowest operating and exploration costs" (Gregoire, Zagorski, 2008, 20). Bolivians, especially the ones living in Cochabamba, refused to allow their water to be privatized and began massive protests between December 1999 and April 2000 that got world news attention and was labeled the "water wars." The protests were successful because the government reversed the privatization in April 2000.

Overall Bolivia was a political mess from 1999 to 2005 having ousted two governments through popular protests and riots. During Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada's second term from 2002 to 2003, the pressures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led him to increase taxes that caused a national riot. The national riot reached its peak when the Bolivian police and Bolivian army attacked each other while the police was protesting in front of the presidential palace. An estimated 30 people died in that attack and Bolivians were furious that the government was willing to spill blood for the sake of following IMF orders. Due to the "tax riots" in February of 2003 Sanchez de Lozada's government lost legitimacy, which led the president to step down in October, and the vice president Carlos Mesa became president. Even though President Carlos

Mesa was well liked, he did not have any better luck and failed to address the concerns of the people. He also stepped down in December of 2005.

All these events such as two consecutive presidents stepping down, as well as the gas, water and tax wars made Bolivians doubt neoliberal policies and the leaders that chose to abide by them. Scholars credit the failure of President Mesa to the fact that Bolivians no longer believed in democracy and no longer trusted that the government was looking out for the people's best interest.

> What they [Bolivians] had learned was that giving a government the time and space to implement its plans had proven a bad bet. The Bolivians' "questionable loyalty to democracy," to which those who lamented the ongoing protest after Mesa's installation pointed, was in this sense well founded: their earlier loyalty to and trust in democracy's mores had cost them dearly (Salman, 2007, 113).

The lower class, specifically, felt like they could not afford to wait and see any more since their silence and patience had only lead to deterring living conditions. Bolivians were convinced that politicians only took care of themselves, but they did not have a discourse or organized movement to identify themselves with, until Evo Morales joined the scene.

ii. *Evo Morales' Rise to Power*

Evo Morales is famous for being Bolivia's first indigenous president after a long and chaotic history of colonialism, military dictatorships and the constant rule of the elite. Evo Morales' rise to power was indeed a slow, long and strategic process. And in order to understand why it was a slow, long and strategic process we must look into a few facts that demonstrate the exclusion of indigenous peoples in Bolivian politics.

As mentioned previously, Bolivia has been independent since 1825, but this independence meant little to nothing to indigenous Bolivians since they were completely excluded from politics and had no say in the fate of Bolivia even though they have always made

up the majority of the population (estimated 60 percent). Throughout the centuries with impressive indigenous leaders such as Tupaj Katari, an Aymara Indian rebel leader of the late 18th century, indigenous people have tried to get their voices and opinions heard but with little success. Scholars credit the lack of success of indigenous peoples' inclusion into politics to the overarching control of the white and criollo elite, as well as the lack of organization among indigenous peoples. As often as indigenous peoples are grouped together, they are made up of different ethnicities, have different cultures and belief systems and speak different languages. It is quite unrealistic to expect indigenous peoples from all sorts of different ethnic and cultural differences to join together in a solidary movement. Just to give a quick example of how indigenous Bolivians had not organized, up until 2002, the best result in national elections for all indigenous parties combined was 4.6 per cent (Van Cott, 2003, 752).

One of the first and most successful sign of indigenous organization was the Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB), which was established in 1979 by a Marxist oriented labor movement called Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) to unite disperse independent unions. The CSUTCB's Marxist agenda and discourse, "encompassed class and ethno-national demands that emphasized the dual-basis of exploitation of the highland indigenous population" (Van Cott, 2003, 761). In Bolivia's more recent history two institutional changes occurred that gave indigenous peoples a chance to enter into politics:

> The municipal decentralization of 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (LPP), and the creation in the 1994–5 constitutional reform of uninominal districts for 68 of the seats in the 130-seat the chamber of deputies. Prior to these reforms it was difficult for local, regional, or poorly funded movements to compete in Bolivia's centralized, unitary system. (Van Cott, 2003, 755)

Out of these reforms and with the organization by CSUTCB, Asamblea de la Soberania de los Pueblos (ASP) was created in order to participate independently in the December 1995

municipal elections. Evo Morales, who was at the time the leader of the Coordinadora de las Federaciones del Tropico de Cochabamba, one of the main coca growers' organizations, was thoroughly involved in CSUTCB and in the creating of ASP. The reforms mentioned above gave CSUTCB the opportunity to create a political party. Yet due to internal conflicts, by the 1999 elections the ASP was split into two parties: the MIP which was led by Felipe Quispe and the Instrumento Politico para la Soberania de los Pueblos (ISPS), which was led by Evo Morales. Due to registration issues, the ISPS became the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), which according to Morales incorporates the word "communitarian" to the name MAS that "conveys more of its cultural message, while maintaining a name with high public identification" (Van Cott, 2003, 764). Therefore, by the 2002 national elections:

> The indigenous movement had become one of the most dynamic and consolidated social movements in the country. It was anchored in permanent social movement organizations that were 15–20 years old, and headed by leaders with decades of political experience. These organizations provided the human and material resources for the IPSP-MAS and MIP to compete against better-financed parties. (Van Cott, 2003, 768)

The result of the 2002 elections was unprecedented: the indigenous parties MAS and MIP won a combined 27 per cent, and for the first time in Bolivian political history, interpreters needed to be hired in order to translate several new legislators' speeches that were in Aymara, Quechua and Gurani (ibid, 753). Scholars credit the substantial rise in votes for indigenous parties (from the historical maximum of a 4.6% to a 27%) to the political instability, the economic failures and the strategically organization of MAS and MIP. As discussed earlier since 1993, Bolivia had two consecutive presidents step down and gone through tax, gas and water wars. Bolivians no longer believed in democracy and no longer believed in neoliberal policies. Economically, incomes had stagnated, unemployment had risen and 63 percent of Bolivians lived in poverty. Due to how disappointed and frustrated Bolivians were with Bolivia's political

and economic state, they were seeking alternative options to the traditional elite parties in the

2002 elections. Evo Morales proudly became that alternative option and quickly started

becoming a national symbol of defiance against the neoliberalist Bolivian government and the

United States, who were the imperialist power Bolivians began to blame for Bolivia's problems.

He also developed an image of incorruptibility by refusing to collaborate with the government

and refusing to be sold out or bribed by traditional parties who offered financial benefits or a

secure job. The 2002 elections was a major step in Bolivia's political history since it enabled the

confrontation between the two Bolivias: the included minority and the excluded majority.

Evo Morales' failure to win the elections in 2002 made him even more determined for the

next elections that came earlier then planned in 2005. Evo Morales and the MAS party had a

strategic plan that would ultimately lead to their victory: "rather than capitalize on state

instability to seize power, Morales chose to pursue power through electoral means, which gave

him a better chance to oversee the reconstitution of relations of power and the economy" (Kohl,

Bresnahan, 2010, 10). In other words, MAS was only concerned with the people's vote and were

targeting the majority of the population, which is the poor and indigenous. MAS did not waste

their time trying to win over politicians or the government overall, they knew that soon enough

they would be the government and could rewrite Bolivia's future. In addition, MAS organized

and built bridges among diverse interest groups that all shared the dissatisfaction with

neoliberalism. MAS was not only running in the elections; they were starting a revolution. MAS

promised to completely reconstruct Bolivia economically and socially: economically by getting

rid of neoliberalism and embracing twenty-first century socialism and socially by rewriting the

constitution and providing benefits. MAS' revolutionary spirit spread throughout Bolivia,

protests went from an average of 13 protests a month during President Sanchez de Lozada's term

(1993-1997) to an average of 28 protests a month during Hugo Banzer's term (1997-2002) to an

average of 49 protests a month during Carlos Mesas' term (2002-2005). It was very clear that

Bolivians were unhappy and were determined to see real changes, starting with the end of

neoliberal policies. And MAS managed to organize fragmented and dispersed anger and protest

into more continuous, more stable, and into a more politically sophisticated movement (Salman,

2007, 123). Evo Morales won the elections in 2005 with 53.7 percent of the votes and the runner

up won just 28.6 percent of the votes; in the political world this is seen as a landslide win. MAS

had the unique ability to appeal to indigenous as well as nonindigenous voters from diverse class

backgrounds, which had been unheard of in Bolivia.

iii.   *Decolonization in Practice*

Six months after being elected, President Evo Morales and the new MAS government

released their official social development strategy, the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia

Digna, Soberana, Productiva y Democrática para Vivir Bien (National Development Plan:

Bolivia Dignified, Sovereign, Productive and Democratic to Live Well). The plan carried out

MAS' promise to decolonize Bolivia and declares that:

> The history of Bolivia…has been marked by colonialism and neoliberalism" and that
> the country (especially since the mid-1980s, considering structural adjustment policies)
> has been dominated by "transnationals and international organizations of the powerful
> nations," while "external colonialism grew…and the 'national bourgeoisie' listened only
> to the orders of foreign countries. (Johnson, 2010, 142)

In addition, the plan states that the government will initiate the process of decolonization,

dismantle neoliberalism and construct a new plurinational and communitarian state. It also

clarifies that national strategy is to construct "a new socially and productively inclusive society

in which technological advances are combined with the knowledge of our ancestors, based in the

energy and the capacity derived from our cultural identity" (Johnson, 2010, 143). Furthermore,

the plan attempts to humanize development and calls for the society to be an active subject instead of a passive receiver.

As promised, President Evo Morales began the decolonization process and declared that he would undo the 400 years of colonialism. The MAS government proposed a new constitution that would symbolize Bolivia's second independence with the inclusion of indigenous peoples since Bolivia's independence in 1825 excluded indigenous peoples. President Evo Morales explained:

> The majority of people in this country- people from more than 30 indigenous groups-
> did not participate in the foundation of Bolivia in 1825. We have to re-found Bolivia in
> order to end the colonial state, to live united in diversity, to put all our resources under
> state control, and to make people participate and give them the right to make decisions.
> (Morales, 2011, 136)

President Morales claimed that this new constitution would encompass the deepest aspirations of the most neglected peoples and his goal was to change the country not only in theory, but also in reality. As the National Development Plan proposed, the 2009 constitution defines Bolivia as a plurinational state "which is founded on the idea that socio-cultural, linguistic, political and economic pluralism must be recognized in order to transform and democratize the political system" (Radhuber, 2012, 171). The constitution also recognizes that Bolivia is made up of multiple nations and peoples within a single state: "the Constitution identifies multiple forms of nation: indigenous peoples that self-define themselves as nations because of their pre-colonial existence and their high degree of self-organization, as well as the single nation that corresponds to the territory of the state" (Radhuber, 2012, 171). An example of Bolivia's recent identification as a plurinational state is the state's recognition of 36 official languages. In addition, the MAS government created the Vice Ministry of Interculturality and the Vice Ministry of Decolonization, both under the Ministry of Culture. The Vice Ministry of Interculturality is

responsible to "foment an intercultural dialogue between the various nations and indigenous peoples and promote interculturality as an instrument of development" (Johnson, 2010, 143). The Vice Ministry of Decolonization is responsible to:

> Coordinate the implementation of decolonization programs and projects, foment the participation of the indigenous original campesino nations and peoples, intercultural communities, and Afro-Bolivians in the public management of the Plurinational State and develop policies for the prevention and eradication of racism and cultural intolerance, all as part of the struggle against intellectual, social and economic colonization, which continues to live on in some parts of the nation. (Johnson, 2010, 144)

> The dismantling of neoliberalism required, more state control over the economy, which

the new constitution guaranteed.

> To decolonize natural resources the Morales government seeks not only to recover control of production and rents but also to further the long-term goal of capturing values by transforming natural resources (e.g., natural gas or iron ore) into finished products (e.g. petrochemicals or steel). (Kohl and Brenahan, 2010, 13).

The MAS government nationalized Bolivia's gas reserves, which are the second largest in South America and renegotiated contracts with transnational oil companies to ensure that the greater share of profits stay in Bolivia.

Culturally, President Morales stood as a symbol of decolonization as the first indigenous president. Even though Morales does not speak any indigenous languages or dress in indigenous attire, he is still a leader the majority of the population in Bolivia can identify themselves with. "Many people within MAS have expressed their gratification to work under the leadership of an "Indian". The charisma of Morales is so high that vice-president, Linera, has called the political configuration that brought the neoliberal project to its knees as Evismo" (Gregoire, Zagorski, 2008, 33). Through the MAS party's use of indigenous languages, clothing, symbols and rituals, they officially legitimatize them in the public sphere challenging the cultural hierarchy that traditionally categorized them as inferior.

By evoking the concept of "refounding," the Morales revolution has restored lost dignity to conquered and colonized indigenous peoples, fundamentally altering the country's ethnic narrative and elevating the culture and image of "the Indian" in national life. A majority of Bolivians have embraced their indigenous roots and culture rather than rejecting them as sources of social stigma, discrimination and exclusion. (Morales, 2011, 136)

iv.   *Evo Morales and Women*

Evo Morales projected himself not only as a supporter of indigenous autonomy, but also as a women-friendly leader, which gave him the full support of the majority of indigenous women. President Morales' presidency has been referred to as the era of "indigenous nationalism" and has led to a rise in power of indigenous movements by giving indigenous men and women a space in politics which they did not have prior. There has been a political power shift between women since indigenous women's groups have become the legitimate representatives of women: "The hour of indigenous women seems to have arrived, and the time in which the feminist movement sought to represent all Bolivian women will have to end" (Rousseau, 2011, 13). Due to this political power shift, the dynamics among Bolivian women's groups has heightened. Some feminist organizations have resisted against the new government instead of adjusting to it and blame President Morales' close relationship and collaboration with indigenous women for the lack in progress of women's rights.

The MAS government has made small strides towards women's political empowerment, such as when it was time to reformat the government. MAS did not instate a law that women must hold 50 percent of the seats in the assembly instead they settled for the notion that constituents are elected through political parties' lists by following gender alternations within their own lists. Since women were rarely positioned on top of the lists, this led to women occupying 88 seats of 255 (33 percent), which is far from the goal of gender equality (50 percent) that feminist and indigenous organizations were asking for. Yet, MAS did end up being

the party that included the most women elected: sixty-four women, or 46.72 percent of MAS's seats, compared to the runner up right wing party PODEMOS that only elected sixteen women that made up 26.67 percent of their seats. About 45 percent of the women elected were indigenous which is unprecedented in Bolivia's history; "the assembly was the first institutional space to include indigenous women on a formally equal footing with nonindigenous women and men" (Rousseau, 2011, 14).

The political history from 1994 to the present that I have presented gives the framework to understanding the political context behind my case studies. Each of my case studies emerged during a certain time period under a specific political context. The political context of each case study will help analyze my case studies.

II.   Case Studies

My three case studies on the Participation Popular, Mujeres Creando and Coordinadora de la Mujer serve to answer my overall question, how do women make change for women in Bolivia? Each case study represents a different strategy of how change can and has been made for women in the case of Bolivia. Participation Popular is my first case study as it is the starting point to having gender equality in Bolivian legislature. In my Participation Popular case study I will explain why the law was established and the theory behind it. I will then examine how the law has worked in practice. My next case study is on Mujeres Creando, a radical, anarchic, feminist organization who believes in purely grassroots efforts to make change. I will discuss why Mujeres Creando was founded, and examine their political views and grassroots efforts using the field research I conducted this summer in Bolivia. My final case study is on the Coordinadora de la Mujer, a feminist non-governmental organization who believes in using both the law and grassroots efforts. I will discuss why Coordinadora de la Mujer was established, then

examine their mission, their agenda, their strategies and give an example of their work by discussing the Mujeres Presentes project.

i. Participación Popular

In 1994, the Bolivian government under the presidency of Gonzalo Sanchez Lozada passed a groundbreaking law called Ley de Participación Popular (Law of Political Participation) (LPP). An essential factor to consider in order to analyze LPP is that it was established during Bolivia's neoliberalism period which greatly influenced who was involved in creating the law, as well as who took responsibility for implementing the law. As mentioned previously, Bolivia was under a great deal of pressure from the World Bank and IMF and was following a strict neoliberalism agenda that was implemented under the Plan de Todos. The World Bank amongst many other international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were involved in establishing LPP.

LPP was constructed based on neoliberal policies and its primary objective was to decentralize and democratize the country since Bolivia was counted amongst the most centralized countries in Latin America leaving all political and economic decision-making to the national government, which the majority of the population did not trust or supported. LPP was a solution to Bolivia's centralization problem as it decentralized financial resources and decision making from the national government to local municipalities. Municipalities already existed in Bolivia, but out of LPP a municipalization occurred, in which the number of municipalities expanded in numbers and locations. About 198 new municipalities were created making the existing number of municipalities over 300. Next came resource allocation: municipalities receive a total of 20% of national tax revenues, which is distributed to each municipality according to its population. This money must be spent on public services since municipalities are

now responsible for the public services in their community and municipalities are responsible for dividing the funds accordingly. The municipalities make these decisions through the Organizaciones Territoriales de Base (OTBs) which are organizations made up of the community, so the idea is that projects and funding decided according to the needs of the community.

> Community organizations are key actors in the process of identifying and prioritizing public investments to be funded by co-participación and are assigned the role of proposing, controlling, and supervising local investment projects in the areas of education, health, basic sanitation, sports, local roads, and urban and rural development. (Daniere, 1998, 1)

Each municipality elects their own leaders, who are often the pre-existing community leaders, but through LPP they are recognized by the government and are the representatives of the community to the national government. LPP also targets underdevelopment by requiring every municipality to spend 70% of their budget on development projects. Due to Bolivia's past centralization, the rural regions needs had been left unattended, "the LPP has made rural regions "legible to the State" whereby formerly ignored citizens are now legally mandated under the LPP to voice their needs and concerns, and expect a response about these concerns, from the municipality" (Hippert, 2011, 501).

As mentioned earlier, NGOs, most international, were an essential part of establishing and implementing LPP. Bolivia was and is still heavily inhabited by NGOs; in 1980, there was an estimated one hundred NGOs, which grew to more than one thousand by the end of the 1990s. Due to the increase in NGO presence, it led the Bolivian government to rely on NGOs not only for funding projects, but also for planning, training, organizing and advocating. When the time came to create LPP, the Bolivian government consulted with NGOs since they had become the "most important rural development agents" (Kohl, 2003, 157). The decentralization model

introduced in LPP encompassed several of the ideas previously developed by NGOs such as

Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (CIPCA) who organized seminars and

workshops on the theme of decentralization that resulted in a publication entitled "For a different

Bolivia: contributions to a historical popular project." This publication "proposed a radical

decentralization in which the role of political parties is limited to the election of the president.

Local community government and functional organizations were destined to play a far more

elemental role in policy making" (Nijenhuis, 2002, 50). NGOs were funding and providing

resources during the early stages of LPP and highly influenced the institutionalization of LPP.

> The German (GTZ), Canadian (ACDI/CESO), and Danish (DANIDA) cooperation exemplify the interventions of the international agencies on implementing the LPP. They worked in different spaces such as strengthening of legislation, institutional development, local governments, and civil society. They also addressed food security, economic promotion, and management of accountability systems. (unknown, 80)

In addition to helping create LLP, NGOs were also expected to advocate and help implement the

law. NGOs raised awareness and informed communities of their rights and obligations under the

LPP. NGOs provided the technical support to develop the annual operating plans (AOPs) and

five-year municipal development plans (MDPs) in small municipalities lacking the technical

capacity to write their own (Kohl, 2003, 156).

    The LPP has changed the relationship between communities that became local

governments and NGOs. Before LPP, NGOs worked autonomously since they received funding

from abroad and they decided what projects to do and where, leaving the decision making in

communities to outsiders. But after LPP, NGOs were required to check in with the municipalities

in the areas they wanted to work in, "in response, NGOs have increasingly assumed the role of

consultants that sell services to municipal governments" (Kohl, 2003, 160). Municipalities for

the first time had access to a financial budget, which they had the power to allocate however they

saw fit. Leaders of OTBs believe that:

> They now have a stronger position in negotiations with NGOs on the type of projects
> that are implemented. Before 1994, the population was more dependent on the supply,
> that is, the projects offered by the NGOs, since this was often the only access to projects.
> With the LPP, they are in a position to select the projects that correspond with their
> demands. (Nijenhuis, 2002, 157)

Thus NGOs went from being autonomous since the government was absent in most areas to

having to address, negotiate and seek approval from local governments. Yet, even though the

relationship between NGOs and local governments changed, it was not ruined. Research shows

that municipalities that work with NGOs have had a lot more success in planning and completing

projects than municipalities that do not work with NGOs.

> The planning process in municipalities that were served by NGOs had a higher level of
> citizen participation and a higher degree of citizen involvement than the planning
> process in municipalities that had a strategy developed by a consultant with little
> previous experience in the municipalities. (Nijenhuis, 2002, 157)

Unfortunately, not every municipality has the opportunity to work with an NGO since NGOs

choose their location and tend to stay in the location for many years. NGOs continued to work in

the areas they worked in before LPP was passed and these areas are usually the areas that are

easily accessible, so areas close to cities where their staff can commute to daily. Because of this,

municipalities in rural areas continue to have the least success in completing plans and allocating

budgets.

    Another neoliberalist policy in LPP that will be the focus of my analysis is gender

mainstreaming[13]. LPP is the first piece of legislation in Bolivia to attempt to incorporate women

into politics and LPP is internationally seen as a progressive law since it predates the Platform

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[13]To integrate women into existing systems as active participants and to reduce gender
inequalities stemming from women's disadvantaged position in society CITE

for Action's call for gender mainstreaming in the wake of the 1995 UN Conference on women in

Beijing. In the first article of LPP it states that the law serves to:

> Endeavor to improve the quality of life of Bolivian women and men, with the most just distribution and best administration of public resources... [and] to fortify the political and economic instruments necessary to perfect representative democracy, to facilitate citizen participation, and to guarantee equal opportunity at the levels of representation for women and men. (Hippert, 2011, 499)

LPP calls for women's obligatory participation by asserting that women must make up 30% of

the candidates for municipal elections and municipalities are responsible for promoting women's

participation and needs. LPP is explicitly trying to integrate gender awareness and gender

equality into politics. It provides a legal basis for women's political participation and officially

gives women the right and space to be politically active. "This is the first time gender equalities

has been incorporated and gender-neutral language has been applied in Bolivian legislation" yet

in 1999, only 11% out of 31,000 members of the communal executive boards were women

(Pape, 2008, 45). LPP is a major step towards women's political empowerment in Bolivia, but it

has not proven to be enough to truly gender mainstream politics especially in rural and Andean

traditional areas. Due to the indigenous belief in complementarity and chachawarmi, LPP was

not successful among indigenous communities, which is why this analysis will focus on

indigenous women.

a) Theory vs. Practice

According to chachawarmi, women are not preordained to be politically active for

multiple reasons. Traditionally, women are limited and restricted to certain spaces, certain

conversation and certain issues simply based on their gendered division of labor. Indigenous

women tend to not be politically active not because of a lack of interest or wanting; indigenous

women are not politically active because they are not given the opportunity to be even though the law demands it.

Why women do not attend meetings:

Since complementarity and chachawarmi are based on unity and gendered pairs, man and woman are seen as one, so there is only the need for one of the two to be politically active. In addition to gendered pairs, there is gendered work and gendered spaces. Politics is understood to be a man's work and a man's space, so women have no place in politics. The married man represents his family in the community and he attends the meetings on behalf of his family. Another reason why women do not attend meetings is because they do not have the time, they are too busy with their side of the gendered division of labor, which is a combination of reproductive and productive work. Women do not have afternoons or evenings off as the men do to attend meetings; their work is ongoing. In addition, indigenous women have the highest levels of illiteracy, lowest levels of education and lowest levels of bilingualism so they do not feel confident enough to attend meetings because they believe they will not fully understand the discussions and will not be able to contribute even if they wanted to (Please refer to Appendix A on page 89). Yet this is not to say that women never participate in meetings or are not politically active at all. As discussed in my literature review, class and ethnicity play a major role in Bolivia, so municipalities will have different male and female dynamics depending on community's locations, class, ethnicity and how traditional they are. In some communities women make up 75 percent of the attendees at meetings and in others, women outnumber men 2:1 (Hippert, 2011, 502).

Yet even when women attend meetings and outnumber men, there are rarely any women elected leaders on the OTB boards. Municipalities are legally required to have at least one position in every municipality's OTB reserved for a woman, yet OTBs often ignore this requirement.

> In the case that an OTB fails to elect women onto the board, they appoint women to positions called vocales (voters), positions that are subsequently very ill-defined and have no real duties or power. In this way, the OTBs fulfill their obligation to encourage women's participation, but the effect is a mere illusion. (Hippert, 2011, 502)

Furthermore if women are elected as leaders, they are more often than not, on community school boards. Women are seen as appropriate candidates when it comes to advocating for the quality of children's' education, but are not considered qualified enough for other political positions such as an OTB official. The positions of OTBs are generally for men since men are seen as true political actors in the public sphere whereas, "women, on the other hand, participate in women's groups, such as mothers' clubs, education boards, are thought to be community-builders--people who serve as intermediaries and bring residents' problems to the public sphere" (Hibbert, 2011, 502).

Why women do not speak at meetings:

"The institution of the meeting is governed by a set of rules and decision making practices that reflect the ideology of the community" which is problematic for women because the meetings reinforce the communities' norms instead of challenging them as the law had requested (Pape, 2008, 48). During the meetings men are expected to express the opinions and make decisions and women are expected to be quiet and listen. Women must never interrupt discussions and may only speak when the discussion directly concerns women's division of labor. Furthermore, since the chachawarmi couple is understood to be symmetric, it is often argued that couples speak about the agenda of the meeting prior to the meeting where they make a decision together. Then when it is time to make a decision during the meeting, the man voices the decision he made with

his wife, since the man is the representative of the family and politics is a man's space. But many

women deny this claim; they claim that the agenda is rarely known prior to the meetings and that

their husbands rarely consult them. So women are left out of the political discourse and have less

political knowledge than the men (Please refer to Appendix B on page 89). Furthermore the

CERES (2001) study also reveals that:

> Women who speak out in public meetings often endure discriminatory insults, both
> publicly in the meeting and privately with friends, neighbors, and even family members.
> As a result, women suffer from "feelings of insecurity" that serve to further distance
> them from seeking out leadership positions. (Hippert, 2011, 502)

Why women's issues are not acknowledged:

Based on complementarity, men and women are united as one through marriage and make up

one social being. By becoming one social being there is no room for individuality. In addition,

indigenous communities are very communal and do not believe or support individuality. So there

is no room for individuality either in the household or in the community, this leaves the

community and especially the men with the understanding that every decision that is made is

best for all and that women do not have different needs or wants than men. "Any project for the

community, benefits all and therefore the idea of projects based on the women's opinion is

almost absurd, unless they are specifically to do with their part of the gendered division of labor

such as child rearing, cooking, weaving, or vegetable gardens" (Pape, 2008, 53). Even though

most of the decisions that are made in the community are made solely by men with no input from

women, the men believe that their decisions include the needs and wants of women since every

projects benefits men and women. This mentality seeps into the broader context of fighting for

women's rights, which is a foreign concept to the indigenous that has become important after

colonialism (Please refer to Appendix C on page 90).

b) Failure of Participación Popular

Participación Popular failed to integrate women, especially indigenous women, into politics because it used a limited gender analysis and completely omitted ethnicity and class. LPP gender analysis was reduced to male and female, and it did not look further or deeper to acknowledge the differences and varieties within the categories of male and female. The experience of a *criolla* female is much different than the experience of an indigenous female and they both face different challenges on being politically active. LPP assumed that all Bolivian women face the same challenges and have the same daily experiences, which contradicts their objective of promoting "a set of rules and decision making practices that reflect the ideology of the community" (Pape, 2008, 48). Each community will have a different ideology and the differences will increasingly vary when comparing communities that are made up of one class or one ethnicity.

In addition, the other two main reasons why LPP has failed to increase women's political participation is because it did not find strategic and practical ways to integrate women and it did not provide systematic and adequate ways to facilitate women's participation. An example of this is how LPP ignored or failed to analyze women's time. LPP assumes that women have the time to attend meetings and be as involved as men when women are in charge of not only reproductive tasks but also productive tasks. In order for women to have the time to attend meetings and be politically active, the state or the municipalities must provide resources for women to be able to take time off their duties, such as childcare. "Gender equality of participation may be written into the text of the LPP, but, unless this participation is practically and strategically facilitated, women's involvement is made particularly difficult" (Clisby, 2005, 26). In addition, the different roles assigned to men and women must be considered when it

comes to planning and meetings must be held during times of the day that fit both women and men's schedules, not just men's.

Furthermore LPP calls for women's participation and gives women the right to be politically active, yet it "did not provide any mechanisms or incentives for changing gender relations in a positive direction" (Crisby, 2005, 29). Even though the law gave women the right to be politically active, the law did not change sexist and patriarchal habits on the ground. Indigenous women have the highest levels of illiteracy and the lowest levels of education, but indigenous men also have this problem even if it's not as high as the women, yet indigenous men are not stopped from being politically active even with their lack of education and lack of literacy. The same standards in the municipalities to not apply to men and women; men are given a chance to become community leaders and be politically active even when uneducated and illiterate, but women are not given the same opportunities.

In addition, another area where patriarchy and machismo is clearly seen and not challenged is when it came to deciding which organizations could be Territorial Base Organizations (OTBs). The community leader and OTBs run each municipality; the OTBs are seen as the professional advisors to the community leader and play a big role in the decision-making. The OTBs are often pre-existing to LPP and are socio-territorial organizations. Through LPP, the OTBs are legitimized and are made official representatives of their community and are responsible for creating development plans. The definition, of which organizations could be an OTB, was that the organization had to be territorial and represent the whole population on that territory. Women's organizations were not allowed to be an OTB because they were perceived as not being territorial and not representing the whole population. The women's organizations claimed to be as territorial as all other organizations and it would have been an easy step to make

the women's organizations officially territorial. But nonetheless, the fact that they were women's organizations meant they were leaving out men, so they weren't representing the whole population. But again, the same rules does not apply to men and women, just because other organizations were not called 'men's organizations' it did not change the fact that these other organizations were overwhelmingly male dominated. The result was that "it appeared to be more acceptable for all-male or predominantly male committees to purport to represent the whole than it is for female-dominated groups to do so" (Crisby, 2005, 30). If the male-dominated organizations truly represented the whole community then why would women feel the need to create their own? Women are not welcomed or encouraged to participate in male dominated organizations, so there is no way male dominated organizations represent the whole populated any more than women's organizations.

LPP represents not only the neoliberal political time period of Bolivia, but also represents institutionalized feminism by the involvement of liberal NGOS as well as illustrates the cultural challenges of chachawarmi and machismo that limit women's political activity. I will further analyze LPP by exploring these connecting in my analysis section. My next case study will further explain the problem of institutionalized feminism and the failures of NGOs by representing a different type of organization.

ii.   *Mujeres Creando*

One of the most well known women's organizations in Bolivia is Mujeres Creando, yet well known does not equate to well-liked. Mujeres Creando defines themselves as a radical, anarchic, feminist movement, and with such extreme characteristics people either love them or hate them. Either way, Mujeres Creando follow the belief that there is no such thing as bad press and enjoy the backlash they receive from Bolivian society. When I told my interviewee, Maria

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Posada,[14] that whoever I mentioned my thesis to in Bolivia, they often told me about Mujeres

Creando, and express either admiration or repulsion and she responded,

> "Tú le preguntas cualquier en todo el país quienes son Mujeres Creando te
> responda: Que son las locas, las encantadoras, q son…no sé.. Bueno y malo, pero saben"

> [You can ask anyone in this country who are Mujeres Creando and they'll answer: They
> are the crazy ones, the charming ones, that they are…don't know…well, good and bad,
> but they would nevertheless know]

One of their tactics to get attention is to make people feel uncomfortable and they purposely do

things to get reactions out of people such as their graffiti and naked protests.

The two founders of Mujeres Creando, Julietta Paredes and Maria Gallindo, were two

revolutionaries who were involved in militant left-wing struggles, but as Paredes explains, they

"found that women weren't seen as revolutionary figures. Instead, the women involved in these

struggles were acting as secretaries, or serving coffee. So, we began to question these

movements, and our role within them" (Day, 2008). Paredes and Gallindo decided to start their

own movement through a nonhierarchical organization that respected gender and cultural and

sexual diversity. To Paredes and Gallindo, sexual diversity was very important, as they are both

lesbians who were a proud and public lesbian couple, which on its own was (and still is) a very

radical notion in Bolivia. Because Mujeres Creando was created by two lesbians, they continue

to have the reputation of being a lesbian group and I heard them being referred to as "las

lesbianas" quite frequently.

Paredes and Gallindo were not sure what the future of Mujeres Creando was going to

look like, but they were sure that they wanted to work for women and with women and that they

would achieve this goal by following a complete feminist agenda that was anti-neoliberal and

anti-patriarchal. Romana explains that Mujeres Creando was formed 21 years ago in the heat of

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[14] Pseudo name

neoliberalism when everything was being privatized. Mujeres Creando doesn't believe in all the

ideas implanted by these big organizations including INGOs, such as the subject of gender which

they don't believe in since we they are true feminists and view gender as one way to analysis

society, not the only way. Mujeres Creando has never lost their initial beliefs and goals and has

only learned from them and expanded them. Maria Posada explained to me,

> "Si te das cuenta nosotras no somos un grupo feminista que tratamos temas de mujeres. Nosotras trabajamos la sociedad, con mujeres y desde mujeres"

> [If you think about it, we are not a feminist group that deals with the subject of women. We work the society, with women and by women]

Mujeres Creando objective is to plant another model of how to live from the feminist into

society. They believe that feminist theory can be applied in practice and they want to apply their

model of life in the Bolivian society and provide another form to think, see and live.

Mujeres Creando are radical feminists who believe that men and women cannot work

together because they believe that men and women will always have different agendas, so it

would make no sense to work together. When I asked Maria Posada if Mujeres Creando worked

with men, she gave me the example of a slave and a slave owner, as well as an employer and the

boss, who in both situations have opposing needs and wants. They do not believe that men and

women are necessarily enemies, but they believe that men cannot understand the women's

struggle and women need to live and fight their own struggles without the interference or

manipulation of men. Mujeres Creando do not even ask for the support of men, they just want

men to leave women alone to live and fight their own struggles. Maria Posada elaborated,

> "Las Condiciones son tan diferentes en una sociedad patriarcal como lo nuestra q nosotras tenemos decir lo nuestro y ellos lo suyo. No podemos mezclarnos. Porque cuando se mezcla siempre acabamos diciendo lo suyo. Es absurdo. Entonces ahí nosotras necesitamos que ellos reconsideren su situación de privilegio, pero nosotras no se lo vamos a hacer. Nosotras no somos sus madres. Más adelante es su problema, nosotras tenemos lo nuestro"

[The circumstances are just so different in a patriarchal society like ours, that we have to say what we think and they can say what they want. We cannot get involved one with another. Because when we do, we always end up saying what they want. It's absurd. So we need them to reconsider their privileged status, but we will not do it for them. We are not their mothers. From then onwards, it's their problem, we have got our own]

Because of their radical feminists belief in addition to their anti-neoliberal stance, it is anticipated that Mujeres Creando do not support NGOs, especially international NGOs and including NGOs with feminist agendas. Galindo explains that NGOs have helped spread feminism, but they have also brought negative changes. She describes negative changes such as how NGOs have become a completely institutionalized system that is based on hierarchies and bureaucracy. As Romano put it, NGO's domesticate feminism and makes feminism easier to swallow. In addition, she explains how Mujeres Creando hates "gender technocrats" which is a term they have invented to describe the women who work for NGOs that are considered experts and specialist in the field of women and use standardized and widely accepted terms such as gender and empowerment. Also, NGOs have donor based funding, so they believe, notions of autonomy and cooperation with other organizations have been lost. NGOs also accept funding from international financial institutions encouraging an imperialistic relationship.

Furthermore Mujeres Creando prides themselves on their anti-discriminatory practices and accepts women from all ethnicities, cultures, religions, classes, and women with different sexual preferences. Maria Posada described Mujeres Creando as,

"Nosotras somos todas heterogéneas. Y tan heterogéneas Q somos tan diferentes, que unas apoyamos a las otras. Entonces la lesbiana apoya a la casada, la q ha sido novicia cristiana católica apoya a la atea. L atea apoya a la lesbiana, la lesbiana a la bisexual, es decir a tan alianza entre todas nosotras que nos hace más fuertes. Más fuertes que si fuéramos todas profesionales, todas de la misma carera universitaria. A nosotras nos gusta la diferencia de edad de sexo de acción sexual, de todo.

[We are all heterogeneous. We are all so different and yet we support each other. So, the lesbian supports the married, the newly baptized Christian catholic supports the atheist.

The atheist supports the lesbian; the lesbian does so with the bisexual and so on. In other words, there is such an alliance between all of us that makes us even stronger. Much stronger than if we all shared the same professional or academic background]

Maria Posada ended this discussion by saying that the only thing Mujere Creando women have in common is that they are all rebels and that they all have rebelled in a certain way for our society.

a) Political Views

Mujeres Creando are anarchists in the true sense of the word; they do not believe in a governmental system. Mujeres Creando is an ideal case study of a grassroots organization because since they do not believe in the government, they will not work with the government. As a result, they do not get involved in formal politics in any way. Paredes explains,

We don't believe substantive change can be made within the political systems in place, because they are inherently patriarchal. This is why, as a movement, we maintain ideological and economic autonomy from the state. We believe the base structures and forms must first be changed themselves. (Day, 2008)

They believe that working within or through the state is pointless since the state on its own is a problem as it was created on patriarchal and discriminatory bases: "true democracy, according to las Mujeres Creando, occurs in the street, which is why they skirt electoral politics to engage directly with society" (Day, 2008).

Even though Mujeres Creando do not get involved or participate in politics, they still express their thoughts and opinions on politics and criticize the Bolivian government every chance they get. As Maria Posada stated, "nosotras tenemos muchas críticas y además creemos que hay q hacerlas" [We are very opinionated, and we also believe that we need to express these opinions] Mujeres Creando have thoroughly expressed their dissatisfaction and disliking of Evo Morales and MAS. Galindo regularly calls President Morals' bluff and questions his intentions as an indigenous, women-friendly president since he continues to follow and not challenge

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patriarchal and machismo norms. Galindo gives the example of how indigenous women in the government are expected to dress in comparison to the men:

> [The MAS] use ponchos, suits, or sports jackets and they choose their clothes with the liberty that patriarchal societies prohibit women, and above all those that are called indigenous, and who, for that reason, have to carry their cultural identity on their hips and backs, undrawing their curves in the use of masculine mandates. (Day, 2008)

Galindo wrote an article called "Evo Morales and the Phallic Decolonization of the Bolivian State" where she clearly lays out her dissatisfaction with the MAS government and makes some suggestions. She is dissatisfied with how the MAS government decided to restructure the state. According to Galindo, MAS' restructuring of the state was done for the sole purpose of guaranteeing MAS hold on power. She critiques how after the restructuring there is no possibility of direct representation of social movements, forcing social movements to align themselves with MAS in order to have a chance of representation in the government. She also criticizes MAS' attempt at gender mainstreaming by enforcing gender quotas within the government. She asserts that these gender quotas are continuing the use of neoliberal methods to increase the representation of women based on a biological quota, which inhibits any form of alliance among women since every woman is rotated with a man based on the gender alternations MAS enacted (Galindo, 2006, 325). In addition, Galindo points out that since the quota focuses on gender instead of the candidates' ideology or political stance, any women will represent all women no matter what her ideology or political stance might be. Galindo also condemns the MAS government for their andino-centrism way of thinking, she states:

> Our society is not a society of pure, original, indigenous people versus undesirable whitish mestizos. It is much more complex than that; it is a society where, like in every society in the world, there are no pure, nor static, nor territorial cultures. It is a society, like every society in the world, made of mixes and crossbreedings, many of them even forced crossbreedings. (Galindo 2006, 329)

Based on this final critique, her first recommendation is that the MAS government and Bolivians should question the rise of nationalism. Next, she insists that Bolivia should be a secular state and completely separate itself from the church. Galindo is against having a religious state like Bolivia because religion seeps through every aspect of Bolivian society such as in school where religious classes are taught. Galindo wants religious classes to be replaced with secular sexual education where students are given the right to know their bodies. To Galindo the worst part of Bolivia being a religious state is the inheritance of the Judeo-Christian concept of family in the constitution and in all legislations. She stresses the need for the removal of the Judeo-Christian concept of family, which is based on patriarchy. She calls for the reconceptualization of the concept of family to correctly represent all the multiple and complex forms families appears in society.

> This opens the doors for the recognition of all forms of 'free bonds' that exist outside the State, those beautiful and uncommon forms that make possible freedom in love and the construction of affective and solidary togetherness. This includes, of course, partnerships between men and between women, communal bonds between mothers, daughters, sons, grandmother, aunt, uncle; bonds whose complexity widens without impositions, without models, and, above all, without imposing sufferings, lacks or absences upon those who have the right to grow and live with affection and freedom. (Galindo, 2006, 330)

Furthermore, once the concept of family is reconceptualized there will be a restoring of rights given to those families that supposedly lack 'a father', which dignifies them before the law and society (ibid, 330). She continues, by stating that society has imposed maternity on women and has made maternity the purpose of women's lives, yet men are still the ones that society sees as the one who legitimizes maternity. Even though mothers are the ones who get pregnant and give birth, the fathers are the ones with the authority to grant the child a place in society. Galindo wants mothers to be the ones that have the authority to grant the child a place in society and appeals for children to have the mothers last name as the first of the two last names (In Latino

culture, children get both their fathers and mothers last name but the fathers last name always comes first and is the name that society associates the child with). Galindo expresses the importance of women having the right to make all decisions when it comes to their bodies, which includes the right to abortions. She adds, "the recovery of women's sovereignty over their bodies is a wider concept than the mere decriminalization of abortion" and that specific regulations need to be enforced to ensure women's rights. Finally, Galindo voices her disapproval of the mandatory military service in Bolivia for all men (women can volunteer), since the military reproduces and promotes a patriarchal culture. She suggests that instead of military service, men and women should have the option of doing social service, which would challenge the notion of what it means to be serving society.

b) Grassroots Work

Mujeres Creando considers themselves a movement, since they want to completely transform Bolivian society, and since they do believe the means to transformation lies within the state, they have come up with multiple grassroots strategies. When I asked Maria Posada what were their strategies she replied,

> "Nosotras no trabajamos con estos conceptos. De misión, visión eso es muy ONG. Nosotras tenemos un discurso muy anti-ONG"

> [We do not work with these concepts. Of mission, vision; that is very NGO-like. We follow a very anti-NGO discourse]

Instead she outlined some of the services Mujeres Crenando offers. Mujeres Creando work out of a large pinkish-red house, which they have called La Virgen de los Deseos (Virgin of Desires). In this house, they have their offices, their radio station, their library, their café/restaurant, lodging. They have an open door policy where women come on a daily basis to have some tea or eat lunch. They host many events that are open to the public such as

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discussions, workshops and documentary screenings. At La Virgen de los Deseos, Mujeres Creando offers women legal help, moral support and shelter to women who cannot afford it on their own or who have nowhere else to go. Maria Posada explained that unlike NGOs, Mujeres Creando have a horizontal relationship with the women they work with,

> "Las mujeres que vienen aquí saben que no las vamos a usar y saben y no las vamos a usar de escalera para nada. Entonces vienen sabiendo que nosotras ponemos el cuerpo y mañana seguimos poniendo el cuerpo por otras… no no vamos a estar diciendo entonces que si te apoyo a tienes que ayudar nos con un proyecto"

> [The women that come to us know that we will not use them, and know that we will not take advantage of them at all. So you come knowing that we are entirely committed, and that we will continue to be committed for other women. No, we will not say that if we support you, we will turn you into a project]

Because of this charitable service, Mujeres Creando has gained a lot of respect throughout Bolivian society since they take in women and help women whom society has turned its backs. La Virgen de los Deseos also functions as a refuge for people suffering of social stigmas concerning their sexual orientation. Ultimately, La Virgen de los Deseos is "a communal-space where women create, where women denounce sexism, racism and homophobia in their lives, and on the airwaves" (Day, 2008).

In addition to Mujeres Creando's house of support, education and sanctuary, three of the most effective ways they reach out to the public is through their radio programs, their graffiti and their protests. As the reporter Angela Day describes: "they consistently occupy public spaces with graffiti campaigns and political actions that range from provocative demonstrations to theatrical performances- often confrontational, and always creative" (Day, 2008). Starting with their radio programs, located in La Virgen de los Deseos, the radio station's purpose is to discuss all things feminism and their most popular radio program is hosted by an indigenous woman whose radio show is based on calling out and putting to shame men who have wronged their

wives or children. Once a week, name of host, calls out a list of men's full names and explains what each man is being "convicted" for whether it be for not paying child support, cheating on their wives or beating their wives. This show is so popular whether it is because people find it funny or enjoy the juicy gossip; it has listeners that are not even supporters of Mujeres Creando. They also have radio programs that teach aymara, discuss religion, culture, economics, politics, etc. On their website they outline their radio station's criteria.

"La radio esta abierta a toda propuesta radial que tengan como base:
no al machismo ni la misoginia,
no a la homofobia,
no al racismo, no al clasismo,
respeto al aborto y
respeto a las mujeres en situación de prostitución" (Radio Deseo's website).

[The radio is open to any radial proposal which is based:
 not on sexism or misogyny,
not on homophobia,
not on racism, or classism,
on the respect for abortion
on the respect for women in prostitution]

Next, what Mujeres Creando is most well known for is their famous graffiti all over La Paz. In a city that is full of graffiti, Mujeres Creando has managed to make their graffiti stand out, resulting in their graffiti being noticed by anybody who ever steps foot in La Paz. The reason their graffiti stands out is because their graffiti are radical feminist quotes that consists of harsh language that capture anybody's attention that can read Spanish. An example of these quotes is,

"Para todos los sistemas
De machos y fachos
La mujer es una puta
Mueran los sistemas
Vivan las putas" (Garcia-Pabon, 2003, 242).

[To all the systems
of men and fascists,

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a woman is a whore.
Down with the system,
long live the whores]

You can see more examples of their graffiti in Appendix A. When I asked Maria Posada about

the graffiti she said,

> "El grafiti es para tirar una provocación a nuestra sociedad. Que nuestra sociedad nos
> devuelva lo que piensa. Entonces para nosotras es como una pizarra en una escuela. Para
> nosotras es como la televisión…para nosotras la tele es como una ventana que entra en
> las ventanas del todo el mundo. Entonces nosotras queremos entrar en esa ventana,
> queremos decir lo que pensamos"

> [Graffiti is a way to provoke our society, so that our society may revert what they think.
> So for us, it is like a chalkboard at a school. For us is like a television. For us television
> is like a window that allows us to enter in all the other windows of the world. So we
> want to enter that window, we want to say what we want]

But their use of graffiti is not only for attention grabbing: "the graffiti of Mujeres Creando are

not simply a way to call for a political propaganda or to look for attention on certain matters, and

themselves. There is a reason behind their creation and usage" (Garcia-Pabon, 243, my

translation). Mujeres Creando want to show that politics may exist and look differently than what

society is accustomed to and that people should allow themselves to think outside of political

party (the right and the left) limitations. Most importantly, their graffiti works to introduce

feminism as a political and social model to Bolivian society. Furthermore, Mujeres Creando

refers to their graffiti as "grafiteadas" which is a combination of graffiti and paintings to show

that there is much more to their graffiti then just its aesthetic appeal, they have a social

movement behind them.

Furthermore, Mujeres Creando gets a lot of publicity for their creative and bold protests

and demonstrations. Maria Galindo has on numerous occasions stripped naked in public during a

protest. Muejres Creando often does protest on topics such as abortion, domestic abuse and rape.

Two of their most political successful protests was on the a microcredit issue back in 1996 that

lasted 100 days and the other was a hunger strike demanding the impeachment of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada with more than 400 people in 2003. These examples show how influential Mujeres Creando can be and how successful they are at organizing and gathering support for causes from Bolivian society who might support Mujeres Creando or not. Maria Posada told me about one of their recent protests where they put five naked men on the streets in a public area with a dressed prostitute and a bed at eleven am. They purposely put the focus on the men and everyone was looking at the men since they were the ones that were naked. They put the focus on the men because they believe that the problem of prostitution lies on the men who go to prostitutes, not the prostitutes. Everyone in Bolivia spoke about this protest for a week straight, mainly because of the naked men; there are many women who had never seen a penis before even being married and having children. At this protest, they started discussions such as "what is a naked man? Who is a man who goes to prostitutes? Does your husband go to prostitutes or does not?"

Mujeres Creando clearly explain their dissatisfaction with the government, NGOs and institutionalized feminism. They propose a complete reformat of society based on anarchic, radical and feminist beliefs. They have successfully infiltrated Bolivian society and have succeeded in making change for women by acting as a purely grassroots organization. I will further analyze Mujeres Creando and their strategies to make change for women in my analysis section. My next case study challenges Mujeres Creando by combining both grassroots work and the law to make change for women.

iii.   *Coordinadora de La Mujer*

The Coordinadora de La Mujer (Coordinator of Women or the Coordinadora) was established in 1986 and is a non-governmental organization that is partnered with 26 non-

governmental organizations from all over Bolivia. In the 1980s, out of a United Nations

Populations Fund (UNDP) project lead to the creation of the Coordinadora. The factors that

instigated the Coordinadora's establishment were: the lack and instability of addressing the

problems of women, the lack of policies on the subject of women at the government level, the

emergence of various government agencies that are interested in working directly or indirectly

on the subject of women (The Coordinadora's website). From the Coordinadora's establishment,

their work has been aimed at society and the State, which is what makes them the ideal case

study as they show us how the law and grassroots efforts can be combined to successfully make

change for women by women.

The Coordinadora is a proud feminist organization with a clear feminist agenda: to

improve the position of women in Bolivia in all aspects politically, economically and socially.

The Coordinadora uses the law as their main tool to achieve their agenda but before proposing

any law changes, they conduct research and consult with their partner organizations. So instead

of having a top down decision making process where the elite, politicians or men create laws, the

Coordinadora brings a down top decision making process where they get the opinions and

feedback from women to create laws. So the laws the Coordinadora proposes laws that women

want and are asking for. How does the Coordinadora know what women want and are asking

for? The answer is what makes the Coordinadora a unique organization that has managed to

break the intricate class and ethnic barriers in Bolivia. And the answer is in the Coordinadora's

official mission statement:

> Promote dialogue and encounter between various women's organizations at the prospect
> of contributing to the construction of a plural and diverse women's movement, based on
> programmatic agreements and strategic alliances that consider the diversity of class,
> ethnicity, gender and generational order to overcome the subordination, discrimination,
> exclusion and poverty experienced by women in the context of the transformation of
> power relations in society. (The Coordinadora's website)

One can see in their mission statement, the Coordinadora has taken it upon themselves to organize women from all types of different backgrounds to make alliances and work together, which they have done successfully. Their list of their twenty-six affiliates, as they like to call them, is quite diverse and includes indigenous organizations, feminist organizations, mining organizations, research institutions, educational institutions, political organizations, farmer organizations, banking institution, and women's shelter (Please refer to Appendix D on page 90). The Coordinadora mainly works with twelve out of the twenty-six organizations who have shown commitment for the past eight years. The only thing this diverse list of organizations have in common is that they are all made up of women. Some of the affiliates consider themselves feminists and some, mainly the indigenous ones, do not, yet this does not stop the Coordinadora from seeking out their partnership. The Coordinadora has managed to organize these women to come together and accept and move past their differences and focus on their shared goals of wanting to improve the lives of women in Bolivia. Each affiliate brings their own perspectives and gives the Coordinadora a well-rounded understanding of what Bolivian women want and need. When I asked my interviewee, Natalia Sallangos[15], isn't it hard to get women with different perspectives to agree on something? She responded,

> "Es difícil, pero existe un elemento central en la construcción de esta articulación q es q nos concentramos en los temas que pueden hacer una agenta común. En el caso de participación violencia y política es muy claro. No hay visiones muy diferentes en eso. Puede haber ciertas resistencias que ver más con una argumentación relacionada, lo que significa una sociedad patriarcal, una visión más feminist"

> [It is hard, but there is an important element in the creation of this collaboration, which is concentrating on matters that can generate a common agenda. When it comes to issues such as violence and politics, it is clear. There are not very different views on that. There might be some resistance on discussions on topics such as what is a patriarchal society, what is feminism]

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[15] Pseudo name

The Coordinadora has succeeded in breaking down the class and ethnic barriers by following three simple principles: multiculturalism, interclass solidarity and autonomy. The Coordinadora does not go as far as being ethnocentric in which ethnicity and culture comes above all, and they definitely do now believe in essentialism in which culture is seen in a negative way and is blamed for standing in the way of attaining rights. Instead the Coordinadora had found a comfortable middle ground, which they call multiculturalism. They propose multiculturalism as an alternative to ethnocentrisms and essentialism in which they are able to build a horizontal dialogue between different cultures, which is based on the recognition of full citizenship for all members of Bolivian society while respecting their cultural differences (The Coordinadora's website). Next, interclass solidarity is the understanding that:

> Women from different sectors and classes can achieve partnerships and exchange knowledge and skills within a reciprocal relationship between the organizations, institutions and individuals, to a new form of democratic relationship, leading to common and shared commitments around the same goal. (The Coordinadora's website)

Finally, each affiliate has social, political and economic autonomy, which gives the Coordinadora and all affiliates the opportunity to grow as individuals and as a collective. When I asked Natalia Sallangos how they succeed in accomplishing these principles with a diverse group of women? She responded,

> "En este proceso habido un erfrezo de construir confianza. Entonces ellas saben bien los que pensamos nosotras. Pero nosotras no podemos intervenir en sus definiciones políticas. Somos respetuosas de la dinámica de cada organización, nosotras no vamos a Imponer nuestra visión. Los que si vamos a generar son espacios de discusión, sobre estos temas"

> [Through this process there has been an effort to create trust. So they know very well how we think. But we cannot intervene with their political definitions. We respect the dynamics of each organization; we will not impose our opinion. What we are going to do is generate space for discussion, based on these matters]

She added that, the Coordinadora has now been working with these organizations for at least eight years, so they all know each other and know how to work together and know which topics they will be successful at creating a common agenda. She stressed the importance of being comfortable and says the key is good communication and transparency.

a) **Agenda and Strategies**

With a mission as broad as "improving the lives of women" the Coordinadora focus on nine central themes. The first theme is democratic and political participation, which consists of ensuring 50 percent of representation of women in the government and the attempt to democratize the Bolivian government so there is a fair distribution of power and decision-making is made through democratic means. The second theme falls under housework, which includes the sharing of household responsibilities between men and women and the right for stay-at-home mothers to be compensated by the state for their domestic work. The third theme is citizenship and women's rights where women's rights must be enforced in every aspect of society including the private and public sphere and on all levels including communal, local and national. The fourth theme is development and gender equity that includes research, generating proposals and monitoring projects that have a gender perspective. The fifth theme is access to ownership and inheritance of land, which ensures that there are policies that protect women regardless of their marital status. The sixth theme is migration that includes the promotion and defense of the rights of migrant women. And the final three themes are justice, sexual violence, and sexual and reproductive rights that includes women to have autonomy over their own bodies, to make their own sexual and reproductive decisions including the decision on their sexuality, access to sexual and reproductive health, access to contraception and the recognition of diverse gender identities.

Even though the Coordinadora has 26 affiliates, they mainly work with 12 of them on a regular basis. With 12 affiliates to organize and nine general areas to work in, the Coordinadora has come up with strategic ways to accomplish their mission. Their first strategy is to conduct research on the reality of women's lives in Bolivia, to identify the progress and setbacks of women's rights, to generate reports on violation of women's rights, to redefine conceptual and practical notions from the perspective of the women, to have data to be used for advocacy and for diagnostic purposes. Their second strategy is to build an agenda with specific policies to target the problem. This agenda building is done in partnership with their 12 affiliates and the agenda they construct is aimed at influencing society as a whole from the household, to the communal, to the local and national. Natalia Sallangos explained,

> "Recojemos todas la preocupaciones de las organizaciones de mujeres. Las trabajamos en una propuesta, se revisa la propuesta, se aprueba y se hacen acciones de incidencia política"

> [We gather all the concerns of the women's organizations. We create a proposal, the proposal is then reviewed, and approved and then necessary political actions are taken]

When I asked who actually writes the proposals, Natalia Sallangos responded, "we write the proposals; we have a pool of consultants depending on the topics. If we are pushing for the criminal code then we try to find some feminist advocates or feminist lawyers to write the proposal" Their third strategy is to advocate the agenda publicly through as many mediums as possible. Advocacy is a crucial step since the Coordinadora believe that society has a direct affect on if a law will get passed or not, so they need to get the people's support before they propose their policies to the government. When I asked if the Coordinadora believes if the law changes the people or the people changes the law, Natalia Sallangos explained:

> "Both ways, because if you have a very progressive framework then you're going to be able to change some things in society, but the other way too, because of the laws that have changed, even in the discourse level, you can tell anyone here in Bolivia, even if

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you're indigenous or if you're a women, you can get to a very high position in the government, and they will believe you because they can see that there are female are senators, congresswomen, women ministries, and even our president is indigenous so they will believe you because they have seen it. In a very discursive level, but its changing minds. The mindset has already started to change and that's is how we can change public policies and laws"

Furthermore their advocacy efforts will benefit the policy changes in the long run as once people know a law they will make more efforts to enforce it and seek justice if it has been violated. Finally, their fourth strategy is to present their agenda and propose their policies to the government where with some lobbying efforts their policies can be turned into law.

Finally when I asked about the Coordinadora's grassroots efforts, Natalia Sallangos clarified:

"We don't because we work on the national level, on the advocacy strategy, but they do, on their own, they do grassroots work, bartolinas sisa once the law on violence against women was passed, we worked with the organizations and they were trying to disseminate the law, and we have developed some materials, so they can do it, but we don't do it so they do it by themselves…we can bring or build some tools for them"

b) Bartolinas Sisa

One of the grassroots organizations the Coordinadora is partnered with is the Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa (the Bartolina Sisa National Federation of Bolivian Peasant Women or Las Bartolinas). The partnership between COORDINADORA and the Bartolinas is such an important one because the Bartolinas are the strongest and largest women's movement in Bolivia giving the Coordinadora access to a larger population. In addition, the Bartolinas are very well connected with the MAS government adding more connections to the Coordinadora's network.

Las Bartolinas was established in the early 1980s as a branch of a popular indigenous peasant union called Confederación Sindical Unida de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (the Sole Trade Union Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia, or CSUTCB). Initially, the

Bartolinas was created to accompany and support the men in the indigenous struggle for land, democracy and autonomy, but grew to include a more gender specific agenda such as protecting women against violence. Another important gender specific objective was to support women's decision-making power in the 'father' organization since many peasant women were illiterate and did not have land ownership, which were reasons used to exclude them from union politics. In addition, peasant women were often left in charge of the household and children, which made it very hard for them to ever seek leadership positions in the union (Rousseau, 2011, 17). Las Bartolinas is to the present day one of the only all female and all indigenous organizations in Bolivia.

Since it was established, Las Bartolinas had been torn between becoming autonomous, in other words becoming an independent organization rather than a branch of CSUTCB or remain a branch of CSUTCB. Even though some of the leaders of the Bartolinas attempted to become an independent organization due to the sexist ideology and patriarchal structure of CSUTCB, but they did not succeed as it was seen as too controversial and lost many members because of it. The Bartolinas made an official decision in 2004 to "stay with their brothers in the struggle for decolonization" and now represents the largest women's movement with more than 100,000 members (Monasterios, 2007, 36).

Furthermore the partnership between the Coordinadora and Las Bartolinas is a perfect example of the Coordinadora's ability to work with women from different backgrounds, as well as with women who in theory have opposing views. Even with a gender specific agenda, the Bartolinas explicitly declare that they are not feminists and support gender complementarity. They view feminism as a conflict against men, which does not work for them as they view men as their partners against colonialisms. Furthermore they believe that their understanding of

gender complementarity is very different to the western understanding of gender equality. They believe that motherhood and domestic work do not oppose active citizenship; in principle women do not have to choose one or the other. They believe in women's political participation and leadership, women's equal access to education and women's right to work and earn an income (Rousseau, 2011, 18).

c) Mujeres Presentes

An example that illustrates the Coordinadora's work and their impressive abilities of breaking down barriers between women and making change for women by women is through their Mujeres Presentes project. In 2006, after President Morales was elected and there were talks and plans for a rewritten constitution. The Coordinadora took it upon themselves to find out what Bolivian women wanted to be in the new constitution. They organized over four hundred workshops and meetings throughout the country and calculated over twenty-five thousand women participants who represented one thousand organizations to create a comprehensive proposal.

In the beginning of the proposal, they introduce themselves as el Moviemento Mujeres Presentes en la Historia (the Movement of Women who are Present in History, Mujeres Presentes for short) and state their purpose, which is to participate in the construction of a new Bolivia. Mujeres Presentes declared that they consider themselves unique because they have shared their dreams and suffering to construct a proposal that expresses their diversity. They continue by stating that that have left their "individual interests aside, and that more than 25 thousand women from all kinds of fields, east or west, from urban or rural areas, agree and create a comprehensive and an all-inclusive proposal" (MP, my translation). They end their introduction by expressing that thousands of women have come together to create a vision of a

country with more equality for all women and men, and that it is "important that the State and society work together and take actions towards guaranteeing that us women will form a constituent part of the changes the country requires" (MP, my translation).

Mujeres Presentes successfully produced a comprehensive proposal that had articles under themes such as: equity and affirmative action, equality and nondiscrimination, equal pay for equal value, recognition of domestic work, women's sexual and reproductive rights, women's equal rights to land ownership and inheritance, nonsexist language in the new constitution and the constitutional recognition of international human rights treaties. Mujeres Presentes also embodies Bolivia's decolonization and depatriachalization political context as it was established after Evo Morales' election and its purpose was to include the participation of women in creation of a new Bolivia.

iv.   Analysis

When it comes to answering the questions how can women make change for women? Bolivia presents us with different strategies. Each strategy is valid and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. I will analyze each strategy through my case studies. Participation? represents law and shows how the use of law is a strategy to make change for women. Mujeres Creado represents grassroots efforts and shows how grassroots efforts are a strategy to make change for women. Coordinadora de la Mujer represents a combination of both law and grassroots efforts and shows how the both combined is a strategy to make change for women. My analysis will discuss the strengths and weakness of all three strategies and examine which strategy is the most successful.

i. Law

The first strategy is change through law as my case study on Participación Popular represents. Participación Popular was indeed the first Bolivian legislation to call for gender equality and was commended by feminists all over the world. It succeeded in incorporating women into politics in less traditional areas. It also succeeded in paving the way for other gender-mainstreaming legislation to be passed and brought attention to women's situation in Bolivia and stimulated research. But as I examined in my case study, Participación Popular failed to truly incorporate women, especially indigenous women, into politics for multiple reasons, however they all revolve around the theme of neoliberalism. Participación Popular was passed during Bolivia's neoliberal period, which greatly influence who was involved in creating the law, the language in the law, who the law affected and who was responsible for implementing the law.

Participación Popular is an evident product of institutionalized feminism, which is an outcome of neoliberal. The political actors that were involved in creating the law were NGOs, mostly international NGOs such as, the United Nations, World Bank, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who follow neoliberal principles, the language used in the law was standardized gender mainstreaming language that stems from the universalizing criteria of the United Nations that most NGOs use and finally the government completely depended on NGOs to help implement the law. All these criteria help explain why the law failed by not affecting the majority of the population since neoliberal policies including the ones concerning women have a "one size fits all" approach that does not take into account the culture and socio-economic situations of countries.

One of the reasons Participación Popular was a failure was because it was created by the government with the help of most international NGOs and excluded society from the law-making process; it was a top down law, where the top (the government) imposed this law on the people. The government should have not assumed that the society was ready to implement a law like Participación Popular and should have conducted research to see what society needed in order for Participación Popular to be successfully implemented. Or at the very least the government should have consulted with mostly domestic NGOs who understand Bolivia's culture and socio-economic situation instead of international NGOs who have an outsider perspective and might not fully comprehend Bolivia's situation.

Furthermore Participación Popular was only a starting point for promoting women's rights in Bolivia. The government has succeeding in passing a law that gives the right for women to be politically active, but the government must delve deeper and work on making sure women have the opportunity to use that right. The government must work on changing structural problems and offer mechanisms to integrate women into politics, as well as support women's movements that challenge patriarchy. A lot more research and analysis needed to be done before passing Participación Popular to understand the structural problems that are preventing women to be politically active because a "one size fits all" policy does not work, especially in countries with deep seated divisions of ethnicity and class like Bolivia. For example, women "have become the "targets" of neoliberal-development policies; policies that assume women have endless amounts of time and flexibility to participate in development projects" (Lind, 230).

Finally, a lot more work needed to be done at the grassroots level such as advocacy and workshops in order for a law like Participación Popular to successfully affect the majority of the population. Since Participación Popular was a product of institutionalized feminism, the people

involved in creating the law, the government and international NGOs, prioritized the law above grassroots work and did not have a plan for grassroots work. The government created Participación Popular as a development project, but they did not have any plans over how to implement the projects after they passed the law. Since the government did not have a plan, it completed depended on NGOs to do the grassroots work for Participación Popular, and since NGOs are situated in specific areas, mostly urban areas, only the municipalities where the NGOs were situated benefitted. As a result, the municipalities in urban areas that needed the least help benefitted and the municipalities in the rural areas that need the most help received no help since NGOs were not around.

ii. Grassroots

The second strategy is change through grassroots work as my case study on Mujeres Creando represents. Mujeres Creando is a purely grassroots organization that refuses to work with the government. Mujeres Creando does not waste their efforts, as they would put it, with the government, the law or politics because they believe patriarchy is so deeply embedded in them. Instead they propose a complete transformation of society and they believe the most effective way to achieve the transformation is through grassroots efforts.

In other words, Mujeres Creando is one of the few women's organizations left that have chosen to stick to radical feminism and not be influenced by neoliberalism, and institutionalized feminism and work outside the conventional political arena. Mujeres Creando, as mentioned earlier is extremely anti-NGOs who they believe are the products of neoliberalism, and institionalized feminism. During my interview with Romano, she explains that Mujeres Creando are anti NGOs because they have institutionalized and domesticated feminism. Mujeres Creando believe that NGOs have institutionalized and domesticated feminism because they have stripped

away the natural radicalism of feminism by trying to please and by trying to gain acceptance from civil society instead of trying transform civil society as true feminism demands. As Romano put it, NGO's make feminism easier to swallow. In addition, she explains how Mujeres Creando hates "gender technocrats" which is a term they have invented to describe the women who work for NGOs that are considered experts and specialist in the field of women and use terms such as gender and empowerment. For Mujeres Creando, Participación Popular Participación Popular is a perfect example of the work of gender technocrats since NGOs helped create it and influenced the language used which followed the universalizing criteria of NGOs.

Mujeres Creandos do impressive grassroots work and have undoublty affected many people's lives; they have supported women and given shelter to women in need, educated anyone who will listen, sent out feminist messages to society, organized protests, held demonstrations and the list goes on. But most importantly, Mujeres Creando's strategy for change is effective because of their feminist perspective that requires a deep analysis of society from all sides. Mujeres Creando do not only focus on gender, as true feminists, they use gender as only one theme to analyze society. Due to their feminist perspective, Mujeres Creando have fully analyzed Bolivian society, including Bolivia's historical, political and economic background, Bolivian culture, and Bolivian ethnic and class divisions, so they understand what Bolivian society needs and how their grassroots work can be successful or not.

Nonetheless Mujeres Creando's focus on effecting change through individuals is limiting. Even though Mujeres Creando want to live in an archaic state, the fact is that they do not, so without working within the state in its current form, they will not be able to change the deeper structural problems that affect the women that come to them for help. Mujeres Creando have

managed to turn some women and even some men into feminists, but they have not been able to change the discriminatory and sexist structures that affect women in their daily lives.

iii. Law and Grassroots

The third strategy is change through a combination of law and grassroots work as my case study on the Coordinadora de la Mujer represents. The Coordinadora is a Bolivian non-governmental organization that uses both the law and grassroots efforts. Even though the Coordinadora do not actually do grassroots work themselves, the 26 organizations they are partnered with are almost all grassroots organizations, so they are the ones who undertake the grassroots work. The Coordinadora is one of the few organizations in Bolivia that has managed to move past ethnic and class barriers between women. Since its establishment of the Coordinadora, it has been working as a great resource for both the Bolivian government and Bolivian society. Whenever the government has failed to put in the time, effort and money into gender equality and women's empowerment, the Coordinadora has stepped up to the challenge and has done the work for the government by conducting research, creating policies and advocating. As an NGO they have managed to infiltrate society in a way the government has not been able to do, which is by focusing on what people have in common rather than focus on what differentiates people. The example of Mujeres Presentes clearly shows how powerful this notion can be, it has the ability to bring together over twenty-five thousand women from all over the country from all different class and ethnic backgrounds to successfully produce one document. The Coordinadora can be compared to the CONG of Venezuela and the Women for Life of Chile as they are all organizations that have made it their mission to organize women without putting limitations on ideologies and political parties. These organizations have had the most success in organizing the largest amount of women. Another noteworthy characteristic of the Coordinadora

is that they do not hold any grudges towards the government, even though it can be easily said that they are doing work the government should be doing. Instead they work along side the government and take pride in being a resource for the government. They also take pride in being an intermediary between the government and society.

iv. Which is the most successful strategy and why?

I propose that the strategy that affects the most amount of people and uses the most amount of mediums would inevitably make the most change. With this in mind, I have selected four important attributes a strategy should have; the ability to create solidarity between women with different ideologies and from different ethnic and class groups, build alliances with diverse women's groups, uses numerous mediums and has autonomy. After having thoroughly analyzed Participacion Popular, I have realized that as a law it cannot be analyzed using the attributes I have selected, so the following analysis will be between Mujeres Creando and Coordinadora de la Mujer.

The most important attribute that a strategy should have when it comes to answering my research question is the attribute to organize women and create solidarity across ethnic and class barriers. Mujeres Creando and the Coordinadora both have strategies that succeed in organizing women and creating solidarity across ethnic and class barriers. However, the main and essential difference between the Coordinadora and Mujeres Creando is that the Coordinadora creates solidarity across ethnic, class and ideological barriers. The Coordinadora accepts and works with women who have different ideologies than their own, unlike Mujeres Creando who only accepts and work with women who share their ideologies, maybe not to the full extent, but Mujeres Creando do have specifications on what ideological type of women they will work with.

The second attribute is creating alliances. Mujeres Creando do not cooperate or work with other organizations. As Maria Posada admitted, "Nosotras no hacemos amigas, realmente somos bastantes difíciles, y cada ano q pasa somos más desagradables" "we do not have friends, we are truly difficult". The Coordinadora on the other hand base their strategy on creating alliances and partnerships with other organizations. Because the Coordinadora has alliances with other organizations, they have access and are able to influence a larger population of women. When I asked Natalia Sallangos if they worked with or have tried to work with Mujeres Creando, she explained that since Mujeres Creando are radical anarchic feminist who reject the state and NGOs, "we cannot work with them, they don't believe in what we do, so there is no way we can get close" and mentioned that they do work with Julietta Paredes, one of the founders of Mujeres Creando that has chosen to enter into politics and counsel the government on gender issues.

The third attribute is the use of numerous mediums to make change. The Coordinadora successfully uses the law and grassroots efforts to make change, but they are not the ones who physically do grassroots work, their affiliates do grassroots work. The Coordinadora mainly uses mediums such as research, proposal building, lobbying and advocacy. The Coordinadora have in the past organized large amounts of women to build a proposal such as with the example of Mujeres Presentes, but this case is rare and the Coordinadora mostly work with their partner organizations and not individual women. So the Coordinadora reach society mainly through their partner organizations, such as with the Bartolinas Sisa, so they are lacking the attribute of using numerous mediums since most their mediums are aimed at the government. On the contrary, Mujeres Creando, as a grassroots organization uses numerous mediums to reach and influence society such as protests, radio programs, graffiti, offering legal services and shelter, holding

discussions and workshops. Mujeres Creando have a long list of mediums they use to make change, but they are all aimed at society and individuals and ignore the government.

The fourth and final attribute is autonomy. Mujeres Creando is the only one that is completely autonomous and has based their strategy on autonomy. Mujeres Creando are proud of the fact that they are one of the few organizations that are autonomous and explain, "nosotras, no nos ata nadie, no nos muerde nadie la boca, y nosotras decimos lo que pensamos porque no le debemos nada a nadie." Mujeres Creandos autonomy allows them the freedom to be as feminists, as radicals and as anarchic as they please. They do not have to be concerned with using acceptable language, fulfilling certain quotas, lobbying, satisfying and answering to funders, receiving pressure from outside forces and the list goes on. On the contrary, the Coordinadora has minimal autonomy and have to be concerned with everything stated on the list mentioned. Since the Coordinadora has alliances with the government and other organizations; they have a responsibility to each one of their alliances. In addition, the Coordinadora receives a lot of international funding from organizations like U.N Women and countries like Spain. The Coordinadora's lack of autonomy leads them to act as "technocratic feminists" which Mujeres Creando are against.

The strategy that I believe in the most successful in the Bolivian context is the Coordinadora's strategy. Coordinadora is the only case study that truly combines law and grassroots work. Coordinadora is also the most inclusive since it bases its strategy on solidarity and alliances. Coordinadora works with everyone and anyone, from miners, to feminists, to anti-feminists to politicians and includes people throughout their entire strategic process. Mujeres Creando on the contrary excludes non-feminist women, feminist technocrats, men overall, the government and non-governmental organizations. When the government passed Participación

Popular, they did not do enough advocacy efforts to educate society on the gender

mainstreaming law, which excluded society from making the changes the law demanded.

Naturally no strategy is perfect, and the Coordinadora is lacking autonomy and the use of

multiple mediums as discussed earlier. But even with their extra challenge of needing to please

all of their alliances, they continue to successfully manage to make change for women by

women. In addition, even though they receive international funding, have an alliance with the

Bolivian government, and their mediums are mostly aimed at the governmental level, they

continue to put the needs of Bolivian women first through working with their 26 partner

organizations.

In conclusion, from the three case studies we can see that there needs to be a balance

between the law and the people, both are needed to make real change in society. Real change

meaning a change in mentalities as well as structural change. The Coodinadora is the only case

study out of the three that attempts to change both mentalities and structural change and is the

only case study that has found a balance between the law and the people.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Bolivia presents us with a specific historical and cultural context that has created

challenges that have prevented women's solidarity. As discussed in the first half of my literature

review, the divisions between women based off of ethnicity and class has existed in Bolivia since

the 1920s. Since then, it has been challenging for women to connect and work together across

ethnic and class barriers. The ethnic and class barriers are historically deep seated as women

were designated by law based on their ethnicity and class in the 1920s as senora, mujer and

indigena and these labels are still used in everyday language in the present day. Another

historical challenge to women's solidarity is Bolivia's colonial past and the hesitation of

indigenous women to become feminists due to the colonial past. The hesitation indigenous

women have to becoming feminists is an important factor that contributes to Bolivian women

being divided between feminists and non-feminists as they believe their ideological differences

makes it impossible to work together. Furthermore, Bolivian women overall, even though on

different levels, face cultural challenges that create obstacles to women making change for

women. These cultural challenges include the belief in chachawarmi and having a machismo

mentality. Even though chachawarmi is not based on gender inequality, as machismo,

nonetheless they both limit women to a certain space and to certain jobs and responsibilities,

which creates obstacles to women organizing to make any kind of change for women.

In the second half of my literature review I presented two theories, decolonization and

depatriachalization, that work to alleviate the historical and cultural challenges that prevent

women's solidarity to make change by demanding the transformation of the state and society.

Since the election of Evo Morales, Bolivia has been attempting to go through a transformation

towards decolonization and depatriachalization. I also discussed feminism in Latin American,

which explained the relationship feminism has to political parties throughout Latin America and

gave a theoretical framework to understanding my case studies. I ended my literature review by

giving examples of women's groups in Latin America that has successfully organized women to

make change for women. These examples all used different strategies that revolved around the

goal of creating women's solidarity through ethnic and class barriers. I used these examples to

create the criteria I used to analyze my case studies' strategies.

In addition to understanding Bolivia's historical and cultural context, Bolivia's political

context is essential in order to understand women's situation in the present day. In my research

section I provided Bolivia's political background since 1994 showing Bolivia's neo-liberal

history, Bolivia's transformation to socialism with the election of Evo Morales, how Evo Morales's attempted to decolonize in practice, and how the MAS government has changed the dynamics between women. The political background I provided gave the framework needed to understand each case study's political context.

The combination of Bolivia's historical, cultural and political context gave a well-rounded framework to analyze my three case studies on the law of Participacion Popular, Mujeres Creando and the Coordinadora de la Mujer. The law of Participacion Popular was created and implemented during Bolivia's neo-liberal period, which completely dictated what kind of law it would be. In my section on feminism in Latin America, there is a link between neo-liberalism and feminism that combined results in institutionalized feminism. Participacion Popular is a clear case of institutionalized feminism based on the language used, who was involved in creating it and who was responsible for its implementation. Participacion Popular also clearly shows how cultural challenges such as chachawarmi and machismo limits women's political participation. As for Mujeres Creando, they formed as a backlash to Bolivia's neo-liberalist period and were determined to uphold true feminist ideals, which is completely anti-institutionalized feminism. Since Mujeres Creando uphold feminist ideals, they are socialist by nature, reinforcing the relationship between feminism and socialism discussed in the section on feminism in Latin America. Mujeres Creando also add to the discourse on how machismo is a cultural challenged that limits women's rights. Lastly, the Coordinadora de la Mujer does not align themselves with a political party and have learned to adapt to whatever political party is in power, yet have been the most successful working alongside the MAS government. The Coordinadora de la Mujer does represent institutionalized feminism, but not to the extent as many non-governmental organizations as they mainly work with Bolivian grassroots

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organizations. The Coordinadora de la Mujer validates the change in dynamics between women with the election of Evo Morales, as stated in the section on Evo Morales and Women, as most of the 26 organizations the Coordinadora is partnered with are indigenous organizations.

Finally, the purpose of this paper was to answer the question how do women make change for women in Bolivia? After having discussed and analyzed all the challenges and obstacles that have prevented women's solidarity to make change, my case studies provided three different strategies of women can make change for women. The first strategy is through law, the second is through grassroots work and the third is through the combination of both. As discussed in my analysis section, each strategy has pros and cons, but to answer my research question, which strategies are the most successful at overcoming historical, cultural and political obstacles to advance women's rights in Bolivia? I have argued that the most successful strategy combines the use of law and grassroots efforts, has the ability to create solidarity between women, have alliances with diverse women's groups, uses numerous mediums and has autonomy. Out of my three case studies, the Coordinadora de la Mujer has shown to have the most effective strategy to make change for women by women. Nevertheless the Coordinadora de la Mujer could still learn from Mujeres Creando's strategy, as Mujeres Creando are the ones helping, educating, listening and discussing with Bolivian women on an everyday basis. I believe that Mujeres Creando would be a valuable addition to the organizations the Coordinadora de la Mujer is partnered with, but after having spoken to both organizations I do not see that happening anytime soon.

To conclude, this paper I would like to express how I believe that Bolivian women are an inspiration as they continue to pursue women's rights in a country that has been politically unstable and is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Still under these unfavorable

circumstances, Bolivian women have figured out ways to work together by bridging ethnic and class differences to make change for women not only at the governmental level, but also at the societal level. I would love to return to Bolivia for a longer period of time to conduct more in depth research on all three of the strategies I have analyzed, as well as conduct research on the depatriachalization process Bolivia has started. This is truly a fascinating time for Bolivians and I look forward to seeing what Bolivian women will achieve.

Appendix A

So would the women like to participate in the meetings?
Woman 1: Of course we would like to participate. It is just that we don't understand, for we are not used to attending meetings, that's why we don't know. If we were sure that we knew [how to behave at the meeting], we would not be fooled so easily.
Why is it you are not used to attending meetings?
Woman 1: Because we cook and wash and all these things.
Woman 2: We would really like to go, for in this way we would learn, and besides they would not fool us anymore.
Woman 3: It is because we don't know how to read, we don't know the letters, we don't understand what it says in the projects, we try but we can't.

Appendix B

The reason why I wanted to speak to the women is that they do not speak very much at the meetings.
Woman 1: That's because we are afraid of the men, because some of them laugh at us.
Yes? But why would they laugh?
Woman 2: It's because they don't listen to women at meetings.
Woman 3: Go to the health post, they say.
But then the woman does not speak?
Woman 2: We don't speak.
Woman 1: We only listen.
But if you hear something that you agree with, don't you ever speak to say so?
Woman 1: Thing is, we don't speak.
And what if there is something you don't agree with?
Woman 1: This is not a meeting for women, they say.
Who says that?
Woman 3: Well, the men do, of course.
All of them?
Woman 1: The men say to us: "You go and talk at the health post"; "You go home and cook," they also say.
Then when you speak about the community, the women do not participate?
Woman 3: Only the men speak.

Tell me about projects for women initiated by the municipality.
Man 1: There aren't any.
But have the dirigentes *never asked for any?*
Man 1: No, there is nothing.
What would you like, what do you need?
Man 1: Surely, with the municipality we are going to be better off in the communities because we see each year projects are carried out in different communities. Besides, we have other needs, like potable water and sewerage.
Man 2: Well, what we men apply for is not going to benefit just us, but also the women, because the projects include men and women.
So there is no difference between what men need and what women need?

Appendix D
(Coordinadora de la Mujer website)

Coordinadora de la Mujer affiliates:

1. Asociación de Instituciones de Promoción y Educación
2. Casa de la Mujer
3. Centro de Apoyo a la Mujer y a la Niñez
4. Centro de Capacitación y Formación Política para Mujeres
5. Centro de Capacitación e Investigación de la Mujer Campesina de Tarija
6. Centro de Capacitación y Servicio para la Integración de la Mujer
7. Centro de Desarrollo y Fomento a la Auto – Ayuda
8. Centro de Investigación y Apoyo Campesino
9. Centro de Investigación y Asesoramiento Social y Económico
10. Centro de Investigación y Educación Sexual y Reproductiva
11. Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado
12. Centro Juana Azurduy
13. Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza
14. Centro de Tecnología Intermedia
15. Coordinadora de la Mujer – Beni
16. Equipo de Comunicación Alternativa con Mujeres
17. Fundación La Paz
18. Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral
19. Instituto Politíécnico Tomás Katari
20. Mujeres en Acción
21. Organización de Mujeres Aymaras del Kollasuyo
22. Programa de Coordinación en Salud Integral
23. Progenero,
24. Pro Mujer
25. Servicios Técnicos Agropecuarios para las Mujeres

26. Taller de Historia y Participación de la Mujer.

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