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*From Christopher Columbus to Evo Morales*

Indigenous exclusion and inclusion in urban education in El Alto, Bolivia



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## **Abstract**

This thesis looks into the educational system in Bolivia, with a main focus on the implementation of intercultural and bilingual education (EIB) in the urban areas. According to the current educational reform from 1994, *Reforma Educativa*, the education in the country is supposed to be intercultural and bilingual; however, little progress has been done to achieve this in the urban schools. The reasons for this are many, and there seemed to be a combination between a vague reform, a misconception of intercultural and bilingual education being meant for rural schools only, lack of competence and commitment from the teachers and resistance from the parents.

Consequently, in the migrant city of El Alto, Aymara children do not receive the education they are entitled to. Moreover, they are deprived of their indigenous language, culture and traditions, both in the school and, for many, in the homes. The result is an already observable language and cultural shift among the migrant population. Another consequence is that the *castellanización* or forced assimilation process towards the indigenous groups continues through alienation and exclusion of their language, culture, history and knowledge. In addition, the learners seem to be victims of an oppressive, monolingual and monocultural education where they learn to listen and repeat the teachers' "Truth", rather than discuss and think critically.

However, the table seems to be turning. Bolivia, under the new president Evo Morales, is trying to challenge the Western hegemony in the country, through a counter-hegemonic educational reform that reinforces the aims to decolonize the Bolivians and re-dignify the language, culture and knowledge of the country's indigenous population. Moreover, Morales appears to be a long anticipated role model for young, urban Aymaras who grow up in alienating, Westernized surroundings with adults who distance themselves from their indigenous background. The Evo effect is both causing conflicts and tension, but also hope and pride among the young Aymara generation that now challenges 500 years of oppression and silence by speaking up and preparing for an education for liberation rather than oppression.

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**Jallalla, Bolivia! Jallalla, El Alto!**

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## Abbreviations

<b>ANKN:</b>	Alaska Native Knowledge Network
<b>AS-EP:</b>	Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez
<b>DRIP:</b>	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<b>EIB:</b>	Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (Intercultural and Bilingual Education)
<b>FDCIP:</b>	Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples
<b>GMEA:</b>	Gobierno Municipal de El Alto (the local authorities of El Alto)
<b>GRID:</b>	Global Resources Information Database
<b>HDI:</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HDR:</b>	Human Development Report
<b>HRW:</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>ILO:</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>INE:</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics)
<b>IWGIA:</b>	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
<b>LAG:</b>	Latin-Amerika gruppene (The Latin-American Groups)
<b>MANB:</b>	Misión Alianza Noruega en Bolivia (the Norwegian Mission Alliance in Bolivia)
<b>MAS:</b>	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism)
<b>MEC:</b>	Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (The Ministry of Education and Culture)
<b>MECD:</b>	Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes (The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports)
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>RB:</b>	República de Bolivia (the Bolivian Republic)
<b>RWB:</b>	Reporters Without Borders
<b>SAIH:</b>	Studentene og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpesfond (Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund)
<b>SNL:</b>	Store norske leksikon (Norwegian encyclopedia)
<b>UD:</b>	Utenriksdepartementet (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
<b>UDCD:</b>	Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity
<b>UHCHR:</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP:</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNESCO:</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNPFII:</b>	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
<b>URACCAN:</b>	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast)
<b>WB:</b>	World Bank

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# Glossary

## Spanish – English

<i>Alteñ@</i> =	A person from El Alto
<i>Asesino</i> =	Murderer
<i>Baile</i> =	Dance
<i>Bayeta</i> =	Baize or felt. In Bolivia <i>bayeta</i> is used to describe a cloth used by the Aymara males, similar to a poncho.
<i>Boliviano</i> =	The Bolivian currency. The value of 1 boliviano is slightly less than 1 NOK.
<i>Bono</i> =	Scholarship
<i>Camba</i> =	A person from the lowland
<i>Campo</i> =	The rural area
<i>Campesin@</i> =	Peasant. The word is also used about indigenous peoples, since they are mainly peasants and the peasants are mainly indigenous.
<i>Castellanización</i> =	A process of cultural and linguistic assimilation of the indigenous peoples.
<i>Castellano</i> =	Spanish. It is preferred to use the word <i>castellano</i> instead of <i>español</i> when one talks about the language in South America, since calling the language Spanish is considered a promulgation of the colonization.
<i>Chacra</i> =	A small piece of land, mainly shared by the <b>ayllu</b>
<i>Chicote</i> =	A whip
<i>Cholita</i> =	An indigenous woman who is living in the city and wearing the traditional clothing in the highland; the <i>pollera</i> and the derby hat
<i>Chuño</i> =	Freeze-dried potatoes
<i>Citadin@</i> =	People from the city
<i>Cocalero</i> =	A coca leaf farmer
<i>Colla</i> or <i>Kolla</i> =	An Aymara or Quechua person from the highland. The word is often used as an insult by the lowlanders.
<i>Criollo</i> =	Descendant from the Spanish colonizers
<i>Departamentos</i> =	Departments or counties
<i>Escuela</i> =	School

<i>Gring@</i> =	Foreigner. Originally used to describe people from the US, it is also used to describe other white foreigners.
<i>Indígen@</i> =	Indigenous
<i>Indio</i> =	Indian (but with a more negative connotation than in English)
<i>Ladino</i> =	A non-indigenous person.
<i>Ladron/ladrona</i> =	Thief or criminal.
<i>Media Luna</i> =	A half moon. The name of the lowland <i>departamentos</i> .
<i>Movimiento al socialismo</i> =	Movement Towards Socialism. Evo Morales' political party
<i>Movimiento Nación Camba</i> =	Movement for the <i>camba</i> nation. This is a radical and quite racist organization working for autonomy in the lowland and liberation from what they call the Andean state power.
<i>Normal</i> =	A teacher academy
<i>Normalista</i> =	Teachers who are educated from a teacher academy, a <i>Normal</i> .
<i>Pollera</i> =	A multi-layered skirt worn by the indigenous women in the Andean highland
<i>Pueblo</i> =	Village. But it is also understood as “community” or “people”.
<i>Revocatorio</i> =	Recall referendum
<i>Salteña</i> =	A Bolivian pastry

## Aymara- English

<b>Amauta</b> or <b>Amawta</b> =	Wiseman or Andean scholar
<b>Ayllu</b> =	An organized community
<b>Ayni</b> =	An Aymara value that means “to give and receive”. <b>Ayni</b> is a form for mutual help and way of working in reciprocity.
<b>Challar</b> =	To sprinkle with liquids. People spill some of their drinks on the ground as an offering to the <b>Pachamama</b> .
<b>Ch’ama</b> =	Ability
<b>Ist’aña</b> =	Listen
<b>Kamisaraki</b> =	How are you?
<b>Kakuy</b> =	A bird (the name has a Quechua origin)
<b>Machaq mara</b> =	Aymara New Year
<b>Pachamama</b> =	Mother Cosmos, also called Mother Earth
<b>Tarka</b> =	An Andean flute, similar to the recorder.
<b>Tarquedada</b> =	Aymara folk music
<b>Wajta</b> or <b>Waxta</b> =	An Andean ritual where offerings are made to <b>Pachamama</b> . Preferably under the supervision of a <b>yatiri</b> , a small plate is being filled with sweets and figures (money, cars, houses etc), herbs and an animal fetus, preferably a llama. This plate is sprinkled with alcohol before it is set on fire and the smoke goes up to the Mother Cosmos. The <b>wajta</b> ritual is known as <i>la mesa</i> , the table.
<b>Waliki</b> =	I am fine!
<b>Waqui</b> =	An Andean institution of solidarity.
<b>Wawanaca</b> =	Children
<b>Wimpala</b> =	The Aymara flag.
<b>Wiraxucha</b> =	Pan-Andean deity. The highest god of the Incas.
<b>Yatiri</b> =	Andean priest.

(Sources: Estermann, 2006; Yampara Mamani & Calanca, 2007)

# Map of Bolivia

Research sites:  
El Alto and  
La Paz



# 1 Introduction

*There is no neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Shaul, 1970/1996: 16).*

In Bolivia the educational system has been used to oppress, exclude, exploit and "civilize" the indigenous peoples since the colonial times. However, today the country seems to be in a limbo between conformity and transformation. My intention with this thesis is to account for how these political and ideological changes are affecting one urban school in the city of El Alto. The reason why I picked this topic and this location was partly to unite my own interests in the topics of languages, culture and indigenous empowerment. Moreover, I found that El Alto provided an interesting setting for my investigation. The city on the one hand has been a key area for indigenous rights movements in the last decades, yet on the other hand it is the city that people move to in order to escape their indigenous background and instead participate in the modern, Westernized way of life. With this tug-of-war between shame and pride, surrender and resilience, tradition and modernity, El Alto is an exciting ideological battlefield between the former and the new leaders of the country.

I will start this introduction chapter with a presentation of the core concepts that will be used in the discussions. Thereafter I will introduce the social and political situation of Bolivia, in order to display the tense context in which the investigations have taken place, and also to underpin the importance of and challenges toward the implementation of a de facto intercultural and bilingual education (EIB) in the country. After a brief presentation of my focus group, the Aymaras, and my research site, El Alto, I will further discuss the relevance of the thesis together with the research objectives and research questions.

## 1.1 Introduction of core concepts

### 1.1.1 Interculturalism

In Latin America today there is a preference for using the term interculturality and interculturalism rather than multiculturalism (Postero, 2004). The difference is that

(w)hile multiculturalism implies numerous cultures each deserving equal treatment, interculturality signals a more interactive process of mutual recognition of diversity, cultural difference, and especially linguistic difference (Postero, 2004: 209).

Interculturalism is an interactive process beyond just hearing about other cultures, but also sharing, dialoging and mutually influencing people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Postero, 2007). The draft Constitution of Bolivia (Republica de Bolivia (RB), 2007)<sup>1</sup> emphasizes the value and importance of interculturalism and defines it as

the instrument for cohesion and coexistence in harmony and balance between all the villages and nations. Interculturalism will show respect for differences and equality of possibilities (art. 99, my translation)<sup>2</sup>.

The importance of interculturalism is also promoted by UNESCO. The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UDCD) (UNESCO 2001) argues that creativity flourishes in contact with other cultures and also underpins the importance of intercultural dialogue as a guarantee of peace.

However, when it comes to intercultural education, there is no universal guideline or definition, thus the content, understanding and practice differs from state to state, school to school and even from teacher to teacher.

### 1.1.2 Bilingualism

The term bilingualism is vividly discussed, and its definition ranges from “native-like control of two languages” (Bloomfield 1933/1984: 56) to the more pragmatic view of Macnamara (1967 in Holmarsdottir, 2005: 10) claiming that a bilingual person is “anyone that possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four languages skills; listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, in a language other than their mother tongue”. Some definitions, like the

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<sup>1</sup> The new Constitution of Bolivia was passed through a referendum on January 25, 2009. However, I have decided to base my analyses on the draft Constitution, as this was the only official document available in September 2008. The changes and the approval of the Constitution happened after my fieldwork; hence all my discussions with informants are based on the draft from 2007.

<sup>2</sup> “*La interculturalidad es el instrument para la cohesión y la convivencia armónica y equilibrada entre todos los pueblos y naciones. La interculturalidad tendrá lugar con respeto a las diferencias y en igualdad de condiciones.*”

abovementioned ones, mainly address the question of language competence, while other definitions have a sociolinguistic approach, focusing on language use, function and attitudes rather than skills. Weinrech (1953 cited in Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2000: 32) argues that bilingualism is “the practice of alternatively using two languages”, whereas Skutnabb-Kangas (1984a in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 574) adds that a bilingual person is someone “who is able to identify positively with both (or all) language groups (and cultures) or parts of them.” To better systematize the different approaches to bilingualism, I will include a figure made by Skutnabb-Kangas (1984a in 2000/2008: 573) attending to competence, function and identification.

*Table 1.1 Definitions of bilingualism*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	A speaker is bilingual who
1. Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has learned two languages in the family from native speakers from infancy</li> <li>b) has used two languages in parallel as means of communication from infancy</li> </ul>
2. Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- internal</li> <li>- external</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifies herself as bilingual/with two languages and/or two cultures (or parts of them)</li> <li>b) is identified by others as bilingual/as a native speaker of two languages</li> </ul>
3. Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has complete mastery of two languages</li> <li>b) has native-like control of two languages</li> <li>c) has equal mastery of two languages</li> <li>d) can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language</li> <li>e) has at least some knowledge and control of the grammatical structure of the other language</li> <li>f) has come into contact with another language</li> </ul>
4. Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) uses (or can use) two languages (in most situations) in accordance with her own wishes and the demands of the community</li> </ul>

(Source: Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984a in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 573)



### 1.1.3 Mother tongue

Linguistic diversity, bilingualism and diglossia<sup>3</sup> are more the rule than the exception in the world today, and in school this has practical challenges regarding the question of mother tongue instruction. It is often unclear for teachers what the mother tongues of learners actually are. Skutnabb-Kangas has identified four different criteria for the definition of mother tongue:

*Table.1.2 Definitions of mother tongue*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Origin	The language one first learned (the language one has established the first long-lasting verbal contacts in)
2. Identification a) Internal b) External	a) The language one identifies with/as a native speaker of b) The language one is identified with/as a native speaker of, by others
3. Competence	The language one knows best
4. Function	The language one uses most

(Source: Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984a in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 106)

Its definition is not merely an academic exercise, but it has practical purposes and consequences (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). In this thesis the focus will not be to pick the most suitable definition, but rather investigate how my informants understand and use the term, and discuss what consequences this has for the language choices in the school I observed.

### 1.1.4 Culture

If you google “culture + definition”, you end up with more than 22.6 million results. This shows how difficult it is to give just one comprehensive definition that covers every aspect of this concept. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to include two definitions. One focuses on culture as a tool for communication and understanding relevant to the intercultural aspect of EIB:

Culture is what makes communication possible; meaning that culture is the patterns of thinking, habits and experiences that human beings share and that make it possible to understand each other<sup>4</sup> (Eriksen, 2001: 60, my translation).

<sup>3</sup> The use of different languages, or varieties of a language, for different functions and purposes (Romaine, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> “Kultur er det som gjør kommunikasjon mulig; altså at kultur er de tankemønstrene, vanene og erfaringene som mennesker har felles og som gjør at vi forstår hverandre.”

The other definition attends to the intracultural aspect of EIB, promoted by the new Bolivian government. Klausen (1992) emphasizes the dynamic attributes of cultures. According to him, culture is

the ideas, values, norms, codes, and symbols that people inherit from the previous generation, and which one attempts to pass on somewhat changed, to the new generation<sup>5</sup> (Klausen, 1992: 27, my translation and emphasis).

In addition to these definitions, I also want to include the so-called iceberg analogy of culture<sup>6</sup> focusing on the many layers of culture. Weaver (1994: 395) argues that culture is like an iceberg, where on the surface one observes the external culture, whereas the biggest part of the iceberg, the internal culture, is hidden under the surface. In Appendix A I have enclosed a figure of the iceberg analogy, where indigenous culture is divided into surface culture expressed through music, food, clothing and dancing, and deep culture containing norms, world views, tradition and religion (Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN), n. d.).

### **1.1.5 Indigenous**

It is difficult to find one good and overall suitable definition of indigenous peoples to apply to this thesis, as there seems to be no standard, universal definition. I choose to use the understanding of indigenous peoples used in the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169, because this convention has been ratified by the Bolivian authorities. According to the ILO (1989: Art. 1:1) the Convention applies to

(a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;

(b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> “De ideer, verdier, regler, normer, koder og symboler som et menneske overtar fra den foregående generasjon, og som man forsøker å bringe videre oftest noe forandret til den neste generasjon.”

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A for an illustration of the iceberg analogy.

ILO (1989: Art. 1:2) further argues that “(s)elf-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply”. This self-identification criterion is also supported by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). Due to the diversity of the world’s indigenous peoples, the UN has chosen not to have an official definition and instead developed an understanding of this term based on

- Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- A tendency to form non-dominant groups of society
- A resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (UNPFII, n. d.).

Thus, my main focus in this thesis will not be to define the indigenous peoples in Boliva, instead I will explore how my informants and the group studied identify themselves, and what consequences their self-identification may have on the implementation of EIB in schools.

### **1.1.6 Indigenism**

Indigenism is a globally growing form of activism for recognition of and self-determination for the indigenous peoples (Niezen, 2003). According to Niezen (2003: 9)

The indigenous peoples’ movement has arisen out of the shared experiences of marginalized groups facing the negative impacts of resource extraction and modernization and (...) the social convergence and homogenization that these ambitions tend to bring about.

In Latin-America indigenism, or *indigenismo*, is a key concept when it comes to the increased political and social movements on the continent, fighting for the rights of the colonized peoples. Encyclopedia Britannica presents a definition adapted to this context where wealth and power are still intrinsically connected to ethnicity 500 years after the Conquest.

A movement in Latin America advocating a dominant social and political role for Indians in countries where they constitute a majority of the population. A sharp distinction is drawn by its members between Indians and Europeans, or those of European ancestry, who have dominated the Indian majorities since the Spanish conquest in the early 16th century (“Indigenismo”, 2009).

## 1.2 Bolivia: peoples and politics

Bolivia is a landlocked country situated in the very midst of South-America, surrounded by Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Peru. The country is characterized by a diversity of peoples and languages. In addition to the white and mestizo<sup>7</sup> population, there are as much as 36 different indigenous groups. According to the 2001 census, 62% percent of the population identify themselves as indigenous<sup>8</sup>, and the biggest groups are the Quechuas (30% of the Bolivian population) and the Aymaras (25%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2001). The colonial language Spanish has been the only official language of Bolivia until 1999, when all the indigenous languages were also made official languages (World Bank (WB), 2003). Nevertheless, the same national population census also disclosed that almost 64% of Bolivians regarded Spanish as their first language, whereas the number for Quechua and Aymara were 20.8% and 13.6% (INE, 2001). This mismatch between indigenous self-identification and language use will be thoroughly highlighted and discussed in this thesis.

The country is divided into three main groups: indigenous peoples, the mestizos and the whites, and they live separated from each other with different lifestyles, traditions and positions in society. In the four lowland *departamentos*<sup>9</sup> (departments or counties), also known as the *Media Luna* (the half moon), the majority of the population are non-indigenous (INE, 2001). The white minority in Bolivia, who mainly reside in the lowland, control the natural resources like gas and petroleum and most of the food production, and they have been the leaders and elites since the colonial times, economically, politically and culturally (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008; Latin-Amerika Guppene (LAG), 2008). In the five highland departments<sup>10</sup>, on the so-called Altiplano, you find the majority of the indigenous peoples, mainly Quechuas and Aymaras. They live in cold and harsh surroundings around 4000 meters above sea level, where the soil is less fertile; hence, they are dependent on the food supplies, in addition to gas provision and the hydrocarbon incomes, from the lowland. They highlanders mainly work as low-income subsistence farmers, miners, small traders or artisans (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup> Mix of white and indigenous. However, the mestizo identification is more related to class and lifestyle than blood. Indigenous peoples who have moved to the city often regard themselves as mestizo; hence, making the category social rather than ethnic.

<sup>8</sup> The 2001 census only asked for identification with indigenous groups. Therefore there are no official numbers of people identifying themselves as mestizos or whites.

<sup>9</sup> Pando, Beni, Santa Cruz and Tarija

<sup>10</sup> Cochabamba, La Paz, Oruro, Potosi and Chuquisaca

In contrast to its wealthier neighbors, Bolivia is still considered a Third World country (*Gobierno Municipal de El Alto* (GMEA), 2006). It is the poorest country in South America and ranked as number 111 in the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2008 (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2008). In Bolivia, more than 60% of the population of 9 700 000 inhabitants live below the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2009; WB, 2003). Moreover, the difference between the rich and the poor in the country are enormous. As an example, the income of the richest 10% Bolivian is 90 times that of the poorest 10% (UNDP, 2005:166). According to the Human Development Report 2005 published by UNDP (2005: 166) as much as 88% of the indigenous population live in poverty and the situation seems to be constant, whereas the poverty rate for the non-indigenous population is falling (WB, 2005 in Postero, 2007: 3). Thus, both the political and the socio-economic strata in Bolivia seem to be based on class or ethnicity.

When it comes to land ownership, which is the main political, cultural and economic dispute between the indigenous peoples and the landowning elite, the inequalities are even clearer. HDR (UNDP, 2005: 166) shows that 25 million hectares of land were controlled by 100 families, while 2 million families, mainly indigenous, shared access to 5 million hectares of land. In addition, you find about 250 000 landless *campesinos* in the country (LAG, 2008: 22). Both literally and figuratively, the indigenous peoples cultivate the land whereas the white and mestizo elite enjoy the fruits of this labor. The Bolivian authorities have, until now, failed to address these structural inequalities, and the result has been lack of dialogue between the groups, combined with political tension and instability (UNDP, 2005).

### **1.2.1 The rise of the indigenous movement**

Even though Bolivia gained its liberation from the Spanish conquistadores in 1825, this freedom was only granted to the white and mestizo population. The liberation led to expropriation of indigenous territories by the new rulers' prohibition of collective ownership to land (Luykx & Lopez, 2008), bringing enormous wealth to the *criollo*<sup>11</sup> landowners and enormous poverty to the landless indigenous peasants: hence creating an unequal society still prevalent in Bolivia today. The discrimination of the indigenous population did not cease after the liberation. Instead, they lost their land and were excluded from "real" political and economic participation. For instance, they were

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<sup>11</sup> The descendants after the Spanish conquistadores. Some words and concepts are difficult to translate as they do not exist in English or they will lose some of their connotations in the process. I therefore chose to write some of the words and expressions in *Spanish in italics* or **Aymara in bold**, and add an English explanation.

officially prohibited from entering the Plaza Murillo<sup>12</sup> until the 1940s, and according to my informants people dressed in traditional indigenous clothes were expelled from the Plaza even in the 70s (interviews: informants, July-September, 2008). It even took almost 130 years after the so-called liberation, before the indigenous peoples were recognized as citizens of the Republic of Bolivia and granted the right to vote in 1952 (Luykx & Lopez, 2008). Nevertheless, the indigenous peoples have never been de facto liberated and recognized; instead, they are still suffering from continued colonization and misrecognition in the Bolivian society.

In 1990 an indigenous mass mobilization started with the “March for dignity and territory” from Santa Cruz to the capital of La Paz<sup>13</sup>. In La Paz, these Amazonian indigenous groups from the lowland were allied with the highland indigenous groups and the peasants. Their common struggle for recognition and rights led to a change in the constitution in 1995 underlining that Bolivia is a multiethnic and pluricultural nation. Three important laws were implemented in the 90s: the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, instituting collective titling for the indigenous territories; the Law of Popular Participation, with more possibilities for political participation; and the Intercultural Bilingual Education Law, which will be discussed in detail later on (Postero, 2007; Taylor, 2004).

In the 2000s this alliance made new friends: the labor movements and the neighborhood committees in the cities. Together they supported the presidential candidacy of Evo Morales, the leader of the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS). Morales is Aymara and speaks Spanish as his second language. Moreover, he is poor, has no formal education and has a background as a llama herder, a trumpet player and a coca farmer, and is thus the complete opposite of any former Bolivian president (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008). In spite of this, on December 18, 2005, Bolivia surprised the whole world by electing the first South American president with an indigenous background. The election of Morales is challenging the 500-year tradition of the rich, right-wing landowners having the economic and political hegemony in Bolivia. Consequently, political polarization and tension between the indigenous peoples in the Andean highland and the white and mestizo population in the eastern lowlands has increased (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008; CIA, 2009).

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<sup>12</sup> The city center of La Paz. This is where you find the Cathedral, the Parliament and the Presidential Palace. The plaza is named after the rebel leader of the independence of La Paz, Pedro Domingo Murillo.

<sup>13</sup> La Paz is the name of a department and a city. It is the administrative capital of Bolivia, where the Congress and the President are stationed. Sucre is the historical and constitutional capital, and today home to the judicial branch of the government. The relationship between the two cities is ice cold, and the prefect of Chuquisaca wants to move the capital back to Sucre. She is therefore supporting the *Media Luna* in their fight against the current President.

### 1.2.2 Political changes and challenges

According to the Bolivian journalist Amalia Pando (2009), the *Media Luna* alliance<sup>14</sup> fears an indigenous uprising after hundreds of years of invisibilization, and they use their power over 90% of the mass media as a weapon in their campaign against the President and his indigenous empowerment agenda. The mass media is mainly run by the opposition, and especially in the lowland the media are spreading racist propaganda and fear among the population. The link between the media and the violent neo-fascist movements that are growing in the *Media Luna* is also strong, especially in the city of Santa Cruz (Pando, 2009)<sup>15</sup>. Morales' indigenous background is being used against him, his ability to govern is questioned and his relationship with Cuba's Fidel Castro and the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, is eagerly discussed and criticized in the opposition-friendly media. On the other hand, the more government-friendly media in the highland, and especially the official media station, shows pro-Evo programs almost 24/7 (Pando, 2009). Thus, in Bolivia today it is a challenge to find neutral, reliable sources of information and a balanced presentation of the two main controversies between the President and the opposition: the New Constitution and the fight for autonomy in the lowland.

One of the first things that Morales did when he entered office January 2006 was to start working on a proposition for a new constitution that would give the indigenous population more power and that would also redistribute the wealth of the country, like land ownership and the hydrocarbon income. The work on the new constitution started on August 6, 2006, with a Constitution Assembly of 255 elected people from all the 9 departments (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), 2008). During the meetings of the Assembly in Sucre there were several violent clashes between supporters of the opposition and supporters of the MAS. Indigenous delegates were prevented from entering the meetings, were beaten and insulted by neo-fascist demonstrators from the *Media Luna*, and on the walls in Sucre slogans were written like "Be a patriot, kill an Indian"<sup>16</sup> (IWGIA, 2008; Pando, 2009). In the end the meeting had to be moved to Oruro, and the opposition left the Assembly due to insurmountable disagreements between the parties (IWGIA, 2008; LAG,

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<sup>14</sup> The four lowland departments plus the department of Chuquisaca.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix B for an example of some of the racism being spread on the radio in Santa Cruz. The English translation and transcription are made by Reporters Without Borders (RWB).

<sup>16</sup> "*Haga patria. Mata un colla!*"

2008)<sup>17</sup>. The final draft was approved by the remaining Assembly members in December 2007, but the opposition has refused to recognize it, claiming it to be undemocratic (IWGIA, 2008).

The controversies on the draft constitution intensified both racist violence and the struggle for autonomy in the rich lowland departments (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008; Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2009). In 2008 they all declared autonomy through a referendum and implemented their own autonomy statutes (IWGIA, 2008). These referendums and the statutes are approved neither by the Bolivian authorities nor by the international community<sup>18</sup>, instead they are regarded as illegal, unconstitutional and racist, as many rights are taken away from the indigenous peoples (LAG, 2008). According to the vice-president of the self-appointed, however not recognized, legislative assembly of Santa Cruz, Delmar Mendez (2008 in LAG, 2008: 19), the indigenous peoples are a minority in Bolivia, and therefore it is wrong to establish so many specific rights for them. Mendez (2008 in LAG, 2008: 19) claims that the government is trying to sell a picture of a country that does not exist, where an indigenous majority is oppressed by some white families. Sergio Antelo Gutierrez (2008 in LAG, 2008: 19), the leader of the separatist movement *Movimiento Nación Camba*, elaborates on this as he calls the census of 2001 a fraud. In his view, 65% of the population are actually mestizos, President Morales included, as he has a Spanish last name (Gutierrez, 2008 in LAG, 2008: 19). According to the opposition the real oppression is the other way around (Mendez 2008 in LAG, 2008: 19). These different social and political disagreements between the lowlanders and the highlanders were further intensified after the recall referendum in August 2008.

On August 10, 2008 Bolivia held a *revocatorio* (recall referendum) where the President and his Vice-President, in addition to the prefects of 8 of the 9 departments, were up for re-election. This *revocatorio* showed strong support both to the President and his politics giving him 67% yes-votes, whereas the prefects of La Paz and the neighboring department of Cochabamba, both belonging to the opposition, had to leave their offices. Nonetheless, the *revocatorio* was also a victory for the fight for autonomy inasmuch as all the prefects in the lowland regained new trust. Consequently,

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<sup>17</sup> According to other sources like the US embassy in Bolivia, the opposition delegates were blocked from participating in the final meeting of the Assembly by Evo-friendly demonstrators and armed forces (US Department of State, 2008). However, one must keep in mind that the relationship between Bolivia and the US is problematic, and the US ambassador was even expelled in August, 2008, due to allegations of economic and political support to the opposition. Therefore, I am reluctant to regard the American embassy or the oppositional politicians as reliable sources in this matter.

<sup>18</sup> The UN, EU and OAS have all criticized the lowland departments for illegally declaring autonomy (LAG, 2008).



the turmoil between the President and the *Media Luna* did not diminish. Instead revolts, violence and massive demonstrations against the new constitution and for autonomy continued in the lowlands after the election (“Country profile: Bolivia”, 2008; HRW, 2009). The violence escalated in September 2008, leaving 30 people killed in the lowland department of Pando. Sixteen of them were indigenous demonstrators reportedly killed by paramilitary groups supported by the oppositional prefect, Leopoldo Fernandez, who was charged with genocide (Pando, 2009; “Bolivian governor arrested for genocide”, 2008; HRW, 2009).

In this environment of political tension and violence, the indigenous peoples continue to struggle for their right to education in their own language and for their culture and knowledge to be recognized within the educational system. This struggle that has traditionally been rejected by the elite, but today is reinforced by the new indigenist government.

### **1.2.3 Education and the indigenous peoples in Bolivia**

After the liberation from Spain, the descendants from the Spaniards, the so-called *criollo* landowners and mine owners, depended on their cheap manual labor: the indigenous peoples. For that reason they feared that educating their indigenous workforce would lead to changes in society and political instability (Taylor, 2004). Even though free and mandatory education was granted in the Constitution of 1880, the indigenous peoples did not gain access to education until 1905 due to resistance from the elite. Moreover, the goal of education has traditionally been to “civilize” them through linguistic and cultural assimilation, so-called *castellanización*<sup>19</sup>, and to create national homogeneity (Taylor, 2004). It was not until the 1990s that schools were regarded as a place to conserve, develop and impart the indigenous cultures and languages, through EIB included in the *Reforma Educativa* from 1994 (Taylor, 2004; WB, 2003). However, this reform is being criticized for only paying lip service to the inclusion of indigenous languages, cultures and knowledge systems in school. Therefore, the new government under Morales has since 2006 tried to radically change the educational system through a new school reform called Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez (AS-EP), with a stronger and more binding promotion of a inter-intra-cultural and trilingual education (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (MEC), 2006). Another important aspect of this

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<sup>19</sup> *Castellano* is the word most frequently used for the Spanish language. Through *castellanización* the indigenous peoples were taught the Spanish language and assimilated into the *criollo* culture.

reform is decolonization. According to the former Minister of Education, Felix Patzi (cited in Aula Intercultural, 2006), the indigenous peoples

have to decolonize our education system, because up until now the school has only taught Europeanizing knowledge, and not the knowledge and technologies of the original peoples, something which has made us believe that everything from outside is good and what is ours is not (my translation).<sup>20</sup>

Thus, these two reforms give a clear picture of the changes that both the country of Bolivia and, consequently, the educational sector are going through with its political power shift from the neoliberal, white elites to Morales and his socialistic indigenism. The new reform was not yet approved in the Parliament when I conducted fieldwork, nevertheless the schools and teacher academies were preparing for the changes that according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) would come about as soon as the new Constitution was approved (interview: MEC official, 10/09/08). A group affected by these preparations, resistance and anticipations is the group I have chosen to focus on, the Aymaras in urban society.

### **1.3 The Aymaras**

The Aymara people's history goes back over 2000 years, since the Tiahuanaco civilization by Lake Titicaca from 200 BCE- 600 CE (Buvollen & Julsrud, 2009). The first Aymara kingdoms were established between 1200 and 1450, during which time they were conquered by the Incas (Buvollen & Julsrud, 2009). The Aymaras were enslaved by the Inca Empire and later on by the Spanish conquistadores. Today they are still struggling for their freedom from discrimination and exclusion in Bolivian society. There are about 2 000 000 Aymaras in the high plateau region of Bolivia and Peru near Lake Titicaca, and you may also find some smaller Aymara villages in Chile and Argentina. According to the national census of 2001, the Aymara population in Bolivia is almost 1.3 million, most of them living in and around the La Paz region (INE, 2001).

The Aymaras are, like other Andean cultures, collectively oriented and Aymara society is organized in family-based communities called **ayllus** (Yampara, Mamani & Calanca, 2007). Their cosmovision is based on the relationship between man, gods and nature where they are all inter-

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<sup>20</sup> *"Tenemos que descolonizarnos en educación, porque hasta ahora la escuela solo enseña conocimientos europeizantes y no así los saberes y tecnologías de los pueblos originarios, debido a que nos han hecho creer que lo externo es bueno y lo nuestro no."*

related and inter-dependent<sup>21</sup> (Global Resources Information Database (GRID), n. d.). The Andean conception of the universe is agro-centric and not anthrop-centric (Estermann, 2006); hence, Aymara culture and language are closely linked to rural life. Their cyclic calendar begins June 21 with the **Machaq Mara**, Aymara New Year, as this is when the harvest is over and the sun is returning (Origenes, n. d.). The most important month for the Aymaras is August, the month of **Pachamama** or Mother Cosmos. During this month people burn offerings to the **Pachamama** for luck, fortune, health and happiness (Ingham, 2007; Origenes, n. d.).

The **Pachamama**-cult is also characterizing in the urban areas of La Paz. People chew coca leaves, burn incense in their houses, make bonfires by the highways and **chállar**, spill some of the drinks, on the restaurant floors. In the crowded tourist market in La Paz you can buy everything from dried llama fetuses, **Pachamama** altars, talismans and coca leaves, all important elements of the Aymara culture (Ingham, 2007; my own observations, August 2008). Even the President is known, loved and ridiculed for making fires and worshipping **Pachamama** inside of the Presidential Palace in the capital (Smith, 2006). Nonetheless, the meeting with the conquistadores and their Catholic faith has led to a syncretism when it comes to Aymara spirituality. The Christian and indigenous religions have fused together and many of the Aymaras worship both the Christian God and **Pachamama**, especially in the highland cities (Ingham, 2007).

Since the Agrarian Reform in 1952, the indigenous peoples are often called *campesinos*, peasants (Postero, 2007). Nevertheless, there is a massive migration from the rural villages to the cities, mainly El Alto. Hence, a growing number of urban Aymaras are today trying to combine their rural traditions with modern life. Some leave their cultural heritage behind, whereas others proudly wear their ponchos and *pollera* skirts in the city. In El Alto and La Paz, the streets are characterized by the many Aymara-speaking *cholitas*, indigenous women in traditional outfits. The *pollera* was originally an oppressive outfit, as indigenous women were forced to abandon their traditional clothing under the Spanish rule and wear what was then the Spanish fashion, a multilayered skirt and a derby hat (Forero, 2004). After 1952, the *pollera* became a symbol of indigenous identity and an act of empowerment among the indigenous population (Forero, 2004).

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix C for an illustration of the relationship between the three.

Nevertheless, the Aymaras, especially the young generations, are also facing many challenges living in this cross-road of traditional and modern lifestyle. Many of the girls stop wearing the *pollera* as they enter city universities and workplaces as they try to hide their background (Madami, 2005). In contrast, others challenge both the modern values and fashion on the one hand and the traditional lifestyle and appearance on the other hand; they listen to both rock music and the **tarqueadas**, they may wear *polleras* and at the same time dye their hair and wear jewellery (Madami, 2005). Even though it is traditionally the peasants living in the rural areas that are considered indigenous, a growing number of modern, urban people also identify themselves as Aymaras. One Aymara girl puts it this way:

I consider myself indigenous because of my roots, my way of thinking and my way of life, in line with the rules and customs of my **ayllu** and my Aymara family. For me, being indigenous does not only mean being “different” but being recognized amongst the Aymara people, with their ideals and way of life and particularly amongst the youth who find themselves in a daily process of alignment (Madami, 2005: 23).

This way of uniting two lifestyles, has led people to call her a transformer (Madami, 2005), and this group of transformers seems to be growing and challenging the way of defining and identifying the Aymara identity, especially in the Aymara city of El Alto.

#### **1.4 Research site: El Alto**

El Alto is situated at the highland plateau, the Altiplano, 4000 meters above sea level, right next to the capital of La Paz. With a growth rate of 5.1% a year, El Alto is the fastest growing city in Bolivia (GMEA, 2006; Zibechi, 2005). In just 50 years the population has grown from 11 000 to 827 000 (Utenriksdepartementet (UD), n. d.; Zibechi, 2005). The growth is due to massive migration from the rural areas, and this migration is causing problems of fulfilling the demands for basic health care and education for all the inhabitants (GMEA, 2006). The population of El Alto is also very young, as the migrants are mainly families with small children or children being sent to live with relatives in the city in order to get a good education (interviews: informants, July-September, 2008). As much as 60% of the population are under the age of 25 years (Yampara et al., 2007: IX) and 39.5% under the age of 15 (GMEA, 2006).

One of the most fundamental challenges of El Alto is poverty reduction. According to the local authorities, El Alto is known for its bravery and rebellions, but also its poverty and problems

(GMEA, 2006). The majority of the *alteños*, the inhabitants of El Alto, are either poor or very poor. Most of the *alteño* families do not have the necessary income to provide for the basic needs of their family members like health care, water, electricity, housing or education (GMEA, 2006). The socioeconomic problems in El Alto have led to a culture of violence, especially domestic violence where women and children are the victims (GMEA, 2006). As for the workforce in El Alto, there is both a lack of professionals and of work opportunities, which has led to a massive participation in an informal and precarious economy and the city is characterized by self-employment (GMEA, 2006; Zibechi, 2005). The jobs are mainly within sales, mostly as street vendors, or in the restaurant business (Zibechi, 2005). Most of the workforce in El Alto, 90%, is engaged in micro firms with 1 to 4 workers, and half of them do not pay any taxes, leaving the city with very little income (GMEA, 2006).

Besides the socio-economic problems, the *alteños* are also facing cultural challenges. El Alto is considered an Aymara city. According to the 2001 census, the number of Aymaras is 74%, whereas others claim that the number is between 80-90% (INE, 2001; GMEA, 2006; Zibechi, 2005). However, among the young generation there is a process of acculturation and intercultural conflicts (GMEA, 2006). The authorities of El Alto are taking this into consideration in their Development Plan for 2006-2011 where they speak up for a strengthening of the Aymara identity among the *alteños*. The plan is filled with Aymara words and concepts like **waqui** and **ch'ama**, and emphasizes that the Aymara identity with its focus on values like solidarity and respect is one of the strengths of the city (GMEA, 2006). Education is thus a prioritized area for cultural revitalization. According to the *alteño* authorities, the education given in the city lacks a cultural and linguistic focus that would enhance contextualization and answer the needs of the village-city migrants (GMEA, 2006). The vision of the authorities is to

revalue, recuperate and institutionalize the identity, the values and the cultural and linguistic manifestations of the *alteña* community through sustainable processes and actions related to the quality of education, health, justice and human rights belonging to the idiosyncrasy of the population, and protection of the environment<sup>22</sup> (GMEA, 2006: 4, my translation and emphasis).

In this thesis we will see whether this vision is being attended to in the educational sector.

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<sup>22</sup> “Revalorizar, recuperar e institucionalizar la identidad, los valores y las manifestaciones culturales y lingüísticas de la comunidad alteña, mediante procesos y acciones sostenibles relacionadas con la calidad de la educación, salud, justicia y derechos humanos pertinentes a la idiosincrasia de la población, y al cuidado del medio ambiente.”

## 1.5 Relevance of the thesis

Centuries of oppression have led to marginalization and exclusion of the world's indigenous peoples. "They came, they saw, they named, they claimed" is Smith's (1999: 80) summary of the encounter between the Europeans and the Maoris in New Zealand, and this quote can also be applied to describing the colonization of the American continent. The indigenous peoples have not only been physically colonized after the detested "discovery" of America in 1492, but their minds have also been and continue to be colonized. The most conspicuous symbol of this is through the name given to the continent:

The term induced all to think of its population as "Latin" and hence the one and only ethnic group of its social configuration. The new name, then, not only made Indigenous peoples invisible but also contributed to the establishment of a European way of life. According to this way of life, ethnic differences constituted an excuse for segregation (Arajújo-Olivera & Gonçalves e Silva, 2009: 542).

This value given to the European roots have both led to the idea of European superiority and thereby indigenous inferiority among the Latin American populations. Moreover it has solidified a class stratification in the society based on race and ethnicity, a division which again is reflected in the educational system (Carnoy, 2009).

In the pluricultural state of Bolivia, the indigenous peoples have been struggling for cultural survival for over 500 years. The negative attitudes towards anything indigenous, or *indio*, are deeply rooted both in the minds of the white and mestizo elite, and among the indigenous peoples themselves. Many of them are ashamed of their background and run away from their cultural heritage to pursue modernity, prosperity and a Western lifestyle in the cities. This makes it even more important, and challenging, for schools in urban areas to strengthen the indigenous pride and identity of learners who live far away from the traditional lifestyles and the indigenous languages.

Bolivia is considered the country with most progress with the implementation of EIB in South America (Taylor, 2004). Nevertheless, what is written in policy documents and what is actually happening in the classrooms may often be two different things. The good intentions in the policy papers have no value unless the teachers have the will and competence to implement them. Thus, a successful implementation and execution of EIB presuppose competent bilingual teachers and available teaching material in the learners' mother tongue (UNESCO, 2008). The challenges of growing up as an urban Aymara in El Alto and the importance of having dedicated teachers

supporting the children's quest for identity are the foundation of my research objective and questions. I have also done research in a country on the verge of radical changes, culturally, socially, politically and economically, therefore the "Evo effect" will be an inevitable part of my analyses. Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon to change the world, and in this thesis I will discuss whether EIB might be a suitable weapon to lead the Bolivian society in a more equal and inclusive direction.

## **1.6 Research objectives and questions**

Bolivian society and the educational sector are too complex and heterogeneous to be adequately presented and discussed in one master thesis. Therefore, I have chosen to limit the scope of my thesis and shed light on one main indigenous group in a specific area, exemplified by one primary school and one *Normal* (teacher academy). My research objective is to explore and discuss how the Aymara culture is being presented in urban education, and whether the indigenous learners receive the intercultural and bilingual education they are entitled to through international laws and declarations ratified by the Bolivian government. Moreover, I want to discuss the relationship between language, culture and identity, and elucidate how education can be a tool for strengthening or undermining the learners' indigenous self-identification.

These objectives entailed the following research questions:

1. What are the ideologies behind the educational policies in Bolivia? And is there coherence between the policies and the actual classroom teaching?
2. To what extent is intercultural and bilingual education given in the urban schools? What might be the obstacles for the implementation of EIB in urban areas?
3. To what extent is the indigenous identity of Aymara children attended to in urban schools? Is the Aymara language and culture present in schools?
4. How is the indigenous identity perceived among teachers and students?

## **1.7 The outline of the thesis**

This first chapter has presented background information and discussed the thesis relevance and objectives. I have decided to give much attention to the social and political past and present in Bolivia, as I believe this knowledge is indispensable in order to grasp the relevance, importance and challenges in implementing EIB in the country. In Chapter Two I will account for my methodological choices and elaborate on the practical execution of the fieldwork, in addition to a thorough presentation of the research sites. Special focus will also be given to the challenges and ethical considerations I encountered as a qualitative researcher. Chapter Three contains the theoretical framework applied in the thesis. My main areas of interest have been the attitudes towards languages and linguistic competence in schools, the situation of indigenous migrants and how their identity is shaped and reshaped in urban surroundings, and finally the main discussion regards the role of education as a tool for oppression or liberation of marginalized groups. The theories will be integrated in Chapter Four, where I present and discuss my findings. Through the use of qualitative methods like interviews, observations and document analyses I collected a large data material that will be systematized, analyzed and explained within the theoretical framework.

My fieldwork presented me with two rather contradictory conclusions regarding the situation of EIB in the urban education and the Aymara identity among the urban migrants. Thus, in Chapter 5 I will sum up the present situation, but also include some predictions about the future of EIB in Bolivia. This is done in order to not only critique and challenge, but also inspire and encourage people working with and people responsible for the inclusion of indigenous languages, culture and knowledge in the educational sector. If the implementation of EIB shall be a success in the urban areas, there is a need for radical changes in schools. Nevertheless, I also found that these changes were already taking place.



## **2 Methodology**

Both the current and the proposed educational reforms in Bolivia have good intentions and talk warmly about the importance of cherishing diversity and including indigenous languages and cultures in the teaching (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes (MECD), 1994; MEC, 2006). Nevertheless, intentions in policy papers are mainly ideological manifestos that are not necessarily followed up by action. Thus, key documents related to EIB would not present an accurate picture of the presence and presentation of indigenous language and culture in Bolivian schools. For that reason I chose to travel to Bolivia and conduct fieldwork to investigate what is actually going on in the Bolivian classrooms and to identify possible obstacles for implementing EIB.

In Bolivia I discovered that a lot of studies were done concerning the implementation of EIB in rural schools, which seems to be a prioritized area, but not many researchers have looked into the situation in urban schools. This triggered my interest to explore the situation for urban indigenous learners, and how the challenge of uniting their traditional culture and a modern lifestyle is being approached by the teachers in the Aymara-dominated city of El Alto. I wanted to observe the teaching, but also elucidate teachers' background, knowledge and attitudes towards the indigenous culture, language and identity, and see how this factor affects the teaching. In order to ensure a liberatory education based on intercultural and bilingual teaching, the initiative must come from within (Freire, 1970/1996). For that reason I found the perceptions of the insiders, the teachers, but also the future change makers, the student teachers, pertinent.

Both obtaining and making the best use of such a multitude of sources, voices and perspectives requires the right set of tools. Thus, for my research purposes I chose to utilize the qualitative tool kit, which I believe helped me to achieve my research objectives.

### **2.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research gives people the chance to tell their stories and for the researcher to interpret actions and testimonies in a real life context. "The stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2004: 266). My goal was to generate an understanding of the life, experiences, attitudes and values of real people in real life contexts. The best way to accomplish this was through qualitative methods like

classroom observations, participant observations and interviews with primary teachers in El Alto and lecturers and student teachers at a *Normal*, a teacher academy, in the city of La Paz.

By applying a qualitative methodology frame, I underline my intention to work “with words rather than numbers” (Bryman, 2004: 266). I decided not to use quantitative research methods like statistics and surveys to account for the Aymara identity among my participants. My applied definition of an indigenous person relies on self-identification. Hence, I found it more helpful to explore how the informants perceived themselves. I wanted to get the informants’ subjective experiences, histories and opinions, something I believe would not have been accessible through statistics and surveys. However, I have included some statistics from the 2001 census (INE, 2001) in order to problematize, contextualize and support my findings.

The goal of qualitative research is to generate new theory. This theory is supposed to be an outcome of an investigation, rather than something that precedes it (Bryman 2004). Thus, to find the answers to my research questions I had to be in the field and gather data, and through the data analyses bring forth my own “grounded theories”. According to Bryman (2004: 540), grounded theory is “(a)n approach to the analysis of qualitative data that aims to generate theory out of research data by achieving a close fit between the two” . However, in smaller research projects such as a master thesis, aiming to create a whole new theory might be too ambitious; hence, my expectations and purpose with this process were rather to generate new knowledge and perspectives to already existing theories. In the following I will present my preparations and the methods I used in my quest for new knowledge and perspectives. This process was not straightforward, and in the last section I will discuss the challenges affecting the trustworthiness of my research.

## **2.2 Research methods**

Before I went to Bolivia I tried to prepare myself by reading books and reports about the country and meeting people who had been there before. Nevertheless, you can never be prepared for the Bolivian reality until you are actually there, together with people, taking part in their everyday activities. When conducting fieldwork you are using all your senses; watching the colorful dances and parades, feeling the cold draft in the classroom and dizziness from the altitude, hearing the cacophony of voices and languages in the minibuses every morning, listening to the teachers’ stories, drinking coca tea and eating *salteñas*, tasting the *chuños*, being tormented by hundreds of

children playing the **tarka** flute out of key, avoiding drowsy stray dogs, laughing over the inventive learners and all in all enjoying the company and warmth of the Bolivian people. It is not until you are embraced by the people and the culture that you can start making investigations, interpretations and gaining an understanding.

Even so, my experiences and my interpretations of these experiences will probably differ from other people who were at the same place, at the same time. Therefore, I had to use different methods in order to get as much information as possible, and thereby achieve a broader understanding and a wider picture of the subject of research. Geertz (1973a in Bryman, 2004: 275) introduced the concept of “thick description”, meaning “rich accounts of the details of a culture”. My way of obtaining thick description of the Aymara culture in urban education was based on the use of four research methods that I will account for in the following sub-sections: classroom observation, participant observation, interviews and document analyses. I am mainly letting the teachers talk, but also bringing forth the voices of the principal, the parents, the children, student teachers, NGOs and policy makers, as well as including written sources like development plans, didactic plans and material, national census, the current and the forthcoming educational reform and the draft Constitution.

Nevertheless, before I could start conducting my fieldwork and apply my chosen methods, I had to get access to the research sites.

### **2.2.1 Access**

Gaining access to a primary school where I could conduct my research was easier than expected, thanks to my contacts at the Norwegian NGO Misjonsalliansen. I stayed at their guest house in the lower part of La Paz, and a staff member of their Bolivian branch, Mision Alianza Noruega in Bolivia (MANB), took me to one of the schools they support, in the semi-urban part of El Alto. There I spoke to the principal, who immediately allowed me to stay with them, and I could even start the observations the next day.

Getting access to a *Normal*, however, was more challenging. I wanted to observe a *Normal* in El Alto, since my focus area was this city, but I never got access. Even though I had several appointments with the school administration, the meetings kept being postponed and in the end I could not waste more time waiting. Therefore I went to a *Normal* in the city of La Paz and asked for

permission to conduct research there instead. Coincidentally it appeared that the majority of my teacher informants were graduates from this institution, so this provided me with an unexpected opportunity to also gain insight into their academic background. Nevertheless, it took me another two weeks just to get permission to do research from the *Normal*'s principal. In addition, it was difficult to get access to the lectures as I did not know who to ask and was not allowed to enter the staff rooms. I could not identify what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) call the "gate keeper" at the *Normal*, someone who could direct me and help me speed up the process getting access. Again I had to rely on my contacts in MANB. I found out that one of the staff members of the NGO had a sister attending this school and this sister invited me to visit her course which was a specialization program in Aymara culture and language. However, due to the restricted access, I was unable to conduct longitudinal classroom observations of the teacher training, as I had intended to, instead my main observation period took place in the *alteño* primary school.

### **2.2.2 Classroom observation**

My reason for using one school as a case is that "(i)t provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 181). I could explore what happens when the policy papers have left the Ministry of Education and reached a classroom in El Alto, and thereby explore how changes taking place outside the schools affect my focus group, the urban Aymaras. I did not want to base my research only on what I read about school content or what the teachers told me that they were doing, I also wanted to be there myself and see what goes on, and if the expressed laws and intentions were in sync with real life in the classroom.

#### **Research school 1: Primary school**

The primary school where I conducted most of my fieldwork, from July 15 to August 29, 2008, was a new and fast growing school. It had 1500 learners from preschool to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 50 teachers and assistants. It was a very popular school and parents waited up to two days in line outside the school gate to enroll their children (interview: principal, 29/08/08). The school's good reputation was based on good exam results and the fact that all the teachers are *normalistas*. Nevertheless, I found the school far from well-equipped and it was also in need of rehabilitation. As the school was rapidly growing, there were not enough classrooms and the classes were filled with up to 45 pupils who often had to share the chairs and tables. There were no spare rooms or places for the teachers to work and keep their materiel, so they had to work at home, and bring all the books and notebooks of

the children back and forth for revision. In addition to the lack of staffroom, library, meeting rooms and even adequate restrooms, the school had no room for music classes and sports. As a consequence, the music education, band practice and physical education were held out in the school yard. I conducted my fieldwork at the time of national holidays like the National Day<sup>23</sup> and the Day of the Flag<sup>24</sup>, so there was a lot of **tarka** and drum playing going on outside the classrooms which disturbed the teaching and the learners' attention.

The first impression of the school was, however, not related to material shortcomings, noisiness or crowdedness. The main thing I noticed when I started my observations was that school was freezing cold. The school year had even started one week later than planned after the winter holidays, due to the cold and a high rate of sick children in the Altiplano<sup>25</sup>. For example, the first and coldest weeks of my observation period I wore at least two or three layers of wool, plus thermo jacket, winter coat, a scarf and hat, inside of the classroom! The rooms were drafty as the windows are broken, and the sun did not reach the inside of the brick walls. So I sat in the back of the classroom on a little chair that kept falling apart, next to the cold wall and children sneezing, struggling to be "invisible" and warm together with the 44 coughing learners in the class.

I wanted to stay with a class where the children were as old as possible. I assumed that the oldest children would have more participation and discussion, and a broader curriculum with more opportunities for intercultural learning than in the younger age groups. Since the 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes only had subject teachers, I chose to stay all 7 weeks in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade where they had the same teacher in most of the subjects<sup>26</sup>, except Religion, Music and Arts & Crafts. In my class the learners were from 9-12 years old<sup>27</sup>. Even though I tried to keep a low profile in the classroom and sit all the way in the back of the room, my presence did not go unnoticed. It took a couple of weeks for the children and teacher to get used to me being there, and it also took me some time to get to know and understand the procedures and the classroom culture. I tried to be quiet and not disturb, but me being in the room might have affected the classroom activities and teaching since the teacher

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<sup>23</sup> On August 6

<sup>24</sup> On August 16

<sup>25</sup> The name of the high plateau area where El Alto is situated.

<sup>26</sup> Math, Language and Culture, Social Science and Natural Science. These were the main subjects taught four days a week, whereas the other four subjects were given on Wednesdays when the class teacher had her day off.

<sup>27</sup> The big age difference is due to the fact that one of the boys had to repeat 5<sup>th</sup> grade, whereas another boy had been allowed to skip 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Most of the learners were 10 going on 11 years old.

wanted to give me the best possible picture of her class. After the first weeks I was, however, considered a natural part of the group. I noticed that the teacher became more relaxed and used to having me observing her, and the learners started focusing more on the teacher and not so much on me and my notebook.

The school started at 9 o'clock and ended at around one in the afternoon. Mondays we started 15 minutes earlier to have a gathering out in the school yard where all the parents were invited. The learners sang the national anthem and participated on the stage singing, dancing or reciting poems. The only break during the school day was from 11:00-11:30, where the children were given a free school lunch (a piece of bread, a small milk bag and sometimes a fruit) and they could also buy sweets, ice cream or warm food from a *cholita* running a small kiosk in the school yard. In the beginning I found it easier getting to know the learners, since they always approached me in the school yard, whereas the teachers seemed to prefer spending their breaks in the classrooms making it difficult for me to meet them. Since there were no teacher lounge, I usually sat outside in the school yard during recess, enjoying the sun and talking with the children. After the first weeks some of the teachers also joined me during recess, but my relationship with the teachers was more complicated than the one I had with the children, which is something I will elaborate further below.

In addition to the classroom observation in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and observations during recess and in the Monday assemblies, I did make use of the possibilities to visit some other classrooms when my class had band practice, Arts & Craft or exams. This way I could see more of the teaching methods and content and get to know potential informants. On some of these visits I noticed that my presence interrupted and affected the teaching more than I had wanted. The learners looked at me more than at their teachers and some of the teachers seemed uncomfortable with being observed. Moreover, I was mainly invited to exhibitions, presentations and musical performances where the teachers were eager to show me how good their learners were, and they expected me to participate and teach about Europe and Norway. Even though I found these visits and the interaction with the teachers and learners interesting, the authenticity of the classroom teaching was questionable and I tried to limit my time outside of my selected class.

It is difficult to know when you are “done” when conducting classroom observations. However, after 7 weeks of observations where I had tried to write down everything that was said and done

during classes and in recess, in addition to conducting interviews with the principal, teachers and learners, I achieved what Bryman (2004) calls “theoretical saturation”, at least regarding the present situation of EIB in urban schools. Thus, I decided to move on to a teacher academy and get some new input and ideas about the future of EIB. The education of bilingual teachers with cultural competence is a prerequisite for the children to get the education they are entitled to through international laws and agreements. Therefore I wanted to visit a *Normal* to see how, and whether, they ensure bilingual and intercultural competence among the student teachers. Still, I did go back to the primary school three times after finishing the observation period: to deliver some photos I had taken of the school parades, to celebrate the Day of the Student<sup>28</sup> and the last time to say goodbye.

### **2.2.3 Participant observation**

My original plan for the data collection was to be a “fly on the wall” in both the primary school and the *Normal*. Nevertheless, I soon discovered that the non-participant observer role that King (1979 cited in Cohen et al., 2000: 187) acclaims was not for me. I could neither ignore the children nor pretend to be invisible. I therefore found it more useful to be a participant observer. Participant observation is a method where “the researcher is immersed in a social setting for some time in order to observe and listen with a view of gaining an appreciation of the culture of a social group” (Bryman, 2005: 267). I was both inside and outside of the milieus I was investigating, and tried to encourage people to act the way they would have acted had I not been there (Eriksen, 1998).

In the primary school I was perceived as a teacher and I did even teach on a few occasions, either because the teacher that was supposed to come was delayed or had to leave for some minutes. I mainly taught the children some English words and phrases, even though this was not a subject in primary school. Nevertheless, the children were eager to learn the language and the parents were always asking me to teach their children English so I took advantage of these opportunities to be of use and give something back to the school and the learners.

In addition to my teaching experiences, I participated in the two big school parades where I was hushing the children and making sure they marched in line, in addition to taking pictures for the school. I also participated in the celebrations after the parades together with the rest of the teachers.

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<sup>28</sup> On September 21

All this gave me an opportunity to learn about the socio-economic and cultural background of both teachers and learners in El Alto, and to see how the Aymara culture and language were included inside and outside of the classrooms. The role as participant observer came gradually and it helped me gain the trust of the teachers, learners and also the parents or guardians, as it was easier to approach them informally and they also saw that I took great interest in the work they were doing in the school as well as the well-being of the children.

### **Research school 2: The *Normal***

The *Normal* I visited had 2500 students, and though it was a monolingual school, 60% of the students had an Aymara background (e-mail correspondence with Head of Primary Education).

During my visits to the *Normal* I had to participate and discuss with the lecturers and student teachers so my role as a participant observer was inevitable. Due to miscommunication I was even perceived as a lecturer at my visit to the Aymara specialization class. When I entered the classroom I was surprised to discover that I was not invited to observe the lecture, but to give a lecture. Hence, I had to improvise a short introduction on the situation of indigenous peoples and multiculturalism in Norway instead of sitting through a lecture as I had planned to. As soon as I had gotten the official permission from the *Normal*'s principal, I also visited two Aymara lectures for third semester students who were specializing in Social Science, where I clearly stressed that I was there to observe and not to participate or teach. However, I was still expected to share some ideas and experiences from the Norwegian school system and also to try to learn Aymara pronunciation together with the students. Through this experience I made contact with the students in an informal setting, making it easier to find informants and conduct interviews.

Nonetheless, I only managed to observe or participate in three lectures during my time at the *Normal*. The reason, besides the challenges of access, was that very often the lectures I was supposed to visit were cancelled, moved or the lecturer did not show up. Moreover, the students participated in demonstrations against the increasing violence in the lowlands, like the aforementioned Pando massacre, and there were also organized several student strikes due to political disputes during the student parliament elections. However, my time at the school was not in vain inasmuch as I gained some valuable information from my observations combined with the interaction and interviews with students and teachers.



#### 2.2.4 Interviews

It is not sufficient only to observe what is going on, in order to understand the situation. One also needs to get the ‘emic’, the native, perspective which you may retrieve through interviews (Eriksen, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The insider account provides information about the informant herself and the culture she belongs to, and this knowledge is valid for analyzing observations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Moreover, the use of informants is important both to get more information on things that I could not directly observe, and to confirm or disprove conclusions I have drawn from my observations. I conducted formal interviews with 28 informants and additionally shorter informal interviews with 18 learners, as illustrated in the table below. Although I have not used all the informants in the data analysis, their accounts helped me understand the context and get a broad picture of the situation of EIB and the attitudes towards the Aymara language and culture in urban society.

*Table 2.1 Informants*

	Learners	Teachers	Principal	Student teachers	Lecturers	NGOs	Ministry of Education
Individual interviews		10	1	4	2	2	1
Group interviews (participants in total)				3 (7)			
E-mail interviews					1		
Informal interviews	18						

In the following I will account for how I chose my informants, what interview method I applied and finally how the interviews were conducted and what challenges I encountered.

##### 2.2.4.1 Sampling<sup>29</sup>

The most important interviewees for this thesis are the teachers in the primary school I visited. My objective was to understand their everyday knowledge and their socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckman, 2006) that they as teachers transmit to the learners. I decided to interview 10 teachers as this number was big enough to both get a variety of different voices and experiences, and also draw some general conclusions. I also found it to be a reasonable number of interviews for one

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix D for a detailed list of the informants. To grant them full anonymity I have given them code names.

person to handle. In addition to the teachers, I interviewed the school's principal to get the views, policies and values of the administration.

My intention was to elucidate the urban teachers' attitudes towards Aymara culture and identity, regardless of their own background. For that reason I did not ask specifically for Aymara informants, since that would have revealed my topic of interest and possibly influenced the informants' accounts and thereby also my findings. Instead, I chose my informants without asking for their ethnic or social background. Since the school had no staff room, it was difficult to get in touch with the teachers, thus I had to approach them coming or leaving the school, or during the parades or other out-door activities. This meant that I had to apply a convenience sampling method choosing the nearest individuals who had time to talk to me or who had invited me to their classroom (Cohen et al., 2000: 102). The convenience sampling had an unexpected disadvantage as it appeared that three of my informants were Quechuas, an indigenous group I have not included in this thesis. However, I still chose to include them in my informant group, since this illustrates the heterogeneity of the urban areas and displays further challenges to the implementation of Aymara language and culture in multi-linguistic schools.

Finding a time and a place for the interviews was another challenge. The teachers were very busy and this made me feel that I was "stealing" valuable time if I asked for an interview before or after school hours. Consequently several of the interviews were conducted inside the classroom during recess or class, sometimes with the learners present. In addition, several of my interviews were cancelled, as the informant postponed our appointments or just did not show up as planned. Thus, the process of not just finding informants, but also going through with the interviews, was more challenging and time-consuming than expected.

In the *Normal* I also met difficulties finding informants. This was due to the little time I spent there and the limited access I had to lectures and lecturers. Again I had to rely on my gatekeeper, the student teacher whose sister worked in MANB. Gatekeepers often attempt to select interviewees for the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) and this girl was no exception to the rule. She supplied me with several informants, who were all her friends and classmates. Thus, here I also, though unintendedly, applied a non-probability (also known as purposive) sampling method, namely snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2000), where I ended up with 6 informants with the same

characteristics: Aymaras studying Aymara as specialization. For the other five informants I used convenience sampling again and I found them either out in the schoolyard or in a classroom waiting for a lecturer who was either delayed or did not show up. Due to this unbalanced representation of the student teacher, where the majority had already taken a clear stand in the discussion of EIB by choosing to specialize in Aymara language and culture, I have decided to include only this majority in my analyses. I do not intend to use the informants to generalize about all student teachers in Bolivia, instead this group of student teachers represents a new trend in the country where Aymara youth now are making an effort to ensure and speed up the implementation of EIB in Bolivian urban schools.

The least accessible informant group was the lecturers at the *Normal*. I had wanted to make several interviews with lecturers as they are the ones preparing the future teachers and thereby responsible for training bilingually and culturally competent teachers. However, without access to their lounge and no gatekeeper, I just managed to get two informants, also selected by convenience sampling. The principal never responded to my request for an interview, whereas the interview with the Head of the Primary Education department kept being postponed, and in the end it had to be conducted by e-mail. This was not an ideal method, as the informant misunderstood some of my questions, and I had no possibility to rephrase them or to ask follow-up questions, nor had I time to change or add questions since it took the informant four months even to answer my first questions. Nevertheless, his answers still gave me valuable insight of the teachers' education in Bolivia.

Even though my main focus in this thesis is the school I visited in El Alto and the *Normal*, I was also trying to present a bigger background picture of the situation of EIB and also of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Therefore, I arranged for one interview with a government official at the EIB office of the Ministry of Education and Culture and also representatives of two NGOs working with these issues. This gave me important background information about EIB and the work being done for its implementation, both by the government and the civil society, which made it easier for me to understand the context of my observations and also of the informants' responses.

#### **2.2.4.1 Interview methods**

I chose to use qualitative interviewing inasmuch as it is characterized by a greater interest in the interviewee's point of view than quantitative interviews (Bryman, 2004). According to Bryman (2004: 320), in qualitative interviewing “‘rambling’ or going off at tangents is often encouraged – it

gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important”. However, the interviews are not merely friendly conversations. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 152) argue that the researcher “has a research agenda and must retain control over the proceedings”. In order to retain a certain amount of control, I choose to conduct semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2004). I had an interview guide<sup>30</sup> with a list of questions and topics to be covered. The interview guide was regularly revised, as some questions were misunderstood or even redundant and new questions emerged along the way. Yet my general topics of interest were covered in all the interviews.

Due to time limitations at the *Normal*, both for me and the student teachers, three of my interviews were group interviews. I only found time to interview three student teachers individually, whereas I had two group interviews with two respondents and the last group interview had three respondents. Group interviews may be more difficult to control than one-to-one interviews. Nonetheless, they allow the participants to prompt one another and encourage each other to be more forthcoming, and can thus be very productive (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). My experiences are mixed. I both saw the value of letting the informants discuss and share with each other, making the interview more dynamic, but there was always the danger of one informant “running the show” and not letting the others participate. One of my informants left the interview after some minutes after being constantly interrupted by his more talkative colleague. However, he came back after a short while and engaged in the discussions again, whereas I tried to make sure that everybody had a chance to speak by asking each one of the participants specific questions.

The third interview method I applied was informal interviews and conversations. The first day of observation, I asked the principal whether I needed permission from the school or the parents to observe and interview the learners. He gave me complete *carte blanche* and said that I only needed his permission, which I was already granted, as long as I did not enclose information that might harm the children. After his approval I decided to conduct short and informal interviews with 18 learners. The interviews were not recorded and the children were given full anonymity, so their privacy was protected. I asked them what language they and their relatives spoke, what job their parents had and what they wanted to work with in the future. On top of that, I ended all the interviews asking them about their views of President Morales. The children were eager to participate and discuss with me, and even assisted me in asking the questions to their peers and

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<sup>30</sup> See appendix E for the interview guides used for the interviews with the teachers and the student teachers.

finding new interviewees for me. Even though the interviews were limited in both time and scope, they did provide me with a lot of valid information about the indigenous identity of the children and the strong position that the President has in the highland.

I had not planned to use parents as informants since I wanted to focus on the teachers and student teachers. However, I had several conversations with some of the mothers in the school yard and also the maids at the guesthouse I stayed at who were Aymara *alteños*. The weakness of such informal conversational interviews is that they are less systematic and comprehensive than semi-structured interviews, making the data organization and analysis difficult (Cohen et al., 2000), and they will therefore not be given much space in the findings chapter. Nevertheless, the conversations with the mothers' helped me clarify and confirm my observations and interpretations.

#### **2.2.4.2 The interview process**

The semi-structured individual and group interviews lasted between 20 minutes to over 1 hour, with an average of 30 minutes; thus, even by applying the same interview guide this interview method brought forth very different products. All interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. None of my interviewees was reluctant to me using the recorder, and since it was quite small they seemed to quickly forget it was lying on the table. Had I written notes instead of taping the interviews, I believe that the language would have constrained me, as my speaking and comprehension skills in Spanish are far better than my writing skills. Since I had to conduct several of the interviews in the classrooms, and often with children present, some of the comments are impossible to hear and transcribe. Therefore, I had to cut some inaudible parts of the interviews and thereby risk losing important information. However, I feel that I have collected enough data from the 28 informants, and I would rather cut some sections than try to guess what the interviewees were saying. Moreover, I also tried to make a summary as soon as possible after each interview while they were still fresh in mind, with the main point that the informants made, together with my own observations and personal comments.

Then, in addition to seeing, participating and listening and discussing with my informants, I also wanted to supply my data with the documents that in the end steer or try to steer their actions and reflections.

### **2.2.5 Document analyses**

The teachers do not work in a vacuum. Instead they are bound by schools policies and didactic plans, in addition to national rules and regulation. For this reason I was also interested in exploring some of the policy papers that influence and guide the teachers' implementation to EIB. I wanted to see if there was coherence between what the policy papers say is supposed to happen and what I saw and heard in the schools. The documents I have collected are the draft Constitution, the current and the new educational reform, the didactic plan for 5<sup>th</sup> grade at my host school, NGO reports and the Development Plan for El Alto 2006-2010. I also wanted to do textbook analyses, but in 5<sup>th</sup> grade they did not use textbooks, only dictations from the teacher. The only books I found the children using were Aesop's fables, a song pamphlet with national hymns and some other small informative pamphlets they buy from street sellers. These documents will also be presented and discussed in the analyses chapter together with other didactic material I observed being used in the teaching.

It is important to stress that official documents are social products and not bias-free. Hence, "they must be examined and not relied on uncritically as a research source" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:168). The school reforms have therefore been read in the light of the political situation in Bolivia, as presented in the first chapter, and are presented in this thesis as illustrations of the different governments' ideologies and values.

### **2.3 Analyzing the data**

The different methods engendered a large data material consisting of interviews, observation notes, field notes, books, documents and e-mails, in addition to photos and video clips. In the process of collecting and analyzing the data, I applied a grounded theory approach where "the data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other" (Bryman, 2004: 401). The tools used for this process were theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation and constant comparison (Bryman: 2004). While I conducted my interviews, key themes were disclosed and I started seeing a pattern or common issues in my informants' accounts, which again made me narrow down the scope of my interview questions and the focus of my observations. Sometimes I had to change my intended research sites, research questions and also interviewees as new salient topics emerged and others had to be left out. For instance I dropped the original plan of visiting both urban and rural schools. I also realized that my number of informants was more than enough, and I have left out several interviews in the discussions in order to fully focus on the urban context.

The interviews were the foundation of my analysis, as I was mainly interested in the informants' experiences and attitudes, rather than an in-depth analysis of policy papers. However, I found the transcribing process very difficult and time-consuming for me to do by myself, especially since the informants, in addition to speaking in my third language, used a lot of Aymara words and phrases. I therefore hired a Bolivian woman to do the transcribing for me while I was still in Bolivia. She was, unfortunately, not a professional and had little knowledge about my topic. Consequently I had to spend a lot of time re-listening and proofreading the transcriptions when I came back from the fieldwork due to her misspellings and misunderstandings. Nonetheless, the scripts were an important basis for me to fully understand what the informants had said and to start the process of coding the data.

According to Bryman (2004) coding is the most important tool in grounded theory. Coding “entails transcripts and/or field notes and giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied” (Bryman, 2004: 402). As I conducted my fieldwork, I made notes of the most salient features observed and mentioned by my informants, and in the process of listening to the interviews and proofreading the transcriptions I started making a list of main themes and sub-themes. Thereafter I organized a table where I placed informants, observation findings and key quotes and could identify the most salient themes and chose the main topics to be discussed in this thesis. Throughout the process of collecting, finding, analyzing, reading and searching for a suitable theoretical framework, I have tried to ensure that the quality of the research and the finished document has been upheld.

## **2.4 Trustworthiness and authenticity**

To ensure the quality of quantitative research, reliability and validity are important criteria; however, their relevance for qualitative research is disputed (Bryman, 2004). For instance, reliability is a synonym for consistency and replicability (Cohen et al., 2000), making it a difficult measurement in qualitative research since people, societies and cultures are neither static nor replicable. Validity has usually been connected with measurement, which according to Bryman (2004) is outside the scope of qualitative research, thus have little bearing on such studies. Instead, Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1994 in Bryman, 2004: 273) propose two alternative criteria to be assessed in qualitative research, namely trustworthiness and authenticity. The latter is still

controversial and less influential within qualitative research (Bryman, 2004); however, I found the questions it poses relevant and helpful in my own reflections on why and how I conducted my fieldwork and presented my findings. Trustworthiness is made up by four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2004), which I found applicable for my research.

I do believe that I have ensured trustworthiness through this process of data collection and data analysis. For instance by using multiple methods, so-called “triangulation” (Bryman, 2004), and also by discussing my findings and observations with informants and people with knowledge of the Bolivian context in order to make sure my understanding of that social world is correct. Throughout this whole process I have also participated in seminars and study groups where my peers and professors have critiqued, commented and had insight in all the phases of my research process. Moreover, through my large data material I have produced a thick description of the Aymaras and their situation in El Alto, making it possible to compare and transfer their experiences and challenges I have identified to other indigenous groups in Latin America. My aim has not been a generalization of the entire world’s indigenous peoples; instead, I have strived to give as accurate a presentation as possible of the *alteño* educational context as perceived by my informants and my own experiences in the Andean Bolivia. Nonetheless, I believe that other indigenous groups may identify themselves with, learn from and be inspired by the struggle and achievements of the Bolivian Aymaras.

However, when it comes to conformability, the social and political polarity in Bolivia and the fact that I am only talking to one side in the conflict; namely the indigenous population, has made it difficult, if not even impossible to be objective. My personal values have guided me towards my choice of topic and research objectives and questions, thus thereby also my findings and conclusions. In the following I will elaborate more on this and two of the other main challenges I met during the data collection and analysis when it comes to ensuring both trustworthiness and authenticity. These challenges were the language and cultural barriers, the role as a researcher and how this affected the field relations and, finally, maintaining marginality and objectivity.



### 2.4.1 “Lost in translation”

A challenge when conducting research in an international context is the translation (Eriksen, 2003). According to Berger and Luckman (2006), an understanding of the language is essential in order to understand the informants’ everyday reality. Even though I do speak Spanish fairly well, language is more than just words. A language is filled with cultural concepts and categories. Thus, it is not enough to translate single words; instead you need to translate both language and culture (Eriksen, 2003). The researcher must retain a holistic understanding of a concept’s full meaning, use and connotations (Eriksen, 2003). This leads to another challenge in qualitative research, namely to translate the unfamiliar reality in the field into a Western way of thinking and naming the world (Eriksen, 1998; Smith, 1999). Many aspects of the reality are untranslatable; and thus cannot be captured in words, and may not correspond with other social realities (Eriksen, 1998).

Consequently, it may be necessary to use words without translation and instead try to give an explanation of the use and meaning (Eriksen, 2003). Goduka (2000) does this in her article, as she claims that English words cannot bring forth the essence of her spiritual wisdom. I have chosen the same approach by leaving both some Spanish and also the Aymara words and concepts without translation, as I cannot find accurate English or academic substitutes. However, I have tried to explain as accurate as possible these words and concepts and made a glossary with Spanish and Aymara words and concepts. In addition I have included some photos to illustrate some social and cultural features<sup>31</sup>.

Even though I have learned a lot about the Aymara culture from my informants, literature and observations, my knowledge is limited inasmuch as I spent too little time to fully understand and experience all the cultural idiosyncrasies. Nevertheless, my aim is to elucidate how people see themselves and their attitudes toward indigenous culture, not to give a thorough introduction in Andean culture and linguistics. I have therefore chosen to focus less on explaining what Aymara culture is, and more on people’s self-identification as Aymaras and what they regard as Aymara identity. Moreover, my lack of Aymara expertise may impact my observations and analysis, as I might have overlooked Aymara content in schools and wrongly interpreted them as Bolivian aspects. However, in addition to observations and reading relevant policy documents, I have conducted 28 interviews with different people in the La Paz region, both indigenous and non-

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<sup>31</sup> See photos in Appendix F

indigenous, and they have all presented more or less the same picture of the situation of EIB in urban schools. Moreover, I have attended several conferences and seminars about indigenous peoples in Latin America and Bolivia where key speakers have confirmed and added to my understanding of the social world I have studied. Thus, the credibility criterion has been attended to (Bryman, 2004).

#### **2.4.2 Field relations**

The researcher must relate to different informants and contexts and will consequently need different “identities” or “selves” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). At the same time, gaining and securing access to social settings and people is an ongoing activity (Bryman, 2004). Thus, participant observation does not only require academic but also social competence and sensitivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). My role as a researcher had to be invented and reinvented along the way; hence, I had no fixed role, but a variety of roles which were both voluntarily and involuntarily applied. As a result I soon encountered that there was a mismatch between my own intentioned roles and people’s expectations and understanding of me.

Factors like gender, age and ethnicity shape the relationship between the researcher and the people under study and work to one’s advantage and disadvantage (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). As a young, blond woman from the West I was ascribed with characteristics and abilities that I do not necessarily possess. The internalized view of European superiority and Bolivian inferiority, to use Taylor’s (1994) terminology, among many of my informants was disturbing, and I was very uncomfortable in this superior role I was given. At the primary school in El Alto, I planned to apply the role as an “acceptable incompetent” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), eager to see, hear and learn. However, I was ascribed as an expert, and the principal and teachers expected me to advise and guide them, not merely observe them. Of course, it is important to maintain marginality and distance oneself from the subject of research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Nonetheless, this undeserved humility and admiration I was shown by some of the teachers, parents and learners created an undesirable distance between us, based on race and ethnicity, not on professionalism.

I also found that some of the teachers were skeptical talking to me or letting me observe them. Consequently, I spent a lot of time during my observation period stressing that I was there as an independent researcher, not as a donor, spy or an educational expert. During the interviews and observation I conducted I also made it clear for the informants that they were granted full

anonymity and that I did not co-operate with the principal or the MANB. Furthermore, my participation in the parades and celebrations of the National Day and the Day of the Flag helped me get to know the teachers informally and this removed the fear and tension between us.

Although some teachers and parents were skeptical in the beginning, I did gain their trust and I made good friends in Bolivia. However, I had to remind myself that the value of participant observation is measured by the quality of the collected data, not by the number of friends one has made in the field (Eriksen, 1998). It was difficult to criticize and be objective to people I had grown fond of. I knew that the teachers and parents I met in the primary school wanted what is best for the children and were doing what they could to support them. Nonetheless, as a researcher I had to critique them and my data required me to draw a less favorable picture of the school than they probably expected me to. I also felt sometimes that I was using my informants' confidence against them, stealing their time and even taking advantage of their hospitality, without giving anything back to them. However, my findings might help raise awareness about the importance of EIB, especially in an area like El Alto, where children have little knowledge of and contact with their Aymara background. There has been made a lot of progress with EIB in the rural areas. However, instead of focusing only on the positive aspects of EIB in Bolivia, I wanted to shed light on a seemingly forgotten target group, namely the indigenous city migrants. Therefore I can justify my friendly critique as it can be a way to improve the situation of the Aymara children, teachers and parents, and my research has thereby provided me with the opportunity of giving something back to the urban Aymara community.

### **2.4.3 Maintaining marginality**

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher is an active participant in the process, being the research instrument par excellence (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The questions being asked, the way they are put and the interview site can all influence what the informants tell or do not tell (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and if people know that they are participating in a research project this can change their behavior (Bryman, 2004: 37). Wadel (1996) argues that informants are not one-dimensional, and just like the researcher, they will take on different roles when the situation calls for it. Naturally, the teachers wanted me to get the best possible picture of their learners and their own competence as teachers, and for instance, they invited me to see their classes' presentations and exhibitions. All this does not make the observations or the interviews invalid, but

my presence and its possible impact on the observation and interviews must be taken into consideration when analyzing the findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

As a participant observer you can also risk over-identifying or under-identifying yourself with the people and culture you study. Being as engaged in people and their lives as I was, the danger of “going native”, of becoming wrapped up in the world view of the people studied, was impending (Bryman, 2004). For me, spending three months with one ethnic group, the Aymara, and learning about them, their situation and experiences, it was almost impossible not to get involved and want to help them retain their rights. However, even if I do sympathize with the indigenous population, my purpose was not to take sides in the ethnic conflict or present the “true story” of Bolivia. Instead, I wanted to hear the Aymaras’ version of how their language and culture were being presented in urban schools in the Altiplano and how this affected or was affected by their indigenous self-identification, and consequently the opposing voices from the elite have been left out as they do not contribute to exploring this specific field of interest. Moreover, due to the violent, political riots in August and September 2008, it was not safe or even possible for me to travel to the lowland, as roads were blocked and airports closed, and the streets were generally unsafe.

Moreover, being an objective and value-free researcher is a difficult, if not impossible task (Bryman, 2004). Although I strived to be an “acceptable incompetent” person ( Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) when I came to Bolivia, I did see the world through my own glasses colored by my preconceptions. As a researcher, my cultural baggage might have determined my directions (Eriksen, 2003) and my values have intruded everything from choosing the research site, formulation of research questions, choice of methods, analyzing and interpreting data, and at the end, my conclusions (Bryman, 2004). Inasmuch as research cannot be totally value-free, Bryman (2004) emphasizes that it is important for the researcher to reflect, be aware of and also to be open about his/her background, views and values, which I believe I have been throughout this process. Moreover, issues like politics, language, culture and identity are something I am particularly interested in, and I am eager to advocate their relevance in school. Therefore I have chosen to apply theories discussing the importance and connection between language, culture and identity, and also the relationship between ideology and education.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

According to Rudolfo Stavenhagen (2005 in Jensen, 2005), the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, there is an increasing trend towards designing educational policies that are based on respect for cultural diversity and that promote bilingual education. Nevertheless, the implementation of EIB in Latin America seems to be a long and slow process, facing numerous challenges. In this chapter I want to elucidate how attitudes towards bilingualism and indigenous identity affect the value given to EIB in urban schools. The education system in Latin America traditionally promotes Western knowledge systems and languages, and the urban lifestyle has become an ideal even for the indigenous peoples. A quest for work and prosperity has led to mass migration to the cities, where the indigenous identity must adapt to new surroundings and a new way of life. There is a danger of losing both the indigenous languages and culture in this process unless the value of multilingual and multicultural competence is recognized both inside and outside of the classrooms.

Moreover, education is power and can be used as a tool for power prolongation or for changing existing power divisions. The power relationship between the marginalized groups and the elites established after the conquest of the Americas has remained unchanged and unchallenged until recent decades of indigenous movements and uprising in Latin America, which has led to the promotion of more rights for indigenous peoples. In the last part of this chapter, I will show how education has been used as a tool to exclude and oppress the indigenous peoples, and further discuss how education can be used as a weapon to change the social injustice by including the indigenous peoples and giving them their dignity back.

#### **3.1 Bilingual education and orientation**

One way of ensuring linguistic and cultural diversity and preventing languages from dying, is through bilingual education where minority languages are maintained, transmitted and preserved. However, there are various ways of practicing bilingual education depending on the attitudes towards bilingualism. In the following I will briefly present the main forms of bilingual education and then discuss how different attitudes towards bilingual education and competence affect the choice and implementation of these models.

### **3.1.1 Forms of bilingual education**

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000/2008) identifies three forms of bilingual education: non-forms, weak forms and strong forms. The first form is often found in many former colonies where there is a preference for using the high status language of the colonizers as the language of instruction in schools. In this submersion or sink-or-swim model, the learners' low-status mother tongue is not being developed because the children are forbidden to speak it or are ashamed to do so, hence the imposed language is learned subtractively (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). As opposed to this non-form of bilingual education, weak forms do include mother tongue instruction. Nevertheless, the mother tongue is not given any other value than merely instrumental, and as soon as the learners can function orally in the majority language, they are transferred to a majority language medium program (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). The strong forms for bilingual education, so-called "language maintenance" or "language shelter" programs, are programs where learners voluntarily chose to be instructed in their own mother tongue and the majority language is being taught as a second language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). As opposed to the non-forms and weak forms, through the strong forms of bilingual education the majority language is learned additively, and not subtractively (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008).

### **3.1.2 Orientations in language planning**

What type of bilingual education to apply depends on the state's orientation towards languages and their role in the society. According to Ruíz (1988), there are three forms of orientations in language planning. The first is the language-as-problem-orientation where multilingualism is a societal problem and bilinguals are associated with poverty and social disadvantages (Ruíz, 1988). This has especially been apparent in the US where bilingualism coincided with social problems among the non-English speaking population. To remove the handicap of the language minorities, English was the only language they were taught in school, often at the expense of their own first language (Ruíz, 1988). Such transitional bilingual education is regarded by Skutnabb-Kangas as a non-form of bilingual education inasmuch as where the majority language is learned subtractively. Bilingual education was for the poor and disadvantaged and the goal was to learn the majority language to keep up with their peers (Ruíz, 1988).

There is a different approach to bilingualism, where the minority groups are not being passively assimilated in the majority language, but instead are asserting their right to learn, protect and preserve their own mother tongue through bilingual education (Ruíz, 1988). UNESCO (2001; 2003)

advocates for the right to bilingual education and the use of indigenous languages in the educational sector. Mother tongue instruction both attends to the cognitive development of children, the preservation and transition of the knowledge the languages contain, and recognizes the value of diversity. In the program for the Decade of Education for Sustainability, UNESCO (n. d.) argues that

(a) key aspect of diversity is respect for indigenous and other forms of traditional knowledge, the use of indigenous languages in education, and the integration of indigenous worldviews and perspectives on sustainability into education programmes at all levels.

Still, such statements are no more than advisory and it is up to each state to decide whether they would like to include the guidelines in their own language policies or not.

International declarations, however, are legally binding for countries that have chosen to ratify them. Nonetheless, human rights declarations have historically said little about language rights and generally only set minimal limits on language policies (Patten & Kymlicka, 2003). Even though the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man contains important statements on language-based discrimination and protection of minority groups (Ruiz, 1988), it does not say anything about language rights in the States that have ratified the declaration (Patten & Kymlicka, 2003).

Today there is progress when it comes to linguistic rights for indigenous peoples. In September 2007 a new UN declaration was launched, namely the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (DRIP). DRIP grants indigenous peoples the right to develop and transmit their culture to the next generations and gives them the right to start their own schools in their own language or to have access to education in their own language (UNHCHR, 2007, Art. 13 and 14). As a contrast to advisory declarations on indigenous peoples’ linguistic rights, this new declaration is more concrete and demands the states to “(i)n conjunction with indigenous peoples, (...) take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights” (UNHCHR, 2007, Art. 31, my emphasis). The states that have ratified this declaration have to actively make sure that the linguistic rights of the indigenous peoples in their country are being fulfilled.

According to Patten and Kymlicka (2003) a language-as-rights approach may lead to confrontations between minority and majority groups, as language rights are often part of a larger program of sub-state nationalism and a step towards multinational states, which is what the dominant groups

typically want to avoid. Therefore, Ruíz (1988) asserts a third orientation, namely the language-as-resource orientation, which focuses less on confrontations and more on dialogue. Globalization and increased contact and commerce between countries have led to an increased demand for plurilingual populations and foreign language studies; however, the language capacity already existing within countries with linguistic minorities is often forgotten. Hence, an important aspect of the resource orientation is language conservation, and Ruíz (1988: 16) calls for a stronger awareness about the language resources that are being destroyed due to the repression of the bilinguals by pinpointing that “the irony of this situation is that language communities have become valuable to the larger society in precisely that skill which the school has worked so hard to eradicate in them!”

Moreover, the growing awareness of the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in order to ensure biodiversity also fits within the language-as-resource approach. In the world today there are 228 countries and 6806 different spoken languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi & Harmon, 2003). Consequently, in just a few of these states do all the citizens share the same mother tongue or even belong to the same ethno-national group (Kymlicka, 1995). Thus, diversity is the norm and not the exception. Languages are not merely means of communication, like some researcher might advocate (Ruíz, 1988). We need the diversity of languages, not a common interlanguage, for the reason that languages are containers of knowledge. The catastrophic neglect of the environment by the Western world has led to challenges we are not capable of solving by ourselves. Instead, we need the ecological knowledge of the indigenous peoples (Linden, 1991). The indigenous peoples are dependent on nature for survival and to cover their cultural and spiritual needs. For generations they have developed profound knowledge about the local ecosystems, adapted to them and learned to exploit them in a sustainable way (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003). Thus, every language contains a specialized vocabulary giving the solutions to the challenges different peoples meet in their unique ecological niches (Linden, 1991).

Ruíz (1988) argues that language-planning efforts that regard the languages as resources to be managed, developed and conserved will regard language-minority communities as sources of expertise, and no longer the source of a problem. Important ecological knowledge will therefore die if the language dies, and language maintenance is thus a prerequisite for preservation of biodiversity (Patten & Kymlicka, 2003). Language preservation is not only dependent on research and



knowledge centers, but also the possibilities to use and develop the language through a traditional lifestyle (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003), something which is difficult to obtain in the urban areas. Instead, an increasing migration from the rural areas to the cities has brought about new challenges for the indigenous communities, and in the following section I will discuss how urbanization may affect the indigenous identity, lifestyle and language.

### **3.2 Challenges to the indigenous identity**

There are numerous definitions of identity, and since I am exploring the presence of indigenous language and culture in schools, I want to focus on the link between identity, language and culture, and how recognition can strengthen or threaten indigenous identity. Even though ILO and the UN define indigenous people based on self-identification and not cultural or linguistic competence, indigenous identity and language are often considered interlinked. Kroskrity (2001: 106) defines identity as “the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories”. He elaborates on this by saying that

language and communication often provide important and sometimes crucial criteria by which members both define their group and are defined by others. Identities may be linguistically constructed both through the use of particular languages and linguistic forms (...) and through the use of communicative practices (Kroskrity, 2001:106).

For instance, to be regarded as a Sami in Norway you must identify yourself as a Sami and you, your parents or grandparents must speak the Sami language (Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2000). Also in Latin America being indigenous seems to be related to knowledge of the indigenous languages. In a research conducted in Ecuador, it was found that in addition to clothing and participation in indigenous organizations, the knowledge of Quechua was a third defining characteristic of an *indígena* (King, 2001). “Many members stated that they believed it not possible to be *indígena* without knowledge of the language” (King, 2001: 101, italics in original). The strong connection between language and identity is also supported by UNESCO, which regards languages as an integral part of a people’s identity (UNESCO, 2003).

As it is difficult to separate language and identity, the relationship between language and culture is equally close. Fishman (1994: 72) claims that language is the best way to express a culture given that “(m)ost of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language”. In one of his articles he explains the relationship this way:

A language long associated with the culture is best able to express most easily, most exactly, most richly, with more appropriate over-tones, the concern, artifacts, values, and interest of that culture. (...) the language stands for that whole culture. It represents it in the minds of the speakers and the minds of outsiders. It just stands for it and sums it up for them—the whole economy, religion, health care system, philosophy, all that together is represented by the language (Fishman, 1994: 72)

This view is also shared by Niezen (2003: 88), who adds that “a loss of language contributes to a loss of ability to describe the world and express emotions”. Therefore it is vital to preserve and promote indigenous languages both for maintenance and expression of indigenous culture and identity, and also to let people communicate their feelings and ideas.

Moreover, we do not develop our identity in isolation. According to Taylor (1994) identity is partly shaped by recognition or misrecognition. He elaborates on this by saying that:

a person or group of people or society can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor, 1994: 25).

Since recognition is a way of forming identity, misrecognition can significantly deform our identities. “(O)ur identities are not only shaped by recognition, but also by its absence” (Coulthard, n. d.). As we will see in the following, indigenous migrants in the cities often meet both misrecognition and expectation to change their lifestyle. I will address three challenges facing the indigenous identity in a modern society. These challenges are interlinked, and I will start by discussing migration and urbanization, before I look at how discrimination and oppression in the urban society may lead to shame and denial of the indigenous identity and how this again might cause language shift and language death among indigenous migrants.

### **3.2.1 Migration and urbanization**

There has been an increased indigenous mass migration from the rural to the urban areas in developing countries, particularly from the 70s onwards (Bello, 2007). The reasons for this migration vary from search for employment, poverty, lack of land, depletion of resources, natural and environmental disasters, armed conflict, forced displacement and increasing dependence of local economies on external trade circuits (Jensen, 2002; Bello, 2007). For many migrants the

possibilities for education are poor in the rural areas, so they have to move to the city for their children to get a better education (Bello, 2007).

In spite of the hope of prosperity and a better life for oneself and one's family, poverty too often characterizes the lives of indigenous urban migrants around the globe. "The essence of this is a 'culture of poverty' that is formed by the inequality, discrimination and relative deprivation that follows from belonging to a marginalized-indigenous group" (Jensen, 2002: 5). The work they find is mostly bricklaying, building, baking, drivers, loaders, shop work and general unskilled labor for the men, and for the women domestic service work is most common (Jensen, 2002; Bello, 2007). Professional and better paid jobs are harder to find as the indigenous migrants are often met with skepticism and discrimination, and are perceived as inferior and unqualified. One Mapuche woman from Chile had this experience in the city:

I encountered many difficulties and opposition at work from the beginning. Everyone thought I was uneducated and that I would always make mistakes in my work, in other words, whatever I did it would be bad. They told me that people of my class should work in a bakery, or as a domestic help in a private house. They told me that we prefer bad habits above all else and that if we do well we become proud and ungrateful to others (Munizaga, 2007 in Bello, 2007:12).

In addition to the lack of social mobilization and acceptance in the city, the possibility to lead an indigenous way of life in the city is another challenge facing the migrants. The relationship between indigenous identity and the traditional lifestyle in the homeland is also strong, and life outside the village can be challenging. Indigenous identity and culture are constructed and oriented around the notion of "place", which according to Giddens (1990) is a traditional and pre-modern notion. In the situation of the indigenous migrants "place" is challenged by the modernity<sup>32</sup> characterizing the cities where "space" is torn away from "place", leaving the latter increasingly phantasmagoric<sup>33</sup> (Giddens, 1990). Consequently, there is a constant struggle between the demands for or expectation of assimilation by the modernity-oriented elites in the cities and conservation of the indigenous culture by the tradition-oriented *pueblos* or indigenous communities. As one indigenous organization in Chile puts it: "We have sacrificed many of our generations, forcing them to

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<sup>32</sup> According to Giddens (1990), "modernity" refers to institutional transformations that have their origins in the West with two specifically important organizational complexes, namely the nation-state and systematic capitalist production.

<sup>33</sup> Phantasmagoric used in this context means that "locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them (...) the 'visible form' of the locale conceal the distanced relations which determine its nature" (Giddens, 1990:19).

emigrate from their ancestral territory, very often condemning them to live in marginalization in the large urban centers” (Bello, 2002: 45). In this struggle between tradition and modernity indigenous parents are facing a dilemma when it comes to the language of instruction in schools:

First, parents seek to reproduce their group identity through their children, so they favor the use of their mother tongue, either as language of instruction or as a language course. Second, parents’ own experiences with job markets and social mobility opportunities and obstacles, lead them to expect their children to learn the language or languages that will open, or maintain open, the doors to job markets and political participation spaces (Schmidt-Nieto, 2002).

Giddens is, however, criticized for being too rigid in his polarization between tradition and modernity, and for ignoring the dialogic nature of identity construction (Breidlid, 2002). The indigenous migrant might have to go back to the homestead to conduct their rituals or give up their traditions and surrender to the modern city life. However, they can also combine and adapt their traditions to their new urban environment. While migration to the cities is a factor of cultural losses like the loss of language, weakened links and social interactions, this does not necessarily mean a loss of indigenous identity (Bello, 2007). Identity is dynamic and changing and migration leads to new challenges of adaptation of indigenous identities. The indigenous city dwellers often continue the close contact with their homeland for several generations and many migrants take with them knowledge and practices that they manage to recreate and develop in an urban context (Abarca, 2006 and Bello, 2002 in Bello, 2007: 16).

Another central aspect of modernity is that formal education together with technology may shape and sharpen social differences, which results in more effective assertions of distinctiveness than ever before (Niezen, 2003). One example of that is the growing number of indigenous women in Bolivia who wear the *pollera* instead of Western clothes in the city, to expose their indigenous identity in the urban surroundings. Thus, migration does not only lead to a breakdown of community ties and discrimination; it can also be a process of reaffirming the indigenous identity through intercultural learning and experiences.

Several works have, however, shown an increase in urban indigenous organisations, and an increased visibility of indigenous people in the cities through the resumption of traditional fiestas and ceremonies or the creation of organisations and organisational spaces in general (Millaleo 2006; Bello 2002). These processes can be interpreted as part of a strategy of ethnic reaffirmation and promotion of their identity in a context (the city) that has generally

been hostile to indigenous people, whether Mapuche, Aymara, Rapanui or other (Bello, 2007: 16).

Migration might therefore lead to a reinventing of indigenous culture and identity. Indigenous identity does not have to be sacrificed on the altar of modernism, instead urbanization enables new bonds and forms of community attachment to be constructed; thus it creates a process of continuity and change (Bello, 2007). However, this also requires that the indigenous migrants wish to conserve and develop their indigenous identity in urban surroundings that often are hostile to their culture and traditions.

### **3.2.2 Internalization of shame and inferiority**

As we have seen, indigenous migration to the cities boosts the discussion of the polarization between tradition and modernity. Tradition is often described as rural, agrarian, pre-scientific and resistant to change and innovation, whereas modernity is characterized as scientific, innovative, future oriented, dynamic and urbanized (Gyekye, 1997). Even though the appropriateness of the clear-cut polarity between tradition and modernity has already been questioned, people tend to equate between tradition and indigenous peoples on the one hand and modernity and Western-influenced elites on the other hand. Moreover, the Europeans have projected an image of indigenous peoples as inferior and uncivilized since the Conquest in 1492, and this image has been imposed on the conquered (Taylor, 1994). In his speech at the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples (FDCIP) in Tromsø, Nicaraguan scholar Ray Hooker (cited in FDCIP, 2005: 16-17), said that “(i)t is relatively easy to legally abolish slavery. What is much harder to do is to extinguish the slave mentality out of the minds of people who have never enjoyed the fruits of freedom”. The indigenous cultures and languages in Latin America are suffering from 500 years of oppression and colonization, and this has also led to a colonization of their minds and an internalization of their inferiority (Smith, 1999).

If a culture is not generally respected, consequently the dignity and self-respect of its members will be threatened (Kymlicka, 1995). According to Taylor (1994: 25), “a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves”. The attitudes towards social or ethnic groups are transmitted through and reflected in the attitudes towards the language the group uses (Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2000). Several places in the world today we find linguisticism, which

means that differences are justified and reproduced on the basis of languages and consequently one has to speak the majority language in order to succeed in the society (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). Local languages and their users are thereby marginalized and disempowered, and people may have to sacrifice the language of their parents and their culture in the quest for the alchemy of the colonial language (Alexander, 2000; Gupta-Basu, 1999 in Alexander, 2000: 12). In multilingual societies, homogenization through mass media and entertainment has contributed to giving the dominating language a higher status (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003), and the linguistic hierarchy from colonial times has remained unchallenged (Alexander, 2000). This is supported by Schmidt-Nieto (2002) who argues that

(t)he belief that associates European languages with progress and non-European languages with stagnation is one that developing countries are only starting to dismantle but that still carries tremendous weight in decisions about language instruction.

The indigenous peoples often try to hide their ethnic origin to avoid discrimination and to be accepted by the urban people, in search of prosperity and change in the urban areas. For instance, in Mexico, like many other Latin American countries, the stigma created by the Spanish colonial society has been reproduced by the society for the last 200 years (Carrasco, 2002). Hence, being an *indio* is synonymous with backwardness and ignorance. Since 1950, the Mexican census has recorded a decline in the number of indigenous language speakers, although this does not mean that there has been a fall in the indigenous population (Carrasco, 2002). Instead, it shows a tendency to leave the language behind in order to assimilate and avoid discrimination.

The discrimination and stigma are not only affecting the indigenous identity of the migrant workers themselves, but also their children. The shame over being indigenous and having an indigenous mother tongue is reinforced by the lack of appreciation of the indigenous languages within the urban school system (Carrasco, 2002). Nonetheless, it is not only the schools' responsibility to transmit languages and culture, it must also happen in the homes, as "(s)chools are not inter-generational language transmission agencies" (Fishman, 1994: 76). In the migrant situation the children are victims of double desertion. School does not teach them their language, and their parents do not have time to teach since they are working day or night. Moreover, they often do not want the children to learn their mother tongue, due to the shame associated with the indigenous

languages. Consequently, the indigenous migrants may go through a language shift, and in the worst case scenario, it may result in language death.

### **3.2.3 Language shift and language death**

According to Romaine (2000), probably half of the world's population is bilingual, and bilingualism is found in practically every country. Multilingual countries are characterized by diglossia, where each language or variety has a specialized function according to their status (Romaine, 2000). Thus, bilingual and multilingual people often use different languages for different purposes and on different domains. These domains can, for instance, be family, friendship, religion, employment and education (Romaine, 2000). In Latin America, Spanish has traditionally been used for high status functions like education and in government, whereas the use of low status languages, the indigenous languages, is reserved for low status domains like at home. As an example, in Peru, Quechua is identified with the territory of the **ayllu**, whereas the colonial language, Spanish, is linked with the cities. Now Spanish is entering the traditionally monolingual indigenous communities, and Quechua children are often interacting in Spanish when they are at school and in Quechua outside the school compound (Romaine, 2000).

Thus, urbanization, education, migration and a job market that demands knowledge of the dominant language can lead to language shift within an indigenous group. The indigenous mother tongue loses more and more terrain and the dominant language become the leading language outside, and often also inside the homes (Romaine, 2000). Monolinguals become bilinguals and then monolinguals again, but in a different language. Usually, they become monolinguals in the language of the economically and politically dominant elite of the society they belong to or have migrated to (Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2000). In addition, negative attitudes towards the language both from the society but also from the language users themselves, can lead to language shift (Romaine, 2000). As mentioned earlier, bilingualism is often associated with poverty, powerlessness and subordinate positions in society, thus a hindrance to prosperity in society (Ruíz, 1988). According to a study done in Mexico, rejecting indigenous ethnicity improves one's situation in the city and less discrimination is perceived (Carrasco, 2002). The Mexican informants also asserted that the loss of languages among indigenous groups was due to pressure from the schools to abandon the mother tongue (Carrasco, 2002).

A consequence of the exclusion of indigenous culture and language in schools is language death. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000/2008) claims that the schools can kill languages more or less on their own. If the language of instruction is another than the mother tongue, children do not learn to read, write or develop their own language (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003). Indigenous peoples are often victims of such subtractive education where the majority language becomes a “killer language” killing the mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000/2008) claims that governments are consciously committing linguistic genocide when they refuse to let the indigenous population learn their own language. The UN defines genocide as forcing people into a different ethnic group and causing serious bodily and mental harm on the people of a group which is exactly what the governments are doing to indigenous peoples when they force them into subtractive language assimilation (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000/2008). This view is also shared by Kelman (1972 in Ruíz, 1988: 5), who emphasizes that languages are important aspects of self-expression and self-identification:

Since a language is so closely tied to group identity, language-based discrimination against the group is perceived as a threat to its very existence as a recognizable entity and as an attack on its sacred objects and symbols. The issue is no longer merely a redistribution of power and recourses, but it is self-preservation of the group and defense against genocide (Kelman, 1972 cited in Ruíz, 1988: 5).

Thus, the educational sector can strongly influence the status and recognition given to a language and its users, and even the destiny of the language. How this power to exclude or include, oppress or liberate is carried out, will be the topic for the next section.

### **3.3 Education and power**

In spite of great diversity among the world’s indigenous peoples, there is one feature that brings them together and reinforces their common identity, and that is the history of conquest and colonialism, and with that also the oppressive and assimilative state education (Niezen, 2003). “Knowledge is never neutral (...) Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power” (Fiske, 1989 cited in Breidlid, 2005: 253). The education system is the ideological arena where the linkage between power and knowledge is most evident; hence the school curriculum is a power tool by its inclusion and exclusion of knowledge (Breidlid, 2005; Dupuy, 2008). The choice of subjects and school content are political choices, and so are the attitudes in the study plan toward non-standardized languages used by the learners (Shor, 2003).



Thus, education is never neutral, instead it favours either of domination or emancipation (Carrillo, n. d.). It is a tool that can be used to oppress people, as has been done in many instances to indigenous peoples throughout history, but it can also be used to bring about liberation and social change.

### **3.3.1 Education and oppression**

State education has tended to be brutal and traumatic for the indigenous peoples and imposed drastic transformation of collective knowledge, social arrangements and identities (Niezen, 2003).

One way this oppression has been carried out is through what Paulo Freire (1970/1996) identifies as banking education. Banking education maintains and stimulates the teacher-student contradiction and mirrors the oppressive society as a whole:

- a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- d) The teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- j) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (Freire, 1970/1996: 54).

The more the oppressed can be led to adapt to the situation that oppresses them the more easily they can be dominated, and banking education is used to achieve this, both used knowingly and also unknowingly (Freire, 1970/1996). The educational system is an instrument for maintaining “the culture of silence” as the oppressed are kept unaware of their situation, and schools do not open for critical thinking and responses (Freire, 1970/1996). Learners are containers being filled by the teacher and they repeat what the teacher says but do not reflect on the meaning of the words (Freire, 1970/1996).

The dominating elite utilize the banking concept of education to encourage passivity in the oppressed. “Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of

oppression” (Freire, 1970/1996: 59). Teachers are also victims of the oppressive educational system. After years of working within the traditional<sup>34</sup> school, the teachers are destined to lecture, to defend their authority, transmit official information and skills, as opposed to opening up for discussion, dialogue and including the learners’ reality and language in the teaching (Shor, 2003). They treat learners as empty containers to be filled, and the teachers’ knowledge is the only valid, whereas the learners’ contributions are misrecognized (Freire, 1970/1996; Taylor, 1994).

The misrecognition or non-recognition of indigenous language, culture and knowledge in schools is a harmful form of oppression as it imprisons people “in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Taylor, 1994: 25). With this being my point of departure, I want to point out three ways in which indigenous people have and are being oppressed within the school systems: exclusion, alienation and assimilation.

### **3.3.1.1 Exclusion**

In Latin American countries indigenous peoples have often been kept out of the educational system because the elites were feared the liberating effect that literacy might have on the power division (Soria, 1992 in Taylor, 2004: 7). Today the indigenous peoples may be allowed to, and have the right to, formal education. However, exclusion from education does not only happen physically by denying access to schools, but also through schools’ devaluation of indigenous languages, culture and knowledge.

Denying the use of particular languages as mediums of instruction is a form of cultural repression and social exclusion. It perpetuates social privilege and social injustice, since language mediates access to education and to power (Degu, 2005 and O’Brien, 1996 in Dupuy, 2008: 41).

Minority languages are seldom given the same rights as the official languages and marginalizing languages and cultures of minority groups is a form of internal colonialism (Romaine, 2000). Thus the power elites are, by denying indigenous learners access to their own language in school and submitting them to an education in the colonizer’s language, enduring the colonization of the indigenous minorities, as well as the linguistic hierarchy initiated by the Spaniards 500 years ago. In Latin America, Spanish is unquestionably the dominant language in education, whereas indigenous

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<sup>34</sup> In this context “traditional school” means schools within the banking education discourse.

languages and knowledge have traditionally been regarded as useless or without value and importance.

This difference in cosmology occurs often in modernization processes, where administrative languages become associated with progressive views while local languages are identified with traditional ways of life and backwardness (Fishman, 1968 in Schmidt-Nieto, 2002).

Thus, the white and mestizo elites only hear their own words while silencing the indigenous peoples (Freire, 1970/1996). They regard themselves as those who have knowledge and thereby consider the others as ignorant, incompetent and they doubt their abilities (Freire, 1970/1996). The teachers are through banking education imposing the legitimate knowledge, and often also the languages, of the elite upon the indigenous learners.

If the preschools or schools do not support the use and the teaching of the learners' mother tongue, this can intensify an indifferent or negative attitude amongst children. As maintained by Robinson (n. d. cited in UNESCO, 2003: 5): "Children who learn in another language get two messages – that if they want to succeed intellectually it won't be by using their mother tongue and also that their mother tongue is useless". As a consequence, the oppressed learn to denigrate and devalue their own language, culture and knowledge.

Exclusion of indigenous languages and culture also harms the indigenous learner's self-identification since they do not identify themselves with the school content. Hence school becomes an alien and alienating institution for many indigenous learners.

### **3.3.1.2 Alienation**

The use of a foreign language may alienate learners, but also the school content regardless of the language in which it is expressed. After the 1994 educational reform in Bolivia, textbooks in the three biggest languages, Quechua, Aymara and Guarani, were developed (WB, 2003). However, the books were not necessarily cultural sensitive. Monica Navarro (2009) from the PROEIB-Andes Foundation in Bolivia gave an example of a Guarani schoolbook where children were presented a math problem where an indigenous boy was selling trees. This is a preposterous thing to do within the Guarani culture as trees are considered their brothers; hence, not something you could sell (Navarro, 2009). So even in materials especially developed to include them, they indigenous learners were alienated by the colonizers' mindset.

All over the world we find controversies and discrepancy between the educational system led by the nation state on the one hand and the culture, the values and the epistemologies held by indigenous peoples on the other hand (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006). According to Champagne and Abu-Saad (2006), the schools run by the nation-state might be an alien place for children with indigenous background, and they are often, socially and culturally, poorly prepared for this new environment. The indigenous learners are being prepared for a lifestyle that differs from their traditional life within the indigenous community. Indigenous peoples are mainly collective oriented, nevertheless through schooling children learn to work and act as individuals and not as part of a group, tribe or clan (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006). Many indigenous learners live in a society with different languages, values, goals, rules and religions, and where their language and culture are not recognized within the curriculum, and they are subjects to “efforts to remove their natal culture and language in an alien school environment” (Niezen, 2003: 87).

Face to face with an unfamiliar school culture and misrecognition of their own culture, learners become cultural losers, dependent on the teacher as a transmitter of words, skills and ideas (Shor, 2003). He/she teaches them how to speak, think and act as the dominant elite, which is put forth as the only acceptable way to do things. Thus, the indigenous learners are submitted to an assimilative state education, which is the most commonly used mechanism for cultural reformatting among indigenous peoples the world over (Niezen, 2003).

### **3.3.1.3 Assimilation**

The main problem when it comes to indigenous people in formal education is no longer access, but what the education is doing to the indigenous identity. Indigenous peoples are in many countries victims of what Freire calls a cultural invasion where

the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression (Freire, 1970/1996: 133).

Freire (1970/1996: 134) argues that for the cultural invasion to succeed, “it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority”. The invaded consider themselves as inferior and recognize the invaders' superiority.

So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (Freire, 1970/1996: 45).

This process of forced assimilation and self-depreciation is supported by banking education (Freire, 1970/1996). Homes and schools function as agencies preparing the future invaders. According to the government of Bolivia, education has been, until recently, used to wipe out the memories of the indigenous groups (MEC, 2006). In Bolivia the indigenous culture and languages were considered obstacles to national development, in line with Ruíz's (1988) language-as-problem approach. This had to be overcome through *castellanización*, a term that addresses both the cultural and linguistic assimilation and resembles the policy of Norwegianization of the Samis in Norwegian schools from 1862 until the 1970s (Taylor, 2004; Balto & Todal, 1997). Through the Norwegianization process “Saamis were to familiarise themselves with Norwegian language and culture in order to become ‘informed’ people” (Balto & Todal, 1997: 77). Thus, the goal of educating the indigenous peoples both in Bolivia and in Norway was to “civilize” them by giving them the language and culture, and also the religion, of the former conquistadors (Taylor, 2004).

Such cultural invasion and conquests leads to cultural inauthenticity of the invaded people. They will respond to the values, standards and goals of the invaders, thus leaving their own cultures and traditions behind (Freire, 1970/1996). The oppressed internalize their oppressors' values and want to be like them (Freire, 1970/1996; Taylor, 1994). In the following section I will account for how this oppressive education can be defeated through an education for liberation.

### **3.3.2 Education and liberation**

As a response to banking education, Freire (1970/1996) advocates for a pedagogy of liberation.

Indigenous peoples have during centuries of oppression lived in a culture of silence and accepted the conscience of the dominated (UNESCO, 2002-2003), so there is a need for a pedagogy that will awaken and empower them. A fatalistic attitude and fear of freedom are often the result of oppressing through banking education, hence there is a need for the oppressed to not only be aware of their underprivileged and unjust situation, but also be encouraged and empowered to change it (Freire, 1970/1996). This is the core of liberatory education as the learners go from being merely an Object of others, to being a self-determining Subject. They often start at the magical consciousness stage where they are unaware of being oppressed, then awareness is raised at the naïve consciousness stage, yet identification of their own ability to change the injustice is not found until

they have reached the critical conscience stage (UNESCO, 2002-2003). Freire (1970/1996: 17) uses the term “conscientização”<sup>35</sup> to capture this process of “learning to perceive the social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality”.

Change is a key word for the pedagogy of the oppressed. It is not enough to know and reflect about the unfairness of the world, one also has to act to change it and at the same time, one cannot act without being informed. Thus, Freire (1970/1996) unites action and reflection in what he calls “praxis”. Education must be used as a tool for combating injustice and inequalities, instead of a way of prolonging the power of the dominant culture (Shor, 2003). Consequently, liberatory education must not be imposed from outsiders, but be born from the initiative of the oppressed themselves (UNESCO, 2002-2003). According to Carrillo (n. d.),

the purpose of liberating education is to help to bring about change, in accordance with visions of the future that go beyond the existence of oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited, excluders and excluded; it means overcoming economic, social, political and cultural obstacles preventing the development of learners as human beings. Critical educational practice, linked to transformative social practice, enables people to write their own history, that is to say, to overcome the adverse circumstances and factors that condition them.

In the following I will discuss three ways to ensure a liberatory education for indigenous peoples, namely inclusion, recognition and decolonization. I will start out with the first step to be taken, inclusion of indigenous languages, knowledge and culture in schools.

### **3.3.2.1 Inclusion**

The history of colonization and oppression causes many indigenous groups to be skeptical to the education given by elites. The oppressed groups see this as a continuum of elite domination and a threat to their own freedom and maintaining of their traditions (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006). According to Navarro (2009), parents in Bolivia send their indigenous child to school and in return they receive a Spanish professional. Nonetheless, the indigenous peoples are not reluctant to education per se. What they are afraid of is what the education is doing to their children (Navarro, 2009). Thus, they want an education that includes and strengthens their cultural views, institutions and communities, and to help them tackle contemporary demands, not assimilate them.

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<sup>35</sup> The translator of my copy of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* has chosen not to translate this term into English (Freire, 1970/1996), therefore I also choose to use the term in its original language, Portuguese. To omit confusion with the Spanish terms used in this thesis, I will not write it in italics, instead I will use quotation marks.

Indigenous communities change, but they want a change according to their own cultural interests and values and within their own cultural values and understandings. Education for indigenous peoples must incorporate the dual or multipurpose knowledge, needs, and value system that indigenous peoples are required to cope with and desire to maintain and develop (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006: 6).

One way of including indigenous people's language, culture and knowledge in school is through intercultural and bilingual education. Linguistic diversity is often reckoned as a problem and many governments try to make multilingual children monolinguals in the majority language (Ruíz, 1988). However, if languages are regarded as resources, the status will rise making it easier to preserve and develop them, and linguistic minorities will simultaneously be considered a source of expertise and not a problem (Ruíz, 1988).

According to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UDCD), "all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity" (UNESCO, 2001, Art. 5). It has also been argued that the use of one's own language as the language of instruction is a prerequisite for good learning (Holmarsdottir, 2005). Denying indigenous learners education in their own language, consequently, removes their opportunity to learn. UNESCO (2003: 6) points to three important issues when it comes to bilingual and multilingual education<sup>36</sup>, including the quality and the intercultural aspect of education:

1. Promoting education in the mother tongue to improve the quality of education.
2. Encouraging bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of schooling as a means of furthering social and gender equality and as a key part of linguistically diverse societies.
3. Pushing languages as a central part of inter-cultural education.

The use of indigenous languages and inclusion of indigenous culture and knowledge in the schools, as EIB promotes, has therefore both a pedagogical and a socio-cultural value (Taylor, 2004). Intercultural and bilingual education both ensures good learning and promotes a contextualized and participatory education by including and recognizing their language, culture and knowledge. It is not possible to liberate people by alienating them, thus peoples' world view must be taken into consideration in liberating education (Freire, 1970/1996). Inclusion means that indigenous language, culture and knowledge are integrated parts of the school content, and not merely a

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<sup>36</sup> Multilingual education means learning the mother tongue, the regional or national language and an international language (UNESCO, 2003).

decoration or an exotic flavor. UNESCO (2003: 7) underlines the importance of developing indigenous languages to cover the school content and not be an addition but instead be teaching tools which “go beyond just describing the legends of the forest and be able to handle things such as scientific plant evolution and the greenhouse effect”.

As stressed by the director of URACCAN (Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense), Alta Hooker (2009), the indigenous peoples demand not only inclusion of superficial cultural aspects like music or dances in the educational sector, but integration of their deep culture and knowledge systems. Moreover, including indigenous knowledge in the educational system is not just helping the children build their identity and better their learning, it is also an important step towards decolonizing the indigenous peoples.

### **3.3.2.2 Decolonization**

The observation of the after-effects of the colonization in Latin America is the point of departure for the reflections of Freire, where social problems and equality have been, and still are, enormous between the rich white landowners and the poor peasants, mainly indigenous people (UNESCO, 2002-2003). Freire proposes a humanistic and liberatory concept of education that teaches people to free themselves from the colonization of the spirit (UNESCO, 2002-2003). Today we see a trend of decolonization movements among indigenous peoples all over the world, as a tool for liberating the marginalized groups from oppression. Decolonization seems to be the new buzzword for the Bolivian authorities as it is included in both the draft Constitution and in the new educational reform (MEC, 2006). According to Raul Prada (2008 in LAG, 2008: 41), a MAS member and member of the Constitutional Assembly, decolonization means to reconstitute the indigenous nations by recognizing and lifting up the institutions of the indigenous peoples to the same level as the state. One of these institutions is education, and a way of decolonizing the indigenous peoples is by including and thereby recognizing their languages, cultures, traditions and knowledge in the classrooms, from preschool and up to higher education.

For instance, Smith (1999) views Western research on indigenous peoples as a continuum of colonization and calls for decolonization by promoting an indigenous research where the indigenous researchers reclaim the right to and control over their own knowledge. Other researchers like Goduka (2000), Hoppers (2002) and Morgan (2003) aim to implement Indigenous



Knowledge Systems and spirituality in academia. This view is also maintained in UDCD. The member states are committed to

(r)especting and protecting traditional knowledge, in particular that of indigenous peoples; recognizing the contribution of traditional knowledge, particularly with regard to environmental protection and the management of natural resources, and fostering synergies between modern science and local knowledge (UNESCO, 2001, Art. 15).

Moreover, Morgan (2003) criticizes the West for the theft of indigenous intellectual property by using Western methodologies to “discover” and retain copyrights and patents to knowledge already existing within the indigenous communities. “The intellectual property from thousands of years of Indigenous scientific endeavour is not recognized, and the economic rewards are given to those who appropriate from and exploit Indigenous peoples” (Morgan, 2003: 45). Thus, including both indigenous languages and knowledge systems within the educational systems where Western language, culture and knowledge have been hegemonic, is one way to recognize the contributions of thousands of years of indigenous research and knowledge production.

### **3.3.2.3 Recognition**

Through exclusion, alienation and assimilation of the indigenous learners, their own background and contributions have been misrecognized by society. Misrecognition is a lack of respect that can “inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred” (Taylor, 1994: 26). People who have internalized a picture of their own inferiority through misrecognition are often incapable of taking advantage of new possibilities, even when the obstacles to their advancement have fallen away (Taylor, 1994). It is also difficult to change the society and the school culture when indigenous peoples are given an inferior role and are not empowered to act upon this; hence as a result oppression continues in many societies. Thus, Taylor (1994: 26) argues that “recognition is not just a token of courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need”. Coulthard (n. d.), inspired by Charles Taylor, encourages states to act upon the recognition of indigenous groups by maintaining that

(i)t is this idea that unequal relations of recognition can impede human freedom and flourishing that continues to serve as one of the main theoretical justifications for state policies geared toward the protection of indigenous cultural difference.

Taylor argues for multicultural curricula as a way of giving the recognition to the subjugated, and preventing a continuum of unequal power balance between different groups in society:

Dominant groups tend to entrench their hegemony by inculcating an image of inferiority in the subjugated. The struggle for freedom and equality must therefore pass through a revision of these images. Multicultural curricula are meant to help in this process of revision (Taylor, 1994:66).

Recognition through a multicultural curriculum also requires promoting a culture's language, as it is the foundation of building any people's identity (UNESCO, 2003). "Every decision about languages is political" (King, n. d. cited in UNESCO, 2003: 6) and as we have seen earlier, Ruíz (1988) promotes the language-as-resource as the best approach when it comes to a state's language planning, as it recognizes the value of having a multilingual population and also recognizes the knowledge inherited in languages. Learning in one's own language about one's own culture works as an empowerment tool for the marginalized groups, as it strengthens their identity and also status of both the language and culture outside of the classroom.

Inclusion in the curriculum to give recognition to the hitherto excluded groups again forges identity (Taylor, 1994). Thus, in addition to making learning more accessible, culturally relevant education, like EIB in Bolivia, also strengthens the indigenous learners' self-esteem by confirming their cultural identity. In the following chapter I will discuss whether the urban Bolivian school system is succeeding in promoting an adequate intercultural and bilingual education that is strengthening the Aymara learners' self-esteem, or whether the oppression is continuing through a prolongation of the exclusion, alienation and assimilation. Is there coherence between reflections and actions, or is the liberatory praxis still not present?

## **4 Findings and discussion**

According to former Minister of Education Amalia Anaya (2002a in Taylor, 2004: 28), the inclusion of intercultural and bilingual education (EIB) in Bolivian schools has led to increased confidence and self-esteem among indigenous learners, and the indigenous communities have acquired the ability to reaffirm their cultural identity. It may, however, be premature to say the same thing when it comes to the situation in urban schools. Many challenges are yet to be overcome, and in this chapter I will discuss some of the main factors hindering or promoting EIB in the city of El Alto, characterized by the high rate of indigenous migrants moving away from the traditional rural lifestyle to the modern, urban society.

EIB has been part of the educational discourse in Bolivia since the 1990s, but the questions of where, how and why to include this aspect in the teaching are unanswered in the current reform. I will start by presenting the main policy papers concerning EIB in Bolivia to give an insight into the educational, linguistic and cultural ideologies in the country. Then I will give a short introduction of the language and cultural situation in El Alto, my focus area, before I start the presentation of teachers' attitudes, competence and practices when it comes to promoting an intercultural and bilingual education. Finally, I will discuss whether there is coherence between the reflections and the actions of the teachers, and how the indigenous identity in the urban society may directly or indirectly affect the presence and value given to Aymara language and culture.

### **4.1 Intercultural and bilingual education the school reforms**

The curriculum is an important political and ideological tool that directly and indirectly transfers values and attitudes onto the learners (Dupuy, 2008: 54). Bolivia is currently in a limbo between two different educational reforms, the current *Reforma educativa Ley no 1565*<sup>37</sup> that has been in force since 1994 and the new government's reform Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez (AS-EP), developed in 2006, but still not approved by the House of Representatives. By comparing the two documents we can identify the differences in ideologies between the former and current administrations in regard to the status and value given to indigenous language, culture and knowledge in schools. I have also included the teachers' and student teachers' attitudes and understanding of the two reforms, since this is decisive for how the intentions are carried out in the classrooms.

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<sup>37</sup> The law is also known as *Reforma Educativa* or *1565*.

#### **4.1.1 Reforma Educativa Ley no. 1565: “It is written by neoliberals”**

According to *Reforma Educativa*, the object of the educational system is to construct an intercultural and participatory educational system that permits access for all Bolivians to education without discrimination (MECD, 1994, Art. 3: 5). In order to combat discrimination, *Reforma Educativa* was the first educational reform to remove the division between rural and urban education (Taylor, 2004). Thus, on paper, the indigenous peoples were no longer discriminated by being exposed to a rural education of lower quality. Moreover, the indigenous peoples were also given the right to co-determination through popular participation, which was encouraged in the reform (Taylor, 2004)<sup>38</sup>. In addition to national and departmental councils, four indigenous educational councils have been established, each from the main indigenous groups: Aymara, Quechua, Guarani and the indigenous peoples in the Amazon. These councils were invited to participate in the educational, linguistic and cultural policy making, especially policies focused on members of the indigenous *pueblos* (MECD, 1994, Art. 6: 5). This was in line with Freire’s (1970/1996) argument for dialogue and not monologues found in liberatory education. The indigenous peoples were now given the opportunity to create an education more in line with their needs and values, an education that would help them develop but without being assimilated, hence in line with what Champagne and Abu-Saad (2006) argue for. One way of assuring the inclusion of the indigenous languages and culture was through the promotion of intercultural and bilingual education (EIB) in the reform.

*Reforma Educativa* states that Bolivian education is intercultural and bilingual and it assumes the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the country (MECD, 1994, Art. 1: 5). Nonetheless, it does not bring about a definition of intercultural and bilingual education nor does it concretize how to include these aspects into the teaching (Taylor, 2004). Thus, the reform promotes verbalism rather than intercultural and bilingual praxis, as the reflections are not accompanied by binding and concrete action (Freire, 1970/1996). Another problematic aspect is the uneven treatment of religions and world views. According to Anaya (2002a cited in Taylor, 2004: 18), interculturality within the reform is understood as “a relationship of respect and appreciation for different Bolivian cultures that transcends regional and national borders”. In her article, Taylor (2004) problematizes this

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<sup>38</sup> This is in accordance with another important law for the Bolivian people: the Popular Participation Law from the same year.

definition by calling attention to the continued provision for Catholic religious instruction in schools. The hegemonic position of the colonizer's religion in Bolivian society may thereby be prolonged by the cultural invasion (Freire, 1970/1996) upon non-Catholic learners through religious indoctrination in the classrooms. Another critique when it comes to the authenticity of the intercultural aspect of the reform is the fact that the books developed for the EIB were not contextualized and adapted to the local knowledge of the indigenous peoples (Navarro, 2009). Instead, they contained the national, hegemonic knowledge translated into indigenous languages. Thus, the reform did not really promote any radical changes in the educational sector, only apparent changes (Navarro, 2009). The purpose of education was still assimilation, however now it was done in the indigenous peoples' own languages. This is not only a Bolivian phenomenon. The same situation has also been identified in other Latin American countries who claim to have implemented EIB. An example would be Guatemala:

Bilingual and multicultural<sup>39</sup> education has become ghettoized, taught only to those who are considered to be "multicultural" (that is, the indigenous peoples), who are then taught in their mother tongue about ladino<sup>40</sup> rather than indigenous culture. The ladino population learns almost nothing about the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, and what they do learn largely revolves around the Mayans and indigenous peoples of the past, not the current situation of Guatemala's indigenous population (Dupuy, 2008: 42).

The discrepancy in the reform between the apparent participation and inclusion, and the de facto continued alienation and assimilation of the indigenous learners is also evident when it comes to bilingual education. In the *Reglamento sobre organización curricular* (Regulation for the curricular organization), it is said that the national curriculum shall assume an intercultural perspective and bilingual teaching (MECD, 1995, Art. 9 and 11). The curriculum also opens up for local adaptation, and promotes acquiring and developing a content related to the ethnic, socio-cultural and sociolinguistic specificity of each department and municipality (MECD, 1995, Art. 9). Thus, there are two alternative ways of teaching in the *Reforma Educativa*; either monolingual in Spanish with some teaching of indigenous languages, or bilingual with the indigenous language as first language and Spanish as a second language (MECD, 1994, Art 9: 2). The different modes are used according

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<sup>39</sup> Dupuy uses the term "multicultural"; however, the Peace Accord promotes an intercultural and bilingual education: [http://www.usip.org/library/pa/guatemala/guat\\_950331.html](http://www.usip.org/library/pa/guatemala/guat_950331.html). As argued by Postero (2004; 2007), in Latin America the term interculturalism is preferred over multiculturalism, as the former promotes an interactive process.

<sup>40</sup> *Ladino* in the Guatemalan context means a non-indigenous person.

to the predominant language of the school area. The pedagogical justification for bilingual education is, however, unclear:

The national curriculum is bilingual in the whole educational system, starting in primary education gradually and progressively advancing to the rest of the system. The curriculum is bilingual principally in the districts and areas where the learners speak an indigenous language and require an educational attention in another language than *castellano*<sup>41</sup>. Bilingual education pursues the preservation and development of the indigenous languages at the same time as the universalization of the use of *castellano* (MECD, 1995, Art. 11, my translation)<sup>42</sup>.

*Reforma Educativa* clearly states that children shall develop oral, written and reading competences in both languages, yet the quote above is giving an impression that indigenous languages are mainly used as transitional languages to reach the expressed goal of universal use of Spanish. According to the *Reglamento*, EIB is meant to ensure that all the learners in the country have adequate and efficient mastery of Spanish since it is regarded as the language of intercultural and interethnic dialogue (MECD, 1995, Art. 30: 4). This implies a weak model of bilingual education inasmuch as the indigenous languages taught in school are given an instrumental rather than intrinsic value (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). The indigenous languages are tools for Spanish and school subject acquisition, whereas the knowledge inherent in these languages is ignored. In addition, bilingual education for learners with Spanish as a second language is not mentioned in the *Reglamento* for secondary education, so the intention to achieve development and maintenance of indigenous languages through bilingual education will be hard to fulfill (Taylor, 2004).

*Reforma Educativa* perpetuates the unchallenged domination of Spanish as the high status language (Romaine, 2000) in Bolivian society. Hence it has assumed a language-as-problem orientation where the main goal is to make learners monolinguals in Spanish, rather than maintaining and cherishing linguistic diversity as a resource (Ruíz, 1988). Moreover, it promotes a weak form of

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<sup>41</sup> Due to the history of colonization by the Spaniards, many Latin Americans prefer to use the word *castellano* rather than *español* when they talk about the Spanish language. Therefore, to respect this need to distance themselves from the Spaniards, I chose to use the word *castellano* without translation when I quote my informants or other Bolivian sources written in the colonizers' language. Apart from that I will use the word Spanish.

<sup>42</sup> "El currículo nacional es además bilingüe para todo el sistema educativo, comenzando a aplicarse en la educación primaria, para ir avanzando gradual y progresivamente en todo el sistema. El currículo es bilingüe principalmente en los distritos y núcleos en los cuales los educandos hablan un idioma originario y requieren de una atención educativa en una lengua distinta al castellano. La educación bilingüe persigue la preservación y el desarrollo de los idiomas originarios a la vez que la universalización del uso del castellano."

bilingual education, a so-called early exit program, since the bilingual education seems to cease when the learners have reached mastery of the high status language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008).

When it comes to EIB in areas where learners are monolingual in Spanish, the intentions of the reform are vague, saying that they ought to incorporate the learning and use of an indigenous language (MECD, 1995, Art.12, my emphasis). So while the model for the bilingual education of children with other mother tongues is detailed and mandatory, the model for bilingual teaching for Spanish-speaking learners is given less space and no clear strategies in the *Reglamento*. In addition, the implementation of EIB in Spanish-speaking areas even relies on guidance and funding from international and private organization to be sustained (MECD, 1995, Art.12), which underlines the lack of commitment from the 1994 administration. Moreover, EIB-related projects initiated by the NGOs were mainly implemented in rural, primary schools (interview: UNICEF officer, 13/08/08; interview: Plan International officer, 17/09/08), thus bilingual teaching in urban areas was under-prioritized both by the Bolivian authorities and by the donor community.

There was a concurrence among my informants from teachers, via student teachers to NGO workers, that EIB as expressed in the *Reforma Educativa* was meant for rural, primary schools only and not prioritized in urban areas (interviews conducted July-September, 2008). One student teacher elaborated on this:

“Bilingual education in 1565 is only for primary school, or so they said. But in theory only, because in real life nothing has been done. They said that the education should be bilingual in Aymara and *castellano*. But then there were no more projects, and I don’t think the reform was implemented in secondary school. And even less in higher education. And bilingual education was only given in rural areas, and here in the urban area, nothing, nothing” (group interview: Gloria, 12/09/08).

In addition to the lack of clear focus and commitment regarding EIB, another critique raised by my informants was the lack of contextualization in *Reforma Educativa*. Even though participation from the indigenous communities was promoted and the reform opened up for local adaptations, it was still regarded as neoliberal in its essence and part of a package of neoliberal reforms initiated in the late 80s-early 90s and funded by the World Bank (Howard, 2009; Postero, 2004). Thus, the critic towards neo-liberalism in the 2000s was also affecting the *Reforma Educativa*, as it was seen as a symbol of this ideology (López, 2005). Moreover, the reform was also considered foreign and not adapted to the Bolivian context according to my informants:

“They say that it is a copy of other countries that has nothing to do with our reality (...) It is written by neoliberals” (interview: Jorge, 13/08/08).

“The modules came from Spain for instance. And in Spain they live differently from us. It would be better if the teachers could have participated. Let us make the modules. Let us show the geography of Bolivia. Here you find geography from Spain, from Colombia, from Venezuela, but we don’t live like them” (interview: Norma, 26/08/08).

“The other law from the former Ministry of Education was not in accordance with our context. It was a copy from the law in Spain, I think” (interview: Eva, 27/08/08).

The fact that the *Reforma Educativa* and the development of textbooks for this reform was funded by the World Bank (2003) also intensifies its image as a neoliberal project with an intention to open for indigenous participation in the national, economic market (Navarro, 2009; Luykx & López, 2008). Thus, education was still a tool used for cultural oppression, and the de facto exclusion of the indigenous languages as languages of instruction prolonged social injustice (Dupuy, 2008). The alienation of the learners and exclusion of indigenous culture and knowledge in the school content is being combated in the present government’s educational reform, the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez (AS-EP) reform.

#### **4.1.2 Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez: “By the indigenous, for the indigenous”**

The current Bolivian government claims that the schools have contributed to erasing indigenous history and culture (MEC, 2006). For that reason, the government of Morales developed a new educational reform in 2006<sup>43</sup>, Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez (AS-EP), named after the two national pioneers within education of the indigenous peoples<sup>44</sup>.

“It [the new law] is in accordance with the reality in both methodology and fundament because it is influenced by the schools of Warisata, of Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Perez. Perez wanted to implement long time ago, a reform, and a change in the educational system that would include the *campesinos* in the classroom. He wanted to educate what they call the indigenous, these despicable beings that had no rights and no opportunities” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

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<sup>43</sup> From my informants and other informal conversations with Bolivians, I have been told that several changes in this educational reform have been undertaken. Nevertheless, I am basing this discussion on the document as it was published in 2006, as this is the only official document published by the Ministry of Education that expresses their vision of the Bolivian educational system. Still, one must take into consideration that the reform when implemented will differ from the one I am presenting in this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> The reform is named after the founders of the *Escuela Ayllu* in Warisata in 1931. This was the first school that included an indigenist perspective and intercultural education by uniting the school and the **ayllu**, through communal labor and community control over educational decisions. Albeit with Spanish being the dominant language. The school did not live long, and was closed in 1941 as it conflicted with the state policy of cultural assimilation (Taylor, 2004).



The ideological base of AS-EP is most clearly expressed in the first article of the reform document, stating that it is

decolonizing, liberating, anti-imperialist, anti-globalizing, revolutionary and transformative of economic, social, cultural, political and ideological structures; oriented towards self-determination and reaffirmation of the *pueblos*, the indigenous and Afrobolivian nations and other cultural expressions of the Plurinational state of Bolivia<sup>45</sup> (MEC, 2006, Art. 1: 2, my translation).

The main purpose of AS-EP is to take back and re-dignify the indigenous languages, cultures and their knowledge systems (MEC, 2006). The learners will learn about Western technology and science side by side with the holistic world view of the indigenous peoples, including their spirituality and the idea of the cosmovision (MEC, 2006, Art. 1: 10 and 15). In this new educational reform, indigenous language, culture and knowledge are integrated parts of the curriculum, and not merely an addition to the national school content. Bolivia will thereby be in tune with the Declaration on Cultural Diversity's request to respect and protect indigenous knowledge by fostering synergies between modern science and traditional knowledge (UNESCO, 2001). The intention is to let the indigenous peoples reclaim control over the presentation of their history and culture, and to integrate Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the formal educational system from primary and up to higher education, as encouraged by researchers like Goduka (2000), Smith (1999), Hoppers (2002) and Morgan (2003). The inclusion of indigenous knowledge, history and spirituality is one way of preventing the alienation of the indigenous learners through the, still continuing, process of *castellanización* in Bolivia.

“This is something that we are discussing now. There are two discourses, the Western and the indigenous. And we are trying to re-dignify the culture that exists here, the Aymara or indigenous culture. That is logical, because Western culture is foreign, it is not ours. Of course there are things there that we want to keep, but first of all we want what is ours. And it is all so different, even the religious part. Everything is different. So we want to start with the cultures that exist in Bolivia first and foremost” (interview: Enrique, 21/09/08).

In addition to the concretizing and strengthening of the intercultural aspect of EIB, AS-EP is also expanding it by promoting an inter-intra-cultural and trilingual education (MEC, 2006, Art. 1: 8 and

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<sup>45</sup> “*Es descolonizadora, liberadora, antiimperialista, antiglobalizante, revolucionaria y transformadora de las estructuras económicas, sociales, culturales, políticas e ideológicas; orientada a la autodeterminación y reaffirmación de los pueblos, naciones indígenas originarias, afroboliviano y demás expresiones culturales del Estado Plurinacional boliviano.*”

12: 10; interview: MEC official, 10/09/08) From primary school up to higher education, the learners will be taught in Spanish, the predominant indigenous language of the area and a foreign language. Moreover, special measures are to be taken for languages in danger of extinction (MEC, 2006, Art. 14). Thus, AS-EP recognizes the indigenous language's immanent value and responds to the need to preserve and develop these languages and the knowledge they contain. Thereby the new reform has assumed a language-as-resource orientation (Ruíz, 1988) and the indigenous languages are not regarded as merely an instrument for Spanish acquisition, like in *Reforma Educativa*. The reform is also challenging the linguistic hierarchy apparent in Bolivia as in so many other former colonies (Alexander, 2000) by letting indigenous languages enter more and more high status domains (Romaine, 2000).

In addition to the emphasis given to indigenous knowledge and language, the reform is radical in its promotion of a secular education. Since the Conquest the Spaniards language, culture and also religion have been imposed upon the indigenous peoples. For that reason AS-EP, within its decolonizing framework, aims to take back not only the languages, histories and knowledge systems, but also the cosmovision of the indigenous nations.

“The Catholicism in Bolivia is much stronger than other doctrines. What the doctrine that Evo Morales is bringing wants, is to make the religion more respected, to diversify the Catholic education to diversify the religions and respect the freedom of religion. That's why I am telling you that when AS is implemented there will be many changes in the field of education” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

“We attended this national congress on education some time ago, and the Catholic Church was protesting outside, saying that they do not want a secular education. But this is a demand from the *pueblo*. They want to include the cosmovision, the spirituality. Because today this is not respected. But the new law will touch upon the different religions, the different histories, the Andean cosmovision, its advantages and disadvantages. The Church does not even want to include religious sects. This is a problem” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

The new indigenist government headed by an Aymara is leading the work, and the indigenous peoples are included in the development of the reform (interview: MEC official, 10/09/08). This means that AS-EP is in line with Freire's (1970/1996) ideology of liberation from the inside. The perceived liberatory and decolonizing reform comes from the Bolivian people, not from outsiders or oppressors, like the *Reforma Educativa*.

“What our government is saying is that the law 1565 is a copy from the European countries. So what are they doing with this law Avelino Siñani? They are implementing a law made by the *indio*, the indigenous, for the indigenous. Like they are saying ‘learn to learn’ and that’s a motto that comes from the collective community” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

Another important difference between the two reforms is that whereas the current reform is promoting what Freire (1970/1996) calls banking education, the AS-EP assumes a dialogical pedagogy.

“The first law, 1565, is more individualistic and the second is more social, more community based. It re-dignifies the indigenous languages and the indigenous way of learning. The current law that we are following is more individual in the sense that the learner has to sit in front of the teacher, and the one that is entering is, let’s say, it is more real. The learners sit together, it is more social” (interview: Flor, 12/09/08).

“And the new law is clearer on one more aspect, that the teacher is not a know-it-all. So the teacher can invite, let’s say, a **yatiri**, a wise man from the community, to share his knowledge with the children” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

However, the Bolivians are not all positive about the changes that will come. The conflict about the reform together with the controversies with the new Constitution has worsened the relationship between the Morales administration and the opposition as well as the Catholic Church and the teachers’ syndicate<sup>46</sup>. The Vice President of the 1994 administration, Victor Hugo Cardenas, himself an Aymara, is another critical voice in his concern that the vision of decolonization might lead to indigenous separatism (Howard, 2009). Moreover, Cardenas critiques the ethnocentrism of the proposed reform, and argues that the reform is embedded in a conflictive rather than democratic political project (Howard, 2009). These views were also shared by my informants, who were concerned that AS-EP might go from one extreme to another, from neoliberalism to indigenism combined with communism (interview: Diana, 25/08/08). One teacher even joked that soon everyone will come to school dressed like the indigenous, inasmuch as the new law will take away the uniforms and let children come to school in traditional clothes (interview: Diana, 25/08/08).

The fact that this idea seemed funny and unrealistic also illustrates the attitudes towards Aymara culture found among people living in El Alto. Skepticism and negative attitudes towards inclusion of Aymara language and culture in schools were evident even among many of the teachers,

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<sup>46</sup> I chose not to elaborate on this conflict, since the teachers’ syndicate is first and foremost against the reform due to administrative, and not ideological, reasons (interviews: informants, July-September, 2008). Administrative differences and difficulties are not part of the discussions in this thesis.

something that might affect a successful implementation of EIB, regardless of what the policy papers say. Both *Reforma Educativa* and AS-EP are policy papers with no real value if the teachers do not follow their directives. Thus, the attitudes, understanding and competence of the teachers and student teachers when it comes to EIB will be discussed thoroughly in the next sections. Firstly, I will describe the language situation in El Alto as a starting point for the discussions.

## **4.2 “Chronicle of a Death Foretold”**

El Alto was a rapidly growing city with a massive immigration of mainly Aymaras from the rural areas, looking for work, education and prosperity. City life promoted new demands for language use and the dominant language, Spanish, had a higher status in the public life than the low status language of Aymara and was also entering new domains previously reserved for Aymara, like the home sectors (Romaine, 2000). As a result, two important trends are identified among the population. The first was a shift in the mother tongue and the other was a decline of bilingual competence among the population. Hence, the danger of a language shift and possibly language death among the Aymara *alteños* seemed to be impending. However, before I address these two trends, the mother tongue issue needs to be clarified and discussed. What is the mother tongue of children growing up with Aymara-speaking parents in Spanish-dominated surroundings? And consequently, what language should they learn in the school?

### **4.2.1 “Their mother tongue is castellano”**

According to the regulations for *Reforma Educativa* (MECD, 1995, Art. 34: 1), schools shall develop the mother tongue of the learners. However, a definition of mother tongue is not included in the reform. My informants regarded Spanish as the learners’ mother tongue. According to one of the teachers, nearly all the children were born in El Alto, and therefore “their mother tongue is *castellano*” (interview: Eva, 27/08/08). Ana (interview, 18/08/08) claimed that “here in the urban areas, well, *castellano* would be first language and Aymara second language”, thereby maintaining the understanding among many of the informants that the children’s mother tongue was the language they spoke the best and the most. None of my informants argued that the children would have the same mother tongue as their parents, who were mainly Aymara speakers. The understanding of learners’ mother tongue depended on where they lived, and not who they lived with. Thus, the criteria mostly used for defining mother tongue were competence and function. The other two criteria identified by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000/2008), origin and identification, were given

less if any value. As a consequence of defining Spanish as the learners' mother tongue and the predominant language of the area, the schools in El Alto were not obliged to teach Aymara according to the current *Reforma Educativa*, as the reform did not give any specific requirements to bilingual education in Spanish-dominated areas.

As argued by Patten and Kymlicka (2003), international human rights declarations traditionally promote tolerance rights rather than promotion rights when it comes to indigenous languages, and education in indigenous languages is often advised but not demanded. In the "Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989" signed by Bolivia in 1990 (UNICEF Bolivia, n. d.), it is stated that education shall be directed to develop respect for children's cultural identity, language and values and that they have the right to use their own language (UNHCHR, 1989, Art. 29: c and 30); however, the issues of mother tongue teaching or language of instruction are not addressed. Moreover, as long as Spanish is regarded as the mother tongue of the Aymara learners in the urban school, they are already granted their right to mother tongue teaching as recommended by UNESCO (2003).

"The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention" of ILO signed in 1991 (IWGIA, 2008) omits the mother tongue dilemma by arguing that "(c)hildren belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong" (ILO, 1989, Art. 28: 1). Nevertheless, by adding the phrase "wherever practicable", it is up to each State to interpret this as they find most suitable. As we have seen earlier, *Reforma Educativa* has also adapted this vagueness by arguing that there ought to be bilingual education in areas where Spanish was predominant, but that this relied amongst other on funding from private or international institutions (MECD, 1995, Art. 12). This possibility that Bolivia has had to escape its commitments has, however, been restricted by the DRIP which was signed by Bolivia in 2007 and even incorporated into the new Constitution (IWGIA, 2008; RB, 2007). Article 13 (UNHCHR, 2007) states that "indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures" and it further emphasizes that "States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected". Nevertheless, when it comes to children living outside the indigenous communities, the declaration has also made certain reservations. According to Article 14

States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language (UNHCHR, 2007, my emphasis).

Thus, in the El Alto context two important questions are decisive for the role given to Aymara language in schools. Firstly, what language is most commonly used by Aymara migrant group? Secondly, do the schools choose to apply a language-as-right orientation (Ruíz, 1988) to make sure the Aymara learners' language rights are attended to? And in that case, how do they choose to interpret the vague demands from the international declarations they are obliged to follow?

Apart from the linguistic rights perspective, including the Aymara language in the school could prevent the Aymara language from disappearing in El Alto. The majority of my informants regarded either Aymara or Quechua as their mother tongues. Thus, the parents and most of the teachers had an indigenous language as a mother tongue, whereas the young learners were regarded as Spanish mother tongue speakers. This indicated a dramatic language shift among the Aymara population in El Alto, a trend that can be clearly identified in the table below from the 2001 national census displaying the mother tongues of the *alteño* population according to age groups (INE, 2001).

*Table 4.1 Mother tongue in El Alto from age 4.*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Aymara</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
4-9	104 018	4 892	98 506
10-19	150 267	19 016	129 867
20-29	123 323	39 646	81 408
30-39	85 745	41 391	42 025
40-49	57 613	33 253	22 321
50-59	30 798	19 376	9 883
60-69	14 711	9 815	3 977
70-79	8 012	5 648	1 879
80-89	2 232	1 754	356
90-98	514	416	71

(Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2001<sup>47</sup>).

This table (4.1 above) shows that there were far more children with Spanish as a mother tongue in El Alto, than Aymara mother tongue speakers. For the youngest children, 98 506 were Spanish mother tongue users, which is almost 95% of the population from 4-9 years of age. Among the

<sup>47</sup> On the new webpage of INE the numbers are wrong when divided into age groups. Therefore I have scanned a copy from the former webpage and enclosed it as Appendix G.

population aged 10-19 the percentage of Spanish mother tongue speakers was also high: 86.4%. As much as 129 867 youth in El Alto had Spanish as their mother tongue, whereas only 19 016 were Aymara mother tongue speakers (INE, 2001). Spanish continued being the dominant language among the *alteños* up to 40 years of age. Here the table displays a different picture, where Aymara was dominating. This meant that the mother tongue of the parent generations had not been transmitted to the children and youth. Instead a new language seemed to be entering the Aymara homes, namely the high status language of Spanish.

#### 4.2.2 Bilingualism in El Alto

Thus, in spite of being regarded as Spanish mother tongue speakers, the majority of the children in El Alto had parents that spoke Aymara only or that were bilinguals. Out of the 18 learners I interviewed, one of them had parents who were both monolinguals in Spanish, whereas the rest had Aymara-speaking parents (informal interviews: learners, August, 2008). However, this had not necessarily led to bilingual competence among the children. The aforementioned 2001 census also showed that the percentage of bilinguals or plurilinguals in El Alto was lower among the youngest age groups, as we can see from the table below displaying language competence in El Alto (INE, 2001).

*Table 4.2 Language competence in El Alto, according to age groups.*

Age	Speak one language	Speak two languages	Speak three languages or more	Do not speak
0-9 years	124 611	14 101	185	34 942
10-19 years	103 357	45 362	1 387	166
20-29 years	47 088	72 383	3 798	129
30-39 years	19 656	62 366	3 716	70
40-49 years	10 350	43 729	3 519	59
50-59 years	5 909	22 421	2 457	24
60-69 years	3 886	9 486	1 326	13
70-79 years	2 898	4 414	692	9
80-89 years	1 210	878	143	2
90-99 years	344	142	24	3

(Source: INE, 2001 <[http://www.ine.gov.bo:8082/censo/make\\_table.jsp](http://www.ine.gov.bo:8082/censo/make_table.jsp)>)

Since the mother tongue of the population under 20 years of age was mainly Spanish (INE, 2001), this table (4.2 above) indicates that the majority of the children in the survey were monolinguals in Spanish and very few of them had competence in their parents' mother tongue. The numbers were especially dramatic for the youngest age group, where nearly 9 times as many children were

monolinguals than bilinguals. As for the rest of the population, those over 20 years of age, most of them could speak both languages regardless of their mother tongue. This decreasing number of bilingual speakers in El Alto heightens the abovementioned tendency of language shift in El Alto households.

The table also confirms the impression I got through observations and interviews, namely that the parents were speaking Aymara with each other, but Spanish with their children (my own observations, July-September, 2008; informal interviews: learners, August, 2008). Thus the inter-generational transmission of Aymara that Fishman (1994) advocates for was almost nonexistent. According to the informants, the parents of the learners were working long hours or even days or weeks outside the home, therefore they had no time to teach the children the Aymara language (interviews: teachers, July-September, 2008). The 18 children I interviewed drew a similar picture. Twelve of them had some knowledge of Aymara, but this was mainly passed on by their grandparents, who were often monolinguals in Aymara, or by other relatives in their *pueblo*, not by their parents (informal interviews: learners, August, 2008).

Fishman (1994) argues that it is the parents and not the school that have the greatest responsibility in transmitting their mother tongue to the children. Schools may be agencies for literacy, versatility or formality, but “schools are not inter-generational language transmission agencies” (Fishman, 1994: 76). This meant that in El Alto it was not only the schools that contributed to killing the Aymara language by excluding it from the classrooms, but also the Aymara parents participated in this linguistic genocide by not using their mother tongue in communication with their children, hence committing linguistic suicide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). Consequently, the bilingual competence of the children was not developed and in addition to being deprived from cultural and emotional ways of expressions (Fishman, 1994; Niezen, 2003), the *alteño* children might even face problems in communicating with their own parents and grandparents. As an illustration of the graveness of this situation, one 4<sup>th</sup> grader told me that she did not speak Aymara and her parents did not speak much Spanish, so her bilingual sister had to be their translator (informal interview: female learner, August, 2008).

The low status of Aymara and high status of Spanish was evident in the way Spanish was regarded as the language for high status functions like education and communication with the teachers,



whereas Aymara was randomly use for informal greetings and as a tool for learning Spanish. Aymara was used to a certain degree in communication between the parents, but not between parents and children or between the children (my own observations, July-September, 2008; informal and formal interviews: informants, July-September, 2008). Thus, the situation was similar to the situation among the Quechuas in neighboring country, Peru, who were also going through a process of language shift among the younger generations (Romaine, 2000).

The situation in El Alto was that Aymara children grew up in a Spanish “language bath” where they seldom used the Aymara language and where they were exposed to a Spanish-only submersion program in school that might speed up the already rapid language shift (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008).

#### **4.2.3 “They don’t identify themselves with their origin”**

Entering the school yard in the observed school, it seemed like the *alteños* were not only going through a language shift, but also a cultural shift. The strongest indication of the Aymara background of the learners was the great number of *cholitas* inside and outside of the school building, mothers who were following their children to school, meeting with the teachers or attending the Monday assemblies. Few mothers used so-called “Western clothes”, like jeans or t-shirts, instead they mainly wore *polleras* and hats, and were carrying their younger children in colorful shawls strapped on their backs. The learners, on the other hand, wore uniforms in grey and purple colors, whereas the teachers had grey teacher robes, and black suits on the parade days. Hence, these outfits did not display any indigenous belonging.

However, on the Day of the Student the children were allowed to wear regular clothes, and one girl was wearing the *pollera* whereas the rest of the about 1500 children in the school were dressed in jeans and Western second-hand clothes<sup>48</sup>. In addition, the children’s dolls, note books, toys, stickers, bags, and pencil cases showed the images of idols quite different from themselves and the people in their surroundings. Most of the girls had Barbie-mania and played with blond dolls in the school yard, whereas they boys seemed to prefer superheroes like Spiderman and Batman. They had

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<sup>48</sup> Most of the clothing stores in the area sold either *polleras* or second hand clothes, mainly from the US or Argentina. Second-hand clothes from the West were also sold at the enormous market arranged twice a week in El Alto on the *Avenida 16 de Julio* (July 16th Avenue) where some 40,000 market stalls converge. To find clothes that were not second-hand, one had to go to the shopping malls or to the stores in the lower part of La Paz, places that were not frequented by my focus group, but were reserved for whiter people with more money.

no toys or images of indigenous people they could identify themselves with. This was maintained by Martin (interview, 21/08/08) who argued that “they don’t identify themselves, let’s say, with their origin, with their nature. They are influenced by the TV, the radio, the music, more than anything from North American TV”. He further added that this lack of identification with the indigenous culture even caused shame rather than pride among the young Aymaras:

“I ask them ‘Why are you ashamed of holding your mother’s hand or bring her to school on Mother’s day?’ Some children don’t bring them. They prefer to bring their sister who is wearing a dress. So I tell them because I see them: ‘Look, I am a professional and my mother is dressed in *pollera*’” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

Thus, the parents were the ones most strongly expressing their indigenous belonging through their outfits and language use, whereas the children seemed to prefer a Western look and lifestyle and the Spanish language, and were even ashamed over their parents’ cultural expressions. The teachers were already concerned about this situation, and in the following sections I will discuss whether the education provided for the *alteño* learners contributed to or reversed these tendencies towards language and culture shifts in El Alto. One way to avoid language death can be through promoting and cherishing bilingual competence in schools. This will be the topic for the next section.

### **4.3 Bilingualism: attitudes and practices**

According to the school development plan, the inhabitants of the region are bilinguals (unpublished paper, 2008). However, the abovementioned census presented a very low number of bilinguals among the *alteño* children (INE, 2001). Thus, there seemed to be little consensus about the requirements for being regarded as a bilingual person. When I asked my informants in the primary school about the number of bilingual children in their class, the number ranged from 12.5% to as much as 70% of the group (interviews: teachers, July-September, 2008).

There seemed to be a preference for the native-like control demand from Bloomfield (1933/1984). As an example, according to Ernesto (interview, 27/08/08), between 7 and 10 children in his group of 38 children were bilinguals, which he defined as speaking both good Aymara and good Spanish. There were other learners who understood Aymara, but they did not fulfill his bilingual requirements. Martin (interview, 21/08/08), on the other hand, argued that as much as 70% of his learners were bilinguals and another 20% understood Aymara. Such a large number of bilingual learners compared to Ernesto could imply that Martin had replaced Bloomfield’s requirement for

proficiency with Macnamara's (1967 in Holmarsdottir, 2005: 10) more liberal requirement of minimal competence. Both Ernesto and Martin did, however, only talk about speaking skills, and neither of them included having only comprehension skills in their understanding of bilingualism, like Macnamara (1967 in Holmarsdottir, 2005: 10) does.

Regarding bilingual competence in Aymara<sup>49</sup> and Spanish among the teachers, there was also discord in the informants' answers. Any exact number of bilingual teachers in the school was not documented; hence, the informants had to assume a number. These assumptions reached from 50% up to as much as 90% (interview: teachers, July-August, 2008). According to the school's principal (interview, 29/08/08), "80% of the teachers can communicate in Aymara". Through this answer he presented a functional view on bilingualism as identified by both Weinreich (1953 in Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2000: 32) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1984a in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 573).

Thus, just like with the mother tongue-definition, we see that bilingual function and competence were the main criteria for being regarded as bilingual. Only one informant mentioned the origin criterion supported by Skutnabb-Kangas (1984a in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 573), as seen in Table 1.1. She said that 50% of her learners were bilinguals since their mothers spoke Aymara (interview: Eva, 27/08/08). In contrast, no one addressed the identification criterion, also found in Table 1.1. when defining mother tongue and bilingualism among learners and staff. This gave the impression that languages were considered a tool for interpersonal communication rather than an identification mark.

Moreover, the knowledge about learners' and colleagues' competence in Aymara differed largely from one informant to the other, which might indicate that bilingualism was not a common topic or feature in the school. The different criteria used for defining bilingualism maintained the impression that the teachers had not discussed the concept collegially and found a common understanding. This absence of consensus also characterized the value and purpose ascribed to bilingual competence and education.

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<sup>49</sup> Some of the teachers were bilinguals in Quechua and Spanish, but I am only including competence in Aymara since this is the main focus of this thesis.

#### 4.3.1 “Of course my Aymara is not fluid, but I understand it”

The presumed high percentage of bilingual teachers in the school concurred with the numbers from the 2001 census (INE, 2001) and their language competence had several explanations. The main reason was that many of the teachers came from the highland and learned Aymara while growing up.

“The teachers also come from the same context, the villages. So they know about this life, they know Aymara. Their families come from the provinces, so they have this same mentality as the parents and learners” (interview: principal, 29/08/08).

“Some of us have learned it by listening. I have some knowledge of Aymara from my parents when they spoke with their neighbors I listened and I learned some words. But I cannot speak it well. I understand perfectly, but the pronunciation is difficult and different from *castellano*” (interview: Ernesto, 27/07/08).

Moreover, in Bolivia all teachers must work two years in the rural areas before they can apply for work in the cities, and several of the informants mentioned their time in the provinces as the most important place for Aymara acquisition and competence development.

“I understand some words because I have worked in the provinces. So some words I can understand and some words I can speak. But of course my Aymara is not fluid, but I understand it” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

“Where I learned Aymara? Well, when I did my service years in the provinces. I worked in Sica Sica. There the parents spoke Aymara, so there I learned it, by talking with them” (interview: Jorge, 13/08/08).

The youngest teachers had also learned Aymara at the *Normal* where they did their teacher training. Aymara has been a subject at the *Normals* since *Reforma Educativa* in order to prepare the teachers for this mandatory service in the rural areas (e-mail correspondence with the Head of Primary Education). The hours of Aymara teaching at the *Normals* seemed to vary and even increase year after year. While Ernesto had a course called “The national reality” that included some teaching of Aymara in 1999, Diana, who graduated in 2006, had been given 3 modules of Aymara language and didactics during the teacher training (interviews, 25/08/08 and 27/08/08). Aymara was also given at university level, and Veronica (interview, 21/08/08) had learned the language while studying tourism at a university in the city of La Paz.

Even though the Aymara competence seemed mainly to be achieved in the rural areas or at the higher learning institutes, the teachers did not have to travel far to learn and to use the Aymara language. It was not even necessary to leave the school compound. Due to massive migration from the rural areas learners, parents or other relatives housing the learners, with none or minimal competence in Spanish, was not uncommon. This meant that the teachers had to learn and relearn Aymara in the school in order to communicate with them.

I: And where did you learn Aymara?

T: “Here in the school with the mothers. Sometimes there are mothers who don’t know *castellano*. So you are forced to learn sometimes, to inform them about their child or grandchild. It is important that you know Aymara” (interview: Norma, 28/08/08).

“Of course there are parents that only speak Aymara. So we are forced to learn Aymara. Because otherwise there would be no understanding, no relations. That’s why I speak Aymara” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

The bilingual competence among the teachers was considered useful in communication with parents and relatives. However, bilingual competence among the learners was not merely regarded as a positive feature or even encouraged in school, as we will see in the next section.

#### **4.3.2 “For the perfection of castellano”**

Spanish was what Romaine (2000) identifies as a high status language in El Alto and in the educational sector; hence the lack of proficiency in this language was regarded as a problem, regardless of the competence one might have in other languages. To cope with the communicative challenges the school was facing with Aymara-speaking learners or guardians, the school was arranging courses for the teachers to strengthen their competence in Aymara.

“We have this project. We are preparing for learning more about the Aymara language, both in writing and in reading. Precisely to later on help these children” (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08).

“Sometimes the children have better knowledge of certain words in Aymara, and an Aymara workshop had recently been arranged to help the teachers help the children” (interview: Ernesto, 18/08/08).

These answers given by the informants illustrate the school’s attitudes towards Aymara-speaking children. Instead of regarding these children as a resource with their knowledge of the Aymara language, the teachers claimed that the Aymara-speaking children had a problem and needed help.

Another example of the language-as-problem orientation (Ruíz, 1988) came from one teacher who talked about her experiences in the province: “In my case, my province was close, so everybody spoke Spanish. I didn’t have problems” (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08). The same problem orientation was maintained by Paola (interview, 30/07/08), who talked about monolingual Aymara children this way:

“No, there is not that problem in the school. These things you only find in the rural areas. There you find children who only know Aymara. So then you have to motivate them and teach them both languages”.

Only one teacher had experiences with monolingual Aymara learners in the classroom. Lydia (interview, 27/08/08) had a girl in her class who did not speak Spanish when she started school. Since the school did not provide for any organized bilingual education, Lydia had to teach the girl Spanish during regular classes with the other 40 learners present in the room. This made the girl very timid and afraid of speaking in the beginning, but little by little she learned more words and was able to speak Spanish like her classmates. Her Aymara competence, however, was not developed; instead, it had been conquered through subtractive Spanish acquisition (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). The girl did achieve Spanish proficiency, but at the expense of her mother tongue, which she did not use in school any more (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08). Additive bilingual education, as recommended by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000/2008) was not provided, partly due to the teacher’s lack of Aymara competence, and partly due to the prominent view that bilingual education was meant for solving the problem of monolingual Aymara learners by strengthening their Spanish competence, not for reinforcing bilingualism in school.

Thus the aforementioned functionalistic view on bilingualism, held by many of the informants, was maintained as they perceived bilingual education as a tool to make the learners monolinguals in the dominant language, Spanish.

“Of course they have some problems, for instance that they say *dispues* instead of *despues*. They mix them. In this area there has been done some work in this part of bilingualism, for the perfection of *castellano*” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

The principal also contributed to this impression by giving these views on bilingual education in the school:

“Some of the children are born in the city with *castellano* as their first language, whereas others have Aymara as their first language. So there are these cultural clashes here. Therefore we give them this opening, a chance for them to interrelate. And little by little they start communicating well. And maybe they reach the phase of having Aymara as a second language and they can read and write together with the other children. I think with time we will be able to deepen this. But at the moment we do not have teachers in Aymara. We only have teachers that speak it but we are giving them training, and we have a plan for implementation of Aymara” (interview: principal, 29/08/08).

The bilingual education offered at the school was therefore a weak form where Aymara was merely used as a tool to help and support children on their way to becoming monolinguals in Spanish (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). “Aymara is not included in the curriculum. But we use it as a transversal language” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/08). Bilingual education was used as a learning strategy to universalize use of Spanish only, the same view found in the *Reforma Educativa* (MECD, 1994). The goal was not language protection or development, or to make children familiar with and proud of their cultural heritage, like in the strong form of bilingual education promoted in the new educational reform (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008; MEC, 2006). Instead, when the learners were proficient in the majority language, they no longer received a bilingual support.

Another misconception among the informants was that the children would be confused if they should learn two languages at the same time. One second grade teacher used some words and greetings in her class; however, she claimed that learners were still too young to start learning to write and make sentences in Aymara in addition to learning to read and write in Spanish (interview: Diana, 25/08/08). This displayed a false either-or mentality which consequently also promoted subtractive rather than additive language learning in the school (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 665). This meant that “the learning of the dominant language has been presented as necessarily happening at the cost of a dominated language, instead of in addition to it. Diversity is killed” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008: 665). As a result, Spanish became a killer language for the Aymara learners and the school was contributing to the linguistic genocide.

#### **4.3.3 “Many of us would like to speak it well, but we can’t”**

The language-as-problem orientation was most prominent at the school (Ruíz, 1988) together with a subtractive rather than additive bilingual education (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). However, both the interviews and observations indicated reflections and action among the staff towards a stronger form for bilingual education (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008; my own observations, July-

September, 2008). Steps were taken to strengthen the teachers' knowledge of Aymara, which might facilitate the implementation of EIB in a near future. Moreover, several of the informants recognized the value of language knowledge and hence wanted to encourage and strengthen the learners' bilingual competence.

“I learned Quechua with my grandmothers most of all, with one of them because she spoke Quechua only. Therefore I had to learn it, and I like it and most of all I like to be able to speak my own mother tongue and communicate when I travel to other departments. It is very favorable because you can speak with other people and at the same time draw your own conclusions. It is good to know other languages” (interview: Norma, 28/08/08).

“We the teachers, we have to talk to our learners. I have a learner, I have to say that she shouldn't be ashamed, that it is natural that she has learned this language and that it is a great advantage. Many of us would like to speak it well, but we can't” (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08).

The principal (interview: 29/08/08) was also promoting the language-as-resource orientation (Ruíz: 1988) in the school by encouraging the parents to speak Aymara with their children and also requesting the teachers to learn at least two languages. Moreover, the school planned to gradually implement Aymara language use in the school. The teachers were given *carte blanche* by the principal to use Aymara in the classroom and they were also encouraged to do so (interview: principal, 29/08/08). Some of my informants said that they had started to teach the children some words and greetings in Aymara.

“Of course we don't have a specific subject that is Aymara. But we try to incentive that the use of the native or indigenous language is being pronounced in the school (...) I make the children speak Aymara by giving the homework to learn certain words for next class. Words like love, or man or woman, etc.”(interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

“I don't use much Aymara in the teaching. Not in particular. Sometimes if the topic we discuss calls for it, if I have the opportunity to use Aymara words, I do it. Sometimes I tell them in Aymara to be quiet and listen; **ist'aña**. Then they are all surprised. When I tell them '**wawanaca ist'aña**', then they pay attention” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/8).

However, as seen from these answers, the school still had no specific guidelines for the use of Aymara in class, and the voluntariness of this initiative resulted in different approaches and a lot of uncertainty. The informants were not in accordance with each other regarding the actual presence and use of the Aymara language in school. Some asserted that everybody was greeting the learners in Aymara, others claimed that they were using Aymara but their colleagues were not, and others



again said that there was no use of Aymara at the moment, but that it would come soon (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008). The only staff member I observed using Aymara to greet people, me included, was the janitor. Every morning he would greet me with “**Kamisaraki**” and expect me to answer “**Waliki**”. In the class I observed the Aymara language was not used at all, whereas other teachers claimed they used the language mainly to explain something to children who were not fluent in Spanish. Thus, the Aymara language was mainly regarded by the teachers as a tool for communication and not a value in itself.

#### **4.3.4 “Everyone shall learn to read and write”**

The authorities of El Alto argued that the educational system and curriculum today did not respond to the reality and the needs of the development in the municipality, as it was all written and given in *castellano*, without having in mind the importance of the Aymara language (GMEA, 2006). All the same, the school persisted with monolingual teaching with Spanish as the only language of instruction, hence prolonging the linguistic hierarchy from the colonial times (Alexander, 2000). This hierarchy was also disclosed in the school’s view on literacy. The development plan stated that few of the parents had higher education, the majority merely primary education, and some were illiterates (unpublished document, 2008). As an example, in Ana’s (interview, 18/08/08) preschool class, 50 % of the parents of her learners had not passed primary school. As an answer to the challenges of illiteracy among the parents, the school was planning to give them literacy courses, supported by the Morales administration’s “*Yo, si puedo*”<sup>50</sup> (Yes I can)-program.

“This is something that the new government is initiating. That everyone shall learn to read and write. No other government has bothered to do something like that before (...) Three teachers from 6<sup>th</sup> grade are doing this because we like to teach and it is important that the parents are capable of helping their children with schoolwork”(interview: Norma, 28/08/08).

During my field work period the school organized exams to identify which of the parents who needed literacy training (my own observations, September, 2008).

Although the good intentions behind this initiative, it added to the mixed messages the school was sending to its Aymara learners. On the one hand the teachers strived to make the learners proud of

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<sup>50</sup> The “*Yo, si puedo*” program is borrowed from Cuba and relies on voluntary work. The 15 teachers from the observed school who were participating in this literacy training were going to teach the parents on their day off, and did not receive anything else but a certificate for their efforts (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008). For more information on the Bolivian campaign: <http://www.minedu.gov.bo/minedu/redirect.do?page=/pna/sis.html>

their language, yet on the other hand the learners saw that the competence their parents had in Aymara was not valued. Their Aymara parents come from an oral tradition that was supposed to be respected and valued in the school, but instead they were regarded as illiterate. Their oral literacy in their mother tongue was not recognized or measured by the school; instead, only literacy in the dominant language was given value and interest. Thus, the school privileged textual orientation over oral testimonies (Smith, 1999). Writing was considered “the mark of a superior civilization” (Smith, 1999: 46), in this case the inherited civilization of the Spanish colonizers. The school was thereby prolonging and transmitting the message that Aymara had less value and lower status than Spanish, which was the same attitude they claimed to be combating. By its rejection of other forms of literacy, the school was actually boosting the existing shame among the migrants over their indigenous background. I even observed a 6<sup>th</sup> grader telling her mother in the school yard that she did not want her to attend the exam, as this girl would now become the embarrassment of her class, now that her classmates would see that her mother was “illiterate”.

Thus, in spite of increased awareness of the importance of language competences, the Aymara language was still not recognized as a value besides a communication tool. The Spanish language and textualization was given a higher status than the indigenous language with its oral tradition, and in the next section I will discuss whether the Aymara culture faced the same misrecognition in the *alteño* classroom.

#### **4.4 Presence of Aymara culture in school**

In the school’s three-year development plan, the importance of having in mind both the socio-cultural and linguistic context of the school was stressed (unpublished document, 2008). The document was filled with intentions like to increase the value of cultural, national, regional and local identity and teach the children to be critical and reflected (unpublished document, 2008). Moreover, the school wanted to improve the low self-esteem in the region by “valuing the personal identity, the cultural roots, the language, the traditional clothing and the capacity to continue growing like a person with abilities, skills and values”<sup>51</sup> (unpublished document, 2008, my translation) and the teachers should respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the learners. Thus, the school opted for a liberatory education by promoting critical thinking and participation of

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<sup>51</sup> “Valorizar la identidad personal, las raíces culturales, el idioma, el vestimiento originaria y la capacidad de continuar creciendo como personas con habilidades, destrezas aptitudes y valores.”

the oppressed indigenous groups (Freire, 1970/1996). Moreover, by including and recognizing the idiosyncrasy of the learners' language and culture, they would combat the misrecognition and internalization of inferiority characterizing the indigenous migrant community (Taylor, 1994).

Nevertheless, their reflections had not been followed up by action. One clear indicator of a liberatory praxis, as Freire promotes (1970/1996), still being detained in the school was that even though the document stated that the surroundings were bilingual, the same document clearly said that the school was monolingual with Spanish as the language of instruction (unpublished document, 2008). Thus, the school committed itself to respect the linguistic diversity and improve the low self-esteem of the Aymara people in the area, but at the same time it did not take any necessary measures to include the Aymara language in the school and promote intercultural and bilingual education. The only specific mentioning of Aymara culture and values in the development plan was the promotion of the value of **ayni**<sup>52</sup>, an Aymara term for mutual support, nonetheless, inclusion of language, culture and knowledge were not mentioned.

This discrepancy between the aims and ambitions on the one side, and the actual conduct on the other side, between reflection and action (Freire 1970/1996), will be the point of departure for the following discussions. On the basis of my own classroom observations and interviews conducted from July to September 2008, I will account for how Aymara language and culture were presented in the school and how this presence might weaken or strengthen the identity of the Aymara learners.

#### **4.4.1 “The deeds of Christopher Columbus”**

In the teaching plan for 5<sup>th</sup> grade there were four transversal themes, namely Education for Democracy, Gender Equity, Education for Health and Sexuality and Education for the Environment (unpublished paper, 2008). The intercultural aspect was not mentioned. Nonetheless, most of the subject curriculums included some focus on indigenous history or culture. The indigenous inclusion was most salient in the plan for Social Studies, where the expressed goal was to value the different local and national cultures and respect diversity (unpublished paper, 2008). The 5<sup>th</sup> graders were

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<sup>52</sup> One of my informants explains the concept of **ayni** this way:

“The **ayni** is, for instance, in a community, the Choque family is having a party and they need ten bags of potatoes but they don't have enough. Then they go to their neighbor and say “please, **ayni**, of potatoes” and they lend them. So the next time they will lend to their neighbors again. **Ayni** is also when you are harvesting the potatoes. Then you do **ayni**. You help someone harvesting and the next time he will help you” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

supposed to learn about the prehistory and the Tiahuanaco<sup>53</sup> civilization during the first trimester, the same period I conducted my observations. In the second trimester they would learn about the Aymara, Inca, Aztec and Maya empires together with the indigenous groups in the Bolivian lowland. At the end of the school year, the topic would be the discoveries by Columbus and the conquest of America (unpublished paper, 2008).

Although the presence of indigenous culture and history was given much space on the syllabus, the last topic indicates an unbalanced presentation of Bolivian history. The ancient history of the Aymaras was included in the syllabus; however, they were excluded or disregarded when it came to newer colonial history. By using the word “discovery”, the curriculum appeared contradictory, inasmuch as the learners by then would have learned about peoples already living on the continent thousands of years before Columbus arrived and supposedly “discovered” already populated land. “Were the indigenous peoples blind?”<sup>54</sup> would be an accurate question to ask the teachers who developed this teaching plan. The reading list for Language and Culture also included a text called “The deeds of Christopher Columbus<sup>55</sup>”. This was another addition to a history version where the Spaniards were the active and brave heroes, whereas the indigenous peoples who already populated the continent before the “discovery” were passive, and even blind, as their presence, their history and their grief were not mentioned in the syllabus. Grace (1985 cited in Smith, 1999: 35) argues that “when they tell us only about others they are saying that we do not exist” and in this school the Aymaras were made invisible.

This made the indigenous learners victims of cultural invasion, to use Freire’s (1970/1996) concept, 500 years after the actual Conquest. This cultural invasion was also apparent in the school’s approach to the Independence of La Paz<sup>56</sup> and the Independence of Bolivia<sup>57</sup>. The learners made posters and wrote in their notebooks the stories of the liberation heroes without problematizing the fact that even though the revolution led by the *criollo* Simon Bolivar in 1825 liberated Bolivia from Spain, it did little, if anything, to improve the situation of the indigenous peoples (Luykx & Lopez,

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<sup>53</sup> A pre-Aymara civilization.

<sup>54</sup> This question was posted by the Deputy Minister of Culture in Guatemala, Elsa Son, at a seminar arranged by NorLarNet (Norwegian Latin America Research Network) and SUM (Center for Development and Environment) at the University of Oslo April 21, 2009. In this seminar, called “Indigenous peoples and democratic processes”, Son was commenting on the controversial history version presented in schools in Guatemala.

<sup>55</sup> “*Las hazañas de Cristobal Colón*”

<sup>56</sup> July 16, 1809

<sup>57</sup> August 6, 1825

2008). The questions that remained unanswered and unasked in the school were whether the Aymara people really were liberated and whose liberation and heroes they were actually celebrating. These are questions that together with the contested histories of the *criollos* and the indigenous peoples might promote a “conscientização” of both teachers and learners, as opted in the school development plan (Smith, 1999; Freire, 1970/1996; unpublished paper, 2008). Instead, the lack of discussion led to a prolongation of the culture of silence (Freire, 1970/1996).

Smith (1999) claims that even though the indigenous peoples would have been allowed to tell their histories, they become outsiders when their versions are being retold in a Western cultural framework and through the use of an alien system of concepts. Thus, the ones dominating the educational system are not only in charge of what version of history is being presented to the learners, but also the discourse in which it is presented. The situation in the observed school illustrates how the curriculum can be used as an ideological and political tool and as a way for the elite to prolong their power and hegemony over knowledge (Dupuy, 2008; Bredlid, 2005; Freire, 1970/1996). The learners were presented with one version of history, the version of the winners: the descendants of the colonizers. Whereas the voices of the colonized indigenous peoples were silenced. The only valid knowledge was the knowledge coming from the teachers, who, in spite of their own indigenous background, seemed to identify with the oppressors and their heroes (Freire, 1970/1996). This indicates that the teachers had not reached the critical conscience stage (UNESCO, 2002-2003); instead, they are participating in the forced assimilation and *castellanización* of the learners by teaching them about foreign white heroes and by using the pronoun “our” in “our heroes”, “our liberation”, “our language”, “our religion”, even though none of these things represent the Aymara people.

#### **4.4.2 “Pachamama is dirty!”**

It was not only the elite’s version of history that was dominating the school content. The colonizer’s religion was also prominent. The learners were exposed to Christian religion in nearly all the subjects. For instance, both religion and music classes were, according to the teaching plans for 5<sup>th</sup> grade, based on Christian principles and values (unpublished paper, 2008). Religious indoctrination also took place in other subjects even though it was not promoted in the teaching plan. As an example, on the first day of observation, the teacher spent the whole math class praying with and for the learners to free them from their laziness after the long winter vacation (my own observation,

15/07/08). Moreover, when the children were making friendship cards on the Day of Friendship the teacher told them to write “I appreciate your friendship. May God bless you!” and they even sang Christian songs in Math, Language and Science classes (my own observations, July-September, 2008). Some of the language and math problems the learners were solving had a religious content and they analyzed sentences like “The Bible is a sacred book”. Moreover, in Natural Science, there was only one valid version of how the Earth was created and sustained and that was by the Christian God. Thus in spite of a Western, compartmentalized school culture (Morgan, 2003), there was an omnipresence of religion in the class. However, the cosmovision and Andean spirituality were excluded, and not even mentioned in Religion or in Natural Science classes as alternatives to the religion and science of the elite.

As mentioned earlier, *Reforma Educativa* has been criticized for not being intercultural since it promotes Catholic faith and gives this world view hegemony in schools (Taylor, 2004); hence, by following the guidelines of the reform the school promoted cultural invasion rather than intercultural dialogue. The result was that instead of being included and respected, there was a lot of joking with the Aymara cosmovision in the school, especially the **Pachamama** or Mother Cosmos (my own observation, July-September, 2008). One day when they talked about pollution, a boy shouted that “**Pachamama** is dirty!” and he was met with laughter from the other learners. Another day the topic was prehistory and how agriculture started, and the teacher asked “What is agriculture about?” -“La **Pachamama**”, said one of the boys and everybody laughed, including the teacher. Thus, even though the learners, and even the teacher<sup>58</sup>, would identify themselves as indigenous, they did not seem to have respect for or interest in the Andean cosmovision.

**Pachamama** is the Andean Mother of Cosmos (Estermann, 2006); and hence a natural aspect to include in both a discussion of the protection of the environment and also when it comes to agriculture. According to the Andean myths, **Pachamama** presides over planting and harvesting. Instead, the class talked more about God and Jesus and the Creation, even in Science classes, than of the Andean deities and world views. As argued by Kymlicka (1995), if a culture is not generally respected in school, the dignity and self-respect of its members were threatened, and in this class the lack of self-respect was expressed through Aymara learners who were making fun of their own cultural heritage.

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<sup>58</sup> This teacher was Quechua, not Aymara. However, both indigenous groups share the same Andean world view.

Many of the teachers were both indigenous and Christians themselves and did not seem to reflect upon how or whether Christian hegemony in the educational system was affecting the learners. They claimed that all the children belong to some kind of Christian congregations and that the parents did not object to the religious teaching (interview: teachers, July-August, 2008; interview: principal, 29/08/08). However, Ernesto (interview, 27/08/08) did mention the cultural clashes that might appear when they taught Catholic religion in the school:

“In the Aymara world the most important God is **Wiracocha**, the Creator. They believe in the other deities, they believe in the valleys, in the spirit of the water, the spirit of the sun. This is not done in the Catholic culture. In this culture they believe in the Virgin, they believe in the saints. But all this is rejected by the evangelicals. So there is a terrible discrepancy. But I haven't noticed any problems in this school. The parents leave it up to the school to teach religion. There is probably a parent who would like to say: 'What happens here? I have another way of thinking'. But they don't speak because they feel that they are a minority”.

Thus, the opposing voices and views, if any, would come from the evangelicals or people from other Christian communities, who mainly protested against dancing in the school (interview: teachers, July-August, 2008). No one, either parent or teachers, seemed to request teaching of the Andean cosmovision in school.

Moreover, the Aymaras are used to adapting to new surroundings without losing their culture. For instance, they have developed new religious expression by integrating their own traditions into the worship of the Christian God; hence, making a syncretism between Aymara spirituality on the one hand and Christianity on the other.

“I have experienced that in school they taught me what is the Catholic religion, and in the weekends I went with my parents to do offerings. Also with my grandparents we conducted these rituals. This is why I think the secular education will come” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

“The Catholic religion was imposed on us centuries ago. The interesting thing is that many communities have not lost their own religion, but instead they combine them. This has to do partly with the fact that the Spaniards built their churches on the most sacred places of the *pueblos*. So people go to church and at the same time they perform their own rituals. They worship the Virgin Mary, but also their own gods and goddesses. This is why I think the secular education will succeed. There will be no imposition of only one religion” (group interview: Gloria, 12/09/08).

“I believe in the **Pachamama**. I make the table<sup>59</sup>, I burn offerings, I believe in the mysteries and these things. I have the table with sweets in my house so that things will be good this year. In the end of the year I give thanks, in January I give sacrifices so that it will be a good year. Everybody in Bolivia does these things. And they also go to church at the same time” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

This shows that tradition may not be so rigid and place-bound after all and not necessarily threatened by modernism as Giddens (1990) claims. On the contrary, traditions are dynamic and open for renewal and change (Gyekye, 1997; Breidlid, 2002). Nevertheless, the apparent absence of reflection about the Christian hegemony in the school kept the teachers on the naïve consciousness stage where they had accepted a situation of unfairness, but did not act to change it (UNESCO, 2002-2003), thus excluding the holistic world view of the Aymaras.

In spite of exclusion, and even ridicule of Aymara history, religion and knowledge, there was an inclusion of the more folkloric sides of the Aymara culture in the school. Visible signs of Aymara culture were also expressed in the school parades on the National Day and the Day of the Flag, by children playing the **tarka**, which is an Andean instrument, wearing traditional outfits and carrying the **Whimpala**, the Aymara flag together with the national flag and the flags of the nine departments. In addition, on the Day of the Student, the teachers arranged a show for the learners where they presented both Andean dances, Spanish dances, like the flamenco and so-called *bailes mestizos*, dances that originated from the Spaniards and had been mixed with Andean folklore, like “*La Morenada*” and “*La Diablada*”. Moreover, in the syllabus for Language and Culture in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade the indigenous inclusion was found under the topic of legends (unpublished paper, 2008). The learners should for instance read a text about the Andean legend of the **Kakuy**. However, when it came to more informative texts, the colonizer’s world view was normative, as mentioned earlier.

The school seemed to be doing exactly what Hooker (2009) and UNESCO (2003) warn against; namely presenting indigenous culture mainly as music and dances, and not include the more profound and less visible side of Aymara culture, the part of the culture that lies below the surface. The internal, or deep, culture (Weaver, 1994; ANKN, n. d.) of the Aymaras seemed to be missing in much of the school content, making the contextualization of the teaching a challenging task for the teachers.

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<sup>59</sup> The **wajta** ritual is commonly referred to as “the table”.



#### 4.4.3 “*We base ourselves in the reality*”

The school openly admitted that one of its most precarious challenges was that the school content was not significant for the learners as it was not in accordance with their interests (unpublished document, 2008). Therefore, many informants strived to adapt the teaching to the reality of their learners.

“We, directly, we base ourselves in the reality. For instance, we always speak about what the Altiplano is. What do we produce, what do we not produce. If we go to the textbooks, the texts say other things. Like for instance in natural science. We can talk about let’s say sowing potatoes. But in Santa Cruz this doesn’t work, because there they don’t know much about potatoes, but instead the yucca” (interview: Jorge, 13/08/08).

“For instance, we talk to them about the culture, for instance our ancestors. We compare with other cultures and do what we can so that they don’t feel shame” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08).

However, the intentions to contextualize the school content was not always followed up with actions, hence we find traces of verbalism instead of praxis (Freire 1970/1996). For instance, the school did not commemorate either the month of **Pachamama**, which is August, or the Day of the Indigenous Peoples, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Instead, it was up to each teacher to include or exclude these celebrations in the teaching and only Diana (interview, 25/08/08) said that she had discussed the celebrations with her learners:

“When August comes, they call it the month of the Earth, of **Pachamama**. Well, this is a custom from our ancestors, especially in our Aymara culture. If there is a possibility I tell my children ‘today my mother has burnt the field<sup>60</sup> and she has made the table’. We share with our children. But not in written form, not in their notebooks, not in our teacher’s guide. But I share with my children. I don’t know what the other teachers do.”

In addition to the misrecognition of Aymara history in teaching, the didactic material also excluded the indigenous learners’ language and culture. All the posters on the walls, made by the learners themselves, were in Spanish and portrayed “The Creation”, liberation heroes and historic events, or topics like math and Spanish grammar. There seemed to be no room for contested histories (Smith, 1999) or culturally adapted education recognizing the Aymara language and traditions. Even though the children learned about agriculture and animals in the Altiplano like sheep, lamas and cows, the didactic poster used for the Natural Science classes showed a white, wooden villa with a green

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<sup>60</sup> In order to help the weakening sun in August, the Aymara people make open fires to give the sun strength to continue the cycle.

garden and small pond where a swan was swimming. Even the posters about preservation of the environment presented white and blond people and green parks and woods. Thus, the learners were not only alienated and misrecognized through the hegemony of the oppressors' language and culture in the teaching (Taylor, 1994; Freire, 1970/1996), but also by the esthetics of the classroom. The classroom environment reinforced what Niezen (2003: 87) calls a "cultural reformatting" of the Aymara learners executed through an assimilative education.

Both the posters and also some didactic pamphlets regarding nature preservation were given by foreign donors, which may explain, however not justify, the lack of contextualization and the alienating images. The school did not use any locally produced or adapted material or books, even though bilingual and intercultural books had been developed to meet the requirements of the *Reforma Educativa* (interview: UNICEF official, 13/08/08; WB, 2003). In fact, in none of the subjects of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade were textbooks used. The only textbooks I saw during my observation period were a pamphlet with national hymns used for the music classes and an illustrated book of Aesop's fables. The fable book was not used in the classroom teaching, but the children had homework copying the texts to practice their handwriting, and they copied the pictures to decorate their notebooks. Consequently, most of the pictures drawn by the children, and they drew a lot, were drawings of white people or animals dressed in clothes, and nothing that resembled their own surroundings or looks.

The reason for not using textbooks was, apart from the precarious economic situation of the children, due to the teachers' preference for finding their own didactic material to better contextualize the teaching (interviews: teachers, July-September, 2008). However, it seemed like the lack of contextualize didactic material boosted the alienation and exclusion of the Aymara learners instead. Moreover, it promoted a teaching method that encouraged passivity rather than participation (Freire, 1970/1996).

#### **4.4.4 "Earlier there was a vertical education"**

During my observation period, the teaching was continually disrupted by the preparations for and celebrations of the many red-letter days<sup>61</sup> commemorated in the school. Consequently this led to a

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<sup>61</sup> During this period the school celebrated the Anniversary of La Paz, the Day of Friendship, the National Day, the Day of the Flag and the Day of the Student. Moreover, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade learners who were playing the **tarka** in the parades were practicing playing and marching several days a week during school hours.

lot of missed classes. In order to get through the curriculum before the trimester exams, the teacher had to prioritize what she regarded as the most important subject (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08; my own observations, July-September, 2008). For that reason many Social Science classes were cut out in order to advance in the prioritized subjects like Math and Language. During the 7 weeks I spent in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, we only had five hours of Social Science, a subject that was supposed to be given two hours every Friday according to the teaching plan. Moreover, the teacher had to rush through the topics, and had little time to open for questions, comments and discussion.

In order to liberate and empower the learners, the teaching must be familiar to them instead of alienating them, and they must be allowed as participants in their own learning, in dialogue with the teacher (Freire 1970/1996). The learners in the observed class were active and spontaneous, but their participation was restricted if they went outside of the topic. Had there been time, or the teacher had prioritized differently, their comments could lead to more intercultural and contextualized discussions. For instance, one day the teacher made a word soup and drew squares on the blackboard. “Just like the **Wimpala**”, said one of the boys, but the teacher just nodded and went on with the game instead of discussing the **Wimpala** any further. Another day a learner made a clever joke uniting the topic of littering that they were discussing and the political situation in the country by proclaiming: “*Yo boto por Evo*<sup>62</sup>!” Just like the aforementioned **Pachamama**-jokes, this remained uncommented. The math and grammar problems the learners were solving also led to comments and questions (my own observations, July-September, 2008). Some math problems even had a political content: “The municipality of El Alto bought 43 760 bags of milk to give to 45 schools<sup>63</sup>. How many bags did each school receive?” and “President Evo Morales makes 15 750 *bolivianos* a month. How much does he make in one year?” There were also traces of the **ayni**, like: “Carina shares 120 apples with 43 neighboring families. How many does each family get?” All these sentences could open for further discussions about Aymara culture, politics or even the children’s everyday life and traditions, but instead they were given as problems to be solved and not issues to be discussed.

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<sup>62</sup> *Yo boto por Evo* = I throw for Evo  
*Yo voto por Evo* = I vote for Evo

<sup>63</sup> All the learners in the schools in El Alto receive a small bag of milk and a piece of bread every day, sponsored by the municipality.

The limited use of textbooks gave the teachers more freedom when it came to contextualizing their teaching and letting the learners participate in discussing the teaching content, which, was at best in line with the liberating pedagogy that Freire promotes (1970/1996). Nevertheless, this class was characterized by dictations rather than discussions, at least during my observation period (July 15-August 29, 2008, plus some short visits in September). The teacher dictated texts that the learners copied down without asking questions. There was little room for discussions and critical thinking around the topics addressed inasmuch as the main goal of the education seemed to be to drill the learners in math and grammar and have them repeat what they had learned from the teacher.

Freire (1970/1996: 54) argues that “(t)he more students work at storing the deposits entrusted in them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world”. Thus, as the teacher withdrew the same knowledge from the learners that she once had deposited, she also hindered the learners in becoming Subjects in their own learning process and apply their own knowledge and views. They were domesticated to the current, oppressive system instead of becoming critical thinkers and future transformers of the society. Hence, the resemblance to banking education (Freire, 1970/1996) was obvious. Banking education had traditionally been the norm in Bolivian teacher training, which may explain why the teachers were still utilizing these methods.

“Earlier there was a vertical education. You had to speak *castellano*, you had to repeat what you were told and use the theories you were given, without looking at the context. This is the problem. And because of this the classrooms are still closed” (group interview: Hernan, 12/09/08).

The teachers had been oppressed during their teacher training and were acting like sub-oppressors in the classrooms by hindering the “conscientização” of their learners and, consequently, themselves. “Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (Freire, 1970/1996: 59). Seemingly unaware, the school culture promoted monologue instead of dialogue, and the only legitimate knowledge holders were the teachers, not being challenged by either textbooks or the learners’ perspectives.

Even though the school expressed intentions to contextualize the teaching and cherish diversity, the actual outcome of the teaching was quite the opposite. The Aymara learners were subjects of

unintended “efforts to remove their natal culture and language in an alien school environment” (Niezen, 2003:87). In a school culture that does not include their world view and history, indigenous learners might feel unwelcomed and alienated, and therefore to fail to succeed (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006). Instead, they become “cultural losers”, according to Shor (2003). However, as stressed by Champagne and Abu-Saad (2006), it is seldom the intention of the school to cause this alienation and exclusion of their learners, as education is seen as a gift and a way out of poverty. This view was also apparent among the informants, who promoted an education that would help the children succeed in the future, thus paying more attention to the social rather than cultural needs of the indigenous learners.

#### **4.4.5 “They have to advance”**

The preference for facts and figures rather than discussion and reflection in the observed 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom was not due to deliberate *castellanización* or oppression from the teacher’s side. However, she did what she thought was the best for the children and their future by prioritizing good exam results in math and language. Consequently, indigenous identity building or development of critical consciousness among the learners were not prioritized classroom activities, and extracurricular activities like the parades and other celebrations were perceived as distractions (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08). Time limitations and the expectations from urban society forced all the teachers to down-prioritize cultural content and discussions and advance the core subjects.

“Maybe they should talk about the values of Aymara and the mother tongue. But sometimes there is no time. As I told you, the teachers have a curriculum that they need to follow. They have to advance. Sometimes the teachers prefer to advance rather than to speak with the children” (interview: Veronica 21/08/8).

As discussed earlier, the Aymara migrants had moved from the collective-oriented **ayllus** to the individualistic, competitive and market-oriented city (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2006). Although there were examples of the Aymaras succeeding in adapting and conserving some of their rituals and values in the urban areas, when it came to knowledge systems, Western science and knowledge with its compartmentalized systems (Morgan, 2003) was given hegemony in the classroom teaching, whereas Indigenous Knowledge Systems were not even present. As we can see, the linkage between power and knowledge was apparent in the educational system (Bredlid, 2005) as the Eurocentric elite’s power was used to impose their Christian religion, language and Westernized knowledge system upon the indigenous learners. On the ideological battlefield between Euro-

centrism and indigenism in El Alto, the former defeated the latter; hence, the *castellanización* of indigenous learners had succeeded in its mission. So in order to give the learners what the society perceived as the best education to achieve success, the teachers had to succumb to the modernist Western educational discourse, and a more culturally sensitive education was still kept on hold. Because of the precarious socio-economic situation of the learners, their future seemingly relied on getting good grades and passing their exams in order to succeed.

Many of my informants expressed greater concern with the social situation and challenges of their learners rather than the cultural. During our interviews they often changed the subject from EIB to the socio-economic situation of the children (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008). Poverty, domestic violence, unemployment and underemployment, lack of health care, abandoned children and bad housing situations were prevailing challenges among the *alteños* (interviews: informants, July-September, 2008; GMEA, 2006). Most of the parents in the school made as little as 400-800 *bolivianos* a month and they were working long hours and sometimes even in other cities or countries (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008). Problems with low self-esteem, low educational achievements results among the learners or lack of involvement from the parents' side were therefore regarded as a result of social problems, and had little to do with the cultural challenges of the migrant population.

“I think that the children have low self-esteem, and this starts within the families, the homes. This is not a problem of cultural identity. It's a problem in the social environment. Socially and psychologically” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

“They live from hand to mouth. If they don't go out to their stand to sell, they don't have money for supper, they don't have money to buy bread” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/08).

Thus, by trying to help the children with their socio-economic problems, the school did tend to their needs to get a good education and hopefully improve their living condition in the future. However, they failed to attend to the cultural need of the learners.

Language-based discrimination and the cultural misrecognition the indigenous learners were experiencing in school might affect their self-expression and self-identification as indigenous peoples (Kelman, 1972 in Ruíz, 1988: 5). The indigenous informants have already been put through the same system of misrecognition and exclusion of their indigenous background, and in the

following I will account for their experiences and how this is affecting their identity and how this again may affect the identity building of the indigenous learners.

#### **4.5 Expression of Aymara identity among teachers and learners**

Dupuy (2008: 50) argues that “teachers are the most powerful socializing force within the school context” and they act as both authority figures and role models for the learners. In the context of El Alto, migrant children had limited contact with their parents, and many were even abandoned.

“The parents of some of the children are not here and the children are left with their grandparents, their uncles. Many parents work abroad in Argentina, Brazil, and Spain. So you can say that about 30% of the children are abandoned, without their parents” (interview: Veronica, 21/08/08).”

As an example, one informant told me that one of her learners lived alone with his 6 year old sister and 12 year old brother while their parents worked in Argentina and only came home once a month (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08). Consequently, Lydia was the only steady adult role model in the boy’s daily life. The teachers were seemingly the adults that the children spent most of their fundamental years together with. Thus, the role of the teacher as an adult and indigenous role model was even more important. In the interviews I conducted with 18 children, more than half of them wanted to become teachers when they grew up, and none of them wanted the same profession of their parents (informal interviews: learners, August, 2008). This illustrates the influential force the teachers had on the learners’ attitudes and identity.

According to the school development plan (unpublished paper, 2008) and the development plan of El Alto (GMEA, 2006) there was a growing shame and low self-esteem among the urban Aymaras in the city. Consequently, the teachers’ attitudes towards being indigenous or any denial of indigenous background can color the way they present the Aymara culture and language to the learners. Therefore it is appropriate to explore how the indigenous identity is presented and perceived among the teachers in the school. First I will account for how my informants define Aymara identity.

#### 4.5.1 “We have to reconstruct what is the *pueblo Aymara*”

Among my informants there were different understandings and requirements for being Aymara. As expressed by Hernan (group interview, 12/09/08),

“There are people who identify themselves as Aymaras even though they don’t know why. I have friends for instance, from the city, and they do not speak Aymara, but they have this commitment, deep inside. They want to be Aymaras. On the other side you have the territorial aspect. According to the Convention 169, if you live on Aymara territory, then you necessarily have to speak Aymara. In this case we could say that the Aymara region includes the department of La Paz, Oruro, parts of Potosi, Cochabamba, and even parts of Chile, Peru, Argentina and Paraguay. But we have to reconstruct what is the *pueblo Aymara*. It is very wide.”

Hernan opened for a wider definition of Aymara, as so many have moved away from the Aymara territories. The UNPFII (n. d.) has omitted the problem of territorial residence by basing their definition on “strong link to territories” and not demanding that you actually have to live there, a clarification which is helpful in the context of the urban indigenous migrants. My informants lived in the city and not in the Aymara *ayllus*, yet they expressed a strong connection to their *pueblo* of origin. For instance, Ana (interview, 18/08/08) told me how she found her inner self by working in the fields and feeling the connection with the nature, away from city life:

“It was just through the ways of destiny and the work I did in the fields with my mother, where I learnt so many values. The effort you put in the *chakra*, as they call it, makes you stronger. There in the *pueblo* I saw people getting up early. At 5 in the morning they were up. So I learnt so many values to build my self-esteem. There are moments where nature helps us more. She is so wise. We need to learn from Mother Nature, because we are damaging her. When I went up the hills and started meditating, this is where my values as a human being grew”.

Even some of the children who were born and raised in El Alto addressed their parents’ or grandparents’ home villages as *mi pueblo*, “my village” (informal interviews: learners, August, 2008). Thus the Aymara tradition is still linked to the notion of place (Giddens, 1990), even though parts of the culture are adapted to modern city life.

Another problem raised by Hernan is the language issue. According to King’s (2001) informants in Ecuador, one could not be *indigena* without speaking Quechua. However, such a rigid criterion might not be applicable among my focus group since many of the Aymaras I met had been forbidden to learn and speak their language in school and even at home (interviews conducted July-



September, 2008). One student teacher even explained that she had to keep her knowledge of Aymara hidden from her own father:

“With my father we always spoke *castellano*. But when he went to the office, in these moments I spoke Aymara with my mother, and we felt like *ladronas*. We spoke Aymara because my mother is the one who knows the language. My father too, but he did not want us to develop that language” (interview: Maribel, 12/09/08).

Most of my informants regarded Aymara as their mother tongue, yet the majority had never learned to speak it well and spoke Spanish as their first language. Nevertheless some of the informants still identified themselves with the Aymara language and this was one indicator of the Aymara identity promoted by amongst others UNESCO (2003).

On the other hand we have also seen that the teachers regarded Aymara language as a tool for communication and learning, rather than a tool to strengthen the indigenous peoples’ cultural identity. Thus identification with the Aymara language or with Aymara territories was not the only ways to express or perceive indigenous identity among my informants. Informants with Aymara as their mother tongue did not always identify themselves with the Aymara culture, whereas some informants with Spanish as a mother tongue would talk about “we the Aymaras” (interviews: teachers, July-August, 2008). As an example, Ana (interview, 18/08/08, my emphasis), expressed her self-identification as Aymara and distance from the colonizers when she argued that “if they hadn’t come to discover what is called the Americas, maybe we would have developed our identity”. Though her mother tongue was Spanish, she still identified herself as an Aymara. This shows that language and identity were not as interlinked as Kroskirty (2001) and Kelman (1972 in Ruíz, 1988: 5) argue. Instead, the situation was more similar to the observations from Mexico (Carrasco, 2002) where there was a decline in the speakers of indigenous languages, yet not in the number of self-identified indigenous habitants.

Moreover, it is possible to have several or mixed identities as urban Aymaras. As expressed by one student:

“First and foremost we are Bolivians. We identify ourselves as Bolivians. Secondly, we do not have a firm identity. We are neither fish nor fowl. We cannot identify ourselves as 100 percent Aymaras. Neither can we identify ourselves as 100 percent *ciudadinos*. That is part of the problem. I identify myself as Aymara and as someone from the city. I have adapted to

the city life, but without forgetting my Andean customs. It is in my nature to act the way I do because it is all based in my Andean culture” (interview: Maribel, 12/09/08).

As seen from this last quote, migration has led to a hybrid identity uniting traditions and modernity, hence disclosing the dialogic nature of identity construction (Breidlid, 2002).

Thus, indigenous identity was diverse and the effects of migration and cultural clashes between tradition and modernity had affected people in different manners. Indigenous peoples, many of my informants included, had been deprived of their language through formal education and forcibly assimilated into the dominant culture (Niezen, 2003). Moreover, they had been forced to hide their indigenous background, including the language, to avoid discrimination and stigma (Carrasco, 2002). As a consequence, informants with the same background defined themselves differently, and in the following I will discuss how their experiences had influenced their own self-identification and attitudes toward the Aymara identity.

#### **4.5.2 “We were even punished if we spoke Aymara”**

Many of the teachers had also suffered from discrimination and racism for being Aymara speakers, something that might color their attitudes towards their Aymara background and the knowledge of the language.

“Earlier there was a lot of discrimination over languages. Because I went to a school in the city and it was forbidden to speak Aymara. So my mother is a product of this alienation, if you can call it that. It was looked badly upon that a woman dressed in *pollera* entered the establishment” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

“My sister comes from the village, and earlier the teachers only spoke *castellano*. The parents told them to teach the children *castellano* only, and not Aymara because they wouldn’t learn anything. So they taught the children *castellano*, but only a little, so it was a trauma for them. And when we came to La Paz, the trauma continued. She said that she did not understand the teachers. My sister hardly learnt to read. In addition there are words that we do not understand, that do not exist in the Aymara world” (interview: Flor, 12/09/08).

Some were even humiliated or punished by the teachers for being indigenous and not mastering Spanish. Even when the student teachers went to primary school they experienced punishment.

“My mother tongue has been Aymara since I was a little boy. And when I started school, I didn’t know *castellano*. So the teacher made me repeat things in *castellano*, but I didn’t understand anything. The only thing I could do was to memorize, but I did not know the meaning. And we were even punished if we spoke Aymara. I did not use regular clothes, but

traditional clothes like the *bayeta*. So the teacher made us come up in front of the class and say that we were clowns. And all this affected us a lot psychologically, and I did not want to go back to school. I almost forgot the Aymara language when I finished high school. I did not speak it. I did not want to speak it because I was ashamed” (group interview: Hernan, 12/09/08).

Many indigenous peoples have through banking education internalized this view that their culture is inferior and they became sub-oppressors, and imitate the oppressors by discriminating their own people (Freire, 1970/1996). Thus, my informants did not only meet discrimination from the mestizos or whites, but even from their own people.

“When I finished primary school we moved to a miners’ center because I am the son of a miner. And the same indigenous people there were the worst discriminators” (group interview: Hernan, 12/09/08).

The experiences of discrimination, ridicule and punishment affected the informants differently. Especially among the student teachers, the will to fight back and change this system was striking, something that I will elaborate more on in the last chapter, whereas in the responses and actions of many of the teachers, Taylor’s (1994) theory about internalization of inferiority was more salient.

#### **4.5.3 “We are stupid and underdeveloped”**

Even if most of the teachers interviewed were indigenous, they also expressed negative attitudes and even disdain toward the Aymara and also the Bolivian culture. Martin (interview: 21/08/08) argued that the problem of poverty among the indigenous migrants in El Alto was not mainly due to a lack of resources, but a problem with wasting money. Parents spend money on alcohol and parties and therefore the children sometimes have problems getting notebooks and equipment. “The Bolivians are very careless,” was his conclusion. Lack of formal education is often considered a sign of inferiority in many former colonies (Smith, 1999) and Bolivia is no exception. The President was therefore perceived as ignorant and irrational by one of the informants, who claimed that

“This is what the President is missing, to be educated and informed. It is good that an indigenous has become President, magnificent. But one must also have knowledge. Be a person with knowledge through books, or at least a balanced and reflected person. Not only be hormonal” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

All over the world, indigenous peoples are stereotyped as lazy, ignorant, feeble-minded and irresponsible (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). Such statements are often uttered from people of the

elite, like the people in the Bolivian lowland; however, in these cases the criticism came from people who regard themselves as indigenous. This self-depreciation was manifested in the wish to become like the oppressor. According to Freire (1970/1996: 44): “(i)n their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them.” An irresistible attraction towards the oppressors, first and foremost the Westerners<sup>64</sup>, and their way of life was also apparent in the teachers’ interaction with the children, and this will be further discussed in the following.

The Aymara parents wanted the children to learn English in order to have more advantages in the future: “They say ‘If my son is going abroad, he will speak English.’ Therefore they prefer English” (interview: Martin, 21/08/08). This view of English as a way out of poverty and Europe as the continent of prosperity was also shared by the teachers. Several of the teachers wanted to leave Bolivia and travel to Europe (informal conversations: teachers, July-September, 2008). They claimed that Bolivia was underdeveloped and poor, and Europe seemed to be their utopia. As expressed by one of the teachers: “I just need to get out of this country! It’s a mess!” (informal conversation, August, 2008). One of the teachers constantly asked me to take her with me to Europe to be my maid. Three of her sisters were already living in Spain, where they worked as domestic servants, and she had no other ambitions for herself. This also showed the slave mentality that Hooker (in FDCIP, 2005) talked about in his speech. They saw no other work opportunities for themselves than as servants, even though they were educated and had a good job in Bolivia. Moreover, they assumed that everybody in Europe was rich and wanted and needed a maid.

Being a European I got a lot of unwanted and undeserved admiration and respect. I was even asked to march together with the principal in the school parade on the Day of the Flag so that all the spectators could see that they had a *gringa* among the staff. This might have reinforced the low self-esteem among many of the Aymaras, and even the learners were exposed to this dichotomy between inferior and superior, by listening to the praise their teachers were giving me just for being white and from the West. The bad self-image was especially apparent in one of the subject teachers (my

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<sup>64</sup> The informants never expressed any desire to resemble the white and mestizo power elite living in the lowland, but instead they wanted to be like the Europeans, hence like the former conquistadores and colonizers. Moreover, the idea of European supremacy in Latin America is strong and the elites identify themselves with the European culture and lifestyle (Carnoy, 2009).

own observations, July-September, 2008)<sup>65</sup>. She invited me a couple of times to observe her classes. However, it was really me who became the object of observation. In the classes I visited, she put me in front of her class and engaged the learners in a relegation of their own look, by asking them if they would want to look like me instead. By adding that she thought of herself as being too short and dark and ugly, she indirectly told the Aymara learners that they looked bad, having the same features as her. The same teacher was not only degrading the indigenous looks, but also their intellect. She constantly told me that we in Europe were so smart and developed, whereas the Bolivians were stupid and underdeveloped (informal conversations: teacher, July-September, 2008).

This way she taught the children that the foreign, white look was better than the familiar, indigenous look, and that they as Bolivians were not as smart as the people in the West, and thus went far away from the school development plan's intentions to strengthen the identity and pride of the Aymara learners (unpublished paper, 2008) and instead became a sub-oppressor contributing to the learners' internalizations of inferiority (Freire, 1970/1996; Taylor, 1994).

Thus, although the teachers expressed concern for and will to improve the low self-esteem in the area, they also contributed to the same problem by trying to imitate the Western or European lifestyle. Shame and disdain towards the Aymara lifestyle was transmitted to the learners not only by the parents and the discriminatory surroundings, but also from their important role models, the teachers. Consequently, socialization of the Aymara children took place in hostile and self-denying surroundings in the school. The teachers who had been victims of oppressions themselves committed the same crime against their learners (Freire, 1970/1996); thus, the road from oppressive education to an education for liberation still seemed long and the challenges towards a liberatory intercultural and bilingual education were numerous.

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<sup>65</sup> This teacher refused to let me interview her, so she is not in the informant list and I do not know her mother tongue. However, we spent a lot of time together so I know that she comes from an Aymara village and speaks some Aymara and some Quechua.

## 4.6 Challenges towards the implementation of EIB in school

In this section I will concentrate on two challenges that I have identified as being the main challenges to the implementation of EIB in the school I observed, both of them partly mentioned in the previous sections. An internal challenge has to do with the teachers' competence and also commitment to bilingual and intercultural teaching, whereas the main external challenge is related to the society's misconception about the Aymara language as merely a rural necessity and a symbol of regression in the city.

### 4.6.1 *“We don't dominate the language, neither in writing nor in reading”*

Even though many of my informants considered Aymara as their mother tongue, the principal was the only one with native-like proficiency in both languages and would fulfill the requirements of Bloomfield (1933/1984) for being bilingual. Few of the teachers I interviewed had competence in more than one or two of the language skills mentioned by Macnamara (1967 in Holmarsdottir, 2005: 10), mainly listening comprehension and speaking. In addition to Diana and Veronica, who both had studied Aymara at a higher educational level, only Eva could read Aymara, yet not write it (interview: teachers, July- August, 2008). Thus, just like the children the teachers would understand more than they could speak and hardly any of them were literate in the language. Consequently they did not feel qualified to provide a bilingual education.

I: What are the obstacles for implementing EIB?

T: “The domination of the language from the teachers' side. Because we do not dominate the language, neither in writing nor in reading” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

The reason for this lack of reading and writing skills may be the fact that Aymara is an oral language still in a process of standardization<sup>66</sup>, thus most of the teachers grew up in homes where the language was transmitted orally, and not through texts (Luykx, 2003). On top of that they attended a formal educational system where the Aymara language was not included, at least not until 1994 (MECD, 1994), thus they have had very few opportunities, or even needs, to learn to read and write in their mother tongue.

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<sup>66</sup> Due to space limits, I will not go further into the ethic discussion about whether or how to textualize oral traditions since this is not within the scope of my research objectives.

Moreover, the standardization of the Aymara language has taking place within an alienating Western academic setting, which has provoked debate among the indigenous speakers (Luykx, 2003; Navarro, 2009).

The nearly exclusive focus on school-based literacy as the site of language planning suggests that the underlying, perhaps unconscious aim is to expand Bolivia's indigenous languages into the standard set of western academic genres, rather than to encourage the persistence and development of culturally distinct, indigenous discourse practices (Luykx, 2003: 94-95).

Luykx (2003: 99) further adds that:

In Bolivia's new linguistic order, native indigenous language speakers are no longer considered the experts on how their language should be used, or on what constitutes beautiful, powerful, or correct speech. Instead, indigenous criteria of linguistic value are subordinated to those of university-trained experts and government functionaries.

This controversial process has produced a standardized Aymara that is based on reconstruction of archaic dialects, rather than the vernacular Aymara spoken by most peasants (Luykx, 2003). Standardized Aymara also has a non-phonemic orthography, making it even harder to read for people who are used to reading a phonemic language like Spanish, where there is coherence between pronunciation and orthography. This brings forth pedagogic challenges for the teachers, in addition to their own difficulties of learning the standardized language.

Given this entrenched tradition of literacy instruction, and the limited awareness of the standardization process among the general population, most schoolteachers are unprepared to explain to children why the (written) word "juk" should be pronounced /uj/, or why "ruwachkan" should be read as /ruwašan/. Certainly, people can learn to read a non-phonemic orthography, as millions of English- and French-speaking children can attest - but, unlike their First World counterparts, Quechua and Aymara children seldom grow up surrounded by written texts, or even by adults literate in their native language (Luykx, 2003: 95).

Thus, in order to implement bilingual education in the school, the teachers would need more than a couple of voluntary workshops to be able to fully learn and teach the Aymara language. Until then, any bilingual education in the school would have to be mainly oral instruction, since that was the most predominant competence among the teachers. This would also be more in line with the Aymara tradition. According to Goduka (2003) oral traditions are, for indigenous peoples, veritable vehicles for transmitting knowledge to the younger generations. However, in the urban school

system this vehicle was not recognized. Rather than opening up for a culturally adapted method of oral Aymara language and culture transmission, the lack of literacy in Aymara was considered as an obstacle of implementation of bilingual education by my informants. Smith (1999) criticizes this trend of colonizing indigenous cultures by exposing them to an alien educational system with a disregard for oral traditions and preference for literacy as the only valued competence. Nevertheless the colonization of the Aymara culture in the urban schools had even caused the Aymaras themselves to require literacy as the only accepted tool to transmit their own language and culture to the next generations.

#### **4.6.2 “From our side we do not advance”**

This (mis)conception that EIB could not be implemented due to the teachers’ lack of bilingual proficiency in all the language skills also sustained another common misapprehension, namely that EIB meant bilingual education only. Very few teachers mentioned the intercultural aspect of EIB. Instead they were the exception rather than the rule.

“EIB means to maintain the culture. This is what it refers to. That they maintain the two cultures, so that they don’t lose the Aymara culture when they teach *castellano*” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

“We have participated in some courses about interculturalism. About the different cultures and how we can relate to them and at the same time respect their customs, traditions. We have so many different groups and I believe that everyone deserves respect, either you are black, colored, white. I think we are all the same even if the way of thinking may be different” (interview: principal, 29/08/08).

Even though these informants did reflect upon the intercultural aspect of EIB, it was still an under-prioritized area. The principal (interview: 29/08/08) blamed this on the lack of funding from the ministry, whereas Ana placed the blame on the teachers themselves:

“You can say that we as teachers are responsible for the transformations here in Bolivia. Not in a fundamental way, but still. And from our side we do not advance. Like now we are talking a lot about interculturalism with this new government, yet not even here are we implementing the valorization of our culture and the language. It is a problem of identity. I don’t think we identify ourselves with either the pedagogical or the social aspect of what we are supposed to do” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

Thus Ana argued that neither intercultural nor bilingual education had been implemented in the school due to lack of identification and interest from the teachers themselves. For instance, the



teachers showed little interest in learning or improving their Aymara competence. The school had arranged workshops for the teachers to learn Aymara, but very few had showed up (interview: principal, 29/08/08). Other informants confirmed this and said that the teachers were devoid of commitment when it comes to learning and teaching Aymara in school.

“It [the reasons for not implementing EIB in the school] is mostly for lack of material. Another reason is the teachers’ lack of desire. Why try to hide something you can see? When we have meetings of the teachers and plans are made for continuing with the Aymara courses, there is no support. The teacher comes for economic reasons. It’s not for the vocation (...) ‘It’s like going back to zero again’, they say. It would be to teach a language that several children do not understand. Only few speak it. The little ones speak Aymara, but they are few. The majority are used to *castellano*. The *castellano* they understand fine. Now, start teaching them Aymara, you would have to start with the writing. So this is a problem for the teachers” (interview: Veronica, 21/08/08).

Some of the teachers were also skeptical towards EIB as they found it time-consuming both to learn it themselves and also to find time in a busy schedule to implement it. One teacher said that she did not teach the learners Aymara since it was not a subject and the teaching plan was already filled with other topics that needed attention (interview: Eva, 27/08/08).

“We have our qualification book, and it [EIB] does not appear there. They do not demand it from us because in primary school math and language is fundamental, including arithmetical operations, reading, writing (...) I wish they would put the interculturalism aside. It needs emphasis, but to give it emphasis we need more hours. It is very little time we have been given and we hardly manage to finish the work we are already given” (interview: Eva, 27/08/08).

Rather than acknowledge the flexible and dynamic nature of the Aymara language and culture, and include the intercultural and bilingual aspects in all the classroom activities, Eva had constructed an “Aymara-as-subject box” and EIB became a time-consuming problem rather than a resource. Thus, the holistic nature of Aymara language and culture was appropriated within a compartmentalized educational institution, the same trend that Morgan (2003) observes in Western academia. In a modern school context there seemed to be no room for the traditional features of Aymara. This perceived conflict and separation between tradition and modernity, expressed through language choice and preference, will be elaborated upon in the next section.

#### **4.6.3 “In the rural provinces they prefer Aymara and in the urban areas castellano”**

*Reforma Educativa* promotes bilingual education first and foremost in rural areas where other languages than Spanish are predominant; hence, special measures to improve fluency in Spanish is considered a necessity (MECD, 1994). This has led to a perception of EIB as a rural phenomenon. According to the informants, bilingual children were considered a rural problem and there would be no need for EIB inasmuch as most of the children in the city already knew Spanish.

“It’s not necessary because the majority speak *castellano*. Among the more than thousand children here, there may be one that doesn’t speak it well” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

“You know the parents are living in the urban area, in the city, so obviously, logically, they think that the children need to know *castellano*. Even in the provinces the same thing happens. Go to the nearest provinces like Los Andes, go to Lama, the majority, everybody knows *castellano*. In the rural areas they are bilinguals since they know *castellano* and they also know Aymara. Therefore, EIB was implemented in the rural areas, not the urban areas” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

Teacher education seemed to promote the same understanding of EIB to future teachers. The *Normal* I visited was urban and monolingual, and even though they taught three modules of Aymara to all students, this was done to prepare the students for their two-years rural services, not to implement the language in urban schools (e-mail correspondence with the Head of Primary Education; interviews: student teachers, September, 2008). All the teaching practice during the teacher training took place in urban, monolingual schools. As for those who had chosen the Aymara specialization track, the institute was planning to let them train in the rural areas, because these were the only place where Aymara was being used and taught (interview: Enrique, 12/09/08). Consequently the *Normal*, even with an Aymara specialization career, maintained the understanding of EIB being a rural necessity and Aymara being used and needed in the *campo* only.

Aymara was not needed and wanted in the modern city, a view that was maintained in the educational sector through the hegemonic position of Spanish. Romaine (2000) claims that in diglossic countries one language withholds a higher status than the other and the status division between Spanish and Aymara was clearly expressed in my informants’ responses. In the migrant community Aymara was often degraded as a useless low status language, whereas Spanish and also English were perceived as the keys to modern life and development.

“But here in the urban area the matrix language is *castellano*. That’s the first language they learn and the second language, Aymara, they treat like it was a secondary language. As a second language and foreign language they have always chosen English. They give more priority to English than Aymara. That’s why the children you meet in the classrooms, they can speak Aymara. But they are ashamed. They blush. That’s the problem. They speak it but it’s not given priority” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/08).

From the 1950s until 1994 there existed two separate school systems in Bolivia. One was an urban school system for the elite in the cities whereas the other was rural and for the indigenous peoples; the former system being of far better quality than the latter (Taylor, 2004; MEC, 2006). This quality divide between urban and rural schools still characterizes Bolivian education. Consequently, being one of the reasons why many people have moved or sent their children to the city of El Alto, where they hope that the children will get a better education than in their home villages (interview: Norma, 28/08/08). This skepticism towards rural education, an education characterized by bilingual teaching, combined with a false either-or thinking (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008), made parents oppose the teaching of Aymara in urban schools, inasmuch as they thought that the children would learn Aymara at the expense of, and not as an addition to, Spanish.

“There are not many students in the provinces. Why? Because the parents say: ‘Here they teach everything in Aymara, in Quechua, and in the city they teach in *castellano*. I want my child to be better off than me’. This is how they are thinking” (interview: Norma, 28/08/08).

The rigid polarities between tradition and modernity were evident in the attitudes the Bolivian society displayed towards Aymara and Spanish. The former was regarded as rural, change resistant and pre-scientific, whereas the latter represented urbanity, change, science and innovation (Gyekye, 1997; Breidlid, 2002). These polarities are criticized as being based on false assumptions and being too static, inasmuch as tradition and modernity co-exist in both traditional and modern societies (Gyekye, 1997; Breidlid, 2002). Nevertheless, the Aymara parents seemed to regard tradition and modernity as mutually exclusive. In short, Aymara meant regression and Spanish meant progress.

“The parents are well satisfied with the *castellano* language being developed because they say that the level of technology is advancing and that Aymara, for them, is a regression” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

Even in the rural areas there were protests against the already implemented teaching of Aymara, because it represented a rural lifestyle and also because of the abovementioned false either-or

thinking (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008). The rural parents were afraid that their children would be deprived of Spanish competence if they received additional Aymara teaching.

“They say to the teachers that come there: ‘Do not teach us something we already know. We want our children to learn Spanish, not Aymara. So that when they grow old they will get a higher education and have a better job. In the city they can go further.’ That is why they oppose having Aymara as a subject. They prefer improving their Spanish to later on avoid discrimination” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/08).

Spanish was a high status language connected to a high status life style, and parents did not see the point in teaching the children a language they already knew and that had no value in their way to prosperity in the city. As a consequence the Aymara migrants were expected to disapprove of their linguistic and cultural background in order to fully participate in the modern life. Thus, both external and internal discrimination affected the parents’ indigenous identity and caused shame and opposition to Aymara teaching in schools.

#### **4.6.4 “When we say that we speak Aymara, they discriminate us”**

The resistance to include Aymara language and culture in school had evolved from the discrimination that they had experienced as Aymara speakers in Bolivian society. All of my informants (interviews: July-September, 2008) argued that the parents were opposed to EIB because they did not want their children to experience the same racism as they had been victims of.

“Some parents say: ‘When we say that we speak Aymara, they discriminate us. Therefore, it is preferable to speak *castellano*, and that my child knows *castellano* and not Aymara” (interview: Norma, 28/08/08).

The parents had internalized a picture of their own inferiority (Taylor, 1994). The word *campesino*, peasant, was even considered an insult, which emphasizes the negative attitudes towards the traditional, rural lifestyle found in Bolivian society, attitudes that consequently were transmitted from the Aymara parents to their children.

“The children give each other bad looks if someone speaks Aymara. ‘He is from the *campo*. He is a *campesin*,’ they say. So there is this discrimination. Sometimes the shame comes from the parents when they say: ‘Don’t speak to me in Aymara. You are in La Paz. You are not in the village.’ That’s the problem” (interview: Paola, 30/07/08).

“The shame is due to the influence from the homes. ‘Don’t speak Aymara because it is ugly. You shouldn’t speak it.’ But they know it, they know the language. But as I told you, they

are ashamed. I ask each and every one of them: ‘Tell me how to say this in Aymara, tell me.’ And nobody wants to answer” (interview: Jorge, 13/08/08).

Taylor (1994: 25) asserts that “even when some of the objective obstacles to their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities”. Thus, the opportunity for their language and culture to be recognized in formal education is not applauded by the parents. Instead, their internalized disdain for their indigenous background is displayed, together with a fear of further disadvantages for their children in the urban society. My informants’ accounts maintained that parents saw no other way for their children to succeed in life than by getting rid of the low status language and discarded lifestyle, and embracing the modern and monolingual life in the city. In that process they caused the children to undermine their cultural and linguistic heritage.

However, not all the Aymara parents were reluctant to EIB, and the situation was not as black-and-white as the picture drawn by my informants. I found a more complex picture when talking to some of the Aymara mothers in the schoolyard. These mothers blamed the absence of Aymara in the school on the teachers’ lack of competence and will to initiate EIB (informal conversations: mothers, July-September, 2008). The mothers wanted their children to learn and cherish the Aymara language and culture. Due to the oral traditions of Aymara and the exclusion of the language in the educational system, the parents had never had the need to or had the opportunity to develop reading and writing skills in Aymara and could not assist their children in developing Aymara literacy. Thus there was an expressed wish for inter-generational language transmission (Fishman, 1994), but this was hindered due to the oppressive school system the parents and the teachers had been through (Freire, 1970/1996). For that reason they were anticipating the advent of an intercultural and bilingual education in the urban schools.

However, none of the mothers I spoke to had expressed any request for EIB to the principal, thus maintaining the impression of the parents’ reluctance and disinterest in teaching children Aymara.

“Here no one has requested it, or at least I haven’t heard about any request for the implementation, for introducing Aymara as a subject. The Aymara workshop I told you about was an initiative from the teachers themselves” (interview: Ernesto, 27/08/08).

Both parties were blaming each other for not having EIB in the school. Moreover, the teachers, who have the last word when it comes to implementation of EIB, considered themselves as unqualified for this task. Hence the basis for a successful implementation of EIB was unfavorable.

I could choose to conclude here by displaying a pessimistic view of the future of EIB in El Alto, as the observations and interviews conducted with the staff at the observed school left an impression of much talk but little action. Even though the teachers did what they thought was the best for the learners, they excluded an important part of the children's life, namely their indigenous background and identity. However, my fieldwork in Bolivia resulted in two different conclusions. Firstly, that the indigenous learners keep being oppressed, assimilated and alienated in school and also in urban society and, secondly, that the country is heading in a new direction where schools may be key areas for liberation, decolonization and recognition of indigenous peoples. Thus, Bolivia is going through a time of profound changes.

## 5 “The Times They Are A-Changin’”

*Come mothers and fathers  
Throughout the land  
And don't criticize  
What you can't understand  
Your sons and your daughters  
Are beyond your command  
Your old road is  
Rapidly agin'.  
Please get out of the new one  
If you can't lend your hand  
For the times they are a-changin'.*

(Bob Dylan, 1963, from “The Times They Are A-Changin’”)

In the previous chapter we saw that many teachers and parents were skeptical to the implementation of EIB. The language and cultural shift in El Alto were already apparent, and even though the teachers expressed good intentions to reverse this trend, their actions had an opposite effect. By paying lip service to the inclusion of Aymara language and culture in school, the teachers were instead speeding up the occurring language and cultural shift, instead of slowing it down. Moreover, the school, although unintentionally, contributed to assimilate or *castellanizar* the learners. An internalized view of the superiority of European languages, culture and knowledge systems, and the consensus that assimilation was the only way to grant the learners success, strongly influenced the attitudes of the *alteños*, the parents as well as the teachers. The desire or expectation to imitate the oppressors in order to achieve success in urban society was transmitted to the next generations of Aymaras. This colonized mindset led the oppressed teachers to become sub-oppressors by prolonging the colonization of the future generation of Aymaras. Success in the modern city depended on conformity rather than diversity, and this view was maintained by the oppressive school culture.

An intercultural and bilingual education requires competence, dedication and commitment from the teachers. Other vital factors are a language-as-resource orientation in the school that supports and is supported by a strong form of bilingual education where languages are learned additively and not

subtractively (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008; Ruíz, 1988). Merely teaching children to say “Hello” and “Good-bye” in Aymara, does not forge bilingual competence, neither does the language-as-problem orientation prevalent in the observed school. Even though they had initiated some use of Aymara in the classrooms and were training the teachers in Aymara literacy, many of the teachers still lacked both awareness and priority when it came to EIB. The inclusion depended upon each teacher’s views on how and why and when to include Aymara language and culture in the classroom. Moreover, the optional and random use of Aymara language maintained the impression that Aymara language and culture were not regarded as natural parts of the school content, but merely an addition, an exotic flavor. The school only presented the top of the Aymara cultural iceberg, like flags, music or dances, whereas deeper cultural aspects adapted to the urban context of the learners were absent. As a result of this school praxis, the learners were deprived of their linguistic and cultural heritage and hence not given the education they are entitled to according to international declarations ratified by the Bolivian authorities.

Thus, the teachers did not demonstrate a liberatory praxis as their words and reflections were not followed up by action. Instead, the indigenous learners were exposed to double communication from the teachers. They were told that their Aymara culture was important and valuable, but at the same time the teachers excluded Aymara language, culture and knowledge in their teaching. Instead, core subjects and good exam results were prioritized over intercultural transmission and dialogue. Western science and religion were, together with the colonizers’ language, taught unchallenged by Aymara language and spirituality, and there was no room for questioning the version of history presented by the teachers. Contested versions of the “Truth” were not included, and thus the school promoted a kind of banking education rather than critical thinking among its learners. By this the school prolonged the hegemony of the oppressors’ language, history and culture through banking education instead of promoting dialogue and critical thinking through an intercultural and bilingual education.

However, the informants and the observations presented two rather contradictory positions towards the inclusion of indigenous language and culture in schools. On the one hand, urban schools were still characterized by *castellanización* rather than cherishing diversity. On the other hand, the country found itself in times of radical changes and the recent political shift from neo-liberalism to indigenism was also affecting the attitudes towards EIB in urban society.



In the previous chapters the focus was mainly on the teachers and parents, so now it is time to give the floor to the younger generations. I will identify two trends that might speed up the implementation of EIB in urban schools. The first was a growing awareness of the importance of transmitting and re-dignifying the Aymara language, culture and knowledge. Secondly, there was an increased pride and cultural confidence among the Aymara *alteños*, even the children who were exposed to *castellanización* in the urban educational system. Both these tendencies had been boosted in the aftermath of the election of Evo Morales as the first indigenous president in Bolivia and Latin America. Hence, I will begin with presenting how Evo was perceived by the *alteños* and further discuss how his policies were affecting the attitudes towards EIB.

### **5.1 An Evo effect?**

The rise to power by an uneducated, indigenous *cocalero* causes conflict and protest in the Bolivian society, and at the same time creates hope and expectations. The different attitudes towards the President correlate with the economical, ethnic and social strata in Bolivian society. This was something I could easily detect when I commuted between my home in the fashionable part of La Paz city and the school I observed in El Alto. I started in the lowest part in the capital, at an altitude of 3400 meters above sea level, in a neighborhood with big, new houses, nice cars, Vote No<sup>67</sup>-posters on the walls and graffiti claiming that “*Evo = asesino*”, Evo is a murderer. The people breathing the thin and relatively clean air were mostly white Bolivians, mestizos or foreigners. The only people with dark skin were the maids and the street vendors. As the bus passed through the city center of La Paz, the Yes-slogans started to be more dominant and the people’s skin tone darkened. After one hour, three buses, and at an altitude of about 4000 meters above sea level, people were darker and shorter, the air thinner, colder and more polluted, the streets more crowded and the houses and cars were smaller and simpler. Moreover, the language had shifted from Spanish only to a cacophony of Spanish and Aymara. And most importantly, there was far more graffiti on the brick walls and all displayed a pro-Evo message: “Evo, El Alto is on your side”, “Vote Yes”, “Vote for MAS” and “Sucre is the capital of racism”. In short, I had arrived in Evo-landia, where a process of revitalizing the Aymara pride was initiated by Aymara people themselves.

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<sup>67</sup> To the re-election of Evo in the recall referendum.

### 5.1.1 *“I think it is called indigenism”*

Liberation does not come from the outside, from researchers, NGOs or other international organizations advocating for the valorization of linguistic, cultural and biodiversity. True liberation has its origin in the oppressed people themselves who have reached the critical consciousness stage and are ready to liberate both themselves and their oppressors (UNESCO, 2002-2003). Liberation is bottom-up, not top-down, and in Bolivia this bottom-up liberation had intensified after the 2005 elections. Morales brought about a revolutionary and, in the Freirean sense of the word, liberatory educational policy. Both the new Constitution and the new educational reform had an indigenist perspective and a mission to decolonize the oppressed and re-dignify their language, culture and knowledge within the Bolivian educational sector.

Efforts have been made by the new administration to transform the status of the indigenous languages from being languages of oppression to becoming languages of power. Aymara has traditionally been used in what Romaine (2000) identifies as low status domains like in the home and in the **ayllu**, whereas Spanish has been reserved for education, (Christian) religion, work and commerce. In El Alto, Spanish had also entered the private domains and was commonly used in Aymara homes and in communication with and between the children. However, the new government was initiating the use of the indigenous language in the high status domains through Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez, which promoted a trilingual and inter-intracultural education, and also by requiring bilingual competence for civil servants (MEC, 2006; personal communication with Navarro, 27/05/09). Due to the language policies of the new government, it may be difficult in the future to get a public job without knowing indigenous languages; thus, the number of people studying Aymara at university level was also rapidly increasing.

“But now, like I told you, they are focusing more on, we are at the peak of the, I think it is called indigenism. Now everybody is obligated to speak Aymara. (...) The former minister of education, Felix Patzi, made a communiqué saying that all state officials had to learn Aymara. And after two years this would be controlled so all the teachers had to learn Aymara. But now as there has been a change in the ministry and we now have this female minister, the idea is different. There is not so much pressure. So it has ended there. However, if the new Constitution is approved, all the public servants, even us as teachers, the police and other services, have to and should speak Aymara” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

The new government had assumed a language-as-resource-orientation and was promoting a strong form of bilingual education in schools with their intentions of making EIB<sup>68</sup> mandatory for all learners up to secondary school (Ruiz, 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000/2008; MEC, 2006). Hence, in the future the use of Aymara would no longer be something that hinders progress and inclusion in urban society and the work market, but something that promotes it.

### **5.1.2 “Evo is rescuing the culture”**

The answers from the informants indicated two major linguistic trends among the Aymara peoples. One was a language shift from Aymara to Spanish in the cities and nearby villages, and the other trend was a new demand for, and interest in, Aymara in urban areas. This was also in accordance with the two contradictory positions regarding Aymara identity that was found among the informants. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Aymaras in the city seemed to have created a fear of freedom (Freire, 1970/1996). The indigenous *alteños* silently accept their unfavorable position and the *castellanización* that characterizes urban life, as they saw no other way to success than to imitate the oppressors. In order to participate in urban society, they had to downplay, or even hide, their indigenous background. The migrant parents wanted to protect their children from the racism and exclusion that they had experienced; nonetheless, regardless of their good intentions, they prolong the oppression rather than defeat it. Aymara names were changed into Spanish names, urban youth wear Western clothes rather than traditional *polleras* or ponchos, and the language for social mobility is that of the colonizers and of today’s elites.

Simultaneously, a contrasting picture has been drawn by some of the informants. They detected an increasing self-esteem and “conscientização” among the indigenous migrants, who now are actively participating in the process of re-dignifying and re-recognizing their culture (Freire, 1970/1996; Taylor, 1994). The Aymara students at the *Normal* I observed maintained that there is an increase in the number of people studying Aymara, not only to get a civil job, but also to reclaim their deprived indigenous identity and investigate their background.

“People have even changed their surnames. That is a terrible history. For instance those with names like Mamani or Quispe, names that have a meaning, they changed to names like Marquez or Velasco, names with no meaning. And they did this to get a better education or to get better jobs. All this has been a trauma for the parents. But now the situation has

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<sup>68</sup> The new administration has even added an extra I in EIB, to include the intra-cultural aspect as well as the inter-cultural (interview: MEC official, 10/09/08). Thus, it is now called EIIB.

changed. Now the youth are interested in exploring the meanings of these surnames. They want to investigate and learn” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

The student teachers were also trying to protect the younger generation, however, they used other methods than the parents had used. Instead of staying in the magical consciousness stage like many of the parents did, characterized by a lack of awareness over their role as oppressed, the students had passed the teachers on the naïve consciousness stage who were awakening but still not perceiving and acting upon the structural inequalities of the society, and they were heading towards the third stage of critical consciousness preparing to combat the injustice in society (UNESCO, 2002-2003). As opposed to the teachers in the observed school, the student teachers, by entering a specialization program in Aymara, had already started their liberatory praxis and wanted to teach Aymara language and knowledge in school so that the children did not suffer like they had done.

“In school they taught us histories that are not true. We never learned about the real history, the history of our people. We heard about foreign people, people that have done nothing for our country. In the Aymara culture we have many leaders that still today are not recognized in school. So it is necessary to change the curriculum and implement the true history of the Aymara people (...) I am interested in studying the language in depth to develop it so that we do not lose it. So that not only we speak Aymara, but that the language can continue, that the children do not forget the language” (group interview: Gloria, 12/09/08).

“So this course is filling a need. We do not want the same situation as before. This is why we are doing this, and it is also a sacrifice. We have to have lectures in *castellano*, and it is more difficult for us to understand. But imagine what it would have been like if we had been educated and developed in our own mother tongue, and later on learned *castellano*. Then everything would have been different, right? Now we are neither this nor the other, and we do not want this to happen to the next generations” (group interview: José 12/09/08).

While the adult generation, the parents and teachers, seemed to be paralyzed by the culture of silence, the student teachers were both reflecting and acting upon the injustice in society. They also saw hope in the new generation, whereas the attitudes and colonized minds of the adults seemed harder to change.

“What has happened is that the parents have become colonized. They have this colonial mental schema. Before *castellano* was considered better than other languages, and people still have these ideas in their heads that Aymara will not bring them anywhere. This is what we want to change now. People have this idea of Aymara as a setback, and therefore they deny their children learning the language. We have been subjugated by this mental schema for 500 years, and we have accepted this. The new government is trying to decolonize the schema. It will be difficult to change that in the adult generation, but the children are more

flexible. And we as the youth have adopted new ideas and perspectives” (interview: Enrique, 12/09/08).

The change of attitudes was also commented upon by the teachers interviewed. According to Diana (interview, 25/08/08) the people of El Alto were now talking proudly of Achacachi<sup>69</sup> and wearing their ponchos and *chicotes* with pride instead of shame. “Evo is rescuing the culture”, she concluded. This new pride was especially evident among the *alteño* children.

### **5.1.3 “They talk about Evo, Evo, Evo”**

According to the informants, there was a lot of shame among the people of El Alto caused by discrimination not only from the elite groups, but also from the indigenous peoples themselves. Moreover, the school participated in undermining the Aymara language and culture through exclusion or negative attitudes expressed both directly and indirectly. Many of the informants drew a dark picture of shame and disdain among the learners as well. However, they might have been too categorical. Even though my time in the school was too limited to fully observe how this hostile environment and the teachers’ low self-esteem affected the learners, I did sense more pride than shame among the learners that I interacted with during my 7 weeks at the school.

Most of the children expressed no shame over their knowledge of Aymara. On the contrary, many children taught me some Aymara words and phrases and told me about the Aymara history. One of the boys in 5<sup>th</sup> grade was especially eager to stress that the Aymaras spoke the same language as the President. Moreover, he elaborated on the resistance and bravery of the Aymaras both in the past and in the present: for instance, he proudly claimed that the Aymaras in El Alto had thrown out the detested president Goni after the War on Gas<sup>70</sup> in October 2003. However, the most popular topic among the children was Evo Morales.

The president is an important and positive role model for the Aymara children inasmuch as many learners grew up without any adult Aymaras at home, and the indigenous teachers in the school often expressed conflicting attitudes towards their own background. As expressed by one of the

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<sup>69</sup> An Aymara village that resisted the Inca conquest.

<sup>70</sup> The conflict started when the former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, or “Goni” as he is called, planned to further privatize Bolivian gas and oil by selling it to foreign, mainly US companies. This plan caused large protests in the country. A social revolt escalated in El Alto and in October 2003 the military entered the city and 67 people were killed and hundreds of people were wounded. “Goni” was forced to leave the country after this massacre and he is now living in the US. President Morales has requested an extradition of Goni, but due to the difficult relationship between Bolivia and USA, this request has still not been met.

teachers: “They talk about Evo, Evo, Evo and they reject to the autonomy<sup>71</sup>” (interview, Diana, 25/08/08). The children had only positive things to say about the President: “He helps us”, “He gives us money for school<sup>72</sup>”, “He helps poor families”, “He builds hospitals” were some of the comments given by the learners (informal conversations and interviews: learners, July-September, 2008). According to the children, those who criticized Evo were liars who tried to destroy him (informal interviews: learners, August, 2008).

Thus, the children were informed and took a clear standpoint on the political conflicts in the country. As an example, one day the class I observed learned about the 9 departments of Bolivia, and when the teacher mentioned Santa Cruz, the children protested and said that they did not want anything with Santa Cruz, inasmuch as this is the department where you find the largest Evo-critical voices (my own observation, August 2008). The children said that they had not discussed Evo Morales in school, but they had learned about him from their parents, relatives or through television, which in El Alto is mainly Evo-friendly. This indicated that the Evo-effect had reached the parents who were transmitting positive attitudes of their Aymara background to their children. The aforementioned internalization of inferiority had been replaced by a growing sense of pride and recognition of the Aymara identity among the indigenous migrants.

“It is a fact that the new government helps with what is culture and bilingualism, and this helps the children feel safer. They feel safety and they are not, let’s say, with this thought that they will get rejected. Instead, the government helps them feel secure and have confidence in themselves” (interview: Lydia, 27/08/08).

These positive attitudes within the Aymara migrant society reinforced by the Evo-effect may support inter-intracultural and bilingual education in the urban schools. As mentioned earlier, a vital factor is commitment and competence among the teachers, who in the end are the ones implementing such an education, thus the growing awareness and interest in EIB among the future teachers might make the anticipated changes in the educational sector even more attainable.

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<sup>71</sup> She is referring to the lowland departments’ fight for autonomy, as discussed in the introduction chapter.

<sup>72</sup> The government gave all children in public primary schools a yearly scholarship, *Bono Juancito Pinto*, of 200 bolivianos to buy school material. This *Bono* had just been distributed when I conducted these informal interviews which may explain some of the positive comments.

## 5.2 “It is getting better”

Many of the teachers had little knowledge of EIB since this was not a subject when they did their teacher training. Aymara courses have slowly entered the urban *Normals* after the *Reforma Educativa* in 1994, but many did their teacher training before these changes.

“More and more the concepts of bilingualism and interculturalism are being applied. When I graduated from the *Normal*, I knew about what is first and second language. But this was not included in the curriculum. But I think that after I graduated this has been taken more into consideration. Because I have seen that they have a lot of cultural activities in the *Normals*. So I think that, yes, it is getting better” (interview: Ana, 18/08/08).

Today in the observed *Normal*, the same *Normal* that the majority of my teacher informants had attended, three modules of Aymara that were mandatory for all students, no matter what they are specializing in (e-mail correspondence with the Head of Primary Education). Moreover, it was also more common to study Aymara language at the university level combined with other courses, like Veronica (interview, 21/08/08) had done while studying tourism. Bilingual competence was in demand and there seemed to be a shift from the language-as-problem found in the observed school towards a language-as-resource orientation among future teachers (Ruiz, 1988).

“The problem is that youth graduate from universities monolinguals in *castellano* and they will not function in a work place. If you go to work in a community, it is difficult if they speak Aymara and you only speak *castellano*. You will feel bad. So we have to tell our fellow students that it is important to speak not only two languages, but 3, 4, 5. Because our country is pluricultural and plurilingual, so if you are going to work somewhere, you have to know their language, or at least understand. Otherwise you will be lost. The communities demand that you learn their language” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

According to my informants, the process of empowerment and “conscientização” (Freire 1970/1996) among the indigenous peoples is already taking place, even though the reform is still not approved.

“In 2000 to 2002 or a little while ago, the parents did not want their children to learn the *lengua originaria*, Aymara or Quechua. And even worse, the teacher called the law ‘the damned law’. So it has been a process. Now it is a different situation, with or without the new law, we are going forward. And we are supported by the Constitution and also the ‘Declaration for the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples’, an international law for indigenous peoples all over the world. And there is also a social demand, from the *pueblo*” (group interview: José, 12/09/08).

José was the only informant who assumed the language-as right orientation (Ruiz, 1988). Patten and Kymlicka (2003) claim that international human rights declarations are more concerned with tolerance rights rather than promotion rights and are hence inadequate to resolve disputes on the linguistic rights of minority groups. However, DRIP, that José mentions, does not merely advise, but instead promotes the linguistic rights of the indigenous peoples. The declaration obliges the states that have ratified it to actively make sure that the linguistic rights of the indigenous peoples in their country are being fulfilled (UNHCHR, 2007, my emphasis). Thus, the fact that DRIP was ratified by the Bolivian government in 2007, and even included in the new Constitution, made the language-as-right orientation more likely to both ensure and even to speed up the implementation of EIB also in the urban areas.

The increased indigenous empowerment and the demand for an intercultural and bilingual competence in Bolivian society made the student teachers certain that the new reform AS-EP would be implemented.

“We are in a time of change at the moment. If the new Constitution is approved, Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez will be made valid. So we are only waiting for the new Constitution, before we can implement what is going to be a transcendental change in the educational system. I think that the moment the Constitution is approved, the reform will be put into force” (interview: Enrique 12/09/08).

### **5.3 New oppressors or new liberators?**

Morales, with his indigenist politics, is uniting and empowering the indigenous peoples; nonetheless, at the same time the polarization in the already stratified Bolivian society is increasing.

“The people in the Orient<sup>73</sup> do not accept Evo Morales, just because he is indigenous. Because of all this... for not having a good education, not being a professional. But the people of the Altiplano, here he has been well accepted. Because of the fact that he is indigenous. Here they support him, the people in the provinces, in the villages most of all” (interview: Jorge, 13/08/08).

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the election of Morales has led to an increased polarization between the people in the lowland and the highland, and an escalation of racist and political violence together with an almost nonexistent dialogue between the poles. It appears that the new government, in their quest for decolonization, is aiming to replace a Eurocentric education

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<sup>73</sup> The lowland departments.



with an indigenist education, and imposing thereby an alienating education upon the white and mestizo population. Former Vice President Cardenas has already criticized the new proposed educational reform of being embedded in a conflictive rather than democratic political project (Howard, 2009). The political tension between the opposition and government in Bolivia was already at a peak level and any attempt to force the lowland elite to teach and learn an indigenous language would only add fuel to the fire. Thus, the danger of the oppressed becoming oppressors, by overrunning or ignoring the critical voices, is impending, and both the oppressed and also their oppressors need to take part in their own liberation.

Nevertheless, interculturalism implies an interactive process where the goal is mutual recognition of diversity, both cultural or linguistic (Postero, 2004). In such a fragmented and divided society as Bolivia, it is even more important to build arenas for mutual understanding; hence, the implementation of EIB should be strengthened and used as a tool for dialogue as opposed to the 500-year long monologue in the country. As Navarro (2009) put it in her speech at the SAIH conference: “The urban people have to learn about us. We already learn about them”. An intercultural and bilingual education may be the best suited weapon to change social injustice by challenging Western power hegemony over knowledge, culture, religion, language and history. Not only in Bolivia, but also in global society it is time to let the oppressed voices be heard and for the oppressors to learn to **istaña**.

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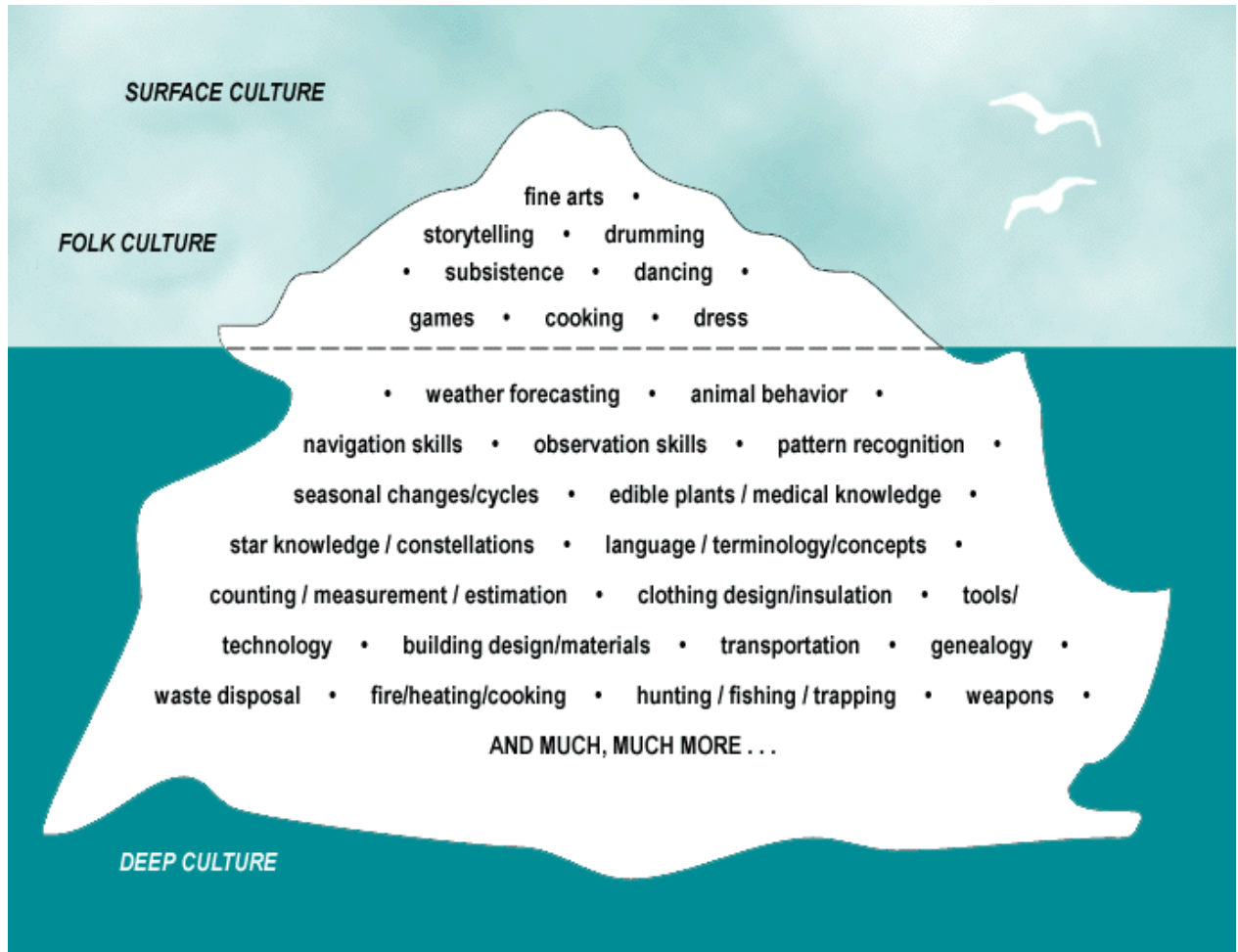
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## **Appendices**

## A. The “Cultural Iceberg”



(Source: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/images/Iceberg2.gif>)

## **B. Lowland radio transcription**

### **“Nuestra Palabra” editorial - Radio Oriental**

By Luis Arturo Mendivil, lawyer and owner of Santa Cruz-based Radio Oriental

#### **Glossary by Reporters Without Borders**

*"Colla" or "cholo": inhabitant of the highlands of western Bolivia. Most "collas" belong to the Aymara or Quechua indigenous groups. "Upper Peru" was Bolivia's name when the region was under Spanish colonial rule. Present-day Peru was called "Lower Peru."*

*"Camba": traditionally, the peasant of the eastern lowlands. Nowadays it is used for all the inhabitants of eastern Bolivia, especially Santa Cruz.*

*"Paco": a common and somewhat vulgar term in Bolivia for a policeman of the lowest rank. As he is paid so little, it is always assumed he will try to extort money from the public.*

*"Stone llama freaks": Partly because the complexion of many Aymaras and Quechuas has a coppery tone, racists often claim that they look like llamas (the Andean domestic animal) or look as if they were made of stone, or both at the same time.*

#### **11 June 2008:**

“I am not proud of being a Bolivian, as the collas would say. I am proud of being a camba, of being a Santa Cruz man to the core. I want to be an Amazonian. I want to take advantage of this piece of Latin America without having to keep the company of these ignorant brutes, these animals in human form. I will never stop calling them that, these drugged, alcoholic maniacs who yesterday or the day before tried to demonstrate their ferocity in La Paz like poor animals. When a human being takes the form of a two-legged animal, when a human being loses his rationality, when we listen to these brutes and imbeciles who govern us, each day we lose a bit, or a lot of what we aspire to become. I was listening to this imbecile, this ignorant cretin who represents us on the international stage, I was listening to him say he was not satisfied with the ambassador's statement but would consult lawyers. Obviously, it is a man with knowledge of international law who can maintain relations between peoples, and not this stupid donkey, this animal, this stone llama freak. We must develop every possible mechanism to oppose this proposed referendum which makes no sense, which is just a sexual infatuation between the government and Tuto Quiroga [former president and current head of Podemos, the main opposition party, who is regarded as traitor by the most radical supporters of autonomy]. We won't let ourselves be screwed by these sell-outs. They are all in the same corner as this crazy government that wants to make us submit to a socialist-model economy that has failed all over the world.

We must forge a broad social pact to preserve and extend our autonomy, as these imbeciles are trying to make it fail and to lead us into chaos. I am becoming steadily more convinced that those who govern us want our blood. My concern, and I appeal to our leaders about this, is that these stone llama freaks should stop thinking they can impose their vision of government on us. The referendum will lead us to a dangerous extreme.

This populism without content, vision or ideological basis that rules us is a source of uncertainty. We are beginning to feel the effects of the blockades, including inflation. The departmental prefect made proposals today. The response he will get tomorrow will be

insults and blockades. We think the prefect's proposal must be improved. Santa Cruz cannot and must not lower its guard towards this government. The war continues and the collas won't stop until they see blood flow. They won't stop until they have destroyed the pro-autonomy process. They won't be happy until they have eliminated our system of production. That is why we must halt this cholo mentality in Bolivia."

**18 June 2008:**

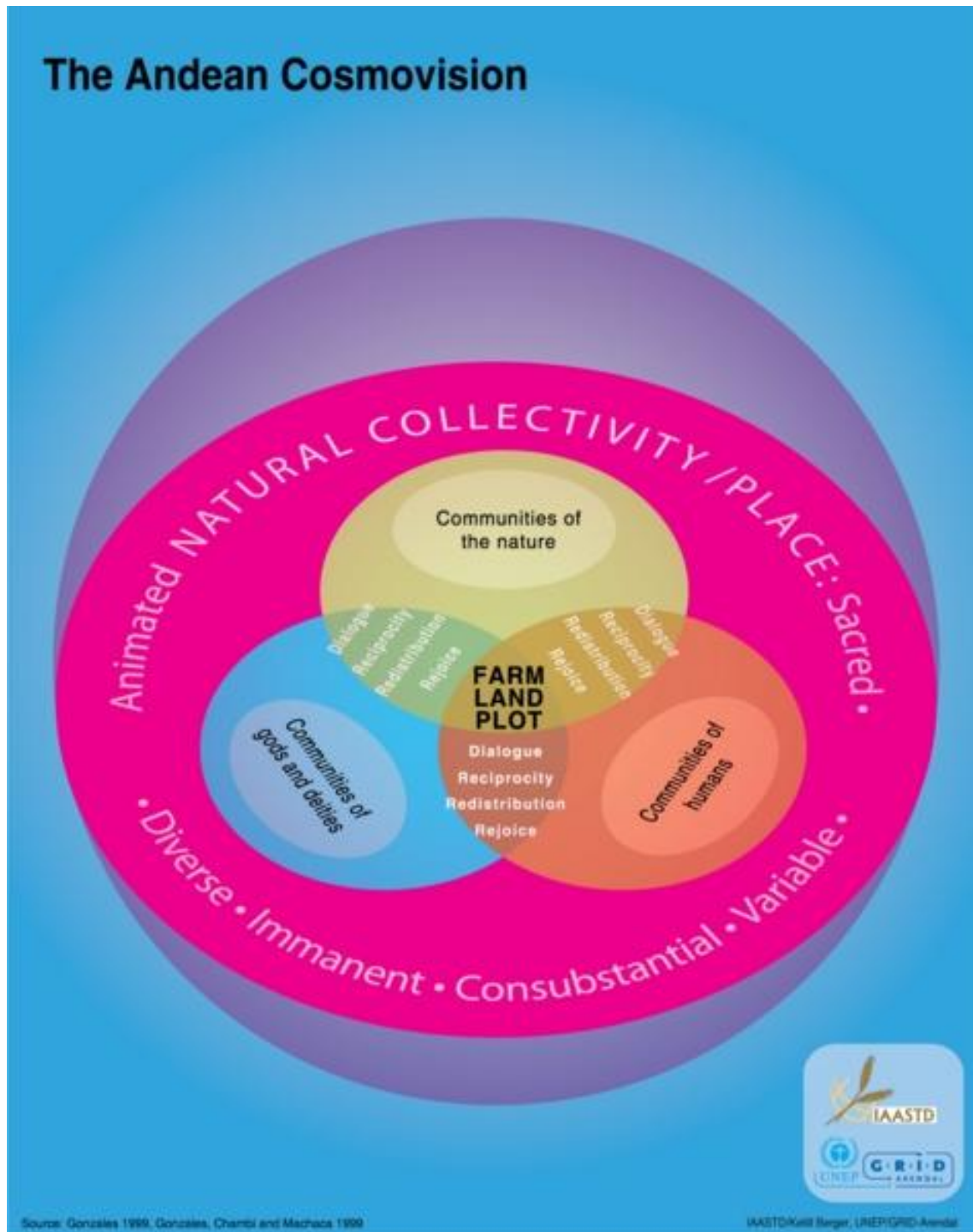
"We are above all Santa Cruz supporters, fanatically cambia and nothing, absolutely nothing, can make me proud of being Bolivian. I want to pay tribute to these men and women who put their lives at risk in order to ensure that our rights are respected. The cholo, thieving, drug-trafficking bourgeoisie of Upper Peru, nowadays with Chávez's trollops in their wake and manipulated from the upper levels of Illimani, know no limits in their hate for the people of Santa Cruz. It is a good thing we have a strong Unión Juvenil Cruceñista [an extreme right-wing group based in Santa Cruz that supports autonomy; implicated in attacks on state media].

We need a strong youth to deal with the blockades and take charge of defending the people everywhere, and not these damned collas who are just a bunch of nonentities, delinquents and perverts. The guy running the government is a pervert too, he is incapable of doing the job. The Unión Juvenil Cruceñista is attacked, insulted and vilified here. Damn you, those of you who think that our youth here is shit. Our youth is full of nobility, unlike that race of collas who just want to suck the state's tit, who just want cocaine, who just want to rob. That's the difference between the cambia and the colla. We are sick of hearing this gang of scruffy collas, these stone llama freaks, who want to get rid of the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista. They cannot do anything without insulting us, these sons of bitches, who do anything to discredit the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista.

Any of these sick colla bastards can insult the Santa Cruz youth. I ask myself: where are the media, which are always ready to denounce a scandal? What does the press say? Where are the human rights people. Where are these lousy collas? Where is the ombudsman? They all need to say something. When the collas come out with their machine guns, organise ambushes, kill, rob and spread terror and blood, is this a work of art that must be applauded? We are going to defend everything to do with Santa Cruz.

(source: <http://www.rsf.org/Nuestra-Palabra-editorial-Radio.html>)

## C. The Andean Cosmivision



(Source: <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/the-andean-cosmovision>)

## D. List of informants

### *Teachers*

- Ana** = Female teacher preschool. Mother tongue is Spanish. Interview conducted August 18<sup>th</sup>
- Diana** = Female teacher 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted August 25<sup>th</sup>
- Ernesto** = Male teacher 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. Mother tongue is Spanish. Interview conducted August 27<sup>th</sup>
- Eva** = Female teacher 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted August 27<sup>th</sup>
- Jorge** = Male teacher 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Mother tongue is Spanish. Interview conducted August 13<sup>th</sup>
- Lydia** = Female teacher 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Mother tongue is Quechua. Interview conducted August 27<sup>th</sup>
- Martin** = Male science teacher 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Mother tongue is Quechua. Interview conducted August 21<sup>st</sup>
- Norma** = Female math teacher, 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Mother tongue is Quechua. Interview conducted August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Paola** = Female religion teacher, all grades. Mother tongues are Spanish and Aymara. Interview conducted July 30<sup>th</sup>
- Veronica** = Female administration worker and teacher. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted August 21<sup>st</sup>

### *Student teachers*

- Enrique** = Male student. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Flor** = Female student. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Gloria** = Female student. Mother tongue is Aymara. Group interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Hernan** = Male students. Mother tongue is Aymara. Group interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>
- José** = Male students. Mother tongue is Aymara. Group interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Maribel** = Female student. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted September 12<sup>th</sup>

### *Others*

- Head of Primary Education** = Male professor. Mother tongue is Spanish. Interview conducted by e-mail
- Ministerio de Educacion y Cultura (MEC)** = Male official. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted September 10<sup>th</sup>
- Plan International** = Female official. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted September 17<sup>th</sup>
- Principal** = Male. Mother tongue is Aymara. Interview conducted August 29<sup>th</sup>
- UNICEF** = Male official. Mother tongue is Quechua. Interview conducted August 13<sup>th</sup>

## **E. Interview guides**

### **TEACHERS**

1. Name:
2. Place of birth:
3. Mother tongue:
4. Title:
5. What grade or subject do you teach?
6. How long have you been working as a teacher?
7. Where did you do your teacher training?

#### **Relationship with the parents**

8. How is the socio-economic situation of the learners in this school?
9. In what fields do the parents work?
10. Are there parents who do not speak Spanish? And what do you do to communicate with them?
11. How would you describe the relationship between the parents and the school?

#### **Language**

12. What languages do you speak and where did you learn them?
13. What languages should the children learn in school and why?
14. What languages do the learners/ teachers/administration staff/ parents speak?
15. Are there any monolingual children in the school? How many?
16. What is the predominant language among the learners?
17. Are there any learners in the school who do not speak Spanish? What do the teachers do to communicate with them?
18. What languages do the teachers use in the classroom teaching?
19. Do the school teach Aymara as a subject?
20. Do you use teaching material in other languages than Spanish? Does the school provide books or other didactic material in other languages?
21. Are the teachers trained to teach other languages than Spanish? What does the school do to strengthen their linguistic competences?
22. How do the learners/parents/teachers/ administration respond to the use of Aymara in the classroom?
23. Is it necessary/important to learn to read and write in Aymara? Why? Why not?
24. What are your personal views on Aymara teaching in school?
25. Do you have any experience with this?
26. Did your teacher training contain an intercultural or bilingual focus?

#### **Interculturalism**

27. What is the percentage of Aymara learners/teachers in the school? How many are bilinguals? How many have Aymara as mother tongue?
28. How does this influence the teaching content?
29. Do you teach the culture, history, language, knowledge of the Aymaras in the school? And what are the views of the teachers on this inclusion?



30. How do you make use of the cultural and linguistic competence and background of the learners?
31. Which values do you teach the children?
32. What are the differences between the values the school promotes and the values the learners meet at home? Are there any cultural clashes?
33. What are the parents' views on the teaching of religion at the school?
34. What does **ayni** mean and how do you include this in the teaching?

### **EIB and the educational reforms**

35. What is EIB?
36. What are your views on EIB? Do you support it? Why? Why not?
37. What does it take for the implementation of EIB to succeed? What are the obstacles?
38. What has this school done to assure the implementation?
39. Have there been any changes regarding the school content or attitudes towards EIB after the elections of Evo Morales? If yes, in what way?
40. Are you familiar with the new educational law Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez?
41. Where have you found information about AS-EP?
42. What are your views on this law?
43. Do you think the law will be implemented?
44. What are the differences between the two educational reforms?
45. Is there anything else you want to add?

### **STUDENT TEACHERS**

1. Name
2. Mother tongue.
3. Year and specialization track.
4. What part of Bolivia do you come from?

### **Education/vocation**

5. Why did you want to become a teacher?
6. Are any of your parents or relatives teachers?
7. What subjects do you want to teach?
8. Where would you like to work? In the city or in the provinces?
9. Do you have in-service training at this academy? And where does this training take place?
10. Which pedagogues or pedagogical theories do you study in this course?
11. What are the main values children should be taught in school?
12. What is the main function/mission of a teacher?

## **EIB**

13. What is EIB?
14. How do you interpret the word interculturalism?
15. What languages should children learn in school? And why?
16. What are your views on the teaching of Aymara in schools?
17. What are the views of the lecturers/students in this *Normal* towards the teaching of indigenous languages, culture and knowledge systems in schools?
18. What are the differences between the culture and knowledge of the indigenous peoples and the culture and knowledge transmitted in this *Normal*?
19. How does the *Normal* prepare you for a multicultural and multilingual classroom?
20. Is it the school's responsibility to maintain, transmit and develop indigenous languages and culture?
21. How can the school contribute to strengthening the identity and self-esteem of indigenous learners?
22. What are your views on the efforts made by the *Normal*/the Ministry to implement EIB?

## **Indigenous students/lecturers/learners**

23. Where do the students at this *Normal* mainly come from?
24. How many of the students/ lecturers do you think are Aymaras?
25. How does this affect the teaching or the teaching content?
26. How do students/lecturers relate to their indigenous background? Shame, pride?
27. What can you as (indigenous) teachers do to help indigenous learners maintain their Aymara background in urban areas like La Paz and El Alto? How can you prevent cultural identity problems/clashes?
28. How can you teach learners about their cultural heritage? Is this part of the curriculum?

## **Educational laws**

29. Which of the educational laws do you study/follow in the *Normal*?
30. Do you know the new educational reform, AS-EP?
31. What are the differences between the two reforms; *Reforma Educativa* and AS-EP?
32. Do you think that AS-EP will be implemented? What are the obstacles?
33. Is there anything else you want to add?

## F. Bolivia in pictures



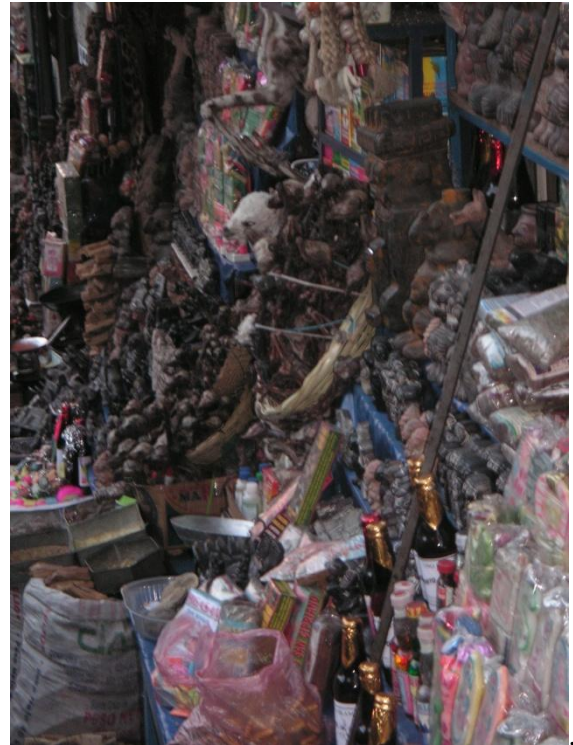
1. Women in their best *polleras* dancing *La Morenada* in El Alto.



2. Between *cholitas* and shoe shiners, waiting for my bus down to La Paz.



3. **Pachamama** covered in llama hair for good luck.



4. The witches' market in La Paz. Here you can buy everything you need for the **Pachamama** offerings, including llama fetuses.



5. Children playing **tarka** at the National day parade.



6. Aymara dances at the Day of the Students.



7. Between jeans and *cholitas* in the school yard.



8. Class room observation.



9. Barbie-mania in the school.



10. Whose liberation are they celebrating? Pre-school children dressed up as soldiers and nurses, commemorating the liberation from the Spaniards. In addition they are also carrying the **Wimpala**, and wearing the traditional costumes of the 9 departments of Bolivia.



11. Pro-Evo graffiti in El Alto.



14. Bilingual signs (Aymara and Spanish) in a monolingual *Normal*.



12. And pro-autonomy graffiti in La Paz.



15. Mural from the *Normal*. The War on Gas as perceived by the student teachers.



13. Evo addressing the people on the balcony of the Presidential Palace, under the images of the *criollo* liberation heroes.



16. *Cholitas* at the Plaza Murillo, where they would have been prohibited from entering just some decades ago.

## G. Mother tongues in El Alto

Table View

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La Paz: Idioma Materno de la Poblacion de 4 años de edad y mas- UBICACIÓN, ÁREA GEOGRÁFICA, SEXO Y EDAD

IDIOMA MATERNO				Total	Quechua	Aymara	Español	Guaraní	Otro Nativo	Extranjero	No Habla
UBICACIÓN	ÁREA	SEXO	EDAD								
El Alto	Total	Total	4-9 años	104,018	216	4,892	98,506	22	5	35	342
			10-19 años	150,267	1,104	19,016	129,867	40	5	86	149
			20-29 años	123,323	2,023	39,646	81,408	40	10	84	112
			30-39 años	85,745	2,168	41,391	42,025	32	8	55	66
			40-49 años	57,631	1,957	33,253	22,321	13	5	34	48
			50-59 años	30,798	1,490	19,376	9,883	5	4	20	20
			60-69 años	14,711	883	9,815	3,977	5	1	19	11
			70-79 años	8,012	468	5,648	1,879	2	2	6	7
			80-89 años	2,232	121	1,754	356	1	-	-	-
			90-98 años	514	25	416	71	-	-	-	2