Processing National Identity

A Study of National Identity Construction within Education in the Plurinational State of Bolivia

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Resumé

Bolivia’s reformation of indigenous politics with the present government re-defines social classification aiming to construct a new idea of unifying societies’ diversity in the country. With the recognition and empowerment of the various nations contained in Bolivia, the actual president Evo Morales and his political party in power, the MAS revolutionize identity politics with rewriting the constitution with forthcoming principles implemented in the public sphere in the re-defined Plurinational state of Bolivia. This project intends to analyse the possibilities of social changes in a resource exploited and socially differentiated former European and US influenced Andean country with its nation-wide reformation of national identity in an exemplified educational setting in the rural area of the city of La Paz. The discussion will be centred, if the construction of national identity takes place as viewed from the constitutional aims for homogeneity in the Bolivian society, in relation to the strategy of the specific educational setting. These implications will be theorized with particularly Benedict Anderson’s work on “Imagined communities”, in order to draw upon past events of the homogeneity of nation-states and its relevancy with future perspectives in the Plurinational state of Bolivia.
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1. Introduction

Being a student at Cultural Encounters, I started to interest myself towards the subject of identity constructions, and had further considerations about nationalism. Personally, I find it interesting and relevant to analyse the different realities of nationalism performed nowadays because of the various influences an individual can encounter from a nation’s history. Connecting these ideas, the construction of national identity sparked a particular interest in me, and specifically when applying it to one of my closest life experiences abroad, towards the Plurinational state of Bolivia.

In general, the colonial past and impulsive present in Latin America has been a crucial element of the lectures and literature in this semester of Cultural Encounters. When looking at identity construction, Latin American countries have gone through immense challenges the past century under the imperialistic intervention of the dominating global North, and therefore reveal themselves as highly relevant to be exemplified in the discourse of the construction of national identity. Bolivia especially opens up new ideas and possibilities when discussing the emergence of inclusion of different ethnic groups within its national boundaries, because of the presence of the first elected indigenous president Evo Morales in a Latin American country and his ruling party, the ‘Movement towards Socialism’ (MAS).

Because of these changes in the poverty stricken and culturally diverse Andean country, the analysis of identity construction towards a ‘new’ sense of national belonging occurred to me as relevant to carry out in the studies of Cultural Encounters. Herein the racial question is central to the outcomes of this project. As I have mentioned above, I have a close relation to Bolivia because of my volunteering experience of 2 months in 2011 in a specific educational institution near the city of La Paz. During that time, I have realized an interesting relation of the pupil’s identification to their Bolivian nationality, because of their diverse social and cultural background and respect towards each other. Therefore, I have questioned myself the reasons behind such a construction, and began to investigate the possibilities such a project can encounter.

1.1. Problem field

In the broad field of the studies of Cultural Encounters, I could see relevancy working with the following issues. This project aims to discuss the hypothetic and existing challenges the
process of the construction of national identity encompasses in the re-defined Plurinational state of Bolivia. The discussion will take its central point in the analysis of the construction of national identity in an educational example in Bolivia, which can be perceived as an influential social setting where national identity construction is performed.

The new constitution introduced in 2008 declares Bolivia to be a Plurinational state, meaning to emphasize the inclusion of the several acknowledged nations, identities, cultures and languages in the country on an official level. With the aim to re-define a Bolivian citizen’s national identity in equal terms, the constitution intends to include the different indigenous nations represented in the country, which have been marginalized and excluded in previous governments. Now, their political participation and jurisdiction, as well as the recognition of their various cosmologies shall be enforced to educational relevancy throughout the country.

With the objective to use Benedict Anderson’s theory of imagined communities as a central theory in this project, an analysis of the global spread of the conceptualization of nationalism will explain the different influences throughout history, when exploring the processes that created nationalism. In his analysis the creation of nationalism originated in the establishment of nation-states in the Americas, where a homogenous image of a nation was reinvented according to European hierarchical conceptions, as Anderson defines it, an imagined political community.

The concept of the Plurinational will be explored in the context of Bolivia’s post-colonial history in order to examine the challenges it poses to a homogenized idea of unifying a diverse nation. To homogenize a nation, in the case of Bolivia, which doesn’t exist for long time as in its present state, and which contains various nations of different cultural reproduction, poses challenges to a unification of the people of Bolivia. That is why the Plurinational agenda indicates an equal implementation of rights, participation and recognition, and education as the reproductive social setting to enforce new possibilities to the public.

Taking an example of this specific educational setting, the analysis of the incorporation of diversity as a dialectical process of learning can be viewed to integrate the principles of Plurinationaly, and therefore show a direction of how a constitutional conception of integration can be performed within education on a small scale.
1.2. Problem formulation

With the objective to find out how the Plurinational principles of inclusion and equal opportunities for Bolivians with different social and cultural background can be carried out in an educational setting, in order to enforce a nation’s identity as a whole, the project directs an interlinking question:

How does the Plurinational state of Bolivia construct national identity, applying the idea of homogeneity within a nation?

1.3. Sub-Questions

The following three sub-questions have been constructed to lead to possible results of the problem formulation. In order to create a valid picture of identity construction in the exemplified educational setting in the context of Plurinationality, it is necessary to analyse if the Purinational portrays a unilateral re-definition of socio-cultural enforcement in Bolivia, and if it rejects a possibility of homogenous construction of national identity. These sub-questions will be addressed later in the Analysis, where each of the questions will correlate with specific data from the Theoretical framework.

1) Which indicators correspond with the nation-state’s idea of homogeneity, and how were they carried out throughout continuous changes in time?

2) How is the idea of the Plurinational constructed, and which problems does it address?

3) How does the exemplified educational setting interconnect the construction of national identity in Plurinational concerns?

2. Methodology

The methodological approach of this project will mainly be to relate empirical data, theories and my personal experiences from a participant observation carried out in 2011 in Bolivia. Through the specific selection of empirical data, theories and the experiences of the observation gained, I intend to lead the reader to an interesting Analysis and Discussion, where I will forge these elements together in order to enhance the issue of national identity construction in the emerged Plurinational state of Bolivia.
2.1. Participant Observation

I have chosen to work with participant observation, because I can relate the valuable experiences I have gained during 2 months’ volunteering work from October until December 2011 in the free-school “Colegio Kurmi Wasi”, Achocalla, La Paz, Bolivia. As an educated teacher and social worker, I believe that I understand the influences an education can make on a pupil’s development of identity construction towards a sense of national belonging. The participant observation turned out to be an effective method to use in this project because of the various experiences I can base it upon, and through the time writing this project in Bolivia I am able to evaluate the observation with people who can reflect with me upon that in a useful and analytical perspective.

I am of the opinion that using participant observation gives an opportunity to share a situation with the researched social group and can result in scientific objectivity. (Tedlock, 1991, pp. 69) This methodology enhances data that might reflect the researched subject’s point of view and can be evaluated as relevant for anthropological knowledge. Such as Malinowskis’ (1922) idea of a human understanding suggests “to grasp the natives point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of the world”. (Tedlock, 1991, pp. 69, 70) Sharing a similar point of view, it seems to be convenient to carry out an engaged period of fieldwork, therefore I have decided to write this project abroad in Bolivia, in order to encounter my former experiences with an interest to connect those to a further research into the issue of identity construction in this very same setting.

Reflecting upon my experiences, I can relate the method I have applied with Daniel Mato’s decolonizing academic-research ‘Studying with subaltern social groups’. According to Mato, it is up to the researcher to obtain knowledge through a reverse within the fieldwork, meaning to study with the “subaltern” social groups. The “subaltern” social group can in this sense be described as mainly the pupils I have been working with, but as well as with some relation to the teacher colleagues, because both of them express the term in supplying and receiving education. (Mato, 2000, pp. 487) Considering as well Paolo Freire’s “with the subject dialogical approach”, which invites the researcher to have an on-going dialogue with the social group in any kind of setting, to increase the possibilities of a qualitative research. From his well-known book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, Freire refers to his experiences with indigenous people in Argentina to the ideas of praxis and the dialogical approach. (Mato, 2000, pp. 492, 494)
Furthermore, the official description of the exemplified free-school will be attached in the Appendix of this project, in order to refer to its didactical implications towards identity construction in the Theoretical framework. I will introduce my observations in the 3rd part of the Analysis, “The school’s performance of integration, identity and diversity”, in order to work out a broad and descriptive Analysis of the school’s application on identity construction. I am of the opinion that including this description, this working paper will be enhanced with a great extent of a unique and diverse perception of pedagogical work and its application towards the local needs or requirements.

2.2. Delimitation of Empirical Data

In order to work with implementations of the Bolivian Plurinational state in education, I have taken Bolivia’s “Nueva Constitución Política del Estado”, the “New political Constitution of the State” into account to look for relevancy towards the issue of national identity construction. Drawing upon Bolivia’s New Constitution addressing education as an essential implementation of its Plurinational principles, I will refer to six articles of its publication in 2008. Through this joint data, I intend to give a relevant theoretical input to my participant observation as a helping teacher in a free-school setting in Bolivia in 2011.

It occurred to me that it would be applicable to portray as well national educational settings, in order to draw a clear and objective picture of how identity politics in education are implemented in a national context in Bolivia. But, because of the limited time I have been in Bolivia, and the complexity I could foresee in investigating in governmental issues in this country, I have chosen to rely on my experiences of my voluntary work of one year ago and the personal input of the contacts I have of that specific educational setting.

As well, I have been researching for Bolivian online sources in order to draw a realistic and critical image of the statistics of the Bolivian population from the National Institute of Statistics (INE), which undertakes the most well-known survey to count the population and make notes about their living conditions. This survey is called “Censo de población y vivienda” and is carried out every 10 years throughout the country to achieve an official document that reflects the reality of the country.

Furthermore, I investigated in local newspapers online, where I could find opinions contrary to state operated activities, like the INE survey. I came across the “Periódico los tiempos”,

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from which I will relate the findings of local survey foundations (UNIR & FBDM), and opinions of political active scholars towards the INE statistics of the Bolivian population.

### 2.3. Delimitation of Theories

I have chosen to focus on a compilation of historical events which in my opinion have contributed to the development in the establishment of nation states, because it reveals a relevancy when viewing upon the foundation of the newly originated nation states in Latin America and the Caribbean. With a particular reference, I take Benedict Anderson’s theory of “Imagined Communities” into account, because the related “New Constitution of the Pluriational State of Bolivia”, with its identity politics, contains a new outlook towards a homogenous identification as one nation in relation to the different “nations” represented in the country. This phenomenon of homogeneity is central towards the historical data used in this project.

The term “Plurinational” and its implementation as a reforming constitutional strategy is therefore a substantial element to examine in this report, in order to understand its relevancy in the context of nation building. With this aim, I will draw upon the imperialistic past of Latin America, and the correlated concepts of “Coloniality”, “Decolonization” and “Identity politics” of the scholars Eduardo Galeano, Catherine Walsh, Anibal Quijano, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Robert Albro.

Hereby, I limited myself when addressing the concepts of “Coloniality” and “Decolonization”, because of the rigorous assimilations it can encompass, and the possibility to lead me to a different problem formulation and outcome of the study. I intend to use the two concepts to depict the indicators the development of a reformation of nation-ness the former Spanish America encountered and how they are used and implemented by the current government in order to restructure the countries’ national identity.

With the idea of investigating in a social area, where identity politics are carried out, I will draw upon the transformation of educational reforms in the development of the nations-states, and further on more specifically with the principles of the Bolivian educational example “Kurmi Wasi”. This educational setting relates to educational reformations of Céleste Freinet’s “Transformation of learning” and Paolo Freire’s “Education of the oppressed”, which will be explained as well as a part of the educational framework in this project.
3. Theoretical framework

The following compilation of empirical data used in this project will be divided in 3 chapters regarding to historical, political and educational indicators towards the construction and the redefinition of national identity. The aim of involving this data is to address the construction of national identity from different angles and origins in order to explain the background, recent processes and outcomes of the issue.

3.1. History chapter

In the history to the mainly referred colonial and imperial era, the implementations of European derived ideologies and power relations are an important fundament to demonstrate the “imagined” structures, the creole population of the occupied territories of the Americas had to identify themselves with. This led a further assimilation with the impact the independent nation-states based their national belonging upon, practicing national propaganda with “imagined” nationalism. The historical data concerning the origins of nationalism will be used as fundamental to understand further processes of national re-structuring in the case of Bolivia.

The nation and homogeneity

According to Anderson’s historic/theoretic implications to define the origins of nationalism, a crucial point of departure can be taken from the hierarchical codes of a monarchical-naturally constructed society in the 15th century, where only a privileged part of society had access to an ontological truth of the transcontinental entry of Christendom. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 36) Whereas the ‘modern nation’ occurred in the joining of capitalism and print technology in the Western hemisphere, giving the literate part of a society the possibility of a new kind of an imagined community, and with it the rise of a national consciousness through a larger grouping between political entities between 1776 and 1838. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 46)

A further, and more indicating record towards the rise of nationalism, are the independence movements of the ‘lower classes’ in the former Spanish colonies in Latin America. Those indicated a resistance towards the idea of building a new nation according to an imperialistic, Eurocentric image of ruling a territory. The most common factor was the colonizer’s control
of the spread of Enlightenments liberating ideas. With imposing new taxes and their efficient
collection, the increase of urban mercantilism and the restriction of local trade for the
monopoliser’s advantage, and the centralized hierarchic administrative control. (Anderson,
2006, pp. 48, 50)

Eurocentric identity constructions had a strong impact on the early social movements,
reasoned by the suppression of slaves and indigenous of European elites in Latin-America.
The example of creole identification to their homelands has been the spark of the uprisings
against the colonial powers. This imagined, de-territorialized conceptualization of nationalism
led the path to countless social movements of a suppressed social class and increased tensions
on the perceptions on national identity when imperialism was about to set the stage in Latin-
America. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 47-67)

At the time of the fall of influential Eurasian monarchies in 1922, the Congress of Berlin, in
which the League of Nations has concluded upon the design of a nation-state as a legitimate
international norm, as it is known today. From this time on a model of imperialistic
nationalism officially applied to non-European countries, which have had a complex history
of colonial influence, with nationalistic enthusiasm and ideology through the mass media, the
educational system and administrative regulations. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 113, 114) Departing
from this pattern the colonial state transformed into the nation-state mainly through the
enormous increase of physical mobility, and as well through the rapid multiplication of its
functions and the spread of modern-education. That can be reasoned by the growing
acceptance of moral importance and modern knowledge throughout the whole population of a
diversified colonized country.

“The very idea of ‘nation’ is now nestled firmly in virtually all print-languages; and nation-
ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness.” (Anderson, 2006, pp. 135)

Within this development, the access to literacy for a whole population meant an essential step
towards a further identification towards a new image of a nation. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 115,
116) In addition, this imperial official nationalism imparted certain European national
histories into the consciousness of the colonized, and therefore created throughout generations
an inseparable political significance towards the idea of belonging to a nation state.
(Anderson, 2006, pp. 118, 119) The effectively interlink between educational and
administrative practices provided an important transformation of nationalism as an imagined
community especially for the native population. (Anderson, 2006, pp. 140)
Foreign power and national marginalization

Since the end of the Second World War, the United States invested continuously in Latin American industries, with its giant corporations undermining local competition and gaining control of the industrializing process. This determined the international division of labour and with it the course of economic development, so that Latin America continues exporting its unemployment and poverty. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 206, 207) Looking at the larger economies of the continent, between 1955 and 1962 four fifth of investments in Brazilian industries came from foreign banks and hit Brazil later on with external debt. In Argentina, foreign investments were declared to have the same possibilities and standards of procedure as local ones. The military regimes in power put no limitation on the entrance of foreign capital and its export of profits. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 218)

A further denationalization of Latin American industry happened in the name of the International Monetary Fund, which imposed imbalanced trade policies and high loans with increasing interest rates. In addition to that a US Bank invasion weakened the national economies, which enabled further loans for US enterprises when exploiting the continents wealth. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 220, 224) Furthermore, it was not only that the foreign influence took the continents wealth; it became a part of the strategy to control the various countries’ political and economic agreements. In Bolivia, the US Empire defined with whom the country is obliged to make trade agreements, and therefore induced exclusively their own manufactured products upon them. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 232)

Reasons behind the easy access of foreign exploitation and control were the Latin American bourgeoisie, who owned most of the national property and land, but acted as agents and functionaries of foreign corporations and shareholders. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 208, 244) A result of foreign dominance throughout Latin American societies was the migration of educated and skilled professionals of local universities to the United States because of the higher salaries and broad research possibilities. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 245) This polarization effected Latin America’s economic growth, that their industries’ productivity raised tremendously, but in the same time their worker’s wages stayed very low. With it a heavy migration of the poor from the rural areas to the massive growing urban ports caused the cheap labour effectively. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 248, 249, 250) “People and capital were displaced according to the rising and falling fate of gold or sugar, silver or indigo, and only the ports and the capitals, the leeches of the productive regions, had a permanent existence.” (Galeano, 2009, pp. 259)
A development out of decades of US imperialism, showed the nationalization of oil in Venezuela in the late 70’s. But as so often, it has to be questioned, when a state takes control of a country’s centre of wealth, who operates behind the scene? Nationalization of resources doesn’t necessarily entail a common distribution of the profit. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 268) Throughout the 70’s one could observe several brutal dictatorships serving the well-being of the few through the misery of the many, displaying a cavity of injustice as nowhere else as on this continent. A systematic outsourcing controlled by powerful foreign politics and operated through the local governments. (Galeano, 2009, pp. 271, 272)

“Underdevelopment isn’t a stage of development, but its consequence. Latin America’s underdevelopment arises from external development, and continues to feed it.” (Galeano, 2009, pp. 285)

3.2. Politics chapter

This chapter will demonstrate the reasons behind ideas behind the construction of a state’s new political agenda. Hereby, it is important to relate the historical data to the following, as the forthcoming definitions of “Decolonization, Coloniality and Identity politics” are a construct of past events. Furthermore, Bolivia’s ethno-racial population composition will be taken into account from the statistics of the state’s survey upon the population’s ethnic origin and its official clarification.

Problems of the nation as homogeneous & the Plurinational

A first crucial entailment in the making of the Plurinational state can be seen at a still ongoing colonial power relationship, constructed through a hierarchical system of social classification defining the social status and class dependency according to racial determination. This “coloniality of power”, defined by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano, maintains a process of capitalism and colonialism through marginalization of the indigenous and African population in various Latin American countries for the control of labor, knowledge, being, spirituality, existence, life visions and nature. (Walsh, 2011, pp. 53) From this perspective, it is undeniable that an ethnic-racial difference was produced out of a historical-structural problem. This implication finds its relativity when looking at the mestizaje (racial mixing towards “whiteness”) population as a model of white –western modernity as a continuous
discourse of power. This issue of a power relation of a “white” dominant group upon different indigenous realities in the country has been addressed within a ‘De-colonizing process’ when re-defining the state and the Plurinational idea to imply to a new state foundation in the development of Bolivia’s New Constitution in 2009. The idea behind Plurinationality finds its indicator in a plural character of a national oneness, and can be seen in cases of Ecuador and Bolivia in a geographical context, which relates to different ways of living and how a sub-society re-produces itself in an own, different surrounding. (Walsh, 2009, pp. 67, 68)

As the Bolivian writer Cusicanqui describes the indigenous of Bolivia, “They are given a residual status that, in fact, converts them into minorities, ensnaring them in indigenist stereotypes of the noble savage and as guardians of nature”. (Cusicanqui, 2012, pp. 99)

In December 2005, the Coca farmer and indigenous leader Evo Morales won the presidency elections as a result of the denationalization of local industry and resources. With the aim to dismantle the countries neoliberal agency, Evo Morales and his political party, the MAS (Movement towards Socialism) wanted to appeal with rewriting the Bolivian constitution to nationalize Bolivia’s oil and gas industries and reverse the marginalization and victimization of the indigenous community. (Albro, 2006, pp. 409, 410) Since the recognition of the term “Plurinational” in the new Constitution developed in the National Constitutional Assembly of Bolivia in January 2009, the state took as the first Latin American country a step towards re-defining boundaries between the diversity of people, identities and cultures emerged within the nation. With the aim to re-configure indigenous rights in participatory actions and the recognition of indigenous autonomies within the national ones centered the path to de-colonize the country as one of the crucial elements of the new Constitution of 2009. Plurinationality should further be promoted, in the diversities of expression of the plurality of the nation, relating to the existence of the diversity of cultures in the state, as well as administrational and juridical equality between the different recognized nations within the state of Bolivia, and at last reasoning the construction of an intercultural society as an essential component of the constitution. (Walsh, 2009, pp. 73)

“The thesis of the Plurinational State implies the recognition of the self-determination of indigenous peoples and nationalities, understood as the right of these nationalities to choose their own political and juridical system as well as their model of economic, social, scientific, and cultural development, in a territory geographically defined within the frame of a new Plurinational Nation”. (Gustafson, 2009, pp. 1000)
Identity and diversity

“Bolivia’s new narrative of nationhood, it should be clear, has switched from an assimilationist to an indigenous one.” (Albro, 2006, pp. 412)

Identification can be recognized by some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, a concept, which does not signal a stable core of the self, unfolding an individual’s life without change until the end, without being fixed nor guarantees a cultural belongingness. Identification is an own concept by itself creating an imaginary, constructed concept of any kind of belonging. (Hall, 1996, pp. 2-4)

The “Plurinational” can be taken as an interesting example when exploring possibilities within the plurality of identity construction. Identity politics in this case have introduced a meaning of diversity, which should be integrated in the cultural, educational, economical and other sectors, in order to recognize the existence of more nations and identities within the nation state and their cosmological world view as well as to maintain the respect and acceptance between them on a broad variety. (Harten, 2011, pp. 188, 189) Bolivia’s former minister of the presidency, Ramon Quintana, expressed his approach towards the successful reformation of identity politics, in the sense that Anderson’s “imagined community” in Bolivia has been dismantled and leads new paths and strategies forth to a new identification of the different nations contained in the country. (Harten, 2011, pp. 187) With a specific outlook to govern Bolivia as a Plurinational state, Evo Morales and the MAS define their agenda as “democratic, plural, participative, communitarian, and representative, based on the diversity of the people.” (Albro, 2006, pp. 417)

Evo Morales identifies himself as a representative of the indigenous nation in Bolivia and holds on a cultural strategy to recover the indigenous cosmovision as an intention of identity politics throughout the country. (Albro, 2006, pp. 411, 413) Aymara leader Felipe Quispe, described Evo Morales as a socialist and not an Indian, and the MAS rather as a hybrid political party, not expressing the indigenous nation. (Albro, 2006, pp. 416) For the indigenous movement, Quispe points out; Morale’s political project has tried to intervene too much in adjustments in Bolivia’s colonial legacy, with particularly the inclusion of indigenous participation in the state’s legislation. Further academic voices have accounted Morales as an “indo-mestizo” coca grower descended. A certain scepticism concerning Evo’s identity questions the measure of representation in a political credibility of Morales and the MAS. (Albro, 2006, pp. 417)
Silvia Rivery Cusicanqui refers with her work of Bolivia’s “internal colonialism” (1993) to problematic within the generalization of the Indian and the European, and the common assumptions of mestizaje. Whereas, the altering of a hierarchizing “caste structure” remains in society feeding the “colonial cycle”. (Albro, 2006, pp. 421)

Bolivia’s ethno-racial composition

Every 10 years Bolivia’s National Institute of Statistics (INE) undertakes a survey about the population and housing, called “Censo de población y vivienda” throughout the country to account for the population’s economic, demographic, social and environmental statistics in the country. According to the Census in 2001, the population above 15 years in that year accounted for 5.064.992 Bolivians. From this number, 1.555.641 identified themselves as Quechua and 1.277.881 as Aymará, which represents the most dominating indigenous groups, mainly living in the occidental, Andean part in Bolivia. Furthermore, 78.359 identify themselves as Guaraní, and 112.216 as Chiquitano, which mainly live in the oriental, low land part of Bolivia. (INE – Censo 2001, http)

This survey is carried out through the process self-identification, as the freedom to believe what one is and towards which cultural assimilation one defines him/herself, relating from their personal or collective history or simply the perception of oneself. In 2001, a total of 8 Million people were accounted, from which 64% belonged to one of the six major indigenous nations, according to the options of the questions posed in the Censo. In that time, it was still an option to identify oneself as Mestizo as well, whereas in the new government, with the recently carried out in the Census 2012 the Mestizo option did not prevail, instead one option to find oneself within the 36 constitutionalized indigenous nations or as Afro-Bolivian descendent. Hereby, a simple differentiation between indigenous and non-indigenous was addressed. (Periódico los tiempos, http)

A further study, derived from the foundation (UNIR) sampled a statistic where 60% of the population were identified as Mestizos, as well as another study, from the Multiparty Democracy Foundation (FBDM) approved 70% of Mestizos in the country. In contrary, Félix Cáderas, the actual Vice-minister of Decolonization declares the Mestizo population as landless, without language, religion and culture. On the other hand for Rafael Quispe, leader of the Andean coordination of indigenous organizations, the issue of inclusion of the term indigenous is very sensitive for the government. The Morales government has declared the
population as mainly indigenous, as well as the government is indigenous, but previously, the vice president out himself as Mestizo and defined the most powerful people in Bolivia as Mestizos. (Periódico los tiempos, http)

For the educator and former minister Enrique Ipiña, the subject leads to a fascist aftertaste with the exclusion of Mestizo’s, and therefore forcing many Mestizos to choose an option to prefer native indigenous origin before considered non-existing identity. Consequently the choices many people might have taken do not correspond to reality and helps the government to strengthen its indigenous empowerment. Inevitably Ipiña says most people do not understand the question, as the limited identification of cultural belonging indicates racial differentiation in this case. (Periódico los tiempos, http)

3.3. Education chapter

This chapter will encompass a broad field of empirical data derived from different angles of importance. First, Bolivia’s new implementations on a national scale will explain the political aspect of the reformation in education. Further, educational theories and principles will be enhanced. Paolo Freire’s relevancy towards the empowerment of oppressed social classes, as in the case of the Plurinational state of Bolivia, and Célestine Freinet’s pedagogy, as it is applied in the exemplified school setting. Lastly, the most important aspects of identity construction in education will be explained in the free-school’s “Colegio Kurmi Wasi” official description.

Plurinational principles in education

In the New political constitution of the state, education is informed in various articles reflecting upon redefining education as a free and open social sphere uniting diversity. Hereby I will make use of six articles relevant to the issue of national identity construction.

- Article 78 explains the re-founded state’s definition of education as intra- and intercultural and multilingual. Education is to be seen as unitary, public, universal, democratic, participative, communitarian, de-colonizing and of quality. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 35)
- In article 79, education should encourage the inter-cultural dialogue, incorporating etic and moral values, which should clarify gender equality, non-differentiating roles, non-violence and the validity of Human Rights. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 35)

- In the article 80, education should aim to contribute to the unity of Bolivian identity as a principle of the Plurinational state, illustrated in the development of cultural identity of each represented nation’s understanding and intercultural enrichment in the state. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 35, 36)

- Article 83, refers to the recognition and guarantee of social and communitarian participation towards the educative system through representative organisms in all the levels of the state and in the nation’s indigenous communities. The involvement of a student’s parent in the school is thereby legitimized and should influence the intercultural sphere in the education. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 36)

- Article 89 illustrates the states’ and the societies’ obligation to eradicate analphabetism through programs launched re-connecting especially the indigenous population to their cultural and linguistic reality. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 37)

- In the article 96, the training of teachers is as well defined with Plurinational principles derived from unifying aims. These express uniqueness, state-run, free, inter- and intra-cultural, multilingual, scientific and productive. (Republica de Bolivia, 2008, pp. 40)

**Education as an agent of liberation**

The Brazilian Educationalist Paolo Freires refers in his famous work “Pedagogy of the oppressed” (1970) to a dialectical materialism, where two actors, the oppressor and the oppressed are caught in an uncertain situation, from which no one less than the oppressed can theoretically free them, because they are able to see the dehumanization. But too often, striving for liberation, the oppressed tend to take in the role of the oppressor in other situations, whereas they are the ones being able to reflect the situation and make a change happen with taking in a different role, as the oppressing one. The dehumanization is the result of oppression, and affects the oppressed and those who oppress.

In Freire’s “banking concept” education, the subject of education is the teacher, who leads the learner to memorization of content. This concept determines the maintenance of power and
knowledge, as a passive learner is easier oppressed and controlled. Freire defines knowledge as not transmitted, instead as "under construction", meaning that the educational act is not a transmission of knowledge; it rather expresses the enjoyment of the construction of a common world. Therefore, Freire suggests “problem posing education”, as a way to unite the knowledge transmission between the two subjects in a constant dialogical manner, in order to liberate education within any given context. Both educators and learners, educate each other while establishing a dialogue which takes place in the educational process. (The new observer, http)

The French pedagogical practitioner Célestine Freinet (1896 – 1966) developed an understanding of education, which was much more of a concrete activity then a theoretical approach. According to him, education is to be experienced and techniques for living to be obtained in order to address liberation of humanity. Freinet’s own deigned school took its origin in outdoor observations of the natural and human environment. The pupil’s impressions were discussed and written down, and further enhanced to be used for the learning of the traditional basic skills. This basis of interactive communication in the school gave new ideas of projects to carry out and publicize in the school’s newspaper, which determined an important pedagogical tool the “school printing press”, which with its activities enabled the self-governing of the pupil’s performance in school. (Legrand, 1993, pp. 3)

These communication techniques enabled civic education through active participation, on which Freinet bases his work “The transformation of learning” (1956). This concept includes several disciplines, whereas all are connected to a practical approach and the learning of the necessities in life in order to acquire a genuine communication, without limiting any specific social class. (Legrand, 1993, pp. 4-11) Contemporary ideas hold on Freinet’s Transformation of learning, because of the emergence of an information society, where children today ‘consume concepts’ without noticing it. (Legrand, 1993, pp. 12)

Identity construction in the “Colegio Kurmi Wasi”

The educational setting “Colegio Kurmi Wasi” has a particular focus towards culture, nature and identification in a broad cosmology of the social and natural environment, and the approach to the personal, family, national and global. This practice is divided in three areas.

Self-identity and the environment
The first area represents the identity of the student with him/herself and the environment. Through self-identity, it is intended that the students will assert themselves as important and capable through recognizing and accepting strengths and limitations, and integrating the social, cultural, economic and political basis of the recognition of their own roles and others. A practical example how the school works with this area is the development of an autobiography where the students discover more about their personal and family life. The students are invited to paint a self-portrait autobiography, a family tree, a drawing of their birthplace or prepare a family picture. This is a learning opportunity what the students have in common and how they differ from each other in the classroom.

The home, school and community, represents another field of this area that favor the development of identity with the environment. The home-space is of great importance in the development of identity and sense of belonging, in recognition of the diversity of values, customs and belief, which constitutes an educational situation that needs to integrate learning, since it contributes to a respectful approach to differences. In the different customs practiced, the opportunity to bring the students through school to diversity in family context is often used in the school’s didactics. The school, as a space of socialization and learning is another aspect, encompassing the enabling environment to interact and deal with different situations to those experienced in the family.

The daily experience in school linked to the difficulties of discrimination and violence poses answers through dialogue, respect, solidarity and affection, to learn how to live every day for heterogeneous groups, to lead democratically develop autonomy to study, play, share. At school, the Assembly, which represents a methodological tool-education, constitutes empowerment, participation, organization and decision making. Students exercise their citizenship democratically while participating in decision-making through critically problematizing their reality and acting on collective welfare, assuming rights and responsibilities. In one month, three meetings and one general assembly of the school are to be hold. In assemblies topics are related to the organization of the classroom and activities, to the resolution of conflicts, and to find solutions and participation in everyday tasks. In the general assembly issues are addressed that concern the school’s water usage, food distribution in the common “Apthapis”, the maintenance of the school’s agriculture, and the sharing and usage of common areas.

The community is also present in the daily day because it represents a significant space to develop identity with the surrounding environment. This is expressed in the approach to the
various aspects that compose it, such as basic services to meet local needs, cooperation with existing institutions, conducting economic activities, forms of recreation in the neighborhood or community participation. Being a student at Kurmi Wasi means to establish a relationship to get to know the valley of Achocalla, to share their customs, participate in their festivities, appear and provide activities in the communities, and being involved in its development. (Appendix, 2012, pp. 3, 4)

Identity with the natural and social reality

The second area represents the identity with the natural and social reality. To do this the school experiments with objective observations of nature so that the students get to meet and explain nature’s laws, and how they influence and intervene in human life and the planet. This arousing interest and curiosity to explore is pre-requisite to understand and act upon the natural and social world, and explains the interrelationship between the natural world and human activity. In the study of human activities, it is important to analyze the serious problems caused by the actions of humans towards the environment as the exploitation of natural resources which explain local problems. Therefore it becomes a necessity to encourage the development of environmental awareness to reduce or avoid the consequences of natural phenomena in life and to take care of the environment, as basic conditions for the conservation and development of all life in the planet. This commitment is embodied in the school’s activities, so that students of first and second grade in 2011 have developed a radio program about the pollution problems in the valley of Achocalla. For the realization of this program those students have conducted a research to realize the problems of areas with higher pollution lacked of environmental policies to protect the lakes and green areas. Furthermore, the college has established agreements with the children and their families to replace the use of plastic bags for cloth bags.

It is part of this second area, to know and appreciate the different ways of organizing human beings either to defend rights, not to be oppressed and exploited, to be heard, not to be discriminated against, to express ourselves freely and creatively, and to not be excluded. To develop the identity and sense of belonging to the social reality is relevant to bear in mind the importance of responsibility in creating the conditions for welfare and ethical sense at work. It is also important to analyze the situations of inequality and risk in working conditions and the rights that protect working people and their organizations. During the year 2012 there have been a number of research trips and visits in order to contextualize learning. In the “Moyapampa” community the students got to know about community organization, functions
and forms of election, originating authorities, and ancient customs for the management of water and land. In the “Huanuni” community, the mining environment has helped to understand the historical role of the working class in the class struggle and to know the form of organization of the proletariat. This approach to reality is one that encourages the building of social ties, cultural and political rights of young people with their context. (Appendix, 2012, pp. 5, 6)

Identity with history and culture

The third area aims to develop an identity with the link of history and culture. It is seen as necessary to develop a notion of time processes, because it is a tool to understand the history and it helps to form the cognitive schemas related to space and causality. Furthermore it favors the development of basic skills to understand and manage the terms and categories which provide the learner with basic tools to reconstruct the past, explain the present and have a notion of the future.

This approach of historical information involves to identify that organized collective activity for the common good has a permanent impact over time, so that the students can understand their validity and link with the contemporary. In this way it will help the students to build their sense of belonging and identity towards their people and their culture. Then it will make sense to refer to data, facts and figures of history that will be included as part of a complex historical process involving each one in various ways, with leading roles and responsibilities. Referred to the process of Andean culture throughout time, these processes are not linear-seen but circularly, that the past is a part of the present.

During the research of history, students of third and fourth grades are studying colonial times. One of the resources they use to approach this historic moment is a radio program called "500 years" based on the book by Eduardo Galeano "Open Veins of Latin America", from which the Trans-Atlantic slave trade is part of the history research. To contextualize these historical facts a study trip to the Afro-Bolivian community “Tocaña” located in the low land “Yungas” is applied to carry out. While researching historical aspects, the journey aims to discover a culture that persists over time and is still creating and recreating customs, rituals and knowledge over time. Every two years students of the “Colegio” are visiting this community for three days, and share learning, customs and knowledge of this different environment. (Appendix, 2012, pp. 6, 7)
4. Analysis

The Analysis will take its direction with the inclusion of Anderson’s theory of nation-building towards homogeneity in order to combine the three main approaches of this project: The theory and history, the state and the school. In correlation to that, the principles of identity construction within education of the Plurinational state of Bolivia will be enhanced in order to draw a possible relation between the two. In the Analysis I aim to clarify the exemplified school’s educational outlook and intentions of constructing identities according to their ideology of integration and diversity with the school’s official description and my personal observations of the school’s activities and effect on the pupils.

I will divide the Analysis into three parts, which correlate to the three sub-questions. The chapters will address the three major elements of the analysis, the school, the state and the theory, which will be encompassed with the various concepts of the theoretical framework in order to provide a broad scope of analytical relations.

4.1. The nation state’s design of homogeneity

*Which indicators correspond with the nation-state’s idea of homogeneity, and how were they carried out throughout continuous changes in time?*

The basic idea behind the construction of nationalism, as Benedict Anderson explains, is to be followed back to the establishment of the independent nation-states in the Americas around the 18th century. In the analysis of the result of homogenization as a principle of the introduction of nation-states in the Americas, the power-relations in the monarchical driven Europe around the 15th century are necessary to demonstrate, as the colonies have been influenced with Eurocentric ideologies and power structures throughout the changes in time.

In the 15th century Europe, a nation was principally constructed by the hierarchical codes, exemplified by the church, which created a huge gap between the privileged upper class bourgeoisie and the marginalized lower working class. That meant an unequal access for a country’s population to political participation. Here education played a major role, as well as capitalism and the printing press, and therefore literacy implied access to political participation, where a sense of national performance and therefore belonging was constructed. Unfortunately, this access could only apply to individuals who were born in upper class
families and the church’s dominating elite, who controlled what was defined as knowledge at that time with their power-upon oppression in society. A quite similar, but more discriminating oppression was carried out by the colonial powers in the occupied Americas, which can be seen as a colonial exploitation of a hegemonic foreign regime controlling the invaded territories and former kingdoms of the Americas.

In a similar time frame, the continuous oppression provoked the uprising of the lower class in Europe, where a certain influence can be drawn upon when social movements of the marginalized Indian and African labour forces arouse in the Americas. As Anderson describes it, these essential movements, where nation-building took place for the first time, derived from the ideologies of the Enlightenment period aroused in Europe. The colonial powers tried everything to undermine the social uprisings by controlling the nation's wealth by government regulation of all of the nation's commercial interests. But the liberating movements were on their way to put an end to colonialism and to define a new era. That demonstrates the dissatisfaction of the majority of people in a time where a governing style excluded them from actually being involved in benefiting from a countries’ absorption of wealth and a nation-building process. Therefore, Anderson describes the liberating movement in Latin America as the spark for nationalism with the intention to free and unify independent countries.

With the fall of the ruling monarchies in Europe and Russia, the concept of the nation-state as it is known today became internationalized and applied to all the former colonized territories overseas. Here, a homogenization of a national principle has been carried out in order to apply to same governing acts of authoritarian means, which gave birth to the imperialism. Different that in the colonial state, people where influenced by a national discourse of nationalistic propaganda, which created enthusiasm and ideology. Here, the mass media, the educational system and administrative regulations made it possible for the citizens to participate and interact. Through an increase of physical mobility, the expansion of a state’s functions and most important the spread of modern education increased the involvement of more citizens in a national discourse. Education implied a new national consciousness through the invention of involving European history in the curriculum, which had a particular effect on the native population in the process of defining nation-ness. As a result of this, the process of unification took place, meaning to make people following a certain national pattern with re-invented principles of identification of national belonging.

In Latin America, the continuation of foreign control and oppression did not let the people breathe. Since the reassessing of the shift of territories and power the Second World War
brought along in Europe, the United States took lead in intervening with their geo-political strategy in order to exploit and corrupt the Latin American continent with means to invade the various countries’ economies. The independent nation-states did not work for their citizens; they made abuse of them and the resources in the country through the unequal distribution and ownership of land and industry. The upper class Latin American bourgeoisie let themselves be bribed by the foreign capitalists, who in the name of organizations and firms invested in industry and cheap labor for their own benefit. Throughout the 20th century the strategic outsourcing of Latin Americans resources for the profit of the few dependent on the suffering of the many caused the most inequalities within a population in a continent. Accounting the influences the imperialism of the United States and Europe has made upon Latin America, it is necessary to analyse in order to understand the emergence of the development of the Plurinational state of Bolivia.

Relevant to the various indicators and changes of hegemonic agents throughout the last 500 years, can be seen the relation between the oppressor and the oppressed in Paolo Freire’s conception of “Pedagogy of the oppressed”. Because, when analysing the past, it is important to realize that these events were continuously following a certain pattern, controlled by the oppressor misusing a hierarchical structure of racial categorization, from which only the oppressed is able to change the pattern when refusing to imitate it in a new situation with new possibilities. Education in this regard plays a major role in showing a new generation how to reflect progressively to the oppressive past with the aim to lead to new ideas to incorporate a nation’s capacities for an opportunistic national development.

4.2. The emergence of the Plurinational state

How is the idea of the Plurinational constructed, and which problems does it address?

The Plurinational construct can be seen as an answer to the long history of oppression and social differentiation of the native indigenous and the African descendent population in Bolivia. As in many other Latin American countries the domination of the white population group in a hierarchical constructed system can be seen as one of the major indicators for a reformation of a nation-state, as in the case of Bolivia. The unequal positioning of the different social classes of different ethnic origin has been a decisive impact on the indigenous movements in Bolivia, which has been carried out in a process of capitalism and colonialism.
marginalizing the indigenous and African population for the control of labor, knowledge, being, spirituality, existence, life visions and nature. The indigenous population has therefore not received a common treatment as the favored social classes in Bolivian society, as Anibal Quijano defines it as “Coloniality of power”. This inequality and its reasoning introduced a discourse in society through the very present social movements, the “Decolonization”, which should transform the old colonial pattern of unequal treatment and exclusion. The white, population group, identified as “mestizae”, which determines a racial mixing mostly of indigenous and European, should be re-identified from their dominating positions in society, as they interpret a model of white-western modernity as a discourse of power. Plurinationality indicates primary the different ways of living, and how these communities reproduce themselves in an isolated, self-regulated socio-political system visible in the vast geography of Bolivia. Because of the spread out, diverse lifestyles and their origin to a nature-based cosmovision, Plurinationality should acknowledge and include all of them on an equal term.

The background of the most poverty stricken Latin American country, Bolivia, demanded a transformation of the socio-economic structure. After years of incidents, where national resources where plundered and even privatized with the result that Bolivians could not obtain the basic needs of water and electricity, a national movement towards a more equal distribution of the nation’s wealth made space for a different political campaign of indigenous origin. This major change in the country’s politics lead a path to new reformations and direction the people could be moved to. With the recognition of the Plurinational state of Bolivia in 2008, the New Constitution made it possible for Evo Morales’ government to make new identity politics possible in the country with the specific remark towards the indigenous communities represented in the country. Until today, such a tremendous re-identification of the social status and representation of people with different ethnic origin creates a new situation and power relation in which the diverse population has to negotiate the shifting of their roles.

In this sense it seems to be relevant to pay attention to the critics Evo Morales and the MAS are pointed at. Concerning identity politics, the recent government is not totally acknowledged to represent the indigenous community, rather a socialistic approach of unifying the diversities in this country. What is important here to analyse, is the diversity of an indigenous community in Bolivia, of which it might involve difficulties claim representation for such. The diversities can be seen in a geographical context and in the ideologies and activities the various communities are set upon. Evo Morales is often
compared to a coca farmer revolutionary of indo-mestizo origin and not as claimed as an Aymara representative. This leads to a reasoning that re-defining identity politics in a socially and culturally diverse country as Bolivia cannot be as precise as the government intends to do, because of the common appearance of mestizaje generalization of different kind. The different opinions of racial difference indicate to question identity politics in Bolivia, which can differentiate even more between a mixed society and their categorization.

These political activities can be assimilated to the population’s self-identification, which appear to correlate strongly with the governments implications on the society. A relation can be drawn with the indigenous empowered government and the recently carried out national Census of November 2012, which showed a major indicator in defining a Bolivian’s ethnic origin without including the possibility in identifying oneself as Mestizo or even as a White. The problematic appears as the question is exclusive, because it explores only the group membership "peasant indigenous" in terms of yes and no. Uncertainty among the population appears when doubting that the enumerators might be instructed to register only categories previously identified as indigenous, or to register any response, and coding ignored as "non-indigenous", which would undoubtedly cause discomfort when disseminating data. Therefore, the data derived is questionable in its validity.

In the Census of 2001, the question to identify oneself as Mestizo was introduced without further discussion and demonstrated an international effort dedicated to capture information on the indigenous population. What happened now appeared rather as to impose political intentions to help to legitimize a movement relating to a specific ethnic identity. In fact, rather than to help generating identities, the Census may have silenced the Mestizo population, and reflects to ignore a long history of multiculturalism in Bolivia, and might lead to impose a relationship that requires an exclusive assertion of cultural identities. The irritating power that decides Mestizos to be without culture looks like ignoring surveys which show a majority of Mestizos in this country. And undoubtedly, this part of the population appears to have culture, as it is the majority and derives from indigenous and European descendent origin. Therefore, an essential questioning of the recognition of “racial mixing” has to be addressed in order to define a nation’s ethno racial composition.

In relation to that, the implementations of Plurinational principles in the national educational agenda can be viewed as relevant and qualitative when addressing equality of gender and social and cultural differentiation, as well as the eradication of analphabetic leads the students to knowledge and recognition of their own rights and of the others. In addition, the social
participation of the student’s parents can encompass a relevant social and cultural distribution to the educational setting, whereas the teacher training can be understood as free and unifying. Those principles can be understood as unifying and progressive, when considering education as a way to lead to a common identification. The principles as well address a certain state control and Decolonizing approach, where it can be understood that education might be commonly related from one side, with possibilities of influences of a socialistic-indigenous government towards an “Anti-US and the West” ideology, which can encompass strategies and identity politics to construct a linear thinking pedagogy, in order to free a new generation of a former oppressed part of the population from an oppression with exists today in a different form.

4.3. The school’s performance of integration, identity and diversity

*How does the exemplified educational setting interconnect the construction of national identity in Plurinational concerns?*

An idea of education combining identity construction is represented in a free-school in Bolivia. Drawing upon my personal experience of volunteering there, I intend to enhance my participating observations in the analysis of the school setting’s official description attached in the appendix.

With my background as an educated teacher and social worker, I have involved myself as a helping teacher for students with learning difficulties in a free-school project called “Colegio Kurmi Wasi”, in the valley of Achocalla, between the city of La Paz and El Alto, Bolivia. Working in that project from October until December 2011, I have realized the strength behind the cohesion of the comprehensive principles of identity and diversity to encourage creativity and critical thinking. This school is mainly based on Célestine Freinet’s group activity and outdoor relationship, that the students build capacity for self- and inter-active learning, in a smooth, plural with the social, cultural and natural, where human bonds of solidarity are meant to generate reflection and action to transform the world.

The students at the “Colegio” are from all ages from pre-school until A-level, and are meant to mangle up in various situations, involving free-time activities as well as during the lessons, which are rather freely created, that the students have more learning possibilities. Learning is understood as an active process, where the students develop and construct their own
knowledge from previous experiences and the interaction established with peers, teachers, family and the environment. The active processes are maintained through finding ways of comprehensive work, contextualizing learning, providing meaningful experiences and opportunities to apply knowledge and to draw conclusions from the observations made in practice. Therefore, this school involves teachers as well as indigenous people from the locality to teach about culture, agriculture and local language, such as the pre-dominantly Quechua and Aymara. Diversity is expressed as a universal element applied to all the people active in the school. The background of the students and teachers varies from the simple countryside life in Achocalla, the poverty marked districts of El Alto, and the commercial centers of La Paz, such as the “Zona Sur”. This diversity is manifested through a variety of contexts, knowledge and skills, pedagogical theories and practices of children from different social, cultural, economic and intellectual.

Equally important, when speaking of the valuable interaction are the school’s meetings to discuss, decide, find, create, in order to learn and live together in diversity. Those meetings, called Asembleas, happen in the student’s own class as well as with the fellow students and teachers in the school, enforcing each individual to participate with their opinion towards subjects related to the school, as well as issues concerning their public sphere and citizenship. According my observation and understanding of the encouragement of participation and opinion sharing, a crucial input of a dialogue between the students themselves and the teachers is given in order to enhance the student’s involvement in a socio-political thinking process. In many occasions I could experience the student’s opinion towards political and national considerations, e.g. at the time of the march of the Tipnis in October 2011, which had a great effect on a larger national dimension. The students were involved in discussions about the problems between governmental activities and the demonstration. The student’s might get influenced subjectively along with the aim of the school to have such discussions, but as many of them bring already some knowledge and opinions from their social environment and/or family, those discussions had a tendency to become rather objective and created an understanding for the students to be able to accept other opinions and to realize a certain process of identification with such diverse issues on a national dimension. This characteristic was for me as a participant and an involved helping hand an influential aspect when relating it to the issue of the construction of national identity in the context of the Bolivian Plurinational state.
The school’s educative practices are of great importance when reflecting upon identity construction in an effective way. Using the examples mentioned in the Theoretical framework, the re-construction of identity working with the student’s family background in order to share with the class the diversity in the sense of belonging to a nation might have a strong impact constructing a Bolivia of the past reflected the present to many students. Furthermore, the connection the students are meant to draw to their surrounding environment with involving themselves taking action with local issues such as the pollution in Achocalla. A more into depth going research and activity to prevent this problem, like the carried out radio program involves a range of related aspects on a national basis, such as environmental policies, with which the students might learn more about state functions and the relation, the Plurinational state is concerned with the aspect of nature. Moreover, the various research trips the students are obliged to do, can bring the student closer to the Plurinational principles of inclusion, as stated that communities with their own activities and functions are to be acknowledged and legitimated. Through visiting and learning directly from those diversities represented in the country, the students might gain a further national application to the meaning behind those constitutional principles. The joining of those practical approaches to a better national understanding of its diversities with historical implications, like the usage of Galeano’s “Open veins” illustrates a further carried out relationship between the new generation of Bolivian citizens with past structures of colonial, imperial and neo-liberal power relations. Hereby, the students might acquire a more estimable apprehension of a categorization of races executed during Bolivia’s colonial dependency.

5. Discussion

In the discussion I will draw together the problems defined beforehand and occurred in the compilation of the theoretical framework as well as the outcomes of the analysis. With channelling these aspects together, I aim to explain the initial project formulation with a few directions from the different areas of research. Firstly, I will examine the most important historical entailment in order to demonstrate a preserved construct of homogenous nation-states. In addition to that, I will draw upon the Plurinational with a specific focus at the social categorization today in Bolivia in correlation to the discourses of Coloniality and Decolonization. This approach will lead the discussion further to identity politics and the representation of the state as a constructive indicator of a reformation of national identity. At
last, the examined school will be taken into consideration, if or how it corresponds with the
principles of Plurinationality in education. These points of departure should answer the
problem formulation:

*How does the Plurinational state of Bolivia construct national identity, applying*
*the idea of homogeneity within a nation?*

The imagined construction of nation states in post-colonial era in the Americas introduced a
hierarchical structured European image present since the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. This establishment of
an independent state was certainly a good thing to do after the colonial oppression of any
local considered grouping for independent interventions under the colonial regime.
Nevertheless, the rapid introduction of a national construction and with it ideologies derived
from the European Enlightenment brought revolutionary ideas to a different founded society,
where a heavy impact of a racial differentiation existed. The homogenizing idea to unify
diversity in defined territories through the concept of nation states interfered from this specific
instance and caused a meaning of nationalism reasoning the various social movements
involved in this process in Latin America. In this sense Homogeneity has had an impact to re-
structure a territory to a nation with essentialist background, which in the case of the
emergency of nation-state formation had a far more complex indication. Furthermore, the
changes the imperialism brought with it in the mid- twentieth century, had a strong impact on
nation-building. Education, as one of the indicators, which spread out through the country to
reach the underprivilged indigenous population, is a crucial aspect of a further and likely
more evolving aim of homogenization of the diversity situated in Bolivia.

This illustration of reflecting as a nation on a mixed historical data brings modern nation-
states into a dilemma where identification as a citizen of a particular nation-state might be
difficult or even impossible, when trying to relate to a complex variety of past events. This
theoretical approach can be used in a post-colonial context, as in correlation with the
constitution of the Plurinational state of Bolivia. That example shows a seriously taken
approach of the imagined community by the current politics and administration in the
Bolivian state, recognizing a wide set of nations, identities and languages within their national
territory.

The historical indicators reasoning the emergence of Plurinationality in Bolivia poses
attention to the dilemma of Coloniality, which in Quijano’s definition still exists in power
relations in the context of cultural/racial differentiation. This argument can be applied to the
present situation in Bolivia, where the white, dominating population group marginalized the indigenous activities ever since the colonial age. The national discourse of Decolonization acts upon a possible reverse in the Bolivian society. The positioning of this power relation between Bolivians with different ethnic origin might have changed in some regard. The now empowered indigenous population is elevated, according to the new constitution to an equal identification of rights, participation and recognition. On the contrary the once dominating European descendent population faces more difficulties representing functionaries in the society as in decades before.

This differentiation can be observed to some extent, as in the Census of November 2012, where Bolivian citizens are being counted and questioned in their municipalities for an up to date data of population control. Here, one of the questions indicated the ethnic origin of the citizen and referred only to the 36 possible indigenous nations, and no remark to answer Mestizo. It can be discussed what influence the new government has upon the self-identification towards indigenous ethnicity and denial of the fact, that Mestizo cultures are predominantly in the Bolivian population. In that sense, it is incoherent to violate freedom of expression, to compel a person not able to express him/herself, for example as Mestizo. Freedom should be left to the individual to self-identify and indeed not as the government wants to be considered in the context of closed questions. The different opinions which correlate with the Census impact on self-identification, direct to the misinterpretation of the government as non-indigenous, but of mixed race.

It is certain that the Decolonization of the countries’ past has a particular impact on the census statistics, viewing a distorted and misrepresented cultural makeup of the country. Hereby, the Bolivian belonging to a nation encounters its relevancy. If Decolonization determines particular options of national identification, how does this process correlate with the Constitution’s goal of equality in diversity? This paradox expresses an unequal distribution of rights. In fact the old discrimination now added other, new regulations.

In addition to that, the identity politics Evo Morales and the MAS are indicating to re-define national identity in Bolivia contain contradictions of its own indigenous empowering agenda. The critics Morales and his party encounters, draws a controversial image on the president and the ruling party, when applying indigenous counter politics. Therefore, Morales’s implication of a new national identification reveals discussions, because if critics from the indigenous community question his and the parties’ legacy, how can a population be re-defined in their nation-ness and self-determination. It appears to me that the arguments of
being identified as a Mestizo occurs today with hesitation, because of the implications of the
government, it means something positive to be able to relate oneself to an indigenous origin,
whereas the majority of the population is a blending of indigenous and European decedent.

The educational principles of the Plurinational state of Bolivia illustrate a broad idea of how
to unify and direct the new generations to a culturally diverse and inclusive society. Most of
the arguments presented in the New Constitution can be seen as relevant, empowering and
encouraging to indicate the importance of education as a construction of an inclusive national
identity. Nevertheless, De-colonization can in this context be seen as something too concrete
when referring it to the whole population of Bolivia, as education is meant to be for
everybody. That initiation might create confusion among a unified way of teaching a new
generation about the mistakes and failures of the past, but as well it can be eye-opening in the
same time.

The exemplified educational setting can in this discussion demonstrate an unconditional
incorporation of diversity as a dialectical process of learning, without referring necessarily to
the principles of Plurinationality to reform a nation. There might be similarities between the
institution and the state, but basically, the “Colegio Kurmi Wasi” disregards the process of
“Decolonization and Coloniality” in their Pedagogy; instead they ground the simple principle
of inclusion in their Philosophy. This example shows that a construction of national identity
can be carried out in the Plurination state of Bolivia through an inclusive and diverse
configured education referring to identity construction in a broad sense involving the areas of
the individual, family, school, community, state and nature. Working with these elements, a
sense of belonging and identification of the national does not necessarily indicate a
homogenous idea of this process. Rather, the diversity is emphasized and leads a path for a
new generation of Bolivian citizens to an inclusive idea of respect for the differences in their
society.

6. Conclusion

The main aim of this project has been to demonstrate the different influences which occurred
in the complex process in the establishment of nation-states and with it the creation of
nationalism in a time frame of approximately 500 years throughout the various periods of
oppression and dictation of foreign and national power in the currently reformed Plurinational
state of Bolivia. With the theory of Imagined Communities, a spread out scheme of belonging to certain aspects of nation-ness have done a visible impact on the ethnically mixed Bolivian population, that today identity politics are relatively present in the agenda of the New Constitution released in 2008 in Bolivia. This project intended to show the assimilation of the homogenous idea behind the construction of national identity indicated during the liberation of independent nation-states in the Americas, deprived from Eurocentric ideologies, with the current implementations of Plurinationality in the Bolivian state in order to unify the diversity, depriving from an indigenous re-enforcing socio-political strategy. This phenomenon has been investigated within a specific educational setting, the “Colegio Kurmi Wasi”, as education is a major social sphere where identity politics have been carried out in the past and today. The relation of the school’s ideology and my personal observations in the educational setting has channelled the project’s content to possible conclusion.

The process of the construction of national identity in Bolivia can be seen as influenced by new indigenous identity politics, which has its relevancy when viewing upon the oppressive past, but it does not necessarily apply to the present, where a Bolivian citizen, nevertheless of the difference of colour and look, is to be identified as a Mestizo. Therefore, indigenous empowerments lack of argumentation according to this interpretation. They rather contradict their application on identity politics, when trying to exclude the given possibility of having ethnical mixed backgrounds. Furthermore, the revolutionary politics of Evo Morales and the MAS are difficult to interpret, as they derive from uncertain origins, claiming for indigenous representation, but are classified as rather socialistically influenced then originally indigenous. From this point of view, identity politics can be seen as a false propaganda in the implementations of the Plurinational state in the New Constitution’s educational aims.

This process is visible in the Census 2012, where its implications to exclude a Mestizo culture not only violates the right to cultural self-identification, but is incompatible with every principle of equality. Undoubtedly, this Census has been politicized and will bring confusion to a population, where racial differentiation has determined its development.

These nationalized educational aims, classified in a rather abstract manner, take direction with the Decolonizing process of freeing a diversified society of racial differentiation from its oppressed past, which can be understood as indicating an idea of revenge towards this distinct past of indigenous marginalization. The exemplified school does not incorporate this principle of decolonizing the past; it rather focuses on the solutions of integration of diversity in a dialectical process of learning through experiencing life in its varieties presented by the
students in the college. Referring to Paolo Freire, a vicious cycle of oppression can be understood, changed and replaced by the former oppressed in a new process of identification. Therefore, homogeneity of a nation as promoted by the Plurinational state might lead to a reproduction of a synonymous, distinctive national identity, eroding the possibilities of a future of an integrated, diverse Bolivia.

This possible issue of redefining national identity in Bolivia might encompass challenges, which are not classified in its society today. The problems of empowering a before marginalized social group might appear in some areas in Bolivia and might as well not be viewed as problems in other areas in the country. The diversity by all means in Bolivia determines already equality and unification, as the different recognized nations construct a certain life image with its encompassing principles, where e.g. national identity is viewed in different ways and will still be difficult to approach from the state’s new implementations.

National identity cannot be redefined through a certain inclusion and exclusion. That contradicts the constitutionalized objectives of unification of diversity. Herein, the racial question is turned upside down and discriminates another part of society. The Plurinational principles are not clear enough in its implications and therefore project contradictory indicators towards the educational aims on a national level. The exemplified school setting shows that the constitutionalized political agenda does not apply to their own, as the equal inclusion of every student, no matter of gender, ethnic origin or handicap is addressed as their main philosophy. That does not mean that the constitutionalized educational implications are wrong or dangerous in constructing a national identity, but it shows a loose fundament of equal inclusion and recognition of cultures and nations represented in Bolivia.
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