

Oppression and empowerment

Analysis of the relationship between development, religion and gender-based violence
within Bolivia

Master Thesis Religion, Conflict and Globalization

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Preface

During the course Social Scientific Research Methods, I already knew that I wanted to combine my knowledge from my bachelor's degree on Latin America with the things I learned at the master Religion, Conflict and Globalisation. Although the concept of writing about gender equality has been there from the beginning, it has been a long process which changed over time into the thesis which it is now. Many adjustments were made both on the topic itself as on the manner of doing research. In March 2020 there was a possibility to go to Bolivia and do the planned interviews in person. However, due to the situation of COVID-19, these plans changed and therefore all interviews were done through Skype. This thesis focuses on the challenges and empowerments surrounding gender-based violence. The need to address this problem with an intersectional approach is highlighted using Bolivia as a case study. I would, therefore, like to thank the people I interviewed from Bolivia for sharing their insights, knowledge and time with me. Marjolein Westerhof and Mensen met een Missie for giving me time and space to write this thesis during my internship. Furthermore, thank you, Dr Erin Wilson, for your endless energy and much-appreciated comments on the many drafts of this thesis. Last, but not least thanks to my family and Robbert for keeping up with during the stressing times.

Abstract

This thesis researches the relation between development, religion and gender-based violence. It focuses on the interconnections between development and religion. In order to analyse the complexity of gender-based violence, this thesis elaborates on the importance of taking an intersectional approach. This is outlined with the use of Bolivia as case study, in which the religious influence on working with the topic of gender-based violence from faith-based organisations is emphasised. Furthermore, the intersectionality tries to show the mechanisms of both oppressive and empowering characteristics of gender-based violence within Bolivian society.

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Introduction

In 2015, a 14-year old girl from Argentina was murdered and found under the patio of her boyfriend's family. Her name was Chiara Paez. When reading about this case in the newspaper in 2015, I realised that doing nothing was no option anymore. It sparked an activism not only in myself, but also in the rest of the world. As a Latin American scholar and as a woman, I always knew that the issue of gender-based violence existed. However, this was the case which made me change my perspectives and pushed me to do more in favour of gender equality. The case of Chiara Paez evoked protests which started in Argentina and later took over Latin America and other parts of the world. Under the hashtag #NiUnaMenos, the movement became a widespread protest gender-based violence. Even when writing this first few sentences my throat gets sore and emotions take over. These emotions came up again when quarantine ,due to the COVID-19 virus ,started and a peak in cases of domestic violence became visible everywhere in the world. ¹

The concept of gender refers to socially constructed roles and identities of masculinity and femininity (Radoki, 2012, p.639). Gender based violence is embedded this social system of gender relationships, in which the society is based upon males. This does not refer towards the biological characteristics of men and female, but towards the social and cultural differences. Societies in which the man is the privileged is called patriarchal (Johnson, 1997). Regarding this social structure of inequality and its implications for society. There is a key role for global civil society. Civil society and development have become closer allies regarding the work on important topics such as gender inequality. However, within the development sector there is a dominant approach towards religion: it is marginalised (Carbonnier, 2013). This seems to be a surprise, because the non-governmental organizations which are faith based remain prominent in the development sector (Carbonnier, 2013).

Religion and gender are both manifested in the socio-cultural and political sphere. As argued by Leer-Helgesen (2020) the relation between religion and development is both on institutional and individual level, together with this multilevel relationship she addresses the fact that it is important to come to terms with the terminology you use. However, in this thesis I do not provide a definition of religion. Religion will be used as contextual approach. In order to analyse the relation between the

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-52338706>
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/domestic-violence-rates-rising-due-to-covid19-1.5545851>
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-latam-domesticviol/another-pandemic-in-latin-america-domestic-abuse-rises-amid-lockdown-idUSKCN2291JS>

development sector, religion and gender-based violence I will focus on the dominant approaches towards development and gender and how they interact.

The aim of this thesis is to challenge the assumption of the development sector and religion being opposites. Furthermore, I want to show the complexity of gender-based violence and the need to take an intersectional approach by analysing this. In my research I conducted nine semi structured interviews with people who work on the topic of gender-based violence in Bolivia. All of them work with the theme of religion, not only because of its presence in society but also because some of them are members of congregations or working for an organisation which identifies as religious. I choose to focus on these faith-based organisations because they provide an alternative towards the dominant human rights-based approach. This data is used to enrich the scholarly literature, Besides this, the emphasis is put on the visibility of both gender and religion in Bolivian society and politics. Because of the religious identification of the respondents the idea of religion as empowering concept has been greatly shared.

The research of this topic is structured around the following main question: What is the relationship between religion and gender-based violence in development? The answer to this main question will be retrieved through the answers of the following sub questions:

1. What is gender-based violence?
2. How are the concepts religion and development connected?
3. How can we see the intersectionality of gender-based violence in the case study of Bolivia?

Therefore, I argue that the relationship between religion and gender-based violence in development need to be understood using an intersectional approach in order to fully appreciate the diverse nuances, perspectives and factors that shape how religion is entangled with gender-based violence. Bolivia is used as a case study to demonstrate this.

The structure of this thesis is as following. Firstly, the concepts of development, gender-based violence and intersectionality are outlined. This will provide insights in the dominant approaches within the development sector and the role of gender. The focus will be on the connection between development, gender and the international development sector. Continuously, the concept of intersectionality is introduced. Secondly, the relation between religion and development is examined. The interconnections and differences are highlighted and connected towards the concept of gender. Theological frameworks of development are used to argue how religion and development can find common ground within civil society. Thirdly, the case study of Bolivia is used to emphasise the need to

take an intersectional approach towards gender-based violence. Within this case study the context of Bolivia shows the complexity and difficulties of this problem within Bolivian society. Besides this, it focusses on the challenges and empowerments of religious organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence within Bolivia.

Due to the topic of intersectionality and the position of privileges I find it important to take a closer look at my own positions as researcher and scholar. In this reflection, I will not only reflect upon the process of writing this thesis but also on the position of being a white European feminist and how this influenced my research. Firstly, the first step into this thesis process was acknowledging that as a white, female scholar and self-claimed feminist, this thesis could not entirely be objective. My own perceptions as a human being have been reflected upon this thesis, and it lies at core why I choose this topic. It is something which is close to my heart, not only as female and feminist but also as Latin American scholar. During a semester abroad in Chile in 2016, I followed a course on gender manifestation in Chile. The teacher encouraged everybody to open up, sharing our personal stories on the topic of gender-based violence. It was one of the many wake up calls I endured during my time in Latin America: inequality has multiple layers which cannot be seen apart from each other. I tried to take this consciousness into account when interviewing the nine people who work on gender-based violence in Bolivia. Therefore, I did not ask for personal experiences instead I focused on gender-based violence and gender as a general notion. Elaborating on their work and their position within this topic. Another thing which I was emphasised was the topic of privilege. Privilege allowed me to be in the position in which I am now. My skin colour and my social class allowed me to receive good education and opened doors for me which for other people are kept closed. I tried my best to be aware of this in the thesis by using multiple sources from scholars around the world.

The situation of COVID-19 gave another dimension towards this thesis. It did not only influence the collection of data, but it influenced the subject of gender-based violence too. Since March 2020 almost all countries in the world have been in lockdown because of the COVID-19 virus. People are not allowed to leave their home, and if they do it has to be for essential good such as groceries and medicine. Although this is done to stop spreading the virus, another silences pandemic is going on in multiple countries: domestic violence. Studies in several countries show that there has been an increased rate of domestic violence cases.¹¹ However, the data surrounding this topic is not entirely trustworthy. This must deal with the fact that many survivors of domestic violence do not have the capacity to accuse the perpetrator and report it. Although there is no data available, there have been multiple studies on the relation between crisis situations and domestic violence which show that

during crisis situations domestic violence tends to increase.² In crisis situations often institutions and systems who provide help are weakened and contributing factors which as poverty and alcohol are more visible (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Factors such as increased stress level, financial struggles because of unemployment and lesser community services add towards a situation of domestic violence.³ The latter has a great impact on working with the topic of domestic violence. Because of the strict isolation, other manners to help victims need to be put into action. There are hotlines for people in need, but these are often understaffed and the demand for social services is high. Because of this, several organizations raise their voice to incorporate a gender perspective in response to containing the virus. One of them is the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). They argue the necessity to take an intersectional approach to respond to COVID-19. Intersectionality meaning looking at the following conditions: economics, age, migrant status, disability, deprivation of liberty, ethnic and racial background, sexual orientation, and gender identity.⁴ It is exactly this message which is key within thesis thesis.

² <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-we-know-about-crises-and-domestic-violence-and-what-that-could-mean-for-covid-19/>

³ <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/double-pandemic-domestic-violence-age-covid-19>

⁴ https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2020/074.asp

Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodological approach taken in the collection of data and the process of research. I will heighten the qualitative research methods in general, after which I will focus on interviews as a research approach. Secondly, it discusses the collection of data and the challenges which came up during this process. Furthermore, there will be a focus on content analysis and the coding units used to analyse the data. Lastly, it discusses the relevance and implications of COVID-19 on the collection of data.

Qualitative research methods

This research is aimed at the exploring the relation between religion and gender-based violence in the development sector. In the research the focus was put on qualitative research methods because of its ability to focus on multiple factors of the research subjects, such as social norms, gender roles, economic states, race and religion (Mack, 2005). Within this qualitative approach, the emphasis has been put on the interpretative paradigm (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2010). The interpretative paradigm focuses on the social construction of peoples experiences in a particular context. Besides the social construction of experiences, this paradigm argues that objectivity does not exist. Both from the side of the researcher and the participants in the research, they have their own perspective of life and this influences the research (Hennink et al, 2010).

This research focuses on the perspectives of religion and gender-based violence in the development sector but to understand this relation there is the need to put it into context. Focusing on the context of Bolivia and its relation between religion and gender based violence in the development sector gives the change of investigating the relationship of these two actors in context. It helps understanding the relationship between religion and gender-based violence in the development sector in general. Within the direction of qualitative research I focused on conducting interviews. I choose to focus on interviews to get in insight in the practice of working with gender based violence from a religious perspective in Bolivia. I allows to retrieve insights and clarifications which are not often researched or available online. The interview were constructed through the use of semi structured interviews. The choice for this was easily made because of the general focus of the data retrieving but also being able to change the focus with each different participant. However, the interviews were conducted to enrich the scholarly literature from the Bolivian case study.

Case study & Content analysis

To be able to conduct a case study one has to combine multiple data sources. As Rowley (2002, pp.18) argues:

“ Case study research can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Typically, it uses multiple data sources including two or more direct detailed observations, interviews, and documents. “

Therefore, this research uses both interviews as data source and existing literature. Within the interviews content analysis way used to examine the data. The interviews have been used to enrich the scholarly literature within the Bolivian case study. The main reason for choosing this manner of conducting research is because it shows more than only the direct observations and it is a manner of tracing correlations between the data (Krippendorff, 1989). The pillars of the content analysis are based upon the Kyriarchal system by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (2013). The pillars are the intersections which influence the notion of gender based violence within Bolivia: gender based violence within Bolivian society, actions taken to combat gender based violence, gender stereotypes, colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism and religiosity. This intersectional approach of social systems elaborates on multiple section playing a part within the context of both oppressive and empowering social systems. It beholds social concepts such as sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, colonialism, classism and many more. In order to operationalise the system of intersections, various terms were outlined from the interviews. These terms can be found in the Appendix 2.

Characteristics of the interviews and limitations

The interviews were conducted online through the use of WhatsApp and Skype in the period between the end of March and the end of April. The participants were selected based upon their work on gender based violence and their religious/ faith based approach. 9 interviews were held, of which 2 were men and 7 were women. The interviews were initially focused on the relation between religion and gender in Bolivian society and the work of the specific person within this context. There were no specific questions asked about the intersectionality within this context. This was because the answers of the participants already showed an interconnectiveness between multiple domains. The questions asked during the interviews can be found in appendix 1. All interviews were done in Spanish, this was not only because not all the participants had a sufficient level of English but also because they would have a better expression in the things they wanted to share. Some challenges arise during the interviews, although I speak Spanish, some questions were not understood and therefore I needed to

explain more to the participants. The specific use of words changed during each interview because of the identification of the participant, of which some belong to an congregation of are leaders of their church. Therefore, the need to adapt towards the language used by the participant was very important. Due to the safety reasons, the names of the participants and any sensitive information were changed. Besides this, the interpretative paradigm argues the non-objectivity of the researcher (Hennink et al, 2010). Key to this objective approach are the power relations between the researcher and participants. Power relations were visible within this thesis, through myself as researcher and the interviewees as experts on working with gender based violence from a faith perspective. . Most of the participants received an higher educational degree, such as university and have been working on the issue of gender based violence in Bolivia for a long time which makes them experts on this field. To tackle the power relations between myself and the participants I used the concept of validation (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). After the transcribing process, I send a copy towards the participants asking for them to check if there were important things missing and if they had other comments on the interview. This allowed me to get the most out of the research, giving the participants the last check to see if the information they wanted to bring to the table was correct. Another influence on the process of conducting research was the underestimation in the amount of work transcribing the interviews in Spanish and then translating them in English. This took more time then anticipated and an important lesson learnt. Besides the problems of language, another event which influences the research is the situation of COVID-19. The original plan of this thesis was to conduct the interviews in person, which allows the researcher to have a better understanding of the contextual circumstances. One day after permission to go abroad, Bolivia closed its borders and the plans of conducting the research locally had to be changed into online interviews. Although this was a good manner to conduct research, the thesis would have been very different when research was conducting in Bolivia itself.

Chapter 1: Development, gender and intersectionality

The aim of this chapter is to outline the relation between the concepts of development, gender and intersectionality. It focuses on the theoretical frames which are seen as key towards this connection. It will outline the importance of intersectionality within the debate surrounding the development sector and gender inequality. In the chapter I answer the following questions: What is gender-based violence? How are the development sector and gender connected towards each other? Firstly, there will be an examination on the development sector itself, its main approaches and the work on gender related issues. Continuing, the term of intersectionality is introduced and the importance of an intersectional approach.

1.1 Development

As argued in the introduction of this thesis, the base of development is unequal power relations. The development sector during the beginning of the 19th century focused on economic growth, without focusing on social aspects of the development concept (Pieterse 2010; Cowen en Shenton 1996; Galtung, 1996). Later, industrialisation became part of this concept as well. This can be seen in the The Stages of Economic Growth by Walt Rostow (1960), in which he presents five steps of development. Starting at the traditional society towards the end goal of high mass consumption. Base of this development theory was the concept of modernisation. The overall idea was that “primitive” societies could become advanced when they followed a certain pattern of development (Durkheim, 1893). Pieterse (2010) shows this historical change of the meaning of development in following way.

Table 1.1 *Meanings of development over time*

Period	Perspectives	Meanings of development
1800s	Classical political economy	Remedy for progress, catching up
1870 >	Latecomers	Industrialization, catching-up
1850 >	Colonial economics	Resource management, trusteeship
1940 >	Development economics	Economic growth – industrialization
1950 >	Modernization theory	Growth, political and social modernization
1960 >	Dependency theory	Accumulation – national, autocratic
1970 >	Alternative development	Human flourishing
1980 >	Human development	Capacitation, enlargement of people’s choices
1980 >	Neoliberalism	Economic growth – structural reform, deregulation, liberalization, privatization
1990 >	Post-development	Authoritarian engineering, disaster
2000	Millennium Development Goals	Structural reforms

From the 1980 onwards the development sector began to focus on the social aspects of development. This focus has been most visible since the millennium development goals. Although the focus has shifted from economical towards a more social constructed meaning of development, the notion of development as a Eurocentric term is still in place (Latouche, 1993; Escobar, 2010; Kothari, 1988). Opinions surrounding the concept of development changed over time, there has been a structural notion of unequal power relations and a Eurocentric point of view which is often in place. Since the 2000 there has been a more holistic and multidimensional approach towards the concept of development and the millennium development goals has impacted the field of international development ever since.

As a response towards the challenges of development, anti-development, beyond development and post-development were born (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000). Escobar (2010) explains how these responses gave an alternative view on the concept of development and modernisation in Latin America. This anti-Eurocentric point of view is visible in the Bolivian concept of *suma qamana*, better known as *vivir bien* or living well (Escobar, 2010).

The *vivir bien* [living well] is an expression of the encounter between people and communities, with respect for the diversity and cultural identity; that means 'vivir bien among us. It is to live together as communities, with interculturality and without asymmetries of power, 'one cannot *vivir bien* if the others live poorly'. It is about living as part of the community, protected by this. At the same time *vivir bien* in harmony with nature means 'vivir bien in balance with all that surrounds us. That also means 'vivir bien you and me together', and that is different from the Western 'living better', which is individual, separated from the others and also at the expense of others and separated from nature. (Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2006, p. 10)

Within the concept the difference between individual and communal, the difference between two notions of development are portrayed. The communal based approach focuses on the following points: the replacing the capitalist economy with communal and non-capitalist forms, communal forms of democracy, cultural pluralism as a base for interculturality (Paco, 2004, p.190).

1.2. Millennium development goals

At the beginning of the new millennium in 2000 the Millennium Development Goals were established. They evolved out of the need to challenge multiple international problems. It was established through subject specific conferences and world leaders agreed to achieve these goals by 2015 (McArthur, 2014).

8 goals were established on the bases of poverty, education, gender inequality, child mortality, maternal health, HIV/malaria and other diseases, sustainable environment and global partnership. After 15 years the United Nations made up the balance in their 2015 progress report. Although poverty was reduced and many works has been done, they outlined some challenges which still influence the work of development sector in general. These consist of gender inequality, the big gap between rich and poor, climate change and the rise of violent conflict which violates the basic needs of people (United Nations, 2015). There have been critiques on the Millennium goals of being too much focused on Western notions and giving little voice towards the lesser developed countries (Kabeer, 2005; Waage et al, 2010; Amin, 2006). This critique is also heard in terms of other influential development actors such as the World Bank (Caufield, 1996).

1.3 Gender and development

The concept of gender is referred to as the social constructions between masculinity and femininity (Radoki, 2020; Momsen, 2010). The identifications of gender are flexible and socially constructed. Although the fact that gender issues have been put on the international development agenda development has influences gender notions and vice versa. Momsen (2010, p. 5) concretises this in the following way:

“Women’s organizations, and the various United Nations international women’s conferences in Mexico-City, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing over the last three decades, have put gender issues firmly on the development agenda but economic growth and modernization is not gender neutral. The experiences of different states and regions show that economic prosperity helps gender equality, but some gender gaps are resistant to change. Rapid growth, as in the East Asian countries, has led to a narrowing of the gender differences in wages and education but inequality in political representation remains.”

Especially the non-gender-neutral point of view of the development sector has influences how gender is often portrayed in development issues. The issue of gender inequality or gender-based violence is not a development issue in terms of when a country is developed, gender inequality does not exist anymore. Gender inequality is visible throughout economic, social, political, legal discourses. Because of the social construction of gender, the notion of gender can difference in every society. Therefore, in the following section the international framework around both international and national initiatives

are discussed. Focusing on both legislative manners and grass-root movements. These focus mainly on the notion of gender inequality in general and especially on gender-based violence.

The main theory behind gender inequality which influenced the development sector is feminism. Feminists argue that violence against women results from gender inequality (Bograd, 1988; Yodanis, 2004). However, there are multiple forms of feminism, which has influenced how gender equality is faced today. Lorber (2010) explains three types of feminism which evolved over time since the 1970's until now. During the 1970's Gender Reform Feminism was established. It focused on the gender balance between men and women. As a result, on this, Gender Resistance Feminism was born. They argued that balancing the genders was not enough. A new perspective needed to be added, the perspective of women, and social order needed to be reshaped. Since the 1990's Gender Rebellion Feminism has been in play. This type of feminism focuses on the intersections of inequality. It does not only focus on gender but also on social identities such as race, sexuality, age etc (Lorber, 2010, pp.11-12). Within the development sector the feminist perspective was visible too. Since the 1970's gender became mainstreamed in almost every policy and program in the development sector (Brouwers, 2013; Daly, 2005; Rao & Kelleher, 2005). The concept of gender mainstreaming is about institutionalising gender in public policies (Daly, 2005; Rao & Kelleher, 2005).

The strategy of mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions in 1997, as

"...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality."

This gender mainstreaming is visible in international policies and thus also in the work of international and local actors in the development sector. Although this strategy has put the gender perspective on the agenda, there is critique on this approach as well. This consists of the fact that gender mainstreaming approaches lack implementation and monitoring in the policies (Africa Development Bank 2011; Charlesworth, 2005). Overall, gender needs nuance. This is not only for the terminology, when referring towards the relation between women and men (Grown et al, 2016). It also applies towards the nuance in working on the theme of gender equality and looking at the multi-dimensional nature of gender equality. Therefore, in the following paragraph the focus will be the concept of gender-based violence itself.

1.4 Gender based violence

The concept of gender-based violence is a term under which multiple forms of violence are attached. It is a harmful act perpetrated against a person's will, based on gender differences. It includes physical, sexual, or mental suffering and can occur in public or private (IASC, 2015, p.5). However, it is important to note that other forms of gender-based violence such as economic or financial gender-based violence also occur. This deals with the pay gap between men and women but also with the fact that some women do not have control over their own money.

Gender based violence is not only violence from men against women but also violence from women towards women and any other relation possible. However, there is often the notion that gender based violence is about a man physically hurting a woman. It is important to note that the concept is much more than physical hurting others based on gender perceptions. Gender based violence relates to the idea of gender equality. In which the ideal is that all genders are equal, and violence based upon gender does not exist. The concept of violence is used as broad as possible within this thesis. Meaning violence can be emotional, physical, economic, sexual, political, and cultural. Gender based violence thus not only affect women, it affects everyone. Power relations form the core of this structure of gender inequality. Therefore, to work on the topic of gender-based violence means working on the topic of gender inequality.

To understand the broadness and the widespread problem of gender-based violence it is important to notice the available data around this topic. There are several organizations measuring gender-based violence and actors based on gender in/equality. One example is the Gender Index established by the European Union.⁵ The index uses an intersectional approach to analyse how far member states are from reaching gender equality, domains which are used are work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. Besides these, two extra factors are taken into consideration; intersectional inequalities and violence against women. Besides indexes like these, there are also other statistics available on gender-based violence. Because of the broadness of gender-based violence, I will outline the data on gender-based violence using the distinction of emotional, physical, economic, sexual, political, and cultural violence. It is important to note that there are different numbers and statistics available. It depends on the research and how the research was conducted.

Emotional gender-based violence is one of the forms which is hard to measure. However, it connects to all the various types of gender-based violence. One example is that studies show that victims of

⁵ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/about>

physical or sexual partner violence report higher rates of depression, having an abortion or getting HIV, compared to women who did not have this experience. ⁶

Physical violence is the form which most people think about when they refer to the concept of gender-based violence. Worldwide the estimation is that 35% of all women and girls have been victim of physical and sexual violence by a non-partner. This does not include sexual harassment. Besides this, it is estimated that in 2017 87.000 women were killed intentionally. More than half of them were killed by intimate partners or their family. One third has been killed by their own partner. ⁷

Furthermore, the ONUDC ⁸reported in 2018 that women and girls account for 72% of human trafficking victims. Out of every 4 children which became victim of child trafficking, 3 of them were girls. Furthermore, 4 out of 5 trafficked women and 3 out 4 trafficked girls are dealt because of sexual exploitation.

Besides sexual violence and its gender aspect, there is more than meets the eye. Other identification marks such as ethnicity and race play part in these statistics as well. This shows the intersectionality of gender-based violence. The Australian Human Rights Commission found out in their National Survey no Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces (2018), that the cases of sexual harassment in the past 5 years was substantially higher among whom identify as aboriginal or Torres Strai Islanders. 53 percent of these group experiences sexual violence in the workplace in the last 5 years, compared to people who do not identify as such, 32 percent. ⁹

1.5 International and national efforts on the work of gender equality

Within the framework of working with gender-based violence there are two important and influential legislative matters which have influenced the work surrounding this topic: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The United Nations argues in their 2020 world development report that gender equality is important because it is a human right to live your life as you want it. Secondly it contributes towards economic features too and influences other development goals (UN, 2020).

⁶ World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, p.2.

⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2019). Global Study on Homicide 2019, p. 10.

⁸ UNODC (2018). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, p. 25, 28.

⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission (2018). Everyone's business: Fourth National Survey on Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces, p.28.

In 1995 the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China. Better known as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The purpose was to talk about gender inequality and the empowerment of women. They noticed 12 areas of concern, reaching out from the economic position of women towards human rights and violence both in general as in armed conflict. This has been blueprinted for governments and other conferences. This year the renewal of the Beijing Convention was planned, as it celebrated its 25th birthday.

Another important base for regarding legislative matters of working with gender equality is the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The committee was established in 1982 to monitor the implementation of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It consists of 23 experts. The definition of discrimination used is the following : “...*any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.*” (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979)

Both have made an impact on the visibility of women in international politics, human rights, and many other spheres. However, there are two main critiques which can be put forward regarding these legislative manners of gender equality. Firstly, there is the case of strict making of gender. Meaning the focus goes to the women instead of gender as broader spectrum. This is not only seen in the definition by CEDAW but also in the fact that the United Nations entity regarding women empowerment and gender equality is called UN Women. Gender has a broader pallet than which was started by the United Nations at that time. During the beginning of the work of the UN gender equality was approached by the women in development frame (Krook and True, 2010). This frame was criticised because of its focus on development could get anything from women instead of the other way around. From this moment the terminology gender was introduced. Krook and True (2010) argue that this “moves the focus away from binary opposites to a continuum of identities, at the same time that it replaces singular attention to women with a dual lens on the relative status of women and men”. Although I agree with the fact that it moves the focus away from binary oppositions, it is still not quite clear how and when the different terminologies are used. However, comes together in the human rights discourse which is the base of the United Nations and the key of their work. This draws us towards the second critique on legislative matters the recognition of the human rights is discourse come from international laws like the United Nations. This human right talk, as Matthew Engelke (1999) calls it, is based on legal discourse. Although these legal discourses, like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, might have good intentions and are there

to 'protect people,' they have a certain morality. This morality might have little to do with how people in a certain country think about a certain human right. Thus, although there is a legal international framework on working against, for example, gender-based violence, the situation and the vision on certain concepts might differ. This morality however also provides an international framework in order to combat issues such as gender-based violence.

Since the ratification of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) many countries have adopted law enforcement to response to gender-based violence (Bott, S., Morrison, A., & Ellsberg, M., 2005). This is done by training professionals, reorganising police and to provide a more inclusive response to survivors (Bott et al, 2005). Although these enforcements often lack effectiveness, the fact that there is attention is a step into the right direction. Besides law enforcement initiatives and the training of both professionals and police forces, there have been several global initiatives surrounding the theme of gender-based violence. In 2020 a campaign was implemented by the United Nations with the title "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future". Reason for the campaign is the 25th celebration of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The goal is to bring together activist of different generations and to 'tackle the unfinished business surrounding gender equality'¹⁰. The campaign focuses on both economic equality, equal share of domestic work and unpaid care as on all other forms of violence. Besides institutional initiatives civil society plays a part in raising awareness and trying to combat gender-based violence. Two civil society initiatives on which I will be elaborating on more broadly are: 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence and Not one less (Ni una Menos).

16 days of activism against gender-based violence is an international campaign which started in 1991 when the Women's Global Leadership Institute was established. It is an international and annual campaign which starts on the 25th of November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on the 10th of December. Which is known as international Human Rights Day. This timeframe is chosen on purpose, as it reflects the link between women's rights and human rights. Every year another theme is attached to the 16 days of activism. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue on both national and international level. Besides this they provide a forum in which organisers can share strategies and show their solidarities with each other. The concept of 16 days of activism has grown from a women's movement towards a concept which is used by both international, national, and local organisations, which include faith-based organizations. Within this frame there is a key role for the media, both

¹⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25/about>

traditional and social. For example, organizations use the period between November 25th until 10 of December to focus on gender-based violence in their social media channels such as Instagram. Another use of the 16 days of activism is the creation of prayer guides which are used in churches to emphasise the problem of gender-based violence.¹¹

Another civil society initiative is the movement of Not one Less, which is better known as Ni una menos. In the introduction I already touched upon the origin of this movement. It is a feminist Argentinian collective which became known after the murder on 14-year-old Chiara Páez in 2015. The use of the hashtag #NiUnaMenos became trending topic and it spread over the entire Latin American content. The act which was the trigger to this movement is the act of murder because of being a woman, which is known as femicide. Within the context of gender-based violence, murder is the most extreme form. In the case of Latin America, the problem of women's murders is much more visible and severe than other parts of the world. Although the use of social media brought the movement more recognition, the protest first consisted of reading marathons and performance art. The catalyst of the protests was the murder on Daiana García, whose body was found in a garbage bag at the side of the road.¹²

After the initial protest in Argentina, the movement spread to neighbouring countries such as Chile, Bolivia and many more. The movement is still actively part of the fights against gender-based violence in Latin America. This not only has to do with the fact that it was widespread with the use of social media, but also with the existing problem of femicide. Lastly, it is important to note that the slogan of this movement comes from a Mexican poet, Susana Chavez, in protest the many femicides in the city of Juarez. She was assassinated in 2011 and this phrase became the symbol for the fight against women's murders.

¹¹ <https://eagle.co.ug/2019/11/28/church-of-uganda-marks-16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence.html>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jun/08/argentina-murder-women-gender-violence-protest>

https://www.surcapitalino.com.ar/detalle_noticias.php?Id=3598https://www.surcapitalino.com.ar/detalle_noticias.php?Id=3598

1.6 Intersectionality

Gender is not only a concept visible in the development sector itself, but it needs to be understood in the context of power relations and social identities (Collins, 1990). Earlier the feminist theory in the development sector was outlined and the focus on gender as concept which was included in processes surrounding the creation of development programmes. Together with the feminist theory the importance on looking at other women's position from other social identities became visible (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Hull et al, 1982; Dill, 1983). These intersections between multiple social factors is exactly what intersectionality is about. The importance of intersectionality within the frame of development is important because it is a manner to analyse the complexity of the development sector itself and the multiple actors which influence a certain development issue. These intersections are visible in the concept of gender-based violence too. In this case, and in every social issue analysed by using an intersectional approach, these intersections create both oppression and opportunity (Zinn & Dil, 1996). An example is a white woman belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, might be oppressed on base of her sexuality and her gender but she also gains an opportunity because of her race. These different intersections thus are visible at the same time. Not only sexuality, race and gender form part of this intersectionality. Social identities such as age, disability etc (Shields, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Schussler Fiorenza, 1975). On the topic of gender-based violence and women of colour, Crenshaw (1991) distinguishes categories of intersectionality: structural, political and representational intersectionality. She writes about the context of gender-based violence, especially battering and rape, in the United States of America but she provides an overall conceptualisation on how to intersectionality is important in the issue of gender-based violence. With the concept of structural intersectionality, she explains how support services of gender-based violence are often specific for certain groups, women with higher status or whom speak English are more likely to get support (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, political intersectionality is in play too. In politics the focus has been on people of colour, which refers towards males and the focus on women, which focuses on white women. Thus, there is a lack of diversification within the social groups as well. However, this does not only deal with the categories itself rather it is about the values we attach towards these categories of race, sexuality, gender etc (Crenshaw, 1991).

Concluding, this chapter has shown the relation between the development sector, gender and intersectionality. Gender focus and intersectionality became an approach in the development sector to combat gender inequality and gender-based violence. It has focused on development as a Eurocentric point of view and established some alternative framework of looking at development. Furthermore, the concept of gender and gender-based violence is discussed. Which showed the multidimensionality of both terms and the widespread problematics of gender-based violence. Lastly,

the concept of intersectionality was introduced to show an approach towards the complexity of multiple social identities which simultaneously oppress and gives opportunity. In which multiple intersections can be oppressive and relieving at the same time, apart from each other. Although the intersectional approach analyses gender equality from all social identity markers there is a lack of attention towards religion (Ter Haar, 2011; Mahmood, 2005; Weber, 2015). Therefore, in the following chapter the relation between development and religion is examined.

Chapter 2: Religion and development

The goal of this chapter is to outline the relation between religion and development and to answer the subquestion: How are religion and development connected? The marginalised position of religion within the development sector is discussed (Ter Haar, 2011; Carbonnier, 2013). Secondly, the religious and secularist visions on development is discussed. Furthermore, the liberation theology and feminist theology as development approach are being analysed. Within the feminist theology the Kyriarchal System by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is explained and how this system enables us to analyse the case study of Bolivia. Lastly, the connection between religion, development and gender in civil society is studied.

2.1 Religious versus secular

Within the development sector religion has been marginalised (Ter Haar, 2011; Carbonnier, 2013). As discussed earlier, the focus has been on economics and liberal thoughts. The notion of modernisation and secularisation have been integrated, arguing that if societies modernised, they became less religious (Gorski, 2003). Taylor (2011) argues that this division between secularism and religion became visible since the separation of church and state. He explains this the following way:

“ One way of understanding the development of Western secularism is to see the separation of church and state and the removal of religion into a “private” sphere where it cannot interfere with public life as a result of the earlier distinction between the secular (or temporal) and the sacred (or eternal). The former would thus be, in retrospect, the ultimately satisfactory solution, whereby religion is finally relegated to the margins of political life” (Taylor, 2011, p.35)

Clarke (2006) highlights, in contrast with Taylor, that religion has shifted from the private towards the more public space in recent years, emphasising the moral importance of public policy. Besides this, the role of religious leaders became more prominent since the 1980's and the 1990's, in which religious leaders took a side in helping countries in the democratic transition from often military dictatorships towards democratic states (Clarke, 2006). After the creation of the Millennium Declarations, both the development sector and faith based civil society actors find themselves in the common ground of focusing on the poor and their concerns about social exclusion and the effects of inequality (Ter Haar, 2011).

In this thesis I will understand development in a holistic manner, not only looking at development as economic prospects but also as part of spiritual believes. The notion of development as modern and secular concept shows the historical background of the marginalisation of religion in development work. However, this seems contradictory when development can be traced back towards the religious

missionary work and still constitute a big part in development work (Carbonnier, 2013). Although religion has been neglected, they do have interconnections.

Leer-Helgensen (2020, p. 24) argues *“development goals can also be religious goals. For many religious actors, development work is a resource to reach religiously based goals and values. The concept of the ‘Kingdom of God’, based on theological interpretations of justice and inclusion, is the horizon for most Christians. This horizon and ‘goal’ are why many – if not most – Christian institutions engage in development work. They wish to promote the Kingdom of God.”*

Thus, both are a vision of how the world could be (Ter Haar, 2011). The difference between the two approaches is based upon a deeper understanding of their world vision. Within religious development the question is often deeper than the social economic aspects of development, it is about the question what it means to be a human being (Kartas & Silva, 2013). The religious outlook on development thus have broader outlook, which does not only put the visible world into context but also deals with the invisible powers which are core towards religion.

2.2. Institutional versus individual religion

In this thesis there is a distinction between religion as institution and religion as individual concept. Religion as institution is referred to the institutionalisation of religion values and ideas. This is best shown by the Catholic Church whom institutionalised Roman Catholicism into an institution known as the Vatican. Religious institutions thus refer towards the institutions itself such as mosques, churches and other places of worshipping ones sets of believes. On the other hand, we distinguish the individual level of religion. In this thesis both the institutional part of religion comes into play, especially the set of values and believes from the Catholic Church. Besides this, religious values are portrayed by the interviews conducted with religious organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence in Latin America.

2.3 Theological frameworks for development

Within the context of development, gender focus and religion it is important to look at two theological frameworks whom have influenced the work of religious actors in the development sector: Liberation theology and feminist theology. Both have a certain vision of how key problems such as poverty or gender inequality need to be combated.

Liberation theology came up around the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's in Latin America. The term liberation theory was founded by Gustavo Gutiérrez, author of the book Liberation Theory, from which the theological movement got its name. The continent of Latin America was during the 1960's and 1970's in a political period of change, which resulted in the upcoming of military dictatorships (Petrella, 2004). Social issues were very much visible in society and politics. Liberation theologians

argue that poverty is complex and is not only limited to economic conditions (Gustavo Gutierrez and the preferential option for the poor, 2020).

“ They share the following presuppositions: (a) a sharp dichotomy between revolution and reformist political action, the first seen as necessary while the second is deemed as ineffectual or as an ideological smokescreen that supports the status quo; (b) the poor were seen as the primary, and at times exclusive, agents of social change; (c) a sharp dichotomy between socialism and capitalism, socialism as the social system that could remedy the injustice of the latter; and (d) priority was given to politics in the narrow sense of struggle over state power, with little attention to issues of gender, ecology, race and popular culture.” (Petrella, 2004, p.1)

However, there has been an increased emphasis on the complexity of oppressions ever since, not only economical which was stated by the liberation theology but also within racism, sexism etc. (Chopp & Regan, 2005; Hohner, 2005; Maduro, 2006). This diversification of oppressions, focusing beyond the concept of poverty paved the way for many distinct critical theological theories. Because of the emphasis on the relation between gender, religion and development within this thesis, the focus will be on feminist theology theories. However, there are many other critical theological frameworks whom have been developed out of the liberation theology, such as Palestinian liberation theology.

Key towards feminist theology is the women’s movement, better known as the as feminism. The term feminism is a broader concept which substitutes different and multiple forms of feminism. The movement of feminism critiques all institutions which “exploit, stereotype and inferiors” women (Schussler Fioranza, 1975). It is in this point of view that Christianity has been criticised due to the institutional inequalities and the theological justifications of inequality between women and men (Beauvoir, 1961; Daly, 1973). Rakoczy (2004) argues that after the first few centuries of Christianity dualism were introduced. The concepts of mind and spirit were addressed towards males and the concepts of matter and body towards females. Males were more spiritual and thus closer towards God. Therefore, men are the ones having the authority. Women are then the ones who need to take care of the procreation of life. Taking care of the family. These home gender roles are displayed within the Christian tradition. Besides these gender roles, most of the symbols and language which are used are paternal; it is centred around the perspectives of men. God, the Lord, Jesus Christ. The role of the women is represented by Mary as her role in being the mother of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the structure of institutional religion, more specifically Roman Catholicism, is hierarchical. There is a strict hierarchy between the higher positions, like bishops or the pope, and lower positions such as nuns. Although women did become more visible, they are still not represented in the higher segment of this hierarchical system (Rakoczy, 2004).

Religion and feminism are therefore often seen as contradiction. However, identifying one's self as feminist does not mean that you cannot identify as religious too. Feminist theology uses two different social analytics to explore women's position in society and religion: the analysis of gender and the analysis of intersectional oppressions (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2013). Schüssler Fiorenza (1975) argues that within Christian theology interpretations and traditions have been from the masculine point of view. Therefore, there is the need to rewrite Christian tradition and make sure that women are visible in these perspectives too. This need to be on both spiritual and ecclesial level. Other characteristics which are key towards feminist theology are the critiques on the male-centredness in both literature and images.

From the dominant feminist theology, other forms emerged. These forms dealt with culturally specific contexts of theology, which have been applied towards particular social, historical and geographical settings. One of these feminist theological approaches is known as Latina Feminist Theology. It is about complex socio-political movements and subjects; about creating an alternative vision on how social life is structured (Aquino et al, 2010). Another term which is often mistakenly used to describe Latin American feminist is *Mujeristas*. The term comes from theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, which deals around the moral power of women (Isasi-Diaz, 2004). However, it is often looked at as a homogeneous approach towards Latin American feminism instead of being more diverse (Aquino et al, 2010). Latin American Feminist Theology thus approaches the struggle against gender inequality in the same intersectional way as Schussler Fiorenza (1975) does. This feminist approach within theology and religion is further emphasised in the case study of Bolivia.

2.4 Religion, development and gender inequality: civil society

The concepts of religion, development and gender inequality are connected towards each other because they operate in the same social field: civil society. Civil society is often referred towards certain groups such as non-governmental organisations and social movements, who are independent from the government, working in the interest of society. Groups who are part of civil society often take up roles such as: service provider, advocating for certain goals and try to involve citizens in their work (Cooper, 2018; Keane, 2003). This complexity of (global) civil society is best emphasised by Keane with the following definition (2003, p.8):

“a dynamic non- governmental system of interconnected socio-economic institutions that straddle the whole earth, and that have complex effects that are felt in its four corners. Global civil society is neither a static object nor a fait accompli. It is an unfinished project that consists of sometimes thick, sometimes thinly stretched networks, pyramids and hub-and-spoke clusters of socio-economic institutions and actors who organise themselves across borders, with the deliberate aim of drawing the world together in new ways. These non-governmental institutions and actors tend to pluralise power

and to problematise violence; consequently, their peaceful or 'civil' effects are felt everywhere, here and there, far and wide, to and from local areas, through wider regions, to the planetary level itself."

Within this civil society, religious organisations can be placed as well. They can be organised within the sector of civil society. However, boundaries tend to change, meaning the traditional division between government, economics and civil society is changing. It is evolving into a more complex and increasingly intersectional model (World Economic Forum, 2013; Ter Haar, 2011; Salamon, 1999; Edwards, 2004). Besides this, religious has been more visible within civil society, in which it gives a certain morality which is missed within the secular vision of society (World Economic Forum, 2013).

Faith and religious culture are increasingly regarded as drivers of community cohesion thanks to the engagement of faith communities and organisations at the grassroots of society. Religion thus is part of civil society, playing a role in social norms and social action. This can be empowering for things such as gender equality but also working against such things for example more extremist religious movements. Another prominent role in religion and civil society are religious leaders. Religious leaders can be both formal and informal leaders within a religious or faith-based community. Religion thus is a factor of identification, cohesion, and bonding. The complex dynamics of civil society make it hard to analyse how actors influence each other. Development organisations and religious organisations are both part of civil society. Both have the power to create and change social norms, and they use certain discourses to operate in this complexity. A similar theme on which they work is gender inequality. In this manner the triangle between development, gender and religion is set. We can place these dynamic structures of organisations into the broader context of power structures. Moreover, the concepts and discourses of both development, religion and gender are part of a bigger more complex network of organisations, discourses and power structures, which are both national and international. Lastly, it is important to emphasise the human rights-based approach in the development sector. Legal and legislative instruments are commonly used in an international frame based on conventions and the human rights have become an international and universal language of the work on development related issues. The focus on human rights has similarities with the religious vision on what it means to be human. After all human rights "are claims that people are entitled to make simply by virtue of their status as human beings. Such claims are therefore based on people's perceptions of human nature, which in many societies, are inspired by religious belief" (Ter Haar, 2011, p. 304). Development and religious approaches thus combined have both a moral-legal and a moral-spiritual approach towards subjects (Ter Haar, 2011, p.305). Again, religious and development discourse are overlapping.

Concluding, religion has been marginalised in the development sector for a long period of time (Carbonnier, 2013). This is rather surprising due to the presence of religious organisations within the development sector. Within the development theory, spiritual development has been neglected and this is where the concept of religious comes in. Religious discourse provides a moral and spiritual vision of development itself and the work of development organisations. It uses a deeper understanding of this concept and what it means to be a human being, this discourse has similarities with the human rights discourse which is currently the dominant approach within the development sector. Two main theological approaches whom can be connected towards the development sector are the Latin American liberation theology and the Feminist Theology. Both provide an intersectional approach towards the oppression of certain groups within society. The Kyriarchal system by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza explains this intersectionality of both empowering and oppressive intersections. All these actors of religion, development and gender discourses have in common that they operate in the field of civil society. Civil society is often referred as, certain non-governmental organisations working in the interest of society. This terminology has been increasingly complex due to the international and national actors which are at stake. Thus, religion and development are connected within the complex field of civil society, in which they both have the power to create and change social norms. These discourses are about the values of what it means to be human, only religion focuses on the more spiritual aspect and development uses the language of human rights. They entail a vision of how the world can be.

Chapter 3: The case study of Bolivia

In the following chapter the case study of Bolivia is discussed. First, the context of Bolivia is examined with the use of the following structure: gender-based violence within Bolivian society, actions taken to combat gender-based violence, gender stereotypes, colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism and religiosity. This structure is applied towards the analysis of the data too. Within this analysis the focus will be on how these multiple intersections empower or challenge the work of Faith based organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence in Bolivia. Within this analysis the Kyriarchal system by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza is used in order to include the notion of colonialism biblical interpretations (Pui-lan, 2009). The intersections which refer towards this system of multiple oppressions are the outline used in this chapter: gender stereotypes, colonialism, social stratification, racism and religion.

Bolivian context

Since the beginning of 2020 41 women in Bolivia were killed because of being a woman¹³. Not only this year, but for many years, Bolivia is among the countries with the highest rate of femicides in Latin America, together with countries like El Salvador and Honduras. In this case study we will research the different intersections which are at play when talking about the problem of gender-based violence in Bolivian society. This chapter will give insights in how Bolivian society is shaped. The outline of the case study is done by the intersectional approach of Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1975) Firstly, I will elaborate on the problem of gender-based violence in Bolivia and the measurements which have been taken to fight it. Continuously, the gender stereotypes of Marianismo and machismo are discussed. Lastly, the intersections of colonialism, classism, ethnocentrism, racism, religiosity are outlined.

3.1 Gender based violence in Bolivia and actions taken

The latest data which was established by Bolivian authorities itself comes from the National Institute of Statistics. This data from 2017 researches gender-based violence in the educational, social and workplace sector. The data shows that 3 out of 4 women who are married or in a relationship suffer from any kind of violence by their partner (INE, 2017). Besides this, 92.7% of Bolivian women suffer from psychological violence during her lifetime, in contrast with 67.3% physical violence, 45.5% sexual and 41.8% economic.

¹³ https://eldeber.com.bo/177847_fiscalia-reporta-41-casos-de-feminicidios-en-bolivia

Besides this, femicides have grown since the implementation of the law against violence for women in 2013, better known as law 348. From 2013 till 2018, 555 women were killed. More specific, there were 26 cases in 2013, 71 in 2014, 110 in 2015, 111 in 2016, 109 in 2017 and 128 in 2018 (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2019). Besides psychological, physical, sexual, and economic violence, gender-based violence is also visible in the political sphere (World Bank, 2015). Although women are represented in parliament, women are being pressured to vote in line of their party, which prevents them from promoting women's interests (World Bank, 2012).

Besides gender-based violence, an investigation by the non-governmental organisation Coordinadora de la Mujer in 2011 shows the multiple layers of discrimination, not only by gender but also because of ethnicity. They researched the base on which women felt discriminated. 13.5 % of the non-indigenous women felt discriminated because of their gender, compared towards 26.8% of indigenous women. Overall, indigenous women have shown significant higher rates of discrimination on skin colour, language, economic circumstances, gender, clothing, and age (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2011). This data shows the importance of intersectionality when it comes to discrimination and gender-based violence in Bolivia.

Just as in other countries, Bolivia experiences a rise in gender-based violence since the lock down due to COVID-19. Since the quarantine started, femicides continued. Just like other countries, telephone numbers are being spread and WhatsApp groups of neighbourhoods are being established. However, although there is more attention towards the issue of gender-based violence in times of COVID-19, acts of violence continue to happen. On the 19th of March 2020, a 24-year-old man was captured because of the murder on his girlfriend. She is not the only victim, since the state of emergency and the quarantine measurements, 17 women were murdered ¹⁴. Meaning one woman has been killed every week since the start of the lock down.

In order to combat gender-based violence, Bolivia has taken legislative measures. It must be noted that there are several forms of gender-based violence visible, therefore we will look at the political and legislative matters with a broad point of view. In 2013 Law 348 was implemented. The law made sure that the maximum sentence for the act of an femicide (the murder of a women because of her gender) changed to 30 years in prison. Bolivian law uses a broad definition of gender-based violence, ranging from economic to symbolic violence. It shows the intersectionality which is needed to combat this phenomenon. During the presidential period of Evo Morales, he had a progressive political agenda. This made it possible that in 2010 half of the parliament was female. Besides this, in 1997

¹⁴ <https://www.opinion.com.bo/articulo/policial/mujer-es-asesinada-concubino-hirio-cuchillo-pierna-desangro/20200529224547770255.html>

there was already a law which required political parties are to have 25% women within their party (Lynn Walter, 2001). However, the practical side of this legislative matters is that political parties found a loophole within the system. On the election ballots the parties put a man behind every woman, in the system of Bolivia there is always a 1st runner and a second behind him or her, on their list (Archenti & Tula, 2014).

Other initiatives which have been made the creation of a special organization dedicated towards fighting gender-based violence, called Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra la Violence (FELCV). Although the law states that there are a lot of services, there is insufficient access to legal and other services for victims of gender based violence (Valverde, 2010; Albaine, 2014; Montaña, 2016) Reporting cases of gender based violence is often a bureaucratic process, officials are not sufficiently trained, and justice is a major problem. Therefore, impunity is high and only a very small percentage of perpetrators who are convicted.¹⁵

3.2 Gender stereotypes in Bolivian society

Within the continent of Latin America, there are some concepts related to stereotyping gender which need more explaining: Marianismo and Machismo.

Marianismo calls upon the history of Mary in the Bible and the importance of purity. The female is seen as valued for her ability to bring new life into this world. The concept of marianismo support on a few pillars (Castillo, Perez, Castillo and Ghosheh, 2010). Firstly, the importance of family. This shown by tasks in and around the household such as cooking but also in taking care of the children. Secondly, virginity is a pillar of marianismo. Meaning this importance of being a virgin before marriage. Women are expected to be non-sexual creatures and being passive in sexual encounters. Thirdly, being respectful. The idea that the women need to know her place in the hierarchical system. Furthermore, the concept of silence and agreeing with your partner is crucial. Women need the uphold their thoughts and avoid any disagreement with their partner. Lastly, women need to be spiritual and taking care of the spiritual practice of their kids and family. (Castillo, Perez, Castillo and Ghosheh, 2010).

Machismo, on the other hand, refers to the gender pattern of males in Latin American society. The term machismo refers to be a strong man, taking care of your family financially, being non-emotional. However, in practice, this term has a more negative connotation. Within the context of Latin America,

¹⁵ Del total de 113.269 denuncias de violencia contra la mujer procesadas entre 2015 y 2018, sólo 1284 casos recibieron condena, es decir el 1.13% de los casos.

<https://www.defensoria.gob.bo/noticias/informe-defensorial-evidencia-deficiencias-en-la-implementacion-de-medidas-atencion-y-proteccion-de-las-mujeres-victimas-de-violencia>

the concept of machismo often refers to the system in which the man is seen as superior to the women, and the toxic influence machismo has on society. Besides this, machismo is seen as negative because of the unequal power structures it creates between man and women. This again has its effect on gender inequality.

Besides the concepts of Marianismo and machismo, we can detect certain gender patterns which are embedded in the indigenous worldview. The concept of Chachawarmi stands out: Chacha meaning men in Aymara and Warmi meaning women. It is a concept which notes the dualism of the relation between man and women (Burman, 2011; Ardeleanu, 2014; Agar Diaz Carrasco, 2010). The indigenous vision of complementarity has a base within all living things in the cosmology of Indigenous world view. Not only man and women are complementary to each other, every male or female living creature has an equivalent in the other. There is no existing possible without being a pair. The other option of not being a couple is being incomplete (Agar Diaz Carrasco, 2010). Besides the duality of all living creatures, there are visions of how male and women are portrayed in indigenous culture. Just like the concept of marianismo, certain characteristics such as fertility are attached to the female gender. This is visible in the task of ruling the household and taking care of the children. The man, on the other hand, makes the decisions. The image of the female has its base in the concept of Pachamama. Pachamama is the term used to describe the world, meaning 'Mother Earth'. She is seen as female and as the mother of all creatures of the world.

3.3 Colonialism & social stratification

In the following subchapters, the focus is on the intersections which influence the notion of gender-based violence within Bolivia. They are interconnected towards each other and influence each other. One of the concepts which are key to Bolivian history is colonialism. The colonial period started with the coming of Christopher Columbus in 1492. The land which is now known as Bolivia was then part of a bigger territory ruled by the Incas. The concept of colonialism is referring to the 'practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another'¹⁶. During the period of colonialism, the notion of the self and the other was created (Loomba, 2015). It is commonly known that during before the women's movements of the 19th century, societies and power was held by men. The colonial era is no different.

The invasion of the Spanish was not only political, but the Catholic Church and state were closely connected (Calderisi, 2013; Calder, 2004). Together with the introduction of Catholicism and the converting of the indigenous population, the system of social stratification became visible. Social

¹⁶ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/>

stratification refers to a hierarchal system of certain groups within society. During the colonial period, this meant that Spanish people were the highest rank and Indios, together with the enslaved people the lowest rank in this hierarchy. This structural social stratification is currently still visible, the elites are ranked on top and the Campesinos are at the bottom (Faletto, 193; Roberts, 1996). The colonial history of Latin America thus still influences social stratification nowadays. This is not only visible within social stratification but also in the division of land. When the Spanish came to Latin America, they conquered the lands, and it was redistributed from the indigenous towards the elites (North et al, 2000). Over times, these lands were kept in the hands of the elites. Unequal land distribution thus provides an influence of inequality within society too (Frankema, 2008).

Thus, during the colonial period, unequal power relations were at stake in the form of social stratification. This social stratification was a way of structuring society and still has been an influence in current societies. Another influence within this context is the unequal distribution of land, which was granted from indigenous people towards the elites. The current social structure is a descendant from colonial times. The elites are seen to be more “European” and descendants of the highest hierarchical scale within social stratification. On the other hand, land workers are the lowest on the scale. It is exactly in this social category where most indigenous people are represented (Cleary & Steinenga, 2004).

3.4 Ethnocentrism, racism and current politics

Due to social stratification, ethnocentrism became visible within Bolivian society. Ethnocentrism refers to culture as privileged oppression. It is often associated with the vision of seeing one’s culture as superior to the other. Which has the effect of not giving value to the other culture. Both ethnocentrism and racism are based on inequality. In Bolivia two cultures, Eurocentric culture, and indigeneity, can be detected.

Together with the historical history and the centuries of unequal power relations, racism comes into place. Pérez-Ruiz (2000) explains how the current problematics of racism against indigenous people an effect of colonial history in Bolivia is. Besides this, the political structure shows this social stratification too, the power often within the hands of non-indigenous people (Loayza Bueno, 2004). However, there is an important note to make regarding the visibility of indigenous population in Bolivian society. The focus from non-indigenous towards indigenous representation shifted in 2006. Years of protests, social movements and alliances between indigenous farmers organisations have let towards the coming to power of the first indigenous president of Bolivia: Evo Morales. He focused on the indigenous identity of the Bolivian State. This led towards a new constitution in 2009 in which the

name of Bolivia changed towards Bolivia Plurinational State. Together with the new focus on plurinational, the Indigenous flag, which represents the native people of the Andes, better known as the Wiphala, got the status of the official dual flag of Bolivia. The focus thus came to be on the indigenous character of society, emphasising the plurinational which is key to Bolivia. The ethnocentrism which was focused on colonial inheritance for many centuries changed towards the focus on indigenous culture.

Although Evo Morales presented himself as a social leader, there have been many critiques on his governmental rule and that of his party (the MAS – Movimiento al socialismo). One of these critiques is based upon how the high extraction of natural resources of Bolivia in contrast with the Andean world vision of Pachamama which is about living harmoniously with nature (Aguirre & Cooper, 2010). The last decade of politics in Bolivia must be defined in the following way:

“This political era can be understood as a new phase in the construction of the citizenship of most Bolivians, first empowered through the so-called 1952 Revolution that established universal suffrage and successful agrarian reform. Following this earlier major transformation of the Bolivian citizenship regime, most peasants and miners organized themselves along corporatist schemes where their autonomy was restricted. These schemes eventually collapsed during the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s and led the way to independent union-ism accompanied by an ethnic revival process, the Katarista movement. New organizations led the way to produce a new agenda of demands, notably expressed in the Tiwanaku Manifesto issued in 1973. From that moment onward, the popular struggle against dictatorships or democratic governments governed by mestizo elites had as strong normative foundations a discourse of Quechua and Aymara cultural empowerment based on indigenous-peasant community self-governance.” (Rousseau & Morales Hudon, 2017, p. 28)

In 2019 there came an end to the presidential period of Evo Morales. During the electoral period of November 2019 there were disputed elections, protests emerged, and Evo Morales had to resign after pressure from the military. During the protests, violence erupted and the division between indigenous and non-indigenous in society became visible. Anti-indigenous discourse became visible in the form of burning the Wiphala, the official flag which represents the indigenous tribes of the Andes.¹⁷ However, racism is often more subtle than the protests which occurred during this period of political change. It is manifested in the use of language, the images which are visible in society etc. The focus on ethnicity thus has been present from the beginning of colonial times and changed while focusing on one ethnicity, ethnocentrism, which for long has been the Eurocentric culture but shifting in politics

¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/15/world/americas/morales-bolivia-Indigenous-racism.html>

towards the indigenous identification. The complex situation which emerged since October/November 2019 has been characterised by polarisation within Bolivian society (Ortuño Jáñez, 2020)

Besides the power relations between indigenous and non-indigenous identification, women have been trying to get a place at the table too. During the 1970's and 1980's a few peasant organizations joined forces and set up the Rural Workers' United Confederation of Bolivia (CSUTCB). Although women have been represented during these confederations and later in social movements, there is still a focus on the duality of gender (Rousseau & Morales Hudon, 2017, p. 77). There is a complexity between political involvement both as indigenous and as women. Overall, the focus of politics has been based upon indigeneity and decolonisation, however the structures of these concepts seek to exist (Postero, 2017; Beltrán, 2017). Another concept which is not explicitly seen in the social movements of indigenous women, but more in political sphere in general and the stereotype of Marianismo, is womanhood. This is where social constructed, religious based images over gender and politics meet. Because of this mixture with politics, social stratification, gender inequality and religion, there is the need to elaborate on the role of religion within Bolivia society. In the following chapter the history of the Catholic Church is outlined, and new religious movements and its political influence are explained. Besides this, the concept of secularism is contested as of the influence of religion within political discourse.

Although indigenous politics have become visible and significant within the Bolivian political climate, the role of women is not. Men hold the positions of authority (Beltrán, 2017). Political harassment has been significant within Bolivia (Rojas Valverde, 2010). Manoeuvres which are used to harm women and to undermine their positions are not providing information on the election bullets whether someone is male or female and revealing personal information about elected candidates in order to undermine their dignity (Archenti & Tula, 2014). Representation of women within Bolivian politics grew thanks to legislative measurements, however the manoeuvres as called upon earlier are still visible (Albaine, 2015; Rojas Valverde, 2010). In 2017 65 complaints about political violence have been reported, a number which has been growing and reached the level of 87 denounces in the year of 2018 (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2019).

3.5 Religious influence in Bolivia

The concept of religious has been of great influence within Bolivian society, not only the Catholic religious affiliation but also the Andean worldview and new emerging religious movements. In 2017 97.8% of the Bolivian people argued that they believed in a God. Besides this, 54% contested that only their religion is the valid one (CIS, 2018). Religion influences the notion of gender-based violence in two manners. Firstly, the conservative religious worldview undermines gender inequality because it resolves around the man as authority. Secondly, although Bolivia is a secular state, in which religion and state are to be separated, religious has and still have influence on Bolivian politics. In the Bolivian constitution church and state are separated (Cons. Boliviana, 2009, Article 4). Besides this there is freedom of religion regarding Law 1161. Religious organisations such as churches, as well as indigenous religious organizations, must register themselves at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One exception has been made for the Catholic Church. Throughout history, the Catholic Church has been very influential within the Latin American context. The role of the Catholic Church as institution can be best described in the following way:

"... Spanish American ruling class, which continued to treat Indians as inferiors, and the Church itself became part of that elite, mired in protecting its own material interests and nurturing its close ties to the military, large land- owners, and emerging business class. By the eighteenth century, thanks to bequests from the rich, tithes from the general population, and the Mexican Inquisition (which confiscated the assets of condemned heretics), the Church was almost as rich as the Crown." (Calderisi, 2013, p.145).

When the countries in Latin America began to fight for their independence, tension between States and the Catholic Church began to emerge (Calderisi, 2013). However, moral and social issues were still influenced by the Catholic Church (Htun, 2009; Calderisi, 2013). Social services are also still influenced by the Catholic Church (Velardi Rosso, 2011; Jimenez Canido, 2014). Within the specific context of Bolivia, Catholicism has been given a special place in political power until 2009. Within the Bolivian constitution there was a special recognition for the Catholic Church.

"The State recognizes and sustains the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion. It guarantees the public exercise of all other faiths. Relations with the Catholic Church shall be governed by concordats and agreements between the Bolivian State and the Holy See." ¹⁸

¹⁸ Church not asking to be official religion of the State, Bolivian cardinal says". Catholic News Agency. June 20, 2006. Archived from the original on September 27, 2007. Retrieved February 13, 2007. Retrieved on February 12, 2007

After the empowerment of the new constitution in 2009 this phrase was substituted by the following sentence, in which the Catholic Church lost her special recognition but stays influential.

“The State respects and guarantees the freedom of Religion and Spiritual beliefs, in accordance with every individual's cosmovision's. The State is independent of religion. (Consti. Boliviana, 2009)

As emphasised earlier, the Catholic belief stays highly influential within the context of the social agenda and especially on topics such as abortion, birth control, HIV and sexual diversity (Htun, 2009; Hagopian, 2009). It is in these topics that Catholicism finds a new ally within the context of Latin America: evangelical conservative movements. Following the numbers of the Latinobarómetro (2018) in 1995 80% of the population in Latin America called themselves Catholic, in contrast with the data from 2017, in which this percentage had declined towards 59%. In 2017, in Bolivia, 73% of society called themselves Catholic, 20% evangelical, 4% non-religious and 4% identified with another religion such as indigenous religions (Latinobarómetro, 2018). The growing conservative and evangelical movements have been visible within Latin American society and politics (Patterson, 2005; de la Torre & Martin, 2016). Religious influence has been visible in several domains within Bolivia. Firstly, it influences the discussion about sexual and reproductive rights (Htun, 2009; Lanza Monje, 2010). The control over laws about abortion and anti conceptive measurement is contested by both the Catholic Church as other religious fundamental movements. Furthermore, the focus is on the family. These family values constitute of a heteronormative couple, the female as mother and taking care of the kids and the male as head of the family. These family values have a result of also elaborating an anti discourse on LGBTQ+ communities, which does not differ in Bolivia (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; Fulton et al, 1999). This religious discourse and references towards religion were used during the turbulent period of October/November 2019 too.¹⁹ Several uses of Christian concepts, such as the Bible, were used in political discourse. A well-known example is the use of the Bible by Jeanine Áñez when she was inaugurated as interim president of Bolivia. She presented herself on the presidential balcony with a Bible in one hand and a crucifix in the other. She spoke the words: “The Bible has returned to Bolivia”.²⁰ The visibility of fundamental religious visibility within Bolivian politics is not exclusive to Christian influences. Andean Cosmovision is also a discourse which can be found within Bolivian politics. Andean Cosmovision is the tradition vision of the people living in the Andes, which revolves around the living in harmony with nature and the earth (Ardeleanu, 2014). During the presidential periods of Evo Morales, indigenous religious practices became more visible in politics. Morales often was seen with

¹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/27/bolivian-christians-evo-morales-indigenous-catholic-protestant>

²⁰ <https://www.perfil.com/noticias/internacional/en-nombre-de-dios-el-factor-religioso-detras-del-golpe-de-estado-en-bolivia.phtml>

Aymara spiritual leaders and certain practices were performed on important political meetings.²¹

Besides this, religion was visible in the political speeches he gave and in his political discourse.

However, it is interesting to see the concept of secularism not as a static state but as a process moderated by power relations (de la Torre & Martin, 2016). They argue that it is important to see the concept of secularism in an historical perspective. Meaning the level of secularism may change during different leaderships or presidential periods. De la Torre and Martin (2016, p.479) express the case of Bolivia in which “ high percentage of indigenous people and a president who champions ethnic socialism, a pan-indigenous messianism has emerged under the leadership of Evo Morales that challenges the classic relationship between the Catholic Church and the state.” The challenge has been declined since the resignation of Evo Morales and the bible is used again in political discourse.

Lastly, it is important to notice that within the context of Bolivia there is an also a visibility of religious syncretism. Syncretism denotes the meeting, mixing, and blending of the socio-cultural components of different religious systems. (Smith, 1974, p.1) Besides looking at syncretism as a mix of socio-cultural components of religious systems, it is used to describe the interaction between cultural and ethnic traditions (De la Torre & Martin, 2016). However, the mix of indigenous practices and catholic faith has been going on ever since the arrival of Columbus to the Americas. During this period religious syncretism was a manner to survive the forced conversion from the indigenous people towards Catholicism. Within academic spheres there has been a focus on researching this phenomenon in Afro-Brazilian context. Afro-Brazilians converted their deities into the images of Christian tradition, to be able to still worship them. It was a manner of surviving the dominance of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. To large extent this happened to other lands in Latin America too. Conversion was an important part of the colonial agenda. Mixing ancient rituals with catholic traditions thus was a logical mix of social-cultural components. Due to this mixture, religion and culture have been intertwined and its hard to distinguish the one from the other.

Concluding, this chapter tried to give an overview of the social system which is key towards the analysis of gender-based violence in Bolivia and its multiple oppressive intersections. It highlights the problematics of gender-based violence within Bolivian society and the measures which have been taken to combat this. Continuously, key actors within this gender inequality are discussed. Firstly, the stereotypes which are visible in both the Latin American and Bolivian context. Furthermore, it emphasises the colonial legacy of social stratification and ethnocentrism which influenced the concept

²¹ Aliaga, J., 2020. El Gobierno Interino De Bolivia Declara El Fin Al "Culto A La Personalidad" Y Borra Los Símbolos De Evo Morales. [online] Univision.com. Available at: <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/el-gobierno-interino-de-bolivia-declara-el-fin-al-culto-a-la-personalidad-y-borra-los-simbolos-de-evo-morales>

of racism within society. This focus on Eurocentrism has shifted since Evo Morales came into power. Although the indigenous character of Bolivia became the focus, women were still marginalised. In October/November protests emerged due to expected fraud on behalf of Evo Morales, he was forced to resign. Currently, Jeanine Añez is interim president of Bolivia. Together with her interim government, Christian discourses became more visible within Bolivian politics. In the following chapter I will use the base of this chapter: historical influence, dualism and religiosity to analyse challenges and empowerments in the work of organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence in Bolivia.

Analysis of challenges and empowerment's in the work on gender-based violence

Historical influence on gender-based violence

From the beginning of colonial time, the concept of social stratification was introduced, and this system was a manner of providing power relations which were at favour for the Spanish elites. Within this period, societies were centred around males. Before the Spanish arrived, many people believe that Bolivian society was based on equal gender notions. However, Anna (2020) argues that Bolivian society was already male-centred. It is with this historical influence that women have been missing from social life. Males have been centred of power. This is not only visible in the gender stereotypes which have been introduced earlier. It is visible in politics and religious institutions where men hold the positions of authority (Maria, 2020). It was only in 1952 when women were considered in politics, giving them the right to vote. Beside this, equality between men and women became official in the constitution of 1967. Due to this, women have not been getting access to education for a long period of time (Catherina, 2020).

The lack of education for women is something which hinders the work on gender-based violence. Men are pushed more to go study, in contrast to women (Catherina, 2020). This educational factor also plays a role in the internal structures which people learned during their period of life. These internal structures are another factor which difficult the work on gender-based violence (Adriana, 2020). Within this internal structures and education is the factor of tradition (Felipe, 2020). The idea of tradition holds back improvement on this topic. Because of the lower position of women throughout history and the lack of education, women have been marginalised within society. These power structures influence the concept of gender-based violence because they have been in power

for over decades. The past continues to influence the present, this is the case for gender-based violence too.

Dualism

From the colonial history onwards, Bolivian society had two identities: the indigenous identity and the Eurocentric identification. This duality between indigeneity and Eurocentric is reflected in Bolivian society. Juan (2020) elaborates on the fact that there are two Bolivia's. One is based on the Eurocentric point of view, where the process of egalitarianism is especially important nowadays. The other Bolivia is based on the indigenous identity. These different worlds interconnect at certain parts, such as culture and this is how the situation is complicated (Juan, 2020). Whereas the Eurocentric vision of gender stereotypes is based upon the Marianismo and Machismo, Andean Cosmology is based on the duality between women and men. The concept of Chachawarmi stands out. Chacha meaning men in Aymara and Warmi meaning women. It is a concept which notes the dualism of the relation between man and women. However, these gender stereotypes are embedded in the cultural notion of Bolivian indigeneity and to a lesser extent in the religious dimension of Aymara history (Anna, 2020). Due to this duality, the Andean world vision is often seen as more equal. Anna (2020) explains that although many people embrace the concept of Chachawarmi, of men and women being equal and having to live as pair, when you take a closer look you will see that the man holds the authority.

Since October/November 2019 this dualism became visible in the form of polarisation within Bolivian society. During the political crisis, in which Evo Morales resigned and Jeanine Añez became interim president, there has been a highly polarised environment visible with Bolivian society. Indigeneity have been referred to as satanic by Jeanine Añez, before becoming president²². Besides this, other racist discourses have been visible towards the indigenous population since the turbulent period of 2019.²³ The current political climate is highly polarised, and everything is politicalised, and racism is high (Juan, 2020). This polarisation and the division between indigenous and non-indigenous and the polarisation became visible when the minister of mining, Fernando Vásquez joked about how he could never belong to the Movimiento al socialismo (The political party of Evo Morales). He joked about how he did not meet the requirements for membership, as he had green eyes, fizzy hair and white toned skin.

²² <https://www.laprensagrafica.com/internacional/Estos-son-los-agresivos-tuits-contra-originarios-e-indigenas-que-borro-Jeanine-Anez-la-presidenta-de-Bolivia-20191116-0518.html>

²³ <https://www.telesurtv.net/news/caracter-racista-golpe-estado-bolivia-comunidad-indigena-20191113-0035.html>

²⁴ Besides this, terminology such as savage is commonly used within the political debate. ²⁵ This dimension of politicalisation within the polarisation of indigenous and non-indigenous shows the issue of race within Bolivian society.

Religious influence

Religious influence within Bolivian society goes back towards the Colonial period, in which Catholicism took over the entire continent. Maria (2020) explains how this religious notion is embedded in Bolivian history:

“People used to say I belonged to the parish. The parish was the geographical division of communities. It was a total mix, or the birth certificate did not really give you a civil registry in the rural area. The mix that is functions of the state and what are functions of the Catholic Church was completely mixed up for many centuries. It is difficult even today, for these to separate. That is why in Latin America we do not really have secular states. Although it is said in the Constitution, the weight of the Catholic Church is constitutive.”

The Catholic Church has profound influence on social service throughout Latin America (Maria, 2020). This emphasises the role of the church in politics, gaining power and influence. Recent years the conservative movements within Catholic and Protestant church have been growing and became more visible (Anna, 2020). This phenomenon is also emphasised by Juan (2020), who argues that there is a strong conservative movement. Often these evangelical churches are supported by North American organization which have a lot of money (Juan, 2020). These churches are mostly concerned with the concepts of sexual and reproductive rights and sexual diversity. One example is the platform of ‘Don’t interfere with my children’, where both Catholic and evangelical churches come together. They focus on the area of education because there is no education in Bolivia on sexuality and the case of gender (Isabel, 2020). Thus, the evangelical structures are more visible (Anna, 2020). Within the more traditional churches there are discourses which puts the man in the position of authority and the women in the position of submissive (Adriana, 2020). The Bible is they used as a form as authority, using it as an argumentation for the gender roles (Adriana, 2020).

This conservative movements, challenges the work of faith-based organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence. They emphasise the male as centre of power and family, together with stigmatising gender equality discourses religious movements have influence on working with gender-based violence (Juan, 2020). The faith-based organisations working on this topic however provide an

²⁴ <https://www.telesurtv.net/news/bolivia-nuevo-escandalo-gobierno-facto-racismo-ministro-20200531-0011.html>

²⁵ <https://www.efe.com/efe/america/politica/ministro-boliviano-llama-salvaje-a-evo-morales-y-le-acusa-de-genocidio/20000035-4144048>

alternative way of bible reading. Empowering women with their faith, emphasising the feminist theological approaches. These re-interpretations of the bible give space to talk about masculinity and, for example, the way Jesus treated his friends and family. Although all these efforts are mostly on grass-root level, the Bishops conference in Bolivia has made some steps towards. Every year a document is made which is the guideline for the entire Church in Bolivia. One of the guidelines is the support of women in all different aspects (Felipe, 2020). Besides the religious influence, Isabel (2020) argues that the promotion of separation between church and state also helps her organization in their work. This is because it facilitates a discussion on how human rights are mistreated and the serious problems affecting mostly women. Another interesting element within the fundamental religious churches, Juan (2020) argues that they often have financial support form North American organisations. These latter have bigger financial resources than organisations working against gender inequality and on the topic of gender-based violence.

Together with the new religious movement, the Catholic Church does not openly advocate for gender equality which can be seen in the fact that they don't argue that it's okay for people to use anti-conception measures (Anna, 2020). Besides this, the Catholic Church still openly argues that a family must welcome every child God grand them, however practically this gives problems because there is an economic limitation of how much children a family can raise (Anna, 2020). Moreover, religious organisations working on the topic of gender-based violence agree upon the oppressive factors of religion, which focuses on the guilt and sin (Isabel, 2020). Besides the oppressive characteristics of religion within the Bolivian context, there are some empowering characteristics of religion which are used by the organisations. Earlier, the Bishops conference was called upon and how the attention towards women's rights have been implemented (Felipe, 2020). Besides this, it is important to notice that working from the non-hierarchical structure helps the organisations working with gender-based violence (Isabel, 2020). Besides this, the notion of ecumenism has been regarded as an important approach (Adriana, 2020). Most importantly, religion is used as an empowering concept which recognises the oppressive mechanisms but also makes room for deconstruction. The overall idea if best put into context by Rosa (2020) God is love and God does not want mistreatments.

Furthermore, the effective knowledge on what gender-based violence is (Esperanza, 2020) and the fact that there is not enough police force to handle the amount of denounces does not work in favour of the organisations working on gender-based violence (Felipe, 2020). Impunity has been very high and only few police denounces are solved. On the 23rd of June 2020 the de women's collective Mujeres de Fuego announced that during the quarantine the complaints are minimised by the

authorities due to a lack of personnel.²⁶ However, the fact that there is a law which uses an intersectional vision of violence is one of the key positive things as well (Adriana, 2020). The availability of the law and of information about gender-based violence, such as statistics makes it easier to show the problematic issue of gender-based violence in society. Another important aspect which most organizations use is the ecumenical approach towards religion. The ecumenical approach refers towards working together with multiple forms of Christianity. It evolves around the unity of Christianity. Besides focusing on the ecumenical aspects which helps getting in touch with other religious movements and non-religious organizations, it helps that the Christian vocation is seen as peaceful (Juan, 2020).

Another important factor which helps the work of gender-based violence is put forward by Felipe (2020). He emphasises the importance of having a role model for women. He gives the example of Jeannine Añez as female president, but also the visibility of women in the Bible. This works again with building the self-esteem and the change of internal structure which allows women to value herself as equally important as men. It is important to note that these organizations all work from a faith-based perspective. Using religious methods together with human rights-based discourse to work on the topic of gender-based violence.

Although this thesis showed a lesser focus on power relations between faith-based organisations and their donor- or partner organisations in European countries, there are some best practices and challenges which are showed by the case study of Bolivia. Firstly, organisations need to be aware of the connection between gender-based violence and other oppressive mechanisms which are at state in the context where they work. Because oppressive mechanisms relate to each other, one needs to include this in their work. Focusing only on gender-based violence needs a broader perspective. Secondly, organisations need to be aware of their role in the unequal power relations which are at stake. Whenever a foreign non-governmental organization gives funds to smaller local organizations a certain kind of power structure comes in play. Therefore, awareness is important. Besides this, organizations need to take a critical look at their own internal structures before addressing gender-based violence. Organizations need to reflect the values they work on in other contexts in their own organization too. Thirdly, organisations need to not only take an intersectional approach when talking about gender-based violence but also in addressing it in terms of gender. Meaning, one need to not only focus on survivors of gender-based violence but also the perpetrators. This approach deals with

²⁶ <https://www.lostiempos.com/actualidad/pais/20200623/plantean-cuatro-medidas-mejorar-atencion-victimas>

de deconstructions of social structures and ideas. Consider that for many centuries these inequalities existed, it takes time to deconstruct this.

Lastly, 84% of this world identifies itself as religious.²⁷ Being religious is often seen as one of the cores of one's identity. Not addressing it in the work of gender-based violence is therefore a missed opportunity. The organizations in Bolivia show that religion can help in the deconstruction of oppressions and the empowerment of people. They provide a development not only on gender inequality but also on mental and spiritual level. Religion is often experienced as part of one's identity, when this concept is left out of the work on gender-based violence a part of one's identity is missing in the healing process. Also because of this, intersectionality does not only count in the combating of gender-based violence, it does so in the help provided which needs to be holistic.

Concluding, the intersectionality of the issue of gender-based violence in Bolivia is visible in two ways. Firstly, the intersectionality in the concept itself and the areas which influence the notion on gender-based violence. Secondly, in the way faith-based organizations combat the issue. It is important to place the problem of gender-based violence into a historical perspective. During the colonial period, social stratification became one of the key factors in society to put people in certain social boxes. This social stratification was based on ethnicity, ranging from indigenous population as bottom towards Spanish people as highest in hierarchical terms. Although there is no evidence that this social stratification has left its official mark, it is still visible. Besides this division in race, there was also the fact that women were inferior. This was something which transcended the social stratification. Although women who were Spanish did have a higher hierarchical position. Besides this stratification, women did not receive education, even as the lower social classes. In which the indigenous population was more visible. Eurocentric culture was "better" than the others. This played into the notion of ethnocentrism. Racism was thus already based on both gender and ethnicity. The male-centred was key to this. This social stratification explains why the rates of discrimination is higher amongst indigenous population (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2011). The influence of religion provided an emphasis on this equality by providing stereotypes of men and women. Men got education, women did not. The structures within the church were only accessible for men. In a society which is centred around males for centuries, it is not surprising that gender inequality is present. However, because of the internalisation of differences between men and women and the social stratification which left its marks, it is hard to combat this problem. It takes a change of mentality, and a restructuring of society. It is on this change of mentality where religion can play an empowering role.

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/27/religion-why-is-faith-growing-and-what-happens-next>

Conclusion

By analysing the problem of gender-based violence and the multiple oppressive mechanisms which lay at the core of this problem, this thesis has tried to show the importance of intersectionality in working on the topic of gender-based violence by focusing on the case study of Bolivia. By focusing on this intersectional approach, I tried to challenge the assumptions of development and religion being opposites to each other and religion having a negative influence on gender-based violence.

Firstly, the thesis gave insight in the concept of gender-based violence by emphasising the multiple forms of manifestation. It entails multiple forms such as symbolic, political, physical, psychological and cultural violence. Gender based violence is broad concept, which does not limit itself to stages of development. It is a universal concept, which cannot be a development issue. Besides the multiple forms of gender-based violence, other identity markers such as race, class and sexuality play part in the problematics too. This is outlined by Crenshaw (1991), who focuses on an intersectional approach towards the concept of gender-based violence. Besides this, gender has been influential within the development sector too. The development sector has long been focusing on the economical aspects of development, without taking an approach towards the social issues of development. Due to the Women's conference of Beijing in 1995 and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 1982, gender has been given a focus within the development sector. However, there has been critiques on this international focus too. These critiques both deal with the Eurocentric point of view which have been key towards the development sector. As a result, concepts such as post-development emerged, which focuses on a more holistic approach towards development. Although gender became visible within the development sector and intersections became important, religion has been marginalised within the development sector (Carbonnier, 2013; Ter Haar, 2011).

Secondly, the relation between religion and development is often portrayed as opposites ends. Development sector envisions a secularist approach, meaning religion belongs to the private sphere instead of its manifestation in public policies (Taylor, 2011; Gorski, 2013). However, religion and development have more in common than meets the eye. Both concepts focus on the poor, social exclusion and inequality (Ter Haar, 2011). Besides this, they both entail a vision of how the world should be and act in order to try and perceive this (Leer-Helgensen, 2020). Two important theological theories focus on this developmental approach, Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology. It is due to the latter, where the notion of gender plays an important role. Within the focus on Christianity, religion is often looked at suspicious because of the hierarchal system, the strong gender roles and dualism between women and men (Rakoczy, 2004). However, Feminist Theology argues how Christian

tradition has been male-centred and they argue the need to re-write this tradition (Schussler Fiorenza, 1975). Schussler Fiorenza argues how there is the need to look at the multiple oppressive mechanisms which are key to gender inequality. Therefore, she uses the concept of the Kyriarchal system. These systems do not only focus on the intersections discussed by Crenshaw (1991) but focuses on religion too. Continuously, it is within civil society where gender, religion and development find common ground. All three of these discourses have the power to create social change within society, positive or negative, and can do so from their own moral framework.

Thirdly, the case study of Bolivia tried to show the importance of taking an intersectional approach towards the problematics of gender-based violence. Gender based violence in Bolivia is significantly high on indigenous women (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2011). However, there are multiple intersections at play: indigenous women feel discriminated not only by their gender, but also on the basis of clothing and age (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2011). Measurements against gender-based violence have been taken by the government, especially with Law 348 which grants women a life free from violence. Within these legislative measurements, the Bolivian government uses the concept of violence as a very broad definition, ranging from cultural violence toward political violence. Although there has been a focus on combating this problem, impunity rates are very high, and there are an insufficient number of officials to deal with the denunciations. Besides the highly problematic nature of gender-based violence in Bolivia, which is visible through statistics, there are some spheres which influence this problem within Bolivian society. First, the gender concept of Marianismo and Machismo create an image of gender roles which creates stereotypes between men and women. These stereotypes focus on the women as mother and the men as head of the family. These stereotypes are visible throughout Latin America, however in Bolivian society there is also the indigenous vision of gender. This is visible within the concept of Chachawarmi. The duality between women and men and the idea that they complement each other. This duality of women and men is visible in other levels too, the societal level. Due to the colonial period, social stratification became visible within Bolivian society. A strict hierarchy, based on social aspects such as race has been influential. This social stratification empowered the division between indigenous and non-indigenous. Women within this colonial system have been historically marginalised. The social stratification used the concept of ethnocentrism to focus on the European identity as the standard. This standard changed when in 2006 Evo Morales became the first indigenous president of Bolivia. The focus on European identity shifted towards the indigenous identity of the country. This focus was visible within the new constitution of 2009, in which Bolivia became a plurinational state and the Wiphala became the official flag. Within this polarisation between indigenous and non-indigenous, men are still seen as the standard, privileged and authoritarians. The religious influence within Bolivia has emphasised gender inequality due to the

social influence of the Catholic Church and new conservative religious movements on topics such as reproductive rights. However, a new aspect of religious influence in Bolivia became visible within the period of October 2019, in which Evo Morales resigned and turbulence emerged within society. Not only did the polarisation between indigenous and non-indigenous become visible, religion as political tool became visible. The direct use of religious discourse, in which the stereotypes of men and women and the ideas about reproductive rights have been key, has given a new dimension towards fighting gender-based violence.

Lastly, this thesis focused on the intersections of gender-based violence and how religious organisations working on gender-based violence in Bolivia may see this as challenge or empowerments of their work. Most importantly, the historical marginalised of women influence the work of religious organisations due to the structural feeling of being of less value than men. Besides this, religion is used as an empowering concept to challenge the dominant ideas of structural inequality between women and men. With the use of re-reading the bible they challenge perceptions of being women and men and try to combat gender-based violence. Religious influence thus can be positive and negative: positive by focusing on the re-reading of the bible and the empowerment of women. Negative due to the conservative campaigns from conservative movements, which emphasise the gender stereotypes of being man or women.

Therefore, to answer the main question *“What is the relation between religion and gender-based violence within development?”*

The relation between religion and gender-based violence within development is based upon empowering and challenging characteristics. Therefore, there is the need to take an intersectional approach when looking at gender-based violence. At the core of gender based violence are unequal power relations which influence the multiple intersections at stake. Religion is often seen as oppressive, deepening the inequality between man and women. Despite the oppressive character of religion, there are theological theories who focus on the empowering character. Feminist theology and liberation theology has left its marks on the development sector in which faith-based organizations play a role. Both development and religious approach towards gender-based violence shape social norms and social actions. Religious discourses are not only seen in Bolivia with the presence of conservative religious movements, such as evangelical, but also with the high influence of the Catholic Church. Since the time of colonialism, the Catholic Church has had a strong influence in both social and political structure. Other religious discourses, which are used by faith-based organizations working on the topic of gender-based violence focus on theological theories which deal with oppression and social inequality. Most of them have an ecumenical discourse and use theological

theories such as feminist theology and the liberation theology. These organizations use the deconstruction of stereotypes, the reconstruction of biblical texts and focusing on the combination of human rights discourse and theology, to change the unequal gender relationship present in society. The development sector and religious organizations thus find common ground in their work against unequal relations and social exclusion. In Bolivia, faith-based organisations who work on gender-based violence, argue that education is key towards the deconstruction of oppressive mechanisms visible in society (Felipe, 2020). This awareness does not only affect the unequal power structure regarding gender but there is the need to place the problem of gender-based violence into context. Changing oppressive mechanisms such as gender inequality and therefore gender-based violence takes a change of mentality, and a restructuring of society.

To combat gender-based violence one need to look at factors such as race, ethnicity, economics, religion, sexuality, class, and other disabilities. This is not only relevant for organizations working on the topic in Bolivia, but also for international organizations working on gender-based violence. It is important to be aware of the contextual frame and the power relations your work adds towards the work on gender-based violence. Development agencies must take a critical look on their own internal structures, looking at diversity, power structures and divisions between gender. Further research on this topic can be done on the intersectionality in both the external and internal structures of development organizations, faith based or not. Besides research on this topic, organizations who work with the topic of gender-based violence need to be aware of the other unequal power mechanisms which are at stake in the country they work in. This is especially the case for European non-governmental organizations working in the context of non-Western countries. Besides this, these international organizations need to have a critical perspective on their international structures too. Working on gender-based violence asks active participation of the organization. The intersectionality of addressing gender-based violence must be for the concept of gender too. This relates towards the fact that combating gender-based violence means working with both the survivors and the perpetrators. Due to the complexity and the broadness of this thesis, lesser attention has been given to the relationship between donor organisations and faith based organisations in Bolivia. It is on this topic that more research can be conducted. Furthermore, specific research on the duality within Bolivian society and the role of the turbulent period of October/November 2019 would be another interesting research for future scholars.

More over, gender-based violence is not just gender-based violence. It is connected towards the broader notion of inequality. Inequality which has been present and can be traced back towards the countries as former coloniser and the countries former colonialist. This structural stratification of people based on gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and other concepts has been the way of holding one's power over the other. The structural, historical manners in which these oppressions are visible, come in to play in individual manners too. This privileged concept of individuals who profit from this system, and the ones who do not, becomes more and more visible. The multiple issues which are at stake is why we need to combat gender-based violence in an intersectional manner.

*"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives."*²⁸

²⁸ Audre Lorde, "Learning from the 60s," in *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches* by Audre Lorde (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2007), 138.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

Gender

1. How is the role of women and men portrayed in Bolivian society?
2. What characteristics are attached to this gender narratives?
3. How does your organization understand gender based violence?
4. Is there a difference between the gender narratives in indigenous and occidental society?
5. How does your organization tackle gender based violence?
6. What kind of activities are you organizing?

Religion

1. How is religion visible in Bolivian media/politics/public spheres?
2. How is religion represented in your organization?
3. What religious background do you have?
4. Are there any theological theories which lie at the core of your identity (of the organization)?
5. Which factors allows of obstacles an discussion about topics of gender based violence in churches?
6. Within the religious discourse, whom are allies in fighting gender based violence?

Political and social context

1. How are religion and gender visible in the recent social and political issues of November 2019?
2. How is this visible in the political sphere?
3. Does this influence your work?

The relation between gender and religion in the work sphere

1. On which parts do the narratives of religion and gender come together in your work of in society in general?
2. On which part do these concepts clash?
3. How does the situation of COVID-19 influences your work?
4. How is the reaction of other religious actors on gender based violence?

Appendix 2: Terms to analyse the interviews

Andean religiosity - Chachawarmi	Feminist Theology
Catholic Church	Dogmas
Ecumenically	Ownership
Grass root level	Male-centred
Inequality	Pluri-cultural/ indigenous
Submission	Secularism
Social division	Patriarchy
Morality	Machismo
Paternity	Authority
Deconstruction of society	Violence (in all its forms)
Social constructed	Tradition
Education	Religious discourse

Appendix 3: Interview transcripts

Interview 1

Name: Anna

Job: Part of feminist theological network

Date: 30-03-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

How is the role of women portrayed in Bolivian society?

I think that Bolivia has several cultures. It has a way of thinking about women that are always subordinated to men. Perhaps as the property of men, like we have not reached the age of majority. They think for us, they make decisions for us. This happens on a cultural and religious level. There are two essential and institutional forms that give justification to gender inequality. One has to do with culture and the other has to do with religion.

Religion is generally Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), where we have a sacred book and where this book, the Bible, is misread. These inequalities are produced in the churches. They watch over certain verses, certain biblical texts that are misogynist. Thinking that God speaks through those texts and women are relegated to only the private space and with a determined role. In the religious sphere violence is justified, especially symbolic violence.

The second form or source of violence is cultural. In the sense that this cosmivision, even though we sometimes think that our culture is very egalitarian, that we live complementarity, we live chachawarmi values. The last is an Aymara term, it refers to the fact that women and men always need to be together (as social subjects). Just as the cultural elements, the gods and all other things which are in pairs. It seems that, through its cultural principles, we are trying to make men and women equal, however, if you go a little deeper than what it tells you at first glance, you notice that in the community meeting that does not happen in reality. The woman does not have a voice in the decisions. They can go in some cases to the community meetings, husband, and wife. Nevertheless, the voice of authority in the decisions they make is the men. And very seldom do women get involved. Above all, women who have children are and are single mothers. They have fewer rights than women who have a partner within the community.

So, it is two institutions, on the one hand, culture and on the other hand, religion. We must continue working from the symbolic, from everything that gives meaning to our experience because our daily life is incubating inequality. So, there is quite a lot of inequality in the cultural and religious spheres.

Besides the cultural and religious sources of violence. What types of gender violence are most visible in Bolivian society?

For example, in politics there are equalitarian laws. A political party must incorporate fifty percent of women in its program of authorities and fifty percent men. However, the parties, which are generally reorganised by men. They are going to make the lists with the women, but behind a woman they put a male advisor. And at the end when the country's policies are being decided, those who are going to blow the whistle on the decisions that must be made are the male advisors. So, what is the quota of women within the political? Decisions are minimal because behind every woman you are going to be a man making the decisions. That is the political thing.

In the religious aspect. For example, in the Catholic Church. No matter how much we study theology, we could never agree to celebrate a mass. That is against an organization that is very much male-dominated. Culturally, I was grateful for chachawarmi. So, it seemed that, how nice cultures are, are egalitarian. However, there are several feminist thinkers who talk about the patriarchal connection. One of them argues that we want to romanticise our ancestral indigenous cultures. There is the defence that before the Spanish arrived, or the colonizers, our cultures were egalitarian. She denies all this, saying that our culture was already patriarchal, based on a social organisation that privileged men. This already existed before the colonial encounter with the colonizer. The Spanish came to our

country, to our lands, they also bring a patriarchal organization. Therefore, she speaks of the patriarchal connection, as a concept to define that in the encounter with the colonizer. Therefore, the colonizer and the colonized have brought patriarchal organizations. So, what this encounter has done is to deepen even more that inequality, that patriarchal organization. So, in the cultural sphere, this concept reaches me a lot and explains a lot because sometimes within our social spaces there are many who defend that no, we are not such a culture. Romantically, between families who say we are equal. When it does not happen that way. There is a sense of ownership by men towards women. So, when we cannot explain femicide, it is easy to see why this sense of ownership of women by men is present. Men feel that women are their property and when they want to raise their voices, claim rights, or separate themselves, that man will take their life. He will violate those women. Because it is the sense of belonging, of being owners, it is not going to be easy to get rid from conditions of inequality. So, there are several spaces where symbolic violence is shown, it is implemented within all the inhabitants.

In which spheres of society can one see the difficulties between religion and gender. Is it also in politics?

At the general level, women's daily experiences are marked by this inequality. I have already told you that at the religious level there are women who know more about theology than we will ever agree to be pastors or leaders of our own churches. Why? Because they have a feeling that no, only men can hold these positions. We cannot move forward. I was telling you that the policies of our country, with the new constitution in 2009, which has made the government of Evo Morales, it seemed that as I said he tried to do something at the level of public spaces in the question of authorities. So, the lists of the political parties are always going to include women because the law says so. However, this law, when it comes to cheating, has a saying: if the law tells you that 50% of the women on my list are women, but in the end they are not going to decide, they are not going to have an autonomous voice. And women who are removed from their political parties are because they can no longer tolerate this political violence. Also, from the organization of their political parties. At all levels, this violence is improperly projected in the daily experiences, that is why it is necessary to work at all levels. Above all, with curricula, minimum content, within schools and universities. Deconstructing certain cultural and religious patterns, because it is not helping to get a more egalitarian society and that is revealed in the figures of violence that we have in Bolivia. And many of these violent acts are committed by women believers' women believers who for many times have raised up violence in their homes, especially in the evangelical churches. There are several studies, researches, that tell you that the evangelical churches must show romantic images. We have a good life; we are the perfect couple. This couple has

no arguments, they do not fight, have wonderful children. All beautifully dressed, they are the typical evangelical Christian family. However, there is a tendency to hide from violence. Supposedly there are many women believers who think this is God's will. Men in their own religious discourses are saying 'ahhh the woman has to be submissive; Paul says so. Like there are Bible readings that you find in Paul. Misunderstood, they will tell you that women must be quiet and submissive. When you get married, you are read, not others who tell you men and women have the same equality. These verses of equality read you these verses that already rather patriarchal. And it tells you to feel like a woman that you always must be submissive, and you are going to have a perfect and Christian marriage. So, you have seen in these studies that there is a lot of tendencies to hide violence. The woman of faith is hardly going to denounce the violence that she has within her places. They put up with it and think that prayer is a way for God to intervene in their story. To save him, especially with the hope of her husband, she will change. So, that reveals some investigations. That is why it is necessary to work also within our churches, Catholic, evangelical, but also to work on reading these verses again, that is to say, there is another interpretation and not always the role of the woman is secondary. So, there is a lot of work to be done, I think.

Within Bolivia, within the churches, who are allied with this gender issue?

Women who have clicked. They tell it through workshops, through Bible re-readings. They replicate the discourses. We also have men, but in a small percentage. The young people when they learn to read other forms of the bible are also agents of change. People who first click on their own personal life and their life as a believer who will later replicate it to their peers. These new ways of being religious. This new way of having faith in the transcendence in the divine being, but no longer with categories of inequality. So, above all, I find that women are very sociable when we discover something. Women are among the change; young people are too. In some cases, men, it is very difficult for us, so we also have one or two allies.

There are also public, official reactions from some churches on this subject?

Yes, in general I think that there is religious respect for the Christian communities here in Bolivia. They are concerned about the cases of femicide and how I incorporated questions of equal beings. What they have done is to conduct a small project on the women of the Bible. How we recover the memory of the women who are present in the Bible. Many times, without a name, many times anonymous and how we reread them in our context. At the most Latin American level, they begin to denounce what is being done in the investigations that evangelical Christian women are the ones who hide most of their

daily violence. Because they want to make the world in which they are in perfectly married and that there is no further discussion. So, it has well started from Bible readings, attached feminist theology to promote feminist theologians in their readings to publish books that you have to see in this sense. This is on the Latin American level. There are several other national organizations in Chile, for example, in Peru. Theologians who have united to publish, to raise their voices, to make this problem visible. Two years ago, we started to show the symbolic violence within the churches. We did this with a study of inter-church violence in La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz where these women, leaders of the churches, have been recorded. Yes, we work, but if the one who decides is the pastor, the man. They do not make the violence they have visible, so it is good for them to organize themselves in this way. It is normal, so there is a lot of symbolic violence. From this study that we have done there came up workshops. The first has to do with symbolic violence. The second one is about feminist reading and the Bible. So, there are efforts, no, there are efforts of various institutions. In various ways we want to dismantle the religiousness that are patriarchal.

Is there visibility of changing political and social issues in this public political and social sphere?

Every time there is a conflict, I feel, for example, the conflict of October-November, we now have because of this coronavirus. I feel that every time there is a conflict the violence wants higher rates of cruelty. So, if you ask me if these efforts are already affecting the numbers, my answer is no. They are not influencing them.

There are many women who are locked up with their abusers. Girls locked up with their abusers. So as much as the government has put up a phone number for complaints. There are situations where you will not be able to report that you are convinced it is your fate. So, you do not leave these people with this awareness of what to report. There is still a lot of silent suffering, so it is a very slow work.

You use the feminist theology in your work, can you elaborate on this a bit more?

What I was telling you begins with an awareness of women believers in all Christian churches, including feminist theology of Islam and Judaism. All religions that are monotheistic, we have realized, implies violence and inequalities from their religious discourses. And from their holy books, be it the bible, be it the Quran, be it the Thora. These religions incubate the inequalities There is an awareness of women that has been developing since the seventies, more or less, this awareness that exists. This traditional theology has been written by men from their experiences and from their interests. Then

this conscience of women, what it tries, is to take inputs of the feminist theory in all its spots. From the suffragettes that fought for the vote, that is to say, we are political subjects, I told you at first to claim that we can vote. Then, we are social subjects, we can work. All these gradual struggles have also sprung up in the churches and religions. In the way that women believers also realise that this theology that you have developed over the centuries is male, from your experience as men. Then it is women who will say, I have another feeling. For me there is a contradiction, you have taught a masculine god, but I feel another tendency that can also be feminine. That I can also love myself as a woman. Or because we have forgotten the goddesses of our history because we only remember a god that seemed to be male. Because we talk about the patriarchies, where the materials are. You talk about prophets, but because you do not see the prophets. So that feminist theology is a theology of contradiction. That is, women who have experience of God, not from the male experience, but from their own bodies. Because they annulled women's sexuality in history. We have a Middle Ages in which women were loved. We have a Middle Ages that has said that sexuality is bad. We have a Catholic Church that, at the moment, in the middle of the 21st century, does not allow you to use a condom. And it wants you to have all the children that God gives you between families. What does that mean for a society in which you have economic limitations, in which you cannot create more than two children? Imagine having seven children. Who is in a position to get eight children? And the Catholic Church has not denounced; taking care of yourself is fine, using contraception is fine. They did not say. So, women, who are Catholics, must transcribe these dogmas and these mandates. Because we have no choice, women know from experience that it is impossible. The economy is not enough for you. However, what is being said in this dome of patriarchs of fathers, of bishops, of cardinals, do not consider this experience of women. From there it is necessary to take inputs from the feminist authority, recycle them from the religious, and there is where the feminist theology is born. As an axis, it has also been established in the same theology of liberation. When the liberation theology was born in the seventies, this of option for the poor. Feminist theology has also declared this for women. They are a poor object, doubly marginalized. One because we are women, the other because we do not have access to economies. We are owners of the land etc. So feminist theology is claiming all these rights of women believers to work from the religious

Is that also possible in the more indigenous religion?

This is from the cultural, not so much from the religious. For example, our ancestral cultures have few Christian elements and they have been mixed. You can feel that way in the religiosity of the ancestral ones. It is rather in institutional religions such as the Catholic churches.

Interview 2

Name: Maria

Job: Part of feminist theological network

Date: 31-03-2020, 09.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

In my organisation we are not only people who have studied theology. I am in the network of theologians by invitation as a leader of my church. The organisation had just started.

How do they understand gender-based violence? What types of gender-based violence are they working with? And how are you working

Within our mission the most important is feminist theology. Feminist theology is much broader than just the issue of gender violence. Although obviously, any feminism always starts from the recognition of the reality that is violent against women. So, it has kept the vision: Christian churches in Bolivia with gender justice, without violence, participatory, horizontal, ecumenical, plural, and diverse. That would be the vision. The mission: it is an ecumenical and sisterly collective made up of women theologians and church leaders in Bolivia. It produces biblical and theological reflection, celebrates faith, and advocates for church and social change. It denounces the patriarchy that justifies gender-based violence. So, if there is gender-based violence within the mission. But it is like, that is, I can see feminist theology for example that focuses on corporeality, the role of the body that does not necessarily speak of physical violence. Do you understand?

It can be a much more philosophical issue than a specific issue of one type or several types of gender-based violence.

And more generally, in Bolivian society, how are these roles of men and women represented? How is it different from Bolivian society and its work?

The criticism of our organisation is that we have not started with our activities yet. In the subject of feminism here are several feminist angles and theories. In this intersection with religion there is also a great diversity. Of people who make that criticism, let us say, of patriarchy. Feminists, as I understand it, those on the side or at the intersection of religion claim that women are God's creation. We are God's daughters, with equal value, let us say, in the creation of men. So, from that point I think it is the starting point mostly, the ones who write about feminist theology. The group would also be in that position, of criticizing these structures of male domination whether they are within the church. It is still somewhat difficult to develop, first of all, that critical stance. One of my colleagues is from an Angelical church when she read the project that I had written she told me but take away that churches are patriarchal because my church is not like that. In my church there is no gender violence. Then she says: we also have women pastors, that is, women pastors. Unlike the Catholic Church. So, I think that there is a lack of understanding that a church can have women pastors, as well as the Methodist, Lutheran, etc., but at the same time it can produce patriarchal patterns within its discourses, which we would call symbolic violence. You can be in the images or in the religious discourses that are reproduced, patterns of patriarchal power. Or also within their form of these structured for example in the Lutheran church it is also much more difficult for a woman to be ordained as a pastor than for a man. Even if they have the same studies, a degree in theology and more. That is what we call intra-church violence. That is not necessarily symbolic, but it is within an institution where men are privileged over women.

The two forms of violence would perhaps be the most important, the symbolic and the intra-church, for a group that are leading theologians.

Within the different churches, with whom you work, who are allied to these issues differ by church in each city. Are there any churches allied to this issue?

As I say, it has not started yet.

Perhaps more general about Bolivia?

Yes, it really depends. What we are trying to do is form groups at the grassroots level. We are not starting directly with church administrations. That is, worse within the Catholic Church, which is very large, we are not entering, through the ecumenical commissions of the archbishopric. Because simply

using the word feminist directly closes all the doors. And also, with the evangelical churches, especially the Pentecostals, they are completely closed. Even they, here in Bolivia there is not much understanding that it is ecumenical. Many people do not understand the word and of the many churches, of many churches both Catholic and Protestant believe that it is something outside the Church. They do not think it is part of their own discourse. So, it is very complicated and what we mostly do, is work and dialogue with grassroots groups to change the discourse from below. There the ones that open doors for us the most are the Lutherans and the Methodists. They have generally been more open. I even believe that it has a historical background that during the dictatorships of the seventies and eighties these churches have been part of the defenders of democracy. They were very much part of the movement against the dictatorships. So, they have a historical background that makes them open their doors to us, but not at the formal institutional level. It is not that we say a bishop of the Methodist Church, or the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia. We can work with their groups that they have and using their infrastructure, let us say their churches, their halls, to talk to the women of that parish. And, what if we are trying to make these events, which are going to take place, mixed. That is still difficult. Because the people obviously know each other and if you go, they say that I think I will do a workshop on Jesus in the new man, one of the themes. The masculinity of Jesus, we interpret it as non-hegemonic. But at the time of organizing the workshop, the place already defines the audience a bit. Mostly in a workshop you have pure Methodists, or in another all Lutherans or pure Catholics. Within the religious orders there is a lot of freedom, people can express other things that they do not express perhaps in the hierarchy. Our allies are not institutions. In the movement of Ni Una Menos, there are people who are interested in religion. We try to introduce those issues. It is to start from the other side, the non-religious. And rather from there, many of those people on a personal level if they belong to a church or have faith. Or they are just interested because they do not feel checked out in their respective churches anymore and have stopped going or are no longer participating. But they say if I am really interested in that, but the church is so patriarchal that I do not go anymore. So, it is like there that you are going to be the base for a group of lay people. Of people not affiliated with a church. That is more or less the picture, it is not in any way of formal alliances.

You have said that the people in the workshops are not mixing. But what are the factors that hinder this mixing of people. Is it because of the difference in religion?

In general Bolivia, among many political and social movements and discourses is very backward. So, the ecumenical discourse here has come very late and weak. That has several factors, one is that historical factor that the Catholic Church was a state religion until the 1930's. In 1904 it was the first

time that other churches could enter the country, hold worships, and defend themselves. So, the separation of the Catholic Church from the state has been slow historically and incomplete. The Catholic Church here, as in many countries in Latin America, has a very strong political and institutional weight. They have many benefits, they do not pay taxes, they are not treated as one church, among others. In our socialist government in recent years, it could not break that power that has been created through centuries.

Is this power of the Catholic Church visible?

It is highly visible, not only visible but also historically significant. Since five hundred years the Catholic Church, that you will also find in other countries like Venezuela and Colombia, where the church formed the state. People used to say I belonged to the parish. The parish was the geographical division of communities. It was a total mix, or the birth certificate did not really give you a civil registry in the rural area. The mix that is functions of the state and what are functions of the Catholic Church was completely mixed up for many centuries. It is very difficult even today, for these to separate. That is why in Latin America we do not really have secular states. Although it is said in the Constitution, in reality the weight of the Catholic Church is constitutive. That is where the evangelical churches come in, and their first struggle has been to be constituted as a church and to have the right to celebrate their own worship. So, when you talk to people from the Protestant churches, they mostly do not want much to do with the Catholic Church. Because they are afraid of this hegemonic power. Even today, for example, here in an ecumenical committee but what they organize for Catholics, and people a little bit older than that group think that they create that committee so that people from the Protestant churches will think about it and come back to the Catholic church. There is no real understanding of what ecumenical respect is. What is interesting is that the indigenous people always had an interfaith faith. Mixed with their indigenous or Amazonian spirituals before the Spanish arrived.

In these indigenous religions, is there also the issue of equality? Is it visible or is it not a thing that is problematic in the indigenous religions?

There is a lot written about Andean religiosity. In general, I would say that in the indigenous culture it is more egalitarian than the Hispanic culture that arrived with colonization. There is more female symbolism, there are more weights if you want to say it like that to female deities. To the maternal, the fertility, of the role traditionally given to women. From the importance from their value. But they are also very rigid, whether they give more value and more importance to the feminine part and more representation. In all the indigenous cultures, for example, the mother earth has a greater role. It is a

female deity concept, but also very rigid gender roles. Perhaps more rigid than the culture that came with the Europeans, because it is totally defined what a man does, what a woman does. What are their roles, then the face of age is more feminine, but at the same time more rigid? They do not accept that people get out of the gender role.

Interview 3

Name: Isabel

Job: Catholic Feminist Organisation

Date: 31-03-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

I am Isabel, I have a sociology degree from the university. I am a self-confident activist, a feminist for women's rights. I am responsible for the area of political advocacy. Our organization is a feminist organization that works for the rights of women and young people, above all. But with an emphasis on the sexual and reproductive rights of these populations. So, we obviously work at the political, social, and cultural levels.

How do you understand the concept of gender-based violence?

For us, gender-based violence comes from a profound inequality that exists in the social, historical, and political construction. From the situation and place that women occupy with respect to men. A place of inequality, of subordination and multiple discriminations. Therefore, from this perspective, we consider that violence is gender-based, or gender violence as it is called, is violence that responds to this patriarchal structure. But we also see it from a human rights perspective. That gender violence is one of the problems that most affects the internal world in all parts of our country, especially women. Therefore, it also affects children and adolescents from a generational point of view. Therefore, it is one of the problems that leads us to an absence of an effective exercise of women's rights.

So, how are women's and men's roles represented in Bolivian society? What are the stereotypes of these gender roles?

There are many of the stereotypes and forms of reproduction of these inequalities in relation to gender that are like the floor, the structural base, which often come about in violence. It is a society that we consider quite macho. That is to say that the expressions of precisely the patriarchy are very violent in the reason of the stereotypes. It comes from a symbolic violence, where all these stereotypes, with assigned roles still very strong, in the sexual division. Work, for example, is still quite prevalent. Although it has achieved in recent years in a more generational change some democracy of some gender roles for example with respect to the work of the house. However, it belongs very strongly in the thinking, in the ways of expressing, even the sense of humour still these roles and very marked stereotypes. But, in addition, it translates into discriminatory treatment. Still the right to be paid between men and women for the same work remains very strong. Obviously, the same violence due to gender shows us that in the statistics Bolivia is in the countries in the region with the highest rates of violence. If not that this violence above all produces against women. Among the stereotypes, these roles still, although the reality is something else, there is a stereotype of the male testator, as head of the family. The man makes sure the family has everything it needs, however, in Bolivia there are many single-parent places (many times they are women). There is a strong stereotype of the man as the head of the household and everything that that leads to this. Paternal authority is still strong in families. As the last voice of decisions or as the one who is really the boss. Another aspect that I think has to do with these stereotypes has to do with the religiosity of the people and the strength that they have. Religious thinking, especially Western thinking, with obviously male figures. The father god. The stereotypes that have come together by reproducing for women and for men. The good, self-

sacrificing woman and the authoritative father. That also has a strong religious origin and that is very present in our culture.

How can these two concepts be seen in the political or public sphere?

It is quite visible. Bolivia has a political state constitution since 2009 that characterizes the Bolivian state as a secular state. On the one hand, they admit, let us say, all the freedom of practices and beliefs and religious cosmology's but the state is independent of religion. It establishes this separation. Therefore, it is a secular state. However, in much public policy, not in politics, but rather in the speeches of authority, of the candidates. There are still many of these precepts that obviously come both from the source of religion, but also from the formation of a modern state with a single parent family as the basis of the still functioning society. In the last years we have observed a lot of vulnerabilities to the structure of/ at the beginning of the state in Bolivia. Because there are several proposals and there are several interferences from the religious positions. Above all, more fundamentalist, dogmatic, Christian positions that put themselves on the public stage in the treatment of certain themes. For example, it fights a lot against sexual and gender diversities. So, by saying that they are normal, it is not nature, it is not God's plan. There is also a link between religion and nature. Both religion and nature are established as normal. So, it puts in the plan of unnatural and abnormal. Thus, the theme of sin is added. We have had political speeches from some religious fundamentalist candidate, attending events like sin. For example, last year, during the electoral process, one candidate referred to a large fire in the Chiquitina area, he said it was because of the sins of homosexuals (or gender diversity). So, there is a lot of association with what should be the ideal of values around the family, life, and sexualities especially in relation to religion. So, this is linked to public policy. So, this same candidate has been proposed to return to a republic, no longer public as in a plurinational state, but to return to a Christian republic. Also, the treatment of some normative changes that we saw in religious discourse. For example, a few years ago, in 2017, the law of gender identity was introduced in Bolivia. Which is an administrative law that transgender people can change their name. This law has been challenged by religious fundamentalist groups before the Constitutional Court and has been found unconstitutional.

Within these different churches, some are against the gender related issues, but who are the allies?

I think there are some aspects to the churches and religious inscriptions that are quite variable.

Traditionally, because of the colonial process, you know, the Catholic Church has had and continues to

have a strong historical, cultural, and social influence. There are still 70% of people who consider themselves to be Catholic, although there are not necessarily people who are totally practicing. It is more like a title of affiliation, to be determined to a church. Another significant percentage, which was calculated at 30%, are self-controlled evangelical Christians. Within that there is a lot of difference because the Catholic Church is no longer the official religion of the state since 2009. This institution has a lot of power, especially in some areas of action and social work that they have. And in the area of education, health, they have quite a presence with educational and health services. They also have quite a lot of political power at certain times. In recent crisis conflicts, the Catholic Church has always presented itself as a mediator for dialogue in social and political conflicts. So, they have their weight. They maintain some privileges in the Bolivian regulations, for example they do not pay taxes. Because they have a special treatment. The Bolivian state has also ratified agreements with the Vatican and the Catholic Church precisely for these collaborations. So, the Catholic Church has its weight. However, in recent years it has never developed a single position on paying for gender equality. Although they do support many gender equalities programmes. However, for two issues that are really at stake let us say this issue of morality if joined with other evangelical churches. These are two issues that have to do with gender and equal rights. One is abortion, free and safe. Where both the Catholic Church and the evangelical churches are colloquially opposed to it. They fight for the respect/right of a life from conception. They obviously also obstruct this access. For example, in Bolivia abortion is legal on two grounds: when it is the result of rape (incest) or for health reasons when it is a risk to the woman's health or life. However, in these cases, many times even in cases of raped girls or adolescents, the churches hinder this access. The other point where it is found with respect to sexual gender diversities is in its position of equal civil marriage between persons of the same sex and adoption of children. Because they are considered unnatural etc. In Bolivia for years they have joined together to form the platforms for life and family where allies, evangelical churches and also Catholic churches and other Christian forms participate. Now, however, they do not have the discourses, which are much more dogmatic and fundamentalist, even bordering on discrimination. There are some churches that are evangelical in name, but they are more of a Neo-Pentecostal kind. They come from that matrix. And they have organized a platform/campaign called 'Don't interfere with my children'. They fight a lot in the field of education, because in the field of education they do not put education about sexuality. They do not talk about sexual and gender diversity issues. Obviously, they do not talk about the issue of legal abortion etc. So, there are alliances, but also at certain key moments, about the nine penal condom system in Bolivia, where some causes for legal abortion were raised. They studied allies to reject this modification. Was the regulation approved with this revision, but it lasted a month and then it was approved? The whole law. That it had been proven. The government did that because of other pressures that had to do with other social conflicts. But the campaign that these platforms have

carried out, there have been protest marches. These more fundamentalist neo-Pentecostal groups, they collected signatures etc. But the Catholic Church is less fundamentalist, in the sense of achieving the rights of other people

How are the reactions of these churches perceived in society?

I think there is also a social divide in perception. There are very conservative people precisely because of this religious tradition and the religiosity they have. You can support these movements because of their religious history. Above all, you see younger people who do not accept all these discourses because they are really discriminatory. There is a double perception: it is a conservative society and these discourses can silence these feelings a lot. But, in addition, the neo-Pentecostals use false discourses in their campaigns. They do not give complete information. They take advantage of many people who do not know how to deal with these issues and the problems around them. They justify gender violence, naturalize unequal relationships between men and women. That is conservative thinking in religious thought. For example, that campaign 'don't mess with my kids' embarrasses a sense that parents should have the right to choose how their children are raised. That girls are girls and therefore they should not be confused in their gender and sexual identity. Then, just from these senses where many people are transcribed, but they do not know either the intention of discrimination that these contents have. But there are also other groups that are dissidents of these discourses, everything has to do with the younger population.

And within your work, what are the factors that facilitate this discussion of this topic?

I think that the factors that facilitate this discussion for us, well we work on the defence and promotion of laicism. The factors that facilitate us is that in Bolivia on the formal basis in human rights and development also criticizes as a social transformation from multiculturalism is something that also socially has ended people. Therefore, I believe that it is a factor that, if it facilitates this discussion or power to realize how these fundamentalist anti-rights discourses go backwards towards democracy, the guarantee of human rights, etc. This I think is a fundamental factor. Another factor that helps us to demonstrate in this discussion is the serious problems that we have in terms of the lack of human rights guarantees, especially those affecting women. The violence, the sexual violence specifically that also in Bolivia has horrifying indexes. Femicide is also the problem of this absence of sexual and reproductive rights, and even comprehensive education for sexuality. We have some cases of higher rates of teenage pregnancy. Thus, adding several equalities to the labour and economic level for

women. All these problems are the best arguments to show how elusive all these discourses are and how necessary it is to deepen the subject of equality and rights.

One more factor has to do with freedom of belief and religion. Because, although it makes us difficult as the subject of laicism. It is precisely because many people and many of these religious discourses make us see the subject of laicism as patriotism. Or anti-religious.

So, it is more like religion versus non-religiosity?

If it has to do with freedom of religion.

You have said that your organisation is a feminist organisation. What theological theories are important for the identity?

We have an identity to be self-catholic, but from the dissidence before the hierarchy let us say. So, we work from the perspective of feminist theology and there are various aspects that help us or that support or provide arguments. One of them has to do with the moral authority of women to make their own decisions. About autonomy over their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction. This is one of the precepts we use. Another has to do with freedom of conscience, which is one of the conditions of the Catholic religion as such. That is to say, if one does or does not make decisions or act in an unconscious way that is not necessarily to translate into decisions that go against God's will. Therefore, this accompaniment from the conscience row, in the decision making, is another of the arguments we use. As the church develops, specifically to its own theology we are catholic if we mark it within another type of analysis in the feminist theology. Not everything in the Bible is literal, it must be understood in its historical, socio-political, and cultural context of its time. And biblical interpretation, not only the biblical text but also the reading of the Church itself, the various elements also in order to highlight the patriarchal origin of the Church itself. So that is another element that helped us theologically and to emphasize the need for equal participation. Other sources, let us say, are the economic rights themselves, which the Catholic Church has, especially the sisters in Mexico. So, we emphasize that there are norms within the Church that exculpate from a serious sin due to conditions of conscience or freedom to make certain decisions, such as abortion. We then use those narratives that the Catholic Church itself has, such as canon law, to show that these validate the freedom of conscience and the use of this conscience in relation to the faith to make decisions before being qualified in guilt in sin. Guilt and sin are one of the forms of submission from women to their religiosity. So also understand the guilt and sin of these other dimensions that have to do with the depth of faith in conscience and freedom.

Interview 4

Name: Adriana

Job: Part of theological network, pastor

Date: 02-04-2020, 09.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

Hi, I am Adriana and pastor of a Pentecostal church. In previous work, I was working with these Catholic, evangelical faith communities for the formation of church leaders. And we also prepared material for children and young people in schools, educational units to work on the issue of gender-based violence, masculinity, and this work as we did for 3 years by teenage teachers. Then we are working with a network of women theologians and there we also work from the faith communities. I

work with people from churches, women, and men. Sometimes I also write some articles for publications and share some contributions in some of the readings. Now I am coordinating the community advocacy project. It is a joint project where eight organizations from the whole group work to make symbolic violence visible. We generally work with the most visible violence, physical, sexual. But we believe that invisible violence is also covered up in phrases, speeches, jokes, from society, in the home, family, when they play a joke on you or when it comes out that you are a woman and responsible for what society puts women through as a work role. Just because you are a woman. And because of the church, in the communities of faith, through religious discourses, and again in the media that women also come as an object for publicity.

In this work what factors facilitate this discussion on this gender issue?

As I said, visible violence concerns us and there is information that facilitates this. There is information about femicide, the family, and child abuse. That facilitates and also that people have information. Society is informed. One thing is that they are informed, but the other thing is that the practice. The practice of solidarity within the family is another thing. But there is information, there are laws that favour our work, not only destroy, but also point out violence. But also, that they indicate the access, about where to go when you need help. But it is not always the case that people are able to report this to the police. Women are not happy to make a report. This denunciation when there is no justice to be executed. So, it facilitates that there is information, that there are spaces to denounce, there are organisations that work in favour of the most vulnerable groups. But it is not always equal to the possibilities that diminish violence against women. We continue to live in a very macho society, where men and the churches are privileged, as are the communities of faith, through their discourses. So, I think that we have work to do; violence has not diminished. Although there is a lot of information, there are workshops, there are various manifestations of art, drawings, theatre. We are working each organization in different spaces, different methodologies.

What theological theories do you use in your work?

In the more fundamentalist churches, or in most of them let us say, for example, there are discourses that say that the man is the boss and that the woman submits to his authority. Without many explanations what it means to be the head, authority, our idea of power is to submit. The idea of society, or practice. There is a belief in the family where someone has the power and the decision. In the biblical texts that are used where women are placed in a role of submission, they then favour what society historically places in the lives of men (power, decision making). Being a dominion is also the story of creation. There is no talk of equality within a family, a couple. It is about an inheritance. This is

quite common in the hierarchical churches, where the pastors, etc. have the authority. And also, in the use of the bible in a way that suits their purposes. They give each other support: God said so. And in the churches, these are accepted, without a reflection, it is also forming of oppression for women in the Communities of Faith.

What theories are important for the identity of your organisation?

We work with the feminist theory of liberation. In that there are principles, a reinterpretation of the Bible that help us with those texts that are oppressive. That is not common, theological weeklies do not often teach or are afraid to teach, less are they practiced. It is not the original one and it is not always worked on.

How are women represented in Bolivian society?

Gender based violence is not only seen in physical and sexual violence. It manifests itself in the fear of being in the street, in the fear of making one's own decisions. In many cases, it is also expressed in the subordination of their jobs, which they are paid to do. Not so visible, unstructured. But you are still a skilled professional, often as a second-class person. They could choose a man and not a woman. The decision taxes. Discrimination against a woman who is pregnant, even though the law says that you cannot discriminate in your job, there are people who do not want to take on the rights of work. They want a young person without commitment or a man. In families where there is physical violence, there is fear. There are ways to show that everything is fine. It is not about freedom.

There are many laws on this subject. What do you need to do more to get results?

I think we have to keep making it clear that if there are laws. Not only that they indicate these types of violence. It is expressed. Sometimes the same officials who should apply it, do not recognize it. We need to embrace it, must speak about it. Not only to women, to men I think that the work of awareness is of empowerment is not more by women of organizations must include men and young people. Then it is a slower work, perhaps a deconstruction of our way of thinking, of the way we have been educated. To a new way of being like men, that is why the community works on masculinities. Working with young men who are in that time of forming families, sharing in the school or university with other people, other women and other institutions make public incidences. Working with public officials and making an impact on other media, communication, other spaces to speak. I think it is at all levels: training, advocacy, impact advocacy.

How is this reaction perceived by the Methodist, Evangelical, Lutheran, and Catholic churches within Gender based violence?

Few would be open to reflection or are ecumenical, it shows an openness. The work we have done in recent years, the churches that you mentioned not as a general organisation but as groups we have an openness to do the work. Some spaces in the Catholic churches, fortunately with the basic Christian communities, have meaning with the youth, with the groups, spaces to work on the theme. Openly in Methodist churches are not allowed. It is not that at the general level they can obtain an option with an alignment of working in favour of gender. Sometimes there are people, leaders who are more open, there are changes. Sometimes these spaces are also closed, the ecumenical openness is not strong in Bolivia. The majority is more conservative, more fundamentalist, more closed. I still believe that we have to continue working, and not allow ourselves to be limited by these things.

In what way does the situation of COVID-19 influence the work of Gender Based Violence?

I think that this time of being at home favours families that have good relationships, are balanced in their relationship with others. But it is a danger for women who live in constant violence, verbal, physical and psychological aggression. After the emergency is over, physical, and emotional health is affected. Men in our society are more used to getting out of the street, outside the house. To be closed then they will reinforce this division of roles. Men go to watch TV and again women do the most work. At any moment they can be in a situation of screaming, of violence. Because if it affects them emotionally, they cannot go out. I think it is a danger for women, because they should not report it, or they cannot get out or make calls. There are no accessible means to go out, to escape.

Interview 5

Name: Caterina

Job: Theological network

Date: 03-04-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

My name is Caterina. I am a nun, and I joined this network last year. I joined because in the last few years they have been developing a little bit, or so, of feminist theology, of the ecumenical. Women have been left in the background so that is why I find it important to work on this topic.

What types of activities are you organizing?

As a team we are developing some workshops, for now not because of the virus situation. Ecumenical workshops with women. We are on our way, but everything happens a bit slower in Bolivia to the question of gender.

How is the role of women represented?

I am going to speak from the town of my region where I live, which I know. At the social level, we could have the vision of a matriarch. The woman is that she works, that she runs the economy. But which is also in the church, the big decisions, and also in politics, there are no women. She is the one who works, who drives, who supports. But later, at the public level, women are left in the background. There are women in politics, in social organizations, but it is not for all the work that is done here. Physical work, relationships, but then when I take the big decisions she is not there.

And religion, is it also so visible in Bolivian society?

The path of faith, and the process, is for women. But the same thing, in the structure, it is the men. It is a strong issue because when it comes to making decisions, it stays there. The leadership is in the background. They are not in the big decisions. The church is a macho, patriarchal. So, by making it super hard, we try to get in. Right there, the masses are all over the media. There are no women, only men.

How is this reaction of churches perceived in VBG society?

I think the feminist theology and the ideal is a church of equals. I think it is desired, but on the other hand society is also silent. Because there is a century-long formation, that the situation is like this, it is justified because the religious of man. Therefore, as a believer it is accepted. It is accepted that women have become dependent and in a position of exclusion. I accompany a group of women; we arrive at the point of this position of second place. It costs a lot because they accept it. You have always lived; it is hard to discuss it. An argument could mean losing communion. So, the communion stays a lot therefore because of the structure. In the other Methodist churches etc., it is the same conversation. In the end it is the same, even though I am a pastor you have to wait longer to get this title. Although the man can have it in 2 years. For women it is more demanding.

Is there one type of GBV you work with more than another? Ecclesial and social?

Bolivia is one of the countries in Latin America that has more to do with the issue of femicide. So, that reflects this situation of gender violence, which is strong. And there is a resistance because of course women have been coming out to the public world. There is a strong violence. In the last few months that we have been at home, in quarantine, there was already a case of femicide. The president has given an instruction of this situation, saying that men will be punished if at this moment of staying at home, they are badly treating their women.

It is in the churches too. Therefore, your word does not have much force, they do not have it, if there is violence. I feel that in our churches there is violence. Because they shut you up, because you have to accept decisions that you do not agree with. Or it takes you to the margin, it is like being outside. For example, they still force you to become a priest. That is violence. And nobody stops it. That they force you to be subjected to it. In the way you do the bowing etc. In things that are very violent.

What are the factors that facilitate or hinder this discussion within faith communities or churches?

One of the factors that limit us. I teach with novices, young people, always the same. One is the factor of formation/education. We women have centuries of not having access to formation, to study. Studying theology, the Bible, etc. Libraries have been much more limited; women have not given priority. Communities, of all kinds, but to the work of being exercise, to help. Yes, there has been more focus on women to work, to service, than to formation. That still exists in many communities. I see it, even in our churches, because it depends a lot on the pastor. Also, we have experience in the community that we lived for several years because we did not have to be a priest. So why can't we

prepare a speech? For that you need to study. So, the man has had more position to access, he has more years of study. Another is the way we operate within the community. This attitude is also one of submission, of submissiveness, of humility. This image of the woman who has to be silent because she has to speak. In the evangelical communities he does not realize that. There is an image, a stereotype of the woman who is perceived as struggling in many places. This also means that we do not develop self-esteem, a capacity for dialogue. Access to the word. I consider that too, I realize, everyone talks, but the one who closes the speech, closes the conversation in many places is a man. We women accept this. Another factor is tradition as well. That it is difficult to break with some traditions that exist.

With your organisation you use feminist theory, how do you practice it?

This recognition of the woman's line, of equity, equality. This is also true for the reading of the word. Reading that allows us to look more deeply. Not to stay only with what you have said in the text. Therefore, it is the need to look more from the woman's perspective. There are methods that are made. For example, reading the biblical text in another way. But that is a very slow process, you need to change in your head. We all have mental structures that have formed us.

Are there any social or political issues where you can see this mixture of politics and religion?

Here in Bolivia when the government fell, there was pressure, even some religious symbolism. One has been from the bible, to put it as something magical. Both Catholic and evangelical. Also, the cross, the image of the virgin. In politics, the religious has been used, especially in the days of protest, when the government of Evo Morales fell. Later on, there are also countries in Latin America, including Bolivia, that continue to give this religious discourse in politics. To put the word out as to support even decisions they are making. For me this is something new because, not only for Evo Morales, but also in other countries. Well, we have a separated church and state, but we are going back. There are several governments in Latin America that have governments with ties to the evangelical or Catholic churches. There is also a politician who is evangelical. It is about sin etc. I am not surprised, no. That today, centuries ago, we go back.

So, these narratives, how do they influence your work?

For one it is worrying, because one realizes that there is a manipulation on one side and there is ignorance on the other side. People believe it. They believe in a god of salvation. There is influence

that since the new government, things are going to be more religious. They are not going to be independent of the church. That is worrying, on the one hand. That means they do not have the right to practice their own faith, to manifest it. I was a professor at a university that was Catholic, they never said, but their practice was ethical according to their religion. The discourse is about ethics, a religious discourse, but they do not bring in ethics. For me to be influenced: there is a religious discourse, but not necessarily an ethical one.

How do you work in this situation of COVID-19? Are there actions in the media?

At least here in Bolivia, as I said before, the president has information on television where to call. The neighbourhood council, I am on the neighbourhood council's WhatsApp. They also report on any cases, where to go in case of violence. There are some psychologists who are helping on social networks also for people who are suffering violence. In my organisation there is someone with a psychological program, she is connected to our organisation. In my place where I live it is not strong, but in uphill there is more alcohol etc. They cannot go out, that also generates attention. Many people live in little rooms, they live with 5 people. Many people do not have a patio, it is the street which allows them to get outside the house.

Interview 6

Name: Felipe

Job: Father, working with faith communities

Date: 02-04-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

I am Father Felipe; I work with ecclesial Christian communities. It is a work of supporting women and the theme of non-violence. Violence against women in Bolivia is very strong. Right now, the issue of quarantine and violence, and so we are working on some workshops at the level of young people from adults on issues of non-violence. We are also working with an Aymara organization in the countryside and indigenous Aymara women.

How do you understand gender-based violence as a concept in your work?

In Bolivia, a law was passed on gender-based violence, but what we do is socialise it. We socialise it; we work with it. But we realise that we must not only work with women, but also with men. Because the aggressor in principle, in general, is a man. So, there is no point in working with a law for women, which gives them their rights as far as they are concerned. But truly the transformation must come from the side of the aggressor, of course. What we are working on is the law with men and women.

What kind of activities are you organizing?

The activities are workshops, with dynamics, with talks, with presentations. We make an analysis of the reality, of the news. Then there is a very nice part that is in coordination with another organisation, with them we worked on the whole theme of 'the role of women in the Bible'. We have to emphasize the importance of implanting in the churches, perhaps sometimes we forget a little bit, the important role of women. From there, their self-esteem is raised. It must be said that women see that next to history there were many great women, who had gone a long way. So that too, their self-esteem and models where they can reflect themselves.

Within these workshops, what are the factors that facilitate and hinder a discussion about GBV?

The main obstacle is the traditional one. Bolivia, the world, is very macho. And that is, let us say, "in our blood". The first obstacle in the issue of violence is the attitude of women. That attitude of I am a woman. When you are born here in Bolivia and you are a man, they celebrate more, you are a woman: not so much. That attitude of being a man is already like a list. And being a woman also brings with it the conditions and training. So, women have all these stereotypes, they have to take care of the house, take care of your family, etc. That they are total sexists. Those phrases that you are a woman have to endure. And that is what I break, that is how I break the internal structures of education. That here in Bolivia you are born. For example, the subject of cleaning. You have to clean the house, it is the woman, it is a clear stereotype. So, the woman herself is an obstacle in the way she is sometimes structured, and the man is also clear in his setting. The man in this position, as more of power. A position of being a man and here I sent the house to him. The first thing in the workshops that counts is to break that figure. There is a very beautiful dynamic that is made, is simulation, of situations of mistreatment. And the same goes for what young people also see that figures are present today. The workshops are not only with adults, they are with young people too.

So, there are facilitating factors as well?

Yes. For example, we young people already see a change. For example, for me it is very important that women have access to education. It is important because in Bolivia it is not like in Europe. In Europe, you know no, the university has even more women than men. Here in Bolivia recently, these last years, there has been an access to university. Before, university was a privilege for the rich, let us say. In the last ten years women are attending. So that is changing, education is changing. That women feel more empowered. They have studies, a degree because in Bolivia it weighs heavily on the degree. So now they are with a very important factor, the new generation that is more educated.

How is this change expressed? Is it present in the public sphere or the political?

Yes, of course, for example, we have a female president. In all of Bolivia's history there are only two female presidents, formerly Lidia Gueiler Tejada and now Jeanine Añez. That is why it is an important change that women are growing into political office. The same goes for the church. Women are slowly paving the way. It will change when women take these positions. Sometimes I think that decision making is important to me. That women have access to decision-making in different institutions, spheres and so on. For me this is one of the important aspects of education and there are figures in which women are more present, have more voice than before they did not have this.

In your work, do you use some theological theories or some biblical texts that are important for the identity of ecclesial communities?

In the communities it is beautiful to see them, as the base is the family. So, from there it is very nice because they are structures like that again from being the most structured churches, but in the groups, I work with it is more like the community. So, to make community is there, it is a concept of all of us being equal. Not so much from the top down, it is the base of the people, in the first concept it is not that. It is not a concept of a demand structure but of equality. So, for me the structure of this more beautiful, you cannot see it in the structures. How many the concepts of equality and from the base, from below, is not the line of power. Perhaps more important, we see it in the participants. We

carry in it, this as they say, the count. In these workshops that we are doing and the women, very ostentatious, what they participate in. The role of women, in number, is very broad. Also, in the ecclesial communities' women mean less. In the communities the internal part is structured to always analyse the reality; from seeing to acting. So, the analysis is in this line of equality; we all talk, we all coordinate, there is no power.

So, it is not like the institutional church?

Yes, let us say that the church as an institution on the subject of the priest etc., then it does make decisions as it comes relatively. However, with this communities it is another reality, even the priest, is a guide only. A guide. But he is not the different one, he is an assembly, they meet, and everybody talks.

Are there reactions from other religious movements? How do they respond to your work?

What we do is based on alliances. There is an image of a very macho church etc. But the reality is different. So, when we have the covenants which is a very nice job. coordinating etc. I think a lot depends on the person. A person who is more open to dialogue depends a lot on the attitude of the person who is in charge. To be able to make these alliances, these relationships, without fear of sharing, to get together to work. By working hard, which is ecumenism, we are working hard. Above all, we are working with the Protestant Church and the Catholic Church. Let us say that they have made a lot of progress in this area.

How has this mixture of religion and gender become visible in Bolivian society today? In social/political issues?

From the part I am working on, the Catholic Church, there in the bishops' conference has taken a number of steps, which are the approaches and guidelines. The approaches and guidelines are a document that it produces during a whole year. And you are going to be the line that the whole church in Bolivia has to work on. One of the lines is the support to women in the different aspects. And above all it is a work to defend her, to fight against violence. That is a very big change that appears within the approaches and guidelines as a priority. It did not seem that way before. It is important to see the reality then of many bishops who have as their idea of the defence of women, the theme of changing this violence. There are the speeches, in the approaches and guidelines, but

also in the work with the workshops. And then there are the speeches of the bishops who are more authorities, who deal with these themes in their congresses and families. For me this is a step forward.

And more generally in Bolivia in the case of politics, is there also more attention for this topic?

At the political level there was a campaign called "not one less". Let us say that, at the political level, importance is given to the façade, but at the political level not to the level of making it practical. There were some advertising campaigns in the streets, on television. But it does not materialize. It is missing. For example, there is a law, but it does not have a support in the police institutions and so on. We have socialized a law, but when they go to denounce there are not enough people to work with those cases. 10 thousand complaints, only 800 cases go forward. So, it clashes. There is a campaign, but at the level of other institutions. The police and the judiciary are clashing because they do not make it easy for the law to go ahead.

How does the situation of COVID-19 influence the work on GBV?

First of all, to express a very big concern. Imagine, you are in quarantine and the abuser is with the victim in the house. Quarantine is a difficult situation. Then more to a there are situations of poverty, or lack of life economy. They will resort to conflict situations, for example, femicide. The issue is that we are being confronted with messages that the victims who are at home with the abuser are in a horrible situation. If they talked, they sent emails, a telephone support. That is not enough. A very hard reality. There is a lack of planning on this issue.

Interview 7

Name: Juan

Job: Theological Institute

Date: 06-04-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

My name is Juan, I am a theologian and anthropologist by training. Currently I work as the rector of a Theological Institute. Which is an instance of principle formation, of theological education, sciences of religion at the superior technical level which is like a bachelor here in Bolivia.

How are the roles of women and men represented in Bolivian society?

This is a question with many aspects. In general, Bolivia is also undergoing historical changes. So, normally from the most anthropological and sociological theory there was a lot of discussion about the resistance in at least two different Bolivia. So, in a Bolivia it would be just like Western culture, or more like European culture. Where one is within a process of egalitarianism, let us say of relations. There is a process of feminine liberation as well. Quite marked in the urban centres. This process is normally always linked to civil organizations that promote this change. That nevertheless also have their particularities. It is quite a lot, this process that is going on at this level. In this Bolivia, the relations between men and women, these roles of women and men, I think they are in a change, of the liberation, of the participation of women. This knowledge of women in society. This is, on the one hand, a Bolivia that would be more linked to the indigenous peoples. That is where the situation becomes much more complicated. To explain this, the concept of chachawarmi, is to be a person. Chachawarmi says that you have to see as a couple. You have to be married and live as a couple. That living as a couple would already be part of the cultural relationship of this other Bolivia. There are moments in history when we do not detect that these two Bolivia's have argued as well, which is better. For example, you can see in the processes of the 90's when there was an opening towards culture and there was a process of popularity. That of the popular in Bolivia was very interesting. There was a family value that came out precisely, that reached quite a lot of urban areas. On the indigenous side they also saw very well, which has been very cool, a phenomenon there that has used the perception of the indigenous peoples in this theme of churches that many that make neo-Pentecostals, especially those that do mission in rural areas. In this case of the family, there is a movement 'with my family don't interfere'. Many churches, very conservative, support this model, which has used chachawarmi to another type of worldview. It also has to do with political positions, which is very different in rural areas than in centralised Bolivia.

Have they become more visible on social and political issues?

If recently, especially since the government of Evo Morales, there is much discussion about the respect of, especially the first years of government 2006-2011, because it was time to change the

political constitution. So there has been a lot of discussion and electoral production. And a lot of movements have seemed like specific positions. Right now, the current situation we are in, we are living in a time of revanchism, many middle- and upper-class spaces where indigenous culture can be found through reason. This is precisely the problem with the current government, which has been in office since the shift of power and there are no new elections coming up due to COVID-19. It has brought out two problems in Bolivia that I think are fundamental to understand Bolivia: it is totally politicized and there is a very strong racism. So, it is mediated by this racism, coloniality is very strong. And they make it visible from these years of politics, but I also find it interesting that there is also discussion within the indigenous communities. That sometimes is not reflected in the more academic field or social networks.

How do you work with this problem?

Yes, my organisation has been working on this issue for 25 years, and this gender approach has been in place since its inception. What is a transversal axis? It is precisely because of the work done over several years that the difficulty of seeing this issue in rural areas was noted. And that this happened because of something intercultural. So fundamentally the axis of us is that, the principle of interculturality. And for example, with the Methodist church, which is a church that has a presence in all the departments, in that sense they have a women's ministry. This was a lot of work that we did because the churches, as I was saying, have consolidated a conservative division. And in this sense, the Methodist church and the Lutheran church are not just because of our work, because of the theological formation, etc. In fact, we are working with school children as well, who are in school. In this sense, the particularity of this approach, which we call masculinity, is that they contribute to intercultural dialogue. In this sense, the particularity of our work and our partners is that they contribute to intercultural dialogue.

What factors facilitate and hinder this discussion of GBV?

In principle, how could we outline it is... In principle it is quite positive, the Christian vocation, which is in the spaces. But also, being a space of theological formation, it always takes from this angle. This Christian vocation is peaceful, it is also progressive, and it always facilitates these readings of spaces. That is something positive that they facilitate. What makes it difficult for us is that it was done there, from this moment, there are organizations/churches with a lot of financing that are promoting these conservative visions of the family. Sometimes they are supported by North American churches, which these visions they have usually want to stigmatize. They want to talk if they talk about something natural, even about (for example, in our case) centrist pastoring. The figure of the pastor as the only

authoritative voice in the whole church. Normally the role of the woman is always reached. And there not only physical violence but especially symbolic violence. That we could structure in both ecclesial and civil society spaces but also in concrete actions of the pastors especially where the power of the churches is concentrated.

So, you are also working with these different types of gender-based violence?

Yes, exactly. We work with a new project which is about masculinity. We are sharing and this is the one where the quarantine comes in.

When you are working on this issue of masculinity, what kinds of theological theories are you using?

We mainly work on the basis of male role deconstruction. As a general framework. That is what we are doing with biblical interpretations that we have always worked on to biblical reinterpretations. From the suspicious theory, biblical feminist. We are applying the role of the male. At this moment we have an investigation of biblical reinterpretations. It is precisely from these themes that we are working. We are with materials that we made some years ago, which was no longer so much theological but more of social theory. Now we are in the process of doing the research and developing new materials for the workshops.

Is there also a difference between working in the indigenous peoples and the Euro-centric peoples?

If there is a lot of difference, it is very noticeable. Always the good thing about working with both spaces, especially with women, is the openness to dialogue. There is a great openness to these issues. But usually within their own structures on a topic that is almost closed, they almost do not want to touch. With our organisation it is a great opening, that is very valuable, normally it is very difficult to bring the two together. Let us say spaces of indigenous organizations with spaces of Christian organizations in an institutional way. Because they have made the people, the concrete subjects, sisters, and brothers, they are on both sides. That helps a lot because people already understand that these issues are problems that drag them down and that they need a lot of support to be able to go about absorbing the problems.

What is the reaction of people in society to these conservative narratives in the public sphere?

It is in vogue today. It is a growing phenomenon; it is strong yes. It is complicated for us really. Then the whole ecumenical, progressive, social movement. What happened to the theory of liberation in all of Latin America? We are entering a moment of crisis. Bolivian society is apparently experiencing a very large growth of these movements which are more fundamental. But this year we campaigned for new students in spaces of these types, more fundamentalist churches. We see that, in many times, especially in the urban spheres that many people do not know about our work. I did not know how it would work out, but it was very successful. We have the biggest new student numbers in the existence of our organisation. These new young people are coming in, let us say. There is a sense that they will feel that Christianity is not just about being conservative. Because there comes a time when many young people identify that being Christian is not being conservative. So, we see that there is also restlessness. Our speciality is the study of theology with these perspectives: ecumenical, intercultural, with a gender perspective. It seems to be a scandal for fundamentalist pastors who have the media, they have these colleges and universities as well, where they do not give theology. I believe that in all of Latin America there is an ally of these fundamentalist churches.

How does staying home with the virus influence your work?

The foundation of the organisation is theology and religious studies classes. We meet various groups while theology classes are for people who are studying at the professional level. The outreach programs, workshops we give to various groups. We think that in April we will resume. The churches have also stopped, it is a total quarantine. They are digital. We are also in a state where we are waiting for it to happen and as a community we are concerned. What is specific to Bolivia is that we are at an inopportune political moment. A moment for no good. We are with a government that has not been for the people. So, it makes for a lot of problems at once. Of course, the Andean culture, all of this, is responding in a very interesting way. For example, in Oruro society, they had eight and now they are at five. That is where the infection started with the woman from Italy in Bolivia. They are still going down. We find that very interesting. We are formulating more academic texts that we work on.

Interview 8

Name: Rosa

Job: Therapeutic centre against GBV

Date: 14-04-2020, 11.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

What types of violence are you working with?

We work in different cities, the themes are different, but almost everything is about violence. Violence or trafficking is also the basis of gender-based violence. Reparation for harm, the violence suffered by women, adolescents, boys and girls, victims of violence. But besides working with women, we also work with men.

Can you give examples of your activity in the therapeutic centre?

We work with everything that goes into repairing the damage to women. From two points of view or support: the therapeutic intervention includes social work and the area of psychology. Social work takes care of everything that means social treatment, to identify the issue of violence in the woman is. Many times, they have it naturalized, so they work with tools where they can identify. They work with tools that they can use to identify. They can see and decide I am living this. Suddenly, sometimes it is the issue of sexual violence itself, because of their right to be a couple. Many times, they think they have the right to use it. It is necessary to make them see it; they can go to identification to work with women. Once you have worked with the social part, with the identification or treatment, the psychology area is the only one to read about it. In the area of psychology is where they work with more direct, intimate things. With the process more therapy, individual. So, it is more profound. Both are supported by the intervention of the therapeutic centre. We also work with children, children of mothers, they are sometimes the most victims or punished of violence. We work in the same way. But the work is more with the adults. During the woman's visit to the therapy centre, the man continues to mistreat her. So that follows from working with masculinity to working with men. It is about this issue of giving education by aggressors, as they have learned to be male. That allowed the man, because he mistreats, what has been the construction of his own gender. It helped us a lot to make

them understand what they are living through. We have already considered that; the treatment is more in a couple. But that continues to work first this the individual person because that a learned form that has had of being man and being woman. So, we do not suddenly take the people or the couple themselves because first we work with the individual part of each one of them. It is to deconstruct a form, which they have, what it means to be a man or a woman.

What are factors that facilitate or hinder this conversation about GBV?

In fact, male chauvinism. It is still controlled by the women who go to the therapy centre. That is why it is complicated to work this construction process in pairs. Working with the abusers, for example, they are convinced that what they are doing is right. It is their social mandates that they have learned, so it is complicated they sometimes do not let them out. Or they have found some change in them. Because you are like this, because you have changed. Because she is empowered. Suddenly the machismo is still there. Some of the women have economic dependence, emotional dependence. A still persist within them. There are many things, that more than anything, the situation has been learned. How they have built me as a woman, how they say I should be as a woman. But in reality, they are not like that. So, these processes of learning must be deconstructed. It is not easy. People's willingness to believe that they can make changes in their lives also does a lot. When people do not want to change, or men in this case do not want to change, if the person recognizes that he or she is a generator of violence, they change. The same times are not so long ago. It is better to do the therapeutic situations with the whole family. That is why I have always had very positive situations.

In your work more generally, are there some theological theories which are important for the identity?

We are part of a congregation. If in any way as a foundation we are made if we have the charism of them. We, as staff, share it with the people. We do not close it from the Catholic Church, we do not close it for people who do not have the Catholic identity. We also work with people, from women pastors, who say: yes, but the bible says that. We work with the phrase: God is love and love does not mean mistreatment. So, we do have a little bit of this religiosity in the therapy centre.

How does this situation influence COVID-19's work?

That is a problem for everyone in the world. We make our activity in a direct way, our interventions from one person to another. It is difficult to do that intervention. Because the cases actually, the telephone, addresses are in the offices. Working from our homes is very complicated. But that has not limited us. We also have the possibility of working with the women's support groups at WhatsApp. So, through WhatsApp you can connect when something happens. There are 4 support groups, they cannot help all the people who need it, who are in individual processes. So, it was difficult. At the general level, we are making materials, to support them, to make them see, sending phone numbers, messages. They can connect with the networks. That is what we are doing at the moment. The administrative department is obviously working with Skype, zoom etc. We cannot get there like that, but it does not limit us.

Interview 9

Name: Esperanza

Job: Institute on women's rights

Date: 07-04-2020, 09.00 (local time in Bolivia), online

Language: Spanish

My name is Esperanza. I am an indigenous woman who was born with native Andean roots on behalf of my parents. The institution I work for is a feminist institution, whose work logic is centred on the defence of women's rights, individual and collective women's rights. It has a vision of the search for a more just society for women. It is based on the economic, personal, and political empowerment of women. We are working on three strategic lines. The first is in the area of violence prevention. This is the programme I work on and it has two or three strong points from this first strategic line. First, we are in the framework of providing a comprehensive, legal, psychological service to women victims of violence. That is centred on this initial empowerment of personal empowerment. We also work with

women as a very strong strategy that we have as community promoters that is the result of the first work that is done in the service of care that recovers women, survivors of violence, so that these women can contribute and support other women. The work of these promoters is now divided into three areas, from detection to accompaniment. The second is the interaction of the community through the development of informative workshops on gender, self-esteem, Law 348, the political constitution of the state, human rights, and sexual violence. Also, sexuality as a theme that we have and that in addition its third pillar of the promoters this to develop actions of control (the police, legal services etc.) Has a very close intervention with everything what they do in the benefit of services. It has a very close involvement with everything they do in the provision of services. This is also the result of our services. In this context, we propose that violence is not something that occurs in couples, but rather is something that is visible in a marriage, etc. The naturalization of violence.

The group of brigadistas also has 3 pillars. Then they also have this interaction as I told you to be able to support other adolescents. But they handle the family issue very strongly. The relations in the family and from where it begins to break to the channels of communication between parents and children. Another thing is that we do social mobilization, we have a radio program, street theatre, etc. Then this same component leads to work with public conservatives, there is a lack of institutionally in the care services. We have to repeat national and international standards. It is to improve the quality of the services, part of the justice operators. To work also with the emotional part. That is the second line of strategy. Another one has to do with the empowerment and economic autonomy of women. This is a process of developing technical capacity. It implies improving their dignity in order to break certain structures within their families. This integral formation. Improving women's economic income, but also that women respect this right. The third component has to do with political empowerment. To be active citizenship. It is not only about physical violence, it is about health, education, employment. It is about depatriarchalizing. Working with young women, from social organizations, working with them to make them participate.

Each of these strategic lines, violence, economic and political, as we have stopped from the national regulations to somehow legitimize our demands. For example, in the case of violence we handle very strongly what is the implementation of law 348.

Also, in politics we work with law 243, which is the law against violence and political harassment. It is the triangulation that we move. We know that we can generate an agenda. That is the work that is done at the institutional level. We are involved in social and political advocacy. That is the scenario in which we work.

When you are working with these activities or also with the political, what are the factors that facilitate or hinder this discussion on this topic?

I think there is something very important to consider when you do an analysis. That is not only in Bolivia, but also at the international level. What happened, we have less speeches and more resources. Bolivia at this moment is characterized as one of the countries with the most national regulations in favour of women's rights. But the issue of oppression is that it has the greatest visibility. You only do and say like this, we understand the problem: here is the norm and now let us see. But the national government is not going to execute it, it is the local departments. So, there is a budgetary situation in the face of this need. At the normative level, a destination of ten percent of our idea has been defined, and five percent at the municipal level to strengthen services. But there is no understanding of how to investigate the best way to provide services. There is a political will just to calm down certain needs, but there is no political will to make the regulations operational. We do have a law, but the number of cases of femicide continues to increase. Last year 24 women were murdered just because they asked for family assistance. Most of the women we call ourselves are in a productive age, the phenomenon that most of the women are young women who have been killed. Moreover, precisely because we are talking more about violence as such in the private sphere. Last year a ministry was set up which deals with patriarchal society etc. But they have no resources. The situation of the elections has brought a lot of instability to the work. There, these changes of government have stabilized all the regulations that are raised, delegitimised.

There is no specific violence prevention strategy. In other words, to talk about violence prevention is to feel that as it treats workshops and we are already. Law 348 establishes three lines of strategy. Prevention is dealt with by the entire state apparatus, community prevention and has to work with individualized prevention. In the way we go down, we repair the damage done to women in order to return to society. So, this has not yet been consolidated. There is a bad operation of the normative, the answer of the instances is not there. That has to do with the operator of the service that has your case of violence. He has not disrupted his view of the problem. The point of violence is in people's way of thinking. We are sometimes the filter of how we apply the norm, but unfortunately, as long as we do not deconstruct, we do not see how to generate change. This is not only for women in situations, but also for their own families. So, I think that is what it is all about. Our main barriers are within the one established in the patriarchal system, taking advantage of your culture, your education. Of other traditional components that do. Here in Bolivia I loved the prestige of having a partner. It does not matter how you are living, but it matters a lot that you have someone.

Also, the patriarchal system has to do, even to the religion that is a very strong component and barrier, here in Bolivia the evangelical tendency has begun. Here in Bolivia the evangelical tendency has begun. The evangelical, to the point of faith, for example, has many cases of sexual violence. I do not have any data.

Is it more visible in recent years?

Sure, it is a matter of saying. It is how the church handles it, the point of forgiveness for its aggressors is serious. Invisibles from the bible for example what they are using for the father role. This drives very hard. There have been cases of pastors denouncing churches that have committed sexual violence. One example is the case of a girl named Ariana. She was raised by a family of evangelicals. Her adoption father, a pastor of a church, has committed sexual violence against her for seven years. Until she got pregnant. He says that the care is not only to give her food, but emotionally and sexually too. These are things that are given. Above all, they transcend in peri-urban places. There are thousands of reports that have started to come out. All these churches, it is like an offer: who does the most miracles etc. It is a lucrative aspect. It is related to the social stratum. If you do not have a cultural or religious component, it is educational. Teaching you to keep the relationship together. So that is one thing. The other thing is that there is a very strong tendency towards patriarchy that only makes this issue of domestic violence against women visible. Before we make it visible, there is other violence that women experience in other spaces and other systems. She told you, for example, about the issue of sexual violence, but it is linked to the exercise of sexual rights, of your reproductive rights. Religion has a very strong role there. We have had a very strong dispute in Bolivia with the decriminalization of abortion. Above all, with cases of sexual violence, 11-year-old girls who have been raped... The other thing is the job. But only to earn the same for the same job. But also, the work that the woman does in the house, which is not valued. The children's remains and so on. It is not recognized. Political violence, there is a resistance to implement the regulations because it is considered that women are in a privileged space. They work in the political arena, so they think that with this they can solve their problems. Women who work in the political sphere do not work by themselves. They are not themselves. They are like puppets with independence. There is a lot of absence of them in the issue of rights. The cultural, educational, religious factors that really exist are the patriarchy they know how to use.

How is it influenced by COVID-19?

Yes, what I was saying. We are concerned about certain questions regarding the policies of humanitarian aid that the government has advanced for the publication of, let us say, more vulnerable. They are helping all the women who are pregnant or those who receive the bonus. It is for the families that the man works with for the state. But there are many women who become pregnant on an ongoing basis to ensure that their husband has a job. That is also an issue of violence as well. So are these bonus benefits. The patriarchal state still recognizes that you are a subject of rights when you are a mother. But it goes when you are not a mother, but a new mother discussing vouchers. We are getting into questions of depth. People need food. The poverty levels at the top are very high, there has been a lot of growth in the last few years. That is where I am talking about single mothers. We are doing a solidarity campaign for them. There are no safety and security measures.