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*Lights and Shadows of the Education Reform Process  
in Bolivia and Guatemala”*

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*Lights and Shadows of the Education Reform Process*  
*in Bolivia and Guatemala*

by

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Abstract

*Lights and Shadows of the Education Reform Process*

*in Bolivia and Guatemala*

by

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Bolivia and Guatemala experienced a process of education reform in late 90's. Even though both countries had great international support to eliminate inequalities, especially among indigenous peoples, the domestic political contexts determined to what extent such changes were possible to make. In Bolivia the process started in 1994 with the signing of the Reform Law of Education, and in Guatemala in 1996 with the signing of the Peace Agreements. After more than two decades Bolivia and Guatemala present very different outcomes derived from their respective education reforms. This study is a comparison of them, an attempt to unveil the reasons why Bolivia has moved forward in terms of diversity, indigenous languages, and inclusion while Guatemala has apparently nullified the education reform process and remains in authoritarianism.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

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### *About the author*

I am a result of the Guatemalan educational system. Every time I have gone to the classrooms and listened to a lecture, witnessed discrimination within the schools or attested to authoritarian pedagogical practices, I remember myself being in the same classrooms and gone through similar situations not too many years ago. Even though more than 20 years have passed by, the system remains being the same: discriminatory, exclusionary and elitist. Early in my life I easily fit into the scholarly routine, most of my background and memories about primary school are related not only to my good academic success but also to discrimination in two senses: for being a woman and for my indigenous heritage.

One of the most touching experiences I had during my fieldwork was in the school of Warisata (Bolivia), when the school's principal introduced me to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. He gave a little speech about my fieldwork in Bolivia and highlighted the fact that I was studying in an American university at the graduate level. Even when he did not intend to make the students feel bad, I believe his speech left a hostile atmosphere and a feeling of desolation in the students' minds, considering that it is virtually impossible for most of them to even think about going to a public university in La Paz (the nearest city to Warisata). Even though the gap between them and myself was apparently huge at that precise moment, the truth is that less than ten years ago I was one of them.

In Guatemala, and most Latin American countries, the opportunities of social mobility given by the educational system are very few. In my case, I had to break not only economic boundaries, given the fact that I come from a working class family, but



also social obstacles that stigmatize women as housewives; home keepers whose only goal in life should be to get married, raise children and take care of their husbands. In the social imagination there is no right for a woman to be independent, or a professional in any area. In my case, even when in my school I won a social space for being a good student, very few people saw a future for me, even within my family: their expectations about me were to get married and have a family of my own.

Such struggle was clearly visible when upon reaching the age of eighteen I decided to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. I had to face increasing discontent and disagreement for spending time in the university as well as constant criticism and questions about the real future of my career. From their point of view, I was wasting my time because once I got married my profession would be over. Only my father, whose real expectations of professional success were first focused on my brother, supported my desire to continue studying. Such encouragement increased significantly when my brother quit his education and asked my parents not to insist on him continuing. During the five years I spent at the university, my career was a refuge and an inspiration for fighting the social structures, stereotypes, and pre-conceived roles imposed on me. Through my readings, explanations, social theories and the understanding I developed of the social system, I learned about inequalities in Guatemala and I could understand that my family was only reproducing a whole system of exclusion that had excluded them in the past and was excluding me now as well. Such understanding opened my mind to my parents' actions. I learned how to deal with those problems and even when they did not stop, I learned how to overcome my own fears and encourage myself to continue fighting with such ideas and boundaries.

I think my family was relieved when I finished my Bachelor's degree and I know they were not exactly happy when I told them that I was coming to study in the U.S. The process, however, changed their point of view about women's rights and particularly me. I cannot tell when exactly they changed their point of view but I know that now they are more open to support my younger sister in whatever she wants for her own life. I understand now that, with my effort, I broke a system of beliefs that tried to stop me. I opened my family's eyes to a new way of understanding women, independence and education. Somehow it also helps me to heal, I forgave them and claimed my liberty of action through the process, which, I believe, required a dose of rebellion and, another one of agency. Still, when I remember what I went through I can assure that it was not easy at the beginning and still it is not easy to describe what happened. To break boundaries is a continuous process and the system is so complex that you never finish breaking them. Education to me has meant a possibility to understand the world we in which we live. It has also helped me to shape my identity, form a new way of thinking of myself and analyze the social circumstances that surround women. But I have also understood that the shortcomings of the educational system are so deep that allow very few people to open their eyes to the reality we live in. Sadly I realize that my effort to get away from inequalities have only worked to legitimize a system that utilizes my example (and the example of others too) to consolidate and reproduce itself. A deep change in the educational system is needed and that is my main inspiration: to research and find ways to provoke such a change.

### *About the research project*

*“Dicen “educación para todos”, pero educación de calidad... esa es solo para pocos” (interviewed)*

The main goal of this research is to develop an analysis and a detailed picture of the current status of educational reform processes in Bolivia and Guatemala in two stages: (1) the proposals of public policies and (2) processes of dialogue-negotiation between the different political actors. The purpose is to compare each particular case and contrast them in order to understand similarities and differences between both, highlighting the particularities in each sociopolitical context. Such a comparison will allow understanding of sociopolitical circumstances that encourage or discourage processes of structural changes in policies related to bilingual education, multiculturalism and teacher training. The first concern of this research is to understand social processes of participation, the actors involved on the development of the education reform process and the levels of inclusion in both countries. Revealing the configuration of the political forces behind the policy making: participant and nonparticipant groups along with factors and conditions that explain their presence or absence in the dialogue. Unfolding the ramifications of power in each one of the actors involved in the policy making process in order to create a map of their influences which will help explain the direction of the policies and predominance of ideas on them. This study would endeavor to disclose the complexities of promoting change in education at the national level.

Secondly this research seeks to dig deep into the results of such processes of dialogue and negotiation, which are the proposals of education reform. Delving into the factors and conditions that, promoted by the process of dialogue, consolidate either a transformative or superficially transformative change of the educational systems in

Bolivia and Guatemala. Evaluating the levels of inclusion in themes and specific demands from civil society and indigenous people in education to public policies at the national or regional level. Finally, it seeks to promote a debate about inequalities through the educational system: to what extent the proposals re-defining education would eliminate or not the inequalities and discrimination or if they open to a new way of understanding the educational system. I will explore the proposals' basic concepts and explanation of education to understand their direction and their understanding of the role of education opening new ways of knowledge or reproducing given ideas along with the impact that would have at the society level.

The realization of this research is significant in the theoretical and empirical level. An analysis of both education reform processes Bolivia and Guatemala can help to understand the differences between them and give room to extend the discussion about similar processes in Latin America. There are very few studies written comparing Bolivia and Guatemala and even fewer have studied issues of education reform processes. The elaboration of this research is a starting point to understand reform processes that have started under similar sociopolitical characteristics in other countries. These experiences of reform can help to identify contrasts between the political theory and its practice. Because Bolivia and Guatemala are examples of cultural diversity, their experiences help to explain multiculturalism inside societies and how it can increase or decrease the opportunity of agreements in favor of the construction of a plurinational state. The elaboration of this research can also help to understand the roles of political actors through an education reform process and how they can build a context that promotes or hinders such a process. Since education reform processes are happening concurrently and

need to be reinforced for committed academics that may provide theoretical feedback and help for creating the tools that are needed by social authorities. A comparison between both countries might allow, at the empirical level, to provide tools that may be useful for the implementation of the process to the classrooms. Looking beyond the analysis of education reform this research seeks to make a reflexive critique of the sociopolitical contexts of both countries and to reveal the political platform in which educational changes are located.

***Methodology: Comparing cases of study***

Given the nature of the research a study of two specific cases, Bolivia and Guatemala, the researcher uses a comparative method. In social sciences, *'the method of systematic comparative illustration'* is what social scientists traditional have called the *comparative method* (Ragin 1987). The comparative method attends to configuration of conditions; it is used to determine the different combination of conditions associated with specific outcomes or processes (ibid). This research attempts to follow the main characteristic of the method, which is not to follow samples or populations, but relevant instances of the phenomenon and combinations of conditions that produce a given result. Such methodology is characterized by a pluralistic approach, centered not only in the comparison of countries, but also on subsystems, cultures, groups, policies and people (May 2001). The advantages of using a comparative method lie on the combination of conditions to address questions concerning to the consequences of specific factors. Explanations that result from the comparative method may contain interpretive accounts of the particularity of one or more deviating cases, highlighting the particularities of each case and propose explanations of irregularities given. The comparative method forces the

investigator to become familiar with the cases relevant to the analysis, examining each case directly and comparing each case with all other relevant cases. (Ragin 1987)

This research is strategically case oriented, using a methodology that takes into consideration the historical background of both instances and analyzes causal mechanisms. The goal of case oriented investigation is often both historically interpretative and causally analytical (Ragin 1987), using historical outcomes or sets of comparable outcomes by piecing evidence together in a manner sensitive to historical chronology and offering limited historical generalizations which are sensitive to contexts. Case oriented research often aspires to understand or interpret specific cases because of their intrinsic value, which reaches limited generalizations concerning the causes of theoretically defined categories of empirical phenomena common to a set of cases. (Ragin 1987)

In early sociological work Wright Mills used the ‘method of agreement’, which basically consists in finding causes (variable dependent) of a given phenomenon. The application of the method is straightforward: *if an investigator wants to know the cause of a certain phenomenon, he or she should first identifies instances of the phenomenon and then attempts to determine what circumstances invariably precede it's appearance* (Ragin 1987). In comparative studies such a principle is followed and complemented with the process of elimination, which is used to discard those cases that do not present the same conditions until finding one that meets the basic comparison principles. Essentially, the method of agreement is a search for patterns of invariance with different outcomes to be examined so that the main cause of difference can be studied and analyzed.

In this study, the complexities of sociopolitical currents in these countries, Bolivia and Guatemala, along with the differences in characteristics between them, give a particularly interesting background for research. Since the object of study is policy dynamics the investigator uses two main techniques of collecting data and information (documentary research and semi-structured interviews) as well as notes taken in the field to complement them. During the process the investigator has paid special attention to those characteristics of the process that are constant in both cases (period of time, education laws, international context and commitment to education), which allows outline of a guide for analysis and comparison. Establishing a common background for both cases was important, but the investigator also tries to highlight the differences and particularities of each country in order to find the causes of different outcomes in the process.

In order to collect empirical data and information I spent two summers (from middle May to the end of August 2012-2013) in the field during my first and second academic years. I split the time between both summers: the first one (2012) I went to Bolivia for three months and stayed in La Paz for half of the time. The other half of the summer I spent in conferences, indigenous meetings, interviewing people in the country and visiting CEPOS. The second summer (2013) I went to Guatemala for two months and stayed most of the time in Guatemala City, where most of the policy is written. The remaining month I again visited La Paz, Bolivia, and stayed there the entire time. The purpose of this second visit was to observe changes in the policy or attempts of implementation as well as completing data that might be incomplete or missing from the first fieldwork visit. Most of the data presented in this study comes from public and semi-

public institutions strongly committed to education in different areas such as bilingual education, teaching careers, international aid, etc. The purpose was to present a diverse point of view of policy through interviewing school administrators, researchers, indigenous leaders and activists in both countries. I was also involved in conferences, organized dialogues and other activities related to my research topic in both countries<sup>1</sup>.

I did documentary research on the one hand, which consisted in the collection of documentation, reports, institutional plans, published research, systematization of experiences and other types of bibliography that engage in the reconstruction of the historical background related to the process of education reform and policy making in Bolivia and Guatemala. The purpose of such activity was to build a framework that would help me to establish a more complete view of the sociopolitical context in which the education reform takes place. In addition, the activity provided the opportunity to identify and create networks with the principal political actors that have promoted the reform over years. During the process I also had the opportunity to understand the role of such institutions and their importance at the policy making level. This technique also gave me the opportunity to understand the structure of such institutions and help me correctly identify the best people to approach in order to gain as much knowledge possible of the political situation in both countries.

Along with the documentary research I did semi-structured interviews conducted with people in the main positions in the different institutions visited, key political players

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<sup>1</sup> I also visited, very lightly, some schools experiencing changes related to the implementation of education reform process, in both rural and urban areas of both countries. I did also interviews to some teachers and principals of the schools. Such activities were not scheduled and therefore are considered additional and complementary of this research. The data collected on them will be included partially in this research.



and indigenous leaders previously identified by the method mentioned above. The purpose of conducting the interviews was to validate the information collected in the first stage of fieldwork (documentation) and to bring supplementary information that the bibliography does not provide. I was also interested in compiling perceptions and personal opinions about policy-making and inclusion. I created strong social connections and was interested not only in knowing the people's participation in the process of educational change but also the implications of such involvement in their personal lives and how the experience has changed their conceptions of education and if the process had produced a change in their academic, activist or professional life. I spent a lot of time in meeting the actors in education in my search of profound reflections about the changes in education and I believe that this approach gave me more inputs to understand social change by policy making. I was also interested in creating confidence networks that will help me to immerse into the political process; I used a *snowball sampling exercise*, which basically consists in asking to my first contacts (in the Ministry of Education) to refer me to other people and institutions that they recommend me I should visit. This technique is a non-probability sampling wide used in sociology and statistics, in which the data is built as the sample grows allowing the researcher access to those people that are not easily reachable and that, without a previous reference, would probably not be open to be interviewed (i.e. friends of friends, indigenous leaders, experts, etc.). Using this method was of particularly strategic importance in Bolivia, where there is not much openness to international researchers. A friend of mine referred me to a researcher who gave me the name and phone number of somebody in the Ministry of Education and I gained his trust.

Most of the principal contacts for other important interviews were referred to me by this first contact in the Ministry.

In regards to the comparison, I explore as much institutions as I could and was referred to. Some of them are common in both countries (i.e. the ministry of education, teachers unions, international cooperation, indigenous leaders, etc.) and others are particular (the CEPOS in Bolivia and CNE in Guatemala). The diversity of those interviewed gave me what I believe to be a more complete set of information and data to understand the current status of policies and politics in both countries. Chart No. 1 (below) is an enumeration of the institutions visited and interviewed people.

<b>Chart No. 1 Institutions and interviews during fieldwork in Bolivia and Guatemala</b>		
<i>City</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Office</i>
La Paz	Ministry of Education and Culture	Dirección general de planificación
		UIIP – Unidad de Políticas Intra e Interculturales y Plurilingüismo
		Viceministro superior de formación profesional
	Observatorio Plurinacional de la Calidad Educativa	Principal executive
	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	Sociology and Education department
	Consejos Educativos de los Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia (CEPOS)	Consejo Educativo de la Nación Aymara
		Consejo Educativo del Pueblo Indígena Originario Moxeño
	UNICEF The United Nations Children's Fund	Principal Executive
OEI - Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos	Principal Executive	
Cochabamba	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	PROEIB Andes
	Fundación para la Educación en Contextos de Multilingüismo y Pluriculturalidad (FUNPROEIB Andes)	Principal Executive
Sucre	Consejo Educativo de la Nación Quechua	Principal Executive
Santa Cruz	Indigenous leaders	
<b>Institutions Visited in Guatemala</b>		
Guatemala City	Ministerio de Educación	DIGEBI – Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe
		Ex-Ministry of Education
	Ministerio de Cultura	
	GIZ - Programa de Apoyo a la Calidad Educativa	Principal Executive
	PRODESSA – Proyecto de Desarrollo Santiago	Principal Executive
	FLACSO - Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales	Ex-Principal Executive
	Universidad Rafael Landívar	Instituto de Lingüística e Interculturalidad
Indigenous leaders*		
Chimaltenango	CNEM - Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya	Principal Executive

### ***Reproduction Theory and Resistance in Education***

The educational system in Latin America has changed very little during the last decade. In the Marxist theory of education, society and its structures are analyzed from a social division of classes: the bourgeoisie as the dominant group and the proletariat as the dominated one. The role of education in this framework is the reproduction and legitimation of class division, which explains the reasons of the reminiscence of such a system. (Villa 1997) Bourdieu argues that the individual is the final product of historical forces rooted in material conditions, social norms, values and rules that answer to specific interests of the dominant class in which the educational system plays the role of promoting lifestyles according to their social conditions. In education such alienation is promoted in the classroom and the production of labor force does not only consist in the reproduction of abilities and skills, but also the reproduction of subjection to the dominant ideology and the legitimization of power and the social class structure.

Althusser was aware that in order to break such reproduction of the system, teachers were the first actors to be aware of their crucial role in the education process. However, he was also aware that his hopes of a teaching revolution were unlikely because it would be difficult for them to open their eyes to the exploitation. Such revolution, therefore, would necessarily start outside the educational system.

*“I ask the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. (...) So little do they suspect it that their own devotion contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School.” (Althusser 1971)*

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron studied more closely the aspects of education and their role of reproduction in the social system. Their book *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) is an interesting approximation to education under the lenses of a serious critique to its functions. In their conclusions, Bourdieu and Passeron assert that the *social origin defines the possibilities of schooling in the population, as well as the lifestyle and future work*. Social origin is the main factor that determines the configuration of schooling and also determines the direction and scope of the conditions of existence. (Villa 1997) *Human capital is therefore a heritage*: human cultural behavior, modes, cultural habitus, hobbies, etc. The schooling system is not equal, producing capitalist inequalities and reproducing them. Bourdieu argues that social order is organized through a widely varied set of elements that contain a reproductive dynamic and which are connected to one another (Villa 1997). Each subsystem, given their own structural conditions, has the property of producing and reproducing not only their own conditions of existence but also the conditions of other social systems. Following this idea, Bourdieu analyzes the educational system according to three basic theoretical concepts: habitus, cultural arbitrary and relative autonomy.

Refining such theoretical argument, Paul Willis in his book *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Willis 1977) expanded the debate about reproduction in the educational system adding the concept of 'agency'. His starting point is that, effectively, the educational system fails in promoting social mobility among working class children but there is also an element of agency in staying as working class. Willis argues that working class kids let themselves to obtain working class jobs through

a process of cultural identity that makes them reproduce the roles of origin in which they were born. In the process working class kids create a set of practices of resistance to the determinate roles in schooling ages.

*“Any classroom situation is a complex combination of elements: acceptance, opposition, legitimacy and the particular way in which the teachers inhabits the educational paradigm”* (Willis 1977, 103)

The school is a place of disadvantage for working class kids as a state institution, but the kids, argues Willis, have the opportunity (or at least the possibility) to choose careers according to aptitudes and developing qualifications. The kids, however, develop an idea of rejection to follow such a possible path. Instead the ideas of conformism become greater along with a self-assignment to social status. Such theoretical argumentation of agency opens the possibility of playing a determinative role in a structural reproductive system such as the educational one: kids convince themselves that working class jobs are “the right thing” for them (Willis 1977, 167). By making such a decision, the ways of resistance that kids eventually practiced in schooling age disappear and they no longer represent a threat to the system since they are “integrated or assimilated” by the system and “placed” in the social strata from which they are coming.

Although Willis opens up the debate of self-determination and agency in the educational system, his arguments stay in the framework of reproduction theory, following Bourdieu and Passeron, and do not consider the possibility of social mobility or changes to the structural system. Bourdieu briefly considers the possibility of change in the system of reproduction but such expectation of change is not determined by a change in the system but rather a special kind of social mobility over generations. One of the

critics to the reproduction theory is that deterministic way of analyzing society, in which the individual has few or no choices to be part of another social group. Such understanding of the society is understandable considering that the epoch in which it was written structural changes were hard to conceive. In Latin America (and all over the world) such a structural change has been possible: external (i.e. globalization, neoliberalism, etc.) and domestic (i.e. changes in politics, demand of principal rights, etc.) factors have pushed governments to promote structural change at all levels, including changes in the educational system. But what characteristics of the educational system should be changed? The proposed education reforms have pointed out the necessity of improving not only coverage but also quality in education, with a special focus and attention to sub alternated groups: indigenous people, minorities, women and special needs. A reform of the educational system should, in summary, promote the reduction of gaps related to differences in groups and classes along with encouraging mechanisms to overcome reproduction. The reproduction theory gives some of the main concepts to be changed at the structural level for the reform to succeed: (1) it should break the system of legitimation of class division, which is the one that ensures reproduction; (2) open the system up, to education that promotes equal sets of values and social conditions; (3) promote equality, so that education would not reproduce historical discrimination and finally (4) inclusion of resistance and agency as a way of social mobility and change.

Bourdieu argues that the educational system is neither absolutely independent nor dependent of the social body as a whole (Villa 1997). It starts in a systematic cooperation

that sees modern society structurally configured, which are a set of interactions and correspondences that are reproduced through different sub-systems. It is therefore necessary to understand the properties and functions of each social system in order to understand their relations with others. A reform of the educational system should, therefore, create or promote change within other structures in order to be substantial. A change in the educational system necessarily means changes in other systems and when it comes to ideas, ideological change at the system level as a whole. Such a change should be seen in both levels: pedagogical and systemic, so that education can build the bases for equality. What an education reform should strive for is changing *the conditions that make possible the structure of relations between classes and the given social order* (Villa 1997).

Bourdieu and Passeron's argument might explain the lack of quality and coverage of education in poor, rural and indigenous areas; the reproduction of cultural capital is capable through the quality of education that gives preference to elites rather than promoting 'standardization' of education to all of the population. Thus, indigenous peoples are the most disadvantaged, being condemned by the existing educational system through patterns of discrimination, poverty and lack of opportunities. In Bolivia and Guatemala the educational system reproduces the structures and ideologies from the economically dominant group.<sup>2</sup> The pedagogical practices within classrooms continue being authoritarian, rote, non-participant and highly focused on competences. Education

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<sup>2</sup> The Bolivian case shifts into a new form of education but such a shift will be discussed afterwards.



does not promote citizenship but instead it boosts the idea of human capital, where the only role of education is preparing children for the labor market. (López 2009)

In America Latina, and specifically in Bolivia and Guatemala, the social origin determines the future of children. In Guatemala, statistics from the National Institute of Statistic (INE) and Ministry of Education show that Mayan indigenous adult population has smaller educational levels compared to the rest of the population (Rubio 2004) and such disadvantage increases in adult indigenous female population. The Guatemalan educational system does not provide enough schools to educate 100% of the population of schooling age and such gaps are perpetuated by the lack of pedagogical materials in indigenous languages, poor bilingual teaching training and inadequate infrastructure. Along with such difficulties, indigenous children in rural areas face poverty, discrimination, violence and other serious social problems that do not allow them to succeed into the educational system (i.e. malnutrition, starvation, etc.).

<b>Chart #2 GUATEMALA</b>										
<b>School-age population that is literate by residence, ethnicity and gender 2002</b>										
<b>Level</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>			<b>Non indigenous</b>			<b>Totals</b>		
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Primary</b> 7 to 12 years old	Urban	76.2	73.1	74.7	87	87.6	87.3	83.6	83.1	83.3
	Rural	63.8	59.4	61.6	72.3	72.6	72.5	67.8	65.6	66.7
	Total	67.5	63.4	65.5	79.6	80.2	79.9	74.3	72.8	73.5
<b>Secondary</b> 13 to 15 years old	Urban	89.6	84.3	86.9	96	95.6	95.8	94.1	92.1	93.1
	Rural	82.4	73	77.7	88.1	86.8	87.5	85.2	79.7	82.5
	Total	84.6	76.5	80.6	92.2	91.4	91.8	89.0	85.1	87.1
<b>High school</b> 16 to 18 years old	Urban	88.3	79.5	83.7	95.9	94.8	95.4	93.6	90.2	91.8
	Rural	78.4	63.4	70.8	85.3	82.9	84.1	81.8	72.7	77.2
	Total	81.6	68.8	75.1	91	89.5	90.2	87.1	80.8	83.9

*Source: National Institute of Statistics*

Rubio argues that gaps related to the place of residence, gender and class remain for indigenous and non-indigenous populations. The gap associated to ethnicity is 14.4% for primary schooling population, 11.2% for schooling population between 13 to 15 years old and 15.1% for schooling population between 16 to 18 years old (Rubio 2004). Chart #2 (above) shows the gaps between urban and rural populations and also the differences in access to education for men and women: the statistics show that indigenous female groups in rural areas are the most vulnerable and least reached by the educational system. These statistics also show that over time the percentage of indigenous population entering to the educational system is lower in higher grades and the gender gap continues. A closer look, examining the rates of illiteracy in the same groups, it is possible to identify the most vulnerable population: indigenous women in rural areas summing a total of 65.3% (Rubio 2004).

<b>Chart #3 GUATEMALA</b>									
<b>Rates of illiteracy by place of residence, ethnicity and gender 2002</b>									
<b>Area</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>			<b>Non-Indigenous</b>			<b>Total</b>		
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Urban	24.7	45.3	35.5	8.6	14.2	11.6	13.0	22.3	18.0
Rural	42.5	65.3	54.3	2.3	37.8	44.0	35.9	35.9	44.0
Total	36.3	58.3	47.7	17.2	23.3	20.4	24.6	36.7	30.9

*Source: National Institute of Statistics*

According to Rubio (2004) illiteracy is one of the biggest challenges of the educational system along with keeping students in the classrooms. The rates of dropout are high at the national level, even higher in indigenous-rural areas and the gaps increase according to age. Non-indigenous people continue to reach higher levels of education than indigenous people and this gap becomes deeper depending on which indigenous group they belong. Indigenous Mayan populations in Guatemala are the most

disadvantaged by the educational system in terms of coverage, which gives them very few opportunities to transcend at the professional level.

In Bolivia the situation of the educational system is quite similar to Guatemala. Statistics from the Bolivian National Institute of Statistic (INE) and the Ministry of Education (MEC) show that the educational system had not reached full coverage at any level in any department and it evidences the persistence of significant differences in levels of education between men and women. Chart #4 (below) shows the highest levels of education reached from 2007 to 2009 in urban and rural areas. The numbers and percentages demonstrate that those who live in urban areas are more likely to attend school and obtain a higher degree than those who live in rural areas. According to Luis Enrique Lopez (López 2009), the lack of quality in education in Bolivia initiated a process of educational transformation. The lack of coverage and inadequate learning tools, the early school dropout rate (especially in rural areas), high and expensive school repetition and high rates of illiteracy and the lack of parental inclusion, indigenous leaders and members of the community in policy making decisions, as well as the lack of indigenous contents in the curricula are continuous problems for the educational system in Bolivia. According to Luis Enrique Lopez (2009) such conditions make intercultural education hard to achieve, even when indigenous people have mobilized and claimed their rights of belonging and culture, rights that go beyond education and should impact policy, citizenship and sociopolitical structures. *Interculturality continues to be an empty word of content that only works to cover new ways of integration and clientelism from the*

State (...) the recognition of rights is fundamental to expand citizenship in intercultural societies (López 2009).

<b>Chart #4: BOLIVIA</b>						
<b>Levels of education in the population older than 19 years old by gender and geographical area - Percentages</b>						
<b>Description</b>	<b>2008 Total</b>	<b>2008 Male</b>	<b>2008 Female</b>	<b>2009 Total</b>	<b>2009 Male</b>	<b>2009 Female</b>
<b>Bolivia</b>	<b>5.617.954</b>	<b>2.666.883</b>	<b>2.951.071</b>	<b>5.846.935</b>	<b>2.815.165</b>	<b>3.031.770</b>
None	10,89	5,80	15,49	11,26	5,88	16,26
Primary School	37,80	38,03	37,60	36,06	36,11	36,01
Secondary School	28,33	31,79	25,21	28,62	32,80	24,75
Superior (1)	22,72	24,11	21,47	23,80	24,96	22,72
Other level (2)	0,25	0,28	0,22	0,25	0,24	0,27
<b>Urban area</b>	<b>3.815.841</b>	<b>1.798.381</b>	<b>2.017.460</b>	<b>4.008.588</b>	<b>1.925.142</b>	<b>2.083.446</b>
None	4,58	2,02	6,87	5,40	2,46	8,11
Primary School	29,57	27,24	31,65	28,44	26,15	30,55
Secondary School	34,53	37,72	31,68	34,05	37,59	30,79
Superior (1)	30,99	32,67	29,49	31,77	33,46	30,21
Other level (2)	0,33	0,35	0,31	0,33	0,33	0,33
<b>Rural area</b>	<b>1.802.113</b>	<b>868.502</b>	<b>933.611</b>	<b>1.838.347</b>	<b>890.023</b>	<b>948.324</b>
None	24,24	13,62	34,12	24,05	13,28	34,16
Primary School	55,22	60,34	50,46	52,67	57,65	48,00
Secondary School	15,22	19,51	11,23	16,78	22,45	11,47
Superior (1)	5,22	6,39	4,13	6,41	6,58	6,25
Other level (2)	0,09	0,14	0,05	0,09	0,05	0,12

Source: National Institute of Statistics, *Encuesta continua de hogares 2005-2009*

(1) Superior: University level (BA, MA, MS and PHD), Technical level, military school and police academy

(2) Other levels: short courses in which is not necessary more than high school.

Each one of these problems are magnified in Bolivia's rural areas. Indigenous areas of the country have a lower rate of coverage than urban areas (38,6% at the national level), which makes students (whose families can afford it) move out of their communities to the closest urban areas in order to continue their education or to stay in

the same school for more years repeating the last grade multiple times (ibid; 48). According to Lopez, high rates of repetition are a challenge in Bolivian rural areas as well and the indigenous population has twice the probability of repetition compared to the non-indigenous population, 40% vs. 23% respectively (López 2009). Bolivia has one of the highest rates of absolute illiteracy in Latin America, which according to statisticians, might be higher if more accurate data were available. Illiteracy in women is higher than male illiteracy by 12% (male illiteracy 6.9% vs. female illiteracy 19.3%), and even when such a rates had diminished by 2001, the gap of education inequality in gender is a constant. Differences in area (rural and urban) and gender (male and female) are very marked in Bolivia and literacy was one of the biggest challenges for the educational system. Such statistics show the real necessity of Latin American countries to promote a deep and constant reform process of the educational system, but such a transformation requires different set of factors as follows.

### ***Historical Roots of Inequality in Education***

What are the roots of such inequality? Indigenous people in Guatemala and Bolivia have a shared history of colonization and perpetuation of dominance from the state. In Guatemala, the government did not recognize the right of access to education for indigenous people until late nineteenth century when, through a Decree, the state eliminated forced labor and demanded basic labor conditions for employees (Argueta Hernandez 2011). In education most of the first schools for indigenous people were catholic and their goal was to emancipate the ‘*indios*’ and civilize them through the learning of white culture and manners. Indigenous people were supposed to be dominated

through a new ideology, not slavery and forced labor but equally exploited given the fact that indigenous peoples were constantly fighting against the submission and hard labor conditions in which they lived. Some of the first public schools for '*indios*' were also related to agriculture, the main economical production of the country. It is important to notice that most of the public schools created for indigenous people were separated from the 'normal' ones and their pedagogy was also different. The '*indios*' were submitted to an authoritarian pedagogy; in Bolivia such a way of teaching is recognized today by indigenous peoples as '*la letra con sangre entra*' (learning with blood) and is one of the more recognized ways of domination, exploitation and punishment to indigenous people through education. (Condori Ancasi 2009) Such a way of teaching also meant rote of knowledge, repetition of ideas and internal racism among indigenous cultures; indigenous people were taught that their cultures were 'backwards', indigenous knowledge and traditions were 'sorcery' and that their identities were less valuable than others. The reason for rejection of school, even nowadays, is related to such a way of teaching. School never gave to indigenous people a real education, never taught them to critique ideas and denied them the reproduction of native languages (Apala, Director CEPOS 2012) Rather, indigenous languages were relegated to the private space, within the home, obligating indigenous peoples to speak Spanish in the public spaces (government, church, etc.) and schools.

There was also a military component in the pedagogy for indigenous people. Virgilio Alvarez (Aragón 2013) argues that there is strong historical evidence that many '*escuelas normales*' in Guatemala were run by former members of the military and their

wives, which would very much explain the pedagogical practices based on punishments and reprimands to indigenous children and the prohibition of speaking indigenous languages in the classrooms. The presence of military logic can also be noticed through the command line promoted in the classrooms, where students cannot ask or critique the work of teachers but rather be quiet and learn in silence. Argueta (Argueta Hernandez 2011) argues that such a military process was a new strategy of domination and control of indigenous bodies. The pedagogy was designed to be a framework in which indigenous people were assigned specific functions and obligated to follow specific rules and orders whichever they were (labor, social, familiar, etc.), and this pedagogy had a hard impact in the students' daily lives because they were constantly watched and under surveillance.

Some efforts of resistance were born, in Bolivia the school of Warisata ran by Elizardo Perez and Avelino Siñani is one of them. Such a model of education is the one that is taken as a reference in the Law of Education signed by 2010 in Bolivia. According to Carlos Salazar (Salazar Mostajo 1992), the model of rural education promoted by Perez and Siñani was focused not only in vindicating indigenous right to education but also the their way of life, knowledge and work. It also taught students to critique the knowledge received in normal classes and bring it to their daily lives. This kind of school however was an exception, practiced clandestinely because it was prohibited by the state, even though supported by the community. The inherited pedagogy, however, is authoritarian and the educational system unequal. The state has treated indigenous people as inferior and has trusted very few in their cognition and relegated them to labor, education, handicrafts and oppression. In Guatemala very few presidents have believed in

indigenous youth. Argueta gives the instance of Reyna Barrios in 1893, when he oversaw the construction of the *'Instituto Agrícola Indígena'* on the perimeter of Guatemala City, its main purpose was to educate teachers that would later educate other indigenous youth, starting the project of *'escuelas normales'* widely known in Latin America. But the educational system has been mostly segregated and included a racist component throughout Latin American history. Indigenous people have had to keep fighting for inclusion and recognition not only in the educational aspect of society but also in those relating to their culture, knowledge, languages and place in society.

### ***How to Promote a Structural Change?***

As mentioned above, education reform change requires acknowledgment of inequalities and, to a certain degree, recognition of failure by the educational system to fulfill basic features. Latin America, in the international context, has signed agreements that have also added pressure to reduce gaps of inequality in subaltern groups and transform the pedagogy. A reform of such characteristics is, according to Javier Corrales (1999), a *quality reform*. A quality reform differs from an access reform, which promotes the opportunity of giving education to the population. Generally, access reform involves “increasing the numbers of schools, classrooms, teachers training, salaries and supplies” (Corrales 1999). *Quality reforms*, on the other hand, involve efforts to “improve efficiency”; the goal is to improve the academic performance of students, reduce repetition standards, autonomy of schools, etc. Quality reforms are hard to quantify because their effects are more abstract and can be evaluated only over a long period of time. Quality reforms are also harder to promote (Corrales 1999). A process of education



reform is, therefore, a public policy, which according to Lahera (Lahera 2002), is the final goal of practicing politics. Javier Corrales and Eugenio Lahera explain that in order to accomplish good policies and attempt to promote a process of transformation, the political system should meet some characteristics and follow specific processes. In the first place, the whole sense of making politics is to have proposals that will become public politics (Lahera 2002). A public policy ‘of excellence’ corresponds to flows of action and information related to political objectives that have been designed in a democratic way: *developed by the public sector in conjunction with the participation of communities and the private sector* (Lahera 2002). A quality public policy includes orientations or contents, instruments or mechanisms, definitions or institutional modifications and the anticipation of their results. *If public policies are not framed into a broader participation process political actors’ actions might be slanted.*

Chart #5 Characteristics of a good public policy				
a) Wide social basis	b) Estimation of costs and alternative funding	c) Including factors for its own evaluation	d) Provides more social benefits than disadvantages	e) It has intern consistency and added
f) Includes support and criticisms equally	g) Represents a political opportunity	h) It is placed in the sequence of relevant measures	i) Clarity in the objectives	j) Functionality of the instruments
k) Include indexes: unitary costs, economy, efficiency and efficacy				

A process of education reform should, therefore, follow the formal excellence of the public policies. Frequently, public policies are a “second best” in relation to the optimal substantive issue, which is unlikely to exist. According to Lahera, –quoting Rawls– (Lahera 2002), a “*well organized society*” is one where the social arrangements

*are based in agreements that everyone approves, if the opportunity is given. Public policies can be considered as state policies, in which include all the powers of the state in their design and execution. A political process would obviously include different political actors in the process. Political actors (or players) are those who are involved in the political game, promoting or disapproving a political reform or policy. In politics of education reform it is possible to identify a set of actors who approve such policies and another set who disapprove such reform. Union teachers, indigenous social movements, presidents, political parties, social leaders, civil society and business sector are some instances of political players. Sometimes the actors are not institutionally represented, but their presence can still be strong. Such cases are exemplified by international organisms and cooperation or by institutes, whose purpose is social research and the production of sociopolitical knowledge. Different actors may play different roles in different contexts or even change strategically their role because of a specific juncture. Political players are more likely to take a position for or against the education reform but it may be the case that a specific political actor is more “neutral” than it is likely to take a position of approval or disapproval. (Corrales 1999)*

According to Javier Corrales (1999), a successful adoption of education reform should gather some conditions that promote the right address of the following political obstacles: 1) concentration of cost and diffusion of benefits, 2) deficient ministerial commitment levels, 3) efforts to bolster, 4) institutional settings determinants of societal cooperation with reforms. Corrales explains that reforms in the educational system face three common obstacles: 1) the cost of such policies 2) less powerful and low incidence

of policy entrepreneurship and 3) the mixed and insincere motives of the state in decentralization. Because education reform processes generate “concentrated costs” affecting interest groups that disapprove the reform, often producing “a stronger incentive to block the reforms than beneficiaries to support it” (Corrales 1999).

The benefits of an education reform process can only be identified in the long term, not in the short term. This situation produces in the political actors antagonistic expectations. On the one hand, groups that support the process because they perceive the possibility to obtain a specific benefit from it (e.g. a better job position or the opportunity to make specific political demands that favor them), and on the other hand the opponents of the process. These last groups are opponents because they obtain favors from the “old” educational system. “Beneficiaries exist but they have very few incentives to mount a sufficiently strong demand to defeat the campaigns of potential losers” (Corrales 1999). In addition, the lack of “policy entrepreneurs” makes difficult the approbation of policies supporting the reform process. Entrepreneurs are “political actors at the cabinet level or with close links to the president, who find a way of pulling together a legislative majority on behalf of significant interests now well represented in government”. The author argues that even when they do emerge, their powers are not significant, which makes difficult their influence in the government. Generally speaking, governments simply do not face sufficient incentives to persevere with quality reforms or high enough penalties for abandoning their commitment. (Corrales 1999) On the other hand, a “pro-reform discourse might score popularity points for governments, particularly today when education reforms enjoy so much prestige”.

Such a condition is influenced by two factors: the instability and short tenure at the ministry level and the different bargaining power between ministers and teachers. According to the author, *“because heads of government are not likely to be engaged in education reform battles, they use the ministry of education for alternative political purposes (i.e. to reward political supporters, to compensate opposition parties, etc.)* (Corrales 1999) “High ministerial turnover means that education ministers, even those who would like to initiate deep quality reforms, have relatively shorter terms of office”. Therefore, ministers who spend little time in office have less inclination to promote reforms for a long period of time (Corrales 1999). Finally, “the likelihood of quality reforms to entail some form of decentralization raises a whole new set of political difficulties. Although governments have embarked on decentralization projects, their commitment to this is often dubious. Since the decentralization process conflicts directly with the interests of the state, this situation complicates the politics of reform adoption. How can these obstacles to reform be overcome? Corrales affirms that empirical evidence may contradict these pessimistic predictions (Corrales 1999).

Given a set of elements and conditions, Corrales describes four strategies for overcoming possible political obstacles and these hypotheses have been grouped in four broad categories: *a) type and style of reform*; a way to diffuse problems associated with quality reforms is combining access elements into quality reform to enhance reform adoption. This strategy may make much easier politically to adopt the process (Corrales 1999). “Education reforms that follow a more gradual, step-by-step approach tend to encounter fewer political difficulties than more comprehensive sweeping reforms” and

packaging education reforms with other types of reforms (of the state or the economy) enhances the chances of reform adoption. ***b) Political strategies to bolster the supply of reform:*** entrusting education reforms to ministries with low turnover rates enhances the chance of reform adoption. If the rate of turnover is lower, it is possible to resolve problems such as lack of policy continuity, propensity toward quick fixes, little attention to long-term goals, etc. Also, since new impetus for reforms comes from external sources, it would follow that greater receptivity to the outside world results in greater incentives to pursue quality education reform. External links can provide new political allies and sources of advice and funding that may stimulate reform initiative. (Corrales 1999) Finally, independent pro-reform advisory councils bolster the supply of reform. Establishing independent advisory/monitoring councils to advise the ministry of education, policy reforms and implementation process: they may help to insulate difficult policies and avoid democratic deficit associated with independent parties (Corrales 1999). Corrales adds that for the conditions to be effective, independent advisory/evaluative bodies should include not just politicians, but also representatives from civil society, respected intellectual leaders, opinion makers such as journalists and think tank experts (Corrales 1999, 26). Independent advisory councils are not panaceas but they can perform crucial political tasks. Governments should be aware that the effectiveness of independent advisory/evaluative councils might depend on the initial degree of commitment at the executive level (Corrales 1999, 28). Councils cannot easily create government commitment to reform where it does not already exist. What the councils can do is to galvanize existing commitment, give it direction, prevent it from

waning during the implementation period and establish stronger links between the state and society (Corrales 1999). *c) Political strategies to bolster the demand for reform:* A successful reform strategy requires mechanisms for counteracting weaknesses on the demand side. First, information dissemination is more likely to be effective if it is backed by professional, scientific research. (Corrales 1999) Secondly, involving potential beneficiaries in reform design and evaluation enhances the chance of reform acceptance. Inclusion gives change teams the opportunity to address reservations and, more importantly, to convert opponents. Including local personnel in decisions about improving schools fosters more effective implementation of reforms. (Corrales 1999, 30) Finally, in cases of decentralization, granting greater financial autonomy to local entities enhances local level demand for reform (Corrales 1999, 32). To bolster local level demand for decentralization it is necessary to generate “local empowerment” which gives autonomy to the local authorities. *d) Institutional features that magnify or diminish the power of veto groups:* Veto groups will be unswayed by strategies of inclusion, information, or compensation. Therefore, it is necessary to think of strategies to reduce the political leverage of these veto groups. Teachers’ unions can be one such group which enjoy comparative political advantages as pressure groups. Their opposition can seriously undermine reform processes although they can be part of the beneficiaries and supporters also (Corrales 1999). Unions that expect government support tend to be more “recalcitrant” because they expect to be heard, this pressure makes the government attend such demands. According to the author, “even legislators from the opposition may be persuaded to support education reforms, given the popularity and prestige of them”.

(Corrales 1999) Finally, strategic coalitions between cost-bearing groups and other societal actors hinder reform adaption. According to the author there are two groups of players: affected players –or cost-bearers- and outsider players. The first are those who directly bear the consequences of reforms and play important roles in the implementation of it. The second are those who do not bear the impact of the reforms directly. “Outsider players are crucial in the politics of education reform because they can be decisive allies of either pro-reform or anti-reform players”. (Corrales 1999)

<i>Chart #6 Conditions that the educational reform should meet for being more feasible politically*</i>	
<i>Condition:</i>	<i>Characteristics:</i>
1. Addressing the cost impact of reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compensation for the cost of reform with concentrated benefits.</li> <li>b. “Lower” implementation cost by moving incrementally.</li> <li>c. Packing education reforms in tandem with broader public sector reforms.</li> </ul>
2. Bolstering the supply of and the demand for reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Inclusionary strategies that assign concrete roles to passive stakeholders.</li> <li>b. Information campaigns that counteract the propensity of the general public to remain rationally ignorant</li> <li>c. Granting financial autonomy to local entities in cases of decentralization.</li> </ul>
3. Addressing the institutional factors that magnify the bargaining power of veto groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strong links between veto groups and opposition parties in polarized political party systems.</li> <li>b. The status of executive-legislators relations</li> <li>c. Leadership challenges inside and outside the unions</li> <li>d. Strategic coalitions between veto groups and other societal groups.</li> </ul>

(Corrales 1999)

### ***Transforming in cultural environments***

Guatemala and Bolivia are multicultural societies and can no longer be treated as closed social systems. Their cultural identities are there, present in their everyday life and the educational system plays a meaningful role of reproduction for them. An attempt to

reform education, at any level, has a repercussion in building such identities. *“The fact that they (indigenous people) remain socially and politically dominated by non-indigenous elites is a persistent and intrusive dissonance in the attempted construction of a transcendent nationalism harmony.* (Luykx 1999) Any attempt to change a given multicultural system must also change perspectives towards indigenous peoples, their languages, identities and cultural values, eliminate possible manifestations of racism in both politics and schools. Education public policies should engage in moving schools towards the transformation of philosophical and pedagogical practices within classrooms. Transforming the curriculum in order to make it accurate to localities and particular kinds of subjects since *“the knowledge and practices learned in school play an increasingly important role in shaping individuals as particularly positioned social beings”* –which the author calls ‘hidden curriculum’– (Luykx 1999). Obviously, by attempting to change the pedagogical practices, a transformation of the teaching career should also be promoted so that, teachers can change the environment within the class. Transforming the curriculum is transforming teachers’ identity, specifically their cultural capital and the meaning of their careers, along with a critical process of understanding their own culture, which many times has been rejected or hidden fearing discrimination. According to Luykx (1999) *“the ‘integration’ of indigenous culture into the curriculum often constituted an exercise in contradiction, a superficial valorization of a stereotyped ideal of indigenous identity which cloaked a deeper discourse of denigration”*.

A cultural transformation of the curricula should take into account indigenous knowledge and promote local pedagogical models of education in which ideally the



community should also be involved. Gustafson (2009) argues that one of the challenges in reforming education is the construction and production of (pedagogical) materials and teachers to implement bilingual pedagogy. Along with it, a proposal of changing pedagogy into constructivism (which is an academic proposal rather than an indigenous one) might also be accompanied with strategies that allow its implementation and, to some extent, cultural indicators to evaluate it. Intercultural Bilingual education, according to Gustafson (Gustafson 2009) should start a decolonizing shift in regional and national languages of the state, generating the conditions for a new dialogue on citizenship, addressing indigenous educational marginality and opening doors to those epistemes and languages historically delegated to the margins, the voices that are now speaking from the centers of power. EIB constitutes a vehicle for creative engagement across languages, epistemes, and visions of history: a notion of cultural defense in the ‘rescuing’ of languages and knowledge.

### ***Using the theory***

Javier Corrales’ argument is important for the understanding of reform processes of public policies and the path that different actors should take in order to accomplish a structural change. In this study, I am making an attempt to recognize the direction of the reform in Bolivia and Guatemala and establish why having similar contexts both countries have generated different outcomes. Taking as a starting point that both are quality reforms and that both attempt to change the systems of reproduction historically legitimized by the educational system, promoting agency, probabilities of social mobility and manifestation of resistance. In both cases education reform should also promote basic

policies related to coverage (infrastructure and materials) along with promotion of a basic curriculum. The education reform should also be highly focused on indigenous peoples and promote policies of vindication to their cultural knowledges and languages, with the attempt to change historical relations of subordination and authoritarian pedagogical practices. As a political process the education reform should meet the requirements of state public policies, in which negotiation is a main component. Identifying groups of support and possible opponents, as well as the continuity in the process and political strategies, if any, to ensure stability in the process. Describing the different roles of political actors in the process of transforming education, and to what extent indigenous proposals are taken into consideration. Transforming education would therefore mean inclusion at all policy levels: proposals, decisions, implementation, transformation of pedagogies and shifts in centralization of power.

In this particular study I will compare the cases of Guatemala and Bolivia and disclose the education process, evaluating if there was a process of education reform and the characteristics of such a process. The idea is to understand political background and historical roots that might help to understand not only similarities between both processes but also their differences. This study attempts to determine why similar political contexts produce different outcomes in education reform. This report is divided in four sections. The first chapter is a theoretical approximation to how a process of reform should be and the conditions that it should meet. It also talks about the elements that it should consider and attempt to change along with a brief historical overview of the elements that should be transformed. This first unit also explores briefly the inequalities among indigenous

peoples and the characteristics of pedagogy inherited by the colonialism and the strong charge of racism in the institutions of the state.

Chapter two and three are the cases of study. The Bolivian case (2) is explored through a timeline that reveals the changes in politics related to education during the last eight years. In a first stage, early 90's and mid 2000's, Bolivia followed the pattern of the Latin American processes, in which the process was led 'from above' and financed by different organizations of international cooperation. The state neglected to include indigenous people in the proposals and the resistance to the implementation of reform within classrooms was high. Given the resistance for the promotion of education reform, the Bolivian state gave room to indigenous people to present proposals and opened a dialogue with them. By 2005, indigenous people had built strong proposals that needed to be taken into account. In 2006 the MAS was elected and came to power, Evo Morales gave to indigenous people hope and the opportunity to be taken into consideration and in 2010 a new education law was signed. The meaning of such a law opens a new debate about intercultural education and bilingualism along with indigenous knowledge and structural changes. This research focuses on the changes between the first and the second wave of education reform in Bolivia, its differences and what makes especially strong the proposals of indigenous people.

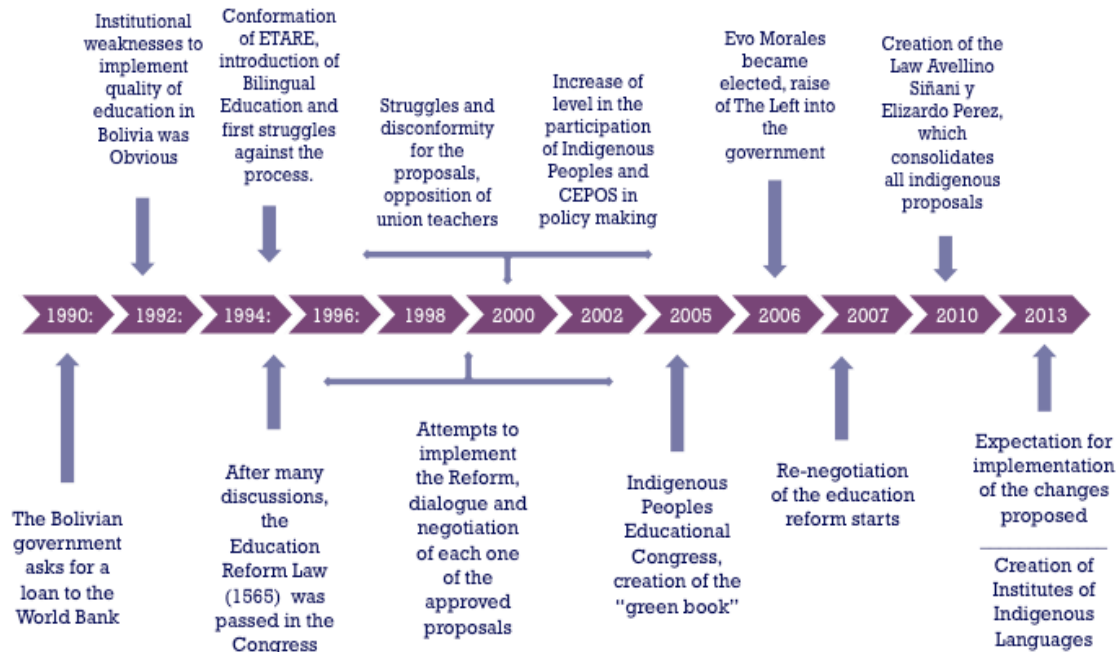
In the third chapter the Guatemalan case will be explored, starting with the historical background that started the promotion of an education reform through the signing of the Peace Agreements, along with international pressure for ending the civil war and giving room for democracy. The purpose of the reform in Guatemala was to

vindicate indigenous rights and culture, which gave the opportunity to include indigenous languages into the educational system and redefine the purpose of education. Such an attempt of inclusion however was frustrated through a constant turnover and gradual dissolution of the educational reform proposal. The lack of consensus in key concepts related to the reform was a weakness that finally neutralized attempts to implement the reform. The reform of teaching careers and escuelas normales is seen as a neoliberal project because it seeks to give the responsibility of higher education to private universities, which has provoked mobilizations and rejection from indigenous people but also from the unions' teachers. Finally the chapter reflects on the deeply institutionalized racism that persists in the main public organizations, a primary reason for which the education reform has been stopped and neutralized.

The fourth chapter is a comparison between both countries, the stages in common and elements that have produced different results in both countries. I highlight the historical and structural differences that have allowed change in some degree in Bolivia and stopped the process in Guatemala and the legalization of both. It also is a critical review of the indigenous movement, the strong organization in Bolivia and the lack of organization and continued repression toward indigenous leaders in Guatemala. Finally this chapter poses questions and makes final comments about both processes, remarking on possible ways to continue doing research in education politics.

## CHAPTER TWO: EDUCATION REFORM PROCESS IN BOLIVIA

### *Timeline of the Bolivian Education Reform Process:*



*Based on interviews, fieldwork notes and readings.*

The history of education reform processes in Bolivia can be separated in two waves or stages (1994 and 2010), a new education law is the starting point of each one of them. The first attempts (or first wave) to reform the educational system started in the 90s, when at the international level the politics of reforming education around the world was discussed. Education reform was highly present on domestic and international agendas throughout Latin America in the 90's, raising concerns in academic discussions and promoting research towards a shift in quality of education. The reasons of such constant debate were structural: “many children attended school but learned little, an alarming number of them repeated grades, and dropping out of school with only a few years of education” (Grindle 2004; 05). There was also an external pressure on

governments in Latin America for the implementation of social public policies in education, especially since the rise of democracy in the region. Such phenomena was internationally known as “second-generation educational reforms”, which sought to reduce the role of the state and had special emphasis in producing human capital to improve productivity, promote economical development, combat poverty and generate equality (Contreras and Talavera 2005).

In Bolivia, the education reform process started with the proposal of obtaining a loan from the World Bank in order to increase social spending on educational issues in the early 90's. But by then, Bolivia had a long history of educative interventions without central coordination or long-term planning. Critics to the educational system were mainly about its homogenizing character, lack of orientation towards work and an educational system in the service of a dominant social minority (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 41). The World Bank had already granted a loan to Bolivia in the past for \$15 million in order to promote specific actions for the promotion of equality in access to education, reduction of dropout rates, promotion of school feeding and educational materials. However, given the institutional weaknesses of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), which included lack of experience and continually changing staff, ten years later, with only \$10,6 millions invested, the World Bank concluded the project due the lack of advancement towards its goals (Contreras and Talavera 2005). In 1993, the World Bank summed up the weaknesses of Bolivian education:

*“The lack of coverage and low quality in education partially answer to the low level of global social spending in education during decades (from 1986 to 1991, average social spending was 2,7% of GDP). There were also other important factors to explain such weaknesses: a) the alienation*

*and exclusion of its principal beneficiaries (children, parents and society as a whole) from the process of decision- making and the right to examine its operations and results; b) the weakness of the administrative system; c) inappropriate and inefficient management of the sector and the insufficient assignation of resources to the primary school; d) barriers to the access of education and obstacles for ending it, inadequate teacher training, lack of attention to indigenous peoples whose first language is not Spanish and deficient infrastructure, all of it affects particularly to the girls in rural areas (World Bank 1993).*

It was in these conditions that the design and implementation of the first education reform process was promoted. In 1994, the Bolivian government signed a new law of education (Ley 1565 de 7 de Julio de 1994), which was proclaimed to be “**the Law of Education Reform**”. This new law created so much expectation at the international and national level, since it became part of the international tendency in the 90's to reform education. Its first goal was to reinforce the labor-economical market and eventually promote development within the nation. Its actions were promptly oriented to the creation of competitive and productive human capital. According to Contreras (Contreras and Talavera 2005), the context of change modified the relations between the state and civil society. Such modifications were product of decentralization processes as well as the creation of new forms of popular participation, as well as greater leadership from the union's teachers in the country.

A consultant group, external to the Ministry of Education, built the proposal of this education reform law. The World Bank financed the project and even when there were internal issues in the teamwork for the inclusion of indigenous languages in the classrooms, the project was dialogued, agreed to and turned into an education policy starting in August 1993, expected to be implemented by June of 1994 (Contreras and

Talavera 2005, 50). The ETARE (Technical Team to Support Education Reform) finished the proposal in 1992, working along with the Bolivian Ministry of Planning and strongly supported by Amalia Anaya<sup>3</sup> who negotiated with the World Bank for funding of the project. During the construction of the proposal there were many disagreements between ETARE and The World Bank about whether to include bilingual education in the proposal or not, but it was finally passed in the Congress and signed into law. Maria Luisa Talavera (2005) and Gustafson (2009) agree that building the proposal for the education reform was not an isolated fact but a gradual and continuous process in which each point was opposed or defended by different political actors. As a result, the final proposal of education reform included a diversity of points of view, highlighting the promotion of bilingual education and the need to reorganize the Ministry of Education.

Gustafson (2009) argues that the sign of education reform, and specifically the discussion of whether to include or not intercultural bilingual education into such a law, was merely a discussion about recognizing discrimination from “criollos” to indigenous population in Bolivia. The “danger” of including poor people into policymaking and adopting the goal of “education for all” was the recognition of alternative cultural approaches, which would probably mean not only the advocacy of interculturality but also the inclusion of other indigenous movements that would probably lead the country to

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<sup>3</sup> Amalia Anaya is one of the most important figures of the first wave of education reform in Bolivia. She was the undersecretary of social policy in the Ministry of Planning and Coordination affiliated to the MIR (Movement of Revolutionary Left). She was convinced of the importance of building human capital in the country in order to achieve higher levels of economic development and considered the education reform as the best way to improve the quality of life and to correct the inequitable distribution of income (Grindle 2004) Her impetus to promote the reform was constantly blocked by other political actors that did not want the proposals to be implemented.



a more indigenous (leftist?) way of policymaking. This recognition would also play a role in the decolonization of a society were historically the “*indio*” was considered “*tonto*” (stupid) and incompetent. Bilingualism by then was considered a “medium” to bring indigenous people into a white-Spanish culture. Indigenous culture, from this point of view, was synonymous of backwardness, underdevelopment and “an attempt to resuscitate dead languages of defeated cultures”, which had no place in a modern nation (Gustafson 2009, 173). The specific article about intercultural bilingual education was signed and approved by the specific intervention of Victor Hugo Cardenas, Aymara intellectual and EIB supporter whose claims were reasonably more powerful than his opponents:

*He (Victor Hugo Cardenas) recalled his experience as a Spanish speaker challenged by English schooling in the United States, saying, "I don't want children to suffer in their own land what I suffered in a foreign one. I think we should have bilingual education. Next article." Bilingual Intercultural education became state law. (Gustafson 2009)*

### ***The education reform law: content***

The education reform process proposal included many points to be restructured, which included structural changes to the administrative level (inside the Ministry of Education) and to the local level (in the classrooms). Each one of the points described bellow caused concern and struggles within the civil society. The most prominent was the union’s teachers, which almost left the dialogue and removed their support for the reform process, creating a hostile environment for the implementation of such changes. The

process of implementation of the reform process also faced several problems, especially related to the transformation of *escuelas normales*<sup>4</sup> (points b and c).

Chart #7: Changes proposed by the Law of Education 1565	
Administrative level	Local level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enlarge the teaching profession: promote vocational tests among professors to break the monopoly of teaching positions</li> <li>- Promotion of a common curricula to all the country, giving freedom to each region to create their own, specialized for their own needs</li> <li>- Restructuration of the Ministry of Education and Culture, promoting the inclusion of social scientists and qualified administration</li> <li>- Implementation of global tests focused on quality, measuring children's learning and the capacity of teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change of the grades structure: increase the number years in primary school (from 6 to 8)</li> <li>- Reform the teaching profession and existing <i>escuelas normales</i>: give pedagogical orientation and training within the classrooms</li> <li>- Promote a more constructivist approach in which memorizing learning would be eliminated</li> <li>- Implementation of intercultural bilingual education: reading and writing in indigenous languages (L1) and second language (L2) usually Spanish</li> <li>- Promotion of decentralization and citizenship participation through indigenous and scholar councils</li> </ul>

Within the classrooms the implementation of the new curricula was especially risky because of the lack of pedagogical tools and materials for teachers. There was also a lack in educational material for children, as well as uncertainty in the evaluation procedures and contradictory ideas about the right pedagogical way to teach. Among the parents there was also certain discomfort about the process since they were not asked about their opinion nor included in the process of building the proposal. There was no opportunity for them to be heard and make suggestions (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 67).

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<sup>4</sup> “*Escuelas normales*” is their name in Spanish; since I will not be discussing private schools I will continue referring to them as *escuelas normales* only.

Union's teachers considered the proposals of the reform as a direct aggression to their profession and not as strategies for building useful human capital in the nation (Contreras and Talavera 2005). Such confrontation between the Ministry of Education and the union's teacher promoted the creation of certain monetary incentives from the state in order to promote the capacitation. In terms of education quality, the Ministry of Education created SIMECAL "System Quality Measurement"<sup>5</sup>; its objective was to create tests to measure national educational achievement. These actions alerted indigenous peoples about the real objective of education reform process: to promote productive competencies in the students (Apala 2012). Such an action answers to a neoliberal project of standardization of education, in which testing and scores are ways of measuring academic achievement. The education reform process succeeded in terms of coverage. According to Talavera, "the education reform process increased the coverage of primary education, improved internal efficiency of the education system and allowed progress in terms of quality of education" (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 120). As a direct consequence of such social changes in the education area, the implementation of Education Reform Law was restricted to small rural communities, indigenous contexts that were considered as "the destiny" for the practice of intercultural bilingual education. This characterization created the idea that bilingual education was only for indigenous communities.

*"Its implementation only reached the first cycle of primary education (the first three years) no further, and in linguistically matters the process was only a partial*

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<sup>5</sup> Spanish Acronym

*“translation” of non-indigenous knowledge to indigenous languages, not even fully”* (Gutierrez 2012). Indigenous peoples shared this point of view in general and the education reform process completely left behind the recognition and assessment of the different Bolivian cultures. Within the positive progresses, however, the legal and legitimate possibility given to indigenous peoples to be organized and empowered with strategic positions within the educational sector was one of them, as well as the emergence of a collective conscience about the necessity to be included in education issues and be prepared for them. *“The law allowed indigenous people to be empowered in education matters; it promoted the concern of having a better understanding of what was happening and the real necessity to fully understand the policy making-implementation”* (Gutierrez 2012).

### ***Attempts of reform implementation***

Once the proposal was finished and approved, the implementation process started. According to Talavera the process took five years to be prepared for implementation in both primary and escuelas normales (Contreras and Talavera 2005). Such complexity and difficulty in the implementation was mainly because the reform was a new policy, a process without precedents in which each situation was a new problem to be solved. The very first problem faced was the lack of pedagogues and teaching materials that could bring the ideas presented in the proposal into actual pedagogical practices, along with pedagogical materials that could help teachers in the learning-teaching process. *Escuelas normales* also faced issues in the implementation of the curricula: there were few people who could lead a real process of transformation in the teaching career following the

standards the proposal had given. There was also a wide promotion of this transformation without a clear sense direction or the real purpose of it. Most of the implementation processes in the teaching career were isolated efforts with a wide diversity of ideas in them (Carrion 2012). The education reform process proposal lacked a solid material structure, from objectives to guides of implementation within the classrooms. Talavera argues that the education reform process also answered to many proposals and demands from the unions' agenda for many decades and union teachers attempted to control political participation of students and teachers (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 59). A very important point, and one of the main obstacles in the implementation process of transforming *escuelas normales*, was that these institutions has established pedagogical practices (rote and authoritarian) that were very difficult to discontinue, especially taking into account the fact that some professors had countless years teaching in such a very traditional way and refused to give up their jobs. Education reform processes of transformation also had the characteristic of not answering to regional and local interests for teachers (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 63).

### ***Transforming the 'Escuelas Normales'***

One of the biggest challenges of the education reform process proposal was to transform the *escuelas normales*. Historically, teacher schools have had the monopoly of educating future teachers at the national level and most of the teachers in the public system were trained in these public institutions. Even now, a legal requirement of becoming a teacher in a public school is to be graduated from one of the *escuelas normales* (Alvarez 2012). During the process of implementing the education reform the

Ministry of Education attempted to change the system of teachers' training, by restructuring the teaching career and transforming the *escuelas normales* into "Institutos Normales Superiores" –superior teaching institutes-, which would be linked to public universities with the purpose of obtaining a degree similar to a Bachelor's one. Such a transformation would elevate the academic level of teachers and open the opportunity to continue studying at the university level and probably obtain a Bachelor's degree (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 63). The process of negotiation and agreement for the making of such a transformation lasted for at least seven years: from 1997 to 2004

<i>Chart #8: Process of negotiation and agreement in transforming escuelas normales (Contreras and Talavera 2005)</i>			
	<i>Attempts of transforming escuelas normales</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Obstacles and weaknesses</i>
<i>First Stage</i>	Transformation of escuelas normales into national superior teaching institutes	Each instate should have a institutional academic project	Institutional weaknesses of the escuelas normales
<i>Second Stage</i>	Transform only eleven of 23 escuelas normales and fuse two escuelas normales of the same region into one	Reinforce weaknesses in the escuelas normales and promote the institutional academic projects	Confrontation and local interests in each teaching school; the few national superior teaching created did not reach the goal of creating academic projects
<i>Third Stage</i>	The Ministry of Education and GTZ <sup>6</sup> created the project of superior teaching institutes and intercultural bilingual education (PINS-EBI)	Educating bilingual teachers in Aymara and Quechua with an intercultural approach	Lack of public policies and a defined national strategy of intercultural bilingual education, lack of national rules and norms, lack of a serious diagnostic of the requirements for bilingual teachers
<i>Fourth Stage</i>	Unification of superior teaching institutes and attempts to create a "Pedagogical University". The purpose was to link both kinds of institutions into the project of education reform as a whole.	Invitation to 16 universities to administrate superior teaching institutes and promotion of specific public policies to decentralize the <i>escuelas normales</i>	The Ministry of Education needed to play a more active role in the <i>escuelas normales</i> , institutional weaknesses prevented it to intervene in the process

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<sup>6</sup> German international cooperation

Each one of the stages described above left a mix of negative and positive reminiscences of implementation in local communities. Given the complexity of such a process, it is understandable why a process of implementing proposals at the local level is wide more complex than the creation of them and it has a lesson in its own: *public policies without understanding of local impetus and densities would very likely to fail in filling their first expectations during the implementation process.* The ETARE and the World Bank, when created the proposal of education reform, might have had a different idea of what the process of implementation would look like to what actually happened when the proposals were to bring about. One of the biggest achievements during such a process was the consolidation of a curricular design in the teaching career, as well as the wide participation of many social sectors for the agreement and planning of it.

### ***Content of the new curricula***

The curriculum proposal was also built by the ETARE. Even when some of the points were discussed with teachers at the regional level, through a wide system of workshops and consultations, most of the main ideas and curriculum were based on experts' consulting. Once the proposal was approved, according to Contreras (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 69), there was no national council to spread the objectives and goals of the new curricula, neither with parents, teachers or civil society. The curriculum proposal had a strong focus in promotion competences, which attempted to fulfill specific aptitudes towards innovative approaches. The process of implementing the new curriculum in primary schools required the production of a high number of pedagogical materials.

<i>Chart #9 Contents in the new curricula</i>			
Contents	Pedagogical Approach	Cultural Approach	Proposed Resources
Organized and integrated in specific areas (math, language, science, technology, creativity, moral, religion, etc.)  Transversal topics integrated to each curricular area	Social constructivist  Emphasis in cultural and linguistic diversity.  Monolingual and bilingual  Education process focused in the student  Experience based, promoting dialogue and participation.	Intercultural approach  Promoting tolerance and incorporating cultural identity and indigenous languages to the educational process.	Pedagogical resources for each curricular area, libraries, audiovisual materials, sports equipment.

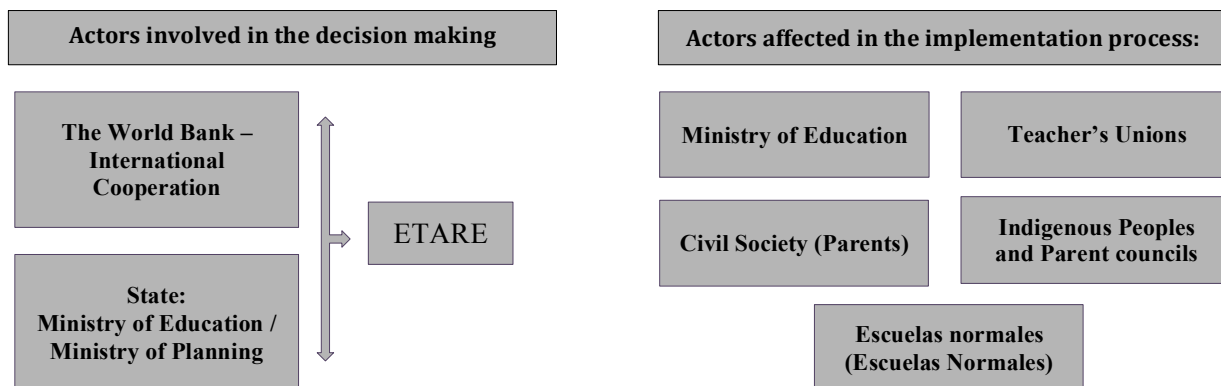
Source: (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 69)

According to Talavera (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 71) from 1994 to 2002 there was a production of 24 pedagogical guides with an impression of 60,000 copies each one. Along with the pedagogical guides, the Ministry of Education also elaborated eight million pedagogical workshops in different languages and focused in four major cultures: Aymara, Quechua, Guarani and Spanish. The proposal of education reform created so much confusion among teachers because it tried to change pedagogical practices and fundamental concepts that have been among teachers for decades (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 72). The Ministry of Education hired pedagogical advisors in order to overcome such problems, which trained teachers to incorporate the curriculum proposals into their daily pedagogical practices. One of the main problems of such training was that pedagogical advisors did not recognize previous experience and knowledge of the teachers; they intended to start a process of learning how to teach from scratch without taking into account regional and local experiences of bilingualism and indigenous



education (Contreras and Talavera 2005, 72-74). Such an attitude produced in teachers a first rejection of the education reform process, along with open confrontations with the pedagogical advisors.

**Chart #10: Bolivian Actors involved and affected in the education reform process of 1994**



***Criticism and rejection of the reform process***

*“Esas políticas no fueron consensuadas con las organizaciones de base, ni con la sociedad civil, aún cuando recogieron algunas de las demandas que ya estaban en las propuestas educativas de los años 90” (Pari 2012)*

Such process of education reform meets the profile of a process promoted and implemented **“from above”**. Much of the critics to it can be traced since the very first moment of decision making, which was characterized by the lack of inclusion in the process of dialogue and negotiation. The direct affected actors with the changes were not consulted and when they were, their opinions were partially included in the proposal and interpreted as convenient (Pari 2012). Such first wave of education reform was characterized for its input from the state and international cooperation into the policymaking and implementation process; the mobilization of state actors (domestic and

international) rather than a process of reform made in a bottom-up way impacted the Bolivian society. The state continued being autonomous and opted for the implementation of a process leaded in a more bureaucratic way: a “**technocratic input**” that closed spaces to civil society of being included. Such a lack of inclusion was the main reason why the process was rejected at the time it needed to be implemented.

*“El proceso (de reforma educativa) sembró las semillas de su propio fracaso al no incluir a la población indígena en las desiciones que tomaron” (Apala 2012)*

In the frame of such socio-political context, indigenous peoples exercised the right of organization legally given by the law, legitimating their demands and promoting the aperture of political spaces in education issues. The main critique to bilingual education given by indigenous groups was that, even when indigenous languages were included in the Law, indigenous culture and knowledge were not. Bilingualism proposed in the Law was considered as “**bilingualism of transition**” because it sought to educate in indigenous languages only during the first three years, with the purpose of introducing Spanish as official language of the educational system. Indigenous knowledges were also not included in the reform; the proposal of national curricula was “a translation of occidental knowledges to indigenous languages” (Gutierrez 2012).

Another problem of the education reform process was to consider indigenous peoples as a whole, somehow unanimous, group. There was no real recognition of diversity, neither of a presence of 36 different cultures in Bolivia (Ballejos 2012). The Education Reform law had problems and difficulties in being accepted by indigenous communities; it was a strange law for local indigenous leaders. In their statement of the

national situation of bilingual education in Bolivia, indigenous peoples argued in 2004 *“intercultural bilingual education can only be found in about 10% of schools in the country, there are thousands of children that are not receiving education in indigenous languages. The intercultural bilingual education is only taught, until recently, in the first and second years of primary school”* CONAMAQ (2004).

Indigenous organizations also argued that intercultural bilingual models of education and processes of social participation still did not answer to their own ways of education and territorial management, even though such experiences have been significant and lead new proposals of education. In the framework of such statement, the First National Council of Education (CONED) was organized in 2005. During the activity, indigenous people claimed to the state to assume its social responsibility towards education and indigenous communities, as well as to listen and take into account indigenous leaders into processes of decision-making at the political level.

### ***A new wave of Education Reform Process – Shift in Bolivian politics***

The National Council of Education in 2005 opened a new stage in Bolivian politics related to indigenous education and interculturality; indigenous peoples in Bolivia have been empowered and able to speak up about their own proposals and demands to the State in different matters, including education. In 2006, with the rise of Evo Morales and the MAS (political party) into the government, indigenous peoples visualized a promise to implement their proposals as well as attendance of their demands. Such a hope became stronger when in January 2009, with the proclamation of a referendum and its high level of approval at the national level (over 90%) promoting the

creation of a new Constitution, approved with over 60% total votes. Thereafter, Bolivia changed its name to "Plurinational State of Bolivia" and has been declared "decentralized" and with "autonomies". Bolivia, in the context of the Government of Evo Morales, has searched internally redefining its national and international public policy. In Educational issues the CEPOS (Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples<sup>7</sup>) have strengthened the social participation of local indigenous leaders and obtained strategic positions into the Ministry of Education.

### ***Emergence of New Political Actors: The CEPOS***

The Education Reform Law legitimated the CEPOS in 1994, in the sixth article, delegating them specifically public policies in education, bilingualism and interculturality (Ministerio de Educación 1994, 7).

*The Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples attending to the concept of trans territoriality will have a national coverage and will be organized in: Aymara, Quechua, Guarani, multiethnic Amazon and others, will participate in the making of educational policies and will ensure their right compliance, specifically about interculturality and bilingualism.*

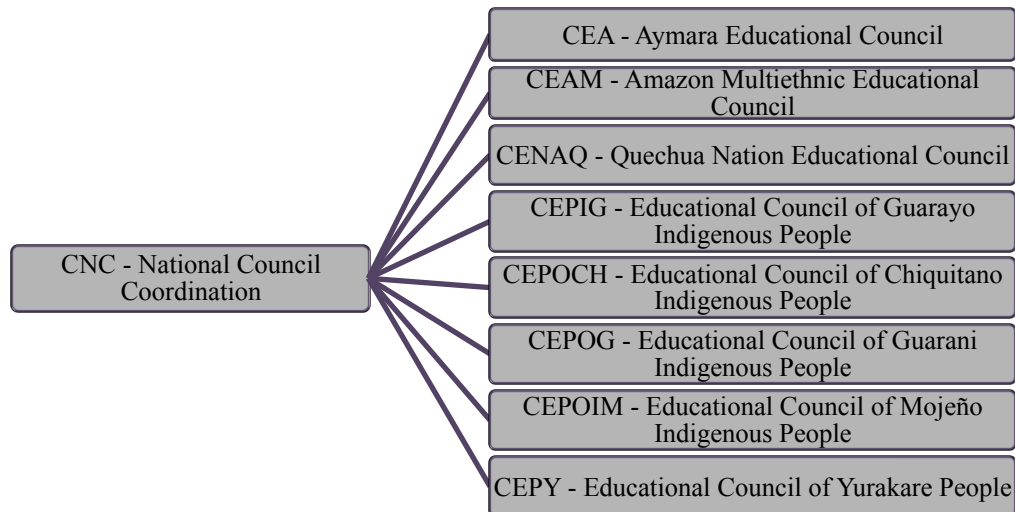
Local indigenous leaders believe this is perhaps the most important part of this law, one of its biggest successes (Gutierrez 2012). In the policy making of bilingual education, the CEPOS have different tasks: 1) promoting social participation of local indigenous leaders into policy making, 2) building of demands based on local realities, 3) the developing of public policies on interculturality and multilingualism at the national level, 4) decision making in political, technical and administrative issues related to

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<sup>7</sup> Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios – Name in Spanish

education, etc. Their mission is to make political actions and participate in planning, organizing, executing, following and evaluating intercultural public policies in education.

**Chart #11 - Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples**



The CEPOS have become a strong political actor in the educational arena and they usually consist bilingual professors, parents, community councils and especially indigenous leaders (Carrion 2012). They work very closely in developing new strategies of bilingualism, pedagogy and promotion of indigenous knowledge. The CEPOS seek to break divisions between the same indigenous groups but at the same time encourage the promotion of localities and promote education that answers to local realities and necessities (Ballejos 2012). The CEPOS emerged in the late 90's and went into a process of learning leadership and instruction before they could play a central role in educational issues (Ballejos 2012). Struggles about indigenous education are not new and over decades –perhaps centuries– indigenous people have made efforts to be heard, included and their demands incorporated into the public policies. With the exception of isolated efforts funded by NGO's and international cooperation, indigenous peoples had very few

answers to their demands from the Ministry of Education. The CEPOS have become a practical –and legitimized- way for this to happen. The new political context promoted by Evo Morales’ government has created a new atmosphere in which such an impetus is timely.

The matrix of indigenous organizations (i.e. Cenaq, Conamac, Coridup, etc) have summarized their demands in education as follows CONAMAQ (2004):

- i. Education must be defined as inter, intra and pluricultural: social participation must be stated from the local necessities and demands of indigenous peoples and other social organizations. Such model of education must be an alternative to the classic model of education.
- ii. The State must assume its responsibility of guarantor in education for all levels and geographic contexts.
- iii. Education must be declared pluricultural and multilingual in order to promote development and reproduction of indigenous ways of living and learning.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of this new wave of education reform, which has been called “an educational revolution” by many indigenous leaders, is that during the policy making, dialogue and negotiation processes have been wide open for indigenous leaders to not only participate but also propose and even make decisions in those policies that will affect their localities. Such an openness from the government to indigenous communities has promoted civil society to rely on government actions and has added trust in the decision making process. Indigenous peoples have experienced horizontality throughout the process, with no perceptible attempts of imposition of ideas

from the current authorities while seeking to reach agreements and consensus with localities. An exchange of ideas rather than an obtrusion, it opens the debate to new forms of thinking about education and an alternative way of producing knowledge with the help of indigenous lore and traditions. The final goal would be to preserve and promote the different Bolivian cultures, supporting the new constitution that declares Bolivia as a multicultural state.

***A New Education Law: Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Perez***

The final product of this process of interpreting, negotiation and inclusion was the signing of a new education law in December 2009 (active from 2010): Law of Education, Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Perez. Such a law is an adaptation of the original book published by indigenous leaders “*Por una educacion indigena originaria*” (2004) which summarizes the demands for and presents an alternative method of intercultural bilingual education. The new Law Avelino Siñani seeks to incorporate new ideas to the educational system. Some of the most notorious changes are the following:

- *Decolonization of education*
- *Intercultural teaching training*
- *Reconfiguration of the curricula at all levels*

This new educational law promotes a new model of education under the name of “productive education”, which is inspired by the education model first promoted in the School Ayllú – Warisata in 1931. Basically the idea of education following such a model is that each school should answer to local necessities: indigenous languages, traditions, economical practices, leadership, spirituality and indigenous knowledge. This type paradigm is stipulated in the 12<sup>th</sup> article:

*“It organizes essential knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes for the comprehensive development of the human being, according to age and the requirements of the natural, social, cultural and productive environment” (Ministerio de Educacion 2010)*

Its objective is to strengthen not only indigenous knowledge but universal knowledge as well, giving to indigenous peoples the place they deserve in the educational issues at the national level. Therefore, *pluriculturalismo*<sup>8</sup> means to understand one’s culture, respect others’ and learn mutually from ones’ point of view and another’s with respect and humbleness, as a plurinational state (Gutierrez 2012). In order to build such a model of education, local indigenous languages should be considered as a “first language” (L1), without leaving behind learning Spanish (L2) and possibly a third, foreign language (L3) (Ministerio de Educacion 2010). In order to move forward with the type of education profile, the Education Law proposes a shift in teachers education, providing a specific list of requirements for teachers to fulfill in order to promote such a change in the educational system.

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| <p><b><i>Profile of primary school teachers according to the New Law of Education (Art. 48)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teaching and service vocation, critical attitude and socially linked to the local reality</li><li>- Awareness and capacity of understanding linguistic and geographic complexities</li><li>- Creativity and interest in indigenous nations, art, decolonization, values and morals</li><li>- Trilingual; should speak Spanish, an indigenous language and a foreign one.</li><li>- Productive consciousness and capacity of articulate education for work</li><li>- Capacity of promoting indigenous identity and leadership in the students</li><li>- Scientific attitude and knowledge of community alternative pedagogical methodologies</li><li>- Knowledge of informatics and new technologies for the community use</li><li>- Capacity of identifying and help students with special necessities</li><li>- Capacity of identifying scientific, artist and productive vocations in the students</li><li>- Democratic attitude, ethic and respect for human and natural rights and dignity</li></ul> |
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<sup>8</sup> The concept *pluriculturalismo* differs in Bolivia from the concept of multiculturalism, which is the recognition of different cultures in the country and interculturality, which is used to define the social relations and cultural exchange between them.



### ***Decolonization of education***

The new education law also includes the proposal of decolonizing education. This proposal relies on the idea that Spanish colonization is in different ways present in the Bolivian society and especially in educational matters. *“When we were a Spanish colony, indigenous peoples and the Pacha Mama were exploited. Spanish people used written documents in Spanish to dominate us in our own land and distorted our community education* (Condori Ancasi 2009). The proposal of decolonization includes the appreciation of Bolivian cultures and building education “from within”, preserving indigenous languages and knowledge in each community. It also attempts to overcome colonial era ideas that condemn indigenous knowledge as “bad” or “backwards”, while promoting social tolerance, elimination of discrimination and racism towards indigenous people and the claiming of indigenous rights. Decolonization of education seeks to adapt the curriculum into the Bolivian cultural diversity and change pedagogical approaches, which means to eliminate authoritarian pedagogy and oppressive learning environments.

### ***Curriculum restructuring:***

The new curriculum should reach localities and specific realities. The purpose of restructuring the curriculum is to include indigenous knowledge that was not included in the first restructuring (proposal of 1994). In order to do so, indigenous people proposed to divide the new curriculum in three parts: national, regional and local. The final implementation of the curriculum would have characteristics of each. The proposal is that each community would adjust the local curriculum to their own necessities and knowledge. The local curriculum should also have characteristics of the local community;

teachers would no longer be the center of education. Instead the community and indigenous leaders would teach children about local history and traditions as well as local economy and development. The CEPOS (Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia 2013) also wrote a proposal of division in areas of knowledge as guidance for indigenous communities to write their own.

<i>Chart #12 Divisions of the Curriculum</i>	
National (base)	It follows professional advices, development vision and it seeks to meet international standards of quality
Regional	It seeks to answer to Andean-indigenous nations. It is divided into each one of the biggest indigenous nations: Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, Chiquitano, etc.
Local	It is a combination of both curriculum (national and regional) but adapted to local history, traditions and realities.

### ***Teachers Education***

With the promotion of a new curriculum, it is necessary to promote a new pedagogical model and decenter the educational event of the teachers. The new education law proposes a new training for them, recognizing their active role in the process: teachers should not only teach but also learn from their experiences. This new vision of education training creates a circle of learning: knowledge – practice – teaching (Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios 2007). The proposal seeks to improve the learning process but also to train teachers to use critical thinking skills and to develop a social commitment within the Bolivian nation (Ministerio de Educacion 2010). The proposal is also divided in two basic components: 1) transformation of *escuelas normales*, elevating their profile into specialized colleges that prepare teachers to a university level of training

2) Specialization of teachers in practice, elevating their academic degree to a higher level than the current one.

### ***International Political Actors***

As the Morales' administration gained power, a shift in the roles of political actors was visible. The State, as the main political actor, assumed its role of controlling and leading the political game, as well as the education reform process of dialogue and negotiation (Carrion 2012). The Ministry of Education confronted the challenge of guiding and moderating political interests related to the process, to make indigenous proposals more visible and allow the teachers' union to be heard, even when such a shift in politics was unexpected for some sectors and disadvantaged others. International cooperation that usually focused on small efforts of education in indigenous areas was compelled to direct their efforts in such a way that concords with the Ministry of Education's agenda. This shift was noticeable not only in the education agenda but also in other types of international cooperation, the most remarkable being perhaps USAID who was expelled out of the country and their projects canceled because their agenda created conflicts with the government. At the international level such actions were received with surprise, especially because of the trans local conflicts that resulted of it. The organisms of international cooperation that stayed in the country, such as the *Organizacion de Estados Iberoamericanos*, modified their agendas to work along with state institutions. During the first wave of education reform, this organism followed the indications of ETARE and the Ministry of Education and financed attempts to implement the new curriculum in small communities (Bejarano 2012). The OEI also have supported

meetings of indigenous leaders, workshops and dialogue assemblies. With the shift in politics and the rise of the Left in the country, the OEI has been working more closely with the Ministry of Education and following their guidance in supporting bilingual education.

Although international cooperation is interested in working with and supporting the main national projects and always attempts to reach specific goals, its role in sustaining certain specific projects is also important. The CEPOS are an instance of it. The CNC (central CEPO) and other major CEPOS work along with IBIS, a Norwegian social organization that works on access to education, equality and education resources, to promote their own efforts of indigenous education. Through a foundation IBIS finances indigenous leaders meetings, workshops and additional materials that the CEPOS need in order to reach their goals. The CEPOS have also been supported in their weaknesses and given help when they need it (Apala 2012). Even when over the years IBIS has reduced its economical support to the CEPOS, its first impetus has encouraged each CEPO to promote their own sustainable way of continuing to promote indigenous education and also the necessity to actually convey in agreements and formally promote the implementation of their own proposals in the communities.

### ***Current Status of the Education Reform Process in Bolivia***

*The final administrative arrangements for the implementation of the “educative revolution” were supposed to be finished by the end of 2012, indigenous leaders and civil society expected to see the changes within classrooms by mid-year 2013. The expectation of its final implementation was very high by indigenous communities and quite skeptical*

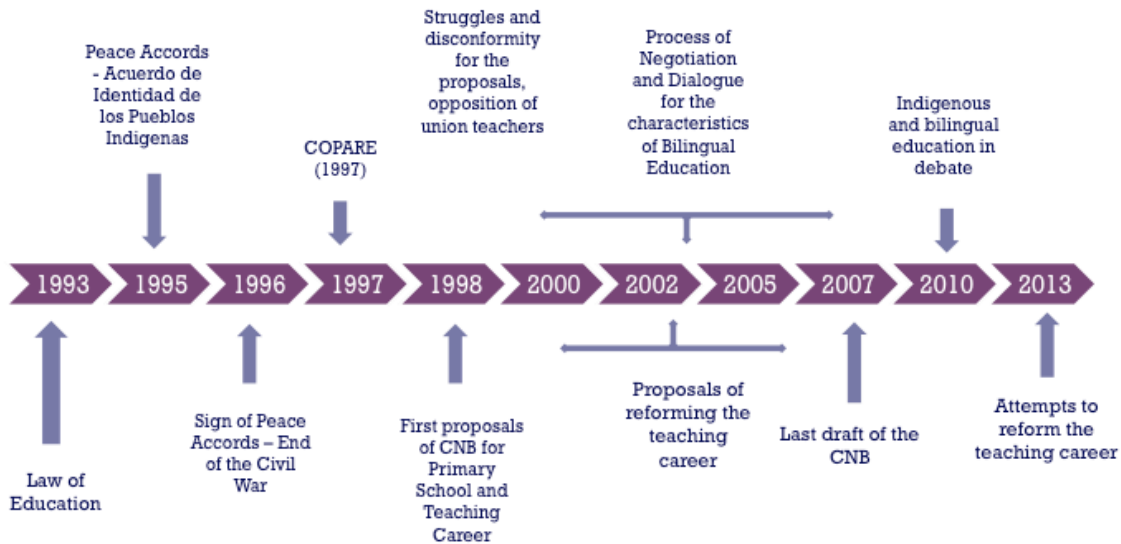
*in academic circles. There were many other topics and social problems that were expected to be resolved along with the implementation of the new curricula: the standardization of indigenous languages, final agreement in basic concepts related to the education reform proposal, increase of social spending in education and approval of other proposals presented to the Ministry of Education (re-mapping of the country according to cultures and linguistic areas), etc.*

*Some CEPOS, with help of their communities, have moved forward and attempted to implement these changes in the classrooms, financially supported by international cooperation. The biggest CEPOS (Aymara, Quechua, Guarani and others) have also made an effort to collect and document indigenous knowledge through a set of workshops and indigenous participation. This compilation of oral history, worldview, art and tradition has inspired teachers to promote education from a more indigenous point of view. At the local level however, a silent debate emerged, questioning the relevance and benefit of the communities from indigenous knowledge and the disadvantages of giving up occidental knowledge. Such concerns have highlighted other weaknesses of the curricula, specifically those related to pedagogical practices: how can communitarian education be evaluated? What would be the measurements to control academic achievements? What is the new role of teachers into such a new model of education? What are the disadvantages of following a model of education locally focused? Is such a model of education preparing children for development? Such criticisms from local and academic circles have also spread doubts about the real purpose of such an indigenous model of intercultural bilingual education and some have even stigmatized it as “pure*

*culturalism". Reactions from the mestizo population and those who do not openly identify themselves as indigenous people have generated rejection and misinformation about the process, thinking that the recognition of indigenous cultures would probably provoke discrimination in other ways (from indigenous people against mestizos) to those who do not speak indigenous languages.*

## CHAPTER THREE: EDUCATION REFORM PROCESS IN GUATEMALA

### *Timeline of the Guatemalan Education Reform Process*



In Guatemala the starting point of the history of education reform can be located in 1995 with the signing of the *Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which became one of the seventeen Peace Agreements. Although some early efforts of promoting indigenous bilingual education are also important: (i.e. the beginning of PRONEBI-National Program of Intercultural Bilingual Education) in 1984. The Peace Agreements highlighted the importance of starting a process of education reform including indigenous peoples, along with the recognition of the country's cultural diversity. Such a step was important, according to international agencies, in order to move forward and "heal" the scars of the civil war (1960-1996).

The Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples demands that the state use indigenous languages in the educational system and guarantee the freedom of

learning to read and write in native languages, along with the recognition of indigenous cultures and local diversity. It therefore states the necessity of promoting intercultural bilingual education, “Mayan schools” and other types of indigenous education (Acuerdo sobre Identidad y Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas 1995). The necessity of an education reform process was clear. In the subsection G of the agreement, the parties (State and the Guerrilla) agreed on the promotion of an education reform process. Such an education reform, according to the agreement, should meet some general requirements.

**General:** Answer to cultural and linguistic diversity, recognizing indigenous peoples’ values and knowledge, strengthen indigenous identity and Mayan educational systems, allow access to formal and informal education and the right of indigenous knowledge to be included in the national curricula. **Specific:** Decentralized and regional, adapted to linguistic and cultural localities, giving communities the power to define their own curricula, sources of education, education schedule and participate in decision-making, integrating Mayan and indigenous concepts into the educational model, along with their history, science, language, politics and art. (Acuerdo sobre Identidad y Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas 1995)

In order to accomplish such purposes the promotion of intercultural bilingual education was crucial and to value the study of indigenous knowledge and languages at all levels. A core goal of the education reform was to include cultural diversity in the education system, which would eventually mean to train teachers and public officials in order to develop an institutionalized system of participation and inclusion. The education



reform process had special emphasis on indigenous people because they were the principal victims of the civil war. The main commitments stated in the *Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples* are strengthened by *The Agreement on Resettlement of the Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict* and *The Agreement on Socioeconomic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation*.

In 1997 the COPARE (Joint Committee Of Educational Reform In Guatemala) was created, its main objective was to design the process of education reform. Organized mainly by ten people: five from civil society and the indigenous community, and five from different government agencies. The process was a whole set of political, cultural, technical and scientific actions to be implemented gradually and permanently. There were four principal “axis” that divided into eleven areas of transformation.

Chart #13 Areas of transformation			
(Axis)	Technical pedagogical	Public policies	Communications
- Democracy and culture of peace	Administrative	Economy and finances	Infrastructure
- Unity in diversity	Human resources	Languages	Productivity
- Sustainable development	Legal issues	Culture	
- Science and technology			

The construction, dialogue and negotiation of the national curricula, what at the beginning was expected to be finished in two or three years, lasted for almost a decade. The proposal was finished in January 2004. The Ministry of Education promoted a process of dialogue between 2000 and 2001, its purpose was to create consensus and agreement about the main problems to solve in matters of bilingual education and

coverage as well as indigenous knowledge that needed to be preserved. As a result of such a long process that covered all levels (national, departmental and local) the most important necessities were divided in six categories a) coverage and quality in all the levels of the educational system, primary education, basic and high schools, b) improvement in the quality of education and absolute support to all educational levels and curricular transformation, c) extension of intercultural bilingual education, d) professionalization of teachers and improvement of teacher's labor conditions, e) decentralization of the educational system and reduction of bureaucracy and increase of efficiency in educative administration at the municipal level and f) increase in the budget for education (DIGEBI 2013). According to PRODESSA (Development Project Santiago) such demands are exactly the same ones that indigenous organizations claim (Roncal 2013). The education reform process also needed to include and recognize different experiences of bilingual education, promote the work of Mayan Schools and consolidate the National Program of Intercultural Bilingual Education for indigenous peoples. The reform also outlines the creation of a Mayan University, superior indigenous institutes and the operation of the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM).

### ***Curricular Transformation and Pedagogical Materials***

During the presidential administration of Oscar Berger (2004-08) with Carmen Aceña at the head of the Ministry of Education the education reform had an impetus in matters of planning. Such administration promoted the construction of the curricular transformation, which included the National Base Curriculum (CNB) for pre-primary, primary and teachers training level. At the primary level, the most elaborated, attempted

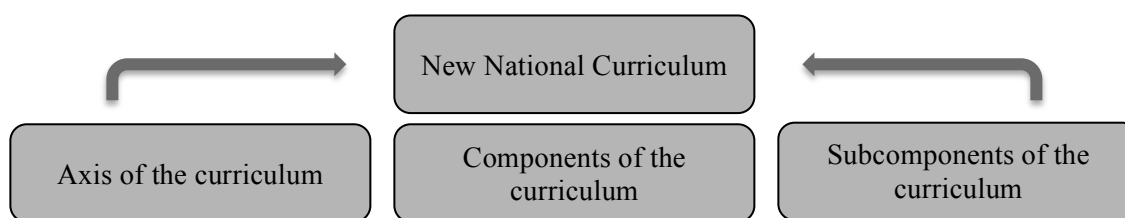
to promote renovation and elaboration of pedagogical techniques, schemes, methods, contents and procedures. Divided into areas of knowledge, the new curriculum attempted to include a whole set of new actors into the educational model, including parents and members of the community.

<b>Chart #14 Local actors involved in the New Educational Model</b>	
Students (main actor)	
Parents	Teachers
Educational councils	Educational administrators
The community	School administrators

*Source: Based National Curriculum 2007; 16-7*

The pedagogical approach in the new curriculum was constructivist. Centered on the students, it sought to develop critical thinking and intercultural ideas in them and put an emphasis on values and cultural identity. Its final objective was to promote an idea of citizenship that includes all the cultures of the nation (Ministerio de Educacion 2007). In order to achieve this the new curriculum promoted five different values as the core of the whole curricular system: equity, relevance, sustainability, participation and social commitment, and pluralism.

***Chart #15 Curricular Transformation and Pedagogical Materials***



The areas of the curriculum were divided in nine: 1) multiculturalism and interculturality, 2) equity of gender, ethnicity and class, 3) values of education, 4) family life, 5) citizenship, 6) sustainable development, 7) social and environmental security, 8)

job training and 9) technology development. The curriculum as a whole promoted a radical change in the traditional way of teaching, which had been criticized for being authoritarian, rote and centered on the teachers as main actors and fully responsible for the learning process. It also includes two different languages to be included in the educational system **L1**, which would be an indigenous language and **L2** Spanish; this order might change according to the locality.

According to DIGEBI (General Direction of Intercultural Bilingual Education), the effort of implementing two languages into the educational system was not new, as mentioned before PRONADE (National Program of Education) had also recognized the need of teaching to indigenous communities in indigenous languages and even before PRONADE, the program “*Castellanización*” in the 1960's taught in indigenous languages with the purpose of “incorporating” and “assimilating” indigenous people into the Spanish language. Both attempts were highly criticized by indigenous leaders for having a racist component and imposing occidental culture over the indigenous ones, and also because they did not take indigenous people into account neither its creation or implementation process (DIGEBI 2013). The difference between such experiences and the process of education reform was not only the focus in indigenous languages, but also their cultures, knowledge, traditions and educational models; the community focus in the pedagogical approach. These along with the diversity in the curricula were two of the biggest challenges for teachers and the teacher’s training at the middle level. That was the main reason why the pedagogical career also needed to be reformed.

### ***Transformation of escuelas normales***

Historically, in Guatemala the teaching career is delegated to middle level institutions called “*escuelas normales*”<sup>9</sup>. The core purpose of their transformation was to strengthen the curricular guidelines given in the CNB and train teachers in matters of bilingualism, interculturality and indigenous cultures. Training teachers would eventually promote change in the localities and provide teachers with the ability to work in different sociocultural environments and with the capacity to use both an indigenous language and Spanish. Basically, the axis and values of the curriculum are the same than the National Curriculum but modified so they can be the guidance for the teachers’ training process.

In Guatemala, *escuelas normales* spend three academic years to prepare a future teacher with the knowledge they need to know before teach. The first proposal to reform the teaching career changed the contents, pedagogical techniques and the structure of those academic years, but not the timing of them. However, to become a teacher in two languages and fulfill all the requirements that the new curriculum stipulated was very unlikely to be completed in three years. The proposal of expanding the time to prepare bilingual teachers to four years was soon part of dialogue. The four-year proposal included expanding pedagogical practices, in order to prepare new teachers into the new pedagogical tools and dive into bilingual contexts. Strong opposition to the process began, the main argument against the reform to teachers training was that prolonging the process would hurt directly the parents’ economy, especially in rural areas, where the

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<sup>9</sup> This model of teacher’s training is about the same than the Bolivian case, *escuelas normales* are very common in Latin America.

teaching career is the only option the youth have to continue studying. The process of education reform entered into a new process of dialogue and negotiation in terms of teaching training.

New proposals of teachers' training reform emerged and a wide variety of institutions involved in the education process generated opinions and suggestions of how teachers' training should be. The breadth of the proposals included an attempt to change the three years of preparation into two very theoretical years of training and two more years that would be taught at the university level. This break into two parts would be named as "pedagogical school" and after the four years the teachers would receive a college degree and the pedagogical tools to teach. This process of negotiation lasted about ten years, according to Roncal (Roncal 2013) and the intricacy of the proposal was too complex to be executed at the national level, especially since the institutional capacity of the only public university (University of San Carlos in Guatemala) is so weak. To raise the teaching career to the university level would probably limit the access to higher education for indigenous peoples, along with the fact that during years the unions teachers have worked on improving the escuelas normales and graduated young bilingual teachers to work in pluricultural regions, made this proposal impractical.

The very limited results coming from the state to strengthen the escuelas normales have cost so much time and negotiation as to cause the state to give them up to the universities, especially when not all private universities believe in the promotion of intercultural bilingual education (Roncal 2013). The apparent renunciation of the state to promote the teaching career reaches its most critical point when there is a lack of

investment in the public institutions. Teachers unions have perceived such actions as a “neoliberal project” seeking to privatize all the services that the state is demanded to fulfill, including education. Recently new struggles for the promotion of the teaching career have emerged, however most of them are focused on improving labor benefits (i.e. increase of salary, infrastructure, extra bonus, etc.) rather than a real demand for bilingual education within the classrooms. The demand for improving indigenous education with the implementation of intercultural bilingual education in indigenous areas should not only be delegated to the teachers’ unions, for they will concentrate on demands for the improvement of labor conditions over the development of a better education (Giraca 2013).

### ***Dialogue and Negotiation***

In Guatemala, the processes of dialogue and negotiation for improvement of education and the real promotion of reform in the educational system is done by different political sectors and actors: the private sector of education (CIEN, Empresarios por la Educación, private universities, etc.), the National Council of Mayan Education (CNEM), the teachers’ unions (ANAM and STEG), indigenous peoples, women organizations, academics and the state (Ministry of Education – DIGEBI). The relations of power however, are much different outside the dialogue table. The dialogue has changed over time to favor certain sectors according to the political parties in power in the state. In Guatemala, the political parties make alliances with the different powers in order to gain support and influence with the government. These alliances determine which areas of public policy will be attended to or not. Because indigenous peoples are not represented

in such alliances of power, intercultural bilingual education is not a priority topic in the dialogue agenda. The policies related to indigenous education in general have become a “correct political speech” that needs to be included because it helps to obtain votes and social legitimization in rural communities.

Some academics have asserted that racism against indigenous peoples is one of the main reasons for the low promotion of bilingual education in indigenous areas (Giraca 2013) (Roncal 2013). The economic power, which lies with the entrepreneurial oligarchy, resists recognizing the diversity of cultures and identities within the country, the first step for the promotion of intercultural bilingual education. Misinformation about native languages is also an obstacle for the promotion of bilingual education at the local level. For example, the view that the teaching of indigenous languages promotes “backwardness” and that Spanish should be taught instead in order to promote economic development is common in many areas. All these elements together have delayed for years a consensus during the negotiation processes, which was one of the main factors for which the education reform process could not be consolidated.

### ***Struggles for the implementation of the reform***

The unions teachers are usually marked as opponents of any reform in the educational system. The population however has misunderstood the unions’ actions and the presence of a political campaign against any social movement strengthens such misconception. According to Giraca (Giraca 2013) it is necessary to remember that unions teachers were born to claim the improvement of labor conditions: salaries, infrastructure in schools, materials, etc. In such matters, ANAM and STEG have done a



good job. They have improved labor conditions and promoted an increase of salaries and bonuses, especially for teachers in rural areas and in hard laboral conditions. To delegate the promotion of intercultural bilingual education completely to the teachers' union is a mistake. Indigenous people, in order to promote their own demands to the state, however, have used their capacity of social mobilization. The struggles between both (indigenous peoples and union teachers) with the state have not been easy. Guatemala, as a society living in a post-conflict political framework, still has traces of authoritarianism and repression towards social movements. This political context has promoted a "biased dialogue", in which the state does not listen to the demands from organized social groups but rather impose its ideas to them.

In an extreme expression of authoritarianism, the state has condemned social groups that are exercising their right of manifestation, organize marches in any kind and topic (i.e. the manifestations of Totonicapán in 2012, where indigenous leaders claiming to make an agenda in different topics, including education, were repressed and even killed by the military), as well as promoting a false discourse about them. Organized indigenous people have been labeled as "terrorists", "vandals", "delinquents" and "criminals". This phenomenon causes the promotion of public policies without the inclusion of indigenous people. Over and over, public policies have been pushed through without the consensus of civil society, which causes a general discontent and pessimism towards any change in the educational system.

According to Giraca (Giraca 2013) such pessimism can also be perceived in academic circles that fear to be involved with the government or the Ministry of

Education because of the abuses promoted from these institutions as well as the projects created by them, even those that come from DIGEBI. The promotion of a real dialogue therefore has been put at risk and the only political actor that has been truly interested in the promotion of intercultural bilingual education are agencies of international cooperation.

### ***The role of international cooperation***

The international cooperation has been indicated as the only political actor interested and fully committed to the implementation of bilingual education. As instances of such a commitment GIZ (German international cooperation), USAID, UNICEF and other agencies have promoted different projects in Guatemala. The international agenda, however, might be far from the necessities of local communities; their interests are not always the same ones as the local leaders and their goals might not be relevant to rural realities. Some researchers have also pointed to the fact that international commitments have strong impact in policy and agenda making. The Ministry of Education is influenced by different inputs and international standards to the point that some even think that the Minister of Education needs to be approved by certain international agencies (Roncal 2013). This phenomenon greatly affects topics related to intercultural education, generating a struggle of power that makes unclear the direction of its agenda. Additionally, the Ministry of Education in Guatemala has been implicated in serious cases of corruption and money deviation that have provoked a high rate of turnover of ministers during the last decade. Whether such accusations are substantiated or not is not

yet clear, but create uncertainty among the population about the credibility of the institution.

### ***Current Status of the Education Reform Process in Guatemala***

*In Guatemala, the education reform is far from being fully implemented. Many of the interviewees agreed that there was never a clear conceptualization of what 'reform' was supposed to mean. The lack of definition has created a generalization of the word in which everything was called reform: from building schools in rural areas to printing books and the distribution of schooling materials. In matters of bilingual education very few solid steps have been taken. The DIGEBI is actually doing a characterization of the schools in rural areas, a counting of the necessities in each locality because it did not previously exist. Their resources however are very limited. A real transformation of indigenous education should not be delegated solely to DIGEBI because the country and its local necessities are so far ranging and complex. A process of reform necessarily means commitment from the whole state. Guatemala has not been openly declared as multicultural, nor truly recognizes the rights of indigenous people because of the institutionalized racism within the public institutions, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. Being of indigenous descent and speaking indigenous languages in Guatemala is still perceived as backwardness. Indigenous languages keep being used in private spaces because the schools do not promote its usage in other spaces. The charge of racism towards indigenous population is high and the schools keep promoting authoritarian pedagogies. The historical roots that created a civil war in Guatemala are still palpable and is further complicated by the state continuing to deny*

*the indigenous rights to land, education in their languages and recognition of culture and knowledge.*

*There are, however, some signs of advancement towards indigenous education. Guided by local authorities and with the effort and support of the local communities, and sometimes principally because of the effort of sponsors, donors and NGOs some bilingual schools function well in the rural areas, promoting indigenous languages and knowledge. Most of that international aid comes from GIZ, OEI, UNICEF, USAID and others. Only USAC (Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala) and the unions teachers are real supporters of the education reform in primary schools, they have openly spoke about the necessity to promote intercultural bilingual education, however the support from the government and public institutions seems to decline over time.*

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF BOTH PROCESSES**

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### ***Historical Background of Both Countries***

It is important to highlight the sociopolitical history of both countries in order to create a more understandable comparison between them. Guatemala and Bolivia share a similar history of resistance and struggles against authoritarian governments but also the reaction of both systems has been different and produced different outcomes. Guatemala and Bolivia share a similar history of indigenous struggles against colonialism, authoritarian governments and revolutions. In both countries, by early 20<sup>th</sup> century, indigenous groups remained in deplorable social conditions, the economy of both countries was supported by exploitation and oppression and it was highly concentrated in agriculture or exploitation of commodities. In early decade of 40's, Bolivia experienced one of the most important revolutionary movements in the region that defeated the authoritarian regime, producing a short civil war that ended with the triumph of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) and promoted the nationalization of natural resources in the country. Even when the policies promoted by the MNR in early 50's can be evaluated as entrepreneurial and ‘*assimilationists*’ (including education), the victory of the civil movement started a contested history of indigenous-state relations.

In Guatemala by 1944, a revolutionary movement had overthrown the dictatorship of Jorge Ubico (1931-44), starting a new decade that later was called “*the 10 years of spring*”, which was mainly characterized by the openness of the state to transform the economic system by promoting a land reform, expelling international influences in politics and strengthening labor rights. Juan Jose Arévalo Bermejo (1945-51) and Jacobo

Árbenz Guzmán (1951-54) former presidents are remembered because of the great political success in promoting deep structural changes that remain until today. In 1953, however, when an attempt to implement agrarian reform was made, Guatemala experienced a political intervention from the U.S., specifically because the agrarian reform violated the foreign investments of the United Fruit Company (UFCo). As a result, Guatemala experienced a '*contra revolution*' that started a civil war in 1960.

In Bolivia by 1965, a military coup had overthrown the National Revolutionary Movement to start a new period of social conflict that became civil war of nearly 20 years. During those decades, the MNR attempted to make an alliance with the military coup, but the levels of repression initiated a revolutionary movement against the military rule and promoted a *Pacto Militar-Campesino* (PMC) in which indigenous peoples and miners benefited from labor rights recognition that eventually became political freedom and the end of authoritarian governments. The period from 1980 to 1996 saw a variety of different governments and included incidents of human right abuses, drug trafficking and economic misleading. In 1985 the Nationalist Democratic Action Party (ADN) won the popular vote and initiated a center-leftist government that battled with economic struggles related to drug trafficking; especially related to the production of 'coca'. By the late 90's the political parties were struggling in obtaining a majority to obtain power and in 2000 the Cochabamba protests against (water) privatization pushed politicians to take indigenous peoples into account for policy making. Politics in Bolivia changed due to internal pressure from protesters and local leaders that demanded policies in favor of minorities. The deterioration of the political system contributed to the rise of a different

kind of politics, an opportunity that was taken by the MAS, vindicating indigenous rights and with the *cocaleros* sector as a leader. In 2005, Evo Morales won the elections promoting a radical change in politics and nationalizing Bolivian national resources.

Guatemala on the other hand, began its civil war in 1960. As a result, the overthrown of democratic period, indigenous peoples and other local middle class leaders that supported the revolutionary governments organized themselves into guerrillas. The government promoted politics against the leftist insurgents with the help of the military, promoting a wide confrontation. Indigenous peoples suffered most of the injustices and human rights violations and the Guatemalan Truth Commission estimates that more than *“200,000 people were killed, the vast majority of whom were indigenous civilians. 93% of the human rights abuses reported to the Commission were attributed to the military or other government-supported forces”* (Historical Clarification Commission 2000). The first guerilla movements were the Revolutionary Movement (MR-13) and the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR). The Guatemalan government promoted a counterinsurgency movement against the revolutionary groups, strengthened by international military assistance, principally from the United States. The worst period of the civil war, and the time were most of the massacres happened, was between 1980-1983 with the administration of Efraim Rios Montt and the policy of *“tierra arrasada”* that decimated entire communities, including massacres of men, women and children. The effects of the repression of the state over organized societal groups had its consequences: most of the leaders that attempted to promote change in the society were punished, tortured and assassinated. Furthermore, indigenous peoples suffered genocide and politics that

attempted to eliminate them and “their roots”. Due to the racism in such politics, the Peace Agreements (1996) sought to reconcile the relations between the state and the civil society and vindicate indigenous rights. The promotion of such agreements, however, did not end the structural racism present in the state institutions and upper-class elites of Guatemala and quickly, the policies that were supposed to be promoted to vindicate indigenous rights were stopped or nullified. By 2005 only some of the politics related to indigenous vindications and peace agreements were active, and few actions were promoted to fulfill the letter of the Peace Agreements. The struggle of indigenous peoples continues because the state is not committed to listen to their demands or take them into account in matters of policy. The crimes against humanity suffered by indigenous people and for which the state is being accused have not been rectified and remain in impunity. Even the current president, formerly a military intelligence officer during the period of the civil war, is accused of participating in the massacres as a principal actor in counterinsurgency actions and there have been no actions for investigating these human rights accusations.

In terms of education reform, such historical contexts help to understand why Bolivian institutions promote more inclusion than Guatemalan policies. The education reform in Guatemala is a component of the Peace Agreements and even when by late 90's the political context seemed to encourage a real transformation of the system, the power of institutions and the inertia of the state slowly appeased the euphoria for promoting a structural change. The constancy of structural racism has changed very little and rather has transformed into a passive aggressive system that excludes indigenous peoples from



policy making. Probably the only way to change the system in Guatemala would be to follow the example of Bolivia, where the rise of a new political power was possible due to protests and the constant demand of civil society and indigenous peoples to be included along with the political opportunity to be heard.

***Stages in common between both processes:***

In the decade of the 90's, the education reform process in Bolivia and Guatemala followed pretty much the same path. Both educational laws were signed almost at the same time and their characteristics are very similar, although the context in which they were approved was different. The National Education Law in Guatemala, signed in 1991, highlights the importance of recognizing multiculturalism in the educational system, but also the importance of promoting “quality” in education (chapter V). Defining quality as:

*“...scientific, critical, participatory, democratic and dynamic. This will require feasible and regulate the development of essential processes, such as planning, evaluation, monitoring and supervision of educational programs.” (Congreso de la Republica Guatemala 1991)*

The Guatemalan National Law of Education takes into consideration the importance of promoting “bilingual education” without giving specific directions for it, not specifically highlighting its importance for indigenous identity and the construction of democracy. In Bolivia, much as in Guatemala, the Education Reform Law (1994) argues that bilingual education should answer to local necessities, according to region, geographic and cultural features. A closer look into both education laws allows unveiling the implicit purpose of education in both education laws; there is no real commitment for intercultural bilingual education from the state but rather a delegation of the

responsibility to decentralized organizations (the CEPOS in Bolivia and municipalities in Guatemala) that are often weak and without a fixed budget or financial support.

<b>Chart #16: Similarities found in the educational laws of Guatemala and Bolivia during the 90s</b>	
<b>Guatemala</b>	<b>Bolivia</b>
Education is a right and obligation of the state, oriented to development and with the goal of promoting democracy (Art 01)	Education is a people's right, it is free and obligatory for everyone at the primary level (Art 01)
Education should be work-oriented, educate citizens for economical development, with critical thinking and ready to face challenges (Chapter 1)	It is indispensable for the national development, work-oriented especially for manual labor, development of competencies and capacities. (Art 2).
Students have the right to be respected, along with their languages and cultures (chapter 2)	It should answer to local necessities and sociocultural heterogeneity without discrimination of ethics or gender (Art 2)
Bilingual education should be accomplished through programs in education and sub-school or parallel-school (chapter 4)	The national curriculum should include a intercultural focus, open social conscience and preparation for human development (Art 8)
The structure of the ministry of education should be decentralized (art 90)	The CEPOS and indigenous organizations are in charge of promoting proposals related to indigenous education (Art 6)

*Sources:* (Ministerio de Educacion 2010) and (Congreso de la Republica Guatemala 1991)

Another characteristic they both share is that there was no consensus with civil society about the path for bilingual education and indigenous peoples were only indirectly taken into consideration in the whole bill. The education law of 2009 (Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Pérez) unlike the Law 1565 and the Law of Education in Guatemala is an effort built from below, as it was mentioned previously, with the help of indigenous people and taking into consideration their ideas and proposals for transforming education. Perhaps one of the biggest differences between the education law of 2009 and the other two bills is that it defines education as *“intra cultural, intercultural and multilingual in*

*all the educational system*” and demands free and obligatory access to education up to the high school level (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional 2009) Along with such changes, the Law Avelino Siñani states that education should play a role of decolonization, be democratic, participatory and integrative (*ibid*). This law also claims the necessity of education to include three languages in the educational process (L1) native language [indigenous or Spanish], (L2) second language [Spanish or indigenous] and a third foreign. In order to include localities and communities into the educational process, the Law Avelino Siñani promotes a ‘communitarian educational system’ that expands the learning process beyond the classrooms to all members of the society: parents, grandparents, indigenous leaders, etc. Finally, another core difference of the Law Avelino Siñani is that it is not ‘labor-based’; the goal of intercultural bilingual education would ultimately be to reach well-being or, in the Law’s words: “*el vivir bien*” (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional 2009). The criticisms against the Law of Education Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Perez have been focused on the extension of the demands, arguing that most of them are highly unlikely to be reached (UMSA Sociologia 2012) Such criticisms become real when over the years very few increases in the educational budget can be seen and the Ministry of Education has done little to actually implement the proposals into the classrooms. In Guatemala, the criticisms towards the educational law and its implementations follow the same direction; no efforts of implementation from the Ministry of Education and uncertainty about the real goals of education given the ambiguity of conceptualization in key concepts that lead the educational system (i.e. quality of education).

### *Stronger actors in the process of both countries*

Guatemala and Bolivia have similar actors involved into the education reform process. In the 90s, the formation and alliances of both were quite similar:

- i. A strong entrepreneur sector, business based, with the control of the majority of the wealth in the country, landowners and predominantly white. Most of them are descendants of the original Spanish colonizers that inherited the riches their ancestors took from the indigenous peoples through violent conquest centuries ago.
- ii. Indigenous peoples, the percentage majority in the country, claiming their rights to land, indigenous bilingual education and vindication for repressive actions from the state. Bolivia and Guatemala share the history of authoritarian governments during the 60's and early 70's<sup>10</sup> that sought to perpetuate inequalities within the nation, which made indigenous people acutely conscious of the necessity to claim their rights.
- iii. International cooperation especially focused on educational issues, mainly the World Bank and the promotion of loans through the region in order to promote development. Also, both countries had signed strong international agreements committed to education (i.e. OIE Goals 2021, Agreement No. 111- OIT, Education for All – Jomtien, etc.).
- iv. Teachers unions: a highly organized sector that struggles and proposes changes to the labor educational system. Their demands are summarized in the general improvement of schools, pedagogical materials and raising of salaries but they also play an

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<sup>10</sup> Even though Bolivia got rid of authoritarian governments and Guatemala did not. This point will be discussed later in this same chapter.

important role in the approval or rejection of proposals related to changing the pedagogical methods within classrooms. Guatemala has two main unions organizations (ANAM and STEG) or '*sindicatos*' while in Bolivia the teachers unions are divided into 'rural unions' and 'urban unions' but their demands are on average the same ones.

- v. Civil society: consisting of parents, local authorities, indigenous and non-indigenous leaders, women organizations and educational committees. Their demands are basically for the improvement of education, 'quality', recognition of languages and cultures, but also pertinence and relevancy of education. Parents, especially those who pay fees for access to education, frequently demand education that would help in the future to find a job and the opportunity for social mobility through income.
- vi. Highly centralization of the Ministry of Education and the State, with some extensions and level of impact at the local level but with a reduced budget. The Ministry of Education is perceived in both countries as slow working, inefficient and insufficient for the real promotion of a true education reform process.

Unless the education reform process would bring benefits to these actors in some degree, they will likely be against the implementation of the process. Following Corrales' explanation of political actors (Corrales 1999) regarding to education reform processes, in Bolivia and Guatemala during the 90's it was possible to identify two sets of political actors: a group who approves it and another one who disapproves it, even when their roles changed over time and particular circumstances. A chart similar to the following can be drawn:

<b>Chart #17: Analysis of political actors involved in both processes</b>	
<b>Actors who approve it</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Ministry of Education	Its main motivation was (in the 90s) to obtain loans and international aid to improve the educational system in general. Given its institutional weaknesses, it was weak to negotiate the conditions of such loans.
International Cooperation	Answers to a neoliberal project of reduction of the state and the possibility to give loans to the state to promote human capital. The most important one was the World Bank.
<b>Actors who partially approve it</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Civil Society:	<i>In favor:</i> because the educational system needs improvement in general. <i>Against:</i> because they were not consulted about their necessities and expectations of the transformative process.
Teacher's Unions	<i>In favor:</i> the education reform process could mean a higher salary for them and openness for new career opportunities <i>Against:</i> the new curriculum required competences and a different profile than the teachers had, the implementation of the reform proposal would mean additional preparation and additional work to teacher's unions
Entrepreneur sector	<i>In favor:</i> because the direction of the reform was labor-based, and the vision was to create human capital. <i>Against:</i> If the goal of the reform change or if it represents private investment or economical costs
<b>Actors who disapprove it</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Indigenous Peoples	For lack of inclusion, communication and dialogue. Also because their identity and knowledges were not included in the pedagogical context, which reflected institutionalized racism to indigenous cultures

In Guatemala, given the slow progress of the dialogue and transformation, small changes were introduced. The Ministry of Education promoted economic incentives and bonuses for those teachers interested in bilingual training, pedagogical changes and promotion of the reform within schools. The civil society and indigenous peoples were also heard but their demands were taken little into consideration. Once their voices were

collected, very few public policies were drawn to fulfill them. In Bolivia the process of inclusion was similar, the constant opposition promoted openness for indigenous peoples to be heard and even when they were included, the focus on promoting human capital did not change. International cooperation was flexible in some degree in both cases, its influence focused on the institutional level at the beginning (mainly the Ministry of Education) but then moved to the local and community level in order to promote a major impact. In Guatemala, in late 90's and early 2000's, the international cooperation spread in different ways, through foundations, NGOs, small projects and other forms of funding, which covered not only education issues but also leadership in social movements, health, microcredits and development in general, starting a phenomenon now called “oenegización”<sup>11</sup> which is not only present in Guatemala but also in Bolivia and in Latin America in general. Guatemala maintains the same profile so far, the Ministry of Education has reduced the power of action of DIGEBI and its impact to the local level is minimal. A change of roles in political actions has a strong link to the way demands are proposed along with the political opportunities given by the state. Bolivia, with the shift of politics in 2006 is an example of this correlation.

### ***Differences between both indigenous social movements***

Guatemala and Bolivia have different indigenous social movements and therefore, leaders. In Bolivia, indigenous leaders have learned about social and political struggles “on the streets”, which is in the actual political struggle: organizing marches, strikes and

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<sup>11</sup> There are many articles written about such phenomenon.  
See <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=113914> (Accessed: March 29, 2014)

protests. Over the years they have learned about their civil rights because they have seen themselves in need of reclaiming them. It is a social movement built from below (Lopez 2013). In Guatemala, indigenous leaders profiles are different. There are two kinds of leaders: (1) leaders struggling to survive and (2) classic leaders. The first group is compiled of Mayan indigenous leaders coming from small localities. Their demands are Mayan expressions of the everyday struggle with hard realities. As for the classic leaders, these people are individuals that vindicate a different set of demands. Many of them have studied outside the country, in international universities. They at present have high profiles. Most of them also participated in the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, their vindications are merely symbolic and cultural. Charles Hale (2004) speaks of them as *people that have been empowered by the governments while marginalizing the majority*. They are people who have occupied a place in a neoliberal cultural project: *cultural instruments* that governments have utilized to divide and domesticate indigenous movements (ibid). Such indigenous leaders and activists occupy positions of power in the state (i.e. head of ministries, important cultural directions, etc.) but they do not have any real power, or promote change within the institutions (Lopez 2013). They are probably the face of the indigenous outside the country and have become ‘institutionalized’, their vindications are symbolic because they ‘wear’ indigenous clothes but they have lost social ties with local authorities, occupying spaces in universities, organizations, NGOs and others institutions. They usually live in the cities and their lives and realities are different than the indigenous groups in rural areas. In Bolivia this new social class is starting to emerge with the government of Evo Morales. In fact, this is perhaps one of the



fears of indigenous organizations: the coopting of their leaders when they are taken to occupy places in the Ministry of Education and Culture. There is however a difference between the coopting of indigenous leaders in Bolivia and Guatemala, because in Guatemala the real power is on the hands of entrepreneurs while in Bolivia the power has been taken, to a certain degree, by indigenous authorities. Bolivia currently is fighting for what can be called ‘cultural hegemony’: which indigenous group has the legitimate right to claim the power of the state: indigenous peoples from the Amazon or indigenous peoples from the highlands (Quechua and Aymara)?

Another difference between the indigenous movement in Guatemala and Bolivia is that Bolivia has vindicated the different indigenous groups through the recognition of their existence. The CEPOS have fought to legitimize local movements, giving to each community the opportunity to organize and create their own CEPO with the goal of promoting local efforts to implement indigenous bilingual education following the local criteria of the community. In Guatemala the Mayan Movement has used another strategy, because of the weakness and the lack of inclusion, indigenous groups have grouped together into the Mayan movement. Together they try to be heard and exercise pressure to different governments to be taken into account into policy making. In education matters, indigenous leaders have conformed the CNEM (*Consejo Nacional de Educacion Maya*), which is fighting to be included in the policy dialogue and building proposals to bring into dialogue. Probably the only problem with such strategy is that might diffuse the local diversity of indigenous peoples and their proposals. Indigenous peoples in the localities are fighting for other demands different from education, water, land, territory;

they fight to survive and they have more impact in institutions such as CONIC, CUC and others.

### ***Lights and Shadows***

The purpose of this study was to understand the status of the education reform process in Guatemala and Bolivia. In Bolivia the process followed a quite positive progress over time during the first wave, and even more with the second wave of education reform that redefines basic concepts and opens up to new proposals from indigenous peoples. In Guatemala, however, most of the interviews and the collected data showed that there was not an effective reform process or attempts at transformation in the educational system. By the end of the 90's, Guatemala and Bolivia had similar political contexts and high impetus from the international context to promote structural change, but in the case of Guatemala several factors influenced in the process and stopped any attempt of change in education. The decade of 2000 might be the decade in which education reform lost its way to be consolidated; strong economical and political actors did not promote transformative policies and the high levels of turnover in the Ministry of Education discouraged continuity in the process.

Although Guatemala experienced great international aid for the implementation of the education reform, the process was never fully consolidated because of the lack of domestic political will. The level of racism was so deep that indigenous people were left behind from the process of dialogue and when they were included, indigenous proposals of education were not seriously taken into consideration for policy implementation. The lack of defining a path for education reform condemned the process into an endless circle

of ambiguity in which everything was called ‘reform’ from pedagogical materials to the building of schools. Also, the actions of the Ministry of Education towards the ‘*escuelas normales*’ and attempts to promote their privatization did not help to promote a positive and collaborative environment for the promotion of the transformation in education. Even when teachers’ unions and indigenous peoples might have seen an opportunity to be heard and be included, the political struggle that accompanied the process made imperceptible their demands. Along with these, the criminalization of social protest in Guatemala is a strong factor that is not present in Bolivia, or at least not at the Guatemalan level. In Bolivia the rise of a new political power has promoted inclusion for indigenous peoples and their proposals. The efforts for preserving indigenous cultures are many, including the effort of promoting Institutes of Indigenous Languages, the main objective of which is promoting knowledge of indigenous languages and publishing literature related to indigenous knowledge, so they can be available to everyone.

After reviewing both processes of education reform process, several conclusions can be drawn from this study:

- An education reform process is a structural change. In order to be accomplished, the state should open itself to including proposals from civil society and take them into account on the policy level. The level in which the state is open to changes and inclusion of proposals is important for the promotion of a real education reform; if the state does not promote openness it increases the difficulty of making differences in policy. Such openness also means a transformation of the dominant ideology: if the state continues to be racist and authoritarian (Guatemalan case) public policies related

to education would probably lose their path and the state is more likely to give up its responsibility towards indigenous education and languages.

- Inclusion of indigenous peoples in policy making does matter and makes a difference in the transformation of social policy related to education. The Bolivian case is a good instance of how much inclusion matters in the promotion of indigenous languages and bilingual education. Inclusion, however, also depends on how much the state is invested, or not, in the promotion of indigenous policy.
- A government that is engaged and supported by indigenous peoples is more likely to promote and continue public policies that favor the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures. An authoritarian regime, on the other hand, is less likely to be interested in the promotion of multiculturalism, especially when there exists a history of civil war.

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