



Research Article

GENDER, VIOLENCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IDENTITY OF BOLIVIAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The article intends to approach the social, theoretical, social and psychological perspectives for understanding the processes of social construction of gender identities in Bolivia. Evidence indicates that indigenous women suffer triple discrimination: gender, class and ethnic dimensions of a matrix of colonial domination. Despite the resistance movements of Bolivian women dating from 1962, female emancipation did not occur. The maintenance of the symbolic and social representation that men are always right, are hierarchically superior to women confers space to an environment of violence, even after the promulgation of Law 1674 against domestic violence and domestic violence and Law 2.033 to protect victims of sexual abuse. During the government of Evo Morales, the presence of women in public and political life presented a growing wave with some specific demands such as the defense and promotion of human rights, the pursuit of women's participation in different levels of decision and the liberation of indigenous women and rural areas of all kinds of oppression. The Cholas, women who took shape in the Bolivian historical process and in the past represented subservient and naive people, and who currently occupy a progressive position reaffirming the indigenous identity and its ideological position when using the pollera.

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims to address the social, theoretical and psychological perspectives imbricated in the social construction of women in Bolivia.

Studies show that Bolivian women suffer triple discrimination: ethnicity, gender and class; originating from a colonial matrix and domination.

Due to the strong patriarchy, machismo becomes very internalized in the popular organizations, in the unions, in the juntas of neighbors and in the own indigenous organization

In 1962 the Union of Women of Bolivia (UMBO) and the Democratic Federation of Women of Bolivia (FDMB) were created, promoted by the Bolivian left. Shortly after was created first political party to incorporate organically the Bolivian woman, but nevertheless, the feminine emancipation did not occur.

In Bolivia there are three categories of analysis for women: women, women and gender relations; which emerged in the 1980s. The woman category carries all the essentialism of the 1970s.

It is worth mentioning the struggle of indigenous women in Bolivia, who have taken up the dresses that are considered indigenous as a form of identification and that demand the

liberation of all kinds of oppression. However, women still occupy a differentiated place, hierarchical within a sexist, racist, feminist society with a high rate of femicide.

Female resistance and its trajectory Bolivian women continue to fight for their rights, whether in organized movements, nongovernmental organizations or in feminist groups.

One of the groups with the greatest social and political penetration is called Mujeres Creando. Created in 1992 by activists Julieta Paredes and Maria Galindo, her militancy is in the attempt to produce feminist social analyzes, making female discourse a word present in Bolivia's political daily life.

One striking feature of this group is specifically the way discourses are materialized and conveyed within and outside the country. Through magazines, newspapers and graffiti. The aesthetics of these vehicles signals the importance of autonomous productions within feminism. The women belonging to the group also use the body as political writing (WOMEN CREATING, official website LAMBERT, 2017).

The movements have among themselves discussions related to gender issues, namely: violence, employment, equal wages, justice, contraception. The part central to the feminist movements in Bolivia is to "take the floor" and thus produce a cultural and social critique of patriarchy in contemporary society.

According to Spivak (2010), taking the word within the globe marked by processes of colonization and centralized in the

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hands of the few is a complex but necessary act, since rearranging the idea of speech that presupposes listening as action and political act is a to fight struggles and build dialogues. Thus, other newspapers and magazines have been created in Bolivia.

In this article, we highlight the Malhablada newspaper, which was launched in 2013 and expresses the sentiment and, above all, the oppression of Bolivian women through drawings, texts, caricatures, songs and on the streets, graffiti with reflexive phrases, countering the political and financially from other patriarchal newspapers. Another aspect to highlight is the occupation of the streets as a space for dialogue with people in a democratic way and production of knowledge.

Bordo (2000) reiterates the need to understand feminism as a perspective that goes beyond the struggle for women's rights, but rather the production of knowledge and the way these women are thought of in their completeness.

Bolivian Indigenous Women and Structural Violence

The social exclusion faced by indigenous women (constituted by aymará, quéchuas and guaraní) has a triple variable, or cross-inequality: gender, ethnicity and social class. This exclusion, especially of women of indigenous origin and of the countryside, is still closely linked to colonialism, and its understanding requires the observation of what Carrasco (2014) calls a close relationship between violence and coloniality, since according to the author the uncontested violence of the Spanish conquest and the constant updating of the stigma with respect to the indigenous population remained over time and produced structural violence (whether symbolic or physical) that invisibilized the indigenous demands and perpetuated an image of their bondage.

In this same sense, Quijano (2009) points out that colonialism is a structure of domination and exploitation that manifests itself in the control of political authority and the resources of production and the population.

In this way, the colonial inheritance remains in interpersonal relations and specifically of women, silenced by historiography. Indigenous women also impose a regime of pseudo-slavery and a process of acculturation, where women lose power and relevance to their group.

The actions of Bolivian women in social movements, in general, were articulated according to specific social, political and economic interests or demands, but the action of indigenous women has as a common mobilization factor the experience of different forms of violence (such as physical and structural) and the difficulty of transposing barriers that prevent access to spaces in the social, political and economic spheres.

Despite the differences, the Aymara and Quechua indigenous women are unified by identification with the symbolic construction of the chola or the women of pollera (denomination derived from the use of skirts that differentiated the indigenous women from the others, that is, of the white and mestizas) in turn, underwent a process of change over the centuries and was recently appropriated mainly by the female youth as a way to reverse the negative stereotypes, especially from the social and economic point of view, that marginalized their role in Bolivian society (CARRASCO, 2014).

Still in the eighteenth century the dress of the indigenous women presented an example of the stigmatizing action from the western cultural matrix colonizing, in which the notion of whiteness guided the exclusion of the population of different appearance. At first, the use of specific clothes (skirt, woolen mantle and hat) was observed as a kind of strategy that allowed the indigenous women to access spaces in the urban labor market and economic environment that seemed more possible for mestizos. At the same time, it became an ambiguous symbol of ethnicity in denying and asserting ethnic, cultural, and behavioral differences in the face of other prevailing self-representations such as white and mestizo (RIVERA, 2004).

Among the indigenous communities there was a criticism with respect to its members that from such a "strategy" they deviated from some cultural practices. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was common to find a discourse on the cholos and cholas that described them as a backward and marginalized population in the social and economic spheres.

As described by Plaza (2018) in his analysis of the role of chola paceña in the Bolivian imaginary, it is possible to emphasize that for decades the figure of the chola has been associated with elements such as a low social and economic level, as well as stereotypes related to servitude and inferiority. However, in the last decades precisely through elements related to dress and popular festivities, such as the Gran Poder that is traditional in La Paz, the cholas were able to find ways to re-signify their role in Bolivian society, reversing the stereotypes to the

Thus, aware that their dress was part of the national imaginary that discriminated against them, the cholas observed the same as a way to mark and positively claim their ethnic identity and invested in that and popular festivities to legitimately demonstrate their economic progress and pride with relation to their indigenous belonging.

Their bodies dressed in a traditional way (skirt, woolen mantle and hat) began to expose a resistance to the colonial dualistic imaginary that opposed indigenous and white / mestizos and in the popular festivities the stigmas related to poverty when investing in the use of clothes with fabrics nobles who are of greater value added and who move a significant portion of the local economy around the production of items that make up the chola dress, such as fabrics, lace, shawls, shoes, hats.

In addition to this daily exercise of resignification of their role in society through the imaginary related to the figure of the Chola, women Aymaras and Quechua throughout the government of Evo Morales reached political power through positions of authority and the evidence of leaders of social movements (CARRASCO, 2014, p.140-142).

Such access to political power was not exempt from contradictions, since at the same time there were changes of a discursive and legal nature, such as the aforementioned insertion of indigenous women in the base of government and the approval of a law against racism and society still preserves a patriarchal component that sometimes distances the reality of Bolivian women (observing the notion of subordination to man and the high rate of violence inflicted on them) of more effective practices in gender issues. In the context of social movements, the National Confederation of Indigenous Peasant Women Indigenous Peoples, who reached power and criticized

discrimination, internalization and social and economic exclusion, stood out in the political base of the Morales government.

Final considerations

As we seek to present throughout this communication, the construction of the identity of Bolivian women undergoes a complex process that involves the identification and contestation of the various forms of violence, discrimination and exclusion through which they pass.

One aspect that unites women, whether they are mixed-race or indigenous, in actions of resistance to the current patterns and stereotypes (and therefore guides to a process of reconfiguration of identities) is the existence of a structural and physical violence that due to the strong internalized patriarchal structure in Bolivian society has perpetuated itself over time.

Studies show that Bolivian women suffer triple discrimination: ethnic, gender and class; originating from a colonial matrix and domination. In the case of indigenous women, as discussed throughout this text, such discrimination becomes more evident and in the same way it is possible to observe women's attitudes, through social movements or individual actions, to use the Bolivian popular imaginary - as the figure of chola - as a way of reversing the negative stereotypes, especially from the social and economic point of view, that marginalized their role in Bolivian society.

Throughout the Evo Morales government the presence of indigenous women in public and political life has increasingly taken place along with some specific demands such as the defense and promotion of human rights, the quest to ensure women's participation in different levels of decision-making and liberation of indigenous and rural women from all kinds of oppression.

However, it was observed that access to political power was not exempt from contradictions between the reality of women and the discursive and legal order.

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