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Entrepreneurship initiatives in Bolivia - A helpful or a harmful tool for indigenous women towards empowerment and gender equality?

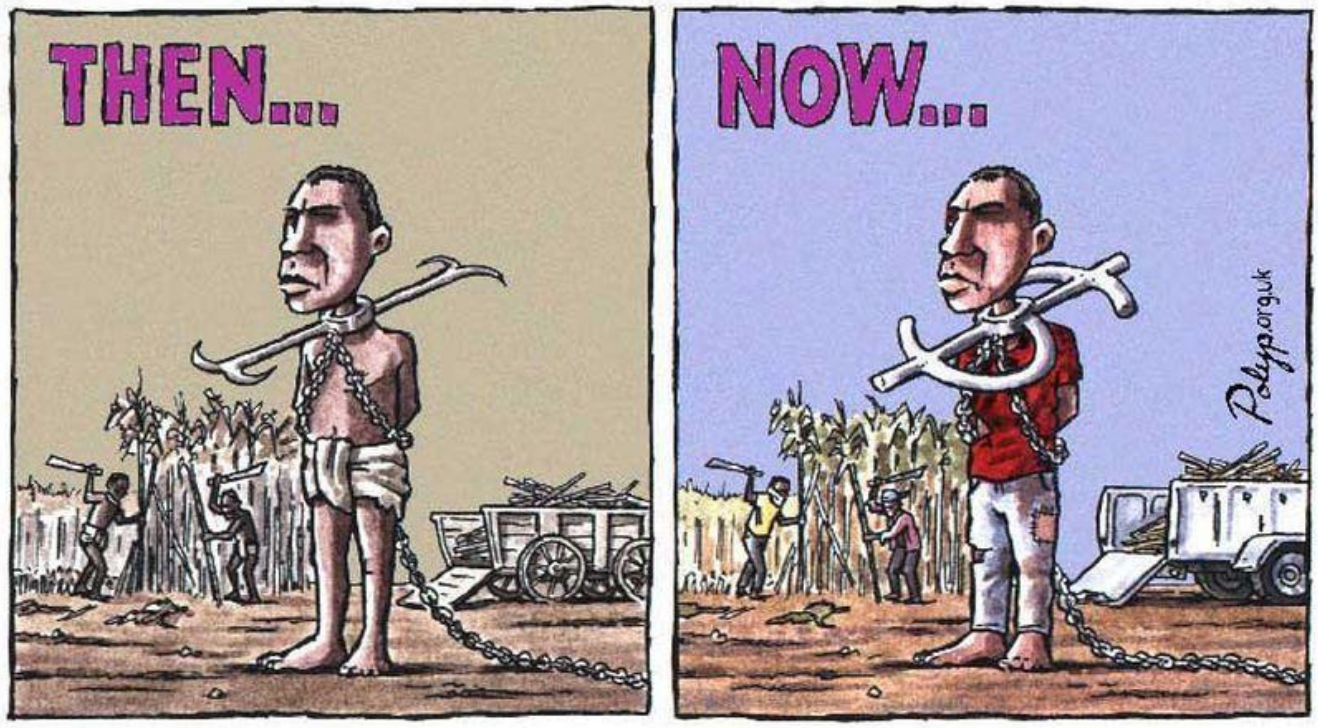

Fig.1 Wealth and Poverty, Aid and Trade (Polyp, n.d.)

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ABSTRACT

Over the recent years, new initiatives have arisen to bring poverty to an end, especially in the Global South. The Latin American economies have been in constant fluctuation and so have the citizens who one morning form part of the formal market, and by the next day must find alternatives within the informal market. Entrepreneurship has therefore become popular, as these initiatives are said to provide a personal income for the citizens who are unemployed or operate outside of the formal market. Women have been in particular, the key focus as entrepreneurship initiatives lead to their economic empowerment. Entrepreneurship has, therefore, received a lot of credit for having the power to reduce poverty and make women actors of socioeconomic change. Other scholars have however been skeptical towards these initiatives, as they believe that these activities only lead to economic dependency rather than financial sustainability. These academic contradictions gave rise to a puzzle, which invented the study of this phenomenon.

The underlying objective was to explore the controversies of entrepreneurship activities by exploring one of Latin America's most culturally diverse nations – Bolivia, where more than half of the population recognize themselves as indigenous. Indigenous peoples in Bolivia have historically been discriminated against and marginalized based on their ethnicity. Indigenous women, however, have faced significantly more oppression due to their intersectional identities, as being both women and indigenous. Thus, the research explored the popular development strategies of entrepreneurship to understand how these either aids or challenge indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment.

To do so, the research adopted a Postcolonial feminist and Marxist feminist theory as well as an intersectional approach, as these theories enabled us to examine the construction of power structures that have continuously oppressed indigenous women in Bolivia. These theories allowed for an in-depth understanding of how the inequalities experienced by indigenous women are related to the consistent oppression within the political, social, cultural, and economic context. On top of that, applying an intersectional approach allowed for an exploration of the intersecting gendered, racialized, and socio-economic barriers that indigenous women experience. The ontological and epistemological standpoints played a role in understanding how the systematic oppression of indigenous women has been constructed over time. In addition to this, the ontology and epistemology allowed us to explore how entrepreneurship activities can be part of reconstructing a

new reality for indigenous women, as empowered women who can achieve gender equality, but also analyze how these initiatives can be part of reproducing the same political, social, and economic reality of indigenous women in Bolivia. The research is built on a qualitative research design that allows a thorough analysis of how entrepreneurship aids or challenges indigenous women in achieving gender equality and empowerment. The analysis highlighted the importance of a context-specific approach and the significance of including the needs and interests of indigenous women. By considering the subjectivity and needs of indigenous women, entrepreneurship initiatives can empower indigenous women by giving them the ability to exercise their agency to achieve gender equality. However, there also exists impediments to indigenous women's empowerment and gender equality, as entrepreneurial initiatives can lead to among other things an economic dependency on bank loans or a continuous dependency on a foreign market. Overall, this research concludes that entrepreneurship can to a certain extent aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality and empowerment. Nevertheless, it was proven that these initiatives do not challenge the colonial, racialized, and gendered power structures that systematically oppress indigenous women in Bolivia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Extreme economic and racial inequality has existed in our world for far too long. This pandemic vividly reveals who society privileges, and who is sanctioned” (Hamilton, 2021; Oxfam International, 2021, p.5). This is how Darrick Hamilton, Professor of Economics and Urban Policy describes the persistent complex relations in the global order, that have exacerbated with the coronavirus (Covid-19). The year 2019 now marks the beginning of the devastating impacts caused by the coronavirus. The recent discovery of the vaccine is unfortunately not the ‘happy ending’ of the pandemic as the vaccine will not trigger an immune response to the long-term economic and social disruption in the world (Johnson, 2020) Nor will it challenge the economic and racial inequalities that Professor Darrick Hamilton underlines.

The impacts of the coronavirus have undoubtedly been disproportionate, as Oxfam states in The Inequality virus report “Since the virus hit, the rich have got richer and the poor poorer” (Oxfam International, 2021, p.11). The pandemic has illustrated the costs of an exploitative neoliberal economic system, where the developing countries and the most vulnerable and marginalized citizens suffer the most (UNDP, n.d.) Oxfam International (2021, p.20) states that the existing inequalities that have become even more apparent are not results of the pandemic, but rather a “product of an exploitative system that (...) depends on the work of women and racialized groups across the world, such as Black people, Afro-descendants, Indigenous Peoples and historically marginalized and oppressed communities, to help sustain an economy that drives the accumulation of wealth and privilege in the hands of a white patriarchal elite.”

The competitive nature of the neoliberal economic system has forcefully created a global division in which some nation-states are economically, politically, and socially more powerful than others (Boden, 2011). This structure has exploited citizens within the less powerful nations, which has led to slow growth of the economies and high levels of inequality. Latin America is a prominent example, as the region has for decades remained at the top of the list as the most unequal region in the world with unsteady economies (Giorgi, 2017).

The level of inequality within the region varies substantially, however, there is a notable tendency that women, indigenous people, and afro-descendants are deprived of significantly more equalities than others. Not enough with major inequalities, indigenous people also face structural racial discrimination. In Bolivia, 40% of the population responded that they belong to a discriminated

social group, where indigenous women were among the most discriminated (López-Calva, 2019). This structural barrier has kept Bolivian indigenous women in a "systematically uneven" structure "in which inequalities are likely to be persistent over time, getting passed from one generation to the next" (López-Calva, 2019). Organizations like The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) have a long historical legacy in representing indigenous women in Bolivia. Many international non-governmental organizations have centered development around economically empowering the most vulnerable and marginalized citizens to lift them out of poverty (Lora and Castellani, 2014). Entrepreneurship is a contemporary example of the efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of these people, something of which is very present in Bolivia.

The entrepreneurial initiative has expanded globally and has become the key to unlock economic growth and individual profit (Lora and Castellani, 2014). It has been evident that entrepreneurship has made a major positive impact on late capitalism for example products like Google (Lora and Castellani, 2014). This has given a positive acknowledgment of entrepreneurship initiatives, nevertheless, these success stories have mostly been within the Western world. Solimano (2014) posits that this has not been the case for Latin America, as entrepreneurs have emerged not due to opportunity but because of necessity. The lack of financial resources and low standards of living has pushed typically, the most marginalized citizens such as indigenous women to open a venture that often operates outside of the formal economy. This leads us to question whether entrepreneurship initiatives indeed can tackle the barrier to more equality in Latin American countries. Specifically, in Bolivia, where indigenous peoples constitute 62% of the total population (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Given the high percentage of the indigenous population in Bolivia, it can be said that more than half of the total population is marginalized and potentially more vulnerable to continuously being exploited.

The exploitation of indigenous peoples in Bolivia has not come with an unequal economic system, rather it traces back to the arrival of the Spanish, where they were exploited for labor (Gigler, 2009). The Spanish conquest shaped the path of indigenous people as the marginalized population in Bolivia. The historical and materialist structures of inequality, which indigenous people in Bolivia continue to face, become an integral consideration to understand the socio-economic situation of indigenous women within the informal market. Within the Bolivian context, indigenous women as a group face significant structural disadvantages, in comparison to men and non-indigenous women, particularly in terms of school enrolment, illiteracy, labor market outcomes, and

access to health care services (Reimao and Tas, 2017). Furthermore, many indigenous women in Bolivia express that they have faced discrimination within education, the labor market, and health care providers, based on their gender and indigenous ethnicity (Grown and Lundwall, 2016).

The gendered oppression in Bolivia has become even more obvious during the pandemic, by showcasing the financial vulnerability of women who work within the informal sector, which has been particularly affected by the Covid-19 crisis (Escalante and Maisonnave, 2021). This is highly relevant when discussing entrepreneurship as a means of empowering marginalized women, which has received a lot of credit for being a bottom-up approach to tackling poverty and promoting development (Maclean, 2010). In terms of promoting gender equality, many entrepreneurship projects have been perceived as being progressive, in the sense that they often focus on the potential of women as important actors of socioeconomic change. The idea behind entrepreneurship projects is that by focusing on women as entrepreneurs, there is a strong potential of promoting their empowerment and challenge gendered discrimination. Furthermore, by focusing on women as beneficiaries, it is believed that they are more likely than men to invest in the wellbeing of their household, and therefore also promote economic development (Maclean, 2010).

On the other hand, entrepreneurship initiatives have also received criticism towards the ability to promote both gender equality and economic development. While these entrepreneurship projects are locally based, they are also externally funded, which further raises the question of to what extent the structures of economic dependency are being challenged. Some feminists have argued that these initiatives are not sufficiently challenging the socio-historical and capitalist systematic oppression against women in the Global South (Armstrong, 2020). While all feminists recognize that women as a group face disadvantages based on patriarchal structures, the discussion of entrepreneurship leads to the question of whether providing women with market resources is enough to tackle gendered power relations. Furthermore, another critical consideration to keep in mind is which women do benefit from entrepreneurship? While we focus on entrepreneurship which is specifically targeting indigenous women as beneficiaries, we need to consider whether there are any imposed "expectations" that these women need to strive for empowerment according to Eurocentric standards of progress, and thus neglecting the true needs and interests of indigenous women. Along with this, we also question whether there is a significant recognition by entrepreneurship initiatives, that women are affected by gender inequality in different ways, and that indigenous women are not a homogenous group.

By recognizing both the unequal power divisions on a global scale, in which Bolivia, among other Latin American nations, is characterized by high levels of poverty, as well the racialized and gendered power relations, we became particularly interested in analyzing the development initiatives that have been in place in Bolivia. There has indeed been increasing recognition of gender equality as a necessary aspect of socio-economic development, as well as growing emphasis towards bottom-up approaches of promoting social and financial wealth. Therefore, we aim to examine whether entrepreneurship initiatives are sufficiently challenging deeply inherited structures of oppression, or if exploitative conditions of capitalism are being reproduced. The pandemic has highlighted how all citizens in the global system are pawns of an unequal economic structure in which some promote, and some remain as the most marginalized pieces in the system. We intend to analyze how entrepreneurship initiatives function as a tool to promote better living conditions for the most marginalized 'pieces' in the system, namely indigenous women. To do so, we propose the following research question that will guide the research.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

How does entrepreneurship challenge or aid indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment?

1.2 PROJECT STRUCTURE

Besides the introductory chapter, the thesis builds on five main chapters. The methodology chapter presents the methods that were seen as relevant to the topic at study. We regard this chapter as the scaffolding of the thesis, as we describe the choice of the methods, and how we attempt to explore the posed research question. The following chapter is the theoretical framework, where we explore the relevant theoretical debates surrounding the problem and present the feminist notions. The fifth chapter called conceptual framework outlines the concepts that we will use to explore how the promotion of empowerment through entrepreneurship aids or challenges women in achieving gender equality. The heart of the project is the analysis chapter, where we apply the theories of postcolonial feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectionality to the data and draw inferences and analyze patterns. Finally, in the concluding chapter, we present the main findings of the research.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological choices taken to explore how entrepreneurship aids or challenges indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving empowerment and gender equality. The chapter consists of seven main sections, beginning with our ontological and epistemological points of departure, which reflect how we view reality and how we understand it. The following section provides a presentation of the overall research design that has determined the techniques chosen to conduct the project. In the fourth section, we present our theoretical choice, which is underpinned by our ontological and epistemological considerations. The fifth section is guided by the choice of theory, here the type of data collected is defined and argued for. The methods of analysis that compromise the sixth section concern the process of analyzing the collected data through the application of the theory. The last section reflects the limitations of the study.

2.1 ONTOLOGY

The research adopts a critical, intersubjective ontological standpoint to understand how entrepreneurship initiatives aids or challenges indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. The key ontological assumptions underlying this research are the complex gender relations and the process of how these have been constructed over time. From this ontological perspective, we explore the process that has led to these gendered power structures in order, to better understand Bolivian indigenous women's political reality. Generally, we hold a belief that historical events have played a predominant part in shaping these gendered power relations. We view that Latin America's structural domination by the Global North, in the economic and political realm, is a result of colonial rule and the external influence on the region. Therefore, our fundamental understanding of the world is that it primarily consists of a geopolitical power, where the Global North has a continuous economic dominance over the South and despite initiatives to prevent this, the geopolitical divide widens. Additionally, we believe that the geopolitical powers have exacerbated other dimensions of power structures, that are racialized and gendered and affect those nation-states that lay lowest on the hierarchical power structure. However, we also believe that the effects of these power dynamics differ within a nation-state. This means that some citizens within a nation-state are more exposed to be oppressed by the system than others; with a general feminist ontology, we argue that women are generally more vulnerable.

With an intersubjective ontological approach, we see international relations consisting of different power relations that reproduce the oppression of women. On a macro-level, there are global power structures that to a large extent serve to maintain unequal socioeconomic conditions on the micro-level. The power structures are thus vertical and all nations, states, and individuals within the international system live under these power structures. However, with an intersectional approach, we believe that the effects of these power structures are different amongst marginalized populations, including women as a group. Therefore, we also possess an understanding that there exist hierarchical relations within marginalized groups that must be examined.

Based on this, we incorporate a critical ontological standpoint, where we argue that the effects of the power dynamics on women are not solely based on their gender as "woman" but are influenced by race and class, among other social categories. On the account of this, we seek through an intersubjective ontology, to understand how the power relations that affect women disproportionately can be dismantled. Adopting this ontological view makes sense to the project, as we generally argue that the power structures have led to the disempowerment of women. Therefore, it is our understanding that by deconstructing these power relations, women can regain empowerment and achieve gender equality. We believe that the social realities of indigenous women in Bolivia are in its essence true, but can be re-researched, re-written, and remade.

In line with a feminist critical, intersubjective ontology, the goal of the research is to interpret the dimensions of power relations, within the historical, political, and materialist context of indigenous women in Bolivia, and how these intertwine and reproduce the oppression of indigenous women. In other words, by embracing this ontology, we as researchers can interpret and understand the racialized power structures and gendered underpinning of the social reality of indigenous women in Bolivia. Furthermore, by understanding how entrepreneurship challenges or aids indigenous women, we can understand if it empowers indigenous women and promotes gender equality.

2.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

These ontological questions are oriented to our understanding of the social world, yet as researchers, we believe that the understanding of the social reality is subjective. To exemplify, one might argue that some women might not experience the gendered power structures to the same extent as others, nor will other researchers view the social reality as one that is constructed. Departing from a critical, intersubjective ontological belief that reality can be remade, the research aligns with a social constructivist understanding of reality, in which an individual's reality – in this case, indigenous women in Bolivia – is constructed. Based on this, the knowledge of the reality one can obtain is imperfect, as there exists no absolute truth, in contrast to what positivists argue. Instead, the research adopts multiple feminist standpoints, with several subjective truths, and these exist concurrently, according to historical, social, and economic contexts. This would mean that the truth of indigenous women in Bolivia exists simultaneously to our understanding of truth as researchers. The research would not be determining the universal truth for indigenous women at a global, national, or local level nor for researchers with similar conditions to us. Acknowledging that there exist multiple feminist standpoints and that these are influenced by historical contexts, the research embraces a nonhegemonic and non-Western standpoint to understand the reality of indigenous women in Bolivia. Furthermore, an important aspect of feminist epistemology is to situate the researcher in the research process (Ackerly and True, 2013).

While some standpoint theorists argue that the production and access to certain knowledge are directly linked to the social privilege of an agent, Yuval-Davis (2012) argues that knowledge is produced through active interaction between various social subjects that are differently situated. As feminist researchers, we share a particular interest in examining what form of normative knowledge is produced from the hegemonic center, as well as how this has an impact on socially excluded populations. This is particularly important when analyzing what entrepreneurship initiatives "knows" about the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, and why these initiatives have received significant popularity within the field of socio-economic development. Furthermore, we are also interested in exploring how new forms of "knowledge" are produced in relation to power, as well as within spaces of resistance against hegemonic standards of truth.

This gives us an insight into what form of knowledge regarding gender norms has been produced within indigenous communities, in relation to structures of patriarchy. Historically, patriarchal norms were imposed within indigenous communities across Latin America through colonization,

which led to the development of current gender relations across the region (Fernández, 2004). Additionally, this enables us to see whether certain knowledge regarding gendered power relations has been resisted by indigenous feminist movements at the grassroots level. Additionally, the predominance of Western feminism has often led to regarding the knowledge of minority women as invalid, which showcases a major contradiction regarding the feminist principle of giving women a voice. This understanding of marginalized women as not being capable of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment on their own has also led to a reproduction of their subordinated position in society.

Ackerly and True (2013, p.2) outline that "in a feminist epistemology, "knowledge is power" and therefore research – using any methods – is a political act, whether the researcher understands the politics of her research or not". While all statements of knowledge are acts of political power, feminist researchers make those statements transparent and the subject of research (Ackerly and True, 2013). This is beneficial in the sense that we question what knowledge exists, why it exists, and that we go beyond this knowledge, instead of taking it for granted. This aspect has been crucial within feminist research to challenge normalized power relations and to provide a more inclusive platform of knowledge produced within marginalized spaces.

In contrast to many normative epistemological standpoints, a constructivist epistemology allows us to question what truth exists and how it is maintained, as well as opens spaces for various forms of truths to coexist. Furthermore, this leads us to elaborate on our position of research as a political act, and how it is shaped by our perception of reality as well as how this has an impact on the reality of others. We take into consideration the fact that we are researchers from the Global North, and therefore, our understanding of "truth" does not necessarily translate into the same truth as of indigenous women in Bolivia. Furthermore, we acknowledge that we cannot empathize with indigenous women in Bolivia and their experiences, as we do not face the same reality as them. On the other hand, we can use their knowledge to reveal how the world is constructed into power relations, as well as how these are produced and potentially challenged.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of the research is to *understand* how entrepreneurship aids or challenges indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment. The objective of the study was thus not to quantify or generalize the problem, but rather generate an understanding of entrepreneurship initiatives' role with regards to gender equality and empowerment for indigenous women in Bolivia. Accordingly, the research was conducted through a qualitative research strategy based on deductive logic.

The design of the research can be characterized as a systematic process that went from general to specific. More concretely, after defining the problem, we searched for feminist theories that could explain the problem statement. Then through the use of the qualitative document collection method, we gathered secondary sources which served as our empirical data. With the use of our theoretical lens, we looked for patterns in the empirical data to draw meaning out of the analysis and to conclude on how entrepreneurship aids and challenges indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment.

The research design was qualitative as we sought to explore the complexities inherent in the problem raised rather than explaining the relationships. The qualitative design was beneficial for the research as it allowed us to explore in-depth the aids and challenges of entrepreneurship and analyze the concepts of empowerment and gender equality. The research sought not to quantitatively measure how many advantages and disadvantages there are to entrepreneurship initiatives but whether this supports indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment.

2.4 CHOICE OF THEORY

We applied three feminist theories, to analyze power relations at different levels of society, which we perceived as political. A feminist theoretical analysis of power highlights how privilege and oppression have been structured through historical contexts of justifying patriarchy and capitalism. Through the use of feminist theories, we analyzed how such structures continue to play out. Furthermore, we examined how new potential power relations may be developed within modern contexts of political development, international relations, and capitalism – for instance newly formed power relations amongst indigenous groups in Bolivia. Feminist theories are also useful in

unveiling taken-for-granted norms and "truths" and their implications on power dynamics, as well as on the lived realities of marginalized populations. Gender analysis is another key aspect of feminist theory, in which gendered power relations are not limited merely to the study of male privilege versus female oppression. We applied a gender analysis to highlight how individuals may experience privilege and oppression at the same time – for instance, majority women and minority men – as well as to examine how gendered oppression has a differential impact among women, depending on their context and social background. Through a gender analysis, we also analyzed the gendered construction of social and political categories.

Postcolonial feminism allowed the analysis of socioeconomic conditions to understand the challenges and aids of indigenous women in Bolivia, to achieve gender equality and empowerment through entrepreneurship. Additionally, postcolonial feminism enabled us to understand indigenous women's historical context in Bolivia, through the effects of colonialism and economic exploitation. Postcolonial feminism seeks to understand how social inequalities among marginalized populations – in our case indigenous women – relate to the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts, and how oppression is persistent within these contexts. This school of thought helped us understand the ongoing structural inequalities that continue to exist.

We applied a Marxist feminist theory in our project, to analyze the interconnection between gender inequality and capitalism. A Marxist feminist approach aims at analyzing the systematic oppression of women, caused by capitalism (Sheivari, 2014). The theoretical framework combined the key aspects of both Marxism and feminism, by examining both class- and gendered power structures in society (Sheivari, 2014). Marxist feminists argue that many entrepreneurship initiatives that focus on the economic empowerment of women do not sufficiently challenge the operation of capitalism, which is claimed to be dependent on the oppression of women and marginalized populations. Furthermore, Marxist feminists are skeptical towards the ability of economically "empowering" women through entrepreneurship initiatives, as it increases their financial dependency on bank loans. Therefore, a Marxist feminist theory allowed us to critically analyze whether the entrepreneurship projects, which target indigenous women in Bolivia, are considering structures of materialist injustice or if these instead are reproducing social hierarchies through capitalism.

Furthermore, we aimed at using an intersectional approach to highlight intersecting gendered, racialized, and socioeconomic obstacles for indigenous women to achieve gender equality and empowerment. Some indigenous women may face even more social disadvantages, for instance,

illiteracy, disability, sexual orientation, or whether they reside in a rural or urban area. An intersectional approach in our case allowed us to highlight the gendered and racialized power structures in Bolivia and enabled us to critically analyze whether these power structures are sufficiently recognized by entrepreneurship initiatives.

2.5 CHOICE OF DATA

The data was guided by the theory, and given that postcolonial feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectionality are qualitatively grounded theories, the collection of data and the type of data was qualitative as well. Due to our ontological and epistemological standpoints, we sought to gather data that was primarily produced by a non-western point of view and background and data that could reveal to the greatest extent possible the subjective meaning and experiences of the indigenous women in Bolivia. However, as it will be explained under methodological limitations, it was not possible to limit the collection of data on indigenous women's subjective understanding, which is why we opted for a document collection method.

Methodologically, the data collected can be described as "non-living materials" as we did not produce our own data nor collect data by interacting or observing indigenous women in Bolivia (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). Using data produced by other scholars and researchers meant that "the data exist independent of the research" and were "noninteractive" (Reinharz, 1992; pp.147-148; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.228). Using existing documents allowed us to examine the data unobtrusively and accordingly, influenced our methods of analysis.

We gathered different secondary sources, both from international institutions like the UN, but also research made by scholars in which they performed a case study of indigenous women's entrepreneurship in a certain community in Bolivia, for instance, Stenn's (2013) case study on Fair Trade. Therefore, the empirical data included journal articles, research and book publications by international and governmental entities, and research papers produced by scholars, among others. However, the empirical data was based on textual material, which means that visual and audio material was not collected or used as empirical data as we were interested in doing textual analysis.

2.6 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The method of analysis consisted of three main steps. After collecting the secondary data, we explored the data; this consisted of reading the textual data and highlighting the key central points that we found within the data. Here we extracted the most important points and quotes that described the data. This first step was a very descriptive phase that allowed us to move to the second phase where we linked the theoretical concepts to the data. By doing this we were able to reduce our data and collect more data or explore in-depth other gathered material to find more patterns and themes within the data. This process is visualized in fig. 2 Process of data analysis.

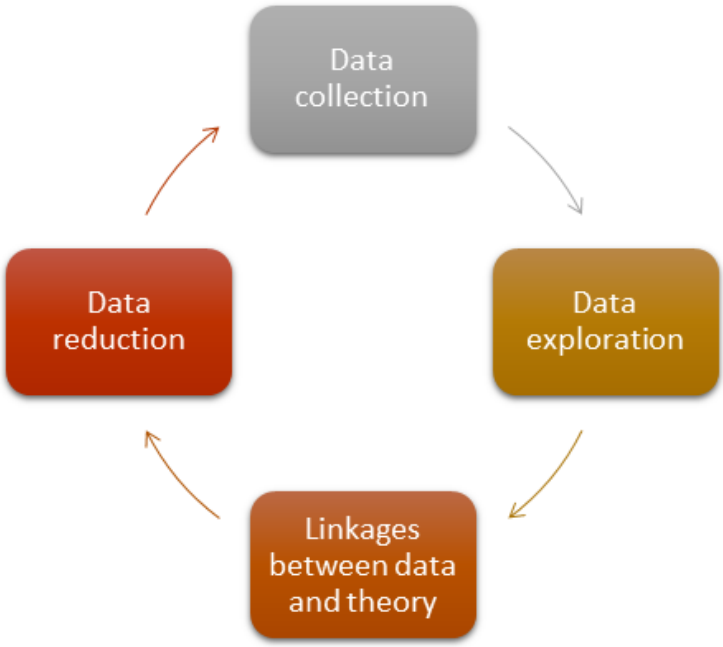

Fig. 2 Process of data analysis (Own figure)

The third and last step is the written interpretation of the data, which is the analysis chapter. Here we use our feminist theoretical lens to interpret how entrepreneurship aids or challenges indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment. Simply put, we attempted to answer the research question and reflect the theory when analyzing interpretatively the empirical data.

2.7 LIMITATIONS

In this section, we attempt to highlight the main limitations of the study and argue why these were left out. First, we present the research limitations, second is the methodological reflections, and lastly are the limitations of the theories chosen.

2.7.1. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Given that our epistemology posits that knowledge is subjective and our ontological view argues that the social reality of indigenous women can be reconstructed, one might not be able to conclude an accurate understanding of the challenges and aids of entrepreneurship initiatives in achieving gender equality and empowerment of indigenous women. This is because other researchers might generate a different understanding of the phenomenon at study. This delimitation of the project, however, is comprehensible, considering that our epistemological view is that there exists no absolute truth. In addition to this, considering that the research has a focus on Bolivia, the aids and challenges of entrepreneurship initiatives could be different in other Latin American countries. Also, considering that indigenous women are geographically spread in Latin America, some initiatives might be more aiding or challenging in achieving gender equality and empowering women, depending on their circumstances.

The research had a minimal focus on the macro perspectives, as it focused on how the global power relations affect the micro-level. A potential research focus could have been the nation-state relation, and how in this case, Bolivia, was influenced by the power relations. Nevertheless, this aspect was excluded, as we in nature have an interpretive epistemological position, and are therefore more interested in understanding than explaining these power relations. Furthermore, since the research adopts a focus on the power relations behind the entrepreneurship initiatives, it might not highlight some of the internal power relations that could influence how these initiatives aid or challenge indigenous women in achieving gender equality and empowerment. This means that this study has excluded the study of how Bolivia's political internal power relations could affect these initiatives.

2.7.2 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The methodological limitations center primarily around the collection of data. The initial idea was to conduct single interviews with indigenous women in Bolivia. We realized that establishing contact with indigenous women who participate in entrepreneurship practices, had to be through the help of organizations that work with entrepreneurship and indigenous women in Bolivia. This meant that we were dependent on the responses from these and given that we received late responses and a few refusals, we realized that it would not be possible to conduct interviews for this research. This challenge was overcome by choosing a different data collection method, namely document collection.

Another consideration with regards to data collection was to perform a single-case study but decided to only work with textual analysis and gain insights into the lives of different indigenous women in Bolivia. As we believe that a single case study would not allow us to discover the reality of all indigenous women in Bolivia, as our epistemological viewpoint is that there exists no absolute truth and that the social realities of indigenous women differ depending on historical, political, and economic contexts. Therefore, using a single case study would offer little reliability for the finding of the wider population, in this case, all indigenous women in Bolivia.

We are, however, aware that by using secondary data, there are some aspects that we will not be able to explore or conclude on, such as the intra-household relocation of resources e.g., a woman within a household might be demanded to hand over her income to someone else. Another challenge of using secondary data is that it is difficult to measure empowerment based on agency and access to resources when one does not obtain a subjective understanding of the indigenous women in Bolivia. Furthermore, by using secondary data we rely on objective empirical data, whereas by using subjective data for example through interviews, we could have generated new data besides the existing knowledge. Therefore, it has been crucial to include our ontological position to show that we value indigenous women's knowledge and experience, despite not being able to use qualitative interviewing.

One of the major challenges with regards to the empirical data has been the question of "who produced the data". Given that the research adopts a postcolonial feminist and Marxist feminist lens, it can to an extent be argued to be contradicting to use data produced by institutions and organizations from the Global North, as we would be part of reproducing the Eurocentric

epistemology over the indigenous women's epistemology. Nevertheless, we realized that it was not possible to limit the data to only Bolivian sources. This was because we discovered that institutions from the Global North produce a great deal of research and publications in comparison to e.g. indigenous women's organizations who barely produced materials. Secondly, given that we adopted a document collection method, the data carried a degree of reliability and credibility regardless of who and from where the data was produced.

2.7.3 THEORETICAL LIMITATIONS

An element that could have made the research findings more specific, would be explicitly defining the types of entrepreneurships that were to be studied. However, this research aimed at generating a meaning of how entrepreneurship in general, can support (or not) indigenous women. Therefore, this research can serve as a foundation to perform more research where entrepreneurial jobs are more specified. This delimitation is also relevant when discussing empowerment and gender equality. The research explored that the concepts of empowerment and gender equality within the discipline of international relations and developments tend to be examined quantitatively and consequently measured statistically, in the form of e.g., individual income (economic empowerment) and gender development index (GDI) (gender equality). However, given that the majority of these quantitative means of indications are measurements proposed by Western-initiated institutions such as the United Nations, we argue that the application of these was not coherent with our ontological and epistemological standpoints. This is because our research holds a belief that the social and political world order consists of power relations, in which the West has had superiority over Latin America. We considered that utilizing these indicators would be a reproduction of Eurocentric epistemology over Latin America. This indicates that we would be measuring Bolivian indigenous women's socio-economic conditions through a Eurocentric method, and it would thus go against our belief in considering their context. By disregarding the use of exact indicators, due to their western origin, we believe that it allows us to distance our western context and reality, as Europeans and thereby avoid any biases.

On the other hand, these considerations have led us to define and conceptualize 'empowerment' and 'gender equality' based on the theoretical framework, which means examining the subject at study through a qualitative approach, as postcolonial feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectional theory are qualitatively grounded. This means that there are opportunities to further examine this

phenomenon quantitatively. Initially, the research had a focus on ‘economic empowerment’ but was left out, as it required a quantitative analysis of economic empowerment and did not concur with our choice of theories, as they are qualitative. Therefore, we considered that the research would not be coherent methodologically by the appliance of qualitative theories and the use of qualitative data but posting a quantitative research question. More than that, his research had the objective to qualitatively explore the issue at hand.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is built on postcolonial feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectionality. Rather than exploring and describing the theories separately, this chapter gives an account of the main theoretical notions and concepts that the research adapts. Consequently, postcolonial feminism and Marxist feminism are used in complementation to each other rather than presented separately. This is first due to the origins of the theories, as both postcolonial feminism and Marxist feminism draw from Marxism, it is natural that they share many key assumptions, and exploring the theories separately became redundant. It also became evident that postcolonial feminist’s and Marxist feminist’s understandings of e.g., power relations were similar, but naturally including some variation, so discussing the main theoretical concepts of each theory within one theme allowed a greater nuance. In addition to this, both postcolonial feminism and Marxist feminism are systematic theories, which means that the analysis level departs from an understanding of the historical and materialist structures to understand the existing power relations. Since we consider postcolonial feminism and Marxist feminism to be better served in complementation, this chapter is structured in a chronological way departing from the historical and materialist context of Latin America. Intersectionality on the other hand is presented in a separate section as it is used as an approach to analyze the multilayers within the power structures, defined by postcolonial feminism and Marxist feminism. Based on this, the theoretical chapter begins by giving an account of the historical and materialist context of Latin America’s political, social, and academic development. This is followed by a discussion on the dimensions of power structures, and which spaces these power structures take place. The third section uncovers some of the key feminist debates and positions the research within a feminist framework. The theoretical chapter is finalized with an exploration of the systemic discrimination that indigenous women experience.

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM, MARXIST FEMINISM, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Postcolonial feminism draws naturally as the name implies, from the postcolonial studies, highlighting the dominant social order that has a historical basis from colonialism and embraces a feminist perspective to explore the 'state of women' and their struggles (Chambers and Watkins, 2012). Postcolonial feminists posit that the struggle of women from the Global South and especially indigenous women's struggle is a ramification of the European colonization and the economic model that was imposed on indigenous communities (Luebke et al., 2021). Postcolonial feminism has a legacy in Marxism, and therefore naturally critiques the oppression of women. What makes this theory distinctive from Marxism, is that it argues that women are oppressed by the patriarchal but also the colonial power system (Al-Wazedi, 2021). Therefore, it lies at the heart of this theory to deconstruct these oppressive power structures that came to being with colonial rule (Luebke et al., 2021). With a focus on decolonization, postcolonial feminism gives the possibility to examine how entrepreneurship initiatives decolonize and empower indigenous people, as well as to uncover the dimensions of the colonial power structure and how these oppress women.

Furthermore, we draw from the Marxist feminist theory to link capitalist exploitation with structures of patriarchy within the Bolivian context. Marxist feminists argue that capitalism is dependent on the oppression of marginalized populations, and particularly of women, and therefore, these two power dimensions should not be analyzed separately (Armstrong, 2020). Marxist feminists are also critical of recent efforts from liberal feminism, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through women's participation in the market, as there is a lack of recognizing the root causes behind women's inequality and disempowerment (Armstrong, 2020). This is an important aspect when analyzing female entrepreneurship, which aims at tackling gendered disadvantages through micro schemes of capital growth, and which targets women as beneficiaries. Therefore, by utilizing a Marxist feminist approach, we can critically analyze how and if entrepreneurship truly aids indigenous women in gaining gender equality and empowerment. Both the postcolonial feminist theory and the Marxist feminist theory recognize the necessity of analyzing the historical and materialist structures of power, at the macro-level as well as on the micro-level, which we aim to do.

We also recognize that different forms of inequalities intersect and that all women do not universally experience gendered oppression. By utilizing an intersectional approach, we examine different forms of power relations amongst women, and particularly what forms of social disadvantages indigenous women in Bolivia face. Along with postcolonial feminism, intersectional feminism argues for a context-specific approach towards promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (Cho et al., 2013). We argue for this as being a particularly important aspect of tackling patriarchy within the Bolivian context, rather than imposing external assumptions regarding the needs and interests of indigenous women.

3.2 HISTORICAL AND MATERIALIST POWER STRUCTURES IN LATIN AMERICA

Deciphering the root cause for Latin America's lack of development has been central to Latin American academics within the field of development and international relations (Fernández and Brondino, 2018). Along with the question of development, have been issues of poverty, inequalities, and economic growth. The process of the concept of development in Latin America has been far from linear but departs essentially from colonization (Pérez-González and Castillo-Eslava, 2017). The research builds on postcolonial feminist and Marxist feminist theoretical frameworks, which analyze the historical and materialist structures of oppression, against women and marginalized populations.

The technological development during the 15th century created a barrier-free expansion, with the creation of ships; empires "no longer had to be geographically coherent" as they had to throughout imperialism (Young, 2016, p.15). Despite this new advanced practice of "power-expansion", colonialism operated the subjugation of people on different terms than imperialism, rather than being an ideology-driven practice, colonialism was economically driven – for the sole purpose of economic exploitation. According to Young (2016, p.15), the Spanish and Portuguese conquest and colonization of Latin America had two objectives: "the extraction of riches and the conversion of indigenous population". And even though the colonization of Latin America has often been described as the doings of the Spanish and Portuguese "empires", it has no connection to imperialism. As the concept of empire in a Latin American context, refers to a (colonial) structure "which was developed for settlement by individual communities or commercial purposes by a

trading company “ (Young, 2016, p.17) The terms imperialism and colonialism have, however, been used interchangeably, as if the words were equivalent in meaning. Edward Said, the founder of postcolonial studies, among other scholars, has been heavily criticized for homogenizing the two terms (Ibid.). Scholars like Said, who have regarded colonialism as identical to imperialism stems from logical reasoning. As Young (2016, p.15) states, both terms “involve subjugation of one people by another”, however, the key distinction between them “were (the) contradictory practices".

Latin America used to be populated by what today are the most marginalized people in the Latin American societies, namely indigenous peoples. The arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America was far from peaceful. Not only did they wipe out native people, but also made their culture forbidden, and imposed their European power structures (Gott, 2007). They also brought African slaves to the region, and with the native Latin Americans, these people became the exploited labor force that carried the economy of the European colonizers. Despite both the African and Latin American slaves being subordinated to the white men, the African slaves were of less worth than the native Latin Americans (Ibid). It is thus this brutal historical past that can lead us to understand the long-lasting trajectory of the racialized power structures that persists in the region today, which will be further elaborated.

Even though there has been a dismantlement of colonization, the world is still organized in a hierarchical structure (Rist, 2014). A structure where Latin America belongs to the “Global South” and the former European colonizers belong to the ‘Global North’. With globalization, capitalism has ascended into global capitalism as well as markets have expanded beyond borders. This has led to a global order with even more complex power structures on a global scale (Kumar et al., 2011). These global power structures have attracted the attention of many feminist scholars, who have increasingly recognized the relevance of critically analyzing the capitalist system (Sheivari, 2014). Luxton (2014, p.138) argues, that resisting the capitalist system and the economic policies that come along with it, can only be done by studying the history of feminist political movements, or else one risks reproducing “the oppression of women, of working-class, racialized, Indigenous and other subordinated peoples”. Postero (2017) argues that the exploitation of the natural resources from the indigenous lowland region reflects continuous racialized power structures in Bolivia.

Throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, the dominant white-mestizo political class introduced several neoliberal measures on the Bolivian economy, including restructuring- and privatization of publicly

owned enterprises, cutbacks on social welfare spending as well as welcoming foreign investment (Postero, 2017). This had a major impact on thousands of miners (most of them being Andean) of the state mining corporation, as most of the state-owned businesses became privatized, as well as there was a significant cut on the public sector employment. Furthermore, the national small-scale farm economy was hardly hit by its commercial liberalization, as peasant farmers and herders faced great competition from imported and cheaper produce. While the poor population of Bolivia had to deal with the burdens of liberalization, the incomes of the local economic and political elite increased, through the transnational capital (Ibid). The fact that the national Bolivian economy was in complete control of the elite class and foreign investment, led to the local population feeling that colonial structures of domination and exploitation were continuous. The privileged white and mestizo population of Bolivia was benefitting from these neoliberal reforms, while the indigenous and peasant population on the other hand faced serious consequences (Ibid).

The neoliberal economic reforms in Bolivia were also linked to political initiatives of promoting "market democracy", which connected free trade to democratic development. This led to the promotion of policies such as decentralization and the distribution of state power to cities and regions. On the other hand, this also resulted in the empowerment of civil society (Ibid). Under the Bolivian Law of Popular Participation in 1994, which promoted "multicultural neoliberalism", indigenous social movements were invited to have a say in the development and budget decisions taken at the municipal level. However, indigenous people and their representatives faced systematic racism as well as competition from the dominant white-mestizo class, which hindered them from having any meaningful political impact (Ibid).

The 1990s were not only significant years for the feminist political movement but it was also throughout these years, that the development discourse shifts. The rebellion against the capitalist system and the neoliberal policies began with the protests known as "Caracazo" in Venezuela, which led to widespread economic and political discontent towards the neoliberal policies across the region (Di John, 2005). These neoliberal policies were supposedly going to empower the indebted Latin American economies, but instead deepened the levels of poverty and inequality among other consequences on social welfare (Di John, 2005). This disenchantment sparked off the rise of militant social movements, made up of indigenous movements, women's organizations among other social justice movements, who assumed the lead in challenging the neoliberal order, particularly in Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil, and Bolivia (Castañeda, 2006).

As a result of the expansion of social movements across the region and the rising of left-leaning governments, academics have since questioned the impact of capitalist globalization. Esteva and Prakash (1998) claim that the existing development paths set out in Latin America, only caused harm, as the economic policies that supposedly led to the development, did not aid the alleviation of social problems, rather it worsened these. The increase of social problems, such as increasing levels of poverty and inequality in Latin America gave rise to the school of thought of post-development. Post-development theorists underlined (and continue to do so) the importance of development including the improvement of citizens' living standards, rather than viewing development as something that can be "caught up on" - as solely a matter of economic development (Escobar, 1995). This critique of economic development raised by post-development theorists gives birth to Decoloniality which also has roots in Latin America and similarly to Post-Development, which criticizes the mainstream ideas of development (Howard et al., 2007). Decolonial theorists challenge the view of development as a purely economic achievement and instead posits that development is a non-linear and multidirectional process in which the economic and social systems of Latin America have to be reoriented. Thus, this paradigm emphasized that development is not universal and that development initiatives have to be contextualized, considering culture and individual needs (Luebke et al., 2021).

Dependency school is found within this range of critical approaches and just like the other theories, Dependency school originates in Latin America. Central to dependency theory is the question of the global order and foreign dependency (So, 1990). It is also what makes this theory distinctive from the previous approaches, as it rather than rejecting development and calling for an alternative to development (post-development) or arguing for different models of development (Decoloniality); dependency theory postulate that the phenomenon of "underdevelopment" is a direct consequence of the foreign dependency that Latin America has on foreign investment (Pieterse, 2000). Additionally, Dependency theorists describe the international system as constituting four types of countries, with each serving a different function. This world structure is a class-built system, in which a group of people within a nation, works in the economic interest of some (So, 1990). Similar to Marxism, Dependency theorists believe all countries draw through a wider global system characterized by global capitalism which, however, promotes dominance and exploitation over development. This type of system does not permit countries to develop, therefore leading to a promotion of countries and citizens being "underdeveloped" (Petras, 1981).

3.3 DECONSTRUCTING THE GLOBAL POWER STRUCTURES

Closely linked to dependency school, is postcolonial feminism, which also views development on a global level by hypothesizing that the reason for the lagging behind on development, is the persistent colonization of the region (Young, 2016). O'Connell et al. (1995, p.789), argue that the 'post' in the study of post-coloniality would indicate an ending of colonialism, when it rather signifies a persistent hegemonic power over the colonial states, as "colonial legacies continue to exist". Marxist feminism shares a similar belief of continuous supremacy over the Global South, but varies to a certain extent, as it outlines how previously colonized nations have implemented new forms of imperialism after gaining political independence (Armstrong, 2020). The study adopts a postcolonial feminist and Marxist feminist understanding of the power structures, as one that has its roots from colonization but has transformed into new forms of colonization. Postcolonial feminism suggests that colonization continues to impact the living standards of women in Latin America, however by incorporating a Marxist feminist understanding, one can examine the current capitalist power structures and understand if entrepreneurship projects could be characterized as "new forms" of colonization of women or if these initiatives rather challenge colonial legacies, such as gender equality.

Apart from power structures, at the heart of Marxist feminism is the issue of women's oppression. Marxist feminists claim that the exploitation of women's labor and the gendered international division of labor are examples of how women are oppressed by the global capitalist system (Armstrong, 2020). Marxist feminists claim that women's oppression is directly linked to upholding the capitalist power structures in the world order, as the current global capitalist system is dependent on exploiting the female workforce, and gender norms back up the continuation of imperialism (Ibid.). Based on this, one can assume that entrepreneurship projects adapt to a capitalist system and therefore one may through a Marxist feminist lens, question whether these initiatives are effective in promoting gender equality. Additionally, embracing a Marxist feminist view allows for the study of how supremacy over Latin America - what Marxist feminism refers to as imperialism - is reproduced through gender norms. Armstrong (2020) elaborates on this matter, as she states that an aspect of the survival of imperialism amongst de-colonized states, is the continuous structures of privatized land from the colonial era and onwards, and its current impact on the gendered division of labor. Therefore, Marxist feminism seeks to liberate women from economic exploitation. Notwithstanding, the theory underlines that to fully understand women's

oppression under capitalism, it is crucial to incorporate a historical and materialistic approach, which refers to a methodological framework of understanding the historical process of the capitalist society, which shapes social, political, and intellectual processes (Sheivari, 2014).

Postcolonial feminism is also highly relevant when attempting to understand Latin American women's oppression in the global capitalist system, as it highlights how postcolonial structures of power aligns with the oppression of women, and especially of indigenous women. Postcolonial feminists outline that indigenous women as a group in Latin America have lower standards of living due to the racialized global power dynamics, together with the western expectation, and an understanding that Latin American countries will eventually "catch up" to the same standards of development as the Global North (Grosfoguel, 2007). Postcolonial feminism draws from Marxism, thus naturally presupposes that the power dynamics are economically linked. On the other hand, theorists within this school of thought claim that the power structures also present themselves as dominant over others, in the context of Latin America, it is the Global North that holds power over Latin America. Therefore, power dynamics besides being economical, Marxist feminist, and postcolonial feminism claim; there are also power structures concerning knowledge, in this case how Latin America is supposed to develop and according to who. Decolonial theorist Annibal Quijano (2000) argued that the continuous European dominance over Latin America did not allow for the idea of another reality. He stated that the world order had been dominated by euro-centric epistemologies that neglected non-western modes of knowledge, since the conquest of Latin America. This assumption of the world order was what Quijano named the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) (Quijano, 2000). Mignolo (2007) discusses that the CMP has four domains, the first being a control of the economy, here among others the exploitation of labor, second is the control of authority, third is the control of gender and sexuality, for example, the family and last is the control of subjective and knowledge, here referring to a power structure of epistemology.

Marxist feminism observes a similar power dynamic but within the domain of labor. Armstrong (2020) explains how the social reproduction of labor is historicized by Marxism, as something that exists within capitalist relations. She describes how behind each social relation of capitalism (between the capitalist and the worker) another invisible social relation is maintained, which is the household (between husband and wife). Armstrong (2020) attempts to illustrate the consequences of these gendered power structures, as women and their labor within the household are naturalized and controlled by men. The use-value of women's reproductive work in the private sphere is her daily

and generational renewal, while the exchange value of this labor is nothing at all. Additionally, Marxist feminists claimed that the patriarchal structure of the family plays a vital role in the operation of capitalism. Therefore, the power structure within the household must be deconstructed, by socializing the familial gendered labor relations (Ibid).

Postcolonial feminists also view the power structures as gendered but add that the power dynamics are also racialized and questions the discourses typically from Europe about women of color, and indigenous peoples (Grosfoguel, 2007). Applying a postcolonial feminist and Marxist feminist lens gives the opportunity to not solely view the entrepreneurship initiatives in Latin America as labor. This also allows us to explore the discourses beyond labor and understand if these initiatives are built on the subjectivity and knowledge of indigenous women, and if these initiatives reflect a level of racialized power over indigenous women in Bolivia. Based on this theoretical point of view, the research holds the assumption that entrepreneurship projects aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality and becoming empowered, if the initiatives are based on non-western knowledge, that is indigenous women's knowledge on what they believe will aid them in empowering and achieving gender equality. Entrepreneurship initiatives for indigenous women in Latin America must be created based on their own, and their communities' interests. Women of the Global South have often been portrayed as being backward, disempowered, vulnerable, uneducated, and as being supportive of patriarchy, and there has been a common perception that they need Western feminism to guide them towards empowerment and modernity (Grosfoguel, 2007). Postcolonial and Marxist feminism is critical towards ignoring the interests of women from the Global South, and in this case of indigenous women, as it merely aids the reproduction of Western hegemony.

3.4 FEMINISM AND THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Postcolonial feminism emphasizes that the conventional feminist models linked to the Western World cannot be used to understand nor research all women in the world; and more particularly women "in postcolonial sites"; it, furthermore, questions "whether Third World women or, indeed all women, could be conceptualized as unified subjectivists easily located in the category of women" (Mohanty, 1991; Minh-ha, 1989; Seneviratne, 2018, p. 187). Furthermore, postcolonial feminists, by nature, ground themselves in the belief of "black, white and other Third World women

have very different histories with respect to the particular inheritance of [...] colonialism, Hegemonies, inheritance of slavery, etc" (Seneviratne, 2018, p.187). Thus, central to this theoretical framework has been the specificities when speaking of women, here among others, race, class, nationality, religion, and sexuality despite one's empirical bias.

Scholars like Spivak (1985) have critiqued the traditional idea of 'third world' women, as it has classified women in one single category, and as Butler (2006) argued, not all women are equal, nor do they experience equal rights and should therefore not be categorized into one category. Mohanty (2003) shares this belief and claims a lack of sensibility towards women's context and struggles. She further argues on the importance of considering the different histories and thus, on the "rewriting of history", based on their struggles, such as postcolonial people, and by the "day-to-day strategies of survival utilized by such people's" (Mohanty, 1991; Seneviratne, 2018, p.187). It is through the understanding of the past, that postcolonial feminist studies can generate the meaning of the present.

It is deeply rooted in postcolonial feminist analysis that gender relations need to be contextualized. Marchand (2009, p.932) exemplifies this, by discussing how a woman "wearing a veil (does) not necessarily mean that women are subordinated; it may also signify an act of resistance or statement of identity". When considering the cultural practices of feminist discourses throughout a historical context, it might to some extent, lead to aid at breaking the societal concept of "the other" (Seneviratne, 2018). As McLaren (2021) points out, Western feminists have often categorized women of the Global South and their struggles for inequality as the "other" women. This categorization has created a portrayal of their local culture as being the cause behind their gender inequality, as well as it has justified a Western dominant framework of providing gender equality. Therefore, postcolonial feminists have discussed how transnational feminism, which aims at tackling sexist oppression across contexts, should at the same time be sensitive towards different understandings of gender equality and empowerment. As it will be further elaborated, Western liberal feminism has often imposed certain values and expectations of gender equality and empowerment, which has often led to counterproductive impacts on women from the Global South.

A critical aspect that tends to arise with regards to promoting transnational feminism is individualism (McLaren, 2021). Within the framework of Western liberal feminism, a form of economic hyper-individualism of women tends to be driven as essential in promoting gender equality (Ibid). The idea behind this form of "independence individualism" is that women become

empowered once they lose strong ties to others, which runs the risk of causing "associational damage", which Khader (2019) describes as local attachments being perceived as irrelevant or even threatening towards the promotion of gender equality. Another harm, which may result from the assumption of individualism, outlined by Khader (2019) as "feminization of responsibility", is when women's work burden increases, as women are expected to produce paid labor, alongside unpaid household- and community labor. This showcases another example, in which the context-specific conditions are not being sufficiently recognized when promoting gender equality. To avoid the generalization that all women aim for individualism according to a capitalist standard, Khader (2019) argues that there should be a distinction between "independence individualism" and "personhood individualism". Instead of assuming that women are better off with "independence individualism", she emphasizes the notion of "personhood individualism" - which means that certain interests of individuals are not necessarily tied to others - is a more appropriate term, within the framework of transnational and contextual feminism (Ibid). Furthermore, McLaren (2021) applies yet another distinction concerning women's material needs, in which she distinguishes between economic independence for women and economic opportunities for women. While economic independence signifies a more Eurocentric expectation of economic individualism, the term of economic opportunities carries a broader meaning for women to meet their basic needs (McLaren, 2021). The context-specific considerations of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are particularly emphasized by intersectional theorists, which analyze how different forms of intersecting power relations (besides sexist oppression) have an impact on marginalized women. The development of intersectional feminism, which recognizes multilayered forms of oppression and privilege, and which calls for an inclusive feminist approach, will be further discussed.

3.5 INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

It was throughout the 1960s to the mid-1990s, when the second wavers globally raised issues of patriarchal society and how all women were victims of this system. Women suffered together and could thus sympathize on a collective, shared experience (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 2006). During this wave, feminists claimed that the individual experience was connected to the collective experience, domestic violence, household labor among others were matters of which the society was at fault, so "the personal becomes political" (Snyder, 2008). Third-wave feminists, such as

Naomi Wolf have, however, strongly critiqued the second wave's understanding of women's experience, attaching terms to the former generation as "sexually judgmental", "victim feminism" (Snyder, 2008). It was the conceptualization of women as being individuals who shared the same experience that marked the emergence of third-wave feminism.

Third-wave feminism took on a different approach to the categorization of women, by firstly critiquing this homogenization and by including an intersectional narrative of women and feminism in general (Snyder, 2008). In addition, third-wave feminism operated within a dynamic that was inclusive and tolerant. Third wavers acknowledge and view a difference among women, this could be a racial difference, a religious difference, economic, politically but also even acknowledge that within one woman, there might exist several and different identities (Heywood, 2006). The third wave of feminism arises in a world where societies speak of global politics and a global economy and the homogenization of 'women' is what absorbs this movement the most, as they demand diverse and inclusive politics (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 2006). Postcolonial feminism, as well as intersectional feminism, emerged from third-wave feminism, in response to the exclusive nature of second-wave feminism. Both theories argue against a universal approach towards the oppression of women, and consider social hierarchies amongst women, historical and materialist contexts of power relations, and other intersecting forms of discrimination, based on e.g. race, nationality, and class.

Just like postcolonial feminism, an intersectional feminist theory emphasizes the importance of a context-specific approach, as well as an inclusive form of feminism that gives a voice to marginalized women. An intersectional feminist approach on the other hand analyzes more in-depth different forms of power relations based on various social disadvantages, for instance, race or ethnicity, social class, residency, religion, ableism, literacy, etc. By utilizing an intersectional approach, it is observed that while there is indeed a social hierarchy between women of the Global North and the Global South, in the Bolivian context there are also domestic power relations between different ethnic groups. These power relations are particularly apparent with those of European descent and mestizos (mixed European and indigenous ethnicity) being perceived as the most privileged people, in contrast to indigenous people and afro-Bolivians (Gigler, 2009) (UN, 2012). Furthermore, there are also power structures amongst different indigenous groups, which tend to intersect with other socioeconomic factors of social positionings, such as residency, education, and social class. It is important to keep in mind that not all indigenous communities nor all women

share the same experiences of marginalization, and therefore, an intersectional approach is necessary in our case.

The term “intersectionality” was originally introduced in 1989, by the American law professor, Kimberlé Crenshaw, to highlight how different forms of power structures tend to operate mutually, as well as exacerbate each other (UN Women, 2020). The argument behind intersectionality is that when a single form of inequality is analyzed as an independent variable, there tends to be a limited recognition of how individuals who belong to different social categories- - such as gender, race, social class, and sexuality - experience injustice, as well as it produces a narrow understanding of power relations (Cho et al., 2013). Many dominant feminist movements of liberal feminism and socialist feminism have received criticism, particularly by black feminists, for being “color blind” and for excluding the forms of inequalities that marginalized women face (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

An important aspect of intersectional feminism is that intragroup power structures within different social categories are recognized and examined through “structural intersectionality”, rather than merely focusing on one single axis of inequality (Cho et al., 2013). When utilizing intersectionality as an analytical tool, it becomes apparent that individuals may experience oppression and privilege at the same time, and in various ways (GADN, 2017). A structural intersectional approach may for instance highlight the fact that while women as a group face oppression based on their gender, women with higher socioeconomic status tend to uphold greater societal privilege, than women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (GADN, 2017). Furthermore, intersectional feminists have been able to demonstrate that women with a certain societal privilege may be supportive of a system that undermines the struggle for social justice of marginalized women. This showcases how intersectional theorists emphasize the interconnection between identities and power structures (Cho et al., 2013). It is important to state that the aim of intersectionality is not merely to recognize that different social categories exist, but to analyze why these are maintained, and how it affects the social distribution of power (Ibid). As Chun et al. (2013, p.923) point out “(Intersectionality) primarily concerns the way things work rather than who people are”.

In Latin America, the idea of “others" came along with the institutionalization of feminism and the absence of equality among women, when indigenous women and Afro-descended women began raising their voices (Berruz, 2018). These women were categorized as “others”. Important with this term is the fact that it was used during a time when gender was part of the feminist discussion yet excluded some women. This gave rise to critical feminist ideas, that called attention to the dominant

structures among women, was white or mestizas were superior over indigenous women, and how this hierarchical race structured led not only to an exclusion of some women but also resulted in damaging consequences for these women (Berruz, 2018).

Another key to intersectionality is that oppression is recognized as structural and political, rather than individual (Oxfam, 2018). The dominant perception by traditional liberal approaches is that discrimination is caused by the lack of states to tackle legal barriers of inequality (Cho et al., 2013). Intersectional theorists on the other hand reveal how race- and gender-neutral regimes often tend to produce and maintain power relations when structural and informal inequalities at different levels of society are not being sufficiently addressed by the state (Ibid). As Cho et al. (2013, p.800) outline "Key to the reconstructive understanding of intersectionality is the notion that "all politics are identity politics". For instance, while a state may formally grant universal access to education, the state may at the same time turn a blind eye towards informal barriers for certain marginalized populations to receive opportunities of attending education. In this sense, by considering identity politics, structural oppression - which often appears to be invisible within liberal discourses that formally grant universal equality - becomes apparent.

Intersectionality has proven to be useful as an analytic tool to address context-specific inequality and to avoid a generalization of the experiences of individuals across different national, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds (Cho et al., 2013), (UN Women, 2020). Therefore, intersectional feminists are concerned with emphasizing how systematic forms of discrimination and violence have an impact on the achievement of universal gender equality (UN Women, 2020). For instance, Western liberal feminism has been criticized for perceiving gender equality according to Eurocentric standards, which fails to consider different forms of oppressions originating from historical contexts of colonization and capitalism, while also ignoring the needs and interests of women of color and women from the Global South (McLaren, 2021).

In this sense, a crucial aspect of the intersectional analysis is to further recognize how power relations at the local level have been developed, and perhaps even exacerbated, through regional, international, and global dynamics of colonization, imperialism, and neoliberalism (Cho et al., 2013). Patil (2013) argues that there have been limited attempts of intersectional theorists to fully examine how "domestic intersectionality" is influenced by external structures of power, which is necessary to consider, to reach the full potential of intersectional examination. Mohanty (2003,

p.505) further outlines that by considering the historical and material contexts of structural justice, it becomes obvious that "differences are never just "differences".

According to Mignolo (2007), CMP is the lead cause of the racial structures and discriminatory practices in Latin America now, as the belief of European knowledge being superior was imposed in the region. Grosfoguel (2007) also argues that it is not solely a question of knowledge being superior over another, but also people being inferior over others. In Bolivia, this has led to a continuous social superiority of people of European descent over indigenous people as well as people with afro-descent (Postero, 2017) (UN, 2012). Furthermore, a social hierarchy amongst indigenous peoples in Bolivia exists, with Aymaras and Quechuas considered as the forefront against the colonial exploitation of land, and these two indigenous groups have had the most influence in shaping "nation-building" policies of the post-colonial state throughout the 20th century (Reimao and Tas, 2017). The colonization of the Latin American region has led to systematic discrimination against indigenous people, in which many still live under conditions of poverty, and experience systematic racism and social disadvantages. For instance, in Bolivia, there is a major divide in labor market outcomes, between women and men, as well as between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Reimao and Tas, 2017). A significantly high number of indigenous people in Bolivia also live under conditions of poverty, have lower human and physical capital endowments, and experience inequalities within the formal market, as well as in terms of access to public goods and services (Ibid).

Intersectional theorists are also concerned with how access to certain knowledge is based on the social situatedness of individuals (Yuval-Davis, 2012). Therefore, when conducting intersectional research or advocating for gender equality through an intersectional perspective, it is crucial to consider the ontological and epistemological perspectives based on the social position of the researcher (GADN, 2017). In a think piece written by the Gender and Development Network (GADN) (2017, p.4), it was argued that "those of us with access to power must step back, sharing and facilitating that access with and for other women". While giving a voice and focusing on the needs, interests, and experiences of marginalized populations is without a doubt a key aspect of intersectional feminism, Yuval-Davis (2012) also emphasizes the importance of considering what form of knowledge is produced and shared from the higher social hierarchies of society.

The intersectional concern with how knowledge is developed and interacted within society is relevant, not only to showcase the experiences of inequality by marginalized populations but also to

reveal what form of "truth" is created from the hegemonic center, which has the most influence in shaping society (Yuval-Davis, 2012). Furthermore, intersectional theorists highlight the importance of studying epistemological and ontological points of departures, from different levels of society, which may range from individual to institutional spheres (Cho et al., 2013). Mohanty (2003) points out that the dominant Western feminist scholarship has led to normative and Eurocentric standards of gender equality, which tends to alienate the experiences and struggles of women from the Global South. By demonstrating how hegemonic and multilayered knowledge is produced, intersectional theorists have been able to unveil how dominant political discourses are maintained, while the subordination of certain populations goes unchallenged (Yuval-Davis, 2012).

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As we have outlined our theoretical framework, it is necessary to define the main concepts which come up within our research. We start with defining entrepreneurship, as an initiative in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and how this may have an impact on indigenous women in Bolivia. Here we reflect on why this form of development approach has received a lot of credit for providing a positive impact on the lives of poor people, as well as why this has been widely utilized. Furthermore, we discuss how entrepreneurship runs the risk of reproducing certain patterns of power structures, and the fact that some indigenous women in Bolivia may benefit from this more than others, depending on their social situatedness. We have also discussed the concept of gender equality, in which we analyze how gendered relations have been developed through transnational dynamics of power and capitalism. Rather than speaking of a binary and merely sex-based perception of gender equality, we analyze various forms of gendered constructions of indigenous women and men, which has led to their marginalization within society. When discussing the concept of women's empowerment, which is not officially defined, we argue for a context-specific approach that responds to the specific needs and interests of different women. The concept of women's empowerment is important to consider when analyzing entrepreneurship initiatives that focus on women as beneficiaries, as there are many different understandings of this concept. In this sense, we argue that it is crucial to not reproduce a Eurocentric and hegemonic perception of women's empowerment.

4.1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is often seen as "(a) magical – force for women's empowerment and socio-economic development of women in poverty" (Croce, 2019, p.1013). These initiatives have proved to lift people out of poverty due to the economic autonomy that these give (Croce, 2017). Additionally, it has been proven that investing in women and providing women access to market resources can lead to a promising future of poverty reduction and economic growth. The argument behind this is that women are perceived to be more likely than men to invest in the welfare of the family, such as health care, nutrition, and education, which, in the long run, leads to both a generally greater faith in women as agents of change, as well as socioeconomic development (Armstrong, 2020). Many third-wave feminists have, nonetheless, criticized this approach for "romanticizing" women and reproducing a binary perception of women as saviors and men as being selfish and irresponsible (Snyder, 2008). Through an intersectional approach, there is also a need to consider if this "proof" is evident among indigenous women.

A great deal of research has been done on women entrepreneurship and indigenous entrepreneurship, but indigenous women entrepreneurship (IWE) has just recently gained attention in academia (Croce, 2019). Croce (2017) states that considering the intersection between gender and indigenous background is of utmost importance when discussing entrepreneurial initiatives, as indigenous women face greater challenges of achieving social wealth, based on them being women and indigenous. Entrepreneurship projects are popular in Latin America and especially in Bolivia, as indigenous peoples represent more than half of the total population" (United Nations, 2009; Croce, 2017, p. 887). McLaren (2021) on the other hand, has a critical approach to IWE, as many development initiatives in the Global South have assumed that local women need economic opportunities, for instance, access to paid labor, which she outlines "positions women as neoliberal subjects". This has been evident in the case of Latin America, as in light of social problems, many Latin American governments have introduced development programs with entrepreneurial practices, to make indigenous women 'economically independent' (Croce, 2017).

Entrepreneurship initiatives have the benefit of economically empowering indigenous women who lack financial resources. Nonetheless, from a postcolonial feminist lens, the colonial power structures can go unchallenged if these projects are influenced or imposed by Western institutions or organizations, which do not recognize the context-specific needs and interests of indigenous women in Bolivia. Although these initiatives have demonstrated that it leads to job creation,

Marxist feminists also hold a critical view, as it retains indigenous women within the periphery of the global capitalist power structure (Anderson & Giverson, 2004; Peredo et al., 2004; Croce, 2017). Marchand (2009) also reproves these entrepreneurship projects since they are based on the strategic priorities of international institutions and organizations. She elaborates on this matter, by explaining how postcolonial governments receive funding from typically western institutions to achieve equal access to opportunities that they see as important and necessary. Rajan and Park (2005, p.64) concur with Marchand (2009), arguing that these funded programs "made no appreciable impact" in the past since the development strategies were based on western premises.

In Latin America, NGOs were primarily present to support civil society on their demands towards social change and the promotion of social transformation. But in the 2000s, NGOs became "service-delivery agents for the international financial institution" (Munck, 2020, p. 23). What this meant was, creating participatory initiatives such as entrepreneurship within the global capitalist system (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2005, p.19-22; Munck, 2020, p.23). It is precisely why postcolonial feminists demand raising questions of representation, in particular, "Who is presenting whom and what?", only by doing so can one truly understand the path of gender and development (Marchand, 2009, p.931). The individual economic profit has been valued as the overriding outcome of entrepreneurship, while Lituchy et al., (2006) express that indigenous women's feeling of representation in their communities and state is of higher importance, as women have several social identities that coexist. Padilla-Meléndez and Ciruela-Lorenzo (2018) also stress the importance of representation, especially if entrepreneurship projects come from outside an indigenous community and if these are of western design, as it might disregard the cultural practices of the communities. In their research in the Quechua community of Tiquipaya in Bolivia, they discovered that entrepreneurship projects had to be in line with the cultural and traditional practices that honor Pachamama, commonly known as Mother Earth. This meant entrepreneurship projects that allowed indigenous women to continue their practice of a harmonious life with nature (Padilla-Meléndez and Ciruela-Lorenzo, 2018). This research affirms that "development arises not only from the economic perspective but also from the social and environmental perspective, in which people practice reciprocity and respect the world that surrounds them" (Huanacuni, 2010, p.160; Padilla-Meléndez and Ciruela-Lorenzo, 2018, p.160)

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, a central objective of the entrepreneurial projects is to dismantle the oppressive global system that has persisted since colonization and attempt to mend

the consequences of the European conquest by understanding the historical context and acknowledging the needs of indigenous people (Hindle, 2010). Recognizing that indigenous people are geographically spread in Latin America, with different historical and political contexts, the needs of indigenous people cannot be generalized, as there exists no "universality of indigenous entrepreneurial model" (Hindle & Moroz, 2009; Croce, 2017, p.889). The individual needs of indigenous women and their historical context play an unquestionable role when establishing entrepreneurial initiatives, yet a central element in this research is women's need to partake in such initiatives. Koutsou et al. (2009) discuss how some women are pushed into entrepreneurial activities out of necessity. They present three types of factors that can lead women to accept "the only available choice that could be to start a venture" (Koutsou et al., 2009; Padilla-Meléndez and Ciruela-Lorenzo, 2018, p.160.) The first factor regards the lack of job opportunities for women, this is an external factor, the second factor relates to the personal life, e.g., a family obligation might pressure a woman into becoming an entrepreneur. At last is the psychological factor, in which a woman's emotional and mental state might influence their decision in accepting an entrepreneurial job (Ibid.).

Marxist feminism highlights how the global mode of production exacerbates structural oppression on women, as the expansion of markets enforces new people (often women) to produce waged labor, under exploitative working conditions and lowered wages, as well as it increases the exploitation of natural resources and often with minimal protection from the nation-state which is primarily concerned with economic growth (Armstrong, 2020). A Marxist approach also describes how women's oppression takes form in class oppression, as the class structures within a capitalist system are fixed, and one class ends up typically controlling the means of production (Armstrong, 2020). The means of production refers to the facets that harness profit, which includes intellectual rights, land, natural resources, raw materials, markets, and systems of distribution. The means of production are owned and controlled by the upper class, who gain the profit from the labor produced by the working class, who in turn receive wages (Ibid).

This is the fundamental element as to why Marxist feminism critiques radical feminism, as it does not consider the class inequalities in gender and amongst women. Marxist feminism claims, that a feminist framework must aim at tackling gender inequality and consider the material conditions which women face under capitalism (Sheivari, 2014). This leads to questioning entrepreneurship initiatives since they aim at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through

economic development, by making women subjects of capitalism. And through a Marxist feminist perspective, it might be questionable whether entrepreneurship can sufficiently challenge patriarchal structures, since the entrepreneurship approach attempts to promote gender equality while adapting to capitalism, by making women participate in the market.

Marxist feminist scholars are currently concerned with how a greater relationality amongst female workers has led to newly formed subjects towards the resistance of economic exploitation and towards a demand for reforming the system of capitalism (Armstrong, 2020). Neoliberalism has shaped the workplace as a vulnerable space for collective resistance, and therefore, new workers' movements of solidarity and unions have emerged, within civil society and non-governmental organizational spaces. However, while several non-governmental initiatives have attempted to challenge oppression against women within capitalist systems, Marxist and socialist feminists have argued that there has been a limited focus on structural reforms (Ibid).

Nevertheless, with an intersectional approach, the research embraces an understanding that women experience oppression and injustices differently. For instance, indigenous women in Bolivia do not only face barriers to achieving gender equality and economic empowerment based on their gender – but they also experience discrimination based on their indigenous ethnicity and their socioeconomic background (Reimao and Tas, 2017). Additionally, some indigenous women may face even more social disadvantages, for instance, illiteracy, disability, sexual orientation, or whether they reside in a rural or urban area. Luebke et al. (2021), stress the importance of considering the intersection of colonialism. As women are not a homogenous group and belong to different social categories, we argue that it is crucial for entrepreneurship initiatives that aim to promote gender equality and women's empowerment to be context-specific to the needs and interests of different women. This further leads to the question of how "gender equality" and "women's empowerment" should be understood and promoted, as this is another important aim of indigenous entrepreneurship projects.

4.2 GENDER EQUALITY

More than the power relations and global power structures, postcolonial feminism posits questions of inequalities, such as gender roles, and how these are created through historical, political, and social contexts (Al-Wazedi, 2021). Mohanty (2003) argues that the global hegemony of neoliberalism, as well as the normative standards of capitalism, has exacerbated the inequalities and

the lack of agency of marginalized populations around the world. This is partly a result of the global system of capitalism since it has led Latin American states to be significantly dependent on the economies of the Global North (Armstrong, 2020). It is thus the unequal economic power relations on the macro-level that have further exacerbated materialist inequalities at the micro-level, and particularly gendered inequalities. As Berruz (2018) states, globalization has led to even more disproportionate inequality in the world, which has impacted most negatively those in the poorer societies that are marginalized.

Marxist feminism shares the same belief of gender injustice being a result of capitalism and adds that patriarchy is interlinked with capitalism, rather than being an independent system (Seneviratne, 2018). As Walby (1990, p.4) outlines: "Men's domination over women is a byproduct of capital's domination over labor. Class relations and the economic exploitation of one class by another are the central features of social structures, and these determine the nature of gender relations." Therefore, Marxist feminists argue that the capitalist economy must be examined to recognize the power relations and structures of oppression. Marxist feminists claim that a system is not able to sufficiently tackle gender inequalities, without any major structural change (Seneviratne, 2018). Khader (2019) suggests that a "non-ideal universalism", which aims at tackling sexist oppression within a specific context, could lead the path towards a structural change. She outlines that universalism is not necessarily an issue of promoting transnational gender justice, but that it is on the other hand the form of universal claims that are produced by feminists with higher social privilege. In other words, it is "idealization" rather than universalism that poses a threat towards an inclusive form of gender equality (Ibid). Therefore, a non-ideal universal approach is meant to develop context-specific gender equality measures, in contrast to Western feminist frameworks which have often alienated women of the Global South, rather than empowering them (Ibid).

As a result of the institutionalization of feminism in Latin America, the disparities in social and economic conditions among women were overlooked, since feminists believed that gender injustices were equally experienced among all women (Berruz, 2018). Notwithstanding, indigenous, and afro-descended women denounced the idea of a "uniformly and shared struggle" and demanded what Khader (2019) refers to as a non-ideal universal approach to gender relations. Indigenous and afro-descended women's demand for a non-ideal universal approach resulted in the opposite, namely the exclusion and a representation of them as "the others". This gave rise to critical feminist ideas, that called attention to the dominant structures among women, where white or mestizas were

superior to indigenous women, and how this hierarchical race structured, led not only to an exclusion of some women but also resulted in damaging consequences for these women (Berruz, 2018). The research adopts a non-ideal universal approach to understanding the systemic oppression of women. Furthermore, we utilize this approach to understand whether entrepreneurship initiatives take into account the specific gender inequalities which indigenous women in Bolivia face and whether entrepreneurship challenges the social hierarchy of women in Latin America.

In addition to Khader's non-ideal universal approach, McLaren (2021) states that the transnational feminist movement needs to consider the problematics of "moralism", in which political activities within a specific context have been imposed based on a generalized moral judgment, rather than examining how certain conditions are caused by power dynamics. Moralism tends to be based on a Western standard of "morals" and is justified by the perception that it is driven by influencing "correct" morals, instead of self-interest (McLaren, 2021). Additionally, moralism leads to a presumed moral superiority of missionary feminism (Ibid). An intersectional feminist approach emphasizes the need of building a transnational feminist coalition, which recognizes and fights all forms of discrimination across all contexts (Oxfam, 2018). The challenge of intersectional feminism within this aspect is how to promote transnational gender equality as the norm while avoiding any universal and hegemonic perception of what gender justice indicates (McLaren, 2021). To promote an inclusive form of transnational feminism, Khader (2019) argues for a minimal definition of feminism, as opposition to sexist oppression**.** In this sense, she recognizes that gender injustice operates across all contexts, yet that those strategies which aim to tackle sex-based discrimination need to be sensitive to the specific location and consider other intersecting power dynamics.

Despite Marxist feminism drawing from Marxism, this feminist school of thought arose as a dissatisfaction towards Marxism, arguing that it is "gender blind", and that an analysis of societal class injustice is insufficient without considering gendered relations of labor (Sheivari, 2014). Even though Marxist feminists recognize that there is a social hierarchy amongst men as a group, based on class, they argue that the existence of gender relations has led to women as a group being socially subordinated to men (Seneviratne, 2018). Additionally, Marxist feminists point out the double oppression of women based on both class and sex (Seneviratne, 2018).

According to Marxist feminism, a key characteristic of modern capitalism is the feminization of the least productive- and lowest-paid sectors, which consists of the most exploitative working conditions (Armstrong, 2020). As Fernández-Kelly (2007, p.509) outlines, the concern with how

the political economy is gendered raises the question of "how women were becoming the new face of the international proletariat". Scholars analyzing the global gendered division of labor have highlighted how gender norms have backed up the continuation of imperialism, and how the current global capitalist system is dependent on exploiting the female workforce (Armstrong, 2020). The current global mode of production, which is shaped by imperialism and largely exploits the female workforce, is characterized by intense competition amongst the most marginalized populations, for the lowest wages and the worst working conditions (Armstrong, 2020). Enloe (2007) outlines that the global structures of capitalism have targeted women as cheap and docile workforce, through the state, and legal and physical coercion. Furthermore, the capitalist feminist framework which idealizes universal paid labor has pushed women into the global workforce, without considering their unpaid work burden as an addition to their formal work (Armstrong, 2020).

As Armstrong (2020) outlines, the use-value of women's reproductive work in the private sphere is her daily and generational renewal, while the exchange value of this labor is nothing at all. Additionally, Marxist feminists claimed that the patriarchal structure of the family plays a vital role in the operation of capitalism. Therefore, the power structure within the household must be deconstructed, by socializing the familial gendered labor relations (Armstrong, 2020). The reasoning behind this argument was that women were only able to realize and challenge their social order and oppression, by joining the proletariat struggles against capitalism as workers (Ibid). This re-emphasizes the Marxist perception of women's domestic work, which is a necessary aspect of the operation of capitalism, as being naturalized and rendered invisible. While the Marxist theory does not analyze in-depth the gendered division of labor, Marxist feminists argue that this is a crucial aspect of understanding the operation of capitalism, since the labor produced by women plays a vital role in promoting profit (Sheivari, 2014).

Traditionally, the promotion of equality between women and men tends to be associated mainly as an issue concerning only women, with terms like "women's equality" and "oppression against women". Within a gender analysis, by replacing the concept of "women" with "gender" and discussing "gender equality" and "gendered relations", we provide a less binary perception of power relations and showcase a more complex reality of the operation of oppression. In this sense, we recognize that while women as a group face structural oppression of patriarchy, power structures exist amongst men as well, and this has an important impact on the promotion of gender equality. For instance, it has been proven that the disempowerment of financially and racially marginalized

men (in our case indigenous men) who may be responsible for providing an income for their household, further leads to a disempowerment of their female spouses, daughters, or other female family members. An example of this is for instance in cases when men from poor households have to move to urban areas or other countries to seek job opportunities. In such cases, their spouses or other female relatives are left behind, and as a result, this often increases women's domestic work burden. In some cases, it could even lead to girls from these households having to drop out of school, to help out with work responsibilities at home (Maclean, 2010).

Therefore, entrepreneurship practices can aid women in achieving gender equality if their unpaid work burden is considered, otherwise initiatives like these would through a Marxist feminist perspective, simply be a continuation of the exploitation of indigenous women and reproduction of patriarchal power structures. The given chapter moves forward to discuss the concept of 'women's empowerment, as the research furthermore posits that entrepreneurship initiatives can aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality through the process of empowering them.

4.3 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women's empowerment was initially contested in the approach "Women in Development" (WID) as an economic gain. This later developed into "Gender and Development" (GAD), which promoted a focus on women's agency and advocated for the change of institutional and structural inequalities, thus moving beyond an understanding of empowerment as purely economic (Marchand, 2009). As these approaches gained attention, organizations, and institutions such as the United Nations spoke of gender equality, leading to among other things the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, commonly known as the CEDAW, which was established in 1979 (UN Women, n.d.).

Women's economic empowerment (WEE) has since gained attention in social and political contexts, as Oxfam Canada (2019) states "leading to a widespread equation between WEE and women's access to productive resources, including paid work" (Oxfam Canada, 2019, p.5). WEE is now a central theme to funding agencies who wish to empower those individuals who "fit within the current neoliberal economic model" (Oxfam Canada, 2019, p.5). Organizations like Oxfam Canada, view this as harmful, as they argue that this focus only deepens the global power structures that the

neoliberal economic system has, and keeps indigenous women, among other marginalized populations, in persistent inequality.

Therefore, this research adopts an understanding of WEE as a tool for poverty reduction and gender equality. As the name implies, economic empowerment is economically linked, however rather than solely measuring the extent of the economic empowerment through e.g., income, the research views WEE as a key to unlock agency for women to build better living conditions. WEE is furthermore defined through a rights-based approach, in which it is all women's right, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, etc., to be economically empowered, as this gives them the ability to exercise their agency and achieve other equalities and human rights. Additionally, we believe it is women's right to control their income and time (in contrast to unpaid care work). Considering that power and agency is something this research embraces, we view agency and power as part of women's empowerment.

Organizations working on development who simultaneously share a feminist approach, tend to believe that women, especially living in rural environments, found a collectiveness sentiment among themselves. Therefore, development organizations created programs to make women beneficiaries of development (Marchand, 2009). This has shed some light on the fact that women were indeed hard workers and sacrificed a great deal for their families, though, among other factors, unpaid home care, which has given rise to a new discourse. This discourse has highlighted the importance of Women's Empowerment (WE), helping them to achieve equality through gaining capabilities (Marchand, 2009).

Entrepreneurship projects have put a particular emphasis on the potential of women as active agents towards socio-economic development, rather than perceiving them as vulnerable victims who are in need of top-down support, to improve their living conditions. However, a paradox has also appeared, which is the external, foreign, and often, western funding of these development projects which aimed towards women's development, but in many cases results in errors (Marchand, 2009). Yet, it is also through these trials, that postcolonial feminism has posited the importance of improving WE and gaining an understanding of their experiences on these acts of development. Furthermore, the gender and development approach originates from a Western perspective, within a neoliberal order, where WE is numerically measured to automatically fit within the neoliberal order and its development progress (Marchand, 2009)., Furthermore, Marchand (2009) critiques this understanding of WE, as it instrumentalizes women within the economic agenda and on the other

hand, one should rather hold a holistic approach to purely pursue a local agenda, rather than an international agenda-setting. More than the power relations and global power structures, postcolonial feminism posits questions of inequalities, such as gender roles, and how these are created through historical, political, and social contexts (Al-Wazedi, 2021). Mohanty (2003) argues that the global hegemony of neoliberalism, as well as the normative standards of capitalism, has exacerbated the inequalities and the lack of agency of marginalized populations around the world. According to Berruz (2018), Latin American feminism is based on contexts shaped by colonialism, along with socio-economic exploitation and later the marginalization of indigenous peoples.

The concept of WE has been utilized within a broad range of institutions and academia, consisting of a range of different meanings. The fact that WE does not consist of one specific definition has been argued by feminist theorists to be significantly beneficial in the sense that it can be adapted across contexts with intersectional considerations (Kabeer, 2002). As it has been stated in our theoretical discussion, the concept of WE requires a careful analysis of context as well as a recognition of historical and materialist structures of disempowerment. Furthermore, conceptualizing WE in a homogenizing manner has proven to be highly contested, and in many cases also contradictory. When justifying a given meaning of WE, it is important to consider the implications of this specific concept as well as to examine whether there are other aspects of WE which are being dismissed.

According to Friedman (1992), empowerment consists of three forms of power; social, political, and psychological. Social power entails the process of knowledge, information, and skills. Political power refers to influence towards policy changes, at both the micro- as well as macro level, which is achieved through the power of collective voices. Psychological power is perceived as an individual sense of confidence, potential, self-esteem, and self-reliance (Ibid). Kabeer (2002) perceives empowerment as a process of change, in which those who have previously not been able to conduct their own choices can do so. She further outlines that this perception of empowerment leads to a necessity of analyzing choice in relation to power (Kabeer, 2002). The reason behind this is that choices can be influenced by others (such as family members or spouses), norms, and consequences, and therefore a specific “choice” may not necessarily correspond to the true interest or benefit of the individual (Ibid). Raham (2013) outlines that from a feminist perspective, there is a need to recognize structural oppression, to promote empowerment. Therefore, access to participation within domains of decision making is not the only dimension of WE, but also the

processes in which women consider themselves as able and entitled to conduct decisions. When promoting WE, it is important to consider gendered power relations within the household and community, gender norms- and expectations as well as the contextual situation of women.

For instance, within entrepreneurship, we need to question whether it is enough to give indigenous women resources to start up their own business and to have their own income, to promote their empowerment. It might be the case that women who earn money are expected to hand over their income to their spouses, who may be perceived as the head of the household, and who in this case are responsible for the finances of the household (Kabeer, 2002). Another likely scenario is that women are still expected to take care of household labor, aside from paid labor, which increases their work burden, or may lead to some women having to make certain compromises (Ibid).

When promoting empowerment, Kabeer (2002) discusses the access of resources, which enables individuals to make choices, and which can be material, social or human. Human resources are categorized as skills, knowledge, creativity, and imagination, while social resources relate to claims, obligations, and expectations within relationships, connections, and networks, which enables the beneficiaries to make commitments which they would not be able to do on their own (Ibid). It is important to consider these forms of resources, as access to financial resources alone may not be enough to respond to the needs and interests of indigenous women in Bolivia. Furthermore, access to these resources through different institutions and processes depends greatly on rules, norms, and practices, within different institutional terrains. In this sense, we can for instance consider whether indigenous women who reside in certain geographical areas, or who belong to a specific indigenous group, have equal access to specific human and social resources to make their own business successful. Therefore, Kabeer (2002) argues that empowerment is not only a matter of an increase in the access of specific resources but also a change in how these resources are acquired.

Some attempts of measuring WE have been focused on universally shared understandings of basic needs (Kabeer, 2002). This, however, often leads to the problematic perception that women's disempowerment is directly linked with poverty. While prosperity may indeed be an important factor in tackling various gendered disadvantages, for instance through a higher school enrollment of girls, in some cases it can also serve to constrain women's ability to make choices in certain aspects. Furthermore, translating WE to wealth leads to other forms of gendered disadvantages, which are not linked to basic needs, being ignored (Ibid). Therefore, it is crucial to not only focus wealth in promoting WE but also to recognize and challenge internalized gendered structures of

disempowerment. This is a particularly important consideration within female entrepreneurship, as this approach tends to be focused heavily on poverty reduction and access to market resources to promote WE.

The social hierarchy of women in Latin America leads to a necessity of analyzing agency, to avoid a generalization of women's needs and interests when it comes to promoting WE. In this sense, it is important to consider the fact that indigenous women do not only face patriarchal barriers towards agency, but also barriers of racism, along with other potential barriers. As it has been argued by postcolonial feminists, there has been a common perception amongst development initiatives that women from the Global South, or more specifically women of marginalized ethnicities, are in need to adapt to Western feminist ideals of social change, which undermines their agency (Rajan and Park, 2005). Agency lies at the heart of postcolonial feminism and postcolonial feminist scholars critique the thinking about agency, as something that becomes active when there is a need for it, such as in moments of resistance, as this view of agency neglects other aspects of agency, such as daily life struggles. As Allen (2003) discusses, power does not arise inopportune moments nor is power centered or held among few, but rather power is "a relational effect of interaction". Hartsock (1983) describes power as a capacity that is linked to the ability to exercise agency to achieve empowerment of any type.

A critical question when it comes to agency is when women make decisions that undermine their wellbeing and empowerment when these decisions are shaped by gendered power relations and their "acceptance" of being subordinated. To make this clear, this is not a matter of expecting women to conform to decisions according to our understanding of WE, we fully recognize that the sense of empowerment varies amongst women based on their context. This question of agency has more to do with women prioritizing the wellbeing of others over their own, or when she accepts her subordinated position according to patriarchal standards. Kabeer (2002) points out that women often may make decisions based on internalized norms and expectations shaped by patriarchal structures, which are difficult to challenge. A common dilemma amongst feminist initiatives which aim at tackling gendered barriers to empowerment arises when attempting to separate the "demands" of women as being shaped by inherited structures of sexist oppression, or as simply representing their interests. In this sense, it is important to consider that patriarchy operates across all contexts, rather than being caused by any specific culture.

To conclude, we do not perceive WE as one standard that women need to achieve, and we do not view WEE as a specific financial income which women need to gain. We have argued for WE and WEE to be a context-specific and inclusive approach, which aims at promoting women as crucial agents towards change, meeting individual women's needs and interests, as well as challenging barriers of patriarchy. There is no "end" to when indigenous women have achieved, WE and WEE, their empowerment rather implies an end to any obstacles which they face in improving their own lives, as well as towards gaining freedom and agency to make their own decisions, based on their gender and ethnicity, amongst other intersecting factors.

5. ANALYSIS

The analysis chapter consists of seven main sections. The first section builds on an analysis of the historical context in Bolivia that departs from the colonial era, to understand the consequences of the European colonization on indigenous women. It furthermore provides an analysis of the political economy of Bolivia and its attempt to include indigenous people's subjectivity within the state policies. This first section sets the ground to discuss the second section on the socio-economic conditions of indigenous people in Bolivia. The aim is to examine how these circumstances might be factors that lead indigenous women to engage in entrepreneurial activities, to achieve gender equality and empowerment. The third section examines the gendered and racialized relations behind the stereotypes of indigenous women and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, we analyze how indigenous women's engagement within entrepreneurship might challenge these stereotypes, as well as potentially construct new identities of indigenous women. An important aspect of this research is the reasons why indigenous women might engage in entrepreneurship and the settings where these activities take form. These two main aspects are analyzed in the fourth and fifth sections. The sixth section is based on case studies of specific entrepreneurial activities. The aim is to evaluate how the specific type of entrepreneurial activity, which indigenous women engage in, might aid or challenge them in achieving gender equality and empowerment. The analysis chapter is finalized with an analysis of the institutional support that indigenous women receive.

5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE CONQUEST OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND PACHAMAMA

"The jungle is a virgin that does not surrender

We will never, ever have to tear him away

Force the word, dress her in cities.

Girdle the mules with roads

Burn her hairy skin with blood

Of progress and civilizations "
(Parejas Moreno, 2008, p.11; Makaran, 2019, p. 117)[1]

Makaran (2019, p.117) uses this quote from the poem "The conquerors of the jungle"[2] by Raúl Otero Reiche (1906-1976) to illustrate how the Spanish, besides colonizing indigenous people, also conquered their lands and their resources. As Young (2016) states, colonization naturally involved the conquest of another land to expand their hegemonic power. Therefore, colonization naturally meant the conquest of new territorial ground. However, in Bolivia, indigenous people have long before and after the Spanish arrival, viewed the land not solely as territorial ground, but as the highest divinity that is characterized as "Pachamama" (Vidal, 2011). indigenous communities in Bolivia have honored a cosmovision that builds on the relation between the human and Pachamama (Mother Earth), who according to Makaran (2019, p.116), the Spanish "possessed, penetrated and tamed violently". Naturally, indigenous people have held the belief that the Spanish crown not only colonized indigenous people, but also Pachamama. With this belief, a postcolonial feminist perspective suggests that indigenous people in Bolivia have been oppressed by the European colonizers, by being exploited for labor, and by suppressing and invalidating their belief on Pachamama.

[1] Translated from Spanish: "La selva es una virgen que no se entrega. Nunca, tendremos que arrancarle por. Fuerza la palabra, vestirla de cuidades. Ceñirle con caminos los mulos. Quemar su piel velluda con sangre. De progreso y civilizaciones."

[2] Translated from Spanish: "Los conquistadores de la selva"

Another dimension regarding the extraction of the natural resources in Latin America, is its interconnection with the historical oppression of indigenous people. Within decolonial feminist academia in Latin America, the concept of "body-territory"[3] has been developed (Zaragocin and Caretta, 2020). This is an ontological method of analyzing the inseparable relationship between the colonial exploitation of both indigenous people, as well as the natural environment, which indigenous people depend on (Ibid). With the introduction of imperialism in Latin America, indigenous people were dehumanized through slavery and racial subordination, and along with natural resources, became perceived as sources of gaining profit (Mollett, 2021).

Despite the end of colonization and the independence of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the racialized power structures and colonial legacies continue to persist and oppress indigenous people, as well as Mother Earth. This is seen through the policies of Buen Vivir that were introduced in Bolivia as 'Vivir Bien' by the former indigenous president, Evo Morales as a response to the conventional and Eurocentric understanding of development (Gudynas, 2011). This concept proposed an alternative development strategy, which recognized the cultural diversity in Bolivia, and acknowledged the contribution of indigenous people's knowledge (Gudynas, 2011). The idea behind Vivir Bien was to embrace the harmonious living of humans with nature and to recognize the right of the "not human world" like nature. The global capitalist system that builds on the contrary principles, which rather gives focus to the individual human rights, such as the right to own and sell, has considered nature and other non-human livings as objects for the disposal of humans (Balch, 2013). As exemplified by Eduardo Gudyanas "if you put a price on nature, then you're suggesting an ownership of the planet" (Balch, 2013). The concept of Vivir Bien aimed exactly at challenging the idea that nature could be sold or owned by others, thus suggesting a non-linear model of development that was not fully dependent on economic growth. Furthermore, the core idea of Vivir Bien was to go beyond the Eurocentric understanding of development (Gudynas 2011). This clearly shows the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge over Bolivia. Furthermore, considering that these sets of principles were introduced in Bolivian society in the 2000s, it showcases the historical neglect of non-Western epistemologies, since colonial times. In this sense, one can argue that indigenous people continue to be oppressed by the global capitalist system and the colonial power structures. Despite efforts to include the non-living world in the development policies of Vivir Bien, the intentions of addressing climate change and protecting Mother Earth clashed with

[3] Translated from Spanish: "Cuerpo-territorio"

the need for national economic growth (Fernandez, 2020). This contradiction can though a Marxist feminist theory be explained as a result of the global capitalist system that depends on the Bolivian state exporting raw materials so that wealthier nations can produce a commodity with an added value. In this sense, the Bolivian state has had to compromise with the neoliberal economic system consequently oppressing the most marginalized citizens.

Fig. 3 clearly shows how the extractivist activity in Bolivia has continued and at the same time, it reflects the economic model that is based on plundering nature's resources. A postcolonial feminist school of thought suggests that this economic model and extractivist activity that persistently suppress indigenous people is a result of the social order that was established during the colonial times.

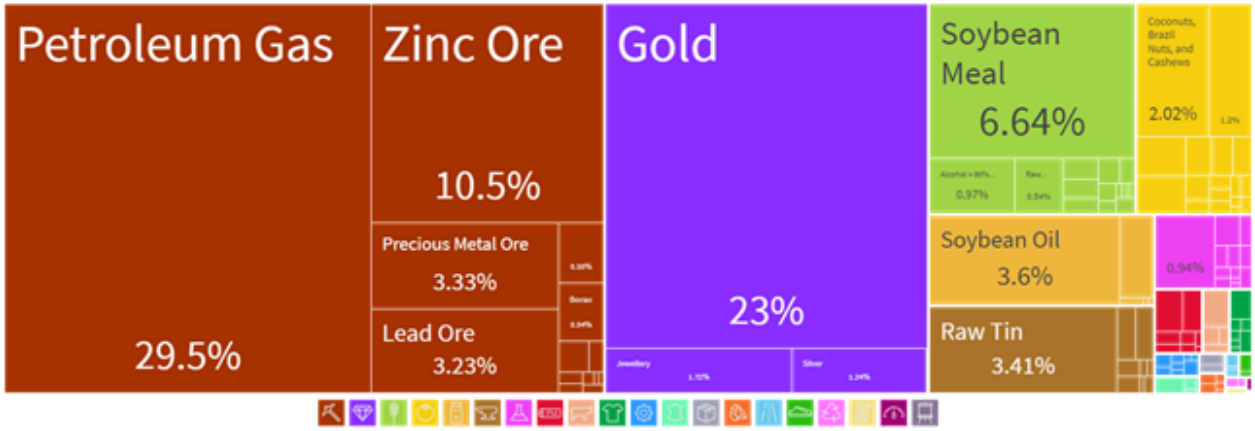

Fig. 3 Bolivia's export in 2019 (OEC, n.d.)

As can be observed in Fig. 3, approximately 47% of Bolivia's exports were mineral products, and 26% were precious metals. This means that approximately 73% of Bolivia's export in 2019 was primarily raw materials which were extracted through mining (OEC, n.d.). As argued by Botero and Galeano (2017) this economic model that is based on the extractive sector does not comply with the alternative model of development and the concept of Buen Vivir. From a Marxist feminist perspective, the continuous extraction of resources reflects how indigenous people continue to be oppressed by the global capitalist system, as their belief in a harmonious life with nature is neglected. In addition to this, the mining companies that are present in Bolivia are often international, meaning that there is a continuity of the colonial power structures, typically of the Global North dominating Bolivia. More than this, through a postcolonial feminist perspective, it can be argued that the neo-extractivist model is a new form of colonial practice, as colonization also consisted of extracting riches.

Another important level of analysis is the patriarchal power structure. Although postcolonial feminism typically discusses patriarchal power structures in relation to the exploitation of indigenous women, it seems relevant to discuss this power structure regarding Mother Earth. Since indigenous people in Bolivia view Mother Earth as a woman figure; the continuous exploitation of Mother Earth's natural resources could, therefore, be characterized as continuous oppression of Mother Earth, by the patriarchal power structures. This concurs with a postcolonial feminist belief, that women's struggle is a direct consequence of the European conquest.

Viewing how the colonial practices are still exercised by the Global North, through the extraction of natural resources and the exploitation of Mother Earth, leads us to question the ability of entrepreneurship to challenge this economic model of Bolivia. One could initially assume that despite entrepreneurship aiding indigenous women in achieving gender equality and empowerment, indigenous women would still be subject to the colonial power structures and oppressed by the global capitalist system. On the other hand, one could also assume that if the entrepreneurship activities which indigenous women are involved in, could challenge the extraction of natural resources, they would also be challenging the global capitalist system and thus be able to break the oppressive power structure that has roots in colonial times.

In this section, we have outlined the historical context of colonisation in Bolivia, and its impact on indigenous people. We have noticed that the exploitation of indigenous people and their culture has continued, even after Bolivia gained political independence, through external trade. Furthermore, we have also showcased how Bolivia as an economy is heavily dependent on the global market, which has challenged the domestic political attempts of promoting indigenous people's rights and interests, through the state agenda of "Buen Vivir". Therefore, the global postcolonial and capitalist power structures further lead to continuous systematic, structural and institutional exclusion of indigenous people, particularly of indigenous women, in Bolivia. This will be further elaborated.

5.2 SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

SYSTEMATIC, STRUCTURAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

As it has been showcased by the postcolonial feminist and intersectional theoretical framework, the colonization of the Latin American region, which brought racialized and gendered power structures, has led to a continuous marginalization of indigenous peoples, and particularly of indigenous women. Currently, a great number of indigenous people in Bolivia live in poverty and continues to face systematic discrimination within institutional domains (Reimao and Tas, 2017). The economic inequalities amongst indigenous people and non-indigenous people – with indigenous women being dominant within the least productive sectors of the Bolivian society – are further explained by the Marxist theoretical framework, as being caused by the capitalist exploitation of marginalized populations, and particularly women. This exploitation is caused by the naturalization of female domestic labor, as well as through the feminization of the least productive sectors of society. With an intersectional feminist approach, it has been highlighted that indigenous women in Bolivia do not only experience social disadvantages based on their gender but also based on their ethnicity, residency, and class, amongst other potential forms of disadvantages.

Even though education is universally granted by the Bolivian state, by analyzing the contextual identity politics, it becomes obvious that the female indigenous population of Bolivia faces various forms of intersecting and informal barriers of attending education, and to further enter the formal labor market. According to the 2012 Bolivian National Census of Population and Housing, more than 80 percent of non-indigenous people over the age of 14 completed primary school education, in comparison to 66 percent among indigenous Aymara people and 54 percent indigenous Quechua (Reimao and Tas, 2017). Furthermore, the census shows a significant gender gap in primary school completion amongst Aymara people, of 76 percent men in comparison to 56 percent women (Ibid). There are many barriers for marginalized women in Bolivia to get enrolled in higher education, including domestic labor responsibilities, care work for other family members, adolescent pregnancies, as well as the necessity of conducting paid labor (Grown and Lundwall, 2016). According to a perception survey by The World Bank from 2014, one in five female students between the ages of 15 to 24 expressed that they have faced discrimination in educational environments; additionally, 25% of the respondents were indigenous females, in contrast to 18%

non-indigenous females (The World Bank, 2015). Grown and Lundwall (2016) outline that while the distribution of public resources to indigenous communities in Bolivia has improved remarkably, there tends to be little or no adaptation of these resources to different cultural communities (e.g. educational programs), and therefore these welfare resources do not benefit everyone equally. Through an intersectional approach, it is clear that indigenous women in Bolivia as a group, are persistently marginalized, in contrast to non-indigenous women and men.

Naturally, these intersecting differences in education outcomes further lead to unequal opportunities within the labor market, accompanied by various other forms of socioeconomic disadvantages for indigenous women. Therefore, as indigenous women face structural barriers of entering the formal market, they may not have any other choice but to participate within the informal market through entrepreneurship. Through a postcolonial feminist perspective, this showcases the relevance of racialized power structures within the Bolivian society, and how indigenous women are continuously excluded by a discriminatory system. Both postcolonial feminist theorists, as well as Marxist feminist theorists, claim that gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be achieved without any structural change of the patriarchal, hegemonic, and capitalist system. Even though entrepreneurship initiatives aim to invest in women, as there is a strong faith in women as being capable of promoting their own gender equality and empowerment, the structural constraints within educational spaces and the formal market remain unchallenged. Therefore, it may be assumed that entrepreneurship initiatives lack the ability to properly tackle the broader structural and institutional constraints. Furthermore, with an intersectional emphasis, it may be hypothesized that entrepreneurship initiatives may be more beneficial for non-indigenous women, who may not have to face structural barriers of racism.

As we have mentioned, entrepreneurship initiatives often target women, as it is seen as a "good investment", because women are more likely than men to invest in the welfare of the household, for instance in education for their children. It is argued that this will benefit future generations and promote socio-economic development in the long run. Furthermore, if this leads to more girls in Bolivia being able to attend school, this means that girls in the future have greater opportunities of entering the formal market, and this is a crucial aspect towards the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. We need to keep in mind however that institutional discrimination towards indigenous girls and women in Bolivia is persistent and serves as a major obstacle for indigenous women to enter the formal labor market. In accordance with intersectional feminism,

this issue must be recognized as structural and political, rather than individual. Therefore, it is questionable how much of an impact entrepreneurship alone has on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the long run.

Analyzing the intersectional inequalities, which indigenous women face in Bolivia, is important to understand why entrepreneurship initiatives are in place, to promote their gender equality and empowerment. Furthermore, it is also crucial to recognize the gendered and racialized constructions of indigenous women and men that are in place in Bolivia, as these are linked to the structures of oppression. By analyzing how indigenous women and men are perceived, we can further evaluate whether entrepreneurship effectively challenges gendered and racialized stereotypes, or if these are being reproduced. We emphasize a non-binary perception of gender relations, which takes into account a more complex reality on how intersecting race- and class structures influence the subordination of indigenous men and women.

5.3 STEREOTYPES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Indigenous women in Bolivia face persistent discrimination, along with negative stereotypes of them being perceived as "backward", uneducated and vulnerable (Fernandez, 2004). It may be argued that showing faith in indigenous women to open their businesses and sustain their households, could potentially challenge the negative stereotypes of indigenous women as being vulnerable victims, in need of external support to be empowered and achieve gender equality. Tackling the negative stereotypes of ethnically marginalized women, which has largely been produced by Western hegemonic feminism, is indeed an important aspect of postcolonial feminism, in promoting an inclusive transnational feminist framework. On the other hand, the fact that indigenous women are maintained within the informal sector of the economy, through entrepreneurship, may also run the risk of reproducing an image of indigenous women as merely being capable of conducting labor with less product value-added, and further exclude them from the formal market. While we should not assume that indigenous women are necessarily interested in achieving empowerment, according to a Eurocentric ideal of capitalist success, indigenous women should still have an equal opportunity to do so. It is questionable whether indigenous women in Bolivia are truly empowered if they participate in an entrepreneurial activity when this becomes

their only option to make a living, and if entrepreneurship is perceived as a less exploitative alternative, than jobs within the formal market. As it has been emphasized in the conceptual framework, agency is a crucial aspect of women's empowerment. With an emphasis on agency, it is important to consider whether the choices conducted by indigenous women are influenced by societal norms, expectations, or consequences, or whether these choices are based on their own interest. In this aspect, it may be argued that the choice of participating in entrepreneurship is often shaped by the consequences of exploitation within the formal market, as well as the limited opportunities of finding formal employment.

While the faith in women from the global South, as being important agents in promoting socio-economic change - with the emphasis that women are more likely than men to spend their earnings on the wellbeing of their families - may be seen as a positive perception, this could arguably be problematic as well. With a lack of an intersectional and context-specific consideration, this reproduces a binary, naive, and superficial perception of gender relations, as it creates a romanticized image of women from the global South, as being "saviors", while men are portrayed as self-centered, careless and greedy. With an intersectional feminist approach, it is showcased that gender relations in Bolivia are more complex and that Bolivian women - particularly indigenous women - experience oppression in different ways. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that indigenous men - while holding societal superiority over indigenous women - also experience racialized- and class oppression, which in turn has a negative impact on the empowerment of indigenous women. For instance, the racialized discrimination and economic exploitation of indigenous men, within the formal market of Bolivia, has led to indigenous populations being maintained within poverty, and within the less productive sectors of society. This in turn has led to a greater financial vulnerability and work burden of indigenous women from poor households, who are financially dependent on male spouses and relatives, and who have to conduct paid labor, aside from their unpaid domestic labor.

Fernández et al. (2011) discuss how the role and stereotyping of gender is an external barrier for indigenous women within the domain of labor. With regards to entrepreneurship, this type of labor has traditionally been associated with 'mens' characteristics, as independent, innovative, natural leaders, among other attributes (Fernández et al., 2011). Based on our epistemological view, one can argue that these "masculine" characteristics that are associated with entrepreneurship and naturally to an entrepreneur, are a social construction of gender, where particular and distinctive

identities have over time been attributed to gender. Notwithstanding, the main point is that if indigenous women can overcome this barrier of stereotypes, and indeed engage in entrepreneurial activities. In this sense, they are challenging not only the patriarchal structure but also reconstructing an identity as 'empowered indigenous women'.

In this section we have evaluated the existent gendered and racialized constructions of indigenous women and men in Bolivia, to analyze why indigenous women are dominant within the informal sector. Furthermore, this has provided an understanding of how these perceptions have an impact on female indigenous entrepreneurs. We have observed that entrepreneurship may lead to a reproduction of certain negative stereotypes of indigenous women, by them being maintained within the informal and less productive sector of the market. Entrepreneurship may also run the risk of reproducing a binary perception of gender relations amongst indigenous communities, with the lack of a more complex understanding of gendered and racialized oppression. This in turn leads to a limited ability to tackle the root causes behind indigenous women's oppression, by simply blaming indigenous men for their gender inequality. On the other hand, we have also noticed that entrepreneurship has the potential of challenging gender stereotypes, by promoting economic opportunities for indigenous women. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is also proven to be beneficial, by demonstrating the potential of women, within a sector that traditionally has been characterized as "male labor". In the following section, we present the main reasons why indigenous women in Bolivia conduct entrepreneurship and evaluate how this has an impact on the promotion of their gender equality and empowerment.

5.4 REASONS BEHIND THE PARTICIPATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

OPPORTUNITY- AND NECESSITY-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Bolivia, there are two major causes behind women's participation in entrepreneurship, which are based on opportunity and necessity (Bergmann et al., 2015). Causes of necessity include limited or no other form of gaining financial income or fear of losing formal employment in the future. The reasons behind opportunities of entrepreneurship tend to be based on the opportunity of increasing wages or gaining independence (Ibid). According to the 2011 survey on women and

entrepreneurship in Bolivia, 43% of the respondents were driven by necessity, while 38% were motivated by opportunity. The remaining 18% of the respondents claimed to be conducting entrepreneurship based on both necessity and opportunity (Ibid). 28% of the respondents who were motivated by opportunity expressed the aim of achieving financial independence, which is often perceived as a crucial aspect of women's empowerment (Ibid). This aspect is particularly important for young entrepreneurs, who face difficulties in finding permanent employment within the formal market or receiving jobs that are related to their academic careers (Ibid).

Female entrepreneurs in Bolivia come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, however, most of them stem from lower socioeconomic classes (Bergmann et al., 2015). The 2011 survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia showed that most of the indigenous respondents conducted entrepreneurship based on necessity (Ibid). This indicates that a great number of indigenous women in Bolivia experience particular difficulties in finding employment within the formal sector of labor, or that the main income of their households is too low to cover their living costs. Through both a postcolonial feminist lens and an intersectional approach, this clearly shows that indigenous women continue to face significant social disadvantages within the Bolivian society and that many of them conduct entrepreneurship based on necessity, rather than being driven by opportunities. In this sense, entrepreneurship may not empower indigenous women.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE FORMAL MARKET

One of the main reasons in which women in Bolivia engage in entrepreneurship through NGOs and microbanks is because women face persistent discrimination by formal institutions when attempting to access labor and financial resources (Bergmann et al., 2015). Bergmann et al. (2015) point out that according to their survey, many of their respondents chose to become entrepreneurs because they struggled to find permanent employment within the formal market, with decent wages and working conditions. Only 20 % of the respondents of the 2011 Bolivian survey on women and entrepreneurship were employed before their entrepreneurial activity. Many of the respondents had previously been employed within the formal market but left because they felt exploited (Bergmann et al., 2015).

One of the respondents claimed that she had previously worked in restaurants, but that she felt that the restaurant owners were abusive and that they were exploiting her (Ibid). Another respondent,

who had previously worked as a teacher, expressed that she faced major challenges of continuing with her teaching career after starting a family: “When I got married and had a child, they knew that they had to pay me benefits, and then they started to bother me and asked me to work much more than what I normally had to do until I quit the job. Within my profession, they do not accept married women who have children” (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.21). What is interesting with the second case is the fact that this respondent previously had a job within a more productive sector of society, in contrast to the majority of the other female entrepreneurs, who previously had been employed within the lower productive sectors of the formal market, or who never had any formal employment, before conducting entrepreneurship. In this case, the gender inequality within the formal labor market is very obvious. With a Marxist feminist perspective, which argues that the domestic care-taking labor has been naturalized as female labor, it becomes clear that women face significant disadvantages in the labor market, under capitalism.

As we have previously outlined, women in Bolivia - particularly indigenous women - face significant discrimination within the formal market, which limits their choices of employment within the formal sector. In this sense, entrepreneurship might serve as a less exploitative alternative to paid labor, which might provide indigenous women with greater agency, and therefore which also promote their empowerment. On the other hand, it can also be argued that entrepreneurship does not necessarily promote gender equality and women’s empowerment for indigenous women, if their motive for choosing entrepreneurship is merely because it is the less exploitative alternative, than the jobs that are available for them within the formal economy. Additionally, for those women who had to leave a better-paid job, which was more relevant to their profession, and instead conduct entrepreneurship within the informal market, their sense of empowerment and gender equality may instead decrease.

WORK BURDEN OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

In accordance with a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework, we emphasize the importance of analyzing context-specific gender relations. This will provide an important understanding of whether entrepreneurship initiatives adapt to the specific cultural context of indigenous women in Bolivia, and if the specific gendered inequalities that are in place are considered. Maclean (2010) expresses that community ties and networks are highly relevant amongst indigenous populations within the Andean regions of Bolivia, with traditions that include exchanges of labor, favors, goods,

and gifts. This aspect is an integral part of the production, and maintenance, of a good reputation within communities, which further has an important impact on the access of resources (Maclean, 2010). In these communities, women are mainly responsible for maintaining community networks (Ibid). At the same time, patriarchal power relations are highly relevant to these communities, as men are perceived as the head of the household (Ibid).

Furthermore, there is an uneven distribution of labor amongst men and women, with women being responsible for household- and community labor, including heavy and time-consuming agricultural production (Ibid). Many indigenous women in Bolivia who are entrepreneurs or conduct any other form of paid labor must get up at 4 or 5 in the morning, to have enough time to take care of all their labor responsibilities (Bergmann et al., 2015). This produces a "feminization of responsibility", as indigenous women are expected to conduct paid labor through entrepreneurial activities, in addition to their unpaid domestic- and community labor. Female entrepreneurs who work from home tend to dedicate more time to their household labor, rather than focusing on the growth of their businesses (Ibid). Some of the respondents from the 2011 survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia, claimed that they felt a sense of irresponsibility regarding their duties of taking care of their children if they would work outside of their homes. In this sense, they feel like they are prioritizing the success of their business rather than caring for their children (Bergmann et al., 2015). One of the respondents expressed: "I feel bad leaving my son alone. I have to choose between caring for my son or abandon him for my business" (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.31).

It is important to keep in mind that the patriarchal norms, that are existent in Bolivia, have historically been imposed, through the colonization of Latin America, alongside the implementation of capitalism (Fernandez, 2004). This showcases a postcolonial feminist emphasis on external power relations, of both patriarchy and capitalism, have an impact on gender relations amongst indigenous communities in Bolivia. Furthermore, by analyzing this aspect through a Marxist feminist approach, the naturalization of female and unpaid domestic labor in Bolivia showcases the gendered power relations, that have been developed within the household, which is maintained through the operation of capitalism. Marxist feminists claim that the patriarchal structures of gender inequality cannot be separated from the capitalist exploitation of women. While entrepreneurship initiatives attempt to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through women's participation in the market, if indigenous women are at the same time responsible for a great deal of

unpaid labor, it becomes questionable whether their gender equality and empowerment are effectively promoted.

An intersectional approach, which highlights that individuals may be subjects of privilege and oppression at the same time, also showcases how the racialized and economic oppression of indigenous men in Bolivia, has a further impact on the gender relations amongst indigenous people. With the traditional gender roles being persistently strong in Bolivia, men are often perceived as the head of the household and are expected to provide a financial income for their households (Maclean, 2010). Maclean (2010) outlines that there is a high out-migration of indigenous men from rural areas, to urban regions and other countries, to seek work and to financially support their families. This has further led to a greater work burden of their spouses and female family members, who they leave behind, as women must take care of the heavier household- and agricultural labor, which is normally conducted by men (Maclean, 2010). Additionally, this has an impact on the time women have of conducting paid labor, outside of the household. In the case of girls, this could also indicate that they need to drop out of school, to take care of domestic work. By applying a Marxist feminist approach to this aspect, it is also noted that while indigenous men from rural areas, clearly are vulnerable under the capitalist system, as they must migrate to urban areas to seek paid labor, women who have to uptake even greater work burdens are even more exploited by capitalism.

Buni et al. (2004; Fernández et al. 2011) raise how the personal and intrinsic values that are entrenched within indigenous women, due to the gender roles, can push indigenous women towards self-employment jobs, as these practices allow women to balance their time between work and family. In this sense, indigenous women's former position within the domestic sphere has not only given indigenous women a lasting role within the family and household, but also given indigenous men a role where they have no responsibilities within the private sphere (Fernández, et al., 2011). Furthermore, in Bolivia, there is a significant lack of public childcare services and adequate school support services, which is a crucial element in effectively promoting the active participation of women within the labor market, and strengthening their careers (Bergmann et al., 2015). One can therefore question the value of entrepreneurship for indigenous women, as these merely support the social reproduction of labor and gendered power structures, where women must continuously balance between market labor and household labor, and indigenous men do not partake in the familial responsibilities. In the 2011 national survey on women and entrepreneurship in Bolivia, 43% of the female entrepreneurs expressed that their labor responsibilities of caring for their

families had a negative impact on the success of their businesses (Bergmann et al., 2015). Furthermore, 19.8% of the respondents closed their business because they felt that they had limited time available to conduct paid labor, alongside their responsibility of caring for their family (Ibid).

On the other hand, Fernández et al. (2011) view this from a favorable point of view, as they argue that it gives women the flexibility to make a compatible life between work and family. Bergmann et al. (2015) outline that in the 2011 national survey of women and entrepreneurship in Bolivia, 69.4% of the respondents claimed that they chose to participate in entrepreneurship, as it gave them the possibility to distribute their time more effectively, between paid labor and domestic labor. This gives women the ability to conduct both forms of labor at home or provides them with greater freedom to choose the time schedule of their paid labor, outside of their households. In this sense, the self-employment that entrepreneurial practices give to indigenous women might indeed include indigenous women's interests and needs, in which they can enjoy the value of work and the value of family. From a theoretical point of view, performing both market labor and household labor does not free indigenous women from the gendered and patriarchal power structures, rather it maintains women within these forms of oppression and additionally, deepens gender inequality. However, holding a context-specific approach, the needs and interests of indigenous women are key to unlocking their empowerment, but the influence of family and community might affect their choice in regards to their empowerment. Other power structures might be the reason behind the influence of the family and community, for example, the patriarchal values imposed by the capitalist patriarchal power structure, within a community, could affect indigenous women's empowerment, by engaging in both market and domestic labor.

INDEPENDENCE

A lot of female entrepreneurs value the independence they get from entrepreneurship regarding the following aspects: the ability to earn their own money to cover their personal needs, as well as the living cost of their families; the agency to organize their own time to assist in events, meetings, and other activities of personal growth; and to negotiate the spending costs with their partners and families (Bergmann et al., 2015). One woman expressed: "I talk to my husband, and now we look each other in the face, without fighting, I can tell him that I can pay for some things… before, I was not able to do that… I cannot believe how much I have grown and how much I value myself now" (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.24). In this aspect, it seems like entrepreneurship indeed has a strong

potential of aiding women's empowerment, and to some extent promoting financial gender equality, by providing economic opportunities for women. Furthermore, here we can notice two forms of power which indigenous female entrepreneurs gain, that are important aspects of promoting empowerment: social power by gaining new knowledge, information and skills through their businesses, as well as psychological power through a greater individual sense of confidence, self-esteem, and self-reliance.

Many female entrepreneurs express that they feel like society, their communities, and their families are holding them back from participating in the market. They express that they continue to face sexist barriers to exercising their economic rights (Bergmann et al., 2015). This in turn leads to serious impacts on their lives and their communities regarding nutrition and health for their children, and their emotional stability (Ibid). Furthermore, it is expressed that violence against women in the domestic sphere is a major cause of the financial vulnerability of women, and their financial dependency on men (Ibid). One of the respondents from Bergmann et al.'s survey (2015) expressed that she was able to break free from an abusive relationship with her husband, after opening her business and gaining financial independence. Another one of the respondents claimed that her husband offered her the double amount of money that she gained from her business if she would agree to stop working. However, she refused, since she felt that the financial independence that she gained was crucial for her emotional stability, and to grow as a person (Bergmann et al., 2015). One of the female entrepreneurs from Bergmann et al.'s (2015) survey expressed: "To gain independence and tackle my fears was the most difficult, all I have been taught in my life is that I only serve to be submissive… to have my own money is not only a matter of being able to buy my own things, but it has also helped me to realize my worth". In these cases, entrepreneurship has been crucial in aiding these women in gaining empowerment, by tackling patriarchal power structures, in society, their communities, and their households. Through an intersectional approach, we can assume that this aspect is particularly important for women from marginalized backgrounds. This is because the oppression against women tends to be more common in poor households since the socioeconomic vulnerability of marginalized men many times leads to a lack of their own empowerment. This often leads to these men letting out their frustration and their masculine sense of control, on other more vulnerable individuals, particularly women (Kabeer, 2015).

On the other hand, even though many female entrepreneurs in Bolivia seem to gain a significant degree of financial agency and economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, in most cases the

men are still perceived as being responsible for providing the main source of income to their households. Most Bolivian women who participate in entrepreneurship do it to provide an additional income to their households, rather than an equal- or main source of income (Bergmann et al., 2015). Maclean (2010, p.506) outlines that in her ethnographic study on female entrepreneurs in Bolivia, the respondents perceived their entrepreneurial activity as “helping their husbands". One of the respondents from the 2011 survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia expressed: “This is a complementary thing. Because you cannot compare this with the contribution of my husband. He needs to contribute so that we can have food.” Another respondent outlined; “This is a form of support to my husband. My husband tells me: “the money you earn is for you, for the things you want to do. Keep the money to yourself because I am the one who is responsible for the family”. Before he told me: “I will work, while you dedicate your time to the house”. But then he noticed that I felt more secure having my own money, even though it's not much, but it's still my money. And now he says: “I like to see that you have what is yours” (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.30). On the other hand, some respondents, who expressed that even though their financial earnings from entrepreneurship are more of complementary income to the household, they aim to earn more in the future and become more independent (Bergmann et al., 2015). In this sense, it is noted that patriarchal structures within the household are not completely tackled. While women may gain more respect and a greater sense of self-worth by being able to provide an additional income to the household, which of course are some important aspects of women’s empowerment, women are still not perceived as equal in providing a financial income to their household. In this case, women are still expected to mainly be responsible for domestic labor.

It is important to keep in mind that women conducting paid labor are not necessarily a sign of greater gender equality and promotion of women’s empowerment. This is often misunderstood through a liberal feminist framework, which puts a strong emphasis on involving women in the market. In many cases, particularly for women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in Bolivia, it is done out of necessity, to cover the living costs of their households. We also need to keep in mind that we live in a capitalist world, in which earning capital is not only highly valued but also essential for survival. In this sense, women being able to financially provide for their households, when they previously have been unable or limited to do so, becomes a crucial aspect of empowerment for many of them. What is important here, to determine whether entrepreneurship may promote indigenous women’s sense of empowerment, is to analyze their choice in relation to power, and whether this truly corresponds to the interest of indigenous women. From the data

collected, it seems like female entrepreneurs on one hand have received the choice and agency to financially provide for their households, as well as challenge patriarchal norms of female dependency, by gaining a greater sense of independence and security. On the other hand, it also seems like the choice of many indigenous women to participate in entrepreneurship is to some extent shaped by the power of capitalist structures, when their paid labor mainly functions as an additional income to cover the living costs of their households.

Here we have elaborated on the two main causes behind indigenous women's participation within entrepreneurship, as being mainly based on necessity or opportunity. From the data collection, we have noticed that the majority of indigenous women in Bolivia, who work within entrepreneurship, do it out of necessity. This generally leads to the assumption that entrepreneurship does not necessarily empower indigenous women. However, by further analyzing the more specific reasons why indigenous women in Bolivia choose to become entrepreneurs, we have observed that entrepreneurship may promote their empowerment and gender equality in certain aspects. For instance, there is some evidence showing that indigenous women, who may gain greater economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, than within the formal market, feel a greater sense of independence and confidence. Furthermore, many indigenous women value the flexibility of distributing the time of their paid labor, with their household responsibilities. On the other hand, we have also noted that the choice of conducting entrepreneurship is often influenced by consequences of economic exploitation within the formal market, as well as by patriarchal structures of women's and men's labor. By evaluating the negative consequences in relation to power, which has shaped the choice of indigenous women to participate in entrepreneurship, we have been able to showcase that entrepreneurship may not always correspond to the true interests of indigenous women. We proceed by analyzing how the location of indigenous women within the informal sector in Bolivia has an impact on their gender equality and empowerment.

5.5 LOW PRODUCTIVITY OF THE INFORMAL MARKET

In 2011, over 80% of the female-owned businesses in Bolivia were located within the informal market, which is characterized by low productivity and low incomes (Bergmann et al., 2015). Almost 70% of these businesses belonged to the lowest productive sectors (Ibid). Over half of the female entrepreneurs in Bolivia in 2011 had an indigenous background (58.2%) (Ibid). Furthermore, businesses owned by indigenous women in Bolivia are less likely to have any

significant growth and tend to be located in sectors with low added value (Ibid). Bergmann et al. (2015) also outline that a great number of female indigenous entrepreneurs in Bolivia do not expect any significantly high rates of growth from their businesses. They explain that this attitude is likely to be based on the local concept of "Vivir Bien" (live good), rather than "Vivir Mejor" (live better) (Bergmann et al., 2015). The concept of "Vivir Bien", which is derived from Andean cosmology, indicates a living standard of only producing and selling the necessary amount of product to cover basic living costs. In contrast, the concept of "Vivir Mejor", represents a capitalist standard of overconsumption and aggressive competition (Ibid). It is indeed important to emphasize the needs and interests of women based on their cultural context, and not assume indigenous women are in need to be financially successful to feel empowered. On the other hand, the structural, institutional, and systematic barriers of sexism and racism, which indigenous women experience in Bolivia, also indicate that indigenous female entrepreneurs face significant disadvantages within the market, to promote the growth of their businesses. Through a Marxist feminist approach, showcases how financially marginalized women are maintained within the lowest productive sectors of the market. The fact that businesses owned by indigenous women are dominantly located within the lower productive sectors of the market showcases a gendered economic inequality, which entrepreneurship initiatives only have been able to challenge to a limited extent.

As indigenous women in Bolivia are primarily necessity-based entrepreneurs, this means that the lack of personal income is the main reason for engaging in entrepreneurial jobs. The necessity-based entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, often have undeveloped or limited skills and knowledge about the process of opening a business (Fernández et al., 2011). Moreover, due to the lack of a personal income, these entrepreneurs typically start with low technologies and with minimal or zero start capital, which means that these ventures are from start vulnerable, and pose little or no threat to other innovative entrepreneurs, that have better material and economic conditions (Fernández et al., 2011). At the same time, these businesses or ventures are often developed outside of the formal market, and often within sectors that stronger entrepreneurial businesses have actively chosen to ignore, due to the small probability of success (Ibid.) Entrepreneurial activities within these settings, position indigenous women in a fragile situation since due to the necessity to produce a personal income, they might just open a venture anywhere, leading to an inevitable failure.

Taking into account that the majority of entrepreneurial activity in Bolivia is based on necessity and not opportunity, entrepreneurship might have a rather negative effect on the achievement of

empowerment and gender equality for indigenous women. In addition to this, opening ventures in an abandoned sector could reproduce the exploitation of indigenous women, given that the capitalist system is characterized by its exploitative and feminized labor conditions. One can assume that entrepreneurship would not challenge this, as these would continue to belong in the lowest-paid sectors. More than that, another key characteristic of the neoliberal system is its competitive nature, which is important to consider when analyzing necessity-based entrepreneurship. It is likely to believe that numerous indigenous women could potentially be developing the same form of entrepreneurial activity, within the same sector. This could impact indigenous women, as they would be competing against each other, within the lowest-paid sectors, and would be subjected to their own class suppression. Therefore, one can argue that the type of entrepreneurship, and the sector where these belong, are crucial for the success of these activities, and for indigenous women to achieve gender equality and empowerment.

We have outlined the characteristics of the informal sector of entrepreneurship, with low productivity, and how this has an impact on the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, for indigenous women. We acknowledge a strong cultural emphasis on the concept of "Vivir Bien", by only producing and selling the necessary amount of product to cover the basic living costs, rather than valuing capitalist competitiveness and overconsumption. In this sense, entrepreneurship may correspond to the individual needs and interests of indigenous women in Bolivia, and therefore also promote their empowerment. On the other hand, we also take into account the fact that indigenous women in Bolivia struggle to find decent employment within the formal sector of the economy, which showcases a strong gendered division of labor within the Bolivian society. We notice that indigenous women are "stuck" within the informal sector, and therefore we assume that entrepreneurship initiatives so far have had limited success in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment on a broader level. In the following section, we aim to analyze the choice behind different forms of entrepreneurial activities, and how these have an impact in aiding or challenging gender equality and empowerment of indigenous women.

5.6 ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

Fernández et al. (2011) discuss how entrepreneurship can result in upward social mobility for indigenous women. In this sense, they move from labor activities that are typically exploitative, and exacerbate gender inequalities, to engage in entrepreneurial activities, where they control their labor conditions and acquire skills to manage their socio-economic conditions. Fernández et al. (2011, p.60) explain that indigenous women become "entrepreneurs of themselves" [4] and can therefore to some extent control the level of gender inequality they might be subject to. In addition to this, they argue that entrepreneurial activities can aid women in finding strategies of empowerment. Fernández et al. (2011) thought on entrepreneurship leading to upward social mobility, reveals how the hegemony of neoliberalism, in which indigenous women are exploited through their labor, has resulted in a withdrawal of their agency. In addition to this, it is evident to see how the economic power relations on a macro-level do indeed create gender inequalities for indigenous women at a micro-level. It also shows however, that entrepreneurship does not per say equal to empowerment, thus can entrepreneurship not necessarily aid indigenous women in their empowerment. Rather, it can aid indigenous women in becoming agents, to explore strategies that can lead to their empowerment. Based on our understanding of agency, we argue that while entrepreneurship can to some extent "restore " Bolivian indigenous women's agency, the extent of empowerment that indigenous women can acquire through their agency, might be questionable. If the historical gendered power relations are not dismantled, indigenous women might unwillingly make decisions that impede their empowerment. It is, therefore, necessary to explore more in-depth specific entrepreneurial activities of indigenous women in Bolivia, in order to fully understand how and if entrepreneurship aids indigenous women in achieving empowerment.

One major aspect impacting the choice of entrepreneurial activity is related to the limited access to finances. This is the case, even for those who receive loans from microbanks. Many female entrepreneurs who attempt to seek financial loans from formal financial institutions have been unsuccessful because formal banks often refuse to lend to people who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Almost all of the respondents of the 2011 survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia expressed that they would have chosen a different entrepreneurial activity if they had enough financial support (Bergmann et al., 2015). One of the respondents

[4] Translated from Spanish: "Empresarias de sí misma"

expressed: “I did not receive enough money to buy a sewing machine, so cooking food is easier. But my initial business plan was not to sell food. I do not like cooking…” (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.27). With a limited agency involved in the business which female entrepreneurs conduct, it is doubtful whether entrepreneurship serves as a tool for promoting women’s empowerment. Furthermore, through a Marxist feminist lens, it seems like the ability for female entrepreneurs to choose a business activity, which fits with their personal interest and which in that case increases the possibility of a successful business, depends greatly on how much personal financial support they are able to receive. This marks class divides amongst female entrepreneurs and creates unfair competition within female entrepreneurship. In this case, those who receive less financial support must choose whatever business activity they can afford to maintain, and in turn might lead to them being persistently stuck in the lowest productive sectors of the market, through necessity-based entrepreneurship.

FAIR TRADE AND KNITTING

Fair Trade is a common entrepreneurial activity among indigenous women in Bolivia that was originally introduced by organizations from Europe and North America, with the purpose of supporting indigenous women to gain a personal income (Stenn, 2013). Indigenous women in Bolivia have received a great deal of support from the global North, and regardless of the motives behind the support, indigenous women have been forced to develop on the standards imposed by them, through programs and initiatives like Fair Trade activities (Stenn, 2013). This simply shows the long-lasting hegemonic power that the global North has had on the global South and its citizens. Fair Trade continues to be a popular entrepreneurial activity among indigenous women in Bolivia. Despite progress within development strategies and approaches that today attempt to be bottom-up rather than top-down, Fair Trade still originates from and builds on Western knowledge. Given that indigenous women in Bolivia still, work and start-up businesses that concur with the Fair Trade commerce, we consider it crucial to analyze the potential of these entrepreneurial activities, in aiding indigenous women to achieve gender equality and empowerment. The mere fact that indigenous women in Bolivia work with Fair Trade commerce reflects our theoretical understanding of oppression, by first the global North and second, the global capitalist system. We build this argument on Hayes’ (2006; Stenn, 2012, p.390) rather positive view on Fair Trade jobs, as he explains that this type of entrepreneurship allows indigenous women to enter the “lucrative export

market". From a Marxist feminist point of view, the access to "lucrative markets" challenges indigenous women in achieving empowerment. The reason for this is that with a Marxist feminist theoretical perspective, we believe that these lucrative markets are equal to the global capitalist market, which solely maintain indigenous women in Bolivia to be disempowered and oppressed. We built this claim on the belief that the global capitalist system oppresses indigenous women in the form of an unequal division of labor, where they are exploited with low labor conditions, such as low wages.

Many of the indigenous women's activities within Fair Trade is knitting since indigenous women who live on higher grounds in Bolivia have access to alpaca wool (Stenn, 2013). This, as Stenn (2013) states, is an advantage for many of the global North nations that have colder temperatures, as indigenous women in Bolivia can knit warm clothing items. This evidently shows the hierarchical structure within the global mode of production and the value chain. As indigenous women in Bolivia are knitting a commodity in the lowest value chain, and in addition to this, producing a commodity based on the interest of the global North. This argument is further supported by Stenn's (2013) statement on how indigenous women from Bolivia have engaged in knitting as an entrepreneurial activity, as it orients the needs of the West, and therefore has greater possibilities of success. From a theoretical point of view, one cannot argue that the production of knitted clothes, that builds on the needs and interests of the global North, is equal to neglecting Bolivian indigenous women's needs or equalities. Regardless of this, it is evident to observe the power of the international market, compared to the domestic market, and how necessity-based entrepreneurship might force indigenous women in Bolivia to engage in the global capitalist system. This would thus result in a reproduction of the gendered, racialized, and patriarchal power structures, as the entrepreneurship activities within Fair trade, such as knitting, would not dismantle the power structures, and therefore not aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality or empowerment.

MARKET AND STREET VENDORS

Another common entrepreneurial activity among indigenous women takes place within markets or streets and occupies the title of vendors. In markets, some indigenous women rent a vending booth or a stall. In the streets, "stalls" consist of "a simple framework of metal bars with a plastic tarp for a roof", typically in a corner on the sidewalk, that are put up in the morning and taken down in the evening (Scarborough, 2010, p. 89). Other indigenous women simply "squat" on the streets and sell

their items in baskets or lay them on the street. Scarborough (2010) also explains how vendors on the street and in markets might sell different products on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. This, besides showing major differences among the conditions under which these entrepreneurial activities are exercised, also represents the major class inequality that an intersectional approach highlights. As one can observe, there are domestic power relations of class, between the ethnic groups, but also through the constant competition between similar entrepreneurial activities, based on the same products. Scarborough (2010) discusses how many 'cholas', who are of mixed European and indigenous ethnicity, dominate the market vendor entrepreneurial jobs. This illustrates the social hierarchy between women in Bolivia since cholas are considered as being of higher status with more privileges than indigenous women. This is an example of the intersection of colonialism and the domestic power relations, where indigenous women must compete with other women, who are higher in the social hierarchy. In this sense, one can argue that entrepreneurship becomes a harmful tool for indigenous women when they are positioned in a competitive market with other women who are further up in the social order. This could consequently result in a widening of the class inequalities amongst women, making indigenous women unable to become empowered and achieve gender equality. This argument is backed up with Scarborough's (2010) statement on how Chola vendors have achieved social upward mobility, giving them the ability to obtain a higher education. Naturally, this shows that entrepreneurship can indeed aid indigenous women in becoming empowered and becoming agents of their life, by choosing education. This supports the intersectional approach of how indigenous women might be oppressed due to their indigenous ethnicity, but also experience privilege compared to other women. Nevertheless, considering the racialized power structures, indigenous women who have no European ethnicity might not achieve this upward mobility, and therefore entrepreneurship would challenge their empowerment and agency. This naturally also points towards the state's "blind eye" to gender relations, as the Bolivian state does not tackle the obstacles of marginalized indigenous women's opportunity in access to education. This racial dimension between entrepreneurs of mixed ethnicity and indigenous ethnicity illustrates the importance of a context-specific approach, that postcolonial feminism and intersectionality demand.

The products that indigenous women sell vary from edible products like, dry goods, fruits, and vegetables, to luxurious items, such as electronics (Scarborough, 2010). Considering that the value-added in these products vary substantially, one might assume that low-valued products, like vegetables, might challenge indigenous women in their empowerment, as these might not enable

them to produce a sufficiently high income compared to the more successful vendors. An important analysis level within this type of entrepreneurial activity is the marketplace, in which these might exist, as many entrepreneurial vendors operate within the informal market. According to Marxist feminism, opening entrepreneurship outside of the formal market might not aid them in achieving better equalities, as these activities might not enhance their possibilities of getting access to public goods and services, leading to continuous systematic discrimination and social disadvantage. Additionally, entrepreneurial jobs like street vendors within the informal market might keep indigenous women within the periphery of the capitalist structure. More than this, bearing in mind the global mode of production that the capitalist power creates, could force indigenous women to produce entrepreneurial work under low wages and exploitative working conditions, which might be the case for street and market vendors. On top of that, given that indigenous women sell already produced or cultivated products, shows how the means of production are owned by a higher class, who earn the profit of the selling that indigenous women do. As in an entrepreneurial activity like vendors, does not necessarily require a start capital, this might give indigenous women greater possibilities of opening a venture, and gain greater economic independence. Under other conditions, no financial support might impede indigenous women, and might in fact maintain them within the patriarchal power structures. In this sense, entrepreneurship activities could aid them in challenging the patriarchal power and achieving gender equality.

Entrepreneurship activities certainly differ and range from the type of commodity produced to the market it operates in and the forms of oppression that are inherent within these labor contexts. Entrepreneurial Fair Trade knitting operates primarily within the international market and thus on the foreign demand, whereas entrepreneurial vendors often occupy the informal market, but sell their products to domestic buyers. The domestic power relations are more apparent within the vendors, where indigenous women must compete against potentially stronger vendors, who belong to a higher social hierarchy such as the cholas; Fair Trade knitting on the other hand is more subject to foreign dominance of the global North. Both entrepreneurial activities are subject to the oppression of several power structures, yet the analysis also reveals that entrepreneurial activities could in specific contexts aid indigenous women in achieving empowerment. Another important point behind the entrepreneurial activities that indigenous women in Bolivia perform, relates to the institutional support that indigenous women receive. As for many indigenous women, financial support can be a crucial aspect in terms of which activities they might engage in. In addition to this, holding a context-specific approach, an analysis of the community and family support is appropriate

to understand the values and norms inherent in the indigenous communities in Bolivia and the extent of influential power that these have.

5.7 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The neoliberal policies that were forcefully implemented in Bolivia, through Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), were advocated by foreign powers, namely the IMF, World Bank, and the United States of America (Jenkins, 2007). Besides representing the foreign dominance over Bolivia, the advocacy of these policies was based on the argument that these were to produce long-term economic growth and create development for Bolivia's citizens (Jenkins, 2007). Based on a postcolonial feminist theory, this clearly shows how Bolivia and its citizens have had to develop according to the global North's standards of development, which view development in purely economic terms. In addition, it is evident that citizens in Bolivia have historically received external and foreign support, such as the aforementioned organizations. Nevertheless, considering that these organizations sought to support the development of Bolivia through their standards, this has not included the needs and interests of Bolivian citizens. It is therefore important to analyze the institutional support that indigenous women have received in their entrepreneurial activities, to understand if entrepreneurship initiatives are based on their needs and interests and whether they support indigenous women receive aids or challenges them in achieving empowerment and gender equality.

The development strategies and economic policies introduced by the global North led to the privatization of publicly owned enterprises, an increase of foreign capital, social spending reductions, and growth in inequality, which consequently laid off employers within the public sector (Postero, 2017). As described in the "National Development Plan" [5], "neoliberalism continued to privilege whites and mestizos, while Bolivia's indigenous and peasant populations bore the brunt of the reforms" (Postero, 2017, p. 118). As it can be observed, the implementation of the neoliberal policies on a national level has undoubtedly maintained the racialized power structures that favor non-indigenous people, and reproduce discriminatory oppression towards indigenous women. Indigenous women have however received institutional support from Banco Solidario, among other financial institutions. As a response to the economic policies, Banco

[5] Translated from Spanish: "Plan Nacional de Desarollo"

Solidario oriented their work to support the numerous people who had been pushed into unemployment or forced to partake in the informal market, through microcredit and microfinance (Banco Solidario, 2019). Women who were the first beneficiaries of microcredit and microfinance programs, lead the path for other people who had been excluded from the formal market, to promote development through entrepreneurship. (Banco Solidario, 2019). This preliminary analysis shows how indigenous women in Bolivia have become empowered through entrepreneurship, based on microcredit and microfinance, which could lead us to believe that the support from financial institutions, like BancoSol, influence positively indigenous women's possibility in achieving empowerment and gender equality.

BancoSol's operation in supporting the sectors that are less favorable through microcredit and microfinance illustrates how entrepreneurship has arisen due to the global capitalist economic system that has pushed typically the most marginalized citizens into poverty. Based on a Marxist feminist view, it could be said that entrepreneurship is a helpful tool for indigenous women in Bolivia in achieving gender equality and empowerment since it challenges the systematic oppression caused by the global economic system. Notwithstanding, it also leads to the question of whether the operation of BancoSol leads to opportunity-based entrepreneurship or necessity-based entrepreneurship. Considering that Banco Sol created opportunities for citizens to have an income, one could argue that entrepreneurship is opportunity-based, but on the other hand, Banco Solidario initiated this microcredit and microfinance possibilities, for people because they were in need of generating an income. Regardless of whether Banco Solidario's initiatives led to opportunity-based or necessity-based entrepreneurship, indigenous women have received support from a Bolivian institution, to attempt to include them in the formal market and to generate a personal income, which could lead to their empowerment. At the same time, holding a Marxist feminist theory, it is possible to argue that the support from financial institutions like Banco Solidario, could consequently lead indigenous women to have an economic dependency on these institutions. The limited access to financial resources is one of the main reasons for women in Bolivia quitting entrepreneurial activity (Bergmann et al., 2015). While most female entrepreneurs in Bolivia only need a start capital of USD 2.000$ to start up a business, many of them end up in a "business trap", in which they are unable to produce enough to pay back their debts (Ibid). This could lead to a high risk of ending up in debt, making female indigenous entrepreneurs even more financially vulnerable under the capitalist system, rather than empowered.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

“Entrepreneurship is held up almost as a universal “solution” for numerous problems in the global South - the World Bank term that this includes poor regions outside of Europe and North America, mostly low income, and with less development economies" (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2020; Ojediran and Anderson, 2020, p.1). This quote shows the global economic and geopolitical division between Europe and North America, with the rest of the world, which postcolonial feminism posits. This prompts a thorough analysis of “whose” understanding of entrepreneurship dominates in Bolivia - is entrepreneurship based on an understanding of Bolivian indigenous women’s needs and interests, or according to the rich regions, with high incomes? We argue that if indigenous women’s interests are excluded, entrepreneurship initiatives are from a start, a harmful tool for these women. Because despite potentially improving the living conditions of indigenous women in Bolivia, they are still subject to Western hegemony.

Ojediran and Anderson (2020) discuss how international donor organizations view entrepreneurship as a tool for economic development. As anticipated, there are a series of benefits that come along with entrepreneurship, one of them being national economic growth, which supranational entities like the World Bank embrace (Ojediran and Anderson, 2020). Nevertheless, given that these entrepreneurship projects are locally based and individually run by indigenous women, it raises a critical question whether the international organizations view entrepreneurship as merely a tool for Bolivia's economic development, or whether they also have an interest in indigenous women’s wellbeing. Ojediran and Anderson (2020) further state that international entities recognize indigenous women’s role in entrepreneurship initiatives, as without their engagement, there would be little progress towards a national poverty reduction. This furthermore underlines whether the needs and interests of indigenous women are included, or whether the indigenous women in Bolivia are simply what McLaren (2021) describes as neoliberal subjects. This illustrates how international organizations that have Western origins continue to suppress indigenous women in Bolivia, through colonial power structures. This is because entrepreneurship projects are implemented because of their understanding of what Bolivia’s economy and the indigenous women are in need of, and not based on indigenous women’s self-interest and subjectivity. Another complexity when discussing the engagement of international organizations is the matter of economic independence and colonial dependency. The International Labor Organization’s (ILO) opinion on entrepreneurship is that it gives indigenous women economic independence, as they can control their social and economic

life, as well as offering them the opportunity to mold their way into the labor market (Vinding and Kampbel, 2012). Nevertheless, if the colonial and patriarchal power structures continue to persist, to what extent are indigenous women in Bolivia truly independent?

Furthermore, an understanding of Western hegemony, with regards to gender equality, can be extracted from the UN Women's Annual Report 2017. The report (Guarachi, 2018, p.2) starts by mentioning that UN Women supports its member nations, in this case, Bolivia, in establishing "the international norms to achieve gender equality" along with supporting the civil society in implementing the international norms. This statement raises a variety of alarming points that could indicate that entrepreneurship challenges indigenous women, not only in achieving gender equality but also in achieving empowerment. The main underlying issue here lies in the continuous Eurocentric knowledge on what women from the Global South, in this case, indigenous women in Bolivia are in need of. As explained by Grosfoguel (2007), women in the Global South, in general, have historically been victimized and viewed as subjects in need of guidance from Western feminism, to achieve development and empowerment. Here we first and foremost argue that all indigenous women in Bolivia cannot be conceptualized within the same group, nor can the Western understanding of gender equality and feminism necessarily be applied as their own understanding of it. Therefore, we argue that the "international norms to achieve gender equality" clearly reflect a Western hegemonic power over indigenous women's knowledge, as the UN does not in this report consider indigenous women's own norms to achieve gender equality. Rather they assume that the so-called "international norms" are also in accordance with Bolivian indigenous women's understanding of gender equality and that they possess no other subjective understanding of how to achieve gender equality. Based on our theoretical perspective, we can argue that, based on this initial statement, entrepreneurship does not aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality, as the norms to achieve this is based on Western knowledge, and could therefore produce a counterproductive impact on indigenous women's achievement of gender equality. Moreover, it can be argued that this illustrates that the particular context, and the historical and materialist structures, have not been considered by the UN Women, which leads to question even more their ability to support indigenous women in achieving gender equality.

The report however mentions the efforts that are put in place to assist indigenous rural women in Bolivia, through the implementation of entrepreneurship projects. UN women and the Swiss Cooperation implemented the project "Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in the

Valley of the Cintis" [6], in an attempt to support indigenous women in achieving opportunities that consolidated their entrepreneurial activities (Guarachi, 2018). The project assisted indigenous women with their entrepreneurship, by strengthening their productive capacities and commercializing their activities (Guarachi, 2018). The question of women's needs and interests appears to arise in a variety of circumstances, and this case is no exception. It appears that the goal of the project, implemented by UN Women and the Swiss Cooperation, excluded indigenous women's interests.

An additional aspect with regards to financed projects like this one, is the lack of tackling the root causes behind the gender inequalities and disempowerment that indigenous women experience. As theorized by Marxist feminism, if the underlying cases are not addressed when implementing entrepreneurship projects that aim at approaching the gendered disadvantages, then entrepreneurship is condemned from the start, as these will not be able to aid indigenous women in achieving gender equality.

One can assume that these were not necessarily included, as the report further elaborates that this project has strengthened the "model of territorial development" (Guarachi, 2018, p. 10). This leads us to believe that the project has assisted the international organization in shaping a model of development. Therefore, through a postcolonial feminist perspective, it leads us to assume that the project of Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in the Valley of Cintis, was merely a "pilot project" that could show whether this exact model could work or not. What seems of greater importance is the fact that this project served to enhance a model of territorial development in Bolivia. Using a project that first of all was elaborated by a Western organization, and second of all, on indigenous women from postcolonial sites, shows the persistent hegemonic power over Bolivia and the indigenous women. Through a Marxist feminist approach, this project could be characterized as a form of imperialist practice, that does not necessarily take the form of economic exploitation, but rather has the interest of the West. In this sense, when indigenous women are assisted in the development of their entrepreneurial activities through foreign organizations, it suggests that entrepreneurship is merely a new form of colonization that reflects the capitalist power structure.

[6] Translated from Spanish: Empoderamiento Económico de las Mujeres Emprendedoras del Valle de los Cintis

Through this project, UN Women saw a necessity to place a greater emphasis on gender equality in other sectors of Bolivian society, and within the rural areas in Bolivia. Therefore "UN Women, the French Embassy, the Belgian Technical Cooperation, the Swiss Cooperation, the Canadian Embassy, the German Cooperation, and the European Union" [7] requested the Bolivian government and civil society for a joint discussion, on how to place focus on gender within these sectors (Guarachi, 2018, p. 10). The participation of these many international organizations and governmental representations, show the massive support that indigenous women in Bolivia, and the Bolivian government, in general receive. The motives are to place focus on how gender equality can be aiding for indigenous women, as it can sensibilize the indigenous communities about patriarchal culture (Guarachi, 2018). However, the fact that all the organizations have Western origins emphasize once again the persistent dominance of the Global North in the political, social, and economic realm of indigenous women in Bolivia.

Class oppression is a central element to consider, when discussing the projects implemented by UN Women. This is because the UN, with the funding of other international development corporations, select specific indigenous women, who they consider as being the most vulnerable and marginalized citizens in Bolivia. By providing economic support to some indigenous women e.g., within selected municipalities in the Bolivian Amazonia, they are part of reproducing class structures, as other indigenous women are naturally at an economic disadvantage than the other indigenous women. As argued by Fernández et al. (2011) most indigenous women in Bolivia have minimal start-up capital to pursue their entrepreneurial activities. Projects like these can be explained because of radical feminism, that neglects the class inequalities among women, and rather widens the inequalities among indigenous women. Notwithstanding, one can also critically reflect on the effects of these projects, regarding the "selected" indigenous women in these municipalities, as the project can be part of involving women within the capitalist market, and thus not challenge the patriarchal structures of oppression, caused by the global capitalist system. This showcases a Marxist feminist argument, that despite indigenous women receiving foreign support, these do not support them in making a structural reform to challenge the patriarchal and capitalist power structure.

[7] Translated from Spanish: Guarachi, 2018: la Embajada de Francia, la Cooperación Técnica Belga, la Cooperación Suiza, la Embajada de Canadá, la Cooperación Alemana y la Unión Europea

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

An important aspect of the context of indigenous people in Bolivia is the fact that community ties are perceived as valuable and desired, while individualistic competitiveness is viewed negatively, as selfish behavior (Maclean, 2010). Because of these local ideals, women who choose to involve themselves in more competitive forms of businesses, lose crucial kinship ties within their communities, which further has an impact on their access to resources that are needed for their businesses (Ibid). This local sense of empowerment, which is based on good reputation and positive relationships with the rest of the community, contradicts with the Eurocentric ideals of women's empowerment, which is heavily based on women's economic independence, as well as an expectation that women need to lose strong ties to others, to feel empowered. Khader (2019) describes this as causing "associational damage". This is a critical example, in which Khader's (2019) distinction between "independence individualism" and "personhood individualism" should be distinguished, because in the case of indigenous women in Bolivia, competing against other women from their own community may not correspond to their interests, and therefore not promote their sense of empowerment.

Through our data collection, we have also noticed that family and community support towards indigenous women's businesses in Bolivia are not only perceived as valuable based on a cultural aspect but are also necessary for the success and survival of their businesses. Bergmann et al. (2015) point out that according to a national survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia, conducted in 2011, 89% of the respondents expressed that social connections were perceived as one of the most crucial elements in opening a business and promoting growth. With a potentially high risk of ending up in a "business trap", which we mentioned in the previous section of institutional support, a great number of female entrepreneurs are heavily dependent on financial support from their families to maintain their businesses (Ibid). One of the respondents of the 2011 survey on female entrepreneurship in Bolivia expressed that she was only able to purchase the machines that she needed for her business, by borrowing money from her mother. She expressed: "I needed more money than what I was receiving. I went to the bank, but they denied my request, since I did not have any form of financial guarantee, I had nothing. In my case, the money I have is borrowed from my mother. If she would not have let me borrow this money, I would not have been able to buy these machines" (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.27). From a Marxist feminist perspective, this runs the risk of producing differential advantages for female entrepreneurs, from different socioeconomic

backgrounds, as the success of their businesses depends on how much financial support they can receive from their families or other personal ties.

Some of the respondents from the Bergmann's et al. (2015) survey also expressed that entrepreneurship had led to a positive impact on family relations and explained how they have received more positive support from their husbands. One of the respondents explains: "When we go to the market, we split the costs. He does not waste money himself, that would not be fair. Before, we had a very tight budget. But now we feel more secure, and we can rest more." Another respondent outlined: "Before I had to do all of the work. Now when I get home, he tells me to relax, and that he will help me. He says that it is only fair because now I work too. So he has learned to appreciate what I do as well." (Bergmann et al., 2015, p.32). Here we notice two successful cases of entrepreneurship aiding gender equality and women's empowerment. The patriarchal structures within the household in these two cases seem to be challenged, through a more equal distribution of spending costs and domestic work. It is worth keeping in mind that most of the respondents in Bergmann et al.'s (2015) survey were young women, between the ages of 18 and 35, which might also reflect a generally more progressive attitude when it comes to gender norms. On the other hand, as we have noted previously, many female entrepreneurs are still experiencing a heavier work burden through entrepreneurship, and earn significantly less than their husbands, which leads to a continuous financial dependency on their husbands. This suggests that the more equal distribution of finances and labor is not necessarily the norm within the households of indigenous women in Bolivia. The power relations within the private sphere need to be challenged at a greater level, for gender equality and women's empowerment to be promoted more effectively through entrepreneurship.

To summarize this section, we have evaluated the institutional support which indigenous female entrepreneurs in Bolivia receive, both through national micro banks like Banco Solidario, as well as through international non-governmental organizations. Here we have analyzed the aims of these institutions, that are initiating entrepreneurship programs, to find out whether these correspond to the needs and interests of indigenous women, or if they are based on a Eurocentric and generalized understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment. From what we have observed from the institutions that we have analyzed, there seems to be a strong emphasis on "international norms" in achieving gender equality, which runs the risk of reproducing a Western and hegemonic form of feminism, with the lack of a context-specific consideration. As we have argued through a

postcolonial feminist approach, to promote feminism on a transnational level, a "non-ideal" approach, with a minimal definition of feminism as an opposition towards sexist power relations, is crucial. With this in mind, the transnational promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment becomes more inclusive and more effective in corresponding to the needs and interests of women from different cultural contexts. On the other hand, however, it can also be argued that entrepreneurship, particularly through Banco Solidario, has benefitted indigenous women in Bolivia, as they have focused on their vulnerabilities caused by systematic oppression through capitalism.

Another important aspect which we have considered, regarding the goals and aims of institutions, is whether these are based on a genuine interest in improving the wellbeing of indigenous women, or if these are primarily driven by the strong potential of economic development, by easing the participation of women in the market. With a lack of including the needs and interests of indigenous women, through the project by UN Women and the Swiss Cooperation, we hypothesize that there may have been a strong emphasis on economic development. This seems to reflect a postcolonial practice of turning indigenous women into "neoliberal subjects", within the market. Furthermore, even though entrepreneurship initiatives focus on a "self-help" and empowering approach to promoting gender equality for indigenous women, we notice a significant financial vulnerability and dependency on micro-banks and non-governmental organizations. This appears to be the case, particularly by considering the "business trap", in which indigenous female entrepreneurs do not earn enough profit to cover their debts. This showcases a Marxist feminist emphasis on women's vulnerability within the lowest productive sectors of society. Furthermore, with a postcolonial feminist approach, we take into account the fact that the financial support, which indigenous women receive from micro banks, is largely externally funded. This showcases a continuous dependency on external economies and institutions, rather than challenging the global structures of power.

Finally, we have also noticed that indigenous women often depend financially on their families to sustain their business, due to the limited amount of loans they receive from financial institutions. We have argued that this runs the risk of reproducing class inequalities amongst women. Additionally, we have also considered indigenous women's strong values of community ties, which also serve as an important aspect of accessing resources to their businesses. Here we emphasize "personhood individualism", rather than "independence individualism", as key in promoting gender equality and empowerment of indigenous women in Bolivia, as many of them may not be interested

in being part of a strongly competitive market. We also observe that there have been some successful cases of promoting indigenous women's empowerment and gender equality through entrepreneurship, with a more even distribution on household spendings and domestic labor, as well as a greater sense of agency of women within the household. However, we notice that this is not the case for the majority of indigenous women, who still deal with unchallenged patriarchal structures within the household, which therefore limits the ability of entrepreneurship to fully promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

6. CONCLUSION

Postcolonial and capitalist power structures at the global level continue to control the economy of Bolivia, which further leads to postcolonial relations of racism, patriarchy, and capitalism at the local level. This is particularly evident regarding the high rates of poverty, the economic vulnerability of Bolivia, as an economy being based mainly on natural resources, as well as the continuous dependence on external trade and foreign institutions. This in turn leads to indigenous women in Bolivia facing major intersecting disadvantages and discrimination within institutional spaces, the market, within communities, as well as within the household. Both sexist and racist stereotypes against indigenous women persist within all these institutional levels, as they are perceived as submissive, backward, uneducated, victimized, and unable or uninterested in exercising their economic rights. Entrepreneurship initiatives that have been in place in Bolivia have therefore attempted to improve the living conditions of indigenous women, by focusing on them as important agents of poverty reduction, as well as by promoting their empowerment and gender equality, through their participation within the market. Entrepreneurship has more specifically aimed at providing indigenous women with economic opportunities which they often struggle to gain within the formal market, tackle patriarchal norms by demonstrating the potential of women in leadership and income-generating activities as well as to promote their financial independence, confidence, and self-esteem.

We have noticed that entrepreneurship has been successful in aiding indigenous women's empowerment and gender equality, in certain aspects. Many indigenous female entrepreneurs have expressed that entrepreneurship has helped them gain greater financial independence, which in turn has led to greater faith and respect towards them, within their communities and households. This

further leads to patriarchal norms within the private sphere being to a certain extent challenged, and in some cases, it has led to a more equal distribution of the payment of living costs, as well as unpaid domestic labor. Furthermore, an increasing financial independence of indigenous women has often also led to a significant sense of confidence, freedom, and emotional security, by becoming less dependent on their male spouses or families.

Entrepreneurship has also helped indigenous women who face significant barriers in seeking formal employment, or who have previously worked within the formal market, but under exploitative conditions and with low wages. Furthermore, entrepreneurship seems to be an attractive form of employment for indigenous women who aim to have greater flexibility in distributing their time between paid labor and domestic care responsibilities. Since patriarchal norms in Bolivia are still highly relevant, as women are perceived as having the responsibility of caring for their children and families, having the option of working from home, becomes a great convenience for many indigenous women. These are indeed crucial aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality, as indigenous women in this sense gain greater agency to conduct choices which they previously have been restricted from.

On the other hand, we have also observed that there are a few limitations of promoting indigenous women's empowerment and gender equality through entrepreneurship. It is indeed evident that entrepreneurship has the potential of promoting an individual sense of empowerment for indigenous women, and to a certain extent, challenge gendered power relations within their communities and their household. We do not however perceive entrepreneurship as having the ability to tackle greater societal structures of discrimination against indigenous women. Institutional barriers towards indigenous women, within educational spaces, and the formal market are persistent in Bolivia and serve as a major obstacle towards the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. In accordance with our theoretical frameworks of postcolonial feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectional feminism, we emphasize the need of recognizing oppression as structural, rather than individual, and therefore, we are skeptical towards a liberal feminist perception of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment merely through market solutions.

While we acknowledge the benefit of showcasing a strong faith in indigenous women as being crucial agents of social change, rather than perceiving them as helpless victims who are in need of top-down institutional support, we also notice a largely binary and simplistic image of gender

relations within indigenous communities. We emphasize that there needs to be an intersectional understanding of indigenous women's subordination, stemming not merely from sex-based discrimination, but also from racialized and socioeconomic power structures, amongst other potential social factors that impact their position in society. In this sense, entrepreneurship initiatives become more effective in responding to the specific needs and interests of indigenous women, rather than promoting generalized solutions towards tackling gendered power relations. Furthermore, with a limited understanding of indigenous men's oppression within Bolivian society, there is a risk of blaming indigenous men for the existent patriarchal structures which indigenous women face. By analyzing how the oppression of indigenous men has a further impact on the vulnerability of indigenous women, it becomes clear that the subordination of indigenous women is structural and systematic, rather than individual, or locally produced.

We have also noticed that most entrepreneurship conducted by indigenous women is mainly necessity-based, rather than opportunity-based, which makes us question their sense of empowerment. One of the main reasons behind the necessity of indigenous women to participate in entrepreneurship is because they often lack the opportunities of finding decent employment within the formal market. Therefore, we assume that there is a lack of agency for indigenous women in terms of employment and that the choice of conducting entrepreneurship is shaped by power structures and socioeconomic consequences. Furthermore, we have also observed that indigenous women tend to be maintained within the lowest productive sectors of the informal market and that their businesses are characterized by low levels of growth. This is not necessarily a negative aspect, as we also consider the cultural ideal of "Vivir Bien", as a standard of only producing and selling the necessary amount of products to cover the basic living costs. With a context-specific approach, this might correspond to the needs and interests of indigenous women. On the other hand, we also notice that indigenous women tend to face limited opportunities of promoting significant growth through their businesses if they wish to do so.

We have also observed that entrepreneurship often leads to a greater work burden of indigenous women, since they are expected to conduct unpaid household- and community labor, aside from their paid labor. Additionally, even though many indigenous female entrepreneurs express feeling a greater sense of independence through entrepreneurship, we have noticed that in most cases, their incomes are perceived as a complementary income to the household, while their husbands are still responsible for the main source of income. Therefore, there seems to be a continuous financial

dependency of female entrepreneurs on their male spouses, which might not promote their empowerment effectively. We have also observed that there is a significant financial dependency of female entrepreneurs on their families. This is the case when female entrepreneurs do not receive enough financial loans from micro banks to invest in what they need for their businesses, or when there is a high risk of ending up in debt. This could potentially produce differential advantages for female entrepreneurs, based on how much financial support they manage to receive in the private sphere.

Towards the end of the analysis, we discovered that international entities, like the UN, play a central role in initiating entrepreneurship projects and programs in Bolivia. International organizations have indigenous women as a target group which means there is a genuine acknowledgment of the marginalization and discrimination that these women experience. The entrepreneurship projects are grounded on primarily Eurocentric understandings of how to achieve gender equality and empowerment and place little attention on indigenous women's subjectivity and interest. This shows the western hegemony form of feminism as well as the Global North's dominance over Bolivia and Latin America in general which could signify a persistent reproduction of the Western hegemony which does not allow indigenous women to achieve gender equality and become empowered. As highlighted previously the research confirmed the significance of understanding indigenous women's historical and political context and considering their own, non-eurocentric epistemology, so that they can achieve gender equality and empowerment based on a non-universal development strategy and entrepreneurial model.

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