

**Gender Dimensions of Community-managed Water Systems: Gender-water Realities in
Peri-urban Cochabamba, Bolivia**

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Legend

ASICASUDD- EPSAS	Departmental Association of Community Water Systems of the South, the Water and Sanitation Service Providers of Cochabamba <i>(Asociación de Sistemas Comunitarios de Agua de Sud Departamental y Entidades Prestadoras de Servicio de Agua y Saneamiento de Cochabamba)</i>
Asica-Sur	Association of Community Water Systems of the South <i>(Asociación de Sistemas Comunitarios de Agua Potable de la Zona sur)</i>
CEDIB	Bolivia Centre of Documentation and Information <i>(Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia)</i>
Coordinadora	Coalition for the Defense of Water and Life <i>(Coordinadora por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida)</i>
EPSAS	Potable Water and Sewerage Service Providing Entity <i>(Entidad Prestadora de Servicio de Agua y Saneamiento)</i>
EPSA-PDA	Potable Water Service Providing Entity of the Zonal Development Project <i>(Entidad Prestadora de Servicio de Agua del Proyecto de Desarrollo)</i>
FEJUVE	Federation of Neighbourhood Councils of El Alto <i>(Entidad Prestadora de Servicio de Agua del Proyecto de Desarrollo de for Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto)</i>
IFI	International finance institutions
MMAyA	Ministry of Environment and Water <i>(Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Agua)</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTB	Grassroots Territorial Organisations <i>(Organizaciones Territoriales de Base)</i>
SEDES	Departmental Health Service <i>(Servicio Departamental de Salud)</i>
SEMAPA	Municipal Water and Sewerage Service <i>(Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado)</i>

Abstract

This thesis examines women's participation in community-managed water systems in peri-urban Cochabamba, Bolivia based on fieldwork conducted from June-August 2013. Informed by a Feminist political ecology framework, this thesis demonstrates that there are key gendered differences in experiences with water because women are the primary managers of water in the home, and their labour, time and livelihoods are significantly impacted by the lack of safe water. By unearthing women's experiences and opinions from a number of water committees, networked systems of water should be considered part of a 'feminist agenda' as having access to networked water systems decreases women's physical workloads and the costs of household water. However, while networked water systems are not perfect from a gendered perspective as male community members hold most of the decision-making positions, alliances with progressive NGOs play an important role within Cochabamba's waterscape as they promote a politics of equity and encourage women to see themselves as vocal subjects, able to define and defend their gender interests.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Despite international agreements and concerted global efforts to improve access to safe-drinking water by means of reaching the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations (UN) explicit recognition of the ‘human right’ to water in 2010, unequal distribution of safe-drinking water remains markedly high. While the World Health Organization (2012) estimates that between 1990 and 2010 over 2 billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking-water, approximately 780 million people are still without safe and reliable supplies of water for domestic and productive uses.

The vast majority of the world’s most water impoverished inhabitants live in the global South and suffer from the health, development and social consequences of the lack of clean, affordable water (Molden, 2007). Growing competition for water from various sectors, including industry, agriculture, domestic use and the environment is directly challenging poor people to access this scarce resource for consumptive, productive and social uses (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007). Of the world’s 780 million “water-poor” that lack access to safe and reliable supplies of water, two thirds are women (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007). While researchers, policymakers and practitioners agree that women are among the most marginalized of the “water poor,” and duly recognize the link between gender and unequal access to water, there remains intense ideological debate on what processes reproduce gendered water inequalities and how the problem should be ‘fixed’.

International initiatives spearheaded by many international development organizations such as the World Bank and the UN have gradually converged on the desirability of local-level or community participation in water management, especially focusing on the involvement of women’s participation (Ray, 2007). Following the 1992 Dublin Conference on Water and the Environment¹, there was a broad consensus within the international community on the need to

¹ The Dublin Conference on Water and the Environment was a watershed event in the world of water policy because of the adoption of the four ‘Dublin Principles’. Formulated through an international consultative process in Dublin, Ireland, these four principles have guided water policy decision making even since. For a more detailed discussion, see Bennett, V., Dávila-Poblete, S., Rico, M.N (2005).

include women in water planning and decision-making. The third ‘Dublin Principle’, endorsed at the International Conference on Water and the Environment, recognized that “[w]omen play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water” (Bustamante, Peredo, and Udaeta, 2005). The statement called for recognition of the contributions of women as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment in institutional arrangements for the development and management of water resources. However, there has been less of an agreement on what such inclusion meant in a concrete sense, in different contexts, and at different scales (van Wijk, Lange, Saunders, 1996).

Following the 1992 Dublin Conference a considerable body of “gender-water literature,” produced to elucidate the links between gender and water management, was informed by mainstream water discourse, embracing the language of neo-liberalism. However, many progressive feminist scholars acknowledge the terminology of mainstream water discourse to hide political choices of distribution through naturalizing, universalizing and objectifying abstractions, and in return have sought to explicitly re-politicize the gender and water-management discourse (Ahlers, 2005; Ahlers & Zwarteveen, 2009; Boelens & Zwarteveen 2002; Zwarteveen, 1997). As Sultana (2010) aptly indicates: “Complex webs of power come to bear on how water is owned, accessed, used, and controlled that affect everyday life” (p. 166). Ahlers and Zwarteveen (2009) continue this line of reasoning pointing out that “a gender analysis attempts to understand the power dynamics underlying resource management with gender inequality being a critical structuring force” (p.410). Such an analysis encapsulates and recognizes the interaction of social, political and economic configurations as historical and dynamic.

Whereas much critical gender-water literature has revealed the shortcomings of neoliberal water policy, there has been fewer feminist analyses of alternative forms of water service delivery, including non-state forms of water provision carried out by a number of actors including non-profit organizations (NGOs) and community groups.² The persistence of gendered water disparities underscores the need to explore alternative models of water service delivery that are counter-narrative to dominant neoliberal ideology supported by mainstream development

² For an exception see Sultana, Mohanty and Miraglia’s (2013) recent work for the Municipal Services Project: http://www.municipalservicesproject.org/sites/municipalservicesproject.org/files/publications/Sultana-Mohanty-Miraglia_Gender_justice_and_public_water_for_all_Insights_from_Dhaka_Bangladesh_Apr2013_0.pdf

institutions.

In order to help fill this research gap, my project focuses on, and is informed by, women's involvement as participants in water committees located in the poor, southern zone of Cochabamba, in order to analyze the successes and drawbacks of community-based organizing using the lenses of "practical gender needs/strategic gender interests"³ as it pertains to their interests and needs for accessible water in their communities. In this research project, I adopt a methodological approach grounded in Feminist political ecology that recognizes that gendered inequities are rooted in unequal access to resources (e.g. social, political and economic). As such, my analysis links 'local' water struggles to larger historical and economic trends and forces.

Research Questions

This research project aims to understand differences in water resource management institutions in peri-urban areas as gendered, and how these institutions have enabled and limited women's abilities to utilize water services in Latin America, specifically in the context of Cochabamba, Bolivia. More specifically, this project aims to specify how women's "strategic" and "practical gender interests" are inter-related in the context of peri-urban water users.

My research seeks to address the following question: What are women's water-related duties at the household level? How do women's water-related responsibilities differ across different models of water service delivery? And lastly, what role do non-service providers play in addressing both women's practical and strategic gender interests in local water resource management?

My thesis is partly motivated by the recognition that mainstream literature on water and gender inequality leads to technocratic and depoliticized interpretations of water governance and fails to explicate how women might become agents in the process of constructing alternatives. Drawing from a review of case-based literature on women and water in the domestic sphere, Ray (2007) argues that "it is not clear when and on what terms participation in community projects improves their access to and control over water, or their empowerment overall" (p. 431). Consequently, this examination of the experiences of female peri-urban water users in

³ Strategic and practical gender interests will be discussed in detail in *Chapter 2: Methodology*.

community water committees will contribute to the field of gender and water resources management by seeking to understand whether or not participatory water management schemes provide an outlet for such practical and strategic gender interests (Molyneux, 1985, 1998; Moser, 1989; Wieringa, 1994). Therefore, this study will provide insight into women's experiences as peri-urban water users in community water management schemes, as it will examine how/if women are also voicing their strategic gender interests through collective action while addressing their practical interests for their basic water needs.

Case Study Site: Cochabamba, Bolivia

Struggles for alternative models of resource management that have contested the privatization and commercialization of public goods have played an essential role in challenging the legitimacy of neoliberalism in Bolivia, and in no policy area has the struggle from below for alternatives to neoliberal policy been articulated more forcefully than in the water sector. The Cochabamba Water War of 2000, one of the best-known anti-privatization movements, is credited for opening a 'revolutionary moment' in Bolivia's history (Webber, 2011) in which a nation-wide, multiclass, leftist movement arose to defend natural resources while strongly opposing neoliberalism.

Unequal access to water in Cochabamba has long been one of the most important political issues for the city's residents (Spronk, 2007). Informal and unplanned settlements of the southern part of the city – home to majority of indigenous residents – lack basic infrastructure such as paved roads and stand in stark contrast with the affluent and majority *mestizo* centre and north of the city. The uneven development in the city is also written into the geography of the city with respect to unequal access to basic services; most notably water and sanitation. The public water service, SEMAPA (*Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado* – Municipal Drinking and Sewerage Services), provides water to the centre and north of the city, leaving half of the population in the southern zone marginalized (more detail provided in Chapter 3). In the absence of the state, for decades the population in the southern zone has self-organized in order to create their own communal water distribution systems by investing their own cash and labour to build these independent networked systems.

The political struggle of the Water War has become an emblem of successful resistance to the privatization of water supply in particular and the neoliberalization of nature in general.

But since the Water War improvements to water access in Cochabamba have been minimal: the restored SEMAPA still fails to supply water to much of the city, the “citizen directorate” that was elected to SEMAPA’s board post-Water War failed to change the internal culture of the utility, and the majority of southern peri-urban residents are still not connected to the municipal water services.

As noted in the extensive literature on the Water War, the threat posed by privatization fundamentally involved a multiclass, rural, and urban layer of the population and involved an array of actors diverse with respect to gender, class and race (Bustamante et al., 2005; Spronk, 2007; Laurie, 2011; Webber, 2012). Women played an active role in the daily aspects of the struggle, and were recognized as playing a key role in forming bonds of solidarity between rural and urban women that helped lessen the early tensions over rural farmers and irrigators ‘invading urban space’ (Bustamante et al., 2005). In an exploration of women’s activism in the Water War, Laurie (2011) refers to women’s participation in the Water War as the “supermother” (*supermadre*). Women’s main roles in the Water War were to collect food, cook and serve the demonstrators during the protests. Adhering to traditional gender roles, Laurie’s exposition of women’s political identity as the “supermother” politicizes women’s roles as mothers and explores how women used their role as mothers to gain access to the popular movement of the Water War. Laurie (2011) found that women’s use of the acceptable role as *supermadre* allowed them to both increase their presence in the social movement at the same time that they maintained conventional but appropriate gender roles (a point that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).

The search for a more socially just form of water supply is not over. As such, many activists and NGOs have started to promote community-run water systems as such an alternative: instead of considering them the “thirsty poor” because they are unconnected to the supposedly universal network, water committees in the South are supported both financially and technologically with efforts to try to replicate them in other parts of the city.

Notions of Community in Urban Water Governance: Alternatives to Privatization

The conventional approach to managing water supply systems, in most countries around

the world for much of the twentieth century, was the municipal hydraulic paradigm⁴ of water management (Bakker, 2010). Over the past three decades; however, water governance⁵ ideology has shifted significantly from government owned and operated water supply systems to private sector involvement. By the late twentieth century, the municipal hydraulic paradigm and associated “state failures” in urban water supply was a key justification for the emergence of private water participation in the 1990s.

A shift in international water policy, promulgated by the controversial Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development in 1992, saw the growth of international support for the private sector⁶ in the provision of water supply. In light of endemic “state failure” by governments supposedly too poor, corrupt, or inept to manage water supply systems, there has been increased support of the private sector in water supply management. One of the four Dublin Principles recognized that “water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good” (as cited in Bakker, 2010, p. 91) The Dublin Principles have since been adopted by numerous international, multilateral and bilateral agencies and mainstream development and policy “experts” have proposed and implemented water governance policies that can collectively be referred to as a “market paradigm.” Although the shift towards this paradigm is contested and certainly not complete, it has had a major impact on the ways that countries and cities around the world govern their water resources. It is generally understood as encompassing an increased private participation in water supply, the introduction of market-based principles into water distribution, and the deregulation of water management (Bakker, 2005).

⁴ Government dominance of water supply systems emerged after a period of experimentation with both private and public provision in the nineteenth century after apparent inability of the private sector to finance universal provision. “With the aim of providing universal access and safeguarding public health, governments created public utilities to consumers on a subsidized basis” (Bakker, 2010, p. 33). This era was emblematic of massive techno-fixes, associated most closely with “mega-dams” but also, in cities, with large-scale treatment plants and piped transport systems. These projects were often tied to nation-building agendas during which large dam projects exhibited the power of the state while supplying the energy and water necessary for industrial production and large-scale agriculture; household water connections, meanwhile, were emblematic of membership in the modern state (Bakker, 2010).

⁵ Water governance refers to the institutions and decision-making processes by which water is distributed, used and monitored. The concept encompasses questions of who makes decisions about water and on what ideological foundations as well as the more classic “management” questions of how to obtain, transport and treat water.

⁶ Following the definition of the Municipal Services Project (McDonald & Ruiters, 2012), private sector includes all governmental, non-governmental, or community-based organizations operating on a for-profit basis.

Spearheaded by United Nation agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the shift towards a “market paradigm” was part of a broader neoliberalization of resource governance.⁷ Such a shift was founded on the belief that private companies operating in market-based settings would solve ‘inherent’ state problems of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Large-scale state intervention in water governance was actively discouraged in part because it was seen as economically inefficient, wasting valuable resources and incurring unmanageable debt. A market-based approach would purportedly improve the water distribution process by guaranteeing that water would be put to its most “productive” uses in ways that maximized economic growth while minimizing social and environmental externalities.

The “market paradigm” of water governance, was encouraged or rather, demanded – of many cities in the global South through conditionalities on loans given by IFIs (Lobina & Hall 2008; Prasad, 2006). Indeed, many international development agencies pushed privatization or private sector participation in vigorously promoting ‘pro-poor’ market-led development (Bakker, 2008). While the justifications were multiple, some of the major points raised by proponents of the “market paradigm” were that privatization would increase economic efficiency, foster sustainable resource use, and improve water supply quality (Shirley, 2002).

Despite these expectations, urban water privatization has often been met with fierce resistance and/or eventual reversal, as seen in Buenos Aires, Jakarta and Cochabamba (Assies, 2003; Loftus & McDonald 2001; Bakker 2008). A partial retreat of the private sector in the business of water supply has not only been credited to successful political struggle but also, as evident in the growing empirical literature, the private sector did not live up to its promises of “water for all” (Bakker, 2010; Loftus & McDonald, 2001; Spronk, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2004).

However, the failure of privatization should not necessarily mean a return to state-run public utilities. Public water supply is no panacea, either: many public utilities in developing countries have historically only supplied water to the more affluent urban areas, while water needs in sub-urban and peripheral areas either go unmet or are met with varying configurations

⁷ The neoliberalization of resource governance in water supply is understood as encompassing an increased private participation in the introduction of market-based principles into water distribution and the deregulation of water management (Bakker, 2005; Finger, 2005).

of small-scale private vendors and communal sources (Swyngedouw, 2004). In these contexts, it is often the case that only a small minority of residents receive the full benefits of citizenship, including the emblematic public water connection (Bakker, 2010; Chatterjee, 2004). As McDonald and Ruiters (2012) explain, to automatically equate state (i.e. public) with the ‘social good’ is to misinterpret the nature of the state. These authors, while largely supportive of state-owned and state-operated services under democratic conditions, argue that “calling for state owned/managed services is of little value in and of itself without considering how state and social groups are interrelated and how ‘empowered democracy’ and public ethics might be attained” (McDonald & Ruiters, 2012, p.159).

The public-versus-private debate that dominated the literature in the 1990s clearly revealed that neither mode of governance would be a cure-all in economic, social or ecological terms. The ideological discussion about the effectiveness of the private sector in comparison with the public sector as argued by McGranahan and Satterthwaite (2006, p.1), “presented an artificial choice, diverting attention from the real problem of how to reach the poor”. As other scholars have indicated, barriers that prevent the poor from accessing services such as poverty and political powerlessness remain regardless of who owns and operates the utility (Bakker, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2004). This recognition has led to an increased focus on increasing citizen participation in the planning and delivery of water services as a way of making water governance more democratic, under the assumption that higher rates of public participation will improve services for the most marginalized populations.

In the absence of a clear winner in the private-public debate, the past few years have witnessed a resurgence⁸ of support for community water supply and the appeals for water user participation. However, notions of community have taken various and not always compatible forms (Bakker, 2010). This ambiguity is important to note because, although many disparate groups see merit in the idea of participation in the planning and delivery of water as one way of making governance more democratic, they are often advocating very different governance models. The World Bank and many other international development agencies have gradually converged on the desirability of local-level or community participation in water management.

⁸ Participation has long been a strategy of development practice and community-managed water systems have existed for centuries, however there has recently been a renewed interest in community ‘participation’ in water service planning and delivery in the neoliberal era (Bakker, 2010; Molyneux, 2008)

These “mainstream developmentalists” tend toward technocratic and depoliticised notions of community and see participation in the light of improved accountability and capturing human capital that, in practice, do not differ from market-based management regimes. Anti-privatization activists, on the other hand, see participation as a step towards “deepening” democracy and exerting “social control” over water governance processes, and may be more inclined to support previously existing community-run water systems.

“Community”, Gender and Participatory Development

Participation, it is argued, creates commitment to a project, ensures efficiency, accountability, and transparency, democratise decision making through bottom-up processes, and enables empowerment for women and marginalised groups (Resurreccion, Real, Pantana, 2004; Beall, 2005). The focus on decentralising management, feminists hoped, would open the door for women to gain measures of control over natural resource management and, ostensibly, access to natural resources (Zwarteveen & Meinzen-Dick, 2001). However, these hopes have not been filled in practice. While water management projects led by major development planning and lending agencies promote the devolution of water management and seek to increase democratic participation of water users, these shifts, feminists argue, are operating concurrently with gender regressive dimensions. Feminist advocates and activists point out that women’s relationships to water are essentialised according to a gendered division of labour, communities are conceptualised as homogeneous in their interests, and households are treated as a congruent unit of interests. Finally, there are also critiques of the meaningfulness of participation, which can vary greatly from “nominal” to “empowering” (Agarwal, 2001) with direct consequences for how a project is structured and to what degree it meets the needs of all community members.

Much of the development work on gender and water tends towards an essentialisation of women’s relationships to water and fails to problematise the socially constructed division of labour informing these roles (Meinzen-Dick & Zwarteveen, 1998; Sultana, 2009). In mainstream policy literature, women’s uses of water are typically limited to their uses in the domestic sphere, including washing, cleaning, and reproductive work. The essentialisation of women’s uses of water casts their activities as predominately rooted in their “natural” role as caretakers (Clever 2000). Taking for granted the idea that women primarily use water for domestic purposes fails to question the socially constructed division of labour. Zwarteveen and Meinzen-Dick (2001)

provide a useful corrective, arguing that women's uses of water should not be seen as a product of their natural gender roles but as produced by a naturalisation of gender inequality. They ask if policy makers would observe different uses of water for women if there were structures in place that allowed such uses. The essentialisation of women's uses of water is representative of narrowly construed resource management schemes. These abstractions make it easier to design a universalised approach, but the flattening out of difference forecloses the potential for these projects to produce meaningful changes in women's lives.

Treating the community as a homogeneous entity has serious consequences for the structure of a community-based group and the distribution of benefits. Without a nuanced approach to the community, privileged community members are more likely to become the primary contacts (referred to as "elite capture") for participatory projects (van Koppen, 1998; Sultana, 2009), perpetuating and/or exacerbating "naturalised" inequalities (Resurreccion et al., 2004; Boelens & Zwarteveen 2005; Karim, 2006). For instance, in the Chhattis Mauja irrigation scheme in Nepal, a local woman leader volunteered to act as a village leader, called a *mukhtiyar*. Though she was given the position, she was forced to resign after five months because the villagers would not accept a woman in this position (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2006). In this example, the leadership position was made available to women, but the project planners did not account for male resistance to a woman in a leadership position. Beyond male/female gender inequalities, an intersectional approach further compels a consideration of relations between women. For example, Singh's (2006) study of village-level water management committees in rural India found that although the majority of women were vastly under-represented at the meetings, upper-caste women were more likely to have their needs met because, unlike lower-caste women, their interests were represented by male family members. The result was that in two different instances, hand pumps were located in places considered to be the province of upper-caste members. The lack of accountability for the poorest members means that the benefits of community-based projects tend to accrue to more powerful members in a given community with gender being mediated by race/caste/class.

Gendered Alternatives to Water Service Delivery

Feminist critiques of the gender and development discourse of women's empowerment most development projects that seek to 'empower' women are compatible with neoliberalism

since they do not seek to unearth nor address the social, political, and economic inequalities that lead to women's inequalities in the first place (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012). Rather, empowerment approaches have been successful in individualizing gender equity, led to the creation of static measures of gender parity in development plans and place an emphasis on women's participation in the private, profit making sector (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2004).

Instead of gender mainstreaming, radical and Marxist feminist activists favour a shift towards gender justice – which would seek to analyze the gendered power hierarchies that reveal and destabilize the roots of gendered forms of inequality – to effectively address women's issues in development projects. Mukhopadhyay (2004) argues that feminists are concerned with the political project of equality being normalized in the development business as an “ahistorical, apolitical, decontextualized and technical project that leaves the prevailing and unequal power relations intact” (p.100). These various perspectives of “participatory” community resource management schemes are important to critique as they relate to women's participation in the peri-urban context. Therefore a gendered approach to the study of these paradigms within resource management that differentiates between women's gender interests provides an attempt to “help to re-theorize and critically challenge operating assumptions and foundational principles of social or political–economic dynamics” (Harris, 2009, p.391).

Chapter Outline

Having laid out the main pieces of my conceptual framework in this introduction, I continue in *Chapter Two* by outlining the theoretical framework and methodological tools used in the collection and analysis of the data. *Chapter Three* will examine the neoliberal project in Bolivia from its onset in the 1980s through to the 1990s that led to the eventual leftward shift of the country. I then examine in detail Cochabamba's *Guerra del Agua* (Water War) that is credited for opening a ‘revolutionary moment’ (Hylton, Thomson, Gilly, 2007) in Bolivia's history during which coalitions of residents from different walks of life emerged to defend against the privatization of their water supply. In *Chapter Four* I will begin my exploration of water service delivery methods in the *zona sur* and will discuss the gendered dynamics of community participation. Finally, *Chapter Five* will summarize the findings of the study and will indicate areas of consideration for future research.

Chapter 2: Methodological and Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

The primary data analyzed in this thesis was gathered during three months of fieldwork in Cochabamba, Bolivia (June-August 2013). I carried out the majority of fieldwork in a peri-urban community in the *zona sur* of the city. More specifically, data was collected of women's involvement in three water committees located in District 14 in the southern-eastern zone of *zona sur* (see map in appendix I). The water committees were selected for their high and sustained levels of participation (notably its political involvement in the *Guerra del Agua*), and for their longevity since their establishment. Nonetheless, District 14, similar to the rest of the *zona sur* is still plagued by service challenges, such that Carmen Ledo, an expert on urban development issues in Cochabamba, describes the situation as 'precarious'⁹. As a whole, the *zona sur* is a 'marginal' area of the city with respect to socio-economic indicators; however, there are disparities of wealth within the zone. A more complete description of the history, demographics, and status of services can be found in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

The fieldwork was supported in part by Dr. Susan Spronk's SSHRC-funded comparative research project entitled "*Water, Power, and Citizenship: Participatory Governance in Urban Water Supply Management in Bolivia and Venezuela*," which examines and contrasts citizen participation in the co-production of water services in Bolivia and Venezuela. Additionally, Dr. Spronk's research contributes to the broader "Municipal Services Project," a global project which explores alternatives to the privatization and commercialization of service provision in electricity, health, water and sanitation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As part of a research team with Madeline West, a fellow graduate student conducting research on the co-production of water services in the *zona sur*, we attended several meetings, interviews and public events. I have included some information from interviews conducted by Madeline West, and cite them accordingly.

This chapter will outline the research design used within the study. The first half of Chapter Two will discuss the epistemological foundations of the research project, followed by

⁹ Interview with Carmen Ledo, *Coordinadora del Centro de Planificación y Gestión* at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón, July 2013.

the qualitative research methods employed to collect and analyze the data informed by feminist methodological approaches. The remainder of Chapter Two will explore several literary and theoretical concepts that will be applied to the Bolivian context to examine women's organizing in their communities surrounding water service management and will provide an overview of the analytical lens applied to the research questions put forward in Chapter One.

Epistemological Foundations: Conducting Feminist Research

A feminist methodological approach was crucial to seek a nuanced understanding of women's participation in their communities in the maintenance of water supply systems, and to explicate how they might become agents in the process of constructing alternatives. While the approaches to conduct research are diverse, feminist research engages strategies that "excavate" women's experiences (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012). This process of excavation is one that strives to "elicit accounts and produce descriptions...of practice and thought that are part of female consciousness but left out of dominant interpretive frames" (DeVault, 1999, p.65). While it is difficult to argue that there is one specific feminist method, methodology, or epistemology, feminist scholars have certainly embraced particular characteristics in their work that makes this work feminist. My research is based upon four well-established key principles of feminist research praxis: research *for* women, challenging conventional or mainstream ways of collecting and analyzing data, reflexivity and, lastly, analysis of power (DeVault, 1990; Harding, 1993; Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012; Reinharz, 1992).

Research *for* Women, not *on* Women

Feminist researchers have long advocated that feminist research should not be just 'on' women, but 'for' women and, where possible, with women (DeVault, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). Feminists define research 'for' women as research that tries to take women's needs, interests and experiences into account and aims at being instrumental in improving women's lives in one way or another. Feminists recognize that women scholars have produced an enormous body of knowledge on women in various disciplines; albeit, this research, consists of adherence to traditional research where knowledge about women was *added* to existing dominant knowledge. Feminists contend such research has failed to unearth deep-seated social, political, and economic inequalities that need to be addressed to make real, meaningful change in women's lives.

Challenging Methodological Conventions

With the objective of feminist research to be ‘for’ women, feminist scholars have been engaged with methodological innovation through challenging conventional or mainstream ways of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data (Naples, 2003). This involved their critique of positivism¹⁰ by firstly calling attention to the fact that women had been left out of much mainstream research and secondly, valuing the perspectives, feelings, and lived experiences of women as knowledge. Feminists went to the heart of some basic foundational questions, namely, *who can know?* and *what can be known?* Instead of working to improve the accuracy, objectivity, and universality of mainstream research by including women, feminists in the early 1990s challenged the viability and utility of concepts like objectivity and universality altogether. For feminists, knowledge is achieved not through “correcting” mainstream research studies by adding women, but corrected through paying attention to the specificity and uniqueness of women’s lives and experiences.

According to many feminist scholars, to understand the unique experiences of women requires more than simply adding women; it requires an epistemological shift regarding how we evaluate knowledge. Bhavnani (1993), Haraway (1988) and Harding (1993) argue, for example, that objectivity needs to be transformed into “feminist objectivity.” Haraway (1998) defines feminist objectivity as “situated knowledges” in which knowledge and truth are partial, situated, subjective, power imbued, and relational. As such, the denial of values, biases, and politics is seen as unrealistic and undesirable. Harding’s (1993) concept of “strong objectivity” is a specific example of how to practice the basic premise of “feminist objectivity.” Harding (1993) argues that throughout the research process, subjective judgments on the part of the researcher are always made “in the selection of problems, the formation of hypotheses, the design of research (including the organization of research communities), the collection of data, the interpretation and sorting of data, decisions about when to stop research, the way results of research are reported, and so on” (p.69) To practice such “feminist objectivity” Harding (1993) argues that researchers need to be self-reflective on what values, attitudes, and agenda they bring to the

¹⁰ Positivism is a traditional research paradigm based on “the scientific method,” a form of knowledge building in which “there is only *one* logic of science, to which any intellectual activity aspiring to the title of ‘science’ should conform” (Keat & Urry, 2011, p. 19). Positivism’s model of inquiry is based on logic and empiricism. It holds out a specific epistemology of knowing—that truth lies “out there” in the social reality waiting to be discovered, if only the scientist is “objective” and “value free” in the pursuit of knowledge building.

research process—strong objectivity means that “the subjects of knowledge be placed on the same critical causal plane as the objects of knowledge” (p. 69). As feminist researchers it is crucial to confront questions of how our own history and positionality influence, for example, the questions we ask. According to Harding (1993) strong self-reflexivity actually makes that the feminist researcher becomes more objective.

Reflexivity

Feminist scholars pay attention to reflexivity, a process whereby researchers recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions affect their research practice (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006). Practicing reflexivity also includes paying attention to the specific ways in which our own agendas affect the research at all points in the research process—from the selection of the research problem to the selection of method and ways in which we analyze and interpret our findings. Hesse-Biber and Leckenby’s (2004) work on the importance of self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher notes:

Feminist researchers are continually and cyclically interrogating their locations as both researcher and as feminist. They engage the boundaries of their multiple identities and multiple research aims through conscientious reflection. This engagement with their identities and roles impacts the earliest stages of research design. Much of feminist research design is marked by an openness to the shifting contexts and fluid intentions of the research questions. (p. 211)

Power Analysis

Lennon and Whitford (1994) contend that feminism’s most compelling epistemological insight lies in the connections it has made between knowledge and power. Earlier feminist analysis of power took an optimistic view on power relations between the researcher and the researched. Feminist researchers contended that power differentials in research could be minimized by developing non-hierarchical and “friendly” relationships with respondents (Oakley, 1981). Later, feminists critiqued this position, pointing to the inevitability of power imbalances in research. Feminist scholars now recognize that researchers and respondents have a “different and unequal relation to knowledge” (Glucksmann, 1994, p.150) and that within most research projects, “the final shift of power between the researcher and the respondent is balanced in favour of the researcher, for it is she who eventually walks away” (Cotterill, 1992, p.604). The

focus of much current feminist analysis of power in research has shifted over the last few decades from debating *whether or not* power relations affect research, to *how* power influences knowledge production and construction processes (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006). Questions about: *Who can be a knower? Whose knowledge? And who speaks for whom?* (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006) have become critical in contemporary feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial studies.

Research Methods

According to Reinharz (1992) feminist research is not methodologically rigid but, rather, uses a multiplicity of research methods. This flexibility is reflected in the diversity of feminist research and a parallel diversity of methods published in the last several years demonstrating that feminism is a perspective rather than a research method.

The chosen methodological techniques for this study utilized a multiple method technique known as “triangulation.” Triangulation can be described as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2005, p. 454) where emphasis is directed towards filtering meaning from a variety of data collection methods. This approach acknowledges that the researcher is interested in the “diversity of perception” including the “multiple realities within which people live...[triangulation] helps to identify different realities” (p. 454). According to Reinharz (1992), there are many instances where feminist research is triangulated due primarily to the special relation this method has with feminist concerns. As such, by combining methods, “feminist researchers are particularly able to illuminate previously unexamined or misunderstood experiences” (p. 197). One strategy feminist researchers have employed is to broaden the meaning of triangulation in the service of pinpointing subjugated knowledge, by treating triangulation as a “loose boundary concept,” one whose conceptual borders are flexible and fluid, as opposed to its traditional, more stringently defined and more “stable” mathematical conceptualization (Hesse-Biber, 2012). Feminist geographer Nightingale (2003) uses such an approach to triangulation in her research on women’s land usage patterns in a community forest in Nepal. Rather than using multiple data sources with the goal of attaining a “truthful” measurement process, she uses a feminist approach to triangulation to better interpret dissonant data that arose from her different data methods. Similarly to Nightingale’s (2003) study, I deployed the concept of triangulation in my data analysis to interpret complementarity

and dissonance between my different data collection methods.

This study employs a feminist, place-based, qualitative approach to data collection with a focus on the articulation of women's lived experiences through their own words, valuing their situated knowledge. As such, a case study approach with a focus on the lives of a select few participants- primarily a small group of women in the *zona sur* was essential to grounding and geographically contextualizing the lives and experiences of these women. Key gendered differences in experiences with water came to light because women are the primary managers of water in the home, and their labour, time and livelihoods are significantly impacted by a lack of or unsafe safe water.

I was particularly interested in hearing stories and responses from women that shed light on gender-water realities and the local power hierarchies that complicate a simplistic focus on gender as a male-female binary. Placing gender at the centre of analysis in research practice brings women's demands into view in a nuanced manner and with greater accountability than relying on conventional notions of gendered water needs: "Where a space is created for women's own voices to be heard...a different set of needs may come into view" (Kabeer, 1994, p.230).

Participant Observation

While, there is, as Lichterman (2002) notes, "more than one way to do participant observation" (p.119), the general intention is for researchers to "immerse" themselves into the social setting of their field site, thereby "observing people in their own milieu and participating in their activities" (Devine, 1995, p.137). Participant observation "opens a window on lived experience" (Lichterman, 2002, p. 121), providing a unique source of research data. Lichterman (2002) describes it as follows, "listening to people talking in their own settings, on their own time, participant-observers have the opportunity to glean the everyday meanings, tacit assumptions, ordinary customs, practical rules of thumb that organize people's everyday lives" (p.138).

I engaged in participant observation in the *zona sur* through attendance at the Central Itocta's water committee monthly meetings, and by visiting the *zona sur* on a daily basis. Daily visits to the *zona sur* and interacting with residents both in and outside the water committees provided me the opportunity to glean the everyday realities for *zona sureños*. I attended two

water committee meetings at Central Itocta in June and July (will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4). It was through my attendance at Central Itocta's water committee water meetings that I was able to see first-hand how community members came together and discussed a multitude of issues concerning their community, including water management. Through participant observation, I also identified key informants who were invited to participate in interviews.

Semi-structured and Unstructured Interviewing

Lichterman (2002) argues that participant observation evidence and interview evidence can be combined “judiciously to create a richer account of lived experience” (p.141). According to Blee & Taylor (2002), an interview is simply a “guided conversation”; however, the difference between an interview and other forms of conversation is the need on the part of the interviewer to “elicit specific kinds of information” (p.92). It is important to note the distinct difference in method between structured or survey interviews that are used in quantitative research and the type of qualitative, semi-structured or unstructured interviews conducted in the fieldwork of this study. Feminists such as Oakley (1981) suggest that structured interviews rest on positivist assumptions about research and can be disempowering for participants. In contrast, feminists scholars have written extensively on the benefits of semi or unstructured interviews for providing “access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher,” which can be seen as an important historical corrective to the marginalization of women's voices in traditional research (Reinharz, 1992, p.19). Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1995) add that this type of interviewing “empowers participants in the same way as other forms of participatory research” (p.7). Furthermore, in contrast to the use of structured interviews, Blee & Taylor (2002) suggest that unstructured or semi-structured interviews “provide greater breadth and depth of information [and] the opportunity to discover the respondent's experiences and interpretation of reality” (p.92).

I conducted a total of 17 semi-structured where participants were selected using a chain referral method (Bernard, 2006) with a focus on the experiences of the women living in the *zona sur*. Interviews with individuals knowledgeable about local water management and committee organizing in the *zona sur*, women's community organizing both in the *zona sur* and in other parts of Cochabamba were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of water politics and

women's organizing. These individuals included academics, feminist scholars, NGO leaders and employees, activists, and community leaders residing in both the *zona sur* and other parts of Cochabamba.

The interviews conducted with community leaders and committee water members in the *zona sur* were conducted in the presence of a research assistant, Ida Peñaranda, whom was hired to help navigate the *zona sur* (both its physical landscape and political structure), and facilitate introductions with community leaders and members. Ida Peñaranda had extensive experience working with water committees in the area from her former position with the local NGO 'Fundación Abril'. Given my limited time in the field, Peñaranda, who acted as my 'gate-keeper' to the community, was essential for securing interviews in the *zona sur*, where residents tend to be mistrustful of outsiders; however, interviewing ultimately depended on people's availability and willingness to participate.

My interview guides outlined a series of broad questions pertaining to the participants' background and experiences involved in their water committee with a focus on women's contributions to their community's water committee. All participants were given the context, and were assured of the confidentiality of the study. Consent to be interviewed was obtained before each interview, and participants were able to withhold comment from any question asked. Please refer to appendix iv for a complete list of interviewees and appendix v for a sample interview schedule (in Spanish). The semi-structured interviews, conducted in Spanish, lasted between 20 to 80 minutes and the audio was recorded with permission of the interviewee. Names were recorded, but the interviewees had the option of having their names omitted from any research report. Of the 17 recorded semi-structured interviews I conducted, no interviewee opted for the anonymous option. My unstructured interviews were opportunistic informal conversations I had with residents from District 14 both in and outside of the water committees I studied. Of the unstructured interviews I conducted, none were recorded but information was written down in a field note diary alongside notes from participatory observation. Weaknesses in my methodology include the fact that Spanish is not my mother tongue. Though my Spanish level is advanced, miscommunication may have affected the quality of some informal interactions. Recordings were used to help mitigate this issue for the formal interviews. Recordings of the interviews were transcribed by Kirsten Francescone, a former researcher at CEDIB and graduate of Carleton

University, and translated by me. I have included the original Spanish version of all direct quotations from my interviews as footnotes.

I am cognizant that there are drawbacks to using a chain referral method, as it may not produce an entirely representative sample of the overall population of women living in the *zona sur*; however, given my time constraints in the field the method was essential in order to secure semi-structured interviews. Despite inherent limitations of the chain referral method, the participants in this study embody a diverse range of individuals involved in their community water committee, as they represent a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, ages and levels of experience within their committee. Moreover, this method is preferable as the *zona sur* is a challenging location to conduct research. A weakness apparent in the methodology was that living alongside the population in question was impossible, for lack of safe accommodations in District 14. The relative levels of poverty, crime and insecurity make the *zona sur* a difficult place to collect data, and therefore having a local research assistant who was capable to help expand the sampling framework was foundational to the data collection process. I stayed in the affluent city centre, and was therefore unable to ‘live the experience’ of my research subjects.

Textual Analysis

Throughout the fieldwork process, I gathered documents written by NGOs, SEMAPA, the water committees, and feminist organizations, in addition to scholarly works. These documents included maps, educational material, and research reports. The data garnered from these documents was incorporated into my analysis alongside the academic literature review. The detail in these documents allowed me to supplement the information gathered from participant observation and interviewing. The archives at the Bolivia Centre of Documentation and Information (*Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia*, CEDIB) were a key source of data for this project, as their researchers have catalogued hard copies of all local and national newspaper articles relating to water and sanitation for the past 40 years. CEDIB has also published profiles of the Cochabamba’s peri-urban districts, and conducted extensive research on water and sanitation issues as one of its key thematic areas.

Theoretical Framework

The second half of this chapter will examine a series of theoretical concepts from the framework of Feminist political ecology to give a fulsome depiction of women’s involvement in

local water management. I will then turn to the framework of Women and the Politics of Place to contextualize how everyday life and local gendered water management practices are linked to place-based struggles that originate in the lived experiences of women's practical needs and strategic gender interests as it pertains to their interests and needs for accessible water in their communities.

Feminist Political Ecology: The Micropolitics and 'Everydayness' of Water

Political ecology, of which Feminist political ecology (hereafter, FPE) is a subfield, highlights the relationship between environmental degradation and conservation, the neoliberalization of nature, capitalist accumulation and expansion, dispossession, history, politics, and power (Sneddon, 2000; Redclift, 1993). This analytical lens emphasizes the connection between environmental degradation and the political and economic structures that benefit from destructive, exploitative, and extractivist human economies and societies.

Scholars of Political ecology that study the complex ways social power and identity are tied to the regulation and management of water resources have provided a rich literature to conceptualize and analyze urban water inequality. Through employing the concept of 'socio-nature' or the idea that urban spaces are both socially and ecologically produced, urban political ecologists focus on the ways that resources such as water are shaped by social relations of power, not just "natural" or "scientific/technological" factors (Gandy, 2002). As Gandy (2002) states, "water is a multiple entry: it possesses its own biophysical laws and properties, but in its interaction with human societies it is simultaneously shaped by political, cultural and scientific factors" (p.22).

Political ecologists' mode of analysis begins from the point of view that resources are cultural and ecological (and not just technical phenomena), thereby focusing on the interrelationships between livelihoods, justice (both environmental and socioeconomic), political economy, and sustainability concerns (Bakker, 2010). FPE takes this analysis a step further and considers the gendered dimensions to these aforementioned issues (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, Wangar, 1996). Feminist political ecologists advocate that for gender to be considered in environmental analysis, attention needs to be made to gendered differences in knowledge, rights, access, control, and organization vis-à-vis the environment (Elmhirst, 2011; Rocheleau et al., 2006; Truelove, 2011).

In the 1990s, with the publication of Rocheleau's et al. (1996) book entitled: *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences* FPE became an important area of inquiry within Political ecology for employing gender as a:

Critical variable in shaping resource access and control interacting with class, caste, race, culture and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, the struggle of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods, and the prospects of any community for "sustainable development". (p.4).

FPE recognizes that water issues pose disproportionate disadvantages for women that reflect broader politics, power struggles, and patriarchal structures that intersect to oppress women outside of the water domain. Therefore, these should be considered when deconstructing the power dynamics that manipulate water access, rights, and control. FPE further invites political ecologists to extend their consideration of scales of analysis to include the household and the community (Elmhirst, 2011; Truelove, 2011) than to exclusively focus on dimensions of inequality on a city-wide scale.

Since the establishment of FPE as a sub-discipline within Political ecology, several feminists have written on substantive issues ranging from gendered resource access and property rights (water and land) to collective action and social movements. A study by Mehta (1996) analyzes gendered access and control over resources at level of households in a community in the Himalayan region of India to understand the ways that land reforms diminished women's control over and access to agricultural resources. While both men and women used to work together on agricultural plots, Mehta's (1996) study demonstrated how men's increasing role in cash economies served to further segregate and de-value women's "private" work on agricultural plots as non-monetary and lacking social prestige.

Recent feminist contributions to the study of water specifically analyze the importance of everyday practices in shaping gender ideologies and processes of social differentiation, revealing the complex ramifications of water governance strategies (O'Reilly, 2010; Sultana, Mohanty, Miraglia, 2013; Truelove, 2011). For example, O'Reilly (2010) demonstrated the ways that a German-funded sanitation project in rural Rajasthan re-shaped gendered practices, consequently unequal gender spaces for men and women. While the initiative was intended to alleviate gender

inequalities by including women and focusing on their empowerment, O'Reilly (2010) found that installation of latrines within homes re-configured gender inequalities, at times with the unintended consequence of reducing women's mobility. O'Reilly (2010) notes:

Like many technical development interventions, building latrines created new physical structures but did not remove all difficulties of women's access to facilities. A sanitation unit built near the entrance to the family courtyard meant that women did not feel comfortable using it, since courtyard entrances open on to public lanes (and courtyards are men's spaces when men are at home). (p.53).

Sultana's et al. (2013) study of women's struggles for access to clean and safe water in Korali (one of the largest informal settlements in Dhaka, Bangladesh), reveals that there are not only key gendered differences in experiences with water, but also notes that:

Wealthier neighbourhoods can use water for non-survival activities such as watering their lawns, washing their cars and filling up their swimming pools while slum residents struggle for, and rarely obtain, an adequate supply of water to meet their daily needs. (p.14).

Sultana's et al. (2013) study captures intersectionalities of gender and class to show that wealthier women are neither affected by water scarcity nor worry about water in the same ways as poorer women, and therefore while wealthier women still hold many domestic and water focused responsibilities, they do not have to worry about water in the same way that their poorer counterparts do. Wealthier women can use water for more than just "survival activities" like watering their lawns or filling up their swimming pools, while in the slums the little amount of water available is used for daily life-sustaining activities.

Feminist Political Ecologists studying gendered water issues argue that understanding the everydayness of water is particularly important and timely given recent global efforts to create a unified discourse of how to solve global 'water problems' (Truelove, 2011). Feminist scholars have been critical of international water discourse converging to support privatization as the key mechanism for providing 'water for all' and the negative gendered impacts of a participatory approach to resource management, anchored in neoliberal paradigms, that has become *sine qua non* for development institutions. Although proponents of the neoliberal water project, including

feminist scholars, suggest that water privatization offers possibilities for realizing feminist ambitions, citing women's independent ownership of resources (i.e. land titles) as a way to achieve women's emancipation or liberation (Agarwal, 1994). Ahlers & Zwarteveen (2009) argue that there is no such thing as a feminist neoliberal water paradigm as a "feminist response calls for challenging the individualization, marketization and consumer/client focus of the neo-liberal paradigm" (p.409).

Women and the Politics of Place: Beyond the 'Everydayness' to Women's Agency

As many feminist scholars and activists have critiqued the managerial and bureaucratized development water management apparatus, they have moved to a more effective, transformative gender justice strategy of place-based politics (Harcourt & Escobar, 2005). The analytical framework of Women and the Politics of Place (hereafter, WPP) introduced by Harcourt and Escobar (2005) seeks to understand and analyse women's agency through place-based struggles that originate in the lived experiences of women, including struggles around the body, the environment, and the economy. Nagar, Lawson, McDowell and Hanson (2002) call for increasing research into the "informal spaces" and practices of globalization, including household relations and the feminization of spaces and labour within communities in order to reveal how gender and women's lives are shaped by larger economic forces. Similarly, Mohanty (2003) argues that the "micropolitics of context, subjectivity and struggle" provide critical insights into the operation and consequences of global economic and political systems. Such analyses allow us to link "everyday life and local gendered contexts and ideologies to the larger, transnational political and economic structures and ideologies of capitalism" (Mohanty, 2003, p.225). The gendered "place-based" framework presented by Mohanty (2003) draws on historical materialism and centralizes a differentiated notion of gendered struggles anchored in the bodies, environments, and economies of the most marginalized communities of women – poor and indigenous women from the global South. Mohanty and Miraglia (2012) note that an experiential and analytic grounding in the lives and struggles of marginalized communities of women (urban poor, working class, peasant, indigenous, etc.) provides the most inclusive paradigm for advocating gender justice (the elimination of hierarchies and unequal power based on gender) in the creation of alternatives to privatization.

It should be noted that place-based movement and activism should not be regarded as place-bound (Harcourt & Escobar, 2005). Rather, the framework suggests that, “places act as prisms that refract global economic and governance structures, bending and shaping them in ways that make sense within the politics of particular sites and in different communities” (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012, p.122). Such a definition of place suggests global processes become part of the terrain upon which women struggle and this perspective compels us to see the ways that women are politicized and act through these changes. Harcourt and Escobar (2005) note that recognizing the power of place, privileges local and translocal modes of resistance to totalizing theories of global processes and therefore valorizes such movements.

In their review of gender equity in “alternatives to privatization”, Mohanty and Miraglia (2012) highlight the complex nature of working in and through established governance structures and within institutional settings and argues for models of action that work to create the infrastructure necessary for women’s strategic interests. The following section will examine these concepts in more detail.

Practical Gender Needs and Strategic Gender Interests

Molyneux (1985) introduced the terminology of “strategic and practical gender interests” within a work of political sociology, in an analysis of the Nicaraguan revolution and its policies concerning women. As defined by Molyneux (1985), practical gender interests ease the hardships for women struggling under conditions of poverty but do not subvert the systems of inequality that perpetuate their subordination. Challenging those systems requires the development of strategic gender interests, those based on an “analysis of women’s subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist” (Molyneux, 1985, p.232). Thus, strategic gender interests work towards undoing gendered divisions of labour, male violence, and unequal political representation (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012).

In Molyneux’s (1985) definition, “practical interests” emerge as a response to women’s perceived needs such as a lack of access or control over water resources. As Molyneux (1985) writes, “[practical interests] do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women’s emancipation or gender equality, nor do they challenge the prevailing forms of subordination even though they arise directly out of them” (p.233). Many of the issues that motivate women to

organize at the community level can be seen as an attempt to meet their practical gender interests for clean water, housing, and education among a variety of other essential services. Molyneux (1985) argues that women may find it easier to meet practical gender interests in the future if their strategic gender interests are addressed first, as the gender relations that constrain women's abilities to access or control resources and basic services can be challenged and deconstructed via the "politicization of these practical interests and their transformation into strategic interests" (p. 234). Molyneux's (1985) distinction of women's interests serves to differentiate between ways of reasoning about gender relations; in the formulation of practical interests there is the assumption that there is compliance with the existing gender order, while in the case of strategic interests there is an explicit questioning of that order and of the compliance of some women with it.

Molyneux (1998) further argues that the formulation of interests, whether strategic or practical, "is to some degree reliant on discursive elements, and is always linked to identity formation. This is especially true for women whose interests are often closely bound to those of the family or household" (p.233). Molyneux (1998) suggests that claims about women's interests need to be framed within specific historical contexts since processes of interest formation and articulation are clearly subject to cultural, historical and political variation and cannot be known in advance. Wieringa (1994) further concludes that since women's gender interests can only be discussed in a specific socio-historical context they should thus be seen as flexible, complex elements.

Some later usages of women's gender interests distinctions detached the categories from their explanatory context and adapted them in an effort to develop guidelines for the purpose of gender policy and planning¹¹. These guidelines in turn were sometimes banalized in applications 'in the field', where they were treated, in the words of one practitioner, as a 'magic key' which would serve as a mechanical prescription for women's organizations to follow (Molyneux, 1998). With regards to the uses made of the strategic/practical distinction in gender-planning contexts, Molyneux (1998) argues the analytic distinction of women's gender interests have been deployed in the form of a too rigid binary, with practical interests set against strategic in a static,

¹¹ The most well known attempt at integrating women's gender interests within a framework for 'gender-aware planning' was by Moser (1989).

hierarchized opposition. As Molyneux (1998) argues, her analysis was not intended to set up a hierarchy of interests and such a binary of interests contradicts the original formulation, “Clearly, practical interests can, at times should, be the basis for a political transformation. Indeed the evidence shows that this evolution has sometimes occurred in the process of struggles around practical interests, as in the case of popular feminism in Peru” (Molyneux, 1998, p.235). Indeed, scholars such as Disney (2008) question: “[W]hy can’t women’s organizing around women’s daily survival issues be an example of feminist agency? Are poor urban and rural women who are organizing around ‘practical’ economic issues necessarily *not* exercising feminist agency?” (p. 37). Tracing the development of the women’s movement in Peru from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, Blondet (1995) demonstrates that poor women mobilizing around practical gender interests have sometimes engaged in strategic struggles which simultaneously enhance their ability to satisfy their practical needs and their strategic interests. However, it is equally important to stress that this transformation may not occur and that it is not simply given in the nature of struggles around practical interests. As many commentators have shown, such struggles more often than not do not proceed to demands which would challenge the structures of gender inequality, or enhance women's rights (Martinez, 1995; Molyneux, 1998). Whether they do or not is to a large degree contingent on political and discursive interventions which help to bring about the transformation of these struggles (Molyneux, 1998).

The false hierarchy of privileging strategic feminist interests over women’s practical needs-based interests within gender planning is said to be further reinforced by Western feminist thought, in which women organizing around their basic needs may not be personified as presenting a challenge to the public/private divide, hegemonic masculinity, or to inequitable gendered divisions of labour. This perspective reinforces the dichotomization of these concepts deviating from the lived realities experienced by women in Latin America, and in various other regions throughout the Global South.

In the 1980s, many feminist critics began to challenge the dominant feminist discourse of Western feminism that perpetuated these biases and assumptions (e.g. Mohanty, 1984). This school of thought in feminism, originating in the Global South, illuminated Western feminism’s failings to account or deal adequately with the experiences of “Third World women”. Mohanty (1984), for instance, criticizes:

The assumption that all of us the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogenous group identified prior to the process of analysis...thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of 'women' as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of groups of women. (p.338).

Previously, feminism itself was seen as "a bourgeois ideology of the First World that privileges gender oppression and struggles against patriarchy at the expense of oppressions based on race, class, and nationality" (Disney, 2008, p. 26). This alternative feminist perspective not only challenged mainstream discursive constructions of the "Third World woman", but also focused on the "intersection of gender, race, and class-based oppressions in specific, local, and historical contexts" (Disney, 2008, p. 27). In addition, attention is placed on women's "plural or collective consciousness". Mohanty, Russo and Torres (1991) describe these concepts in the context of Latin America:

...[T]he idea of plural or collective consciousness is evident in some of the revolutionary testimonials of Latin American women, speaking from within rather than for their communities....Their primary purpose is to document and record the history of popular struggles, foreground experimental and historical 'truth' which has been erased or rewritten in hegemonic, elite, or imperialist history, and bear witness in order to change oppressive state rule. Thus testimonials do not focus on the unfolding of a singular woman's consciousness...rather, their strategy is to speak from within a collective, as participants in revolutionary struggles, and to speak with the express purpose of bringing about social and political change. (p. 81).

This concept of plural or collective consciousness is powerful, as it deviates from liberal Western feminist thought, which focuses largely on individual experiences of gender-based oppression. Similarly, other feminist scholars have also adopted the concept of a collective identity to address their own political struggles as feminists and women of color (hooks, 2000).

Thus, this innovative feminist perspective informed by Black feminism and women's experiences in the Global South has enabled a re-conceptualization of women's activism and

organizing and has put forth a powerful realist and materialist feminist argument that a “women’s position should therefore be based on the realities of their lives rather than on a generalized assumption that they are oppressed” (Mosedale, 2005, p. 245). For example, numerous authors have noted how these needs and interests have started to combine and overlap with one another where “traditionally female” tasks that may be classified as “practical” in nature have become part of a much broader political agenda (Disney, 2008).

Applying a critical lens to women’s interests, informed by the body of anti-racist, postcolonial, and transnational feminist scholarship is fundamental to more fully understanding women’s activism in an effort to address both practical gender needs, and strategic gender interests. Fernandes (2007) explains that it is critical to focus on “how poor women negotiate power, construct collective identities, and develop critical perspectives on the world in which they live”, which challenges dominant gender representations while also improving the gendered conditions of their daily lives (Lind, 2005, as cited in Fernandes, p.100).

In sum, this chapter has outlined the methodological and theoretical frameworks used within the study. The feminist methods used for data collection and analysis correspond to the theoretical concepts explored within this chapter, which enable my research to situate women’s experiences in the *zona sur* as they struggle for access and control of water resources. *Chapter Three* will trace the neoliberal project in Bolivia from its onset in the 1980s through to the 1990s that led to the eventual leftward shift of the country. I then examine in detail Cochabamba’s Water War in which residents from different walks of life emerged to defend against the privatization of their city’s municipal water supply.

Chapter 3: From Bolivia's Neoliberal Period to Leftward Shift: An Historical Analysis

Introduction

Since the turn of the century, Bolivia has been undergoing a leftward political shift, first evident in extraordinary waves of social movement activity beginning in 2000 and later in the 2005 election of Evo Morales and the MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, Movement Towards Socialism); who were elected on promises to end two decades of neoliberalism. This chapter discusses the introduction of the neoliberal project in Bolivia from its onset in the 1980s through to the 1990s that led to the eventual leftward shift of the country. I then examine in detail Cochabamba's *Guerra del Agua* (Water War) that is credited for opening a 'revolutionary moment' (Hylton et al., 2007) in Bolivia's history during which coalitions of residents from different walks of life emerged to defend against the privatization of their water supply.

Responsible for the everyday work of water collection and management in the home, women were highly active in the movement in which their role became emblematic of the political identity of *supermadre* (super mother). I will review how women in the movement adhered to traditional gender roles through their role as *supermadre*, which signified motherhood as a collective, public, and political practice.

Thanks to the collective struggle of the *Guerra del Agua* that defended water as a common good, alternative forms of water governance based on collective visions of solidarity and communal water uses are being sought and contested in Cochabamba, particularly in the everyday practices of the city's hundreds of water committees.

Bolivia's Neoliberalizing Policies of the 1980s and 1990s

As the first region to adopt neoliberalism as its hegemonic model (Spronk, Crespo, Olivera, 2012), Latin America was one of the most profoundly neoliberalized regions of the world. Starting with the 1973 US-backed military coup in Chile, the region became the laboratory of neoliberal experiments designed by mostly American economists in collaboration with local elites (MacDonald & Ruckert, 2009). Beset by the region-wide debt crisis, many countries in the region were forced to approach international financial institutions (IFIs) for support. These financial institutions attached conditionalities to their loans that obliged countries to privatize and deregulate key industries, remove trade barriers, and introduce fiscal austerity

(Leiva, 2008). The guiding principle was the primacy of market-driven development, which was thought to exist only where capital was allowed to flow freely, unimpeded by state regulation, tariffs, and other economic barriers (Leiva, 2008). In Latin America, these reforms “transformed the social, political, and cultural landscapes that had developed during the mid-twentieth-century” (Roberts, 2009, p. 2).

Neoliberalizing policies in Bolivia were introduced in two waves. The first wave was the “structural adjustment” wave of the mid 1980s, and second wave was the “social neoliberalism” wave of the early 1990s (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). To reactivate the economy following the international tin industry collapse at the beginning of the 1980s, the Paz Estenssoro administration introduced the first round of neoliberal restructuring in the form of the New Economic Policy (NEP, *Nueva Política Económica*) - “South America’s second most radical neoliberal restructuring program (after Chile)” (Kohl & Farthing, 2006, p. 60). Imposed as the only exit to the mounting economic crisis, this decree laid the foundations for neoliberal economic reforms by imposing a “roll-back” menu of privatization, trade liberalization, and industrial deregulation (Medieros, 2001). By the measure of the IFIs and the US government, Bolivia was a neoliberal success story – hyperinflation was drastically curbed from 20,000 per cent to 9 per cent, debt obligations were fulfilled, and exports increased (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). However, this ‘success’ came at an enormous cost to Bolivia’s workers; most national industries were forced to close including the large state mines which led to over 23,000 miners out of 30,000 losing their jobs and manufacturing jobs fell by 35,000 over five years due to economic contraction (Crabtree, Duffy, Pearce, 1987). Although COB brought together a variety of unions, including peasants unions, worker unions, and middle-class unions, its leadership had always been drawn from the miners’ unions (Spronk, 2007), and so when the mining industry collapsed, the COB was crippled.

Although the first round of neoliberal restructuring shattered the powerful workers’ unions, it also led to the infiltration of union-like governance systems into other settings, including peri-urban areas, as the thousands of laid-off miners migrated to other areas of the country and took up other occupations (Spronk, 2007). Many of these miners moved to Chapare, located in the department of Cochabamba and began to cultivate coca, a plant central to Andean culture but illegal due to its status as the raw material of cocaine. Prior to the 1980s, *cocaleros*

were not very numerous, and concentrated mostly in the Yungas (a valley in the department of La Paz), but the collapse of the mining industry and a boom in the North American cocaine market caused a rapid spike in their numbers (Dangl, 2007). The *cocaleros* responded to US-led anti-coca campaigns throughout the 1980s and 1990s with an increasingly politicized discourse that became an important voice of the eventual leftward shift. Other laid-off miners moved to peri-urban areas, such as the region around Cochabamba, and to El Alto (in the department of La Paz). In Cochabamba, the union structure had a strong influence on the governance system of the city's hundreds of water committees (Spronk, 2007). In El Alto, they contributed to the FEJUVE¹² systems, which were the organizational foundations of both the Gas War and the 2005 La Paz-El Alto Water War (Zibechi, 2010).

The second neoliberal transition, from structural adjustment to "social neoliberalism" unintentionally boosted the organizational capacity of both multiple rural, indigenous, and peri-urban groups. In 1993, President Sánchez introduced the *Plan de Todos* (Plan for Everyone), an omnibus law that included policies intended to 'deepen and broaden' market democracy (Kohl & Farthing, 2006) and to make it more socially agreeable for citizens; this was the "roll out" neoliberalism that was meant to complement the "roll back" (Peck & Tickell, 2002) of the NEP. Key pieces of the Plan de Todos were the Law of Capitalization (1994), the Decentralization Law (1995), and the Popular Participation Law (1994), which provided the institutional basis to deepen neoliberal reform. As Medeiros (2001) notes the, "Law for Popular Participation was the least controversial and most celebrated of the reforms" (p. 411).

Supported by the labour movement and peasant unions, the LPP enlarged the powers and autonomy of local municipal governments by legitimizing and promoting the participation of community organizations in the affairs of local municipal governments to engage certain segments of society who had historically been excluded from formal political processes (Laurie, Andolina, Radcliffe, 2002). Before the LPP, most of the country fell outside any municipal jurisdiction. Municipal governments only encompassed towns and cities, whose formal boundaries were never registered nationally and often fluctuated in accordance with the interests of the mayor in office. The national government often treated the rural areas as a 'no man's

¹² FEJUVE stands for *Federación de Juntas Vecinales de El Alto*, or Federation of Neighborhood Councils of El Alto.

land', leaving *campesino* communities to assume the functions of local government, disarticulated from nearby municipalities (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). The LPP divided the country into 311 *municipios*¹³ that were eligible to receive state money to undertake development projects and committed 20 per cent of national tax revenues to municipal governments to be utilized for the construction and maintenance of schools, roads, clinics, sports facilities, and irrigation systems (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). The legal recognition of OTBs (*Organizaciones Territoriales de Base*, or Grassroots Territorial Organizations) as units of political participation were then able to access these funds by proposing community development projects to their *comunas*, or local government.

Decentralized governance also significantly strengthened the *cocalero* unions, a fact that eventually enabled Evo Morales to run for president. The *cocalero* unions, which already acted as unofficial local governments in the Chapare region by settling disputes and collecting taxes for community projects, acquired democratic control of the region with the introduction of *municipios*. In the 1995 elections, they won seats in all three of the *municipios* associated with the Chapare (Villa Tunari, Puerto Villarroel, and Chimoré) as well as the two sub-*municipios* (Shinahoata and Entre Ríos) (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). They formed a political instrument¹⁴ called the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) at the head of which was the leader of the *cocalero* union – Evo Morales. It was this transition from grassroots activism to party politics that paved the way for Morales' election to President of the republic (Kohl & Farthing, 2006).

Bolivia's Post-Neoliberal Roots

Bolivia's most recent leftward swing is usually traced back to the year 2000, when the residents from in and around the city of Cochabamba rose up to protest the privatization of municipal water supply. Success in Cochabamba – marked by a reinstated public utility – is said to have been the catalyst for a similar Water War in La Paz-El Alto in 2005 and more widespread protest against the privatization of the natural gas and oil industry in 2003 (known as the Gas

¹³ *Municipios* are similar to counties in the US in that they are focused on urban areas but include their immediate rural surroundings (Perreault, 2008).

¹⁴ Evo Morales has often reiterated: 'The MAS represents the social movements, and is a political instrument of liberation. It is not the creation of *politólogos* [political scientists], nor of political analysts, academics or politicians. It is born from a congress of peasants' (As cited in Albrow, 2005, p. 440).

War). This latter mobilization is attributed with the literal flight of then-president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who caught a plane to United States at the height of the Gas War (Perreault & Martin, 2005). Former President Sánchez de Lozada is most frequently identified with the neoliberalization of Bolivia: raised in the US and the principal owner of Bolivia's largest private mine, he had "an unwavering commitment to neoliberalism" (Kohl & Farthing, 2006, p. 67). Although his departure did not result in victory for the left – there were two short-term presidents in-between his and Morales's election – it certainly represented the beginning of the end of politics-as usual.

In 2005, Evo Morales and his party, the Movement towards Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*), were elected on promises to end two decades of neoliberalism. As many analysts have observed, given the organizational strength of the indigenous, peasant and workers' movements, the potential for the elaboration and implementation of 'post-neoliberal' alternatives is more likely in Bolivia than in the other countries swept by Latin America's pink tide (Leiva, 2008). Bolivian social movements have played an essential role in opposing the neoliberal model. Struggles for alternative models of resource management that have contested the privatization and commercialization of public goods have played a crucial role in challenging the legitimacy of neoliberalism in Bolivia, and in no policy area has the struggle from below for alternatives to neoliberal policy been articulated more forcefully than in the water sector (Spronk, 2007). The Cochabamba Water War of 2000, one of the best-known anti-privatization movements, is credited for opening a 'revolutionary moment' in Bolivia's history (Webber, 2011), which paved the way for the election of Evo Morales and the Movement towards Socialism, who campaigned on a promise to end neoliberalism.

Cochabamba's *Guerra del Agua*

Long before the events that were to occur in 2000, residents of Cochabamba had suffered from insufficient and unequal water services. SEMAPA, plagued by corruption and clientelist practices, was widely known for its inefficiency and its lack of capacity to expand services to the poor. Solutions proposed by the state to address the water scarcity in the region continued to fail to meet the needs of the city's ever-growing population. The most enduring of these proposals, the MISICUNI integrated water supply and hydroelectric dam project, was first conceived during the Barrientos administration (1966-1969). Construction of the multi-phase and high-cost project

had been put off several times for political or financial reasons until 1996, when the first phase of the project was undertaken.

In continuation of neoliberal economic restructuring, the Sánchez de Lozada administration (1993-97) put both SEMAPA and MISICUNI to bidding for privatization. The only serious bidder was Aguas del Tunari, a multinational consortium whose major shareholder was one of the world's largest water companies, Bechtel. Rather than opening a new round of bidding, the government authorized negotiations, laying the groundwork for Aguas del Tunari to "impose conditions on a government anxious to proceed" and secure an extremely favourable contract (Assies, 2003, p. 21). In September 1999, Aguas del Tunari was granted the concession for supplying water to the city of Cochabamba and implementing the MISICUNI project. The criteria used by the Law to establish a rate structure and support the rate hike that followed were tied to the principles of financial sufficiency in guaranteeing cost recovery and return on investment for the concessionary. Under the terms of the contract, Bechtel was guaranteed an annual return of 15 percent on its investment, to be adjusted to the consumer price index in the United States for the forty years of the contract (Webber, 2012).

In October 1999, under President Hugo Bánzer (a former military dictator), the government passed Law 2029 on Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage (Ley 2029 Agua Potable y Alcantarillado), which legalized the concession granted in September. The law stipulated that once concessions were granted, concessionaries had exclusive rights over the concession area. This forty-year concession to control the Cochabamba water system threatened the communal forms of water governance (in both rural and urban areas) as water committees were to be forced into contracts with Tunari which had been awarded exclusive access to surface water, groundwater, and even rainwater within the area of the concession. This provision granted the concessionaire exclusive rights to take control of all of the autonomous water systems without compensating the communities who had built them (Olivera & Lewis, 2004).

When the first monthly water bills from Tunari arrived in January 2000, citizens' confirmed fears of rate hikes¹⁵ galvanized the population of Cochabamba to take action. The quickly organized resistance movement, led by the *Coordinadora de Defensa de Agua y de la*

¹⁵ As indicated by COIBO (2010), rate hikes increased some water bills as much as 300 percent (p. 6).

Vida (Coalition in Defense of Water and Life, hereafter the “*Coordinadora*”), brought together three equally infuriated groups: urban water users who saw their water bills skyrocket; rural irrigators who felt that the concession threatened their irrigation water rights, which were based on the traditional *usos y costumbres* (uses and customs); and peri-urban water committees, who were told that they could no longer draw water from their wells because Tunari had exclusive rights to the aquifer (Assies, 2003). The *Coordinadora* leadership, drawn from professionals, unions among others, had support from both *mestizo* (mixed race) and indigenous Quechua groups. As Laurie (2005) indicates, “these alliances ruptured the rural/urban dichotomy that characterizes politics in many countries of the South and introduced new political subjects” (p. 536). Along with angry urban consumers and peasant irrigators, the members of the water committees, especially those residing in the southern part of the city, played a pivotal role in the 2000 Cochabamba Water War. Water committee members joined the protest to secure continued access to their respective community systems, in which the act of joining forces led to a radical demand of social transformation based upon the principles of collective ownership and popular democracy (Spronk, 2010).

The *Coordinadora*’s organizing resulted in three major uprisings. The first, in January 2000, consisted of a massive march and town meeting in the Plaza 14 de Septiembre, in the centre of the city. After this first protest, a government delegation was able to negotiate a deal with the leaders of the *Coordinadora*: a commission was assembled to study water tariffs, the community water systems would be allowed to continue pumping groundwater, and Law 2029 would be revised within 45 days. In February, the government released its conciliatory proposal, which recommended a 20% water tariff increase, however this recommendation was poorly received. A second round of mobilizations began, this time with the intent to force the government to annul Tunari’s contract. For the next two months, negotiations continued at a sluggish pace, finally culminating in a multi-day protest starting April 4, 2000 when over 10,000 people occupied the streets chanting “The water is ours, damn it!” (“*El agua es nuestra, ¡carajo!*”) (Spronk, 2007). In the response to the protests, President Bánzer declared a state of siege and dispatched police to control the crowds with force including the use of tear gas and live ammunition that left an innocent 17-year-old bystander dead and hundreds wounded (Bakker, 2008; Spronk, 2007). The murder and excessive use of force by police triggered a furious response from the protestors, galvanizing the city against the government. Finally, on April 9,

2000, the city government rescinded the concession that had been granted to Tunari. The protests also resulted in important institutional and legal changes in Bolivia: the potable water and sanitation law (Ley 2066) was revised in 2000 as a direct outcome of the conflict, and in 2004 the irrigation law (Ley 2878) was updated for the first time in 98 years. These two laws officially recognized traditional water uses (*usos y costumbres*), established that concessionaires would not have monopoly water rights within their areas of concession, granted community water systems the right to apply for and receive concessions for indefinite periods of times, and decentralized irrigation governance (Perreault, 2008; Kohl & Farthing, 2006).

As noted in the extensive literature on the Water War, the threat posed by privatization fundamentally involved a multiclass, rural, and urban layer of the population and involved an array of actors diverse with respect to gender, class and race (Bustamante et al., 2005; Spronk, 2007; Laurie, 2011; Webber, 2012). An analysis of the roles of women in the Cochabamba Water War illustrates the contradictory gender relations embedded in this iconic struggle (Laurie, 2011; Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012). While women were indeed active members of the Cochabamba protests, they were mostly responsible for the reproductive work that was necessary to maintain the protests—cooking, providing water, and attending to families and their community. I will now turn to examine women's activism in the Water War.

Women's Role in the Water War: *La Supermadre*

“When we arrived to our water supply in Tiquipaya, we found that soldiers were there and we were unable to access our water source – a water source that had always been ours, always, from the time before our grandparents...They were taking away our right to water and to life. This could not be allowed to happen.”

(Vicky, Tiquipaya Irrigator, as cited in Bustamante et al. 2005)

Women played an active role in the daily aspects of the Cochabamba water war (Laurie, 2011; Bustamante et al., 2005). According to the women protagonists themselves, the roles and activities they took on during the Water War were chiefly: keeping watch at key places as well at the blockade points; responding to police repression with sticks and stones; providing protection against tear gas; serving as roadblock delegates or chiefs and carrying rocks, wire, etc., to

enforce the blockade; closing the *chicherías*¹⁶ to avoid the tendency to go drinking; and cooking in communal kitchens with food supplied by all the communities (Bustamante et al., 2005).

In an interview conducted by Laurie (2011) with one of the male leaders of the *Coordinadora*, women's participation in the Water War was fundamental to the success of the mobilizations due to the multiple roles women took on:

The women's role was to organize, to push and to be the ones who used most energy in deciding actions . . . they suggested forms of action, they spoke up, saying we mustn't back down. They took up the logistical support, the food, going round collecting food, cooking, sharing out the food. And after this I'm sure they went to their houses and attended their families, etc. So they had a multiple role, while the men's role was one of staying at the barricades and resisting. However, as well as being in the blockades, the role of the women was to organize and maintain the blockage and to say we should maintain this blockade . . . they were the ones who spoke most strongly. (p. 182).

In an exploration of women's activism in the Water War, Laurie (2011) refers to women's participation in the Water War as the “*supermadre*”¹⁷ (super mother). Adhering to traditional gender roles, Laurie's exposition of women's political identity as the “supermother” politicizes women's roles as mothers and explores how women used their role as mothers to gain access to the popular movement of the Water War. Laurie (2011) writes that:

By protesting about their ‘legitimate’ concerns as mothers, woman gain access to the public and political arena...they thus project a traditional, domestic and therefore politically ‘safe’ femininity, while at the same time opening up the space for seemingly non-traditional forms of behaviour and activities. (p. 179).

Laurie (2011) found that women's use of the acceptable role as *supermadre* allowed them to both increase their presence in the social movement at the same time that they maintained

¹⁶ A *chichería* is where *chicha* is sold. *Chicha* is a fermented alcoholic beverage made from corn that is a traditional drink of the Cochabamba area.

¹⁷ Chaney (1979) first used the term in her book: *Supermadre: Women in Politics in Latin America*. Chaney (1979) reported on Peruvian and Chilean women who were extending their traditional roles as wives and mothers into the political arena where they focused on “feminine” issues such as family, morality, and food prices.

conventional gender roles. By politicizing their motherhood in the Water War, women were able to gain access to the public and political arena voicing their concerns on a range of issues relating to the provision and management of water. They thus projected and adhered to a traditional, domestic and therefore politically 'safe' femininity as a way to challenge injustice.

As Bustamante et al. (2005) note, "this very feminine approach: to articulate being a mother, made it possible for the rebellion to become generalized and expanded the participation of women from the countryside, from the neighbourhoods in the urban periphery, and from the city center itself"(p.83). As Bustamante et al. (2005) highlight, the role women played in forming bonds of solidarity between rural and urban women helped lessen the early tensions over rural farmers and irrigators 'invading urban space'. In so doing, women played an important part in forging cross-class alliances¹⁸ that allowed rural people to occupy the urban area as fellow Bolivians:

The women would tell me, 'we have many people from the communities who have come to do roadblocks on the avenue and many of them are hungry, we need something!' I told them, '*Mamacitas*' we are the women, we will go ask!' So, we went house to house to ask for whatever they could spare, and then we made that communal kitchen so that people from the surrounding communities could sustain themselves (as cited in Bustamante et al. 2005, p. 83).

Furthermore, as Bustamante et al (2005) note, women's participation in the April mobilizations enabled the spread of solidarity networks among women from different social classes and places of residences around a common struggle:

I've witnessed women's solidarity in the streets. I've seen women from all social classes offer each other mutual support, giving each other refreshments, nuns bringing things, ladies who were watching from their balconies who said, 'we should help, we will give newspapers.' There was solidarity, and this has made us discover that we can indeed build

¹⁸ After the Bolivian National Revolution, class distinctions were mapped onto fused ethnic and class identities, which were divided according to rural and urban space. The rural space was associated with *campesinos* (rural peasants of indigenous origin), while urban modernization was linked to 'white' elites and upwardly mobile *mestizos* who distanced themselves from their indigenous and rural origins — see Laurie et al. (2009) for more details on class and ethnic formation in Bolivia.

solidarity aside from the political differences that may separate us. That has helped us recognize ourselves as women; it has helped us to say, yes, we can change the state of things that affect us (as cited in Bustamante et al., 2005, p. 87).

Although women were active participants, carrying out several duties and played a key role in the negotiations at the micro level, their participation dropped markedly at the level where decisions were made, particularly where face-to-face negotiations with the government took place (Bustamante et al., 2005). As one female interviewee put it,

Even though it was obvious that there was women's participation, we were not taken into account. Those who would lead, who would make up the commission that would be part of the *Coordinadora*, and who would come to represent the *Coordinadora*, were men, and we women had to do other things, anything but be the leaders (as cited in Bustamante et al., 2005, p. 85).

The only female member of the *Coordinadora* was in charge of communications. She liaised with those who were responsible for the various blockades and was the contact person for communication and organization throughout the department of Cochabamba (Laurie, 2011). Although she played an important role in communication, she was not one of the four members selected in a general assembly to be the official spokesperson for the *Coordinadora* who represented the group at meetings with the company and the government. While she accepted her lack of formal recognition during the Water War, this leader expressed concerns about how a female voice would continue to be heard when reflecting on the situation after their success:

They [the four male spokespersons] were voted in an assembly and I didn't make a fuss because at that time it wasn't about making a fuss to gain a space but rather to construct [something] and get involved . . . but afterwards I have been analyzing and I said, well, the female sector has to enter in somewhere (as cited in Laurie, 2011 p. 182).

Throughout the campaign, promoting the participation of the 'female sector' was very much a personal priority for her:

Whenever we have had a meeting, I always invite the *compañeras* [female colleagues]; more than anything, I wanted to carry out this role of getting close to the women's

organizations. [a personal decision and not the *Coordinadoras*]...because the women have been in the streets, they take training courses, they do everything and so they have to be part of this also. So where there is this sort of thing, I call them together. I try to make sure that the *compañeras* are there; they have to be there as they play a very important role (as cited in Laurie, 2011 p. 182).

While women were centrally involved in the Cochabamba protests their activism was mostly relegated to the reproductive work that was necessary to maintain the protests – cooking, providing water, and attending to families. Thus, while women were highly active and present in the mobilizations, gendered ideologies and expectations remained largely unchanged. At the decision-making level, women's voices were not accounted for given the male-dominated *Coordinadora*. Although fellow male comrades from the *Coordinadora* recognized the value of women's participation in the struggle, hierarchies and unequal power based on gender excluded women participation beyond the level where decisions were being made.

The Aftermath of the Cochabamba Water War: Envisioning Alternatives

The Cochabamba Water War has become an emblem of resistance to the privatization of water supply and part of a broader fight for social control over natural resources. But improvements to water access in Cochabamba have been, in practice, minimal: the restored SEMAPA still fails to supply water to much of the city, the “citizen directorate” that was elected to SEMAPA's board post-Water War failed to change the internal culture of the utility, and the southern peri-urban region, which is the poorest and fastest growing part of the city, has the least access to public water supply, with the vast majority of houses unconnected and unlikely to be connected any time in the near future.

However as Mohanty and Miraglia (2012) note, beyond protest and critique, people's movements are beginning to construct alternative practices and paradigms for access to and management of resources. The struggles over access to water are also struggles for creating inclusive models of democratic governance that empower people (Balanyá, Brennan, Huedeman, Kiguamoto, Terharst, 2005). In the case of alternative forms of water governance in Cochabamba, the search for a more socially just form of water supply is not over. As such, many activists and NGOs have started to promote community-run water systems as such an alternative: instead of considering them the “thirsty poor” because they are unconnected to the supposedly

universal network, water committees in the South are supported both financially and technologically with efforts to try to replicate them in other parts of the city. Although such a proposal raises questions about scalability and water quality (Bakker, 2010), the struggles of the community-run water supply systems are part of a broader fight for popular control over natural resources: “The fundamental problem [regarding privatization] is who decides about the present and future of the population, natural resources, work and living conditions. In relation to water, we want to decide for ourselves: this is what we call Democracy” (as cited in Spronk, Crespo, Olivera, 2012, p. 421).

In the subsequent chapter, I will examine women’s experience and organizing at the local level of community resource governance systems in the south of Cochabamba. Through a gendered analysis, it is possible to examine how and to what extent women have been or can be part of the process of imagining and creating alternatives. Though it is certainly the case that community-managed resources are more accountable to the needs of people, it is also the case that gender, class, and racial/ethnic relations inform processes at the community level. Given the growing international interest in alternatives to privatization, the next chapter underscores the significance of a gendered perspective by focusing on women’s lived realities, and the importance of analyzing how the politics of place shape access, delivery and preferences for water in the south of Cochabamba.

Chapter 4: Gendered Analysis of Water-service Delivery in the *Zona Sur*

Introduction

The following chapter will present and analyze the findings of the field research conducted in and around District 14 in the *zona sur* of Cochabamba, Bolivia. This chapter will focus on the experiences of women involved in water management institutions based on observations, semi-structured and unstructured interviews conducted in the field. Their testimonials will be supplemented by secondary literature including interviews that other researchers have conducted. This chapter will address the following research questions: What are women's water-related duties at the household level? How do women's water-related responsibilities differ across different models of water service delivery? And lastly, what role do non-service providers play in addressing both women's practical and strategic gender interests in local water resource management?

The research project aimed to understand how the institutions of water management in the *zona sur* of Cochabamba have enabled and limited women's abilities to utilize water services. I examine the everyday dimensions of resource inequality facing women in the southern area of Cochabamba guided by the framework of feminist political ecology (FPE). FPE scholars extend Political ecology's analysis of power to include gendered relations and extend scales of analysis to include the household, thus complicating arenas of assumed common interest: 'community', 'local', and 'household' (Elmhirst, 2011; Rocheleau et al. 1996; Rocheleau, 2008). Through an FPE lens, I examine, who accesses water and the practices by which access is achieved in the multiple water activities of everyday life in southern Cochabamba to conceptualize and analyze urban water inequality.

In the *zona sur* of Cochabamba, there are key gendered differences in experiences with water because women are the primary managers of water in the home, and their labour, time and livelihoods are significantly impacted by the lack of safe water. The first half of the chapter will report on the 'gendered impact' of water scarcity in Cochabamba and will argue that networked systems of water in the *zona sur* should be considered part of a 'feminist agenda' since having access to networked water systems decreases women's physical workloads and the costs of household water. For households in *the zona sur* that rely on private water vendors, not only are women's daily physical workloads increased but dependence on unregulated, expensive and

questionable-quality of water further deepens their emotional strain. Women therefore benefit from networked water systems, even though the governance of these committees is not perfect from a gendered perspective. The second half of the chapter will report on the role of women in water governance, focusing on the gendered limitations of water network systems: male community members hold most of the decision-making power and occupy most of the leadership positions within these committees. Progressive NGOs, such as Asociación Yaku play an important role in the *zona sur*'s waterscape as they promote a politics of equity and justice in support of community-managed water systems that build on and develop women's agency.

Before turning to an analysis of daily practice of women that rely on different water service providers in the *zona sur*, it is important to situate residents' diverse water experiences within broader processes of historical change and development in the city. In particular, I will firstly describe the biophysical and political waterscape of Cochabamba to elucidate the broader, city-wide structures of water governance.

Case Study Site: Cochabamba – The Biophysical and Political Waterscape

The city of Cochabamba, nestled in an Andean mountain valley at an altitude of 2,800m, is located in central Bolivia in an administrative department of the same name. Cochabamba derives from two Quechua words: *qucha* (lake) and *pampa* (plain), meaning 'the place of the lakes', and its inhabitants benefited from the region's comparatively rich water sources for many generations. For the past 55 years or so, however, Cochabamba has been marked by water scarcity as its principal source, the glaciers in the Tunari mountain range, have become less able to meet the needs of the region's growing population (Grandydier Felipe & Tinta, 2006). Cochabamba has a semi-arid climate and the region receives 350-500mm of rain annually, and has limited superficial water resources (Alarcón Rodríguez, 2013). As in many parts of the world, Cochabamba's water resources suffer from contamination and over-exploitation (Los Tiempos, 2013a). Multiple sources of contamination from industrial factories and improper disposal of sewage waste (see appendix iii) have seriously degraded surface and ground water resources (Ledo, 2013).

The 2013 population of metropolitan Cochabamba was just over 1.5 million, including the municipalities of Cochabamba (known as the *cercado*), Sacaba, Quillacollo, Colcapirhua, Tiquipaya, Vinto and Sipe Sipe. Currently around 919,000, the population of the *cercado* is expected to reach 1 million by 2016 (MMAyA, 2013). Once agrarian, in recent decades the region's economy has become dominated by commerce, services, and small-scale industry (Assies, 2003). This urban transformation has been partly due to an influx of migrants. The population of the department of Cochabamba and its capital grew dramatically in the 1980s following the collapse of the tin market and the subsequent lay-off of 23,000 miners, many of whom moved to urban centers in search of jobs (Kohl & Farthing, 2006). Between 1976 and 1992, the population in the capital more than doubled from 205,000 to 414,000, however this population growth was not met with a corresponding expansion of public services (Assies, 2003). The expansion of services has not kept pace with population growth since then. The remainder of the population gets its water from tanker trucks, privately constructed wells, or community-managed organizations such as cooperatives, associations, and water committees (Assies, 2003).



Figure 1: Salimi, Kate (2013): City centre, District 12

A trip from the north to the south in the city makes a strong visual impact of the disparities in water availability. The northern side of the city is rich with greenery, foliage-filled parks and tree-lined boulevards that gradually gives way to dusty streets and barren hillsides as you reach the *zona sur*. The southern reaches of the city, crisscrossed with dry creeks and ditches, are undeniably water poor. Water scarcity has been a problem in the region for decades, given overexploited groundwater aquifers and a watershed that drains northwards, away from the city (Vera Varela, 1995). Cochabamba has highly uneven groundwater distribution, with the wealthier northern areas of the city sitting atop plentiful aquifers and large parts of the generally poorer southern region without any fresh groundwater at all, or only available from very deep wells.

SEMAPA has been in charge of supplying water to the city since its establishment in 1985 (with a brief intermission from 1999-2000, when its privatization incited the Water War). SEMAPA's water is drawn from both surface water and groundwater sources, with the former meeting 40% of the utility's demands. Two systems of dams and storage facilities capture surface water and deliver it to the northern and central areas of the cities, while four sets of deep wells to the west of the city deliver water to the central and (in a limited sense) the southern regions (SEMAPA, 2003). To date, the municipal water system fails to serve close to half of the city's residents (43.39%) (SEMAPA, 2013). The city's failure to keep pace with the rising demand is notoriously poor, with water and sanitation coverage rates falling far below those of the country's two other major metropolitan areas, La Paz/El Alto in the highlands and Santa Cruz in the lowlands (MMAyA, 2009). Both SEMAPA and the municipal government admit that performance has been dismal, and link this failure to unmanageable population increase as well as internal governance failure. Plagued by corruption and inefficiency (Driessen, 2008), SEMAPA has failed to extend provision beyond the affluent north and city centre to the south and the Misicuni¹⁹ dam does not yet guarantee water for the southern zone (Laurie & Marvin, 1999; Marston, 2014).



Figure 2: Salimi, Kate (2013): Zona Sur, District 14

Cochabamba's *Zona Sur*

Cochabamba's southern zone, like many peri-urban landscapes, is characterized by widespread lack of resources and elevated rates of poverty, along with rapid population growth, unregulated housing construction, and a lack of urban planning. The southern zone also suffers

¹⁹ Much of the hope for increased service lies in the completion of the MISICUNI project. The main purpose of the project is to dam and divert water from the Misicuni, Viscachas, and Putucuni watersheds to the city (see Laurie & Marvin (1999) for a detailed map). The Misicuni watershed is separated from the city by the Tunari mountain range, and it drains northwards, away from the city, which has always been frustrating for *Cochabambinos* anxious to supplement their own failing water sources (Laserna, 2000). The tunnel was completed in 2005, but the rest remains in progress, and is unlikely to be completed anytime in the near future.

from a lack of groundwater, and contamination of existing water sources (Canedo, 2013). The city is divided into 14 political districts (see appendix i) that vary considerably in terms of access to potable water and sanitation. The southern region of the city, which consists of Districts 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 14, is generally acknowledged to have the least access (see appendix ii).

Approximately half of the city's population is located in the *zona sur* (some 462,855 people according to MMAyA's 2013 data). As displayed in Table 1, rates of coverage by the municipal water utility do not exceed 6.8% in the *zona sur* (apart from Districts 5 and 6, which border the city centre).

Table 1: Population, Area and Population Density of the *Zona Sur* and Municipality

Zone	Population (2012)	Area (ha)	Density (pop/ha)	SEMAPA coverage (%)
Municipality <i>Cercado</i>	918, 844	10, 605	87	59.7
District 5	76, 580	638	120	100
District 6	80, 661	459	176	80.8
District 7	31, 028	318	98	0
District 8	69, 453	1, 289	54	6.8
District 9	157, 011	2, 636	60	2
District 14	48, 122	409	118	3.2

(Source: MMAyA, 2013; NDF & IDB, 2013)

The residents of the *zona sur* can pay up to 10% of their monthly income on water services, while wealthier residents located in the city centre and northern zones pay on average just 1% of their monthly income for water of better quality (Linsalata, 2013, p. 12). In terms of daily consumption²⁰, residents in the south use an average of 20 litres per day, compared to an average of 160 litres per day in the centre-north (Jaldín, 2012). There is also a marked difference between the uses of water in the centre-north areas of the city and the southern zone. In the former, residents use water from the public system to wash their cars, water their lawns, and for

²⁰ According to the UNDP (2006), between 50 and 100 litres of water per person per day are needed to ensure that most basic needs are met and few health concerns arise.

other non-reproductive activities, while those in the south are forced to conserve and optimize their limited water, both because of scarcity and high costs. In the peri-urban interface, access to water and sanitation services is largely needs-driven and informal (Allen, Dávila, Hofmann, 2006).

For the many houses in the *zona sur* that either lack public connections or receive insufficient quantities of water from them, there are two main sources of potable water: *aguateros*, truck vendors that sell water of questionable quality at exorbitant prices, or drilled wells. In much of the peri-urban south, groundwater is limited and these truck vendors are the only source of water. In other places, neighbourhoods have drilled wells and built communally owned water distribution networks to distribute the water. Where there is no groundwater, some community groups and neighbourhood associations have built distribution networks and have attached them to large storage tanks; in this way a neighbourhood can purchase a large amount of water from an *aguatero* at a bulk price, and distribute it among residents for a lower cost per cubic meter. The water is then stored in the organization's tanks until it is redistributed through a piped network to the member's homes. In both cases, the infrastructure is communally owned and accompanied by a management structure known as a water committee. According to Gerlak and Wilder (2012), 30% of the southern zone's water users receive water from community-managed systems, while the remaining 70% rely on water from truck vendors (p.10).

District 14, Villa Sebastian Pagador

The community members and residents I interviewed for this research lived in the southernmost district of Cochabamba, District 14, which was formerly and is still commonly known as Villa Sebastian Pagador (or simply Villa Pagador). District 14 is located in Cochabamba's south-east. Covering 69.39 hectares, the district is bordered by a hill known as Kiri-Kiri to the east, the ENDE electrical plant to the north, the Gualberto Villaroel refinery to the west, and the Tuna Sanimayo ravine to the south. The city's Metropolitan Master Plan indicated that Villa Pagador had 48,122 residents as of 2012 (MMAyA, 2013), more than double its recorded population of 21,784 in the 2001 census. Still very much a community of migrants, half of the residents of Villa Pagador were born outside of the municipality (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández et al., 2008). Upon the first arrival of migrants from Oruro in 1977, their vision of the area was to create a 'New Oruro' (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández, Calvimonte, Torres, 2008).

Desolate, with the nearest road a two-hour walk away, the first years were especially difficult for the residents, who, as one of their first organized activities, worked to clear streets so that water trucks could service the area after the well they had initially built could no longer serve the growing community (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández et al., 2008). Similar to the origins of other communities in the *zona sur*, men, women and children collectivized their labour to build their neighbourhoods from the ground up:

When I arrived in this neighbourhood, there was absolutely nothing – no electricity, no water. Once we built our house, we lit it with candles. But little by little other neighbours began arriving and the neighbourhood grew. Together we all submitted paperwork to get electricity...after several years we began our own water system. Each family pays a quota. Some families didn't want to pay at the beginning, but later they realized that this is our own effort, nothing more (resident of the *zona sur*, as cited in Beltrán, 2004, p. 25).

In terms of socio-economic data, District 14 is characterized by the persistent marginalization common to the southern region of the city. Average household incomes in the district fall between 2,323-2,587bs per month (US\$325-362), compared to 4,470-6,504bs (US\$626-910) in the city centre²¹ (NDF & IDB, 2013, p. 55). Teen pregnancy rates in the district are double those in the centre-north areas of the city, at 10%, and the birth rate is the third highest in the municipality at 3.95. Childhood mortality is also high, with 97 of every 1000 babies born alive dying before the age of one. This rate is the highest in the municipality and twice that of the rate in District 12, the city centre (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández et al., 2008). District 14 is also one of the driest areas of Cochabamba, therefore getting water, either by extraction or delivery, is more expensive than in other parts of the city.

Water Service Delivery in the *Zona Sur*: The 'Everydayness' and Micropolitics of Water

***Aguateros*, or Water Delivery Trucks**

Aguateros are water delivery businesses which transport water from private sources, located mostly in the north of the city, to sell in both unserved and underserved areas. While

²¹ Districts 11 and 12

some community organizations own their own tanker trucks and hire personnel to drive them²², the majority of these operators function privately and for-profit. Some *aguateros* sell directly to the end-users, while others sell to water committees or OTBs, filling their cisterns several times daily for the water to be distributed through a piped network (will be discussed further below). Many *aguateros* are affiliated with unions, through which they articulate their demands or opposition to issues such as government regulation initiatives. Most *aguateros* are also tied to a management organization, to which they pay a monthly fee for affiliation in addition to the cost of the truck and gas. *Aguateros* typically make 4-5 trips per day from the water sources in the north of the city to the water-poor southern zone.

For some residents, the water is delivered directly to their home, while others who live in areas with poor access (those who live in areas with no roads or steep hillsides), or have little storage water capacity in their home, must transport water on foot to the home, which can take often several trips (personal communication, July 2013). People with little water storage capacity (200-400 litres) and remote homes have a hard time convincing *aguateros* to sell them water. Since there is no scheduled route, people in need of water must wait at home until they hear the beeping horn of the *aguatero* in the community. Once they hear the horn, they dash out into the street looking for the water truck. It is common to see three or four people running through the community when the *aguatero* is out, trying to anticipate which street he will turn down and how they can find him (Wutich & Ragsdale, 2008). A study examining the daily emotional stress produced by dependence on water vendors for their water supply, reported residents having to beg, chase, and argue with water truck vendors, who preferred customers who were wealthier, had larger storage tanks, and lived in easily accessible zones of their neighbourhood (Wutich & Ragsdale, 2008). One woman reported that her family had trouble buying water because, “the water truck did not



Figure 3: Peñaranda, Ida (2013): EPSA-PDA *aguatero*, District 14

²² As in the case of the water committee EPSA-PDA, located in District 14 (Shirley Morejón, personal communication, July 2013).

want to come into this zone because almost nobody has a large storage tank” (Wutich & Ragsdale, 2008, p.2122).

The acquisition of water in these conditions is a difficult daily task and fall mostly on women’s shoulders as part of their domestic labour (Beltrán, 2004; Bustamante, Peredo, Udaeta, 2005). The necessity of buying water from private vendors places a heavy burden on residents of the southern zone, particularly for women who are primarily responsible for the reproductive activities of collecting water, as one woman from the *zona sur* summarized:

We used to live in the South of Alto Cochabamba. In that zone people didn't have water. From 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, I had to be standing ready to buy water, since that was the hour that the water truck arrived. If I got there late, we didn't get water. (Silvia, former resident of Alto Cochabamba in District 8, as cited in Beltrán, 2004, p. 24).

Gendered Health and Economic Consequences of *Aguatero* Water Service Delivery

Although SEMAPA is hardly noted for its excellent water quality, the water vendors are completely unregulated; while some obtain water from reasonably safe sources, there is no guarantee that they all do. Until recently, *aguateros* were not required to meet any health safety requirements. In order to improve the quality of water delivered by private vendors, over 200 *aguateros* have recently been brought into the formal system through registration with the Environmental Health Unit (*Unidad de Salud Ambiental*) of the Departmental Health Service (*Servicio Departamental de Salud*, SEDES²³). As part of the registration process, inspections are performed on the internal and external state of the vehicles and hoses, in order to identify potential sources of contamination (Los Tiempos, 2014). A sticker on the water truck identifies them as being registered with the SEDES. The purpose of the registration is to reduce the risk of contaminated water through establishing minimum conditions for certification, but regulation is difficult as SEDES can only give training and work with suppliers to increase education on health measures, and then it is in the hands of the individual *aguateros*. In fact, SEDES had wanted to close several privately owned water sources which were contaminated with E-coli, but were unable to do so as it would have cut off access for people with no other way to secure water (Claudia Cossío, communication with Madeline West, July 2013).

²³ SEDES is the decentralized public health agency of the Government of the Department of Cochabamba (*La Gobernación de Departamento de Cochabamba*).

Likely contaminated water from *aguateros* and the health consequences that ensue are well known by residents whom rely on *aguateros* for domestic water supply: “I always boil the water before my kids, myself or my husband drinks it. I still worry even after it is boiled” (personal communication, July 2013). However, there is no guarantee that residents would know how to minimize the risk of contracting the various illnesses from contaminated water beyond the routine practice of boiling water. Residents regularly complain that they are reluctant to use the water for consumption if it appears, smells or tastes ‘dirty’ (Mehta, Allouche, Nicol, Walnycki, 2014), and there is nowhere for water users to voice complaints or concerns: “If there is a problem with supply or dirty water, who can we complain to?” (name withheld, personal communication, July 2013). One rumour, which many people I spoke to believe to be true, is that water vendors fill their tanks out of the swimming pools of Cochabamba’s wealthiest neighbourhoods. This rumour is a powerful expression of the inequities in Cochabamba’s water distribution system; many *zona sur* residents believe that even the best water they have access to is only deemed swimming-pool quality for those living in the affluent north side of the city.

Furthermore, for those residents that collect water directly from *aguateros*, the water is at further risk of contamination while being stored in barrels in their homes. The costs associated with sickness and diseases are routinely borne by women who, in addition to being primarily responsible for water collection and management in the home, are also expected to care for sick family members (Sultana, Mohanty, Miraglia, 2014). Save a very small proportion (0.34%) of the population of District 14 that own expensive household water tanks which reduce the probability of stored water becoming contaminated, in-house contamination is more likely for those using metal barrels. The majority of residents living in the *zona sur* must store their water in metal barrels, increasing the likelihood of water contamination (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández et al., 2008).

In 2004, private vendors charged 4 Bs (\$0.50 USD, 0.020 Bs/L or 20Bs/m³) for one *turril*, a cylindrical container that holds 200 litres of water. When households buy in bulk or have a long-standing relationship with a vendor, they can negotiate to buy a *turril* of water for about 3.5 Bs (\$0.018 Bs/L or 17.5Bs/m³) (Wutich, 2006, p.92). The frequent need to boil water for consumption further compounds the already exorbitant costs of water from *aguateros*: “We drink water after boiling it. We also have to think about the costs of boiling the water. I only boil

water for drinking” (name withheld, personal communication, July 2013).

Community-owned and Governed Water Systems: Cochabamba’s Water Committees

Community-owned and governed water systems²⁴ are territorially-based organizations through which members participate in the decision-making processes related to water governance. There are several different organizational structures of community-managed water systems in Cochabamba including water committees, cooperatives, unions, rural indigenous community groups, municipalities and neighbourhood councils (Marston, 2014). Within the city of Cochabamba, including the north and the city center, there are approximately 200 community water systems operating in the Cochabamba’s southern zone alone, each serving anywhere from 50 to over 900 families (CeVI, 2013). The majority of the systems are located in the peri-urban south of the city, in Districts 7, 8, 9, and 14, where the public network does not exist. The systems vary in age, but the oldest have been operational for around twenty-five years (Roberta Aguilar, personal communication, June 2013).

These communal networks have varied origin stories: while some were completely independent, grassroots projects born out of a shared need for water, others were established with the help of church-based and non-profit organizations. Water committees in the *zona sur* have also been shaped by the heterogeneous backgrounds of their members, whose past experience in miners’ unions, peasant unions, and indigenous community structures influence management practices (Marston, 2014). Regardless of the specific origins of a given water system, neighbours have worked and invested for years to resolve their water needs, and this work has meant substantial collective efforts that are important to the lives of those living in the community. The time and energy invested in this process provided the foundations for many of the communities in the *zona sur*, and is an ongoing process:

Water is something we take care of because it is hard to get...so we organized. We (members of the water committee) have paid a quote of almost \$3,000 (USD) in two years in order to have our own water system. We organized the water committee and we have

²⁴ Within this research project, only water committees were studied (Central Itocta, 22 de abril, EPSA-PDA). Water committees are the most common form of community water organization in Cochabamba. In Bolivia as a whole as of 2004, 56% of all water service providers were committees (Viceministerio de Servicios Básicos, 2004 as cited in Quiroz, 2006, p. 27)

stayed organized. It has been very, very hard work for us women. (Julia, resident of San Miguel in the *zona sur*, as cited in Beltrán, 2004, p. 13).

Upon formation, new committees leverage their existing resources to construct their water systems, with members volunteering physical labour and distributing management responsibilities on a rotating basis according to their needs. In some cases committees have contracted private companies to dig wells or perform other large-scale construction projects, however the majority of the water committees in the south are reliant on *aguateros* to fill their tanks. Internal organization varies between committees; however, the directorate is typically comprised of 5-6 elected volunteers who serve for two-year terms. There is usually a president who organizes and runs weekly meetings and a secretary who is in charge of collecting tariffs from community members. Both president and secretary – and any other authority position the water committee might include – are elected or appointed on a rotational system, depending on the water committee's internal regulations. The water committee also includes associate members known as '*socios*', and regular members known as '*vecinos*' (neighbours). Associate members are typically defined as original members who volunteered their time and work in building or establishing the system in place, by digging, laying pipes, installing equipment, or who have paid some agreed upon amount of money. Democratic participation is a central theme in the water committees, and *socios* who do not attend committee meetings are fined 10-20 Bs. (Daniel Flores, personal communication, July 2013). The directorate is accountable to the committee members, who, assembled together, have the final say on all decisions:

A community committee is an organization where the population, assembled together, is the maximum authority. We have regulations that we have developed ourselves, without the guidance of an attorney. We have made our regulations so that we can be successful. Our committee is a necessity for us; it is an initiative of our own, where we can decide for ourselves. (Don Filemón, former president of water committee 22 de abril, July 12, 2010, cited in Linsalata, 2013)

The water committees breached municipal, national, and international consciousness more or less simultaneously, with the outbreak of the *Guerra del Agua* in 2000 (Marston, 2014). Prior to the Water War, many *Cochabambinos* living in the city center were unaware of the existence of water committees just to their south; those who knew assumed that they were

makeshift systems that would quickly be dissolved when SEMAPA finally extended its supply network to the southernmost reaches of the city. This is certainly not the situation any longer. Water committees played a major part in the *Coordinadora de Defensa de Agua y Vida* (Coordinator of Defense of Water and Life), the grassroots organization that coordinated protests against the foreign private conglomerate Aguas del Tunari, largely because the latter had been awarded sole access to surface water, groundwater, and even rainwater within the area of the concession (see Chapter 3 for more detail). This provision granted the company the right to take control of all autonomous water systems without compensating the people who had built them (Olivera & Lewis, 2004). Indeed, one of the few lasting legacies of the Water War is that the water committees are now very conscious of their own powers of self-organization (*auto-organización*) (personal communication, Carlos Crespo, June 2013).

Since the Water War, Cochabamba's water committees have strengthened their political position. According to Marston (2014), the committees have employed a range of scalar strategies to transform their organizations from informal to 'quasi-formal' structures, and are now a more visible component of the city's waterscape. These strategies have included the formation of an umbrella organization (ASICASUDD-EPSAS²⁵); affiliation with state-sanctioned units of decentralized governance (OTBs); and engagement with local and international NGOs. Table 2 outlines the main characteristics of the three water committees and SEMAPA, to allow for simple comparisons.

²⁵ Until recently, community water organizations in Cochabamba's southern zone were backed by an umbrella organization known as ASICASUDD-EPSAS (Departmental Association of Community Water Systems of the South and Water and Sanitation Service Providers of Cochabamba). ASICASUDD-EPSAS was founded in 2004 and served as an organization for all forms of water and sanitation service providers in Cochabamba's southern zone, and played a central role in advocating for the committees following the Water War.

Table 2: Comparison of Water Systems in the Zona Sur

Provider	Source	Delivery	Access	Cost	Members
SEMAPA	Various superficial and underground sources	Piped system	Varies by zone, 24 hours in central and northern zones	5.05bs (\$0.73)	819, 479 connections
EPSA-PDA	Their own wells and water intake system in northern zone	Their own water truck, to piped system	Rolling by group, two days a week for two hours	12.50bs (\$1.81)	478
Central Itocta	Water trucks	Piped network from storage tanks	24 hours	15bs (\$2.17)	1,900
Abril 22	Water trucks	Piped network from storage tanks	24 hours	15bs (\$2.17)	750

Women's Involvement in the Zona Sur Water Committees

Prior to the establishment of water committees in the *zona sur*, community members recall “times of great suffering and sacrifice” (*momentos de mucho sufrimiento y sacrificio*), which involved walking long distances to fill drums with water from wells, waiting for and chasing after water trucks that rarely arrived more than once weekly, and finally waiting in long lines to access their first well, which only provided water in the rainy season (Ramiro Baldarrama Fernández et al., 2008). Mostly populated by migrants from indigenous communities and miners from Oruro, Potosí y La Paz, newly arrived residents to the *zona sur* were not accustomed to the lack of potable water. The scarcity of water in the *zona sur* compared to the water supply in their hometowns has necessitated that community members, particularly women, be highly conscientious of how much water they use in the household. Upon leaving a Central Itocta water committee meeting on a Sunday afternoon I asked four women chatting outside the community hall what tasks they undertook on a daily basis to save water in their homes. The women gave several different answers: “wash plates with less water,” “take care of clothes,” “don’t shower daily,” “use water mostly just for cooking,” “remind my children constantly to save water” (personal communication, July 2013).

My interviews confirm the findings of other researchers who have found that water scarcity has a significant gendered impact. In an interview with Sonia Colque, former administrator of the water committee 22 de abril, she highlights differences in men and women's procurement and management of household water. She further highlights the water-related emotional distress borne on women when water is not carefully procured or managed in the household:

I think women are more aware of this issue...women tend to pay more attention and provide advice on how to save water, "be sure to close the faucet tightly" or "carefully and slowly open the faucet. " Compared to women, men are not as water conscientious. There are times yes, and when they are its when they see the cost expenditure of water, but for women we are also conscientious of when we waste water. We [women] feel good about ourselves when we conserve water, and when we waste water it hurts us very much²⁶ (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013).

As the above quote suggests, while men also worry about water, women consider themselves to be more conscientious to preserve and safeguard water, and suffer from the emotional stress when water is wasted. In a study conducted by Sultana (2009) on arsenic contamination of drinking water in Bangladesh, Sultana (2009) found that women's identities are wrapped up with their abilities to provide sufficient quantities of good quality water for their families. Similar to the findings of Sultana, Mohanty and Miraglia (2014), the women whom I interviewed repeatedly mentioned their challenges to fulfill familial roles, which are linked to problems of access, quality, timing or fetching hassles including carrying heavy water pitchers.

“Vamos las mujeres, pero estamos contadas”: Participatory Exclusion in the Zona Sur Water Committees

Corina Vásquez, a woman in late fifties who arrived to District 14 from Oruro in 1984 when “cuando había nada” (when there was nothing) worked full-time to see her

²⁶ Yo creo que las mujeres son más conscientes de este tema, bueno, no todas, pero hay mujeres que sí, que si vean, que si saben, que van dando consejos también, “no es que tienes que cerrarlo bien”, o “que tienes que abrir a tu piletita así suavito y no te cobran mucho”. Pero a los hombres es como que no, digamos, los hombres van gastando. Hay momentos que sí, porque tienes que pagar allí es donde les duele a ellos, pero a las mujeres, nos duele haber mal gastado el agua. Pagamos bien satisfactorio cuando sabemos que recibimos más, pero cuando mal gastamos el agua o pero cuando no han cuidado bien si nos duele mucho.

neighbourhood's water committee up and running. For the last 14 years she has been working as a full-time plumber for the EPSA-PDA water committee, and although she speaks proudly of the community's collective work, it was and remains hard work: "the work is constant, there is always work. I dig, I make tube connections, I clean." (Corina Vásquez, personal communication, July 2013)²⁷ The only female plumber in the *zona sur*, Doña Corina began her work in the community as a volunteer health promoter and cook in her neighbourhood while working full-time as a clothing merchant. During her years as a community volunteer, Doña Corina wanted to work in plumbing to be closer to her six children and home, but she received resistance from the community as they did not believe that a woman would be able to cope



Figure 4: Peñaranda, Ida, (2013): Corina Vásquez in her neighbourhood, District 14

with such hard work: "At the beginning, not even my neighbourhoods believed I was capable for the position, but I was convinced that I could and I insisted to be the one for the position." (Corina Vásquez, personal communication, July 2013)²⁸ When I ask Doña Vásquez how it feels to be well-known in the *zona sur* for being the only female plumber she proudly responds: "I like being able to fix things, I always want to do this." (Corina Vásquez, personal communication, July 2013)²⁹

While Corina Vásquez, despite initial community resistance, gained new opportunities for leadership and for learning, her experiences in her committee certainly are not representative of all women's experiences being involvement in their water committees. At the community level, men are primarily responsible for water-related decision-making and management in many societies (Singh, 2012), including in Bolivia. Men's roles as community leaders, engineers,

²⁷ Constante es el trabajo...siempre hay trabajo. Yo ando cavando, empalmando, y limpiando.

²⁸ Al principio ni los vecinos creían que podría con el trabajo, pero yo estaba muy convencida e insistió para obtener el puesto.

²⁹ Me gusta arreglar cosas...quiero arreglar siempre.

construction workers, mechanics and heads of households all facilitate their disproportionate representation in water decision-making. In contrast, women's historic inability to participate fully in governance excluded them from key roles in community water management (Ray, 2007), and in many cases women's participation in water decision-making has been minimal, marginalized or merely symbolic (Cornwall, 2003; Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012).

During field study visits to District 14, I had the opportunity to attend two Central Itocta water committee meetings in June and July. Similar to other water committees in the *zona sur*, general meetings are held monthly and usually on a weekend when the majority of community members stay close to home and wage-earning men and women usually have a day-off. Central Itocta's meetings are held on a Sunday morning, and as indicated by the current President, Daniel Flores, meetings can last anywhere from 1.5 to 2 hours depending on the length of the agenda for a given meeting (personal communication, July 2013). At the entrance of the community hall, Roberta Aguilar, the administrator of Central Itocta sits behind a chair with her young girl on her lap, crossing names off the attendance list of the community members that have arrived. Inside, rows of chairs fill the community hall and as members begin to trickle in and take a seat, three women community members pass out cups of pop and cookies to those already seated. The meetings began promptly at 10:00am and sitting behind a table with the *Mesa Directiva* (Board of Directors), Daniel Flores sets the agenda. On both occasions, there are upwards to 100 people in the room and a number of people are left to stand leaning on walls. For these two monthly meetings I attend, discussion is dominated by two topics: 1) the community's thoughts for Central Itocta to contract a Korean company to drill a well in their neighbourhood³⁰; and, 2) organizing a protest at SEMAPA's headquarters³¹. While I note at both meetings that

³⁰ The well, if successful, has the potential to cut the cost of water by up to 50%. The company was chosen for its ability to drill rock, as the identified aquifer is located 180 metres underground. The project will cost approximately US\$35,000, or 850bs per member, in addition to the costs of future distribution and the energy required to extract water. The process is risky, as water in the zone is sometimes salinated (Daniel Flores, personal communication, July 2013).

³¹ A key priority for Central Itocta is getting hooked up to SEMAPA's sanitation network. In July 2013, approximately 60 members of OTB Central Itocta gathered outside SEMAPA's headquarters to demand that the utility finish construction on a sewerage network that they had left half-complete for the past four years, despite taking money from the community members to fund the project. The OTB has purchased toilets for every home in the community, and is waiting for the people to build spaces for the toilets so that they can be installed (Daniel Flores, personal communication, July 2013).

there are roughly equal numbers of both women and men, there are differences in men and women's participation. Far more often than women, male community members raise their hand to speak or stand to address the group. On both occasions, women addressed the group-at-large less often than men and maintained side conversations amongst one another speaking in low voices.

An ethnographic study by Wutich (2012) investigating local management practices of a water committee located in the southern zone of District 9, observed similar gendered differences in participation during monthly water committee meetings. She observes that the "vast majority of discussions—both by leaders of the Board of Directors and community members—were dominated by men" (p. 108). Furthermore, the Board of Directors was primarily male, with just a few women serving, in which the female members were more involved in other community projects including the development of the local market and less involved in water governance (Wutich, 2012). Wutich (2012) also noted that women's involvement as community members was also less active than that of their male counterparts: "as several long-time residents explained to me, women felt that their input was neither welcomed nor valued. As a result, women generally sat on street curbs during general meetings, a short distance from the action, knitting, chatting and looking after children" (p.108).

Following a Central Itocta water committee meeting held in District 14 I had the opportunity to interview the president, Daniel Flores. Doñ Daniel is an elderly man, who is well respected in the community and is described by his neighbours as a soft-spoken and patient leader. I asked him of his experiences leading the monthly general water meetings for the last 11 years under his leadership, and asked him to share his thoughts on the opportunity for both men and women members to participate in the monthly meetings: "...There is almost equal participation, 50-50 I would say, between men and women. Each person contributes ... women present their ideas and opinions, just as the men do" (Daniel Flores, personal communication, July 2013).³²

When I asked Sonia Colque of her perceptions of both men and women's participation in monthly water committee meetings, she gave a very different response from President Doñ

³² ...en las asambleas participan digamos por casi 50-50 entonces cada uno pone su opinión entonces, así es lo que hace...ellas también gestionan sus planteamientos como mujeres, también como varones.

Daniel:

I am going to tell you our reality. In the meetings, there are more women present. But those who participate are the men. There may be one or two women in the group who will consistently participate. But in general, we [women] are there, but we remain silent (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013).³³

When I ask Señora Colque, why she believes women, although stronger in numbers at the general meetings, speak out less in meetings than men, she responds:

I think that us women are self-conscious, that we feel that we are not equal to men...we lack the courage, and the confidence to say what we think. There are women [in my water committee] that have shared great ideas with me, but they will not participate. We need to be confident that our ideas and opinions are just as important as men's, and deserve the same respect. But we do not feel this way; we feel inferior to men (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013).³⁴

From the passages above it is evident that although women are present with 'critical mass' at the meetings, their participation beyond attendance is often stifled by gendered power dynamics. The women I interviewed draw attention to familiar constraints that Agarwal (1997) highlight: official male bias; social constraints about women's capabilities and roles; and the lack of public speaking experience. Lind (1997), who draws attention to the replication of gender inequalities in community structures, notes that, "increases in local power may not automatically translate into power for women" (p. 1217). This highlights the problem of treating "communities" as ungended units and "community participation" as an unambiguous step

³³ A ver, te voy a decir nuestra realidad. En las reuniones están más mujeres, están. Pero los que participan, son puro varones, las mujeres, no pues, son pocas y si participamos, son unas dos o tres que estamos participando constantemente diciendo que esto, que otro. En general, vamos las mujeres, pero estamos calladas.

³⁴ Yo pienso que como mujeres a veces nos sentimos como cohibidas, como que no somos iguales que el varón...no tienen la valentía, les falta seguridad de lo que ellas piensan. Ellas pueden- yo digo que hay mujeres que tienen buenas ideas, pero podemos hacer esto y esto, a ver, dile. Ella no va a decir nunca...no tenemos seguridad, nos falta sentirnos seguras de que nosotras como mujeres valemos mucho de que como mujeres podemos opinar igual que los hombres y tenemos esos mismos, el mismo respeto, el mismo igualdad digamos. Pero, no nos sentimos así, seguimos como mujeres sintiéndonos inferiores a los varones.

toward enhanced equality (Agarwal, 1997).

Although women outnumber men more often in the committee meetings as Sonia Colque notes, a ‘critical mass’ of women does not necessarily equate for more space for women’s concerns:

Yes, we [women] are present. But in my country there is much machismo. I don’t know if machismo is particular to my country or if it is prevalent everywhere but in my case when I look at my OTB, all the board members of the OTB are men. The president is a man, the vice-president is a man and, us, the women, we are seen as the cooks, with our place in the kitchen (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013).³⁵

On issues that do affect women-in-general, such as – access to a community water supply – it is crucial that women *qua women* are given space to articulate their concerns (Cornwall, 2000). Yet as Agarwal (1997) notes, simply having women present does not in of itself enable them to exercise their agency in decision-making arenas. Furthermore, as Phillips (1991) and Goetz (1999) have made clear, the presumption that women will necessarily represent women’s gender interests is more complex than is often recognized to be the case: “the representation of women as women potentially founders on both the difficulties of defining the shared interests of women and the difficulties of establishing mechanisms through which these interests are voiced” (Phillips, 1991, p. 90).

Strategies are needed to increase women’s confidence and awareness of their agency. In this endeavour, feminist scholars support models of collective action that can include the efforts of international organizations, national state and local governments and NGOS working at the grassroots level (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012). The presence of a gender-progressive NGO, especially a women’s organization, is a major factor: membership of such organizations, Agarwal (1997) argues, make women more self-confident to enable women to take up that space to effectively challenge their exclusion. One such organization in Cochabamba that is providing

³⁵ Si [las mujeres] están presentes pero en el país en que estoy, aquí en Bolivia, hay mucho machismo. No sé si es solo en Bolivia o en todo el mundo pero por ejemplo en mi OTB, te hablo de mi OTB, fuera del comité tenemos una junta de OTB, ¿ya?, todos los encargados son hombres, el presidente es hombre, el vicepresidente es hombre y a las mujeres nos ven como las cocineras, las que atendemos la cocina, que no sabemos opinar.

a site for women to voice their concerns and a stage from which to launch concerted actions that benefit women in particular and the community in general is Asociación Yaku.

The Role of NGOs: Improving Livelihoods and Building Capacity

While beginning with women's everyday experiences is necessary in the process of creating alternatives that are accountable to women (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012), addressing the marginalization of women's interests at the local level can be supported by partnerships with organizations outside the community. Ida Peñaranda, who worked with several water committees in the *zona sur* in her former position with the local NGO 'Fundación Abril'³⁶ recounts that women actively involved in their water committees nurtured women's self confidence and skills for becoming political actors in their community:

.... They do not feel the stigma of being from the *zona sur*. Rather they are proud of who they are, they are proud of their work, and proud that people outside of their community recognize that their work is interesting. (Ida Peñaranda, personal communication, July 2013)³⁷

Ida contributes the increase in many women's self-confidence to the *cursos de capacitaciones* (training courses) that not only her former NGO provided to water committees but also by other NGOs that are dedicated to promoting the sustainability of water committees through both activism and community engagement. Women I spoke with in District 14 also agreed that engagement with NGOs helped to build their self-confidence and re-affirmed the importance of their positions in their communities. Furthermore, community engagement with NGOs such as Fundación Abril has allowed women to make connection to larger-scale political processes through a bottom-up process of collective action:

My position in my water community helped me greatly to increase my social network; I was able to meet many people. For example, when I was in need of assistance I knew that I could go to Aguas Sustentable, knock on the door, and chat with engineers. I could go to

³⁶ Founded by Water War leader Oscar Olivera in 2002, Fundación Abril focuses on capacity-building through solidarity networks with water committees in the *zona sur*.

³⁷ No se sienten con el estigma de ser Zona Sureña que es un problema a veces que la gente carga. "Ah yo soy de la Zona Sur pobre, no sé qué" ¡No! están felices y orgullosas de lo que son, de lo que hacen, de que haya gente que reconozca de que hace un trabajo interesante.

Fundación Abril and meet with others to discuss ideas and plans. Before my participation in my water committee, I would have never had such an opportunity. My participation opened many doors for me to be able to solve our community's problems (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013).³⁸

Sonia Colque recalls that before she became involved with her water committee as an administrator, she lacked the necessary technical skills and was initially hesitant to take on the position:

I didn't know how to use a computer before I began working for my committee. But I wanted to become involved [in my committee]. I told myself, "Sonia, you can do it" and "why not? As a women, why couldn't you be able to? Go for it!" (Sonia Colque, personal communication, July 2013)³⁹



Figure 5: Peñaranda, Ida (2013): Sonia Colque attending a water committee member

By attending various *cursos de capacitaciones* Shirley Morejón recognized the importance of the inclusion of women in the *cursos*, as women play a vital role to solve water problems. Through their participation women have been able to expand their roles at the community level:

In the training courses, its women who participate in water education. And although men attend and participate, shortly after men will forget whereas the women apply what was

³⁸ [mi posición en mi comité] me ayudó a crecer en el ámbito social porque he conocido a un montón de gente, O sea, cuando algo pasa yo sé que puedo ir a Aguas Sustentable tocar la puerta buscar a los ingenieros, hablar con ellos decir, esto, esto, o ir a Fundación Abril, o buscarla a la Ida, decirle esto, esto. O sea, si puedo, pero antes como que no, donde voy a ir, si soy eso, ¿qué hago? No sé, digamos, sí, si te abre más puertas para poder ir solucionando tus cosas.

³⁹ No sabía como manejar una computadora. Yo no sabía nada de eso, pero si me metí. Uno creo porque me pregunté a mí misma y yo dije "Sonia, tú puedes" y yo me dije a mí misma "pues sí, ¿porque no?, una mujer ¿porque no podría? Pues, adelante". Y eso fue como un reto para mí, pues entré a trabajar y listo.

taught: “Remember, the engineer said that we need to this or that”. Women will also transfer their knowledge to the children (Shirley Morejón, personal communication, July 2013).⁴⁰

Feminist scholars have been critical of studies that have viewed the community as homogenous units characterized by stability and equality by revealing strongly entrenched power relations that engender elite dominance and social exclusion (Agarwal & Gibson, 1999; Cornwall, 2003). At the community level, women are constrained by both cultural and social taboos that impact their participation in the public sphere (Singh, 2012). I will discuss and analyze in the following section the participatory exclusions that women on a daily basis face in their community’s water committees.

Addressing Women’s Interests Beyond Practical Water Interests in Satélite de Norte

While not direct service providers, many NGOs and international cooperation agencies have been instrumental in providing financing and technical assistance for local water organizations in Cochabamba. As such they play an important role in the city’s promotion of community-run water systems. There are many NGOs working on water issues in the city, some of which assist in the development of technical solutions and capacity building, for example AguaTuya, CeVI, and Water for People while others, such as Fundación Abril (as discussed earlier in the chapter) and Asociación Yaku focus more on activism and community engagement in water issues.

Founded in Italy in 2007, Asociación Yaku⁴¹ is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to strengthening equitable and sustainable participatory-management water systems in the *zona sur*. In this effort, Asociación Yaku currently works with peri-urban communities in the Department of Cochabamba with three-full time staff based in Cochabamba city. Asociación Yaku recognizes that addressing inequitable gender relations is intricately linked to promoting

⁴⁰ Y además en las charlas mismas las mujeres son las que más participan en el tema de educación de agua, si, cuando hay charlas de capacitación vienen los hombres, pero estos hombres se sientan ese rato después se olvidan pero las mujeres se quedan con eso. “Ah no, la ingeniera ha dicho que no debemos hacer eso debemos hacer el otro” y les enseña a sus hijos también, recibir o cerrar, mantener cerrada.

⁴¹ In Italy, Asociación Yaku serves on the steering committee of the Italian Forum of Movements for Water as a Common Good; a horizontal network of actors including thousands of water committees, associations and unions that unite in solidarity against water privatization.

participatory and democratic processes in the management of water in the *zona sur*:

“[Asociación Yaku]’s promotes women’s meaningful participation by providing the space for women to be able to improve their self-esteem, to build alliances with one another and to increase their agency” (Boris Ríos, personal communication, July 2013).⁴²

One of Asociación Yaku’s most recent projects in Cochabamba has been working with a peri-urban community in Villa Satélite Norte in Tiquipaya to meet the demands of a 400-resident community by assisting in the construction of a sewage system and a wastewater treatment plant. Yaku’s approach is contextually driven with a focus to enable local people to articulate and analyze their own situations in their own terms: “A very practical aspect of our work is to understand each community we work in, and recognize the complex and particular reality of the community” (Boris Ríos, personal communication, August 2013).⁴³ With support from OTB Villa Satélite and Fundación Abril, the technical objectives of the 2-year project as outlined by Project Coordinator, Boris Ríos were to: 1) improve the sanitary conditions of the community of Villa Satélite through comprehensive structural interventions; 2) increase self-management capacity of the community through technical training, environmental education and cultural and political empowerment; and, 3) establish and strengthen the capacity of the sewage committee (*comité de alcantarillado*). Beyond technical assistance, Asociación Yaku facilitated gender equality training and education in order to: 1) promote active and purposeful participation of women in the community sewer system; 2) promote in the community critical development about gender gaps and power relations; and lastly, 3) institutionalize the rights and interests of women in the community within ASICASUDD-EPSAS’s constitution and regulations.

Women-only spaces (*espacio de las mujeres*), and community-at-large meetings with the OTB Satélite Norte were held on a monthly basis during the duration of the project that incorporated gender equality training and education (See appendix vi for one of Yaku’s meeting outlines for the women-only spaces and slides from a presentation shown to the community at a OTB assembly meeting). Yaku’s approach calls attention to the necessity of challenging gender

⁴² [Asociación Yaku] toma mucho el enfoque de equidad de género en todos los trabajos que estamos intentando de hacer...nuestra perspectiva es tratar de fortalecer su autoestima, que se vayan encontrando ellas mismas, que vayan desarrollando capacidades.

⁴³ Una cosa que hemos hecho prácticamente es entender cada lugar donde vamos a intervenir, como una realidad compleja y particular.

inequalities in a way that builds on and develops women's agency, where steps are taken to not merely bring women to the table but to enhance the power they have over decisions that affect their lives and communities:

One of the important tasks we have is to promote the effective participation of women in the areas of decision making.... We [Asociación Yaku] believe it is important for women to become key players in the transformation of their own reality.... It is crucial that women have a space where they can meet with one another and be able to form alliances (Boris Ríos, personal communication, August 2013).⁴⁴



Figure 6: Boris, Ríos (2013): Women-only meetings, Satélite Norte

Asociación Yaku facilitated meetings with 90 participants in the women-only spaces, where women were given the opportunity and space to discuss their specific interests and concerns of the project including peer support for the role of women in decision-making capacities. Both the women-only spaces and community-at-large meetings allowed for discussion of various gender-specific issues: including topics on the gender division of labour, and gender stereotypes. A notable positive impact of women's participation in the project led to the creation of a community-developed proposal to incorporate the specific interests of women within ASICASUDD-EPSAS's constitution and regulations in order to, "strengthen the participation of women in all areas and levels of the organization" (Boris Ríos, personal communication, August 2013).⁴⁵ Furthermore, women's interests were taken into account to ensure that toilets were installed within the household:

⁴⁴ Unas de las muy importantes tareas que tenemos es la de fomentar la participación efectiva de las mujeres en los espacios de toma de decisiones... nosotros creemos [Asociación Yaku] que es importante que las mujeres vuelvan actores fundamentales de la transformación de su propia realidad... es importante dar en todas las intervenciones los espacios donde ellas se encuentren, y puedan hacer alianzas.

⁴⁵ Fortalecer la participación de las mujeres en todos los ámbitos e instancias de la organización.

Following discussions and debates among women of the OTB Satélite, they reached agreements to demand that the project take into account their needs and interests which included to ensure that toilets were built inside the homes (Boris Ríos, personal communication, August 2013).⁴⁶

A few short months into the women-only meetings, women's gender interests beyond their practical interests surrounding their involvement in the community project were raised:

Gradually within the women-only spaces, women became more confident to speak and the issue of domestic violence became a topic. It was in this particular meeting that it was clear that if we don't provide the space for women to talk about their experiences of domestic violence then there is no way we can just continue talking about gender equality and of the importance of equal participation within the project (Boris Ríos, personal communication, August 2013).⁴⁷

In response to the women's disclosure of domestic violence in the community, Asociación Yaku immediately looked to the expertise of local women's organizations and governmental organizations to appropriately address the issue. They collaborated with various other organizations in the city for the remainder of the project. Asociación Yaku acknowledges women's needs for equal access and control of a community's water supply is important, but that women's struggles in other arenas of gender equality must also be addressed:

Yes, it is crucial to involve women in all aspects of their community: in the community work, in the discussions, in the decision-making processes, but if we ignore or choose not to discuss the issue of gender violence against women then how can we talk about gender equality? ... For women to be able to address their specific interests, particularly the issue of domestic violence, is so important especially right now in Bolivia (Boris Ríos, personal

⁴⁶ A raíz de las reflexiones y debates entre las mujeres de la OTB, lograron acuerdos para exigir que se tomaran en cuenta sus necesidades e intereses, basadas fundamentalmente en precautelar la seguridad física, al instalar los baños dentro de las viviendas y; de salud para beneficio de los habitantes de Villa Satélite en general y para su familia en particular, al exigir la construcción de la planta de tratamiento.

⁴⁷ Las mujeres empezaron un poco a hablar en la reunión y poco a poco fue surgiendo este tema de la violencia domestica como recurrente...entonces ese momento fue muy importante porque está clarísimo que si no se resuelve este problema [la violencia domestica] con tampoco podemos hablar de equidad de participación justa de la gestión.

communication, August 2013).⁴⁸

In their discussion of alternatives to privatization, Mohanty and Miraglia (2012) argue that alternatives that provide women with skills, knowledge, and political education to mobilize their strategic interests are likely to have the most lasting impact in terms of gender justice (the elimination of hierarchies and unequal power based on gender). Asociación Yaku's value for equity in access to resources, participation, and leadership within community-led water systems has guided their work to be gender sensitive, to centralize women's experiences in the origin of the project and to define women's roles as leaders and decision makers.

Conclusion

The focus on gender-based inequalities of water service delivery in the *zona sur* requires a focus at multiple levels including the household, the community and the state. Who is responsible for arranging water? Who labours for it? Under what circumstances? And at what physical, emotional, social and financial costs? These costs are all gendered and contextual, as patriarchal norms influence people's sense of self and what they can accomplish. For communities in the *zona sur* that depend on private vendors, the current costs for water far exceed those of network water systems in the *zona sur*, and the extra cost of boiling to render it drinkable makes it a very expensive necessity. The unequal gendered burdens of water provision are evident in the responses offered by women in the *zona sur* who each articulate a gendered division of labour that places the onus of responsibility for water collection on women. Women repeatedly mentioned that they manage the effects of scarce and contaminated water supply with major costs for themselves but also for their children, households and communities.

For women, access to a network water system in the *zona sur* reduces time and labour expenditures by lifting the daily burden of water collection, however, as understood by women's experiences of involvement in their neighbourhood water committees, there is an absence of women from central decision-making power in which political and economic decisions regarding their lives are being made. Thus, there is a need to further open up the 'black box' of household

⁴⁸ Si, es importante la participación de las mujeres en el trabajo, en el trabajo comunitario, en las discusiones, en la toma de decisiones, pero si por detrás se oculta el tema de la violencia y una denigración de las mujeres entonces como que podemos hablar de la equidad de genero?...sus capacidades para enfrentar sobre todo el tema de la violencia es tan importante aquí ahora en Bolivia.

and community, while avoiding the pitfall of idealizing community participation (Sultana, 2009). Exploring gendered inclusions and exclusions is important to ensure that collectivizing efforts will bear fruit for all. Progressive NGOs such as Asociación Yaku, in their promotion of a politics of equity and justice of community-managed water systems, have challenged such gendered exclusions of network water systems in Cochabamba. As illustrated by the most recent work of Asociación Yaku's sewage system and wastewater treatment project in Tiquipaya, women-only spaces not only ensured women's interests were included in the project but that women were able to articulate their concerns and define and defend their gendered interests beyond basic water provision.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In 2010, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution recognizing potable water and basic sanitation as human rights, essential for life and for all other human rights. In light of global efforts to reduce the number of those considered “water-poor”, there still remains 780 million people who lack access to safe and reliable supplies of water, with women representing two thirds of the world’s “water-poor” (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007). While researchers, policymakers and practitioners agree that women are among the most marginalized of the “water poor,” and recognize the link between gender and unequal access to water, there remains ideological debate on what processes reproduce gendered water inequalities and how the problem should be ‘fixed’.

The participatory approach to water resource management has become *sine qua non* for development agencies and mainstream policy literature argues that participation commitment to a project democratizes decision-making through bottom-up processes, and enables empowerment for women. The focus on participatory water resource management, feminists hoped, would open the door for women to gain measures of control over natural resource management and, ostensibly, access to natural resources (Zwarteveen & Meinzen-Dick, 2001). However, these hopes have not been filled in practice. Instead, feminist scholars and activists point out that women’s relationships to water are essentialized according to a gendered division of labour, communities are conceptualized as homogeneous in their interests, and households are treated as a congruent unit of interests (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012). Finally, there are also critiques of the meaningfulness of participation, which can vary greatly from “nominal” to “empowering” (Agarwal, 2001) with direct consequences for how a project is structured and to what degree it meets the needs of all community members. Beyond a critique of participatory approaches to water resource management, feminists look to alternatives that focus on women’s agency in struggles for social and economic justice. Rather than seeking to “empower” women, feminist scholars support, “models of action that work to create the infrastructure necessary for women’s strategic interests” (Mohanty & Miraglia, 2012, p. 100).

In this thesis I study one such alternative form of water resource management found in the peri-urban southern zone of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Cochabamba is best known for the ‘Water War’ of 2000, when its citizens rose up in violent protest against the government’s water

privatization policies. Protesters, involving an array of actors diverse with respect to gender, class and race, were successful in ending the private contract, and the city's water utility company was returned to public hands. Since remunicipalization, however, the utility has failed to extend service to much of the poor southern region of the city, while providing sporadic service to those who do have access (Driessen, 2008; Gómez & Terhorst, 2005). In response, Cochabamba's unserved and underserved populations have worked to strengthen their community systems of provision.

The study draws on a Feminist political ecology framework conceptualized by Rocheleau et al. (1996) that asks that we deconstruct the gendered power dynamics that manipulate water access and control and to extend scales of analysis to include the household and the community (see also Elmhirst, 2011; Truelove, 2011). The field research that informs this thesis was guided by a feminist methodology, which gives careful attention to diverse experiences and voices by heeding the constraints, opportunities and challenges in women's lives, and looks for specific data and stories that are profoundly gendered and relevant to the context. By unearthing women's experiences and opinions from a number of water committees located in the *zona sur*, the thesis demonstrates that there are key gendered differences in experiences with water because women are the primary managers of water in the home, and their labour, time and livelihoods are significantly impacted by the lack of safe water. I argue that networked systems of water in the *zona sur* should be considered part of a 'feminist agenda' since having access to networked water systems decreases women's physical workloads and the costs of household water. However, networked water systems are not perfect from a gendered perspective. In the *zona sur* of Cochabamba, male community members hold most of the decision-making power and occupy most of the leadership positions within these committees.

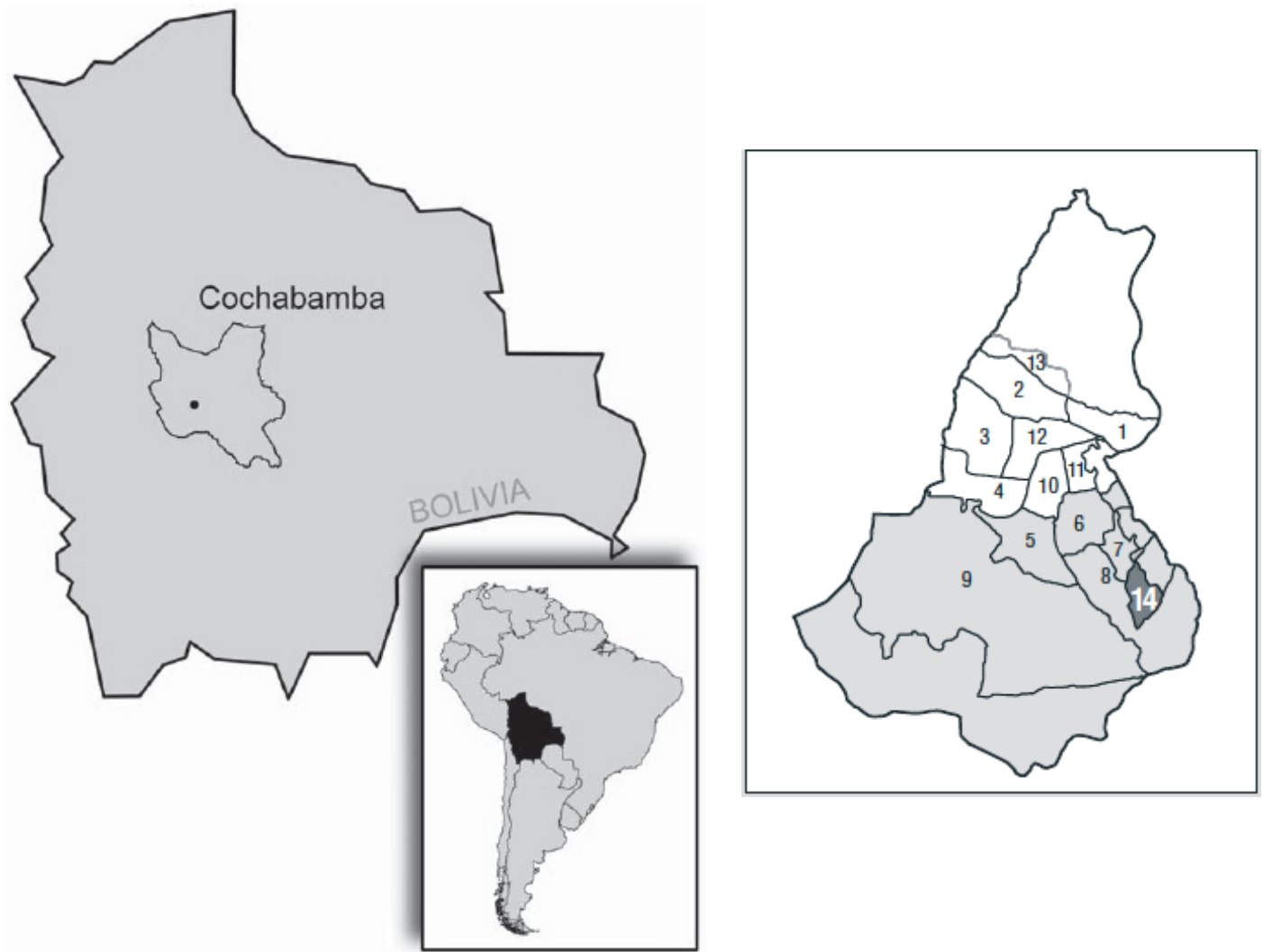
Non-service providers, such as Asociación Yaku, play an important role within Cochabamba's waterscape as they promote a politics of equity and justice in support of community-managed water systems that build on and develop women's agency. Alliances with progressive NGOs promote and encourage women to see themselves as vocal subjects, able to define and defend their gender interests. Wieringa (1994) argues that women's groups, such as the women-only spaces encouraged by Asociación Yaku, can be a transformative site for women as they "may become conscious of new needs in areas of life which they were previously not

prepared to discuss” (p.836). As such, these women-only spaces create opportunity to collectively voice their strategic gender interests while addressing their practical interests for their basic water needs. Overall, this study underscores the importance of integrating a gendered perspective in debates on alternatives models of water service delivery systems. It demonstrates the need to focus on women’s lived realities, and the importance of analyzing how gendered power relations shape access and control of community-led resource management systems. As Sultana et al. (2013) argue, “Not [focusing on women’s lived realities] risks entrenching local power hierarchies, further marginalizing the poor – and women in particular – and exacerbating their exploitation (p. 3).

Future areas of research stemming from this study could entail a return to the field to conduct additional interviews, specifically with the women from the peri-urban community of Villa Satélite Norte who participated in the women-only meetings facilitated by Asociación Yaku. Firstly, it would be important to gauge the ‘success’ of Asociación Yaku’s efforts by ‘measuring’ the way new gender interests have surfaced or have come to be defined along the way by the women participants following post-project. If possible, it would be interesting to interview also the community-at-large including the spouses and family members of the participants to understand how women’s gendered interests in the community are being constructed in processes of possible confrontation, negotiation and alliances with the men of the community. As discussed in Chapter 1, there has been less feminist analysis of alternative forms of water service delivery, including non-state forms of water provision carried out by a number of actors including non-profit organizations and community groups. The persistence of gendered water disparities underscores the need to further explore alternative models of water service delivery. Thus, scaling up this study to other sites in the *zona sur* or in other regions of the world that are experimenting with alternative models of water service delivery as a comparative analysis would offer fruitful research opportunities to gain more nuanced understandings of global water provision crises as well as to address broader concerns of gender and water justice.

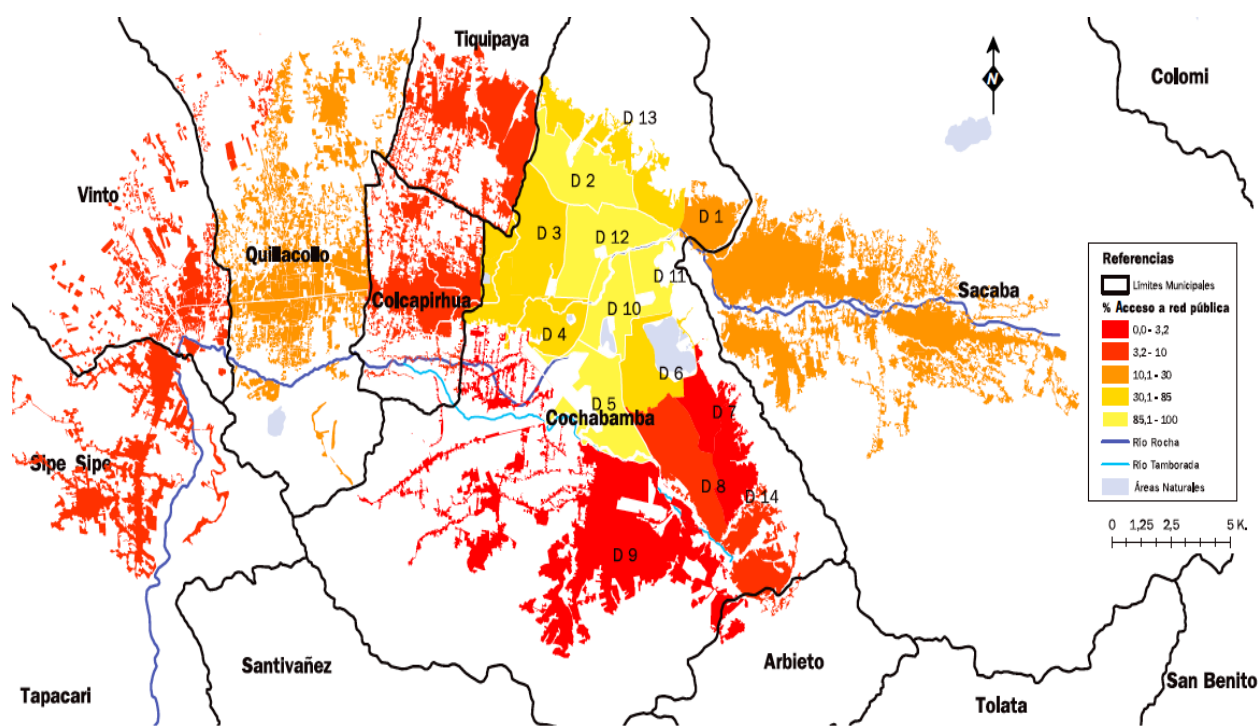
Appendices

i. Map of Bolivia and Departments of the City of Cochabamba



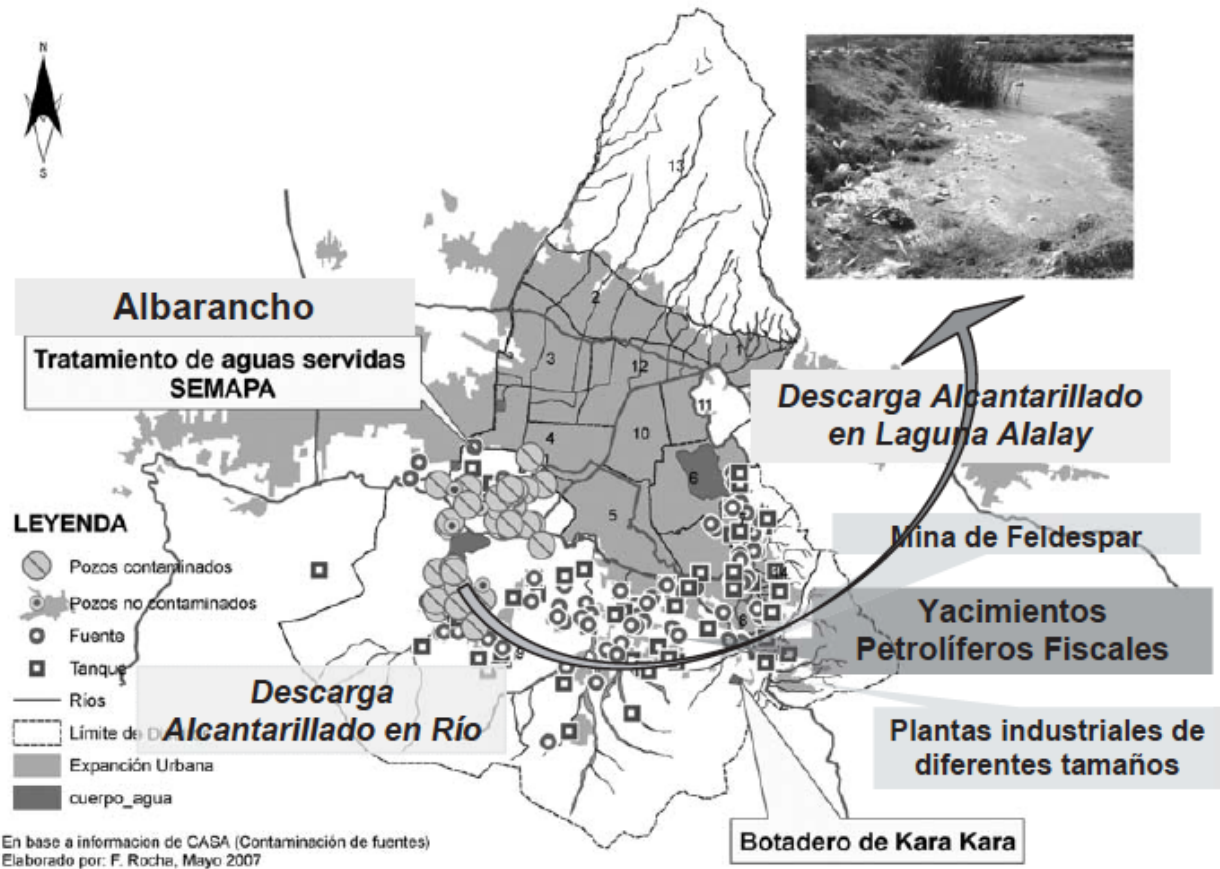
(Source: CEDIB. (2007). Datos del distrito 14. Cochabamba, Bolivia: Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia)

ii. Access to the Municipal Water Supply in Cochabamba and its Municipalities, in Percentage



(Source: NDF & IDB. (2013). *Plan de acción: Área metropolitana de Cochabamba sostenible*. Cochabamba: Nordic Development Bank & Interamerican Development Bank)

iii. Principle Sources of Contamination to Ground Water and Surface Water in Cochabamba



(Source: Ledo, C. (2013). *El agua nuestra de cada día*. Cochabamba, Bolivia: CEPLAG)

iv. Semi-structured Interviews

Interviewee	Occupation/Affiliation	Date of Interview	Length of Interview
Carlos Crespo Flores	Director of Environment Area - Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios (CESU), Universidad Mayor San Simón (UMSS)	June 19, 2013	42:31
Rocio Bustamante	Researcher-CENTRO AGUA – UMSS	June 26, 2013	23:31
Maria Esther Pozo	Researcher-CESU-UMSS	July 4, 2013	30:22
Sonia Colque	Former administrator - water committee “22 de abril” in District 14	July 8, 2013	1’24:18
Alejandra Ramirez	CESU-UMSS	July 15, 2013	27:09
Corina Vasquez Ayala	Plumber - water committee “Agua EPSA PDA” in District 14	July 18, 2013	18:46
Claudia Cossío	Periurban Programme Director - Water for People	Jul 18, 2013	(Interviewed by Madeleine West)
Shirley Morejón Flores	Secretary - water committee “Agua EPSA PDA” in District 14	July 18, 2013	18:46
Sonia Dávila Poblete	Technical Advisory Committee/Global Water Partnership	July 22, 2013	39:57
Vladimir Díaz	Former Researcher - CEDIB	July 23, 2013	49:49
Marina Arratia	PROEIB Andes - UMSS	July 25, 2013	55:35
Daniel Flores	President - OTB Central Itocta	July 28, 2013	25:26
Roberta Aguilar	Administrator – OTB Central Itocta	July 28, 2013	25:26
Ida Peñaranda	Local consultant- formerly Fundación Abril	July 29, 2013	20:59
Oscar Campanini	Researcher - CEDIB	July 29, 2013	30:13
Boris Ríos	Asociación Yaku	July 31, 2013	44:34
Rosemary Amils	Researcher - CEDIB	August 7, 2013	58:00
Carmen Ledo	Researcher-CEPLAG-UMSS	August 8, 2013	32:30

v. Sample Interview Questions

Nombre entrevistado 1:

Género:

Estatus marital:

Edad:

Información demográfica

1. ¿Por cuánto tiempo ha su familia vivido en este hogar?
2. ¿Cuántas personas viven en el hogar?
3. ¿Cuál es su ocupación?
4. ¿Tiene hijos? ¿Cuántos hijos tiene, y cuáles son sus edades?

Vivienda y tenencia

4. ¿Tiene título al terreno en donde se encuentra esta casa?
5. ¿Usted es propietario(a) de su casa, inquilino(a) u otro(a)?

Servicio de agua

6. ¿Cómo consigue el agua potable?
 - a. **Si el agua es accesible dentro la casa**, ¿con cuánta frecuencia llega el agua de chorro a su hogar? Si es infrecuente, cuántos días dura normalmente?
 - b. **Si el agua no es accesible dentro la casa**, ¿cómo recibe/colectar el agua?
7. ¿Hay que hervir el agua antes de usarlo?
8. ¿Cómo abastece el hogar cuando el servicio de agua esta interrumpido?
9. ¿Paga una tarifa por el servicio del agua? ¿Cuánto es la tarifa?

Actividades en el hogar

1. Si el agua no llega del chorro al hogar, ¿quién en el hogar es responsable por ir a buscar al agua?
 - a. En una semana típica, ¿cuántos veces va a buscar al agua?
 - b. ¿Dónde recibe/colectar el agua afuera de su hogar?
 - c. ¿Cómo guarda/almacenar el agua en el hogar?
2. Si hay que hervir el agua antes de tomarlo, ¿quién es responsable por hervirlo?
3. En un día típico, que actividades y quehaceres hace en su hogar que necesita el uso de agua (por ejemplo: cocinar, lavar la coche, bañarles a los hijos, limpiar)

Participación afuera de la casa

1. ¿Han hecho problemas técnicas del agua o de la calidad del servicio del agua desde su residencia en este hogar?
 - a. Si sí, que fue exactamente el problema, y cómo fue resuelto?

- b. Si no, conoce a alguien en la comunidad quién ha hecho algún problema o alguna dificultad con el servicio o calidad?
2. ¿Usted o un miembro de la familia ha participado en una reunión o actividad relacionada con el servicio del agua en su comunidad?
 - a. Si sí, ¿Cuál(es) era(n)? Cuántos actividades/reuniones ha asistido?
 - b. Si no, cuáles son las razones por no haber asistido/participado? (por ejemplo, no tener interés en asistir, no tener tiempo libre)
3. ¿Participa en alguna otra organización o grupo comunitario (Ej. consejo comunal, asociación religiosa o de trabajadores, partido político, etc.)? ¿Cuál?

Sample of Semi-Structured Interview for Scholars and Activists

1. Podría explicar por qué los sistemas comunitarios de agua representan actualmente una alternativa concreta para garantizar el derecho al agua de la población que no cuenta con el servicio municipal?
2. Cuáles son las fuerzas políticas, económicas, o sociales que se resisten a la igualdad de la mujer en la sociedad Boliviana?
3. Sabe de otros proyectos de saneamiento básico y de gestión local de agua que hayan implementado un proyecto integrado con las cuestiones de género?
4. Cuáles cree que son los principales avances relativos al agua y Servicios Básicos en la Nueva Constitución Política del Estado?
5. Por qué es importante que se constitucionalice el Derecho Humano al agua y los servicios básicos?
6. Piensa usted que la aplicación de estos avances ha sido cumplido por el gobierno central?
7. Piensa usted que el contexto político actual en Bolivia y la promoción de la descentralización estatal promueve la equidad y seguridad de agua para hombres y mujeres a nivel local?
8. Cuáles son los problemas más graves que se enfrentan los comités de agua en Cochabamba en relación de mantener sus interés colectivos y el benéfico propio de los comités?
9. Desde que SEMAPA volvió a manos públicas en el año 2000, piensa que existe un sentimiento generalizado de que los habitantes de Cochabamba han “ganado la guerra, pero se ha perdido el agua”? Podría compartir sus pensamientos?
10. Teniendo en cuenta la diversidad social y cultural de la población boliviana ¿cuál es la actual situación de la mujer en Bolivia?
11. Se han notado cambios significativos desde la llegada al poder político de Evo Morales?
12. En su opinión, cuales son las principales debilidades para la toma de decisiones de las mujeres en Bolivia?
13. Desde sus investigaciones, en el sector hídrico a nivel comunitario cuales son las factores que inhiben la participación de la mujer? Por qué la toma de decisiones las mujeres son excluidas e invisibilizadas a nivel de las mesas directivas de los Comités, Asociaciones o Cooperativas de agua, así como en las organizaciones sociales con estructura institucional como las OTBs y otras formalmente constituidas?
14. A pesar de que las mujeres bolivianas tienen una larga trayectoria de participación en las luchas sociales, incluyendo la participación importante de las mujeres en el Guerra del Agua, por qué las instituciones siguen sin contemplar cambios estructurales que permitan una mayor inserción de la mujer, tanto en el ámbito nacional como en el internacional?

15. Los pequeños sistemas de agua manejados por comités y asociaciones en las zonas rurales y periurbanas son considerados transparente, apoyan a la solidaridad, y tienden a ser altamente participativos. Pero desde sus investigaciones, a este nivel de participación, de carácter público-comunitario, piensa usted que están regidos por una institucionalidad donde implícitamente se excluye a la mujer que no está imbuida en el mundo político partidario, como es el caso de la mayoría de las mujeres de los barrios periurbanos?

vi. Asociación Yaku Meeting Outline for Women-only Spaces and PPT Presented to the OTB Satélite Norte

Módulo/Tema 4

Nuestra voz, nuestras propuestas

El último módulo tema se dirige a la realización de un taller en el espacio de mujeres, dividido en dos partes; la primera para que las participantes expongan sus preocupaciones y necesidades con respecto al proyecto y, la segunda, para construir una propuesta.

Dirigido a: Mujeres de la comunidad.

Objetivos

1. Recoger las preocupaciones y necesidades de las Mujeres de la Comunidad respecto al Proyecto.
2. Elaborar una Propuesta de las Mujeres de la comunidad para el manejo, operación y administración del sistema de alcantarillado y la PTAR.

Actividades:

Taller “Construyendo nuestras propuestas”

Taller: Construyendo nuestras propuestas

Nosotras somos parte de la comunidad, pero como mujeres tenemos muchas veces necesidades, preocupaciones e intereses diferentes a las de los varones. Muchas somos solteras, madres, hijas o simplemente formamos parte de una familia con la que vivimos en nuestra comunidad. Otras trabajamos en casa o fuera de ella o nos dedicamos a estudiar. Todas somos parte de una comunidad que queremos fortalecer bajo los principios de equidad, justicia y control social.

El objetivo de este taller es:

Construir una propuesta de las mujeres de la comunidad para el Proyecto de Fitodepuración

Para esto hemos previsto lo siguiente:

1. Definir nuestras necesidades respecto al Proyecto.
2. Establecer nuestras demandas al Proyecto.
3. Redactar una propuesta para la constitución de la EPSA encargada del sistema de alcantarillado.

Resultados esperados:

1. Las mujeres de la comunidad han identificado sus necesidades particulares respecto al Proyecto.
2. Las mujeres de la comunidad han articulado un conjunto de demandas al Proyecto.
3. Las mujeres de la comunidad presentan una Propuesta para la constitución de la EPSA.

Mujeres y Varones tenemos diferencias biológicas



- Como MUJERES y como VARONES tenemos diferencias biológicas.
- Nuestros cuerpos son diferentes.
- Estas diferencias NO significan que unos u otras sean menos o más.
- Varones y Mujeres somos seres humanos iguales.

¿Es natural que hayan desigualdades entre Mujeres y Varones?

- Las diferencias biológicas son naturales.
- Las diferencias sociales, económicas y culturales NO son naturales.
- Estas diferencias son de género y se construyen socialmente.



Las sociedades cambian y se necesita luchar contra las injusticias

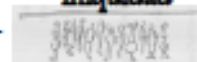


- Antes las mujeres no votaban, ahora sí.
- Antes las mujeres no tenían derecho propietario, ahora sí.
- Antes muchas mujeres no estudiaban, ahora sí.
- Etc., etc.

Una sociedad machista y patriarcal es una sociedad injusta

- Como comunidad tenemos que buscar mejorar nuestras condiciones de vida.
- Para mejorar nuestras condiciones de vida tenemos que buscar la equidad entre varones y mujeres.
- ¡Juntos tendremos un mejor presente y un brillante futuro!

Machismo
Opresión
Pobreza
Iniquidad



Mujeres y Varones no somos iguales, pero tenemos los mismos derechos y oportunidades

- Varones y Mujeres somos diferentes biológicamente.
- Mujeres y Varones somos seres humanos, tenemos los mismos derechos.
- Las sociedades machistas no nos permiten alcanzar mejores condiciones de vida.
- Debemos buscar la equidad de género.



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