Ethnic anti discrimination work in La Paz, Bolivia

A study of the perceptions and beliefs of the employees regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at a public university.

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Abstract

This thesis is based on a qualitative research made on a public university in La Paz, Bolivia. The aim was to examine the beliefs and perceptions of the employees regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at the university. As the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009 has been made to improve the rights for the indigenous groups in Bolivia, we also wanted to hear if the laws have been implemented in their daily work. Seven interviews were done with the help of an interpreter, and a mix of goal oriented and snowball selection was used. Through the interviews, we found out that the ethnic anti discrimination work at the university is almost non-existing. It also showed that not much has been done to follow the law and the reforms of the constitution. This can be seen as non-performative. Even though there are regulations about discrimination, the university is not actively working on the implementation of them. The opinion if an anti discrimination work was needed varied among the employees, as some respondents said that discrimination did not even exist at their faculty. To improve the ethnic anti discrimination work many of the respondents pointed on the need of a change in the culture. One important discussion has been about the lack of communication, information and education. These facts together with the change of culture can be seen as the most important factors to make progressions within the ethnic anti discrimination work at the university.

Key words: Anti discrimination work, ethnicities, performativity, organizational change, attitudes among employees, affirmative actions and implementation.
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Preface

The beginning of this thesis started with an information meeting about Minor Field Studies (MFS) in May 2014. Since we both are interested in discrimination questions, we wanted to see the thoughts regarding this subject in a low-income country. The reason for choosing Bolivia as our context was partly because of the fact that the country includes a unique mix of indigenous groups. This made us curious on how they think and act regarding the ethnic discrimination issues. Another reason was because Umeå University has cooperation with Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) in La Paz, Bolivia and that made it easier for us to proceed with the thesis.

During our eight weeks in Bolivia, we met a lot of nice people who helped us with our work. Without our contacts, both in Bolivia, and back home in Umeå this thesis would not have been made. First, we would like to thank all our respondents for given us the time and showed interest in our study. Your thoughts and beliefs have been essential for this thesis. Second, we want to thank SIDA for giving us the opportunity to make this thesis. We also want to thank Ann-Louise Silfver at the department of Education at Umeå University for all the good information before and during the application for the MFS scholarship. Carl-Johan Orre, teacher at informatics at Umeå University, helped us with important contacts at UMSA, since he had visited the university before. That gave us helpful contacts before entering La Paz. The importance of contacts when writing a thesis abroad is a fact. Erick Trillo, a former student at Linguistics at the faculty of Humanidades, has been incredibly helpful during our time in Bolivia, seen to important information about our subject, translation of both the information letter and most of our interviews and regarding all the bureaucratic work that was required when scheduling the interviews. We are very thankful for all your help. Also, we would like to thank Shirley Luna, a former student at UMSA, for help and kindness when writing our thesis. We also want to thank Ulrika Widding at the department of Education at Umeå University who has been our supervisor and has provided us with useful information and recommendations during our work.
Introduction

This thesis is focusing on the ethnic anti discrimination work regarding the indigenous groups since it is a hot topic in the Bolivian society. The plurinational state of Bolivia has 36 unique and official indigenous groups who each and one of them have their own language. These people have been marginalized and excluded in the Bolivian society for centuries. In 2006, Evo Morales became the first indigenous president in the country with his socialist party Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). One of their biggest aims was to improve the situation for the indigenous groups by strengthening their rights. In the year of 2009, the new Bolivian constitution was made and all of the 36 indigenous groups and their languages were admitted as official in Bolivia. Before this they had not been admitted in the society and their rights had not been taken into account. The rights of the indigenous groups permeate the whole constitution today and so it became the starting point of an improved work for these groups. One of the reforms that has been made in order to improve the rights for the indigenous groups is article five (part II) in the constitution - this article says that the Governmental and departmental governments workers must use at least two of the Bolivian official languages in their work. One of these must be Spanish and the other one shall therefore be an indigenous language. The reform is made to help preventing the marginalization and excluding of the indigenous groups by letting Governmental workers learn how to speak the indigenous language that is being used in their territory. This reform together with the “The Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” from 2010 are two ways to improve the human rights for the indigenous groups. The “Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” is aiming to bring justice to all of the Bolivian citizens and make sure that Bolivia is working towards a non-discriminating country. Unfortunately, the law is not followed and few people have been punished for breaking it. Until now, the individual and collective rights of the indigenous groups might not have generated the impact it aimed to.

In our thesis, we want to examine if the “Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” and the constitution of 2009 have gained any progression for the indigenous groups. We want to take a look at a public organisation that plays an important role in Bolivia. Therefore we are interested in a public Bolivian university since it is an important context for the society. The mission is to examine how the employees are experiences the ethnic anti discrimination work and what their beliefs are about it.

Definitions

Below, you will find definitions of the most common terms in this paper.

Discrimination

In the Bolivian “Law against racism and all forms of discrimination”, discrimination is defined as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on sex, colour, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, origin, culture, nationality, citizenship, language, religion, ideology, political or philosophical affiliation, marital status, economic or social health status, profession, occupation, level of education, disabilities and/or physical disabilities, intellectual or sensory impairment, pregnancy, origin, physical appearance, clothing, surname or that have the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing” (Law against racism and all forms of discrimination, 2010, article 5a).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is not defined in the Bolivian anti discrimination law. Therefore, we are using a definition set by Gisselquist, a Finnish political scientist who has been studying the ethnicities in
Bolivia. Gisselquist defines an “ethnic group” as “a group that identifies by an ascriptive category generally inherited at birth, including language, tribe, race, religion, and culture” (Gisselquist, 2005, p.5).

**Indigenous people**

According to the United Nations (downloaded on 2015-02-21), “indigenous people” can be defined by these sentences.

- Self-identification as indigenous people at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

**Mestizos**

The definition of a mestizo is a person of “mixed race or ethnicity”. In Latin America the most common mix is between Spanish and American Indian ancestries (Oxford dictionaries, downloaded on 2015-04-16).

**White people**

In a Bolivian context the “white people” regards those with European descent from the era as a Spanish colonial (Placencia, 2001).

**Background**

This section has the purpose to present the background of this study. To be able to understand why ethnic discrimination seen to the indigenous groups is a problem in Bolivia, important fact will be presented below.

**The Plurinational state of Bolivia**

The population of Bolivia could be described as almost two thirds of indigenous groups, where Aymara and Quechua are the biggest. In La Paz, where this thesis was written, Aymara is the biggest one. Approximately 30 percent of the Bolivians define themselves as mestizos and only 10 percent as “white”. Even though this statistic shows that the indigenous groups are the biggest, they are being treated as the minority (Placencia, 2001).

The current situation in Bolivia can in many ways be explained as a result of many years of colonisation. Between the years of 1538-1825 Bolivia was a Spanish colony and these 300 years have made an impact of the country, especially in a social context (Lindahl, 2013). One of the results of the colony era is the ethnic hierarchy with the “white people” at the top, the mestizos in the middle and the indigenous groups at the bottom. This hierarchy is permeating the Bolivian society and can in many ways explain the ethnic discrimination that will be examined in this thesis. That means that even though the hierarchy can be seen as historic and old, many of the unprivileged groups, the indigenous ones, are being treated in a different way compared to the mestizos and the white people even today (Muigai, 2015-04-28).

Today discrimination, racism and inequalities among the indigenous groups can be seen
through higher unemployment, inadequate healthcare and higher numbers of illiteracy compared to the mestizos and the "white" population. The situation is worst for the indigenous people living on the countryside; among these are women, children and old people the most discriminated groups (Utrikesdepartementet, 2012).

Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and Evo Morales

Even though Bolivia became a liberal democracy in 1982, the excluding and marginalizing of the indigenous groups have continued (Artaraz, 2012). Today, Bolivia is still one of the countries in Latin America with the highest number of discrimination (Utrikesdepartementet, 2012).

With a big dissatisfaction from the indigenous groups around Bolivia, Evo Morales became the first indigenous president when he, together with his socialist party MAS won the election in the year of 2005. Today Morales has been the political leader in Bolivia for totally nine years. Two of the main issues that MAS are trying to strengthen are the economic and social rights for the indigenous groups (Britannica, 2014).

Laws and regulation regarding ethnic discrimination

During the years of power, MAS has started a long process containing political, social, cultural and economic changes. One of the improvements is that Bolivia became the first country in the world to admit the UN declaration of the human rights for the indigenous groups into their national legislation; in 2009 the new Bolivian constitution was made. The constitution made a big difference as it admitted the 36 indigenous groups with their individual and collective rights.

This is a hot topic in the Bolivian society today since the old constitution only mentioned the rights of the indigenous groups in five articles, while they are mentioned in the whole constitution today (Nilsson, 2009). By admitting the indigenous groups Bolivia became “The plurinational state of Bolivia” that also arises the indigenous languages at the same position as Spanish. The Constitution of 2009 together with “The Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” from 2010 are two of the ways the rights of the indigenous groups shall be improved. “The Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” criminalises racism and discrimination, incitement and dissemination and participation in racist or discriminatory associations or organisations. The punishment for breaking the law can be both penalties and imprisonment from one to seven years. (Chávez, 2014). Further on, we will mention “The Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination” as the anti discrimination law.

Unfortunately, the law has not been giving the impact it aimed to. Discrimination of the indigenous groups is still a reality in Bolivia. Years after the establishing of the law, no prosecutions seen to discrimination have resulted in imprisonment. The problem has been described that the judges do not see acts of discrimination as a crime. This is the background to a big dissatisfaction regarding the government from the indigenous groups during the last years. Institutions within the justice system is suffering from a major crisis with a lack of trust from the population and are being blamed for corruption, inefficiency and non-legitimacy. The social and political conflict between the poor in the west and the rich in the east has grown during Morales political time and the eastern part such as Santa Cruz has shown strong resistance to the politics of MAS (Utrikesdepartementet, 2012).

The importance of higher education in low-income countries

As presented, discrimination, racism and inequalities among the indigenous groups can be seen through higher unemployment and higher numbers of illiteracy compared to the mestizos and the "white" population. This fact explains the importance of equality work within the educational system (Utrikesdepartementet, 2012).

Higher education give the society many opportunities. Both high- and low-income countries around the world are in need of skilled workers, leaders, academics and educated citizens. In Bolivia, like many other low-income countries, education that generates learning and
knowledge is an important step both seen to social and economical development for people. Achieving an education at a university helps to improve the life situation by getting chances to get more skilled and better-paid jobs, and in low-income countries this factor is even more important (Säljö, 2000). A student that decides to study at a university and receives an education will get more benefits like a critical thinking, a broad mindedness, ethical behaviour, responsible citizenship and communication skills, these are all essential elements in the participatory democracy of Bolivia (World Bank, 2000).

Aim

With the background of the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009, the purpose with this bachelor thesis is to examine the beliefs and perceptions of employees about the ethnic anti discrimination work at a public university in La Paz, Bolivia.

Research questions

• How do our respondents describe ethnic discrimination in Bolivia?
• What are their beliefs and perceptions about the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?
• How do our respondents describe the implementation of the constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law at UMSA?
• What are their main beliefs about the most important factor to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?

Previous research

The previous research section in this thesis highlights different subjects within the ethnic anti discrimination work. This section will start with a presentation of a more organisational and societal perspective regarding the laws and its implementation and will later lead to more individual perspectives of it.

Implementing an anti discrimination work

Since this thesis is examining the perceptions and beliefs about the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA with the background of the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009, important factors within the implementation work on a societal level will be presented.

Soft values, for example the attitudes and social norms, can be seen as the most important part in the work against discrimination. Even though, the hard fact can not be forgotten. The main focus when establishing an anti discrimination work must lay in the culture but to make the law work effectively, some guidelines have to be made (Niessen 2003). Looking at the hard facts, there are many considerations to take into account when dealing with anti discrimination questions. The background of this thesis is the constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law that has made a big difference regarding the indigenous groups in Bolivia. These can be seen as political ways of forcing the people in Bolivia in a chosen direction regarding those questions. But what more is required to get these written words into reality? Can the law and the constitution make any differences or is it something else that has to be added? To get a deeper understanding within this, the article by Jan Niessen (2003) explains some different parts that can make a law become effective. When looking at the article in an organisational perspective, it is important that the employees have their beliefs in it. Otherwise, the laws, regulation and policies will never become as effective as they could. This is the reason for bringing this topic
into our thesis since the aim is to examine the beliefs and perceptions of the employees.

Anti-discrimination laws have good intentions, but what parts except from the written words are required to succeed with the implementation of it? In the article “Making the Law Work. The Enforcement and Implementation of Anti-Discrimination Legislation” by Jan Niessen (2003), the author discusses the importance of procedures and sanctions of the laws. As written, how well a law is being implemented is affecting the way the employees look at it. If the laws and regulations are better implemented and followed, the employees will hopefully get a better understanding and trust for the law. In that way, the implementation and the attitudes of the employees are well linked together.

The main reason with anti discrimination laws in the society is to let them be used effectively. Governments, organisations, individuals and other stakeholders are gaining that they are followed. The author means that there is a dynamic process between both governmental and non-governmental participants to succeed with the implementation of it. Concerning anti discrimination laws; information, communication and education are important steps towards success. These factors are even more important regarding individuals or groups that have been deprived of their rights for a long time (Niessen, 2003). If people do not understand the meaning and the importance of the law the work will not gain the same improvements as it could. The history of Bolivia, with its indigenous populations that has been excluded and discriminated for centuries, makes this fact important for the thesis.

So, what if the anti-discrimination laws are not respected? Niessen (2003) talks about the need of having judicial and/or administrative procedures for dealing with crimes related to discrimination. For example, this could be special accusers for criminal offences related to discrimination, special tribunals or chambers for these kind of crimes, legal advice centres and agencies with the knowledge how to deal with questions concerning discrimination. The need of effective procedures for crimes concerning anti discrimination laws can be seen as an important part in the implementation of a law. Sanction as a consequence for breaking the laws is another effective way of dealing with discriminating related crimes. These sanctions can be penalties, dissolution of an organisation, and confiscation of property or community service to mention some of them. These political ways of handling the laws must be seen in a wider perspective. As argued in the beginning these formal ways of working with anti discrimination laws must cooperate with changed beliefs and attitudes in the society in order to make progression. Laws and reforms can be seen as insufficient if the society does not see the importance and the reason for dealing with the problem.

**Performativity**

Regarding the previous topic that was focusing on the implementation of the law and the anti discrimination work, the performativity within these papers and documents must be examined.

Bolivia as a society works actively towards the ethnic discrimination, at least on the paper. All though this is a fact, the actual improvements can, as in many other cases, be discussed. The society has above all the anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009 that is being permeated of the rights of the indigenous groups. The risk with all these laws and reforms is that they just become written papers, not gaining any progressions or at least in the way it aimed to. A common problem in these sentences is that the policies, documents and laws are being seen as an improvable work.

This is the reason for bringing the term of performativity into our thesis. Performativity can be explained in different ways according to the context and the perspectives. In this thesis, performativity is being examined through the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009. According to Austin (1975) performativity refers to “a particular class of speech. An utterance is performative when it does what it says: the issuing of the utterance is performing of an action”. 
Ahmed (2006) writes in her article “The non performativity of anti racism” about the problem with performativity within policies. The author is comparing the differences of what is written about, for example, diversity and what it means in the reality - what actually is being done to accomplish the goals. The conclusion of the article is that it often is a gap between what a policy says and what the organisation actually does. Ahmed writes that, to be able to see if a policy is working or not, the documents and policies have to be followed up within the organizations to see how they move and where they get stuck, if they get stuck. Having an anti discrimination policy for example does not mean that the organization is working actively with it. Ahmed means that policies and documents often are being “substitute for actions”. As one of her participant said “you end up doing the document rather than doing the doing” (Ahmed, 2006, p. 117) Instead of working towards better equality within the organisation, policies risks to be used as bench-markers. That means that the purpose of a policy could be seen as beneficial for the reputation of the organisation rather than for the actual equality work - to prohibit discriminatory acts and make the organisation equal. This fact is important to focus on when looking at the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009. We wonder, do the employees think that these have been implemented in the ethnic anti discrimination work or are they just written papers?

One important fact to take into account when working with ethnic anti discrimination is, for what reasons is the organisation working with anti discrimination? Is it because of the fact that policy or document is needed by the law or is it because of the fact that the organisation wants to treat all of their employees in the same way and make the workplace a equal one?

**Affirmative actions as one way of dealing with ethnic discrimination**

This sections highlights one example of dealing with improvements of the rights for the unprivileged groups. South Africa has, just like Bolivia, a history of ethnic discrimination. Because of this, an article about the affirmative actions is presented below.

The anti discrimination work, seen to the South African EE work for example, includes affirmative actions in the advantage for the unprivileged groups. Brown & Langer (2015) explains the affirmative actions as “practiced by different countries in different ways for different reasons - but always with the goal of redressing inequality” in his article “Does Affirmative Action work?”. These actions could be a fact in Bolivia as well since the government is working on the improvement for the rights of the indigenous groups. According to Brown & Langer, even though countries are dealing with the affirmative actions in different ways, similar successes have been accomplished but also many of the failures. A common way of success can be seen according to the reducing work of economic inequality. The reducing of ethnic inequality on the other hand seems to be harder to reach. Brown & Langer writes that the affirmative action policies regarding the ethnic inequality in one way seems to be underscoring the ethnic division rather than reduce them. Many of the countries who are dealing with this sorts of policies, to assist the disadvantaged, seems to be suffering from corruption from political elites who are manipulating the system in their own advantage. This fact shows the complexity of affirmative actions since the phenomenon can be seen in different perspectives.

Looking at South Africa, the government instituted the policy of “Black economic empowerment” after the end of apartheid. This policy had the purpose to affect the equality at the top in the business sector, and that this transformation should affect people at lower levels, a sort of top-to-bottom perspective. The policy gained progressions in some ways and was in general well received in the country. The summary of Brown & Langer’s article (2015) shows that the affirmative action policies work best when the target is poor. Given the fact, like in Bolivia, that the inequalities within ethnic groups have a long and complex history, the policies needs time. It is also clear that the affirmative actions policies cannot solve the problems by the own. One way of dealing with this fact could be that the politicians set modest policy targets. Today one of the problems are that the policies in this sentence often is being made from the politicians in a way of making things happen. This could also be described through “the non-
performativity of anti racism” (Ahmed, 2006) that has been presented. The policy in itself will not gain any progressions without being actively worked on, even though it can be seen as an important symbol for the unprivileged groups. And for the individuals, it is important that everyone understands why the affirmative actions is needed and what improvements the actions hopefully will gain.

The role of the individuals in anti discrimination work

Since this thesis is highlighting the beliefs and perceptions of the employees about the anti discrimination work at UMSA, the role of the individuals within this work will be presented.

Individuals play an important role in the changing of an organisation. Organisational change will only succeed if their members will agree with the thoughts and how long it will persist depends on the employees and their acceptance (Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, & Topolnytsky, 2007; Weeks, Roberts, Chonko, & Jones, 2004).

Looking at change management, the implementation of anti discrimination work can be seen in a similar way. As written, employees have a big impact of how well a new law or a culture for example will gain progression within a workplace. Neves (2009) writes that how well employees will react to a change depends on their own outcomes. He also writes about the importance of employees to understand the benefits within the change, instead of follow it just because they have to. According to Neves, three different dimensions can be seen when looking at the readiness for change and how important that is for its success. The first step is the self-efficacy; this one refers to the status when people agree that the change is an adequate solution. The next step is the change appropriateness, when you understand the benefits of the change. The last one refers to the personal valance. This refers to when the employees increase their commitment to change in such a way that the change has influenced their own behavioural intentions (Neves, 2009). This can be seen as a step in the right direction of changing the norms; which is one of the main goals for the whole process according to Niessen (2003).

Choi (2011) is also pointing out the importance for organisations to enhance the support or acceptance of the employees for change initiatives. This article is focusing on the various attitudinal constructs that are important factors to reach the support and acceptance in a organisational change. Readiness for change, commitment to change, openness to change and cynicism about organizational change are the main important attitudinal constructs for successful changes according to Choi.

The attitudes towards the anti discrimination work

To get another perspective of the ethnic anti discrimination work, another article regarding the equality and equity work in South Africa will be presented.

In the year of 1998 the South African “Employment Equity Act 55” was made in order to improve the anti discrimination work after apartheid. The aim was to make it easier for the organisations to act according to the anti discrimination law. Oosthuizen & Naidoo (2010) are focusing on the attitudes towards the equality and equity work (EE) in South African organisations since attitudes are an important factor in the work of an egalitarian organisation. In their article the authors studied respondents from different organisations. The main conclusion seemed to be that the attitudes regarding EE seemed to be both good and bad but unfortunately most of the respondents in the article seemed to disagree with the content and the strategy of it. An interesting part was that it was both the exposed and the privileged groups who had these beliefs. White men seemed to be the group who felt most ignored. According to their article, this group of men experienced that it was hard for them to advance within their organisations because of the EE work. Even the disadvantaged people, in this case the black people, seemed to think of the EE as something that does not always result in good things. According to Oosthuizen & Naidoo (2010) all of the respondents, regardless of their ethnicity, agreed that EE was a tool to use to advantage black Africans in South Africa but that
there was a backside; the reversed discrimination due to affirmative actions. One of their respondents said;

We have become the very thing we despised, ‘Whites only’ now it is ‘Blacks only’ and it is justified in the law in the same way. It is actually appalling. This is what I think: do not give the man a job, because he is Black, give him a job because he can do it, regardless of his race. (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010, p.5)

This example shows the complexity of the ethnic anti discrimination work.

**Methodology**

*In this section, the chosen method is presented. Central parts are the data collection and the analysis process.*

**Context**

Since the background of this paper comes from the Bolivian constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law, the aim was to interview people from a public organization. There were many reasons for choosing a public university in Bolivia as our context for the field study. One of the main reasons was because of the reform in the constitution that says that all governmental workers must know two official languages, Spanish and an indigenous language. Another reason was because of the fact that the public universities are important institutions in the society since Bolivia is a segregated country with big socio-economic differences. In the city of La Paz, where this thesis was made, the rich people live downtown and the poor people live up in the mountains. Many of the poor people live in a suburb called El Alto or on the countryside. Because of this the university plays an important role in the Bolivian society. It is important that the youths from the indigenous groups get a proper education with the same opportunities and equal treatment as the white people and the mestizos. The school system and the universities are significant institutions also in the way that the students develop important mental tools in the work against anti discrimination. It provides the individuals with important ways of thinking and helps them to challenge their own values and beliefs.

The university we selected, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) is a public university in La Paz, divided into 13 different faculties. The university is autonomous; which means it is independent from the government. In the regulations and provisions approved by the congress for the national universities, there is written that all discrimination, including social, political, religious and ethnic, is against the spirit of the institutions.

**A qualitative study**

This thesis is an interview based qualitative study since that is a good way to understand the experiences and beliefs of the respondents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The qualitative approach enable a big scale of details and a deeper understanding regarding their thoughts, beliefs, experiences and perceptions which are valuable information for the qualitative researcher (Kvale, 1997). By interviewing our respondents we got access to their beliefs and perceptions about our chosen topic – the ethnic anti discrimination work at Universidad Mayor de San Andrés.

**Selection**

Our selection was a mix of goal oriented and a snowball selection. Bryman (2011) describes goal-oriented selection as the opposite to random selection. It means that you have chosen your participants in advance. A snowball selection on the other hand is when you find the participants during the way. When having the first participants it is easier to get an insight in
which people that should bring interesting points to the study. This especially helped us when we had to find women. In our case, the fact of homo social reproduction was obvious. The men advised us to talk with other men, even though we were clear about our wish of participants.

Seven participants were interviewed during the study.

- The rector of UMSA, who gave us the permission to present his title.
- Two deans (the head of the faculties) at two of the biggest faculties at UMSA
- Four professors from three different faculties

The rector of UMSA has been representing the Human rights in the country for almost 10 years. He is therefore well educated within the subject. Because of his background and the fact that he has a key position within the university, we have chosen to not make him anonymous.

**Data collection**

Since only half of our participants were English-speaking, Erick Trillo, a former student of linguistics at UMSA became our interpreter during the interviews in Spanish. In the beginning of the study, a pilot interview with Erick was made to make sure that the questions were understandable and suitable in the, for us, new context. Some questions were restated after discussions with Erick.

Early in the work the interview guide was made (see appendix 1). The guide was made in a semi structured way and therefore contained different themes with open questions. This was because of the aim, it was important for the result that the participants could present their different perceptions and beliefs. A structured interview would not have gained the study as much as the semi structured did since it was important with the up following questions. The interview questions were connected to the research questions to make sure that the interviews would cover them and contain the right themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interviews took about one hour each and were made in different environments because of the different resources. The rector, deans and one of the professors had their own offices but problems occurred when the other professors, who did not have their own office, were interviewed. In these three cases we sat in a restaurant, in an empty classroom and in a quiet but public place at the University.

**Data analysis**

Many authors recommend a six-step analysis when writing a thesis (Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002) that we have been using during our analysis.

The analysis started with a selective transcribing. All of the interviews were recorded after permission from our respondents and transcribed afterwards. The transcriptions were made close to the interviews to prevent misunderstandings according to Bryman (2011). These together with notes that had been taken during the interviews became our raw material within the analysis process. This process started with an over look of the material to make sure we had the whole picture clear. Next step was to distinguish themes within the transcriptions with the purpose to organize the data. After that the data were coded and shared into different sections through a breakdown of the text so that we could see the most relevant sections regarding our aim. These sections were coloured into different colours depending on the category it was relevant for. The colours helped us a lot during the analysis since it made it easier for us to see the importance, the most relevant fact, from each interview. Step number five was done in order to pay a closer attention to the different nuances. Here, we looked at the categories with closer attention so that we could find out the different answers within each question. The last step was to interpret the data through the question of how we could understand the data according to our
previous research. Therefore, the interpreting was made through different subjects under each section of the previous research (Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

**Ethical considerations**

The importance of ethical consideration is a well-known fact when writing a thesis. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) states that the ethical considerations get one more dimension when making a qualitative study with interviews. They state that the interviews will affect the informants in one way or another and that the ethic consideration must be taken into account during the means and goals of the study. Bryman (2011) is presenting four important areas regarding the ethics. These are the requirement of information, consent, confidentiality and the usage. Regarding the *requirement of information* the respondents got an information letter before participating (see appendix 2). The letter had the aim to present the information about the study and their rights within in. With help from our interpreter we had the letter translated into Spanish, since most of our respondents were not English speaking. *The requirement of consent* was taken into account when the persons were asked to participate. They also got information about their rights to end their participation whenever they wanted through the information letter. Besides that they were told to contact us whenever they wanted to if any questions came up. *The requirement of confidentiality* has been taken into account both during and after the interviews. The participants knew that the data from the interviews would be handled of us but that our interpreter also would have insight within the answers. The letter also described that the information would be deleted after the study was done. Regarding the anonymous aspects, the names of all the participants, apart from the rector who told us that his thoughts and beliefs could be presented together with his title, has been covered. Due to *the requirement of usage*, the participants were well involved in what the data should be used for.

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) also states that the role of the researcher is an important reflection. His or hers presence is often affecting the participants in one way or another, it is important to think about the consequences this can have on the result. For us, who are writing our thesis in another context where the history has made a big impact on “the ethnic hierarchy” as described in the beginning, we were extra sensitive in our attitude.

**Credibility**

To secure the trustworthiness of the study, two important factors can be discussed; credibility and reliability. A study that has been carefully and systematically performed have high chances to be of good quality (Fejes & Thornberg, 2009).

Having the opportunity to talk to our Bolivian contacts, made this thesis more reliable as we got important information about the Bolivian society and a better insight in our topic. Since our background with the anti discrimination law and the constitution, the information about the politics in Bolivia were important facts for us to get a better understanding before starting the interviews. This fact made the cultural distance smaller, as we had the chance to get a better understanding for the context of Bolivia.

Using an interpreter impacts the interviews, since you loose the direct contact with the respondents. Because of this, we sat down together with our interpreter straight after every interview to make sure that we had understood everything in the same way.

One thing that makes our thesis more valid is that the interview guide was set from our research questions, as we wanted to be sure that the answers and questions were relevant for our chosen aim.

Also the fact of a proper analysis method has been an important part of the study. By using six recommended steps (Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002), we were making sure not to forget any important part of the work since the analysis was
systematically made. The steps helped us to distinguish the most important themes from the interviews.

**Result**

*In this section, the result from our interviews will be presented. The result will be presented under different themes due to our aim and research questions.*

**Descriptions of ethnic discrimination in Bolivia**

When looking at the description of the ethnic discrimination in Bolivia, first we want to present the definitions of the word that the respondents gave to get a better understanding within it.

The definition of ethnic discrimination has been described in different ways during our interviews. Even though the content of the definitions are the same, the respondents have had different focuses within them. Most of the respondents were talking about ethnic discrimination as when you make a difference between people because of the race, thoughts, beliefs or just the colour of the skin. The most common verbs when describing the definition of ethnic discrimination were **neglecting, underestimating, denying, forbidding, not tolerating, favouring** or perhaps **non favouring** another person or persons regarding one or some of the reason(s) above.

When asking the respondents about how the ethnic discrimination in Bolivia can be explained or seen, one of the answers focused on those that are not being tolerant to the differences between different cultural or ethnic groups. Another one was emphasizing and problematizing the different perspectives within the definition through the quote below.

> Well for me it is, we should not discriminate people that comes from, that has this origin Aymara or Quechua. But it should come in both directions because they also discriminate each other’s, and maybe they discriminate more than the others. So, everybody have his or her own perceptions about that. (Respondent 1)

This person was talking a lot about the reversed discrimination that he is experience at UMSA. He focused on the fact that discrimination is not only seen through white people discriminating indigenous ones, which is the most common way to discuss this topic in Bolivia. He argued that the discrimination also is seen between different indigenous groups as well as indigenous people discriminate the white people, or mestizos. He was not the only one that was talking about this issue; others of the respondents were bringing this point of view during the interviews as well.

One of the descriptions regarding the ethnic discrimination was focusing on the authorities. The rector, who has been working with human rights in Bolivia for more 10 years, was describing ethnic discrimination as seen below.

> Although the constitution and the laws are recognized for everyone, someone who is in the power, is considered that these rights should not be applied to an specific group just because they are indigenous or just because they have a different colour of their skin. (The rector)

By this, he meant that even though there is a anti discrimination law and a constitution that are focusing on the improvements of the rights of the people, some persons, often authorities, are using the law and the constitution in different ways. These people control the relations within ethnic discrimination since they are applying the laws in different ways depending on whom it may concern. The rector told us that authorities do not always take the law into account for the unprivileged groups.

Another person was talking about discrimination as something subjective, that people should understand that you could affect the way you feel.
Well I think that everybody has to do something about it. In personal. Because if you feel that you are being discriminated you are going to be discriminated all over. Here [at UMSA] or if you travel or some other place. So, I think that everyone has to do something about it, to change the way they think. And, if you manage to do the things this way I think you won’t feel discrimination and you won’t discriminate others either.

(Respondent 1)

Regarding this, that the ethnic discrimination can be seen as something subjective, some of the respondents were talking about the fact that the anti discrimination law often is being used in peoples owns advantages. One of the respondents talked about the problem that many people do not know the difference between insulting and discriminating. She was exemplifying this with students who are failing their exams, it is not unusual that many of them are going to the teachers and are telling them that they have been discriminated because of their ethnic belonging or coloour of the skin for example. She was talking about the fact that there must be a counterparty to prove that you have been exposed for discrimination. For example, when applying for a job there must be another person that the curriculum vitae can be compared with. So that a person that is being neglected a job can see that it depends on their skills and knowledge’s, not of their ethnicity for example. She was questioning if the problem that the people do not know the differences between discrimination and insulting depends on the lack of knowledge or on a utilization of the law. The utilization should in that case depend on the indigenous groups that who have been suffering from discrimination for a long time and now want their rights back within society.

The ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA

UMSA has the essences of being an anti discriminating institution. (Respondent 3)

Although this was said during one of the interviews, the main essence about thoughts of the anti discrimination work at UMSA is that limited actions are being done. When we asked the respondents about the ethnic anti discrimination work and the improvements of it, the respondents told us about the transparency office, the community centres and the scholarships for the best students from the countryside. These three actions are the main improvements according to our respondents. Looking at the work in a formal way, there are no policies or documents regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at the University, only UMSA’s local and general legislation. This was made in 2005, five years before the anti discrimination law was established by the government.

So, one of the improvements that has been done are the transparency office that is on its way to establish at UMSA. Many of the respondents were telling us about this but also the fact that the office had not been accomplished any actions yet since it is so lately established. Two of them were talking in a positive manner about this office and had expectations for its future. The biggest aim with this department is that UMSA gets an office where all the people at UMSA can get help from, regardless if you are a student, professor, administrative worker or the rector himself for example.

As one of our respondent said, in general, the majority of the indigenous population is living at the countryside outside of La Paz and that a problem with this is that the indigenous people do not have the same opportunities as the city citizens to go to the University. He said that this mostly depends on financial but also cultural aspects. This discussion led to the work of including the indigenous students at the university; the respondents were presenting the community centres that UMSA has established on the countryside. The centres exists in five different regions with the aim to meet the indigenous people in a better way, this was something that many of the respondents were talking about regarding things that have been done to improve the situation for the indigenous groups. The background of this is because of the government’s decision to implement programs that offers higher education to community students. These centres have therefore the goal to offer education to a higher number of the
Bolivians. In those communities it is possible to study the native language that is represented in the community. The respondent told us that the carriers depended on the community; the education that is being offered should in some way help the community with important knowledge. For example, in Copacabana, a village near the lake Titicaca, tourism and fishing are important incomes and because of that UMSA is offering education within these fields. Another of the respondents was discussing the community centres as seen below.

> With these [the community centres] they can go to the university but they can keep the context of what they are studying. So they are not allowed to come here, not because of discrimination but we would like to keep the context of what to focus them in the best way ever in order for them to be in their communities and to apply to learn what they need. (Respondent 3)

Even the fact that the best students from the communities apply for scholarship is one step in the way to make UMSA a more including and diverse university. This is a fact on the good side (to include the indigenous students) but the fact that the entrance test for the all the other ones is written in Spanish is prohibiting many of the students from the communities to come to UMSA since there are indigenous people that do not speak Spanish.

The rector of UMSA was talking about low commitment among authorities regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work. He was also talking about the bad communication between the faculties. These two facts are complicating the improvements within the work. This fact was proved during our interviews since the answers regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA were different. At some faculties, the respondents said that nothing is being done regarding the subject, and also that it does not need to.

In these manners, some things are being done to prevent ethnic discrimination at UMSA. Half of our respondents meant that this work is not enough and the other half considered it as enough.

**The implementation of the anti discrimination law and the constitution at UMSA**

Looking at the constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law, we wanted to hear the beliefs and opinions of our respondents about how the constitution and the law have been established at UMSA. The common answer of this was that there is no correlation between the law and the work at the university. Although there are national laws and reforms that are punishing discrimination, these are not being used in the Bolivian society or at UMSA.

The language requirement is one example of a reform that is not being implemented at the university. The rector talked a lot about the missing mechanism within this work. He said that the law and constitution says one thing but that the reality looks different. His thought about the language requirement was also that it should be seen as an extra skill and not as a compulsory one.

> In Bolivia we have the laws and the constitution that says that we are working against discrimination, but the mechanisms are not well established yet. (The rector)

One of the teachers that were interviewed had a more radical way of looking at the constitution and the law.

> The law and the constitution is good for one thing, to burn it. (Respondent 7)

This person was talking about the constitution and the law as something unnecessary, something that is just being made for the wrong reasons. The papers are just a way for the government to show that something is being done, but that is all. She said that the law and the constitution are not made for actually improving the rights for the indigenous groups. This affects UMSA since the people do not believe in the regulations.
And I think this law against discrimination is a good thing but I think that the only things that are really changing are the wordings, we live the same way. (Respondent 1)

One of the interview questions was about the requirement that all governmental employees shall speak at least two languages, one shall be Spanish and the other shall be a native language. This is not the case at UMSA. Only a few of the teachers take classes in an indigenous language. There are a language centre at the University where all employees and students can take classes for a discounted price, even though it is self financed, even for the teachers. So, the resources exist, but they are not well established. One of our respondents that is Aymara speaking, was talking about this requirement as something impossible. It is not possible for all employees to learn an native language. This person said that employees at UMSA, or any other government, will learn these languages when the power relations change. Today, the native languages are not useful. It has to be useful in order to learn it; otherwise it will only take a lot of time and not gaining anything for the people. The reform is made as a step in changing the rights for the indigenous groups but it has not gained any progressions, even from the perspective of an indigenous person.

The learning of a language is related to the power of that culture. It’s about the representation of the language. The Aymara language has been hidden for a long time. Compared with English for example you cannot find stuff on the markets; cell phones, instructions and so on. Whenever Aymara get that power; then Aymara is going to be useful for the employees to learn. (Respondent 5)

As said in the quote, the Aymara language is not necessary for the general Bolivian population. If there is one language that is important to learn it is English. This was something that a respondent from one of the technological faculties also said. In their work there is no need for indigenous languages. In other faculties, as medicine and law for example, another respondent said that the need is bigger. Many of them will work at the countryside and will therefore need a way of communicating with the people from the rural areas. This means that the implementation of these requirements is depending on your own needs, not in a way of improving the rights for the indigenous groups.

One respondent answered that if it would have been a requirement on the University to learn a native language, then the employees would take classes and they would get certificates from the course, but that does not mean that they actually have learned something. The respondent said that the employees probably only will take the classes in order to get their certifications that they can keep in their files, to show when it is required, or when applying for a job at UMSA. Not because of the fact to improve the rights for the indigenous groups.

Beliefs and perceptions about the ethnic anti-discrimination work

To begin with, the respondents had different perceptions about the existence of ethnic discrimination at UMSA. This means that they also had different beliefs of the need of an ethnic anti discrimination work. Some of the respondents said that ethnic discrimination not exists at the university and that the work against it therefore is unnecessary. Others have seen or experienced ethnic discrimination at the University and did therefore see the need of an improving work.

One of our respondents described the ethnic anti discrimination work as almost non-existing at UMSA. Even though, this person had been the head of one department and there they worked actively with it since the department had the goal of creating a equal workplace. This resulted in a workplace with a high understanding for each other, but after some years, when people quieted and new persons were hired, all of the equality work disappeared and they were back where they started. This fact can in some way explain the complexity of it. The mentality and values are deeply rooted in people’s minds.

I think we all are the same, we are colleagues, we are working the same way, we can’t
read different way, so I joined my staff and said, everybody got the same rights and same
duties, so we have to work as a family. We are members of this family and we have to
treat in the same way. And it worked! (Respondent 6)

Three of the respondents, working at three different faculties, told us that there is no
discrimination at UMSA, at least at their faculties. They were therefore talking about the ethnic
anti discrimination work as something unnecessary.

Personally I don’t feel like it is necessary and I think that nobody did that because we
don’t feel like there is discrimination here. So I think that nothing has to be made.
(Respondent 1)

One of them that worked as a dean described that a research had been made at the faculty to see
if discrimination existed and the content was that there was none. When we asked how this
research had been made the answer was that some students did it as a small research, and that
UMSA had nothing to do with it.

Another one of our respondents answered that the discrimination at UMSA has decreased since
the university in El Alto (a suburb to the city of La Paz) was established. This establishment
made segregation between the people from the cities and the people from the rural areas since
the people from the rural areas now have “their own” university to go to. This fact made a
difference for UMSA since the university now have fewer indigenous students, according to him.

The rector, who has got a big responsibility for the university and its students and employees,
had a different opinion about the ethnic anti discrimination work, both regarding the presence
and the future. During the interview he told us that “We are working hard in eliminating
discrimination and the mechanisms” (The rector). He said that one of the ways to improve the
work is by promoting the communication and letting people know their rights. All of the
students, administrators and teachers shall identify themselves with human rights at his
midterm; this was one of the rector’s goals. Another important action according to him was to
establishing punishments for those committing discrimination and racisms crimes. Although
these were his main beliefs about the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA, he also admitted
that it is not a complete work yet, that he cannot say that it is perfect.

Important factors to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA

Regarding the question what is needed when making an equal organisation, the answers were
quite similar among the respondents. Even though they had different beliefs and opinions on
whether discrimination occurred or not at UMSA and whether anti discrimination work was
needed, they all had similar thoughts about the important factors. All of them was talking about
the mentality, values and the culture at UMSA. Many explained this to be an important starting
point, to change their mind and the way they think of each other.

A number of the respondents were discussing changes that have to be done in the young years.
Their parents and their other surroundings of, especially adults affect children and youths.
Values and beliefs are therefore something that has to be affected in younger ages. In this
manner the school system with the primary school for example is an important institution to
make a change regarding their valuations.

Since there are no local policies or documents at UMSA regarding the ethnic anti
discrimination, we were asking the respondents whether or not they believed that policies and
documents could provide progressions at the University. Most of the respondents answered no.
They were talking about policies and documents as optional ending points. Before that it is more
important to change the mentality, the values and the culture within the organisation.
Something has to be done in that manner. One of the respondents was talking about creating
opportunities to meet, both for students, teachers and employees with the aim to discuss this
question. These meetings could gain progression seen to the tolerance for each other through
more reflective conversations. The person was talking about the importance of sharing and meeting each other in those questions.

As it is now, the people at UMSA is often segregated between different cultures and ethnicities and it is hard to break these barriers that are deeply rooted in peoples minds. The segregation is seen through closed groups depending of the ethnicity or culture that you feel like you belong to. The question about belonging was problematized through one of our respondents. This person talked about the need for the citizens in Bolivia to become one identity. Today a person from the city Cochabamba for example identify him- or herself more as a “Cochabambino” than a Bolivian. It is similar with the people from the indigenous groups that identify themselves with their ethnic group first of all. The respondent talked about changing this way of thinking as one of the main factors to end the discrimination at UMSA.

One respondent was talking about the bossy culture that exists on UMSA, both among teachers and authorities but also among the students. He explained this culture through a lack of sensitivity, as many of them do not cooperate with each other between the hierarchical levels. He was also describing the bossy culture as one of the reasons for the bad understanding for ethnic anti discrimination work. The work regarding ethnic discrimination is going slow due to low commitment among authorities and the lack of communication between the faculties. This bossy culture is making it harder for the culture of human rights to establish and root at UMSA.

A professor talked about self-reflection as an important step to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA. The person added the importance of developing an including environment at UMSA where the values can be practised. But, the reason for that should be because they want to improve the work, not because the laws and regulations force them to.

Analysis

In order to understand the result, the analysis will be presented below with the background from the previous research.

The implementation of the law and the reform

One of our research questions was to hear the thoughts from the employees regarding the implementation of the anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009. During the interviews, we found out that there are no local policies or documents regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at the university. Neither have the anti discrimination law nor the constitution being taken into account. According to our interviews it seems to be a gap between what the law and constitution says and what is being done in reality.

The non-performativity of the constitution and the anti discrimination law

Ahmed (2006) talks about the importance to follow a policy or document into an organisation to see how they move and where they get stuck. At UMSA, there are no policies and neither are the anti discrimination law and the constitution implemented. This means that it is impossible to follow the policies and documents and evaluate their impact. At UMSA, the focus is laying on the anti discrimination law and the constitution instead. The employees are aware of them, but they say that nothing is actively done to accomplish them at the university. The fact of implementing laws and reforms but without evaluate them is something that Ahmed writes about, this seems to be the reality at UMSA. To actually get the laws and reforms to be implemented at the university, there are several steps that are missing. It seems like the laws have been “substitute for actions” at UMSA, which can be seen as an obstacle in the progression of the anti discrimination work.

The result from our interviews shows that the language reform, that requires all governmental
employees to speak a native language except for Spanish, is an example of the non-performativity. One respondent talked about that if it would have been required at the university, the teachers would have taken the course, but just to get the certificate to show up when it is required, not for actually learn the language. Looking at the language requirement reform from the constitution of 2009, it can look impressive in its papers, but it does not reflect the reality at the university. So, the reform needs more assistance in order to fulfil its purpose.

**Policies as ending points**

Niessen (2003) talks about policies and documents as an important starting point in organisational changes, this was a bit contradictory to the answers of our respondents. One of our respondents talked about the policies and documents as ending points. She did not see the reason of policies or documents if the culture that exists today will continue. Then there will be no change, she argued. This shows an interesting point of view. For the context of Bolivia, were laws and regulations are often not respected and the reason for writing more documents that people should follow, to her opinion, becomes unnecessary. If the laws and reforms are not followed on a national level, it is easier to understand the doubts in the progress of the anti-discrimination work on an organisational level. On the other hand, changing a culture takes time. The author means that the changing process becomes more effective with policies and laws, but as seen here in Bolivia, it is also a matter of context. As long as laws are respected, new established laws can be a helpful part in the work against discrimination, but if the trust is bad for the legal system in a country, the laws may not be taken seriously. When implementing laws and policies in society or in an organisation, one of the main conclusions of Niessen (2003) is the importance of procedures and sanctions when the laws and policies are not followed. The main reason for having laws is to let them be used effectively, and therefore something is needed when they are being ignored. This is not the case at UMSA. The lack of legislation has resulted in an organisation where laws can be broken and nothing is being done to improve it.

**The improved work**

Looking at the improved work at UMSA, we are analysing the affirmative actions that have been made and the most important factor to make progressions within the ethnic anti-discrimination work at UMSA.

**The affirmative actions**

Although the opinions about if there is something done regarding the ethnic anti-discrimination work at UMSA varies, some of the respondents told us about some affirmative actions made by the university. One of the affirmative actions is the free access for the best students coming from the communities, which includes economical support during their studies. In the article “Does Affirmative Action work?” by Brown & Langer (2015) the author writes about affirmative actions as “practiced by different countries in different ways for different reasons - but always with the goal of redressing inequality”. The scholarships for the best of the indigenous students can in many ways be seen as a step in redressing the inequality. Regarding the scholarships, UMSA actually see the need of a change for the indigenous groups. Even though there are few affirmative actions taken at UMSA, these scholarships are one example of the fact that the university is aware of the problems.

As Brown & Langer (2015) writes, the inequalities within ethnic groups have a long and complex history and the changes need time. But the affirmative actions will not solve the problem; only make an awareness of it. One thing to be careful of is to submit the affirmative actions without spreading information and knowledge about the need of it. This seems to be the case at UMSA; there is a need of increased knowledge and information about the subject.

**The most important factor for a successful change**
One of our missions was to hear the beliefs and opinions about the most important factor to make progressions within the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA. Niessen (2003) state that the culture are one of the most important focuses when organisations are changing, but to reach progressions, policies and documents are important tools. This was also the most common answer during our interviews when we questioned them about what they see as the main important factor to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA. According to Choi (2011), the individuals play an important role in the changing of an organisational culture. Choi states that the employees have to be ready, committed, open and cynic to be able to make the progressions the organisations are looking for. Looking at this fact, the culture at UMSA can be analysed, even though there is no ethnic anti discrimination work, the opinions on whether or not ethnic discrimination exists can be analysed by this. This can be seen as an obstacle when looking at the result of the data, the question is if the culture at UMSA is ready for these changes seen to Choi’s important factors. This analysis will continue below in the section of the role of the individuals.

**The role of the individuals**

*Since the aim of our thesis is to examine the beliefs and perceptions of the employees at UMSA, this section contains an analysis of their opinions about the work and also their own role in it.*

**Different beliefs and perceptions regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work**

An organisation is its individuals, and the power of the individuals decides the culture that will grow in the organisation. An important factor according to Choi’s article (2011) is that when organisations changes or get new laws or policies etc. to take into account, it is important that all of the employees are accepting the new thoughts. This is not the case regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA.

The opinions are divided into different camps regarding the need of anti discrimination work at the university, just like the result of the study of Oosthuizen & Naidoo (2010). In their study, most of the respondents seemed to disagree with the EE and the strategy of it. That is similar to the anti discrimination law and the constitution in Bolivia, our respondents see different needs of it but all of them were complaining about the strategies of them. Once again, this fact shows that the question about ethnic discrimination and the improving work against it is complex, no matter of the context.

During our interviews, it became obvious that also different opinions on whether ethnic discrimination occurred or not at UMSA. This is an interesting topic to analyse. According to several authors (Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, & Topolnytsky, 2007; Weeks, Roberts, Chonko, & Jones, 2004) the employees have to see the need of the change, they have to accept it. Otherwise the implementation or change will never last. As written, the employees at UMSA have different opinions regarding the subject, both seen to the definition of what ethnic discrimination actually is but also if the improved work is needed or not. The employees have to understand the benefits of the change instead of follow it just because they have to (Neves, 2009).

Neves (2009) writes that how well employees will react to a change depends on their own outcomes. Taking this fact into account, the language requirement of the governmental workers can be analysed. Through our interviews, no matter of gender, ethnicity or position at the University, all of the employees were against the reform. None of them thought it would be necessary or useful to learn a native language from their own perspectives. One of the respondents was comparing the fact of learning English and a native language since English will be much more useful for the majority of the employees. This is an example of a law or reform that the practitioners do not see the use of. And therefore, it get stuck. Nothing is being done to accomplish the reform at UMSA because the practitioners do not see the meaning of it.


**Lack of communication, information and education**

Further, Niessen (2003) talks about the need of communication, information and education to make progressions in the anti discrimination work. According to him, this is even more important when individuals or groups have been deprived of their rights for a long time, as in Bolivia. At UMSA, we got different points of view when asking about it. Some answered that nothing is being done, or is going to be done, while other answered that there are regulations to follow and that UMSA think that this is an important topic. This shows a lack of communication, information as well as of education. As some of the employees do not see the need of the work, while other do and the fact that not even the deans we interviewed had the same answers of the question how the university works with the ethnic anti discrimination work, is a evidence on that. This shows that UMSA is not acting as a whole organisation, with the same point of view. This fact makes the progression regarding the work slower. To reach the goals within the anti discrimination work, an important factor is to have educated employees working with the subject. The transparency centre that will open in a soon future is an example of one way that UMSA actually is trying to work with it.

The rector of UMSA talked about the lack of commitment and communication within the authorities at the university. He saw this as a problem since the authorities have a big impact on the employees and that they need to be role models in the work. If they do not understand the necessity and importance, the employees will have a harder time to see the need and the strategies of achieving the goals. The bossy culture that some of the respondents were talking about can be one of the answers of the lack of commitment among the authorities. These bossy people have not providing the university with the right tools and factors to make progressions in the anti discrimination work. Another example of the lack of communication and information that Niessen (2003) is talking about regards the purpose of the language requirement. When analysing the result it became obvious that the relevance of the language reform today seems to be unclear for the employees at UMSA. One respondent said that a native language is quite useless, as he compared it with English that is more useful for the students. Another answer was that Quechua and Aymara languages are necessary in the faculties of medicine and law, where the students need the languages in their future work. The rector said that the language reform should not be compulsory. These wide perspectives of the need of the reform show the unclearenness regarding the reform, a bad environment for a change to establish according to Niessen (2003).

**Discussion**

*In this section we will present our own reflections of the result and the study. We will start with a summary of the result and after that a general discussion will take place under specific themes.*

**Main conclusions**

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the perceptions and beliefs of the employees at UMSA regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work. Through our interviews, we found out that almost nothing is being done to improve the rights for the indigenous groups. The participants have different beliefs and perceptions about the work, if the work is necessary but also if discrimination even exists at UMSA. Also the description of the ethnic discrimination itself differed. Since the background of our thesis has been the anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009, we also wanted to hear their beliefs about them since there are no local rules or policies at UMSA. The respondents agreed that these are good looking papers but that they do not gain progression, nor in society or at the university.

Looking at the most critical part of the work, the communication, information and education...
about the subject was conducted. Whether or not the respondents found the ethnic anti discrimination work necessary or not at UMSA, the respondents agreed over the fact that changing the culture was the most important factor within the work.

**General discussion**

The general discussion is divided into four different sections; "different descriptions of the ethnic discrimination", "an almost non existing ethnic anti discrimination work", "the non performativity of the constitution and the anti discrimination law" and last "the culture as the most important factor for improvements".

**Different descriptions of the ethnic discrimination**

As presented in the result, the ethnic discrimination seems to be a subjective phenomenon at UMSA even though the term is defined in the anti discrimination law. Many of the respondents were describing it in a similar way, but when it came to the description the answers varied a bit more. One of the respondents was talking about the fact that the people of Bolivia have to understand the differences between insulting and discriminating. Another fact was that the ones who are feeling discriminated have to improve their state of mind, this opinion was presented from three of the respondents. For us, it seems like there is a lack of both knowledge and understanding of the ethnic discrimination. If the people of Bolivia, and the rest of the world in that manner, do not see the need of a anti discrimination work, we think that something is missing. During the interviews most of the respondents said that ethnic discrimination do not appear at the university. We got concerned since the previous research pointed at the need of knowledge and understanding about the problem. The employees need to understand why the work against ethnic discrimination is important; otherwise, the work will not gain any progressions. Because of this, it seems like UMSA has a long way to go until they become a non-discriminating institution. We are wondering since the respondents says that there is no discrimination at UMSA, are the thoughts, beliefs and opinions from the indigenous groups being taken into account? Can they raise their voice without being punished? Do they dare to talk about experiences from different treatments, no matter if they are students or employees?

**An almost non-existing ethnic anti discrimination work**

At UMSA, the work against ethnic discrimination is almost non-existing, even though one of the respondents was talking about the university in a way that it has "the essences of being an anti discriminating institution". Three improvements that are being or are to be done are the transparency office that will open in a soon future and the community centres that are established on the countryside and the university in El Alto. We want to discuss the pros and cons about these improvements.

As written, the university is about to open a transparency office that is going to work with crimes and questions regarding the ethnic discrimination at UMSA. One of our main thoughts concerns the importance that the employees at this office have the adequate knowledge regarding ethnic anti discrimination. Also, the fact of what position and what power the transparency office will have at the university is an important factor for a successful work. As we mentioned in the analysis; sanctions and penalties are important tools to make a law effective. Taken this into account, the transparency office need to have the mandate to make decisions regarding the questions of ethnic discrimination. The ones that are going to work at the office needs to have the correct understanding for the definition and the interpreting of the laws and reforms. Since our result sometimes shows a lack of knowledge regarding the subject, we find the adequate knowledge about ethnic discrimination to be one of the most important factors to make progressions in the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA. Another main concern is that the workers of the transparency office need to be objective in their work so that everyone gets the same help, no matter of what background you come from.
We would also want to discuss the fact of segregation at the university. A number of the employees were talking about the decreasing discrimination that occurs at UMSA. They were talking about the fact that this was due to the community centres and the newly established university in El Alto. We want to discuss the pro’s and con’s that we see in this topic. We are concerned on whether or not the community centres and the university in El Alto are ways of transferring the problem instead of reducing it.

When talking about the community centres as an improvement, we are thinking of the fact that many of the indigenous students are staying in their communities in a both good and bad sentence. Looking at this in a good way, the indigenous groups can continue their traditional life and those who wants to study can have both. In a bad sentence, these centres might seem to fulfil the segregation that can be seen in the Bolivian society. If the indigenous people stay in the countryside the feeling of them and us will have a hard time to get improved. One of the respondents told us that the indigenous students cannot go to UMSA in La Paz, “not because of discrimination” just because of the fact that “we would like to keep the context of what to focus them in the best way ever in order for them to be in their communities and to apply to learn what they need”. Here he was aiming on the fact that the community centres offers the education that is needed in the communities. In the result we presented the village Copacabana as an example of this. This fact can in a way be seen as if the power of the indigenous groups is being controlled. They cannot choose what they want to study; instead they have to see what is the best for the community. This will continue the segregation since the people in the cities can control their future in a different way compared with the students on the countryside.

Another of the respondents was talking about the decreasing of ethnic discrimination at UMSA since the university in El Alto was established which we think is another interesting topic to discuss. We are wondering, have the discrimination actually increased or have the problems just being transferred? This establishment provides the society with a more rooted feeling of we and them since this means that the poorest youths of La Paz will go to El Alto and the richer youths are going to UMSA. This makes us concerned over the continued segregation, although a good part is that more of the indigenous people get a better chance to get educated. We think that the university in El Alto is a good thing in many ways, but that the segregation between the socio economic classes is something that needs to continue to be actively worked on.

The non-performativity of the anti discrimination law and the constitution

Since our interviews shows that the anti discrimination law and the constitution are not being followed at the university, we consider the laws as non-performative. For instance, the regulation of UMSA was made in 2005. The interesting part is that the anti discrimination law was made in 2010. This means that the regulation of UMSA has not been taken the anti discrimination law into account. How can an organisation, in this case a university, work towards a non-discriminating organisation if the national laws are not even considered in their regulation?

One of the reasons that the laws are not being followed can be discussed through the lack of trust regarding the legal system in Bolivia. The employees at UMSA knew about the anti discrimination law, but also that it was not followed. Most of them did not think that policies and documents concerning anti discrimination work was a way of improving this work. Some answers that were given were that it will not change anything, and because of that they do not see the need of it. Since the law and the reforms are not followed, the need of more papers appeared unnecessary. If the employees know that laws and regulations that are not being followed do not lead to any kind of punishment or sanction, will they still be encouraged to work with the implementation of the law? The lack of trust regarding the legal system in Bolivia can be one fact to take into account when analysing the non-performativity in this thesis. As described in the analysis, one way to force people to work with discrimination laws is to have sanctions and penalties for punishing discrimination related crimes. If UMSA had been
punished for not working with the law and the constitution, this might have led to a more progressive work. We do see the problems within this conclusion. As it is today, with few people judged for discrimination acts in Bolivia, it is hard to say that punishment and sanctions regarding this subject are a way of solving the problem. To be realistic, this is not the reality in Bolivia. The problem is out of the university; the problem concerns the politic way of dealing with the legal system.

When the anti discrimination law and constitution were made, there was a need of information to the citizens concerning the aim in order to start the progress of making them effective. Other important factors that we see are improved communication and education of the need and meaning of the law and constitution in order to establish them. Neves (2009) talks about that information, communication and education are important factors when the readiness for change is low. Taking the language requirement as an example it became obvious that most of the respondents do not know or see neither the meaning nor the need of the reform. The purpose is to strengthen the rights for the indigenous groups but this was not something that the respondents told us. The answers focused instead on why an indigenous language was unnecessary and why English was the required one. According to the respondents, the only groups who need a native language at UMSA are the students that are studying medicine and law. The respondents themselves did not see the use of the language requirement, and did not think there was a need for it either. And as written in the analysis, to see the purpose and the impacts are two of the most important factors for succeeding with implementations or changes.

Neves (2009) also state that there is a need for the employees to see their own outcomes regarding the organizational change. Because of the fact that most of our respondents were mestizos they may not be the ones that need a native language in their personal vocabulary, they are not positive to this change. But also the person with an indigenous background that we talked to said that it will be hard to include a native language like Aymara into the university. Since the power of the language still is weak, people will not start to learn it just because of the law. Another fact that is important to add is that the teachers have to pay some of the course by themselves. Even though the university provides the employees with a contribution of the cost, the teachers still have to pay the rest. If you as an employee cannot pay the bill for the course, and do not feel the need or the use of the reform, it will be hard to encourage yourself to learn it. If you also add that the university do not see it as compulsory, you can still choose to not attend to a class in a native language, or get the certificate just to show up when it is required. So, in that way, this also shows the problems with the non-performativity of the law.

The culture as the most important factor for improvements

During our interviews, we sometimes experienced a lack of knowledge about why anti discrimination work will give positive outcomes for an organisation like UMSA. This together with the fact of non-interesting employees and a lack of communication between the faculties might have had a big impact on the culture within the university. We see potentials in the change of culture if the communicative and cooperative work will make progressions at the university. As written above, education and information about the ethnic anti discrimination might be a good starting point to improve the knowledge and understanding for the problem and its victims. These progressions will help not only the employees but also the students of UMSA. Their beliefs and conscious can be both influenced and affected of the increased knowledge about ethnic discrimination and this will in its own way also improve the work. Just like us, the respondents saw the culture as the main issue to improve to be able to make progressions within the ethnic anti discrimination work.

Although the culture can be seen as one of the main focuses to improve the rights of the indigenous groups at the university, an interesting thing is that none of the respondents were talking about the importance of laws, policies or documents. We wonder, how will the ethnic anti discrimination work improve at UMSA by just working with the culture? We think that the university needs more help to make progressions within the culture. We think that local
policies about how UMSA shall work towards a non-discrimination organisation would gain improvements within the subject. In this policy it should be defined what ethnic discrimination is, what to do if you experience it, where to go for support, what penalties and sanctions there are and what the main goals at UMSA are. We do see the difficulties regarding writing policies since they are often not respected, nor in Bolivia or in other parts of the world according to Ahmed (2006). But still, the culture needs help for progressing in these questions. Therefore, it is very important that the information, education and communication about these policies and documents are enough if the work shall gain progression.

Looking at the need of a changing culture, we are concerned about the fact that some respondents were talking about the things that have to be changed outside the university instead of focusing on the changes that are needed within it. They were talking about the importance of changing the values and beliefs of the people in the young ages. Because of this, they said that the primary school is an important institution to change these thoughts in the Bolivian society. They were also talking about the importance that parents affect their children to be more open-minded. We agree with this content, but still, we are concerned over the fact that changes have to be done outside of the university. Of course this is important, but the employees of UMSA need to see their role in the work. As written, the students at the university are developing a critical way of thinking. The changes in the younger ages are important but the fact that you develop these skills when going to the university is important to not underestimate. If their is a lack of equal beliefs and values coming from the parents or the primary school, the university plays an even more important role to change these thoughts.

**Method discussion**

*In this section we will discuss the chosen method and its pros and cons.*

**The data collection**

From the beginning the selection of participants was goal oriented. Our contact in La Paz helped us to get contact with the deans at the biggest faculties, as the aim from the beginning was to interview these people. Soon it became clear that this selection would not fit the thesis, in that case the experiences and perceptions only would have come from top positions within UMSA. Another understanding was that all of the deans were men in the middle ages who considered themselves as mestizos. As we wanted a wider perspective, also seen to gender and ethnicity, it became obvious that the selection of participants would have to be changed. The selection went from goal oriented to a snowball selection. As far as we could understand, the majority of employees working at UMSA are mestizos and do not have a traditional indigenous background. This together with the fact that it was hard to find women and employees with indigenous background, the selection aspects in some ways did not went the way we wished for. But since our aim was to get the perceptions and beliefs from the employees at UMSA, we were never aiming for a generalization of the answers among our participants. In the end, our respondents gave us interesting answers from different perspectives, but we would have wanted to talk to a wider range of respondents seen to their ethnicity and gender.

Even though three out of seven interviews were made in public places, we feel comfortable with the fact that the respondents felt secure. We were making sure that the places we visited were empty of people and that the respondents were asked about their opinions about the place before we started.

The reason for transcribing in a selective way was because of the fact that many of the interviews contained some misunderstandings because of the different languages. This caused longer interviews then we had expected since it took some time to make sure that the questions and answers were linked together. Because of this, we had to reformulate many of the questions in order to get the participants to understand the meaning of them. This resulted in recordings with some irrelevant information and we decided to transcribe them in a selective way. In the
end, we were satisfied with the answers since we had our research questions covered.

**Ethic consideration**

In the thesis, we chose to present the respondents with their gender because of the fact that non of the respondents knew who participated in the study. Because of this, non of them have had their identities published since all of the deans are men and the number of professors at the university are too high which means that the participating women can not be identified.

**The cultural distance and the language**

The fact that we needed an interpreter during the interviews was not obvious from the beginning. Our thought was that we could do them by ourselves since our participants worked at one of the biggest universities in Bolivia, but unfortunately only three of them were English speaking as presented before. This fact forced us to use an interpreter. The choice of interpreter was luckily easy since Erick had a good insight within the thesis and understood the subjects, the aim and the research questions; he had a natural place for the mission. Because of the fact that misunderstandings could easily be made, we sat down after every interview to discuss what we had understood and what were the main topics. Also the first research question, that regards the description of ethnic discrimination, was made to minimize the cultural distance. This question was not made in order to connect the answers with the previous research, only to make sure that we understood the Bolivian context.

**Final reflections**

This thesis had the purpose to examine the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA. By looking at the work with new eyes, we wanted to problematize the work and see how it could improve. It has not been our purpose to criticise the ethnic anti discrimination work, rather to highlight the result that was given from the interviews. We also want to make clear that the discussion and analysis is made through the eyes of two swedish students. Hopefully this have gained progressions in both direction since we have recievied a deeper knowledge within the subject and hopefully we can give back a new perspective through our swedish context.

**Further research**

For further research within the ethnic anti discrimination subject in Bolivia, we would like to find a workplace where the indigenous people themselves could be interviewed in a wider way. We are also curious about the primary school in Bolivia, since these institutions have such an important impact on the values and beliefs of the young Bolivians. Has anything been done at that level according to our subject? That is one question that we have been thinking of.
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## Interview questions

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<th>Research question</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening questions</strong></td>
<td>What do you teach? In which career(s) and subject(s)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For how long have you been working as a teacher at UMSA?</td>
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<td>Have you had any other positions like rector, vice rector, dean etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How do you identify your ethnicity?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How do our respondents describe ethnic discrimination in Bolivia?</strong></td>
<td>How do our respondents describe ethnic discrimination in Bolivia?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What are their beliefs and perceptions about the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?</strong></td>
<td>How would you describe the ethnic anti-discrimination work at UMSA?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are there policies and documents regarding ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?</td>
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| | If there are policies and documents at UMSA, how have they affected your daily work?  
  • If there aren’t policies and documents, how come? |
| | Do you experiences different actions and progressions between different faculties/carriers/subjects regarding the ethnic anti discrimination work?  
  • If yes, in what way? |
<p>| <strong>How do our respondents describe the implementation of the constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law at UMSA?</strong> | How would you describe the ethnic anti-discrimination work at your university (at your daily work) after 2010 (when the anti discrimination law came)? |
| | In the constitution of 2009 there is a reform regarding language requirements for governmental employees. What do you know about this reform? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Has the language reform got implemented at UMSA?</td>
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<td>• If yes, how has it been received?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If not, how come do you think?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are your personal beliefs about the Bolivian ethnic anti discrimination work in general? The law and constitution?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What are their main beliefs about the most important factor to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are their main beliefs about the most important factor to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ending question</strong></td>
<td>Is it anything else you want to add?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Information letter (English version)

Information letter

First of all, thank you for your participating within this interview.

We are students at the program of Human Resources Management at Umeå University in Sweden. During April and May we are visiting Universidad Mayor de San Andrés to write our bachelor thesis about the ethnic anti-discrimination work at your University. We want to examine your perceptions and experiences about the proactive work regarding this subject.

Our thesis is based on the Bolivian constitution (regarding the subject of discrimination) from 2009 and the Law Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination (2010). With this background, we would like to hear your thoughts about it. Have the laws made any differences for the indigenous groups? Below you can see our aim and our research questions.

Aim

With the background of the Bolivian anti discrimination law and the constitution of 2009, the purpose with this bachelor thesis is to examine the beliefs and perceptions of employees about the ethnic anti discrimination work at a public university in La Paz, Bolivia.

Research questions

- How do our respondents describe ethnic discrimination in Bolivia?
- What are their beliefs and perceptions about the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?
- What are their main beliefs about the most important factor to improve the ethnic anti discrimination work at UMSA?
- How do our respondents describe the implementation of the constitution of 2009 and the anti discrimination law at UMSA?

The data that we will get from the interviews will, as we wrote, be used in our bachelor thesis. You will be anonymous during the whole study and you are free to not answering a question for any reason during our interview. Your participation is optional and you can whenever you want decide to end it.

We will record the interview only if you give us your permission, to make our analyse work easier. The recording will be handled confidentially and will be deleted after we have finished our thesis.

If you have any further questions or want to contact us for any reason, you are very welcome to email us. And if you want to have our thesis e-mailed to you when it is finished, please give us your e-mail address.

We really appreciate your participation and we are looking forward to meet you.

Best regards,

Anna Ericson and Sara Widmark