#NiUnaMenosBolivia fights back

A discourse theoretical analysis on the struggle against gender-based violence in Bolivia

Student: Olga Yegorova
Supervisor: Jakob Svensson
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Department of Informatics and Media
Media & Communication Studies
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Abstract

Femicides are not a new phenomenon. Marches involving thousands of people all around the Latin American continent to fight them, however, is. Ni Una Menos - Not one woman less - is the slogan that also mobilized Bolivians to mass-based protests in November 2016.

This thesis investigates the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia for the purpose of understanding its discursively articulated identities. A multidisciplinary discourse theoretical analysis combines Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory with Nancy Fraser’s contributions to the struggle over needs of counterpublics to examine textual, photographic and ethnographic data.

Two levels of identities of #NiUnaMenos are extracted from the investigation: Internal agonistic identities pinpoint at the friction between the representors and the represented identities of the counterpublic. A collective identity evolves in the context of the struggle for justice, freedom and dignity through the construction of an antagonistic “Others” who are held responsible for femicidal violence.

This study builds a bridge between feminist activism and academic discourse for feminist studies of the region. It further develops and exemplifies a methodological toolkit for a theoretically based discourse analysis on contemporary women’s movements.

Keywords: Discourse theory, feminism, counterpublic, identity, collective identity, hegemony, agonism, antagonism, Latin American, Bolivia
1. Introduction

Being a feminist in Bolivia is not always easy. When I told some fellows from my sports center in La Paz that I consider myself a feminist, their reactions were very clear: Surprised or shocked gazes and comments reached out to me like: “Please tell me that you are not one of those crazy ‘feminazis’”, was just one example.

The resistance against feminism in Latin America is a widespread phenomenon. According to Julietta Kirkwood (1999) this has several reasons: Firstly, “feminists are seen as elite”. This touches upon the delicate topic of ethnicity and class in Latin American women’s movements (Kirkwood 1999, 162). Secondly, although a wide range of feminisms exist in Latin America, the term feminism is mostly associated with radical feminist theories (Kirkwood 1999, 162). Thirdly, feminism is often falsely perceived as “anti-men” in the region. Lastly, the idea of women as caring wives and mothers is still persistent in contemporary women’s movements (Kirkwood 1999, 166). This sheds a critical light on European individualistic feminism that appears hostile to those societal norms. In conclusion, very few women or men identify themselves as “feminists” even if they are pursuing feminist ideas and goals.

However, to me, being a feminist was not an option, but a necessity. Not only do women experience sexual harassment on a daily basis, but the high amount of women who were killed by their husbands and boyfriends out of sexist motives all around Latin America offers enough reasons to fight for women’s rights in Bolivia (Arauco Lemaitre 2007, Chant and Craske 2007). This is how I became interested in a movement which I had already heard of a couple of times before: #NiUnaMenos, (direct translation: “Not one woman less”), a movement that mobilizes for protests against gender-based violence: “#NiUnaMenos” achieved the unification of thousands of activists all around the Latin American continent: It started off in various cities of Argentina in March 2015 (Prada 2016) and spilled over to Chile and Uruguay (La Izquierda Diario, 2016). In Lima, Peru the #NiUnaMenos march, which gathered together thousands of people on August 13, 2016, was considered by local media as the largest demonstration in Peruvian history (La Respública, 2016). Inspired by this, Bolivian feminists opened up a Facebook group named “Ni Una Menos Bolivia: Movilización Nacional” which led up to a mass-mobilization on the November 25, 2016. Around 70001 protesters marched on the streets of Bolivia’s most populated cities shouting messages such as: “Ni una menos, vivas nos queremos” – “Not one woman less, we want to stay alive”. Among them was me, documenting the protest with photographs in La Paz.

Considering the high resistance of the society against feminists, it becomes interesting to better understand the ways in which #NiUnaMenos developed in Bolivia and the agenda it set for its protests. A lot of research has been done on social movements in Latin America demanding rights for workers, indigenous peoples or citizens in several Latin American countries (Femenías 2009, 33). However, the role of women

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1 This number is estimated by various feminist groups and is not confirmed by official sources.
is mostly considered as a sub-theme of those struggles. The academic texts that focus on Latin American feminism have a descriptive, rather historical approach towards women’s movements and often fail at closing the wide gap between academic explanatory systems based on Eurocentric schemata and daily activism of the many Latin American women’s movements. This applies especially to Bolivia, where – as Virginia Aillón states – despite the high activity of feminist movements, academic discourses are far from catching up (Aillón 2015, 24). The lack of academic research on contemporary, digitally enhanced feminist movements on the Latin American continent is the first motivation point for this thesis.

A second motivation arises from a seemingly paradoxical situation: With its small population of 10 million inhabitants, Bolivia includes 39 officially spoken languages. Just as many other countries of the Global South, Bolivia is struggling for recognition and the detachment from previous colonial structures, which the election of the first indigenous president Evo Morales of Bolivia in 2006 shows (Mazorra 2006, 5). A large range of conflicting ideas which struggle for recognition and rights within this country can be expected.

Considering the previously mentioned reluctance towards feminists throughout a large part of the society, how is it possible for a movement to construct a collective, mass-based identity despite of all the cleavages? And what can we learn about #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discursive identity constructs? These questions are at the center of this thesis and require a theoretical framework that may help to understand #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s identity construction in an integral way. For this purpose, I decided to combine and merge two theoretical branches which both understand the social as a discursive construction. Firstly, I apply Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory. It enables me to place the struggle over identities at the core of any discourse. In particular, it allows me to understand the frictions and conflicts between identities as well as possible ways of group formation of the same. Secondly, my thesis roots in Nancy Fraser’s feminist discourse theoretical insights through her concept of “subaltern counterpublics” (Fraser 1990a) and her deliberations about the “struggle over needs” (Fraser 1989, 1990b) that is an ongoing process when subordinated groups attempt to redefine their position in society.

Merging these frameworks into an empirically applicable toolkit for a discourse theoretical analysis enables me to pursue the following research questions throughout this thesis:

**RQ1:** Which identity constructs within the counterpublic space of #NiUnaMenosBolivia can be detected?

- **RQ1.1:** Which internal agonistic discourses can be identified within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic among different subject positions?

- **RQ1.2:** To what extent do internal hegemonic interventions influence #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic?

**RQ2:** How does #NiUnaMenosBolivia create a discourse that allows for the construction of a collective identity?
RQ2.1: What are the articulated nodal points of the “we” in contrast to the antagonistic “others”?

RQ2.2: Which oppositional need discourses and surrounding “in-order-to” moments does #NiUnaMenosBolivia express against the antagonistic need discourses?

RQ2.3: To what extent is a societal hegemony contested by #NiUnaMenosBolivia?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a multidisciplinary discourse theoretical analysis that was applied on five data sets. Firstly, I applied an embodied observant participation during three major events between September and November 2016 including the main protest march of the movement on the November 25, 2016 in La Paz (Turner 2000, 51ff.). Secondly, I investigated the mostly textual content that was retreated from 542 photos that I took myself during the major protest march in La Paz. Thirdly, three interviews with #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s initiators, which combined semi-structured with narrative elements, provided internal insight into the movement (Edwards and Holland 2013, 30; Lawler 2002, 246). Fourthly, 10 documents from the internal Facebook group and 53 postings from the Facebook fan page of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, which stem from the September 3, 2016 up until the of March 2017 were incorporated into the analysis. Lastly, I included eight written articles written by “Pan y Rosas”, a feminist group of La Paz and a central actor within the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBoliva. The articles ranged from the October 19, 2016 up until the March 9, 2017.

Through the investigation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s case, I aim at contributing in two broader senses. A contemporary and critical insight into a contemporary feminist movement in Latin America which does not solely rely on new social movement paradigms such as the study of collective identity is taken. Moreover, more complex internal relations of hegemony, agonism and antagonism are included. In this way, this thesis aims to close a part of the wide research gap between feminist activism and academic investigation in the region and lay the ground for further academic explorations. Although it is not my major pursuit, a second aim of this thesis lies in providing a theoretical contribution by showing a way in which discourse theoretical and feminist ideas can merge into an applicable analytical toolkit for the investigation of a feminist movement in a highly diverse context.

My thesis is structured as follows: I will first provide an overview over different feminist streams in general and within the Latin American and Bolivian context. This helps to understand why the concept of counterpublics, a critique towards the Habermas’ public sphere is suitable for understanding a contemporary, diverse women’s movement. Theoretical considerations on discourse by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) will help to set this research into a wider discourse theoretical context and develop a methodological framework for the multidisciplinary approach of this thesis. I will incorporate elements of Fraser’s (1990a) concept of subaltern counterpublics and need interpretations (Fraser 1989, 1990b) into a broader discourse analytical framework. Thereafter, I will give insights into the methodology of this thesis and proceed to the presentation of my analytical results starting off with a chronology of events within the #NiUnaMenosBolivia movement, I will be able to display identity constructs of #NiUnaMenos on two
levels: On the one hand, I will look into internal agonistic discourse and hegemonic interventions that exhibit diverse internal identities. On the other hand, I will investigate the many forms in which the counterpublic achieves to establish a collective identity through articulating an antagonistic “other”, and thereby, contesting a wider hegemonic discourse. Finally, I will conclude my research by answering the research questions and discuss my findings with the help of the previous review on Latin American feminism. This will enable me to emphasize certain aspects of the thesis that will enable future researchers to investigate further on contemporary feminist movements in Latin America and especially in Bolivia.
2. Feminism – a historical background

The following chapters lay out a historical, cultural and political background for the Latin American #NiUnaMenos movement. Due to the diversity of women’s activism and feminism, this mapping attempt will just be able to scratch on the surface of the diverse forms of feminisms of the Latin American continent.

The impulses of European and North American feminism will be a point of departure. By doing so, I touch upon one of the strongest critiques of feminist movements which flourished until the 1960s: The fact that is mostly out of the one-sided perspective of white, middle-class, educated women (Enszer 2007, 20).

Nonetheless, I will use this structure in my elaborations because even Latin American decolonial feminists such as Curiel Pichardo (2010) and Rosa Ynés Ochy (2009, 2) critically acknowledge that Latin American women’s and feminist movements were largely influenced by Eurocentric perspectives, and continue to manifest in reality until today.

In order to lay #NiUnaMenos’ rise into a wider background of feminist movements, first I need to introduce various possibilities of defining feminism. Then, I will touch upon the different waves of feminist movements and conclude with a short reflection on the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the step to the next stage of feminism. After Latin American feminist and women’s movements’ streams are scrutinized, I will highlight three merely Latin American characteristics of feminism which need to be considered in order to understand #NiUnaMenos: decolonial feminist streams, social and motherhood feminism and the reluctance towards being identified as a feminist in many Latin American countries.

2.1. Feminism – the Western history

Defining feminism is a difficult undertaking as the term has been object of diverse discussions since its usage (Denis 2013, Beasley 1999, Ferree and Mueller 2004, 576). However, if we wanted do so, we would need to include countless perspectives. Chris Beasley (1999, ix) also sees this problem and calls the definition of the term feminism as “troublesome”. For the purpose of this research, a short outline will suffice. While the Oxford English Dictionary defines feminism simply as “advocacy of the rights of women based on the theory of equality of the sexes” (qtd in Easton 2012, 99), Julietta Kirkwood cites Rosalind Delmar’s definition of feminism as an “attempt to transform women from an object of knowledge into a subject capable of appropriating knowledge, to effect a passage from the state of subject to subjection” (Delmar, 1986, 25; qtd Kirkwood 1999, 165).

Chris Beasley highlights the heterogeneity and the difficulty to define feminism as an important characteristic of feminism. Nonetheless he also formulates cautiously:
“Feminist theory (…) has a normative quality— that is, it is concerned with what ought not and what ought to exist in social and political life. Feminism appears to offer ethical/moral ‘norms’ in terms of a critical stance regarding the position of women and envisioning a more desirable state of affairs.” (Beasley 1999, 25).

In order to make an attempt of laying #NiUnaMenos in an ideological and historical background, it is crucial to discuss the development of feminism providing an overview of women’s and feminist movements in Latin America.

_The three (or four?) waves of feminism_

Even before the term feminism existed, there have been outstanding figures who dedicated their actions to the improvement of women’s living and labor conditions. However, the understanding of feminism is widely categorized into three or four waves.

The first wave in the 19th century of feminism focused on political participation of women. In particular, it promoted women’s suffrage rights (Freedman 2003, 464). While at that time colonized New Zealand brought women’s right to vote through in 1893, the first European country to guarantee women over 30 and who owned property suffrage was Britain in 1918. This right was extended to all women over 21 in 1928 (Phillips 1989).

Second wave feminism begins in the 1960s. Munro (2013, 22) states the phrase ‘the personal is political’ as a key idea of this second stage. It summed up how sexism and patriarchy inhibited women’s action in their daily lives. Therefore, feminism was extended to a wide range of topics such as sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights or legal inequalities (Whelehan 1995, 26; Munro 2013, 23). Second wave feminist movements were harshly criticized for their Eurocentric perspective, depicting struggles of white, middle-class women (Enszé 2007, 20). Third wave feminism took those critiques into account and included feminist experiences of women with different class and race backgrounds (Easton 2012, 100).

Whether or not contemporary feminist movements can be already counted as fourth wave feminism depends on the role one deduces from the rise of the Internet. Baumgartner (2011) was the first one to claim that the ‘experiences’ which the “online universe” permits (cited in Phillips and Cree 2014) symbolize the shift from third wave to fourth wave feminism. Ealasaid Munro (2013) argues that ICTs created a ‘call-out’ culture, in which sexism and misogyny can be depicted online and claims can be directly expressed (Munro 2013, 23).

In the following section, I will outline some key dates of Latin American feminism in order to show the historical pathway from the first institutionalized congress on feminist issues in Buenos Aires, Argentina, ‘Primer Congreso Femenino Internacional de Buenos Aires’ of 1910 until the emergence of digitally enhanced mobilizations such as the #NiUnaMenos protests since 2015 (Femenías 2009, 47).
2.2. Feminism and women’s movements in Latin America

This chapter will give the necessary historical, ideological and political background to Latin American feminism, which we need for our subsequent analysis if #NiUnaMenos and the case of Bolivian #NiUnaMenos.

Although Latin American countries were also inspired by European feminist demands for women’s rights, María Luisa Femenías (2009, 47) shows that the division into first, second and third waves is barely applicable to the Latin American context. Even in the cases where feminist ideas from those waves do apply to the regional contexts, they unfolded in a different chronology of happenings. For this reason, I will not structure my review on Latin American Feminism in the categories of the first, second and third wave feminism. Instead, I will depict the course of Latin American feminism in three ways. Firstly, I will scrutinize a timely linear course of feminism in the region. Thereby, I will depict gender-based and non-gender-based women’s movements. Following Lynn Horton (2015, 79ff.), I understand gender-based women’s movements as movements which include a critical perspective of existent gender roles of women and men, while non-gender-based movements also promote women’s rights, but thereby do not question traditional role ideas. Thereafter, I will outline some specific characteristics of Bolivian feminism, which may be of special interest for the later analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. Thirdly, I will discuss three tendencies within Latin American feminist movements which have been pointed out in various studies.

2.2.1. Latin American women’s movements – a historical review

Conducting a historical review on Latin American feminism is a challenging undertaking. Maxine Molyneux (2003) made an attempt to compile a relatively complete photo of Latin American women’s movements. However, she needed to acknowledge that considering the political, cultural and social diversity in Latin America this undertaking cannot be more than a vast approximation to feminist realities of the continent. Latin America does not only show diversity when it comes to national or regional borders - with different laws, political structures and cultural distinctions within any one country, there also exist countless local forms of social, political and cultural contexts which shape women’s activism (Molyneux 2003, 257). For this reason, I decided to structure this section by depicting key dates, political shifts and mostly institutionalized registered events which had a big influence on how feminism in the region unfolded.

To start with, the first institutionalized congress on feminist issues took place in Argentina, Buenos Aires in 1910 ‘Primer Congreso Femenino Internacional de Buenos Aires’. It had been influenced by first wave feminism discussing women’s suffrage, among other topics. This very first attempt to promote women’s rights already revealed a central discrepancy between the “librepensoadoras” (free-minders) and the “Christianas”. The acts of this Congress exhibit how the Christian women wanted to label the Congress as “feminine” instead of “feminist” in order to symbolize their disapproval for the too free-minded European feminists of their time (Femenías 2009, 47). This conflict split the women’s movements into the feminist movements which regarded gender-based roles critically, and women’s
movements which used motherhood ideals and traditional family roles to gain respect for their struggle (Charleswell 2014).

Up until the 1930s, documented feminism mostly treated the topics of suffrage, protective labor laws, and access to education (O’Connor 2014, 270). In the 1930s up until the 1960s the suffragist movement got increasingly more recognition and the first woman was elected as a mayor in Puerto Rico (Charleswell 2014). Between the 1960s and 1980s Latin American Feminism was influenced essentially by political circumstances. At the end of the 1960s, documented feminism in Latin America was strongly promoted by middle class women from politically leftist groups. Unlike their predecessors and western feminists, Latin American feminists of the end of 1960s concentrated on social justice issues instead of suffrage (Lebon and Tobar 2003, 130).

An influential factor of feminist mobilization in the mid-70s was the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms which typically included “reduction of states services and subsidies. Free trade policies, privatizations, and weakening of labour protections” (Almeida 2015, 80). Especially low-income women, in their role as mothers and those responsible for their families needed to deal with this new situation and therefore, started community kitchens or other collective, community based demands for affordable housing, food, water and public transport (Lind 2005).

The communitarian tendency also influenced women’s actions strongly during this time and up to the era of authoritarian, military and dictatorship regimes which oppressed many political and societal groups (Femenñas 2009, 47). Civil society acted as a counterweight to the corrupt politics and the authoritarian state. In this context feminist and women’s movements centered their encounters in activities which would strengthen civil society (Molyneux 2003, 273). Thereby, women’s groups often used the largely accepted traditional family roles and the motherhood frames to mobilize against the authoritarian regime. For example, in Bolivia the “Union of Bolivian Women” (“La Unión de Mujeres Bolivia”, my translation) and the “Committees of Housewives” (“Comités de Amas de Casa”, my translation) organized hunger strikes in solidarity with their husbands and sons who worked as miners. In Argentina, mothers and grandmothers gathered at the “Plaza de Mayo” of Buenos Aires to demand clarity about their disappeared sons and grandsons during the dictatorship on a weekly basis between 1976 and 1983. These forms of women’s action can be classified as a non-gender-based activism.

A further development of Latin American feminism of the 1970s goes along with the critiques which also arose in the second wave of European and North American feminism regarding the one-sided feminist perspective of white middle class women (Enszer 2007, 20). This gave rise to important decolonial feminist streams from the 1970s up until contemporary Latin American feminists who try to shift the vision to more diverse concepts of women’s activism (Anzaldua 1999, 22).

The fall of dictatorships in the 1980s gave another rise of feminism and women’s action in the continent. The mostly democratic regimes of the regions enabled women to create new spaces for feminist and women’s movements. For instance, in the 1980s, Latin American women started a series of regional
“encuentros” (Horton 2015, 82). Just as Latin American feminism, it developed from an ethnically and ideologically limited gathering of Latin American women, into an encounter of various ethnic and feminist beliefs from all over the country. The growing attendance from 180 at the first meeting in Bogota, Colombia to a high of 3,200 in San Bernardo in Argentina illustrates this development (Friedman 2014, 22). These new spaces of participation promoted the overall capacity of organized women’s movements in Latin America (Horton 2015, 82).

Horton describes the 1990s and 2000s as a post-marginalization phase of women’s mobilization in Latin America. She argues that in this phase women’s action can no longer be explained by simple descriptions of grievances, as those vary and become more or less salient in each context (Horton 2015: 83). For example, Horton shows how Molyneux (1985, 229) suggests that low-income women tend to prioritize practical gender interests and day-to-day survival needs which are not necessarily analyzed from a gender perspective, while strategic gender interests focus on longer term gender equality (as cited in Horton 2015: 83). Horton argues that both, self-defining feminist movements as well as women’s movements which based themselves on traditional gender roles saw a rise in the 1990s and 2000s. This could also be seen in diverse grassroots movements, as well as the increase in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which promoted women’s rights (Horton 2015, 83-85).

By 2010, Horton acknowledges that Latin American feminism achieved substantial improvements in legislative realms and formal policy. However, she outlines three current challenges faced by women’s movements. Firstly, she the stance that women in positions of power should not be merely symbolic, but should actually bring gender consciousness to formal political spaces (Horton 2015, 85). She describes the diversity among women as another challenge for women’s movements. According to Horton, they often fail at fully representing the “perspectives and needs of poor and working class women, lesbians, and indigenous and Afro-descendant women” (Horton 2015, 86). An especially outstanding case is that of indigenous women as they “face exclusion and marginalization on multiple dimensions” and do not see their issues adequately addressed in the movements which are “largely led by non-indigenous, middle class women” (Horton 2015: 86; Richard 2004, 202). A third issue for women’s movements of the region is the shift in the social policies of many Latin American governments due to neoliberal reforms that reduced state services. While some argue for specifically women-targeted programs, others claim that such programs would reinforce pre-existent gender stereotypes of the mother as “the self-sacrificing, caretaker of the family, community and nation” (Horton 2015, 86).

Bolivia, located in the heart of the Latin American continent was largely influenced by the developments of women’s movements elaborated in this section. However, there were also many peculiarities of Bolivian women’s movements due to its unique political, ethnic and historical characteristics. Those will become clearer in the next section.
2.2.2. Bolivian women’s movements and political polarization

Bolivian scholar Virginia Aillón stated that despite the activity of feminist movements, there is a wide gap between action and academic discourse in Bolivia. The lack of academic documentation of Bolivian feminist action is an essential motivator for this research as stated before (Aillón 2015, 24). In the following section, I will mostly rely on Virginia Aillón’s research on Bolivian feminism and add some information from non-academic sources in order to scrutinize the main women’s movements in the country.

Long before the established understanding of first wave feminism, Bolivia offered a wide range of women’s activism with protagonists such as Bartolina Sisa, who led rebellions against Spanish colonial forces in the 18th century (Murillo 2003, 3). This pre-modern women’s struggle against colonial invasions reached into current times where indigenous women, who still face strong discrimination, criticized their under-representation in many Bolivian feminist streams (Aillón 2015).

Bolivian women’s movements have been largely influenced by nationalism, and later by Marxist groups. In this context, many Marxist parties gave the impulse to women’s foundations such as the “Unión de Mujeres Bolivia” (Union of Women Bolivian) or the “Comité de Amas de Casa Mineras” (translated by me into “Committee of Mining Housewives”). This Marxist influence reached up until modern feminism in Bolivia (Aillón 2015, 13-14).

In the 1980s and 1990s a big part of women’s activists in Bolivia were ideologically polarized between a liberal, NGO-based feminism and the anarchic feminism of the autonomous “Mujeres Creando” group (Monasterios 2007, 33).

International NGOs added an institutionalized aspect to Bolivian feminism, which was linked to Western Second Wave feminism concentrating on political rights, labor rights, sexual and reproductive rights of women. UN conferences as the World Conference on Women in Mexico (1975) or the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) largely influenced the agenda of those NGOs. The Bolivian feminist and scholar Karin Monasterios (2007, 33) criticized this development and called the projects incorporated by the NGOs as “gender technocracy”. She uses the term, which was coined by “autonomous Latin American feminists” (Monasterios 2007, 33) in order to differentiate the “elite of professional women associated with NGOs working on gender-related issues” from what is considered a grassroots and “authentic” women’s struggle against patriarchal structures (Monasterios 2007, 33-34).

As a critical response to the institutionalization of gender-based considerations, many autonomous feminist movements from the 80s up until today developed new strategies which stemmed from the disappointment about the failure of Marxist groups to address the role of women in the Bolivian society. An example thereof is the formation of “Mujeres Creando”, a group which was created in the 90s promoting an anarchist ideal. Its aim was to create a more inclusive feminism, which would consider the very diverse realities of Bolivian women. In particular, “Mujeres Creando” elaborated feminist reflections which
included sexual diversity and addressed racial issues faced by indigenous or Afro-descendant women in Bolivia (Galindo and Paredes 1992, 12).

The inauguration of Bolivia's first indigenous president Evo Morales in 2006 caused a shift in the elite, white and middle class domination in Bolivia's women's movements, as many grassroots and indigenous groups of women were empowered by the postcolonial perspectives of the government under the governing party “Movimiento al Socialismo” (Movement towards Socialism, MAS). In the course the “proceso de cambio” (engl. process of change), which is an overarching denomination of the governments nationalist and indigenous empowerment (Mayorga 2006, 5), Evo Morales made various attempts to revalue the Aymara, Quechua and Guarani people of Bolivia who constitute 62% of the total population (Mikkelsen 2014, 150). In this context, the government also attempted to create new spaces for indigenous women, and women in general in the political sphere (Monasterios 2015: 33 ff.).

But the governmental interference into women's movements also split Bolivian feminists in government-related movements such as the “Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia “Bartolina Sisa” (National Confederation of Rural Indigenous of Bolivia “Bartolina Sisa”) and autonomous government-opposed movements such as “Mujeres Creando” (Monasterios 2015, 36.). Some critics of this development claim that the feminist efforts resulting in law changes such as the 50% quota which the government established in April 2016 for the legislative assembly (Layme 2017, Diario Pagina Siete) are just a populist way to brand their government in a rather superficial way (Paredes 2015, pikaramagazine).

What Evo Morales and the MAS call the “Despatriarchalization” of Bolivia also includes the fight against gender based violence. This was addressed through law changes. Particularly, in the realm of the new constitution, the Law Nr. 348 was implemented in March 9, 2013. The “Integral Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence” (“Ley integral para Garantizar a las Mujeres una Vida Libre de Violencia”) aims to establish mechanisms, measures and policies to prevent cases of violence as well as to assist, protect and help to recover women in situations of violence and in the persecution and sanctioning of the aggressors. The wider aim strives towards guaranteeing a worthy life and the full exercise of their rights in order to “Live Well” (“Vivir Bien”), an expression which unifies several indigenous Andean beliefs around what it takes to live a happy life. The decree 2145, adopted in 2014, elaborates on the measures as well as the budget to enact the law in its implementation (Derechoteca.org). A further symbol of the politicization of feminist demands into the state apparatus is the 50% women-quota for the legislative assembly which the government established in April 2016 (Layme 2017, Diario Pagina Siete). However, as it will become clear in the course of this thesis, there is lot of criticism stemming from various feminists and women’s movements around the country towards this tendency. Considering that it seems that the law changes do not go far beyond rhetoric without real budgets, training and direct actions to enact and keep up with the promises, feminist critics perceive them as rather hypocrite means to brand the government's reputation (Paredes 2015, pikaramagazine).
The referendum on February 21, 2016 on the proposed constitutional amendments to allow the president Evo Morales and vice president to run for a third consecutive term under the 2009 Constitution led to further circumstances that politically split the country among the 51.3% majority who voted against and 48.7% who in favour of the referendum (Latin Correspondent, February 2016). This, in turn led to several protests and to a stronger polarization between MAS-supporters and enemies (nation.com, 2017). In this course, many of the protest movements, which seemingly did not have a strong connection with party-related interests turned out to be instrumentalized to protest against the government, such as the march of disabled people (eldiario.net, 2016).

Since October 2016, the #NiUnaMenos movement in Bolivia addresses a problem which persists in the region throughout a long time: the ever growing violence against women that takes shape in its most extreme form as “femicides”\(^2\). According to the Bolivian women’s rights organization CIDEM (Centro de Información y Desarrollo de la Mujer en Bolivia) 59 femicides were registered between January and June 2014 in a country that barely inhabits 11 million people. The movement started off with the closed Facebook group “#NiUnaMenosBolivia” in August 2016. This means that only people who became members of the group could access and create content within the group. Until the August 31, 2016, 13,991 people became members of the group. For the purpose of spreading information on #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s activities to the wider public, the fan page “Ni Una Menos Bolivia: Movilización Nacional” was created in October 2016. The fan page was liked 3,848 times until August 31, 2016. Unofficial sources claim that the protests of the Bolivian #NiUnaMenos on November 25, 2016 with its 7000 participants mobilized more protesters than ever before in Bolivian history for the struggle against gender-based violence.

In the analysis of the #NiUnaMenos movement in Bolivia, it will be of special interest to analyze to which extent the political split under the current government as well as to which extent indigenous women’s rights are being addressed in the movements’ online and offline discourse. Before this analysis, three particularities of Latin American feminism will be stated which apply on a wide range of women’s movements in the region and may also help in the later classification of the Bolivian #NiUnaMenos movement.

### 2.2.3. Decolonial feminist perspectives

Femenías (2007) points out two dominant decolonial streams. Firstly, the empowerment of indigenous movements led by decolonial theorists such as the Bolivian anthropologist Silvia Rivera Ciscicanqui (Femenías 2007; Lugones 1999; Rivera Cusicanqui 1996; Rivera Cusicanqui and Barragán 1997; Barrig 2001). The second stream is derived from people with African immigration backgrounds in

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2 The feminist Diane Russel was one of the first scholars to use the term "femicide" when addressing the International Tribunal on crimes Against Women in 1976. Russel defines femicide boldly as the "killing of females by males because they are female". In her view, males commit femicides out of sexist and misogynic motives, out of a sense of superiority, sexual pleasure or an assumption of ownership over women (Russel and Van de Ven 1990).
the Caribbean islands, Brazil and Peru (Ortega and González 2005; Ramos Rosado 1999; Castellanos Llanos 2011; Curiel 2007; Segato 2007; Espinosa Miñoso 2007). Bolivia with the largest percentage of indigenous population in Latin America saw an enormous empowerment of rural and indigenous women, in particular Aymara and Quechua women (Coba 2013, 22). The rural organisation composed of mostly indigenous Aymara women “Bartolina Sisa” was founded in 1980, and illustrates the increased consciousness about non-Eurocentric women’s rights and distinct concepts of life (Leon 1990, 135-149).

Curiel Ichado and Rosa Ynés Ochy (2009) develop postcolonial viewpoints as follows. They criticize the assumption that feminism began with the French revolution. According to Ichado and Ochy, women all over the world had been fighting against patriarchy in many ways before and after the European history of feminism. Therefore, they argue that the alternative types of activism in Latin America did not translate into a Western theorization because they had different ways to document their ideas and due to a lack of economic resources. In contrast, the European, modern, capitalist women step into a knowledge-power position over those Latin American feminist activists who are referred to as victims and dis-empowered (Ichado and Ochy 2009, 1).

According to decolonial feminists, Latin American feminists themselves need to recognize their own ideas as valid and not only base their ideas on Europeans and North Americans in order to change this asymmetry. Moreover, European and North American Feminists need to actively include feminist thoughts and ideas that differ from their feminist concepts (Ichado and Ochy 2009, 2).

### 2.2.4. Social and motherhood feminism

Since the 19th century Latin American feminism has already put an emphasis on the communitarian responsibility of women. The persistence of these values is based on connected communitarian beliefs and leftist political ideas. Meanwhile, European and North American feminism was highly centered in individualist and particular interests of women. Molyneux (2003, 269), therefore, speaks about “social Feminism” in Latin America.

The image of the woman being naturally responsible for their families was already predominant at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, women’s movements often argued for more political rights as an acknowledgment of their highly important role as housewives and family-caring persons (Molyneux 2003: 257-268). According to Molyneux (2003) this tendency of seeing the women’s essence as naturally caring, has also been reinforced by the authoritarian regime. For instance, at that time a typical empowerment activity of a woman was to provide public canteens “comedores populares” or common pots “ollas communes” for their neighbourhoods (Molyneux 2003, 274-275).

Molyneux (2003) criticizes this community-based way of integrating women into the social sphere with volunteer work as an extension of their duties in a traditional family and reinforcing the socially constructed
concept of “feminine” behaviour. However, it may still have a significant imprint on society today, and particularly women’s movements (Molyneux 2003, 288).

As I have pointed out in this section, there is no single Latin American feminism, but types of feminism which are influenced by western, indigenous, decolonial, communitarian ideas only to name a few. Considering the variety of influences of feminist movements and the public resistance against feminism, the #NiUnaMenos movement and its successful spread throughout various Latin American countries is still a mystery to academia. The poorly studied field of contemporary feminist movements in Latin America invites for a multidimensional approach of #NiUnaMenos, aiming at a holistic understanding of its discourses and broader contexts rather than a punctual insight into its activism. For this reason, I decided to approach #NiUnaMenos in a rather unconventional way that does not only combine and operationalize a variety of theoretical frameworks, but also, enables me to answer the following questions:

What can we learn about #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discursive identity constructs?

RQ1: Which differences between the identity constructs within the counterpublic space of #NiUnaMenosBolivia can be detected?

RQ1.1: Which internal agonistic discourses can be identified within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s Counterpublic?

RQ1.2: To what extent can internal hegemonic interventions be detected within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic?

RQ2: How does #NiUnaMenosBolivia create a discourse that allows for a collective identity construct?

RQ2.1: Which “we” in contrast to the antagonistic “others” is articulated?

RQ2.2: Which oppositional need discourses and surrounding “in-order-to” moments does #NiUnaMenosBolivia express against the antagonistic need discourses?

RQ2.3: To what extent is a societal hegemony contested by #NiUnaMenos Bolivia?

In the following, I will elaborate how Nancy Fraser’s (1989, 1990b) concept of “subaltern counterpublics” in combination with Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory can achieve this aim.
3. Theoretical foundations: Counterpublics embedded into Discourse Theory

The poorly investigated field of Bolivian feminism makes it tempting to approach #NiUnaMenosBolivia merely empirically. This, however, could lead into a positivist pitfall which assumes to understand the “reality” of #NiUnaMenos without actually understanding that this “reality” is shaped by historical, political and social preconditions as well as by my own position as a researcher (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 4). For this reason, a theory-enriched approach helps me to navigate this thesis in an appropriate and interpretative way. To limit my findings to pre-formulated assumptions I applied theories that offer a rigid structure.

Considering the specific political, cultural and social context in Bolivia, it is further challenging to find an appropriate theoretical framework for examination of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s articulations of identity. On the one hand, this framework shall help to understand how a feminist movement can turn into a safe space and enable the expression of conflicting discourses and identities within this space. On the other hand, the theoretical framework should also allow to investigate how – despite of internal differences, common counter-positions and a collective identity is articulated for the wider struggle against dominating patriarchal groups of society.

Under these premises, I decided to start off my theoretical framework with an overview on how identity construction can be understood, and an approximation of how I understand it in this thesis. The theoretical core of my thesis builds on two pillars. Firstly, Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory provides a general understanding on how the social realm is constructed through discourse. It also shows a series of concepts that explain the formation of individual and collective identities while including the importance of conflict and hegemonic power into the investigation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. My second theoretical pillar is built by Nancy Fraser’s concept of counterpublics and her deliberations on the struggle over need interpretations (1989, 1990a, 1990b). Fraser adds a strongly feminist theoretical substrate to my theoretical framework. Moreover, her concept of counterpublics is useful to highlight the categorisation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia into internal online and offline counter spaces for articulation pausing the wider resistance against feminism and allowing space for oppositional need interpretations and identities. Fraser’s (1989, 1990b) insights into the struggle over needs enables to dig into the different battlefields which #NiUnaMenosBolivia might have to go through in order to politicize their need interpretations.

I choose to approach #NiUnaMenosBolivia with a theoretical framework that determines the scope of my research reasonably but also offers the opportunity for further development, transformation or adaptions in the process of it (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 5).

Although Nancy Fraser is rather situated in the tradition of critical theory and Laclau and Mouffe in poststructuralist theorization, I argue that, for the purpose of examining #NiUnaMenosBolivia, a theoretical as well as empirical usage of both strands entails enriching features. During the elaboration it will get clear how both theories represent similar conclusive ideas despite of different theoretical origins. In
the combination of the two approaches, I will establish an appropriate theoretical framework to study #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

3.1. Construction of individual and collective Identities

This section will serve to get a general understanding on how the construction of individual as well as collective identity is understood in this thesis. Therefore, I will shortly outline Nancy Fraser’s stance on the on identity construction. This will allow to show that her viewpoints are compatible with Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) concepts of identity and group formation (chapter 3.2.3.). This chapter also takes the opportunity to enrich the theoretical framework for the analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia with some central standpoints on collective identities by new social movements scholars.

Identity theories can be separated into two dominant streams. First, identity is understood from a psychological and often essentialist perspective as personal identity. Secondly, it can underline the sociocultural assumption that identities are socially constructed. This thesis rests on the latter (Carpentier 2016, 175).

Fraser (1997b, 80–81) addresses the formation of both individual as well as collective identities departing from a point of view departing from discourse theory. Thereby, Fraser’s (1997b, 80) first assumption is that “social identities are discursively constructed in historically specific contexts”. Social identities are “complexes of meanings, networks of interpretation” which give agents in specific societies the possibility to identify themselves with (Fraser 1997b, 80). Being for example a man or a woman, is then followed by a set of behavioural rules which they are expected to act upon if identified with the identity of a “man” or a “woman”. Consequently, one must study specific social practices to understand social identities (Fraser 1997b, 380). Fraser’s second assumption is that identities are “complex and plural” as they stem from a “plurality of different descriptions arising from a plurality of different signifying practices” (Fraser 1997b, 80). A woman can also be a philosopher, a lesbian, a socialist, and a mother (see Spelman 1988). Depending on the social and often situational context of an agent, one of those elements fades in and out of focus. A third assumption on social identities is that “they shift over time” (Fraser 1997b, 80). Agents’ identities are altered and shift with the changes in their practices and affiliations. To take Fraser’s example, a woman’s identity and the attributed elements shift dramatically when a woman becomes engaged in feminism and feminist activism.

Furthermore, collective identities are understood in the context of discourse theory. To Fraser (1995b, 381), some shifts in people’s identities need to occur so that already “preexisting strands of identities acquire a new sort of salience and centrality” in order to form collective social agents. Thus, in the second wave of feminism many who had also previously been taken for granted as a “women” became “women” in a new way through their affiliation with the feminist movement. In this course, new terms such as “wife-battery” or “sexism” have been invented and became part of the new collective identity as “women” (Fraser 1997b, 381).
Some insights of new social movement scholars may add some valuable insights for the purpose of studying how #NiUnaMenosBolivia might have established a collective identity. Polletta and Jasper (2001, 285) describe collective identity as “[…] an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution”. Alberto Melucci (1996, 70) also stresses the importance of emotions for a sense of belonging and as a driving force for collective action. To Poletta and Jasper identities can be expressed in cultural cues such as “names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on – but not all cultural materials express collective identities.” (Polletta and Jasper 2001, Ibid.).

One of the most central aspects in the formation of a collective identity is the differentiation from other identities. Various scholars agree on the fact that to create a sense of “we”, there must be a sense of “the others” (Poletta and Jasper 2001, 285, Haunss 2013, 64; Melucci 1995, 67, Bergman and Erb 1989, 151). The “others” entail a constitutive function as negative attributes or emotions which helps the collective “we” to bond and create positive feelings about the insider group. Laclau and Mouffe also see differentiation and antagonism as a constitutive aspect for the construction of identities (chapter 3.2.3.).

Nancy Fraser does not use the same terms to indicate how the establishment of an antagonistic “other” is a constitutive point of the “we”. However, chapter 3.3.1. of this thesis will show that her concept of “subaltern counterpublics” departs also from the idea that subordinated groups of society arise as an opposition to dominant societal actors (Fraser 1990a). With the help of Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, I will be able to better understand how a collective identity can emerge despite conflicting internal identity constructs. The next chapter will introduce key concepts of this thesis’ discourse theoretical stance.

3.2. Laclau’s and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory

3.2.1. Laclau and Mouffe’s Poststructuralism

Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory combines and modifies two major traditions, namely Marxism and structuralism into a single poststructuralist theory. Thereby, Marxism provides a starting point for understanding the social, and structuralism provides theory of meaning (Marx 1971). Laclau and Mouffe’s poststructuralist theory understands the whole social field as a web of processes in which meaning is created (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 24).

This theory of creation of meaning can be traced back to its roots in the structuralist tradition of Saussure’s linguistics (Saussure 1960). Saussure’s structuralist understanding of language can be explained with the metaphor of a fishing-net: All linguistic signs can be thought as knots in this net where their meaning derives from the difference between one another. Those knots are all situated in different positions of the net. Poststructuralists argue that meaning cannot be fixed so unambiguously. Poststructuralists also acknowledge that signs acquire their meanings by being different from each other. But in contrast to structuralists, they argue that their ongoing usage in language means that those signs are always being positioned in new constellations and relations to one another. This in turn implies that signs can always
acquire new meanings. Hence, the poststructuralist view on language emphasizes that the structures of meanings and its fixations are challenged through social acts. Thus, language is a social phenomenon (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002).

Laclau and Mouffe also apply a poststructuralist critique on structuralist linguistics. They argue that “the creation of meaning as a social process is about the fixation of meaning, as if a Saussurian structure existed. We constantly strive to fix the meaning of signs by placing them in particular relations to other signs.” However, this is ultimately impossible as “every fixation of the signs’ meaning is contingent” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 25, italics in original). Thus, the constant attempts of fixation of meaning never succeeds completely. In Laclau and Mouffe’s words,

“The impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning implies that there have to be partial fixations – otherwise the very flow of differences would be impossible. In order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning. If the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of society, the social only exists, however, as an effort to construct that impossible object. Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 112).

This will be the entry point for our later discourse analysis, where I aim to map out processes in which #NiUnaMenos struggles to challenge old and establish new fixation of the meaning of signs.

3.2.2. From elements to nodal points – some key terms

Before proceeding into further details about Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of the formation of identity – which is at the core of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, we need to introduce their concepts such as “articulation”, “discourse”, “elements”, “moments” and “nodal points” and combine those with relational concepts of latter and previous work of both scholars. Articulation describes “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice”. Discourse is “the structured totality resulting from this articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 110). One central assumption underlying Laclau’s and Mouffe’s understanding of discourse is that it is not limited to words. Instead, the ontological perspective on discourse suggests that every social action, relation or situation even beyond language are results of discursive acts (Glasze 2007, 190). This does not mean that Laclau and Mouffe deny a physical reality independent from discourse; however, the meanings associated with this physical reality are only available through discourse (Glynos et al. 2009). This understanding of discourse as going beyond the written will have a decisive impact on the choice of my data (see chapter 4.3.).

Moments are the “differential positions” that “appear articulated within a discourse” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 111). All signs in a discourse are moments and can be described as the knots in the fishing-net and acquires its meanings from being different from other moments in other positions on this net. Elements are those differences which are “not discursively articulated” because of their “floating” character they
acquire in periods of dislocation of discourses (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 105; Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 7). In other words, elements are signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed. They have multiple, potential meanings, and are hence, polysemic. Discourse then, forms an attempt to transform elements into moments by reducing their polysemy to fully fixed meanings (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 26). In Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985, 110) terms, when this happens, discourse establishes a closure. However, this is just a temporary stop to the fluctuations in the meanings of the signs. The “transformation from the ‘elements’ to the ‘moments’ is never entirely fulfilled”, hence, closure is never definite (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 110). Therefore, all moments stay polysemic, and can potentially become elements (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 27; Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 113 ff.).

A further contribution of discourse theory are key signifiers which help to understand the organization of discourse as well as some conflicting elements of it. For the purpose of my thesis, the most significant are represented by the terms nodal point and floating signifier. The notion of “nodal points” is introduced to explain this construction of elements into a meaningful system of moments. Nodal points are “privileged discursive points that fix the meaning of a signifying chain” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 112). It is hence a sign around which other signs are ordered; those other signs in turn acquire their meaning from their relationship to the nodal point. For instance, as Jørgensen and Phillips illustrate, a nodal point for political discourse may be “democracy” and in national discourses it can be “the people” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 26). In our context of feminist discourses “women” might be a nodal point around which a further signifying chain of signs is situated. Although “women” would be a nodal point, a point of crystallization of feminist discourses, it does not contain detailed meaning and is “empty” until it is inserted in a particular discourse. Discourse theory has the term “floating signifiers” (Laclau 1990, 28, 1993, 287) for signs around which different discourses aim to invest a certain meaning. Although nodal points are floating signifiers, the term “nodal point” refers to the point of crystallization within a specific discourse while “floating signifier” refers more to the ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs (Laclau 2005, 177). To illustrate, the nodal point “women” represents a crystallized point for feminist discourses around which different other signs as “abortion” or “women’s rights” are placed within feminist discourses. As a floating signifier however, “women” is a contested sign where for example feminist discourses struggle against patriarchal discourses. If floating signifiers are used to express a totality within society, as for example “the people”, “the women” or “the country”, they are called “myths”: “By myth we mean a space of representation which bears no relation to continuity with the dominant ‘structural objectivity’” (Laclau 1990, 61). This totality is always just imagined, and never objectively fixed. It serves, however, to describe a social space.

In my analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discourses I will search for key signifiers and the surrounding net of moments that help us to get an overall picture about the discourses are established by #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic.
3.2.3. Identity and group formation through chains of equivalence

At the core of Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is the struggle over identity. This struggle is inevitable in the long run because of the assumption that social relations can never achieve a fixed objective identity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 38). Identity construction is thus a fluid, articulated process that can imply constant changes. Mouffe and Laclau view that identity construction takes place within a discursive structure where a multitude of circulating identities are articulated and contested (Carpentier 2016, 175-177).

The formation of individual as well as group identity in Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory can be understood with the help of the above explained concepts. An individual can identify herself with nodal points of identity and the meanings related to those nodal points. Using Lacan’s term, Laclau and Mouffe call the positioning of a subject within a discursive field a “subject position” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 115). Within this field, identities are articulated in relation to other identities and distinguished through inclusion or exclusion of certain identity components into chains of equivalence (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 106, Carpentier 2016, 176). Social agents can be identified and/or identify themselves within a certain discourse (Sayyid and Zac 1998, 263). To give an example, an individual might identify with the identity nodal point “women”. Then, different discourses offer different chains of equivalences of meanings to fill this nodal point of identity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 127 ff.). For instance, in patriarchal discourses those chains of equivalences for “women” might entail the signifiers “passive”, “passion” and “cooking” in contrast to the nodal point of “man” connected to “strength”, “reason” and “football” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 38). In that way, the cluster of signifiers around nodal points may provide behavior instructions for those who identify with them. Those clusters however, can be accepted, refused and negotiated in discursive processes and hence, can be changed.

Group formation around a collective identity can be understood in very similar terms as individual identity. However, as Jørgensen and Phillips (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 39) argue, the difference between identification as “woman” and identification with the group “women” can be fuzzy. According to Laclau and Mouffe, individuals have several identities and the possibility to identify themselves differently in varying situations. Group formation can then be understood as a process by which some possibilities of identification are put forward as relevant while others are ignored. This process takes place through the establishment of chains of equivalence. Group formations hence, may overshadow internal differences and injustices cross-cutting collective identities (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 40). For instance, group formations around the nodal point “women” may overshadow the differences between black, white, middle class, socioeconomically lower class women etc.

Following Laclau, group formation is linked to representation. According to Laclau (1993, 289 ff.), groups do not exist before someone talks about them, and hence, on behalf of those groups. This means that one may be represented despite of being absent. Thereby, ideally the representative should personify the will of the group as a result of an agreement within the group.
In my thesis, it will be of interest to investigate some of the subject positions that constitute #NiUnaMenos internally. The analysis of common nodal points of discourses which are bound together into chains of equivalence, will enable me to depict the ground for the construction of a collective identity of the women’s movement. The combination of investigating individual as well as collective subject positions will further enable me to make conclusions on who represents whom. Investigating #NiUnaMenosBolivia as an internal discursive space as well as one which directs its discourse to wider public space, I can depict internal conflicts as well as the contestation of external discourses. For doing so, I introduce the concepts of “agonism” and “antagonism” in the next section (Laclau 1993, Mouffe 2005).

3.2.3. Antagonism and Agonism

As elaborated previously, the ongoing struggle over the creation of meaning is a crucial idea of discourse theory that ultimately also relates to the struggle over identities. As we have seen in the section on group formation, a collective identity goes hand in hand with the formation of outsider groups. Laclau and Mouffe describe the distinction of the “we” from the “the others” through conflicting discourses. Thereby, we can distinguish between two different forms of conflicts. Firstly, we can speak of antagonism between different discourses. Secondly, we can refer to agonism.

A social antagonism occurs when different identities mutually exclude each other (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 42). A subject has always different identities. Those, however, do not necessarily exclude each other. For instance, I might entail a “student” and “feminist” identity at the same time. However, some identities might produce antagonisms. For instance, being “Christian” and pro-life, might threaten, or put into conflict my “feminist” identity which strives towards women’s reproductive rights, including the legalization of abortion. Thus, antagonisms emerge when discourses collide. Thereby a strong antagonistic frontier divides the “us” from the “them” (Jane 2016, 467). The difference between antagonistic discourses cannot be resolved through common reason, but only through hegemonic interventions, an articulation which by means of force reconstitutes unambiguity or objectivity (Laclau 1993, 282 f.; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 42).

Chantal Mouffe’s (2005) understanding of agonism builds on various presumptions, which also embrace various parts of antagonism. Although Mouffe acknowledges that closure of meanings through hegemonic interventions is indispensable as otherwise “we would be living in complete schizophrenia” (as cited in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006, 967), she rejects a reconciliation of conflicting discourses which builds on Habermas’ consensus orientated deliberative ideal. In contrast to Habermas, she sees conflict as not only unavoidable, but as constitutive to “the political” (Mouffe 2005, Maddison and Patridge 2014, 31, Knops 2007, 115). To Mouffe, the incompletion, uncertainty and openness is crucial to democratic pluralism rather than harmony and consensus (Tambakaki 2014, 2). To Mouffe, antagonism thus never disappears, yet it can be “tamed” (Dreyer and Sonnichsen 2014, 268). That means that “opponents are adversaries, not enemies” (Dreyer and Sonnichsen 2014, 267). When agonism prevails, adversaries still disagree and know that an agreement will not be achieved. However, they mutually accept the legitimacy of the other’s
perspective (Dreyer and Sonnichsen 2014, 268). Confrontation takes then place, but it does not take a violent (Tambakaki 2014, 3).

The feminist scholars Maddison and Patridge (2014, 31) showed how agonism within feminism can play an important role in the constitution of a collective identity that does not ignore differences among women through notions of sisterhood, unity or solidarity. Following Melucci (1995, 45), they argue that a sense of collective identity is a “result rather than a starting point” of social movements (Maddison and Patridge 2014, 31). Departing from this, I will apply the concept of antagonism to understand who or what constitutes #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s enemies, and use the concept of agonism to understand which internal conflicts are displayed within the counterpublic. This means that I will crystallize various floating elements (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 105) that are contested agonistically within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic and antagonistically against wider hegemonic discourses.

### 3.2.4. Hegemony

In the struggle over meanings of floating signifiers and elements antagonistic discourses aim for a closure of meanings. When this closure is achieved, and a fixation across antagonistic discourses takes place, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) speak of hegemonic interventions. In other words, hegemony prevails when one discourse comes to dominate and undermine all other discourses. It is a way of creating meanings that are so naturalized and prevails consensus, that thereby alternative understandings of the world are suppressed, resulting in the domination of a single perspective.

Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of hegemony builds on Antonio Gramsci’s work that has been best documented in his “Prison Notebooks” (Gramsci 1971). Here, the term arises as a critique to traditional, scientific or orthodox Marxism and examines how predominant classes produce meaning, which in turn are reproduced and naturalized of the various strata of society (Holub 1992, 5, 43). When Laclau applies Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, it is not delimited to an “imposition of a pregiven set of ideas” by a dominating elite (Worsham and Olson 1999, 1). Instead, to Laclau, hegemony is an ongoing and never-ending process, which “emerges from the political interaction of groups. It is hence a premise for the constituting of the social (Worsham and Olson 1999, 2).

Just as for Laclau and Mouffe (1985), also Fraser (1997b, 381) understands the formation of social groups as part of struggles over social discourse and sociocultural hegemony. To Fraser Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) notion of “hegemony” is the discursive term of power. It includes to “establish authoritative definitions of social situations and social needs, the power to define the universe of legitimate disagreement, and the power to shape the political agenda” (Fraser 1997b, 381). However, Fraser highlights the importance of the term hegemony to permits us to recast issues of social identities and understand the dominance and subordination in discourse underlying societal inequality (Fraser 1997b, 381).
In my thesis, I will take Laclau’s stance on hegemony, which does not necessarily entails the negative normative connotation of hegemonic interventions per se (Worsham and Olson 1999, 1). I will use the term hegemony to understand which discourses seem to be dominating on the two levels of my analysis: Firstly, I want to recast the hegemony that #NiUnaMenosBolivia aims at contesting through their articulations of antagonistic discourses. Secondly, I want to understand to what extent internal dominations on discourses exist that overpowers others.

Conclusive reflection

To sum up, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory aims at understanding the construction of the social through contesting discourses (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 26). It examines the ways in which social practices systematically attempt to form identities through the articulation of signifying elements available in a discursive field. Discourse theory stresses on the one hand that all social identity is contingent, but also that partial fixations of meanings are possible, as well as necessary. Those partial fixations allow always for struggles over what a social structure should look like, what discourses should prevail and how meaning should be ascribed to the signs (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 28). Key signifiers mark how discourses are organized internally and, mark antagonistic lines between chains of equivalences of conflicting discourses.

Conducting a discourse theoretical analysis, several focuses are of interest: With the help of chains of equivalences of nodal points I can understand how #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discourses is structured and meanings are related to one another. On the one hand, I can identify conflicts or agonisms within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discursive space. On the other hand, I can understand how a collective identity is constructed through the formulation of the antagonistic other. Thereby, I will be able to draw conclusions of internal dominations within #NiUnaMenosBolivia as well as wider hegemonic discourses which the movement aims at contesting.

Nancy Fraser’s (1990a) concept of “counterpublics” will further help us to understand these processes and lay them into a feminist theoretical context.

3.3. On Counterpublics

In this section, I will shortly elaborate on different understandings of counterpublics within the field and show similarities and nuances of difference between counterpublics and social movements. In conclusion, I will argue why the concept of counterpublics fits better for my analysis of a Latin American women’s movement than the concept of social movements.

When it comes to the usage of the term counterpublics, there has been a certain “frustrating vagueness” among scholars, as Asen and Brouwer (2001, 8) put it. They see the need to elaborate on the differences between social movements and counterpublics (Asen and Brouwer 2001). Cox and Foust narrate that the term has been used as a replacement for “movement”, or as a synonym for “new social movements”, while in other contexts “‘counterpublic’ signals the internal, reflexive discourse of a group’s turn away
from dominant publics to focus inward” (Cox and Foust 2009, 612). Warner (2002, 56) signals that
counterpublics have been associated with their non-public phase of withdrawal. According to Maddux
(2004, 302), movements are defined by persuasion of external audiences, while counterpublics lay a
stronger emphasis on an “internal discursive exchange” (Maddux 2004, 302, Cox and Foust 2009, 613).

Using Manuel Castells’ (2015) understanding of social movements, it becomes clear that the idea of both
counterpublics and social movements derives from a common assumption: It evolves as a consequence of a
constant interaction between power and counterpower (Castells 2007, 2009). Castells understands “power
to be the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actor(s)” (Castells 2007,
239). The consequence of an oppressing power is the “formation of counter-power” (Castells 2007, 239).
He formulates that “since societies are contradictory and conflictive, wherever there is power there is also
counterpower” (Castells 2015, 5). Castells explains social movements’ agency with “the capacity of
social actors to challenge the power embedded in the institutions of society for claiming representation of
their own values and interests” (Castells 2015: 5).

Several considerations lead me to the decision to refer to #NiUnaMenosBolivia mostly as a “counterpublic”
instead of as a social movement. The construction of collective identities is at the core of many New Social
Movement Theories (Stryker et al. 2000, 18; Hara and Huang, 2011, 499). In this way, a good foundation is
laid to understand collective action. However, the importance of differences within social movements as a
constitutive aspect of the same can be underestimated in New Social Movement theories. In contrast, the
notion of counterpublics stresses the discursive space within a movement and allows the scholar to
investigate internal conflicting articulatory practices in a better way. In combination with Laclau and
Mouffe’s discourse theory, the concept of counterpublics can help me to draw an antagonistic frontier
between discourses within the counterpublic and its internal agonistic articulations and discourses that are
established in order to contest discourses in an antagonistic way that lie outside the counterpublic.

Turning to our case of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, this binary orientation of my study entails strong benefits. In
the literature review on feminism in Latin America, I have shown how ethnically, class-wise and politically
diverse streams were in constant struggle over feminist discourse of the region. The strong aversion against
feminist movements in many Latin American countries raised further interest in understanding how a safe
communicative space might have enabled internal discourses and articulations. In #NiUnamenosBolivia’s
case this external resistance against feminism might have been one of the reasons why
#NiUnaMenosBolivia started off with a closed Facebook-group that can only be used by members of the
same. Having taken part in the movements Facebook-communication and meetings, I had a strong insight
into those internal discourses. Regarding the national particularities, I also showed how the ethnic
diversities and political polarizations in Bolivia split women’s movement of the country in the past.

Considering that #NiUnaMenos achieved to mobilize a fairly high number of protestors all over the country
despite these differences, a search for unifying articulations that contribute to the construction of a
collective identity, without simultaneously discussing the specific challenges to the collective identity
would fall short. Therefore, I decided to approach #NiUnaMenosBolivia with Nancy Fraser’s (1990a) concept of counterpublics. This does not mean that one cannot call #NiUnaMenosBolivia a social movement. It is merely a theoretically and historically more suitable decision for the purpose of my thesis. I will refer to “counterpublic” when I mean the discursive space which #NiUnaMenosBolivia establishes within and in order to contest other publics. I will use the term “movement” when it has been used by interviewees or to describe #NiUnaMenosBolivia as a wider social phenomenon. The next section will make the concept of counterpublics clear that I employ throughout this thesis.

3.3.1. Subaltern Counterpublics by Nancy Fraser

Nancy Fraser’s (1990a, 67) concept of “subaltern counterpublics” emerged as a result a critique on Jürgen Habermas’ notion of the “public sphere” (Habermas 1962; 1989), an open and socially accessible space where individuals could come together and discuss in a rational-critical debate topics of their interests. According to the Habermasian ideal public sphere, the results of its equal and open discourses would then mediate state authority. Despite of the grant recognition of Habermas’ notion of the public sphere, it has encountered large criticisms in academia. The most dominant critics address the bourgeois character of the public sphere and its formal or informal exclusivity towards deviating cultural, ethnic, social or gender-based groups, for instance of women or laborers (Eley 1994; Landes 1988). The public sphere implies a situation in which all individuals who are affected by issues are supposed to participate in discourses about these issues. However, this is not fulfilled as a “single, overarching public sphere ignores or denies social complexity” (Asen 2000, 425).

In “Rethinking the Public Sphere”, Nancy Fraser (1990) elaborates main deficiencies of the Habermasian public sphere. Fraser challenges Habermas’ assumption that “the proliferation of a multiplicity of competing publics” is seen as “a step away from, rather than toward, greater democracy” (Fraser 1990a, 62). Here Fraser shows how a wide public discursive space could not allow people of subordinated groups to participate in the deliberations and claim their opinions as dominant power holding groups. Correspondingly, a public sphere would “generate unequal social groups in structural relations of dominance and subordination” (Fraser 1990a, 66).

Therefore, Fraser argues for spaces of deliberation where the subordinated groups, which are usually often bypassed, have the chance to deliberate among themselves. This leads to an ideal of participatory democracy where a plurality of competing publics have an arena for deliberation that enables them at a later point to claim their ideas in front of a wider audience. She backs her argument up with historical records on “women, workers, peoples of color and gays and lesbians” who benefited from the constitution of alternative publics (Fraser 1990a, 67).

In this context, Fraser introduces “subaltern counterpublics” as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser 1990a, 67). This suggestion builds up on Rita Felski’s concept of “counterpublics”, and Antonio Gramsci’s term “subaltern”
Felski (1989, 166) elaborated the viewpoint that counterpublics can be “directed towards an affirmation of specificity in relation to gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, and so on”. Felski conceptualizes counterpublic spheres as multiple and heterogeneous social forces that do not converge to form a single, coordinated revolutionary movement (Asen 2000, 427; Felski 1989). Referring to the feminist counterpublic sphere, Felski explains that, “internally, it generates a gender-specific identity grounded in a consciousness of community and solidarity among women; externally, it seeks to convince society as a whole of the validity of feminist claims” (Felski 1989, 168). Felski (1989) regards the outward extension of feminist discourse as a necessary corollary of its claims to represent a catalyst of social and cultural change. Just as Felski, Fraser argues that counterpublics do not act exclusively inwardly towards a collective solidarity. Instead, Fraser explains that counterpublics retain a “publicist” orientation as “they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment” on the one hand, and “as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed towards wider publics” on the other hand (Fraser 1990, 68). In the dialectic between these two functions, “emancipatory potential resides” according to Fraser (1990, Ibid.).

The term “subaltern” was coined by Antonio Gramsci (1971) who identified the groups which are excluded from a society’s institutions and hence denied the means by which they can raise their voice in a society as subaltern people or groups. In Gramsci’s words, subaltern classes refer to “low rank” persons or groups of people of society who suffer under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the rights to participate as active individuals (Salime 2016, 5). Fraser’s view on “the subaltern” derives from the Indian postcolonial feminist theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who describes the subaltern as a "position without identity", a position from which it is impossible to articulate claims in one's name (Salime 2016, 5). Spivak made her view on the subaltern clear through the example of Indian women under the British colonial rule (Salime 2016, 8). In an interview Spivak warns from using the concept of subaltern in too many ways:

“[..]subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie[...] Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'[...] They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern narrow.” (De Kock 1992, 33).

**Conclusive reflections**

Having explained the different ideas behind the terms “subaltern” and “counterpublic” that Nancy Fraser uses, I make the following decisions about how I use Fraser’s concept in this thesis: When speaking about #NiUnaMenosBolivia, I will only apply the term “counterpublic” since my previous literature review on feminism in general and specifically in Latin America gives enough evidence to show that women’s movements have been fighting for decades, if not centuries, against wider patriarchic power structures.
Thus, #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s position as a “counter”-power immediately suggests itself. Contrarily, I consider the use of the term “subaltern” as more problematic for #NiUnaMenosBolivia at this point of my thesis as it would imply that the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia is constituted by members, who are not just oppressed by some parts of the society, but do not entail any position which enables them to be heard by the wider public. For making such a claim, about #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s position as a “counter” public, the wider public. For making such a claim, about #NiUnaMenosBolivia I still need to provide a deeper insight into the internal constellations of the women’s movement. I will do so in chapter 5.2., by discussing internal hegemonic interventions of the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic.

As seen above, Fraser (1990a) defines the purpose of subaltern counterpublics as spaces in which oppositional interests, needs and identities are articulated. In Fraser’s (1990b; 2003; 1997b) works, however, there is no sharp distinction between what is understood as interests, needs and identities. In her deliberations about needs, Fraser (1989, 171) expresses how “oppositional” forms of needs talks (…) contribute to the crystallization of new social identities on the part of subordinated social groups”. Fraser (1989) constructs a causal effect between the articulation of oppositional needs and the construction of identity. At another point, she mentions “interests talks” and “needs talks” in one breath almost interchangeably (Fraser 1989, 164). For the purpose of the investigation of the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, I concentrate on Fraser’s work in the struggle over needs and thereby, embed it into the wider context of Chantal Mouffe’s and Ernesto Laclau’s discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). As a result, I will show how the formation and formulation needs talks shape the formation of a group’s collective identity. To do so, Fraser’s understanding of the “struggle over needs” will be outlined in the following section.

3.3.2. Discourses about Needs

When Fraser (1989, 162-163) talks about “needs” she addresses “discourses about needs” and “the politics of need interpretation”. This is because Fraser notes how “needs claims have a relational structure” that is ramified through “in order to” relations: “A needs x in order to y” (Fraser 1989, 163). However, Fraser stresses that any interpretation of a need, is constructed in a discourse, and hence, should be reflected as such, instead of taken as a “simply given and unproblematic” (Fraser 1989, 164). A more politically critical view on discourses about needs should be addressed as those might be “skewed in favor of self-interpretations and interests of dominant social groups and, so, work to the disadvantage of subordinate or oppositional groups” (Fraser 1989, 164). In central discursive arenas such as “parliaments, academies, courts or mass circulation media”, talks about needs tend to exclude counter interpretations of needs of subordinate or oppositional groups (Fraser 1989, 165-166).

To Fraser, discourses about needs in male-dominated capitalist societies use the ideological labels “political”, “economic” and “domestic” or “personal” to the advantage of dominant groups (Fraser 1989, 166). This happens for instance if wife battering is canalized into specialized publics associated with “family law, social work” or if “managerial’ problems in profit-orientated, hierarchical managed paid work places” is shunted into publics associated with e.g. “labor law” (Fraser 1989, 168-169). As a result,
those need interpretations are often internalized by subordinated groups to their own disadvantage (Fraser 1989, 169). When those needs break out of their “economic” or “domestic” enclaves, they become “runaway needs”. Runaway needs can then enter the arena, which Hannah Arendt calls “the social”. Here, rival interpretations of needs are contested among each other. Successfully politicized runaway needs can get translated into claims for government provision (Fraser 1989, 169-170) marking “socio-cultural shifts” in the traditional boundaries that separate the “political”, “economic” and “domestic” or “personal” spheres of life (Fraser 1989, 171).

Fraser proposes a scheme of three different needs talks in late capitalist societies. Firstly, need talks can become politicized “from below”, and be articulated from subordinated groups to construct new social identities. Those needs are “oppositional” to dominant need talks. An example would be if women or peoples of color resist the subordinate position of their identity and need interpretations assigned to them and speak publicly out for politicizing the status of those. During the politicization of runaway needs, the classification of needs into “political” economic” or “domestic” and “personal” is questioned. Thereby, different interpretations of needs into “alternative chains of ‘in-order-to’ relations” are offered, and new discourse publics arise which “try to disseminate their interpretations of needs through a wide range of different discourse publics” (Fraser 1989, 171). According to Fraser, those oppositional need discourses are a constitutive momentum for new collective agents or social movements. In the case of feminism, this can mean to speak about the “unspeakable” by creating new terms as “the double shift” or “sexual harassment” to name those phenomena (Fraser 1989, 172). By doing so, a heterogeneous but still political collective emerges.

Those need discourses lead us to the second, the “reprivatization” discourses about needs, which aim at contesting the first, trying to re-establish or hold on to the separation of the “political”, “economic” and “domestic” spheres. This can happen institutionally and discursively whereby both means a depolitization of the need in question (Fraser 1989, 172). Reprivatizers may for example insist that domestic violence should not be addressed in a political but rather in a personal discourse. However, it is important to see those reprivatization discourses on needs not as hindering to the politicization of needs talks. This is because the very act of articulating those discourses in contrast to the oppositional discourses “blend the old and new” by incorporating some new motifs implicitly in their reprivatization argumentation. Hence, defending established discourses on needs and putting them on the agenda, they do actually politicize them (Fraser 1989, 172). The interaction between oppositional and reprivatization discourses represents the axis of struggle between politicization and depolitization of needs.

After politicization succeeded, another axis of struggle, namely the one about the contents of the articulated need succeeds. Here, “oppositional social movements and organized interests, like business” seek to influence the public policy. Within those actors, different forms of power struggles take place (Fraser 1989, 173; Foucault 1977). In this third phase, when the needs discourses enter “the social” arena, “expert” needs talks serve to solve the social problem of “translat[ing] the sufficiently politicized runaway needs into
objects of potential state intervention” (Fraser 1989, 173). Those expert discourses are normally restricted to specialized publics such as “think tanks”. These often become “bridge discourses linking loosely organized social movements with the social state” building new institutions (Fraser 1989, 174). However, when the agency of the discourse is given to these new institutions, the people whose needs are in question become “individual ‘cases’ rather than members of social groups or participants of social movements” (Fraser 1989, 174). The administrative policy can then be viewed as a depoliticizing step making objects out of persons for the sake of administrative policy (Fraser 1989, 174-175).

In conclusion, to Fraser, social movements face two main struggle axes: one, against hegemonic need interpretations of powerful organized interests and the other one against expert needs discourses in and around the administrative social state interpretations of their needs. According to Fraser, the interaction between rival interpretations of needs and social identities between the three kinds of needs talks result in the understandings of needs in capitalist societies (Fraser 1989, 171, 175).

As it became clear in Fraser’s elaborations on needs, the expression and politizing attempts of needs talk imply often the invention or the reuse of new terms, which then constitute a heterogeneous but still political collective. It becomes clear how discourses on needs are a necessary component for the construction of social identities within a counterpublic. I conceptualize the struggle against patriarchal hegemonies with the help of Nancy Fraser's (1989, 161) deliberations on the “struggle over needs”.

Conclusive reflections

I will apply the ways in which counterpublics struggle against patriarchal domination of need discourses in my analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia's struggle against the Bolivian Patriarchy. Particularly, I will examine to which extent the two axes of struggle about need interpretations can be found in the case of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. I will further investigate, which spheres that might be designated to several realms of societal life other than “the political” are uplifted into the realm of “the social” or even “the political”.

I understand oppositional needs articulated within a subaltern counterpublic as moments which are socially constructed through discourse in Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) sense. The surrounding chains of “in-order-to” constructs create a fishing net of meanings among those nodal points. Following Laclau and Mouffe I understand discourse as the struggle over identities (see above), and hence, the articulation of needs as a wider part of the construction of identities. In my attempt to merge the concept of counterpublics with discourse theory, I will analyze articulated collective nodal points of needs discourses and its surrounding chains of “in-order-to”-constructs as constitutive for the group formation and collective identity of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. I will not only investigate articulated needs which organize the discourses of #NiUnaMenos, but also situate those into a wider realms of antagonisms and hegemonic interventions that the counterpublic tries to contest. In the next section, I will outline how I plan to achieve this concretely through a discourse theoretical analysis.
4. Methodology

4.1. Philosophical considerations on my discourse theoretical analysis

In order to use a discourse theoretical perspective to its fullest extent, I will apply a discourse theoretical analysis on the gathered data departing from Laclau and Mouffe’s previously presented work (1985). As we have seen, Laclau and Mouffe understand discourse not as limited to words (Glasze 2007, 190). In contrast to many advocates of critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2001, Fairclough 2001, 121), a discourse theoretical analysis following Laclau and Mouffe does not distinguish between the discursive and non-discursive, but includes everything of the social realm as sets of signifying practices that constitute a certain “discourse” (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 4).

This suggests to apply an integrative principle for the design of my investigation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia that means the use of a diverse set of methodologies (Lister and Wells 2001, 62; van Leeuwen 2005, 8; Weiss and Wodak 2003: 18–19). Also discourse theorist van Leeuwen (2005, 13) acknowledges that the analysis of text just affords to investigate a part of social practices, while not telling us anything about “the agents and patients of the actions, or about their place and time”. That is why he suggests that ethnography and textual analysis should be combined for in a discourse analysis. Adding a historical component to the explanation help to trace the extracted expressions back in their meanings when they fall out of a common-sense cultural knowledge of the discourse analyst (Van Leeuwen 2005, 12).

My last reflection on my discourse theoretical analysis speaks for itself: My analysis builds on theories and in particular, on theories that do not suggest a clear operationalization a priori. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, 24) already noted, “Laclau and Mouffe’s texts aim at theory development, they do not include so many practical tools for textually oriented discourse analysis”. To me, the same applies to Nancy Fraser, who has her strengths in developing theoretical concepts to understand justice (Fraser 1997a, 2012, 2009), identity politics (Fraser et al. 2003; 1995), discourse, power struggles and feminism (Fraser 1989, 1990a, 1997b). However, those insights are not accompanied by clear instructions on how to apply her theoretical concepts as methodological instruments.

For this reason, I will build my analytical framework not only through Laclau and Mouffe as well as Fraser, but I am also influenced by the suggestions of Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) as well as Walton and Boon (2014) who argue that Laclau and Mouffe’s key concepts explained throughout my theoretical framework such as “key signifiers”, “antagonisms” or “chain of equivalence” etc. can be incorporated into an analytical framework (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Walton and Boon 2014).

One of my contributions of this thesis, will be the merging of Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory and Fraser’s concepts on counterpublics and needs discourse (Fraser, 1989, 1990a, 1990b) into an applicable analytical toolkit for the examination of #NiUnaMenosBolivia.
4.2. Operationalization of theory – a five-step discourse analysis toolkit

The theoretical insights that I gave in chapter three of this thesis do not offer clear instructions on how to operationalize their concepts on empirical data. For this reason, I developed an analytical toolkit that translates Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory into analytical instructions and thereby, incorporates Nancy Fraser’s concept of counterpublic’s and discourse over needs (Fraser 1989, 1990a, 1990b). A graphic summary of this toolkit is provided through figure 1.

A starting point of my analysis is the depiction of a chronology of events, which includes a rough overview about main actors and touches upon some conflicting lines in. It serves the thesis to lay a sufficient overall understanding in order to go further in depth into the discourse theoretical investigation. This is a step that may be understood by other scholars as a background section. However, I argue that especially in cases where little has been written about, and where the reconstruction of the timeline of events requires the gathering of empirical data from the scholar, it would be misleading to put such a depiction of events outside of our understanding of discourse analysis. This is because the researcher has an active role in deciding which events to stress, which actors to include and in which ways. To mark its position within the discourse theoretical analysis, however, also as a prerequisite for the in-depth analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discourse, I used a gray color for depicting this first step.

The main part of my discourse analytical operationalization is depicted in lila and purple tones to underpin the construction of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s identity constructs on two levels. Firstly, the internal identities that are articulated within the chain of equivalence of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic and secondly, the collective identity of the counterpublic that establishes a collective “We” in contrast to an antagonistic “Others” (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 283, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 106).

The first analytical level is divided into three main parts, which can be presented in a fluid order, depending on what the data most suggests. In my case, I will start off with the depiction of the main actors that are involved in the discourses and touch upon their subject positions (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 115). In a second step, I will perform an analysis that identifies agonistic discourses that struggle over the meaning of a common theme, a floating signifier (Laclau 1990, 61, Mouffe 2005). Therefore, I identify moments of meanings and argumentations that contribute to an agonistic relationship of discourses. This will enable me to extract floating signifiers. The two previous steps allow me in my case to illustrate internal hegemonic dominations within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic space in a third step. By doing so, I can also address the problem that I stated in the elaborations on Fraser’s concept of “subaltern counterpublics” in chapter 3.3.1, namely the question on to which extent we may speak of #NiUnaMenosBolivia as “subaltern” (Fraser 1990a, 67).

The second analytical level in the examination of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s articulation of collective identities depicts an even more fluid process, in which the main structure lies in the differentiation between the construction of the collective “We” which is separated by an antagonistic frontier to the “Others” (Laclau 1993, 282 f.; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 42). Depending on whether the discourse of the case
is stronger focused on the outsider or insider, I suggest to structure the presentation of an analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 42). Thereby, it is of interest to extract who or what is presented as the antagonistic actors, and which further moments of possibly negative attributes are presented in order to identify nodal points that form the center of the antagonistic “other”. In the examination of the “We”, I incorporate Fraser’s concept of needs and identify those as moments and investigate through surrounding “in-order-to” which nodal points build the pillars of the collective “We” (Fraser 1989, 163).

In #NiUnaMenos’ articulations on needs, it will be especially important to pay attention to how needs, which may have been assigned to domestic, economic or personal realms in order to contest a wider societal hegemony that will fall into the third step of this part of the discourse theoretical analysis (Fraser 1989, 171). I suggest to discuss both, internal diverse identity constructs and collective identities with the use of historical data that I established in my previous research section (chapter 2).
Figure 1: Analytical toolkit for the discourse theoretical analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia's identity constructs
4.3. Choosing and gathering the data

As already stated, the conscious choice of the data to be used in my study in itself is an act of deconstructing the discourse through my interpretative lens and hence, cannot aim at absolute objectivity. In the construction of the data for my thesis, I aimed at acquiring a broad picture of #NiUnaMenos’ discourses, which the scope of this study allows. For this reason, I gathered my data in five ways, namely through embodied observant participations Turner’s (2000, 51ff), by taking photos, conducting interviews, fourthly retrieving documents from the two Facebook channels of #NiUnaMenosBolivia and lastly, using further online articles written by a central actor within the counterpublic.

For my ethnographic participation. In particular, I assisted in three major events between September and November 2016 and was constantly part of any updates online. Firstly, I assisted the third meeting of the commission of communication of the #NiUnaMenosBolivia movement, the most important and active commissions as I will show in the analysis of my thesis. Further, I attended and assisted in simple tasks for the setting up of an event on All Saints Day on the 19th of October. And lastly, I took part in the main protest march of the movement on the 25th of November 2016 in La Paz. After all of those events, I took field notes so that I could later implement into my textual analysis.

Conducting my ethnographic participation I tried to find a balance between active, participative observations and rather passive observation. For this purpose, I interacted with the attendees of meetings in a way that they would feel that I am part of the group. However, I avoided giving my opinion in discussions. During the event on All Saints Day, I did not speak out loud as the other women who organized the event, however, I helped them with minor tasks such as making sure that the candles were lit. On the 25th of November, during the gathering prior to the march, I talked to the few groups which accumulated by the meeting point and asked them due to a very limited time-span just shortly whether they were private individuals or came with a sort of organization or working colleagues to get a short overview about some of the attendees. During the march, I had a slightly different perspective from the onset, as I was taking many photos of the happenings for my analysis. However, when I could, I shouted the paroles in a choir with the marching protesters. I decided to do so, as I take the stand of Turner (2000, 51ff.) who argues that the researcher is “an active embodied participant in social processes”. This stance enabled me to get strong insights into concepts such as “community”, “social group” and “insiderness/outsiderness” (Turner 2000, 51), in other words, main aspects that contributed to the construction of identity. For this purpose, I paid special attention to how I felt throughout the march and to which degree I perceived a sense of belonging. This enabled me to get a stronger emotional understanding for the mostly textual data I was to analyze at a later point. I made short field notes about the rather external experiences I had (such as the discussions, participation etc.) as well as the way especially the public events made me feel.

In the course of taking photos of the march on the 25th of November, I reflected upon my own agency through the decision to take a shot of particular people, of particular angles etc. For this reason, I tried to take photos rather randomly of different parts of the protesting swarm throughout the whole time of the
As I aimed mostly at a textual analysis of the photos, it was important to capture the texts posters and banners. I took a total of 542 photos of the event.

As I aimed at getting further insight perspectives into the movement as well as its timely development, I interviewed the three initiators Violette, Anna and Pamela (fictional names) who created and administrated the Facebook- group of #NiUnaMenosBolivia and were strongly involved in all the organizational and content- related themes of the movement. My interviews were semi-structured (Edwards and Holland 2013, 30) and combined elements of narrative interviews (Lawler 2002, 246). Their narrated character refers to the fact that I started off with a very broad question like “Can you tell me about the ways in which #NiUnaMenosBolivia unfolded?”. And generally, I offered relatively a lot of space to the interviewee to elaborate on what she considered as the most important aspects. However, my interviewing style was also semi- structured in the sense that I knew which themes were interesting for my research, namely conflicts the counterpublic, a common idea of what is perceived as “the idea of #NiUnaMenos”, the role of information and communication technologies, and future aspirations. Much more developed normally out of the interview situation. I transcribed every interview.

In order to acquire insights into the timeline, as well as more extended documents and manifestos of #NiUnaMenosBolivia and its different branches in Bolivia's local areas, I downloaded information from two Facebook-accounts of the counterpublic. Firstly, I downloaded all the uploaded document on the internal, closed group “Ni Una Menos Bolivia: Movilización Nacional”, a total of 10 documents, which stem from the 3rd of September 2016 up until the 16th of December 2016. After this date, no more documents were uploaded (stand: August 2017). Secondly, I downloaded every longer document as well as strongly text-based postings of the #NiUnaMenosBolivia's Facebook-fan page “#NiUnaMenosBolivia ”, a downloaded a total of 53 documents, which I included in my analysis as PDF- files. They were dated from the 19th October of 2016 up until the 27th of July 2017.

Lastly, as I understood in the course of my findings, that the feminist group “Pan y Rosas” represents a central actor within the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenos in order to understand conflicting lines between different actors, I also used eight written articles which I found on their website. They all displayed #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s stance to different issues and ranged from the 19th of October 2016 up until the 9th of March 2017 (laizquierdadiario.com).

**4.4. Process of data analysis**

In order to analyze my data, I used the program for qualitative research “MaxQDA” and starting off with a skeleton of categories consisting of the parts of which I elaborated on in the operationalization of my theory:

Chronology of events

- timeline,
- actors

36
Identities within the chain of equivalence of the counterpublic

- subject positions
- agonistic articulations
  - floating signifiers
    - moments
- internal hegemonic interventions,

Collective identity

- antagonistic “others
  - nodal points
    - moments,
  - collective “we”
    - needs as moments
    - in-order-to construct as moments
  - wider hegemony

- Discussion
  - Relation internal identities, collective identities
  - Data for historical reflection

In the course of my presentation, it will become very clear how I decided to code my data in these categories and which further sub-codes developed throughout my analysis. In order to prevent repetition, I will therefore not go into more detail at this point.

4.5. Limitations of the research

A movement such as #NiUnaMenos might potentially be studied out of countless angles, resulting in equally countless outcomes. This means that any decision on a certain investigative angle goes along with limitations regarding the findings. Regarding the poorly studied field of contemporary feminist movements in Latin America and specifically Bolivia despite of the apparent rise of the region's activism exemplified by the continent-wide #NiUnaMenos movement, I decided to take as many angles and dimensions of the movement in Bolivia into account as the scope of the thesis allowed me to. However, this decision is at the expense of an in-depth insight of each of the prior elaborated categories of my analysis such as the chronology of events, articulations of identities, needs and interests, as well as expressions of antagonistic and hegemonic interventions. As each of those elements may itself constitute a master thesis for its own, the depth of the following analysis will need to adapt to the scope of the thesis. However, I argue that,
considering the novelty of the movement and its richness of insights, this study may lead up to a further investigation which may go further into detail of various aspects elaborated in this thesis.

A further reflection concerns my own researcher role as a conscious co- constructor of my data. The subject (I) and objects (data) of my research on #NiUnaMenosBolivia find themselves in, and partly constitute and are shaped by social worlds (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 5). I, as a discourse analyst am located in a particular political, historical and social context. That is why I think that claiming a neutral point from which I describe, argue and evaluate would be naïve and deficient (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, 7; Mouffe 1993, 14–18; Bernstein 1983, pt. 2). All alone my theoretical departure from Laclau and Mouffe as well as Nancy Fraser implies an academic approach to my investigation that holds a Western imprint.

In order to address this topic and merge as good as possible into my Bolivian surrounding, I spent a total of one year working as a journalist, took a master course in gender based violence at the university “Nuestra Señora de la Paz”, and practiced various local and international sports in La Paz among others. However, this does not change my status as a “Gringo”, which nowadays describes especially English speaking tourists, but also more generally Western and white people in most of Latin American countries (Oxford Spanish Dictionary 2009). It cannot be disregarded that I am a white, German woman, educated within a western orientated system. This implies advantages but at the same time also the largest obstacle of my study. The lens of my camera, the words that I choose and also the impression that I transmit and hence impact my interviewees, may vary largely from the ways a Bolivian woman may do so. I noticed, that as a white woman, western it was often easy to gain credibility because of a resting colonial imprint that still remains in wide parts of the society I observed. Being an observer who does not belong to the group, I could also pay more attention to everything, which may appear rather “natural” to a Bolivian academic. However, my position as a “gringo” might have also limited my study from gaining access to some aspects of #NiUnaMenos Bolivia. Coming from another cultural, ethnic and partly educational context, I can never entirely depict the actual state of women in Bolivia, their actual intentions and incentives for activism beyond my ratio and background. Having interacted mostly in a group of upper class, white and Eurocentric women of La Paz, I do not depict all of what NiUnaMenos was or might have been. Even if I tried to balance my bias as a “Gringo” with a richness of data, I would suggest a follow-up study in which I further discuss my findings and open them for critical reflections as well as a potentially further investigations.

I tried to contact different groups in La Paz, which were subsumed under the NiUnaMenos slogan such as “Pan y Rosas”, however, my attempts were not responded. Interacting with other groups, which were in conflict with my main investigated group, especially of government-near groups, would have been a very strong interference in the whole communication process between the groups. It would have further threatened the trust that the group built up towards me. Hence, for studying the conflict lines between the different groups, I mostly relied on media coverage. This bias however, should be overcome by applying a
discourse analysis on the Facebook communication of #NiUnaMenos that can be observed and analyzed without a personal involvement. Further reflections on limitations of this study will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

4.6. Ethical considerations

In the first meeting that I assisted of #NiUnaMenos, I informed all attendees about my research interest and about the fact that I would make note on the meetings for the purpose of my research. I asked the assisting women whether I may record the meetings. As some of them did not feel comfortable with being recorded throughout the meetings, I did not record any material and just wrote quick field notes on each meeting after it happened. I also decided to not state the real names of the three initiators of #NiUnaMenos, as they told me that they have already received threats, especially through social media as they are very active distributing feminist ideas on those social networks. As it does not add any indispensable information to my research, and may imply a risk of further harassment towards my interviewees, I decided to use fictional names to describe their statements and leave out any concrete details, such as the names of their places of work. For the same reason, the exact locations of meetings will not be revealed, in all instances where they took place at private residences. Although the Facebook group under review does not disclose content to non-members, the amount of members (13,796, August 2017) indicates its relative openness and public characteristic.

4.7. Reliability and Validity

The use of reliability and validity traces back to positivist perspectives, commonly applied on quantitative research (Golafshani 2003, 597). While reliability assumes the replicability or repeatability of results (Kirk and Miller 1986, 41–42), “validity determines whether a researcher truly measures that which was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are” (Joppe 2000, 1).

If I am to argue for the reliability and validity of my research which is based on a poststructuralist view, I need to redefine those terms. Departing from a constructivist perspective, I do not aim for finding objective truths, and unshakable realities. However, I need to take the core idea of reliability and validity of research and break it down to my context by proving that my research is “defensible” (Johnson 1995, 282) and trustworthy (Mishler 2000).

For doing so, I already stated that I acknowledge my own role as a researcher and make sure to find the best possible way to adhere enough data to weaken my own, possibly biased perspective. I do this through the combination of various methods. In the field of qualitative research Patton (2005, 241) advocates the application of triangulation that “strengthens a study by combining methods […] including several kinds of methods or data” and allows the participants of the research to assist the researcher in examining his own assumptions (Johnson 1997, 284). Engaging multiple methods such as observation, interviews etc. contribute to constructing a more valid, reliable and diverse photo of the discourses of #NiUnaMenosBolivia (Golafshani 2003, 604).
Building upon these assumptions, I argue that my research can be assessed as being trustworthy and defensible as it combines three interviews, including a follow-up interview, ethnographic participative observation and textual analysis. As elaborated in the previous section, I reflected upon the persons who I interviewed and the textual bases I chose to analyze so that it might best allow to answer my research questions of identifying the organization of discourse within #NiUnaMenosBolivia. Moreover, the research is not only embedded in the investigation of Latin American and Bolivian women’s movements (Feminism and women’s movements in Latin America) but also situated in my wider familiarity of some of Bolivia’s social realities through living in the country for over a year, working as a journalist on women’s topics (see Yegorova 2016) in a Bolivian organization as well as taking and organizing a Master course on gender-based violence, women's rights and journalism held by Bolivian experts in the field. These experiences help me to understand my findings in wider social contexts of the country and the specific problems around “Machismo”.

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3 The Oxford Dictionary (2016) defines that “machismo” refers to assertive or aggressive masculinity, I suggest to understand this expression as an overarching term for many, sometimes not strictly defined systems of beliefs, actions and cultural expressions, which derive from the idea of a superiority of men over women.
5. Analysis

Following Laclau and Mouffe, at the core of every discourse is the attempt to fix an objective meaning or identity (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 28). I conducted my analysis to deconstruct #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s discourse and get an insight into identity constructs that the counterpublic articulates. As I am interested in a holistic picture, which does not assume a collective identity without considering also internal diversity of a movement, I chose to conduct my analysis on two levels: At first, I will shed a light on the internal discourse of #NiUnaMenosBolivia and thereby touch upon the subject positions of the most involved actors, agonistic discourses among those and finally, draw conclusions about internal hegemonic interventions that seem to dominate the counterpublic. After that, I will take a step back and illuminate the ways in which #NiUnaMenosBolivia articulates a collective “We” in contrast to an antagonistic “Others”. Thereby, I can show how a wider patriarchal societal hegemony is contested by the counterpublic. A chronology of events will be presented in the next chapter to lay a sufficient context for the further investigation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s identity constructs.

In the presentation of my analysis, I will refer to my data in the following ways:

- Interview with Violetta (fictional name) = I1
- Interview with Anna (fictional name)= I2
- Interview with Pamela (fictional name)=I3

- Ethnographic field notes:
  - Commission meeting = E1
  - March of the 25th of November 2016=E2
  - All Saints Day of 19th of October 2016=E3

- Photos taken during the protest march on the 25th of November=1P-542P

- Documents from the internal Facebook group “Ni Una Menos Bolivia: Movilización Nacional”=G1-G10

- Documents from internal Facebook “#NiUnaMenosBolivia”= 1FP-53FP

- Articles written by Pan y Rosas=PR1-PR8
5.1. Chronology of events

Based on the data provided by my interviews with the initiators of #NiUnaMenosBolivia Violetta, Anna and Pamela, the closed Facebook-group and public Facebook fan page of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, as well as the articles written by the autonomous feminist group Pan y Rosas, I will outline a rough timeline since the start of #NiUnaMenos in Bolivia in August 2016 up until July 2017. The chronology of events presented in three stages: Firstly, I will elaborate on how the counterpublic was initiated, organized and which first online and offline events where executed as a lead up to the major march on November 25th of 2016. Secondly, I will dedicate a section to the main happenings during the main march in La Paz, which I will refer to as #N25, and touch upon the conflicting divisions of the protest march on that day. Thirdly, based on the online communication of #NiUnaMenosBolivia I will shortly outline further online and offline events of the counterpublic. In this way, a sufficient picture of the happenings around and within #NiUnaMenosBolivia will be drawn for a deeper discourse theoretical analysis.

Pre-March

#NiUnaMenosBolivia could not have been initiated without the numerous mobilizations throughout the Latin American continent, which started off in March 2015 in Buenos Aires, and spread over in various other countries of the region. Among those, over half a million women and men marched in various cities of Peru on the 14th of August according to the organizer’s statements (Godoy 2016). Pamela and Violetta, two feminists from Spain and Peru who had been living and working for many years in Bolivia, took part of the swarm in the capital city Lima. "The march in Peru was very powerful and historical […] With this energy, we came back [to La Paz, Bolivia]. In an informal evening we met up again, this time also with Anna. We had some vine, talks and the idea emerged: What if that was also possible in Bolivia?” (I1).

On the next day, Saturday the 20th of August 2016, Violetta created a closed Facebook group (G3). Only one day later, it counted already 1000 members. Registering the public interest increasing from day to day, the three women decided to call all the members who wanted to be part of #NiUnaMenos in Bolivia to reunite in a first public assembly at the "Montículo", an "energetically loaded place" as Violetta describes it and a viewpoint over the city in the rather Bohemian district Sopocachi of La Paz (I1). Just as later meetings exemplified, the commitment performed on social media did not reflect in the meetings which required physical presence. As the protocol of the assembly tells us (G3) the “first broad and free reunion of #NiUnaMenosBolivia brought 26 people together who formulated some suggestions, which, even if preliminary, may be pointing in the directions for the national mobilization”.

One of the formal decisions of this first assembly was that on the 25th of November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, marches all around the country should take place as a “milestone (but not the final goal, nor fundamental aim) of the Group #NiUnaMenosBolivia” (G3). The march would later be referred to as #25N via Facebook. I will use this term in my following elaborations.
The first assembly also determined the ways in which the movement would organize itself and distribute certain tasks. Four commissions were created: Firstly, the Commission of Information and Communication (G1). It had the responsibility to search and distribute valuable information on machista⁴ violence and impunity of cases, to communicate with the media and take care of the visibility of the movement as well as to design other campaign towards the march #25N (G1, G3). In the course of the happenings before the march, this commission was the most active one with up to 18 persons (I3) enabling various offline campaigns in universities and organisations (G6), online campaigns such as the campaign "#YoMarchoPor" (9FP), which encouraged women to share why they are going to march on the #25N (G9), and whose participants also engaged in various other traditional media such as radio, TV and newspapers to promote the march of the 25th of November (G9). Violetta was one of the most active members of this commission.

The second commission was the political commission. It was responsible for the elaboration of major "proposals and demands of the mobilization" and its implementation in the other commissions (G1). Six women took firstly part of the commission (G1), although it became clear that Pamela played an especially important role here as the main author of the political position papers of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. Later, as the political positioning (G7) was written, the members of this commission joined the more active commission for communication.

The third commission was responsible for the movement's "articulation and logistics" (G1, I2). And was created to solve all logistical questions of the #25N march, such as its route, timing, sound, and other matters. Secondly, it had the task to ensure territorial communication among the different departments of the country, avoiding the movement to become a centralist and urban protest only. Initiator Anna, who was part of this commission also stressed that this commission had the task to enable especially indigenous people from the outskirts of La Paz to join the mobilizations around the #25N. Further, this commission should make sure that the different groups or organizations interested in the movement came to a common-sense (I2). In retrospection, Anna showed her disappointment about the group because most of the members who participated initially did not support the commission at later points, so that around three women were active members of the commission towards #25N. Most of the communication between the different local Bolivian departments of the movement took place through the independent and personal use of social media. In the aftermath of #25N, Anna also acknowledges that "everything was planned differently than it then succeeded, but it somehow worked out pretty suprisingly" (I2). Particularly, many organizations, offered financial support deliberately by printing T-shirts or pamphlets for their marching employees, even though they were not allowed from the administrative team of the counterpublic to put their own logos on the material.

⁴ "machista” is the adjective of “machismo” and refers according to the Oxford Dictionary (2016) to something, which is male chauvinist. However, as I have seen that, depending on the context, this word can describe a variety of attributes, such as sexist or misogynic, I decided not to use a translation of it.
Finally, a fourth commission was initially created but cut off shortly afterwards. It aimed at a "quick response" to the victims of machista violence (G4). However, as it became rapidly clear that the members were "involved after-work, in our free time, without any institution nor opening hours" (I1), they decided to dissolve this commission.

Followed up by this first assembly, a second assembly took also place in Sopocachi, this time, however, in the more central square Plaza Avaroa on the 22nd of October 2016. The commission of communication met around five times, the commission of articulation approximately 3 times and the political commission two times (numbers estimated by interviewees I2, I3). Moreover, two meetings took place, in which the commissions gathered together in order to discuss more hands-on practical questions (I3).

In the meantime, after the three women took the first step in the creation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, the established feminist movement "Pan y Rosas" in La Paz started to mobilize independently in the name of #NiUnaMenos. Particularly, they organized a women's march on the 19th of October, inspired by the Argentinian #NiUnaMenos Movement, to "organize the outrage and sum up the power for the international call to speak out against femicidal and machista violence5 in all its expressions" (1PR). On the counterpublic’s fan page, #NiUnaMenosBolivia joined together with the call and also motivated people to participate in the event (4FP, 46FP, I1). According to Pan y Rosas (2PR), around 800 people took part in the march on the streets of La Paz.

During this protest of the 19th of October, some confrontations emerged as members of Pan y Rosas saw that deputies of the governmental party MAS wanted to join the marching crowd (2PR). As a result of this dispute, the march split into two different branches – towards the central square near the governmental headquarters (MAS) and towards the ministry of justice (I3). Pamela critically commented in our interview that if this

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5 In the pre-march discourses as well as during the marches on the 25th of November, the struggle against gender-based violence was often coined with the term "femicidal violence" (I3). Henceforth, I will use this expression in my elaborations.
division would not have taken place, the march could have been able to sum up until 2000 protesters, as “people who joined later did not know about the split of the march and got confused on their ways” (I3).

This event initiated a range of conflicts about the question of who should be allowed and who should denied to affiliate with the #NiUnaMenos movement and especially, take part in the march of the 25th of November. In order to avoid solve the conflicts and avoid further quarrels in the future, #NiUnaMenosBolivia made verbally clear on both of their Facebook communication channels that everyone attending the march should protest for his/her own sake and not in representation of any organization, political party or institution. This meant a strict exclusion of logos and other identificatory symbols of institutions (I3, G1). In this context and also as a strongly emphasized aspect during my interviews, the #NiUnaMenosBolivia positioned itself as a citizen-based and popular movement (G3, G4, G7, I1-3).

Despite of these attempts, Pan y Rosas disagreed with the stance that Violetta, Anna and Pamela (1-I3) described as “very inclusive”. Therefore, they attempted to mobilize for a major march on the 24th of November and thereby separate themselves from the other groups. As a response to strong critique from many sides, the autonomous feminist group decided in an assembly on the 18th of November to stick to the priory planned 25th of November (3PR). Yet, they motivated the protesters not to take part in the march organized by #NiUnaMenosBolivia, which would gather at 4pm at the “Plaza Isabel La Católica” (See picture 2), but to gather with them on a square at 3 pm. On the day of the march, the governmental actors did not abandon the idea of marching in the name of #NiUnaMenos and organized an independent march at 11 am (6PR).

March #25N

On the 25th of November, the government-related march counted around 1000 people who participated under the slogan “#NiUnaMenos para Vivir Bien” (NiUnaMenos for “Vivir Bien”). The notion of the “Vivir Bien” stems from the indigenous belief-system for a “good life” and roots back to the communitarian lifestyle of some indigenous populations. Evo Morales used this concept extensively during his electoral campaigns and as an overarching term as an ideal throughout the new constitution in 2009 to highlight a recognition of the Bolivian indigenous population (Céspedes 2010, Morales 2006). Government-affiliated or supporting state institutions, as well as unions, took part in this march (6PR).
The main march took place at 4 pm when the first crowds of people just started to drop in slowly into the Plaza Isabel La Católica preparing their posters and putting #NiUnaMenos T-shirts on.

I used the time before the march to go around and ask of whom those groups of people consisted. Most of them told me that they are incentivized to participate by different local as well as international organizations which work either closely together with topics like women’s rights, reproductive and sexual rights or LGBTQ rights. However, many of them reaffirmed that although they belonged to an organization, they participated in the mobilization as individuals on that day. As I later saw that the aspect of independence has been strongly highlighted throughout my interviews, I interpret these justifying statements as a possible outcome of a strong correspondence with some members of the organizational team of #NiUnaMenosBolivia who might have stressed this characteristic of the march while engaging with organizations interested in the march. Others among the early attendees of the demonstration came alone or in personal friends.

When the demonstration started to follow its route, more and more people joined the march, which was led by the relatives of assassinated women or victims of gender-based violence who demanded justice (picture 5, 41P, 68P, Eth.). Two activists were especially present at the march with their megaphones motivating the demonstrators to participate in the collective repetitive calls of the manifestation such as “Ni una menos, vivas nos queremos” and many more to be elaborated on in other chapters (picture 4).

![Image](image_url)

**Picture 3:** Demonstrating women in typical indigenous clothing in front of the Ministry of Justice in La Paz

#25N
Among the demonstrators were men and women, however, mostly women of diverse ages who, deducing from their clothing also included a lot of indigenous women (see picture 3). Moreover, protesters with LGBTQ flags were present (picture 7, 3P, 7P, 35P, 40P, 48P, 63P, 66P), and two music groups, particularly drummers who accompanied the march (picture 8). After around 10 min, the swarm of people passed by the platform set up by Pan y Rosas (42P, 43P, 44P, 46P, 47P, 6PR), which in the march, appeared more like a part of the march than a separate formation. The people stopped by the ministry of Justice where a lot of people consciously stopped to shout their demands out loud (Picture 6, 71-76P). Finally, the remaining people accumulated by one of the main squares of La Paz' centrum to let the victims and direct relatives of assassinated women speak to the public through megaphones (89-91P). In order to invite the reader into the atmosphere of the day and its different stations, a variety of photos I will depict below. Parallel to the mobilizations in La Paz, numerous marches all around the country took place at the same time. Due to the limited scope of this thesis to La Paz' #NUM branch, this will not be elaborated further.

![Image](image-url)

**Picture 4: Activist motivating the marching crowds to shout the movements paroles #25N**
Picture 5: Relatives of victims leading the marching crowd with the Ni Una Menos Bolivia banner #25N

Picture 6: Capture of the marching crowd #25N
Picture 7: "Heteronormativity kills", LGBTQ flag in the background #25N

Picture 8: Group of the drummers #25N
Picture 9: Activists shouting their claims in front of the Ministry of Justice #25N

Picture 10: Demonstrators mounting posters in front of the Ministry of Justice demanding to “stop the violence against women” #25N
Post-March

After the march, the women's movement went into a rather inactive phase due to the Christmas vacations (13) and faced, according to Pamela, the challenge to keep the interest among its participants once the milestone of the protest was behind them. Assessing their Facebook fan page, the following activities could be detected from January until the end of July:

At the beginning of the year, the #NiUnaMenosBolivia movement pressed charges against the national newspaper El Deber for having published caricatures that trivialized the fight of the movement against femicidal violence. On the 8th of March #NiUnaMenosBolivia joined the international women's strike. Thereby, the international character was pointed out strongly in the postings of their communication stressing its manifestations all around the world (26FP, 28FP, 29FP). The strike was also held by Pan y Rosas, who claimed to have summed up around 1500 persons (8PR) during an offline protest on the 8th of March. Following the conjecture of the state's discussion about the juristic situation on abortions, #NiUnaMenosBolivia motivated their followers online to support the legalization process of abortions in their local as well as digital environments (32FP). On July 1st, the movement claimed to have participated in the LGBTQ march or "March of the Sexual and Gender Diversity 2017". Despite of those activities, a rather less mass-based offline-engaged activism seemed to have followed the mobilizations of #25N.

While this chapter helped us to orientate ourselves through the happenings of the movement, the next deliberations will provide in-depth insights into the nodal points of construction and contestation of identities by #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic. The frictions during #25N’s mass-based protest showed already how different actors enacted conflicting discourses. The next chapter to get a stronger discourse theoretical understanding of these and thereby, address the first research question of this thesis (RQ1): Which differences between the identity constructs within the counterpublic space of #NiUnaMenosBolivia can be detected?

5.2. Identities within the counterpublic’s chain of equivalence

In this part of my analysis, I will take a look at the internal discursive articulations within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic. For this purpose, I will shortly introduce the actors and their subject positions. As a second step, I will depict the agonistic discourses which give us a glimpse of the many possible conflicting attempts to fixate meanings within #NiUnaMenosBolivia. This opens the doorway to reflect on internal dominations and hegemonic interventions and thus, make conclusions about the degree to which #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic can be seen as “subaltern”.

5.2.1. The subject positions of actors

The description of the organizational group of #NiUnaMenosBolivia that I had most contact with, will help me to understand not only there position in the social realm around them, but also their subject positions in the discursive field. My insights will address most of all subject positions into the main organizational team
of the counterpublic as I did not get personal access to Pan y Rosas, and the consideration of the participants of the protest march would have exceeded the scope of this thesis. I decided not to go further into the actors involved in the government’s march on the 25th of November 2016 out of several reasons. Firstly, apart from the call for a separate protest march, I could not retrieve articulated discourses that would give me insights into the viewpoints of this group. Secondly, although Pan y Rosas and the administrative team of #NiUnaMenosBolivia stood in conflict in various ways, as well will see later in this chapter, they both rejected the participation of the government in the marches clearly. My deliberations on the antagonistic actors of #NiUnaMenosBolivia will further show, that the state and hence, also the government, are treated with the strongest emotional and outspoken denial by large parts of the counterpublic (chapter 5.3.).

To start with the initiators of the group in La Paz, Anna and Violetta work together at the same NGO, that focusses on human rights and especially women’s rights. Violetta is originally from Peru and holds two Master degrees on gender-related topics as well as public health (I1). Anna is an anthropologist specialized in gender-related topics as well as development studies. Pamela holds also two Master degrees, was raised in Spain and spent the last eight years of her life in Bolivia, working mostly as an independent teacher as well as a consultant in gender-related topics (I2).

The meeting of the commission of communication that I assisted took place at a private home, in a skyscraper, situated within the fairly bohemian district of La Paz, known to inhibit rather socio-economically stronger situated inhabitants. The participants were all women in their mid-twenties up to forty and included students, artists, and journalists. For instance, one of the participants was a musician who tried to arrange some support of rather well-known musicians of La Paz. I have also known one journalist present at the meetings from the journalist foundation I worked for. She participated in this foundation courses on a regular basis and was considered to be well-known within this circle of journalists in La Paz. Apart from me, there were two other European expats aimed at conducting a radio study about #NiUnaMenosBolivia for their Master degree. None of the present women wore the clothing that is often identified with the traditional clothing of indigenous women. Some of typical symbols which signify culturally indigenous identities of women are described by layered skirts and shawls, as well as a bowler hat that is worn often atop long braids on the women’s head (nationalgeographic.com, January 2016).

Due to the less extensive contact with the actors of Pan y Rosas, the description of the subject positions within the is presented building mostly upon their own ideological positioning and self-description on their Facebook site as well as other related websites. Pan y Rosas considers itself as being an “international group formation for anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal struggle, for a feminism that considers class and socialism, formed by women of the “Liga Obrera Revolucionaria por la Cuarta Internacional” (Revolutionary workers league for the fourth international) and "independent" women” (Pan y Rosas Bolivia, Info). The movement is part of a wider international Pan y Rosas organization which acts in
Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Spain, the United States, France, and Germany. It is politically situated in the far left, and especially critical about the Bolivian government’s concept of “Andean Capitalism” (Lorci.org, December 2016) which tries to reconcile the interests between the working class and business (Tesis Fundacional, Lorci.org 1999).

Building upon these insights, we might make the following conclusions for the organizational core group of the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia: the individual identity components that constituted many of the subject positions within the organizational team are situated within fairly academic, culturally interested and informed and rather bohemian discourses. The absence during organizational meetings suggests that the individual subject position of indigenous women is fairly little represented. However, as the chronology of events already indicated, this did not prevent various indigenous women to assist the protest march of the 25th of November. This, as the participation in the march showed, did not have an effect on the attendees of the march. However, as we will see in the following section that this constellation had indeed an impact on the discourses which determined the counterpublic’s agenda.

While I cannot make individual claims about the subject positions of the members of Pan y Rosas, I can situate them as a group within a discursive field as activists with a strong feminist imprint and a clear politically leftist orientation.

5.2.2. Agonistic discourses

The various angles I took in my analysis of #NiUnaMenosBolivia allow to point out agonistic discourses, which use conflictual moments in order to fixate the meaning of five floating signifiers, namely the Facebook content of the counterpublic, the feminist positioning, the constitution, the territorial identity and the attitude towards the government under MAS of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. The argumentative net of meanings surrounding these, will be depicted in the following.

Floating signifier 1: the language

Moments: Academic feminist language vs. everyday speech

A first floating signifier, which is contested within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic can be expressed in the question: Which content should be for the distribution of its closed Facebook group? Particularly, two discourses exhibit agonistic ideas on this matter. The first one is displayed when after the initiation of the closed Facebook group rules were set up by its’ administrators to ensure that “information, documents and others of high interest, seriousness and consistency” were shared: Apart from misogynist and "machista" contents, also simplistic messages should be avoided. Instead, it was suggested that the contents shared should be contrasted, academic, or entail a high journalistic quality, which enhances the knowledge about machista violence (G1, G3). The administrators of the group had the right to “delete any content or member which would defy those without notifying anyone”.

During my interview with Pamela, I understood that these limitations were met with criticism by many members of the group. “Apparently, there is a rejection of theoretical insights about violence. If we post
something more theoretical to explain something many ask as ‘Well, how many books do we have to read to participate in the NiUnaMenos?’ I think this is a matter of time, though.” (I3). The later contents that I have extracted in my analysis might give a glimpse on what the wider part of the movement’s supporters might understand as meaningful content: Most often these entail news on femicidal violence in Bolivia but also internationally. These more explicit and visible expressions of violence are often accompanied by calls for direct support.

The agonistic discourse over the floating signifier “content” is presented includes a cleavage between moments of articulations that already clear in the previous chapter: The struggle between academic and everyday speech.

**Floating signifier 2: #NiUnaMenosBolivia feminist positioning**

*Moments: feminist theorist vs. popular anti-femicide feminism*

A second floating signifier that I extracted concerned the matter: Which feminist positioning does #NiUnaMenos take?

Thereby, the insights of the first agonistic discourse already indicate that there seems to be a widespread agreement on the struggle against explicit femicidal violence. However, everything that is attributed to more radical feminist concepts seems to be rejected. At the commission meeting that I assisted, one of the attending women reassured: “I am definitely not a feminist, but I fight against femicides”. (E1). From my previous research (see 12) as well as my own experience in Bolivia, I might assume that many demonstrators of the #25N march would deny identifying with the term “feminist”.

In contrast, the feminist movement Pan y Rosas articulate already in the early events of #NiUnaMenosBolivia discourses that might be evaluated as having a stronger feminist substrate such as the fight for LGBTQ rights or free and legal abortions (1PR). Considering that the administrators of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s Facebook accounts also addressed those topics in the post-march development and including the personal trajectories of the counterpublic’s Facebook-administrators, I argue that this agonism is not displayed between the administrators and groups such as Pan y Rosas. In terms of their feminist imprints, both actors can be situated within capitalism-critical and pro-abortion and LGBTQ-rights supporting discourses.

My ethnographic insights, as well as my established historical background that showed the high reluctance against feminism in the region (Kirkwood 1999, 162-166) back up the different subject positions that were depicted by floating signifier 2. The agonistic discourses depict the clash between the moments of meanings educated feminist theorists vs. popular anti-femicide activists.

**Floating signifier 3: the constitution #NiUnaMenosBolivia**

*Moments: plural and inclusive vs. independent and exclusive*
The third, and most present floating signifier concerns a decisive question within the counterpublic: Who is included in the construction of #NiUnaMenosBolivia and who is not?

During the interviews as well as in the postings of the administrative team of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, a strong emphasis on its “plural” (G3) character was made which “invites every women and man to construct a wider and diverse platform” (G7). Thereby, it was stressed that everyone “just represented herself or himself as an individual” (I1) participating in the movement even if, outside of it, she or he belongs to organizations or has religious or party-related memberships. However, “plurality has its risks: The plural can diffuse the feminist substrate”, acknowledges Pamela. To her, “the group has a didactic role of teaching the broader society”.

In contrast, Pan y Rosas criticized the “gather in order to gather” logic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia's administrators as “it can attract several institutions without critique” (3PR). By “several institutions”, the group Pan y Rosas mean “NGOs, officials of state-affiliated companies, of the ministry of health, the ‘cebras’ of the mayor Revilla amongst others”. This, according to the Pan y Rosas group, can lead to a struggle “without clarity about against whom it is fought” (6PR). To Pan y Rosas, #NiUnaMenos as a collective needs to be independent of any of “the government, political parties, churches or NGO's”. The fact that organizations financed the “balloons, T-shirts and the banner for the march” (86PR) is condemnable to the group. According to Pamela, Anna and Violetta, the criticisms against the movement were very often expressed in a personal way via Facebook-comments. Pamela narrates for instance: “They would accuse us just because we are Spanish [Pamela and Anna] or, in a racist way, or say that we are MASistas because some of us work at NGOs [Violetta and Anna]” (I1).

The agonistic discourses about the constitution of “NiUnaMenosBolivia” are constituted by a plural, and inclusive against an exclusive and independent stance. While the ones who argue for a plural and inclusive attitude underpin their argument with moments that argue for #NiUnaMenos as a didactic space for the initiation of ordinary publics, the contrasting articulation is backed up by discursive moments which include attacks because of the personal European or NGO-affiliated background of the women.

**Floating signifier 4: the territorial identity of #NiUnaMenosBolivia**

**Moments: European vs. decolonial and autonomous**

The strong rejection of any participation of NGO's and originally Spanish women can be interpreted in a wider historical context. In Bolivia, the “autonomous Latin American feminists” (Monasterios 2001, 33) who resisted the “gender technocracy” of NGOs after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), have a strong base. The most prominent group is “Mujeres Creando”, which keeps filling headlines on a regular basis in the country’s government-critical media such as “Diario Pagina Siete” (“Maria Galindo

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6 By “cebras” people in zebra costumes are meant who are employed by the major’s office of the city to regulate the traffic.
- Diario Pagina Siete"). The fact that two of the women administrating #NiUnaMenos Bolivia work for international NGOs, even if, as the women claim, did not have any effect on the movement's activities, might have impacted the way in which the established, Bolivian autonomous movements perceived them.

Even though we cannot make assumptions about the extent to which the Pamela and Anna, the two Spanish women, or Anna and Violetta who work at NGOs, enact their professional and personal background into their feminist beliefs in the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivivia, the cleavage that can be seen between the agonistic moments European and decolonial highlight a fourth floating signifier within the counterpublic: it’s territorial identity.

**Floating signifier 5: The attitude towards the government under MAS**

*Moments: impartial “mature attitude” towards the government vs. strong aversion against the government*

This floating signifier is highly connected with the ones. However, as it represented one of the most discussed topics throughout my ethnographic insights (E1) and the articles of Pan y Rosas (PR1-8), I address it as a separate agonism that develops around the question: Which stance is taken towards the government?

The attitude towards the government under Evo Morales and his party Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) is a common theme that polarizes Bolivian politics (chapter 2.2.2.). It is a topic of conflict because of the different ways participants of the movement perceive the government. On the one hand, the few women who organize the main Bolivian #NiUnaMenos movement out of La Paz, such as Pamela, Anna and Violetta, as well as the other women who participate in the commission meetings etc. seem to hold a rather impartial stand: To Pamela (I3) it is necessary “to demand actions from of each institution, which plays a role in its construction of the situation of violence against women”. In the case of the government, the poor enactment of laws gives enough reasons for the activists to criticize it (see 5.3.1). However, the government is not objected as an enemy per se, but only in terms of the ways it contributes to the situation of women suffering femicidal violence (I3). This allows people as individuals of any of party-political belief to participate in the protest movements of the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia, but does not accept any symbols representing those beliefs, such as logos, flags etc. (G3).

In contrast, Pan y Rosas, next to other self-declared autonomous feminist groups such as “Feministas callejeras Sucre” (I3) criticized the administrators starkly for the little distance they took from the government as they have previously assisted in events on gender-related topics which have been organized by the government (I3). In the light that Pan y Rosas is not a newly formed group, their strong repulsion of the government is easier to understand. To Pan y Rosas, the government is one of the main, if not the main antagonist in the struggle against gender-based violence and impunity in Bolivia. This shines through in many ways: In the Evo Morales' overarching project “proceso the camino” (see Bolivian women's movements and political polarization 12), Pan y Rosas “find an infinity of abuses of which thousands of women in the country suffer on a daily basis and whose perpetrators are also officials and authorities of the
The strong aversion against the attempts of the government to participate in #NiUnaMenosBolivia's marches by sending their female deputies to those, becomes obvious when the groups states: “[Evo Morales is] a president who throws his machista and misogynic discourses to the public while the government's 'feminist representatives’ do not say anything against that” (4PR). Even the shouts which the group expressed during the manifestations on the #25N and the 8th of March were directly linked to politicians affiliated to Morales' party MAS: “Evo, Linera, first class machistas; Samuel Rivera, the same rubbish” or “Now, now, it is indispensable, women on the streets because the government is the responsible” (8PR).

Pamela sets the internal disagreements about the attitude towards the government’s position as an antagonist needs into the broader context of the starkly polarized political environment of the country:

“The division is clear. You are part of the MAS supporters or the rest. In between there is a wall on fire. And is insuperable. To me, it is an infantilism. I think that we, the feminist movement in Bolivia, needs to mature politically. The government's plans about the referendum, the natural resources etc. polarize the country more and more. And the feminist movement is affected by that. In Argentina or Peru, this was not the case. There, no companies, organizations or parties took the lead in the #NiUnaMenos march, but they participated. Here, no one of the government could protest without clashes” (I1).

In other words, two agonistic discourses develop through the opposite moments argument on the one hand, for a mature and impartial attitude against, on the other hand a strong aversion per se against the MAS and Evo Morales. Both try thereby to fixate the meaning of the floating signifier government.

It must be noted, that the agonisms that I depicted are probably just a small part of all the further possible conflicting discourses within this counterpublic, which could not be explored due to the scope of this thesis.

5.2.3. Hegemony within #NiUnaMenosBolivia – on internal dominations and subalternity

In this section, I will use some of my previous insights into #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s internal discursively articulated conflicts and add some further insights into the informal conditions under which someone can participate in the meetings of the counterpublic. That helps to make wider claims about relations of hegemony within the counterpublic and point thus out, which identity constructs might be dominating #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

Although, during the interviews, the three initiators stressed the “pluralist, horizontal and citizen based” character of the Bolivian #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic, in which there are “no leaders nor patrons” (I3), the organization structure of the movement suggests otherwise. In the chronology of events, we have seen that only the people who attended the assemblies, commissions or administrate the counterpublic's Facebook-accounts can execute changes within the movements through decision-making. The possibility to take decisions, tells us a lot about the power of a certain actor. Following Mouffe's (2000, 130) view on decisions, they constitute “an element of force and violence” where power is exercised (or not)” (also Carpentier, 2016, 81; Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Applied on #NiUnaMenosBolivia, we need to argue that
the self-concept does not seem to reflect the discursive insights of my study. Although it is potentially possible for anyone to join the meetings of the movement, a closer look into the conditions of how and when someone can actually assist show a different picture than the one the three administrators of the counterpublic aim to draw. In order to underpin my point, I will make use of my own experience of getting into contact and becoming part of the movement. I heard of the meeting of the commission of communication through a friend who has been invested in the feminist social circle of La Paz beforehand.

The commission's meeting took place – as I have already stated – in a rather bohemian area of the city place where I happened to work and live. The meeting took place at around 7 pm, so I could perfectly assist right after my work which in La Paz, ends for many people around 7 pm. Being there, I recognized some people I have seen before – either in my working space of journalism or during cultural events such as concerts, theatres etc. What does this tell us about the subject position of the “type of person” who might have access to those commissions and decide upon the ways it is structured and executes its communication? She/he is very probably a common friend within an artistic, feminist or working space realm, who maybe also do not live in the outskirts of La Paz and has enough freedom to spend her evening on a weekday discussing communication strategies.

But also in the online-platforms of #NiUnaMenos, which are arguably open to new members and postings, the final decisions are made by those few who administrate the web pages by deleting or keeping comments and postings for instance (I3).

Some of the internal agonistic discourses depicted previously may underpin who which subject positions may hold a stronger power holding position in terms of their participative decisive possibilities in contrast to others. The women constituting the organizational core of the counterpublic seem more likely to hold a middle-class, urban, academic and culturally informed subject position, and rather than belonging to an indigenous, rural or socioeconomically weaker identify of the Bolivian society.

This however, does not mean that this, often subordinated group of Bolivian women does not find representation and a voice through #NiUnaMenos. However, using Laclau's term of “representation” (1993, 289 ff.) the representatives do not seem to personify the will of the group mobilized during the marches. This has significant implications on the power structures within the counterpublic. As a protester who attended the march, one could decide which text to put on one's poster, or how loud one wants to shout. However, the shouts that one repeated in choir with the crowds, the time and date for the protest, the route it took and much more were determined by a rather small and elitist group of the #NiUnaMenos counterpublic.

With this in mind, it is not easy to tell whether #NiUnaMenosBolivia can be called a “subaltern” counterpublic or not. On the one hand, we conceptualize “subaltern” classes as groups of people of the society who suffer under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the rights to participate as active individuals, which are excluded from society's institutions and cannot raise their voice to speak out for their interests (Salime 2016, 5). This, however, does not seem to apply to the women who I
interviewed, and whom I supported in the events of the movement. All of them seemed to stem from middle-class and educated socio-economic backgrounds.

On the other hand, my interviews (11-3) showed that the organizational team motivated women from rural areas and indigenous roots to participate. Moreover, even #NiUnaMenos profile photo holds the typically dressed indigenous women. The many women who I could identify as indigenous through their clothing or of rather higher age groups, indicate that the women who participated might have partly indeed belong to a “subaltern” societal milieu. Considering my limited ethnographic insight, I cannot conclude with a definite answer about the subalternity of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic. However, it allows me to acknowledge that academic, middle class and urban women seemed to have held a hegemonic power position within the movement.

5.3. #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s construction of a chain of equivalence of collective identity

From the onset, #NiUnaMenosBolivia develops their claims out of a "counter" attitude against the responsible actors for femicidal violence. Just paying attention to the movements name #NiUnaMenos, we can see that the attention is drawn to those women who have been assassinated, whom the world misses. The counterpublic finds its motivation for action in their tragedies. The "Not one woman less" statement fights for the end of femicidal violence, but it does so by stressing and exemplifying some of its most brutal cases. We can observe this on the march on #25N: The front row was composed of mothers, fathers, and siblings of women who have been assassinated through a femicide (Picture 11, 50P, 13P). In the relatives' hands: pictures drawn of mistreated body parts (50P). At the end of the protest, long, emotional, and moving stories about the victims were told by the relatives in front of the present crowd (88-91P).

During the protest march #N25 in La Paz, we can find numerous cases, in which #NiUnaMenosBolivia expresses very clearly how counter this attitude is, using many words and expressions of denial such as “No more”, “Against” or “Stop”. For example, the most printed posters, which have been handed in to the
protesters were labeled with “Basta de la Violencia Contra Las Mujeres” – “Enough of the Violence Against Women” (17P). Also, the protocols of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s commission meetings are being flooded by sentences like “El machismo mata”, (engl. machismo kills) (G2).

Almost every longer extended text I analyzed from their Facebook-communication, but especially the political positioning papers start off with information such as “Every three hours, a woman dies at the hands of her partner or ex-partner. In the first nine months of 2016, the femicides rates are hovering around 70. Between 2013 and 2016, the reports on violence against women go beyond 120.000 and this number is increasing...” (Bold in the citation, G7). Despite the other disagreements Pan y Rosas had with the broader #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic (see Chronology of Events), also Pan y Rosas starts often with sentences like “We are being killed with total impunity, we are being killed every day, we are being killed, our fathers, brothers and friends” [masculine form of friend indicated through the ending -os] (1PR).

As already mentioned, Poletta and Jasper (2001) believe that for the construction of a collective identity, the individuals do not only start identifying cognitively or morally with a broader community, but also emotionally. Hence, I want to include my own emotional insights during the events to support my point.

On the march of the 25th of November, I tried to tune into the emotional processes that I went through during its unfolding. As the first people accumulated at the coordinated meeting spot, I felt entirely disconnected, like an observer, sometimes hidden behind my camera and clearly positioned as a researcher who was asking several questions to different people. On the onset of the march, I was rather concentrated on taking photos and registering the happenings. However, after around 20 minutes, I started shouting the paroles timidly with the crowd. After another 20 minutes, I was still taking photos and observing, but emotionally much more involved in the protest movement. I shouted more loudly and felt a strong sense of power, strength which emerged from the outrage expressed in the loud demands that the crowd, me included, addressed to the public. I felt even more confident in taking photos, getting closer to the protesters, as I did not perceive myself as an observer, or outsider anymore. Despite the indignation which is a clear motivating point for the march, there was also a powerful atmosphere, enhanced by some drumming bands, which accompanied the march and thereby boosted the happenings from emotional space of anger and indignation into a feeling of empowerment and determination. I would call it an empowering sense of collective outrage. From this internal reflection, I deduce a strong feeling of power, indignation, anger as being significant ways in which the movement bounds the participants to the larger activist community and feeling of a collective identity.

Just as the emotions that I registered throughout my ethnographic participation in #NiUnaMenosBolivia, also the discourses around needs constructs entailed a strong focus on the failures, which were caused by antagonists of the movement. For this reason, I cannot present the nodal points that lead up to #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s need interpretations without simultaneously depicting the surrounding moments of grievances that lead up to their demands.
I argue that the combination of nodal points consisting the “we” in contrast to the nodal points that constitute the “antagonistic others” are both constructing #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s collective identity. Thereby, #NiUnaMenosBolivia establishes an imagined antagonistic frontier that marks the chain of equivalence of the counterpublic’s “we” construct that culminates in the nodal points justice, freedom and dignity. The imagined frontier to the antagonistic other is delineated by the respective nodal points impunity, patriarchal heteronomy and irreverence. I speak about an imagined frontier as all of the articulations that are included in this thesis stem from #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s articulatory practices as I do not include datasets in my analysis that is produced by the antagonistic others themselves. This means that the antagonists themselves, and hence the moments connected to them are a product of the articulatory practice of #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

The main antagonistic actors constituting that #NiUnaMenosBolivia points out are summarized in a descending order of importance by first, the state, second, the society, third, the media, fourth, the capitalist economy, fifth, the church. I identify the articulated antagonists “the state” and “the society” as myths in Laclau’s (1990, 61) sense as they define a not clearly limited totality. I understand the particular grievances caused by the antagonistic actors and need interpretations that #NiUnaMenosBolivia formulates as demands towards these actors as moments in Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001, 105) sense. #NiUnaMenos’ need interpretations are communicated together with moments of “in-order-to” constructs (Fraser 1989, 1990b), which lead often in a circular way back to #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s nodal points of collective identity.

For the purpose of presenting these findings in the way that skews the data the least and enables us to conclude with a graphic overview of #"NiUnaMenosBolivia’s collective identity constituting discourse, I will structure my presentation according to the different discourses, hence practices that “establish a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Glasze 2007, 190). I display the four articulations that relate to first, femicidal violence, second symbolic violence against women, third, women’s situation in the capitalist economy and fourth, the legal situation of abortion.

**Discourse 1: Femicidal violence**

**Antagonist 1: the state – the most guilty and challenged antagonist**

To start with, "the state" ("el Estado") is very often expressed as a major actor responsible for the femicides without necessarily giving further arguments in the same breath. Hence, one might assume that a sort of totality related to the state is meant. This would mean that the counterpublic creates an oppositional "myth" (Laclau 1990,61) around this institution. Several examples might underpin this assumption: In response to a TV show, which themed the particular program as "#NiUnaMenos" and invited several deputies, the movement made a clear statement on its Facebook-Fanpage to distance themselves from the invited guest and reaffirm that "the movement #NiUnaMenosBolivia questions the state as the main guarantor of the rights and lives of his [female] citizens" (8FP). When distancing themselves from the state, the movement
also usually also stresses another central identification component: “#NiUnaMenosBolivia is a mass collective of citizens” (8FP). Another clear example of this can be illustrated when the Ombudsman David Alonso Tezanos who is in charge of addressing “the people's interests” and elected by the assembly (Defensoría de Pueblo, Europapress, April 2016), responded to the first mobilizations of #NiUnaMenos on October 2016 with the suggestion for the declaration of the State of National Alert. The movement highlighted in this course that they reject any ways in which "state-related protagonists try to instrumentalize the CITIZEN MOBILIZATION" (14FP, bold in original). Thereby, they motivated their followers to use the hashtag #MuchasGraciasPeroNoGracias (Thanks a lot but no thanks), criticizing that it is not enough to just declare a state of Alert without involving tangible actions to change something about this state. Putting these sometimes seemingly loose accusations towards the state into the context of later elaborations, it becomes clear that the movement offers solid arguments of what they are fighting about the state in particular. #NiUnaMenos' accuses the state and its actors of trying to instrumentalize their movement for the aims of their own branding and the call to the participants of #NiUnaMenosBolivia to express their repulsion of this attempt can also be interpreted as an indirect demand towards the state and their officials to keep themselves out of the movement, hence staying in the role of an antagonist instead of a conflicting partner within the counterpublic of #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

**Antagonistic moments of grievances 1: impunity and injustice considering the femicidal violence in Bolivia**

The more concrete and very dominant criticisms towards the state by the counterpublic refer to the impunity of cases of violence against women and hence, directed towards. These constitute the most central moments of the discourse about femicidal violence.

To give an understanding about the *moment of grievance that condemns the justice apparatus*, I will provide a short outline of some of the common problems using the material from my pre-study during my Master level classes on the legal situation provided by the lawyer and feminist Heidy Gil (September 2016). According to Gil, a woman who reports on domestic violence does not only have to get through a very long process which can take up to two years without any direct implications (although foreseen otherwise in law 348). She also goes through a process of giving statements. In the first instance, those are directed to policemen, who reflect often a very patriarchal viewpoint on domestic violence in their first consultations, asking for example about the ways in which the women may have provoked her husband. Same cases were also known by Gil about public prosecutors, who are in charge of the investigation on domestic violence. Moreover, as public prosecutors move often between different local areas, they also change the responsibilities for the different cases, which can implicate a prolonged process.

In general, many cases of femicidal violence have shown that prior attempts to report on domestic violence were made by many women, but however, as those processes were so strongly delayed, the juristic consequences came often too late (Gil, 2016). Those are the cases that the #NiUnaMenos counterpublic reports also, for example narrating the story of "Bertha" who was assassinated on the 17th of March 2017.
after having reported twice to public prosecutors, “searching for means of real protection, while those, on the contrary, condemned her for accusing someone without delivering valid proofs for the danger she claimed to be in” (1FP).

In this context, it is easier to understand many of the slogans, texts and emotions expressed during the offline-events and online-communication of #NiUnaMenosBolivia: “Si hay impunidad, hay complicidad” - “If there is impunity, there is complicity” is one of the slogans which most echoed within the offline and online communication of #NiUnaMenosBolivia (picture 12, 18FP, 68P, 85P) and the Pan y Rosas movement within it (2PR). To give a further example to the many accusations of #NiUnaMenosBolivia towards the Bolivian justice apparatus, I state the meme depicted on photo 12 (7FP): “As against the reigning impunity of an inefficient juristic system, the serious daily problems of access to justice on the part of the survivors and the relatives of the assassinated women in the course of femicidal violence, we say: Ni Una Menos! #NiUnaMenosBolivia”. Also the political manifesto of #NiUnaMenos Bolivia, exposes the responsible for many numbers of victims of femicidal violence in their introductory paragraph: “These numbers denounce the lack of the state's political will to ensure that the international conventions and the national norms such as the laws 243, 253 and 348 are upheld, which would require a sufficient budget [...]”.

Picture 12: "If there is impunity, there is complicity" #25N

Picture 13: Fanpage-post against the state's impunity
Also, various educational institutions, connected or disconnected from the state, are accused to not prepare the people who later will have to deal with women in situations of violence, so that no reproduction of violence, revictimization or similar takes place (I3, 51FP).

**Collective moments of needs 1: justice, transparency and meeting the Requirement of Laws**

#NiUnaMenosBolivia articulates a moment in the discourse around femicidal violence in form of the demand to fulfill the need for "effective justice" (53P) and particularly, first of all, justice for all of the women and relatives who are still waiting for their cases to proceed. As already mentioned, relatives of assassinated women lead the march demanding a just process for the perpetrators (11P, 12P, 13P, 87P, 29P, 31P, 44P).

In written texts of the #NUM counterpublic on Facebook, we can detect more concrete demands.

A document uploaded in the group on the 3rd of November 2016 includes various points, which represents many of the claims articulated by #NUM in that respect (G8). The “concrete implementation” of laws, but especially of the law Nr. 348 (Integral Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence) (I1) and the decree 245 (see chapter 2.2.2) are expected. Further, it is suggested to “monitor the processes, support of the victims, to promote a public report as well as to impose sanctions on officials and departments which do not hold up to the laws” (FP13, G8).

Addressing the little transparency and registration of cases of femicides, the movement further urges more transparent public reports on cases, as well as a unified systematization of those to prevent perpetrators from different departments of the country being just registered in the area they committed a crime, so that no record will be found in another region when a woman denounces against him (I1, 13FP from 21st of November, backed up by Heidy Gil in September 2016).

Further suggestions are referred to the multidisciplinary preparation and training in the course of the educational curriculum of officials, psychologists, public prosecutors, judges, nurses, social workers and other persons who are in direct contact with women in situations of violence (G8, 53P), as well as constant updates for those who work in those areas, for the purpose of preventing “inhumane treatment and re-victimization” (50FP). Also, other procedures that prolong or inhibit legal processes, such as the mobility of public prosecutors should be reduced according to the statements of #NiUnaMenosBolvia (G8).

**Antagonist 2.a.: Society – Displanting the roots of femicidal violence**

Another actor, which has been clearly targeted by the #NiUnaMenos counterpublic as an antagonist is represented by “the society”, and in particular, the patriarchal society. So just
as in the case of condemning “the state”, “the society” is also often involved into slogans or writings of the movement (I3, G7, 38FP). “The machismo is a social construction which has been and continues to be naturalized by this capitalist society”, states Pan y Rosas in one of their articles where they argue participants of #NiUnaMenos to join their mobilization during march #25N (4PR). This opinion is also shared by the wider #NUM movement.

**Antagonistic moments of grievances 2.a.: Patriarchal family and masculinity concepts - cultural patrons and “macho men”**

Two major complaints are spoken out towards this machista society. The first one may be subsumed under the category “cultural and social patrons” like Pamela mentioned in her interview (I3). I call the first way in which these patrons manifest the patriarchal imprint of the concept of romantic love which has been studied previously (Cubells, Albertín and Calsamiglia 2010, Cubells and Calsamigilia 2015). To give a better understanding of what can be meant by this, I will shortly elaborate on my general observations within the internal Facebook group of #NUM over a significant amount of time and in the course on gender-based violence in Bolivia. I understood the concept of the romantic love as being strongly present in feminist discourses of Bolivia addressing the confusion between love and attachment. This attachment is manifested through possessive, jealous and controlling partnerships, ideas such as the conquering a woman and other forms of patriarchal demonstrations of love which are very often seen in the typical Latin American Telenovelas. In #NiUnaMenosBolivia's case, this romantic love and its violent outcomes was condemned for instance by reaffirming: The “principe azul” does not exist which would be closest translated into English with “the dream prince” or “shining knight” (56P). In this realm, the “macho” man, as the main oppressor, is confronted and their violent attitudes are criticized: "Who loves does not kill, nor humiliate, nor maltreat" (Picture 14, 69P) or “Love does not kill” (14P). A posting for the women's day includes a meme which says “This 8th of March, do not congratulate us, we are perfectly content if you just stop insulting, harassing, raping or killing us...We’ve had enough“, expressing the anger against the violence which women live on a daily basis as a consequence of macho's behavior (31FP).
Collective moments of needs 2.a.: *Shifts in family and masculinity concepts*

**Picture 15: You weren't born jealous, you were not born violent, you were not born unfaithful #25N**

As a consequence of this condemnation, the society is asked to change its beliefs, starting off in different educational realms because it is seen as the root cause for patriarchal concepts of femininity and masculinity (I3). For instance, on picture 15, we can read “One should stop raising ignorant princesses and violent machitos”.

Moreover, direct demands towards men were articulated in order to make them rethink their concept of masculinity as we can see on picture 16 (77P) on which a man carries a poster that says “You were not born jealous, you were not born violent, you were not born unfaithful”. Another poster, also held by a man states: “Brave men? They dare to question their privileges, wiping out the machismo in their lives” (37P). “Your hits do not demonstrate your strength”.


Antagonistic moments of grievances 2.b.: *Indifference and Ignorance in the face of violence*

Indifference, or as #NiUnaMenosBolivia often calls it “ignorance” is the second major offense directed towards society (14P). The failure to do so is attributed to a violent act itself, projecting the guilt onto the silent observer of violence. “Ignoring is also Violating” (78P, picture 17).

**Collective moments of needs 2.b.: Breaking the silence**

In this context, the loudest shouts of the march at the 25th of November demand for breaking the silence, and to "stop waiting and unite to the fight" of #NiUnaMenos (55P) by denouncing cases of violence against women (57P). "Señor, señora, no sea indiferente, se mata las mujeres en la cara de la
gent" in English, about: "Sir, Madam don't be indifferent, women are being killed in front of the people's eyes" and many posters and banners entailed messages like "Sorry to bother, we are being assassinated" (18FP) or "Basta, let's open our eyes" (36P).

Discourse 2: Symbolic violence against women

**Antagonist 3: Media – symbolic violence as the mother of violence (Post-march, January 2017)**

Even if I registered some statements about the media's role as a contributor to violence against women, this happened to a fairly small degree. However, it must be noted that especially post-march, the media was also expressed as being an institution that fuels gender-based violence against women as it often analyses women’s struggles for a violence-free life.

Accusation – of sensationalist violation of women’s struggles against gender-based violence

"For me, symbolic violence is the mother of violence […] There is a symbolic substratum which performs and maintains – maltreating, objectifying, reproducing the patriarchal system", explains Pamela. For this reason, to Pamela, the struggle in the spheres of digital and traditional media is also a key aspect (I3). In the aftermath, the #NiUnaMenos movement informed about two actions against symbolic violence, which has been probably also put forward by Pamela (one could tell as she was the author of most of the postings around the activities on the Facebook-Fanpage): on the 20th of December 2016 a denounce had been submitted towards the newspaper "eldeber.bo" from La Paz as it published caricatures which "violate heavily the integrity of women who survived gender-based violence, victims of femicides and persons with diverse and generic sexual identities" (19FP). Thereby, Pamela reported privately, and other seven persons of the counterpublic sent in their personal denounces simultaneously (20FP). A similar action, this time a petition on symbolic violence via Facebook was published by the counterpublic on the 14th of January 2017 (20FP). This, however, seems to be seen not necessarily as an expression of mass-based activism, but rather as a strongly academically educated request of the few persons who participated in the movement as central administrative figures. Even the relatively sophisticated language used in the postings as well as in Pamela elaborations underpins this point.

**Collective moments of needs 3: – Ensuring respectful media coverage**

The main need of #NiUnaMenosBolivia expressed towards the media is the "adequate treatment of cases which involve gender-based violence such as the avoidance of misogynist stereotypes" (G8) or sensation seeking displays of violence that go against the victim's dignity (I1). Therefore, the counterpublic demand more elaborated institutions, which are responsible for sanctioning offline and online media that break these norms through using #ViolenciaSimbolica (symbolic violence) (20FP).

Discourse 3: Women's situation in the Bolivian capitalist economy

**Antagonist 4: Capitalist Economy**
A final discourse is constructed around the capitalist economy and economic system in general in the course of the women's strike of the 8th of March, but also in minor occasions in pre-march statements of the self-declared “socialist and capitalist” Pan y Rosas.

Antagonistic moments of grievances 4: – underestimation of women's labor

A final discourse is constructed around the capitalist economy and economic system in general in the course of the women's strike of the 8th of March, but also in minor occasions in pre-march statements of the self-declared “socialist and capitalist” Pan y Rosas. “Machismo is a social construct which has been and keeps being naturalized in this capitalist society”, stated the Bolivian organization Pan y Rosas (4PR) already before the marches during #25N. On the Facebook-Fanpage of #NiUnaMenos, the counterpublic justifies their call for the intentional strike with the following accusations of the wider capitalist and labour system: “On the #8ofMarch we WOMEN strike *because the capitalist, patriarchal system considers that our lives are not worthy *because the violent men keep on working in their companies *because we need to isolate ourselves in order to ‘protect ourselves’: leaving our occupations, our homes, our lives, *because our salary is at least 20% less than of men even if we are more qualified and we have the same position” (29FP). In more general terms, we can identity the main critique of #NiUnaMenos as being directed towards the underestimation of their labor.

By labor, the counterpublic does not only mean formal employment, but considers also the “situation of women in the Bolivian economy and their excessive presence in Bolivian informal economy which is not recognized while 80% of the Bolivian economy is informal and women majority in it.” (I2). Moreover, “the work which we implement in our [women's] homes” is also not recognised. In the #25N march, I could also detect a protester holding up the banner “taking care of the wawa [baby in aimara], cooking three dishes, cleaning, working, standing you and YOU are the strong one. Sure...” (picture 17, 14P).
Collective moments of needs: recognition of women's labor

Although not explicitly found word-to-word in the discourse around society's and economy's view on women, we can deduce of the above-elaborated accusations that the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic calls for recognition of their formal, informal and domestic work.

Discourse 4: The Legal situation of abortion

A further topic which can be stated to underline the state's position as “the others” and thereby, a constituent of the collective identity of #NiUnaMenos can be seen in post-march discussions about the legalization of abortions. It should be noted that the feminist group Pan y Rosas already elaborated their opinion on this topic in pre-march discussions (2PR, October 2016).

Antagonistic moments of grievances: patriarchal heteronomy over women's bodies

A variety of antagonists comes into play, although the focus lies on the state and religious institutions. For instance, as a response to a deputy's suggestion to hold a referendum on the change of the law, #NiUnaMenos stated at their Facebook-page that they reject any ways in which women's rights are being negotiated by the state or the wide citizenship giving their vote (33P). In the aftermath, the penal law 154 was launched in May 2017 including minimal changes but remaining the right to abort only to women in physical risk because of their pregnancy, victims of rapes, or under strongly disabled conditions of the fetus (Paginasiete.bo, May 2017). As a response, the collective condemns “the state's paternalism to control over our [women's] bodies being in charge of giving permission and only some women to execute their right for abortion” (36FP). In this context, also religious institutions are starkly criticized for “infiltrating their cleric fundamentalist dogmas into the state's public health debates”(36FP). To underpin their arguments, #NiUnaMenosBolivia as well as the affiliated feminists of Pan y Rosas use data testifying that “the penalization leads to more than 480 deaths of women caused by illegal and unsafe abortions”, whereby “while the rich women can effort to pay for an abortion under good conditions in a private hospital, the poor ones keep dying (1PR, 2PR). The posting at picture 19, which has been posted in the context of the women's strike, illustrates very well the arguments #NiUnaMenos offers to condemn the penal law of abortions: “#WeStrike because... we miss many [women] of us who have been victims of clandestine abortions”. The accompanying text says: “Does it make you angry that one women is assassinated each three days in Bolivia? What if you knew that more women die as victims of illegal abortions?”. With this statement, #NiUnaMenos aims at compelling its followers to see the violence against women through the illegal state of abortions with femicidal violence. This gives us already a hint about the fact that the Facebook-Fanpage's administrators might hold a stronger feminist belief (see chapter 5.1. Chronology of the events), are conscious about the fact that it is less appealing to the wider #NiUnaMenosBolivia public to join their battle for legal abortion in comparison with the fight against femicides as it touches upon the conflicting cultural and social imprint of the catholic church in the region (Molyneux, 2003, 269). As a result, they try to use persuasive rhetorical tools appealing applying reason and supporting facts in their discourse around the legalization of abortion (Lawsen-Tancret 1991).
Collective moments of needs: unconditional legalization of free abortion

As a consequence of #NiUnaMenos discourses on the legalization of abortions, the counterpublic demands the safe, “free and legal” abortion (2PR) for every Bolivian woman, “without any discrimination or condition, except for, if the abortion is forced or in any way against the will of the women” (37FP). This means that abortions have to become decriminalized through its abolishment of abortions from the penal laws. Further, it is demanded to expand measures of sexual education and free contraception “for deciding and not dying! (29FP). The demands towards the three antagonistic discourses in around the signifier “abortion” can be summed up using picture 20 (34FP): “The woman decides, the society respects, the state guarantees, the church does NOT intervene”.

The woman decides, the society respects, the state guarantees and the church does NOT intervene.

Picture 20: The woman decides, the society respects, the state guarantees and the church does NOT intervene

Nodal points of the “We” through In-order-to constructs

Picture 21: We want us alive #25N
The different moments of interpretations of needs, which have been demanded of the #NiUnaMenos counterpublic, were supported by chains of 'in-order-to' moments (Fraser 1989, 171), which disseminated their ideas to the public observing the offline events, as well as through the counterpublic's Faceook-accounts. Through the elaboration of in-order-to relations that justified priory developed need interpretations on femicidal and symbolic violence against women, the economic recognition of women's labor, as well as the legal situations of abortion in Bolivia, I can deduce nodal points of the collective “we”, and hence also of the antagonistic “Others”.

The discourses around femicidal violence and especially the demands/ or needs resulting in those are justified in different “in-order-to” (Fraser 1989, 171) relations. The first, and most frequent type of arguments underlying the accusation and need talks of #NiUnaMenosBolivia have the characteristics of what we would call in western discourses “human rights”, particularly, rights which enable women to lead a life worth living and in “dignity” (1PR, 26P). A basic precondition for doing so, is to stay alive. This is expressed through the widely used slogan “Vivas nos queremos” (we want us alive) (see for example picture 21). “I was not born as a woman to die because of it” (G2) makes the relationship between activism and its justification clear. A further central justification to protest is in-order-to be free which is often loosely expressed in form of slogans, posters or hashtags (G2, 21FP, 32P, 83P). I perceive the demand of being able to “go out without being afraid” (12FP), not wanting to “be afraid of dying because of your machismo” (picture 22, 33P) or to “dress like we want” without being harassed (12FP, G2) as part of the claim in-order-to lead a life “free of violence” (26P).
The second type of “in-order-to” construct which justifies the struggle against femicidal violence tells us more concretely about the concept of women chosen to support the counterpublic’s claims. It connects the threat for women to being killed the fact that it could hit anyone of the wider public's families: “And if it was your mother? If it was your sister? If it was your daughter?” (51FP) displays a poster held by a protester on the #25N. “For me, for you, for my mother, for yours, for your sister, for your cousin, for your neighbor, for your daughter, for my neighbor, for your best girlfriend, for my nieces, FOR EVERY WOMEN!!!” pronounces a posting (16FP). In these statements I assume that the women's role as an integral part of a community play out, which as we have seen in our elaborations on women's movements in Latin America played a much more important role throughout the history of Latin American women's movements in comparison to North American or European ones (Molyneux 2003, 269). Another poster on the #25N expresses “If my life is not worthy, reproduce without me!” . This is another expression which emphasizes women's role as a mother. Hence, we can find also “in-order-to” relations which embed the protest march into a motherhood frame (Femenías 2009, 47).
Resulting from the need interpretations towards the society and its machista cultural patrons, we can identify a further implicit in-order-to relation: The possibility to live in more fulfilling partnerships, in equality between men and women. This crystallized for instance in the above-mentioned (80) citation on the possibility for men to permit themselves to take a significant part in raising their children (12FP). The claims for equality could be also identified in various occasions, as for example on picture 23 (70P).

As we have seen in prior elaborations, the justification for the demands for more monitoring and sanctioning processes of the media are justified with the women's as well as victim's right to be respected in their dignity and struggles (G8, 20FP).

In the context of the discussion around women's position in the Bolivian market economy, in-order-to constructs were offered which ranged from very general statements such as “If we women strike, the world stands still” (27FP). Another, rather posting pointing in the same directions shows a video of empty streets, markets and kitchens to show what would happen if the women stopped working (30FP). In sum, the
message articulated is that women's labor is indispensable in-order-to make the Bolivian market economy, if not “the world” (27FP) keep on functioning.

The discourse on the legalization of abortion is further linked to the moment that argues for a woman's need to exercise their right for self-determination over their bodies (37FP), their sexual and reproductive rights (36FP). Thereby women's autonomy and self-realization in the decision to when and if become or not become mothers is central (36FP). The statement “Biology is not destiny. Woman is not a synonym of mother.” (Picture 23) stands thereby in contrast to the in-order-to constructs of the women justifying their march on the #25N with traditional family and motherhood roles.

Reflection on timely development of #NiUnaMenosBolivia's discourse

Considering the differences between the discourses pre-march and post-march, it is strongly notable that the grievances and claims treated post-march do not appeal to the most extreme form of gender-based violence: femicides, the “misogynist killing of women” (Davies 1994, 208). Instead, topics which are situated in a rather sophisticated feminist discussions are treated, namely the notion of “symbolic violence” which emerged in the course of the second wave feminism (Morgan 2006, 442; Hester, Kelly and Radford 1996); the right to have an abortion, a topic which was discussed for instance in one of the first “Encuentros” in Bogota in 1981 under the slogan “every child a wanted child” (Sternbach et al. 1992, 408) or the claims for equal pay, which roots in first wave feminist demands (Carrasco 2006, 1). This shows attempts of a development towards a rather concise feminist agenda by #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

5.4. Contestation of wider societal hegemony

Using Antonio Gramsci's notion of “hegemony” as the discursive term of power (Fraser 1997b, 381) and building upon my previous findings, I will describe how the counterpublic contests dominant power structures of the patriarchic discourses in Bolivia.

As Fraser has elaborated, the struggle over need interpretations of feminist movements is a struggle against male-dominated capitalist societies. It tries to challenge the categorization of some needs as “domestic” or “personal” which serve dominant groups to justify their oppressive actions as insignificant to public debates. With the aim of making them enter the realm of “the social” and finally the realm of “the political”, subordinated groups articulate their need interpretations in diverse publics (Fraser 1989, 168).

Also the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic managed to raise visibility for a phenomenon that “was not addressed in the last years” despite of its dramatic extent: “the many and brutal cases of violence against...
women, which in always more tragic levels affected millions of women all around the world and especially in Latin America” (4 PR). It thereby tries to “slap the society and government which are impassible regarding the situation” (I2). To Violetta, they managed to do so: “We succeeded in setting the topic on the public agenda, the media and also a little bit on the political”.

The previous sections demonstrate how #NiUnaMenosBolivia attempted to politicize discourses on needs of women in Bolivia, accusing responsible actors, demanding change and justifying them with in-order-to constructs. When it comes to the legal situation of femicidal violence, which is not enacted optimally in the justice system, we have seen that legislative measures already acknowledged the need of women to be freed from violence. However, just as Fraser explained specialized and bureaucratic publics turned those claims into “individual 'cases' rather than members of social groups” (Fraser 1989, 174). As a consequence, the counterpublic struggles through their protest activities with a reconsideration of those bureaucratic measurements, which include the critiques of the victims of relatives who suffered from those “expert” need talks (Fraser 1989, 173).

Other than that, the struggles of #NUM's counterpublic are bringing topics into public discourse, which did not, or just to a little extent, entered “the social” (Arendt 1958, 22-78) or “the political” realm (Fraser 1989, 168). In particular, the counterpublic addressed topics such as partnerships or family which may be rather attributed to “the personal” sphere in front of the wider public. Further, what would be attributed to “the economic” realm when talking about women's domestic, informal and formal labor is also raised into the public discussions asking for political and social recognition and redistribution (Fraser 2003). While the media's contents have usually been very little treated by political institutions as the claims of the Bolivian #NUM state, the counterpublic also demands new monitoring and sanctioning systems in order to politicize what has been usually delegated within the media scene. And lastly, #NiUnaMenosBolivia criticized the interference of belief systems, which stem from religious and societal institutions into the realm of reproductive rights of women. Thereby they aim at putting this need discourse from the religious or cultural talks into political talks.

My observations during the time after the march showed that the counterpublic managed partly to be heard by the public and media after their marches on the 25th of November. The expressed needs on femicidal violence seem to have entered at least the realm of “the social”. However, to which extent these “runaway needs” (Fraser 1989, 169) may proceed to further concrete politicized realms remains still to be seen.
6. Conclusion and discussion

The striking amount of people mobilized by #NiUnaMenos' counterpublics all over the Latin American continent for fighting gender-based violence highlights the need to investigate the matter. The Bolivian branch of the movement was selected and analysed through as many angles as the scope of this thesis allowed. The broader aim of this thesis was to contribute an area of research which is still starkly underexplored despite its many empirical forms of expression: contemporary Latin American women's movement. A further interest was to establish a way, in which one may conduct a research that allows a multidimensional exploration of a feminist movement within a highly diverse political, ethnic and social space. This was achieved by answering the following questions:

RQ1: Which identity constructs within the counterpublic space of #NiUnaMenosBolivia can be detected?

RQ1.1: Which internal agonistic discourses can be identified within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic among different subject positions?

RQ1.2: To what extent do internal hegemonic interventions influence #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic?

RQ2: How does #NiUnaMenosBolivia create a discourse that allows for the construction of a collective identity?

RQ2.1: What are the articulated nodal points of the “we” in contrast to the antagonistic “others”?

RQ2.2: Which oppositional need discourses and surrounding “in-order-to” moments does #NiUnaMenosBolivia express against the antagonistic need discourses?

RQ2.3: To what extent is a societal hegemony contested by #NiUnaMenosBolivia?

My theoretical and analytical framework combines Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory with Nancy Fraser's understanding of counterpublics and their struggle to articulate oppositional need discourses against dominant groups of society (Fraser 1990, 67; 2003). In a next step, these theories were translated into a comprehensive toolkit based on discourse theory that I applied for the investigation of #NiUnaMenosBolivia.

In my pursuit to answer the first research question and its sub-questions, I identified five agonistic discourses, which struggled over the fixation of meanings of the following floating signifiers: firstly, the language used, secondly, the feminist positioning, thirdly, the people to be included in the constitution, fourthly, the territorial identity and finally, the attitude towards the government under MAS of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. The findings identified that the main conflicts between identity constructs address ethnic, socioeconomic and territorial dimensions. The organizational group of the counterpublic promote language, content or conditions for meetings that represent a set subject positions within the discursive
field that are rather bohemian, academic, party-politically neutral and middle-class oriented. In contrast, other groups within #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic contest the academic and supposedly European feminist positions. These actors demand stronger hands-on information and support of women and relatives affected by gender-based violence as well as an autonomous stance that stands against the current government. This sheds a critical light into the internal hegemonic relations of the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic. This thesis suggests that #NiUnaMenos should not be called a subaltern counterpublic as the ones who hold the informal power positions are de facto not people without a voice in institutions and wider realms of society, but rather, figuratively speaking, “a discriminated minority on the university campus” (De Kock 1992, 33; Salime 2016, 5).

The findings on internal diversities with regards to identity resonate with various historically rooted conflict lines in the region. Particularly, the struggle of decolonial feminists against second wave Western, middle-class-dominated perspectives resonates with #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s counterpublic (Enszer 2007, 20; Anzaldua 1999, 22). For instance, the fact that the Spanish origin and two of the initiators of the group are criticized can be seen in the light of decolonial viewpoints (Ichado and Ochy 2009, Femenías 2007; Lugones 1999; Rivera Cusicanqui 1996; Rivera Cusicanqui and Barragán 1997; Barrig 2001). Also, the particularly critical stance of some self-declared “autonomous” feminist groups against NGOs’ participation in the counterpublic can be situated within a wider decolonial feminist branch that fights the “gender technocracy” promoted by an “elite of professional women associated with NGOs” (Monasterios 2001, 33-34). The ways in which the political polarization influences #NiUnaMenosBolivia, reinforces the assumption of chapter 2.2.2. stating that any political pursuit seems to be overarched and subordinated in the face of the wider struggle between MAS-supporters and enemies (Booth 2016, Layme 2017).

I see the cleavages of identities within #NiUnaMenosBolivia as a challenge that may have weakened the collective strength of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. This assumption relates to a study of Isak Svensson and Mathilda Lindgren who identified that the success of non-violent movements is less likely when “the identity of the insurgents and the government is split along ethnic lines” as well as when “society is highly polarized along ethnic lines rather than being ethnically homogenous” (Svensson and Lindgren 2011, 97).

Although the internal agonistic discourses challenge the development of a collective identity, I could also depict other discourses that create a collective identity in the pursuit of answering the second main research question and its sub-questions. Collective outrage, frustration and grief set the emotional onset for the counterpublic, which translates into a sense of “we” in contrast to an antagonistic “Others”. The nodal points of the collective we around justice, freedom and dignity stand in opposition to the antagonistic “Other”, which is mostly represented by “the state” and “society” as well as other minor antagonistic actors such as “the church”, “the media” or “the economy”. Since those actors are often not explicitly elaborated but depicted as a totality, I called them “myths” in Laclau’s sense (Laclau 1990, 61). The discourses that
elaborate the antagonistic status of the listed actors range all around the nodal points of Impunity, patriarchal heteronomy, and irreverence towards women in general and women in a situation of gender based violence specifically, Figure 2 serves as a graphic summary answering RQ2.1. and RQ2.2.

Figure 2: The construction of #NiUnaMenosBolivia's collective "We" through the antagonistic "Other"

Using Fraser's (1989, 161) work in “struggles over needs” question RQ2.3 of how #NiUnaMenosBolivia contests a societal hegemony has been addressed. I showed that the counterpublic fought two battles. The first fight is against the bureaucratic apparatus which translated the women's needs into “cases”, causing severe impunity and injustice concerning femicidal violence in Bolivia. The other fight is against powerful actors such as men, the media, the church and the economy that placed women's needs into the unpoliticized realms of “the personal”, “the mediatic”, “the belief” or “the economy”. Whether or not the mobilization managed to lift its need interpretations into the realms of “the political” or at least “the social” (Fraser 1989, 168) remains unanswered given the limited access to data that this thesis offers and scope it covers. The findings of this thesis, however, do open up the possibility to further investigations.
Taking the two levels of my study into account, we can see how #NiUnaMenosBolivia managed to put a highly relevant topic on the agenda: the problem around femicidal and gender-based violence against women. Choosing this tangible topic, the counterpublic could attract people to join the protest movement of the November 25, 2016 who might not consider themselves as feminists.

However, as in many other cases when a common overarching identity is suggested for the sake of the mobilization of masses, we could see that there is a clear cleavage between the represented identities and the ones who represent (Laclau 1993, 289 ff.). While gender-based violence concerns all women regardless of their ethnic, social and sociocultural background, mostly women with middle-class, academic and urban personal histories get to decide on the ways the topic is articulated to the wider public. Thus, the women who hold an identity within the intersection of various discriminatory identity positions of the discursive field such as non-white, rural, or less educated are not personified in the informal power holding positions of the counterpublic.

This study suggests several theoretical implications. I argue that a holistic understanding of a movement’s identity construction cuts short if it just focusses on discourses that articulate a collective identity like many theorists of New Social Movement Theory, such as Melucci’s (1995) or Poletta and Jasper’s (2001). Instead, detecting multiple moments that constitute the chain of equivalence of a movement’s collective “we” on the one hand, and revealing difficulties in the establishment of this chain of equivalence due to internal agonistic discourses on the other hand, is indispensable for a critical investigation of a contemporary feminist movement (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 106, Carpentier 2016, 176). Thereby, the examination of internal hegemonic interventions within this chain of equivalence allows us to see whether the contestation of a wider societal hegemony allows those supposedly “represented” by a movement to be personified in the pursuit of this struggle (1993, 289 ff.).

This thesis sheds a critical light on the use of Nancy Fraser’s (1989, 67) concept of “subaltern counterpublics”. Since subalternity expresses a societal position that crosses various discriminated identity axes, such as being indigenous, a women, poor, rural, etc., this thesis suggests to use the term of “subaltern” not previous to the empirical investigation of the subject positions within the counterpublic (Salime 2016, 8). Instead, whether a counterpublic can be described as subaltern or not, can be a result of a close look at the same.

The elaborated angles of this thesis allowed to depict the articulated identities of #NiUnaMenosBolivia. Thereby, it reached the initial aims: to develop a theoretical and analytical framework for the discourse theoretical analysis of a complex contemporary feminist movement as well as to contribute to the field of contemporary feminist movements of the Latin American region.

However, my research also entails various limitations that resonate with chapter 4.5. Firstly, my subject position as a white, European, middle-class researcher enabled me to access certain parts of the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic, but it might have also been an obstacle to acquiring insights into the movement that may have relativized my findings on a domination of middle-class, urban women in
#NiUnaMenosBolivia. Although I tried to balance this limitation with a rich empirical data-set, the fact that internal agonistic discourses could only be identified through direct ethnographic participation, might skew my findings related to RQ1. There may be many more agonistic discourses than the ones, which relate to the party-political and ethnic/class based cleavages. Thus, a research team compiled of Bolivian scholars should be used for data collection and analysis for future research on this matter.

A further limitation is due to the broad scope of my thesis, which did not allow to go in depth into several topics which might deserve further attention in future research: To mention just some of them, it would be interesting to delve into the question to which extent the feeling sorority among the #NiUnaMenosBolivia counterpublic is able to transcend the political polarization within the national borders of Bolivia. Moreover, further investigation should focus on impacts of the use of social media as a factor that may enable counterpublics such as #NiUnaMenosBolivia to withdraw into a safe space is created where time and space is flexible and no real life confrontations with anti-feminist positions limit a movement’s internal aspirations.

Taking another research angle, one may address the emotional dimensions that influence the construction of identities. Ethnographic insights from this thesis provided a glimpse to understand that collective anger was an important condition for the movement’s unfolding. Hence, an investigation that focuses less on the ratio within discourses but more on emotions (Jasper 1998), may help to complement this study.

Lastly, an analysis of symbolical and performed identity constructs should be incorporated, for example with the use of Judith Butler’s (1990) concept of performativity or Goffman’s (1956, 1) notion of “presentation of the self” to further understand the identities of a contemporary feminist movement. In my study, I could observe that there might have been several more possible agonistic or at least diverse identity components represented by the #NiUnaMenosBolivia protestors during the main march. In particular, differences could be observed in symbolical representations in forms of clothing, but more subtle ones like people holding self-drawn posters (as for example the leading row of relatives and family of victims of gender based violence) in contrast to printed posters.

Assuming that this study was a “complete” discourse theoretical analysis may be too ambitious, since it would take years just to analyze all historical, semantic, syntactic, political etc. meanings of one of #NiUnaMenosBolivia’s documents. However, the findings of this study may show a way in which a critical and multidimensional discourse theoretical analysis of the underexplored academic field Latin American feminism can be investigated.
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