



# Security, Citizenship and Masculinity

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# Presentation Outline



01	02	03	04
Hyun reading	Gills reading	Points of Contention	Similarities between reading

# **Building a Human Border: The Thai Border Patrol Police School Project in the Post-Cold War Era**



Sinae Hyun (2014)



# Thailand Border Patrol Police

- Formed as US CIA paramilitary intelligence force (USOM) in 1950s
- BPP formed in 1960s to fight the spread of communism in Southeast Asia
- BPP became became a civic action agency supported by US Agency for International Development and Thai Monarchy
- Contribute to building a border of “Thainess”



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## **Establishing rapport with ethnic minorities**

- Engaged in civic action projects
- Built and operated over 200 schools
- Construct offices for civilian administrations
- Established rural medical aid station
- Gave farmers agricultural assistance
- Built small airstrips

# Border Patrol Police Heritage Teachers Program

- Launched with the support of the Thai Princess
- Recruited “heritage teachers”
- Applicants of the BPP schools were trained to become teachers of the borderland ethnic minority groups

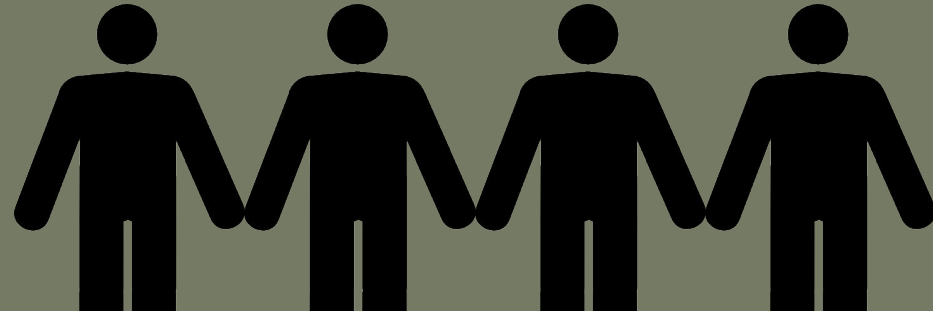


# The Human Border

- Ethnic minorities must identify themselves with the Thai nation
- Schools taught Thai language, introduced Thai modernity and spread Thai propaganda of development imperatives

## WHY?

1. Ethnic minorities threatened border security
2. Ethnic minorities' oblivious nature towards existence of Thai nation-building efforts
3. Spread state surveillance



# Construction of National Identity

Ethnicity vs Nationality





- Set up schools to spread the language of the state → centralise the state
- Told of the benefits of adopting the Thai national identity

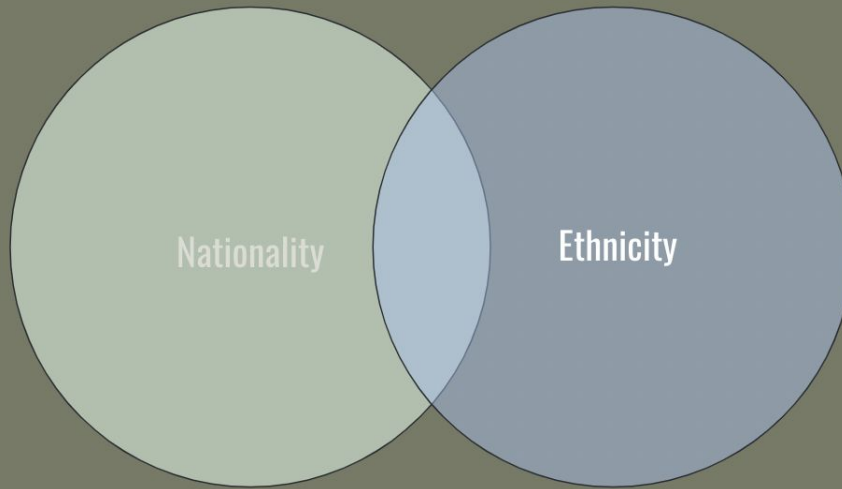
group “in order to acquire the status that comes with membership of the dominant group” (Toyota 2005, p. 134).

Nevertheless, ethnic-minority villagers in Northern Thailand have also become gradually aware of the necessity to defend their ethnic

- Ethnic minorities believed they became true Thai citizens after being granted citizenship

# The Thai Agenda

- State's need to manipulate identities for political reasons
- Reserves access to opportunities and privileges



# The Thai Agenda

Ethnic-minority villagers now know that they are governed by the Thai government. They are willing to send their children to Thai schools so that they can enjoy better opportunities for employment or pursue higher education, like the BPP heritage teachers (Mukdawan 2007, pp. 12–13). Several recent ethnographical accounts similarly make



(p. 350)

# Integration

Actors involved:  
State VS Ethnic Minorities



# The State

- Building a modern nation-state
- Strengthening surveillance systems and controlling the highland minorities
- Prevent threats to national security

changes to Thailand's borders.<sup>8</sup> Thus, building an integrated and independent nation-state became a survival strategy for Thailand against the historical backdrop of the intensifying Cold War in the region.

# The State

“Forming a consolidated and independent nation-state that could effectively repel both communist and superpower interventions” (Hyun p. 342)

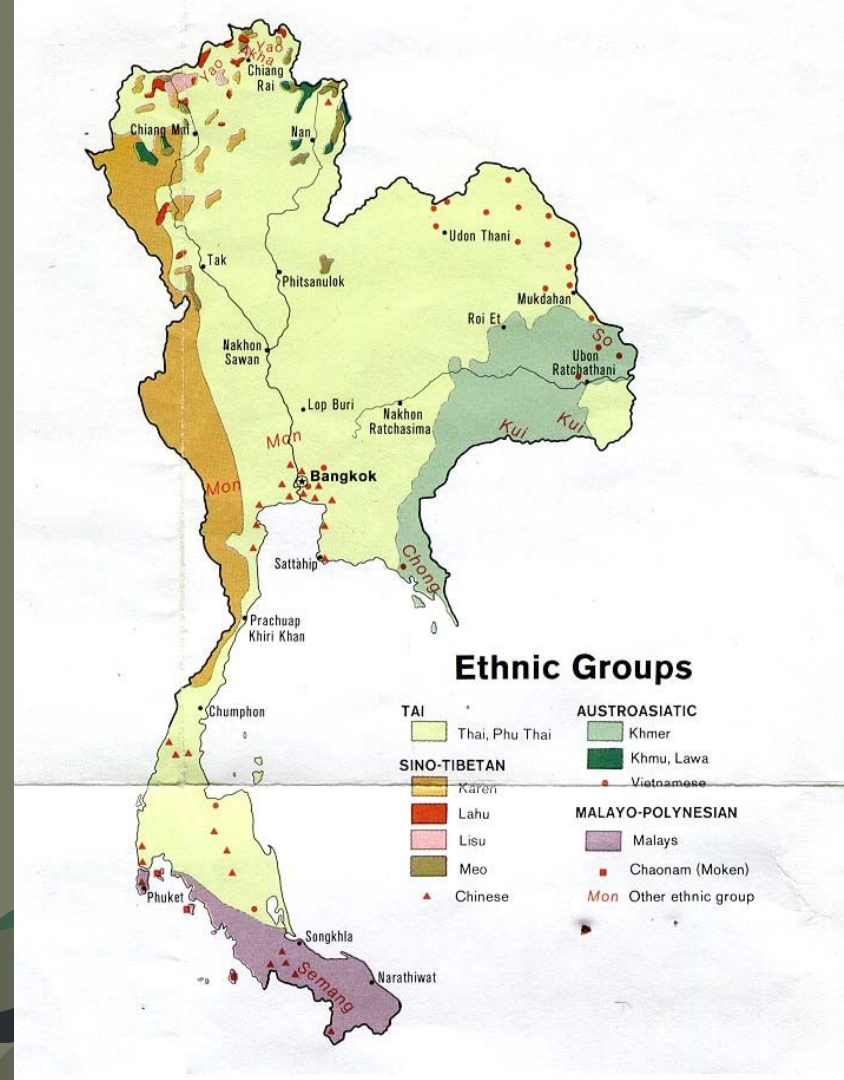
Measures for building a sense of belonging, including:

- Building rapport and trust
- Proficiency of Thai language
- Civic action - modernise communities

Ultimately, worked to increase education and modernity of the villages to sustain the national security on the frontiers of Thailand.

# Ethnic Minorities

- Isolation from mainland Thais
- Unaware of weak territorial boundaries
- Introduction of BPP schools
  - Education
  - Resources
  - Better living accommodations
  - Better future



# How effective is the integration process?

Points of contentions







# Along Ethnic Lines

- Awareness of hierarchy of ethnicities
- “...placing ethnic minorities at the bottom of a vertical order” (Hyun p344)

# The case of Heritage Teachers

- Assigned to the schools within the same ethnic group after the “Border Patrol Police Heritage Teachers’ Program”
- Highlighted the hierarchy between heritage teachers and BPP teachers
- Thai Accents - an indicator of their ethnic differences
- Uneven inclusion - dichotomy between lowland Thai and upland jungle people

Similarly, Mika Toyota contends that the process of creating Thainess constructed a dichotomy of lowland Thai (*mueang*) and upland jungle (*pa*) people that eventually “justified Bangkok officials in looking down on ‘non-Thai others’” (Toyota 2005, p. 115). Interestingly

# Defending Ethnic Minority Identities

- Heritage teachers' willingness to send their children to BPP schools
- Compared to the upkeep of their language and traditions

Emergence of tension between integration through citizenship  
VS Ethnicity

- Alienation of Thai ethnic minorities
- Eventual disintegration



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# Limitations of the study

- No explicit discussion of ethnic minorities perspectives and views with regards to being policed
- Observations of larger trends and patterns
- Possible exclusion of other more implicit views of the highland minorities and their sentiments towards the BPP

# Creating Citizens, Making Men: The Military and Masculinity in Bolivia



Lesley Gill (1997)



# The Bolivian Military

- Masculinity as a tool to create a sense of unity amongst a culturally diverse group
- Conscripts tend to come from the most powerless sectors of society
  - Embody subaltern masculinity
    - Oppression of the subaltern is crucial to the self-definition of the majority group
    - Power to subvert hegemonic authority
  - Seen as “internal enemies”
    - Chaco War: arming Indians seen as a national danger by landlords n rural elites
    - Concerns that Indians would use their military training against white landowners





# Historical foundations:

How militarism, masculinity, and citizenship became conjoined



*Bolivian troop inspection during the Chaco War*

## Chaco War (1932-1935)

- Very little sense of national identity
- Most troops quickly perished or deserted
- Draft evasion was extremely common
- Volunteer Indian troops → New sense of national identity among Indian war veterans

## U.S. military aid during the Cold War (60s-70s)

- Reconstitution of Bolivian armed forces
- A tool for constructing a homogeneous national community loyal to the ruling party
- "Civilizing" the male masses

# Bolivian national identity

- National identity linked to a specific militarized conception of masculinity
- Military unites men from a diversity of groups
  - Integrates men from different parts of the country in the same barracks to break down strong regional sentiments
  - Bolivian male identity linked to militarism and patriotism rather than diverse regional and ethnic identities





# Moral regulation

- Controlling, isolated environment
  - Military as omnipotent and omniscient
  - Ties to broader society cut off and/or severely restricted
  - Strict regulation of every aspect of their lives
- Subordinate their individuality to the identity of the male military group
- Instills rigid conformity and compliance to military values
  - Values include aggressivity, camaraderie, discipline, autonomy, and obedience to authority



# Internalizing masculine ideology



- Brutalization of new recruits
  - abuse from commanding officers and *antiguos* (“old timers” who have entered the service six months earlier)
  - hints at cyclical nature of abuse
- conflict against perceived external threats
  - Bolivia vs Other
  - sense of national identity and pride as the nation's defenders

# Militarized unity

- creates a virtue out of suffering
  - links extreme suffering in the military with an exalted form of manhood
- creates a unified identity among men who have been through the same military experience
  - dissemination of ideology of male equality and bonding
  - soldiers are trained to only rely on themselves and each other

You learn how to survive in the barracks, because there is no help from your family. You only get help from yourself and those who live with you. It's a really beautiful experience, because **you are isolated with others [men] who become even more than your brothers because they share everything with you.** The guy who is beside you is more important than your own family.

pp. 534-535

# Hegemonic masculinity

- veneration of militarized masculinity entails the exclusion of other groups
  - no military experience = weak and incompetent
  - denies the legitimacy of other identities
    - debasement of women and homosexuals
- military service as a way to earn respect as:
  - defenders of the nation
  - strong, responsible male citizens

The person who goes to the barracks, especially from the highlands, suffers a lot during the year, but **those who do not serve never experience what corporal punishment is like and are more or less semi-men.** [People in my community] criticize the ones who serve nearby. They say that they've just been to the kitchen.

In the countryside, people think that you are a coward if you don't go to the barracks; that is, they think you're like a woman. The community pushes young men toward military service, and **[we] have to go in order not to be faggots.** It's a question of manliness.

The officials forced them to trot around the base carrying their [unloaded] guns, bricks, and old tires. They had to shout, **"I'm a woman, not a man."** One of them even fainted a couple of times and we [the troops] were ordered to throw water on them. If we did not obey, the officials would punish us. This is what happens to people for deserting. You just have to endure.

# Integration and Citizenship



# The Military

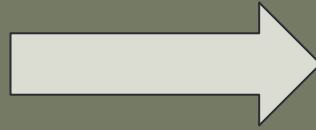
- Military and training seen as instilling the national ethos, civic consciousness and ideal Bolivian masculinity values
  - To “civilise” the male population, transform indigenous men into national citizens → develop nationalist sentiments at the local level
- An “omnipotent and omniscient” presence
  - Military as a ‘totalising’ project (Goffman, 1971)



# Military ↔ masculinity + citizenship



Obtaining the military  
booklet



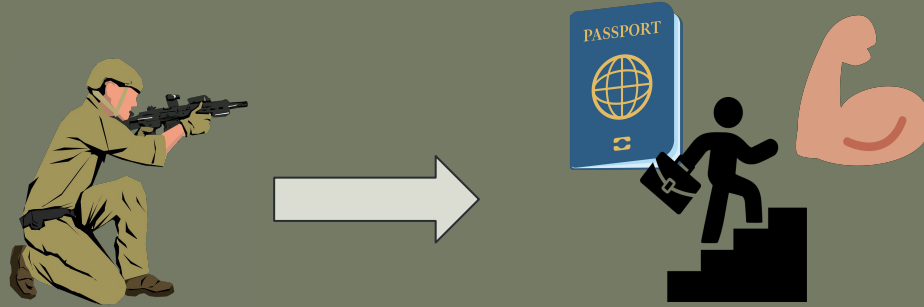
Symbol of manhood obtained

+

Full participation in Bolivian society:  
State transactions, getting a university degree  
or a job in urban society → upward mobility

Conscripts internalise ideas  
of the ideal masculinity  
demanded by the military

# Military ↔ masculinity + citizenship



Military as part of the “civilising process” where

**young men are symbolically incorporated into the nation and the capitalist discipline of the labor process. Furthermore, with the collusion of their command-**



# Making a citizen of themselves

## Perks of attending military

- An adventure; provides food and clothing; learn technical skillsets
- Military booklet gives them access to citizenship and mobility
- Rebrand themselves as “true men”, “grown adults”, “good Bolivian citizens”
  - Notions especially found in the subaltern communities
  - Family members give them more liberty

moved him to enlist. He remembers that after completing the obligatory year in the military, his father, who had always encouraged him to enlist, began to treat him very differently. “You’ve been to the barracks,” Francisco remembers his father saying. “Now you are a man and can do what you want with your life. You can marry or do anything that you please.” Like Francisco, other informants recount how their families prohibited them from consuming alcoholic beverages prior to military service and how this prohibition was invariably lifted upon their return home.

# Effectiveness of the Military and its Outcomes

How effective is the military experience in building men and citizens? Do these subaltern men actually reap the benefits from the military? What about their social relationships – how are they affected by the military?



# Reaping the benefits

- Aforementioned benefits
- Military enables their participation in the “male world of formal community politics” (p. 541)
  - Participate in important discussions and decision-making
  - Start a family
  - Take on leadership roles
- **Suffering, discipline**, but also the male **camaraderie** experience → valorises the male citizenship status gained
  - But this is of a *subordinate* form



# Hidden costs and drawbacks

- Subaltern men “never become true citizens after completing military and returning to civilian life” (p. 540)
  - Continue to be marginalised in society
  - No social mobility granted:
    - Remain unprepared for jobs / continue their low-wage jobs, not much jobs available in the urban economy
    - Remain “Indian” in the eyes of society, cannot escape the low status tied to their indigenous roots
  - Result: feeling disillusioned, military as a waste of time



# Hidden costs and drawbacks

peasants in civilian life understand who the army defends. I went to the barracks with a lot of expectations. I thought that afterwards I would easily get a job [in the city], and I thought that people in the city would respect me. But it wasn't that way. . Everything was false. It was then that I realized that the army just protects the bourgeoisie, but that was only after I got out.

(p. 541)

# Social relationships

Distances and **divides** the people

- Division created between male peers who have not/did not enter the army, as well as women
  - Military tales used to enhance their militarised identities
- Division within the subaltern community itself
  - Changing of Indian surname to a (dominant) Spanish one → unwanted ethnicity association → creates a **“categorisation of ‘aliens’ within the boundaries of the state”**



# Social relationships

- Class encounters
  - Previously: subaltern men display “deference, subordination and humility” (p. 542)  
→ puts them in a position of subordination

Subaltern men  
Impulsive, violent,  
weak



VS

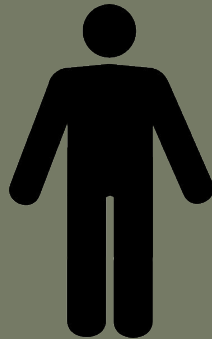


Upper-class men  
Dignified, controlled  
masculinity

# Social relationships

- Class encounters
  - Now: claim military service as their own, use it to gain respect and dignity from the upper-class men
    - **BUT** this is still scorned at by upper-class men who think attaining education is better than attending the military

Subaltern men  
Subscribes to state  
hegemonic  
masculinity values



vs



Upper-class men  
Dignified, controlled  
masculinity



# Women: Mothers and Wives

## Mothers against military

- Dilemma of sending their sons to the dangerous barracks VS depriving them of an opportunity to attain full male adulthood

## Mothers for military

- Military as a chance for upward mobility, attaining male citizenship status
- **BUT** sons not living up to expectations
  - Disillusion of military outcomes
  - Toxic masculinity → harming the family
    - Enact violence against mothers and wives

**Bolivian women are denied of any citizenship or empowerment – even of a subordinate form – in Bolivian society. This deepens the unequal gender relations: women are subjugated to the power and dominated of the men, with little to no room for resistance.**

# Conclusion

## Takeaways

- Militarism and security deeply intertwined with citizenship, masculinity and ethnicity
- Both Thailand and Bolivia's national security threatened by ethnic minority/indigenous groups → BPP Program/military enacted
- Negative implications faced by the minority/indigenous groups are overlooked in face of state agendas

being placed in a social category -

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do we see ethnicity and/or masculinity play a part in the construction of Singaporean identity?
  - a. How does this affect the integration of Singaporean citizens from marginalized ethnicity groups?
  - b. How does this affect the integration of Singaporean citizens who do not embody hegemonic ideals of masculinity?
    - i. For example, can we identify form(s) of subaltern masculinity embodied by men in the Singaporean military?
2. How would females in Singapore subscribe to frameworks of national identity if they do not attend compulsory military service?
3. How has state agendas contributed to the erasure of non-dominant cultures as a result of promoting homogenous forms of culture? (i.e. ramifications of consolidating a national community)