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

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In Bolivia, young male military conscripts come from the most powerless sectors of society: Quechua, Aymara, and Guarani peasant communities and poor urban neighborhoods. Like recruits from impoverished ethnic groups and working classes elsewhere (Gibson 1986; Zeitlin et al. 1973), they are the foot soldiers who risk death in warfare to a greater degree than members of dominant social groups and frequently suffer emotional abuse at the hands of commanding officers. Their rural communities, mining camps, and urban neighborhoods have also long experienced repression in the military's fight against "internal enemies." Why, then, are these young men frequently eager to serve? And why do many experience social pressure from friends, family members, and their communities to enlist?

There is no simple answer to these questions; the reasons are both straightforward and complex. On the one hand, military service is a legal obligation for all able-bodied Bolivian men, and it is understood as a prerequisite for many forms of urban employment. Perhaps more important, young men may acquiesce to military service because Bolivia, unlike Peru and various Central American countries, has not been mired in bloody warfare for over a generation. On the other hand, compulsory military service facilitates more ambivalent processes: even as the state attempts to create "citizens" out of "Indians" and "men" out of "boys," conscripts simultaneously lay claim to militarized conceptions of masculinity to advance their own agendas. They advance a positive sense of subaltern masculinity tied to beliefs about bravery, competence, and patriotic duty.[1] They do so to earn respect from women (mothers, wives, sisters, and girlfriends) and male peers, both as defenders of the nation and, more broadly, as strong, responsible male citizens who can make decisions and lead others.

Military service is one of the most important prerequisites for the development of successful subaltern manhood, because it signifies rights to power and citizenship and supposedly instills the courage that a man needs to confront life's daily challenges. Through the experience of military service, men assert a dignified sense of masculinity that serves as a counterpoint to the degradation

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experienced from more dominant males and an economic system that assigns them to the least desirable occupations. Military service thus enables them to challenge their exclusion from full participation in Bolivian society and to contest more genteel notions of masculinity associated with upper-class males who avoid military service altogether.

Yet self-affirmation and the legitimate desire for respect are also inextricably tied to ongoing patterns of collusion with hegemonic uses and representations of subaltern men and bound to evolving relationships of inequality among subjugated peoples. Conscripts collude with hyperaggressive notions of masculinity that demean women, "weaker" men, and civilians in general, and that conjoin maleness with citizenship. They further assert an imposed falsehood: soldiers like themselves defend the interests of *all* Bolivians from an array of internal and external threats. By so doing, they aggravate the estrangement between men and women, and deepen their alienation from their class peers and the history of indigenous peoples in Bolivia.

This article examines these contradictions. It explores how men, through compulsory military service, shape a positive sense of masculine identity that is, nevertheless, linked to collusion with their own subordination and tied to other gendered patterns of social degradation. To understand this process, I consider how notions of masculinity are constructed in a field of unequal power relationships. My analysis scrutinizes the interplay between masculinity and power by probing the ways that material constraints and beliefs about gender lead subaltern men to participate in a state institution that contributes to the continuing oppression of dominated peoples. It also examines how the armed forces approach the task of creating male soldiers who subscribe to a particular notion of masculinity, and the ways that class, ethnic, and regional tensions threaten this totalizing project.

Feminists have called attention to the importance of beliefs about masculinity and femininity in sustaining the military and the way that militarism is enacted (Enloe 1984, 1993). Although some cultural feminist analyses suffer, as diLeonardo (1985) has noted, from an overreliance on essentialist beliefs about the innate aggressivity of men and the inherent peacefulness of women, works by Koonz (1987) and Bunster (1988) show how the militarization of masculinity may be abetted by women. Similarly, recent work by a number of male scholars who draw on the work of feminists shows that masculinity is itself a fluid concept that acquires different meanings in the ongoing struggles among and between men and women of different classes, ethnic groups, and sexual orientations (Gutmann 1996; Lancaster 1992; Stern 1995).

Another body of literature examines the power of states to regulate social life and define subjectivities. It explores the contradictions between, on the one hand, the efforts of states to monopolize power and incorporate subjects within a politically circumscribed, ethnically homogeneous concept of citizenship and, on the other hand, the impossibility of completely incorporating marginalized peoples within elite-defined, nation-building projects (Alonso 1995; Hale 1994;

Nagengast 1994; Smith 1990). The outcome of these contradictions is frequently military repression (Carmack 1988; Green 1994).

Corrigan and Sayer (1985) explore how state formation is always accompanied by the moral regulation of society, a process in which social identities are constituted through the historically structured relations of capitalist society and are actively enforced by the state in law, census classifications, licenses, and so forth. Patterns of identification fostered by the state are simultaneously forms of material empowerment and disempowerment that condition the very social relations from which they emerge. Normative definitions and ways of understanding oneself in relation to others are imposed or encouraged against the oppositional practices of dominated peoples and come to be understood as desirable by at least some of the oppressed. The moral regulation of society is thus always a cultural achievement that is part of enforcing the rule of one group, class, or alliance of class fractions over others (Corrigan and Sayer 1985:4–7; see also Gramsci 1971; Williams 1977).

This is a very uneven process that silences and empowers poor men and women in different and contradictory ways. It should therefore come as no surprise that cultural claims are not only formulated against those who exploit. They also emerge from the historically created divisions and animosities that structure social relations within oppressed groups (Sider 1993, 1996), divisions that in Bolivia place men against women, the urban-born against immigrants, the relatively well-to-do against the desperately poor, and so forth. Thus beliefs and practices that are forged in the context of domination, and are at least partially oppositional, may also serve as instruments of oppression or obfuscation. The construction of masculinity within the Bolivian armed forces is one arena that illustrates this process; indeed, the military is the premier state institution charged with the legitimate use of force in society, and peasants and poor urban dwellers have a changing and ambiguous relationship to it.

I argue that the state, through the institution of the armed forces, conjoins key concepts of masculinity and beliefs about citizenship that are claimed by many of the poor as they simultaneously accommodate to domination and assert their own interests vis-à-vis each other and the dominant society. Other notions of masculinity and, of course, all notions of femininity are ignored, ridiculed, or marginalized. Conscripts thus become "men" and "citizens" in very contradictory ways, as they are used and represented in different ways by the military. Military service both differentiates them from elite white males and incorporates them into society. Military conscripts also become differentiated from their female class peers and men who have not done military service. The ensuing ruptures that emerge among the poor from these patterns of differentiation and incorporation undermine attempts to shape understandings of masculinity, femininity, and citizenship that can be used to fundamentally transform relations of domination, rather than simply contest some of them.[2] The discussion draws on interviews with men and women from the urban neighborhoods of El Alto, a sprawling, 14,000-foot high satellite city of 400,000 people that surrounds

part of La Paz, the Bolivian capital, and several Aymara communities on the periphery of La Paz.[3]

The following section explores the broad historical contours within which militarism, masculinity, and citizenship became conjoined. It shows that following the mobilization of indigenous men in the Chaco War (1932–1935), which created a new sense of national identity among them, the Cold War and the 1952 Bolivian national revolution furthered the identification of masculinity and citizenship with military service. The Cold War moved the U.S. government to finance the expansion of Latin American militaries, and the influx of U.S. military aid to Bolivia permitted the incorporation of thousands of young men into the armed forces every year. This was consistent with the project of the post-1952 Bolivian state, which, in accord with its enduring rhetoric of populist nationalism, utilized compulsory military service as a tool for constructing a homogeneous national community and "civilizing" the male masses.

The Military and Bolivian Society

Military service has, since 1904, been mandatory for all Bolivian males, but only once in the 20th century were Bolivian troops engaged in full-scale warfare. Some 260,000 combatants engaged Paraguayan forces in the Chaco War, a costly and bloody dispute over the arid lands of the Grand Chaco. In many cases, these troops did not have a well-developed sense of national identity, and 25 percent of the mostly Quechua, Aymara, and Guarani combatants, or over 65,000 troops, perished or deserted (Klein 1982:193–194). A large number had sought to avoid conscription at all costs and, with the collusion of landlords seeking to protect their labor forces, disappeared at the first sight of recruiting commissions. Indeed, draft evasion was so common that the military regularly used violence to conscript a fighting force. The educator Elizardo Perez, writing about the experiences of one community on the shores of Lake Titicaca, stated that

> One day, at four o'clock in the morning, soldiers from the Achacachi base broke into the huts of the Indians and dragged them off to the base without paying any attention to their ages or what they said [and] in less than 24 hours, the poor Indians left Achacachi for the trenches without even being allowed to say goodbye to their loved ones. [1992:167]

A much smaller number of men, according to Bolivian historian René Arze, actually chose to enlist in the army and venture to the front, perhaps because of efforts by the press and local priests to stimulate nationalist sentiments. Some of these men were resident laborers on rural estates and saw the army as a way to escape from the unpaid labor they were forced to provide to the landlords. Highland free Indian communities also volunteered troops and contributed provisions at the beginning of the war in the hope that the state, in exchange, would provide some relief from the heavy tax burden imposed on them.

But when this failed to happen, the Indians' enthusiasm for the war effort declined (Arze 1987).

In contrast to the varied ways that indigenous peoples handled demands by the state for troops and supplies, landlords and rural elites reacted in a more uniformly negative fashion. They not only went to great lengths to keep *colonos* (tenant farmers) out of the army and thereby protect their own agricultural operations, but also questioned the wisdom of arming Indians. Landlords in the Department of Sucre argued that "the army is the most pernicious [place] for the Indian because in addition to completely changing his customs, it deprives agriculture of robust arms and transforms Indians into armed dangers" (quoted in Arze 1987:55). Similarly, the prefect of Potosi department claimed that Indians only joined the army in order to use military training in "their struggles against white landowners." He went on to ask, "Will the militarization of the Indian be a new national danger? This is the question that merits thought by statesmen" (quoted in Arze 1987:55). Because of these fears, the military high command stressed that rural indigenous men would not fight on the front lines and sent them to labor in the rear guard, clearing land and building roads. Yet wartime demands for able-bodied men quickly made this policy collapse, and it was never strictly applied.

The fears of the landowners and rural elites were not completely unfounded. As war raged in the Chaco, land conflicts between *hacendados* (hacienda owners), colonos, and free Indian communities erupted across the highlands and valleys. The large numbers of men on the Chaco front meant that many haciendas were left undefended, a situation that prompted free Indian communities to reclaim land usurped by the estates. But the opposite also occurred. Hacendados expanded their properties onto communal lands, claiming, more easily than in the past, that Indians were not using the land productively.

Social tensions did not ease at the war's end. Participation in the army and the experience of the war itself created a new sense of national identity among Indian war veterans. In addition, the enormous loss of life, Bolivia's crushing defeat, and the corruption and incompetence of the white officers provoked a crisis within the armed forces and generated challenges to the entire political system. In the years that preceded the national revolution, shifting factions within the military came to reflect growing tensions in Bolivian society. Embittered officers of the so-called "Chaco generation" staged a series of coups and attempted to enact limited welfare and pro-union reforms. At the same time, labor and peasant militancy and demands for land and labor reform heightened.

These tensions erupted in the 1952 national revolution, which brought to power the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), a broad-based coalition of peasants, workers, and the urban middle class. The MNR dramatically transformed Bolivian society by implementing a number of reforms that included the nationalization of the largest tin mines, the abolition of unpaid labor, a sweeping land reform, and the implementation of public education. In a move to consolidate power, the MNR also neutralized the army by reducing the budget, eliminating disloyal officers, and cutting back the number of personnel

from 20,000 to 5,000 (Hudson and Hanratty 1991). It then moved quickly to arm the civilian population, which was overwhelmingly loyal to the MNR. Armed civilian militias composed of peasants, tin miners, and factory workers essentially replaced the army for a number of years, until the MNR grew uneasy with these increasingly militant organizations and decided to rebuild the armed forces.

The MNR's efforts to reconstitute the armed forces were assisted, in the mid-1950s, by the U.S. government. Caught up in a rising wave of Cold War hysteria, the U.S. military increased expenditures on technical assistance for Bolivia's armed forces. It also began training Bolivian officers, who returned to Bolivia after several months on a U.S. base, imbued with the teachings of their U.S. counterparts, to instruct local troops in the skills of soldiering.

The MNR, for its part, hoped to keep the armed forces loyal to the civilian government by appointing officers with known MNR sympathies to important command positions and permitting poor *mestizos* to enter officer training programs. The complexion of the upper ranks of the military changed, and the armed forces in general became a channel of upward mobility for urban mestizos of lower-middle-class backgrounds. This trend became more evident in the years following 1964, when the newly emboldened military overthrew the MNR and ruled almost without interruption until 1982. The monthly pay of officers rose dramatically, and several military commanders were able to purchase garish homes in new La Paz suburbs that overflowed with the nouveau-riche (Dunkerley 1984).

The MNR's political rhetoric downplayed the deep class and ethnic differences that continued to divide Bolivia and promoted a nationalist discourse that figured Bolivians as equal members of a "national community" (Anderson 1983; Antezana 1983). The enfranchisement of indigenous peoples was the first, most dramatic way in which the party created a broad new category of citizens, but the expansion of public education also promoted the state's "civilizing mission" by encouraging the spread of Spanish, a standardized version of Bolivian history, and beliefs about civic duty. Military service was another arena in which the state forged "citizens" from "Indians."

The creation of "citizen-soldiers" was possible because U.S. military aid rose from a mere $100,000 in 1958 to $3.2 million in 1964 (Hudson and Hanratty 1991) and attained even higher levels during the reign of General Hugo Banzer (1971–1978).[4] Preventing "communist subversion" and suppressing "internal enemies" became the touchstone of U.S. military policy in Bolivia, especially after the 1959 Cuban revolution, and was known as the national security doctrine. It became the intellectual justification for the Bolivian armed forces and its legion of poor conscripts to protect a reconstituted upper class from the demands of workers, peasants, and students, who were labeled as subversives.[5]

With the redemocratization of Bolivia in 1982 and the subsequent end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, U.S. military policy toward Bolivia shifted. Rather than battling real and imagined communists, waging the "war on drugs" became the key U.S. concern, even though the Bolivian military was itself

deeply implicated in illegal cocaine traffic. Because of this involvement, the United States suspended military assistance in the early 1980s. In 1985, however, the United States resumed the assistance, which, by 1988, accounted for a large portion of Bolivia's military budget, variously estimated at between $87 and $159 million (Hudson and Hanratty 1991:238).

Budgetary fluctuations always limited the number of men conscripted into the armed forces at any particular time, while shifting social and economic conditions influenced the decisions of young men to either report for duty or fail to do so.[6] For example, according to some men who served during the regime of General Hugo Banzer, relatively good conditions on military bases, the military's domination of society, and a lack of lucrative alternatives contributed to the long lines at recruitment time outside army barracks during this period, which coincided with high levels of U.S. military aid.[7] During the mid-1980s, in contrast, the military had difficulty filling its annual quotas. Bolivia faced a severe economic crisis, which adversely affected living conditions on some bases, and U.S. financial support for the armed forces had been cut back. Moreover, in some regions of the country, such as Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, manufacturing cocaine paste offered more remunerative opportunities than military service, and the army allegedly resorted to forcibly conscripting young men off the streets.[8] By 1989—the last year for which data are available—there were some 28,000 men in the armed forces; 68 percent (19,000) were young men in their late teens and early twenties who were fulfilling one year of obligatory service, and most of the conscripts (15,000) were concentrated in the army (Hudson and Hanratty 1991:231).[9]

At this point, we might ask, how has and does the military confront the task of making men out of boys and forging "citizens" out of the male masses? How, too, do claims about class, ethnicity, and regional affiliation exist in tense dialogue with this totalizing project?

Creating Citizen-Soldiers

The efforts of militaries to instill civic consciousness among persons marginalized by their states is a persistent theme in the experiences of diverse countries (Enloe 1980; Glatthaar 1990; Holm 1992; Segal 1989; Weber 1976). In Bolivia, a key aspect of basic training and the formation of male citizens is that recruits experience the military as omnipotent and omniscient. Young inductees are incorporated into an institution in which every aspect of their lives becomes controlled and regimented, and their ties to the broader society are cut off or severely restricted. To become a man and a soldier, it is essential that recruits be separated from home, especially the care and influence of their mothers, and that they move to being under the control of older, unrelated males. The military then strives to subordinate their individuality to the identity of the male group and instill rigid conformity and compliance to military values.[10]

Basic training is a gendered process of moral regulation in which the armed forces define the parameters of appropriate male behavior and link masculinity and citizenship to the successful completion of military service; indeed, military

obligations are linked as closely to civic duty as to the actual practice of warfare. Militarized male Bolivians are created by the imposition of acceptable forms of masculinity that prize aggressivity, male camaraderie, discipline, autonomy, and obedience to authority. As certain forms of individual and collective identification are stamped with the official seal of approval, others are denied legitimate expression. This is a process that depends on the acceptance of young men and is reinforced by their simultaneous brutalization, an aspect of the "civilizing" experience that is central to military training and much anticipated by prospective recruits. It requires an enormous amount of power and must overcome deep regional and ethnic cleavages.

At present, calls for military recruits are issued twice a year, at which time young men of the appropriate age are required to present themselves at designated induction centers. Conscripts are then sorted into groups and sent to various installations around Bolivia. The military tries to mix men from different parts of the country in the same barracks in order to break down strong regional sentiments. In addition to the more abstract purpose of creating male citizens who identify as "Bolivian," rather than as Aymara, lowlanders, and so forth, this policy also has a direct, practical rationale: conscripts, it is believed, are more likely to shoot "subversives" if they do not come from the same regional or ethnic background.[11]

The first three months of military service are dedicated to basic training, in which new recruits engage in endless drills and marching. They are also taught how to use weapons and are prepared to fight. During this period, troops suffer the abuse of commanding officers and the dominance of a more experienced group of conscripts known as the *antiguos*, or old-timers, who have entered the service six months earlier. The newcomers are verbally and even physically castigated for violations of military discipline, misunderstanding commands, and not carrying out required exercises. They are referred to as *sarna*, or mange, by their superiors. Militarized masculinity is shaped in these contexts through the symbolic debasement of women and homosexuals: recruits are called *putas* (whores), *maricones* (faggots), *señoritas* (little ladies), and other gendered insults. Punishment for an infraction of the rules may entail dressing as a woman and parading around the base, or, as one ex-conscript described, sleeping naked with another man in a physical embrace.

Closely tied to this rigid hierarchy is an ideology of male equality and bonding. This ideology pervades basic training and conflates combat preparedness with beliefs about masculinity: troops share the same food and living accommodations, wear the same uniforms, display identical shaved heads, conform to the same rigid codes of behavior, and are trained for war, the ultimate test of their manhood. They are taught to rely only on themselves and each other and to distrust civilians, who are considered weak, incompetent, and lacking the discipline and responsibility of a uniformed soldier. As one ex-recruit described the experience to me,

> 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.

Indeed, the strong, self-reliant man who works together with other men is the desired product of this training.[12]

Male bonding and camaraderie are heightened as recruits encounter "the enemy" in actual confrontations or, more likely, in mock skirmishes and exercises. The identity of the enemy varies with time and place; for example, troops who served near the Peruvian border during the 1980s learned about the Shining Path guerrilla insurgency; the Cold War generated foes out of domestic critics; drug traffickers in the 1980s posed the most direct hazard for conscripts in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz departments; and Chile and its armed forces were always perceived as the preeminent danger by those serving near the Chilean border. Through opposition to these groups, portrayed as threats to Bolivia, a heightened sense of national identity and nationalism is created among conscripts, who are encouraged to see themselves as the nation's most valued defenders.

However, class, regional, and ethnic divisions are reproduced in the barracks and threaten to undermine the military's totalizing project, even as conscripts encounter "enemies," bond with each other, and experience overwhelming pressure to conform to military values. Although recruits from diverse regional backgrounds are mixed together, informants consistently recount that high school graduates, who are more likely to be urban-born and fluent Spanish speakers, stand a better chance of remaining on urban bases, while peasants are routed to much more onerous rural and frontier postings. Moreover, peasants often experience greater difficulty in understanding orders and lessons, which are conducted entirely in Spanish, and they must therefore endure more abuse from commanding officers and the old-timers. They are also less likely to be chosen for advanced instruction after the initial period of basic training draws to a close, and are frequently destined to labor on arduous civic action programs, such as clearing ditches and making roads. Some are even put to work in the homes of commanding officers.

These class and ethnic divisions are further complicated by intense regional sentiments. Ricardo Salinas, an urban-born *paceño* (resident of La Paz) who served in Cochabamba department, was intimidated by all of the *cochabambinos* (residents of Cochabamba department) in his barracks. "The old-timers really scared me," he said, "There were more cochabambinos than paceños. When we [the newcomers] arrived, they asked us who were the paceños and told us to raise our hands. Then they said, 'Sarnas, you are going to die.' " Thus even as the military seeks to undermine class, ethnic, and regional divisions in an effort to enforce a putative nationalism, military training reinforces such divisions.

Some men, in fact, find military service intolerable and may even go to the extreme of deserting, which undermines the military's omnipotent self-representation and, not surprisingly, is viewed as treasonous. Felix Chuquimia recounted to me

how his commanding officers on a lowland base obliged him and other highland conscripts to beat a paceño deserter who had been captured and returned. In another instance, according to Chuquimia, two deserters were dressed as women:

> 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.

In this instance, traitors were identified with women by commanding officers. By involving highland conscripts in their punishment, these lowland-born officers not only made them accomplices but also reinforced a militarized male identity closely linked to patriotic duty and separated from specific regional and ethnic identifications.

We have seen that a concerted effort by the armed forces to forge such connections among the lower orders dates only to the 1952 revolution. Although military service became compulsory at the turn of the century, the populist nationalism of the MNR and, most important, the financial support of the U.S. government, were necessary to make possible the incorporation of large numbers of men into the armed services. Yet because of the inherent difficulty—indeed, the impossibility—of completely incorporating a dominated people into an allegedly homogeneous national community. there are numerous contemporary examples of peasants, miners, and slum dwellers opposing the armed forces and the state (Barrios de Chungara 1978; Gill in press; Justicia y Paz 1975; Nash 1979). Paradoxically, however, popular ideas about "becoming a man" and "a citizen" in highland communities and the poor neighborhoods of La Paz not only aid the state's conscription efforts, but also threaten the masculinity of young men who do not serve in the military.

Popular notions of masculinity emerge in part from the efforts of male peasants and poor urban dwellers to engage dominant institutions, such as the military, in order to prove their worth, find personal dignity, and establish claims to membership in the nation. But in so doing, the oppressed may simultaneously become collusive with their very domination by participating in the creation of beliefs about masculinity, femininity, and citizenship that are destructive within their own communities and households. It is necessary at this point to explore in more depth how young men, their families, and their communities view the military, and what this means for the ways in which they understand their ongoing social relationships.

Sissies and "New Citizens": Suffering for Manhood

A complex array of pressures and motivations prompt young Bolivian men from La Paz and its surrounding hinterland to enlist in the armed forces every year. For some young men, the military offers the possibility of adventure and an opportunity to visit other parts of the country; for others, it is a way of obtaining

food and clothing in a time of need. According to the military itself, service provides recruits with opportunities to learn electrical, mechanical, and carpentry skills, yet only one of the men interviewed for this article mentioned the acquisition of useful skills for civilian life. Although the reasons have varied over time, two primary explanations for responding to the military's biannual calls for men stand out among former soldiers: (1) the importance of the *libreta militar* (military booklet), which documents the successful completion of military duty, for key transactions with the state and for obtaining work in urban factories and businesses, and (2) the desire to validate themselves as men in the eyes of families, peers, and communities. Establishing themselves as men requires the competence necessary to support themselves and a family amidst considerable economic adversity, and to participate in community positions of authority.

Obtaining the military booklet is not a concern for middle- and upper-class young men who wish to avoid military service. Once past the age of 23, when an individual is no longer eligible for service, a man may pay a fee to obtain equivalent documentation. The cost, in recent years, has varied between $200 and $500, which is prohibitive for men from poor peasant and urban backgrounds, since they typically earn only a few dollars for an entire day's labor.[13]

For subaltern men, military service is the only practical means of acquiring the military booklet, which is quite literally a prerequisite for citizenship. Only with this document can a man register with the state and acquire a national identity card. The libreta is also indispensable for other key relationships with the state, such as obtaining a passport, a job in a government agency, or a degree from the state university. Similarly, military documentation is essential for obtaining employment in many of the businesses and factories of urban La Paz, where employers use it to guarantee themselves a disciplined, Spanish-speaking labor force.

The military booklet is thus part of the "civilizing process" through which young men are symbolically incorporated into the nation and the capitalist discipline of the labor process. Furthermore, with the collusion of their commanding officers, recruits may use the booklet as a way to change their Indian surnames to Spanish ones. But while it symbolically creates citizens, the booklet also facilitates the converse: the categorization of "aliens" within the boundaries of the state, a designation that is all too close to the lived experiences of poor men.

The subtle and overt forms of violence associated with processes of exclusion and incorporation are illustrated by former tin miner Raul Gutierrez. When interviewed, Gutierrez recognized the importance of the military booklet for the professional aspirations of his son, whom he has sent off to boot camp even though Gutierrez hates the army and is frightened by the sight of soldiers. Gutierrez had survived a horrific army massacre in the Caracoles tin mine after the 1980 military coup d'état of General Luis Garcia Meza, and intolerable working conditions subsequently forced him and his family to move to La Paz's poor satellite city, El Alto, to search for other work. According to Gutierrez,

> The military entered the mine and went on a rampage. We thought the soldiers were drugged, because they were foaming at the mouth. They beat everybody that they caught and killed innocent people. They raped women and even put dynamite in the mouths of some people and blew it up. People had to crawl like dogs to find hiding places, where they were forced to remain for the three days that the army occupied the mine. To this day I hate and fear the army. Soldiers think that they can take advantage of people because they wear a uniform.

However, Gutierrez recognizes the importance of military documentation. "It's an indispensable document," he says. "My sons are going to be professionals some day, and they will be asked for their military booklets." Indeed, the military's continuing regulation of society in the present and Gutierrez's hopes of a professional future for his son virtually require a passive stance toward the military repression that he has experienced in the past. The military domination of Bolivian society has, in this way, reshaped aspects of social life.

For many young men, the importance of establishing their manhood is also a central reason for military service. They believe that service is indispensable to becoming responsible, disciplined men who are capable of making decisions, heading a family, and commanding others. As Felix Mamani, a rural immigrant who resides in El Alto, told me,

> 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.

Peasant recruits who return to highland Aymara communities are referred to as *machaq ciudadano,* or, literally, "new citizen," and if domestic resources permit, their returns are celebrated with eating, drinking, and dancing. Rolando Cusicanqui, a 26-year-old immigrant from the Lake Titicaca region, understood a machaq ciudadano to be someone who is "able to be fully involved in society and participate with adults. Someone who is considered to be a responsible person and who can fully take part in a series of events, meetings and so forth." Similarly, when Fernando Huanca falsified his birth certificate in 1974 to enter the military under the legal age requirement, it was because he had heard about the "new citizens" and wanted to be one himself. According to Fernando,

> I was born in Igachi and grew up an orphan. When I was 15 or 16 years old, the other boys always acted like they were better than me. Seeing the way that they behaved, I thought, I'm also a man. I'm also *gente* [someone]. What difference is there between someone who goes to the barracks and one who does not? I wanted to understand this. I'd heard about new citizens, and for the pride [of being a new citizen], I enlisted.

In the immigrant neighborhoods of La Paz, the connections between manhood and citizenship are equally evident, if somewhat more diffuse. Military service is not so directly linked to the assumption of community positions of authority, but young men still hope to earn the respect of families and peers by

participating in a rite of passage that is understood as a prerequisite for full male adulthood and a duty of every good Bolivian man. They also hope to obtain the documentation necessary for permanent positions in a factory, business, or state agency and thus escape from the poverty and insecurity of the informal economy. Francisco Perez recalls the mockery of his high school peers, who claimed he was not man enough to bear the rigors of military life. Francisco, a self-described loner, says that these taunts stimulated a flood of self-doubt and that this, in part, 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.

Key to the transformation of these young men is the experience of suffering. Suffering is not only something that they anticipate before enlisting but also an experience that, when safely in the past, is constantly embellished and reinvented, as ex-soldiers represent themselves to others and assert claims within evolving social relationships. Given the myriad ways in which these young men and their families suffer every day of their lives with poor health, low wages, bad harvests, and racism, it is shocking to listen to them boast of their transformative experiences of hardship, which must be understood as part of a desperate and painful search for dignity and self-worth.

Rufino Amaya, for example, dreamed of and eventually received a posting on a distant frontier base in the tropical lowlands, where living conditions were particularly harsh. The isolation of the base meant that during weekend leaves he could not visit friends and family members, and he frequently did not have enough to eat because commanding officers were selling troop rations for personal profit. The food shortages prompted him to work as an agricultural laborer during leaves so that he could buy bread and other basic necessities, even though working for civilians was strictly forbidden by the military and considered a punishable offense. Yet, as Amaya told me,

> 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.

Amaya went on to describe how highland men like himself were better suited for the rigorous tests of military manhood.

> [In my group] we were 161 paceños and 80 *orientales* [residents of the eastern lowlands]. The orientales were very weak and when things got rough, they started deserting. But the *colla* [highlander] man—as they call us—deserts very little, because he is able to endure any kind of hard work.

Informants related similar accounts to me over and over. One individual even likened the Aymara propensity for military service and allegedly superior soldiering abilities to their history as a "warlike people."[14]

We can recognize a number of self-destructive beliefs in these assertions: suffering is a prerequisite for manhood; poor people like themselves can tolerate suffering more than others; and Aymara have special abilities for warfare. To make these claims is to participate in the production of a dominant fiction. It is to create a virtue out of suffering, a condition imposed on the Aymara by both the military and, more generally, the form that class and ethnic domination takes in Bolivia. It is also to link extreme suffering in the military with an exalted form of manhood and to thereby deny the very real daily suffering of women and other men who cannot or will not participate in the rituals of militarized masculinity. Finally, it is to misconstrue Aymara history, a history in which warfare was integral to the process of Incan and particularly European domination, but which has little to do with any essential Aymara characteristics.

At this point, we must explore in greater depth the way that militarism and men's experiences in the military shape ongoing social relationships in their home communities and neighborhoods. How, specifically, do militarized notions of masculinity inform the relationships between male peers, between men and women, and between subaltern men and male members of the white, middle- and upper classes? And how, too, are these beliefs sustained in the context of inequality?

Contending with Militarism in Daily Life

Recruits never become true citizens after completing military service and returning to civilian life. This happens despite the civilizing mission of the armed forces, the concerted efforts to produce "real men," and the considerable extent to which young men claim and assert destructive, imposed beliefs about themselves in their search for respect. The realization of their continuing marginalization leaves many men feeling disillusioned and questioning the point of having dedicated a year of their lives to the armed forces. In most cases, they are no better prepared for a job than before entering the military, and the few decent jobs that remain in La Paz, after years of economic crisis, restructuring, and state retrenchment, cannot possibly accommodate everyone. Young men typically return to their impoverished villages or seek a livelihood as gardeners, chauffeurs, part-time construction workers, and vendors in the urban informal economy and in low-paid positions in the state bureaucracy, such as policemen. Thus excluded from the economic rewards of the dominant society, they remain ineluctably "Indian" in its eyes, and some, not surprisingly, conclude that the entire experience was an enormous waste of time.

In addition, all subaltern men do not develop identical relationships to militarism, nor do they understand it the same way. The experience of military service, once safely in the past, assumes different meanings for them in the context of changing social relationships in the present. Felix Amaya, for his part, understands the military very differently today as a university student and former

socialist party member than he did 13 years ago as a teenage army recruit fresh from the countryside. "Look," he told me,

> 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.

In failing to meet the expectations of Amaya and other recruits like him, the military has trained a potential source of opposition. Yet the nature of the opposition is ambiguous. Military service, as mentioned above, is key to acquiring certain kinds of urban jobs that provide a modicum of economic security. It is also important for participating in the male world of formal community politics, taking part in discussions and decisions, establishing a family, and being perceived by others as a leader. The suffering, male camaraderie, and discipline that supposedly made them male citizens in the first place are not easily cast aside, because they help to ratify these forms of male empowerment, which exclude women and those subaltern men who have not passed through the armed forces. This is an affirmation of male citizenship, albeit of a subordinate form, within the broader context of Bolivian society.

Military experience also provides ammunition for the construction of masculinity and the assertion of male power in other settings. It is typically part of the repartee of all-male social gatherings, such as weekend drinking parties, where male solidarity and competition are closely combined. Exaggerated tales of suffering, hyperbolic anecdotes of bravery in the face of fear, and inflated accounts of cleverness when confronted by abusive superiors shape the male bonding that occurs amidst the music blaring from cassette players, commentaries on daily life, and invitations to drink.[15] Yet this bantering and one-upmanship can easily move from friendly jousting to violent competition, and thus becomes a form of domination and ranking among men.[16]

Whatever the outcome, stories of military life, which, as Broyles (1990:33) notes, are usually false in important details, are always about buttressing the power of certain kinds of men. These stories link a particular concept of masculinity to military performance. Some men use military tales to enhance the importance of their own militarized identities and to exclude young men and those who have not passed through the armed forces from key arenas of male sociality. They also, of course, exclude women, who in these gatherings usually hover in the background, awaiting a summons to bring the next round of beer.

The competence and citizenship equated with postmilitary manhood are also used by former conscripts to assert their dignity and claim respect from more powerful middle- and upper-class males. The latter view military service as a waste of time that can be more usefully spent studying, and they fear the prospect of serving with Indian and lower-class men in a context where military hierarchies theoretically take precedence over class and ethnic ones. Some even view the soldiers' claims to manhood as presumptuous. One individual, for

example, criticized the peasant practice of requiring military service for male marriage partners because it was, he claimed, based on mistaken beliefs about how men acquire a sense of responsibility. Ex-soldiers are highly critical of these men, whom they view as unpatriotic sissies. One scoffed to me that

> They're mamas' boys. They come from a different social class than we do, and their form of thinking and reasoning is so distinct that they forget about their patriotic duty. They are much more individualistic [than we are]; they forget about the nation so that they can be totally independent. The upper class only thinks about its future and its social position and generally not about the country and what could happen one day.

This man and others like him were particularly critical when, in early 1995, a public scandal enveloped a high-ranking government official who had falsified his military booklet to avoid service.[17] Sixty-year-old Rufino Tejar, for example, was absolutely disgusted. "These parliamentarians," he sneered,

> say that they are the fathers of the country, but they are the first ones to avoid the barracks. These little gentlemen wouldn't know where to shoot. They always come from privileged families. They're mamas' boys. They can fix anything with money, but then they fill these government positions and demand that everyone else obey the law. They should be removed from their jobs and obliged to serve in the military at their age.

Tejar's remarks that these men claim to be "the fathers of the country" suggest something of the paternalism and the denigration that shapes the reality of actual encounters between men of different classes. It is as waiters, gardeners, chauffeurs, shoe shiners, handymen, and janitors that indigenous and poor urban men typically meet white males of the upper class. These structurally subordinate positions require them to display deference, subordination, and humility. They are not only demeaning, but also place men in relationships to more powerful males that are analogous to those of women in male-female relationships. Because they cannot command the labor power of others and they possess none of the wealth necessary to embellish an elegant lifestyle and control, provide for, and protect women, lower-class men and men from subordinate ethnic groups experience greater difficulty backing up their claims of personal power and sexual potency than their class and ethnic superiors. Moreover, the class privileges of the latter enable them to develop a well-mannered, dignified, and controlled masculinity; one that is contrasted with the behavior of poor men, who, depending on the context, may either be labeled as weak and ineffectual *or* condemned for impulsive and irrational outbursts of violence.

It should therefore come as no surprise that in certain contexts many poor urban and peasant men have considerable difficulty cultivating and defending a positive image of themselves as men vis-à-vis more dominant males. Surviving the trials and tribulations of military service is one way in which they can affirm their masculine power and rights to citizenship. In the absence of recruits from the upper echelons of Bolivian society, subaltern men can claim the experience

of compulsory military service as strictly their own and use it as a weapon in their ongoing struggles for respect and dignity in a society that routinely denies them both.

We should, however, view their assertions with caution. It is important to bear in mind that subordinate and dominant notions of masculinity degrade women and are premised, in large part, on the ability of men to control and dominate women. Given this, we might expect to find women in highland Aymara communities and the poor urban neighborhoods of El Alto considerably less enthusiastic about military service than their male family members. Some evidence does exist to support such a view. Mothers commonly recall their tears and the deep sadness with which they dispatched their sons to the barracks; they also remember the fears that their sons would be abused in the armed forces and return permanently disabled. Yet these women hope that completing military service and obtaining the requisite documentation will ensure a more prosperous future for their sons, and indeed, a mother struggling too hard to withhold her son from the military might be seen as depriving him of the chance to attain full male adulthood.[18]

Women whose sons have no prospects of upward mobility provide the most enthusiastic support for compulsory military service. Many of these women, like men, believe that military training and discipline will produce responsible, mature adult males, and they have ample reasons to want this to occur. Poor women are frequently disappointed by men who are unable or unwilling to support their families, who spend hard-earned cash on drink, cigarettes, and other women, and who are physically abusive. Military service, they hope, will develop men into reliable, serious adults and serve as a guarantee to women and their male relatives that a prospective husband will fulfill his social and economic responsibilities to the domestic unit.

These women are suspicious of men who have not done military service. A street vendor in El Alto, for example, disparagingly describes a 40-year-old male acquaintance who never served. "He gets occasional jobs that don't pay well, but he can't go to work in a factory [because he doesn't have his military booklet]," she explains. "This is where irresponsibility comes from. The military booklet structures one's future and encourages responsibility." She went on to discuss how women who get stuck with such men have to work more outside the home to support their families.

Following military service, men may in fact become more responsible, that is, dedicated to family and home. Rufino Perez, for example, told me that he "saw things more seriously" after returning from the barracks.

> I wasn't the same prankster that I had been before. My friends noted this and so did my family. In my community, when one arrives from the barracks, people give you more responsibilities because you are now one among adults. I was no longer juvenile and assumed these responsibilities myself. I was another member of society.

Yet men's relationships to militarism do not always bring positive benefits for the women whom they encounter in civilian life. The experiences of Arminda Mamani illustrate how the expectations of women are frequently left unfulfilled. Arminda Mamani is a 45-year-old divorcée with two sons. Born into a family of artisans in a small, provincial town, she moved to La Paz in 1970 and currently works as a secretary. Mamani's two sons have lived without a father in the home for most of their lives, and she has always encouraged them to pursue respect and economic security through higher education instead of going into the military. She views the military as a waste of time and does not want her sons to associate with "Indians" in the barracks. Her views, however, are strongly opposed by her ex-husband, his female relatives, and his six brothers. This side of the family maintains a strong tradition of male military service and constantly chides Mamani's eldest son, Sergio, for failing to enlist. Sergio, for his part, is content with his decision not to serve. He not only has his mother's full support but has, indeed, found a new sense of dignity as the first member of his family to attend university.

Despite her success with Sergio, Mamani was frustrated with a younger son, Pancho, who became a juvenile delinquent in high school; he constantly skipped classes, stole household items and sold them on the street, and argued incessantly with his mother. "Every year that he was in school," Mamani said, "I told him that if he didn't study and behave better, I was going to send him to the barracks." She finally carried out the threat and successfully appealed to an acquaintance with military connections to have the boy sent as far away as possible. She was backed up by her sisters, who, like Mamani, viewed the barracks as a reform school for problem boys. Pancho spent a year in the army on the lowland frontier but, according to Mamani, returned worse than he had departed. "When he returned," she said,

> I realized that it had not done him any good, and he was not reformed. The only thing that he acquired was his military booklet, but he was even more obnoxious than before. He thought that he had more rights, because now he was a man, an adult, and could therefore do whatever he felt like. Just because he had his military booklet, he thought he could arrive home at whatever time he pleased and get drunk whenever he wished. He told me that I wasn't a good mother because I didn't give a party when he returned like all the others [families].

The disappointment that Arminda Mamani feels about her son's sojourn in the military is not uncommon. Indeed, the high level of domestic violence in El Alto, where two major military bases are located, suggests that many men are not living up to women's expectations. In 1993, 53 percent of the reported incidences of violence in El Alto involved cases of violence against women, and of these cases, the overwhelming majority (87 percent) entailed abuse by spouses or male companions (Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Génaro 1994). Although domestic violence is far too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to the effects of militarization on men, it is indicative of the strains that poverty and another

decade of "lost development" are placing on men and women, as well as the misogyny inherent in military training.

Conclusion

The large-scale militarization of masculinity in Bolivia is the legacy of the Cold War and the fervor with which the U.S. government financed the expansion of the armed forces to preserve and defend a status quo antithetical to the interests of the majority of Bolivian citizens. It is also the inheritance of the 1952 revolution and the populist nationalism that prioritized the transformation of "Indians" into "citizens" who nevertheless continue to be excluded from the political and economic rewards of Bolivian society. Although this process takes place in a number of arenas, the military is where the dynamic interplay between masculinity, citizenship, and power is most evident.

Those poor urban and rural young men who embrace military service do so because it offers them the opportunity of crafting a positive sense of themselves as men and as Bolivians in a society where they are routinely demeaned and excluded; indeed, military service, especially the rigors of boot camp, provides them with an arena for serving the nation that they have increasingly claimed as their own. But even as these men engage dominant institutions in order to assert their dignity and establish their self-worth, they are not only used by the military in ways that have nothing to do with improving the lot of peasants and poor urban dwellers, but they also assert a number of imposed beliefs about themselves and their relationships to others. Such beliefs not only degrade women and nonmilitary men, but also injure those men who are the objects of conscription and grant legitimacy to a patriarchal state.

As understandings of masculinity and citizenship have become intertwined with military service, poor women remain marginalized. There is no state institution that links femininity to citizenship and provides a vehicle for female empowerment, even of a subordinate form; indeed, as young men carry out military service, their female peers are likely to undergo a different kind of trial by fire as domestic workers in the homes of well-to-do urban families. The experiences of humiliation, suffering, and insecurity endured by these women are never recognized as empowering. Rather, they are viewed by men, and society in general, as personal affairs that unfold in the privacy of a home.

Separating the construction of gender from militarism is not an easy task. Conceptions of masculinity, femininity, and citizenship that enable men—and women—to resist the state's demand for military service are continually undermined by the contradictory processes of incorporation and differentiation that disrupt the social relations of subaltern peoples. Even as men and women are brutalized by the military in their neighborhoods, communities, and the military barracks, they must engage the armed forces to cope with their own poverty and social marginalization. Resolving the ensuing contradictions in the future will depend on how people perceive their life circumstances as well as their capacity to change them.

Notes

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1. Although I am aware of the difficulties posed by the notion of *the subaltern,* I find the concept descriptively useful. It captures the blurred boundaries and common experiences among subordinated peoples that occur despite other distinctions, such as *Indian, city dweller,* and so on, which also, at times, have analytic significance in this article.

2. My discussion of gender identity and citizenship formation as simultaneous processes of distancing from and incorporation into the larger society. and as struggles that take place among the oppressed, draws on the theoretical perspective of Gerald Sider (1993).

3. This article emerged from a research project conducted over an eight-month period between June 1994 and May 1995 on the relationship between nongovernmental organizations, the state, and popular organizations in La Paz. It draws on wide-ranging conversations with a large network of informants that I developed for that project and on focused interviews with 30 ex-soldiers from rural Aymara communities and poor neighborhoods in La Paz and El Alto. The men completed their military service between 1952 and 1994 and represented approximately equal numbers of urban- and rural-born individuals. Throughout this article, I use pseudonyms for the names of people I interviewed or spoke with during my field research in Bolivia.

4. I borrow the term *citizen-soldier* from Segal 1989.

5. Recovering territory lost to Chile in the 19th-century War of the Pacific, or at least gaining a corridor to the sea, has also been a constant theme for the Bolivian military, although of considerably less importance to its U.S. supporters.

6. Men from peasant communities surrounding La Paz and in El Alto who are most likely to question the utility of military service are those with a realistic possibility of gainful employment or a university education.

7. Older informants also commented on long lines of draftees outside bases in the 1940s, prior to the national revolution (see also Nash 1992:56). Many of these recruits, however, were rejected because of the military's inability to accommodate them.

8. Particularly in Santa Cruz, with its large mestizo population, military service is not linked as closely with notions of citizenship as in the more indigenous highlands of La Paz department.

9. The Bolivian armed forces consists of three branches: the army, the air force, and a small navy.

10. This is very similar to the process described for the U.S. military by Lovell and Stiehm (1989).

11. A severe financial crisis within the armed forces has limited this policy in recent years. According to one army official, however, highland conscripts are still sent to the lowlands because of a constant dearth of recruits from this region and the need for troops to control the drug traffic.

12. Not surprisingly, there are strong parallels between this aspect of the Bolivian military and that described for the U.S. military by Arkin and Dobrofsky (1990).

13. There are other legal ways to acquire a military book without actually serving in the armed forces. Physical disabilities and family situations in which the son is the sole supporter of elderly parents exempt men from service. Students are also allowed to postpone service until the completion of their studies, at which time they must enlist for one year at the rank of "honorary subofficer." They receive payment in accord with the rank and are employed as professionals. Engineers, for example, might teach; doctors provide medical services; and so forth. Student deferments are obviously not an option for poor men, who cannot afford the cost in time and money of a university education.

14. See Sider 1993:203–207 and Holm 1992 for similar assertions by Native Americans in the United States.

15. The tradition of *Viernes de Soltero,* or Bachelor Fridays, among urban, middle-class bureaucrats and workers both married and single, is part of a broader social and cultural arena in which sexual subordination and the reaffirmation of certain kinds of masculinity occurs. Men typically gather together to drink, talk, and bond with each other.

16. See Stern 1995:151–188 for additional discussion of the social construction of masculinity in colonial Mexico.

17. The official did so during a period of repressive military dictatorship when, as a young man, he was part of the political opposition. Yet the scandal surrounding his falsified military booklet was fanned for partisan political purposes by right-wing politicians, who in many cases had also avoided military service, albeit, perhaps, in a legally recognized way. Ex-recruits know that political leaders of the Right and Left routinely use their class and ethnic privileges to avoid service and still manage to find gainful employment. They thus had little sympathy with the individual enveloped in the scandal.

18. See Linda Rennie Forcey (1987:117–135) for more discussion of how women in the United States encourage sons to enlist in the armed forces so that they can shift some of the enormous responsibility for the young men's welfare from themselves to the state.

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