OUTLAWED
BETWEEN SECURITY AND RIGHTS IN A BOLIVIAN CITY
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OUTLAWED

A John Hope Franklin Center Book
The study of violence has often focused on the political and economic conditions under which violence is generated, the suffering of victims, and the psychology of its interpersonal dynamics. Less familiar are the role of perpetrators, their motivations, and the social conditions under which they are able to operate. In the context of postcolonial state building and more latterly the collapse and implosion of society, community violence, state repression, and the phenomena of judicial inquiries in the aftermath of civil conflict, there is a need to better comprehend the role of those who actually do the work of violence—torturers, assassins, and terrorists—as much as the role of those who suffer its consequences.

When atrocity and murder take place, they feed the world of the iconic imagination that transcends reality and its rational articulation; but in doing so imagination can bring further violent realities into being. This series encourages authors who build on traditional disciplines and break out of their constraints and boundaries, incorporating media and performance studies and literary and cultural studies as much as anthropology, sociology, and history.
For Miguel
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Security, Rights, and the Law in Evo’s Bolivia

The law is like a snake: its bite is worse for those who must go barefoot.
—LOCAL SAYING

On Sunday, January 25, 2009, Bolivians voted to approve a new constitution for the country. The Nueva Constitución Política del Estado (New Political Constitution of the State) was endorsed by 60 percent of the voting public, which President Evo Morales interpreted as a strong mandate for what had been his administration’s signature objective since his election in December 2005. For Evo (as he is popularly known) and his supporters in the Movement toward Socialism (the Movimiento a Socialismo, or MAS), the new constitution represented the formal reversal of centuries of institutionalized oppression and discrimination against Bolivia’s “original indigenous peasant” peoples, who compose the majority of the national population, and a significant step toward the goal of “refounding” the Bolivian “plurinational” (Morales 2011). For Evo’s opponents, both in the Bolivian highlands and in the lowland media luna region, the new constitution was another blow to their prestige and power in the nation, a frightening and unworkable tangle of articles that threatened to limit the size of individual landholdings, change the legal definition of property to allow for communal ownership of land, limit the autonomy of regional governments, and give the federal government more control over the nation’s natural gas reserves. Evo’s political antagonists (including many observers in the United States) cited the constitution’s allocation of increased power to the state as more evidence of the president’s demagogu-
ery; such critics frequently referred to the controversial president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, as an example of the extremes toward which Evo was tending. Evo’s supporters, viewing him as their ally and kinsman, pointed to the constitutional guarantee of rights for Bolivia’s indigenous peoples as evidence of his progressive leadership and proof that, after centuries of discrimination and marginalization, there was now room for them in the national configuration.

Among its most important and controversial propositions, the new Bolivian constitution marked the formal recognition of justicia comunitaria (community justice) by the Bolivian state. According to the stipulations laid down in this document, “the nations and original indigenous peasant communities (las naciones y pueblos indígena originario campesinos) will exercise their jurisdictional functions through their authorities, and will apply their own principles, cultural values, norms and procedures” in implementing community justice (Nueva Constitución Política del Estado 2008, 45). Within their “indigenous jurisdictions,” local authorities would have the right to resolve their own conflicts and disputes according to an indigenous legal tradition, which would apply to other members of those nations or communities. Formal state law would exist parallel to this indigenous justice, but the constitution prescribed that the state had the obligation to “promote and reinforce” original indigenous peasant justice, and to make itself available to indigenous authorities should they desire the intervention of state judicial instruments (Nueva Constitución Política del Estado 2008, 45).

The formal recognition of community justice by the Bolivian state exemplified the profound changes that the country experienced following the election of Evo Morales in 2005 (he was reelected in 2009). For centuries indigenous peoples of Bolivia had been denied any sort of voice within national politics. Now they found in Evo an advocate in the Palacio Quemado (the Bolivian White House), a self-identifying indígena who actively promoted the agenda of expanding indigenous rights and representation in the country, while valorizing indigenous cultures and traditions and giving them formal legal recognition. With Morales in power, struggles that formerly took place in the nation’s streets moved to its courts and legislature, as the law itself was transformed to reflect the ruling party’s ideology and objectives. The community justice provisions in the new constitution represented an official acknowledgment of Bolivia as legally plural: the constitution put indigenous usos y costumbres (us-
ages and customs) on an equal footing with national law and required the latter to recognize the legitimacy of the former, creating spaces within the national territory where state law might be discretionary and contested, rather than hegemonic. Even as the constitution co-opted indigenous tradition through recognition, this was still a remarkable move, running contrary to five hundred years of history in which indigenous Latin Americans had been subordinated within a national racial hierarchy, and their beliefs and customs denigrated within national society.

Despite its rather heroic implications, the promotion of community justice and, more generally, the valorization of original indigenous peasant peoples and customs within national law and national ideology was a project fraught with contradictions. As this book explores, even as rural traditions of community justice have been elevated to national prominence, vast numbers of indigenous peoples living on the margins of Bolivia's cities remain without any legal protections whatsoever. In these so-called barrios marginales (marginal neighborhoods), no system of law—neither state nor indigenous—operates to provide support or recourse to the residents, and few authorities—neither official nor traditional—exist to administer justice. In these marginal urban spaces (particularly in Cochabamba, Bolivia's fourth largest city), vigilante or “self-help” practices of apprehending and punishing suspected criminals have emerged as a frequent response to crime, as some barrio residents take the law into their own hands to administer a locally understood form of collective “justice.” The indigenous residents of the barrios are, in various ways, outlawed—they live outside the protections of state law, yet they are multiply subjected to its constraints; they must do without the law's benefits, but they are criminalized as illegal occupants of urban space and perpetrators of mob justice. The experience and consequences of this precarious position—of being outlawed—is a principal theme of this ethnography.

The MAS-led effort to refound Bolivia as a nation that includes (one might even say that it prioritizes) indigenous peoples and their traditional languages and customs was a radical political project, representing a sharp break with the past (perhaps most especially with the recent neoliberal past) and defining a new era in Latin American politics and social life. And at the time of its drafting, the new Bolivian constitution, with its formal recognition of indigenous rights and practices, may have been the most radical document of its kind in the world (Goodale 2009). In terms of its vision and governing philosophy, the MAS project was
undoubtedly a step forward for Bolivians of indigenous heritage, the realization of a long-held ambition of moving from the margins to the center of Bolivian national politics. The rise to power of Evo Morales marked the culmination of decades of political work by those representing the indigenous movements in Bolivia, and the rewriting of the constitution signaled the remarkable overhaul of the Bolivian state and the laws governing the Bolivian nation (Pearce 2011; Sivak 2010; Webber 2011).

However, despite the many transformations in Bolivian law, state, and society, the important processes that have the most impact on the daily lives of indigenous Bolivians unfold at the most local of levels, and these processes are in many ways disconnected from the ideological and legislative work performed at the level of the state. In some senses, despite the MAS government’s rhetorical and political efforts to include indigenous people in the fabric of the Bolivian nation, many of those people have continued to enjoy more or less the same basic relationship to the MAS state as they did with its earlier incarnations. Marginal urban areas in particular—where the majority of Bolivia’s indigenous people now live (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas de Bolivia 2001, 2003)—are marked by a continuous experience of poverty and neglect, characteristic of Bolivia’s urban indigenous communities since at least the middle of the twentieth century. As subsequent chapters of this ethnography explore, urban indigenous people fit poorly in the legislative agenda of the MAS government and its conceptions of what constitutes indigeneity, leaving a considerable sector of the indigenous population to experience an ongoing exclusion from the protections and benefits of the state.

For urban indigenous people themselves, their condition of quotidian poverty, vulnerability to violence and criminal predation, and lack of access to the most basic forms of public services and infrastructure is encapsulated in a single concept: insecurity. To be insecure is to occupy a habitus of fear and uncertainty that is at once social, psychological, and material. Living in one of the poorest cities on the planet (M. Davis 2006), the residents of Cochabamba’s marginal barrios feel insecure: insecurity colors their entire worldview, the way they relate to their neighbors, residents of nearby communities, and strangers in their midst; it shapes their relationships with entities as distant as state and municipal authorities, and as close as their spouses and children. To be insecure is to lack the power to make effective change in your own life, to protect those small
investments you have made in your home and livelihood, and to defend your family from crime. Insecurity physically shapes your home; it structures your movements through space and conditions your relationship to personal property. Insecurity means there is no reliable police force in your neighborhood to whom you can turn in times of crisis—it means instead that you call 911 over and over again, and if anyone answers they offer promises but no actual help. Insecurity is having to leave your children alone and untended while you go to work, never knowing if a robber or a rapist might visit while you are away. It is about vulnerability, especially to the work of petty thieves, embodied in the spectral figure of the ratero—a quasimythical being who haunts the margins of the city, preying on the unwary and posing an unending challenge to local peace and stability. Insecurity is fundamentally about disorder: It is a sense that the world is unpredictable, out of control, and inherently dangerous, and that within this chaos the individual must struggle desperately just to survive. It is about uncertainty, the unknowable, what Ellen Moodie (2010, 170) has called “not-knowing,” an inability to know how to manage risk, which emanates from spectral sources that seem to transcend the local, the recognizable, the real (see also Taylor 1997). It is in some ways part of what Michael Taussig identifies as a culture of terror, “based on and nourished by silence and myth in which the fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious flourishes by means of rumor and fantasy woven in a dense web of magical realism” (1984, 469). This is the lived experience of insecurity for the marginalized urban poor in Cochabamba—as it is in many other cities throughout Bolivia and elsewhere in Latin America—and it is a condition that remains unchanged despite the many political reforms that Bolivia has experienced in the administrations of Evo Morales.

In a place of insecurity, a variety of personal dispositions and social phenomena can arise. The insecure place is dangerous, both for those who live there and those who visit. The insecure place is highly unstable, characterized more by fragmentation and unpredictability than by order and routine. People living insecure lives cannot rely on what generations of social scientists have called traditions or norms or cultural patterns, much less on state laws or government institutions, to regulate their lives and behavior. In the space of insecurity, people have to continually reinvent themselves and their behaviors, calling on what they know or think they know about the world in order to act purposively and meaningfully in it. In this way, they hope to establish the very sense of order and
pattern that their worlds otherwise lack, a sense of control over their environments, their livelihoods, and their lives. For this reason, the marginal barrios—like other marginal zones (Das and Poole 2004)—are spaces of tremendous creativity, where people must assemble modes of living and making do outside the guarantees of the democratic state and its rule of law.

Despite this disorder, however, the insecure space of the marginal barrio is not devoid of law; it is not truly outside the reach of the state, though it may feel that way to those who live there. Indeed, as the chapters of this ethnography explore, the law operates with power in the marginal barrio, as the state attempts to make legible and minimally control the outlawed settlements on its urban fringes. This observation runs counter to the claims of many barrio residents, who describe the state as absent and their relation to it as one of abandonment, and to the critiques of many social scientists, who similarly regard the neoliberal state as having been negligent and abandoned its responsibility to its citizens. But although there is law in the marginal barrio, the law does not protect against insecurity: it does not give residents a sense that they are protected from the work of criminals, or that they have somewhere to turn if they are the victims of a crime. The law operates instead to erect obstacles, sometimes to the very security that people so desperately crave; it strains to impose its own conception of order, which may not conform well to the kinds of social order that barrio residents desire. The law excludes people by failing to attend to their needs while including them in select regulatory regimes of its own devising—a double outlawing that leaves people both outside the law and problematically within it, but in neither sense secure. Contrary to expectations in the global north, the distinctions between legal and illegal, just and unjust, can be blurry in the marginal barrio, and matters of class, race, gender, and social position influence its operation. “The law is like a snake,” poor people sometimes remark. “Its bite is worse for those who must go barefoot.”

Take, for example, the question of land legalization. As I discuss in chapter 3, establishing legal title to land is a lengthy bureaucratic process requiring barrio residents to jump through an inordinate number of hoops in order to receive state recognition of their land claims. For poor people on the urban margins—who have little time, fewer resources, and scant knowledge of the arcane workings of the legal system—the process is onerous, confusing, and often fruitless because the irregular manner in
which they originally purchased their land renders these transactions un-legalizable from the outset. Barrio residents in such circumstances are thus unlawful squatters in the eyes of the state. From their perspective, though, the state and its laws failed to protect them from the unscrupulous tactics of the land speculators who originally sold them their lots, and the laws of land titling impose further damage by making this circumstance painful and unresolvable, consigning them to a perpetual limbo in which legalization and the rights of citizenship that it conveys remain forever out of reach. The law, then, becomes not a force for ordering things and making them knowable and predictable (as the foundational theories of legal realism seem to suggest; see, for example, Llewellyn and Hoebel 1941), but something that in local perspective is barely distinguishable from illegality. A similar point can be made about criminal law and the prosecution of criminal cases. In the absence of a reliable police or judicial presence in their communities (see chapters 3 and 4), barrio residents are again left outside the law, which gives them no avenue to the resolution of conflicts. Indeed, the law perversely seems to require evidence to sustain a conviction, evidence that the absent and corrupt police are obviously incapable of producing—which leaves criminals free to continue their practices and crime victims unable to claim restitution. In the way it apparently favors criminals over crime victims, the law (along with transnational notions of human rights; see chapter 6) again presents itself as a force of illegality and chaos, rather than of peaceful and equitable ordering.

In such a context, in which fear and a sense of vulnerability characterize daily life and the law is seen as either absent or as an obstacle to one's well-being, people seek other remedies to cope with the generalized insecurity they regularly experience (Salcedo Fidalgo 1998). These include a range of behaviors that I describe in chapter 4. But the most dramatic response to insecurity, the one that has most captured national and international attention and sparked public ire, is the vigilante lynch- ing of rateros and other criminal suspects. In some cases, when a ratero has been apprehended, local people have turned to violence in response, characterizing this violence as an effort to create seguridad (security or safety) for themselves and their families. Ironically, even as they violate the due process rights of their victims and demand harsher laws (including the death penalty) to punish the accused, some lynching participants assert their own right to security as the paramount right that trumps all
others, and that justifies the use of violence to attain it. So even as transnational conceptions of rights provided the fuel that brought Evo Morales and the indigenous social movements to power in Bolivia, many people in the marginal neighborhoods regard human rights as a foreign imposition, an alien concept that privileges the perpetrators of crime against its victims and so contributes to the greater insecurity of the community (see chapter 6). What’s more, local people often rhetorically appeal to community justice, using the new constitution’s legitimizing imprimatur to justify their own violence as a traditional mechanism for creating citizen security, while subordinating transnational concepts of individual rights to a local rendering of the concepts of the indigenous collective (see chapter 5).

In this discussion, however, it is critical to note the tremendous diversity that exists within the phenomenon known as linchamiento (lynching). In my earlier writing about violence in the barrios of Cochabamba (Goldstein 2003, 2004, 2005a; Goldstein and Castro 2006), I explored the lynching as an instrument of public communication, a spectacular means by which the marginalized and silenced could claim a voice and express their discontent with state neglect. In this book, I go beyond the public and performative dimensions of this process to examine lynching ethnographically, exploring the motives, behaviors, and responses of individual barrio women and men to the use of violence as a means of crime control in their communities. This discussion reveals lynching to be a far less unitary practice than the notion of mob justice would suggest, characterized instead by a profound ambiguity and heterogeneity of action and opinion. Lynching, like so much else in the context of insecurity, reflects the uncertainty with which local people go about their daily business, prompting a reconsideration of the mob and the ways in which collective violence are practiced and experienced. From this discussion, lynching emerges as one strategy among many that barrio residents and their leaders adopt as they try to manage the insecurity that they confront every day. The consideration of lynching in this book also differs from my earlier work because the broader political context in which it occurs is different. With the passage of the new constitution and the recognition of the validity of indigenous justice in Bolivia, lynchings now occur in a context in which the discourse of community justice has become a powerful frame for understanding local violence and extralegal forms of justice making. As I demonstrate in chapter 5, the national attention given to
community justice in Bolivia has shifted the political terrain on which lynchings are enacted, providing an entirely new dimension to how these acts of violence are interpreted both by external observers and local actors. The question of how these acts violate the human rights of their victims is another emerging context for the consideration of lynching (see chapter 6), a point that further distinguishes this consideration of lynching violence from earlier treatments.

This book, then, examines the lived experience of insecurity for Cochabamba’s urban indigenous poor, set within the context of broader national and global concerns with security and human rights. It asks: Can we speak meaningfully of a right to security, as a property that adheres to all individuals regardless of gender, race, or economic position and that the state is obligated to protect and defend? Or, as so often seems to be the case in a post-9/11 world, are security and rights inherently antagonistic, with an expansion of the one necessarily entailing a limitation of the other? This debate is being waged in the barrios of Cochabamba, as this ethnography describes. In the chapters that follow, I explore the conjunction of two powerful transnational discourses—security and human rights—examining their deployments and transformations in daily social practice to reveal the ways in which security ultimately can work to defeat rights as local actors operate within and against national and transnational formations of politics and law. Despite the protracted Global War on Terror and the primacy of security concerns in contemporary life worldwide, few ethnographies have treated the subject as a lived dimension of daily experience for the indigenous poor. This book calls attention to the ways in which security plays out on the ground, deployed not only by states but by citizens and community groups as well. It demonstrates the complex interconnections that exist between security and other global or local phenomena that are frequently the objects of anthropological concern—especially the idea of rights—and points to the cultural and legal contradictions emerging within what some have optimistically called the post-neoliberal societies of Latin America. By focusing on the quotidian nature of insecurity in the barrios of Cochabamba, Outlawed shifts the focus of what security and security making are often understood to entail—principally, the fight against terrorism by the United States and other governments worldwide—to consider the daily preoccupations and practices that constitute the lived reality of insecurity for the marginal urban poor.
Finally, *Outlawed* embraces the highly uncertain dimensions of life in outlawed communities. As the discussion above foreshadows, and as many of the subsequent ethnographic chapters demonstrate, life on the margins of the law—where the disorder of daily life competes with the often painful ordering imposed by what I identify in chapter 3 as the “phantom state”—can feel destabilizing. People live with doubt, fearful for their safety and mistrustful of official institutions and promises of support, while lacking their own established mechanisms for resolving the problems they confront. In their search for solutions, they encounter further confusion and ambivalence, wrestling with ethical conflicts and other, more pragmatic considerations about the effectiveness of their responses to insecurity. This uncertainty colors ordinary experience and defies easy analysis. Understanding it requires an approach that is open to multiple and contingent possibilities, including the simultaneous expression of contradictory understandings and practices. Approaching uncertainty in this way can itself lead to murky interpretations that lack the definitive clarity that social science often seems to demand. It suggests instead the emergence of what might be called an uncertain anthropology, which by definition aspires to capture the empirical uncertainty of life amid insecurity. The theme of uncertainty appears throughout the chapters of this ethnography, and I explore the possibilities of an uncertain anthropology in more detail in the book’s concluding chapter.

**Anthropology, Security, and the State**

What do we mean when we talk about “security”? Scholars of international relations typically locate security and the ability to create it within the state, and certainly any understanding of security must consider both the role of the state as a security-making entity and the importance of security for legitimizing and maintaining the state. For some scholars (whom Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde [1998] call the “traditionalists”), security pertains solely to matters of military affairs, with defense of the state being the single most important factor in defining a particular crisis or threat as security-related (see, for example, Chipman 1992). The slippage away from such a seemingly straightforward definition begins almost immediately, however, as we consider what might in fact constitute such a threat. Does a challenge to national identity—for example, posed by the increased presence of minority or immigrant populations—constitute a threat to national security? Does the destabilization of a national
economy represent a security crisis? Opposing the traditionalists are the so-called wideners, those scholars who view threats emerging in a variety of arenas as worthy of the “security” designation, rejecting the traditionalists’ insistence on a military facet or threat of international nuclear war as the sole criterion for such labeling (for example, Wæver, Buzan, Kelstrup, and Lemaitre 1993). This latter perspective understands security as a response to anything that can be persuasively identified as posing a threat to the very existence of the state or society.  

For classical political philosophers like Hobbes (1985 [1651]), Montesquieu (see Robin 2004), Weber (1946), and Marx (1967), fear was a powerful motivation for the formation of states, be they autocratic or liberal democratic, and the purported ability to protect citizens against threats to their peace and well-being was central to any state’s raison d’être (Goldstein 2010b). In the twentieth century, individual state security was often envisioned as being best achieved through strategies of collective security, the joining together of nations into coalitions of mutual support and defense like the League of Nations and the United Nations. Collective security rested on the belief that by banding together, nations could provide better security for all against an aggressor because “regulated, institutionalized balancing predicated on the notion of all against one provides more stability than unregulated, self-help balancing predicated on the notion of each for his own” (Kupchan and Kupchan 1995, 52). Such coalitions were thought to be particularly beneficial to smaller nations, which would have more difficulty defending themselves individually against a hostile foe. By the same token, however, smaller nations might be drawn into conflicts in which they had little stake by virtue of their membership in collective security pacts, as in the aftermath of 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq by the “coalition of the willing” (Anderson, Bennis, and Cavanagh 2003). This logic was frequently invoked during the Cold War, when the collective defense organizations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact faced off, occasionally coming to the brink of global war in the effort to secure the perceived interests of the superpowers. In the West, the fear of communism and nuclear annihilation produced a new geopolitical vision and political strategy that not only “colonized everyday life with the minute-to-minute possibility of nuclear war” but also provided the US government “with a new means of engaging and disciplining citizens in everyday life” (Masco 2008, 361). In terms of economics, the creation of global financial institutions like the World
Bank and the International Monetary Fund was motivated in part by a logic of collective economic security, a doctrine of liberal capitalism that assumed the integration of small national economies into global markets would provide greater economic stability and development for everyone, while guaranteeing the public loans and private capital of foreign and transnational investors (Cable 1995; Nye 1974).

But collective security could not be achieved without national security, which after World War II became a paramount concern of many nation-states, again framed within the logic of a clash between communism and freedom. Treating security as identical to national security became an equation with great appeal to a variety of state regimes. In Latin America, authoritarian governments of the 1960s through 1980s based their authority on what was known as the national security doctrine, which identified the military as the institution charged with defending democracy and, indeed, Western civilization against the incursions of world communism (Leal Buitrago 2003). An extension of the broader Cold War emanating from the Western and Soviet blocs, the national security doctrine in the Latin American context provided a powerful exception to the protection of human and civil rights, as the war against internal enemies—communist subversives—had to be fought at any and all costs (Mares 2008). Under this doctrine, the military assumed a domestic policing function, and special units responsible for maintaining public order were created to identify and deal with perceived threats to society and state, however they saw fit. Vital US political and economic support for these regimes was often justified by their demonstrated ability to hold off the communist threat throughout the Americas. The equation of security with social order was quite clearly established in the national security doctrine, a theme that persisted in later versions of state security in Latin America.

As the Cold War came to an end, dictatorships turned into democracies—enjoying support from the United States both before and after the transition (Grandin 2006)—and the state-led, import-substitution developmental model of the 1960s and 1970s was replaced by the free-trade, market-driven model of the 1980s and 1990s. The political, economic, and social consequences of this neoliberal model for the societies of Latin America and elsewhere have been amply documented, including greater income inequality and expanding poverty, reduced state and social services, rising unemployment, and mounting crime and social vio—
ence (see Gledhill 2004; Schwegler 2008). Even so, under neoliberalism
the official sense of what security might entail remained limited to the
political, particularly as the communist enemy of the Cold War morphed
into the terrorist enemy of the twenty-first-century Global War on Ter-
ror. As economies weakened and the daily lives of people in a range of
societies became more precarious, broader conceptions of security that
would include such things as employment, health care, and education—
what the United Nations has defined as “human security” (United Na-
tions Development Programme 1994)—were slow to emerge, so that
security continued to be framed largely as safety from external attack or
internal destabilization, and freedom from fear of terrorism or violence.
The traditionalist understanding of security seemed to prevail in neo-
liberal society, overcoming any attempt to widen security’s domain.

The emergence of what we might call the security state is the logical
counterpoint to neoliberalism’s privatization of civil society, its attempt
to devolve onto civil institutions, local communities, and individuals the
tasks of governance that had once been considered the responsibility of
the welfare state. In its neoliberal mode, the state relies on individualizing
techniques of governmentality to free itself from the various responsibil-
ities of maintaining its subjects, conferring on those subjects themselves
the daily obligations of self-maintenance and self-regulation (Foucault
1991; Inda 2005; Merry 2001). Meanwhile, the state claims for itself the
exclusive right and responsibility to define and impose security (maintain-
ing, of course, the prerogative to subcontract that responsibility—
for example, to private security firms and proxy armies; see Nordstrom
2004). The state is authorized to assess risk, maintain secrecy, and control
dissent, all as part of its reframing of the “care and moral duty” of the state
to its citizens, the provision of security as social welfare (Hay and Andre-
jevic 2006, 339; see also Bratich 2006; on the risk society, see Beck 1992;
Giddens 1990, 1999). In Antonio Gramsci’s terms, the liberal state sup-
posedly becomes a “night-watchman,” “a coercive organization which will
safeguard the development of the continually proliferating elements of
the regulated society, and which will therefore progressively reduce its
own authoritarian and forcible interventions” (1971, 263). Thus even as it
warns of imminent security threats, the state seeks to reduce its own role
in security provision through expanding individual “responsibilization”
(Goldstein 2005a, 391). As James Hay and Mark Andrejevic note about
the George W. Bush administration’s National Strategy for Homeland
Security, the state assumes for itself a “supportive” role in administering security, while “making each of us ‘accountable’ for and accountants of our own security, calculating the many forms of risk and exposure” to which we find ourselves regularly subjected (2006, 337). A corollary to this is the apparent need to limit basic rights, which, according to the Bush administration’s strategy, make a democratic society “inherently vulnerable” to attack by “the invisible enemies, lurking in the shadows” (Hay and Andrejevic 2006, 337). The proper disposition of the neoliberal subject in this security society, inculcated by the state’s immanent securitization techniques, is one of perpetual alertness and individual preparedness, being continually on one’s guard against the emergence of any and all possible threats (Elmer and Opel 2006). Suspicion is a key component of this neoliberal disposition, with each individual encouraged to be prudent and responsible and to assume a habitually anxious, cautious engagement with anyone or anything deemed unfamiliar and potentially threatening (O’Malley 1996).

From the perspective of the scholars known as the Copenhagen School of security studies (see, e.g., Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998), security is best understood not as a matter of assessing real dangers to determine their threat level—no objective measure exists whereby such a determination might be made (color-coded threat-warning indicators notwithstanding). Rather, the Copenhagen scholars emphasize securitization, a process of constructing a collective understanding of something as a particular kind of danger, a threat to the very existence of the state, the society, or “our way of life.” From this perspective, security is fundamentally social and in a sense performative: in terms of speech act theory (Austin 1962), the ability to make a security declaration—to utter the word “security” in reference to a particular threat or crisis—is an indication of the political power of the speaker, demonstrated by his or her ability to declare something a security threat and to have that declaration publicly recognized as legitimate. Security is thus inherently intersubjective and socially constructed: successful securitization depends on an audience’s willingness to accept the legitimacy of the security speech act, based on the perceived existential threat that the object of securitization poses (see, for example, anthropological studies of migration and the securitization of national spaces in an age of globalization, including Bigo 2002; Coutin 2000, 2007; De Genova 2002; De Genova and Peutz 2010; Menjívar 2006; Walters 2002, 2004). It is also highly self-referential: se-
curity is that which authorized actors are able to securitize, not what might actually exist as a real social threat.

As scholars of “moral panics” (Cohen 2002; S. Hall et al. 1978) earlier perceived, the labeling of such threats can incite public demand for a force—the state—capable of controlling or policing the crisis that securitization itself has called into being. In a democratic context, a security matter is inextricably linked to the state’s ability to declare a state of exception, a condition under which ordinary rules do not apply and individual rights can be suspended in the best interests of the state (Agamben 2005). The power of the security speech act is that it authorizes the speaker to take extraordinary action in response to a threat that is deemed so potentially damaging as to preempt all other threats and concerns. Security in itself, then, supersedes politics: by naming something a security matter, the speaker claims the authority to employ extraordinary measures, to set aside the customary rules of the game because a security threat by its very nature cannot be dealt with through customary means. A security threat is that which “legitimizes the breaking of rules” (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 25), which in general means normative law and the guarantee of rights that law is meant to entail. Security, in other words, is about survival, and matters of law or rights cannot be allowed to interfere in ensuring the survival of a society or the state that leads it.

All of the preceding analyses of security share an emphasis on the state as the singular locus of and agent for producing security. But as anthropologists should be quick to recognize, an entirely state-focused, top-down approach to security—even one that recognizes its important constructivist dimensions, played out in official pronouncements and political discourses—marginalizes subordinated groups and alternative voices, including indigenous people, women, and the poor (Hansen 2000). It is here that what I have elsewhere (Goldstein 2010b) called a critical anthropology of security can make important contributions, both to a broader understanding of what security entails and to its theorization. A critical anthropology of security can explore the multiple ways in which security is configured and deployed, not only by states and authorized speakers but by communities, groups, and individuals in their engagements with other local actors and with arms of the state itself. As in other areas of political anthropology (for example, Arias and Goldstein 2010), a perspective on security as made and understood by actors and groups outside
of the state and its official institutions helps to broaden our perspective on what security means, how it is produced, what it includes, and what it excludes in the ordinary and exceptional struggles of daily life. Such a perspective brings to light the manifold ways in which global discourses are adopted, manipulated, transformed, and deployed in quotidian interactions and events, revealing the full range of security as lived social experience in a variety of contexts.

Security and Neoliberalism in Latin America

By the time of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the foreseeable impacts of the neoliberal model were already becoming realized, especially in the developing world, where this model did not emerge organically but was imported by national governments or imposed by forces from without. In these societies, the individualizing and responsibilizing strategies of neoliberal governmentality brought immense difficulties for citizens and states alike. Having dismantled the welfare state (or, as in Bolivia, the patronage state) while relaxing many of the barriers to the movement and operations of transnational capital, many national governments had to contend with rising public doubts about their defense of national sovereignty and the rights and security of national citizens in a context of political and economic globalization. In Latin America, for example, where the prescriptions of the so-called Washington Consensus—including deregulation of transnational industries, the removal of tariffs and other barriers to trade, and the reduction of government involvement in the national economy and social service provision—failed to deliver on their promises of trickle-down economic improvement, organized social movements launched powerful challenges to the state and its claims to be working to provide security to all. Even as more and more nation-states in Latin America explicitly renounce the neoliberal paradigm, the impacts of this approach’s ascendancy over several decades continue to be felt within Latin American society, with consequences for national prosperity and citizens’ civil and human rights.

Who or what is the proper object of security in a neoliberal context is a matter of some debate, as recent conflicts in Latin America have revealed. Under the neoliberal regimes of the last few decades in Latin America, as elsewhere around the world, nation-states have increasingly been required (by the burden of debt and the repayment schedules imposed by
multinational lenders like the IMF) to adopt the role of security providers for global capital, which often forces these states to act in ways that undermine the security (economic, physical, and otherwise) of their own citizens (Ferguson 2006). Nations that cannot guarantee security to transnational corporations risk an investment downturn, as foreign companies and financiers may refuse to do business there, depriving those states’ governments of the capital they require to keep themselves in power and service their national debt. By “security” here I mean both a guarantee of a stable economic environment for foreign investors, with minimal state intervention in business or finance (for example, taxes or laws that attempt to regulate industrial activity and so impose unacceptable costs on investors), and a guarantee of political stability, with popular challenges to transnational corporations being limited and suppressed by the state. States find themselves caught between the dictates of various foreign bosses and the demands of national citizens, who expect that in a democratic context the duly elected authorities will work to serve the interests of the electorate. Democratically elected governments that are unable to reconcile the security demands of transnational corporations and lenders with citizens’ demands for rights face a crisis of legitimacy, as citizens question the loyalties and priorities of national law and policymakers. Such contradictions are particularly fraught when played out across the “neoliberal securitescapes” (Zilberg 2011, 6) that characterize the modern world, unequal distributions of military force and technology that are simultaneously keyed to other forms of power and inequality within and among nation-states from north to south (see Gusterson 2004).

Bolivia experienced such a crisis in 2000, when what came to be known as the Water War erupted in Cochabamba. In 1999, Bolivian officials had granted the lease to Cochabamba’s water supply to a subsidiary of the multinational Bechtel corporation, responding to an offer from the World Bank of a $14,000,000 loan to expand service if the city’s water system were privatized (Schultz 2000). As a result, monthly water bills for poor urban residents increased by as much as 400 percent, sparking local anger that quickly mobilized in repudiation of the Bechtel deal and a demand for the return of public water management (Morales 2010). The Water War marked the emergence of a discourse of natural resources as collective rights, recognized as part of Bolivia’s national patrimony; it also marked a broader claim to indigenous heritage by urban popular sectors, as a means of establishing citizenship claims and
the right to participation in democratic politics (Albro 2005). This series of events was repeated in 2003, as internal disagreement over how to manage the sale and export of natural gas resources to foreign markets led to increasingly violent clashes between indigenous protestors and national security forces. Fearing that gas revenues would be misappropriated by a government that did not appear to have their best interests at heart, many Bolivians refused to accept President Gonzalo ("Goni") Sanchez de Lozada’s hydrocarbon policy, paralyzing trade in the nation’s most viable export commodity and imperiling Goni’s neoliberal economic agenda for debt reduction and national economic security. These events culminated in the Gas War of October 2003, as Goni attempted to forcibly impose his export plan, angering the popular opposition and leading to public violence in which national police and military forces killed sixty-seven protestors and injured hundreds more in the highland city of El Alto. Goni was forced to resign and flee the country, bringing to an end a series of regimes in what had till then been one of South America’s staunchest bastions of neoliberalism. The Water War and the Gas War, understood as conflicts between rights for indigenous people and the stability and security of the state, called into question who was actually being represented under what people locally identified as neoliberal democracy (Albro 2005, 2006a), and led ultimately to the election of Evo Morales as Bolivia’s first indigenous president.∞∏

These events challenge the meaning of security in neoliberal democracies, which proclaim a commitment to security for all when in fact they prioritize the security of transnational capital, which ultimately underwrites the state itself. In Ecuador, for example, Suzana Sawyer (2004) has detailed the responses of indigenous Amazonians to the environmental destruction engendered by transnational oil corporations’ exploratory and extractive industries. These industrial activities threaten the health and livelihoods of tropical communities, whose members are exposed to pollution and disease and whose local economies are crippled as oil extraction poisons the soil, water, fish, and game on which they rely for subsistence. As these groups mobilize to demand government intervention in this crisis, they reveal the extent to which the national state has fully aligned itself with the interests of transnational capital against those of its citizens, calling into question its legitimizing security function (part of what Sawyer [2004, 15] calls the “crisis of representation” in neoliberal democracy). As Sawyer’s work illustrates, a key irony of neoliberalism
lies in the contradiction between its rhetoric, which depicts the state as a minor player in the open field of free capitalist activity, and its reality, in which the state operates as manager, actuary, and cop—maintaining an open field for transnational business by creating laws, enforcing policy reforms, and controlling dissent among citizens whose own economic interests run counter to those of industry, and whose social rights impose unwanted and expensive restrictions on transnational commerce (see also Ong 2006). The personal security of indigenous Amazonians is secondary to the financial security of the global corporations at work in the region, a fact clearly revealed by the Ecuadorian state’s legal maneuvering as it nullified laws that protected citizens’ rights and drafted new codes for industry that protected foreign interests. In this and in the Bolivian case, the state resists popular groups’ efforts to broaden the meaning of security beyond threats to the state itself and their mobilization of the transnational discourse of human rights to challenge the neoliberal democratic state’s abandonment of its obligations to its citizens. Indeed, one of the first efforts in Bolivia to codify “security” came in the form of the Law of Citizen Security, passed by the neoliberal Sanchez de Lozada administration in August 2003. Articles 213 and 214 of this law banned the use of roadblocks and other forms of popular protest that would obstruct the flow of traffic on the nation’s roads, declaring such forms of political action to be detrimental to the “security” of the national population. As in the era of the dictatorships, “security” here meant security of the state, maintaining the political status quo through whatever means might be necessary.

Meanwhile, security means something quite different to most citizens of Latin American nations, especially to the urban poor. Measures of criminality have shown a steady increase in that behavior throughout Latin America since the 1980s, intensifying in the 2000s (Ungar 2011). Despite the inadequacy of data from most countries (police often fail to record accurate crime statistics, and underreporting due to mistrust of the police is rampant), by all existing measures, crimes against property and persons are high across the region (Ungar 2003), with the incidence of violent crime worsening since the 1990s (Carranza 2004). Latin America has a homicide rate that is virtually off the charts: the global average for homicides is 5 per 100,000 people, with a rate of over 10 considered to be dangerously high, but the average for middle- to low-income countries in Latin America is 27.5, the highest regional average in the world (Moser,
Winton, and Moser 2005; World Health Organization 2002). Within Latin America, most violent crimes are committed in large cities, and the Andean region reports the highest incidence of violent crimes in both rural and urban areas (Arriagada 2001). Furthermore, although in the last few years crime rates have fallen somewhat in the region’s wealthier countries, they have risen in the poorer countries, a function of income disparity that many observers attribute to the inequities that have intensified under globalization (Carranza 2004). It is these inequities, more than absolute poverty, that social scientists have correlated most closely with violence, suggesting that violence is most likely to be found in contexts of extreme inequality and social exclusion. Fear of crime, meanwhile, has mounted exponentially and without necessarily being correlated with crime statistics, spurred on by daily conversations, rumors, and gossip (Caldeira 2000) and by the contributions of the media, which sensationalize the most horrific incidents of violent crime for their own commercial purposes (Briceño-Leon and Zubilaga 2002; Goldstein and Castro 2006). Personal fear and what has become identified as *inseguridad* (insecurity) are further exacerbated by the loud and furious debate in all Latin American countries (as in the United States and Europe) over public security, amid efforts to prepare and protect the public from criminal and terrorist violence. The result is a pervasive climate of dread and fear that makes the habitus of daily life, particularly in urban areas, one of overwhelming anxiety, uncertainty, and despair (Garland 2001; Giddens 1990; Merry 2001).17

Contributing to this pervasive sense of insecurity is the absence of a reliable authority, operating according to a rule of law, to which people can turn to report crimes, resolve conflicts, or seek redress of grievances. As I discuss further in chapter 3, corruption is widespread in the Bolivian police force (as it is in other Latin American police institutions), and people reporting crimes to the authorities are likely to be victimized anew by extortionist police practices, with demands for money to initiate routine police procedures being commonly reported. “This sense of the law as worse than crime, the ultimate injustice” (Taussig 2003, 30), is widely held and contributes to the sense of powerlessness that crime victims typically experience. Additionally, the court system is beyond the reach or comprehension of most poor urban residents, who have an incomplete knowledge of the workings of the system and lack the financial or cultural capital to access it (Domingo and Seider 2001).
spaces of policing and justice making vacated by the state are increas-
ingly occupied by private security firms, often staffed by both former
police officers and former convicts, who know the workings of the offi-
cial system and now profit from this knowledge by selling security ser-
VICES to those who can afford them (see fig. 1). These private security
firms are increasingly coming to operate like paramilitaries or mafias,
dividing the city into turfs under their control and pressuring all local
residents to pay for protection or else become the next victims of crime
in the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{18}

Despite the many problems with the formal justice system, many poor
urban residents nevertheless advocate for a stronger and more aggressive
police presence in their neighborhoods, contending that crime would be
reduced and security enhanced were the authorities to take a heavy-
handed approach (\textit{la mano dura}) to crime in the streets. Throughout
Latin America, political candidates have been elected on “get tough on
crime” platforms that promise to circumvent the due process rights of the
accused. (For example, the election of the former dictator Hugo Banzer in
Bolivia in 2001 was in part due to his strong anticrime pledge [Prillaman
2003].) Some states are adopting a zero-tolerance approach to crime, a
now-transnational philosophy derived from Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s ad-
ministration in New York City. Exported throughout the hemisphere by
luminaries like William Bratton, former chief of the New York Police

\textbf{FIG. 1} A private security guard in Cochabamba, 2008. Photo by Lisa Berg.
Chapter One

Department and proponent of the “broken windows” philosophy of crime prevention, zero tolerance justifies a strong police response to relatively minor crimes in order to deter the commission of more serious ones (Escobar et al. 2004). Though studies have shown that zero tolerance is not a realistic approach to crime control—indeed, no city in the world has actually instituted all of its principles (Petrella and Vanderschueren 2003)—zero tolerance has become a powerful discourse for states attempting to project an image of efficacy in the fight against crime (Prillaman 2000). It also appeals to many citizens within these societies, who are willing to surrender some basic rights and freedoms, and to accept harsh penalties and violent police practice, in exchange for enhanced security.

For those who feel themselves abandoned by the state, the idea of taking matters into their own hands can become an attractive option. Indeed, during the last two decades, Bolivia has exhibited one of the highest incidences of vigilante violence in the world, with a majority of this violence concentrated in the southern zone of Cochabamba (Goldstein 2003). Attracted by the city’s large informal economy, centered around its huge outdoor market, the Cancha, and its easy access to the lowland coca-growing region, the Chapare, many peasants have migrated to Cochabamba from the countryside over the last thirty years. The result has been an expansion of illegal urban settlements on the periphery of the city. This pattern, common throughout Latin America and other parts of the developing world, is made worse in Bolivia by that country’s deep and prevailing poverty and the inability of the state to provide adequate infrastructure and services to the residents of these so-called marginal communities. This poverty also drives a high crime rate, and these barrios are frequently the targets of thieves who prey on the homes of poor people, left unattended during the day while their owners are working. For people who have little, any loss is devastating, and the rage and fear that such victimization generates can be channeled into violence, as some seek retribution against those presumed to be guilty of these crimes. Most people in these marginal barrios are extremely reluctant to call in the authorities, fearing that they might have to pay fees or bribes or get involved in a complicated legal system that they neither understand nor know how to use. Instead, some residents turn to violence as the most expedient and, they believe, most reliable means of deterring future crime in their neighborhoods. Such violence, however, is ineffective as a crime-control measure; instead, it feeds an ongoing
cycle of fear, revenge, and erosion of trust in local communities and state institutions. The use of lynching is also highly contested: although most reports describe it as a uniform practice in which all barrio residents unreflectively participate, it is in fact a highly diverse set of behaviors around which no local consensus has actually emerged (see chapter 4).

The consequences of this violence and the climate of fear it engenders are legion, and the security frame compounds the problem by providing a justification for violence, intolerance, and the rejection of human rights. As chapter 3 demonstrates, the vigilance encouraged by neoliberal securitization is robustly present in the marginal barrios, where people regard with suspicion any outsider who enters their neighborhood, fearing that the person is a potential housebreaker, child molester, or rapist. Women’s freedom of movement especially is strictly curtailed, as they fear leaving the home, going out at night, or talking to strangers. Community life itself is highly constrained, with people reluctant to attend public events out of mistrust and a generally degraded sense of collective identity. Furthermore, the Bolivian government does little to meet the security needs of its poorest and most vulnerable citizens. Today, if a barrio resident has a conflict or legal problem or experiences abuse or violence, he or she has to figure out where in the downtown area to go for attention, often having to take time off work to spend hours in line at some government office. If the resident lacks funds to pay a bribe, can’t afford the cab fare downtown, can’t speak Spanish, or doesn’t want to leave his or her children or home unattended, he or she is unlikely to get service, and the problem will remain unresolved. For some problems—domestic violence, for example—the government provides few services, and far too few people take advantage of these, for lack of knowledge of how to access them, or for fear of state authorities or spousal retribution. In general, people are more likely to just endure their problems, despite the suffering these cause them, rather than to deal with the labyrinthine and nightmarish bureaucracy in search of official help. Thus, although Evo Morales’s MAS government has transformed the sociopolitics of the Bolivian nation, many people in the marginal barrios continue to experience a profound and uninterrupted insecurity that shows no signs of resolution.21

Citizen Security and Human Rights

A new and apparently more progressive variety of the security discourse has emerged in recent years, one that seems to combine the longing for
security with the quest for rights in the transnational discourse of citizen security (seguridad ciudadana) (Goldstein 2004). Across Latin America, governmental policymakers, international development organizations, academic analysts, and average citizens have adopted the language of citizen security to characterize the struggle for greater personal and social security guaranteed by a democratic rule of law. By one definition of this new security paradigm, “citizen security” refers to “the protection of the normal functioning of democratic institutions, the defense of the citizenry from criminality in all of its facets and typologies, [and] the defense of citizens against corruption and other asocial acts that impede or problematize the normal development and enjoyment of the fundamental rights of persons” (Delgado Aguado and Guardia Maduell 1994, 20). Implicit in this definition is the right of citizens to a safe and secure life, and to demand that the state respect and guarantee this right (del Olmo 2000). This new wrinkle in the transnational discourse of security is clearly distinct from earlier meanings of “security” in Latin America, distancing it from the idea of state security and embracing one that more explicitly targets the needs of the populace. Rather than pitting rights against security, citizen security acknowledges security to be a right, guaranteed by the state to its citizens.\(^\text{22}\)

In an expanded sense, citizen security has become a platform for the realization of other rights, or for the attainment of security that facilitates equal opportunity and the expansion of economic, political, and social rights for the poor and marginalized (Bobea 2003). Therefore, improving citizen security in the region has become a major goal of transnational development activity in the last few years. Since 9/11, security has become extraordinarily attractive to funders, and many international development organizations (including the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and the US Agency for International Development [USAID]) have recently made grants to Latin American states with the aim of heightening citizen security.\(^\text{23}\) The United States now regards security in Latin American nations as critical to its own national security: In the words of a USAID report (in which the agency quotes its own congressional budget justification for 2005), “Establishing the rule of law also helps to fight crime more effectively, and in the process improve security in those countries and throughout the region. In the new environment of security concerns and the War on Terror, the stability of the hemisphere is a high priority for the United States, especially as it recog-
nizes that, in the post–Cold War environment, ‘the greatest threats to U.S. interests at home and abroad stem not from conquering states, but from failing ones’” (United States Agency for International Development 2005). Similarly, at a 2003 conference on Security in Latin America and the Caribbean sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank, a representative of that organization noted that “the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11 have radically modified the security agenda, and new threats have deepened the consciousness of the Western Hemisphere on the interdependence in facing this problem” and stressed that security should be “the political axis of international cooperation” in the Americas.24 Not surprisingly, on the heels of this transnational funding impetus, concepts of citizen security have recently been written into some Latin American constitutions, and the language of seguridad ciudadana has been incorporated into a number of hemispheric pacts and programs of transnational cooperation (Gabaldón 2004).

Citizen security as a transnational discourse of rights encounters problems, however, in the daily practice of security in Latin America. Given the high incidence of crime and violence, the profound mistrust and ineffectiveness of police and judicial systems, and the generalized climate of fear and suspicion that clouds everyday life, talk of security experiences a slippage away from this progressive language and back into the inherited meanings of the authoritarian past (Dammert and Malone 2003; Neild 2002). Old equations of security with public order reassert themselves, and violence targeting the enemy within reemerges (if indeed it ever went away) as a publicly acceptable method of dealing with social disorder. Citizen security becomes a discourse of this condition, demonizing a criminal element that pervades society and is responsible for myriad social ills. Delinquents (delincuentes or malhechores), as they are frequently called in Bolivia, embody the general unease that people (of all races and social classes, but particularly the indigenous poor) feel as they confront the perils of daily life in a context of pervasive poverty, inequality, and personal disempowerment. Like communists during the Cold War, delinquents today are characterized in the language of citizen security as an ongoing threat to democratic stability and security and are made the targets of repressive campaigns at the national and local levels and demonized in official proclamations, media pronouncements, and daily conversations. Youth are especially vulnerable: young people may be criminalized as potential delinquents simply by virtue of their age (see chapter 3).
From the vantage point of what might be called the security paradigm (Agamben 2002), security can be attained only if the forces of insecurity and delinquency are opposed by the superior force of state repression, and rights become obstacles that have to be circumvented so that law and order in the streets may prevail. For the state, this equation creates a space of exception (Agamben 2005) whose logic postpones the realization of citizens’ or human rights until such time as delinquency can be controlled and the threats to the social order that it poses permanently quelled. Such an approach allows for the remilitarization of policing, reversing human-rights groups’ hard-won gains in excluding the armed forces from the daily work of internal security (Machillanda 2005); the expansion of police latitude in the use of violence in criminal investigations; the adoption of harsher criminal penalties, including the death penalty—now resurgent in Latin America (Dammert and Malone 2003); and the prosecution and punishment of minors as adults. For citizens concerned with their own security but lacking confidence that the state will provide it, the idea of the right to security emerges as a justification for extralegal violence, permitting the adoption of local forms of violent revenge as instruments of crime control and security promotion. The right to security takes its place as the paramount right, the right that trumps all others, and violence—either state, collective, or private—is justified as the means to its attainment.

However, while violent measures to enhance security enjoy broad support across classes in Bolivia, suspicion of the state remains extremely high, support for la mano dura is not universal, and popular responses to state violence not apparently connected to crime control can be swift and severe. In terms of daily life, the contradictions generated by the security-versus-rights debate—a debate transacted not only in Cochabamba but in the United States, across the hemisphere, and around the globe—result in an existential murkiness that only increases the lived sense of insecurity for those on the urban margins. At once aware that rights can be valuable protections and liberating tools as well as apparent threats to their safety and security, residents of marginal barrios often feel torn between embracing and rejecting the discourse and practice of human and civil rights, and ambivalent about the uses of violence in the effort to increase security. In the following chapters, I explore these ambiguous, uncertain states in which barrio residents live, reflecting on the complex and often competing frames through which people interpret their experience of
insecurity and determine how to act from an insecure disposition. The resulting ethnography is at times indeterminate, suggesting not some clear-cut set of perspectives unfolding within an organized social order, but a social field in which people must continually grope for solutions to problems that seem unsolvable, and for frames to make sense out of what often seems entirely senseless. It is a picture of uncertainty, lying at the root of the insecurity with which people live.

Outlawed
In a strictly geographical sense, security in Cochabamba is very much keyed to space and the rural/urban divide common throughout Latin America, and it reflects broader ideologies and practices of social exclusion. Since Spanish colonial times, indigenous people in Latin America were assumed to belong in the countryside, with the city being the domain of white and upper-class elites (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Weismantel 2001). Although the demographic distribution of colonial and (later) national populations never did conform to this idealized model, the urban landscape was transformed after the 1960s, particularly during the neoliberal era that began roughly in the mid-1980s. At that time, a large-scale rural-to-urban migration produced a massive influx of indigenous people, seeking a better life in the cities than the existence that failing agrarian economies could offer them. In Cochabamba, they settled on available lands on the urban periphery and created new communities that municipal authorities deemed illegal because of their failure to conform to existing norms of land legalization established by the municipality (discussed further in chapter 3; see also Goldstein 2004). As these poor, so-called marginal neighborhoods or barrios continued to grow, the city became unable or unwilling to extend municipal and state services to their residents, denying the people access to what many of them regarded as their basic rights as citizens—rights that included access to the law and to state institutions responsible for maintaining social order and creating official justice. The distance of one’s residence from the city center became correlated with one’s ability to access citizenship rights and the services of the state justice system, while race continued to dictate one’s ability to legitimately claim urban residence and citizenship itself. Insecurity, then, coincides with spatial location: the marginal neighborhoods of Cochabamba fall on the wrong side of a spatial and racialized legal frontier, recalling the same historically con-
stituted inequities of race- and class-based exclusion that have endured throughout Latin American history.

Anthropologists who study the margins have long been aware of the fundamental misnomer contained in the term “marginal,” recognizing that supposedly marginal people are in fact deeply connected to the mainstream of social life (Peattie 1974). Marginality is not an innate character flaw that locates some people beyond the pale, but the outcome of a complex political and social process: Peripheries are often peripheral because they have been actively marginalized by the state, with their inhabitants barred from the benefits of citizenship and belonging (Goldstein 2004). At the same time, however, these places are also problematically included in the domain of the state through various official techniques of making order, rendering the excluded legible to power’s gaze (Scott 1998; Trouillot 2001). As Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004) have observed, the margins are in fact critical sites of the nation-state’s ongoing self-reproduction: precisely because of their location at the supposed limits of state authority, marginal spaces are those in which the state’s attempts to reconstitute itself through its forms of legal ordering may be most robust (see Risør 2010). Because they are both inside and outside the formation of the state, at once included and excluded, these marginal locations might be thought of as spaces of “organized abandonment” (Harvey 1989, 303, quoted in Gilmore 2008, 31): Particularly difficult to reconcile with state projects of historicity and nation formation, these localities are deliberately excluded from national consciousness and identity, yet they must still be regulated if the state’s authority is to remain legitimate and opportunities to contest it foreclosed. Such marginal spaces are characterized by poverty, underdevelopment, and neglect, as a host of studies of urban slums and squatter settlements has shown. But they can also be spaces of invention and creativity, as marginalized people explore new ways of resolving local problems, relatively unfettered by broader political or cultural considerations (Appadurai 2002; P. Hall 2004).

An awareness of the ideological and juridical complexity that fills the seemingly marginal spaces of the urban periphery is critical for understanding their relationship to the state and the ways in which their residents try to establish order on its margins. As discussed above, to live on the margins is to be interstitial, both included in and excluded from the domain of the state and its legal apparatuses. As a result, many marginal
people find themselves subject in unfavorable ways to the law’s dictates. In the barrios of Cochabamba, this can mean lacking legal title to one’s land and so effectively being reduced to a squatter, an outlaw illegally occupying urban terrain; it can mean being a participant in or even merely an observer of a lynching, and so situated outside of or made antagonistic to the domains of both state law and transnational human rights regimes. Alternatively, barrio residents may find that their poverty, race, or geographic location on the margins disqualifies them from the protections of state law, including honest policing and access to legal institutions, and so effectively they are “out-lawed” again—written out of the state’s legal purview. These dual modes of outlawing—negative inclusion and perilous exclusion—represent different ways that the state produces or perpetuates insecurity in the marginal barrios, even as it establishes a certain kind of order on its periphery.

However, understanding the relationship between the state and its margins, particularly in terms of security and justice making, again requires us to move beyond a limited vision of the law’s spatial distribution and connection with nonstate forms of ordering. From one perspective, security making in the barrios is a case of intersection between multiple systems of meaning and ordering. In a given social space—in this case, situated on the margins of the state, in a kind of two-dimensional center-periphery model—state law either maintains order or fails to do so; it extends to the fringes or it doesn’t. And where state law fails, vigilante practices or other alternative modes of legal ordering supposedly emerge to fill the gap. These forms are seen to coexist and conflict, vying for legitimacy on a contested legal terrain. This perspective shares an approach with much legal anthropology, in which the notion of legal pluralism—the existence within a single social space of multiple forms of legal ordering—has been dominant, especially as a way of understanding colonial and postcolonial legal contexts. The legal pluralist approach has been extremely useful as a way of conceptualizing forms of local ordering that do not depend on state law, reminding us that law and order do not necessarily emerge from the center and spread to the periphery (Merry 1988). Legal pluralism can be counterhegemonic and potentially radical, suggesting that one national space can contain multiple, equally valid legal systems. Bonaventura Santos’s well-known examination of “the law of the oppressed” in a Brazilian squatter settlement provides a good example of what he calls the “plurality of legal orders” that characterize modern
society, particularly in cities where the state’s legal order may not extend to many poor and marginal communities (Santos 1995, 114). Bolivia, too, can be understood in such terms: as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the academic notion of legal pluralism has influenced the Bolivian state itself by providing the intellectual rationale for the constitutional recognition of community justice, within a nation that officially envisions itself as culturally, linguistically, and legally plural.

But we must be careful here to avoid attributing stability to situations that are better characterized by flux and contradiction—a fallacy toward which pluralist conceptions can lead. In the ethnography that follows, I hope to indicate the ways in which the reality of these marginal spaces are characterized not by stable forms of social ordering and by plural systems of law and legality, but by fractured, ever-shifting planes of law and lawlessness, order and chaos, on which barrio residents unsteadily reside and try to make their way. To insist on a plurality of systems is to risk imposing our own analytical categories on others’ realities. Simon Roberts has critiqued legal pluralism as an analytic approach: “We must remember whose understandings we are working with when we conceptualise social space in terms of plural fields/domains/discourses/systems; actors on the ground may not experience or articulate the repertoire of norms available to them in that way at all” (1998, 105). Rather than stable sets of referents, then, or a competition between or the coexistence of coherent systems of meaningful practices and beliefs, the quest to establish order in the marginal barrio is characterized by individual and collective creativity, imagination, and what I call “legal bricolage,” a process by which people assemble “whatever is at hand” into responses to particular situations (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 17). These may become routinized with time and so take on the appearance of systems or orders, but they maintain a quality of spontaneity and possibility. Lynching is a good example: rather than a unitary phenomenon in which all barrio residents participate, lynching is a loose rubric under which a range of practices might be grouped, and it is regarded with ambivalence by the majority of barrio residents with whom I have spoken. Rather than an overlapping in space of discrete, contained systems, people’s legal understandings may be better understood temporally as the simultaneous expression of multiple, incoherent legal fragments, bits and pieces that present themselves all at once to people facing critical situations (on simultaneity, see Mascia-Lees and Himpele 2006, 2007). In a highly unstable and unpredictable social environment, barrio
residents call on a range of resources in their efforts to create security, as they understand it; these include local renderings of state law, trans-national human rights, indigenous tradition, and media representations, all assembled through the residents’ creative imaginings and expressed through negotiation and confrontation.27

The result is a highly uncertain social reality whose parameters are continually open to negotiation. To live as outlaws—subject to the law through their transgressions, yet forced to make their way without the law’s protections—is deeply destabilizing for local people, who are perpetually unsure about the nature of social threats and the proper responses to them. People must draw on all their resources, including the forces of imagination, spontaneity, and a kind of juridical creativity, as they struggle to control the uncertainty in which they live. The chapters of this book detail that struggle, as barrio residents make their way across this uncertain terrain.

Organization of the Book

The ethnography presented in the following chapters was conducted in the zone of Uspha Uspha, part of District 8 on Cochabamba’s southernmost periphery. Within Uspha Uspha, most of my time was spent in the barrio of Loma Pampa, a community of about 120 families that creeps up a hillside at the farthest end of the district. During the principal fieldwork period, between June 2005 and September 2007, I became very close friends with the president of Loma Pampa, don Miguel; his wife, doña Senobia; and their extended family.28 From 2007 to the present, I have maintained frequent contact with my friends and collaborators in Uspha Uspha and Cochabamba, and I have pursued a variety of initiatives to try to improve conditions there, all of which fall under the rubric of what has come to be known in the discipline as engaged or activist anthropology. I document this engagement—along with its challenges and pitfalls, as well as its successes—in chapter 2. After examining the different understandings of engagement in anthropology, I describe my own attempts to become engaged during and after the conclusion of my fieldwork, exploring the ways in which the reciprocity asked of me by my Bolivian friends and collaborators both facilitated the research that led to this book and imposed obligations on me that I am still struggling to discharge. The chapter suggests that the goals of engaged anthropology, although in many ways vital to the future of the discipline, present chal-
lenges to the fieldworker and academic scholar to which we must pay
close attention.

To deepen the ethnographic and historical context of Loma Pampa
and Uspha Uspha, chapter 3 provides an ethnography of insecurity, in-
cluding a description and analysis of the relationship between local com-
munities and state law on the margins of Cochabamba. In contrast to the
Western assumption that the law operates to provide protection and
support to national citizens, this discussion demonstrates the ways in
which law actually can be antagonistic to the rights and welfare of the
indigenous urban poor. This chapter consists of an ethnographic de-
scription of the law and legal institutions, including the Bolivian police,
and of how they work to perpetuate problems of insecurity in Bolivia. In
particular, it makes the argument that rather than a complete absence of
law—so often asserted by both outside observers, including anthropolo-
gists, and barrio residents themselves—the law is in fact a powerful force
in the marginal barrios, attempting to regulate and order urban life
although it does not provide the protections that might make residents
feel more secure. This is what I identify as the absent presence of the
state, a form of ordering that imposes some kinds of legal regulation
while neglecting others, making the state simultaneously there and not
there, a ghostly presence that haunts the margins of the city. How people
deal with what I call “the phantom state” and the problems it creates for
them is an important theme of this chapter.

In what they perceive to be the absence of the state, people in the
marginal barrios must find ways to contend with the problems of insecu-
rity that they regularly confront, especially the predations of rateros and
other perpetrators of delinquency and violence. The analysis of chapter 4
focuses on three principal techniques or processes by which barrio resi-
dents attempt to manage insecurity: watchfulness, reliance on local
forms of leadership, and vigilante violence. In each case, I consider the
ways in which a sense of community, or lack thereof, figures prominently
in local efforts to deal with insecurity, which tends to promote individu-
alization and isolation. Dealing with rateros seems to require eternal
vigilance on the part of barrio residents, and in some cases seems to
demand a violent response to contain their ever-present threat. This
chapter, therefore, discusses the vigilante lynching as a way in which
people deal with the rateros whom they apprehend in their midst. How-
ever, unlike most popular and academic accounts of lynching, which
characterize it as a collective phenomenon marked by the undifferentiated rage of the actors, this ethnography of lynching demonstrates the deeply contradictory and fragmented nature of this violent behavior. Indeed, what this analysis shows is the profound uncertainty within which barrio residents must manage the insecurity of their lives: in the absence of formal legal institutions or cultural systems for resolving conflicts, the residents of marginal barrios and their leaders grasp for solutions wherever they can find them, struggling to respond to the problems of insecurity that arise in their communities.

As a means of addressing the lack of judicial efficacy in marginal zones throughout Bolivia, the administration of President Evo Morales has promoted a reinvention of community justice, a supposedly indigenous system for the establishment of order and crime control that does not rely on the state or its institutions, but that nonetheless is recognized as legitimate in Bolivia’s new constitution. Such a program is part of the state’s ideological reinvention of indigeneity itself, an attempt to positively reimagine the negative stereotypes historically associated with indigenous people in Bolivia. This move, however, ends up remarginalizing urban indigenous people, whose basic reality does not conform with the spatial and temporal ideologies of race that are implicitly contained within the constitution and the community justice movement. Chapter 5 explores the controversy surrounding the idea of community justice in Bolivia, while examining the larger question of indigeneity that underlies it. It examines local beliefs about the nature of community justice, and the ways in which people sometimes appropriate this national discourse to justify or explain more local, violent practices of justice making. The chapter argues that, rather than depending on custom or tradition to make justice in their barrios, residents instead rely on their own creativity, assembling responses to insecurity that are appropriate to the circumstances without being formal examples of either official or traditional legal custom. Rather than legal pluralism, the discussion of this chapter points to legal bricolage as the principal means of making justice in the marginal barrios.

In chapter 6, I look more closely at the relationship between ideas about security and beliefs about human rights, as they come into conflict in the marginal neighborhoods that I have studied. In Bolivia, amid a stagnant economy and the failure or absence of state social services, citizens of all social strata perceive grave threats to their physical safety.
and are increasingly willing to submit to extreme measures to obtain this elusive goal. In this context, human rights (including such legal rights as the right to a trial, habeas corpus, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and punishment) are increasingly coming to be viewed as extravagant, a luxury afforded to violent criminals at the expense of law-abiding citizens. This chapter suggests that the quest for security in Bolivia today poses challenges to the very idea of human rights itself, as those who feel threatened by criminal predation blame the transnational concept and its defenders for their current predicament. In a context of pervasive and quotidian social violence, it is, ironically, the idea of human rights that is coming to be seen as productive of violence and exculpatory of its effects, while other forms of violence emerge as acceptable alternatives to state policing and as legitimate mechanisms for defending the rights of citizens. Part of the problem here lies in the way in which the transnational discourse of human rights is translated in the context of the insecure barrio. I rely on the concept of human rights vernacularization (Merry 2005) to explore the ways in which nonlocal human rights ideals and language are locally reinterpreted and deployed. This analysis reveals that the process of vernacularization itself can involve different sets of human rights translators, trading in multiple and often conflicting notions of human rights. While some of these represent effective adaptations of transnational ideals to local realities, others appear to be in direct opposition to the normative values encoded in the transnational discourse of human rights.

Finally, in the book’s concluding chapter, I turn to a fuller consideration of the idea of uncertainty and its relationship to insecurity in the context of the marginal barrio, and beyond. In contrast to anthropological efforts to understand and render coherent diverse cultural meanings, the chapter suggests that uncertainty, rather than clarity, may more closely reflect the quality of life amid insecurity. An uncertain anthropology can capture local and global realities in all their murky inconclusiveness, an insight toward which the ethnographic chapters of this book seem to point.
1. SECURITY, RIGHTS, AND THE LAW

1. The actual percentage of the Bolivian population that counts itself as indigenous is difficult to measure. According to national census figures, the self-identifying indigenous population in Bolivia is about 60 percent. Other estimates place it even higher. Bolivia is commonly referred to in the international press as being the “most indigenous” country in Latin America, making Evo’s election seem like something of a foregone conclusion.

2. The media luna region of Bolivia (so-called for its crescent shape) consists of the departments of Beni, Pando, Santa Cruz, and Tarija, with Chuquisaca sometimes included as well. The region’s principal characteristic is that its population is publicly identified as majority nonindigenous.


4. Evo has maintained a strong and publicly close relationship with President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, whose government has been a principal provider of economic aid to Bolivia. This relationship has been the source of some resentment (and much humor) in Bolivia, with some regarding the ties between the two presidents as detrimental to Bolivia’s sovereignty.

5. One of the problems that legislators wrestled with following the approval of the new constitution was how to legally implement many of its community justice provisions. The issue of jurisdiction was a particularly thorny issue. Would nonindigenous people be subjected to indigenous law, if they were accused of a crime in an indigenous jurisdiction? What about members of other indigenous groups? These and many other issues were still unresolved at the time of this writing, but similar issues have plagued community justice efforts in other Andean countries (for example, see Vintimilla Saldaña, Almeida Mariño, and Saldaña Abad 2007).
6. According to Ledo García (2002), 60 percent of Cochabamba’s residents survive on one dollar per day or less. On this basis, Mike Davis (2006) identifies Cochabamba as one of the four poorest cities in the world; the other three are all in Africa (Luanda, Maputo, and Kinshasa).

7. When this manuscript was already in production, I encountered another use of the “outlawed” concept similar to my own, though in a very different context; see Peutz 2007.

8. Lynching, the mob execution of the criminally accused, may involve a variety of different techniques, including burning, hanging, and beating of the suspect. Although the lynching event in Cochabamba does not always result in the death of the accused (and hence should better be considered an attempted lynching), I follow local usage by referring to all such events as lynchings (linchamientos).

9. In much of Latin America, the philosophy and practice of neoliberal capitalism and democracy is under explicit assault. Although it may be premature to declare Latin America to be postneoliberal (see Leiva 2008), at the time of writing much of the region appears to be in transition to a new historical period. However, as later chapters of this ethnography demonstrate, even in Bolivia elements of neoliberal governing philosophy remain in effect, despite Evo’s explicit rejection of neoliberalismo.

10. In the United States, for example, such issues as public health and epidemiology (Heymann 2003; Lakoff 2008), energy policy (Helm 2002), and the environment (Khagram, Clark, and Firas Raad 2003; Matthew 2000) have recently come to be framed within a discourse of national or collective security.

11. For more on Marx’s comments on the security of states, see Der Derian 2009.

12. For a more detailed, albeit partial, history of the security concept, see Goldstein 2010b.

13. Indeed, much recent anthropological debate about security has focused on the collaboration of anthropologists with military strategists, especially in the formulation of what has been called a human terrain system, to better enable the military to understand the decision-making processes and other aspects of local culture that might arise to threaten combat or military occupations (McFate 2005; Renzi 2006; see also Albro 2007; Albro, Marcus, McNamara, and Schoch-Spana 2011; Goldstein 2010a).

14. For important contributions to this body of work, see Collier 2008; Gusterson and Besteman 2009; Lakoff 2007, 2008; and R. Wilson 2005. Also of note here is work by anthropologists and scholars in related disciplines on the production of “cultures of insecurity” (Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson, and DuVall 1999), in contexts ranging from US military complexes (for example, Lutz 2001) to the nuclear public sphere (Masco 2006), biosecurity (Collier, Lakoff, and Rabinow 2004; Lakoff and Collier 2008), and cybersecurity (Du-
Other anthropologists and anthropologically minded social scientists are at work in various locations around the world, studying, for example, the criminalization of supposedly dangerous populations (Caldeira 2000; M. Davis 1992; Low 1997 and 2003; Valverde and Cirak 2002); the production of public fear (Skidmore 2003); and topics in psychiatry, illness, and medical risk (Metzl 2010; Owczarzak 2009), among other issues, all of which make clear and significant contributions to understanding security in specific contexts.

15. In discussing “neoliberalism” here, I refer to it both as a political and economic philosophy with a set of accompanying policy prescriptions—such as favoring open markets and free trade as opposed to a Keynesian welfarism (Larner 2000)—and as a rationality of governance whose characteristics include extending market values to social institutions (Brown 2003). See the discussion in Schwegler 2008.

16. The rise to power in Bolivia of Evo Morales and the MAS was part of a wider shift away from neoliberal policies, which has seen the democratic election of a number of explicitly left-leaning regimes in countries throughout the region. Though Morales himself played a relatively minor role in the two “wars” described here, his evolution as a national political figure can reasonably be traced to these events and the climate of change that they signaled in the country.

17. Although violence may have become normalized or routinized as part of everyday social existence for the urban poor, as many observers claim (for example, Scheper-Hughes 1993), I do not mean to imply an acceptance by the poor of this condition, in the classic sense of false consciousness.

18. The privatization of justice (Caldeira and Holston 1999) that this implies also motivates the lynch mob, the perfect expression of neoliberal logic (see Goldstein 2005a).

19. According to this model, the presence of one broken window in a building communicates neglect to other would-be vandals, encouraging further vandalism that leads to crimes of greater magnitude. Broken windows literally and symbolically identify high-crime urban areas (J. Wilson and Kelling 1982).

20. Bolivia is often mentioned as having the second-highest frequency of lynchings worldwide, after only postwar Guatemala. However, given the lack of any reliable statistical data on lynching, it is difficult to know how this claim was derived.

21. Despite assertions of its socialist leanings, the MAS state has not been progressive on the question of security, relying on punitive rhetoric and unflinching support of the police and military in its proposals on security. The language of “citizen security,” developed under previous neoliberal administrations, continues to find full expression in the Morales regime.
22. The UN secretary general acknowledged this “right to security” more explicitly in a statement on his approach to development, security, and human rights, commenting that “all people have the right to security and development” (Annan 2005, 5). He also noted: “It would be a mistake to treat human rights as though there were a trade-off to be made between human rights and such goals as security or development. We only weaken our hand in fighting the horrors of extreme poverty or terrorism if, in our efforts to do so, we deny the very human rights that these scourges take away from citizens” (37).

23. For example, in 2004 USAID pledged grants of nearly US$50,000,000 for strengthening democratic institutions and improving “access to justice” in Bolivia (United States Agency for International Development 2004).


25. The full reemergence of the old authoritarian national security paradigm is limited by the progressive politics of social movements in Bolivia today, even as many Bolivians share the goal of greater security from crime. Thus the state’s effort to recast the Gas War of 2003 as a threat to national security was firmly rejected by people across Bolivian civil society, who denounced state killings of protestors as a violation of their human rights. The Bolivian state’s audience for this claim was more likely the international community (particularly the United States) rather than its own citizens.

26. The concept of “bricolage” was introduced into anthropology by Claude Lévi-Strauss, understood as a process in which the worker (the bricoleur) puts something together—art, perhaps, or myth—using “whatever is at hand” to complete the task. Although in Lévi-Strauss’s usage the bricolage was somewhat less than a fully creative expression—the work of assemblage at times seems to require nothing more than borrowing that which already exists without producing anything particularly new—in my adoption of the term, I mean it to refer to a creative process in which old pieces can be assembled into something previously unseen, often spontaneous, and temporally fleeting.

27. Although in some ways reflective of the norms and procedures of state legal cultures, the sociolegal realities that emerge in outlawed communities existing “in the shadow of the law” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006, 34) represent complex creations only partially contingent on broader legal domains. The work of Jean and John Comaroff, like that of Carolyn Nordstrom (2007), points to the unstable line that divides the legal from the illegal, the acceptable from the illegitimate, in the contemporary field of global political economy.

28. In most instances I have used pseudonyms to disguise the identities of people mentioned in this book; in some cases, following individuals’ requests, I have used people’s real names. I have used the actual names of
places mentioned in the book, including Loma Pampa and Uspha Uspha, again at the request of local residents and leaders.

2. GETTING ENGAGED

In February 2010 my colleague Dorothy Hodgson and I organized an event titled “Reflections on Engaged Anthropology,” a symposium sponsored by the Rutgers University Department of Anthropology. We invited four keynote participants: Kamari Clarke, Charles Hale, Cindi Katz, and Stuart Kirsch. The symposium, meant to be a broad exploration of the field of engaged anthropology, was organized into three segments, during which the four participants were asked to comment on three key questions: Drawing on examples from your own research, writing, and practice, how do you define and practice engaged anthropology? Based on your work, what do you think the possibilities or contributions of engaged anthropology are to the discipline, the people we study, and others? Based on your work, what do you think are the limits and challenges of practicing engaged anthropology? These presentations were followed by questions and comments from the audience. It is from this event that I derived some of the insights presented in this chapter.

1. Singer (2010) makes a similar point in his commentary on Low and Merry (2010), though from his perspective, cultural critique is the single most important variety of anthropological engagement.

2. Although Hale (2008b) discounts the prospect of a conservative engaged anthropology, I think he is overly sanguine about the possibility of engagement’s being hijacked by less progressive forces within the discipline.

3. Some have characterized forms of cultural critique as a kind of “luxury” knowledge production (Gilmore 1993, 72) and engaged anthropology a way for cultural critics to feel good about themselves without producing anything meaningful or valuable to the people about whom they write. This seems to me an overly harsh assessment, but an important caution nevertheless.

4. In terms of methodology and its basic orientation toward collaboration and participation, the current trends in activist and engaged anthropology are indebted to earlier disciplinary iterations that expressed similar goals. Sol Tax was a pioneer of what he identified as “action anthropology” (1975), an approach dedicated to working to solve problems through anthropology. In this regard, action anthropology was a forerunner of applied anthropology, some of whose practitioners were dedicated to the development of participatory research methodologies (see Stull and Schensul 1987). In the field of public health, approaches like community-based participatory research represent appropriations of ethnographic methodology, applied collaboratively by the practitioners of other disciplines.