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Review/Reseña

Goldstein, Daniel M. *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Marginal, Poor, and Insecure

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The sprawling and impoverished *barrios marginales* (marginal neighborhoods) of Cochabamba, Bolivia seemingly suffer a total abandonment by government authorities. Daniel M. Goldstein, in this eclectic ethnography, argues instead that the government is an important phantom presence; while marginal neighborhoods enjoy none of the law's protections, neighborhood residents are hemmed in—even outlawed—by its dictates. This creates enormous insecurity and uncertainty among Bolivia's urban indigenous poor.

In Goldstein's first ethnography of Cochabamba, Bolivia—*The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004)—the author structured his book around the analytical concepts of “performance” and the “spectacular.” In this, his most recent book, he builds his analysis around the ideas of “security” and “uncertainty.” Goldstein is concerned with more than just security issues; he is also interested in exploring the potential of activist or engaged anthropology. Goldstein did not begin his anthropological work as an activist. Rather, Bolivian activists and the subjects of his study thrust this social responsibility upon him. He notes that an additional complexity of contemporary anthropology is that many subjects are well aware of the potential value of their knowledge and are unwilling to give it away for free. Goldstein is pragmatic, and his humility is refreshing. He shares his mistakes, errors, limitations, and miss-interpretations openly. He is honest about the disappointments and successes he experienced during his years of engagement in Cochabamba's poor neighborhoods.

Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the Loma Pampa neighborhood on the far southern outskirts of Cochabamba. Loma Pampa is a neighborhood of 120 families and is a small part of the larger urbanized zone known as Uspha Uspha. Covering a sprawling 45 kilometers, Uspha Uspha is divided into 13 neighborhoods, and contains 15,000 families. The zone was only first settled in the mid-1990s. Goldstein conducted his initial fieldwork in Loma Pampa between June 2005 and September 2007. Since 2007 he has continued to pursue intermittent activist and anthropological engagements in Loma Pampa.

In 2007 Goldstein facilitated the creation of an internationally financed NGO. The NGO established an office known as an Access to Justice House in Loma Pampa, dedicated to human rights and citizen security. The Access to Justice House was up and running in 2009. While Goldstein remained a part of the NGO after the close of his fieldwork, he felt himself alienated from the everyday decision-making and management of the NGO while engaged with his teaching duties in the United States. Goldstein eventually resigned his position with the NGO in December

2010. He found comfort for his frustrations in a different engagement initiative: International Service Learning. Beginning in the summer of 2008 Goldstein has annually led small groups of university students, sponsored by Rutgers University's study abroad office, from the United States to Cochabamba. In Cochabamba, the students took a variety of academic classes while they also assisted in the construction of a community center for the Loma Pampa neighborhood. This was a project chosen by the people of the neighborhood and their elected local leadership: Don Miguel and his wife doña Senobia, who had been such essential collaborators with Goldstein throughout his time in Uspha Uspha. Student tuition dollars paid for the project.

In describing the phantom presence of the Bolivian state in Cochabamba's marginal neighborhoods, Goldstein uses the tragic history of Wilmer Vargas and his death at age seven. For part of the book, Goldstein employs blog entries that he made while working in Loma Pampa; some of these entries narrate the life and death of Wilmer Vargas. The child was well known to Goldstein, to his research assistants, and to a number of the college students who had worked in Loma Pampa. One day in 2010, a taxi struck and killed Wilmer Vargas while he was selling popsicles on the main road near Loma Pampa. During the three days that passed between the fatal accident and the funeral, no government authority ever investigated Wilmer Vargas's death. The taxi driver's union arranged and paid for the child's funeral and compensated the family with an unknown amount to quiet the incident. As the taxi was not licensed or registered, all of this was done to keep the police and government authorities away. While the state never directly intervened in this tragic incident, its phantom presence structured the responses of all involved.

In the absence of a dependable government presence, neighborhood residents feel threatened by a variety of menaces. For instance, Goldstein's discussion of the figure of the *ratero* is especially illuminating. The *ratero* is basically a thief or a burglar, but in the mythology of the marginal neighborhoods the *ratero* is a terribly threatening figure against which constant vigilance must be exercised. Goldstein identifies three different responses to these threats: vigilance or watchfulness, a reliance on local

leadership, and violence. Violence is the response that grabs headlines, especially when it involves the lynching of suspected criminals. The book's narrative peak is Goldstein's presentation of a near lynching in Loma Pampa on February 19, 2006. The incident occurred while Goldstein was in the United States, but three research assistants witnessed the event. He bases his analysis on their notes and reports. He acknowledges that anthropologists generally have to study lynching at a remove, as participant observation is not an option. Goldstein concludes that this has led to some misinterpretations of lynching in Bolivia's marginal neighborhoods. In his previous book, Goldstein described lynching as a spectacular or performative display. He reevaluates that interpretation in this book. He surmises that too often anthropologists follow the interpretations put forth by the police and the media: that lynching is a unitary communal affair. Instead, Goldstein argues that uncertainty, hesitation, and debate about what to do with the suspected criminal characterized the near-lynching in Loma Pampa. Thankfully, the suspected thief was not killed. Eventually, Loma Pampa's president defused the situation, and the suspect was turned over to the police.

Goldstein goes on to explore how security strategies deployed in Cochabamba's marginal neighborhoods interact with the ideas of "community justice" or "indigenous justice." He does not believe in the emergence of an alternative system; instead he sees a process that is incoherent and chaotic with all sorts of legal borrowings. Goldstein uses the term "legal bricolage" to describe the eclectic strategies at play. He notes that although the government, the media, and neighborhood residents often use the terms "community justice" or "indigenous justice" these words do not appear in the 2009 Bolivian constitution. The concepts come from academic studies of indigenous communities in Mexico. The World Bank in conjunction with the Bolivian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights introduced the ideas to Bolivia in 1999. Goldstein observes that neighborhood residents are making creative and hopeful assertions when they defend their own ad-hoc security practices in terms of "community justice," as this argument runs counter to traditional constructions of where authentic indigeneity lies—namely in the countryside.

Pervasive insecurity also undermines the rhetoric and appeal of international human rights in the marginal neighborhoods. Goldstein notes that many among the urban indigenous poor come to see human rights as foreign impositions that do not fit the Bolivian context. Only criminals visibly benefit from human rights rhetoric and interventions awarding them impunity, while regular citizens are left defenseless and abandoned. This creates the ironic situation in which neighborhood residents actually support the call for more authoritarian and violent policing practices, despite a traditional skepticism of the police because of perceived corruption and incompetence.

Goldstein closes by comparing the security situation in Cochabamba's marginal neighborhoods with the global ethos of neoliberalism. In this context, the government's abandonment of marginal neighborhoods is not an anomaly but instead the logical outcome of neoliberal practices. The government sheds responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and exhorts them to take this burden upon themselves. The book also has a more academic conclusion in that Goldstein's call for an "uncertain anthropology" prompts investigators to emancipate themselves from pre-determined analytical models. He feels anthropologists instead need to accept the uncertainties of life in places like Cochabamba's marginal neighborhoods. Overall, the author's first conclusion about neoliberalism's ethos is really the more evocative and useful of the two.

Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City is an honest analysis of Bolivia's urban conditions since the election of President Evo Morales in December 2005. While President Morales remains popular in Cochabamba's marginal neighborhoods, Goldstein's careful ethnography indicates that reforms and improvements are slow in gaining traction.