



CHICAGO JOURNALS

The  
Wenner-Gren  
Foundation

For Anthropological Research, Inc.

---

Toward a Critical Anthropology of Security

Author(s): Daniel M. Goldstein

Source: *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (August 2010), pp. 487-517

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#) on behalf of [Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/655393>

Accessed: 04/04/2011 04:45

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ucpress>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



The University of Chicago Press and Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Current Anthropology*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

# Toward a Critical Anthropology of Security

by Daniel M. Goldstein

While matters of security have appeared as paramount themes in a post-9/11 world, anthropology has not developed a critical comparative ethnography of security and its contemporary problematics. In this article I call for the emergence of a critical “security anthropology,” one that recognizes the significance of security discourses and practices to the global and local contexts in which cultural anthropology operates. Many issues that have historically preoccupied anthropology are today inextricably linked to security themes, and anthropology expresses a characteristic approach to topics that today must be considered within a security rubric. A focus on security is particularly important to an understanding of human rights in contemporary neoliberal society. Drawing on examples from Latin America and my own work in Bolivia, I track the decline of neoliberalism and the rise of the security paradigm as a framework for organizing contemporary social life. I suggest that security, rather than a reaction to a terrorist attack that “changed everything,” is characteristic of a neoliberalism that predates the events of 9/11, affecting the subjects of anthropological work and shaping the contexts within which that work is conducted.

## Toward a Critical Anthropology of Security

Following that devastating moment on September 11, 2001, when New York City’s World Trade Center towers came down, public consensus in the United States and elsewhere seemed to be that “everything had changed” (Lipschutz 2009). The United States had supposedly been awakened from a blissful slumber to discover that its empire had become critically weakened, its interests were being assailed on every front, and an emerging global terrorist threat was now poised to attack the nation at its very philosophical and economic foundations. Whether one believed that this was a case of unwarranted attack or, alternatively, of “chickens coming home to roost,” 9/11 was marked as a turning point, a critical moment in which the United States and its allies became aware of the insidious threat to their values and way of life and entered into a new phase of increased alertness and attention to “homeland defense,” of which the “global war on terror” was the most evident expression. In other words, the world had entered a kind of “security moment,” a new phase of global history characterized by increased surveillance of potential security threats, expansive government powers to investigate security breaches, armed intervention in places abroad that supposedly fostered terrorism, and restrictions on individual

freedoms in the name of protecting personal and national security.

In this article, I attempt to break with this familiar framing of the security moment to explore the important relationships between security discourse and practice, human and civil rights, and the entailments of neoliberalism by offering a perspective on these issues that is at once ethnographically sensitive and attuned to contemporary global interconnections. I contend that anthropology has a great deal to contribute to an understanding of local and global realities within this security moment in a way that the disciplines whose voices are more familiar in security debates (e.g., political science, international relations, cultural studies) cannot. This analysis is particularly relevant for a critical cultural anthropology of the present as the neoliberal hegemony begins to fracture as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century. “Security” calls on the power of fear to fill the ruptures that the crises and contradictions of neoliberalism have engendered and so functions as a principal tool of state formation and governmentality in the world today, albeit one that is constantly challenged and negotiated by a range of local actors and state subjects, as I go on to explore.<sup>1</sup> That this “post-neoliberal” moment is so frequently identified as “post-9/11” points to the ways in which “security” has usurped the discourses of the present, displacing all other phenomena to the margins of public scrutiny and scholarly inquiry. Indeed, a brief consideration of the decline of neoliberalism and the rise of the

**Daniel M. Goldstein** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University (131 George Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901, U.S.A. [dgoldstein@anthropology.rutgers.edu]). This paper was submitted 21 X 08 and accepted 21 IX 09.

1. I use scare quotes around “security” in this article to suggest that I am referring to a broad field of discourse and practice rather than to the more quotidian uses of the term so frequently invoked in media and government reporting on the issue.

security paradigm as a framework for organizing contemporary social life suggests that security, rather than simply a reaction to a terrorist attack that “changed everything,” is in fact characteristic of a neoliberalism that predates the events of 9/11, affecting the subjects of anthropological work and shaping the contexts within which that work is conducted.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the ubiquity of public security-related concerns—both in the United States and Europe, where so many anthropologists live, and “abroad” in the global South, where they tend to work—anthropological research with an explicit security dimension has mostly been focused on the U.S. context and (most publicly, at least) on matters of disciplinary collaboration with the U.S. security establishment. While some have willingly donned the mantle of “security anthropologists” (McFate 2005; Selmeski 2007), others, understandably reluctant to put their knowledge of other societies to work in the security economy, have been inwardly focused, concerned largely with the ethical and political implications of lending anthropological expertise to government in prosecuting its military and security campaigns (Goldstein 2010). Resisting the call to provide expert knowledge on enemy “culture” so that military operations can be more effectively carried out and foreign-policy objectives realized, some anthropologists have emerged as vocal critics of “human terrain systems” and other forms of intelligence gathering, denouncing efforts to use ethnographic knowledge of other parts of the world to advance security campaigns (González 2007; Gusterson 2005; Members of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists 2007; Packer 2006; Price 2008; Sterpka 2007).<sup>3</sup> Other anthropologists have directed their attention to U.S. historical ethnography and the emergence of what might be called a “security culture” in the United States, providing a powerful cultural critique of American life and its contem-

porary politics (Gusterson and Besteman 2009; Lakoff 2007, 2008; Low 2003; Lutz 2001; Masco 2006; Wilson 2005).<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, anthropology of the non-Western world, even when concerned with issues that might be considered within a broader “security” rubric, has generally not been framed in these terms. While other disciplines have dedicated journals, programs of study, and entire schools of thought to the security “problem,” anthropology has largely refrained from joining the conversation, even as other global phenomena (e.g., human rights) have been prominent foci of anthropological scrutiny. The result has been that the analysis of a truly global reality played out in local contexts—a conjuncture that is perhaps anthropology’s most distinctive *métier*—has not benefited from sustained anthropological attention and that the insights drawn from ethnographic research have not been systematically brought to bear on the theorization of security. This is not to say that anthropologists have been inattentive to issues with a clear “security” dimension; indeed, many anthropologists and anthropologically minded social scientists are at work in various locations worldwide, studying, for example, the criminalization of “dangerous” populations (Caldeira 2000; Valverde and Cirak 2002; Waterston 1997); the fortification of urban spaces (Caldeira 1996; Davis 1992; Low 1997, 2003); the production of public fear (Green 1999; Robben 1996; Skidmore 2003); migration and the “securitization” of national spaces in an age of globalization (Bigo 2002; Calavita 1998; Cornelius 2004; Coutin 2007; De Genova 2002; Menjivar 2006); 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 situated contexts.<sup>5</sup> This work suggests the potential of a broader comparative ethnography of security, one that would place security at the center of global society and its contemporary problematics, revealing the important ways in which “security” in its many forms is operative in the daily lives and communities of the people with whom anthropologists work. The ongoing research of individual anthropologists within this ethnographic and conceptual domain indicates the emergence of an as yet inchoate “anthropology of security,” a movement that I endorse and attempt to foster.<sup>6</sup>

2. Given the many changes that have occurred in recent years, it is difficult to insist on neoliberalism’s robustness in Latin America. Although neoliberal philosophy and governance clearly enjoy a continued hegemony in other parts of the world, based on the evidence from Latin America, it is not premature to predict their demise. However, there is great variation across the region. In some countries in the region (e.g., Colombia), neoliberalism remains a guiding philosophy of the state, whereas in other countries (e.g., Bolivia and Venezuela), neoliberalism is a dirty word, spoken with disgust by politicians and regular folks alike.

3. Much recent debate within anthropology has focused on the collaboration of anthropologists with military strategists in the formulation of a “human terrain system” (HTS) to better enable the military to understand the decision-making processes and other aspects of local “culture” that might arise during combat or military occupations (Renzi 2006). The mission of the HTS is “to provide commanders in the field with relevant socio-cultural understanding necessary to meet their operational missions” (<http://humanterrainsystem.army.mil/missionstatement.html>, accessed June 1, 2009), accomplished in part by “embedding” anthropologists and other social scientists in military units in the field. In much of the discussion about anthropology’s involvement with the military, however, this involvement tends to be reduced to HTS, with many other, less problematic forms of engagement receiving little in the way of anthropological consideration. See Albro (2007).

4. Also of note here is work by anthropologists and scholars in related disciplines on the production of “cultures of insecurity” (Weldes et al. 1999), in contexts ranging from U.S. military complexes (Gill 2004; Lutz 2001) to “the nuclear public sphere” (Masco 2006), biosecurity (Collier, Lakoff, and Rabinow 2004; Lakoff and Collier 2008), and cybersecurity (Dubartell 2006; Kelty 2005; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994; Nelson 1996).

5. The problem of “risk” has long been a concern within medicine and medical anthropology and clearly offers another important area of work on security-related themes in anthropology.

6. Clearly there is a movement under way, though it remains loosely articulated. An electronic search of the program for the American Anthropological Association annual meetings in 2009 for the keyword “security” produced 145 hits, including papers on policing (Smith 2009), state power (Bajc 2009), urban threat perceptions (Leal 2009), “state security sciences” (Darash 2009), migration (Tormey 2009), and health (Hickler 2009).

In this article, then, I argue for the importance of what I call a *critical* security anthropology, one that recognizes the centrality of security discourses and practices to the global and local contexts in which cultural anthropology operates. I contend that many issues that have historically preoccupied anthropology are today inextricably linked to security themes and that anthropology, even when not explicitly concerned with security per se, expresses a characteristic approach to topics that today must be considered within a security framework. Global security discourse and practice shape the contexts in which anthropologists both live and work, providing the conditions within which anthropological research and pedagogy are imagined, approved, funded, and implemented. And for the people and societies that anthropologists study—that “human terrain” on which some would suggest we operate—issues of security and insecurity are critical matters with which ethnographic subjects must contend as they attempt to forge a life in a complex, conflictive, and often violent and dangerous social and political-economic milieu. Anthropology, I argue, is particularly well suited to offer a critical take on global security questions, given the discipline’s long-standing *modus operandi* of situating local realities within broader national and transnational contexts to examine the mutually constitutive effects of each on the other. Anthropology’s concern with global/local articulations as well as its case-study approach, cross-cultural comparative engagement, and emphasis on the intersections of discourse and practice in specific historicized contexts remain disciplinary hallmarks that uniquely position anthropology to contribute to a critical study of security.

Nothing points more clearly to the need to incorporate “security” within the standard ethnographic tool kit than the question of human rights. A central concern of scholars interested in the local effects of global phenomena, human and social or civil rights and their concomitants (e.g., citizenship, democracy, multiculturalism, social movements), have been broadly and deeply studied by anthropologists, nowhere more so than in Latin America, the ethnographic focus of this article. Less concerted anthropological attention has been paid to security in these same contexts, even where an understanding of (in)security is fundamental to a full comprehension of rights as both a global and local reality, rife with conflicts and contradictions. While most of us are familiar with recent rights abuses committed in the name of security in such locales as Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and the detention facilities at Guantánamo, Cuba, the clash between security and rights is not limited to these contexts or to the U.S. “war on terror” but is part of an emergent global phenomenon (Greenhouse 2005). Security and rights intersect in particularly troubling ways in Latin America today, as subordinated groups increasingly call into question the legitimacy of states caught up in the contradictions of neoliberal political economy and formerly hegemonic classes grasp for the instruments to maintain their traditional authority and privileges. An ethnography of rights in this context cannot be considered adequate without

attention to the “security crisis” facing the indigenous poor, and such an analysis cannot be adequately undertaken without an understanding of the security/rights conflict as a distinctly neoliberal phenomenon.<sup>7</sup>

In the next section of this article, I attempt to delineate this relationship with a particular emphasis on the apparent contradiction between security and rights in contemporary neoliberal society. I then go on to explore this intersection in the specific geographical context of Latin America, drawing on the work of a few scholars whose research exemplifies the kind of critical anthropology of security that these circumstances demand. Finally, as a more detailed case study, I offer a reflection on security concerns as they have emerged from my own fieldwork in Bolivia, indicating the ways in which a globalized security discourse is put into practice in the violence of daily life in marginalized urban communities. The Bolivian case 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-local phenomena that are frequently the objects of anthropological concern, especially the idea of “rights,” and it suggests the important contributions of ethnography to understanding the security/rights conjuncture. This analysis further points to some common themes that link the subjects of anthropological inquiry with its practitioners as we all labor within a global security culture that threatens to destabilize the rule of law, the workings of justice, and the bases of democratic society in countries around the world.

## Fear, Insecurity, and the Neoliberal State: A Brief Genealogy

What do we mean by “security”? Scholars of international relations typically locate security and the ability to create it within the state, and indeed, any understanding of security must consider both the role of the state as a security-making entity and the importance of “security” for legitimizing the state. For some scholars (whom Buzan, Waever, and de 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 (e.g., 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 na-

7. While the question of security/rights under neoliberalism is an important issue of consideration, particularly in the Latin American context, I do not mean to imply by this focus that this is the full extent of the issues that warrant consideration by a critical anthropology of security. As another kind of approach to the anthropology of security, see my article on the question of anthropological engagement in the war on terror (Goldstein 2010).

tional security? Does the destabilization of a national economy represent a security crisis? Opposing the traditionalists are the “wideners,” those scholars who view threats emergent in a variety of arenas as worthy of the “security” designation, rejecting the traditionalists’ insistence on a military relation or threat of international nuclear war as the sole criterion for such labeling (e.g., Waever et al. 1993). This latter perspective, more amenable to a holistic comparative approach to politics, understands security to be a response to anything that can be persuasively identified as posing a threat to the very existence of the state or society.<sup>8</sup>

One of my contentions is that the global obsession with security, which seems to have been born with the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the conditions of fear and collective anxiety that these attacks inspired, considerably predates that moment. In fact, security in the broadest sense has been a central concern of nations and states since these concepts and their accompanying institutions first came into existence. In *The Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (2003 [1651]) identified the provision of security as a basic function of the state. To guard against the various threats facing humankind in the state of nature, Hobbes claimed, people gathered together in groups and surrendered certain freedoms in exchange for the safety and protection that the collective provided under the authority of a single, powerful sovereign (the eponymous Leviathan). Driving people to subordinate themselves within a state-ordered political collective was precisely the fear of dangers both known and unknown awaiting them in the free but unregulated state of nature. However, as Corey Robin (2004) observes in his history of fear as a political idea, Hobbes recognized that fear, though a natural human response to real threats in the world at large, was also subject to state manipulation:

Because the dangers of life were many and various, because the subjects of the state did not naturally fear those dangers the state deemed worth fearing, the state had to choose people’s objects of fear. It had to persuade people, through a necessary but subtle distortion, to fear certain objects over others. This gave the state considerable leeway to define, however it saw fit, the objects of fear that would dominate public concern. (Robin 2004:33)

For Hobbes, fear was the catalyst motivating the formation not only of the state but of a collective moral ethos of which all citizens partook, an ethos that identified enemies of the collective and authorized particular dispositions and responses vis-à-vis those antagonists. The power to define this ethos was essential, in the Hobbesian view, to the state’s ability

8. In the United States, e.g., such issues as public health and epidemiology (Heymann 2003; Lakoff 2008), energy policy (Helm 2002), the environment (Khagram, Clark, and Firas Raad 2003; Matthew 2000), and transnational migration (Walters 2002, 2004) have recently come to be framed within a discourse of national or collective security.

to maintain its authority and control over the social collective, always, of course, in the best interest of that collective.

Whereas Hobbes advocated for an absolutist state that could protect its subjects from the dangers that surrounded them, Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, envisioned a more liberal state but one similarly constructed on a foundation of fear. Reacting against the tyranny of Louis XIV’s regime in seventeenth-century France, Montesquieu theorized that the power of government could be limited by the creation of “mediating” institutions through which individuals and organizations would compete with one another for power, leading to political moderation, social tolerance, and individual freedom (Robin 2004). Though utterly opposed to the Hobbesian notion of an all-powerful state, Montesquieu shared with Hobbes the belief that fear was the basis for politics, although in his vision it was not a fear of outside threats that motivated people to accept the power of the state but rather the fear of the state itself and the despotic tendencies of political absolutism. For Montesquieu, the fear of despotism should inspire individuals to submit to “a more civilized, protective”—that is, liberal—state that could secure them against the terror created by absolutist rule (Robin 2004: 53). The liberal state, through its institutions, would also be better capable of meeting the various needs of citizens and so reduce their fear and vulnerability to the vicissitudes of daily life. As Robin points out, however, Montesquieu’s conception of the political terrorist is nearly a caricature of the deranged despot, and his individual citizens are cowering, impotent drones in the face of the state’s awesome power. Indeed, Montesquieu’s conception of the liberal state—so influential in the imagining of political societies in the centuries to come (Neumann 1957; Richter 1977)—overlooks the possibility that “the very contrivances he recommended as antidotes to terror—toleration, mediating institutions, and social pluralism—could be mobilized on its behalf” (Robin 2004:54). The liberal state, in others words, is just as capable as its absolutist counterpart of manipulating fear and deploying terror as implements in the maintenance of state authority and legitimacy.<sup>9</sup>

For Marx, the social threat, the “war of all against all” that defines civil society, does not derive from a Hobbesian state of nature. Rather, fear and social conflict are the necessary by-products of the “capitalist spirit,” which “dissolves the human world into a world of atomistic, mutually hostile individuals” (Marx 1967:245). Whereas Hobbes understood the power of the Leviathan to be derived from the free association of individuals ceding their power to a higher authority, Marx regarded the state in capitalist society as deriving its power from the inevitable conflict that arises in the competition for private property and individual wealth (although, unfortu-

9. John Locke (1960 [1689]) famously argued that the state exists primarily to guarantee liberty and security for its citizens and, failing that, that the people have the right to overthrow the state to create more secure conditions.

nately, Marx attributed the origins of the ethos driving this competition to the “chimerical nationality of the Jew” within Christian society; Marx 1967:216). As James Der Derian (2009:155) points out, quoting Marx, it is the alienation produced by capitalism that requires the security of a state, which becomes “the mediator to which man transfers all his unholliness and all his human freedom.” Rather than emerging from the state of nature, “security is the guarantee of the egoism of civil society” (Marx 1967:16).

For these classical political philosophers, fear was a powerful motivator behind 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*.<sup>10</sup> 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, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Collective security rests on the belief that nations banding together can provide better security for all against an aggressor, being that “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 are 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 may be drawn into conflicts in which they have little stake by virtue of their membership in collective security pacts, as in the aftermath of September 11 and the invasion of Iraq by the “coalition of the willing” (Anderson, Bennis, and Cavanagh 2003). This logic was powerfully operative in the Cold War, during which time the collective defense organizations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization 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 U.S. 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 such as 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 assumes that the integration of small national economies into global markets will 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 in the post–World War II era became a paramount concern of many nation-states, framed again within the logic of a clash between communism and freedom. Defining security as national security became an equation with great appeal to a variety of state regimes. In Latin America, authoritarian regimes of the 1960s through the 1980s based their authority on a “National Security Doctrine” that 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 the “internal enemies” of communist subversion had to be fought at any and all costs (Mares 2007). 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 U.S. political and economic support for these regimes was often justified by their demonstrated ability to hold off the communist threat throughout the Americas.

As the Cold War came to an end, dictatorships turned into democracies (enjoying throughout a sustained support from the United States; 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 and included greater income inequality and expanding poverty, diminution of the state and social services, rising unemployment, and mounting crime and social violence (see Gledhill 2004). Even so, under neoliberalism, the 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 global war on terror. As economies have weakened and the daily lives of people in a range of societies have become more precarious, broader conceptions of security that would include such things as employment, health care, and education (what the United Nations has identified as “human security”; UN Development Programme 1994) have been slow to emerge, so “security” continues 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 would seem to prevail in neoliberal society against any attempt at widening security’s domain.

The emergence of what we might call the security state is the necessary counterpoint to neoliberalism’s “privatization” of civil society, its attempt to devolve onto civil institutions, local communities, and individuals the tasks of governance

10. Max Weber (1958 [1918]), e.g., famously posited a monopoly on the use of violence as the defining feature of the modern state, again locating security provision as a central component productive of state legitimacy.

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 responsibilities of maintaining its subjects, conferring on those subjects themselves the daily obligations of self-maintenance and self-regulation (Foucault 1991). Meanwhile, the state appropriates for itself the exclusive right to define and impose “security,” with the state 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 (Bratich 2006; Hay and Andrejevic 2006). In Gramsci’s terms, the liberal state 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” (Gramsci 1988:235–236). Thus, even as it warns of imminent security threats, the state seeks to reduce its own role in security provision through expanding individual “responsibilization.” As Hay and Andrejevic (2006:337) note for the Bush administration’s National Strategy for Homeland Security (NSFHS), 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. A corollary to this is the apparent need to limit basic rights, which, according to the NSFHS, make a democratic society “inherently vulnerable” to attack by “the invisible enemies, lurking in the shadows” (cited in 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 assume a habitually anxious, cautious engagement with anyone or anything deemed unfamiliar and potentially threatening.

From the perspective of the scholars known as the Copenhagen school of security studies (Buzan, Wæver, and de 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, Copenhagen scholars emphasize “securitization,” a process of constructing a collective understanding of something as a particular kind of danger, an existential threat to state, society, “our way of life.” “Security” from this perspective 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 indicator of the political power of the speaker demonstrated by his or her ability to declare something a security threat and to have

that declaration recognized publicly 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. It is also highly self-referential: security is that which authorized actors are able to securitize, not what might actually exist “out there” as a real social threat. 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).<sup>11</sup> 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 supersede 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 de 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 society or the state that leads it.

What all of the preceding analyses of security share is 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 a critical anthropology of security can make important contributions both to a broader understanding of what security entails and its theorization. A critical, comparative ethnography 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 (e.g., 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

11. The extent to which the imposition of a state of exception is necessary within the framework of a dictatorship or other nondemocratic polity is open to discussion. Is the kind of legitimating work that the state of exception accomplishes necessary in other political formations, or is its relevance limited to the democratic context? My colleague David Hughes and I continue to debate this issue, but it is reason to question the universal applicability of Agamben’s suggestion.

excludes in the ordinary and exceptional struggles of daily life. It 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. This is an insight that even some international relations scholars have arrived at, though they lack the disciplinary tools to effect it:

Analytically we need to recognize and explore the range of ways in which political communities and their values are positioned by different actors, and explore the contexts in which particular security visions “win out” over others. We should also focus more on the understanding or discourse of security underpinning particular representations and practices rather than the act of “securitizing” or “desecuritizing.” Such a research agenda is clearly less elegant and more unwieldy than the Copenhagen school’s securitization framework, whose attraction will always in part be the desire to simply apply a set of universal and ready-made tools to different social, historical and political contexts. But resisting this attraction means recognizing the breadth and complexity of the construction of security in global politics. (McDonald 2008:582)

The next section of this article illustrates how this kind of perspective is already being elaborated by anthropologists at work in the Latin American context. It is followed by a more detailed ethnography of one particular case demonstrating some of the ways in which a critical anthropology of security can advance our understanding of security across a range of disciplinary interventions.

## Security and Neoliberalism in Latin America

By the time of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the inevitable outcomes of the neoliberal model were already becoming realized, especially in the “developing world,” where this model did not emerge organically but was imported and imposed by forces from without.<sup>12</sup> In these societies, the individualizing and responsabilizing strategies of neoliberal governmentality have brought immense difficulties for citizens and states alike. Having dismantled the welfare state (or, as in Bolivia, the patronage state) over the course of the last 20 or so years while relaxing many of the barriers to the movement and operations of transnational capital, many national governments have recently had to con-

tend with rising 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, removals of tariffs and other barriers to trade, and the reduction of government involvement in the national economy and social service provision) have failed to deliver on their promises of trickle-down economic improvement, organized social movements have 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 effects of several decades under this approach continue to be felt within Latin American society with consequences for national prosperity and citizens’ rights. The various struggles in the region between competing understandings of security—what it is meant to entail, how it might best be achieved, and how it relates to rights claims in a variety of contexts—clearly illustrate some of the basic themes of this essay, and the work of some Latin Americanist anthropologists provides a model for how the discipline can approach the study of security and rights in the ashes of neoliberalism.<sup>13</sup>

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, national states have increasingly been required (by the burden of debt and the repayment schedules imposed by multinational lenders such as the International Monetary Fund) to adopt the role of security providers for global capital, often forcing these states to adopt an oppositional stance to the security (economic, physical, and otherwise) of their own citizens. Nations that cannot provide guarantees of “security” to transnational corporations risk an investment downturn, as foreign companies and financiers may refuse to do business there, depriving those states of the capital they require to maintain themselves in power and service their national debt. By “security” here is meant both a guarantee of a stable economic environment for foreign investors, with minimal state intervention in business or finance (e.g., in the form of 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 industry being limited and suppressed by the state. States find themselves caught between the dictates of various foreign bosses and national citizens who expect that in a democratic context, the duly elected authorities will work to serve the interests of the electorate. The inability to manage this evident contradiction

12. In discussing “neoliberalism” here, I refer to it both as a political-economic philosophy with a set of accompanying policy prescriptions (e.g., favoring open markets and free trade against a Keynesian welfarism; Larner 2000) and as a rationality of governance (e.g., extending market values to social institutions; Brown 2003). See the discussion in Schwegler (2008).

13. Again, while it may be premature to declare the death of neoliberalism, in much of Latin America the philosophy and practice of neoliberal capitalism and democracy (what is often locally called *neoliberalismo*) is under explicit assault. It may be too early to declare Latin America to be “post-neoliberal” (see Leiva 2008), but it is clearly in transition to a new historical period.



has led to a crisis of legitimacy for democratically elected governments unable to reconcile the security demands of transnational corporations and lenders with the demand for rights from national citizens.

Bolivia faced such a crisis in 2000, when the so-called Water War erupted in Cochabamba, the nation's third largest city. 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 million loan to expand water service if the city's water system were privatized (Schultz 2008). As a result, monthly water bills for poor urban residents increased by more than 200%, sparking local anger that quickly mobilized in repudiation of the Bechtel deal and a demand for the return of public water management. As anthropologist Robert Albro has shown in his writing on this and other social movements in Bolivia, the Water War marked the emergence of a discourse of natural resources as collective rights, recognized as part of Bolivia's "national patrimony"; they 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 2005a). This series of events was repeated in 2003, when 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, dissident politicians, and national security forces. Fearing that gas revenues would be misappropriated by a government that did not appear to have their best interests in mind, many Bolivians refused to accept President Gonzalo ("Goni") Sanchez de Lozada's hydrocarbon policy, paralyzing the nation's one viable export commodity and imperiling Goni's neoliberal economic agenda for debt reduction and national economic security. 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 67 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 until then been one of South America's staunchest bastions of neoliberalism. The conflicts of the Water War and the Gas War and the subsequent election of Evo Morales as Bolivia's first indigenous president emerged as contestations over the nature of rights for indigenous people versus the stability and security of the state and, as Albro's work demonstrates, called into question who was actually being represented under what people locally identified as "neoliberal democracy" (Albro 2005b, 2006a).<sup>14</sup>

14. The rise to power in Bolivia of Evo Morales and the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement toward Socialism) in December 2005 was part of a wider shift away from neoliberal policies that 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

Similar issues have arisen in Ecuador, where anthropologist 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, who are exposed to pollution, disease, and loss of domestic economy as oil extraction poisons the soil, water, fish, and game on which local people 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 calls the "crisis of representation" in neoliberal democracy). As Sawyer deftly 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 this 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 industry (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—a contested process detailed in Sawyer's ethnography. In this and in the Bolivian case described above, the state resists efforts to broaden "security" beyond threats to the state itself against popular groups' attempts to widen "security" by mobilizing the transnational discourse of human rights to challenge the neoliberal democratic state's abandonment of its obligations to its citizens.

The contradictions implicit in the relationship between democracy and its promise of rights and security and its guarantee of safety and stability are particularly evident in Colombia, which prides itself on being one of Latin America's oldest and strongest democracies despite the 50-year-old civil war that has wracked the country and the extensive human rights violations it has entailed (Mariner and Smart 2001). The ongoing conflict in Colombia pits a left-wing guerrilla movement against the state and right-wing paramilitary groups, with rural and poor urban communities caught in between. As described in the work of the Colombian anthropologist Maria Clemencia Ramirez, the fact of this civil war has permitted the Colombian government at various moments to implement states of siege (what are sometimes decreed "States of Internal Commotion"), during which time the military has grown increasingly autonomous from the

figure can be reasonably traced to these events and the climate of change that they signaled in the country.

civilian administration, assuming responsibility for both national security and domestic law and order (Ramírez 2010; see also Roldán 2002). In the so-called marginal zones of the country, such as Putumayo where Ramírez has done her research, state presence is particularly weak, illegal production of coca leaf (the basis of cocaine) flourishes, and guerrillas and paramilitaries contend for control of the coca profits and the loyalties of local communities. Partly as a result of the perceived illegality and disorder on this internal frontier (with the production of drug crops and the Marxist guerrillas who control this production seen as threats to regional and U.S. national security), the United States has come to view Colombia as a “security” problem framed in the terms of the old anticommunist model (Ramírez 2010).<sup>15</sup>

The Cold War–era rhetoric of communist threat was replaced by the language of terror, with the declaration of the global war on terror in 2001 and the election of Alvaro Uribe Vélez as Colombian president in 2002. As a liberal senator, Uribe had sponsored several key pieces of legislation that restructured the Colombian economy along neoliberal lines, and he was widely viewed as someone who would bring law and order to a conflicted and violent nation. Uribe quickly implemented his “National Development Plan to Provide Democratic Security,” which expanded the presence of the Colombian military throughout the country’s marginal zones. Significantly, under “Democratic Security,” all guerrilla activity, including the production of narcotics, was framed as a “terror” threat: all residents of the disputed territories were classified as “auxiliaries of terrorist groups,” and their supposed allegiance to guerrillas or paramilitaries used as a justification by the state to dispossess peasants of their lands, torture them or otherwise violate their human rights, and demand that they assume an active role in providing military intelligence (Ramírez 2010:148). “Democratic Security” requires citizens to declare themselves for or against the government; it blurs the distinction, fundamental to international human rights law, between civilian populations and combatants (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas 2004), insisting that all Colombians actively support what Uribe calls the nation’s “threatened democracy” by becoming informers against “terrorist” groups that oppose the state (Ramírez 2010). Citizens’ rights are subordinated to state security in the “Democratic Security” paradigm, which in classic neoliberal form expects citizens to take on the responsibility of defending the state without any expectation that the state will, in turn, assist them with their own local needs or protect their individual rights. As Ramírez notes, this conception of security and democracy is derived directly from the principles of Colombian paramilitarism, which (in the words of paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño) holds that “the perfect self-defense force under the

protection of Colombian law and international law is the society, the government, and the armed forces united as one. That’s invincible. The state will only be able to defeat the guerrillas and offer security to the whole society if its power flows from society itself” (Ramírez 2010:150).

In Guatemala, where another long civil war only recently came to an end, rural Maya communities struggle to establish a life in a postwar context characterized by violence and what anthropologist Jennifer Burrell calls an ethos of “making do in the absence of the state” (Burrell 2010). More than a decade after the war, Burrell observes, Maya residents of the village Todos Santos Cuchumatán are well informed of their basic rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens as knowledge of such concepts and their attendant discourses circulate widely in postwar Guatemala. But the structural and systemic violence that continues to characterize rural life makes it extremely difficult for Maya to realize these rights. Of particular concern are the rise of international gangs or *maras*, which are viewed as the source of much of the crime and violence that rural and urban communities experience. Problems caused by *maras*, as well as other forms of violence and a more general concern for livelihood, are locally read through a “security” lens in which *todosanteros* feel unprotected by the state and abandoned to face their problems on their own. In this context, Burrell notes (citing Gledhill 2004), public services such as policing come to be privatized as Maya communities turn to wartime mechanisms such as civil patrols to police themselves against crime and provide local security. In these communities today, community policing, local forms of punishment (*castigo maya*), and vigilantism are on the rise. Nevertheless, these *Juntas Civiles de Seguridad* have been so successful in controlling crime that they have received official state recognition and provide a model that is now being taken nationally. What is troubling here is that people are deploying a wartime form of security making that was originally imposed on them by the armed forces who were also engaged in a genocide against Maya communities—Maya were forced to participate in civil patrols as a means of demonstrating their opposition to the guerrilla movement against which state security forces were fighting (Godoy 2006). In the postwar period, these institutions reemerge, now adopted locally as a means of establishing security against gang violence and setting aside questions of rights (their own and those of the accused) until such time as security can be achieved. Unlike some of the cases described above, in which rights claims are used to counter local insecurities, here rights are subordinated to the need for security, defined solely as protection from crime and violence. This situation is further exemplified by my work in Bolivia, discussed below.

This brief review of recent anthropological writing on security and rights in Latin America brings into play a number of critical concepts and issues, including democracy, violence, justice, citizenship, and human rights. It points to the complexity of these various issues and the ways they are interconnected, mutually reinforcing and central to an anthro-

15. The United States and the Colombian government typically have ignored or downplayed the role of right-wing paramilitaries in these same regions and in the drug industry that lies at the heart of the Colombian “security” problem.

pology of politics in the region. In the next section, I provide a more extended case study from my own work in Bolivia to examine the ways in which security and rights intersect in a society that has explicitly renounced neoliberalism yet continues to live with its consequences.

## Security and Rights in Bolivia

Despite the erosion of the neoliberal state's legitimacy and the many changes accompanying the emergence of what some are calling a "post-neoliberal" era in Latin America (Leiva 2008), a local, national, and regional preoccupation with security persists. This principally takes the form of what is known as *seguridad ciudadana*, or "citizen security" (Goldstein 2004). In its broadest sense as imagined by social scientists and journalists, citizen security refers to a constellation of issues that affect the well-being of individuals and communities in a variety of social contexts across the region. More practically, in the language and daily experience of people and governments, citizen security refers to protection against crime, now seen as one of the greatest obstacles to the peace and happiness of rich and poor men, women, and children in a variety of Latin American countries. In Bolivia, the rhetoric of citizen security has had a powerful resonance in the collective imagination, defining local conceptions of security and structuring a relationship with "rights" that is deeply problematic for considerations of justice and democracy in that country.

Like Colombia's "Democratic Security," citizen security calls on the rhetoric of rights, equality, and social inclusion to mask a more fundamental authoritarian character. As the effects of neoliberalism increasingly became evident in the economies and societies of Latin America, poverty and income inequality worsened, as did crime and daily social violence (Ungar 2009). Coupled with an overall inefficacy of police response and lack of judicial authority to control crime or punish offenders, many citizens today feel abandoned by the national state and live their lives in a condition of generalized insecurity and fear of an assault, a robbery, or the threat of either (Goldstein 2007). Some have compared the general climate of fear and suspicion with that which typified the age of the dictatorships in Latin America, in which a prevailing sense of personal insecurity colored daily life (Damert and Malone 2003; Neild 2002). Citizen security emerges as a discourse of this present 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 condition 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, where they are demonized in official proclamations, media reporting, and daily conversations. Youth are especially vulnerable, as young people may be criminalized as potential delinquents by virtue of their age alone. Most troubling, extralegal violence in the form of vigilante lynchings of criminal suspects has become a common means of dealing with presumed delinquents and administering summary "justice."<sup>16</sup>

Over the last decade, Bolivia has exhibited the second highest incidence of vigilante violence in the world (behind only postwar Guatemala), with the vast majority of this violence concentrated in the southern zone of Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city (Goldstein 2003). The intense migration of rural peasants to Cochabamba over the last 30 years (attracted by the city's large informal economy—centered around its huge outdoor market, the *Cancha*—and easy access to the lowland coca-growing region, the Chapare) has led to an expansion of "illegal" and unregulated urban settlements on the periphery of the city that remain largely outside the control of municipal authorities.<sup>17</sup> This pattern, common throughout Latin America and other parts of the developing world, is made worse in Bolivia by the deep and prevailing poverty in that country and the inability of the state to provide adequate infrastructure and services to the residents of these so-called marginal communities. This same poverty also drives a high crime rate, and these barrios are frequently the targets of thieves who prey on the homes of poor people, which are often 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 often is channeled into violence as people seek retribution against those presumed to be guilty of these crimes. People in these marginal barrios are highly 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 do not understand and do not know how to use. Instead, they turn to violence as the most expedient and, they believe, most reliable means of deterring future crime in their neighborhood. Such violence, however, is ineffective as a crime-control measure,

16. In January 2009, Bolivians approved the text of a new national constitution that, among many other changes, gave formal state recognition to indigenous forms of community justice (*justicia comunitaria*). How this will actually play out in terms of legislation and judicial practice remains to be seen, but the official recognition given to *justicia comunitaria* by the new constitution has been mobilized in popular forms of administering vigilante "justice": lynchings in urban barrios are frequently justified by their perpetrators as acts of *justicia comunitaria*, though urban lynchings bear little resemblance to traditional forms of justice-making practiced in indigenous rural communities.

17. The expansion of squatter settlements in the southern zone of Cochabamba throughout the 1980s and 1990s took place in direct contravention of the city's municipal development plan, which prohibited residential growth in these parts of the city. As a result, many of these new communities were labeled "illegal" and so denied access to municipal services, including police protection. For a fuller discussion of the process of migration and settlement, see Goldstein (2004).

feeding instead an ongoing cycle of fear, revenge, and erosion of trust in local communities and state institutions.

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 my research demonstrates, people regard with suspicion any outsider who enters their neighborhood for fear that the person is a potential housebreaker, child molester, or rapist. Women's movements especially are strictly controlled, as they fear going out at night, walking in particular neighborhoods, or talking to people they do not know. Community life itself is highly constrained because people resist gathering collectively for public events out of mistrust and a generally degraded sense of collective identity. Indeed, one of the most common forms of collective gathering in marginal communities is, shockingly, the lynching, one of the few truly collective events to occur in these barrios (Goldstein et al. 2007). The fact that many have engaged side by side in these illegal, violent actions further erodes communal trust, however, as people share a sense of responsibility for the lynching and an even more heightened fear in its aftermath. Furthermore, the Bolivian government does little to meet the security needs of its poorest and most vulnerable citizens. Centuries of centralization and underfunding have left Bolivia (like many other Latin American nations) with a dysfunctional bureaucracy highly concentrated in the downtown areas and with no capacity to reach to the margins, where the majority of the urban population now lives. Today, if a barrio resident has a conflict, a legal problem, or experiences abuse or violence, 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 she lacks funds to pay a bribe or cannot speak Spanish or cannot afford the cab fare or does not want to leave her children unattended, she is unlikely to get service, and her problems 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 fear or lack of knowledge of how to access them. In general, people are more likely to live with their problems despite the suffering they cause them rather than deal with the labyrinthine nightmare of trying to get official help in resolving them. Even as Evo Morales's MAS government has transformed the sociopolitics of the Bolivian nation, in local communities many people experience a profound and uninterrupted "insecurity" (*inseguridad*, they call it) that shows no signs of resolution.<sup>18</sup>

My research on violence and justice in the marginal barrios of Cochabamba has been ongoing since 1993, but in 2005 I

began a new project in the district of Ushpa Ushpa, part of Municipal District 8, on the far southern fringe of Cochabamba city. In addition to its profound poverty and recency of settlement, Ushpa Ushpa (meaning "ashes" in Quechua, a word that described the consistency of the soil when settlers first arrived there 10 years ago) has also been the site of frequent vigilante lynchings. Ushpa Ushpa today consists of 17 base communities, or *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base*; the total population of the district is around 8,000 residing in an area of about 700 hectares, or almost 3 square miles.<sup>19</sup> The district lacks running water, sewers, and paved roads. It has no medical facilities and one school for the thousands of children who reside there. Where there is electricity and telephone service, it was brought there through the lobbying, fund-raising, and labor of barrio leaders and residents themselves. Ushpa Ushpa is the southernmost district in all of Cochabamba, located 12 kilometers from the governmental and judicial institutions of the city center. No police stations or mobile patrols of any kind exist to control crime or help to resolve disputes in the barrios of Ushpa Ushpa despite its public reputation as a *zona roja* (red zone), where crime and violence run rampant. The vast majority of the population of Ushpa Ushpa is native Quechua and (to a lesser extent) Aymara speaking, with some people monolingual in these languages. Most people work in the informal economy as small-scale merchant vendors in the Cancha or as construction workers, domestics, laborers, or taxi drivers.

In neighborhoods such as Rio Seco, one barrio within the larger district of Ushpa Ushpa, many people articulate a demand for protection against crime, deploying the transnational discourse of citizen security to lend force to these claims.<sup>20</sup> "If there is this insecurity, it is also the result of our great poverty, no?" observed Mario, a research consultant, insightfully. Complaints of police inattention and corruption are frequent, and the ability to access official justice often depends on the wealth of the crime victim; as Delia, another consultant, put it, "Really, *la denuncia* [filing a police report] is only a palliative, because in the end, he who has money can get things moving, he who doesn't have money, nothing moves. . . . That's the reality. To investigate, the police ask for money, when there's money they investigate, when there's no money, they don't." Many people perceive themselves as forced to intervene in a disorder that crime and a lack of official protection have created; another consultant, Aurelio, observed that "the anger is so great . . . with all the things that happen, there is no justice, the authorities don't do anything, so, what are you going to do? You catch someone, you lynch him" (Goldstein et al. 2007).

While the poor lynch criminal suspects in order to create

18. Indeed, despite its socialist credentials, 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 under the Morales regime.

19. *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base*, created under the *Ley de Participación Popular* in an attempt to decentralize public administration, are local forms of organization and governance that receive financial support directly from the federal state.

20. Rio Seco is a pseudonym, as are any personal names mentioned in this ethnography.

security, in wealthier neighborhoods of the city of Cochabamba, people employ private security firms almost universally. Unwilling to rely on what is widely regarded as a corrupt police force, residents of middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods employ private firms to police their communities and perform the basic security-making functions that the state ordinarily is expected to provide. Curiously, many of these middle- and upper-class Bolivians also regard the avowedly socialist government of Evo Morales and the MAS as a source of insecurity, a view of the state long held by poor people in Bolivia who now have reason to regard the MAS state as more sympathetic to their needs. Many wealthy people command the personal resources to create for themselves a backup plan (“plan B,” they call it) that will enable them to flee the country should their fears be realized and the government begins to expropriate the assets of private citizens. Here, too, people feel threatened and insecure and believe that their own personal intervention in this insecurity can provide the protection for themselves and their families against threats from without.

The pursuit of citizen security has clear implications for the realization of civil and human rights in the marginal communities. While they enact their own private strategies for making security, many people in a range of communities urge the state to adopt harsher security measures—including use of the death penalty, more aggressive and intrusive police practices, and suspension of basic rights of those detained—recalling the security-making practices of Latin American dictatorships (Goldstein 2007). Both poor and rich Bolivians alike are concerned that their rights as citizens are violated by a state that does not protect them or serve their interests. At the same time as they express concern for their own rights, however, many people are less concerned with the rights of others, particularly with those whom they perceive to be threats to their own security. Some people complain that human rights and the groups that defend them are enemies of the citizenry, for they defend criminals against the “good people” who are crime’s victims: Emilia stated, “I believe that we have to reform our laws. . . . I don’t know who [the human rights advocates] want to defend, but . . . there are more advantages for the delinquent than there are for the citizen.” “Rights talk,” that transnational discourse disseminated by NGOs and international organizations concerned with human rights promotion, becomes demonized by “security talk,” which depicts rights as an abettor of crime: human rights are “rights for criminals” that many believe run counter to the “security” needs of honest citizens (Caldeira 2000). These security campaigns, popularly initiated but partaking of a transnational security discourse, familiar from both the “national security” doctrines of the 1970s and the twenty-first century’s global war on terror, pit the “good” against the “evil” in daily practices of surveillance, suspicion, abnegation of rights, and a willingness to use violence in the creation of security. Each neighborhood becomes its own little Guantánamo, operating within a state of exception that per-

mits the suspension of national laws, democratic values, and transnational protocols, all in the interests of security promotion and the establishment of order.

While lynching in poor communities and the alternative strategies of creating security that the rich employ are distinct from each other in a variety of obvious ways, at base all of these forms of security making represent the “privatization” of security, clear expressions of the neoliberal logic that urges self-help and the “responsibilization” of citizens in the maintenance of their own welfare in a context of state diminution and retreat. Lynching represents what I have elsewhere (Goldstein 2005) identified as “neoliberal violence,” a violence that is at once structural and interpersonal, expressing within itself the logics of individual self-help and private enterprise that neoliberalism upholds as its central rationality. Having learned to depend entirely on their own devices for the realization of what they perceive to be their basic rights as citizens (including the right to “citizen security”), these Bolivians look to their own resources—including violence, torture, and the administration of death—as their only recourse. They act as good Hobbesians, living out the dictum that “if there be no power erected, or not great enough for our security, every man will and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art for caution against all other men” (Hobbes 2003 [1651]).

## Conclusion

What this brief discussion of the security/rights nexus in Bolivia illustrates is the ways in which two transnational discourses come into conflict in the daily struggle to create peace and stability in the marginal communities of Cochabamba. Additionally, it shows how “rights,” however well intentioned, may receive an entirely different reception by those who view them through a “security” lens (Goldstein 2007). “Security talk” here becomes a way for local communities to engage the neoliberal state, whose failures to create security are seen to undermine the rights of citizens. Curiously, the language of rights, apparently so antagonistic to that of security, is reinvoked in the idea of “citizen security,” which implies that security itself is a right that the state is obligated to provide its citizens lest they take it into their own hands. Anthropological analysis of this situation reveals the contradictory ways in which these transnational ideals are invoked, deployed, and reworked at multiple levels in Bolivian society, offering a perspective on the security quest as running counter to basic democratic values and laws. Though in so many ways dissimilar, the lives of marginal Bolivians and mainstream North Americans are brought into close proximity through this analysis, because the apparent exceptions that security seems to require of rights are clearly characteristic of life in both societies, endemic as they are to life in a global society of security.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, it could be argued, did not so much initiate a new “security moment” in world history as intervene fortuitously in the gradual disintegration

of the neoliberal social and political order, in which various doubts about the nature of security and the state's ability to provide it were already moving from nascent to emergent. Furthermore, rather than contributing to the seamless reproduction of neoliberal governmentality, security, like so many other components of transnational political economy and its accompanying discourses, has been adopted and reconfigured in unexpected and challenging ways, serving not necessarily to deepen a neoliberal hegemony but to contest the very parameters of governmental responsibility and citizens' rights. Ethnographic research reveals these contradictions, expanding our conceptions of what security entails and of the ways in which local ideas about security are informed by and yet also serve to challenge national and global understandings, discourses, and practices.

This article has drawn attention to the long and complex history that joins matters of security and rights in democratic society, pointing to the powerful contradictions that inhabit this relationship. In their very framing, "security" and "rights" would seem to be inherently antagonistic, with security requiring the suspension of rights in order to achieve its objectives. As the history of the concept shows, "security" has always been intimately entangled with "rights," with the latter being constructed as obstacles to the realization of the former. It should not then be surprising to note, as I have shown for the Bolivian case, that the global discourse of security finds expression in a variety of local contexts with the same antagonism to rights (in the case of Cochabamba, the rights of criminals) embedded within that discourse. What this case also demonstrates, though, is the way that rights and security may in fact be seen as complementary rather than oppositional. In Bolivia, as elsewhere in Latin America, the "right to security," an apparently ironic reentailment of these conjoined expressions, becomes a rallying cry for people who lack access to justice or safety under a democratic rule of law. In this sense, "human rights" reveals itself to be a kind of security discourse as well: human rights is meant to provide people and communities with protection from the very kinds of abuses that "security" permits the state to enact. Rights and security, from this perspective, may be seen not as antagonists but as natural bedfellows; the third article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, declares that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person,"<sup>21</sup> with security here meaning protection from arbitrary detention, violence, and exploitation at the hands of the state or other individuals or groups.

These understandings of security and rights emerge from the kind of comparative ethnography that this article offers and point to the contributions that anthropology stands to make to the study of security. A critical security anthropology can reveal not only the ways in which global discourses are situated and manipulated in the face-to-face contexts of eth-

nography—it can transform the way security itself is conceptualized as a historical and contemporary global reality. Such a move can offer anthropology a seat at the table with other disciplinary theorists, bringing a much-needed critical, engaged, and ethnographically informed perspective to academic and policy-based considerations of this fraught and elusive topic.

## Acknowledgments

This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under grant 0540702. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation. A much earlier version of this paper was presented at the 106th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in Washington, DC, on November 28–December 2, 2007, and a later version at the 108th AAA annual meeting in Philadelphia, December 2–6, 2009. Thanks to R. Sivaramakrishnan and Keith Brown for their helpful comments on those presentations and to Rob Albro and Fran Mascia-Lees for reading longer versions of the paper. I am grateful to the editor and anonymous reviewers of *Current Anthropology* for their very useful comments. Thanks also to the members of the Politics of Global Security faculty/student research cluster at Rutgers University—Jack Bratich, Daniel Chatman, Zaire Dinzey-Flores, Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi, Assaf Harel, Angelique Haugerud, David Hughes, Deepa Kumar, Richard Nisa, Nell Quest, and Robyn Rodriguez—for their inspired reflections on this work.

---

## Comments

### Robert Albro

International Communication, School of International Service, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016, U.S.A. (albro@american.edu).  
12 II 10

The development of a "critical comparative ethnography of security" is timely for anthropology. We live in a complex world composed of "securityscapes" (Gusterson 2004). And as Goldstein observes, the question of security composes more than simply a post-9/11 preoccupation with national security in the United States. Therefore, my comments here are constructively supplemental to Goldstein's project, with which I am sympathetic. I have two suggestions: (1) we should not engage with securityscapes as grand narratives, and (2) a critical anthropology of security cannot *just* be a critical ethnography of security.

21. <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/language/right8.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009). I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this observation.

Goldstein's exploration of the ways security and neoliberalism become practically and ideologically intertwined makes the case for why the ethnography of security is necessary and productive: ethnography effectively demystifies such plenipotentiary frameworks by unpacking and specifically locating their entailments and social consequences in people's everyday lives. And the demonization of "rights talk" by "security talk" across the contemporary Bolivian social landscape is a valuable ethnographic insight from Goldstein's ongoing work. Yet if securityscapes encompass the social costs of neoliberalism, potentially they include much more as well.

Goldstein makes his case in part by offering an Enlightenment-inspired genealogy of the concept, beginning with Hobbes and running through Montesquieu, Marx, Gramsci, and Foucault. But this narrative begs the question to what extent and how is "security" a cover term for topically disparate considerations of people variously implicated in diverse regimes of security globally and for whom security is differently experienced and culturally imagined? Any hastily sketched out genealogy, from Hobbes to Bush-era security truisms, runs counter to the fine grain of anthropology's approach to its ethnographic particulars. Goldstein notes the state centrism of this genealogy and offers his critical anthropology of security as an alternative. But he also describes marginal urban Bolivians as "good Hobbesians," placing them and Bolivia's neoliberal violence unquestioningly within his genealogy.

One challenge is the way anthropology represents securityscapes in ethnographic terms and the kinds of narrative containers within which our thick descriptions are housed. We should avoid teleological explanations, perhaps detected in Goldstein's conclusion, "The emergence of what we might call the security state is the necessary counterpoint to neoliberalism's 'privatization' of civil society." It is the *necessary* counterpoint? It is not always clear whether Goldstein presents the mutual entanglements of security with neoliberalism as specific to Latin America or as a pervasively relevant condition on global-local articulations of neoliberalism and security. The term "neoliberalism" has a particular trajectory in Latin America (and Bolivia) that is part of recent hemispheric history. But its historical coherence and integrity are open to question, and its effects are diverse. Neoliberalism describes a host of goings on not always related to one another, put together differently, and with different meanings globally (see Greenhouse 2009). The nexus of neoliberalism with security does not exhaust the arrangements composing different securityscapes. But it is presented here as if it might. Framing a critical anthropology of security in this way—with genealogy intact—invites generalization on the wrong side of the complexity.

This project is also timely because much current ethnographic work actively engages one or another feature of contemporary securityscapes but as yet does not regularly engage each other. Furthermore, as an orientation to ethnographic practice, such a critical project encourages productive reflection

about "the field" (as a discipline, mode of inquiry, and location) in post-place-centric terms. Finally, and not unrelated, agencies of the security sector in the United States and elsewhere increasingly have anthropology on their radar, if only recently and in a variety of different ways. Such a project represents an opportunity for constructive dialogue about the meaning and purpose of anthropology as engaged by practitioners and policy makers associated with the security sector (see Marcus 2009; McNamara 2010).

More systematic attention to securityscapes as ethnographic sites and as organizing epistemes or doxa offers productive avenues to understand such enduring disciplinary concerns as the construction of self, the meaning and fragility of social commitments (in particular the role of risk in social life), synergies and tensions between technologies and communities, new appreciations of the agencies of the state apparatus and social and cultural agency more generally, and valuably thick descriptions of a host of local-global articulations, as Goldstein offers here through his ethnographically grounded discussion of "rights."

But this is not enough. "Security" poses several challenges for anthropology's very conception of its own *practice*, illustrated not just by the ethnographic turn to make sense of diverse securityscapes but also by anthropologists' closer proximity to the security sector (including more intimate working relationships with state agencies); by sustained, sometimes vocal critics of the uses of ethnography in this sector; and by anthropological work—itsself part of securityscapes in the United States and elsewhere—that significantly departs from classical or conventional arrangements of ethnography to the academy. A broader critical anthropology of security, then, might also address new kinds of anthropological commitments, ethnographic projects, and social relations in a changing field alongside novel forms of anthropological knowledge production (e.g., *vis-à-vis* the policy world), both as an ethnographic point of departure and a means of reimagining disciplinary practice through a more capacious public anthropology (see Albro 2006*b*, 2007).

---

#### Catherine Besteman

Department of Anthropology, Colby College, 4702  
Mayflower Hill, Waterville, Maine 04901, U.S.A.  
(clbestem@colby.edu). 9 II 10

In his timely call for an anthropology of security, Goldstein argues that security has emerged as the new paradigm for state building and governmentality "out of the ashes of neoliberalism." For me, three areas of particular anthropological interest emerged from his framework: to critically analyze the dynamic force, content, and conceptual/physical apparatus of U.S. imperialism; to refine and renew an anthropology of

crime and fear; and to reflect on the goals, values, and ethics of anthropological engagements with security.

Goldstein closes the body of his paper by suggesting that Bolivians who resort to vigilante action and private security are acting in accordance with Hobbes's argument that "if there be no power erected" each man shall take personal responsibility for his own protection. But I would argue that the contexts in which citizens take responsibility for their own protection are not defined by an absence of power but rather by a particular structure of power that makes citizens insecure and fearful. One critical dimension of this structure is the force of U.S. imperialism. Goldstein recognizes this, but a particular contribution of an anthropology of security will be our ability to make imperialism irrefutably visible and to articulate its effect across a wide variety of arenas.

The United States sets the discourse and parameters that dependent governments must use to define their interests. As Goldstein notes, in the wake of the Cold War, the West promoted neoliberalism as the greatest enabler of democracy and security through the creation of integrated economies and economic interdependence. This ideology was superimposed on the national security paradigm fostered during the Cold War years and then overlaid again with the post-9/11 concern with terrorism. Given this trajectory, two questions present themselves to anthropologists: why, how, and for whom "The Cold War-era rhetoric of communist threat was replaced by the language of terror," and how exactly the decades of neoliberalism transformed Cold War understandings of security. Throughout the world, anthropologists have shown how the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s fostered public-private partnerships that benefited governments (and militaries) and multinational businesses at the expense of citizens. During the 1980s and 1990s, security concerns predominantly extended only to the protection of transnationally connected economic and political elites. (Lutz and Nonini 1999 provides a brilliant exposition of this transformation.) In the newly emerging models of security informed by U.S. military/economic imperialism, has "terrorist" simply replaced "communist"? Is a terrorist now anyone who challenges state and/or corporate power?

One new dimension of U.S. imperialism is an unprecedented emphasis on military solutions for civil, economic, and humanitarian concerns and for controlling ungoverned spaces identified as insecure and thus potentially hospitable for terrorists. Development and humanitarian work is increasingly defined as a military concern, guided by the Pentagon's view that the development of civil society and economic progress are dependent on security.

Africa (along with Colombia) provide clear examples of this unfolding new military doctrine in which security is to be provided via U.S. combatant commands as well as the training of local security forces by private U.S. contractors (which means little or no local civilian oversight of security forces). Imperialist military intervention in civic life has not been so invasive since the colonial era.

As for the question of the effect of neoliberalism on security, Goldstein's description of a citizenry fighting crime through vigilante violence rings true in much of the world. The decades of neoliberalism undermined governments, opened borders to an unprecedented flow of weapons, and produced greater inequality, impoverishment, and crime. To grasp how human rights claims motivate vigilante justice against suspected criminals, particularly in poor urban environments, an anthropology of security can repoliticize crime by refining a new political economy of crime developed in conjunction with psychological and phenomenological studies of fear. How can anthropologists place an understanding of crime and fear in the context of national and international political economies? An alternative critical discourse of crime, criminality, and fear brings questions of race, inequality, class, and age into the analysis of security practices and beliefs. Who gets defined as criminal, and why are criminals (and which criminals) rather than the state or voracious corporations the targets of violent rage? How are subjectivities emerging from security discourses and practices, and how do perceptions and layers of security collude and collide? Tracing the intersections of transnationalized and privatized security is a particularly important agenda for anthropology.

Finally, who is the audience for an anthropology of security? Goldstein closes his paper with a call for anthropology to join the table with other disciplinary theorists in order to bring our critical and ethnographic perspective into the field of security studies. How do anthropologists moderate the conditions of our contributions to that field and develop a common ethical code for the engagement of anthropology with security studies, both theoretical and practical?

---

#### Susan Bibler Coutin

Department of Criminology, Law, and Society, School of Social Ecology, University of California, Irvine, California 92697-7080, U.S.A. (scoutin@uci.edu). 9 II 10

I wholeheartedly endorse Daniel Goldstein's call for a critical anthropology of security. Goldstein is right to contend that the securitization that is all too often attributed to 9/11/2001 was underway long before those tragic events. In the case of immigration reform—my own area of research—legislation that criminalized many U.S. immigrants was adopted in 1996, some 5 years earlier. Goldstein's synopsis of security-related work by Latin American anthropologists and his compelling ethnography of security in Bolivia are evidence of the insights that an anthropology of security could provide. For example, Goldstein notes the importance of documenting, analyzing, and theorizing "insecurity" and the "right to be secure"—a challenge, given that such endeavors could bolster the security apparatus (see also Moodie 2010). Goldstein's analysis of the privatization of security on the part of *both* the rich and the



poor sheds light on class differences in responses to states' failures to make citizens secure. His attention to continuities in security discourse also highlights the uncanny familiarity of practices that, much as in the Cold War, regard citizens with suspicion. Goldstein further notes that security practices are performative, self-referential, intersubjectively constituted, and linked to the state of exception, characteristics that raise questions about the new forms of authority that are developed within security regimes. Importantly, Goldstein questions presumed linkages between electoral democracy and security, pointing out that "the liberal state . . . is just as capable as its absolutist counterpart of manipulating fear and deploying terror as implements in the maintenance of state authority and legitimacy."

An anthropological focus on security could facilitate connections with other disciplines, such as critical criminology and critical security studies. Interestingly, other disciplines' analyses of security increasingly resemble ethnography (see, e.g., Amoores and de Goede 2008; Leung 2007), suggesting that there may be something of a coalescence around modes of interrogating security discourses and practices. For example, geographer and artist Trevor Paglen (2009) used photography, mapping, archival research, and, when possible, participant observation to chart the clandestine world of U.S. national security. It is therefore possible that particular security practices, such as "deputizing" citizens to be vigilant for the abnormal (Amoores and de Goede 2008), *make* security the sort of everyday practice that insinuates itself into ethnographic "fields."

Goldstein characterizes anthropology's particular contribution to security studies as "the analysis of a truly global reality played out in local contexts . . . situating local realities within broader national and transnational contexts," and attending to "global-local articulations." These characterizations raise questions about how space, indeed, "terrain" (American Anthropological Association 2007), must be conceptualized in order to be securitized. Do security discourses reinforce or disrupt such local-global framings, and is it necessary for ethnographers to commit to a "local" where the "global" is manifested? Furthermore, while anthropology can certainly disrupt overly state-focused analyses by revealing the experiences of "subordinated groups and alternative voices . . . outside of the state and its official institutions," such analyses can also be disrupted or at least enriched through ethnographies conducted within the security apparatus itself, an apparatus that extends beyond state institutions. In other words, formulating a critical anthropology of security may also entail reformulating *location* in general and the place of anthropology in particular.

One central contribution of both Goldstein's ethnographic work in Bolivia and the other Latin American examples presented in the essay is to note that championing citizens' *right* to security challenges popular oppositions between "rights" on the one hand and "security" on the other. Such oppositions have allowed authorities to advocate curtailing rights given

the "state of exception" brought into being by security emergencies. Note as well, though, that authorities have also reinterpreted "rights" (and human rights in particular) in ways that make them compatible with neoliberal policies and even repressive practices (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Schirmer 1998). It is therefore possible that multiple versions of "rights" circulate within these discourses.

Likewise, Goldstein's attention to the ways that the notion of "citizen security" challenges the opposition between rights and security can be extended to the seeming opposition between *law* and security. In other words, if one agrees with Benjamin (1978) that the *suspension* of law is also the *essence* of law, then it would seem that instead of erasing or undermining law, security practices may bring into being another, securitized (illiberal) law (the U.S. Patriot Act might be an example). Thus, one contribution of a critical anthropology of security, via its intersections with the anthropology of law, can be to examine the *multiplicity* of perhaps seemingly incompatible versions of law that are created through security practices. By initiating this endeavor, Daniel Goldstein has performed an important service.

---

#### Jennifer Burrell

Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, AS 237, Albany, New York 12222, U.S.A. (jburrell@albany.edu). 5 III 10

In this well-argued essay, Goldstein states that paying attention to security discourse and practice, human and civil rights, and the entailments of neoliberalism is necessary to understand the contemporary global interconnections that emerge at this nexus—and, crucially, that these interconnections may resonate quite differently when viewed through the lens of security. Security has emerged as a major keyword, in Raymond Williams's sense, as we enter the second decade of the new millennium. Williams' foundational project, conducted during a similarly world-changing moment during which society seemed definitively on the cusp of something new, was a historically based exploration into how keywords take on new meaning in relation to politics and societal values. The "something new" of our times, Goldstein argues, is a move from neoliberalism to what he calls the "security paradigm." However, as Goldstein is careful to point out, security is part and parcel of neoliberalism, its logic ever deepening into the lived lives and livelihood struggles of people around the world. As neoliberalism declines (a claim he makes through tracking different kinds of violence), the security paradigm is replacing it; security, then, is a characteristic of neoliberalism that predates 9/11 but now resonates evermore strongly. The implication that we have arrived at a Kuhnian-style paradigm shift—that in security and the rise of security discourse we have encountered something that can no longer be explained

by the broader category of neoliberalism—is provocative. But in tracing the history of the concept of security and the rise of the security paradigm, it is instructive to return to Williams’s historically based and processual exploration, one rooted in practices shared and experienced by many people.

In this, Goldstein’s piece is a beginning, a way of thinking about how the mandates of security might produce a critical comparative ethnography of the practices and shared experiences of this era. And there is much to build on here. How do matters of scale and specificity matter? At what levels do security analyses become most meaningful? What is the connection between analyses of security and region? Theoretically, if “security” calls on the power of fear to become a mainstay of governmentality, what can we understand ethnographically when considering it in relation to theoretical trajectories that center people and the everyday, for example, Green’s (1999) notion of fear as a way of life? That is, in what ways has security and its intersection with rights now become a way of life?

While I agree with Goldstein that security is resonating in new ways that beg anthropological analysis, I wonder what the relationship of a critical anthropology of security and rights is to a rigorous analysis of power. Much of what “security” accomplishes as an analytic category also emerges from a literature on power, structural violence, and political economy—Wolf, Roseberry, Harvey, G. Smith, Foucault, Benjamin, Bourdieu, Farmer, Scheper Hughes, and Bourgois, among others, have traversed ground and provided fertile theoretical insight into which security anthropology would seem to fit. Indeed, making this linkage might address what Goldstein notes as the often unmade connection between safety from external attack, terrorism, and violence with the so-called human security issues of employment, health care, and education. I find it notable that “human” is appended to “security,” underscoring, as the marginalized citizens of Cochabamba that Goldstein works with would argue in their critique of rights, how the (re)ordering of people and everyday lives and struggles become abstractions in the making of transnational policy, security, and legal regimes.

While security is ostensibly about order, Goldstein notes, it is ultimately about disorder. Dependent on the suspension of normal law to create the exception, security represents a positive intervention. It would seem that the exception is now the norm, that panic is a predominant mode of being (cf. Lancaster 2008) that shapes potential roles for democratic participation and the exercise of informed (and dissenting) citizenship, and that we indeed live in a permanent state of disorder. The implications of such a state mesh well with the argument that security, at some level, promises order (although as Goldstein emphasizes, this is the “big lie”: it does not deliver; it is always in the process of happening). But establishing regimes in which security is at the center also requires complicity to activate new disciplinary techniques that reach ever farther into lives and put deepening constraints on possibilities for political action and change.

Security does not look the same way everywhere and we must attend to its local specificities and cultural aspects as well as to its transnational grasp. Next time we pass through a U.S. airport or are en route to the United States, we will again be reminded of the omnipresent yet by now “normalized” Homeland Security Advisory System, which places the United States in a near-permanent state of “high” or “elevated” alert. We might contrast this with an older historical example for dealing with imminent threat: the recently rediscovered World War II-era British propaganda poster produced in 1939 for last-case-scenario use should the Nazis have succeeded in invading Britain in Operation Sealion: Keep Calm and Carry On.

---

### Diana Fox

Department of Anthropology, Bridgewater State College, 95 Burrill Avenue, 100B, Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02325, U.S.A. (d1fox@bridgew.edu). 19 II 10

There is much in this article that is timely regarding Goldstein’s call for “a broader comparative ethnography of security.” In particular, the example drawn from his research in Cochabamba illustrating the interplay of the discourses of security and human rights indicates the absolute necessity of understanding local realities in the construction of any worthwhile policy initiatives. As Goldstein points out, the United Nations has already adopted a more extensive approach beyond the fear-mongering dimensions that have preoccupied contemporary state security directives since 9/11. As he argues, expanding the security lens must include an investigation into local realities precisely because the ways in which the two discourses of human rights and security are perceived helps to identify the kind of work that needs to be done for a fruitful relationship between the two to be realized. In spite of the seemingly obvious value in locating humanitarian concerns as security issues, this is clearly not the case for the citizens of Cochabamba, who instead perceive an antagonism and stark incompatibility. A rigorous, ethnographically informed discussion about local meanings and practices surrounding security and its intersection with human rights can contribute not only to the theorization of security but toward actual improvement in the condition of people’s lives—the ultimate goal of such analysis. For instance, should the violation of human rights become formally recognized as security issues, the UN Security Council itself could vote and take action on human rights violations.

In my own fieldwork in Jamaica, I have discovered a similar dynamic in which human rights objectives are perceived as threats to security. When a new law recently came into force prohibiting “basic school” teachers from using corporeal punishment, outrage erupted among parents. Many parents believe teachers should assist them in maintaining a moral order,

preventing male children from becoming “gunmen” and girls from sexual promiscuity. Many Jamaicans regard “children’s rights,” embodied in Jamaica’s ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as a security threat. Additionally, as in Cochabamba, the inability of the Jamaican police to control crime has led some citizens to embrace the vigilante role of gangs, such as the One Order Organization (OOO) from Kingston. Although newspapers argue that OOO threatens businesses with extortion (Mills 2004:A5), my interviews indicate that people’s desire for order and stability lends a willingness among some to “give dem a chance.”

One more example, gay rights, illustrates perceptions of tensions between human rights and security discourses in Jamaica, where virulent homophobia persists. In 2005, an article appeared in the *New York Times* (2005) stating, “The country will never defeat its AIDS epidemic—and the government will continue to attract criticism from human rights organizations—unless it takes strong steps to combat homophobia both among police, and in society as a whole.” While homophobia and HIV/AIDS present actual security threats to Jamaicans, the human rights effort to combat them is instead regarded as the threat itself.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a few points of criticism. First, Goldstein’s historical analysis of security and the state is inaccurate. He suggests that conceiving of security as solely a matter of the state and, within the state, a matter of elite interests, is something of a new phenomenon, or at least a consequence of the Cold War. This is not the case. Rather, security has been conceived as a state military concern since the rise of diplomacy in the sixteenth century in the Italian city states. In more recent history, in nineteenth-century Europe, issues of balance of power emerged at this high point of nationalism. Moreover, international law of the time did not prohibit aggressive warfare; rather, it was seen as a legitimate tool of statecraft. The prohibition only came with the UN charter, the period Goldstein marks as the rise of state-centric notions of security.

While anthropology’s contributions can clearly be instrumental, our field has much to learn from other disciplines, and we need not jump into the discussion only to inform it, a point Goldstein overlooks. The entire discipline of international relations theory is built around the question of why states act as they do. Goldstein misses an opportunity here to at least point out that this topic is the bread and butter of most departments of international relations and that in fact a sophisticated dialogue about “critical security” and “postrealist security” emerged before 9/11, posing important questions about how security should be defined, the nature of the prevailing security order, whose security is under question, and how it should be attained. Feminists have also harnessed critiques of masculinist definitions of security, mounting challenges to state-sanctioned violence as a means of acquiring security (Sheehan 1999). A comparative ethnography of security should also be a historically accurate, multi- and interdisciplinary one.

### John Gledhill

Social Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, Arthur Lewis Building, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom (john.gledhill@manchester.ac.uk).  
12 II 10

Two aspects of Daniel Goldstein’s argument stand out especially strongly. One is the way that transnational discourses of security and rights come to be interrelated in complex and frequently contradictory processes of local invocation and reworking. The other is his relativization of the events of 9/11 in relation to both a longer-term historical perspective and the current moment of “widening” of securitization in the Copenhagen school sense. Standing on the firm ground of his own ethnographies of uncivil civil society, he gives us a perspective on securitization from below, set in the context of the “disintegration of the neoliberal social and political order” and the limitations of its governmentality projects, yet with valuable warnings against undue optimism about the “post-neoliberal” future.

Getting historical perspective is a crucial step. In considering the relationship between rights and security as embodied in concepts of law and the functions and prerogatives of states, we might take the discussion beyond Hobbes and Montesquieu toward the “global designs” through which modernity was shaped through coloniality from the sixteenth-century debates in Salamanca onward, of which Walter Mignolo (2000) writes in asking whether there is a subaltern position from which it might be possible to think if not completely “outside,” then at least beyond, these frameworks. Goldstein is very clear about how the neoliberal night-watchman role of contemporary Latin American states is linked to the “guarantees” they offer to transnational capital. Yet his examples of responses from below tend to highlight how subaltern groups become at least partly enrolled in these designs even when they actively denounce privatization and alienation of national assets and demand a widening of “security” to embrace a concern for their own social and economic welfare. If, in Colombia, Uribe’s “Democratic Security” paradigm derives from the logic of paramilitarism, can we find social movements contesting not simply the regime’s security policy but also its way of “recognizing” the claims of victims of past human rights violations? If indigenous communities have revived the civil patrols imposed on them by the military state during the Guatemalan civil war as a means of countering everyday insecurities linked to gang violence, are there no voices asking questions about how the apparent impunity enjoyed by the gangs might be connected to other dimensions of the country’s political order, that is, thinking beyond the assumption that crime and violence are the result of simple abandonment by the state?

I think the answers to these questions are affirmative in these particular cases, and in any event, the questions raise

issues that should be part of critical anthropological analyses postulating grassroots challenges to securitization. There are, of course, also differences of view at the grassroots, as exemplified by rejection of the abusive pacification by militias that took over some of Rio de Janeiro's slums with the sanction of elected politicians. At the same time, we know that state interventions often undermine past local institutional capacity to manage everyday security, nowhere more obvious than in the area of Chiapas occupied by the original base communities of the Zapatista movement before and after the military arrived. As Goldstein shows convincingly, major gains in understanding why people do things that seem contradictory can be made by shifting the analysis of securitization from the level of discursive constructions and speech acts to a sociological understanding of the conditions under which they make their choices and form ideas about who deserves to have rights. Yet this is why we must be careful not to underestimate the depth of the social transformations that have occurred in the Americas as a result of neoliberalization. The spectacular forms of violence that now plague much of Mexico, inexplicable in terms of the instrumental rationality of drug trafficking, along with the incidence of femicide in rural Guatemala are symptomatic of a social crisis for which no political solution seems either possible or even relevant at the present time.

There is still a need to address the widening securitization of poverty now apparent, for example, in international migration and international development. The U.S. border raises the issue of the social climate that permits reproduction of the neoliberal utopia created by the partnership between Homeland Security and private corporations offering global security and incarceration services. The famous victory won in Cochabamba's "water war" was only one battle in what will prove an increasingly internationalized war of securitization over that increasingly scarce resource, one in which the rural poor are cast as a threat to the survival of the ecosystem as well as the state, as Ecuadorian scholar Juan Fernando Terán has pointed out (2007). There are many levels at which anthropologists can engage with such cosmologies of crisis, but none are more urgent than ethnographic investigation of whether redefinitions of the roles of states, citizens, and private entities in the provision of security are making anyone safer.

---

**Mark Goodale**

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, 3330 North Washington Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201, U.S.A. (mgoodale@gmu.edu).  
26 II 10

With this article, Daniel Goldstein describes the contours of a much-needed anthropological orientation to security in the

contemporary world. His analysis of the relationship between discourses of security and the rise, retrenchment, and situated waning of neoliberalism is particularly acute. Also convincing is his argument that what he calls a critical anthropology of security is needed at two interconnected but distinct levels.

At one level, some version of what Agamben (2005) further theorized as a state of exception has become widely institutionalized both within and across democratic and nondemocratic states. "Security" in this sense stands in for a concern with the ways in which social actors move within—and are constrained by—the multiple legal, political, and economic forms that the state of exception takes. As Goldstein explains, anthropologists must pay critical attention to these relationships in much the same way they have attended to the relational forms of other normativities, such as human rights, that share a similar historical and even ideological trajectory.

But at another level, a critical anthropology of security is a way to relocate the practice of anthropology within an altered and for some nearly unrecognizable political-academic climate in which precipitous declines in state funding for universities and a concomitant explosion of federal funding for private contractors have created the conditions in which well-meaning scholars offer their services to the highest bidder as cultural experts. These anthropologists of the "human terrain" are slotted into larger "systems" that can be readily deployed as a technology of surveillance, control, and appeasement, all intended as an expression of a more culturally sensitive framework within which at least some states of the global North project and justify power. For Goldstein, a critical security anthropology is also a way to hold a mirror up to the "conditions within which anthropological research and pedagogy are imagined, approved, funded, and implemented."

Goldstein makes his case for this new framing of and within anthropology in two ways. First, he provides a necessarily abbreviated genealogy of the concept of security within western political and social philosophy, within political ideology over the last 100 years, and within branches of international relations and political science that have carved out their own approaches to security that, according to Goldstein, overprivilege the role and responsibilities of the Westphalian state. What I appreciate most about this particular line of critique is how closely it parallels and indeed helps further explain a similar fetishizing of the state that I and other anthropologists have revealed within human rights studies, an equally emergent field of inquiry that has likewise been historically dominated by political scientists and theorists.

As an antidote to the myopia of statecentricity, Goldstein offers an approach to security that begins in the kinds of margins that anthropologists know only too well, the kind of margins whose importance and contested meanings Goldstein has sympathetically and even definitively illuminated now across an expanding body of work, the most important of which is his 2004 book on performative violence in the peri-urban barrios of Bolivia's Cochabamba. This context grounds

the second strand to his broader argument that the ways and means of anthropology provide a unique epistemological framework for problematizing security in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

As a Bolivianist myself, for years I have been a close reader of Goldstein on the relationship between security and rights, and here he brings fresh research findings and much more expansive theoretical aspirations to this material, which he draws from to great advantage. Yet it is here that I must respond to one of the only points of concern I have with Goldstein's important article. It is absolutely true that "human rights" have been construed by periurban Bolivians in the way Goldstein has described; I think this point is now settled. But I would not go so far as to argue that ethnographic findings from this one case study mean that we should reinscribe our anthropological understanding of human rights as just one among several security discourses. There are any number of reasons for this, not the least of which is the fact that human rights discourse, in Bolivia and elsewhere, functions not so much as a kind of promissory note but as an alternative normative language that might, or might not, be useful for particular actors in the course of particular social struggles or in relation to particular needs. Rights and security discourses are rather, as Goldstein himself acknowledges, complementary in many ways, and the kind of critical anthropology of security that he so powerfully articulates breaks new ground in our understanding of this interrelationship.

---

### Carol J. Greenhouse

Department of Anthropology, Princeton University, Aaron Burr Hall 116, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, U.S.A. (cgreenho@princeton.edu). 12 II 10

Max Weber famously formulates a "state" as "a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in a given territory" (Weber 1958 [1918]:78). Often read as a definition, the passage assays the historical specificity of a state—and state of affairs—that Weber was observing around him. More than once, he introduces the proposition only after a qualifier: "Today . . . we have to say that a state is . . ." (Weber 1958 [1918]:78; see also Weber 1954:14; cf. Weber 1978:909). These passages speak to violence as the "decisive means" of politics—means held to ends through the "organized domination" of administration (Weber 1958 [1918]:80, 121). His reference to a "successful" monopoly claim acknowledges political fields outside the state that are indexed by such claims and the blended intricacies of political interest, state legitimacy, bureaucratic organization, and legal discourse.

The intricacies extend to sociology. Weber writes from an explicit sense of political crisis (Weber 1954:127–128) and grapples with an interpretive dilemma arising from the fact

that domination and freedom have become indistinguishable by direct observation of state practice (Weber 1954:328). Between "law" and "society," then, Weber inserts a third term—"economy"—as ground where the idealized disinterest of law and the realizable interests of actual people meet as each other's enabling contradiction.

Like Weber, Goldstein is immersed in the ambiguity of domination and freedom as a particular problem in our time. Identifying that duality as the conundrum of "security," Goldstein probes the critical and theoretical potential for anthropology. Goldstein's ethnography of Cochabamba (Goldstein 2004 and above) shows a state conspicuously failing to sustain its claims to monopolize violence and, perforce, sharing the "decisive means" of politics" with communities beyond its administrative grasp. His analysis of the circuits of violence in relation to neoliberal urbanism informs his thinking about security as a practical problem, a theoretical object, and a policy field.

In his essay, Goldstein looks to Weber for a definition of "the state" (n. 10)—but then turns away on the grounds that states are top-down arrangements. His own essay is evidence in favor of some reconsideration on this point. For example, he meditates on the extent to which state theory and states in practice are reflexively braided around a notion of *society* as a social contract written in the ink of fear. He considers the pervasive politicization of insecurity in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, and endorses the well-established idea that the so-called war on terror represents a continuity of political interests rather than a new era. He acknowledges the complex intertwining of neoliberalism and the militarization of urban and national security over recent decades, and—withstanding his assessment of neoliberalism as globally finished—he recognizes that national security continues to be politically coded in ways that normalize trade-offs in terms of rights, regulation, and government supports for social security. His own dynamic positionality hints at connections between the critical registers of metanarrative performance and the protean qualities of security discourse (though these do not make that discourse global—by way of friendly amendment to his reference to my essay). These are important insights, drawing attention to the need to rethink how anthropology's conventions of the *local*—borrowed from a legal notion of *jurisdiction*—tend to incorporate an administrative logic that converts social organization into social distance, thoroughly confounding questions of agency and scale and losing states in the process.

Weber's formulation begins to untie that knot. In referring to a state's "successful claim" to "the monopoly of the legitimate use of force," Weber (1958 [1918]) is saying neither that the state holds an actual monopoly nor that all state violence is legitimate. Rather, he is situating states discursively in relation to the political opportunism to be found in intracommunity violence. His discussion of domination (Weber 1954, esp. chap. 12; Weber 1978, esp. chaps. 9, 15, 16) gestures to the many varieties of force that circulate without the state's

warrant. Rogue violence is not the direction of Weber's argument, however. Instead, he dwells on the comprehensive politicization of force as a social fact essential to modern state formation.

On this point, Goldstein's analysis seems to be congenial in spirit even if some of his working concepts (*local, state, and global*) seem occasionally (and paradoxically) static and his historical discourse (*moments, eras*) linear. The genealogy he invokes predisposes him to theorize security as defensive control, but the essay itself points to additional considerations (more tables, more houses). Anthropology's engagement with security may not be lacking so much as it is dispersed—residing under specialist rubrics that the organization of the profession tends to hold apart. Still, there is more needed than consolidation can provide. Throughout, Goldstein presents the connection between security and creativity as a vital point of contact and source of discovery across the fields of our endeavors.

---

### Hugh Gusterson

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University, MSN-3G5, Robinson Hall B445A, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030, U.S.A. (hgusters@gmu.edu). 23 III 10

In the intellectual real estate system of the American academy, the word "security" is largely owned by people who call themselves "international relations" scholars or specialists in security studies. The former are mostly political scientists, while the latter include a number of economists and hard scientists as well as political scientists. It is unusual, albeit not unheard of, to find anthropologists in these circles, and few anthropologists make it onto their reading lists.

In international relations and security studies, four assumptions tend to be axiomatic. First (as Goldstein's excellent article alludes to in its discussion of Hobbes), it is assumed that there is order within states but, in the absence of a world government, relative anarchy in the international system, leaving individual states dependent on allies or their own might for their security. Second, and as a corollary, comes the assumption that security studies as a field is properly focused in the main on the danger of states attacking one another. Although this has changed to some degree in recent years as the post-9/11 fear of terrorist attack in the United States has generated a burgeoning literature on the threat of terrorism emanating from "failed states," still, the literatures in international relations and security studies are centrally concerned with interstate arms races, alliances, and balances of power. And the scholars' concerns are reflected in the U.S. defense budget, which allocates far more to aircraft carriers, destroyers, B-2 bombers, missile defense, and nuclear weapons than to the armamentarium optimized for substate intervention.

In terms of the allocation of its military funding, the United States still seems to be preparing for war with the Soviets. The third assumption is that international relations and international security are properly considered apart from international political economy. Thus, the literature in this field tends to treat security, or its lack, as a by-product of arms configurations, treaties, and state regime type (do democracies fight one another?) while not discussing the implications of neoliberalism for security. An exception to this rule is found in the writings of more popular theorists such as Thomas Barnett, who, in his book *The Pentagon's New Map* (2004), suggests that the Pentagon's problem countries are to be found in those parts of the world that fall into the "nonintegrating gap"—those parts of the world not well integrated into the neoliberal global order. The fourth and final assumption is that security should be discussed in a scientific idiom. Threats are discerned, not constructed. It is assumed that strong generalizations can be made about international security and that, with enough study, predictions can be made. Articles in the field increasingly feature equations.

Into this situation comes Daniel Goldstein's invitation to accompany him "toward a critical anthropology of security." What is so compelling about the article (aside from its trenchant discussion of the appalling deterioration in the situation of Bolivia's poor) is the way it so neatly upends the core axioms of the international security literature. Instead of a Hobbesian world of order within states and anarchy in the international system, we encounter a situation where the internal police function of the Latin American state is disintegrating while there is considerable order in the spaces where transnational capital circulates, protected by international property and contract law and policed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Instead of Herman Kahn's world in which the threat emanated from other states' military forces, we see Latin American peasants who have little fear of being bombed by another country's air force but considerable fear of being victimized by petty criminals or their own state's men in uniform in a situation where the welfare and police functions of the modern state are in danger of being hollowed out. And instead of a situation in which neoliberalism is either irrelevant to the calculus of security or is seen as productive of prosperity and order, we encounter a world where the corrosive effects of neoliberalism are the central security problematic for people concerned to maintain their day-to-day economic and bodily security in a situation in which neoliberalism makes all that is solid melt into air. Finally, instead of a world in which security is weighed dispassionately from a distance by defense intellectuals comparing their calculations, we encounter a space where the term "security" is fundamentally contested and lies at the heart of political struggles.

At a moment when the U.S. national security establishment is showing increasing interest in anthropology, attempting to recruit anthropologists as cultural trainers and as human terrain team social scientists, it is timely to see such an attempt

by an anthropologist to fundamentally rethink the meaning of the term “security.” I have little hope that either the academic centers where security studies is taught or the U.S. military will accept the invitation to a “critical anthropology of security”—after all, such an anthropology would be critical not just of sedimented academic axiomata but also of the neoliberal order that the U.S. military is designed to protect. However, it is important for anthropology to make its voice heard after being silent for too long about matters ceded to political scientists, and it is important to apply ourselves to the long task of reclaiming the word “security” from the uses to which it has been put by defense intellectuals and generals.

---

**Christine Kovic**

University of Houston Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area  
Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77058, U.S.A. (kovic@uhcl.edu).  
12 II 10

The words “Security is never convenient” are painted boldly everywhere one turns at the Ramsey Prison Unit in Rosharon, Texas, where my colleague teaches humanities courses. Perhaps security is not convenient, but it certainly can be profitable, as is the case for the growing number of privatized correctional facilities. In the name of public safety, the U.S. government has lengthened prison sentences for many crimes, and according to statistics of the Bureau of Justice, one in 32 adults is in prison or the criminal correction system. In the name of national security and the war on terror, immigrants, especially Arabs and Muslims, have been targets of surveillance, stereotypes, racial profiling, and hostility. Security measures contain endless complexities and contradictions. They create and reinforce inequalities as large groups of people are subject to detention, deportation, and violence rather than protection.

In this context, Daniel Goldstein’s call for a critical security anthropology responds to an urgent reality. As Goldstein notes, anthropologists are particularly well situated to untangle the multiple meanings, effects, and responses to new security policies. Theoretically, anthropologists can explore the changing significance of security across space and time. The ethnographic method can (and in many cases has) shed light on the effect of security policies on diverse groups and the ways these policies are contested. Indeed, anthropologists have challenged the assumptions of state security models in other time periods. Careful ethnographic study (such as Beatriz Manz’s work on Guatemala’s civil war [2004]) has demonstrated that during the Cold War, national security responding to a supposed “clear and present danger” justified state violence that maintained political and economic structures of repression as well as U.S. hegemony.

A critical anthropology of security as proposed by Goldstein can explore the narratives of those suffering from or resisting

security policies. In particular, anthropologists can make visible the structural and state-sponsored violence embedded in and caused by new security policies. While some scholars and activists question whether new policies make the world more secure for anyone, anthropologists can map the ways policies reinforce privilege for some and create vulnerability for others. To take an example from southern Mexico, where I work, Central American migrants crossing the region en route to the United States face multiple migration checkpoints because of recent security measures implemented by the Mexican government with support from the United States. To avoid checkpoints, migrants jump freight trains—riding on the tops and sides of railcars—where they are exposed to rain, extreme temperatures, dehydration, and electrocution as they pass under power lines. Many have lost limbs or their lives as a result of falling from the trains onto the tracks below. In broad terms, security is defined as freedom from risk or danger. Yet it is precisely because of security measures that large groups of people face tremendous risk and danger, particularly those not recognized as full citizens.

Under neoliberalism, the state at once withdraws from security as it becomes privatized by a variety of groups and deploys security to protect global capital or to defend borders. Goldstein gives the important case of how residents of both marginalized and wealthy neighborhoods of Cochabamba make use of the “transnational discourse of citizen security” to demand protection against crime. This creates a “clash between security and rights” in which security is valued over human rights. In contemporary Mexico, like Bolivia, public figures have criticized human rights organizations as protecting criminals. Arturo Montiel Rojas, who won the governorship in the state of Mexico in 1999, famously campaigned with a tough-on-crime platform. Montiel challenged the idea that criminals were entitled to human rights, insisting “human rights are for humans, not rats.” Yet anthropologists also can document challenges to this security model to provide alternative narratives, exploring the ways inequalities of race, ethnicity, gender, and class generate distinct understandings of security. In Mexico, diverse groups challenge state-sponsored security, arguing that it does not respect human rights. After president Felipe Calderon sent thousands of federal troops to Mexico’s northern border to fight the drug war, human rights organizations protested, raising concerns about raids on homes, unlawful detentions, torture, and other abuses.

Goldstein’s call to historicize new security policies is critical to challenging taken-for-granted justifications for such policies. Scholars and activists working on the U.S.-Mexico border point to Operation Blockade of 1993, not September 11, 2001, as the first major security expansion. This historicization links increased border enforcement to neoliberalism, principally through the North American Free Trade Act, which allows for free movement of goods and capital but not poor workers. Policy makers probably anticipated the devastating effect of free trade on peasant production in Mexico and the exodus

from the countryside. But current border enforcement policies in both the United States and Mexico are justified as counterterrorism measures. There is another model of security, an important one in human rights language—food security and social security—that is, social and economic rights. While structural violence produces vulnerable populations, these same groups are repressed in the name of security. To play on the terms “deserving poor” and “undeserving poor,” the “deserving secure” are divided from the “undeserving targets of security.”

---

### Joseph Masco

Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.  
(jmasco@uchicago.edu). 20 III 10

It is important to recognize that the term “security” is almost never defined by those in the political arena who rely almost entirely on it. It is rather more commonly evoked as a self-evident good, a rationale for wide-ranging and (particularly in the United States) often quite extreme political visions. That we cannot have too much security suggests it is indeed a naturalized category that requires much unpacking and analysis. Thus, I am in general agreement with Goldstein’s call for a critical anthropology of security, one that interrogates the local logics and global effects of financial, ecological, and political regimes and assesses their projection into a deep future. Who defines the logic, aim, and method of security is not only a foundational question in political theory but also a thoroughly anthropological question, one that can tell us much about national self-fashioning as well as how communities experience time, space, and social order. I also appreciate Goldstein’s attention to the global South as well as his recognition of the ideological and material reverberations of U.S. national security policy around the world. A critical anthropology of security, however, faces a number of immediate challenges drawn from the specific context of our moment (involving competing regimes of insecurity, i.e., climate, financial crisis, and war) as well as the evolution of security as a state concern. I would like to offer the following points for consideration.

First, anthropology has always been involved in the production of security. The evolution of the field as an attribute of state power in the colonial era became fully coordinated in the United States with the invention of area studies. The categories we rely on for funding and self-categorization have important linkages to the Cold War and the specific approach to globalization (free markets and anticommunism) pursued by the United States after World War II. Thus, what is novel about a “critical anthropology of security” today is less the explicit focus on how the concept of security is deployed than it is on attending to the implicit ideological and political

structures that shape its means and naturalize its forms, including within the discipline of anthropology.

Second, if security is in practice an endless horizon, a good that can never be fulfilled, then a crucial question involves articulating the parameters of security—its domains, choices, and silences. In this regard, the global expansion of neoliberal economic practices has two contradictory, if powerful, effects in the security realm: (1) it has produced increasing insecurity at the local level as employment becomes more mobile, and (2) it has reduced the sphere of executive authority to those matters that can be constituted as outside of the economic logics of free markets and commonly marked as “national security.” Thus, even as neoliberal policies increase local insecurities, national security, as an unassailable public good, offers a central (perhaps now the only) domain for executives to reassert political power. Here, the U.S. nuclear arsenal provides a crucial illustration: the atomic bomb has never made economic sense in the United States, but it remains the privileged national project since World War II (costing nearly \$6 trillion, which is third in federal expenditures after social security and the nonnuclear military). The bomb, however, has created an entirely new kind of person, a “superpowered” president that has with him at all times the technological means of launching global nuclear war. This consolidation of military and political power in a single person is unprecedented within a democracy. But even if the bomb has been delinked from the economic logics of the market, it nonetheless presents an illustration of how “security” can expand and extend executive power both in spite of and in alignment with neoliberalism.

Finally, I would argue that a critical anthropology of security must resist an alignment with state power and the instrumentalization of anthropological insights that would come from such an alignment. The United States, for example, now has two defense departments—the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security—maintaining unprecedented budgets that are untouched even during financial crisis. Staffed with “security experts” of every stripe, neither of these agencies are concerned with economic or climate crisis. Rather, they are jointly committed to a militarized response to a specific idea of “terror.” Adding more “security experts” is not the answer to this kind of governmentality, as the United States now outspends the rest of the world combined on “defense” but still does not have basic answers to climate instability or the systemic corruption in global financial markets, nor is it able to offer reliable protections in terms of food, drug, and product safety or guarantee clean water for its citizens. Articulating the alternative security logics rendered invisible by state practice is thus as important as assessing the positive terms of any governmentality.

Thus, while a critical anthropology of security has much to offer, I think it is also important to be a committed skeptic when approaching any “security” discourse—to always denaturalize its claims, even as one studies its administrative



practices, and the broader project of future making through managing insecurity.

---

**Katherine T. McCaffrey**

Department of Anthropology, Montclair State University,  
Dickson 108, Montclair, New Jersey 07043, U.S.A.  
(mccaffreyk@mail.montclair.edu). 17 II 10

Goldstein's important ethnographic work in Bolivia examines the disturbing rise of vigilante violence as citizens react to the failure of the central state to provide security from violence and crime. Faced with an ineffective police force and the lack of judicial authority to control crime or punish offenders, poor residents in the marginal barrios of Cochabamba take justice into their own hands. Goldstein examines lynching as a kind of "neoliberal violence," a violence that is at once structural and interpersonal, expressing within itself the logics of individual self-help and private enterprise that neoliberalism upholds as its central rationality." He notes that both poor and rich Bolivians are concerned that their rights are violated by a state that does not protect them or serve their interests, yet they are unconcerned with the rights of others, particularly those whom they perceive to be a threat to their own security.

Goldstein's work on violence and justice leads him to call for increased attention to security as the locus of anthropological analysis. He is interested in a process he calls "securitization," which constructs a collective understanding of something as a particular kind of danger, an existential threat to state, to society, and to "our way of life." He emphasizes that he is interested in the multiple ways security is configured and deployed, "not only by states and authorized speakers but by communities, groups, and individuals." Goldstein advocates for a promising field of inquiry. This kind of situated, ethnographic analysis of a global phenomenon is reminiscent of new work by Latin American historians on the Cold War (Grandin 2004; Joseph and Spenser 2008), which considers the way "Latin American states used a Cold War rationale, generated outside the region, to wage war against their citizens, to gain or perpetuate power, and to create or justify authoritarian military regimes" (Joseph 2008:5). Moving away from great diplomatic debates, this new Cold War literature restores a focus on grassroots dynamics—the social and cultural identities and the political agency of people who have been ignored by foreign-relations history.

Thus, while I agree that the global turn to "security" merits anthropological attention, and I am interested in rich, ethnographic analyses of its local dynamics, I am less comfortable with Goldstein's call for a "critical anthropology of security" that seems to narrow the conceptualization of security and extract it from its broader political economic context. I am puzzled by his assertion that anthropological research "with

an explicit security dimension has mostly been focused on the U.S. context and (most publicly, at least) on matters of disciplinary collaboration with the U.S. security establishment." Yet security and insecurity in their manifold expressions have been explored extensively in anthropology in connection with the dynamics of capitalism. The rise of fear and insecurity and a parallel rise of punitive governance, vigilantism, and the privatization of social control cannot be separated from neoliberal economic restructuring. The lynching that Goldstein describes in Bolivia as a form of "political violence" seems to me to be part and parcel of a larger context of "economic violence" in which draconian fiscal austerity measures froze wages, devalued currency, withdrawn food subsidies, and removed protective trade barriers, threatening citizens' very survival (see Gill 2000; Nash 1990, 1994).

As Goldstein notes, a focus on security did not begin on September 11. Still, it would be a mistake to miss the important developments terrorist attacks on the United States unleashed. As Naomi Klein exquisitely details, 9/11 was used in the United States as justification to dramatically increase "the policing, surveillance, detention and war-waging powers of the executive branch" and "those newly enhanced and richly funded functions of security, invasion, occupation and reconstruction were immediately outsourced, handed over to the private sector to perform at a profit" (2007:298–299). Klein describes this new privatized security state as the "disaster capitalism bubble"—"a booming economy in homeland security and twenty-first-century warfare entirely underwritten by taxpayer dollars" (Klein 2007:300). As the United States wages a multibillion-dollar war in Iraq and Afghanistan with no end in sight, builds new military bases in Africa, erects fortified walls on the Mexican border, and locks up immigrants seeking political asylum in privately run jails, we can trace the significant and disturbing collusion of political and economic forces.

Goldstein's work joins a corpus of scholarly literature that examines the multiple effects of neoliberal political economy on various facets of contemporary life. I am certain that his deep engagement and nuanced understanding of Latin America will undoubtedly yield important insight into the workings of a global security ideology at the grassroots. It is my contention, however, that such an investigation is best served by drawing on our discipline's tradition of holism to identify the intersection of the political and economic forces at work.

---

**Dennis Rodgers**

Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester,  
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom  
(dennis.rodgers@manchester.ac.uk). 22 II 10

Daniel Goldstein's call for a critical anthropology of security is a very welcome one, not because we have entered a new

age of security but because—as he argues very persuasively—we have in many ways long been caught in a “security moment” that has more often than not been ignored. Goldstein in particular contends that security is intimately linked to the neoliberal paradigm that has regulated much of the world for the past quarter century, even going so far as to suggest that it has become the basis for a new iteration of this hegemonic discourse as its original version is increasingly discredited. Drawing on Foucault, he describes neoliberalism as “individualizing techniques of governmentality,” whereby states free themselves from the responsibility of maintaining their subjects by transferring “the daily obligations of self-maintenance and self-regulation,” and he juxtaposes this with the rising “citizen security” discourse in Latin America, highlighting how this, too, is based on a fundamentally individualized conception of society and the promotion of personal responsibility.

Goldstein suggests that anthropology is well suited to exploring the continuities and contradictions infusing the newly emergent neoliberalism security hybrid through its focus on the way global ideas inform and are acted on in local contexts. By providing a window on what one might term “everyday security,” he argues that anthropology can expose particular understandings and manipulations of “the way security itself is conceptualized as a historical and contemporary global reality.” He draws on the work of various Latin Americanist anthropologists as well as his own research in Bolivia to show how the notion of “security” is appropriated, reinterpreted, perverted, and manipulated by groups and individuals, both in relation to themselves as well as to others, including the state.

Citing Jennifer Burrell’s work on gangs in contemporary Guatemala, Goldstein, for example, describes how many Mayan communities have revived the civil patrols that originated as part of wartime counterinsurgency and genocide in order to protect themselves from crime, frequently repeating past patterns of rhetorical demonizing in ways that dehumanize delinquents. The Central American gang phenomenon is arguably a particularly revealing lens through which to consider the ambiguities of the security paradigm from a variety of perspectives. As I have shown in my own work (Rodgers 2006, 2009), in some cases gangs can actually constitute sources of security rather than insecurity for local communities, for example, while their broader projection as the epitome of the “new” violence in Central America by governments and the international community owes much to the need to divert attention from the clear disinterest of elite-captured Central American states to implement inclusive development policies.

This latter point is arguably an unexplored dimension of Goldstein’s discussion, in particular with regard to the rise of the “citizen security” discourse in Latin America and the way that it undermines what he terms “human rights talk.” While Goldstein is spot-on linking the two together, he offers little in the way of insight concerning whose or what purpose this serves. In a Latin American context that is more unequal than

it has ever been during the past 150 years, this question bears thinking about, especially when we remember that ultimately, “there are only two families in the world: the haves and the have-nots,” as Sancho Panza famously observed to Don Quixote. Certainly, although Goldstein ends his article by citing Hobbes’s dictum that “if there be no power erected, or not great enough for our security, every man will and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art for caution against all other men” (Hobbes 2003 [1651]), in Latin America, at least, the issue for the majority is not so much choosing between anarchy and local forms of often unpalatable social order but rather survival in a context of widespread exclusion and domination by a socioeconomically powerful minority.

In this respect, Goldstein’s association of the new security discourse with neoliberalism can be criticized. While his characterization of neoliberalism with “individualizing techniques of governmentality” is by no means unreasonable, the historiography of the phenomenon is also much more complicated, and in many ways it involves less a process of individualization than the abandonment of large swaths of the population as the supposedly “night-watchman” state is increasingly reorganized around exclusively serving the interests of a small minority (see Davis 2006). The critical issue from this perspective is less the decentralization of social responsibility than its abdication. Seen in this way, security does not supersede politics, as Goldstein puts it; rather, security *becomes* politics or at least the basis for a new politics grounded on exclusion and exclusivity, and it is with respect to exposing this new and highly iniquitous reality that the need for a *critical* anthropology of security along the lines that Goldstein advocates is perhaps most important.

---

## Reply

I wrote this article with three purposes in mind. The first was to carve out an intellectual space within which anthropological work on security, broadly construed, could take shape and generate a more coherent effect on our understandings of social life than had previously been possible. Second, I wanted to historicize the concept of security, both within a longer framework of thought on related issues and, more particularly, within the recent history of neoliberalism and its attendant crises. As part of this effort, I hoped to offer a differently spatialized conception of security as well, one that was broader in scope and not limited to the familiar terrain of the “global war on terror.” And third, I hoped to provoke a more robust dialogue within anthropology about security as an object of ethnographic research and analysis—and particularly about the relationship between security and rights—than what had previously been seen within the discipline. I think we can view the article’s interlocutors as engaging with

one or several of these points in their commentaries, and I want to frame my response in these terms.

The commentators express a general approval of the first of these missions, recognizing the timeliness and significance of the effort to synthesize a critical anthropology of security even if there is some disagreement about the form such an anthropology should assume. Burrell, generously, compares the project with that of Raymond Williams's identification of keywords, "conducted during a similarly world-changing moment during which society seemed definitively on the cusp of something new." Virtually all of the commentators are sympathetic with this agenda, acknowledging the importance of defining the parameters of a field that is too often unfocused and unspecified by academics and policy makers alike. Indeed, Masco points out that "security" is typically left undefined by those in the policy arena who most rely on it as a basis for and justification of their policies; similarly, for a critical anthropology of security to emerge as a coherent approach to the field, we need to define our terms and stake out the conceptual ground of our analyses. My article thus relies on a range of theorists and ethnographers who have used the concept of security in interesting and sometimes useful ways in order to assay the varied understandings of the concept, its areas of weakness, and its utility for anthropological analysis of contemporary social scenarios. Recognizing that much interesting research has already been done on topics that could fall under the security rubric (a point that Burrell's commentary also makes), I call on the work of some Latin Americanist anthropologists whose scholarship I know well to provide illustrations of the creative ways in which an incipient critical anthropology of security is already taking shape within the discipline. Here, Greenhouse's observation that "anthropology's engagement with security may not be lacking so much as it is dispersed—residing under specialist rubrics that the organization of the profession tends to hold apart" has a particular resonance.

One technique that I employ, then, is to call attention to the emergence of a critical anthropology of security by highlighting particularly elegant examples of scholarship that represent the larger goals of the paper. Of course, such an essay is necessarily selective, and I appreciate the insights of Fox, Kovic, and Rodgers, each of whom offers additional evidence from their own work to illustrate further the possibilities of a critical anthropology of security. Fox's work in Jamaica offers a particularly revealing example of the contradictions and complexities that emerge when questions of rights (in her case, children's rights) are viewed through a security lens, demonstrating important areas of intersection with my Bolivian case. Such examples as these—along with others that I am sure I neglected to include in my discussion—point to the robust field on whose soil this article plants its flag.

Part of my attempt to define an arena for a critical anthropology of security involves an effort to move beyond the case studies of particular anthropologists to identify a broader discursive and political-economic field of analysis. This effort

pertains as well to the second agenda item for this piece, that of expanding the temporal and spatial foci of considerations of security. My intent here was not to generalize beyond what the ethnographic data would support but rather, as Coutin puts it, to give "attention to continuities in security discourse" across contexts, so as to highlight "the uncanny familiarity of practices that, much as in the Cold War, regard citizens with suspicion." Goodale's discussion of security as a kind of normativity within which local actors operate is another way of framing this move; as Goodale points out, "anthropologists must pay critical attention to these relationships in much the same way they have attended to the relational forms of other normativities, such as human rights, that share a similar historical and even ideological trajectory."

As might be expected, however, this expansive effort rubs some anthropologists the wrong way. Albro, for example, objects to my broader conceptualizing moments as contributing to a "grand narrative" of security, one that ends up with "teleological explanations" and "invites generalization on the wrong side of the complexity." I share with Albro and most postcolonial anthropologists a healthy suspicion of meta-narratives and agree that we must be attendant to the complexities of global phenomena as multifaceted and variegated ("protean," as Greenhouse puts it) as neoliberalism, with particular attention to their local manifestations and resistances (see Gledhill's commentary in this regard). And I accept Albro's critique of my statement about the relationship between the emergence of the security state and the privatization of civil society (substitute the more equivocal "likely" for the offending "necessary" in the line that Albro cites). But I reject the suggestion that generalizations of the kind offered in this paper necessarily contribute to the construction of a meta-narrative of security and neoliberalism. Though seeming to establish the ethnographer's sensitivity to "complexities," such an assertion strikes me rather as a familiar kind of anthropological timidity in which we remain unable to go beyond the minutiae of our own particular cases even as we criticize our colleagues for refusing to transcend the local in their analyses. We fail to engage—intellectually, politically, and with the problems of the world—if we refuse to go beyond the local cases or "narratives" suggested by our research, in the present instance by neglecting the evident continuities that run between and across global "securityscapes." This paralysis also limits anthropologists' ability to engage with policy makers and other disciplinary practitioners, who are less interested in particularities than in the broader implications that those cases suggest—a point to which I will return.

Similarly expansive are my efforts to historicize the security concept, which I intended to provide some context for understanding "security" as a long-standing concern of contemporary states and the populations they govern. Such a genealogy, as several of the commentators note, is necessarily partial and selective, and in my case it was constructed to emphasize my concern with the state-centered approach to security that has long characterized scholarly approaches to

this topic (a point I clearly and repeatedly make in my essay, leaving me baffled by Fox's criticism of my historiography). This emphasis on security as a matter of the state is not, as Greenhouse suggests, because I view the state as an exclusively top-down kind of arrangement; indeed, as she points out, in my conception the state is deeply interconnected with civil society and the quotidian reality of ordinary folks. "Security," because it dialectically joins state policy with the lived experience of daily life, breaches and renders artificial that familiar dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up. Rather than all inclusive, my selective genealogy is meant to highlight the traditional areas of emphasis in approaches to security precisely to identify those domains, both within and outside what might be understood as the limits of the state, to which anthropology can productively contribute.

What I do not do in this framing, despite McCaffrey's assertion to the contrary, is disconnect security from its broader political-economic context. As anyone familiar with my work over the last decade or more can attest, my ongoing project has been precisely to situate what might be glossed as popular violence within the historical framework of neoliberalization and the transformations of Bolivian society generated by economic restructuring, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, urban marginalization, and poverty (see, e.g., Goldstein 2003, 2004, 2005). This article represents another contribution to that endeavor. Given the article's regional exploration of the intersection of security and neoliberal political economy (see "Security and Neoliberalism in Latin America") and its subsequent ethnography situating the privatization of social control within a neoliberal political and economic context ("If there is this insecurity, it is also the result of our great poverty, no?"), I am frankly confused as to the basis for this criticism.

The relationship between security and the state is a confounding one, as a brief comparison of the commentaries here suggests. Rodgers, for example, contends that the history of neoliberal governmentality (in relation to security, as in other areas) is characterized less by individualization than by the state's "abandonment of large swaths of the population," resulting in the "abdication" of its social responsibility to its citizens. In contrast, consider Besteman's observation that "the contexts in which citizens take responsibility for their own protection are not defined by an absence of power but rather by a particular structure of power that makes citizens insecure and fearful." I side with Besteman in this debate. It is tempting to view the state, as Rodgers does, as essentially absent from marginal spaces such as the Bolivian barrios that I describe in my ethnography. According to residents' own testimonies, these are zones of "abandonment," where the state truly seems to have abdicated responsibility for providing security, understood narrowly as freedom from fear of and protection against criminal predation. But such a perspective neglects the many ways that state power is in fact operative even in the apparently abandoned spaces of the nation's margins, structuring local life in ways that are often obscure even

to local residents. This is clearly evident in a range of ethnographies that consider the processes of state formation in zones of exclusion, in Latin America as elsewhere (e.g., Auyero 2000; Caldeira 2000; Goldstein 2004; Lazar 2008; Postero 2006). States are deeply implicated in the production of insecurity in a variety of ways (including through new forms of imperialist domination, as Besteman points out); to view the state as absent is to miss this central fact.

The final agenda item to consider is my attempt to provoke a dialogue within anthropology about security as an object of ethnographic research and analysis. This effort emerges from what I perceive to be a contradiction in anthropology's engagement with "security" more broadly. Although anthropologists (including several of the commentators) have extensively and persuasively articulated an argument against anthropological collusion with the military (Albro's "security sector"), there has been no sustained effort to generate a theoretical framework for understanding security as an ethnographic phenomenon. In this essay, then, I deliberately eschew the question toward which Albro tries to push me: an analysis of "anthropologists' closer proximity to the security sector." That relationship has received considerable ink, while the one I attempt to lay out here has gotten comparatively little. I would respond to Albro that considerations of anthropological practice of the sort he identifies are also "not enough." This is not to say that the question of anthropology's relationship to the security sector is not important; indeed, it is, and my own reflections on the subject have recently appeared elsewhere (Goldstein 2010). Nor is the present essay entirely silent on the subject, as Albro seems to think. In his commentary, Goodale explicitly references my discussion of the relationship between security and the practice of anthropology, and the commentaries by Besteman, Gusterson, and Masco all pick up on the article's resonance with this theme. My unwillingness to dedicate significant attention to this question in this article should not be seen as a failure to recognize its importance but rather as a stance of refusing to allow that question to continue to dominate anthropological discussion of security to the exclusion of the ethnographic dimensions of the phenomenon.

All three of the agenda items I have reviewed in this commentary, if attended to, can enhance anthropology's ability to speak powerfully and effectively to other kinds of disciplinary scholars on the subject of security. Several of the commentators point to this as an area of concern, from Albro (who mentions anthropology's involvement with the policy world) to Coutin (who comments on other disciplines' rather careless appropriations of ethnography) to Gusterson (whose brilliant contrasting of my piece with the international relations corpus taught me much about what my own work is trying to say). Again, the question of "engagement" emerges as fundamental. How can anthropology participate meaningfully in dialogues and debates about security, be they in terms of public policy or critical ethnography? How can we bring our critical, comparative insights to bear on a critique of the

new imperialism that concerns Besteman or to an exploration of the “cosmologies of crisis” of which Gledhill writes? Given the robust interdisciplinary discussion about human rights that has long been waged both within and without the academy, how can a critical anthropology of security bring new insights to understanding other powerful transnational normativities, including human rights (Goodale) and law (Coutin)? And I would add, how can a critical anthropology of security engage with the problems of (in)security confronting our research partners and intervene to create positive social transformations? Many of the commentaries raise important questions such as these, pointing to new areas of research with significant interdisciplinary possibilities and suggesting that the critical anthropology of security is a fertile space for engaging with contemporary global problems.

—Daniel M. Goldstein

## References Cited

- Agamben, G. 2005. *State of exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Albro, Robert. 2005a. The future of culture and rights for Bolivia's indigenous movements. Paper presented at the Carnegie Council Fellows Conference, Washington, DC.
- . 2005b. “The water is ours, carajo!” deep citizenship in Bolivia's water war. In *Social movements: an anthropological reader*. J. Nash, ed. Pp. 249–271. London: Blackwell.
- . 2006a. The culture of democracy and Bolivia's indigenous movements. *Critique of Anthropology* 26:387–410.
- . 2006b. Does anthropology need a hearing aid? *Anthropology News* 47(8):5. [RA]
- . 2007. Anthropology's terms of engagement with security. *Anthropology News* 48(1):20–21.
- American Anthropological Association. 2007. American Anthropological Association executive board statement on the Human Terrain System project. October 31. <http://www.aaanet.org/about/Policies/statements/Human-Terrain-System-Statement.cfm> (accessed February 8, 2010). [SBC]
- Amoore, Louise, and Marieke de Goede, eds. 2008. *Risk and the War on Terror*. New York: Routledge. [SBC]
- Anderson, S., P. Bennis, and J. Cavanagh. 2003. *Coalition of the willing or coalition of the coerced? how the Bush administration influences allies in its war on Iraq*. Washington, DC: Institute for Policy Studies.
- Arias, E. D., and Daniel M. Goldstein, eds. 2010. *Violent democracies of Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Auyero, Javier. 2000. *Poor people's politics: Peronist survival networks and the legacy of Evita*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bajc, V. 2009. The security state and the limits of citizenship. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, November 2–6.
- Barnett, Thomas P. M. 2004. *The Pentagon's new map: war and peace in the twenty-first century*. New York: Putnam. [HG]
- Benjamin, Walter. 1978. Critique of violence. In *Reflections: essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writing*. Peter Demetz, ed. Edmund Jephcott, trans. Pp. 277–300. New York: Schocken. [SBC]
- Bigo, D. 2002. Security and immigration: toward a critique of the governmentality of unease. *Alternatives* 27:63–92.
- Bratich, J. 2006. Public secrecy and immanent security: a strategic analysis. *Cultural Studies* 20:493–511.
- Brown, Wendy. 2003. Neoliberalism and the end of liberal democracy. *Theory and Event* 7(1). [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory\\_and\\_event/v007/7.1brown.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v007/7.1brown.html) (accessed June 1, 2009).
- Burrell, Jennifer. 2010. In and out of rights: security, migration, and human rights talk in postwar Guatemala. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15(1):90–115.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Boulder, CO: Rienner.
- Cable, V. 1995. What is international economic security? *International Affairs* 71:305–324.
- Calavita, K. 1998. Immigration, law, and marginalization in a global economy: notes from Spain. *Law and Society Review* 32:529–566.
- Caldeira, T. P. R. 1996. Fortified enclaves: the new urban segregation. *Public Culture* 8:303–328.
- . 2000. *City of walls: crime, segregation, and citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chipman, J. 1992. The future of strategic studies: beyond grand strategy. *Survival* 34:109–131.
- Collier, S. J., A. Lakoff, and P. Rabinow. 2004. Biosecurity: towards an anthropology of the contemporary. *Anthropology Today* 20:3–7.
- Comisión Colombiana de Juristas. 2004. *En contravía de las recomendaciones internacionales: “seguridad democrática,” derechos humanos y derecho humanitario en Colombia, agosto de 2002 a agosto de 2004*. Bogotá: Comisión Colombiana de Juristas.
- Cornelius, W. A. 2004. Spain: the uneasy transition from labor exporter to labor importer. In *Controlling immigration: a global perspective*. 2nd edition. W. A. Cornelius, ed. Pp. 387–438. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Coutin, Susan Bibler. 2007. *Nations of emigrants: shifting boundaries of citizenship in El Salvador and the United States*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Dammert, L., and M. F. T. Malone. 2003. Fear of crime or fear of life? public insecurities in Chile. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22:79–101.
- Darash, Limor. 2009. Unfolding the state: state forms of action in preparedness for biological events. Paper presented at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, December 2–6.
- Davis, Mike. 1992. *City of quartz: excavating the future in Los Angeles*. London: Vintage.
- . 2006. *Planet of slums*. London: Verso. [DR]
- De Genova, N. 2002. Migrant “illegality” and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31:419–447.
- Der Derian, James. 2009. *Critical practices in international theory: selected essays*. London: Routledge.
- Dezalay, Yves, and Bryant G. Garth. 2002. *The internationalization of palace wars: lawyers, economists and the contest to transform Latin American states*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [SBC]
- Dubartell, D. 2006. Computer-mediated communication: human-to-human communication across the internet. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16:284–285.
- Elmer, G., and A. Opel. 2006. Surviving the inevitable future. *Cultural Studies* 20:477–492.
- Foucault, M. 1991. Governmentality. In *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, eds. Pp. 87–104. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gill, Lesley. 2000. *Teetering on the rim: global restructuring, daily life, and the armed retreat of the Bolivian state*. New York: Columbia University Press. [KTM]
- . 2004. *The school of the Americas: military training and violence in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Gledhill, John. 2004. Neoliberalism. In *Companion to the anthropology of politics*. D. Nugent and J. Vincent, eds. Pp. 332–348. London: Blackwell.
- Godoy, A. S. 2006. *Popular injustice: violence, community, and law in Latin America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Goldstein, Daniel M. 2003. “In our own hands”: lynching, justice, and the law in Bolivia. *American Ethnologist* 30(1):22–43.
- . 2004. *The spectacular city: violence and performance in urban Bolivia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2005. Flexible justice: neoliberal violence and self-help security in Bolivia. *Critique of Anthropology* 25:389–411.
- . 2007. Human rights as culprit, human rights as victim: rights and security in the state of exception. In *The practice of human rights: tracking law between the global and the local*. Mark Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, eds. Pp. 49–77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2010. Security and the culture expert: dilemmas of an engaged anthropology. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 33(S1):126–142.
- Goldstein, Daniel M., Gloria Achá, Eric Hinojosa, and Theo Roncken. 2007. *La mano dura and the violence of civil society in Bolivia*. *Social Analysis* 51(2):43–63.
- González, R. J. 2007. Towards mercenary anthropology? *Anthropology Today* 23:14–19.
- Gramsci, A. 1988. *An Antonio Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916–1935*. New York: Schocken.
- Grandin, Greg. 2004. *The last colonial massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [KTM]
- . 2006. *Empire’s workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the rise of the new imperialism*. New York: Holt.
- Green, L. 1999. *Fear as a way of life: Mayan widows in rural Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Greenhouse, Carol J. 2005. Nationalizing the local: comparative notes on the recent restructuring of political space. In *Human rights in the “War on Terror.”* A. Wilson, ed. Pp. 184–208. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- , ed. 2009. *Ethnographies of neoliberalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [RA]
- Gusterson, Hugh. 2004. *People of the bomb: portraits of America’s nuclear complex*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [RA]
- . 2005. Spies in our midst. *Anthropology News* 46(6):39–40.
- Gusterson, Hugh, and Catherine Besteman, eds. 2009. *The insecure American: how we got here and what we should do about it*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hansen, Lene. 2000. The Little Mermaid’s silent security dilemma and the absence of gender in the Copenhagen school. *Millennium* 29:289–306.
- Hay, J., and M. Andrejevic. 2006. Introduction: toward an analytic of governmental experiments in these times: homeland security as the new social security. *Cultural Studies* 20:331–348.
- Helm, Dieter. 2002. Energy policy: security of supply, sustainability and competition. *Energy Policy* 30(3):173–184.
- Heymann, David L. 2003. The evolving infectious disease threat: implications for national and global security. *Journal of Human Development* 4(2):191–207.
- Hickler, Benjamin. 2009. Bird flu, health citizenship, and the state: the science and politics of controlling emerging infections in the rural Mekong. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, November 2–6.
- Hobbes, T. 2003 (1651). *The leviathan*. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum.
- Joseph, Gilbert M. 2008. What we now know and should know. In *In from the cold: Latin America’s new encounter with the Cold War*. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds. Pp. 3–46. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. [KTM]
- Joseph, Gilbert M., and Daniela Spenser, eds. 2008. *In from the cold: Latin America’s new encounter with the Cold War*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. [KTM]
- Kelty, Christopher. 2005. Geeks, social imaginaries, and recursive publics. *Cultural Anthropology* 20(2):185–214.
- Khagram, Sanjeev, William Clark, and Dana Firas Raad. 2003. From the environment and human security to sustainable security and development. *Journal of Human Development* 4(2):289–314.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. 1994. Spaces of dispersal. *Cultural Anthropology* 9:339–344.
- Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The shock doctrine*. New York: Metropolitan. [KTM]
- Kupchan, Charles A., and Clifford A. Kupchan. 1995. The promise of collective security. *International Security* 20(1):52–61.
- Lakoff, A. 2007. Preparing for the next emergency. *Public Culture* 19:247–271.
- . 2008. The generic bioterror; or, how we became unprepared. *Cultural Anthropology* 23:399–428.
- Lakoff, A., and S. J. Collier, eds. 2008. *Biosecurity interventions: global health and security in question*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lancaster, Roger. 2008. State of panic. In *New landscapes of inequality: neoliberalism and the erosion of democracy in America*. Jane L. Collins, Micaela di Leonardo, and Brett Williams, eds. Pp. 39–64. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.
- Larner, Wendy. 2000. Neo-liberalism: policy, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy* 63:5–25.
- Lazar, Sian. 2008. *El Alto, rebel city: self and citizenship in Andean Bolivia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Leal, Alejandra. 2009. Threat, location and misrecognition: art scenes in Mexico’s historic center. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, November 2–6.
- Leal Buitrago, F. 2003. La doctrina de seguridad nacional: materialización de la Guerra Fría en América del Sur. *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 15:74–87.
- Leiva, F. I. 2008. *Latin American neostructuralism: the contradictions of post-neoliberal development*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Leung, Simon. 2007. The look of law. *Art Journal* 67(3):34–45. [SBC]
- Lipschutz, R. D. 2009. *The constitution of imperium*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Locke, John. 1960 (1689). *Two treatises of government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Low, S. M. 1997. Urban fear: building the fortress city. *City and Society* 9:53–71.
- . 2003. *Behind the gates: life, security, and the pursuit of happiness in Fortress America*. New York: Routledge.
- Lutz, Catherine. 2001. *Homefront: a military city and the American twentieth century*. Boston: Beacon.
- Lutz, Catherine, and Donald Nonini. 1999. The economies of violence and the violence of economies. In *Anthropological theory today*. Henrietta L. Moore, ed. Pp. 73–113. Cambridge: Polity. [CB]
- Manz, Beatriz. 2004. *Paradise in ashes: a Guatemalan journey of courage, terror, and hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [CK]
- Marcus, George. 2009. CEAUSSIC: origin story and grand finale. CEAUSSIC AAA Blog, December 7. <http://blog.aaanet.org/2009/12/07/ceaussic-origin-story-and-grand-finale/> (accessed February 9, 2010). [RA]
- Mares, D. R. 2007. The national security state. In *A companion to Latin American history*. T. Holloway, ed. Pp. 386–405. London: Blackwell.
- Mariner, Joanne, and Malcolm Smart. 2001. *The “sixth division”: military-paramilitary ties and U.S. policy in Colombia*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch.
- Marx, K. 1967. On the Jewish question. In *Writings of the young Marx*

- on philosophy and society. L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat, eds. Pp. 216–248. New York: Anchor.
- Masco, Joseph. 2006. *The nuclear borderlands: the Manhattan Project in post-Cold War New Mexico*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2008. Survival is your business: engineering ruins and affect in nuclear America. *Cultural Anthropology* 23:361–398.
- Matthew, Richard Anthony. 2000. The environment as a national security issue. *Journal of Political History* 12(1):101–122.
- McDonald, M. 2008. Securitization and the construction of security. *European Journal of International Relations* 14:563–587.
- McFate, M. 2005. The military utility of understanding adversary culture. *Joint Force Quarterly* 38:42–48.
- McNamara, Laura. 2010. CEAUSSIC Ethics Casebook CEAUSSIC AAA Blog, January 27. <http://blog.aaanet.org/2010/01/27/ceaussic-ethics-casebook/> (accessed February 9, 2010). [RA]
- Members of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists. 2007. The Network of Concerned Anthropologists pledges to boycott counterinsurgency. *Anthropology News* 48(9):4–5.
- Menjívar, C. 2006. Liminal legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants' lives in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology* 111:999–1037.
- Metz, J. M. 2010. *The protest psychosis: how schizophrenia became a black disease*. Boston: Beacon.
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2000. The many faces of cosmo-polis: border thinking and critical cosmopolitanism. *Public Culture* 12(3):721–748. [JG]
- Mills, Claude. 2004. Gangs flex muscle in May Pen. *Jamaica Gleaner*, June 20.
- Moodie, Ellen. 2010. *El Salvador in the aftermath of peace: crime, uncertainty, and the transition to democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [SBC]
- Nash, June. 1990. Latin American women in the world capitalist crisis. *Gender and Society* 4(3):338–353. [KTM]
- . 1994. Global integration and subsistence insecurity. *American Anthropologist* 96(1):7–30. [KTM]
- Neild, R. 2002. The new face of impunity. *Human Rights Dialogue* 2:1–2.
- Nelson, D. M. 1996. Maya hackers and the cyberspatialized nation-state: modernity, ethnostalgia, and a lizard queen in Guatemala. *Cultural Anthropology* 11:287–308.
- Neumann, F. 1957. Montesquieu. In *The democratic and authoritarian state: essays in political and legal theory*. H. Marcuse, ed. Pp. 111–112. New York: Free Press.
- New York Times*. 2005. Who murdered Steve Harvey? December 13.
- Nye, J. S. 1974. Collective economic security. *International Affairs* 50: 584–598.
- Ong, A. 2006. *Neoliberalism as exception: mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Owczarzak, J. 2009. Defining HIV risk and determining responsibility in postsocialist Poland. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 23:417–435.
- Packer, G. 2006. Knowing the enemy: can social scientists redefine the “war on terror”? *New Yorker*, December 18.
- Paglen, Trevor. 2009. *Blank spots on the map: the dark geography of the Pentagon's secret world*. New York: Dutton. [SBC]
- Postero, Nancy. 2006. *Now we are citizens: indigenous politics in post-multicultural Bolivia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Price, D. 2008. The military “leveraging” of cultural knowledge. *Counterpunch*. <http://www.counterpunch.org/price03182008.html>.
- Ramírez, María Clemencia. 2010. Maintaining democracy in Colombia through political exclusion, states of exception, counterinsurgency, and dirty war. In *Violent democracies in Latin America*. E. D. Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein, eds. Pp. 129–165. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Renzi, Fred. 2006. Networks: terra incognita and the case for ethnographic intelligence. *Military Review* September–October:16–22.
- Richter, M. 1977. *The political theory of Montesquieu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robben, A. C. G. M. 1996. Ethnographic seduction, transference, and resistance in dialogues about terror and violence in Argentina. *Ethos* 24:71–106.
- Robin, Corey. 2004. *Fear: the history of a political idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodgers, Dennis. 2006. Living in the shadow of death: gangs, violence, and social order in urban Nicaragua, 1996–2002. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38(2):267–292. [DR]
- . 2009. Slum wars of the 21st century: gangs, *mano dura*, and the new urban geography of conflict in Central America. *Development and Change* 40(5):949–976. [DR]
- Roldán, M. 2002. *Blood and fire: la violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946–1953*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sawyer, Suzana. 2004. *Crude chronicles: indigenous politics, multinational oil, and neoliberalism in Ecuador*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Schirmer, Jennifer G. 1998. *The Guatemalan military project: a violence called democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [SBC]
- Schultz, Jim. 2008. The Cochabamba water revolt and its aftermath. *Dignity and defiance: stories from Bolivia's challenge to globalization*. Jim Shultz and Melissa Crane Draper, eds. Pp. 9–44. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schwegler, Tara. A. 2008. Take it from the top (down)? rethinking neoliberalism and political hierarchy in Mexico. *American Ethnologist* 35(4):682–700.
- Selmeski, B. R. 2007. Who are the security anthropologists? *Anthropology News* 48:11–12.
- Sheehan, Michael. 1999. Community, anarchy and critical security. Paper presented at the ECPR joint session workshop Redefining Security, Mannheim, March 26–21. [DF]
- Skidmore, M. 2003. Darker than midnight: fear, vulnerability, and terror making in urban Burma. *American Ethnologist* 30:5–21.
- Smith, Alanna. 2009. Citizen/terrorist: security problems of the biopolitical state. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, November 2–6.
- Sterpka, M. K. 2007. Anthropology and intelligence gathering. *Anthropology News* 48(5):11.
- Terán, Juan Fernando. 2007. *Las Quimeras y sus caminos. la gobernanza del agua y sus dispositivos para la producción de pobreza rural en los Andes ecuatorianos*. Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. [JG]
- Tormey, Anwen. 2009. Bordercrosser narratives: due process, fear and truth in asylum adjudication in Ireland. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, November 2–6.
- UN Development Programme. 1994. *1994 human development report*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ungar, Mark. 2009. *Policing democracy: overcoming obstacles to citizen security in Latin America*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center.
- Valverde, M., and M. Cirak. 2002. Governing bodies, creating gay spaces: security in “gay” downtown Toronto. *British Journal of Criminology* 43:102–121.
- Waeber, Ole, Barry Buzan, M. Kelstrup, and P. Lemaitre. 1993. *Identity, migration and the new security order in Europe*. London: Pinter.
- Walters, William. 2002. Deportation, expulsion, and the international police of aliens. *Citizenship Studies* 6(3):265–292.
- . 2004. Secure borders, safe haven, domopolitics. *Citizenship Studies* 8(3):237–260.
- Waterston, A. 1997. *Street addicts in the political economy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Weber, Max. 1954. Law in economy and society. In *Max Weber on law in economy and society*. Max Rheinstein, ed. Max Rheinstein and Edward Shils, trans. New York: Simon & Schuster. [CJG]
- . 1958 (1918). Politics as a vocation. In *Max Weber: essays in sociology*. C. W. Mills and H. H. Gerth, eds. Pp. 77–128. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1978. Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology, 2 vols. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds. Ephraim Fischhoff et al., trans. Berkeley: University of California Press. [CJG]
- Weldes, J., M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, and R. Duvall, eds. 1999. *Cultures of insecurity: states, communities, and the production of danger*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wilson, R. A., ed. 2005. *Human rights in the "War on Terror."* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.