



## Servants of the Nation: The Military in the Making of Modern Mexico, 1876-1911

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SERVANTS OF THE NATION: THE MILITARY IN THE MAKING OF MODERN  
MEXICO, 1876-1911

by

Stephen Neufeld

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“Servants of the Nation: The Military in the Making of Modern Mexico, 1876-1911”

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## ABSTRACT

The twilight of a tempestuous nineteenth-century saw the rise of a new order and a newly defined nation in Porfirian Mexico (1876-1911). Given the martial background of General Porfirio Díaz, and the warfare that marked the times, military involvement in the modernizing country was not altogether surprising. But relative stability and technological advances now enabled a much reduced army to exert itself in unprecedented ways. Far out of proportion to their size, the armed forces absorbed half the national budget and penetrated every area of society with military officers making up, among other things, many of the most important politicians, engineers, and writers. Thousands of young men, often forcibly conscripted, entered a national army that extended the State into regions previously beyond centralized influence or surveillance. Yet the regime's ostentatious public rituals of parade and manoeuvre stood in stark contrast to the violent eradication of bandits, dissidents, and indigenous rebels. Hatred of Porfirian brutality and decadence has obscured the truly significant contributions the military made to the nascent Mexico.

By devising and enacting their particular visions of the nation, and embodying it through practices that ranged from crime and duels to parades and battle, the military proved integral to the formation of nationalism and its constituent identities of gender, class, and racial organization. I contend that the role of the military offers important clues to the making of the modern nation. Both the history of its impact as an institution and the role of soldiers in civil society shed light on the historical roots of Mexican cultures and politics that persisted into the twentieth century, and offer insights into the roots of some persisting challenges— machismo, corruption, and distrust of public institutions. The military comprises both lens and exemplar of how the process of becoming modern shapes the foundations of what is understood as the nation.

## INTRODUCTION

*Mexicans, at the cry of war,  
make ready the steel and the steed,  
and may the earth tremble at its centers  
at the resounding roar of the cannon.  
And may the earth tremble at its centers  
at the resounding roar of the cannon!*

*War, war without quarter to any who dare  
to tarnish the coat of arms!  
War, war! Let the national banners  
be soaked in waves of blood.  
War, war! In the mountain, in the valley,  
let the cannons thunder in horrid unison  
and may the sonorous echoes resound  
with cries of Union! Liberty! – Mexican National Anthem<sup>1</sup>*

Near Puebla on May 5, 1862, a generation of Mexican officers became the first Latin Americans to defeat a major European power in battle since the patriots defeated the rather weak Spanish armies for independence; a number of those same men went on to govern and shape the country as it entered into the next century. The twilight of a tempestuous nineteenth-century saw the rise of this new order and their newly defined nation in the Porfiriato (1876-1911). Given the martial background of General Porfirio Díaz, and the warfare that marked the times, military involvement in the modernizing government was not surprising. Yet relative stability and technological advances enabled a much reduced army to exert itself in unprecedented ways. Far out of proportion to their size, the armed forces absorbed half the national budget and penetrated every area of

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<sup>1</sup> *Mexican National Anthem*, composed by Francisco González Bocanegra in 1853, lyrics written in 1854 by Jaime Nunó. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

society with military officers making up, among other things, many of the most important politicians, engineers, and writers. Thousands of young men, often forcibly conscripted, entered a national army that extended the government into regions previously beyond centralized influence or authority. At the same time, the regime's ostentatious public rituals of parade and manoeuvre stood in stark contrast to the violent eradication of highwaymen, political dissidents, and indigenous rebels. Hatred of Porfirian brutality has obscured the significant contributions the military made to national development. The armed forces became modern, a condition necessary but not sufficient to the formation of the modern nation, and an integral element in that Mexican idea.

By devising and enacting their particular visions of the nation, and embodying it through practices that ranged from training and duels to parades and battle, the military proved integral to the formation of nationalism and its constituent identities of gender, class, and ethnic organization. Officers provide clues to the making of the modern nation. Both the history of its impact as an institution and the role of soldiers in civil society shed light on the historical roots of culture and politics that persisted into the twentieth century, and offer insights into the origins of the persistent behavioural norms of machismo, corruption, and distrust of public officers.<sup>2</sup> The military comprises both lens and example of how the process of becoming modern shaped the foundations of the nation.

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<sup>2</sup> Kirk Hamilton, *Where Is The Wealth Of Nations?: Measuring Capital for the 21st Century* (New York: World Bank, 2005), cited in *Reason Magazine* (online) 2007-08-20,

<http://www.reason.com/news/show/120764.html>

Matthew C. Gutmann, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).



This study, the first of its kind in English or Spanish, analyses the federal army, on institutional and individual levels, as an agent of change in profound engagement with society. Through an evaluation of a wide variety of documents, from personnel files and police complaints, to memoirs and letters, to periodicals and early films, it reconstructs the experience of the armed forces between 1876 and 1911. It investigates the role the military played within society, its connections to power, and the role of officers in creating and enacting a modern nation. By examining regular troops from the perspective of social and cultural history, the study uncovers the daily lives and thoughts of men whose experience played a vital role in creating Mexico. Through a mixture of military and cultural historical approaches, this work brings new interpretations to the successes and failures of nation formation.

The study seeks to recover the experiences of the common soldiers. Seen by many outsiders as marijuana-smoking brutes, troops struggled to assert themselves in the harsh discipline and poor conditions of an institution that had absorbed them, however unwillingly they had been dragooned. The soldiers' lives illustrated the fluidity of class and the geography of power within city and countryside; they revealed considerably stratified notions on masculinity; and they occupied disparate social roles as Catholics, husbands, sons, lovers, bureaucrats, and warriors. Analyzing personnel files and less conventional historical sources, such as musical lyrics, photographs, interviews, and literature, this study gains representational insights. These diverse sources make it possible to delineate the social experiences that defined the military men, and to venture into their more intimate spheres of family, religion, and sexuality.

Middle-ranking and subaltern officers, through conscription, warfare, jurisprudence, and civil engineering, became crucial agents of reform and development, bringing the nation and elite projects into the wider countryside. The efforts they made represented a new domestic colonization, an invasion and occupation of the nation writ large. Their self-representations in journals explained the motivation for the many reforms made to regulations and for debates on recruitment and universal service, as well as their selected borrowing from foreign military systems. In writings they described the nation, in cartography set its bounds, and in practice physically occupied public spaces with garrisons and fortresses, making, to the extent that they could, the nation they envisioned.

On a broader level, parades and legations abroad enabled the military to demonstrate their ideals, and through performance, to attempt to build wide acceptance of their national imagining. The use of political rituals and ceremonies showcased both modern advances and traditional understandings.

Nation formation, as a process, builds from the military experience. Miguel Angel Centeno has argued that limited wars give rise to limited nations, and it follows that the limits of a military echo the limits of the society in which they are part.<sup>3</sup> What were the societal implications of 36 years of direction and formation by a military widely disdained as corrupt and ineffectual? Of a military, moreover, that set the terms and language for discussing and understanding what it meant to become modern, and to

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<sup>3</sup> Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

become Mexican? The inception of the modern military coincided with the rise of the modern nation.

National citizenship formation mimicked and foreshadowed failures in constructing the nation. The abyss between façade and reality that the army embodied augmented clashes with new social classes, and the unfulfilled promises and demands of social relationships would eventually contribute to revolution.

### Historical background

The military historically made up one of what historians have called the baleful trinity, along with Church and hacendados, and some have blamed it for delays in economic, social, and political development akin to that seen in Europe or the United States.<sup>4</sup> As a corporate entity, the army had special rights and political influences that many in the early republic deemed anti-Liberal, anti-democratic, and anti-modern. During the late colonial era, the Bourbon Reforms (1750-1810) set a central army against the interests of the patria chica and small towns that in governing themselves, ran their own militias. Upon Independence, the armed forces entailed widely scattered militias, remnants of colonial garrisons, a strong Spanish army of royalists, and relatively improvised rebel forces, whose infighting and segmented nature contributed to the length and destructiveness of the Independence War. Once free from the Crown, the army still attempted to hold power from the center, and officers became politicians much reviled by

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<sup>4</sup> Christon I. Archer, *The Birth of Modern Mexico, 1780-1824* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2003); Manuel Chust, "Armed Citizens: The Civic Militia in the Origins of the Mexican Nation State, 1812-1827," in *The Divine Charter: Constitutionalism and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*, ed. Jaime Rodriguez O. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 235-254.

merchants and common people alike. With the spectacular corruption and multiple failures of General Antonio Santa Anna de López, the army earned its position in the baleful trinity.

The endemic civil warfare of centralists versus federalists and of Liberals versus Conservatives continued to undermine economic progress and to confirm the negative reputation of the army.<sup>5</sup> Ongoing financial crises, including warfare's drain on the treasury, made the national army weaker and vulnerable to political promises of funding—the armed forces became both ends and means for savage internecine struggles to control the national future.<sup>6</sup> Compounding this fragile positioning, multiple foreign invasions (by Spain 1829, United States 1846-48, Great Britain 1862, and France 1836, 1862-67) did not create unity but rather widened the political divide inside the country and often threw the army into further ill-repute. As the Liberals gained the upper hand in the 1850s, they reduced the Church and its wealth in politics and economic matters; this spurred their foes to the extreme resort of calling in the French as liberators. This proved the last gasp of the early Conservatives and with the defeat and departure of the French in 1867, the road was cleared for widespread reforms as a Liberal nation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jaime Rodríguez O., ed. *The Divine Charter: Constitutionalism and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Barbara A. Tenenbaum, *The Politics of Penury: Debt and Taxes in Mexico 1821-1856* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Donald Fithian Stevens, *The Origins of Instability in Early Republican Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); and Michael Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico, 1835-1846* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993). Pedro Santoni, *Mexicans at Arms: Puro Federalists and the Politics of War, 1845-1848* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1996) and Josefina Vázquez, "War and Peace with the United States," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 339-369.

<sup>6</sup> Jaime Rodríguez O. *Down with Colonialism*; William A. DePalo, *The Mexican National Army, 1822-1852* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Charles Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth Century Mexico*, (Princeton: 1989).

The army inherited an uneven heritage upon which to found a heroic role. The War of Independence gained iconic currency through civic rituals that made the martyrdom of Hidalgo and Morelos touchstones of national pride, celebrated each September 16.<sup>8</sup> It was Santa Anna, the caudillo extraordinaire, that many Mexicans held responsible for the loss of half of the national territory to the United States, and for the discrediting of Conservative visions.<sup>9</sup> From this moment, the image of the *niños héroes* (military cadets) last stand against the U.S. army at Chapultepec became a nationalist icon. Two of the battles against the French, at Puebla on the fifth of May and five years later on the second of April, became nationalist holidays that celebrated indigenous President Benito Juárez's army and its valiant stand against the foreigner. Thus, a nineteenth-century pantheon featuring priests, children, and an Indian became associated with military nationalism and the foundations of *mexicanidad*. The Revolution would continue to build a nationality distant from the conventional army, and it was only with great efforts that regimes from the 1920s to 1940s managed to present the military as a positive part of the national project.<sup>10</sup>

After 1867, the government faced numerous challenges to constructing a modern nation. Presidents Benito Juárez (1867-72) and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872-76) acted to reduce the swollen army roster, eliminate banditry, build new rail lines, and resurrect foreign credit. Juárez expanded the institution of the *rurales*, the rural

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<sup>8</sup> William H. Beezley and David E. Lorey (eds.), *Viva Mexico Viva Independencia! Celebrations of September 16* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Centeno, 146, 148.

<sup>10</sup> Roderic Ai Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico* (New York: Oxford Press, 1992); also Thomas Rath, "Once We Were Warriors, Now We Are Soldiers": Army, Nation and State in Mexico, 1920-1970 (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Columbia University, 2008).

constabulary, and increased the use of the *depósito* as a holding pool for unneeded soldiers and officers. Continuing financial weakness and lack of work for former soldiers meant that his efforts to contain crime or rural uprisings could not succeed, as opposition expanded more quickly than the forces slated to combat it. He also built a number of new military colonies, populated and led by semi-retired officers who garrisoned previously hostile or barren areas. Both the Restoration era presidents relied heavily on the *jefes políticos* and local militias or National Guards to maintain order.<sup>11</sup> For Lerdo de Tejada, this reliance turned toxic, as Porfirio Díaz seized power in a coup largely supported by National Guards.

Díaz brought a new era of progress to the country and its army, consolidating the Liberal project and harnessing it to the rapidly accelerating technologies and social changes of his time.<sup>12</sup> He and his advisors turned to the philosophy of Positivism, seeking in science and technology to resolve the persistent problems of the nation. Serious internal opposition repeatedly emerged, including military rebellions and conspiracies in 1877, 1878, 1879, 1886, 1890, and 1893.<sup>13</sup> Scattered Indian attacks by Apaches, and larger uprisings by Yaqui, Mayo, and Maya continued through much of the era.<sup>14</sup> Army reform, a priority even under Santa Anna, picked up speed. New ordinances and regulations appeared every few years, the General Staff became efficient and expanded in

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<sup>11</sup> Guy P. Thompson, "Bulwarks of National Liberalism: the National Guard, Philharmonic Corps, and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 1 (1990): 31-68; Jane Dale Lloyd, ed., *Porfirio Díaz frente al descontento* (México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> On Porfiriato generally, see Paul H. Garner, *Porfirio Díaz, Profiles in Power* (Harlow, UK.; New York: Longman, 2001); Daniel Cosío Villegas, et al. *Historia moderna de México* (Mexico: Editorial Hermes, 1955).

<sup>13</sup> Guillermo Cota Soto, *Historia militar de México* (México: n.p., 1947), 87-90.

<sup>14</sup> See Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Evelyn Hu-deHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy 1821-1910* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

size, education in the Military College was updated, and new technologies of arms, tactics, and transport were adopted.

Organizationally, instead of the large regional armies and departments that had come before, the Porfirian Staff split commands into ten to twelve zones, three to five commandancies, and between nine and eighteen Jefaturas de las armas (regional commands) that varied somewhat over time with different territorial demands (see Appendix 1: Map 1). Furthermore, they standardized the army's units, gathering infantry and artillery into battalions, and cavalry into regiments. By 1900, they did away with non-standard Divisions and Brigades named for popular generals or regions, as well as such unit descriptors as Cazadores or Fieles, leaving only numbered, rational battalions and regiments. With the army spread thin, it became reliant on rail and telegraph to face serious threats, on local subordinate forces to put out brushfires, and would never allow any one officer to gain too much authority in one region. Making this more feasible, the federal government began to systematically dismantle the National Guard units, and regularly transferred all officers to ensure that none gained personal loyalties in any region. The new Liberal nation thus became subject to a centralized and national army structure, without interference from regional powers, and through army service would instil patriotism in its reformed citizenry. The army and the rurales auxiliaries would balance against jefes políticos and local governments, bringing the federal nation into new prominence across the country.

This study engages in specific ways the wider history of Latin American military and of the nineteenth century. Warfare in the region had a profound impact on historical

change. Although battlefields may have been limited by the scope of European warfare, they had profound impacts on Latin American societies. Indeed, Centeno argues that the limited nature of these nineteenth-century wars stunted the political and economic development of the region. Nonetheless, the mid-century Latin America saw the culmination of Liberal oligarchic regimes drive for power, eliminating or diminishing conservative or more democratic options from competition. With their immediate political troubles under control, regimes began the delayed project of modernizing their military forces with new arms, regulations, training, and tasks. European contractors (especially the Germans of Krupp and the French of Schneider-Kreusot) aided them and made great inroads with a number of militaries across the region including those in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Chile, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Efforts by the Germans in Mexico fell short of the advisors' expectations, due in part to the difficulty recruits had in learning German marching songs.<sup>15</sup>

The process of professionalizing the military did not preclude its intervention in politics (as in Brazil 1889), nor did it produce assured success (for example Argentine victories against indigenous groups versus Mexican attempts to control the Yaqui). By the last decades of the Porfiriato (1880-1910), significant advances in military sophistication still did not remedy the lack of popular enthusiasm for military service, recruitment continued to be an issue in most militaries, and most were still relying on conscription despite Liberal political rhetoric. Yet an important renovation had occurred almost universally across the region as militaries reformed and centralized control within

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<sup>15</sup> See for example, Warren Schiff, "German Military Penetration into Mexico During the Late Díaz Period," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 39, no. 4 (1959): 568-79.



a General Staff and shared their ideas with the international community through military journals.

The early twentieth-century witnessed the demise of the Liberal oligarchic regimes, replaced in turn by somewhat more inclusive and popular forms of government. For militaries across Latin America, these changes meant dealing increasingly with what Brazilian and Chilean politicians called “the social question,” or maintaining order against a population becoming urban, industrial, and frighteningly radical. Early in the century, governments exerted brute force to quell labour in its tracks, resulting in massacres in Chile (Antifagosta 1906, Iquique 1907, Santiago 1905, Valparaiso 1903), Argentina (Buenos Aires 1919), Mexico (Cananea 1906, Rio Blanco 1907), and later in Colombia (Santa Marta 1929). A direct result, the army responded to this modern circumstance through efforts to manage labour—it became the fulcrum of balance between the wealthy and new sectors of working class society, and justified its interventions as the modern mission of the army. Industrialization pressures increased socioeconomic disparity, and along with other factors, the unrest turned revolutionary in Mexico (1910) and Brazil (1930), while in Argentina (1930) the Infamous Decade saw the rise of a conservative regime, and in Chile (1927) General Ibañez seized power for four years. All of these cases saw the military move into politics as either broker for the middle class, or at least acting in its name. Mexico too had revolutionary generals in the presidency from 1910 until 1946.

## Literature and Theory

Little previous research exists on the Porfirian military. Two dissertations have addressed specific questions; James R. Kelley's 1975 work examined the professionalism of the officers, and Robert Alexius in 1976 addressed the efficacy of an army mired in poor recruitment and political corruptions.<sup>16</sup> An article by Alicia Hernández Chávez (1989) focused on the weakness of the army as a means of foreshadowing the Revolution. Milada Bazant de Saldaña's 1997 anthology on military education devotes a chapter to the Porfiriato, but relies heavily on reports published by the army itself. Daniel Gutiérrez Santos's third volume similarly draws on limited sources and has a rigidly anti-porfirian political outlook. Generally, historians of the era have scarcely touched on the army; it receives scant attention, for example, in works on the rurales and the Tomochic campaign, on modernity represented, or on military land surveys.<sup>17</sup> No scholar has addressed the role of the military as a historical actor. This study works to address these gaps in this limited historiography, adding to their arguments and taking a wider view of the significance of the military in nation formation. In doing so, it engages a number of other historiographic and theoretical concerns that

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<sup>16</sup> Anthony Bryan, "Mexican Politics in Transition, 1900-1913: The Role of General Bernardo Reyes," (PhD dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1970); Robert M. Alexius, "The Army and Politics in Porfirian Mexico" (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1976); Pedro Santoni "A Fear of the People: The Civic Militia of Mexico in 1845" in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, (68:2, 1988); James R. Kelley, "Professionalism In the Porfirian Army Corps" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1971); Milada Bazant de Saldaña, et al. *La Evolución de la educación militar de México* 1. ed. (México: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 1997); Daniel Gutiérrez Santos, *Historia militar de México 1876-1914* (México: Ateneo Press, 1955); Alicia Hernández Chávez, "Origen y ocaso del Ejército Porfiriano," *Historia Mexicana* 39, no. 1 (1989): 257-96.

<sup>17</sup> Paul J. Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development*, Revised and enlarged ed. (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1992) and *The Power of God against the Guns of Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Raymond Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

examine nation and nationalism, rituals and ceremonies, modernity and the modern, and old and new military history.

### Nation and Nationalism

The drive for nationalism, as discussed in Benedict Anderson's influential work, resulted in the formation of a new collective community.<sup>18</sup> This identity expressed and represented an imagined sense of belonging to a bounded group, within defined borders of territory. The national imagination depended on smoothing away or homogenizing differences, for example, of language, ethnicity, and religion.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, becoming national required agreement on the requisites for citizenship, a simultaneous sense of separation from foreigners, and the development of a shared collective memory.<sup>20</sup>

The literature of nations and nationalism has taken several different tacks. The origins of the national idea, its inception from a more or less shared imagining, have captured a great deal of historical attention, with the assumption that understanding the beginning will illuminate process and changes over time.<sup>21</sup> Rife with symbolism, and profoundly connected with both rituals and the idea of the modern, the ideological basis for believing a given territory to share common traits and fate has led historians to

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<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976); William H. Beezley, *Mexican National Identity: Memory, Innuendo, and Popular Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Timothy E. Anna, *Forging Mexico: 1821-1835* (Lincoln [Neb.]; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); William French, "Imagining and the Cultural History of Nineteenth-Century Mexico." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (1999): 249-67; François-Xavier Guerra, and Mónica Quijada, *Imaginar la nación, cuadernos de historia latinoamericana no. 2*. (Münster; Hamburg, Germany: Lit, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> David Brading, *Los orígenes del nacionalismo mexicano* (México: Edit Era, 1980).

examine culture more closely. They have looked to literature, archeology, science, and entertainments to better illustrate the rise of the nation.<sup>22</sup> Others, like Michel Foucault, have seen the nation as an exercise in power manifested in institutions, and in discourse, including science and knowledge.<sup>23</sup> Many have agreed that the most marked movement towards nationhood was associated with the rise of a technologically advanced and socially coherent country or government, one with the hallmarks of modernity. During the Porfiriato, the armed forces had a significant role in both the imagining and governing of the nascent nation.

Nationality and citizenship have historically been tied to military service—the armed forces provided both school and forum for constructing what became the modern nation. Defining the nation as an imagined and limited collective identity, scholars have pointed to the military as a central institution that prepares the citizen to understand and fulfill civic responsibilities.<sup>24</sup> The absence of persistent enemies can hinder this; few things work as well as a foreign enemy to inspire a nation into imagining its own virtues and solidarity.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the functions and performances of the military in the public sphere had the potential to direct understandings of the nation, gender, class, and race. It also connected these ideas to one another, constructing a social fabric congruent with modern aspirations and capable of smoothing political and economic changes.

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<sup>22</sup> Sara Castro-Klarén and John Chasteen, *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

<sup>24</sup> See for Latin America generally, Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); for France, the classic Weber Eugen Joseph, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976).

<sup>25</sup> Centeno, 29.

The nation must seem natural, inevitable and eternal in order to become real.<sup>26</sup> The repetition of seeing the militia on parade and taking part in civic rituals, with music, flags, uniforms, and standard arms, presented the populace with a spectacle of the Nation as theatre.<sup>27</sup> The demonstrative nature of the ritual gave the military, and by association its government, the appearance of a legitimate and natural presence.<sup>28</sup> The performed military also constructs ideals of gender, class, and ethnicity. As has been argued for the United States, Brazil, and Germany, the soldier potentially embodies specific ideals of masculinity through bearing, posture, dress, and armament.<sup>29</sup> Lower class “deficiencies” of stooped posture and dishevelment could be attenuated in the soldier; through drill and training a man worthy of the nation would become presentable to the public. In a similar fashion, soldiers in a national uniform could put off their ethnic, even racial features, achieving homogeneity as they ceased being primarily *negro*, *pardo*, *indio*, or *mulatto*, and became simply, soldier.<sup>30</sup> Clothing makes the man, in this instance, the epaulet makes the new man in the relative anonymity of a military formation.

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<sup>26</sup> See Roderick Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

<sup>27</sup> R. Claire Snyder, *Citizen Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 15-16; Guy P. Thompson, “Bulwarks of National Liberalism: the National Guard, Philharmonic Corps, and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 1 (1990): 31-68.

<sup>28</sup> Weber, 298.

<sup>29</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War and Monument in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Peter M. Beattie, *Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Warren L. Young, *Minorities and the Military: A Cross-National Study in World Perspective* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 19, 27-28; Timothy Wickham-Crowley, and Hendrik Kraay (Eds.) *I Die With My Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War, 1864-1870* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Beattie, *Tribute of Blood*.

Implicated in this insight is the idea that the rights and obligations, as well as the privileges, of military service belonged exclusively to men. The civil republican link to the soldier, argues Claire Snyder, gendered civic virtue and political participation as male.<sup>31</sup> Women had no recourse to genuine citizenship, as they could not fight or die for the country, and so they had, the logic goes, a lesser stake in the nation.

An obstacle to using the military to create nationalism lay in the debate over recruitment. As Weber has persuasively shown for France, and Beattie for Brazil, the only way to instill Liberal senses of nationalism through military service was via universal, or nearly universal, conscription of men. Obviously, this raises a number of serious difficulties for the military and the government, not to mention the national population. First of all, it requires tremendous central authority, and for much of the nineteenth-century in Mexico this did not exist, so universal conscription was out of the question. Second, it requires an economy robust enough not only to pay and supply this huge army, but also to survive the loss of so much manpower from its economy. Third, the process of circulation and mixing (which Weber identified as a crucial element of nationalism, albeit it developed gradually in the barracks) was of grave concern to middle class families who saw the army as a den of vice and immorality.<sup>32</sup> Beattie demonstrates that this element, by itself, retarded the development of Brazilian military nationalism for decades. Finally, the Liberal ideal of egalitarianism proved difficult in practice, as the wealthy continued to find ways to avoid service and the poor continued to be arbitrarily enlisted. Beyond fears of moral and sexual cross-class contamination, rich citizens

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<sup>31</sup> Snyder, 52, 55.

<sup>32</sup> Weber, 297, 292, 302.

claimed that their inclusion in military service would irreparably harm the economy they had built.

Debates over recruitment raged through the nineteenth-century. Popular hatred for conscription led to unrest, and individuals attempted to avoid military service in any way possible; purchasing replacements, desertions, bribery, and faked illnesses were measures taken by young men to avoid honourable service to the nation. Clearly, the calls of patriotism and the idea of nationalism had little purchase in still less than prestigious armies noted for poor living conditions and worse pay.

Porfirian elites made a similar effort at the turn of the century. General reforms in recruitment were debated vigorously, with eight different schemes of recruitment being weighed.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, although the Ordinances of 1900 specified volunteer service only, the army continued with the *leva* as it had since the eighteenth-century—forcibly drafted criminals, vagrants, dissidents, transvestites, and prisoners of war entered the army in chains and were locked in barracks by night.<sup>34</sup> Predictably, morale was low. Desertions, by some estimates, reached epidemic levels of nearly fifty percent, and few considered the nation well served, or well represented, by its federal army.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, the *rurales*

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<sup>33</sup> Eduardo Paz, *A dónde debemos llegar: Estudio sociológico militar* (México: Tipografía Mercantil, 1910), 18-19.

<sup>34</sup> Alexius, 34; on transvestites see: Robert McKee Irwin, Edward J. McCaughan, and Michelle Rocío Nasser (eds.), *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, 1901*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Alexius, 68.

cultivated an image of disciplined masculine prowess, but one tainted with a presumed bandit heritage and a legendary brutality.<sup>36</sup>

Nationality and military service are intimately connected, but making that connection in nineteenth-century Mexico proved quite difficult. The great institutions of Liberal nation-building, factories, schools, and barracks, failed to convince popular classes of the viability and utility of the nation.<sup>37</sup> Elite actors attempted to construct the iconic soldier as a representative of the ideal national man, one with the desired qualities in race, masculinity, and class, through public ceremony and historical celebration. Yet the persistence of alternative visions of nation continued, in part due to the disparate experiences of warfare across the nineteenth-century.<sup>38</sup> Enormous social divides of race and region, the perceived cultural gap between elites and subordinates, and the continued abuses within the army and its recruitment, ultimately undermined the military as a foundation for a unified imagining of nation. Despite these limits, the discursive and ritual presence of the military provided an understood visual language upon which a national culture would eventually be built. While the initial claims of the elite fell short, the lower and middle classes of the twentieth-century built their nations using the same cultural logic learned from these elite projects.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Paul Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police and Mexican Development* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1992); Jonathan King's forthcoming dissertation provides greater depth of sources on the topic (PhD. diss, University of Calgary, forthcoming).

<sup>37</sup> William E. French, *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1996), *passim* and Robert M. Buffington and William E. French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History Of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Centeno, 163-166, 168-172, 241, 235, 257.

<sup>39</sup> A similar argument in: Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).



The enormous crude strength of this new kind of nation appeared in its changing capacity to deal with ruptures in multivalent ways, an apparent flexibility that nonetheless relied ultimately on brute force.<sup>40</sup> Two significant differences transformed the process's sheer efficiency at the dawn of the twentieth century: the injection of modern methods and tactics drawn from global sources, and elite access to the financial and technical resources of capitalism. In various points of disagreement, the army acted to fuse differences in the meaning-making frameworks where hegemonic ideologies clashed and transformed.<sup>41</sup>

This study engages with the literature on nationalism and nation formation throughout, dealing with citizen formation, military projects, and the public performance of national imaginings. The first two chapters focus on the education and socialization of the soldier, in the context of barracks and family, and illustrate how new identities were both formed and resisted. The soldiers and soldaderas did not ultimately accept the national identity as primary, instead retaining customs and loyalties to their patria chica despite all efforts by officers, non-commissioned officers, and doctors. Nation formation also had a rough and practical nature, as officers in the third chapter took the army and nation into the farthest corners of the country and installed garrison forces, communication networks, and public works. The choreographed displays of national imagining, a performance by military actors, take shape in chapter four's discussion of the martial ceremonies and delegations abroad.

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<sup>40</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

<sup>41</sup> William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, Eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 355-366.

A persuasive argument about the essence of the nation hinged on a consensus reached on the modern trajectory. Modernity, according to Ernest Gellner, is prerequisite to the national, and a crucial self-description that determined the role of the military in the Porfiriato.<sup>42</sup> Like nation, it can be a slippery terminology, often rendered insensible in confusions with modernism, and modernization. The definition of modernity in this dissertation draws on Rita Felski that first, modernity is inclusive, saturating daily life and forming historical consciousness, and second, it is a polysemic, indeterminate, and ambivalent manifestation of a cultural consciousness. To this definition, I argue that modernity comprises both discourses and practices that invent both the modern and the traditional at the same time and in a specific context.<sup>43</sup> The regime's argument that Mexico had entered modernity, relied on demonstrable practices and technologies thrown into stark relief by adhered-to customs of shared histories. Their proof of scientific and social progress came from collected statistics, it was made public in expositions and displays, and it was made real in the collapse of space and time afford through the technology of as rails, telegraph, and telephones.

The military's responsibility for expressing and embodying modernity is central to this study. During the Porfiriato, education and science were proofs of modern progress, but also represented the possibility of overcoming what some elites deemed the problems of race and class. The first three chapters all touch on this, examining how

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<sup>42</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 9; Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 90-94; Stuart Hall, *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 1-18; Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 15-16; John Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern: Explorations in the Western Experience of Otherness* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

scientifically-justified regimens were applied to destroy Indian identities, to remove lower class habits, and to erase traditional behaviours. At the same time, medical and hygienic reforms instilled morality, a concept essential to the progress and modernity of the nation. The modern soldier, so reformed, would become loyal, patriotic, and obedient. The military had to identity tradition, a prerequisite in refashioning the modern by contrast. Chapters three and four show that despite solid modern arguments against such practices, the army maintained the traditional custom of duelling; they were slow to replace impractical uniforms that looked good on parade; and they reinvented festivals that glorified the military past. Modernity's inevitable encroachments often fell first upon the armed forces, as they took to new technologies and applied them with an eye to European advances. If all things solid melted into air, the army would rebuild them from their own vision of the modern nation.

### Ritual and Rite

Mexico arrived as a modern nation in halting and fumbling steps, directed as much by pressures from below as elites' efforts from above. The rise of nationalism, according to Anderson, was to build primarily from ideas diffused through print capitalism. Subsequently, historians examining this argument have refuted Anderson's claims for Latin America as the incubator of nationalism, and pointed to the wide lack of literacy (and publishing) as a critical difference in the region. Nonetheless, Anderson would have been the first to agree that print literature does not represent the only way to

inculcate or create nationalism. Visual and musical cultures constructed the nation in ways imminently understandable throughout the nineteenth-century in Mexico.<sup>44</sup>

The use of the military parade and mobilization of crowds represent the two most noteworthy elements in the factional struggle to define the nation's historical vision. Drawing from the long tradition that associated military prowess and appearances to the legitimacy of the regime, Iturbide's procession into the capital communicated an idea to the massed viewers. The people, for its part, had long associated military parades with a social and political meaning. The persistence of civic militias and National Guard units on parade as local representations of nationalism resonated in powerful ways, at the same time expressing both local autonomy and connection to the wider nation. They also connected directly to *Juntas Patrióticas*, which expressed these local ideas to the central governments and shaped the direction the nation would take.<sup>45</sup> As a visual culture, the military parade demonstrated the latest fashions in uniforms and arms, an approved and deracinated vision of manhood, and the reassurance of security and strength. Moreover, martial music provided both entertainment and a glorifying message, especially as some

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<sup>44</sup> Ricardo Pérez Montfort, *Estampas de nacionalismo popular mexicano: Diez ensayos sobre cultura popular y nacionalismo* 2ed. (México: Centro de Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2003); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); T.G., Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.) *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, (New York: Routledge, 2000.); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); William Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, eds., *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994); Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, trans. Sonya Lipsett-Rivera and Sergio Rivera Ayala (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999); William H. Beezley and David E. Lorey, eds., *¡Viva Mexico ¡Viva la Independencia! Celebrations of September 16* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> Guy P. Thompson, "Bulwarks of National Liberalism: the National Guard, Philharmonic Corps, and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 1 (1990): 31-68.

conductors (like Juventino Rosas) gained international recognition for their compositions.<sup>46</sup> It speaks to their importance, for example, that military bands participated regularly in Worlds' Fairs and international expositions, and presided over the signing of treaties with Yaqui leaders in the 1880s.<sup>47</sup>

The urban masses, as rioters or spectators, lay at the heart of attempts to form national sentiment.<sup>48</sup> They actively participated in politics throughout the century, expressing their support or disdain of governments and policies with vocal demonstrations, and sometimes, projectiles. This political engagement, especially given the exclusionary nature of electoral politics, became a common feature in larger cities and an important facet of nationalism. Attempts to sway these masses, on the other hand, proved difficult in light of their relative intransigence and disunity, and the frequent lack of fit between moral economy and national politics.

Ironically, perhaps, the construction of nationalist architecture prospered most during the five year occupation by the French under Emperor Maximilian and Empress Carlota. The imperial couple sought to create the nation they envisioned in broad strokes, bringing in architectural changes, musical innovations, European fashions, as well as establishing new institutions intended to describe and define Mexico. Building grand edifices brought a degree of pride and a new patrimony to the urban populace, and new

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<sup>46</sup> Guy P. Thompson, "The Ceremonial and Political Roles of Village Bands, 1864-1974," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, eds. William H. Beezley, C.E. Martin, W.E. French (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 307-325; Helmut Brenner, *Juventino Rosas*, (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2000); On music more generally: Aurelio Tello, "El patrimonio musical de México. Una síntesis aproximativa," en Enrique Florescano (coor.) *El patrimonio nacional de México, Vol II*, 76-110 (México: Consejo Nacional Para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Evelyn Hu-deHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 94-109.

<sup>48</sup> Richard A. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Masses in Mexico City* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

broad avenues like the Paseo de Reforma (as it was later named) shaped a cityscape suitable for massive parades and pomp.<sup>49</sup> Greenery transformed the center of Mexico City, with new parks that provided an escape for increasingly cultivated elite, or a play space for the vulgar. Opera and the so-called high cultures brought an element of cosmopolitanism to the nation, highlighting the gap between classes and entrenching differences. Institutes of art and of cartography portrayed a persuasive vision of the nation and its past, drawing a visual roadmap of history and identity easily understood without literacy. Antonio García Cubas, head of the Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics, presented the nation with increasingly detailed maps annotated in historical allegories and popular types.<sup>50</sup> These efforts, continuing into the twentieth-century, reinforced a sense of the bounded-ness of the nation, and allocated a purely imaginary space to excluded indigenous groups.

Leading up to 1900, unprecedented peace and prosperity fostered an explosion of artistic, literary, and civic activities.<sup>51</sup> The *Paseo de Reforma* and other public spaces displayed proud new statuary, glorifying figures like Juárez and Hidalgo, but also resurrecting an Indian past with images of Cuauhtémoc. The construction of what became the Bellas Artes would provide a space for appreciating the finer life, and green spaces expanded to provide all classes with hygienic moral spaces to meet. Literature propounded the strengths of the people, and set standards for proper behaviour. Sporting

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<sup>49</sup> Barbara Tannenbaum, "Streetwise History" in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, ed. William H. Beezley, C.E. Martin, and W. French (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 129; Claudia Agostini, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876-1910* (Calgary, Boulder: University of Calgary Press; University Press of Colorado, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Craib, 20-53.

<sup>51</sup> José Luis Martínez, "México en busca de su expresión," en *Historia general de México-Versión 2000* (México: El Colegio de México, 2004).

events also attracted crowds, and theatre and puppetry expressed important messages about the changing times.<sup>52</sup> Spectators also witnessed increasing numbers of military parades, funeral processions, and civic rituals that lent pomp and weight to the regime, and helped sell a stable image to foreign investors. These demonstrations changed in nature, with the onset of electrification adding a modern glow to the proceedings.

The power of performance and ceremony to alter fundamental national understandings brings cultural history into this study. The often incomplete successes in shaping participants and spectators applied to raw recruits in the drill square, to foreign embassies in the reviewing field, and to subaltern officers in the dueling salon. The first two chapters highlight the soldier's experiences with nationalist ritual and official regimens, and argue that with rare exceptions the performances did not overwrite old understandings in the short term.<sup>53</sup> Chapter four, nonetheless, demonstrates how the language and meanings inherent to the nationalist ceremonials became the discursive template that would limit conceptions of the nation and of the modern. Even critiques, and many appeared, now used the same terms and assumptions that had been displayed in military performances. The nation's trajectory towards modernity was shown by representatives of the army, whether promoting technological advances or patriotic sovereignty, and had become the only acceptable pathway. The shift between seeming modern and being modern came about through practice and reiteration.

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<sup>52</sup> William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*; for a soccer specific analysis, see Gregg Bocketti, "Playing with National Identity: Brazil in International Football, 1900-1925," in *Negotiating Identities in Modern Latin America*, ed. Hendrik Kraay (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 71-93.

<sup>53</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985)

## Military Historiography

The role of the military in the modern Latin American nation has received a great deal of scholarly attention. Historians concerned with the roots of army intervention in politics saw this early phase as crucial to the development of professional or political military systems. This intense study was due in part to the influence of historian Edwin Lieuwen after the publishing of his 1960 work, *Arms and Politics in Latin America* (and later, *Mexican Militarism*).<sup>54</sup> With the notable exception of the prolific Frederic Nunn, this group of authors suggested that eventual militarism came out of insufficient professional development, and that further professionalizing (by way of U.S. assistance) would increase the stability of societies. Nunn, contrary to this idea, instead argued that military intervention represented a form of professional behaviour common to eras prior to World War Two, and came to believe that the propensity for military government in the 1960s to 1980s in Latin America manifested a reversion to the normal course, in keeping with what he termed officer's vocation for service.<sup>55</sup> Another voice, Brian Loveman, continued to focus on civil-military relations, but went further in delving into

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<sup>54</sup> Edwin Lieuwen, *Arms and Politics in Latin America*, 2d ed. (New York,: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Praeger, 1961) and *Mexican Militarism; the Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army, 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968); Lieuwen, previously funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, sought to explain, and perhaps prescribe, the causes of military interventions in politics. His studies became even more important as scholars tried to understand stabilizing influences in the region in the wake of the Cuban Revolution (1959). With thirty five graduate students over the course of his career, numerous dissertations came out that looked to the roots of military professionalism in the early twentieth century, across Latin America (among them: José Ferrer, "The Armed Forces in Argentina Politics", Allen Gerlach, "Civil-military Relations in Peru", as well as publications by Winfield Burggraaf, on Venezuela, Michael Meyer on Victoriano Huerta, Robert Potash on Argentina, and Frederic Nunn on Chile--one of the most influential nonetheless was Louis Pérez Jr.'s 1970 dissertation on the Cuban army).

<sup>55</sup> Among other works see: Frederick M. Nunn, *The Time of the Generals: Latin American Professional Militarism in World Perspective* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).



the meanings that officer castes assigned the patria.<sup>56</sup> His work touched on the importance of demography; while others had written on the caste formation of officers, the role of indigenous identities had not played a major part in analyses of the army. His work joins Nunn's in taking seriously the idea of military lore, the shared ideas and identities that unified military forces in their custodianship of the nation. An important contributor to the scholarship, David Pion-Berlin argued that these driving motivations are precisely what are missing from the civil-military relations field, yet did not suggest a workable solution.<sup>57</sup> For the most part absent from the debate have been soldiers, their relationship with officers, and their direct interactions with the community around them.

The experiences and lives of everyday military members serves as the primary focus of what has been called the New Military History, best represented in Latin America for Brazil.<sup>58</sup> Through the study of soldiers' hopes, their family lives, cultural expressions, historical memory, understandings of gender, and collective identities, recent scholarship (since around 1990) has reexamined the military life as a complex social relationship rather than a monolithic institutional bloc. This approach, as the editors of *Nova história militar brasileira* point out, is not new but a resurgence of the

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<sup>56</sup> Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, eds. *The Politics of Anti-Politics: The Military in Latin America*. 2 ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Loveman, *For the Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> David Pion-Berlin (2001); also see Linda Alexander Rodríguez, *Rank and Privilege: The Military and Society in Latin America, Jaguar Books on Latin America* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1994).

<sup>58</sup> Celso Castro, Vitor Izecksohn, and Hendrik Kraay (eds.), "Introdução", *Nova história militar brasileira*, (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bom Texto, 2004). Morgan, Zachary R. "The Revolt of the Lash, 1910." In *Naval Mutinies of the Twentieth Century: An International Perspective*, ed. Christopher M. Bell and Bruce A. Ellerman, 35-54. Portland: Frank Cass & Co., 2003. Hendrik Kraay, "Reconsidering Recruitment in Imperial Brazil." *The Americas* 55, no. 1 (Jul., 1998): 1-33; Beattie, Peter M. *Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001; John Keegan is also considered by some to be a New Military Historian, see John Keegan and Richard Holmes, eds. *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle* (New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, 1986).

type of military history written in the late nineteenth-century, just prior to the so-called professionalizing of European-style militaries. An attempt to bridge the space between traditional military histories (whose interests were in battles, maneuvers, and politics), and social or cultural histories (bottom up approaches discussing identity constructions and daily life), the New Military History sees the whole armed forces as an important facet of society without removing it from normal social understandings. It thus addresses the psychosocial gap in analyzing civil military relationships that Pion-Berlin proposed was missing.

As part of the New Military History, this study takes as a particular starting point the work of Peter Beattie. In *Tribute of Blood*, he examined the social and cultural lives of soldiers in Brazil with a focus on attempts by state and society to transform soldiers into model citizens. He found that recruitment and living in barracks remained critical and contentious issues well into the twentieth-century. Examining the period between 1864 and 1945, he contended that the relationship between honour, race, nation, and masculinity played out in the debates over, and experience of, recruitment. In the fluid social geography of street, home, and barracks, military service helped explain the construction of norms that reinforced and recreated hierarchies of race, class, and masculinity. He contended that this project had many facets, including recruitment as a means for social control, the policing of family honour, the instillation of nationalism, and the emergence of new ideologies (to reconcile patriarchal masculinity with honourable military service). By connecting military service to labour transformations, Beattie placed the soldier within broader patterns of coercive systems and economic

structures in an unusual way. He concluded that eventually the Brazilian army largely achieved its goal in forming an institution that was seen as modernized, honourable, homogenizing, and nationalist.

This study addresses many of the same issues within the Porfirian context. Similar influences, such as European models and emergent technologies, shaped changes in both countries. Significantly, Brazil's racial questions around the *praças* (many formerly slaves) made for considerable differences from the efforts by Mexicans to overcome indigenous backgrounds. Conscription issues plagued both nations and the unpopularity of military service likewise. Chapter one analyses the effects that this practice had in Mexico, while the following chapter delves into a barracks life markedly different from those studied by Beattie. The often disruptive presence of women and family in the Porfirian barracks had enormous influence on public opinion, on constructed genders, and on modernization efforts. They broke the divisions between home, street, and barracks, in ways that Brazilian troops did not experience so directly. A final great difference, while Brazilian soldiers arrived at a degree of nationalism and pride in arms, Mexico fell into bloody revolution, one that destroyed the nineteenth century military institution.

The military found that it could not, in the end, inculcate the nationalism that it sought. While officers intended that military service would make raw recruits into men filled with patriotic fervour, instead the troops evinced a grand disinterest and hostile resentment. The critical problem, already visible in the colonial period, was that impressment and poor training, coupled with societal disdain, left the soldier with little

incentive to become the kind of man that the modern army demanded. Rather, in the face of emasculating or infantilizing treatment by superiors, he opted to act in the ways men of his class had, since colonial times, been expected—drinking, fighting, and visiting prostitutes. Furthermore, there was no discontinuity between home and barracks life in terms of gender, which might have promoted soldiers to become disciplined and less resistant to authority. Instead, women, the *soldaderas*, were in barracks and on the march, and in their presence soldiers continued in a performance of gender learned in the home. Finally, and in contrast to the French experience described by Weber, the continuing presence of civic militias with colonial roots, that dwarfed the federal forces, meant that there existed no universal male experience of *levée en masse* to inculcate modern nationalism.<sup>59</sup>

## Chapter Summaries

Chapter one, “Servants of the Nation: Recruitment, Training, and Becoming a Soldier,” examines the conscription and daily regimes of instruction and ritual faced by soldiers. Despite promises and assurances, the army continued in the long practice of the *leva*, a process of taking men from their communities by force of arms and law. Locked in remote barracks and only allowed supervised excursions, the soldier was virtually imprisoned until his superiors deemed him unlikely to desert. Nonetheless, men with strong community ties found ways to avoid being taken, and those that were impressed

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<sup>59</sup> Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; the federals in service did not generally equal local militias in number, despite the regime’s best efforts.

often did eventually escape. Once brought into the army, the new soldier entered a daytime world broken into tasks and instruction by regulation and trumpet calls. Through learning drill and arms skills, and even attaining basic literacy, the army sought to shape their raw apprentices into able soldiers, and loyal citizens. Officers tried to strip the recruit of previous indigenous or regional identities by controlling their meals, their dress, and their routines. Ultimately, these efforts bore limited results.

Demonstrating far less controllable circumstances, chapter two, “Nightlife in the Barracks: Breaking Boundaries and Making Spaces,” analyses the lives and practices of soldiers outside of the regulated routines. Unique to Mexico by the late century, the presence of women and children in the barracks by night shaped the soldiers in innumerable ways. Sexuality and relations between men and women influenced the construction of gender and in many ways, undermined official discipline. Soldaderas, women with the army, could fill numerous roles: they sold goods, they brought meals, they did laundry, and they provided sex. They also brought religion into the barracks, as a means to legitimise sexuality and to care for offspring. In response to their influence, military doctors attempted to set controls on women and on hygiene, typically blaming the soldaderas for a wide range of illnesses. Officers concurred with a negative view of the women whom they blamed for troop’s poor discipline and for smuggling of contraband. The women did supply the means for the soldier’s leisure, bringing alcohol, marijuana, snacks, and tobacco into the barracks. The troops of course found many ways to entertain themselves when off duty, for example, playing music and conversing in a

cant that their officers did not understand. Through all of these practices and conflicts, the soldier reaffirmed his sense of identity and his own vision of *mexicanidad*.

Moving away from the soldiers in the ranks, the third chapter, “The Subaltern Officer: Agents of Change and Engineers of Nation,” focuses on the junior grades of officer (below major) that led the drives to make the Mexico modern. The education of these men at the Military College of Chapultepec shaped their character and the sense they had of the nation. A curriculum heavy on science and mathematics primed them towards a positivist stance on development, an equal stress on military honour appeared in the expectations and demands of the duel. The government deployed the resulting graduates according to ability, training, and family connections. The line officer, or *práctico*, led the troops in garrisons and detachments across the countryside. Many became involved in graft, and only a few gained special notice as leaders of men. Like their troops, many indulged in too much alcohol, in petty crimes, and in street violence, and their records indicate routine charges and arrests. Most subalterns married upon reaching the rank of captain, some as a result of legal pressures. The technical officers, *facultativos*, enjoyed the benefits of additional training and sometimes of family status. They made up the personnel for the General Staff, Artillery, and the Professional Staff, and worked as engineers, cartographers, supervisors, and orderlies. Others also joined the newly expanded Navy, or trained to enter the Medical Corps, both branches renovated during the Porfiriato. The projects undertaken by the subaltern officers, whether they were hunting for bandits or building railways, enabled the country to take on a modern

shape. The young officers came to represent the nascent nation through their wide-ranged tasks as Díaz's agents of change.

In chapter four, "Another Theatre of War: The Performative Army," the scope of analysis widens to the institutional role of the military in shaping imaginings of the nation. The military elite devised and projected a carefully selected martial image for spectators from peons and journalists to ambassadors and presidents. The regime spent considerable energy in controlling criticism of its projects in print, both domestic and foreign, and new military journals counteracted rumours with their own patriotic and scientific literature. These journals also reached a foreign and specialist audience as editors sent them out in exchange for their foreign counterparts in dozens of countries. Capturing the imagination of viewers, military parades and processions became regular sights on the streets and fields around cities. Regimental bands also gained respect and renown for the army, both at home and away. Taking advantage of the visual power of the army, the president surrounded himself with a carefully designed honour guard that would highlight his own martial reputation. Officers and troops also went abroad, particularly to Europe and the United States, to take part in embassies, legations, commissions, and expositions. These men, sometimes as attachés or consuls, represented Mexico personally and organized the display of images that fit the regime's vision of itself. They also facilitated in exchanges of information on modernizing, or oversaw arms trading. A deliberate choice, the army through its foreign contacts decided to organize and update its forces in a co-evolution with the United States, as both drew selectively from European advancements and from one another.

CHAPTER 1  
SERVANTS OF THE NATION:  
RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND BECOMING A SOLDIER

*“...entre los soldados no hay amigos ni enemigos del Gobierno todos son sus servidores.” -Porfirio Díaz<sup>1</sup>*

*“De modo que fue esclavitud...los soldados no eran libres, en primer lugar, el ejército no era libre....” -Trinidad Vega<sup>2</sup>*

“Cannon meat” was what they called the young conscript, as they took him at saber point from his home as part of the so-called contingent of blood sent to serve the Porfirian government. Their indigenous mothers prayed to the Virgen de Guadalupe and watched helplessly as six soldiers and an officer put their boys in shackles, one mother wailing and pleading on her knees to no avail. Leaving the immense pain of mothers and children behind, officers chivvied the raw recruits down the road with slaps, kicks, and obscene language until finally the village fell out of sight.<sup>3</sup> For months, the young conscript would learn the life of the barracks, the rules of the army, and the vices of his comrades in arms. Despite homesickness, abuses, and deprivation, the new soldiers tried as best they could to make a new life, and in doing their duty, perhaps become modern men. Seen as vice-ridden *marihuaneros* by many, these young and reluctant servants of

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<sup>1</sup> (Porfirio Díaz to Cor. Miguel G. Marin, 12/ 4/1885, Iberoamerica Colección Porfirio Díaz, Legajo 10 Caja 35 Doc 12331 Mexico). Iberoamerica Colección Porfirio Díaz hereafter CPD, and Porfirio Díaz as PD.

<sup>2</sup> Interview of Trinidad Vega (by Ximena Sepúlveda, 10/29/73, Instituto Mora, INAH Proyecto de Historia Oral [hereafter PHO] 1/26), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Luis Urquizo “Juan Soldado” in *De la vida militar mexicana* (México: Herrero Hermanos Sucesores, 1920), 43-47; Urquizo, who served as a soldier of the leva, fought as a Revolutionary, and eventually attained the highest ranks in the army in the 1920s and 1930s, even meeting with U.S. presidents during WWII.



the nation nevertheless played a significant role in constructing the progress and order the republic so desperately needed as they transformed from *carne de cañon* to *tropa vieja*.

The recruitment and day-time regimen of ordinary soldiers provided experiences that speak to the interactions between civilians and military officials as part of a human journey from peasant to warrior, perhaps to Mexican. Although this process had its greatest effects on the individual conscript, it also had profound implications for families and communities. Similarly, the significance of military service went beyond personal social networks, and demonstrates a course taken into modernity where class divisions, regional loyalties, and gendered behaviours became fields of contention. Positivist elites sought to define the nation as it transformed economically and technologically, modeling their ideal on European patterns. In this milieu, the ideal citizens would lose indigenous and lower-class traits, and homogenize in line with a new rhetoric of modernity and nationality. The soldier became exemplar of this ideal—but the recruit forced into the service of arms did not, would not, fulfill elite aspirations. The president's call for servants of the nation became ironic; the lower-classes had their own vision of the nation attached to local identities, and served it as they deemed best.

Exploring this trajectory occasions a framework of analytical questions. What did the *leva* (forced conscription) mean to the recruits, and how did they resist its grasp? How did the experience of the *leva* affect communities and families, and how did they express this? In what ways did this reflect social and class divisions, and how did the process of stocking and training a national army occur at the expense of the *patria chica* (regional loyalties)? Finally, how and why did officers seek to reshape recruits, and to what result?

From their initial capture and resistance, we move into barracks to see the day-time regimen where instruction and conditioning clashed with the soldier's agency and the government's poverty.

Ultimately, the young men experienced transformation — in circumstances, conditions, and understandings — as they went through a process to become soldiers that included recruitment, orientation, and daily instruction.<sup>4</sup> This is a history of the average soldier.<sup>5</sup> Their views, the ways they came to see themselves, their community, and their nation, resulted from interaction with critical civilians and unhappy officers.<sup>6</sup> The oppressive discipline, nonetheless, only worked to affirm the conscripts' previous conceptions of indigenous and regional identification.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the disciplinary program to instill nationalism and foster order and progress took on new meanings for the

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<sup>4</sup> On habitus versus understandings, Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977); On totalizing institutions, see Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Chicago, Aldine Pub. Co., 1962); on inscribed subjectivities see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) and Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); tying them together see Chris Schilling, *The Body and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> The protagonists of this chapter are primarily soldiers of the federal army, although some references to sailors or other armed forces will be made; I take my cues from the New Military History, see Peter Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002) and Celso Castro, and Vitor Izecksohn, and Hendrik Kraay, eds., *Nova história militar brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bom Texto, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> On imagining and nationalism theory, see Francois Xavier Guerra, Monica Quijado, *Imaginar la Nación, Cuadernos de historia Latinoamericana* No. 2. (Hamburg, Germany: Lit, 1994); Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006.); Sara Castro-Klarén and John Chasteen, *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> I contend that this process of oppression, affirmed indigenous identity and reinforced it, but did not by any means create it as Martínez Peláez has argued for Republics of Indians in Guatemala. Severo Martínez Peláez, *La patria del criollo: ensayo de interpretación de la realidad colonial guatemalteca* (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1970), 10-25.

enlisted men, who may have been servants of a nation, but whose agendas often remained far removed from the aspirations of their civilian and military commanders.

### The Background for Recruitment

Smoldering embers and smoking rubble left in the wake of nineteenth-century invasions by Spanish, American, and French armies began to fall into memory after 1867 as Benito Juárez made attempts to reestablish Mexico as nation and as State. Order throughout the country became central to his efforts and the army was his tool in hand. In their own way, nonetheless, its officers became foremost among the presidents' obstacles. He could not afford to keep them, nor worse still, to demobilize them. From a height of 70 000 men, Juárez worked to cut his forces down below 40 000.<sup>8</sup> Critics brought light to the rising wave of banditry in countryside and crime in the cities as unemployed soldiers found new means to survive.<sup>9</sup> Federal budgets were unable to even pay those troops remaining in service, let alone provide stability, and international creditors remained leery, especially after what they considered the barbaric execution of Emperor Maximilian.<sup>10</sup> Exacerbating this dangerous situation was the temporal power of the military as an institution.

Finally victorious against its conservative or foreign enemies, the army held both moral and practical claims to the stewardship of the nation. Juárez could no more abandon them than they could betray him, the iconic symbol of their triumph. As he cut

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<sup>8</sup> James R. Kelley, "Professionalism in the Porfirian Army Corps" (Ph.D. dissertation. University of Tulane, 1971), 14-38; Robert Martin Alexius, "The Army and Politics in Porfirian Mexico" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1976), 8-67.

<sup>9</sup> Chris Frazer, *Bandit Nation: a History of Outlaws and Cultural Struggle in Mexico, 1810-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), passim.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz, Profiles in Power* (New York: Longman, 2001), 56-65.

their ranks, he therefore needed to consider his policies carefully. The result echoed through the next half century as his regime resurrected the *depósito*, a compromise that allowed officers to remain in semi-active service on less pay rather than ignominious mass discharge (see Chapter 3).<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the petitions and pleas of ordinary troops to retain their occupations largely fell on deaf ears, and slowly these stewards became an echelon of the aged and high-ranked.<sup>12</sup>

The army continued to decline in numbers through the end of the 1860s and the subsequent presidency of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada until, by 1888, new troops were again in high demand. The exigencies of control over an unruly countryside made armed forces a high priority as the army chased bandits, secured borders, and suppressed rebellions. As the pre-Porfirian budgets and senior staff discharged more and more troops to unemployment, they also pushed many back into local employment in National Guard units.<sup>13</sup> The dangers of this policy became obvious when one hero of the Guard, Díaz, used his connections to seize power in 1876. His own more prudent policies would eviscerate the Guard units, as had been done to the Federals', and foment a recruitment crisis.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kelley, 137; despite impressive progress the number of geriatric officers continued to be extreme.

<sup>12</sup> Luís González y González, "El liberalismo triunfante" in *Historia general de México*, ed. Daniel Cosío Villegas et al. (México: Colegio de México, 2005), 635-705.

<sup>13</sup> On evolving National Guard see Manuel Chust, "Armed Citizens: The Civic Militia in the Origins of the Mexican National State, 1812-27," in *The Divine Charter*, ed. Jaime E Rodríguez O. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Pub. 2005), 235-255; Pedro Santoni, "A Fear of the People: The Civic Militia in Mexico 1845," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (1988): 269-88.; and during Porfiriato, Garner, 55-58. Díaz and his generals' attitudes are seen in Grl. G. Palomino to Díaz, 1/22/89 (CPD Legajo 14 Caja 2 Doc 598) (3815), where he asks that National Guard be relieved of its current duties so the men can go back to agriculture and industry.

<sup>14</sup> Kelley, 40, also in Paul Garner, 110-115.

Expectations swelled among common soldiers as the energetic Oaxacan general took the reins. Many, especially fellow Oaxaqueños, felt a special bond with the charismatic warrior who had played a major role in defeating the French invaders.<sup>15</sup> Old enough for wisdom, young enough for dynamism, Díaz seemed to promise better days for the average soldier, whether *rurale*, reservist, or regular. High hopes notwithstanding, his vision for the armed forces proved markedly different. The Federal army became the agent to impose order and progress, the antagonist of the *patrias chicas*, and a new secular priesthood of modernity – and the first step was streamlining the modernized national army and neglecting or disbanding the regional Guard forces.

*Patrias chicas* and local communities faced persistent onslaught as their men disappeared to distant barracks, as strange soldiers occupied their towns, and as their own militias faded through federal neglect. Porfirio Díaz’s visions of a scientific European-like modernity relied on this regulation of militarized manhood. Centralizing power and radiating it back through technologies of rail and telegraph, the modern regime needed the dissolution of regional loyalties and capacities.<sup>16</sup> Aggressive recruitment became a priority and facilitated nation building, while enfeebling the strongmen and *caudillos* away from Mexico City. Critical to this achievement was that the peasants and criminals absorbed into the army would depart it radically transformed in loyalties and civilized in behaviour.

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<sup>15</sup> Patrick McNamara, *Sons of the Sierra* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 93-121.

<sup>16</sup> New technologies of control also tied to new spaces and power over now-modern bodies, see Foucault, “Spaces, Knowledge, and Power,” in Rabinow, 243. These also specifically tie to the army, which he defines as a technique of power over social bodies (collective) in the form of the “militaire,” in “Discipline and Punish,” 179-186. This conception underlies discussions of discipline and identity formation throughout the chapter.

The cultural and material obstacles the regime faced in implementing this dream lay at the roots of the Porfirian recruit's experience. The budgetary weakness of the government ran through several phases. Initially, the near bankruptcy of the government saw troops continue to decline in numbers and benefits, many lacking pay entirely, between 1876 and 1880.<sup>17</sup> With the restoration of credit and a balanced budget, after 1885 the army saw gradual improvements in conditions, more regular pay, and stabilized numbers (from an official low of around 20 000 men in 1881 to a brief peak at 30 000 in 1886, they hovered near 25 000 through the rest of the Porfiriato).<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, too many officers in depósito, expensive pet projects, and general indifference to soldiers meant that these advances were matters of degree rather than profound reforms taking advantage of new funds. As budgets grew, so too did graft and corruption, and a soldier in 1910 was only marginally better off than was his 1876 counterpart. Witnesses to the resulting poor conditions of soldiery, many civilians maintained disdainful and disgusted attitudes towards the military as a profession, and potential recruits generally shared their distaste. The cultural obstacle to creating the modern army emerged from the near complete failure of the regime to persuade average Mexicans that military service could be honourable and desirable. In lieu of volunteers, the regime felt compelled to levy

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<sup>17</sup> On early lack of budget see *Memorias de Secretaría de Guerra y Marina* (1876-1910) [hereafter *Memorias*] and Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Guerra y Marina, Comandancia Militar de D.F., Expedientes Personales caja, various expedientes (1867-1880) [hereafter AGN, CMDF, EP].

<sup>18</sup> Total figures are highly suspect, due to over-reporting for national security and prestige, shame of deserters, and officers skimming pay. But effective numbers aside, using the figures given by the Secretary of War to Congress at least provides a somewhat reliable base figure to estimate change with. I compute mine by averaging with Alicia Hernández Chávez, "Origen y ocaso del Ejército Porfiriano", *Historia Mexicana* 39, no. 1 (1989): 257-296, who gives low figures supported by Alexius, "The Army and Politics in Porfirian Mexico" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1976), 20; with press figures like Porfirio Díaz's in *New York Times* (6/13/11, sec. 3), 3; and finally with the *Memorias* yearly totals, and detachment reports, which tended to be high.

troops, engendering resistance to official visions of nation – not least among the newest “servants of the nation.”

### Loathing the Leva

The leva, forced conscription based on arbitrary criteria, had plagued poor Mexicans since the Bourbon Reforms of the eighteenth-century.<sup>19</sup> It continued to do so during the Porfiriato despite official claims of the implementation of a new policy of volunteers and *sorteo* (lottery system). While in theory a replacement (*reemplazo*) or substitute recruit could be purchased by anyone for a mere forty pesos, this represented a prohibitively high figure for many.<sup>20</sup> The impoverished knew their vulnerability to any opportunistic public official, but so too did dissidents, migrants, cripples, and those deemed deviant. While the vast majority of recruits came from rural communities, cities and towns also gathered what officials termed contingents of blood for the army. The new recruits overwhelmingly represented the central areas of the Bajío and the Valley of México, while southern and northern states tended to have fewer contingents, even in proportional measures of population.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to European systems of compulsory military service, the leva went well beyond mere distaste and represented one of the most

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<sup>19</sup> Ward Stavig, “Conflict, Violence, and Resistance” in *The Countryside in Colonial Latin America*, eds. Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan M. Socolow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 222-228; and Christon Archer, *The Army in Bourbon Mexico, 1760-1810* 1st ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), passim.

<sup>20</sup> As a strange coincidence, this figure matched the cost of a first-class burial; a commentary perhaps on the assigned value of a life in Porfirian Mexico.

<sup>21</sup> For example: *Memorias* 1902, 5456 Anexo 23, Bernardo Reyes, July 1 to June 30 1901-2: and Anexo 24 for July to Dec. 1902; both show a predominance of recruiting from Mexico State and City, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Tlaxcala, Colima, Michoacan, San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas, Puebla, and Veracruz. While soldiers were recruited elsewhere, it was less frequent and areas with active campaigns were generally exempted.

despised institutions of the Porfirian era.<sup>22</sup> Mexicans hated the leva for its method of implementation, its implications for family, and for the harsh conditions that soldiers were likely to face.<sup>23</sup>

The selection process engendered a sense of deep injustice and vulnerability among the most likely candidates for the leva. The politics of the leva saw its victims selected as a means to exercise power over a community, disciplining, commanding, and punishing those whom authorities picked, and by extension, their families or supporters. Meeting the quota set by the Secretary of War, state governors and the *Jefes de Reemplazos* (Chief Recruiting Officers) sent orders to regional *jefes políticos* who either delegated it to municipal officials or personally worked to gather the needed men.<sup>24</sup> Local officials, and particularly the *jefes políticos*, used this power to control constituents through the threat or application of adding men to list for recruitment. Ironically, the *jefes* only official duty connected to the military was to prevent any attempts to take recruits by force.<sup>25</sup> Under pressure from above to secure reemplazos for troops discharged, dead, or deserted, many of these officials looked first to empty their jails, to discard weak or lazy workers, and in the last resort, offered impoverished men from the community who

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<sup>22</sup> Even policies of forced deportation, such as those faced by Yaqui, did not create the nation-wide sense of fear and disgust that the leva built. Indeed, the leva represents a forced deportation in its own right as it seized men from their homes and sent them to far-away garrisons; on deportations see Evelyn Hu-deHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy 1821-1910* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 134-5, 165-70; Francisco Troncoso and Ministerio de Guerra y Marina, *Las guerras con las tribus Yaqui* (Mexico: Tip. del Departamento de Estado Mayor, 1905).

<sup>23</sup> On similar processes in Brazil, see Beattie, 99-122.

<sup>24</sup> Generally, there was one Jefe de reemplazo in each of the 28 states and territories, usually comprising Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels, who worked closely with the governor, see Chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> Universidad Veracruzana, *Memorias e Informes de jefes políticos y autoridades del regimen Porfiriano 1883-1911, Estado de Veracruz* (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1997), 15.



were least able to resist.<sup>26</sup> At times they even sent men missing limbs, congenitally ill, or obviously diseased, despite the likelihood that medical staff would eventually reject them. An army contingent of dissatisfied, angry, criminal, crippled, or undernourished illiterates became a near inevitability.

Yet numerous accounts reflect the tenuous position of the jefe político. In Tulancingo Puebla, for example, a jefe named Silva raised the ire of residents by refusing to hear their complaints. This resulted in an armed uprising and the arrest of both Silva and the local military detachment.<sup>27</sup> In point of fact, the jefes políticos frequently overstepped their authority in the leva process. They legally had no jurisdiction to incarcerate recruits, to work with or command army units, or to order compliance with the leva. Charges of abusing authority resulted from the frequent failures of the jefes to follow this stricture. They nevertheless stood to profit from well-planned recruiting, removing political enemies, or even arresting a sixty year old man in order to steal his land.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, when jefes circumvented local authorities, particularly the municipal presidents, they stripped communities of the power to police their own population. While perspectives on those who deserved consignment sometimes matched, for example in the case of criminals, the political or economic abuses of leva by an outsider infuriated many communities.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar*, “Estadístico de reconocimiento de reemplazos” (1889), 123-125, (5204-06). Details the health of incoming recruits, notes about 9.8% rejection based on health, mostly for hernias, bad constitutions, weak legs, heart defects, high fat, and syphilis. Only 19 of 7000 were rejected for alcoholism.

<sup>27</sup> G. García to PD, 5/6/1887, CPD Legajo 12 Caja 11 Doc 5102.

<sup>28</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 360 ep-n, Florentín Morín and Lázaro Mendoza.

<sup>29</sup> On the politics of recruitment see Beattie, 81-151; Alexius, chapter 2.

The seemingly arbitrary selection dismayed even the most stalwart defenders of the military, yet calls for reform fell afoul of the Porfirians' class divisions and prejudices. If *gente decente* were to serve under universal service alongside the usual scum, would this not corrupt the best youth of society?<sup>30</sup> Further, in a nation only beginning to regain its economic strength, removing the best and brightest of the elite classes from the active economy might deliver a crippling blow to business and development. Other writers added that truly universal service would create an enormous and expensive army that really had no threatening enemy, and worried about what foe they would manufacture domestically.<sup>31</sup> Surely, they argued, money could be better spent in education and building commerce, that these men with an education in nationalism since primary school could ply trades to improve the country. Men like Porfirio Díaz agreed; middle and upper-class women could, as mothers and teachers, become the primary inculcators of the new nationalism without risking good sons to the hardships and vices of the barracks.<sup>32</sup> The better classes persuaded themselves that becoming modern, however necessary to the nation's progress, had a corruptive element best borne by the poor.

As such, the *gente decente* expected that the lower class should surrender their sons willingly to the army despite this being a fate too morally questionable for their own. The vulnerable classes knew from experience that they faced the loss of a good lad,

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<sup>30</sup> Eduardo Paz, *A dónde debemos llegar: Estudio sociológico militar* (México: Tipografía Mercantil, 1910), throughout but especially 74, 75.

<sup>31</sup> For examples, this was the opinion of Eduardo Paz, 31, 32; and "Más sobre bizarría militar," *Regeneración* (5/7/1901), 15, 16.

<sup>32</sup> William French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72:4 (Nov. 1992): 529-31.

having seen the return of men turned vicious and vice-ridden, or they did not return at all.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, examining the troops it becomes evident that the leva acted also as an instrument of class discipline and eventually as a means to blunt the rise of a political—and threatening—industrial class.

From a near standing start, the country experienced a significant development of industry that accelerated between the 1890s and 1910. While class struggle did not emerge as a real threat early on, by the turn of the century new worker classes began to clash with the entrenched wealthy capitalists, to the horror of a nascent and insecure middle-class. The military had little to do with urban or factory unrest in the early Porfiriato, but it was not coincidental that the drive towards a modernized and professional military rose alongside the growth of new social tensions.<sup>34</sup>

With urbanization and industrialization, the army and its recruitment had four major effects that worked to counter the new unrest. First, military service absorbed a body of young men that otherwise might become part of the new industrial classes, particularly as these men came from the poorest of families in both rural and urban settings—prime worker material.<sup>35</sup> Despite the need for workers, the army continued to siphon away, for a time, the impressionable youth of the country. Second, officers noted that teaching these men discipline filled the prescription for providing new industries with ideal workers. After five years of drill in arms, the former soldier could thus become

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<sup>33</sup> For one example, see interview of José Almeida Alderete by Ximena Sepulveda, 10/30/1973, PHO 1/27, 5: “Then they took them, took them to other parts far from here, to the central states, there were some who returned again, others never came back.”

<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault “Discipline and Punish,” in Rabinow, 210; Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 32-37; Francois Xavier Guerra, *Le Mexique: de l’Ancien Regime a la Revolution* Vol. 1 (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1985), 212-222, 312-316.

<sup>35</sup> “Esclavitud en Yucatán,” *Regeneración* (1/31/1901), 4: refers to the soldiers as proletariat.

the ordered factory worker without sympathies for anarchist unions, and replace the disruptive elements. Third, expanding industrial classes had created rising tensions that soldiers met with arms and bloodshed, with increasing frequency as industry gained prominence, and reaching a climax in 1906 and 1907.<sup>36</sup> The military service thus not only absorbed young men away from industrial work but also provided the means to suppress unrest. Finally, use of the army as a supplemental labour force for building roads and public building allowed the direct replacement of hostile *corvée* workers with a presumably more controllable lot. None of these measures, however convenient for the capitalist elite, made military service popular among the poor.

The distrust and disdain of *gente decente* for ordinary soldiers was reflected back by the under-classes who had not aspired to become soldiers in the first place. To be chosen, taken, and corrupted, as they saw it, was nothing less than a masculine form of government-machinated *rapto y estupro* (kidnapping and deflowering). The practice of stealing women from neighbouring villages, deflowering them, and eventually marrying them, was longstanding and legally recognized during the Porfiriato.<sup>37</sup> As a semi-legal form of captivity narrative entrenched in popular consciousness, it bears a strong resemblance to the processes of forced recruitment, and one that reversed the usual gendered expectations for men. Forcibly carried off, physically overpowered and bereft of family, publicly shamed by sergeants and officers, the newly dishonoured soldier

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<sup>36</sup> On Cananea and Rio Blanco see Kelley 83, 84; Karl Koth, *Waking the Dictator: Vera Cruz, the Struggle for Federalism, and the Mexican Revolution, 1870-1927* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002), 1-40; also see "Los sucesos de Rio Blanco," *El Imparcial* (Tues, Jan 10, 1907), 1.

<sup>37</sup> W. French, "Te amo mucho," in *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, ed. Jeffrey Pilcher (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 123-137; Ana Maria Alonso "Love, Sex and Gender in Legal Cases from Namiquipa, Chihuahua, Mexico" (unpublished conference paper, 2004), 1-10.

understood his profound powerlessness against the violation of the *leva*. Still, some also saw a romantic element to the idea of returning home as a hard man, as a competent warrior, and perhaps even as a war hero. And while women occasionally used or orchestrated the traditional *rapto y estupro* to their own advantage, so too did some men choose to accept military service for their own ends.

Indeed, for all that the *leva* stirred hatred it undeniably also provided a few men a welcome escape.<sup>38</sup> There were certain advantages for an already marginalized man to leave his community and perhaps make a living elsewhere. For sons of the poorest families an army life might be the best possible way to care for dependants. Numerous letters to Díaz indicate that this circumstance allowed some an opportunity that simply did not exist in their home town. Pedro Ehlera wrote the president requesting that he be reinstated, since his discharge was unfair, and claimed he had no other means by which to provide for his family.<sup>39</sup> Soldiers were not alone in their complaints, Sergeant Miguel Jiménez argued that his captain had suspended him for complaining, and then discharged him for his further complaints.<sup>40</sup> A twenty-two year old soldier from Puebla likewise asked to retain his position without further charges for a broken window, as his prison pay was scant and his regular army pay was the only support for his widowed mother and grandmother.<sup>41</sup> Pleading with the president, León Martínez had never known any other life than soldiering, and after thirty years had been discharged for his age and now found

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<sup>38</sup> Although some men did volunteer, contrary to popular perceptions, their numbers represent an extremely limited number of the total forces. Nevertheless, their choice affords an interesting contrast to their more reluctant comrades-in-arms.

<sup>39</sup> Pedro A. Ehlera to PD, 1/26/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 3 Doc 1445.

<sup>40</sup> Miguel Jiménez to PD, 11/2/1891, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 29 Doc 14130.

<sup>41</sup> AGN Caja 359, ep-M, Antonio Vásquez. Prison pay was generally only 25 centavos and since food was more expensive and more difficult to acquire, this was quite difficult to survive on.

himself in misery. He asked for new work, or at least, for the government to review his service records and grant him a pension.<sup>42</sup> A few begged for positions in order to take part in what they saw as inevitable war with Guatemala, out of patriotic fervour for some, for others a way out of prison or poverty.<sup>43</sup>

Others seem to have taken to the army for quite different reasons. Troopers could, and did, take advantage of army service to steal rifles, clothes, and even horses on their way to joining or rejoining bandit gangs or rebel forces. If they got away, a successful raid of this sort could be worth as much as 300 pesos, close to a year of decent wages. Some recruits with similar motives in mind signed up under false names, a tactic that backfired horribly for one recruit calling himself Porfirio Caballero. Having been caught deserting he completed a three year term of service, but had been reentered to the rolls for additional years of army life when they discovered his real name, Arcadio Ramírez.<sup>44</sup> In 1894, a soldier of the Second Regiment was likewise charged, among other things, with “change of name” before a formal Counsel of War.<sup>45</sup> For others, it proved a short step between desertions *en masse* and forming a bandit gang, as in the case of the Sixth Battalion in 1888. Most of their soldiers had originally been “enlisted” straight out of the

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<sup>42</sup> León Martínez to PD, 9/28/1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 7 Doc 003464.

<sup>43</sup> Poverty inspired some: Andrés Frías to PD, 8/18/1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 4 Doc 1595; Enrique Mayer to PD, 7/21/1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 5 Doc 2223; The concern in 1885 that a war was brewing with Guatemala, which received considerable attention in the army and press, also inspired men like Ignacio Gómez Cárdenas to volunteer to fight despite having no experience: I. Gómez Cárdenas to PD, 3/18/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 6 Doc 2630.

<sup>44</sup> Arcadio Ramírez to Pedro Hinojosa, 11/30/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 25 Doc 12118-a.

<sup>45</sup> AGN Caja 358 CMDF ep-m Cpt.1 Marcial Mardero.

Guadalajara prison, and General Pedro Galván reported that upon their desertion they had become the terror of Tepic.<sup>46</sup>

Still another reason one might be volunteered into service was the misfortune of having the wrong family. For some guardians of incorrigible young men, army service seemed a possible solution to reform their ways. One uncle, despairing of his nephew as obstinate, impassive, and lazy wrote to Díaz asking that the boy be sent to the Navy to become a man of worth.<sup>47</sup> He asked that this enlistment happen soon, before the boy became lost and fell to even greater depths, but it was apparently too late; in a letter the next month he reported his nephew had since been jailed for robbery.<sup>48</sup> Mothers wrote the president or senior officers to ask positions for their sons for the financial or moral sake of the family. Yet for all these exceptions, the army largely remained a destination both feared and loathed, and the usual situation victimized the unlucky.

### Of Rumours and Anticipation

However recruits hated the selection process, the daily grind and poor conditions of army life represented the greater dread for any soldier. Even the rare volunteers knew that they faced a bleak life, poor pay, bad sanitation, surly officers, dangerous fights, and frequent punishment. Popular rumours, press criticisms, deserters' tales, and public sightings reinforced the negative, and mostly accurate, preconceptions of the *vida militar*. Even though a teenager at the time, Trinidad Vega remembered in a later interview how they viewed the military in his small town. He recalled that some, having only failed to

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<sup>46</sup> Pedro Galván to PD, 9/1/1885, CPD Legajo 13 Caja 4, Doc 1917.

<sup>47</sup> Pablo Pantoja to PD, 7/6/1889, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 15 Doc 7371.

<sup>48</sup> Pablo Pantoja to PD, 8/2/1889, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 18 Doc 8591.

pay a debt, would be sent to the army to face extreme mistreatment. He remembered that this punishment represented the greatest terror of the people, a truly horrible threat and went on to describe how poorly the men were treated, how inadequately they were paid, and how degenerate they all appeared to civilians.<sup>49</sup> Another eyewitness to the era, Ignacio Suárez, recalled seeing a *cuerda* (chain gang) being marched down the streets in downtown Mexico City. He saw what they called an army contingent, and described them as drained and heartbroken peasants marching under the guns of vigilant guards. Traumatized by the sight, he asked his mother about them, and some sixty years later felt that the elimination of the *leva* alone might have prevented the Revolution.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, the press made no secret of its opinions on military life and the brutal conditions of the common soldier. Newspapers pointed to the savage fighting and alcohol abuse that marked barracks as spaces of ill-repute, and took glee in their commentary about the lowly *soldaderas*.<sup>51</sup> *La Patria* described the horrible state of the twenty-fourth Battalion on service at the National Palace, with threadbare dirty uniforms unsuited to the season.<sup>52</sup> The vociferously critical *Regeneración* frequently printed articles sarcastically titled “Military Gallantry” in which the authors attacked the abuses of officers towards soldiers, and soldiers towards civilians.<sup>53</sup> These represent but a few examples of the

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<sup>49</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/26 interview with Trinidad Vega.

<sup>50</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/85, interview with Tnt. CrI. Ignacio Suárez by Alexis Arroyo Daniel Casas, January, 1961.

<sup>51</sup> *El Partido Libertad* (7/21/87), 3, 4.

<sup>52</sup> “El batallón 24,” *La Patria* (3/24/84), 5.

<sup>53</sup> “Bizarria militar,” *Regeneración* (4/23/1901), 12, 13; and “Más sobre bizarria militar,” *Regeneración* (5/7/1901), 15, 16.



hundreds of stories depicting the unsavory nature of military service that the Porfirian press presented to its middle and upper class readership.<sup>54</sup>

Press critiques emphasized the distance between the *gente decente*, with their presumed civility, and the bestial nature of the lower classed soldier. The imagining of a threatening underclass reinforced by contrast the rhetoric of progress and order, but also created an image of the army that clashed with its official representations as the embodiment of the modern (see Chapter 4).<sup>55</sup> The apparent gap between modern army and savage soldier, nonetheless, suggested the possibility of civilizing the indigenous poor through the application of proper military discipline. This impulse to perfect subjects through institutions of control, as described by Michel Foucault, was quintessential modernity.<sup>56</sup> But once again, newspaper portrayals themselves did nothing to enhance the prestige of the *vida militar*.

The army did itself no favours in reinforcing these popular impressions by using military service itself as a means of punishment. Soldiers accused of bad conduct regularly saw time added to their five year term, *pour encourager les autres*. Units already infamous for poorly disciplined troops or terrible conditions, rather than becoming the object for reforms, became the destination for wrong-doers dropped from

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<sup>54</sup> On readership see María Elena Díaz, “The Satiric Penny Press for Workers, 1900-1910: A Case Study in the Politicisation of Popular Culture,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 3 (Oct.1990), 497-526; Julio Ramos *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001), 78-150; among many many more examples see “A los militares,” *El Combate* (May 9, 1879); “En Gran Escandolo,” *El Nacional* (Sept. 25, 1895): 3.

<sup>55</sup> James Alex Garza, *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfirian Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 1-11, 179-181.

<sup>56</sup> Foucault, “Discipline and Punish,” in Rabinow, 185, 243.

better battalions and regiments.<sup>57</sup> The disease-ridden battalions of the Yucatán and coastal areas became the ultimate garbage-heap for the worst cases, drawing everything from suspected murderers, rebellious officers, incorrigible slackers, political dissidents, and public transvestites.

The Yucatán saw the frequent arrival of what the military command considered worst-cases and was popularly, if inaccurately, considered a one-way voyage due to tropical diseases. Any officers who failed in rebellion, or succeeded in dissent, faced the prospect of transfer to the pestiferous southeast.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, officers did not universally despise these positions and active service there boosted the careers of such men as Brigadier General Mariano Ruiz and Victoriano Huerta.<sup>59</sup> Service in the southeast also became the experience of ordinary men caught breaking social mores in an increasingly homophobic society. One Sub-lieutenant, Manuel Cantaneo, received a mere discharge in 1879 after conviction by the Junta de Honor for practicing, with a well-known member of society, “actos opuesto al sexo” (acts opposite to his sex).<sup>60</sup> By contrast, in 1901 when police raided the Famous 41 dance, 23 civilian men were marched through the streets in dresses and sent to an unknown end in the Yucatán—merely for

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<sup>57</sup> “La esclavitud en Yucatán,” *Regeneración* (1/31/1901), 4; Outside the Yucatan, the 9th Cavalry Regt. and the 6th Battalion of Infantry were especially known as dumping grounds for the incorrigible, see AGN CMDF cajas 50-400, and AGN Estado Mayor Presidencial, Cajas 92-98.

<sup>58</sup> Kelley, 79; Lazaro Pavia *El Ejército y la política* (México: s.p., 1909), 3-6; *México Nuevo* (May, 1909) published lists of Reyistas sent to Yucatán.

<sup>59</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 359, ep-r, Mariano Ruiz, left a successful stint as Congressman to command in the Yucatan for which he received several decorations; Victoriano Huerta’s time in the Yucatán, with daily letters to Bernardo Reyes, proved crucial to his later political aspirations, see ConduMex CARSO [hereafter CDX] fondo DLV, Bernardo Reyes letters.

<sup>60</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 334, ep-c 1867-97, Subtnt. Manuel Cataneo.

wearing women's clothing.<sup>61</sup> Nor was it only homophobic mores that spurred such exile. For Second Captain Antonio Navarro a charge of adultery, with a year and a half in prison, was prelude to a tour in the Yucatán where he died several years later.<sup>62</sup> When even the army saw service as a punishment, the notion of an honourable service in arms seemed distant.

### Resistance to Recruitment

Many recruits would go to extreme lengths to stay, or return, to civilian life before their five year tour ended. Four options might offer them this chance: flight before the *piquete* (recruiting detachment) arrived, obtaining an *amparo* (legal injunction), granting of a discharge, or desertion. No measure was certain, and notably, all required a degree of resourcefulness and usually support from family.

Fleeing before the *leva* was a likely response for many men, but is somewhat hypothetical due to silence in the documentary sources. Perhaps in smaller towns the impending *leva* would be an ill-concealed secret and taking to the hills a seductive possibility. With family or community support, a fugitive might easily stay out of reach and outwait the small *piquete* sent to corral replacements. Some evidence of this comes from the fact that *jefes políticos* routinely over-reported their potential recruits, some of whom certainly disappeared and left the *jefe* with only excuses once the army unit arrived for pick-up. The rather tenuous power of local constabularies proved insufficient at times to enforce their will in the case of well-connected locals, and local jails were often

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<sup>61</sup> *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, 1901*, ed. Robert McKee Irwin, Edward J. McCaughan, and Michelle Rocío Nasser (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 1-21.

<sup>62</sup> AGN CMDF caja 360 ep-N, Cpt. 2 Artillería Antonio Navarro.

neglected to the point of becoming merely symbolic.<sup>63</sup> As a result, detachments sent out by Jefes de Reemplazos consistently failed to meet quotas, and often only obtained a few jailed men.

The amparo, a legal injunction often based on constitutional law, represented one of the most controversial and intriguing facets of the whole leva experience.<sup>64</sup> Constitutionally, the government absolutely could not force army service on any Mexican. Military law backed this, proclaiming since 1824 that all soldiers were to be volunteers or selected by lottery.<sup>65</sup> Although the military authorities continued to use the leva regardless of legality, victims increasingly challenged it in the courts with some success, much to the chagrin of an elite enamoured of both modern jurisprudence and large armies. The usage of the amparo became one of the most vexing constitutional issues of the Porfiriato. Enshrined as a legal right in the 1857 Constitution (Articles 101-102), reformers altered its terms in 1882, 1889, and 1897 to reduce its abuse, primarily by impressed soldiers.

It nonetheless reflected some compromises between military agendas and civil rights. In 1889, a reform to Article 779 rejected any applications for amparo after ninety days time, which assisted the cause of recruitment.<sup>66</sup> While further reform in 1897 (Article 809) worked to discourage overuse, Article 746 now permitted women and minors to petition for amparo without legal representatives, provided they could persuade

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<sup>63</sup> W. H. Bishop, *Old Mexico and Her Lost Provinces* (New York: Harper's Brothers, 1883), 155.

<sup>64</sup> See a great discussion by Alexius, chapter 1.

<sup>65</sup> See "Reclutamiento del Ejército," *Revista Militar* (9/15/1880), 532-9, on *sorteo*, which was already made law in 1824, 1839, 1852, 1853, 1854, and 1869. Similarly, volunteer only service was made law in 1848.

<sup>66</sup> 1/28/02 Bernardo Reyes, Dept. de Estado Mayor, Circulo #314, Anexo 2 of 1902 *Memorias*.

the court it affected a matter of their personal integrity.<sup>67</sup> They routinely argued that the recruit played a vital role in providing both sustenance and moral guidance to their family. By depicting the potential effects upon the welfare of domestic harmony, they evoked the discourse of the *hogar* (hearth) that the elite associated with class progress and social development.<sup>68</sup> In this manner, families, and especially mothers and wives, put increasing pressures on the military recruitment system by pointing to loss of their man as a direct affront to the well-being of their family and integrity.

It thus presented a critical point of resistance to military service from the perspective of officers, judges, soldiers, and families alike. Most often, mothers initiated the petition of *amparo*. With or without legal counsel, they pursued this course first by contacting officers in the unit that had taken their son. Once officers identified the soldier, his case went forward to the judge who determined whether a legal right existed for *amparo*. If he discovered that the conscript was a criminal, a deserter, or under false name, he dropped the case. Meanwhile, officers held the recruit under lock and key in a military prison or isolated within the barracks, at minimal pay. Even once a judge granted the *amparo*, it was not an absolute guarantee of freedom. Eduardo Marin F. languished in the jail at San Juan de Dios in Puebla, charged with desertion, for four painful months after the granting of his *amparo*.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, records show that the petitions did release some 2000 men each year from their five year military term.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Carlos Arellano García *El Juicio de Amparo* (México DF.: Porrúa, 1974), 134-137.

<sup>68</sup> William French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico," *HAHR* 72 (1992), 529-553.

<sup>69</sup> Eduardo F. Marin to PD, 9/2/1889, CPD Legajo 14, Caja 20, Doc. 9587 (3908).

<sup>70</sup> Anexo 23 BR in *Memoria* 1901-1902 reports falling 50% short of recruitment goals

As the high rate of amparo discharges seemed far too generous for their purposes, army commanders used various means to prevent what they felt was an abuse of the system. For some officers, constitutional reform appeared to be the ideal solution to the problem and so they pushed Díaz to re-write the law.<sup>71</sup> This he would not do; having invested himself in a liberal image and depending to some degree on popular affection, he discarded this option as politically untenable. Strict adherence to the law, at least in appearance, represented one of the most sacrosanct of liberal ideals, a legal fetish that emulated other modern nations.<sup>72</sup> He could, and did, tinker somewhat, but wholesale reform he avoided.

Other officers pressed for universal service, seeing the problem in terms of injustice rather than constitutional violation. Manuel Mondragón insisted that not only would brief universal service help everyone, but it would also be a source of education and regeneration for the lower classes who would naturally be proud to serve with their social betters.<sup>73</sup> Bernardo Reyes's "Essay on Recruitment" argued that solely recruiting from the indigenous classes represented the great shame of the nation, and only truly fair recruitment might provide the material for building the honour and discipline the army so needed.<sup>74</sup> His Second Reserve (discussed in Chapter 4) was another possible alternative to large conscript armies.

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<sup>71</sup> See *Memorias* 1879 (5824-25), which calls for constitutional reforms; Alexius, 50-66.

<sup>72</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 95-98; Rabinow, 171.

<sup>73</sup> Manuel Mondragón, *Proyecto de Organización del ejército sobre base del servicio obligatorio*, 21-23.

<sup>74</sup> Bernardo Reyes, "Ensayo de reclutamiento." 185-189, in *Revista Militar* 4/15/1889 and 5/15/89 and 6/1/1889.

Angry officers posed a serious challenge to amparos by interfering directly with local judicial officials, a measure of the deep political problems of militarizing society. Don Porfirio himself wrote to Bernardo Ruiz Sandoval in Zacatecas, asking him to concede fewer amparos and thus save the government the time and work that went into consigning these men. He admitted that in this matter perhaps there existed disagreements between the executive and judiciary, but he believed these could be overlooked if the judge acted with some tact.<sup>75</sup> General Julio Cervantes in Sonora fighting the Yaqui found that with men disabled or deserting, his command shriveled to about half-strength and requested that Díaz suspend the amparo to allow him to gain his needed replacements.<sup>76</sup> Others followed suit, like General Carlos Fuero who as Governor of Chihuahua informed the judges in his state to make amparo trials less easy, in order to make meeting the reemplazo quota possible.<sup>77</sup> The militarized politics of the regime repeatedly allowed pressures such as these to overcome judiciaries and further alienated civilians from the armed forces. Again, military service became a punishment, a sentence, beyond even the Constitution to prevent.

More devious and pragmatic still, some officers avoided loss through amparos by applying procedures designed to make the petition far less likely to succeed. If judges were untrustworthy and constitutional reforms unlikely, then the army would simply find some other way to fill ranks without interference. Their greatest advantages in opposing the amparo were the legal ignorance of petitioners, the recruit and his family's lack of

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<sup>75</sup> PD to Bernardo Ruiz Sandoval, 1884, CPD Legajo 9 Caja 2 Doc 861.

<sup>76</sup> Grl. Julio Cervantes to PD, 7/11/1889, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 14 Doc 6766.

<sup>77</sup> Grl. Carlos Fuero to PD, 10/10/1885, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 21 Doc 10469.

resources, the sheer bureaucratic inertia of the military institution, and the ninety day limitation on injunctions instituted in 1882. Officers misinformed families as to the destination of their son, his unit and its location, and also moved recruits quickly to new areas and battalions, and clerks lost or misspelled documentation.<sup>78</sup> The officers then pled ignorance to families' inquiries—for at least ninety days.

Making the procedure more uncertain, some officers used the fear and chaos as an opportunity for graft, as in the case of José de los Angeles. In 1899, his sister Rafaela Hernández wrote to the Military Commandant of D.F. She had offered to buy a replacement for her brother for forty pesos, and had sent it to an officer named Pisquinto Millon at the Third Battalion. The authorities looked into it, and initially could find no such officer. Eventually, they tracked down an off-duty Colonel who had taken the money, but he claimed that in the interim the proffered replacement had deserted with the girl's money in hand.<sup>79</sup> The family was essential, and few soldiers could initiate the process themselves. Indeed, officers treated those identified as enabling amparos or as a barracks lawyer as serious offenders.<sup>80</sup>

The third option for resistance to *leva* was petition for discharge. Given the need the military had for new recruits, it is not surprising that few discharges (*licencia absoluta*) appear for soldiers prior to their five year term.<sup>81</sup> Even for officers, the release from service was often denied. Nonetheless, mothers wrote to officers and to the President asking for the discharge of their sons. They frequently cited special

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<sup>78</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 359, for various examples of these evil clerks and difficulties.

<sup>79</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 359 ep-m letter, Hernandez to CMDF, 3/20/99.

<sup>80</sup> Crl. Rosalino Martínez to PD, 7/7/86, CPD Legajo 11 Caja 16 Doc 7833, re: barracks lawyer sent to Yucatan for helping write amparos.

<sup>81</sup> AGN CMDF, EPs, *passim*.



circumstances to justify their request. As one of many examples, the Señora and widow Clementina de Calapis wrote plaintively to the president. She had five children, four still at home, and they desperately needed their brother to come home from service. At least, she bargained, bring him to a unit in Mexico City from where he could still care for the family.<sup>82</sup> Others were less eloquent; Antonia García de Bueno simply asked that her son be returned to her home from his detachment in the Yucatán.<sup>83</sup> Nonetheless, and in both these examples, the answer usually came back a respectful “no” from the president or his functionaries.

Desertion offered the most common option for the reluctant soldier to return to civilian life. When other means failed, some 25-50 percent of the soldiers decided to flee their units.<sup>84</sup> Officers guarded the new recruits day and night, denied them any access to the streets for the first few months of service, and held roll calls numerous times each day.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, the resourceful found opportunities for escape in sometimes ingenious ways. The most common method of escape saw the soldiers scale the walls of the barracks late at night, often waiting for the changing of guards to facilitate evasion.<sup>86</sup> For the most part, these men would not be missed until early morning. The problem in achieving this came especially from barracks buildings with forty foot walls. Some soldiers waited for orders to march or patrol to make a break for it, risking being shot by

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<sup>82</sup> Clementina de Calapis to PD, 5/26/1889, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 9 Doc 4434.

<sup>83</sup> Antonia García de Bueno to PD, 10/4/1885, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 22 Doc 10563.

<sup>84</sup> Kelley; Alexius, “The Army and Politics in Porfirian Mexico”; Manuel Mondragón, *Proyecto de organización del ejército sobre base del servicio obligatorio* (México: Tip. Mercantil, 1910), 13.

<sup>85</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 54; Jefe Fuerzas Federal Bonifacio Topete to PD, 5/14/1883, CPD Legajo 8 Caja 1 Doc 74, 75.

<sup>86</sup> AGN CMDF Caja323 ep-a Tnt. Joaquin Ayala, 1879.

their compatriots and officers.<sup>87</sup> Still others took advantage of more lax security at military hospitals. They faked illness, a common problem for medical staff, and counted on the drunkenness of guards to make a get-away; in at least one case, a soldier disguised himself as a doctor and simply walked out.<sup>88</sup> One ingenious escape plan involved local pigeons. Having convinced the Lieutenant of the guard that he had seen a wounded pigeon, a soldier sprinted after the bird in chase, rounded the corner, and ran on into the city. Unfortunately, he stopped short of the anonymity of the countryside, and a troop recaptured him in a nearby cantina some hours later. The officer received the punishment for this infraction, perhaps for gullibility.<sup>89</sup>

Trial records offer insights into the deserter's world. The testimony hints at oppressive conditions, although witnesses routinely reported that the deserter had faced absolutely no mistreatment from officers. Rather, the decision to desert was baseless, *sin razón*, or most likely, witnesses standing in front of a Counsel of War had good reason to withhold honesty.<sup>90</sup> Far from baseless, one deserter appealed to the court's mercy, claiming that he had a young family and the army pay was simply too little to provide for their needs.<sup>91</sup> Other documents demonstrate consequences that faced a would-be deserter, or perhaps, the relative foolishness of those who were caught. For example, getting on a train headed for Mexico City proved to be the downfall of deserting sailor Luis Airaldi in

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<sup>87</sup> Among many examples, Abraham Pimental to PD, 1/11/89, CPD Leg 14, Caja 2, doc 660. On the other hand, given accuracy problems in the army (see Table 2 on p. 40), perhaps this was not such a risky chance to take.

<sup>88</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 329, ep-c, 67-97, Cpt2 Luis G. Calderón, complaints and problems at Hospital Juárez with guards; AGN CMDF Caja 350, ep-g, Victorio Vicente Garza, 1/20/1902, on Doctor disguise.

<sup>89</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 318, ep-a, 67-97, Cpt1 José María Aguirre, 1892.

<sup>90</sup> Complaints of mistreatment could lead to dishonourable discharge, see Sgt. Miguel Himénez to PD, 11/2/1891, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 29 Doc 14130.

<sup>91</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 350, ep-g, (trial of) Teófilo Gutierrez y Socios, 11/1/1894.

1885. To no-one's surprise but his, guards awaited him a station down the line.<sup>92</sup> The combination of telegraphs and railways enabled officers to capture the least wary of would-be civilians quickly.

Catching deserters had long been a favorite sport for bored officers. "The Mexican Armies and Generals" by A. Conquest Clarke, portrayed an army that sounded unhappily similar to the one that Díaz's regime tried to hide from foreign view in later years.<sup>93</sup> Clarke's highly critical account derided the ragged conscripts as a rabble of imminent deserters, and he offered an entertaining description of the sport of rounding up deserters from horseback. Cooperating with local gendarmes, experience taught the pursuers some sure methods for hunting down soldiers on the run. They generally began with known haunts near to barracks areas, in particular the favoured cantinas and pulquerías.<sup>94</sup>

The surest means to re-capture was to go to the deserters' homes. Troops immediately invaded and searched the homes of the soldier's nearest family members and neighbors.<sup>95</sup> This tactic often succeeded, but at the same time did nothing at all for the popularity of the army, as private citizens vehemently denied that soldiers had the right to search their homes. As Illustration 1 shows,<sup>96</sup> the arrival of an armed search party

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<sup>92</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 318, ep-a, 67-97, Luis Airaldi.

<sup>93</sup> A. Conquest Clarke, "The Mexican Armies and Generals," *The Galaxy* 4:6 (Oct 1867): 691-700.

<sup>94</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 359 ep-m, José Millan, 1/24/98 and Nicasio Villaseñor and Luciano Martinez, musicos 11/26/98.

<sup>95</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 351, ep-h, Subtnt. Alfonso Hong, 1875; Search for deserter in trial record, AGN CMDF Caja 321, ep-a, Crl. Eduardo Arce, 5/8/1889.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Janvier, *Harper's Weekly* 79, no. 474 (Nov. 89), 818.

occasioned what appears to be angry resistance, and immediate gossip among neighbors.



**Illustration 1.1** “Search for Deserters”, Frederick Remington, *Harper's New Monthly* (1899), 818.

The soldiers surround this peasant, while his wife looks on from the background, and the apparent arrogance of the officer can be seen in his posture and aggressive stance. By contrast, the soldiers slump as they tower threateningly over their target. Although the

transient worker populace (*población flotante*) and bandit gangs certainly absorbed some fugitives, a larger number eventually returned to service with extra years in the army as punishment for their recapture.<sup>97</sup>

One implication that stems from this rather fluid service was that the Porfirian military absorbed, vomited, and re-ingested a far greater proportion of the population than has been previously suggested. Given that the army officially only consisted of 20-30 000 soldiers in a given year, many historians have overlooked its significance. But the wrench in these logical gears lies in turn-over. A number of soldiers in any roster were fictional names added to pad the payroll. A number of soldiers also remained in service for long stretches, up to thirty years in arms. Yet a majority only saw service for fewer than their five year terms. At a natural attrition rate, plus desertions, units regenerated most of their numbers every three years, meaning that during the Porfiriato some 200 000 men experienced armed service in the federal army alone. This is borne out by recruitment of nearly 6 000 men in 1902, which, if average, would indicate 216 000 new federal soldiers over thirty-six years time.<sup>98</sup> As a significant portion of the eligible population of males in a country of only nine million souls, this created an enormous shared experience—and one that created a shared and implacable hatred for the effects of Don Porfirio’s *leva* and its impact on their lives, their comrades, and their families.

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<sup>97</sup> AGN CMDF Caja 350s, misc. folders on soldiers trials, *passim*; Alexius counts some 3000 per year, 108; on modern discipline and floating population, Foucault, “Discipline and Punish,” 207.

<sup>98</sup> In *A donde debemos llegar*, 28, Eduardo Paz gives a figure of 13 million in 1910, from which 1.7 million are men of military age (18-36) and derives from this, at a 15% rate, that the nation could *in extremis* field 255 000 total mobilized. Given population growth and relative peace, I contend that the hundreds of thousands who do get military experience remains a very significant figure for the 35 years of the era, approaching nearly half of Paz’s emergency contingent.

## From Conscript to Soldier

The officer corps had distinct aspirations for what the new recruit would become as a servant of a modern and unified nation. They looked to a heroic past, to personal experience, and abroad to the best military nations of West and East. Porfirian elites framed these desires in ways connected to masculinity (make men of them), liberalism (make citizens of them), modernism (make them better with science), and pragmatism (make them useful). The conscript ideally would become a hard disciplined killer with manageable gender behaviours and a deep loyalty to the official vision of Mexico. Further, this would ideally see him un-rooted from his upbringing, his *patria chica*, his racial difference—leaving behind all but his new devotion.

How to accomplish this lofty task? Traditions established well before Independence relied on the power of tough and committed NCOs (non-commissioned officers, Sergeants and Corporals) to instill discipline with iron hands. For the Porfirians, this still seemed the best solution, perhaps the only one. Training would imbue the virtues of the soldier: *élan*, self-abnegation, obedience; the civic goals of patriotism, literacy, and *mexicanidad*; the practical skills of marching, drill, and shooting.<sup>99</sup> Through a daily regimen of rituals and classroom work, they attempted a transformation process to reshape the raw material of the *leva*.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See Eduardo Paz “Instrucción” in *Boletín Militar* (weekly installments of 2-3 pages from 2/1/1900 to 3/23/1900); and Mílada Bazant de Saldaña, “La modernización en la educación militar, 1876-1910,” in *La evolución de la educación militar de México*, ed. Mílada Bazant de Saldaña et al. (México: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 1997), 183-184.

<sup>100</sup> On the daily lives of soldiers in Brazil as comparison, see Beattie, 125-151.

### From “Dawn” To “Silence”: Formal Instruction of the Recruit

The raw recruit, having marched in a chain-gang for days, staggered into the imposing walls of the barracks. Worried and scared by what he imagined, and tired from his ordeal, he queued to a desk. He was now a soldier as the sergeant forced him to sign or mark a five year contract. They stripped him of what little he owned, even, as one soldier remarked, attempting to take from him the memories of his past life. But before he could sleep, the young soldier needed to make yet another change—shears appeared and he was made *soldado raso* (shaven soldier) on the spot. They assigned him, and defined him, with numbers: as part of a squad of ten, a platoon of 30, a section of 60, a company of 180, and so on up to a battalion of 900. Assuming he arrived in the night or late evening, as was often the case, he and his compatriots trudged to sleeping mats for their night’s repose. Sleep would not come soon as the sentinels cried alerts and alarms every twenty minutes, a special treat for new arrivals. And with the rising sun, his new life began.<sup>101</sup>

A world of sounds greeted the raw recruit and would soon regulate and determine the rhythms of his days in the *vida militar*. The strict regimen of time in an isolated barracks, although an old tradition, bears much similarity to the installation of clocks in town squares.<sup>102</sup> Ritualizing daily activity around a new pattern helped break the new soldier of old habits, prevent desertion, and train obedience. In the usual hubbub of the barracks they heard shouting sergeants, barking dogs, sentry’s challenges, crying

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<sup>101</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 32, 33, 40. Soldiers made a mark rather than signing if they were illiterate.

<sup>102</sup> On time inculcations see E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 352-404; on Mexico, William French, *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), *passim*.

children, drill orders, and even the singing of parakeets. This rich sound-scape intruded day and night, but most important were the clarion calls of the bugle that ordered life between dawn and nine in the evening. Throughout this musically ordered day, the recruit learned his new profession and much more.

### “Toque de Diana” --- 0600

First nights in barracks were rarely peaceful experiences but the new constant of life was the early morning call of “Diana.”<sup>103</sup> Depending on the taste of the band, the call would ring out for as little as a minute or as long as a half hour, and signaled the official day to begin. In the dawn’s light, the bleary-eyed soldiers wearily sorted themselves from covers and sleeping mats, disentangled from women, stepped over dogs and children, and shuffled into the parade square.<sup>104</sup> They lined in their files and companies as the surly sergeants called out roll (*lista*) and answered to their names with “Presente,” while the missing were noted for punishment or pursuit. The sergeant of the day would then present each man his daily pay, for many men the best reason to wake up.

In theory, soldiers received between 25-38 centavos each morning, a figure set by the Secretariat of War and Navy to ensure a basic quality of life that was not, necessarily, forthcoming.<sup>105</sup> A number of factors mitigated this desired outcome: availability of funds, daily expenses, and the costs of vice. Soldiers’ complaints of non-payment may have

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<sup>103</sup> Diana, a poetic touch, referred to the dawn, and the call might vary by as much as an hour depending on time of year, and on particular barracks’ or unit traditions.

<sup>104</sup> On the presence of these women, children, etc., see Chapter 2.

<sup>105</sup> Pay varied somewhat by year, by locale, and by service, see note 96. By contrast, a normal servant’s wage (*mozo*) was around a peso per day, the Presidential Guard soldiers received about 1.5 pesos plus expenses, while marijuana was extremely cheap (50c/kg see Chapter 2), rice went for 24 centavos a kg, corn for 4 c/kg, and milk for 12 c/liter (AGN Gob. s/s Caja 760, Exp. 8); Trinidad Vega recalled that the Revolutionary general Orozco was popular in part for paying three pesos per day, PHO 1/26, p. 13.



been the most venerable tradition in this army.<sup>106</sup> Far-flung garrisons, particularly those in active and mobile campaigns, at times out-marched pay trains for weeks on end. Some officers, but by no means most, continued providing pay out of their own pockets and wrote Díaz or the Secretary of War for reimbursement.<sup>107</sup> More commonly, soldiers simply went without pay or had to seek other income by theft, extortion, or prostitution (see Chapter Two). Officers also extorted monies from troops in a number of ways, making lack of funds that much harsher. A favourite graft was to draw from pay-chests to pay for forage for non-existent animals or at inflated prices, leaving soldiers without centavos.<sup>108</sup> Still other officers demanded *obsequios*, gifts, from subordinates and freely took this from pay coffers. Endemic lack of government money for pay also afforded Díaz an excuse to deny permission for local authorities to raise their own forces, pleading poverty and using federal soldiers' plights to prove his point.<sup>109</sup> This ongoing crisis was yet another cancer on morale and another source of hatred for the *leva*.

Assuming the men received their pittance, daily expenses leeches most of it away quickly. Less mobile or inactive units with decent officers met for their pay after Diana, and the amount depended on service, year, and location.<sup>110</sup> Sergeants immediately deducted between twelve and fifteen centavos to pay for official rations, the simple and

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<sup>106</sup> Perhaps the complaint in any army, accounts from Julius Caesar's Legionnaires to Sun Tzu's *pengs* reflect late or short pay as an ordinary feature of military life that continued well into modern times.

<sup>107</sup> See Porfirio Valderrain to PD, 12/29/1884, CPD Legajo 19, Caja 2, Doc 577 1884 ; Grl. Albino Zertuche to PD, 5/8/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 11 Doc 5135.

<sup>108</sup> José del Valle to Pedro Hinojosa, 2/22/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 3 Doc 1064-65.

<sup>109</sup> Bernardo Reyes to Jefe de Hacienda de Edo. Sonora, 2/23/1881, CPD Legajo 6 Caja 1 Doc 422; and Manuel González to PD, 1882, CPD Legajo 7 Caja 2 Doc 441. It is worth noting that Díaz was Oaxaca's governor at this point and supported under funding Oaxaca's Public Security forces.

<sup>110</sup> "Reclutamiento del Ejército," *Revista Militar* (9/15/1890), 535. Pay varied: in 1890 pay for infantry 31¢, cavalry 38¢, artillery 38¢, sapper 50¢. Writers suggested averaging all to 44¢. Troops in expensive areas were to be compensated better as well.

insubstantial three meals that most soldiers supplemented with other food purchased from the soldaderas.<sup>111</sup> The extra food that the women supplied, plus laundry service, small personal effects, medicines, contraband, and sexual services, quickly drained the remainder of the soldiers' thirteen to twenty-five centavos.<sup>112</sup> The soldaderas assured some quality of life for relatively low price, and left troops with empty pockets in the process. Between services, support, and feeding, the soldier absolutely required this "family" member; most prior wives stayed in the village, and so most married soldiers added a new "wife" (*mujer de tropa*, *amasia*, or *vieja*) to fill these needs whatever the monetary or eventual emotional costs. The last financial drain came from numerous and expensive vices also made possible by the presence of soldaderas, practices that had tremendous consequences.

### Call to Rations --- 0630, 1200, 1800

At 6:30 the "Toque de Rancho" sounded for the first of three daily meals, the next at 12, and finally at 6 p.m., where official and unofficial rations met hungry young men. A rotating order of squads moved through the long lines to be fed by a skeletal cooking staff, and settled on the ground to eat over the next half hour. The horn call of "Atención" announced the arrival or emergence of soldaderas with baskets of various foods for the men with a relationship or with coin to pay. As with the men, these ladies followed the regimen of the trumpet and upon the call of "Media Vuelta," at the end of the meal times,

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<sup>111</sup> On soldaderas, see Chapter Two; expenses see Rafael Aponte, *Empirismos de cultura, moral, social y militar* (Mexico DF: Tip. H. Barrales Sacr., 1924), 82, 83; Common expenses covered in: *Memorias* 1879, Circulo 92, 354-355.

<sup>112</sup> Aponte, *Empirismos*, 82, 83.

officers forced them out of barracks and into streets. The more punctilious units also demanded that men wash up before meals, but usually hygiene fell short of even basic measures.<sup>113</sup> In any case, the contents of these rations represented an important point of contention and interest in the fashioning of a modern soldier and in the maintenance of morale.

Medical and logistics officers looked for ways to provide the proper feeding of troops that could be affordable, healthy, and modern.<sup>114</sup> Above all, they equated modern progress with the emulation of Europe, and nutritionally this meant a deliberate distancing from normal Mexicans' usual diets. Soldiers' tastes, on the other hand, would create the demand for supplementary food and a hatred for official rations. One of the many hardships of military life, food was very near to a soldier's heart and critics of the regime emphasized the poor quality of rations. Francisco Madero cunningly appealed to the poor conditions and worse food in his pamphlet sent to Federal barracks calling for revolutionary support.<sup>115</sup> Ironically, had the prescribed diet actually been followed, troops would have been close to content.

The official scientific ration is surprising in a number of ways. Medical staff evaluated each item in minutia and detailed fat levels, shrinkage in cooking, various nutrients, gluten amounts, and potential digestibility. They recommended specific meats and vegetables based on the expertise and experience of French and German army

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<sup>113</sup>For but a few examples (see Chapter 2 for more): Archivo del DF, Ayuntamiento Gobierno de DF, vol. 34, exp. 92, 3/19/1874, 5/28/1884, exp. 96, 98, 99, 121, 126; on potable water problems for hygiene see: Archivo del Agua, E. Masilla, *De como Porfirio Díaz dominas las aguas* (México DF: Concurso CIESAS, Oct. 1994).

<sup>114</sup> Alberto Escobar, *Manual de higiene militar* (México: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1887).

<sup>115</sup> Varios revolucionarios to PD, February 1911, CPD Legajo 36 Caja 7 Doc 3241.

dieticians.<sup>116</sup> These they gauged by comparing biometric data on soldiers' strides, heights, and weights. Despite this apparent sophistication, the doctors claimed that fish and shrimp had no value for a healthy diet, but reptiles such as tortoise they considered quite appropriate.<sup>117</sup> Nutritious common dishes such as *atole* (corn gruel) they deemed unsuitable save as last resort due to their association with indigenous identity, and they extolled instead the virtues of coffee with sugar as a morning substitute.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, after a lengthy discourse on the dangers of alcohol, Dr. Alberto Escobar continued to sanction a shot of *aguardiente* (hard alcohol) for troops' morning meals in order to help them ward off the chills.<sup>119</sup> He also discouraged tobacco use unless soldiers had coffee, which he believed would mitigate its harmful effects.

The goal of creating modern, non-indigenous men informed much of what these doctors recommended. They saw Europeans as having the height of science and culture, and felt that by the same logic, European food would mould the soldier into a modern figure. As such, the traditional meals of maize, chiles, and lime would be replaced with wheat breads and coffee. Their beliefs, justified by the best pseudoscience of the day, led them to portray food as the measure of a dichotomy between modern Mexican versus backwards Indian. To build the new national man, they needed a new cuisine. Still, even Escobar could not bring himself to suggest banning beans, perhaps he had a weakness for them. *Atole*, and other common Mexican dishes with indigenous antecedents continued, despite medical advice, to be served in many barracks. They were cheap and the medical

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<sup>116</sup> Escobar, *Higiene military*, passim.

<sup>117</sup> Escobar, *Higiene military*, 95-156.

<sup>118</sup> *Memorias* 1883, 343, (rations for the day).

<sup>119</sup> Also in regulations for 1883, Escobar, *Higiene militar*, 121.

staff arguments over the nature of modern versus primitive did not matter all that much to quartermasters on tight budgets.

Medical recommendations fell short of reality given an uneven and under-funded supply system. Quite aware that rationing had not been standardized, Escobar pointed to the improvements made in quality and quantity between 1882 and 1885, but reiterated the importance of following the official diet as set out in Ordinances (Table One). While these figures highlight the differences in nutrition and variety, it is in sheer amounts that the official diet puts the actual rations to shame: a total of 400g meat, 500g bread, 100g rice, and 242g of sugared coffee—well in line with European standards. The German army, for example, gave soldiers 250g biscuit, 270g preserved meat, 150g preserved vegetables, salt, and coffee as an iron field ration; their regular rations typically doubled these amounts.<sup>120</sup> Also of note, the partaking of a main meal at noon (*almuerzo*), uncommon in France or Germany, did not particularly raise concerns.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> “Porte de campana de la infantería alemana,” *Revista del Ejército y Marina* (1906), 195.

<sup>121</sup> Jeffrey Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 45-77.

**Table 1: Rations for Troops**<sup>122</sup>

	Recommended 1887 Official	Battalion 3 1882	Battalion 15 1882	Battalion 26 1883	Battalion 20 1884
Morning Meal	coffee sugar liquor bread	None given	78 g bread 286g coffee	24g bread 140g coffee	30g bread 280g coffee
Noon Meal	meat garbanzos greens butter rice salt potatoes beans bread	160g rice 82g meat 215g broth 462g beans 152g bread	170g bread 110g broth 105g meat 140g beans 128g rice	450g broth 120g meat 140g bread	303g rice 178g meat 200g broth 360g bread
Late Afternoon Meal	coffee sugar bread beans	92g bread 239g arvejón (peas)	75g bread 282g coffee	30g bread 320g beans	30g bread 280g coffee

In contrast to these official charts, rations continued to vary depending on location and availability of materials. Soldiers in the Yucatán complained to their commander of insufficient rations, in his words unfit to maintain basic health. Worse still, cattle sent there for the purposes of providing pox vaccinations ended up in the stew pot for a rare treat rather than helping to inoculate the men.<sup>123</sup> Soldiers in garrison at San Juan de Ulúa, despite the proximity of supplies in Veracruz, complained that they had to beg in the streets even to get bread, and reemplazos on the march notoriously lacked any rations until arriving at a barracks; Díaz specifically had to order one officer not to allow them to

<sup>122</sup> From Escobar, *Higiene militar*, 95, 120, 125.

<sup>123</sup> Grl. Ignacio Bravo to Bernardo Reyes, 7/12/1900. CDX Fondo Bernardo Reyes, vol. 29, Doc 5771, regarding food shortages in Yucatan; Governor of Yucatán to Bernardo Reyes, 6/1/1900, CDX Fondo BR, v. 29, Doc 5757 on the eating of cattle intended for vaccine provisions, he blames it on científicos.

die of hunger.<sup>124</sup> In a somewhat more stable locale, the common meal of the Ninth Battalion included white atole, beans, some bread, and tortillas. Unlike the official prescriptions, they rarely saw meat, perhaps once a month and on special occasions.<sup>125</sup>

Relatively active lifestyles and this stingy ration left troops hungry and dissatisfied, and dependant on outside sources for proper nutrition. This feeling of dependence undermined the goals of military solidarity and masculine independence, leaving men in a state of need that only the mercy of their women could fulfill. Soldaderas had a thriving market for food that included canastas with enchiladas, tamales, and fresh bread. It is not clear where they prepared some of these dishes. During barracks reforms in the early 1920s, additions to kitchen space, deliberately intended to replace soldaderas efforts with a stable cooking staff, indicates that no facilities existed for these women in the D.F. buildings previously.<sup>126</sup> Likely, given the lack of civilian complaints, soldaderas were able to do their cooking in out of the way corners, local cantinas and pulquerías, or simply purchased their wares from locals who had kitchens.<sup>127</sup> Wherever the food came from, the inability of the military to feed itself properly shaped the soldier's daily life and gravely undermined the men's dedication to their profession or gratitude towards their units.

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<sup>124</sup> CrI. Lorenzo Fernández to PD, 9/14/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 22 Doc 10644, on food for San Juan de Ulua; PD to Sabás Lomelí, 1/10/1889, CPD Legajo14 Caja 1 Doc 446, on recruit's hunger.

<sup>125</sup> *Tropa Vieja* 36, 43, 58.

<sup>126</sup> Pascal Ortiz Rubio, *Los alojamientos militares en la República Mexicana* (México: Dir. de Talleres Graficos, 1921), 67.

<sup>127</sup> Pilcher, 59, 83; An unusual exception, the *amasia* (lover) of Agapito Maldonado had her own house; presumably she did her cooking there. AGN CMDF Caja 359 EP-m Agapito Maldonado, 12/21/98.

## Call to Instruction --- 0800, 1500

At eight in the morning with night guards relieved, the soldiers reassembled for instruction in the main patio, and again later in the afternoon at three. Instruction entailed a wide range of activities intended to instill skills, virtues, and discipline. Live exercises, marches, target practice, bayonet fencing, and parade drills taught practical skills. Classroom work on theory, care of equipment, and literacy furthered this objective. Rituals and selected texts complemented the practical with the psychological effort of inculcating nationalism and *élan*. Results lagged behind rhetoric in all areas.

Frustrated officers met numerous obstacles in the practical training and recruits quickly became disgruntled, bored, and resistant. A major problem, as in any military, was lack of resources and funds. Poorly fed, often unpaid, the soldiers predictably lacked much desire or energy to make efforts to please their officers and NCOs. Because the budding arms industries produced relatively few shells, the crucial skills of marksmanship depended on pricey imports and soldiers went under-trained.<sup>128</sup> A generation of older officers turned to French *élan* building over German and English firepower as an underlying training philosophy.<sup>129</sup> Bayonet charges proved cheap to teach compared to live-fire practice, and moreover, some resistance among certain officers to building a truly effective army, rather than a paper tiger, prevailed.

The figures given for the live fire practice indicate that solid marksmanship would reflect coincidence rather than training. Soldiers' somewhat dismal shooting records

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<sup>128</sup> PD to Aurelio Melgarejo, Mex. Consul in Belgium, 4/11/91, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 8 Doc 3769-72.

<sup>129</sup> An example, translated from the French, "El ataque á la bayoneta en las próximas guerras," *Revista Militar* (5/1/1889), 314.



should not be surprising since few managed to fire more than five shots a time, about once a month. Furthermore, despite offers of cash bonuses for good shooting, up to two pesos for each bulls-eye; few soldiers seem to have mastered the skill. In comparison with European counterparts, Mexicans' lack of practice and poor quality of ammunition greatly reduced their battlefield efficacy (see Table 2).<sup>130</sup> Because units in combat zones and units practicing in garrison show little to no difference in accuracy, the effects of normal training fall into further doubt.

**Table 2: Average Shooting Percentages, 6m x 2m Target<sup>131</sup>**

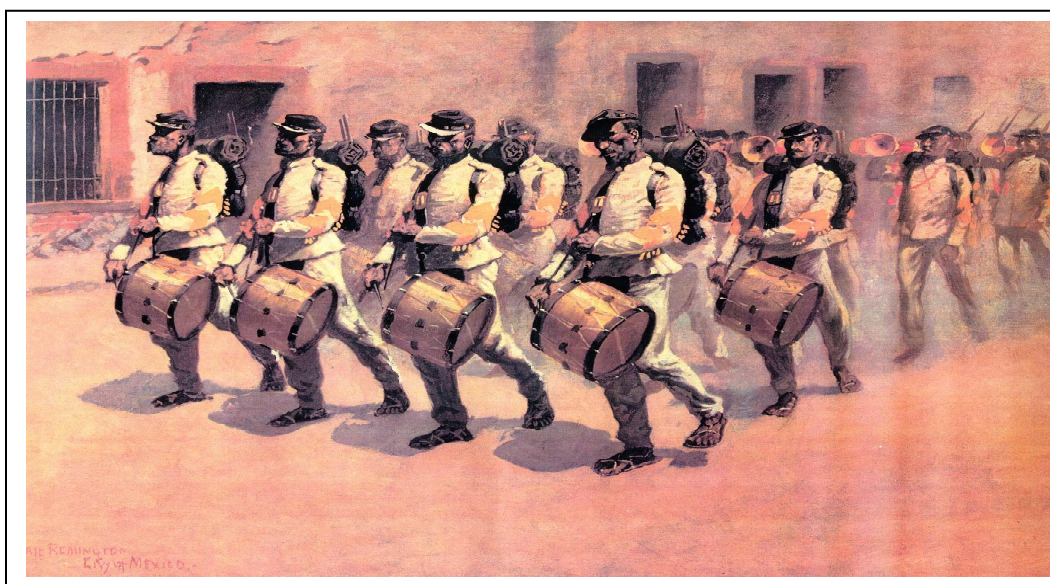
	At 100m	At 200m	At 300m	At 500m
28 Battalions of Infantry (Range)	52.6% (30-71%)	31.1% (19-31%)	30.6% (11-56%)	18% (7-31%)
14 Regiments of Cavalry (Range)	26.6% (18-43%)	N/A	18.9% (11-38%)	5% (2-10%)

On the march, few nations could match the Mexican soldier. Carrying his regulation pack of 21.25kg (47 lbs), foreign observers commented on the astounding pace and endurance

<sup>130</sup> AGN Gobernación, sin sección, Caja 757, 745; Anexo51 Circ 356, 12/22/1903 *Memorias*; By contrast, the British soldier of the same era was trained to high accuracy up to 600m, and expected to hit a 2-foot circle at 300 yards with 14 of 15 shots in under a minute. The Mexican rates in 1903, with a similar rifle to the British, more resemble the expected accuracy of the Prussian soldiers a century earlier firing enormously inaccurate muskets, who had 25 % at 225yds, 40% at 150, and 60% at 75, albeit with a 2m by 30m target; John Keegan and Richard Holmes, *Soldiers* (New York: Viking, 1985), 66, 70.

<sup>131</sup> AGN Gobernación, sin sección, Caja 745 Gobernación, E11, 5/24/1900, informe.

of troops.<sup>132</sup> They practiced this skill frequently to satisfy both the tactical needs of the army and to maintain a reasonable fitness level. If not in a fixed garrison, all units had to go on prolonged marches at least three to six times each month, taking one-third of the garrison for up to 24km over varied terrain. For one third of the year they would go on four day marches of 20, 22, 24, and 26 km each with a full load of equipment and attempt different maneuvers and situations.<sup>133</sup> Perhaps more impressive to observers, soldaderas in the field not only kept up but also out-carried and out-distanced their male counterparts.<sup>134</sup>



**Illustration 1.2** Frederick Remington, "Drum Corps," 1899.

<sup>132</sup> From Escobar's *Higiene militar*, 94; they bore a considerably lighter load than the European average of 28.67kg (7.42kg or 16lbs lighter), a fact approved by Porfirian doctors for medical reasons. They were, nevertheless, carrying about the same 45 lb. load as U.S. troops of the era.

<sup>133</sup> AGN Gobernación, sin sección, Circulo 252, Caja 745 gobernación s/s E11, 2/14/1900.

<sup>134</sup> In Cptn. F.H. Hardie, "The Mexican Army", *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* (1892), 1211; Janvier, 822.

Despite having a shorter gait than foreign soldiers, the Mexicans could be counted on to achieve thirty km a day over virtually any terrain.<sup>135</sup> From this constant wear and training rose further issues, nonetheless, over the supply and type of footwear.

Responsible for maintaining their own kit and replacing worn out gear, troops complained about shoes if they had them, or about the shoes they did not have. While traditional huaraches remained standard issue in many units, proper modern shoes (western style) became required for dress reviews, honour guards, and military parades. Nonetheless, many units outside Mexico City never received shoes, and keenly felt their lack when parading with better-equipped rurale or police units. Envy of these better-shod counterparts undermined pride in their battalion and soldiers who returned home after five years without shoes reported a sense of betrayal.<sup>136</sup> Officers pressed for universal supply of leather shoes, despite utility problems in places like jungles, because they saw the huarache as a visible marker of backwards, uncivilized, Indian identity. Given soldiers' vehement demands for uncomfortable footwear, it seems they too sought distance from patria chica in a simple matter of dress.<sup>137</sup> In the image of the drum corps from 1899, indigenous troops paraded for artist Frederick Remington in their huaraches and white cotton clothes (see Illustration 2, above.)<sup>138</sup> By contrast with other troops

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<sup>135</sup> AGN Gobernación, sin sección, Caja 745 Gobernación. ss, e11; also see Heriberto Frías, *The Battle of Tomochic: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant*, trans. Barbara Jamison (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006 [1893]), 39.

<sup>136</sup> Trinidad Vega interview (by Ximena Sepúlveda, 10/29/73, PHO 1/26, 6.

<sup>137</sup> Trinidad Vega interview, PHO 1/26, 6-7; Vega also remarked with admiration about the boots he saw revolutionary forces wearing, and was angered that federal soldiers had to carry shoes in their packs in case of a formal parade while wearing their huaraches normally.

<sup>138</sup> On the particulars of his visit see Frederick Remington, "General Mile's Review of the Mexican Army," *Harper's Weekly* Vol.35, no. 756 (July 4, 1891), 495.

presented him, these unusually retained the markers of race or class that the government usually covered up, and that many soldiers resented.

Most days, and for new recruits quarantined to barracks, practical instruction consisted of drill in the patio. Considered by the military minds of the time to be the best possible means to instill discipline, drill focused through repetition to create social cohesion, and solidarity. The act of moving and working together built what William McNeill terms “muscular bonding,” the kind of unconscious collectivity that organized and choreographed movement evokes, whether in dance, ritual, or parade square motions.<sup>139</sup> However important this routine seemed to theorists, NCOs and troops alike found the practice tedious, pointless, and contentious. Complicating matters, poorly trained sergeants and corporals could only emulate their own training, and some recruits actually had never learned the difference between Left and Right.<sup>140</sup> Troops may also, at times, have been exacerbating the difficulties on purpose, resistance through acting stupid, as protest.<sup>141</sup> An unhappy soldier in the Second Reserve recalled how he and his comrades had acted, in his words, like monkeys, and deliberately fouled all attempts at proper drill maneuvers.<sup>142</sup> Perhaps the result of ineptitude, perhaps the cause, the NCOs enforced this training harshly with brutal beatings and obscene insults.

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<sup>139</sup> William McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 132; Extending this to military cultures from ancient Greece through modern day, see Thomas J. Desch-Obi, *Fighting for Honor: the History of African Martial Art Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 6-12.

<sup>140</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 56; or at least, that is what some claimed.

<sup>141</sup> James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), passim.

<sup>142</sup> Interview of Cpt. Francisco Macias (by Maria Isabel Souza, 1/22/1974, PHO 1/54), 26, 35.

The beatings and nasty treatment of troops did serve another purpose by providing what David Grossman has called the inoculation of hatred.<sup>143</sup> NCOs had the responsibility to expose new soldiers to the psychological stress of personal animosity, of dehumanizing, in order to prevent them from having to process the idea on a battlefield. Through vicious treatment, the theory goes, NCOs better prepare their charges for the inhuman task of killing other men without hesitation. In the Porfirian officer corps, this method had many adherents, although a small minority argued that sweetness might better instill civilized decorum to balance natural savagery.<sup>144</sup>

Soldiers rarely complained officially of ill treatment for fear of reprisals, but private memoirs recall the prevailing means of drill instruction involved vicious blows, kicks, and foul verbal attacks. The recruit would learn to listen and instantly obey by means of fear and intimidation. Broken like an animal, officers hoped he would become a beast without will of his own. In the words of Francisco Urquizo's autobiographical protagonist, the corporal as a superior could demand that he endure and obey, that he would remain submissive, broken, crushed.<sup>145</sup>

The obscene language reinforced the NCO's masculine status over the emasculated recruits, as the latter could not reply and obscenities tended to insult the recruit's manliness, his sexuality, and his family. Called *chingada*, *pendejo*, *maricón*, *hijo de puta*, and *cabrón*, regardless of offense taken, the new soldier could do nothing.

Troops, sometimes referred to as *los rasos* or *los pelonas* due to their haircuts, were also

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<sup>143</sup> David Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995), 81-82.

<sup>144</sup> Mondragón, 14.

<sup>145</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 43: Urquizo uses the phrase "agorzomado" which connotes as completely broken, and hints at a moral and mental decay.

subjected to sexualized humiliations. A veteran in *Tropa Vieja* recalled that the recruits stripped naked for their officer and he remarked that it was only with this figurative castration that one became a true soldier.<sup>146</sup> Other forms of training were more civilized.

Formal education became an evolving priority, particularly the goal of returning men to the country-side after five years as full literates. Díaz's famous interview with U.S. reporter James Creelman revealed his belief in the essential childlike nature of his indigenous subjects; they had potential, as did the nation, which only a proper and firm education might release.<sup>147</sup> Likewise, many officers believed that literacy was a major hurdle faced by the semi-savage peasant that prevented their inclusion in civilized politics and society. His military exemplified this idea, and the impetus to teach soldiers more than simple rote skill would see increasing efforts and sophistication in the educational programs taught in the Troop Schools between 1876 and 1911.

The Liberal project since 1821 had called for the creation of an educated yeoman class.<sup>148</sup> The turmoil of the nineteenth-century and the lack of State finances had left this aspiration largely unfulfilled and land redistribution had long since failed to build a critical mass of small farmers.<sup>149</sup> With a new stability and a proper treasury, the regime made concerted efforts to improve education.<sup>150</sup> Education, undertaken with an eye to foreign sciences, became a fetish for the positivists building a national and nationalist

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<sup>146</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 59-60.

<sup>147</sup> James Creelman, "Porfirio Díaz," *Pearson's Magazine* (March 1908), relates Díaz' vision of a child-like nation in need of a strong patronizing leader, who might eventually make modern citizens from primitive peoples with time and education.

<sup>148</sup> Jaime Rodríguez O., *The Divine Charter*, 1-34.

<sup>149</sup> Emilio Kourí, *A Pueblo Divided: Business, Property, and Community in Papantla, Mexico* (Stanford, 2004), *passim*.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Buffington and William French, "Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael Meyers, and William Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 408-411.

society. Literacy programs in the barracks, one facet of this, seemed an obvious and cost-effective place to start, costing a mere 20 000 pesos a year in 1900, going up to nearly 50 000 by 1906.<sup>151</sup>

The evolution of the education program reveals changing conceptions of the soldier's role.<sup>152</sup> In the earliest years of the Porfiriato, the only instruction troops might receive in classrooms was the rote readings of regulations and ordinances. This remained the case for over twenty years until, in 1898, Secretary of War Felipe Berriozábal initiated new Troop Schools within the barracks, and gave them a four-fold curriculum. They were to study the national language (reading and writing), basic arithmetic, basic geometry, and civic instruction. The latter combined national geography with historical lessons to teach basic patriotic knowledge; the patriotic lessons of Independence received special focus.<sup>153</sup> Upon the turn of the century, nonetheless, these basic lessons transformed into a set both more sophisticated and more patronizing.

As Secretary of War in 1900 to 1902, Bernardo Reyes added to the instructions a degree of modern concern and realistic pragmatism. He identified problems in method, materials, and texts that he felt created difficulties for the students. Although training was a priority, he did not see the point in overburdening soldiers and mandated that schooling could not exceed one and a half hours per day, taught by subaltern officers, and that the curriculum should be both practical and suitable. To this end, his office would let the

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<sup>151</sup> *Memorias* 1905, 25: Gives cost for Escuela de tropa (5705).

<sup>152</sup> Mílada Bazant de Saldaña, "La modernización en la educación militar, 1876-1910," in *La evolución de la educación militar de México*, ed. Mílada Bazant de Saldaña et al. (México: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 1997), 181-185.

<sup>153</sup> Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, "Reglamentos para las escuelas de enseñanza primaria elemental," in *Memorias* (1898), 5.

barracks know which texts should be used, and they would reflect the needs of a modern military man, presumably adding a scientific or positivist slant.<sup>154</sup>

Further changes, including an increase to six subjects and an increase in classroom hours, emerged under the Secretaries of War who followed Reyes, including Secretary Francisco Mena in 1906 who again reformed the regulations for schooling. While the soldier of 1902 to 1905 received more variety of course topics, he was also subjected to an enigmatic class called “Thing Lessons” (*Lecciones de Cosas*). These peculiar classes, orally instructed, imparted an enumeration of objects and places, whether they were natural or industrial in their formation, and their correct pronunciation. After three years of such study, they would also be capable of saying whether the thing in question was solid, liquid, or gas.<sup>155</sup> While it is difficult to ascertain why such a class seemed necessary, it may have entailed a combination of basic physics, Spanish language, and military lore. Nevertheless, topics that were more ordinary prevailed.

The new Troop Schools seem to have made tremendous efforts to bring a real elementary education to a tier of society long deprived of it. The soldiers received a minimum one to two hours each day of this classroom instruction, excepting only weekends, one week in December, and two weeks in June. Discounting units on campaign, nearly 12 000 men received instruction in 1905 alone.<sup>156</sup> Teaching officers forced a common national language and common national history onto disparate and

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<sup>154</sup> Bernardo Reyes, Circulo 268, 7/20/1900. AGN Gobernación, Caja 745, E11 S/s 1900.

<sup>155</sup> Sec. Guerra y Marina, Anexo 15, “Reglamento para las escuelas de enseñanza elemental,” *Memorias* (1906), 170.

<sup>156</sup> Sec. Guerra y Marina, Anexo 15, “Reglamento para las escuelas de enseñanza elemental,” *Memorias* (1906), 183, 184; Bazant, gives the official claim by the military that 50% of soldiers became literate, some 12000 in 1907 as well (pp. 193,194), but given critiques of the training etc. I believe this literacy claim to be greatly exaggerated.



regionally distinct men of mostly indigenous background, to the degree of breaking language habits, if only in the barracks. The task of homogenizing towards a national standard, as described in the works of Eugen Weber for France, did not entirely happen in the barracks or classroom.<sup>157</sup> Nonetheless, these efforts did spread something like a national culture among some thousands of men, half of whom identified as purely Indian, and must be regarded as a limited success.<sup>158</sup> Nationalism on the popular level, as William Beezley has demonstrated, built narratives about history and society onto shared practices.<sup>159</sup> The shared miseries of barracks aside, soldiers left the service with a repertoire of historical tales and ceremonial experiences—for some the instruction would provide a basis for imagining *mexicanidad* as natural, inevitable, and sacred.<sup>160</sup>

The hours of instruction went beyond mere practicality by delivering a specific inculcating message in texts and rituals. Two texts in particular were eventually selected at the height of the educational drive: Jorge Suárez Pichardo's *Hechos ilustres de la clase de tropa del Ejército mexicano*, and Ernesto Fuentes' *História patria*.<sup>161</sup> Nearly identical in form and message, both lauded the soldier as patriotic heroic figure, and urged him to adopt the self-abnegating and obedient martial ideal. Fuentes claimed that he would use

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<sup>157</sup> E. Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford, 1976), especially 292-303 on military.

<sup>158</sup> Cptn. F.H. Hardie, "The Mexican Army", *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* (1892), 1203-1208. Hardie gives breakdowns on race in county and in army.

<sup>159</sup> William H. Beezley, *Mexican National Identity: Memory, Innuendo, and Popular Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008), ix-xii.

<sup>160</sup> William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico, Latin American Silhouettes* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1994), xv-xx; on nation as natural etc., see Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), introduction; on relative success of process see Urquizo's comments on solidarity in *Tropa vieja*, 73-74.

<sup>161</sup> Two later texts: Jorge Suárez Pichardo, *Hechos ilustres de la clase de tropa del Ejército mexicano* (México: D. Hernandez Mejía, 1909); Ernesto Fuentes, *Historia patria, obra adoptada por la Secretaría de Guerra y Marina para servir de todo en las escuelas de tropa del Ejército Nacional* (México: Sec. de Fomento, 1909).

simple language in order to promote “a virile gymnastics” of patriotism, whatever that might have entailed.<sup>162</sup> Notably, the level of writing was considerably higher than an early reader could manage after limited hours of classroom literacy instruction. Given the relative difficulties of the texts, it is reasonable to speculate that in most cases, the officers read the books aloud and troops followed along. Fuentes’s text reinforced values through rote memorization, which both authors urged, and helpfully included the definition of such useful terms as feminine spirit and Doña Marina: respectively, the timid spirit of women that is unlike that of soldiers, and a loyal, tender, submissive, and always useful helper to Cortes.<sup>163</sup> He described Díaz in predictably glowing terms as a great Statesman whose understanding of the need for bayonets had made the national army a great institution.<sup>164</sup>

Súarez Pichardo, on the other hand, offered a book that he felt suited the terribly limited intellect of the Mexican recruit.<sup>165</sup> He provided a series of historical tales from the nineteenth century’s wars, and used heroic examples to inspire. He encouraged teachers of his text to follow each day’s reading with memorization practice for the soldiers, and perhaps with explanation of points like honour, or military brotherhood.<sup>166</sup> Throughout his text, he lionized war heroes as representative of true manhood. When he did speak of the heroic women that raided a French camp, killed the sentries, and captured the detachment, he made a particular point to show that the real reason they were heroes was because they had sacrificed their sons for love of the patria—the commando attack by

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<sup>162</sup> Fuentes, 9.

<sup>163</sup> Fuentes, 29, 30, 31.

<sup>164</sup> Fuentes, 231.

<sup>165</sup> Suárez Pichardo, 6.

<sup>166</sup> Suárez Pichardo, 16.

itself did not impress him.<sup>167</sup> Only their complex language overshadows the overblown melodrama of both texts—reading never became a practical skill for the majority of recruits. The demands to produce *mexicanidad* simply proved more powerful than the efforts to establish functional literacy.

Building on this rote instruction was the ritual performance of nationalism in barracks and streets.<sup>168</sup> Part of the daily regimen saw the soldiers gathered for the reading of regulations. As each ordinance was read aloud, the punishment for infraction followed—a dismal recitation of years in prison up through execution. Standing at attention, the soldiers heard the constant recitation of legal infractions from desertion to murmuring to murder. The ritual reinforced the semi-sacred nature of army service, for each sin a penance, and the sergeant as inquisition priest. As each charge was read, the tone changed for the penalty. As Urquiza tells it, they read it loudly and lovingly, proudly exclaiming death penalty after death penalty in a litany of threats for the recruits to absorb.<sup>169</sup>

Fear built on this repetitive ceremony grew when soldiers took part in executing their comrades, as either witnesses or shooters. The military periodical *Vanguardia* gave considerable space to descriptions of the executions of soldiers. They told the sad story of Sgt. Zuñiga, cursed with alcoholism, who tried to shoot an officer while in a drunken

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<sup>167</sup> Suárez Pichardo, 101.

<sup>168</sup> George Mosse, *The Image of Man* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 51-53, 78; William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*, Latin American Silhouettes (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1994), xiii-xx; Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23-60; David I. Kertzer *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale, 1988), 1-15, 77-102.

<sup>169</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 53; on the effect of such recitation, regulation, and ceremony in training the social body, see Foucault's "Discipline and Punish," in Rabinow, 184, 199.

rage. Shot to death as an example, troops from several units attended to witness his execution, conveniently carried out in the cemetery.<sup>170</sup> Another execution notice reads like an obituary, listing family members and hometown, and suggested official remorse as his general purchased him a good lunch, out of his own pocket.<sup>171</sup> Nonetheless, the importance of soldiers witnessing these ultimate sanctions played a role in reinforcing fearful behaviour and obedience, while it engendered even more hatred of the army's harsh discipline.

Following ritualized sermons, soldiers were set to the repetitive tasks of sweeping the parade square or, for those under punishment, the intentionally emasculating tasks of *limpieza* (cleaning). Beyond ensuring basic hygiene, the tasks held a deep cultural significance that threatened their masculinity and shamed them publicly. For all soldiers, the call of "Orden" at 11:00 a.m. signaled an hour of repairing and cleaning arms and equipment. But in between morning instruction and noon rations, sergeants used domestic chores as a special means to discipline their charges.

Cleaning represented one of the worst possible punishments available. Soldiers whose masculinity was already under attack bitterly resented being put to menial tasks, to becoming servants for their comrades. Their chores included close scrubbing of sleeping areas and latrines, preparing food, and doing laundry— all, as far as they were concerned, women's work.<sup>172</sup> Not near as onerous as road labour, nor tedious as drill, the painless

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<sup>170</sup> "Ejecución militar," *Vanguardia* (2/4/91), 1, 2.

<sup>171</sup> "Ejecución militar," *Vanguardia* (6/27/91), 2.

<sup>172</sup> Robert Buffington, "Homophobia and the Mexican Working Class," *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, 1901*, ed. Robert McKee Irwin, E. J. McCaughan, and Michell Rocío Nasser, 193-226 (NY: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2003), 221, emphasizes working class fears about barracks life creating

limpieza nonetheless instilled dread due to its embarrassing and shameful nature.<sup>173</sup> If soldiers viewed themselves as manly, then clearly those engaged in women's work were neither macho nor real soldiers. So detested was this chastising that some soldiers petitioned to be sent to Military Prison rather than be lowered to maid-servant for lengthy periods.<sup>174</sup> Outsiders too derided these duties and the men who did them and *El Imparcial* referred to all soldiers as mere "monkeys with brooms."<sup>175</sup> While using a broom sounds relatively benign, sweeping had had an association with women's work since colonial times and thus represented a serious insult.<sup>176</sup> Sweeping appears in numerous cartoons and images in Porfirian newspapers as a marker of male shame, from depictions of indigenous men in *El Hijo de Ahuizote*, to the famous Posada image of the Famous 41 transvestites in gowns sweeping their way to the ship transporting them to Progreso.<sup>177</sup> *Servicio de limpieza* reinforced gendered expectations and added public shame to the officers' tools for training.

Morning chores and regulation reading reinforced obedience and order in their own way, but the greatest rituals came with the less-frequent military ceremonies for

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effeminate men. Soldiers' complaints in AGN CMDF expedientes personales support their view that this labour was not manly.

<sup>173</sup> Also part of military discipline as meticulous ordering, see Rabinow, 170, 181.

<sup>174</sup> CMDF caja 358 ep-m Agapito Maldonado, 98, sentenced to 1 month in Military Prison of Santiago rather than limpieza.

<sup>175</sup> *El Imparcial* 5/1908, cited in Pavia, 31.

<sup>176</sup> See Louise Burkhart, "Mexica Women on the Home Front," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, ed. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 33-38.

<sup>177</sup> Robert McKee Irwin, Edward J. McCaughan and Michelle Rocío Nasser eds., *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, 1901* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 8.

funerals, anniversaries, and changes of command.<sup>178</sup> More profound rites accompanied events such as April 2, May 5, and September 15 that generally demanded that entire battalions and regiments gather formally to declare allegiance to the flag. In a lengthy ceremony, soldiers and officers performed a mass dialogue that built solidarity and demonstrated a martial brand of patriotism and nationalism. According to Urquiza, this ceremonial act had particular power and he found it extremely moving. An officer addressed the massed soldiers in the name of the Republic and commended their discipline, bravery, and patriotism. He went on to associate the flag with their great honour, and asked them to swear that they would follow the flag with loyalty and constancy, defending it in combat until victory or death. To this, they would all shout as one, “Yes, I swear.”<sup>179</sup> The flag ceremony, perhaps for its rarity, seemed to hold an especially affective power.

The official routine also ended with a certain degree of ritual. Each day at 6:00 p.m. with the end of instruction, the whole unit from trooper to colonel assembled in the patio of the barracks. In this moment of solidarity, and prior to the last meal, soldiers listened to a final roll call and the names of those slated for punishments. As the official day drew towards a close the final message for troops was reminder of their vulnerability and shame, all while forced to wait patiently for their last mealtime—like mere animals.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Matthew Esposito, “Memorializing Modern Mexico: The State Funerals of the Porfirian Era, 1876-1911” (PhD Diss. Texas Christian University, 1997), 1-67; William Beezley, *Mexican National Identity: Memory, Innuendo, and Popular Culture* (Tucson: University of AZ press, 2008), 53-98.

<sup>179</sup> From Sec. Guerra y Marina, *Ordenanza General del Ejército* (1890), Article 9220; *Tropa Vieja*, 80-81.

<sup>180</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 55: The troops “seemed like animals trained to the commander’s voice.”

## Calls of “Retreat” and “Silence” --- 2000 and 2100

After two hours of free time that followed the last meal, soldiers gathered for one last quick head count in the main patio, a redundancy with ulterior motive. With soldiers safely gathered in files a distance away, the last call of “Atención” brought the women back into barracks for the final time. Officers and NCOs assigned to the gates screened women for contraband, mistreated some, and took bribes from others. More than just letting in women, this last call saw the barracks invaded by children, animals, and goods, all flooding in with the somewhat ironic call of “Retreat.” With the even more ironic call of “Silence,” the barracks erupted with the noisy and noise-some throng. The long day had set soldiers under the continuous surveillance of authorities, under active discipline. But with the arrival of night military officials retreated into a profound silence.

## Conclusions

The drive to build modern armed forces brought the poorest and most vulnerable men of society into direct contact with both elite projects and others of their ilk. Although the leva had victimized these classes for over a century, the changing capacity of the government to extend its reach throughout the Republic meant an inexorable encroachment into ordinary lives. The systems of recruiting and educating soldiers now shaped a significant portion of Mexico’s male under-classes; as important, these processes also deeply influenced the lives of soldiers’ families and the fate of their communities.

The family and community played several crucial roles in the experience of a recruit and, accordingly, his acceptance of a new nationalism. They mitigated his vulnerability to becoming a soldier by opposing or bribing officials, hiding deserters and fugitives, paying for replacements, and petitioning courts for release. A great deal of the army's energy went towards stymieing these efforts, with only limited success. Once taken into service, soldiers continued to depend on their women; lovers, informal wives, new wives, and transplanted wives made up the ranks of the *soldaderas* so vital to the feeding, clothing, support, and entertainment of troops. Communities too felt the impacts of their repeated loss of young labour and worse, the return of men become foreign in their habits and vices.

Officers and doctors worked to create a modern, national, non-indigenous soldier, descriptors that they came to believe were synonymous. He would, ideally, be literate, patriotic, and disciplined through his constant instruction, painful beatings, and grueling fatigues. Gruel itself was part of the prescription; medical staff reformed rations to meet the newest scientific and European nutritional standards, and discarded traditionally Mexican foods as backwards and unhealthy. The soldier's nationalism, officers hoped, could rise out of hyper-patriotic textbooks, ritualized recitations, and participatory ceremonies. Rhetoric could become reality if they but reiterated it and performed it with enough frequency. The mainly indigenous recruits would become purely Mexican without racial or regional identities by giving them Spanish language and education, new clothes and shoes, and new hygiene and cuisine. With limited resources, it was perhaps predictable that these methods did not persuade their subjects.



The new servants of the nation came to the army reluctantly and resisted its grip constantly; this struggle to survive underlay their understanding of their place in a modern Mexico. While officers and intellectuals attempted to civilize the lower class body and mind, recruits instead retained most of their old habits and loyalties, and even would develop new vices in urban garrisons. Men forced into a service they knew to fear and loathe faced five years of boredom, humiliation, and deprivation. Inadequate facilities and resources hindered proper training. NCOs attempted to break them, and no time or energy remained in order to rebuild them. Poor pay and rations made life uncomfortable, and the recruit's dependence on *soldaderas* led to conflicts and a sense of vulnerability. Superiors made this pressure on a soldier's masculinity worse through their means of instilling discipline. Ceremonies and rituals affirmed loyalty to the ideal nation, but their comrades and conditions continually reminded them that the Porfirian nation was far from that ideal.

From peasant to recruit to soldier, the youth would complete his transformation by night and in between regimented hours. In the gathering gloom between *jacale* walls, another side of life, the unofficial education of a levied recruit, helped fashion the "Juan Soldado" immersed in crime, disease, and vice.

## CHAPTER 2

## NIGHTLIFE IN THE BARRACKS: BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND MAKING SPACES

*“Hay aquí un niño que tuvo la desgracia de venir al mundo; son culpables convictos y confesos de este delito, el soldado Juan Carmona y la soldadura Juana Torres; nadie los puede castigar por lo que hicieron, dándole vida a un ser predestinado al sufrimiento....”*- Francisco Urquizo<sup>1</sup> (from baptism of a barracks child).

*“Es desastre...a facilitar el medio que la tropa satisfaga las necesidades fisiológicas que la naturaleza le impone. Este mal es el acceso de las mujeres á las cuarteles durante la noche, para hacer compañía á los hombres. Esto es degradante, inmoral y antihigiénico y...da lugar á infinidad de conflictos....”* – Manuel Mondragón<sup>2</sup> 1910.

Suddenly thrust into what seemed Dante’s Hell, the new Sub-lieutenant of Artillery descended into the barracks. All of his joy, pride, and enthusiasm from graduating now drained into the shadowy recesses of his surroundings, where every soldier was a mocked victim or a natural bandit. He had joined the ranks of their tyrannous jailors, perhaps even their executioners. He would soon confront a situation shockingly different from the clean sterile image his professors had given him. Knife-wielding drunks, marijuana-smoking thugs, filth-encrusted children, and pox-infected soldaderas presented a face of the barracks that no military college class prepared him to meet. His shock at the promiscuity and filth in the garrison resonated with popular conceptions of the vulgar soldier. At the same time, his disgust with fellow officers whose corruption enabled all kinds of substance abuse would separate him, for a while,

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Luis Urquizo, *Tropa Vieja* (México: SEDENA, 1984 [1921]), 84-85.

<sup>2</sup> Manuel Mondragón “Proyecto de Organización del ejército sobre base del servicio obligatorio”

from his peers. From all around him came the noises and reeks of the horde, some with faces of decay or degeneracy, and all marked by the cruelty of the place. His memoirs scarcely contained the savagery and chaos of the barracks the young Rafael Aponte,<sup>3</sup> observed. This view from one of the *gente decente* obscures the vital experiences of soldiers and families attached to a garrison, and their relationship with the wider community around them. For both troops and women, this venue had a life of its own, one that would reinforce and shape their senses of self, their senses of difference, and their senses of what a modern nation meant.

Inside the imposing military buildings, most of them former convents or monasteries, a confluence of influences affected conscripts and those around them. Contrasting with the formal regimens that sought to obtain and shape men as national citizens—stripped of old habits and identities—at night and in-between times the agent to assert his own personality.<sup>4</sup> This informal element of transformation built on a number of related sets of practice and custom, each containing its own direction and consequence. The social experience of military life with its rough leisure, sexuality, drugs, and hygiene had a profound impact on civilians' perceptions, soldiers' welfare, and community relations.<sup>5</sup> The interior world of the army mirrored, in its own ways, the manner in which the nation embarked on a modern campaign.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rafael Aponte, *Empirismos de cultura, moral, social y militar* (Mexico DF: Tip. H. Barrales Sacr., 1924)

<sup>4</sup> Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)

<sup>5</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Customary Practice Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 478-9, 500-501.

<sup>6</sup> Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, *Mexico at the Worlds' Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

The barracks and the bodies within them reflected the successes, failures, and assumptions of the government in its efforts to bring a positivist and scientific modernity as it built the nation. The national imagined community writ large began with smaller imaginings, in the engineering of institutional power within the walls of schools, penitentiaries, and barracks.<sup>7</sup> Far from controlling the urban garrison's environment and behaviours, the regime officials could not even achieve their ideal separation of the military space from the community that surrounded it. Streets, homes, and barracks bled into one another as soldiers and their families interacted with the city and outsiders.<sup>8</sup> The discipline and education of the daily military regime gave way in the darkness of night, and the successes of drill, ceremony, and classroom were largely reversed by the men's after hours lifestyle. The practices in the barracks, especially those associated with vice and promiscuity, were labelled lower class behaviour and did not suit an institution intended to impose and represent the new scientific and moral nation.<sup>9</sup> Officers employed what they deemed the appropriate modern tools, especially hygiene, to assert authority over the actions and meanings of behaviours.<sup>10</sup> The identities forged in the process of acting out in the face of discipline thus created a counterpoint to the official versions of *mexicanidad*.

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<sup>7</sup> William French, "Imagining and the Cultural History of Nineteenth-Century Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (1999): 249-67.

<sup>8</sup> On street versus home: Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-Grande & Senzala: Formação Da Família Brasileira Sob O Regime De Economia Patriarcal* 13. ed. (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1966); Roberto da Matta, *A Casa & a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher E Morte No Brasil* (São Paulo-SP: Brasiliense, 1985); Peter Beattie, "The House, the Street, and the Barracks: Reform and Honorable Masculine Social Space in Brazil, 1864-1945," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1996): 439-73, Allen Wells, and G. M. Joseph, *Summer of Discontent, Seasons of Upheaval: Elite Politics and Rural Insurgency in Yucatan, 1876-1915* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 148.

<sup>9</sup> "La vida del calle," *México Gráfico* #235 (Jan. 1, 1893), 3-6.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, 1991), 2,5, 80-81.

The Porfirian soldier moved beyond the attempts to force him into the modern project as his interaction with women and his everyday practices engendered a man of a different sort.<sup>11</sup> His self-identity as a man, as indigenous, as moral, lay at stake. He and his comrades wanted to enter the modern world on their own terms, resisting scientific prescriptions and moral regulations that conflicted with their convenience.

This self-identification was a narrative shaped by various forces, but all built on conflicts that centered on embodied behaviours. Sexual activity and gender relations forged alternate ways to see family, and even religion, and created conflagrations that fed the troop's rough masculinity. Leisure activities reflected a sphere of personal expression, if limited, which had inconsistent resemblance to old lifestyles in small villages and rural origins. Entertainment in the army included use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana, but entailed music, conversation, and games as well. Concern over lower-class customs also connected to changing conceptions of medicine and health. As hygiene became an integral element of military life, soldiers and soldaderas dealt with sometimes invasive scientific prescriptions that sought to enhance public health at the cost of personal liberty. These, as in the case of syphilis regulation, challenged sexual and leisure practices and ignited conflicts with military officials. Conflicts rising from the circumstances of military life came under scrutiny from all sides, and often came from breeches in the theoretically isolating walls of the garrison. Agency, environment, and

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<sup>11</sup> John A. Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 110-7.

community acted in concert to shape the military men in ways that contrasted sharply with the disciplinary efforts of the army.<sup>12</sup>

### The Soldadera in La Gran Familia

A unique feature of the Porfirian military was the infiltration of women and children into barracks life. The presence of families, lovers, and offspring created a community separate from, yet connected with, broader urban and civilian communities. Conflicts, sexuality, religion, and relationships paint a vivid picture of society and the military.

The ambiguous status of the soldadera and her role in the garrison set her apart from society; as one asserted, soldaderas were simply not like other women.<sup>13</sup> Merely by being there, they brought a feminine element into army life. One conception of the military institution envisioned it as a family in structure and purpose, a framework that highlights the distinctively sexual nature of this army.<sup>14</sup> Patriarchy under Porfirio Díaz complemented what some officer writers termed the Great Family, a military that would obey the president as a father and love the *patria* like a mother.<sup>15</sup> For most soldiers, a separate feminine figure intervened in their patriarchal understanding.<sup>16</sup> The soldadera represented an individual common to army practices and integral to the barracks life. The presence of women and families within the military quotidian played an essential role in shaping how soldiers saw themselves, how they exercised their masculinity, and how

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<sup>12</sup> On efforts to discipline, see Chapter One.

<sup>13</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 110: soldaderas comment on soldaderas that they must follow and are not like other women.

<sup>14</sup> The unusual sexuality of the soldadera and presence of family was in counterpoint to the conception of the army as a “second family”; see Suárez Pichardo, 52.

<sup>15</sup> Mondragón, 11; at the same time, he emphasizes the loss of the soldier’s old family.

<sup>16</sup> Mothers still had a presence, nonetheless, see Chapter One and the profound effect of a letter from his mother on the protagonist of *Tropa Vieja* on page 61.

local communities envisioned the barracks. The women facilitated the development, or better, the affirmation, of troops' habits, vices, entertainments, conflicts, and sexualities.<sup>17</sup> Reinforcing some practices, introducing others, the soldadera became one shared point of reference in armed forces across the country.

The soldadera had tremendous influence on the average soldier's life; some undermined discipline, facilitated leisure, instigated crime, damaged reputations, and affected hygiene. All the same, the soldadera also enhanced the army's efficacy and life quality.<sup>18</sup> She, and the roles she played, had direct influence on the process of civilizing the lower class men. In doing so, she represented a way in which gender constructions emerged in the barracks, and a significant divergence from the modernizing militaries in Europe, the United States, and Latin America.<sup>19</sup>

Richness of life in the Porfirian army derived in large part from the presence of soldaderas. The women came from a wide range of places and backgrounds, and stayed with soldiers and garrisons for different durations and motives. Some came as sutlers, servants, wives, lovers, or prostitutes; others became such.<sup>20</sup> They presented the range of legal and customary definitions of women's gendered roles. Moreover, their tasks in barracks and on campaign varied, including combinations of cooking, laundering,

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<sup>17</sup> Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory* 2nd ed. (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2003), 156.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* 1st ed. (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1990), passim.

<sup>19</sup> Martin L. Van Creveld, *Men, Women and War* (London: Cassell Military, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Aponte, 68-72.

feeding, selling, hauling, smuggling, fornicating, and offering invaluable emotional support.<sup>21</sup>

Prior to 1850, the female camp follower appeared in armies the world over.<sup>22</sup> Undertaking the same duties, they facilitated the subsistence of armed forces in the field and in garrisons, and formed what has been called the campaign community.<sup>23</sup> Their presence, nonetheless, always added an unsavoury moral element to military life, and in the eyes of theorists and officers, they presented a significant challenge to maintaining discipline and threatened family values. European armies set increasingly rigid restrictions on the presence of women in the army as military ability to handle logistics improved. With the advent of railways, armies could leave the camp followers behind, and provide food and materiel at the same time.<sup>24</sup> Most militaries around the world looked to emulate Europe as the most modern and advanced example, and by the middle of the nineteenth century the camp follower began to disappear while barracks became idealized as male only spaces. Although the Mexican army usually looked to Europe as inspiration for modernizing reforms, the soldadera continued to have her place.<sup>25</sup>

Both urban and rural garrisons gathered women who occasionally had followed husbands or lovers during recruitment, but most came to the barracks due to unemployment, underemployment, or homelessness. The waves of urban migration that

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<sup>21</sup> An example on emotional support from Europe, see Lynn, 92.

<sup>22</sup> Van Creveld, 227.

<sup>23</sup> Lynn, 93.

<sup>24</sup> Van Creveld, 96.

<sup>25</sup> During the revolution, forces under Villa did make attempts to rid themselves of women, see interview of Eduardo Angeles Meraz (by Alicia Olivera de Bonfil, 1972, Instituto Mora and INAH, PHO 1/31), and interview of Francisco Macias Rodríguez (by Maria Isabel Souza, 1974, Instituto Mora and INAH, PHO 1/54).



so worried the gente decente brought girls and women from rural backgrounds without family supports or a community of their own—many found a living and a community in the army.<sup>26</sup> Despite press opinions, relatively few became prostitutes, indeed many became soldaderas to avoid this fate.<sup>27</sup> More commonly, they entered into relationships and marriages they deemed appropriate, and others simply worked as domestics and *vivandières* (sutlers) without sexual duties. For the most part, women did not prepare official rations.<sup>28</sup> They cooked and sold supplemental food to the soldiers and junior officers, either on street corners or at nearby kitchens (see Chapter 1). Laundry service, sometimes done in tandem with poorer soldiers, also brought them small incomes.<sup>29</sup> In exchange for their services, the women earned a living, received a degree of recognition from the army, obtained some protection in their often dangerous neighbourhoods, and got a solid, if unhygienic, shelter for sleeping.

Garrisons had both a stable and fluid population of women that represented some of the most enduring personnel of the military. Women could come and go, and had the option to find other employment or attach themselves to other barracks.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, in the urban barracks many stayed beyond the average term of a soldier, officers frequently faced transfers to new regions, and so the soldaderas and NCOs often had years of on-site

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<sup>26</sup> Claudia Agostini, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876-1910* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), 26; Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 69.

<sup>27</sup> Aponte, 71; Pascal Ortiz Rubio, *Los alojamientos militares en la República de México* (México: Dir. De Talleres Gráficos, 1921), passim; c.f. Lynn, 67: he proposes a triad of prostitutes, whore and wife that seems rather limited.

<sup>28</sup> Agostini, 68; Toxqui, 215, 250; Lynn, 124-5.

<sup>29</sup> Heriberto Frías, Barbara Jamison, and Antonio Saborit, *The Battle of Tomochic: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18-19; Lynn, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879-1931* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), especially chapter one; Frías, 114-115.

seniority.<sup>31</sup> The army thus always had a hard-core of local veterans—a few thousand half-trained sergeants and corporals, and thousands more experienced women—that did not conform to the administration’s ideal of a European-like military. From their somewhat ambiguous place in the military system and the urban community rose a need to categorize them socially, to ascribe to them the labels that would make sense of their class and gender position.<sup>32</sup>

### Sexuality and Gender

The soldadera, in finding her place, challenged the military authorities. Defined by some as a woman belonging to soldiers, *mujer de tropa* also had a significant double meaning as trooper woman. On the one hand, as property the responsibility for their actions rested on the shoulders of their male counterparts. The army demanded that the women respect military ordinances and barracks rules, and officers expected soldiers to maintain a degree of control over women or face punishment detail.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, as troopers of a sort the officers also had a personal responsibility to police soldaderas’ behaviours. They had the authority to restrict access to the barracks. Officers could, and sometimes did, proclaim a woman as a *mujer de mala vida* rather than *mujer de tropa*, and ban her entrance.<sup>34</sup> This regulation theoretically protected soldiers from the life of

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<sup>31</sup> AGN, Fondo Guerra y Marina, CMDF expedientes personales, passim; [hereafter AGN, CMDF, ep].

<sup>32</sup> A wealth of sociology exists on the topic of labeling and stigma, see for example: Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan, "Conceptualizing Stigma", *Annual Review of Sociology* (2001); Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1963), passim.

<sup>33</sup> For two published examples, "Un Escandolo," *El Diario del Hogar* (April 22, 1903); "El reconocimiento médico de las mujeres de los soldados," *El Diario del Hogar* (June 10, 1903), 7-9.

<sup>34</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 366 Ep-p Alberto y Portilla, 6/25/97: 15 days in Sala de Banderas for "recibir mujeres de mala vida que lo distraen de sus obligaciones"; by military regulation: México, Secretaría de Guerra,

disorder that a prostitute caused, but in practice, military officials rarely invoked this option, choosing instead to accept bribes and favours for garrison access. This also applied while on campaign, and even in the field, officers attempted to keep an accurate registration of the women attached to their force and to regulate their interaction with soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

Rafael Aponte offered a bleak vision of what the women experienced.<sup>36</sup> When the bugle called “Atención” each evening around six, lines of women filed up at the portal to the barracks. They brought with them their children, their pets, their *petates*, and their baskets filled with food and trifles. The officers of the gate might leer at their bodies, steal some of their victuals, and prod through their belongings with a bayonet. Eventually, they allowed women to enter the patios and seek a place to sleep, or to set up a *tianguí* (storefront) in which to sell their now abused goods for a few hours time.

Despite the unsettling chore of passing through this guard post, women continued to come and officers continued to allow their presence.<sup>37</sup> Notably, even with disruptions that invariably arose when women and children inhabited the barracks, no guards ever excluded them for more than a short while, including even those at the National Palace.<sup>38</sup> While the gate inspection seems at first glance, to suggest the soldadera’s impotence against officer whims and gaze, it may only have been an incidental harassment of little weight. Control of women’s access entailed more negotiation than officers liked to admit.

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*Ordenanza general para el ejército de la republica de México* (México: Imprenta de I. Cumplido, 1882), Article 2440, 274.

<sup>35</sup> Frías, 39.

<sup>36</sup> Aponte, 71.

<sup>37</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 77.

<sup>38</sup> For example, AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep-n Tnt. Reynaldo Nila 10/17/95.

In some cases, officers had specific orders to establish an understanding with the soldaderas regarding conditions for entrance, implying a measure of agency on the part of the women.<sup>39</sup> Attempting to dodge blame, one sergeant allowed women into a restricted area against orders, simply because a woman claimed it would be okay.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately for the sergeant, his immediate superior beat him for the transgression. The ability of the soldadera to offer insolence to officers in other venues makes this interpretation of their agency that much more likely.

Women had ways of exercising their own influence, disrupting military order and decorum with tremendous insouciance, and officers could do little to counter them.. One of the most powerful displays of Díaz's army as modern, organized, and cosmopolitan, a performance that legitimated the nation itself, was the military parade (see Chapter 4). Yet officers complained that women frequently fouled this spectacle of order, especially during the larger parades on May 5 (Battle of Cinco de Mayo), April 2 (Battle of Puebla), and September 16 (Independence Day), by running alongside the streets where their men paraded. In one description, the soldaderas ran over everyone in their way, knocking over other spectators, in order to stay close to their units. The author went on to complain that although officers may have made superhuman efforts to keep women away from the men, they had failed. With the least slip of caution, the women made contact and the soldier committed excesses he regretted later: excesses often leading to his hospitalization—what these excesses might be remained mysterious. Rather than blaming the soldadera, this

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<sup>39</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep-n 7/4/98: subaltern officers of corps have understanding with women of soldiers to “permitirles o no entrada.”

<sup>40</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 373 ep-s Subtnt. Juan R. Solorsano, 11/22/81.

officer concluded that the men had gotten soft, not like in the old days, and were not accustomed to hardships.<sup>41</sup>

Why would the women do such a thing, facing the jeers of the crowd and the ire of the officers (maybe of the soldiers too) later? They might have seen the parade as an opportunity to gain recognition of their role in the military, and took part in the only way they could. Possibly, they saw the spectacle as a celebration and participated in a carnivalesque fashion, adding their own inverted statement of parading, masculinity, and theatre to the occasion. Regardless of their motives, they shattered an important military fantasy by becoming visible to the watching audiences, by compelling viewers to acknowledge the presence of the soldadera in the midst of the apparently modernized military. By claiming a space in the streets, the home-making women of the barracks shattered the ideal separation of spheres, and they did so in the face of officials and civilians.

Nor did officers punish soldaderas once back inside the barracks walls; generals and colonels could order subordinates to discipline them, but fear of soldiers' reactions put limits on superiors directly interfering with "their" women. Soldiers stood at attention some distance away during the gate queue, and so permitted harassment to some degree. Officers knew that to enter the main patios at night, at the best of times was dangerous, and to mistreat the women there would be insane.<sup>42</sup> Beyond physical perils, interfering with the women also correlated with high desertion rates, and since officers on night duty

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<sup>41</sup> "Formaciones militares," *Vanguardia* (Thurs. March 9, 1891), 1-2 [4882-4] continued (Fri. April 1, 1891), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Examples of this are seen in accounts by Urquiza and Aponte, and in various expedientes with complaints by officers against violent soldiers.

could not leave their post, the ill-will of the women might lead to many hungry evenings. For example, a sub-lieutenant in a Mexico City barracks faced charges of deserting his post while officer of the week. Having angered his troops and their women, he could not procure his dinner nor command a soldier to fetch it, and so left the gate to buy his meal himself and was later punished.<sup>43</sup> Aponte remembered his fear of the rough and scarred soldiers he encountered in the barracks, as did Manuel Mondragón.<sup>44</sup> This pusillanimity did have a basis. A Major Herrera complained to his commander about drunken civilians in the 24th Battalion barracks who stabbed him while his soldiers watched, and of a Cabo who not only robbed him of every centavo but then ate Herrera's dinner and laughed at him. Herrera's immediate superior clarified the actual events, asserting that the Major had hit and cursed at an amasia in the barracks and was roughed up for his troubles.<sup>45</sup>

Even on campaign, the soldaderas did not follow officers' orders or give them the respect they demanded.<sup>46</sup> During the expedition against Tomochic in 1893, Heriberto Frías described several incidences that highlight the relative autonomy of the camp follower. Attempting to keep close order on the march, officers ineffectually shouted at women bringing water to their men in columns, and the women only responded with laughter.<sup>47</sup> As men rose in the morning, Frías complained about the insolent looks that he received from the women who lolled about until it was time to march. In the actual fighting, the women defied orders, and perhaps good sense, to run ahead of the siege lines

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<sup>43</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 364 ep-p Tnt. Pérez, s/f.

<sup>44</sup> Aponte, 69-71; Mondragón, 15.

<sup>45</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 352 ep-h Mayor Cde. Antonio E. Herrera 1/7/88; as a further note, Herrera may not have been the most scrupulous of men, at his funeral two years later *both* of his wives attended.

<sup>46</sup> Frías, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Frías, 12, 13.

to collect water under fire. At the same time, he also exhibited some ambivalence towards these women that he and his comrades, clearly, could not control. Unruly, immoral, and pitiable, on the one hand, he also saw them as angels and heroines worthy of his respect.<sup>48</sup>

The frequent failure of officers to exert control over soldaderas more accurately reflected the reality of gender relations in the barracks than did the letter of the regulations. Officers' interference with women had limits. Soldiers and NCOs frequently, and with good reason, also surrendered claims to power over women upon whom they depended. And the *mujer de tropa* at times mobilized resources to protect against violations of her own sense of propriety. The women maintained the order of their own ranks, occasionally with violence, but largely avoided criminal prosecution if not press censure.<sup>49</sup> They did not tolerate male abuses that crossed a certain threshold, and used legal recourses at times to ensure safety.<sup>50</sup> Further, their behaviours and the reactions of those around them revealed a moral economy understood by the military system.

Conscripts depended on the women's willing assistance for quality of life, and despite certain limits, women had a degree of mobility and choice that outstripped the usually restricted troops. Without a woman, the soldier faced poor food, cold nights, and

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<sup>48</sup> Frías, 12.

<sup>49</sup> See María Áurea Toxqui Garay "'El Recreo de los Amigos': Mexico City's Pulquerías During the Liberal Republic, 1856-1911" (Ph.D. Diss.: University of Arizona, 2008), 268-270 on lower-class women fighting each other; for example from the press, "Cronica Negra," *El Partido Liberal* (July 27, 1887): on sapper battalion women fighting in pulquería.

<sup>50</sup> For one example, see AGN, CMDF Caja 357 ep-m, Soldado Antonio Martínez 3/14/89; also discussion of abuse on page 15.

absent contraband, a situation made worse if he was imprisoned.<sup>51</sup> The acquisition of what they sometimes disparagingly termed *viejas* could prove challenging.<sup>52</sup> Finding potential mates seems to have entailed a rite of institution. Men new to the barracks often had simple expectations of what they might need; one mourned that his inability to obtain a soldadera stemmed from his lack of *fierros*. This loaded term had three possible interpretations: he lacked coins to buy love, he lacked a knife to fight for it, or he lacked an erection to make use of a woman.<sup>53</sup> The protagonist of *Tropa Vieja* moved through various stages in his search for a woman. At first he was content to pay for sexual services, managing to bargain with a woman whose regular partner fell asleep early. From this temporary, and dangerous, circumstance, he was next approached by one of the more experienced soldaderas. She made it clear that he had passed some threshold to become an acceptable partner, perhaps by his behaviour in the barracks or simply by time in service. With his agreement, she searched for a suitable partner and presented her a short while later.<sup>54</sup> His new compañera fulfilled exactly what he wanted: she was experienced in the army life, relatively attractive, and safely available. Presumably he fit her tastes, as the two wed on the spot.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 356 ep-1 Soldado Pedro Lara, 5/17/80: 7<sup>th</sup> Regt. rations given by women to individuals in prison not always certain.

<sup>52</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 44.

<sup>53</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 44.

<sup>54</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 85.

<sup>55</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 96-97.



The nature of relationships greatly influenced gender behaviours. While some women sold goods to all, emotional and sexual relations often had an exclusive nature.<sup>56</sup> Sex for one night was often far beyond the meagre pay of a recruit, costing as much as two pesos, an amount equal to a month of saving and sacrificing.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, purchasing sex did not, by any means, necessarily lead to the sort of reliable relationship where a soldier had a partner who would continue to assist him in prison or on campaign.<sup>58</sup> Some soldaderas thus traded on their scarcity and mobility to demand a degree of autonomy and respect in exchange for stability.<sup>59</sup> This is not to imply a purely cold or calculating functionality; couples could and did form romantic and loving relationships as well.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, some new soldiers observed the couples in barracks with a poignant sense of loneliness and exclusion, while foreign observers during the Revolution also noted the apparent happiness of many couples they witnessed.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, the nature of most relationships set unusual limits to male power and influenced soldiers towards increased macho displays.<sup>62</sup> The blame for machismo did not lie with women alone, of course, but the presence of women often led to posturing, competition, and frustration as soldiers interacted with the people around them.

Machismo, a hyper-masculinity based on norms of misogyny, and violence, and often binge drinking, emerged from the sexual and gendered relationships between

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<sup>56</sup> Aponte; also noted was that relatively equal footing on sex undercut NCOs authority, making all men equal. See *Tropa Vieja*, 76: argument with corporal that since we are all in barracks and the women here “rolan” with everybody, we are all equal.

<sup>57</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 60.

<sup>58</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 366 ep-p Juan Pevedilla 6/24/79: women and families were always to have access to soldiers in prison or hospital.

<sup>59</sup> Frías, 113.

<sup>60</sup> Lynn, 92.

<sup>61</sup> Salas, 64; *Tropa Vieja*, 60.

<sup>62</sup> Lynn, 105.

soldaderas and recruits. Sex represented an important commodity and power for the soldadera, in addition to being an end of its own. Given men's virtual imprisonment, withholding sex or changing partners afforded some women a degree of power over relations with soldiers. Barracks sexuality, nonetheless, also contributed to the construction of masculine behaviours that mitigated this power difference. Other factors, such as training stresses and officers' abuses, certainly also played a part—nevertheless, the exacerbating factor remained the presence of the *mujer de tropa*.<sup>63</sup> Officers rarely intervened in their troops' efforts to control their rivals or their women unless the violence spilled into public view or escalated into serious injury.<sup>64</sup>

Domestic abuse did lead to charges on occasion, as women or officers pressed a complaint, although more often it likely remained unpunished. In one example, a junior cavalry officer received reprimand after being reported by his mother for beating his sister. While his mother later recanted and claimed he had since stopped, his justification of his actions was that as the head of the house he had simply fulfilled his duty in defence of the family's honour, discouraging his sister from shameful relations.<sup>65</sup> Another soldier was charged for lightly wounding his *amasia*, unusually he did so in her home rather than in the barracks, and it may be that his charge stemmed more from his state of drunkenness.<sup>66</sup> Antonio Martínez in Puebla also received charges for wounding “his

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<sup>63</sup> Stephen Neufeld, “Performing the Masculine Nation: Soldiers of the Porfirian Army and Masculinity, 1876-1910,” in *Negotiating Identities in Modern Latin America*, ed. Hendrik Kraay, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 49-69.

<sup>64</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 359 ep-m Agapito Maldonado, 12/21/98.

<sup>65</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 352 ep-h Alférez Manuel B. Herrera, 1886.

<sup>66</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 359 ep-m Agapito Maldonado, 12/21/98.

woman,” one Bibiana Medel, another charge aggravated by alcohol.<sup>67</sup> In these, as in many other examples, formal legal processes resulted from extenuating circumstances—location, severity, and most common, alcohol.

Soldiers and NCOs in barracks violently competed over women, often encouraged by both onlookers and by the alcohol women supplied. In part, establishing hierarchies and hazing newcomers drove men to violence in the garrisons, with precedence for contraband, comforts, and respect going to the strongest or meanest.<sup>68</sup> The ubiquitous fighting over *soldaderas* was part of common military and popular folklore, appearing for example, in the corrido “De Bruno Apresa” where a soldier killed his sergeant over a woman’s affections, and a plate of her food. The song made special note of how this proved poor Bruno was truly a man among men.<sup>69</sup>

An extraordinary fight over a woman occurred in Mexico City in 1896 between two Sergeants of neighbouring battalions.<sup>70</sup> When Pió Gutiérrez and Candelario Carrillo discovered that they both were living *en amasiado* with Candelaria Montes, one challenged the other. They met outside city limits with pistols to fight a duel of honour. Being lower than gentleman, the authorities stopped the proceedings—it became a mere fight rather than a permissible duel because of their class status. In the trial Montes defended herself and Gutiérrez, saying that Carrillo had propositioned her repeatedly and been rejected as she was not an available woman. Carrillo then allegedly sent her various

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<sup>67</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 359 ep-m Soldado Antonio Martínez, 3/14/89.

<sup>68</sup> Mondragón, 13; Frías, 112, on pecking order; *Tropa Vieja*, 41, on hazing.

<sup>69</sup> Vicente T. Mendoza, *El corrido mexicano* 1 ed. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954), 150; See pages 51-52 on music in barracks.

<sup>70</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep- n, Sgt. 1 Pio Gutiérrez and Sgt. 2 Candelario Carrillo (Report to Primero Juez 5/28/1896).

letters that dishonoured her, which she shared with the court. The letters referred to her as too stubborn to give him sex, as a disgraced woman, and insulted her parentage.<sup>71</sup>

Carrillo defended himself to the judge, pointing out that since he was illiterate, the letters could not possibly have been his. Despite his entreaty, both sergeants received punishment for the unsanctioned fight, presumably, Gutiérrez and Montes lived happily ever after.

Sexual relationships, the reward and the cause of fierce competition, had an important place in the army's daily life. The barracks's reputation for promiscuity, as reported in the press, emerged in part from class differences about appropriate sexual modesty and prurient modern prescriptions.<sup>72</sup> Couples in the barracks made do without privacy, and probably, without much modesty. Sleeping areas normally comprised large open areas covered with individual *petates* (mats) and *cobijas* (covers). Soldiers, amasias, children, and pets slept together with little room and no real separation; indeed, officers allotted each soldier a mere one meter by two meters of space, the same as a grave.<sup>73</sup> At times officers also ended up sleeping among troops, reducing space further. One was charged for slumbering there when he was supposed to be on watch in the hour of "greatest danger," possibly at the hour when most desertions took place.<sup>74</sup> *Gente decente*

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<sup>71</sup> The letter, barely literate, read in part: "ques mull mulota y mull hijo de chingada y mull desgraciado" ... "si uste no le da chigadasos mandermela para darselos yo uste es mull muela," followed with a number of "su madres" and "su padres".

<sup>72</sup> Agostini, 16 (on "new" need to be dressed in public); Toxqui, 232 (woman told she does not even need petate to chingar her soldier); Aponte, 70; Mondragón, 30; Frías, 18; Buffington, 58; AGN, CMDF Caja 343 ep-g, Tnt. Alberto González: 17th Battalion, Report of 1st Demarcación to CMDF 10/19/1885, regarding incident in "La Noche Buena" where soldiers are accused of "faltas cometidas en pareja publica."

<sup>73</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 41.

<sup>74</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 341 ep-f, Francisco Franco, 11/13/1880 (letter of E. Flores to CMDF).

outsiders commented negatively on this dangerously sexual environment that they deemed barbaric and animal.

Unlike accounts from Brazil, homosexuality did not present a major public concern in regards to barracks.<sup>75</sup> A degree of silence on the topic combined with a widespread, and not entirely mistaken, conception that the army was populated by overly heterosexual and macho soldiers.<sup>76</sup> This certainly did not mean that homosexual encounters and relationships did not happen, only that they did not manifest in press or military accounts, or popular memory, as they had in other countries.<sup>77</sup> If anything, the overt sexuality of the soldadera (whether real or imagined) acted as antidote to public fears of sodomy in the army, despite the rise of homophobia in other spheres of Porfirian life.<sup>78</sup>

The soldiers and their women were indifferent to interpretations of army sexuality and accepted both the lack of privacy and the censure of publicity.<sup>79</sup> This reflected both lower class norms regarding intimacy and conferred religious authorization. Sexual intimacy among the poor traditionally had an openness enforced by small living spaces and lack of separated bedrooms.<sup>80</sup> Only the rich could afford rooms designated simply for sleeping, let alone different rooms for couples or children. Cultural norms varied, and in

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<sup>75</sup> Beattie, 177-204.

<sup>76</sup> Martin Nesvig, "The Lure of the Perverse: Moral Negotiation of Pederasty in Porfirian Mexico," *Mexican Studies* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2000), 3-4, 35, 37.

<sup>77</sup> Lynn, 90.

<sup>78</sup> Buffington, 193-195; also a sexual space created in contrast to home, see DaMatta, 11-28.

<sup>79</sup> Mondragón, 21; Frías, 18 (on campaign).

<sup>80</sup> Michael Johns, *The City of Mexico in the Age of Díaz* 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 96, 97.

some indigenous areas Catholic or mainstream taboos on sex simply never applied.<sup>81</sup>

Above all, in the barracks patio the only option for modesty was a combination of covers and the polite evasion of gaze by one's comrades. One soldier remarked on his initial uneasiness with this, he recalled that at night he could hear the kissing, and see the forms of couples *entrepieradas*, entangled at the crotch, and he felt ashamed.<sup>82</sup> Still, within months he himself had paid for sex in the barracks and married a soldadera, hence joining in with the sexual spectacle of the army patio. Religious approval provided a further degree of comfort and acceptability on a couple's semi-private sexuality.

### Religion and Children in the Army's Ex-conventos

Widespread uneasiness over unsanctioned sexual liaisons and unusual family structures left the women of the barracks in a position of ambiguity. One officer reflected that soldaderas were neither loving wives nor grasping prostitutes, but possibly both at the same time. Social anxiety about the diverse functions of the soldadera contributed to the various terms used to describe them: *galletas*, *viejas*, *mujeres de tropa* or *de soldado*, *vivanderas*, *Juanas*, *coronelas*, *amasias*, *esposas de tropa*, *mujeres legitimas*, *curanderas*, and *chusma*. The women's defining labels came from numerous sources including the press, officers, NCOs, conscripts, and most importantly, themselves. *Mujer de tropa* comprised the most generic of these terms, and emerged from official

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<sup>81</sup> An understudied topic for the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Mexico, presumably some continuation from differing notions during colonial times, see as examples, Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* 2 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th-18th Centuries* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).

<sup>82</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 48.

regulations and popular conceptions. In practice, nonetheless, this included a variety of legal and social statuses.

Perhaps least common of these were the women legally recognized and Church endorsed as proper wives, sometimes referred to as *mujer legitimo*. The army forced most soldiers into service against their will, marched them far from home and hid them from family inquiries. Accordingly, few wives of married recruits had the ability to follow or find their husbands, and many lacked the resources to try. Impressing the poor and the criminal also limited the numbers of previously married men, and recruiters made some attempt to avoid taking those with families to support.<sup>83</sup>

Marriage itself proved a somewhat ambiguous status that did not, for the poor, rely on Church endorsements or legal formalities. Many in society's lower classes recognized the existence of marital rights (similar to common-law) that although disputed by some authorities, nonetheless received acknowledgement and respect from the military institution. As such, officers employed the term *mujer de tropa*, and even the less formal *amasia*, as accepted and regulated categories. While they certainly afforded formal marriage more weight, particularly for themselves,<sup>84</sup> the *mujer de tropa* could appeal for rights to pension, access to soldiers, and protection against abuse, regardless of civil registration.<sup>85</sup> Widows, orphans, and children received small pensions if their soldier

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<sup>83</sup> Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* Vol 1. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 18-19; also see Chapter 1.

<sup>84</sup> For example, officers were held to high marital standards, see: AGN, CMDF Caja 321 ep-a, Cipriano Andrade 6/23/87—he gets 6years prison and 500 peso fine for bigamy.

<sup>85</sup> AGN, Gobernación sin sección, Caja 760 Expediente 2, Círculo 342, 1903 by Francisco MENA, 8/26/1903.

should die, about fifteen centavos a day in assistance. To legitimate further their community and demands, the soldaderas brought religion into the barracks.

Officially, the liberal army and the nation had left behind their religious superstitious past. The army took over as a secular priesthood, a harbinger of modernity, much of it housed in the seized convents of the old colony.<sup>86</sup> Soldiers did not have access to priests, could not attend mass, and generally did not receive sacraments, except prior to formal execution.<sup>87</sup> Instead, the soldiers themselves replaced the priesthood in public spaces, enacting solemn rites of nationalism, with regulations as their bible and enjoying the poverty of monks. In theory, recruits abandoned the Church along with their indigenous roots or regional identities. In practice, the soldaderas acted as a spiritual bridge by bringing folk catholic rites into the heart of the ideally secular military.

The soldaderas manifested religious understandings through ceremonies, particularly marriages and baptisms that they themselves performed. In early modern Britain, the rite of marriage in the campaign community proved quite simple, participants set a sword or two on the ground and leaped over them, declaring “rogue follow, whore follow.”<sup>88</sup> The Mexican rite simplified this more still; couples approved by their comrades simply clasped hands, and both partners verbally agreed, “arreglados.”<sup>89</sup> The customary practices of marriage among lower classes depended on community acceptance of meanings: in this case the bond meant more than norms that favoured

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<sup>86</sup> Agostini, 78; see also Sec. Guerra y Estado Mayor, *Memorias de Guerra y Marina* [hereafter *Memorias*]: yearly from 1878-1910 lists all military buildings.

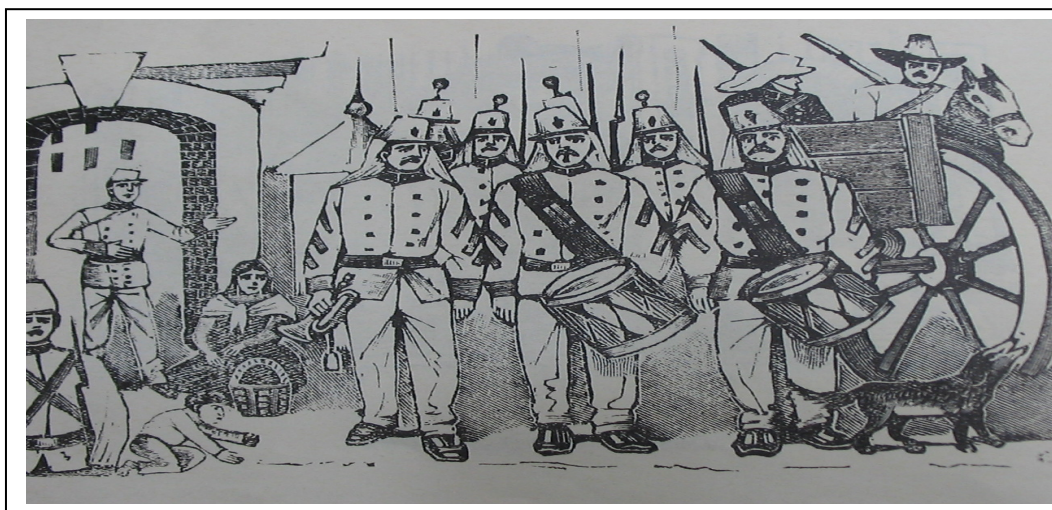
<sup>87</sup> By contrast, U.S. army and Europeans provided a chaplain or padre to all units at all times, Mexican soldiers only saw a priest on the day of their execution.

<sup>88</sup> Lynn, 88.

<sup>89</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 97 on wedding, and 113 on engagements.



public courtships and Church sanctions.<sup>90</sup> The marriage agreements, acknowledged by soldiers and other women, gained a quasi-legal status when recognized by officers as sufficient for pensions or petitions. Similarly, these understood marital bonds conferred a degree of regularity and respectability for sexual relations. In contrast, women deemed *amasias* represented a higher degree of uncertainty or social anxiety than *mujeres de tropa*, and occasioned greater conflicts between rival males and denigration from married *soldaderas*.<sup>91</sup> Not only did these marriages and relationships create a hierarchy among the women and cement their relations to men, they also helped to legitimate children. Offspring of the barracks could obtain rights and papers as *hijos naturales*—but only with the father’s acknowledgement.<sup>92</sup> Children appear to have been ubiquitous, for example, in this image by Posada, a depiction of the barracks required inclusion of child and *soldadera* (see Illustration 2.1).



**Illustration 2.1 “La Gorra de cuartel,” Guadalupe Posado.**

<sup>90</sup> Thompson, *Customs*, 493.

<sup>91</sup> Salas, 77; *Tropa Vieja*, 113.

<sup>92</sup> *Memorias* 1878, “Documento 39,” 92: on *hijos naturales*.

Most officers considered marriage, even though informal, sufficient recognition and this represented a likely motive for some women to press for wedding. Furthermore, this sanctioning of a number of children opened the barracks to all children because gate officials did not typically ask for documentation. Nevertheless, some soldiers and soldaderas deemed the barracks unfit for raising kids. One remarked that no child should sleep in such lousy, dirty conditions, nor see, once old enough, how his father was beaten, or how other soldiers groped and used his mother.<sup>93</sup>

Not surprisingly, those who had children often took steps to ensure their welfare through the religious and social bonds of baptism and *compadrazgo*. Baptisms had even greater formality and ceremonial detail than did weddings. In one such, the whole battalion gathered together on a Sunday, and gathered the necessary candles, blanket, and water.<sup>94</sup> One soldier presided, and lacking a true priest, called on the spirit of Miguel Hidalgo and invoked the patria to witness the ceremony. According to the account, the women gathered together crying and the men took the rite with all seriousness, and the bugler played the Toque de Diana. When the father called for a compadre, the whole battalion and its women accepted the charge—the child became godson to the entire unit. No mere satire, when father and child died in battle, his comrades took on the burial as the appropriate duty of comadres and compadres.<sup>95</sup> Soldaderas accepted as part of their duties that they would offer prayers for the dead and arrange masses after battle.<sup>96</sup> Thus,

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<sup>93</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 67.

<sup>94</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 83-84.

<sup>95</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 171.

<sup>96</sup> On prayers for the dead, Frías, 109; on masses Frías, 115; praying also in *Tropa Vieja*, 117.

religion continued to play a role in soldiers' lives, even if the Church itself faded from view.

Beyond motivating kin structures of folk religion, children also raised troubling issues in the barracks relating to health and hygiene. Witnesses routinely mentioned the swarm of children that entered some barracks by night, and tellingly, always made reference to their lack of cleanliness.<sup>97</sup> Given that most of these military families had no other home, and the lack of water supply that plagued many garrisons, filthy children represented an inescapable norm. Some who grew up there eventually became full-members of the army, soldiers or *soldaderas*, as teenagers; many more disappeared into the communities around the garrisons. Along with up to three children, women likewise brought dogs, cats, and even parakeets into the barracks, which further annoyed officers. Doctors had grave concerns over the medical implications of these nightly intrusions. They reported outbreaks of cholera and typhoid and pointed to the women and children as both unfortunate victims and likely culprits. This led some experts to demand reforms and inoculations; still others sought to lay blame on the apparently perilous body of the *soldadera*.<sup>98</sup>

### Body, Hygiene, and Polluted Milieus

Becoming modern Mexicans proved most difficult with an unhygienic uncivilized lower-class that was often far from becoming. The regime sought, as had governments since the Bourbon era, to apply education and hygienic measures to civilize the poor

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<sup>97</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 68; Mondragón, 13.

<sup>98</sup> Aponte, 83.

through politicized sciences, turning science to political ends.<sup>99</sup> Improved public works, clean paved streets, and foreign trained doctors were to usher in a modern age, reducing mortality and instilling morality.<sup>100</sup> Among the reformatory projects they undertook, the bodies and barracks of the Porfirian army received special attentions. One of their first targets was the soldadera.

Clashes between military aspirations, public images, and soldaderas' rights grew into a power struggle over hygiene and the female body. Negative public impressions regarding women who spoiled military parades, fought in the streets, and flaunted sexuality in the barracks, put pressure on military staff to enforce order and control. Medical advances and new sanitation laws envisioned the soldadera as the locus for diseases and the primary obstacle to military health. Despite these pressures, soldaderas continued to exercise their own moral economy on the army, in at least one case with riot and forgery.

As Porfirian officers examined their policy on syphilis and conscripts, Dr. Ángel Rodríguez recounted an earlier failure to curtail the soldadera and her pox.<sup>101</sup> In 1867, the Second division in Puebla, under General Alatore, had ordered a weekly exam for all women belonging to the corps, and those who passed received tickets to enter barracks. An exception was made for those that Jefes deemed to be truly (*realmente*) married; presumably a Church sanctioned wedding trumped venereal diseases. The soldaderas

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<sup>99</sup> Agostini, xiii 23, 62-63, 71.

<sup>100</sup> Ricardo, Pérez Montfort, Alberto del Castillo Yurrita, and Pablo Piccato, *Hábitos, Normas Y Escándalo: Prensa, Criminalidad Y Drogas Durante El Porfiriato Tardío* 1. ed. (México, D.F.: Ciesas: Plaza y Valdes Editores, 1997), 148; Agostini, 87 (public works budget); Agostini 78, says average lifespan is 25.5 years, which seems low and must include infant mortality.

<sup>101</sup> Angel Rodríguez, *Profilaxis de las afecciones venereo-sifiliticas en el ejército* (México: Imprenta Gobierno, 1893), 26.

answered with violent mass protests, threatened medical staff with death, and frightened the officers. The discontent of soldaderas led directly to a tremendous rise in soldiers' desertions. Despite this, the General persevered and finally the women submitted to the regulation of showing a health ticket that gave such information as age, name, and physical features, and the results of an every eighth day physical examination. Still defiant, the women then made a mockery of the sanitary vigilance by ingeniously forging their own tickets. The Division's officers eventually discarded the practice; although it reappeared in ordinances in 1881, by 1893 almost no garrison followed the procedure.<sup>102</sup>

The high incidence of venereal diseases represented a failure for military hygienists who considered themselves the forefront of modernizing reforms, and they attempted to redress this in various ways. Syphilis and gonorrhoea, they believed, could only be controlled through the carriers whom they identified as the soldadera. Unfortunately, the ambiguous position of these women, as both wives and possible prostitutes, rendered this an improbable proposition.<sup>103</sup> The doctors came to recognize, especially in light of the Puebla experience, that they could more reasonably expect to treat the men captive in barracks.

Their attempts reflected the limited scientific knowledge of the day, although it drew from the best medical studies available, particularly those of Phillippe Ricord and Etienne Lancereaux from France.<sup>104</sup> European doctors also viewed their military forces as potential foci for venereal diseases, but they made special note of how the ravages of

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<sup>102</sup>A comparable protest rose from camp followers of the American Revolutionary forces, see Lynn 113.

<sup>103</sup>Rodríguez, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Etienne Lancereaux, *A Treatise on Syphilis, Historical and Practical*, trans. G. Whitley, Vol. 1 (London: New Sydenham Society, 1866).

syphilis applied especially to Mexico and Central America.<sup>105</sup> Ricord and his students had considerable influence on Mexico's hygienists, and their model of syphilis became the basis for Porfirian understandings of the disease. The French believed that environmental conditions had considerable influence on the spread of the disease, particularly hot climates, alcohol use, racial mixture, and over crowding.<sup>106</sup> They concluded that the best prophylaxis required supervision of prostitutes.<sup>107</sup>

European scientists had identified syphilis as separate from gonorrhoea in 1767 and as a three stage disease early in the nineteenth century.<sup>108</sup> After a possible one month period of incubation, the first stage was chiefly diagnosed by the presence of chancres on the penis. Notably, women were not so easily identified because their sores were internal, and there was widespread resistance by women and distaste among doctors for use of a speculum to inspect within.<sup>109</sup> Doctors had more luck discovering the second stage, whose symptoms included pallor, spots, and rashes. If untreated, with time this exacerbated into stage three syphilis, where organs and tissues began to decay and dissolve, potentially resulting in haemorrhage, organ failure, insanity, and death.

Ricord and his followers were, nevertheless, much less certain about the transmission and treatments for syphilis. They believed that transmission certainly occurred through vaccinations and on occasions spontaneously, the latter being proven by

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<sup>105</sup> Lancereaux, 8, 272 (on soldiers) and 58-59 (on Mexico).

<sup>106</sup> Lancereaux, 61, 92.

<sup>107</sup> Lancereaux, 63.

<sup>108</sup> Lancereaux, 92: gonorrhoea was mostly known as separate, although this was not a complete international consensus, for one example Charles Knowlton who believed nocturnal ejaculation related to venereal disorders under a blanket term, see "Gonorrhoea Dormientium" [1842], in *Attitudes Toward Sex In Antebellum America*, ed. H. Lefkowitz Horowitz (Boston: Bedford's, 2006), 85-88.

<sup>109</sup> Lancereaux, 66, 127.

the infection of respectable women. Occupations such as cooking, laundering, and glass-blowing also seemed to be related to the disease. They could not with certainty say that syphilis did not spread through kissing, nor did they believe semen had any transmissive properties.<sup>110</sup> Hence, they believed that the best means to prevent epidemics of syphilis in soldiers was the strict regulation and inspection of the women they had contact with—the location of the disease.<sup>111</sup> The question of how to control venereal diseases among the soldiers raised a number of practical issues.

Diagnostic methods fell short of the primitive, relying primarily on visual and olfactory inspections.<sup>112</sup> In Great Britain, these weekly genital inspections of soldiers gained the charming moniker of the “dangle parade.”<sup>113</sup> True diagnostic proof of syphilitic infection was not possible until the perfection of serum testing in 1949, so the once-over was truly at the height of medical sciences.<sup>114</sup> Nonetheless, this entailed special difficulties when doctors deemed women to be the carriers of the disease, as medical tests for women proved even less reliable than those for men. Given the long possible incubation stages of syphilis, the lack of external symptoms in women, and the existence of asymptomatic carriers, demanding invasive checks of females in contact with men engendered great resistance. In Mexico as in Europe, the only women that officials could

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<sup>110</sup> Lancereaux, (Vol. II) 228, 230-232, 239, 245.

<sup>111</sup> Lancereaux, 26.

<sup>112</sup> Lancereaux, 274, 275: in France every other day tests of prostitutes; Rodríguez, 28: in Mexico, from 1872 on, every 8th day checks considered sufficient.

<sup>113</sup> J. D. Oriel, *The Scars of Venus: A History of Venereology* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1994), 201.

<sup>114</sup> Oriel, 78: 1906 serum tests start but in 1949 perfected.

regularly force into such surveillance programs were prostitutes, and even that policy often failed.<sup>115</sup>

Failure also marked the attempted treatments for syphilis. In Europe and the United States, doctors and researchers had experimented with numerous possible cures from exotic woods to pure opium, and came back again and again to using mercury.<sup>116</sup> The alchemical mysticism surrounding mercury as a substance encouraged scientists to imbue it with mysterious properties. The French school under Ricord and Lancereaux, while warning of overdosing with mercury, continued to prescribe it as the best possible treatment with the addition of potassium chloride to mitigate its harmful effects. While this seemed, from anecdotal evidence, to reduce symptoms of syphilis, the treatment had no real effect on the disease and led to the slow painful death of many patients from heavy metal poisoning. Mexican hygienists followed suit and prescribed mercury and calomel cures in the modern fashion.

The new Porfirian military medical staff, formally instituted with ranks in 1880, undertook to diagnose and treat recruits as best they knew how.<sup>117</sup> They saw the army as a particular concern, even though the apparent rate of syphilis among soldiers fell below that of civilian populations.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, this was low even for soldiers. In 1892 only 1785 soldiers were diagnosed as syphilitic, a mere seven percent, which compares extremely favourably with the close to 30% boasted by many armies in World War

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<sup>115</sup> Katherine Elaine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 28; also see Luis Lara y Pardo, *La prostitución en México* (México D.F.: Librería de la Vda de Ch. Bouret, 1908) on prostitution rates and contemporary attitudes.

<sup>116</sup> Lancereaux, (Vol. 2) 243, 286-302, 290; Oriel, 88-89.

<sup>117</sup> See Chapter Three on medical corps.

<sup>118</sup> Rodríguez, 24.



One.<sup>119</sup> The barracks was supposed to be far better, and far more controllable, and so the soldier would need the full efforts of hygienists. Regulations for medical inspections insisted that each battalion, regiment, and garrison have a médico-cirujano on staff, and that they would hold an inspection of the genitals each week. The medical corps also worked to improve the training of military doctors.<sup>120</sup> These doctors saw regular evidence of syphilis in the army, and feared its effects on local communities. In the case of Diónicio Silva in 1877, they worried that his syphilitic issues would aggravate the disorders he could commit on the street.<sup>121</sup> They published a number of studies on the subject; in 1888 they laid blame on the soldiers' bad lifestyles and complained that this represented a waste of time spent in their training.<sup>122</sup> In 1891, the Military Hospital for Instruction began offering its doctors a clinical class on venereal and syphilitic diseases to remedy their lack of knowledge.<sup>123</sup>

Ángel Rodríguez's study suggested a number of new ways to deal with syphilis in 1893.<sup>124</sup> He argued that the "entrenched enemy" of syphilis could only be beaten if the army followed his suggestions. He argued the need to ban soldaderas from barracks, to quarantine the ill, to inspect soldiers' genitals, regularly and thoroughly, with punishment for anyone hiding his symptoms, and to force soldiers rigorously to clean their genitals. He added that if they did not find it repugnant to do so, all soldiers should be

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<sup>119</sup> "Memoria y mejoras en Hospital Militar de Instrucción 1889," *Gaceta Médico Militar* tomo II (1889), 329; Claude Quétel, *History of Syphilis* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1990), 176-177, 231.

<sup>120</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 372 ep-s Subtnt Diónicio Silva 12/5/77.

<sup>121</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 372 ep-s Subtnt Diónicio Silva 12/5/77: "chameros sifiliticos" which will aggravate with the "desordenes que pudiera cometer en la calle."

<sup>122</sup> AGN Gob. s/s Dep. Cuerpo Médico, Caja 653 exp. 8, SecGyM 8/3/1888—See *Gaceta Médico Militar* Tomo 4, 1893: Mayor Zurado y Gama, "Algunos consideraciones sobre la profilaxis de los enfermedades venereo-sifiliticas en el ejército," 176-186.

<sup>123</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 344 ep-g Tnt. Crl. Jose P Gayon 5/12/91.

<sup>124</sup> Rodríguez, 7.

circumcised, and he emphasised the need for education. Major Zurada y Gama echoed Rodríguez the next year, stressing that with education and read-aloud regulations, soldiers would understand the damage syphilis would do their health and to their family.<sup>125</sup> He also saw the soldadera as the major problem, and suggested that it was those women who were not legally wives that spread the disease between different soldiers in the garrison.<sup>126</sup> Doctors could point to cases such as Lieutenant Francisco Pérez whose third stage syphilis included severe ulceration of the throat, and confidently claimed they had cured him in two months time. Proof of their venereal mastery, they brought to bear the finest in European treatments to bring soldiers back to an illusion of health.<sup>127</sup>

Despite advances, the normal treatment continued to consist of mercury, cold baths, and electric shocks. Discarding talk of inoculations, which remained unproven, doctors prescribed mercury pills that were, in 1893, all the rage in Montpellier, France.<sup>128</sup> Zurado y Gama found his troops resistant to medicines and to circumcision, and seemed surprised that they should hide their symptoms from him—even though his principle treatment was the cauterization of genital sores.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, already in 1892, the most common operation in the medical corps was circumcision, but only about 70 were performed each year.<sup>130</sup> In a Monterrey garrison, three men with what may have been

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<sup>125</sup> Zurado y Gama, 182.

<sup>126</sup> Zurado y Gama, 180.

<sup>127</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 363 ep-p, Tnt. Francisco Perez, 12/31/93.

<sup>128</sup> “Tratamiento de la sífilis,” *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1893), 361: mercury pills delivered 10-20cg/day.

<sup>129</sup> Zurado y Gama, 183.

<sup>130</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1889), 330: in addition to 70 circumcisions, surgeons also performed 3 full castrations, presumably also related to venereal complications.

syphilis suffered a round of treatment that combined strychnine, electric shocks, coffee, and cold baths.<sup>131</sup>

The result of treatments did not instil great hopes, and reformers continued to lay the blame on the dubiously moral women of the garrisons rather than on gross medical ignorance and potentially iatrogenic treatments.<sup>132</sup> For example, in the Tenth Regiment doctors announced which women had syphilis to everyone. The betrayal of confidence was justified, they felt, since they limited their revelation to women who were not married, to those only interested in money, thus indicating both the doctor's respect for barracks weddings and their disdain for "un-ordered" women.<sup>133</sup> But Lancereaux's prescriptive devices also connected the venereal outbreaks with their environmental causes, especially substance abuse and cleanliness. Indeed diseases, cleanliness, and drug usage all connected the modernist discourses back to class expectations and the demands of modernity. It made little sense to treat chancres and symptoms then, without addressing the related perils of the disordered barracks lifestyle.<sup>134</sup>

### The Perils of the Barracks

Visions of moral and physical hygiene echoed attempts by the medical officers to reform the barracks. Sexuality represented one set of behaviours that shaped soldiers, but disease and environment transformed them in other ways. Conditions in the aging barracks contributed to health issues that positivist hygienists believed they could control.

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<sup>131</sup> Jesús M. González to Alberto Escobar, *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1893), 352-3.

<sup>132</sup> Bliss, 43, 53-61.

<sup>133</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1893), 360.

<sup>134</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 71, 1897, Mayor Médico Cirujano J. Hernández, "afección sífilítico contraído por vida desordenada"; *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1893), 329: blames women once again.

Soldiers' habits and vices likewise raised concerns over the creation of modern citizen with both morality and vigour. The poverty of the barracks family also restricted the treatment of their illnesses, and some complained that the soldier's wage simply could not stretch to cover medicine for his family. For soldiers, too, the lack of pesos at times led to self-medicating with local remedies that were cheaper than scientific pharmaceuticals, and perhaps as effective.<sup>135</sup> Understandings of the body changed as aspirations for science-based modernity built new demands. An unhealthy army suggested a sickly nation—the priorities of the regime made reforming bodies a national objective.<sup>136</sup>

The barracks represented an enormous challenge and expense due to their shameful states of disrepair. Most had never been intended for the purpose; the ex-conventos in particular made up the majority of these buildings and had been built to house relatively few clerics rather than the large number of men, women, and animals that they now sheltered. They could not simply discard the buildings; in 1879 they totalled over 7.7 million pesos worth of real estate.<sup>137</sup> On paper, the regime budgeted some 300 000 pesos for the upkeep of 83 (1899) barracks buildings, and roughly the same for vital repairs. It was a losing proposition; most buildings continued to disintegrate, and by 1920 those still standing required complete reconstructions that cost on average about 300 000 pesos per building.<sup>138</sup> They also made use of hundreds of unofficial and temporary lodgings for which the army paid rent (see chapter 3). As the

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<sup>135</sup> Grl. Ignacio Bravo to BR, 8/14/1900, CDX, Bernardo Reyes, Carpeta 29, Doc 5775: troops self-medicating; on funds, Aponte, 83.

<sup>136</sup> Rabinow, 17-20.

<sup>137</sup> *Memorias* 1879, "Informe," 110-112. (5935-38)

<sup>138</sup> Ortiz Rubio, *passim*.

national army extended its reach into the countryside and displaced local forces, the need grew to build or acquire quarters in previously un-garrisoned areas (see Appendix 1: Map 1 and chapter 3). Despite increases made to budgets and to medical advice, persistent shortcomings made troops' lives uncomfortable, unhealthy, and, at times, unbearable.

The military's buildings had many problems. Old, dilapidated, and not purpose-built, they fell far short as permanent fortified homes for hundreds of men, women, and children. Among their many issues: poor lighting, stagnant ventilation, no beds, no tables, dirty or absent water supplies, and lack of either windows or mosquito netting.<sup>139</sup> Poor air flow made summers miserable, lack of heating made winters awful.<sup>140</sup> The dismal environs and lack of illumination created a haven for mould and vermin, not to mention the psychological effect. Goals of civilizing recruits behaviour went unfulfilled as they found themselves eating and sleeping on the dirt of the patio, and they had to buy their own sleeping mat to ward off the chill at night. At times the chill prompted soldiers to light a fire despite the dangers of nearby powder magazines or flammable interiors.<sup>141</sup> Exposure to mosquitoes made for sleepless nights at best, and in some climates also led to anopheles-induced malaria.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, Yellow Fever continued to take its toll, between 1883 and 1885 killing 581 men in the port garrisons.<sup>143</sup> Quite simply, the convents converted to barracks were not modern, healthy, or pleasant—but their worst fault was poor supply and quality of water.

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<sup>139</sup> Felipe Angeles, *Revista del Ejército y Marina* 1908, 228.

<sup>140</sup> Ortiz Rubio, 17.

<sup>141</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 319 ep-a Ramiro Alvado: troops made fires in barracks twice near powder magazine.

<sup>142</sup> Reyes to PD, 1/6/1904, CDX BR, carpeta 35, doc 6850: mosquito nets used vs fiebre amarillo.

<sup>143</sup> *Memorias* 1886, Doc. 82, signed E. Cacho, 3/3/1886: for Veracruz, Mazatlan, Tepic, and Tampico alone.

Water shortage presented a ubiquitous complaint of medical officers, thirsty garrisons, and neighbouring civilians alike. For many units, especially cavalry, even drinking water remained in short supply. On this issue the barracks often clashed with local communities. The residents near Santiago Tlatelolco barracks complained bitterly to the city government about the cavalry regiment's overuse of the neighbourhood fountains as well as the demolition of parts of the fountain to help rebuild a wall in their barracks.<sup>144</sup> Nearly every garrison in Mexico City petitioned the municipal government for better water supplies. Like other residents, they had to apply and pay yearly for a *merced*, a grant allowing them to take a certain amount of water from the City supply.<sup>145</sup> The usual amount frequently failed to meet the requirements that hygienists called for, since per man allotments still only accounted for soldiers, and not their families or animals, and not for bathing or laundry. Taken together, water quality ailments incapacitated 20-50 % of ill soldiers, and represented a possible vector for the infection of civilian populations as well. Medical officers, with resulting public support, pushed engineers to improve potable supplies as part of the new modern society, but with meagre results.

Attempts to repair water pipes, dig wells, and pave streets came slowly, even in the Federal District, and more remote areas waited even longer. Local communities expressed concerns about the spread of disease from barracks, and officers seemed especially bothered by reports of *soldaderas* and their children contracting typhus.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Originarios del pueblo* to Sr. Pres. de Ayuntamiento, 10/10/1878, AHDF, Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 1312, Exp. 453, 461.

<sup>145</sup> The *merced* represented a set quantity in liters per minute, measured by a standard bronze tube.

<sup>146</sup> CPD on women and kids and typhus

Secretary of War Felipe Berriozábal used common fears to threaten the city government in 1897, declaring that the lack of water in the barracks must be mended with all haste to prevent a typhoid epidemic among troops, and thereby among all the inhabitants of the Capital.<sup>147</sup> The City said that their four square meters of water was sufficient, and denied any more, but the complaints continued for years. The barracks of the Military Police, with 150 men and 100 horses, were unable to wash daily, and the Seventh Regiment used horse troughs for bathing and drinking of both man and mount.<sup>148</sup> The First Battalion had faced over a year of inconstant water in 1878, and had resorted to taking enough for drinking directly from the Cathedral.<sup>149</sup>

The result: filthy soldiers at best, diseased at worst. Medical reports on infectious diseases indicate that compared to civilians, a soldier was somewhat less likely to contract fatal typhus (1.2:1.3). The barracks nonetheless took a toll, and military men had roughly twice the rate of death from tuberculosis than did their civilian counterparts (7.6:3.3). Because tuberculosis had lower absolute fatality, military doctors focussed on the typhoid issue—not surprisingly, they once again concluded that the blame for disease in the barracks came from soldaderas.<sup>150</sup> As with syphilis, the arguments of typhus prophylaxis insisted, to the point of frenzy, that women’s promiscuity resulted in lower-class unhygienic threats to the soldiers and the community. Again like syphilis, the

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<sup>147</sup> Felipe Berriozábal to Ayuntamiento DF 5/14/97, AHDF Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 34, Exp. 92.

<sup>148</sup> Cdte. Luis Figueroa, 10/9/1900, AHDF Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 34, Exp. 153.

<sup>149</sup> Jefe de 1 Battalion to Fomento to Ayuntamiento, 2/16/1878, AHDF Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 1312, Exp. 416.

<sup>150</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1891-93), 326-9; on civilian rates, Agostini, 67.

treatment did more harm than the disease, as typhoid sufferers received an injection of strychnine.<sup>151</sup>

Poor quality of water also aggravated disorders of the gastrointestinal tract and resulted in one of the most common causes of hospitalization and death during the Porfiriato. Hundreds of soldiers already afflicted with syphilitic damage added to the thousands more for whom bad water had inflamed or aggravated stomach issues. Dysentery and enteritis afflicted enormous numbers of soldiers and civilians in the capital, and annual flooding led to periods of higher disease rates. Many soldiers, rightly leery of their water, attempted to drink only beer or pulque. Lack of sewage facilities made stomach ailments nightmarish, and the city of Mexico became renowned for its reek. For medical staff, the stinginess of civilian officials prevented proper water supplies, and the refusal to dig artesian wells seemed a greedy ploy.<sup>152</sup>

Even when military units had sufficient water, other problems arose. From the Sixth Battalion in Yucatan in 1902, Victoriano Huerta wrote to the Secretary of War that he could not convince his soldiers to wash their faces; in fact, he claimed that his soldiers were, for some mysterious reason, afraid to do so.<sup>153</sup> Other units, presumably less afraid of water, still complained of their dirty conditions and the omnipresent lice. For hygienists, the filth of this sort was concomitant with lower-class behaviour and the absent morality and social diseases. Lack of washing represented both a symptom and

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<sup>151</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1891-93), 328; strychnine is a potent poison, that can cause convulsions, paranoia, and respiratory failure.

<sup>152</sup> Johns, 43-46; AGN, Gob. s/s, Salubridad, Caja 791 exp. 4, 1906, "Informes" for January and June, 1906.

<sup>153</sup> Victoriano Huerta to Bernardo Reyes, 3/31/02, CDX BR Carpeta 34, Doc 6741.



cause for the problems they associated with what they called the life of disorder, the anti-hygienic.

Adding to the problems of water supply, sewage treatment at many barracks presented a considerable issue, one made worse by the daily eviction of the soldaderas. For hours each day, the soldiers' wives and children were homeless, wandering the nearby streets while the barracks did its daily business. Unfortunately, many areas also lacked any public facilities. In 1870, neighbours of the San José de la Gracia barracks complained to the City government about soldaderas' abuses against health and public morality.<sup>154</sup> They claimed that the women left the sidewalks covered in fecal materials, turning their corner of the street into a veritable dung heap. The deposits, solid and liquid, produced an awful stench and a public disgrace. In this incident, perhaps the most blatant irruption of barracks into street, the connections between class, hygiene, and morality once again focused public scrutiny on soldaderas as the embodiment of obstacles to modernity.

### The Vida Desordenada

Environmental and sexual factors aside, the health of the soldier degraded at his own hands. The contraband that men obtained, much of it smuggled into barracks by the women, brought soldiers' new opportunities to harm their health and reputation.<sup>155</sup> The soldadera acted as a vivandière, providing the things of life for relatively small price. Among these items, she brought and sold cigarettes, marijuana, pulque, aguardiente, and

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<sup>154</sup> Inspector de Cuartel #11 to Gobierno D.F., 7/22/1870, AHDF Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 3669 Exp. 98.

<sup>155</sup> Lynn, 138; *Tropa Vieja*, 41; Van Creveld, 94.

on occasion even opium. Drugs, tobacco, and alcohol presented bored and desperate men with the means to escape the confinements of routine barracks life.<sup>156</sup> The life of disorder that concerned the hygienists and writers of the day associated the habits and practices of lower classes, the pelados or léperos, with their lack of Darwinistic fit to the modern nation. The gente decente's preoccupations aside, the men and women of the barracks continued to intoxicate themselves as a normal and comforting custom. That these behaviours spilled regularly into streets from the supposedly sealed barracks only added to popular disdain of the army.

For the military, repressing these habits represented a class issue—the endemic issue of alcoholism, for example, applied for the lower class who could not help themselves, the middle class who should know better, and the upper class for their tragic disease. Thus, the poor were animals because they were poor, the middle elements needed better education, and the wealthy needed more discretion to hide their sad condition.<sup>157</sup> Efforts to have soldiers in the barracks become civilized individuals represented a grave disappointment, and to some degree officers simply gave up on truly impeding the flow of contraband into the barracks. Nor were young sub-lieutenants and lieutenants well suited to the task; as mentioned earlier, by night many feared to enter the darker spaces of the barracks and few officers had sufficient nerve to invade with the intention of seizing intoxicants from rowdy soldiers.

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<sup>156</sup> Aponte, 49.

<sup>157</sup> *Ley penal militar*, 1897, Tit. 2, Cap.1, on “embriagues”; Art. 236-240, on drinking; Art. 238, officers in uniform to get three to six months arrest. Art. 239 sergeants or cabos, with habitual drinking sentenced with “destitución de empleo.”; officers drinking in uniform faced public censure as well, see “Oficiales en las cantinas,” *El Diario del Hogar* (April 29, 1903), 24.

There also existed some rationales for allowing soldiers access to intoxicants, provided that it was intermittent and either supervised or kept hidden behind garrison walls. Drinking in the barracks helped to ease tensions, if done in moderation, allowing men and women a space to relax and enjoy their otherwise hard lives. The social function of alcohol helped reduce desertions, making life in the army a bit less onerous and also siphoning away some of the cash a would-be deserter might use for his getaway. The intoxication also represented an important rite of passage; in many military systems the tradition of the “blow-out” was considered necessary to foster a sense of toughness, masculinity, and group solidarity.<sup>158</sup> Bonding over booze was as old a custom among soldiers as was bragging about it later. In the case of the Porfirian barracks, the community ties built by heavy drinking brought together soldiers, NCOs, subaltern officers, and soldaderas. All the same, alcoholism presented society with a serious problem.

Alcoholism became a prime concern of hygienic and scientific officials during the Porfiriato, and this applied with special power in the military. As a problem, it was certainly nothing new.<sup>159</sup> But a new and scientific discourse on alcoholism corresponded with increased surveillance on the civilizing bodies of the army. Proscriptions of drunkenness led officials to bring regulations and punishments to bear against the vices of the *ebrio*, or habitual drunkard.<sup>160</sup> Among officers, drunkenness was a matter of

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<sup>158</sup> Paul Higate, *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 22, 26; on Mexico see Toxqui, 69, 70, 113.

<sup>159</sup> See William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), passim; Pablo Piccato, “No es posible cerrar los ojos,” in *Hábitos*, ed. Pérez Montfort et al., 75-142; Toxqui, passim.

<sup>160</sup> “Embriaguez,” *Derecho Militar* (May 4, 1895), 1-2.

shame—public appearance was the primary concern. In the ranks, by contrast, alcoholism and *escándalo* represented the normal state of affairs. The men drank hard and often, and the women with them. Women smuggled in most of the alcohol, indeed the term *vivandera* from *vivandière* was often synonymous with smuggler in contemporary lexicons, relating the *vender* to her means. Hollowed loaves, soup pots, and concealed wineskins brought the full range of brews into the barracks: *sotol*, *pulque*, beer, *aguardiente*, *charanda*, and of course, *tequilas*.

Drinking to excess was not, in itself, the problem. Rather, alcohol abuse only appeared officially as a problem under certain circumstances such as serious fights, public spectacles, or the undermining of military functions. In all cases, the violation of the dignity and morality of the ideal soldier, as much as his physical welfare, lay at the root of chastisements for inebriated troops.

Drunken brawling in the barracks occurred with routine frequency. Aponte remarked on the appearance of troops cut up and bloody, with knives still in hand and alcohol on their breath. He did not concern himself with the event, other than commenting that the officers of that garrison lacked the judicial knowledge to deal properly with their troops—the knife fight did not otherwise surprise him.<sup>161</sup> In personnel files, the great frequency of minor charges for wounding or assaulting bears up the general rough nature of garrison life, and the majority of these cases specifically mention drunkenness, suggesting that responsibility for violence was mitigated by alcohol.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Aponte, 78.

<sup>162</sup> AGN CMDF Fondo Guerra y Marina, expedientes personales, *passim*.

Accidents suffered by drunken soldiers, strangely enough, received official concern and investigation. For example, the death of soldier Timoteo Cisneros occasioned a full inquiry after a wall trestle crushed his skull while he was inebriated on pulque.<sup>163</sup> In another case, a drunken soldier fell and cut open his head in the street near his Mexico City barracks. It is remarkable that such an ordinary occurrence should gain the attention of military authorities, but Felipe Martínez's case generated a full report all the way up the hierarchy to the regional commander.<sup>164</sup> What truly seemed to concern the army, it seemed, was when the dregs of the barracks spilled into nearby communities.

Numerous accounts of drunken soldiers of all ranks and branches in the streets, gave evidence of civilian prejudice and barracks leakage alike. Despite efforts to keep soldiers locked away in barracks, reports of alcohol related crimes made it clear how the military frequently spilled into the community. The cantinas and pulquerías and their products brought out the worst side of the soldiers. It seems that after three months seclusion, soldiers had increasing opportunities to spend evenings out, especially with junior officers who had similar habits. These expeditions did not receive official notice; rather they appear in records only in the context of other events or complaints. For example, two NCOs out on the town were nearly trampled by a carriage in a narrow alleyway and saved themselves only by striking the lead horse. Unfortunately, the carriage driver was their Major and they were forced to prove that they were not

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<sup>163</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 335 ep-c, Timoteo Cisneros: in hearing of 1898, suffered a blow to the head while drinking pulque.

<sup>164</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep-n Soldado Músico, 12 Regt. Felipe Martínez, Wednesday 7/6/98: fell drunk on head in street.

drunkenly attacking him in a counsel of war.<sup>165</sup> Although technically prohibited from unescorted excursions, these and numerous other reports indicated that troops had some access to the streets.

The issue of fraternization particularly worried senior staff. Junior officers on numerous occasions faced charges for taking their men to local bars in the evening, taking advantage of the opportunity to have a few drinks while also ingratiating themselves with the troops.<sup>166</sup> In one case, a recently promoted officer went drinking with his sergeant, and when confronted by police for his rude public behaviour, gave them a false name and instigated a fight.<sup>167</sup> Some officers went further; one captain received complaints because the cantina he opened within the barracks had unfairly high prices.<sup>168</sup>

Since soldiers represented a potentially lucrative market, cantinas tended to proliferate in the same areas as barracks, and this brought inebriated troops into the awareness of the local community.<sup>169</sup> Conflicts rose between soldiers and civilians, as in the case of José Millan who, in a drunken rage, refused to pay his bill in a cantina, beat up the owner, and fought the arresting police officers.<sup>170</sup> Fighting with police seemed almost a tradition. In 1898, two inebriated soldiers kept arresting officers at bay by

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<sup>165</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 330 Mayor Agustin Camacho y Arrayo, Tues 2/17/1891.

<sup>166</sup> Two examples: AGN, CMDF Caja 357 ep-m, Subtnt. Antonio Manzano, Tuesday 1/7/79: with troops in pulquería; AGN, CMDF Caja 368 ep-r, Subtnt. 11<sup>th</sup> B, Jesús Rivas, Monday 1/6/79: in pulquería with troops.

<sup>167</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 335 ep-c, Subtnt. Cleofas Córdova: with Sgt Antonio Quinines drunk in street, claims to police that he is Manuel Gonzalez, receives 1 month sentence in Prisión Militar de Santiago.

<sup>168</sup> Geronimo Treviño to PD, 3/8/1891, CPD Leg 16 Caja 7, Doc 3064-66: captain opened a cantina for the detachment.

<sup>169</sup> For example, Frías, 8: reports the presence of a cantina directly across from Peralvillo Barracks; Toxqui, 198: provides map of 570 pulquerías in downtown of Mexico City.

<sup>170</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 359 ep-m, Soldado José Millan, 1/24/1898.

throwing rocks at them.<sup>171</sup> In another instance, a soldier with nearby family began a lengthy brawl with a local storeowner, and with responding policemen, that eventually ended up in an uneasy siege of his barracks and a showdown between civil and military authorities.<sup>172</sup> The reputation of the army as hard-drinking and riotous was well-entrenched, so much so that the rare unit that did not cause problems would be specifically noted for their morality.<sup>173</sup> Despite the seriousness of the alcohol issue, troops continued to receive a shot of hard liquor in the morning, and officers continued to lace their coffees with tequila.<sup>174</sup> Public censure instead focused on the Doña Juanita, the toasted tortilla, the *chupito*—marijuana.

Marijuana represented a drug most uniquely associated with the Mexican army, by both press accounts and popular opinions. This, as other contraband, entered the barracks in sometimes clever ways. Women concealed it in clothes, in food, and in their hair. Soldiers concealed it in hat bands and belts, and musicians commonly hid it inside their instruments. As with other elements, the officers attempted to prevent its entrance. In 1900, one commander ordered scrupulous inspection of all incoming women to prevent their trafficking in the dangerous herb to soldiers.<sup>175</sup> Considered in the press as the scourge of the troops, marijuana use was associated chiefly with barracks and with prisons, blending the two spaces in popular conception.<sup>176</sup> The use of the drug,

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<sup>171</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep-n, Soldados Porfirio López and Severiano Marin, Monday 7/4/1898.

<sup>172</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 355, ep-1 Alf. Genaro Lozero, 2/22/1884.

<sup>173</sup> Letter from Sociedad de agricultores de San Martín, AGN, Gob. s/s, Caja 362 exp. 1, 6/22/93: specifically comments on how the soldiers (as opposed to one officer) are moral and only rarely in tavern.

<sup>174</sup> Frías, 21: on lacing coffee with tequila; other reports are endemic to CMDF records and newspapers.

<sup>175</sup> “Vigilancia en los cuarteles,” *La patria* (Thursday, March 1 1900), 2.

<sup>176</sup> Isaac Campos-Costero, “Marijuana, Madness, and Modernity in Global Mexico, 1545-1920” (Ph.D. Diss.: Harvard University, 2006), 222,237; on smuggling see *Tropa Vieja*, 78.

nonetheless, long preceded the Porfiriato, and early corridos associated marijuana with the infamous Antonio López de Santa Ana, among others.<sup>177</sup> The sale and use of marijuana, as with many drugs, only became illegal in 1884 in Mexico. Extraordinarily cheap in the street markets, it could be purchased for as little as fifty centavos per kilogram.<sup>178</sup> Particularly after it became illegal, it represented a lucrative commodity for those with access to barracks or prisons, and soldaderas sold it with a heavy mark-up, usually around ten centavos for a single cigarette.<sup>179</sup>

Public perceptions painted the marihuanero in the press as a dangerous figure, far worse than mere drunks. For example, three men and three women began a brawl in front of the pulquería “La Montaña Rusa” in 1895. The difficulty the police had in subduing them was attributed to one man who had apparently been smoking marijuana, and become insane from it.<sup>180</sup> Two months later the same paper blamed a brutal attack on a sergeant by a soldier, who gave him blows to the head with a rock, and insisted the cause of the outburst was marijuana.<sup>181</sup> In the 21st Battalion five years later, a different paper reported how two soldiers, intoxicated on marijuana, had slain a comrade in the barracks and now faced the death penalty. They reported that the drug had made the men lose control of their faculties.<sup>182</sup> The same paper commented outright that just as thieves were a lesser evil compared to murderers, rowdy drunks were less dangerous than marijuana

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<sup>177</sup> *Hábitos*, 186.

<sup>178</sup> *Hábitos*, 187-8.

<sup>179</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 70; *La Patria* (Sunday December 16, 1894), 3.

<sup>180</sup> “Escándalo y agresión a la policía,” *El Nacional* (Wednesday Sept. 25, 1895), 3.

<sup>181</sup> “Otro delito militar,” *El Nacional* (Wednesday Oct. 28, 1895), 3.

<sup>182</sup> “El drama en 21 Batallon,” *La Patria* (Thursday Oct. 25, 1900), 3.



smokers.<sup>183</sup> This seemed true if press reports could be believed. In 1902, a woman screaming in the streets attracted the attention of pedestrians and police. She claimed that a nearby man had stolen from her, and accompanied the police and unlucky man to the precinct. Upon further questioning, she revealed with perfect calm that the man had robbed her of her soul, and doctors determined she was afflicted by marijuana. The press also saw the drug in more cosmopolitan light, if still a danger. In an 1895 article, the author compares it to Baudelaire's descriptions of hashish. He claimed that while the coarse smoking soldier could not express the experience with French eloquence, they nonetheless became somewhat Oriental in a dishevelled manner. He continues in a sarcastic tone to describe their harem of young poor girls that then become involved with such men.<sup>184</sup> The popular marijuana user thus emerged as insane, psychotic, vulgar, and violent.

This vision accorded with what some military officers wrote. The pernicious influence they attributed to the drug, exacerbated by alcohol, raised grave concerns about morality and discipline at least, and about crazed violence at worst.<sup>185</sup> Mondragón claimed that it dominated men, ruined their minds, and made their limbs weak.<sup>186</sup> Urquiza pointed to the marijuana smoker as the last stage of military degeneracy.<sup>187</sup> In one of his tales, when a group of soldiers encountered a witch they sent in an ugly

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<sup>183</sup> "Escarceos," *La Patria* (Friday, Dec. 21, 1900), 1.

<sup>184</sup> "Fuegos Fatuos," *El Nacional* (Friday, Dec. 5, 1895), 1.

<sup>185</sup> Two examples: Alcade to Gobernador, AGN, Gob. s/s, Caja 760 exp.3, 12/30/03: government has not made jail a school of morality because soldiers introduce gambling, and marijuana; AGN, CMDF Caja 360 ep-n Soldado 16<sup>th</sup> B, Cruz Sira 5/28/98, very pernicious behaviour because continuously drunk on aguardiente and bringing his marijuana into barracks.

<sup>186</sup> Mondragón, 11.

<sup>187</sup> Urquiza, "Juan soldado," 49.

corporal because he might be a brujo too, or at least a marihuanero—suggesting that he was expendable. She turned him into a rooster for his troubles, and the other soldiers fled, one marijuana-smoker fewer in number.<sup>188</sup> Aponte described a more serious drug encounter where a hallucinating soldier on Doña Juanita saw an ocean scene and attempted to swim on the floor. He then imagined himself a condor and madly threw himself against walls trying to fly. To Aponte's shock, the officers beat the man severely, put him in a cold bath, and left him to sober in a corner.<sup>189</sup> The medical establishment in the army was scarcely better informed, and wrote nothing about marijuana until 1898, when they simply said that it seemed to have harmful effects similar to tobacco.<sup>190</sup>

The troops themselves had a somewhat different take on the herb, sometimes called toasted tortilla or other nicknames. Smoking it afforded a rare opportunity to relax, and importantly, to forget the hardships of service life, even more effectively than could be accomplished with alcohol alone. In the words of one, the freeing little herb was the consolation of the imprisoned, the eraser of miseries, and the music of the heart.<sup>191</sup> His compatriot described his experience as a descent into deafness and blindness to the mundane world, with senses suddenly sharpening to take in colours and sounds he had not noticed, and a profound feeling of wellbeing. His thoughts turned to sex, to far off family, and even to politics, flitting from topic to topic.<sup>192</sup> The experience, in short, fit far better with clinical descriptions of the effects of cannabis. Nonetheless, when discovered

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<sup>188</sup> Urquizo, "Una historia de brujas," 60.

<sup>189</sup> Aponte, 81.

<sup>190</sup> *Gaceta Médico Militar*, 1898, cited in *Hábitos*

<sup>191</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 70.

<sup>192</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 71-2.

intoxicated by his officer and NCOs, they beat him and made him run around the patio until he sweated the drug out of his system.

So how then to explain the markedly different perceptions of marijuana between press and participants? The relatively mild symptoms of normal cannabis intake match closely with descriptions by the soldiers. Those engaged in the panicked discourse of drug fiends in the streets either spoke of a different drug entirely or exaggerated for effect. The likeliest explanation would be that normal usage escaped notice, but occasionally users either had pre-existing mental conditions, or encountered adulterated drugs laced with a hallucinogen such as opium, psilocybin, or peyote. The resultant hallucinations, psychoses, and paranoia could produce the kinds of episodes newspapers reported. While many scientists deemed marijuana a minor nuisance, if one unseemly for soldiers, in this case moral outrage by the gente decente trumped medical opinion.

Tobacco, although contraband, entered barracks most easily. Smoking was only mildly discouraged despite contemporary studies that argued for its harms.<sup>193</sup> In a second opinion, Doctor Alberto Escobar even felt that tobacco, if taken with coffee, was perfectly acceptable.<sup>194</sup> Although some certainly died from tobacco use, smoking was a normal practice.<sup>195</sup> The long history of smoking and its prevalence in village and rural life meant that smoking did not become a soldier's bond to service, as it had been in the French military. Eugen Weber argued that the French soldier-citizen, after his conscripted service, left the army with a newfound habit that set him apart from village life and a

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<sup>193</sup> "El abuso del tabaco," *Gaceta Médico Militar* (1889-1893), 20-21.

<sup>194</sup> Escobar, *Higiene*, 144, 153.

<sup>195</sup> Although suggested by rates of lung disorders, the only specific death I discovered was AGN, CMDF Caja 374 ep-t, Cpt. Ygnacio Tirado 7/21/82: died from tobacco use.

sense of solidarity that built on the imagined reality of nationhood.<sup>196</sup> By contrast, it excited little comment by either Mexican officers or society. Perhaps only in its resemblance to marijuana did it ever evoke any public reaction whatsoever.

Indeed, tobacco regularly was given to soldiers as a reward for good behaviour or to mark festival days.<sup>197</sup> Ordinary brands of cheap cigarettes were accounted part of a soldier's daily expenses, indicating that smoking was endemic and as necessary as polish or other daily trifles paid for by the army.<sup>198</sup> Nonetheless, soldiers did appreciate the gift of cigarettes on days such as September 15, and commented favourably when they received better brands such as Tabaco del Tigre, or Canela Pura.<sup>199</sup> It seems that as an accepted vice smoking provided an exception to proscriptions on the disordered life, and belonged to the realm of sociability and leisure.

### Fun and Games

The sense of danger and degradation in the barracks does not describe the full range of life or social experience. Card games, sports, theatre, music, and promenades afforded alternatives to less acceptable behaviours. Simply drinking and smoking left men with attention and hands to spare for other activities. Leisure was an important part of life and one that revealed much about individual and group views of community. Their choices for fun and entertainment, though significant in their own rights, also reveal a sense of social unity, of fatalism, and of resistance to military dictates. Fun built solidarity in ways that sometimes countered official aspirations for discipline.

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<sup>196</sup> Eugen Weber, 292-303.

<sup>197</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 37, 82.

<sup>198</sup> Tobacco was cheap, Mondragón, 37: recommends 5centavos/day for tobacco and soap etc.

<sup>199</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 82.

The lack of appropriate troop entertainments was a concern for a number of reasons. Captain Rodolfo Casillas, after a three-year mission to Fort Riley in the U.S., made a lengthy report for the *Revista de Ejército y Marina* in 1910.<sup>200</sup> Comparing the two armies, he argued that Mexican soldiers absolutely lacked basic healthy distractions, which he felt would mitigate the monotony that troops routinely suffered.<sup>201</sup> Sports appeared as the ideal type of leisure activity that might counter what he referred to as the ennui and sadness of barracks life. Casillas recommended that the army impose practices that would instil a taste for activity in the recruits. This could include passive pursuits such as watching movies, circuses, theatre, and bullfights. Other than the latter, he suggested that these shows could come to the barracks, and would also represent a properly national entertainment. His report also highly recommended increased free time for soldiers, expanding on the usual practice of leaves on Sunday or festivals, and noted that U.S. soldiers were allowed to spend nights at home with their families. Finally, he pointed out that the U.S. military provided shops, billiards, swimming pools, gyms, libraries, and dances to their troops, and had a correspondingly better record of morale and low desertion. In particular, he claimed that sports contributed to health and solidarity; the U.S. army encouraged participation in boxing, basketball, baseball, football, polo, and track events. While some of these did not fit Mexican tastes, Casillas's hope was that increasing opportunities to play organized sports would vent soldiers' frustrations and build teamwork.<sup>202</sup> Perhaps too late, perhaps too expensive, the army did

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<sup>200</sup> Capt. Rodolfo Casillas, "Vida Del Soldado Americano," *Revista Del Ejército y Marina* (June 1910), 36-

<sup>201</sup> Interview of Rodolfo Casillas (by Alexis Arroyo, 1961, Instituto Mora and INAH, PHO1/104).

<sup>202</sup> Casillas, "Vida," 40-1; Shilling, 166: on sports versus violence; James H. Frey and D. Stanley Eitzen, "Sports and Society," *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991), 503-522.

not implement sports programs although they had been slowly providing more spectator entertainments and leave time.

Soldiers did enjoy supervised leave on occasion, and as discussed earlier, also managed to exit barracks on their own at times. Officially, granting leave (*dar franco*) was the prerogative of an officer of the week who had limited discretion to allow soldiers out into streets. Those who abused this power went before superiors on charges.<sup>203</sup> A certain balance proved necessary; too many leaves was permissive, undermined discipline, and facilitated desertions, while too few would hurt morale and encourage desertion attempts. Still, soldiers and their barracks families did spend time in local communities, if generally escorted by officers. Those considered trusted soldiers (*soldados de confianza*) after three years service were allowed out without supervision at times, provided they returned to the garrison by a certain hour. These sanctioned excursions usually occurred on Sundays, as opposed to the individual drinking binges or clandestine escapes.

The public spectacle of marching through towns and cities represented a way for the military to manage and control the ideal separation between barracks and streets. Troops out in public took the chance to stroll through markets, to shop, and to loiter. Sugar cane and oranges seem to have been common cheap purchases, although some less legitimate treats undoubtedly were also bought.<sup>204</sup> Controlled and supervised, the troops could present civilians an unthreatening and orchestrated image, making the army a normal part of public space without rigid formality. Soldiers did feel themselves on

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<sup>203</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 351 ep-h, Tnt. Jorge Holzinger, 8/1/78.

<sup>204</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 54.

display, and some bemoaned the state of uniforms or shoes that lacked what they envisioned as properly modern or prosperous appearance.<sup>205</sup> They also took this opportunity to relax with soldaderas, and to announce partnerships to public and to comrades by handholding during Sunday strolls.

Long before Casillas's report, these afternoons sometimes included attending a bullfight. Advertisements suggested an oddly patronizing and perhaps educative element to this practice; bullrings offered half-price tickets for children and for troops in formation, meaning under supervision of officers.<sup>206</sup> As Casillas later suggested, these shows entailed a national practice, perhaps one that would make indigenous conscripts more Mexican. The Porfirian elite also made attempts to ban blood-sports as too primitive or barbaric for a modern, Europe-like nation, and so, at least in Mexico City, the opportunity to see bullfights would be curtailed.<sup>207</sup> In any case, much of the soldier's free time would occur inside the barracks' walls, compared to these other more rare excursions.

Gaming with cards and dice was a favourite activity in garrisons throughout the Republic. Soldiers and officers alike played, in their own separate games and places, but women seem to have rarely joined in. As opportunities to gamble, these games required a bit of money and either the forty card Spanish deck (*barajo*) or a set of bone dice.<sup>208</sup> The age old practice of gambling among soldiers forged friendships and raised rivalries. The appeals of the games, at least at low stakes, included the relaxed social setting for talking

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<sup>205</sup> Interview of Trinidad Vega (by Ximena Sepúlveda, 10/29/73, Instituto Mora and INAH, PHO 1/126).

<sup>206</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 54.

<sup>207</sup> William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 16-17.

<sup>208</sup> For specific games and meaning see Toxqui, 114-116; *Tropa Vieja*, 67.

and bonding, the possibility to occasionally feel lucky, and the simple, fun, filling of idle hours. Yet the higher risk aspects of a high stakes game also created both more excitement and more conflicts.

The exchange of money, goods, or debts among soldiers could lead to theft and violence, and, officially, the military discouraged it. Officers and regulations could not easily prevent gambling, given the difficult of ascertaining at a distance a friendly game from one with stakes. Furthermore, the officers were among the worst offenders themselves, often too busy gambling and drinking to effectively police their own troops' behaviours.<sup>209</sup> For the most part, soldiers had too little money to get into much trouble, and perhaps, better judgement than the army credited them. Relatively few charges or complaints appear in the records in comparison with the sheer numbers who played everyday without problems. Still, some did stray. Men who lost too much became desperate, and numerous anecdotes connect a criminal reaction with the misfortunes caused by lady luck. At other times, fortune favoured the prepared, and accounts warn of playing dice against the wily veterans of the army who came with loaded dice and card tricks.<sup>210</sup> When all else failed, song was free.

Music filled the Porfirian barracks by night. As tunes spilled into streets neighbours recalled hearing and enjoying army bands.<sup>211</sup> The military bands also frequently performed for the public in arranged venues, but they were equally ready to

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<sup>209</sup> Frías, 113, 140

<sup>210</sup> Urquizo, "De la Vida militar," 49.

<sup>211</sup> Interview of Fausto Becerril (by Eugenia Meyer, 1974, Instituto Mora and INAH, PHO1/61): recalls listening to the music of the Barracks across from Ildefonso, in downtown Mexico City



accompany soldiers for less stilted material, chiefly corridos.<sup>212</sup> Whether with instruments or not, men sang in evenings and free times in garrison or on campaign. Their sad songs of tragedy and betrayal, of bandits and bullfighters, brought the outside world into army life.<sup>213</sup> The music of lower-classes represented their stylistic taste, and also held deeper social meanings as they channelled rage and hostility into group solidarity.<sup>214</sup> Of course, there were occasional critics; one officer locked his band in a room and shot at their feet as a dance lesson.<sup>215</sup> But the songs that gave men and women the taste of home was enough reason to sing in itself. They were an acceptable way to express emotions, to vent loneliness, and were an important measure of cultural capital—every unit desired a good singer. And more, in the repertoire certain songs held special appeal as they spoke to military life, and significantly, challenged it through subversive lyrics and subtle mockeries.

One such song was “De los indios Mayas del 28 Batallón” from around 1900.<sup>216</sup> The song purports to tell the story of General Ignacio Bravo’s defeat of the Maya uprising at Santa Cruz de Chemal (see chapter 3, lyrics in Appendix 2). It describes the soldiers and their victory that destroyed the indigenous enemy. A closer reading of the lyrics reveals a message of resistance and subversion of military narrative. The song played on the idea that the soldiers, rather than the Maya, were the protagonist Indians of the corrido. It described them as cannon fodder, and suggested their slyness through

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<sup>212</sup> For example, see official repertoire of 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion: AGN, CMDF Caja 323 ep-a, Cpt. Santiago Avadaño.

<sup>213</sup> Frías, 39, 114.

<sup>214</sup> E.P. Thompson, 485: speaking of rough music, but also of popular or lower-class music more generally, he points out that it often channels rage and hostility that is felt towards conditions of life.

<sup>215</sup> AGN, CMDF Caja 95 ep-d, Cpt. Luis Delgado 3/2/77: “dar cañonazos a banda.”

<sup>216</sup> See Appendix for lyrics; from Mendoza, 21-23.

wordplay. The good but poorly forged soldiers became the Indians dying of fright and screaming “no more.” The song referred to their burnt fields, the homes the recruit had left behind. It mourned the warfare as the soldier yearns to leave all Indians behind and move overseas instead of seeing the Hell all around him. Snidely commenting on officers, the corrido explained how one was shot in the brain to no effect, but he died anyways. It ended with a veiled criticism of General Bravo, saying he made the Indians run but not specifying which Indians this meant.

Other corridos took up the same theme, including “De los Tomochis,” that referred to battle against millenarians in the town of Tomochic.<sup>217</sup> The lyrics spoke, once again, of fighting against Indians, even though the uprising was by mestizos. Thus, they could build on the theme of the indigenous soldier, even in an apparently patriotic song. This corrido also made an oblique reference to executions. The Indians died fighting in twos and threes, shot down. Other corridos made note of the heroic and preferred tragic death, an execution with three shots to the heart and two to the head. With this twist, the Indians of Tomochic, actually federal conscripts, faced heroic executions in the cause of God over government. Clearly, the lyrics ran counter to the official military narrative of the campaign.

The importance of music in barracks also appeared in the corridos themselves, as in the song “Del desertor o Juan Soldado,” apparently a favourite in some garrisons.<sup>218</sup> This song told the tragic tale of a youth taken by the leva at age fifteen. He came to love

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<sup>217</sup> Mendoza, 23, 24; on Tomochic see Frías, entire; also Paul J. Vanderwood, *The Power of God against the Guns of Government*.

<sup>218</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 101: singing “Juan Soldado” in barracks; lyrics in Mendoza, 147-150.

his regiment, and rapidly rose to sergeant, but chose to desert to his land and his mother. Captured and abused by a mounted patrol, Juan faced execution. That his mother was weeping becomes the repeated lyrical counterpoint to the chorus, that the military band “toquen y toquen” (played and played). Music framed Juan’s experience in the army, his mother’s sobbing interjects. The unfortunate man made his goodbyes, and was shot dead, two in the head, three in the heart.

A final example was the corrido “De Bruno Apresa,” another tragic execution taking place like “Juan Soldado” in the Second Regiment of Morelia.<sup>219</sup> Bruno and his sergeant both had relations with the same soldadera, but one night she brought a plate of food to the NCO rather than the soldier. While on sentry duty, the enraged Bruno shot his rival in the back, but accidentally also wounded his corporal. The song suggested that the accident led to Bruno’s sentence, implying that murder of a rival would not suffice. Two years later, the soldier died in front of a firing squad after more than seven shots. An American impressed by his bravery offered to buy Bruno’s kepi for an enormous five pesos, intending it as a souvenir, but the captain refused to sell it. The corrido ended by repeatedly proclaiming Bruno’s manliness. Tough, masculine, and not for sale to foreigners, the tragic figure of the soldier struck a chord and represented how the singers envisioned their own military ideal.

Moving beyond song, conversation in myriad forms built community and filled leisure spaces.<sup>220</sup> From murmurs and complaints to rumours and obscenities, troops and

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<sup>219</sup> Mendoza, 150.

<sup>220</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 47.

families formed and gave expression to their circumstances.<sup>221</sup> The barracks developed its own language, a cant indecipherable to officers that wed a community of conscripts from various regions who may not otherwise have shared a common tongue. A measure of autonomy and resistance in itself, barracks argot was significant to the expression of social hierarchy within the group and mastery of cant indicated belonging and status. As soldiers and soldaderas gave it voice, they built their own sense of identity in the whispers and mutters of the old ex-convento.

Outside of formations the conversations did not cease. People shared rumours and scuttlebutt, and complained as soldiers have throughout history. They swore at one another with the same terms favoured by NCOs, but seemingly without the rancor.<sup>222</sup> Obscenities were markers of status, claims to power, that corresponded with other more physical means to establish hierarchy and position.<sup>223</sup> As a class activity, cursing set aside suspicions of over-education or pretension, and made clear ones fit within the social strata—eloquence mattered far less than inventive imprecations. Barracks talk also instructed new-comers.

Rites of institution include group inculcation; the Porfirian army's failures to make fully modern soldiers by day stood in stark relief to the successful peer instruction by night. While love of patria and skill of arms had limited success, career soldiers transmitted their tricks and dodges to the rookie with the near perfection. Older troops, and in particular, veteran soldaderas, taught their new comrades how to avoid trouble,

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<sup>221</sup> For examples, Frías, 12-3.

<sup>222</sup> Frías, 39; *Tropa Vieja*, 123, 140.

<sup>223</sup> A contemporary history on the topic, see Julian Sharman, *A Cursory History of Swearing* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968[1884]), 11-21; from colonial era: Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 10-52.

how to break regulations, how to find a partner, and all of the other norms, vices, and trifles of army life.<sup>224</sup>

Conversation could also be a means of resistance to erode authority and power.<sup>225</sup> Insolence and subversions were essential elements of barracks cant. Although NCOs promoted from ranks would be wise to the meanings, officers had to at least pretend incomprehension or stoop to a lower-class status. Soldiers prided themselves on clever wordplay that belittled their comrades and superiors, making use of *alburres* and double entendre for subtlety. As an example, a dialogue in *Tropa Vieja* pitted a soldier against his corporal.<sup>226</sup> The indigenous soldier Calequi pretended stupidity while managing to call his interrogator a gossip, an idiot, an animal, and a bastard, in the course of a dozen exchanges. Humour, integral to the insolence of the hidden transcript, seems also to have been important to barracks life.

## Conclusions

The darkness of the evening barracks was a matter of perspective. Music flowed out into streets as men and women smoked, drank, gambled, sang, and talked. Itching from vermin and aching from disease, they inoculated themselves from the discomforts of unhygienic and uncomfortable surroundings. They made idle conversation, they complained, they spread rumours, and they discussed the raising of their children. Newcomers learned the ropes, veterans told lies and stories. Later still, sex and fights

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<sup>224</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 68.

<sup>225</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 289-295.

<sup>226</sup> *Tropa Vieja*, 98.

over sex filled the shadows. And in the process they created a community that frequently seeped out into local streets and broke the isolation of the barracks.

The unique presence of women and families in the Mexican garrisons shaped gender relations and encouraged religious infiltration. Family centred the soldiers' experiences as a community more meaningful than the army emerged. Military officials challenged the presence of women, as they attempted to restrict the *mujer de tropa*'s access to men, or exposed them to hygienists who saw the *soldadera* as the carrier of disease. The women reacted, on occasion successfully cowing officers. Until driven from the barracks in 1925, they gave conscripts access to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. These vices further degraded the soldier's image in public forums.

As troops and families found entertainment they bonded and reinforced their sense of community and awareness of difference from civilians. They expressed resistance and discontent together in song, building common or customary understandings. Ultimately, the community of the ranks represented a counterpoint to the civilized soldier sought by the modern scientific nation. Custom, family, and leisure of the barracks subverted the discipline in pursuit of the national citizen.

CHAPTER 3  
THE SUBALTERN OFFICER:  
AGENTS OF CHANGE AND ENGINEERS OF NATION

*“Un mal caballero no puede ser buen soldado”* – Antonio Tovar, *Código del Duelo*,<sup>1</sup> 1891.

*“Que México cuente con un ejército instruido, unido en ideas y aspiraciones y noblemente educado; y no tendrá ya motivos para temer por su independencia, por su decoro y por su tranquilidad...el ejército sabrá cumplir con sus deberes patriótica y científicamente.”* - Periódico Militar<sup>2</sup>

The formative years of young Fausto Becerril had inclined him to the military life—to becoming one of the officers that Porfirio Díaz set to building the modern nation.<sup>3</sup> Years later, he remembered the centre of Mexico City as a clean place without beggars, trash, or disorder, where as a child he had enjoyed listening to the military bands practicing in the barracks at San Yldefonso, across from his home, and idolized his father who was an impoverished but proud Lieutenant of Artillery. When his time came, he eagerly enrolled in the Military College at Chapultepec Castle. He attended balls and danced with generals’ daughters, even strolling with the young ladies of the Carranza family in the Almeida. His time at the College ended during the early Revolution when the victorious insurgent President Francisco Madero sent the young man into exile and a still secret mission in Japan. Upon his return, Becerril directed the national the arms factories nation and advised Joaquín Amaro on reforms to the army. Hardly typical of the

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Tovar, *Código del Duelo*, (México: n.p., 1891).

<sup>2</sup> “Ejército durante el paz,” *Periódico Militar* (April 1, 1881), 120.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Mora, INAH Proyecto de Historia Oral [hereafter PHO] PHO 1/61, interview with Fausto Becerril by Eugenia Meyer, March 1974.

junior Porfirian officers, Fausto nonetheless represented the ideal scientific and loyal gentleman that the regime hoped would usher the nation into modernity.

The literature of nation-building abounds in “whys” but relatively little attention has been paid to the “hows”—to the daily mechanisms of penetrating and managing the peripheral regions far from a central regime.<sup>4</sup> In Mexico, this was precisely the role of the subaltern military officers of the late nineteenth-century.<sup>5</sup> As a corporate body and as individuals, these young officers worked to create a nation along the lines intended by the centralized and modernizing elites out of the numerous *patrias chicas* of the country. Their education guided their efforts in ways particular to a social context of class and expectations. Once deployed they represented national interests with varying degrees of success and in disparate manners.

Officers commanding small detachments occupied remote areas, where federal troops had never been stationed and established direct connections to the national regime, breaking down the barriers of intense localism. Their conspicuous presence and interactions with local elites created new ties, if not always in positive ways. Other officers became part of military colonies, garrisons that created an interstitial network in the unsettled spaces between towns. Still others, with different specialized training, literally built the nation through engineering projects, constructing buildings, and surveying territories.

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<sup>4</sup> See G. M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> As comparison, see also István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 4-9 and 73-189.



The officers dedicated their careers to the Porfirian slogan of Order and Progress. Roughly two in three became *prácticos* (line officers) who led troops in the name of bringing Order, while the remainder, *facultativos* (technical or professional officers) laboured in the name of Progress.<sup>6</sup> Both types of servants to the Patria were agents of change integral to constructing the nation. Their work hinged on the army's ability to invade, occupy, and colonize the countryside.<sup>7</sup> These tasks would be carried out under the hand of the subaltern officer.

### The Crucible of Chapultepec

The education of officers in the Military College developed a corps with both specialized skills and social talents. The staff of the College explicitly intended to form not simply good soldiers, but honourable gentlemen. Indeed, no division between the two existed in the eyes of senior officers.<sup>8</sup>

The directors of the school, serious men all, gave the institution impressive continuity, gravitas, and prestige. One of the great strengths of the College came from the remarkable continuity of leadership during what some called the institution's Golden Age. Sóstenes Rocha (1880-87), Juan Villegas (1887-1900, 1903-1906), and Joaquín Beltrán (1900-1903, 1906-1912) headed the school for over thirty years and often remained involved in the College when they were not actually in charge.<sup>9</sup> Sons of

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<sup>6</sup> Kelley, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel R. Headricks, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4-12.

<sup>8</sup> Juan N. Chavarri, *El Heroico Colegio Militar En La Historia De México* (México, D.F.: Libro Mex. Editores, 1960), 16, 241.

<sup>9</sup> Miguel A. Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros del Ejército Mexicano, 1821-1914* (México: n.p., 1952), 193-197.

military men themselves, Rocha and Villegas had the greatest impact, moving the academy back into Chapultepec castle (1883), reforming its curriculum, heightening the prestige of French doctrine and engineering, and energizing students with their charismatic leadership.<sup>10</sup> Rocha, who had served under Santa Anna and Juárez and against Díaz brought with him first-hand knowledge from Prussia and Paris. Villegas was greatly respected, and earned from students the nickname Juanote for his positive attitudes.<sup>11</sup> Beltrán, for his part, oversaw the school in years of change and upheaval during the reforms of Secretary of War General Bernardo Reyes (1900-1903) and with the rise of rival institutions (Escuela de Aspirantes for example). Their leadership, in many ways, cushioned the College from censures of the military and regime, even after the fall of Díaz.<sup>12</sup>

Cadets came to the college to become proper men with modern habits and traditional values. Military authorities envisioned these youths as a valuable resource, if only their potential were unlocked. They recognized that the scions of the emergent middle-classes and nouveau riche would, in the crucible of Chapultepec, meld with the sons of the best families. This potent combination of social classes, military sciences, and martial comradeship, would construct what some termed a caste or guild capable of delivering the country into modernity.<sup>13</sup>

The prospective officer-cadets faced several obstacles to acceptance at the Military College. Limitations of resources and space kept class sizes small, usually

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<sup>10</sup> Sánchez Lamego, 81-94; Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Guerra y Marina, Comandancia Militar de D.F., Expedientes Personales [hereafter AGN, CMDF, EP], ep-r Caja 370, Sóstenes Rocha.

<sup>11</sup> Sánchez Lamego, 195.

<sup>12</sup> Chavarri, 249, 250.

<sup>13</sup> “Boletín Militar,” *Revista Militar Mexicana* (July 1, 1890), 1-2.

numbering less than 150, which improved instruction but restricted entrance. Sixteen year old boys (or fifteen if from army families) needed to prove a basic level of education in mathematics, French, and Spanish in application. Letters of reference and petitions from family, especially from mothers, flooded the desk of the president every fall for positions and scholarships in the next January to November term.<sup>14</sup> More often than not, these pleas to bend regulations were denied. For example, when a Señora L. Zafra wrote to Díaz in 1880, she asked a place for her son Pepe Sánchez who lacked baptismal records. The President replied that he could not help, the regulations at the College were simply too severe for him to override the generals in charge, and he apologized for his inability.<sup>15</sup> This type of petition in the case of poverty, youth, or missing documents came by the hundreds. The College had extremely firm rules; even Díaz's nephew Félix had to scramble to provide his paperwork.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, high status could not always facilitate admission, as General Jerónimo Trevino found in trying to gain positions for family friends in 1884. The directors even denied General Zertuche's son the next year, perhaps showing a measure of distrust for a rival to Díaz's popularity in Oaxaca.<sup>17</sup>

Restrictions to entrance went beyond simple letter of the regulations. Motivations other than pedagogy limited the success of applicants who did not fit with the social class requirements set by the College. The education requirement went beyond the means of

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<sup>14</sup> H.T. Reed, "The Mexican Military Academy," *The Journal of the Military Service Institute* (1902-1906), 811-818.

<sup>15</sup> L. Zafra to PD, Jan. 1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 10 Doc. 4532-33.

<sup>16</sup> Grl. Francisco Naranjo to PD, Jan. 82, CPD Legajo 7 Caja 1 Doc. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Jerónimo Treviño and PD, CPD Legajo 9 Caja 6 Doc. 671-2; (re: Zertuche) Luis Luna García and PD, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 2 Doc. 589-590. *Revista Militar Mexicana* of 6/1/1890 ran an obituary on Albino Zertuche, which highlighted his popularity and humble origins, as he was also a governor in Oaxaca it is possible that Díaz felt some animosity towards the Zertuche family, in any case, the refusal does seem politically motivated. Alternately, the son may have had undisclosed issues of criminality etc.

most poor families, as their children could not attain proficiencies without the assistance of private tutoring or Church seminary. For example, when Manuel García Vigil became a cadet he gave up on his religious education at the bidding of his family who deemed the military better for his future.<sup>18</sup> His futile dismay at the change of course, ignored by his family, did not motivate him to excel as a student, and he limped through his College years with many scandals. Ironically perhaps, it was this derailment from the clerical life that later motivated him to fight as a Revolutionary, attaining the rank of general in an army that worked hard to purge clerical elements from the nation. Finding appropriate teachers outside the Church also limited cadet opportunities, and some forty percent failed to pass entry exams.<sup>19</sup> Given the language requirements alone, the officer classes tended to draw men from somewhat larger urban centres rather than small towns where fewer opportunities to learn French existed. A typology of the usual cadet began to shape from these limits.

Students did not always arrive at the College with social polish, but they had come with some money. The bond of sixteen pesos a month, the cost of uniforms, and the need for stipends, set the price of schooling well beyond the reach of many families.<sup>20</sup> Even for the middle classes, this could be a burden as their average incomes ranged around eighty pesos monthly. Some families managed to raise the money through loans, and their sons thus became an investment for whom the pressure to succeed rose accordingly.<sup>21</sup> Observers noted few cadets of indigenous or non-white features, a function

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<sup>18</sup> Basiliás Rojas, *Un Gran Rebelde: Manuel García Vigil* (Mexico: Editorial Luz, 1965), 21-32.

<sup>19</sup> Reed, 814.

<sup>20</sup> Bazant, 184-5.

<sup>21</sup> Mier de Terán to PD 3/8/85, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 6 Doc. 2831.

in part of incomes but also of social rejection of the military as a career among many in the general population.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, only a handful of foreign students attended the College; among personnel records for the central regions one finds a small number from Spain, the U.S., and Germany, and one from Japan.<sup>23</sup> The vast majority of cadets came from quite similar backgrounds, often from military families, upper-middle or upper classes, non-indigenous, and larger cities.

Once accepted the students shared in a daily regimen instantly recognizable to their counterparts in Europe or the United States.<sup>24</sup> Their daily routine of classes and work changed little during the decades of the Porfiriato, and went from January 8 to October 25 when field exercises began. Cadets woke at 5 a.m., bathed in the large pool, and after breakfast and inspection they did gymnastics, fencing, and drill until 9 a.m. This they followed with 8 hours of study, a brief free period and supper and finally an extra hour of study before the 9 p.m. call of *Silencio* marked the end of the day. Especially around examination time, students often studied in a guarded room until after midnight in lieu of sleep.<sup>25</sup> Meals were, by all reports excellent, although diners had to do without proper napkins.<sup>26</sup> Their reading materials were, by regulation, strictly censored and selected for moral content. Despite a rigorous schedule, students also found spare time for musical entertainment, particularly Thursday nights, and occasional baseball games

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<sup>22</sup> Hardie, 1203; Janvier, 816.

<sup>23</sup> AGN CMDF expedientes personales, passim.

<sup>24</sup> Deák, 85-88; Reed, 816.

<sup>25</sup> Reed, 816.

<sup>26</sup> *Mexico Militar*, (1900), 429.

by 1900.<sup>27</sup> The cadets performed guard duty in barracks in eight hour shifts, but were spared from cleaning the school by a janitorial staff.

Their courses of study reflected a mixture of traditional and novel military skills. Cadets learned updated regulations for maneuvers, for field service, and for military jurisprudence. They trained in the use of new technologies: telephone, telegraph, railway, and photography. They studied topography and military geography, and specialized in the mathematics and sciences. French, Spanish, and English language courses, along with a basic run of world history and geography, composed a scant education in humanities. Students enjoyed the traditional curriculum as they honed their swimming, fencing, marksmanship, and equestrian skills.<sup>28</sup> These did not vary greatly from those offered at West Point or Sandhurst, Berlin or Vienna.<sup>29</sup> The basic skills taught reveal some of the common assumptions and preoccupations of military leaders at the end of the nineteenth-century.

The *Science of War*, published by Sóstenes Rocha in 1878, illuminated much about the goals of the College that he ably directed.<sup>30</sup> He asserted that history and geography should be offered in purely uncritical formats in order to instill patriotism in a standard, shared, way. The cadets learned rote material that focused on knowledge of their potential enemies in classes that did not encourage political questioning or revisionist analyses. The goals of nationalism and literacy trumped analytical

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<sup>27</sup> “La Vida de un Cadete,” *El Imparcial* (1/1/1907) and (1/13/1907); “Equilibria,” *Boletín Militar* (11/1/1899), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Kelley, 62-65.

<sup>29</sup> Deák, 86, 87; “Proyecto de escuelas,” *Revista Militar Mexicana* (12/1/1889), 16-20.

<sup>30</sup> Sóstenes Rocha, *Estudios sobre la ciencia de la guerra* (México: Imprenta y librería Pablo Dupont, 1878).

development. One reason for this, which Rocha makes clear, was to create a sense of the nation as homogeneous, as lacking in regional disparities that would distract from wholehearted service to the central government. Rather than a default curriculum chosen out of laziness, his essays on military education indicate a rather deliberate pedagogical undermining of any lingering loyalties to the *patria chica* among his cadets.

The *Sciences* went on to stress a unique blend of the modern and traditional. Innovations of technology, including optics, railways, telegraphs, cartography, and armaments, ideally would be harnessed to an officer class committed to the venerable traditions Rocha revered.<sup>31</sup> He intended to mould cadets to match his public image. The perfect cadet would be brave in battle and polished in salons, ready to face opponents with pen or sword, and able (like Rocha, who had historically fought against Díaz) to serve even a sworn enemy for the good of Mexico. His work went on to discuss the importance of adapting different foreign systems into teaching and into warfare.<sup>32</sup> One Spanish reader of the work concluded that Rocha's career and thoughts clearly demonstrated how he had brought science and wisdom to the Military College.<sup>33</sup>

Some historical descriptions of the Porfirian era have presented a simplistic division between political factions seen as scientists versus soldiers, a depiction that fails in light of cadets' training and subsequent careers.<sup>34</sup> Even those who became line officers with only four years training attained a considerable degree of education, better than most

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<sup>31</sup> Sánchez Lamago, 81-94

<sup>32</sup> A. Fernandez Merino, "El General Sóstenes Rocha," *Periódico Militar* Tomo I (Nov. 1879), 1-5. [Note, republished from an unnamed Spanish periodical].

<sup>33</sup> *Periódico Militar*, Tomo I (2/1/1879), 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> See for instance: Luis González, "El liberalismo triunfante," in *Historia General de México* (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2000), 652-706.

in civilian occupations. Journalist Thomas Janvier reported that the College had become a prestigious institution and impressive far beyond its military education alone.<sup>35</sup>

With several languages, considerable mathematics, and a solid grasp of military lore (laws, tactics, and procedures), the graduates were not the unlettered brutes that critics of the regime derided. The military journals bear this out, as officers of all branches and ranks contributed articles that ranged from complex mathematics, to editorial letters, and even on occasion, patriotic poetry. One officer, Heriberto Frías, went on to great success as an author of books such as *Tomochic*, following in the footsteps of great military authors such as Ignacio Altimirano.<sup>36</sup> The technical officers with an addition three years of specialized education break the political dichotomy further as they clearly represented a scientific, (modern) soldier. Graduates of the College achieved the intentions of Rocha, Beltran, and Villegas—becoming both men of the plume and of the sword.

The education of the cadet did not end in the classroom. Mealtimes provided students with social training, as they chatted and socialized with one another and interacted with servants under the eyes of their instructors. Only with proper deportment at meals as well as in classes would cadets earn approbation and liberty on Saturday evening and Sunday. For those with family or connections in Mexico City, this weekend respite was relatively supervised.<sup>37</sup> For others, it seems to have been an opportunity for mischief and bad company. Cadets strutted through streets and parks in their off-time,

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<sup>35</sup> Janvier, 818.

<sup>36</sup> Heriberto Frías, *The Battle of Tomochic: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant*, trans. Barbara Jamison (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006 [1893]).

<sup>37</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/31, interview with Tnt. Cor. Eduardo Angeles Meraz by Alicia Olivera, 12/8/1972, 1.



outfitted with flashy uniforms, shining sabres, and all the restraint of any testosterone-filled teenagers. As one recalled, all the students quickly found girlfriends in town, and even fifty years later, for this reason he retained fond memories of his cadet years.<sup>38</sup>

Chastisement from the staff covered a great range of cadet misbehaviour. Faults in classes, fighting, contraband, lateness, or a myriad of other infractions would mean a Sunday spent without seeing one's girl, a week of teenage misery. The worst offenders would even be locked in, as Victoriano Huerta found himself on numerous occasions.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Manuel García Vigil's troublesome behaviour earned him frequent detentions, and eventually expulsion for knife-fighting.<sup>40</sup> The roughness of behaviour represented a genuine need to earn respect; the military brother of Felipe Angeles instructed him to take all violent measures necessary to overcome the bullies that bothered him in order to obtain the respect of his peers.<sup>41</sup> Some students fell afoul of the military justice system as if adults, with serious charges including desertions, drinking in barracks, and public scandal with prostitutes.<sup>42</sup>

Cadets who roamed the city presented an image that foreign observers often noted. Their European-styled uniforms and proud comportment presented a picture of military vigour as they occupied public areas in parks and squares, young men of means

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<sup>38</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/104, interview with Rodolfo Casillas by Alexis Arroyo, 3/1961, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/31, Angeles Meraz, 6. Huerta apparently had a running tab at a cantina near Peravillo named Reforma del Niágara and drank heavily there, leading to numerous punishments.

<sup>40</sup> Basillas Rojas, 27-28.

<sup>41</sup> Instituto Mora PHO 1/31 Angeles Merez, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Some examples, AGN, CMDF, ep-j Caja 353 Subtnt. Angel Jiménez: deserts Military College; AGN, CMDF, ep-f Caja 342 Cpt. David de la Fuente: alcohol into College; AGN CMDF ep-f Caja 341 Daniel de la Fuente: with Eduardo Nieto and Enrique Maria Rabago rode around in a carriage, drunk, with prostitute causing disturbance, then insulted arresting officer [from letter 8/15/1890 forwarded to Dir. Col. Mil. Villegas]; for one of numerous incidents in the press, "Noticias militares," *Vanguardia* (2/17/1891), 8: two cadets dishonourably discharged for staining the honour and decorum of the Military College (no further explanation published).

and army connections with class pretensions. The government celebrated this image as proof of the national progress, lauding the cadets as a new generation of scientific, learned, and professional leaders. Their “cocky,” as one man from the U.S. asserted, demonstrated the cadet’s pride in their honourable profession, and in their gallant traditions. He mused that this certainly would manifest in officers that would not disgrace their service or nation.<sup>43</sup>

The social and political process of winnowing technical from practical officers surpassed the purely academic. All cadets at least occasionally met the President in the course of living in Chapultepec, but real access to the halls of power came from family connections. Socialite parents brought their sons to balls, and to dine with other elite families, reinforcing and extending the social networks of the wealthy and influential. Thursday evenings at the College featured dance lessons as military bands performed, where the cadets perfected their steps with one another.<sup>44</sup> One graduate recalled an evening gathering where his father introduced him to various important personages, and where he found himself dancing and conversing with the beautiful daughter of a general.<sup>45</sup> The U.S. Consul General David Hunter Strother wrote in his diaries of his own occasional encounters with cadets, whose deportment he found quite acceptable.<sup>46</sup> For the highest of families, the officer cadet sons had meteoric rises through ranks and considerable special treatment.

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<sup>43</sup> Janvier, 816-7.

<sup>44</sup> Reed, 818.

<sup>45</sup> PHO 1/61, Becerril, 17. During the dinner, the elderly Cor. Tornel quietly died at the table.

<sup>46</sup> John E. Stealey III, *Porte Crayon’s Mexico: David Hunter Strother’s Diaries in the Early Porfirian Era, 1879-1885* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006), 103, 922. Strother’s son was intent on attending West Point for his career.

The President's son and nephew, once through the requirements of the College, received swift promotions and comfortable postings. Porfirio Díaz junior, in 1894 became a military attaché to the U.S., and in 1895 was commissioned in both the Special General Staff and Military College, thus earning double the usual income paid in U.S. dollars.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Félix Díaz rose from Sub-lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel only fourteen years after graduating, also holding positions as Inspector General of the Police, Congressman, and Consul to Chile.<sup>48</sup> Cadets soon learned that grades alone were not all that separated line officers in training from the specialists of the PMF or Engineering. Merit counted, but patronage undermined the high standards that the College tried to maintain. In the clearest example of this, the tutor to Porfirito wrote despairingly that he could not help the cadet any further, and that his position in the elite engineers hung in the balance.<sup>49</sup> Despite little improvement, the student continued on without hindrance.

The difference in social prestige continued after graduation as line officers faced a far harder career arc and worse conditions than did their counterparts. On average, an officer of the technical branch could expect regular promotions out of subaltern levels in about ten years. By contrast, line officers often spent at least double this time. Some of these men went decades without promotions.<sup>50</sup> Without luck or patronage, many officers both young and old were relegated to the deposit, a holding pool for officers at half-pay

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<sup>47</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-d Caja 95, Cpt. Porfirio Díaz.

<sup>48</sup> Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Estado Mayor Presidencial 1824-1912, Caja 96 Félix Díaz.

<sup>49</sup> Juan Villegas and PD, 10/3/1891, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 27 Doc. 13303-4: a tutor (Garza) assigned to instruct Porfirito in his house.

<sup>50</sup> AGN, CMDF, expedientes personales, passim; León Martínez to PD, 9/28/1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 7 Doc. 3464.

awaiting deployment.<sup>51</sup> The higher ranks could expect lengthy or even permanent placement, for lowly subalterns this condition generally only lasted a few months.

The social element of Chapultepec life had a dark underside. Cadets' social lives did not entirely improve through promenades and womanizing, as this on occasion led to duels with swords or pistols over slights to their own or to a lady's honor. One notorious duelist José Sáenz Botella, also known as "el Milord", fought several high profile duels.<sup>52</sup> The first pitted him against a fellow cadet, Antonio Portillo, over a girl they both fancied. Director Villegas opposed the fight due to their youth, but General Pacheco petitioned successfully to Díaz to allow it, arguing that if it were the President's son then the issue would be clear. Having exchanged a number of pistol shots fewer than the agreed upon ten, Portillo had an arm injury and the two boys forgave one another fully.<sup>53</sup> El Milord went on a year later to duel successfully against two brothers over insults given at a ball, wounding Santos Ruiz with a sword and deliberately missing his brother Ramon with pistol shots.<sup>54</sup> Cadet Rafael Saavedra had less luck or skill, and took a serious pistol wound from his duel against Eulogia Magaña in 1892, once again in a rivalry over a woman. Upset, the cadet's brother Captain Ángel Maria Saavedra avenged the family by killing Magaña in a subsequent duel.<sup>55</sup>

Duels struck to the heart of martial traditions of masculinity. By the time a cadet graduated the means and motives of the duel were well inculcated—a man understood the

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<sup>51</sup> "El depósito," *La Vanguardia* (6/6/1891), 2: for usual military attitudes to the deposit.

<sup>52</sup> Angel Escudero, *El duelo en México* (México: Imprenta Mundial, 1936), 156.

<sup>53</sup> Escudero, 157-8.

<sup>54</sup> Escudero, 160.

<sup>55</sup> Escudero, 164-165.

stakes of honour and eagerly defended it. In practice, sixteen year old boys hacked at one another or shot guns at ever-decreasing distances.

Specialized training helped as cadets and officers benefited from many hours of practice in shooting and fencing. The army established high quality schools of the sword, and sponsored foreign teachers and champions to assist. Prizes for swordplay came from the War Secretariat, and regimental instructors gained considerable status for their skills. As a result, a number of military men became exceptionally able in the deadly arts.

Nevertheless, the reported dueling injuries indicate a general unwillingness to commit murder, even for this most traditional of practices, and deliberate misses or slight wounds often prevailed.<sup>56</sup>

The army as an institution demonstrated ambivalence to dueling. The custom had become quite rare in France, Britain, and the U.S., and was on the decline in Germany and Latin America. Conflicted over modernizing and conserving traditions, the army had Colonel Antonio Tovar formulate a new code of dueling that would bring Mexico up-to-date.<sup>57</sup> Tovar, at the time also a *Diputado* in Congress, wrote the President in 1891 to apprise him of the new rules. His primary concern revolved around managing duels between officers of great difference in rank. The Code forbade duels on the eve of battle, but otherwise affirmed that refusal to fight meant the man became a bad gentleman outside the laws of honour (article V). The reasons for the duel also fell under scrutiny, and to maintain military order the only acceptable motives were those purely personal in

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<sup>56</sup> Escudero, *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> Antonio Tovar to PD, 1/19/91, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 2 Doc. 976-979.

nature. Díaz thanked Tovar warmly, and after consulting with General Rocha, the army soon implemented the Code.

While some officers worked on writing a code and setting aside a building for duelers, others wrote prohibitions of the duel into military law that forbade its practice altogether. The ordinances gave a range of penalties, perpetrators faced from two months prison for a no-injury duel, to two years in the case of a death. This only applied to a duel, they clarified when a deadly fight was murder— if done for money or immoral reasons, if the fighter cheated, or if there were no seconds.<sup>58</sup> A double standard extended to the vague regulations enforced by Honour Boards (*Juntas de honor*) that would cashier any officer too timid to fight a duel. Military men thus faced a difficult situation in defending their honour. For most, the decision came easily to fight and spend time in Military Prison or locked in barracks, instead of ending career and reputation with an apparent show of cowardice.

By the end of their four or seven years, cadets became officers and gentlemen of a particular sort. Selected for, and instructed in, class differences they left the academy with rote instruction in their duties and practical experience in masculine behaviour. Expected to become *espadachines*, swordsmen and womanizers, the College led them to believe they were destined for great things. Most of the approximately 2500 Porfirian graduates discovered their army life harsher than expected. As they deployed to factories, barracks, camps, and embassies, all were challenged and many disillusioned.

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<sup>58</sup> Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, Estado Mayor, *Ley orgánico del Ejército Nacional*, 1882, Article 3607, and Article 3011.

## Line Officers and War on Savagery

To the many *prácticos*, line officers, fell the task of bringing the vision and policies of the central government into the communities, towns, neighborhoods, and countryside—often to places that had scarcely seen the federal presence previously. These officers often commanded small detachments and garrisons, and they both embodied and enacted the infiltration of modern governance from the centre. Troops away from the large cities interfered with regional politics, suppressed dissent, and reduced banditry. They also acted as a balance, not to *rurales* as some have claimed, but to the *jefes políticos*.<sup>59</sup> Line officers also facilitated the development of regional economies, acting as labour supervisors in overseeing public works and mining enterprises. In these, as in other tasks, they ultimately obeyed their commanders who represented the central government; they only rarely bowed to local elites. Progress and order, bread or the club, transformed from motto to reality in the hands of these primarily low-level graduates from the halls of Chapultepec.

As prerequisite to progress officers worked first to instill order throughout the country and they made eradication of those labeled bandits, their highest priority.<sup>60</sup> The long and storied history of highwaymen did not sit well with the new official image of a prosperous and modern nation.<sup>61</sup> Chasing bandit gangs thus occupied the attentions of

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<sup>59</sup> Ramona Falcón, “Force and the Search for Consent: The Role of the Jefaturas Políticas of Coahuila in National State Formation,” in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. G. M., Joseph, and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 107-134.

<sup>60</sup> The classic study is Paul J. Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development*, Revised and enlarged ed. (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1992).

<sup>61</sup> Chris Frazer, *Bandit Nation: a History of Outlaws and Cultural Struggle in Mexico, 1810-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), *passim*.

many rural garrisons, particularly in the central states of the Bajío, throughout the first half of the Porfiriato (1876-1895). An image, from the *Revista del Ejército*, depicts a rare success in apprehending such a criminal (Illustration 3.1).



**Illustration 3.1 "Justicia Militar," *Revista Del Ejército* (1907), 340.**

The army faced several problems in their efforts: identifying bandits, finding their lairs, deploying sufficient troops, and public relations all proved difficult.<sup>62</sup> Local populations often did not cooperate with federal forces, nor always agree that nearby gangs of armed men represented bandits in a pejorative sense. One man's bandit was another's folk hero, eccentric neighbour, or admired dissident.

Two of the most famous bandits of the age were Heraclio Bernal, the Lightning Bolt of Sinaloa, and Jesús Arriaga, called Chucho el Roto. A number of historians have dealt with these figures (and others like El Tigre) and analyzed their challenge to national

<sup>62</sup> For example, the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment detachment at San Ignacio, Tamaulipas not only could not catch bandits, but were themselves ambushed and lost horse, arms, and captives: Lorenzo García to PD, 12/14/1892, CPD Legajo 17 Caja 39 Doc.19370.



order or as figures of social memory.<sup>63</sup> From the point of view of the military, these men represented a threat and challenge to controlling the expansion of the regime's power in the countryside, and to the image that they deemed necessary to sell to investors. In short, they posed an unforgivable opposition to modernity as envisioned by government officials.<sup>64</sup> Both men robbed and resorted to violence, but the difference in methods and in setting (rural versus urban) reveals the great variety that the label of bandit can contain. Both men attained some fame and popular respect from lower classes, and at least in the case of Chucho even the middling sectors appreciated his legendary daring. Defeating their predations was only one problem, indeed Chucho was apparently fairly easy to get as authorities captured him several times. Bernal raised official ire also for his purported links to political rebels like Juan Hernández y Marín, as alleged by nearby army officials.<sup>65</sup> An enduring problem for officials was vanquishing the bandit's status as folk heroes in the process. Never quite successful in this, the regime did its best to publish unflattering press pieces, ugly caricatures, and eventually quite crude and unromantic photographs of the two criminals.<sup>66</sup> Had these two been the only bandits they faced, the army would have rested content by 1888.

The challenge of these gangs did not surprise the army authorities, many of whom had fought as guerrillas against the French or seen firsthand the skills of the rurales, whose ranks had initially seen many men fresh from banditry. In fact, the small

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 33; Amy Robinson, "Mexican Banditry and Discourses of Class: The Case of Chucho el Roto" *Latin American Research Review* 44, no.1 (2009), 5-31.

<sup>64</sup> Robinson, 8, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Juan M. Flores to PD, 7/5/1887, CPD Legajo 12 Caja 13 Doc.6299-6300.

<sup>66</sup> CPD Legajo 13 Caja 7 Doc.3112-a: Photo of cadaver of Heraclio Bernal.

detachments that chased criminals through the hills differed little from their prey, and deserting soldiers regularly swelled the ranks of bandit groups. Worse, the deserters and lost military stores provided an ample supply of Remington and Enfield rifles to the bandits, as in the case of the Fierro Amarillos gang.<sup>67</sup> General Lorenzo García wrote to Díaz in 1892 to report that one of these organized bands had managed to surprise the Sixth Regiment and capture their horses and arms, while taking a number of their men as prisoners.<sup>68</sup> Bandit attacks came regularly through the early 1890s, but with increasing rail links, telegraph lines, and sustained efforts the armed forces at last eliminated the most notorious highwaymen.

As a publicity strategy and a discursive tool, the government made use of the negative associations of the bandit to justify the vicious elimination of broadly-defined political rivals. The same elasticity of label could also affect rebellious generals, as in the 1880s, or with deserters in arms.<sup>69</sup> The principal means of carrying out this quick “justice” that the labeling demanded was the Ley Fuga, the anti-fugitive law that permitted use of lethal force against fleeing suspects at the discretion of the commander on the scene. The appropriateness of this form of de facto execution was generally not at issue within the army, nor did many in the press or middle-classes consider it extreme, so long as soldiers assiduously applied it solely to those deemed either savages or bandits.<sup>70</sup> These became terms of careful exclusion, legal categories that permitted the most draconian action without besmirching the national honour. Nonetheless, the justification

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<sup>67</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-c Caja 336, loose note.

<sup>68</sup> Lorenzo García to PD, 12/14/1892, CPD Legajo17 Caja 39 Doc.19370.

<sup>69</sup> Kelley, 79 (FN 43).

<sup>70</sup> In a rare exception, the article “Ley Fuga,” *Regeneración* (3/15/1901), 5-6, reverses the claim and calls the authorities savages.

for the measure was tenuous, and Díaz took care to come out against it in his correspondence to regional commanders. General García assured that his forces only used the measure in cases were clearly working with bandits, and was informed that such shooting would, this time, be squelched in the press.<sup>71</sup> Most correspondence only declared the death of such bandits, hinting that the robber had been shot in the course of a crime, leaving vague the exact circumstances.<sup>72</sup> Lieutenant Ygnacio Esparzo García took it a step further, arguing that he shot a bandit only because the sheer effrontery of being robbed actually insisted upon him that he give the thief a bullet.<sup>73</sup> There was reason to believe this a disingenuous dodge, mere lip service to the ideal, and officers continued to practice Ley Fuga at a distance from the president.

Powerful men in government could also remove political foes by having a detachment quietly execute a prisoner. In 1880, one Colonel Nicolás Calderas ran afoul of Rafael Cuellar, the Governor of Guerrero with strong family ties to the military. The army first tried him for repeated drunkenness and speaking ill of the government, a crime against the common order for which he went to the Military Prison of Santiago. After four months in jail, he was sent to Governor Cuellar (for unknown reasons), and somehow eluded from his captors. The cavalry squads shot to death the unfortunate Calderas shortly after his “escape” over the high barracks walls.<sup>74</sup> The escape attempt was all quite convenient for a government that was the object of the dead man’s criticism.

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<sup>71</sup> Lorenzo García to PD, 7/19/82, CPD Legajo 7 Caja 2 Doc. 702.

<sup>72</sup> Lorenzo García and PD, 11/5/1891, 11/12/1891 CPD Legajo 16 Caja 29 Doc. 14271-72; Aniceto Lopez to PD, 12/14/84, Legajo 9 Caja 4 Doc. 1812.

<sup>73</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 347, Lieutenant Ygnacio Esparzo Garcia.

<sup>74</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-c Caja 329 Tnt. Calderas.

Savage or barbarian proved another label that allowed military forces an unusual degree of latitude in dealing with opposition, whether armed or not. Two particular groups singled out for such treatment, the Yaqui and the Apaches, faced murderous campaigns that leaned heavily on this discursive crutch. The Apache had long had an barbaric reputation that justified the army in its vicious campaigns of eradication. Worse still for border garrisons, as late as 1882, some units still lacked proper arms or ammunition to fight the incursions.<sup>75</sup> As proof of the nation's arrival to modern progress and civilized heights, the delegation sent to Paris in 1889 brought the head of the Apache chief, the "savage" Victorio, in a jar.<sup>76</sup> As the Apache threat receded, the pogroms against the Yaqui reached new levels.

The headlines of the late nineteenth century Mexican and U.S. press made much of "savagery" in their less than objective evaluation of the threat posed by a few thousand Yaquis rebelling in Sonora (see Appendix 1, Map 2).<sup>77</sup> Perhaps the greatest continuity for the Yaqui pueblos was their long history of armed resistance to government forces. Uniting under the elected Captain General, and at times allying with neighbouring Mayo Indians, the Yaqui fought for independence in three major revolts; they rose in 1740 (against the Jesuits), 1826-1833 (the Banderas rebellion), and once more in 1875-1885 (under Cajeme). In addition to these three discrete uprisings, the Yaqui participated in the Wars of Independence, the Wars of Reform, the French Intervention, the Revolution, and

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<sup>75</sup> Lorenzo García to PD, 7/19/82, CPD Legajo 7 Caja 2 Doc. 702.

<sup>76</sup> Tenorio Trillo, 84.

<sup>77</sup> A few such examples include: "Indians of North America" *New York Times* (July 4, 1885):4; "Gov. Ortez's Quarrel with Federal Gen. Reyes" *New York Times* (Oct. 28, 1882):5; "Mexico" *New York Times* (Dec. 29, 1885):3; "Mexico-Yaqui Indians; Government Troops and Tax Collectors Attacked" *New York Times* (Dec. 28, 1892):1.

undertook lengthy periods of insurgent or guerrilla warfare, particularly between 1885 and 1910, and again in the 1920s. These periods of open conflict generally followed increased government pressures or military occupations and as a result, the Yaqui Valley saw few years of peace until late into the twentieth-century. By 1889, only about a thousand Yaqui remained in the Pueblos of the approximately 12000 who lived there in 1872, and the scattered remnants soon faced genocide through deportation. Governor Rafael Izábal, in particular, became the feared despotic agent of this new policy. The Sonoran elites deemed that the Yaqui had finally proven themselves unsalvageable, or at least, far from being prepared for civilismo. By this logic, the Yaqui as a people became an obstacle to modernity and accordingly, had to be removed.

As early as 1895, authorities began a policy of deportation against recalcitrant Yaquis. An unknown number, mostly men but some women and children, were shipped from Sonora to work in the south.<sup>78</sup> A large number of the men, ironically prisoners of war, found themselves in the federal army that had just captured them. These reluctant conscripts entered an army of harsh discipline, low pay, and jail-like barracks. Further, they were to fight in the Yucatán against the Maya, where many died from malarial fevers.<sup>79</sup>

According to the official military historian of the Yaqui campaigns, Francisco Troncoso, President Díaz and his advisors had found the idea of mass deportation

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<sup>78</sup> Evelyn Hu-deHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 94-109.

<sup>79</sup> Hu-deHart, 183.

completely inappropriate and unworkable in 1902.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, it is telling that they already considered the option, and undoubtedly had drafted some plans for its implementation. In the wake of the United States' campaigns forcing Indian peoples onto reservations since the 1830s, it should not be surprising that Mexico would consider the option. Indeed, one Emilio Kosterlitzky became the chief architect of the military and rurale operations against the Yaqui by 1904.<sup>81</sup> Aside from his colourful personality, Colonel Kosterlitzky contributed an interesting combination of military experience to the enterprise, having served with the U.S. army previous to his desertion to Mexico. The "Mad Russian" thus provided his direct experience with suppressing and relocating Native tribes to Governor Izábal. The increasingly draconian measures taken by the government, moreover, directly benefited the biggest henequen plantation owners of the Yucatan, who coincidentally, held the positions of Secretary of War and Secretary of Development. In this sense, the policy change derived in part from pragmatic desperation, in part from indifferent racism, and in part from greedy ambition.

Creating social difference and relegating indigenous peoples to subhuman categorizations gained momentum as a military strategy as the demands for unfree labour increased. Between 1903 and 1907, efforts by Izábal had achieved the deportation of several thousand Yaqui.<sup>82</sup> The regime primarily deported adults as workers, and given the mortality from disease, the Yucatán plantations had continual needed for more. Children generally stayed behind, given as servants to wealthy families or simply left in camps to

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<sup>80</sup> Francisco Troncoso and Ministerio de Guerra y Marina, *Las guerras con las tribus Yaqui* (Mexico: Tip. del Departamento de Estado Mayor, 1905), 24-26, 235.

<sup>81</sup> Cornelius Cole Smith, *Emilio Kosterlitzky, Eagle of Sonora and the Southwest Border* (Glendale, Calif.: A. H. Clark Co., 1970), passim.

<sup>82</sup> Hu-deHart, 181-188.

fend for themselves.<sup>83</sup> By separating families in this fashion, the regime also undermined the cultural integrity of the Yaqui and further destroyed what they regarded as a problem culture.

In most areas, the army garrisoned platoons and relied on swift reinforcement, if necessary, to keep order. The small detachments and sometimes unconventional tactics used by the practical officers allowed the government to suppress wide-scale uprisings but at a cost. Coverage of terrain, with scattered pockets of occupation, complemented the use of railways and telegraphs to move and coordinate larger units of reinforcements. The strategy was a type of armed reconnaissance, as small groups of twenty or thirty federal troopers could then coordinate with even smaller units of rurales to watch over large territories.<sup>84</sup> Where the gaps between garrisoned towns and railheads were too large, the government expanded on an older program of military colonies that were located between areas of normal coverage.<sup>85</sup> The goals of totally eradicating armed opposition had proven futile, as the persistent uprisings of Sonora and the Yucatán had shown. Nonetheless, the suppressive strategy put the army in a position where it could greatly limit the size, mobility, and effect of scattered raiders or rebels. After the embarrassment suffered at Tomochic, for instance, the army had shifted its strategy in the nearby Yaqui territories to a gradual campaign of colonizing and marginalizing remaining enemies.

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<sup>83</sup> Hu-deHart 187, 188.

<sup>84</sup> Alicia, Hernández Chávez "Origen y ocaso del ejército porfiriano," *Historia Mexicana* 39, no. 1 (1989): 257-96.

<sup>85</sup> "Colonias Militares," *Revista Militar Mexicana* (10/15/1890), 587-591. Colonies began in 1824, but expanded greatly under Juárez, and spread under Díaz, as a response to Indian uprisings. The author of this article advocates replacement of colonies by specially selected troops acclimated to region.

### Promoting Fraternity

The duties of the line officer in the field of battle had a certain restricted and straightforward nature; more confusing was the murky complexity of roles in the garrison. The subaltern officer had an often ambiguous and complicated relationship with his troops. The upper brass expected these young men, with an average age of around twenty, to bully, lead, discipline, educate, and inspire large groups of generally older men from enormously different class and ethnic backgrounds. The usually poor training and attitudes of non-commissioned officers left the subalterns with limited options in enforcing their will.<sup>86</sup> While egregious insubordination held immediate consequences, it seems that more often an undisciplined laissez-faire relation dictated normal interactions.

Fraternalizing between the subalterns and troops stood out as a problem that concerned the higher command. The prospect of junior officers deserting along with their soldier friends warranted extra regulations, and the punishment for what they termed aggravated desertion invariably ran to years in prison.<sup>87</sup> Far more usually, fraternization came with alcohol as young officers led soldiers on binges out of the barracks.<sup>88</sup> At night, all officers below captain were required to return to the garrison to stand watch or be on hand. This created problems, as these men sometimes became involved in the evening's drinking, flirting, and socializing, thus undermining their distance from the troops and

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<sup>86</sup> Aponte, 71, 78.

<sup>87</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-c Caja 334 Soldado Rafael Cervantes: trial (11/23/1897) distinguishes between simple desertion (soldiers only) and aggravated desertion, where officers bring troops with them. The Juez also notes that desertion requires intent, that is, one can not accidentally desert, and this complicated a charge that could be levied automatically upon three days of absence.

<sup>88</sup> For one example: AGN, CMDF, ep-m Caja 3567 Subtnt. Antonio Manzano: 1/7/1879, caught drinking in pulquería with 4 other officers and all their troops.



their women. Other officers tried, generally in vain, to keep the soldiers from their customary vices (see Chapter 2).

At the same time, many Military College graduates, however friendly with their troops, opposed the promotion of soldiers to their ranks, whether as so-called mustang officers (common soldiers promoted to officer), or those given abbreviated training at the *Escuela de Aspirantes*.<sup>89</sup> This school had opened in 1905 and offered an abbreviated two-year program intended to produce much needed line officers. Although it received favourable reviews from the press and from foreign observers, many officers felt it undermined overall quality and morale in the officer corps. Training at the Escuela focused on practical tasks and skills, and at lower cost and with lower social capital needed for entrance, proved attractive to the more humble classes.<sup>90</sup> The first graduates entered in service in 1907, and from the records it appeared that they did no better nor worse than their slightly better trained counterparts. They boasted similar arrest records, similar commendations, and similar combat successes. Nonetheless, in the few years before the Revolution it seemed that promotion discrimination began to show.<sup>91</sup>

Attitudes towards the mustangs revealed some entrenched biases against the common soldier. Agreeing with the story of Juan Soldado, officers believed that an up-jumped soldier would soon return to his brutish nature and defile the honour of his

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<sup>89</sup> Mustang is a somewhat derogatory term for a common soldier advanced to commissioned ranks, the complimentary term was to compare them to the French system, a Marshal's baton in every backpack.

<sup>90</sup> "Escuela de Aspirantes," *El Imparcial* (1/6/1907): appeals to those who want a career in arms without studying to highest grades.

<sup>91</sup> AGN, CMDF, expedientes personales, passim.

acquired caste.<sup>92</sup> Resistance to rising from the ranks appeared in several forms, including denials of promotion, and higher rates of incarceration and discharge.

Reviews for promotion were often political affairs, whether for generals and colonels reviewed by Senate or sergeants rewarded in battle. The Porfirian ideology and budget dictated efforts to reduce the officers on the payroll sharply, especially those of higher ranks when possible but it also hit subalterns.<sup>93</sup> In theory, promotions reflected time in service, merit by reviews, and passing of examinations. Retarded promotion nonetheless frustrated many officers, particularly among the *prácticos*, and especially their *mustang* minority.<sup>94</sup> Personnel records indicate that less than one percent rose from ranks to even the lowest grades, *alférez* or *subteniente*. Most of these had special skills or connections, for example, a good scribe might well move into junior staff positions as an *alférez*, or a skilled accountant become a *pagador* (paymaster).

Still, line officers of any origin in the Porfirian army faced uncertain futures. Lieutenant Colonel José Maria Garcia languished for over twenty years in and out of service and could never make the next promotion, despite considerable talents.<sup>95</sup> In a suspiciously stifled career, Lieutenant Blas Garcilazo never received a second promotion in twenty-four years.<sup>96</sup> Many others experienced the same, or gave up and left the army.

Long periods in a dreaded location or without promotions stifled the enthusiasm, and created embittered or elderly officers who hurt the public's image of the army. In

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<sup>92</sup> Urquizo, "Juan Soldado," 43-50.

<sup>93</sup> Alexius, 69-124.

<sup>94</sup> León Martínez to PD, 9/28/1880, CPD Legajo 5 Caja 7 Doc. 3464: bitterly complains that he has consumed thirty of the best years of his life and now is abandoned to misery, having watched others pass him by for promotions.

<sup>95</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 343, Tnt. Cor. José Maria Garcia.

<sup>96</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 345, Tnt. Blas Gracilazo.

this cartoon from the *México Grafico*, the older soldier asks what rank this young poet held, to which he replied sarcastically that he lacked the poetry even to call the old man Colonel.<sup>97</sup> His resentment, and even shame, reflected the general public opinion about Díaz's aging senior officers; some had gained ridicule in the fiasco at Tomochic, others typified the corruption at the top of government, and many more haunted the streets and pulquerías.



**Illustration 3.2** Mexico Grafico (Sept. 1891), 7.

<sup>97</sup> *México Gráfico* (Sept. 1891), 7.

In some ways, the young line officer for all his flaws represented a man closer to the image of nation that Díaz desired than did his aged generals. The subaltern in charge of troops put an educated yet pragmatic face on the regime, a rejection of the charro tradition in his kepi and still criollo rather than indigenous, although some thought this was in flux.<sup>98</sup> Photos reveal the rarity of darker skinned officers and race itself was a distinction erased from military auto-recording (see discussion in final sections of this chapter). The older generation of officers in deposit, a term also use for the shelving in morgues, at times became an embarrassment to the government as they succumbed to vices and age.<sup>99</sup>

Others proved a nuisance for their vigour, as with Rocha whose rough popularity was matched by his propensity for scandalously public dueling. Quick to take offense, the aging Rocha publicly vilified fellow General and Governor Francisco Cayntal y Arce in 1887. The matter reached the press, and soon letters arrived on the presidential desk asking for him to forbid the duel. The question of honour, in this case, was not at stake, but rather concerned officials thought the duel would prove a disgrace to the government and army, and a potential tragedy for the nation.<sup>100</sup> Soon after this argument had been quelled, Rocha did manage to duel an unnamed opponent, killing him in September of 1894. Facing a charge of murder, courts acquitted the old officer on the grounds of immunity as a member of Congress.<sup>101</sup> All of this accorded with the former College director's philosophy that the duel was quicker, cleaner, and more decent than a lengthy

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<sup>98</sup> This despite Janvier, 816, where he notes indigenous features as a positive sign.

<sup>99</sup> A great number of scandalous reports in the records of the CMDF bear this out.

<sup>100</sup> Cor. Juan N. Malda to PD, 7/23/1887 Legajo 12 Caja 14 Doc. 6537.

<sup>101</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-r Caja 370 Sóstenes Rocha.

argument.<sup>102</sup> Dueling aside, Rocha gained a fearless reputation with his soldiers, in one case riding at the fore of an uncontrolled live-fire exercise to prove the loyalty of his men to a fellow officer.

### Of Crime, Scandal, and Marriage

For all young officers, and again especially the mustang, the threat of discharge dangled consistently overhead despite devoted services to the patria. Subalterns in garrisons commonly accrued charges and punishments, collecting them on their records at an amazingly consistent rate. Only slightly less often than their soldiers, officers below captain, according to personnel records, typically collected between two or three arrests each year, with average penalties of around a week in confinement to the Flag Room (Sala de Estandartes or Banderas) or to barracks. Among the subalterns charged or discharged, the mustangs stood out as easy targets for misconduct discharges, often dismissed for faults that their more educated brethren committed without consequence.<sup>103</sup> Less often, and only after serious or repeated offences, the officers faced significant time in prison or discharge. This is certainly not to say they were paragons of gentlemanly behaviour.

Various criminal problems appeared from within the officer corps that reflected sexual norms, rampant alcoholism, and abusing authority. Little different from the soldiers, the press vilified officers for public disturbances.<sup>104</sup> Complaints to police and

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<sup>102</sup> Escudero, 159.

<sup>103</sup> AGN, CMDF, expedientes personales, *passim*.

<sup>104</sup> There are many examples in the papers for soldiers and officers, for several examples: "Oficiales en las cantinas," *Diario del Hogar* (8/13/1890), 3; "Un oficial consignado," *Diario del Hogar* (1/9/1902), 3; "Los militares en las pulquerías," *Diario del Hogar* (5/25/1906), 3; "Otro jefe de batallón suspendido," *Diario del Hogar* (7/18/1903), 3.

army reveal a wide scope of misbehavior that extended from the National Palace to the tiniest rural garrison.

Subalterns below captain were discouraged from marriage, mostly through perceived youth, poor pay, and frequent transfers, while captains and up were almost invariably married. This did not, in any way, mean that the road to marriage ran smooth.

A significant number of subaltern officers were charged by their superiors with the crimes of raptó and estupro, and sometimes of rape, at the behest of fathers and apparently ending in settlement.<sup>105</sup> Second Captain Rosalio Salazar had been involved sometime with a sixteen year old girl, and was eventually charged on the testimony of a number of workers in a hotel of ill-repute.<sup>106</sup> After he confessed, the judge dropped the case without explanation. In another such incident, Alférez Porfirio Velasco's case saw him incarcerated for less than two weeks before the judge dismissed.<sup>107</sup> The reversals were justified by citing lack of merits, lack of information, or that the crime did not happen (*no pasó*). It is likely that in some instances this demonstrated a negotiation between the family of the girl and the officer, either marriage or money. Many times the cases seem to coincide fairly closely with an officer's promotion, suggesting motive for the family to act.

Of course, even normal relationships had conflicts. Officers, like their troops, at times entered into less formal relationships with amasias (see Chapter Two). Lieutenant Francisco Rojas chose an extremely tough one. One night as he returned to barracks at

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<sup>105</sup> William French, "Te amo mucho," in *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, ed. Jeffrey Pilcher (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 123-137; also see his forthcoming monograph.

<sup>106</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-s Caja 372 Capt.2 Rosalio Salazar

<sup>107</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-v Caja 375 Alférez Porfirio Velasco, 1890.

Chapultepec with some NCOs, his drunken amasia took exception, threw him down, and beat him. When the sergeant and two corporals tried to help, they too were thrashed. Far more often, the violence came from the men who most times escaped with only a fine for even the worst abuses.<sup>108</sup> One captain combined his faults when he drunkenly assaulted his family in front of a military band he had forced to come and play at his house.<sup>109</sup>

Rampant alcoholism plagued the officer classes just as it undermined the rest of society.<sup>110</sup> Extremely common incidents of drunken disturbances filled the personnel records, and the jail cells. By the rank of major, most officers either quit drinking or became relatively immune to arrest over simple matters. Minor displays of public drunkenness, if not too frequent, received short punishments. Serious charges came from the outrageous spectacles: brawls in theatres or at the bullfight, wild gunplay in the streets, or loud profanities and nudity in churches.<sup>111</sup> Intoxication created dangerous situations, but from the perspective of army reformers, the serious damage came to the military's public image. Newspapers, even those sympathetic to the regime, frequently published stories about the drunken antics of military men.<sup>112</sup> The lack of decorum and

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<sup>108</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-t Caja 374 Cdte. Guillermo Thompson: great escandalo, as he gets drunk and abuses family, even cutting his wife's ear with a sword blow, until a neighbour fires shots in the air for help. Ultimately, he pays a fine of 20 pesos, or about a week's salary.

<sup>109</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 346 Cpt.2 Rafael Guitian: (6/4/1880)one month sentence for making band of 14th Battalion play against their will, then with prostitutes in tow, ridiculed his family with obscene words in a "repugnant spectacle."

<sup>110</sup> Ricardo Pérez Montfort, Alberto del Castillo Yurrita, and Pablo Piccato, *Hábitos, Normas Y Escándalo: Prensa, Criminalidad Y Drogas Durante El Porfiriato Tardío* 1. ed. (México, D.F.: Ciesas: Plaza y Valdes Editores, 1997), 75-121.

<sup>111</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 320 Subtnt. Zacarias Alvarez del Castillo, 6/27/1896: sold sword and pistol for drinking money; AGN, CMDF, ep-m Caja 358 Cpt.2 Herminio Montenegro: constantly drunk and causing disturbances that included threatening the wife of a Subtnt., who was his landlady, at swordpoint; AGN, CMDF, ep-s Caja 372 Subtnt. Luis San German: 5/3/1872 police arrest him in Arzobispado, drunk and "absoluto desnudo."

<sup>112</sup> Ricardo Pérez Montfort, Alberto del Castillo Yurrita, and Pablo Piccato, 26-37, 82-97.

extremes that behaviour reached was exacerbated by the propensity of soldiers to resist the police.

Drinking and troublemaking in proper style required more funds than low-paid officers typically earned; along with a sense of opportunistic entitlement, this lifestyle led to corruption and embezzlement, that had become customary in the army.<sup>113</sup> The subalterns called their petty theft and skimming *las buscas*, or searches, and many considered it a normal bonus to their monthly pay. Indeed, complaints about low pay seemed justified as men lacked even their basic necessities, could not afford proper upkeep on equipment or mounts, and could not support families.<sup>114</sup> They received no additional funds for extraordinary expenses either, such as travel or medical costs, but the practice of gifts for superiors (*obsequios*) appeared to be the most resented. Most graduates of the College or promoted Sergeants immediately found themselves in debt, owing between 140 and 300 pesos just for their uniform, horse, and gear.<sup>115</sup> The army did not reimburse soldiers for dead or ill mounts either, and especially after campaigns, the officers slipped further into debt. What was a man to do? Military corruption in forms small and large had a long tradition, and represented an area of Porfirian life that saw little progress.

The large-scale depredations of higher ranking officers, particularly those with political office, included land speculation, accepting bribes, and even human trafficking;

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<sup>113</sup> Kelley, 81; Juan Pedro Didapp, *Gobiernos militares de México; Los ataques al ejército y las maquinaciones políticas del partido científico para regir los destinos nacionales* (México: Tip. de J. I. Guerrero y Comp., 1904), passim.

<sup>114</sup> "Gratificaciones," *Revista Militar Mexicana* (12/15/1889), 39-44.

<sup>115</sup> "Gratificaciones," 42.



the low grade officers had to make do with modest schemes.<sup>116</sup> By far the most common means to earn a steady side-income came from embezzling. Managing mounts and forage was an opportunity to adjust the accounts, non-existent or low quality horses and mules were officially purchased, fed, and doctored, and the proceeds kept. Pay for deserted or non-existent men could also be drawn, but inspectors quickly noticed. With fluctuating prices for forage and animals, the risk was lower and numbers changed at the last minute before inspectors arrived. In la busca, officers also accepted generously provided themselves gifts from the soldiers from the pay-chests without bothering troops for permission. Small bribes for entrance to the barracks, or for allowing contraband, further rounded out the line officers pockets. The practice became normalized, and charges for abuse of authority required truly venal and outrageous excesses.<sup>117</sup>

How could inexperienced officers with such checkered records control their troops? Memoirs demonstrate a number of possible paths: violence, bribery, and apathy. Each garrison had its own personality, its tenor reflected location and often the efforts of the junior officers. Some units clearly lacked any real discipline from officers.<sup>118</sup> In Huerta's sycophantic correspondence with Bernardo Reyes he pointed out a number of junior officers he considered completely inept in dealing with troops. Some were too

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<sup>116</sup> Alexius, 90-124.

<sup>117</sup> CDX BR Vol 34 6735 Juan D. Brijar to BR, 3/7/1902 forage records falsified; CDX BR Vol 34 6753 V. Huerta to BR, 8/31/1902 pagadores are dishonest and buying unneeded mules; CDX BR Vol 29 5772, Juan A Hernández to BR, 7/13/1900 forage cheaper than officers claim; Ignacio Escudero to José del Valle, 2/21/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 3 Doc. 1065: report that 68 horses of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Regiments are useless; PD to Gob. Alejandro Prieto, 8/19/1891, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 19 Doc. 9105: attempts to meet fluctuating price of 30 centavos/day/ horse for forage but Prieto replies in 10/29/1891 CPD Legajo 16 Caja 28 Doc. 13771 that the Army's official rate in Tampico is 44 centavos, which maybe he could lower to 35 centavos.

<sup>118</sup> Ongoing diatribes in CDX BR Vol. 34, letters from Huerta to BR, docs. 6733,6741, 6743, 6745, in March to May of 1902. In Vol. 34 6636, 5/16/1901, Huerta admits that in Sinaloa they say that he is an "animal carnívero," in reference to his campaign style.

friendly, and hence lacked the fiber to enforce dictates. Others he deemed simply too stupid to know how to lead. Among his own troops, he became known for a hard hand, and with support from their NCOs, a number of units gained reputations for harsh discipline and profligate use of the lash. Some units appeared to have an orderly reputation without such harshness, and earned praise in the military literature and press. Inspectors often cited the Ninth Battalion, the Seventh Regiment and Third Artillery as good examples to which other troops should aspire. The officers sent to a new unit shortly learned to fit in with the general expectations of their counterparts. Rafael Aponte described the ordeal of a new Artillery officer whose arrival at the garrison soon spiraled into fear of soldiers, hazing by officers, and a miasma of lowered expectation and apathy.<sup>119</sup> Ultimately, few line officers attained little control over their factious soldiers beyond simple regulation keeping.

The subaltern of the line was more than a disciplinarian alone, but in many ways also represented an exemplar of class and the educator of nationalism. Literacy programs (see chapter 1) required the *práctico* to become the primary school teacher as he read nationalist textbooks to, and with, his captive troops. The interpretation of the texts' materials and messages largely depended on him, an officer trained at a College that proudly claimed not to instruct cadets in historical interpretation or critique.<sup>120</sup> Daily rote recitations of penalties and regulations also fell to the junior officers, as did drill instruction although NCOs assisted with the latter. The great ennui such readings instilled in soldiers can only have been surpassed by officers who read them for years on end.

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<sup>119</sup> Aponte, 81.

<sup>120</sup> Kelley, 63-64.

Instruction at arms, on the other hand, seems to have been more entertaining as it even brought senior officers out at times.

Beyond their direct instruction, officers were also expected to provide their troops with a good example. Somewhat the antidote for geriatric eccentrics and vulgar conscripts alike, the junior line officer could be displayed in public as the proof of the nation's progress. In the face of low pay and high alcoholism, this proved difficult. Superiors charged junior officers with providing a bad example, with a penalty of eight days in lock-up, with some regularity.<sup>121</sup> Drinking to excess with one's troops, while barely acceptable within garrison walls, became a problem when translated to the city streets. Even more troubling to commanders, some officers opened their own cantinas and took advantage of their troops as customers.<sup>122</sup> Poor military demeanour, disheveled uniforms, and frequent lateness also demanded charges. Whether officers influenced soldiers through example seems possible, but the reverse seems more likely. As Aponte's troubled officer demonstrated, the new face in the barracks adjusted to what he encountered rather than instigating changes in the men before him. Manuel Mondragón's assessment agreed, the young officer, far from providing a good example, instead became mired in the vices and habits of his soldiers.

### Professionals of Technical Progress

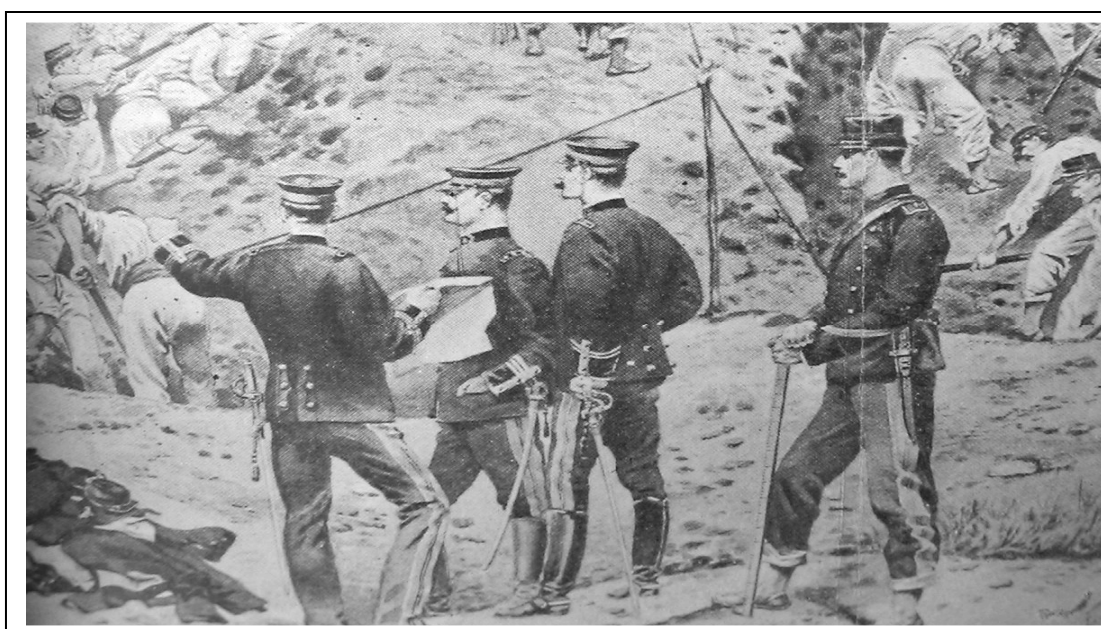
The scientific officers brought a broad panoply of skills to the tasks of building a modern nation. Some became medical staff, and attempted to improve and control

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<sup>121</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-d Caja 95 Tnt. Antonio Díaz: 7/15/1892 with Tnt. Enrique Otero charged with faults in service that gave a bad example to the troops, sentenced to eight days in Prisión Militar de Santiago.

<sup>122</sup> Jeronimo Treviño to PD 3/8/91 Legajo 16 Caja 7 Doc. 3064-66.

hygiene in the name of the army. Others built and sailed a new navy. Engineers worked to create a national arms industry, to harness nature, and to facilitate the colonization of the *patrias chicas*. They would proudly oversee ordinary Mexicans in the tasks of transforming and engineering the nation, as they depicted in this illustration from their journal (Illustration 3.3).



**Illustration 3.3 "Ingenieros militares," *Revista del Ejército* (1907), 224.**

The elite planners of the General and Faculty staffs advised the President in how to best create his vision of Mexico.

The idea of a scientifically minded officer class was not purely a Porfirian innovation, but had antecedents reaching back at least to Santa Anna's conception of the Military College.<sup>123</sup> As the century rolled forward, curriculum changed to match the times. Specialty classes in new techniques of photography, in use of railways, and even

<sup>123</sup> Secretaría de Guerra. *Exámenes De Colegio Militar* (México: n.p., 1838).

use of telephones soon appeared.<sup>124</sup> New explosives and chemistry entered the curriculum, and required increased equipment and field experience. Sharp reforms in 1900 improved technical skills in the field, and seven year graduates now earned the rank of Second Captain upon leaving the College. Technical officers learned from the timetabled precision of the Prussians, and added new weapons to their arsenals that demanded new tactics, including the Whitehead torpedo and the machine-gun.<sup>125</sup> New regulations and ordinances followed suit, and the Porfirians produced volumes of reforms to military law and procedure. The goal, as press and army alike announced, was to provide the nation with a modern, professional, and scientific officer.<sup>126</sup>

A number of significant institutional reorganizations and profound technological changes brought Díaz's army specialists to new levels of scientific professionalism. One crucial change came in the redefinition and organization of the Special General Staff (Estado Mayor Especial, EME) and its executive levels of the Professional Staff (Plana Mayor Facultativo or PMF) and Department of Artillery. By the 1880s, it became clear to military and civil planners that the technical leadership needed to direct modernization would likely come out of the Military College. To be sure, not all officers had the required talents for specialization, nor could many be redirected away from actual troop commands. Those with the extra years of training in engineering, naval skills, medicine, or cartography, with proper family connections, became a vanguard in production of a rational nation.

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<sup>124</sup> Secretaría de Guerra. *Reglamento De Colegio Militar*. México: De M. Murguia y Co, 1854); Chavarri, 195-237.

<sup>125</sup> *Memorias*, 1906 Parte Expositivo.

<sup>126</sup> For one example see: "Todo es empezar," *La Vanguardia* (4/9/1891), 1,2; (4/16/1891),1; (4/23/1891),1-2: which also calls for scientific NCOs.

The Presidential General Staff (EMP) of the PMF overlapped other services as an executive or planning group, and included most of the CGE favourites at some point or another. In theory, the Staff served the president as orderlies, extra security, adornments, and liaisons to the army. They also had an important symbolic role by adding a visual military presence with a youthful sheen to the old General (see chapter 4). For Díaz, the younger men also included friends and family, a trusted coterie to assist him. Genuine respect and affection also come through in letters, as what seems sycophantic from others appears more heartfelt.

For all of the professed dislike that the president was said to have for book-learned officers, his Staff showed remarkable education and experience. These sixty-five officers were conspicuous in their records and training. With few exceptions, they were graduates of the full seven-years of the Military College, and nearly all had field experience with the CGE or other specialized commissions.<sup>127</sup> Most had traveled on military business or undertaken study missions to Europe and the U.S. Some, like Lieutenant Colonel Francisco García, had considerable experience in directing civilian commissions like the *Junta Directiva del Ferrocarril de Sonora* (in Boston), which undertook the expansion of commercial rails in northwest Mexico.<sup>128</sup> While critics of the regime bemoaned the cronyism and the persistence of ancient war heroes, the men staffing the Presidential office suggested a significantly vibrant, if still military, alternative.

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<sup>127</sup> AGN, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, Estado Mayor Especial, expedientes personales, passim.

<sup>128</sup> AGN, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, Estado Mayor Especial, Caja 94 expedientes personale Tnt.Cor. Francisco García.

### Evolutions of Military Medicine

The doctors that served the army had profound influence on the military as an agent of change.<sup>129</sup> The Medical Corps formally took shape in 1880 under President Manuel González, with a formal structure for training, rank, promotion, and hierarchy, twenty years after its inception. Prior medical staff had no rank but *médico* and worked as a form of auxiliary or parallel service. This service had worked tolerably well in the crises of nineteenth-century warfare and with the limited medical knowledge of the time. With the advent of more peaceful times, direct trauma interventions became less important than maintaining general health and well-being. The expansions of medical knowledge by the end of the century also shaped the Corps and its close ties to the modernizing government under Díaz. The better trained and organized doctors now expanded their roles, adding pharmacies, veterinarians, and ambulances to the army, but also took responsibility for engineering hygiene programs and eugenic planning for the nation more generally.<sup>130</sup> Before the top medical officers could entertain these reforms, changes to the education system would be necessary.

The training of army doctors, quite separate from the education of other officer branches, revealed underlying philosophies driving the Corps and nation as a whole. Before 1860, medical staffing generally was left to unit commanders, and relatively little was done to vet the competence of civilian educated doctors. Indeed, as with many armies in the nineteenth-century, a great number of these men were little better than

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<sup>129</sup> Agustín García Figueroa, *Higiene Militar: causas de la frecuencia de la sífilis en el ejército y medios de disminuirla* (México D.F.: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1874), 1-10.

<sup>130</sup> After a number of scandalously mishandled horse purchases, the veterinarians were assigned their own branch of service; hygiene is discussed in previous chapter.

butchers or barbers with similar tools and anatomical knowledge.<sup>131</sup> A good commander would sensibly seek the best doctor he could find for his troops—not an easy task since expense, expertise, and willingness to live in the field primarily left the worst, cheapest, and most desperate doctors to the army. Further complicating matters, evaluating the skill of a doctor could be fraught with difficulty, the line between primitive medicine and outright charlatanism confounded even contemporary experts.

An early comedic example, the protagonist of the *Itchy Parrot* by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi managed to pass himself off as a medical doctor simply through pretension and the touch of Latin learned in seminary.<sup>132</sup> His masquerade aroused suspicion but not outright rejection from a self-important physician that the author selected as his object of ridicule. Pompous and dangerous to his own patients, the doctor could as easily have fit into some of the satirical cartoons published by the *Gráfico* at the end of the century. Not underestimating the comic intent, this uneasiness with early medicine was hardly exceptional. During the Porfiriato, despite great advances in training and medical knowledge, patients continued to find themselves at equal risk in the hands of a doctor as in the care of the soldadera's folk cures.<sup>133</sup>

Aspirants faced stiff competition for entrance to the Medical School, a condition that suggests the social acknowledgement and prestige associated with this training. As with other specialty education, this often involved nepotism. Family connections served

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<sup>131</sup> See William A. DePalo, *The Mexican National Army, 1822-1852* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 51: on the reliance upon soldaderas and folk cures.

<sup>132</sup> José Joaquín Fernández De Lizardi, *El Periquillo Sarniento*, trans. David Frye (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 152-164.

<sup>133</sup> See for examples, Mariano Azuela, Beth Ellen Jorgensen, and E. Munguía, *The Underdogs: A Novel of the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 27, 30-32.



multiple functions by restricting the quality of applicants to some degree, but most of all by creating connections between elite medical, military, and political networks,.

Generally, this insider system worked well, but in one case, Beatriz Alvarez had to write to the president to ask that her son not be admitted to the army's medical corps. She preferred instead that he be sent to study in Paris. While this seems a bit unreasonable, the President acquiesced because the young doctor was only trained in gynecology.<sup>134</sup>

With the inception of regularized medical training in 1880 new degrees of expertise did, nevertheless, become the standard. European advances became the de rigueur measure for the staff, and the participation in international medical conferences or training seminars brought new abilities into the military hospitals. Coursework at the prestigious Pasteur Institute in Paris, for example, allowed Medical Major Daniel Velez to study modern abdominal surgery for one year.<sup>135</sup> The Military Instructional Hospital in Mexico City taught the latest in diagnosis and treatment, using expensive foreign-made equipment. As concerns shifted, so too the curriculum changed; for example new courses in hygiene and in syphilis appeared in 1890 and 1891.<sup>136</sup> Only about half of the aspirants managed to pass the strenuous training, and it was difficult enough even to get in.

Families with long military traditions, such as the Montes de Ocas, featured prominently among the top medical officials. Best remembered for contributing a Niño

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<sup>134</sup> B. Alvarez to PD, 5/21/87, CPD Legajo 12 Caja 8 Doc. 3541.

<sup>135</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep Caja V Daniel Velez, 3/23/95; also, Memoria Parte Expositivo 1906, 45-47.

<sup>136</sup> This was reflected in the medical school theses produced: Ángel Rodríguez, *Profilaxis de las afecciones venereo-sifilíticas en el ejército* (México: Imprenta Gobierno, 1893); Leopoldo Ortega, *Breves consideraciones sobre algunos puntos de higiene militar* (Mexico: Imp. de Ignacio Cumplido, 1882); Agustín García Figueroa, *Higiene Militar: causas de la frecuencia de la sífilis en el ejército y medios de disminuirla* (México D.F. : Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1874); Francisco Domingo y Barrera, *Ligero estudio sobre higiene de cuarteles e indicaciones de los condiciones que guardan los de la Capital*. (México D.F.: Tip. Literaria de Filomeno Mata, 1880).

Héroe to the resistance against the U.S. in 1848, the Montes de Oca family later supplied a number of Porfirian officers in various services. The highest ranking of these directed the Medical Corps for years.<sup>137</sup> With political capital stemming from an exclusive entrance policy the Corps managed to attract accomplished physicians to teach despite relatively poor pay. Alternative possibilities for revenue, as in other services, somewhat compensated for this as corruption, embezzlement, perks, and bribes afforded a reasonable standard of living.

Furthermore, medical officers had by far the easiest time resigning their commissions and returning to a civil practice, as indeed the majority did after only three years on average. The government chose to use semi-permanent and permanent postings to the larger hospitals as one means to retain more staff. Since there were only eleven military hospitals, this measure did not make a great difference.

The Medical Corps also stands out from other services in the usual career arcs of its personnel. With fewer ranks in the hierarchy, graduates attained higher responsibility and pay grades fairly quickly. Graduates moved from Aspirant-Lieutenant to Medic Major immediately, and within a short time, those rose to the ranks to Lt. Colonel or Colonel. The corps became top-heavy, with seventy-eight high officers (Jefes) to only fifty-eight regular officers in 1902. The promotion scale depended on available posts, the higher grades generally taking over hospitals, military zones, or branches such as the pharmacies. The relatively swift promotion arc certainly appealed to some, even if field service did not.

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<sup>137</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-m Cajas 357-359 Montes de Oca.

The possibility of postings to less desirable regions prompted complaints and even resignations from some. Doctors nonetheless were expected to follow their orders and their units, and so semi-permanent postings to fixed hospitals had great appeal. The Yucatán with its reputed unhealthy climate and ongoing warfare nonetheless attracted a number of scientifically or morally minded doctors who saw the garrisons there as a challenge. The government also established new hospitals and clinics specializing in peninsular illnesses.<sup>138</sup> Malaria and Yellow Fever, as well as the more common typhoid and cholera, represented an important puzzle for which the barracks unfortunately, provided a possible laboratory. Various theories appeared, some that came close to uncovering the connection between anopheles mosquitoes and disease. Mosquito nets, for example, were noted to have a salubrious effect for troops, but doctors felt that this stemmed from the better resting conditions.<sup>139</sup> Others noted that in windier areas they saw fewer cases, and drew the conclusion that something in the air must be to blame, but mosquitoes did not occur to them as the vector.<sup>140</sup> The final breakthrough, nevertheless, would not come for another decade.<sup>141</sup>

Other field service locales provided their own possibilities for study by an inquisitive doctor. Manuel Balbas's memoirs of the Yaqui campaigns combined natural history with partisan perspective.<sup>142</sup> He noted the state of "savagery" of the Indians, but also made comments on their traditional dances, songs, and family life. A strange

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<sup>138</sup> Luis Mier y Terán and PD, 8/31/1886, CPD Legajo 11 Caja 17 Doc. 8327: on problem of doctors leaving service; Memoria 1903, "Cuerpo Médico," 251-253.

<sup>139</sup> Crl Hipolito to PD, 11/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 22 Doc. 10683.

<sup>140</sup> "Ligeras reflexiones sobre infección," *Gaceta Médico Militar* (T2, 1889), 337-43.

<sup>141</sup> "Campana de Yucatán," *México Militar* (1901), 329.

<sup>142</sup> Manuel Balbás, *Recuerdos del Yaqui: principales episodios durante la campana de 1899 a 1901* (México: Sociedad de Edición y Librería Franco Americano, 1927).

combination of patriotic militarism and humanist pity became a tract that valorized indigenous culture and Mexican nationalism. As he published this in later years, he argued along with Gamio and Vasconcelos that the ultimate solution for civilizing would be education, in his words, “school, school, and more school.”<sup>143</sup> Although Balbas did not see his efforts as anthropology per se, a field still undeveloped at that time, he provided a picture of rare precision of the peoples he encountered. His work and that of other specialists in the countryside helped to produce a body of knowledge about health and customs that embedded the medical service into projects to shape *mexicanidad* and nation-formation.

### Steaming Towards the Modern

The Navy was another specialist field reinvented in the 1880s through expansion and re-regulation, as the government debated over its regional and national aspirations. Despite enthusiastic rhetoric from some top military and political figures, a degree of uneasiness over spending tremendous resources on a not well-justified navy appeared in newspapers and journals. Gun ships, all agreed, were tremendously expensive undertakings, particularly as they all came from foreign shipyards.<sup>144</sup> Transports and revenue cutters had obvious practicality, but it took more convincing for naval proponents to gain support when most army conflicts happened so far from shorelines. The *Universal* especially pointed out the small chance that a foreign navy would attack, but this line of argument did not impress the editors of the *Vanguardia* who deemed the

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<sup>143</sup> Balbás, 116.

<sup>144</sup> Buying vessels was a matter of high finance: see Alejandro Coney to Manuel Dublán (Sec. Hacienda), 12/20/1888, CPD Legajo 13 Caja 26 Doc. 12535-6.

comment ridiculous and possibly cowardly.<sup>145</sup> By 1907, the press had largely come around, and *El Imparcial* lauded the great utility and success that gun ships had in campaigns against the Maya.<sup>146</sup> This growing support and public admiration came partially from the increasing professionalism of the Navy, especially after the opening of the Navy School in Veracruz in July of 1897, which greatly enhanced the limited training facilities that small facilities in Campeche and Mazatlán had offered.<sup>147</sup>

The arguments reflected ambivalence about the nation's role in the circum-Caribbean region, and about likely military opponents. The creation of a submarine navy, as one example, remained a contentious point. One native design, rather reminiscent of a Jules Verne fantasy, would almost certainly have proven more deadly to its occupants than to its foes.<sup>148</sup> Still, when Bernardo Reyes became Secretary of War he attempted to go ahead with the purchase of a number of U.S. made Holland-class submarines.<sup>149</sup> Critics raised pointed questions. How was the Navy going to help defeat simmering Indian uprisings in the countryside? How were blue-water capable steamships, of which a number had been purchased, going to assist in a possible war against Guatemala? Some innovative officers suggested tactics more fanciful than realistic, but ultimately the navy specialized in limited roles of anti-smuggling and coastal patrols. They also represented an apt showpiece of military modernization, particularly when used to show the flag

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<sup>145</sup> "Halagadores noticias," *La Vanguardia* (6/27/1891), 1; "El Universal," *La Vanguardia* (7/11/1891), 1-2.

<sup>146</sup> "Prosperidad de nuestra marina de guerra," *El Imparcial* (1/20/1907), 1.

<sup>147</sup> One example, see re: Naval School: "Memória," *Boletín Militar* (4/1/1900), 8-10.

<sup>148</sup> Manuel Mondragón, "Defensa de las costas," Laminata #8: the depicted submarine, superficially similar to the Holland-class subs, lacks workable air re-supply among other issues.

<sup>149</sup> Bryan Anthony, "Mexican Politics in Transition, 1900-1913: The Role of General Bernardo Reyes," (PhD dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1970), 71.

diplomatically abroad (see Chapter 4). For officers, the service experience was markedly different than that of their land based counterparts.

Only a few hundred formally trained naval officers and less than a thousand sailors served during the Porfirian era, yet they remain an important group for analysis.<sup>150</sup> Of all the branches of the military, the navy earned the greatest sustained gains in budget and numbers. From humble beginnings, the fleet boasted two training corvettes, six gun ships, and several transports by 1906, with more war ships on order from Italy and the United States.<sup>151</sup> The Naval School in Veracruz became known for its excellence in the decade between its inauguration and the Revolution.<sup>152</sup>

Training new officers and machinists represented a priority in order to displace the foreign talent that staffed important positions in the 1870s Navy.<sup>153</sup> The requirements of ship life, in particular the close quarters with crew members, seemed to attract officers from lower middle class origins. This, no doubt, was exacerbated by the common perception that the Navy had little opportunity for advancements; with so few ships, the majority of advancing officers eventually found themselves assigned to Captaincies of Port, supervising shipping. Poor conditions aboard vessels, including endemic illnesses, dissuaded other would-be officers.<sup>154</sup> The Secretariat attempted to attract more applicants by glorifying Independence era naval heroes like Pedro Saenz de Barranda, which helped, and by offering sailors regular vacation time, which helped more. Perhaps the greatest

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<sup>150</sup> Compare to the 800 serving aboard a single contemporary British battleship, the *H.M.S. Britannia* (1904).

<sup>151</sup> CDX 5773 EmbMEx inEu to BR 7/26/1900 from New Jersey see Chapter 4

<sup>152</sup> "Prosperidad de nuestra marina de guerra," *El Imparcial* (1/20/1907), 1.

<sup>153</sup> AGN, CMDF, expedientes personales, passim: A considerable number of foreign machinists and naval crew appear well into the 1890s.

<sup>154</sup> "Servicio Naval," *Gaceta Médico Militar* (T2 1889), 81.

attraction of naval life was travel, and Porfirian gun ships made numerous trips abroad to “show the flag” and promote the nation (see chapter 4).

#### Engineering Changes

The branch of the specialist services with the greatest national prominence was clearly the engineers. They roughly divided to three areas of expertise: construction, cartography, and artillery. The engineers represented, much as the medical staff, the finest in Porfirian education and families. The highest ranking engineering officers tended to have highly recognizable names, coming from the clans of greatest political and economic influence. Many of the most successful families deemed engineering an appropriate and desired service for their children. The engineers had received a top notch education at Chapultepec, sometimes supplemented at foreign academies, and excelled in mathematics especially. For some this represented true aptitude, such as with Felipe Angeles, while others like Díaz’s son struggled academically. Ultimately, many engineers enjoyed brief careers in the army before moving on to civilian life and higher salaries.<sup>155</sup> This did not detract from the important work that many accomplished while in arms, nor did their future employments undermine the significance of the military as a prime institution in building a modern nation.

In the search for a scientific officer class, the engineers became essential to Porfirian shows of progress. Historically, the engineering units built on the duties of the sappers, and by 1900, the Sapper Battalion had been largely relegated to garrison tasks in the capital. Sappers had traditionally focused their work on fortress construction or

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<sup>155</sup> Kelley, 132.

demolition, and general fortification. Battlefield engineering began to take second place to projects of greater civilian nature, or construction of military buildings. Cartographies, statistics, and surveys increasingly fell under the aegis of army men; likewise the control over waterways, if for somewhat different reasons.<sup>156</sup> Laying out roads, raising new barracks, installing fixed artillery, and charting exact borders became priorities for both sappers and engineers. These disparate and important duties at the heart of modernization belied the meager numbers of specialists.

The new sapper-engineering officers differed in a number of other ways. Drawing on manpower from all available units and from criminal or hired levies, they played integral parts in the tremendous expansion of communication networks (roads, rails, and telegraph), of electrical services and dams, and of establishing both penal and military colonies.<sup>157</sup> Military engineers, in addition to their quality education, were cheaper than civilians and accordingly in high demand. They worked for a range of employers, as often drawing pay from the Secretariats of Development, Interior, or Government, or from municipal and state governors, as from their own Secretary. The Engineers remained under the overall command of planning officers from the PMF, but clearly branched out from the army to direct the modernizing projects of Díaz and the elite.

They were not alone. Foreign engineers, especially from the U.S. and Great Britain, held lead positions in the largest public works projects across the country. The Gran Desagüe, many railways, urban paving, and dam building depended mostly on these

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<sup>156</sup> Waterways were mostly federalized by 1888, see: E. Masilla, *De como Porfirio Díaz dominas las aguas* (México DF: Concurso CIESAS, Oct. 1994).

<sup>157</sup> For various examples, see career accomplishments in Sánchez Lamego and *Memorias de Secretaría de Fomento* (1906-07).



foreign experts and the capital they carried.<sup>158</sup> Among the engineers brought in was Henry Ossian Flipper, the first African-American graduate of West Point, who worked as a civil engineer following his dismissal on trumped up charges. He later also advised Senator Albert Fall on Mexican affairs during the Revolution.<sup>159</sup> Although such men as Weetman Pearson, Alfred Frisbee, and others drew on native talent, including military engineers, to oversee labour and for local guidance, credit and blame for the large projects generally ignored Mexican participations. Despite the importance of these outside experts, the demand for the military's builders continued to rise through the era.

Exotic projects only absorbed a small portion of the engineer's time, given the generally decrepit state of the army's facilities. Construction projects focused on military buildings: barracks, arsenals, hospitals, warehouses, and factories. Barracks repairs and maintenance, touched on in the previous chapter, absorbed much of the army budget and left little for new housing. Still, new projects appeared from time to time. At the turn of the century, considerable land purchases for new barracks, and interminable repairs to existing ones cost a minimum of 300 000 pesos.<sup>160</sup> With six large schools, eleven military hospitals, five factories, and more than eighty barracks, the engineers and construction companies had continuous work ahead.<sup>161</sup> Nonetheless, unusual projects associated with expansions held more cache.

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<sup>158</sup> Luis Espinosa, "Reseña histórica y técnica de las obras del desagüe del Valle de México, 1856-1900," en *Memoria histórica y técnica de las obras del desagüe del Valle de México 1449-1900*, ed. Luis Gonzalez Obregón, Tomo I (México: n.p., 1902); William Schell, *Integral Outsiders: The American Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2001); Paul Garner, forthcoming.

<sup>159</sup> For a full biography: Henry Ossian Flipper and Quintard Taylor, Jr., *The Colored Cadet at West Point* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

<sup>160</sup> *Memorias* (1900-1902).

<sup>161</sup> *Memorias* (Dec. 31 1902), 12.

Some of the larger projects drove the re-colonizing of the Yaqui River valley in the wake of its forced depopulation and eventual repopulation. The power of a modern nation became evident throughout the mostly depopulated eight pueblos of the Yaqui Valley; the First Military Zone now boasted updated maps and surveys, a railroad connection to the U.S., three permanent garrisons and a military hospital, and a major canal and irrigation system (for layout of valley see Appendix 2, Map 2).<sup>162</sup> Former federal soldier Cajeme's revolt sparked the first attempt to survey the Valley accurately in 1881, and the CGE entered in force by 1887. Under the leadership of Colonel Agustín Díaz, surveyors moved through the area with military escorts as part of a strategy of scientific containment aimed at finishing the guerrillas and opening the area for foreign investment.<sup>163</sup> After initial surveys by the CGE, the specially designated Scientific Commission of Sonora arrived to map the Valley definitively for railroads and large-scale agriculture. Faced with serious problems of climate and health, the engineers continuously upgraded the new barracks they had established. By the declared end of the uprising, military engineers had fully occupied the Valley with examples of their trade.

Cartographers and surveyors were important agents of change, especially those assigned to the Geographic Scouting Commission (CGE). Far out of proportion to their numbers, they affected wide territories. The military surveys combed the landscape for valuables, interfered in politics, rationalized navigation and communications, renamed thousands of towns, seized water rights, designed colonies, and, for themselves, found

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<sup>162</sup> Troncoso, 264-280.

<sup>163</sup> *Memorias de Fomento* (1909-10), vi-viii; and report for Comisión Científico de Sonora, by Tnt. Cor. Antonio F. Torres, 40-74.

promotions and prosperity.<sup>164</sup> Their slender ranks were thick with political connections. Even the dimmest sub-lieutenant in the army soon recognized that these men were an elite group of the PMF, staffed by such family names as Díaz, Treviño, and González. A Military College graduate sent to command infantry would, if fortunate, attain the rank of major before retiring; one sent to the PMF's engineers was rather unlucky if he did not make Lieutenant Colonel by his mid thirties. Cartographers played a rather ambiguous role in local politics and in fixing the landscape, but equally important were their interactions with their fellow government and army actors.<sup>165</sup>

The primary task of the CGE was not in making places legible, but rather in the active assertion of default claims on uncontrolled or locally ruled areas—in essence, a military occupation by mapping. With scattered deployments of garrisons and detachments across the nation, the surveyors served to simplify and fill spaces in between and enhance central government claims.

This did not occur without cynicism and profiteering, an example of which took place during a claim made on the Rio Hondo. In 1896, Licenciado Rebollar of the municipal government of Mexico City attempted to commission engineers to survey land to the southwest, and possibly resolve the City's great deficiency of potable water.<sup>166</sup> A civilian engineer, Guillermo Puga, informed the city that it would require three engineers,

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<sup>164</sup> Falcón, 124 argues that the *jefes políticos* acted as intermediaries between local civil and larger military commands, I contend that this was true only in some areas, and that taken more largely the army acted as an apparently objective balance on embedded *jefes* seen by locals as corrupted and discriminatory (this is born up in letters from CPD and CDX, and in complaints to Sec. Guerra re: *jefes*); The *Periódico Militar* (1889) carried in series the renaming of all towns and villages in Mexico, that they might have unique map notations appropriate for mail delivery and for military deployments.

<sup>165</sup> Craib, 127-192.

<sup>166</sup> R. Rebollar to Ayuntamiento D.F., 12/31/1896, AHDF, Ayuntamiento del Gobierno D.F., Vol. 1323, Exp.1254 [122 pages total].

two technicians, four servants, and six peons, as well as a budget of about 16,000 pesos. Unfortunately, upon assembling his group, he received serious threats from area residents hostile to his enterprise, and he requested an armed escort.<sup>167</sup> The *cabildo* government dismissed his services, and requested the Secretaries of War and Interior that they form a military commission from the Special General Staff, consisting of a Jefe, two captains, four lieutenants, four peons, and whomever the local jefes políticos could spare. On behalf of the Secretary of War, Manuel González Cosi6 responded in May that no army engineers were available, but finally agreed in August to comply with a second request—provided that the City covered a substantial bonus of 70 percent from base salary for the officers.<sup>168</sup> Having held out for higher compensation, the Rio Hondo Commission continued to draw pay from the City for over two years, well after the survey finished. Ultimately, the frustrated municipal governor contrived to cancel the parasitic Commission only after a public declaration lauding their tremendous efforts, expertise, and service.<sup>169</sup>

The engineers of progress that carried cartography into all the dark corners of the nation also dragged a portmanteau of greed. Local actors, as Craib has shown, made use of federal surveyors to avoid, at least, falling victim to them.<sup>170</sup> Military authorities also controlled deployments to mitigate local advantage; when one town requested the service of several local-born army engineers fresh from the College, the president sent regrets.

Scandals and lawsuits often dogged the tracks of the CGE who at times

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<sup>167</sup> AHDF, Vol 1323, Exp. 1254 Guillermo Puga to R. Rebollar, 4/3/1897 and 4/12/1897.

<sup>168</sup> AHDF, Vol 1323, Exp. 1254 Secretaria de Guerra to Ayuntamiento, 5/1/1897, 8/12/1897, 8/18/1897.

<sup>169</sup> AHDF, Vol 1323, Exp. 1254 Ayuntamiento to Sec. Guerra, 12/20/99.

<sup>170</sup> Craib, 8-17.

discovered unclaimed, that is to say, not officially titled and registered resources, set their stakes on it, and used soldiers to protect their claim. This reputation added to local hostility and added an element of danger to the surveyors' tasks. A military escort, usually twenty men, protected the engineers as they pillaged and mapped. Conditions were not always pleasant, officers reported great dissatisfaction among escorts to the Guatemala border commission, and high rates of desertion. In another example, the president sent letters out to precede a CGE mission by his nephew Félix Díaz, asking governors and local authorities to protect the survey team.<sup>171</sup> In something of a reverse, when Trevino found a potentially profitable mining operation but he had only a dubious claim, he wrote Díaz asking for a detachment of soldiers to protect it. He implied that there would be profit in it for the president, perhaps in the form of a kickback, but the old Oaxacan turned him down.<sup>172</sup> It is possible that the denial was purely political, a disinclination to strengthen a regional caudillo, or even that the request offended the president's sense of propriety.

Military survey work in the Yucatán, perhaps more than anywhere else, revealed the martial nature of the engineer's task. New ports, especially at the aptly named Progreso and near Santa Cruz, allowed yet another important tool of empire, the steamship, to help stitch the nation together.<sup>173</sup> Vast efforts and treasures went into designing, dredging, and protecting new harbourages that drew the peninsula closer into

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<sup>171</sup> Agustín Díaz to PD, 1/24/1889, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 1 Doc. 230: asks specifically for his nephews Félix Díaz and Ignacio Muñoz for CGE for the good of their careers; PD to Grl. Carlos Diez Gutiérrez, 10/2/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 25 Doc. 12034: asks that he help Félix whom he is sending to San Luis Potosi on Geographic Commission.

<sup>172</sup> Jerónimo Treviño to PD, 5/10/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 11 Doc. 5395 (response 5396): from near Monterrey.

<sup>173</sup> Headrick, 17-18.

the grasp of the central government. Not incidentally, these ports worked to help the army undermine the unwanted influence of British Belize in the Mayan regions. Since before the Caste War of the mid-century, government and business representatives in the Yucatán saw smuggling of arms from the British to Mayas as a chief cause of revolt.<sup>174</sup> In 1867, officials discovered a large cache of gunpowder on a ship intended to meet with natives at Bacalor, men the author of one letter referred to as merciless savages and the scourge of civilized Yucatan.<sup>175</sup> Suspicions against the British supply of arms to barbarians continued, and in 1876, an accusation pointed to the presumably anti-Catholic stance of the English as reason for their hostility. The solution to this foreign interference, military planners thought, would be the establishment of a guardable buffer zone. The political carving of the peninsula with the establishment of Quintana Roo thus put the finishing touches on the anti-British posturing by blocking smugglers and consolidating area administration. To these efforts, military engineers added a massive road and rail project that would tie together economies, and by 1905 lay bare any potentially dangerous jungle interiors.

Porfirian roads, many whose routes are still followed today, matched the lines of military advance in late nineteenth century campaigns (see Appendix 2, Map 3). This was also the case in Sonora against the Yaqui. In Yucatán, the army built its roads along the best paths between strategic goals; the all roads lead to Chan Santa Cruz (capital of Maya resistance) phenomenon. The road between Progreso-Mérida and Chan Santa Cruz was a

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<sup>174</sup> Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) Archivo Historico Tomo 3, Legajo 1669, letter to Minister of Negocios Extranjeros, 7/28/1874.

<sup>175</sup> Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) Archivo Historico Tomo 3, Legajo 1669, Y.L. Vallarta to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1867.

necessary umbilicus that connected two major projects while, not accidentally, slicing the region in two. This permitted federal armies swifter movement and better logistics as they sought their elusive enemies. For aggressive officers, especially Victoriano Huerta, this also facilitated the deployment of small guerrilla-style troop movements who could rely on roads for re-supply in between jungle excursions.<sup>176</sup> Forces under General Ignacio Bravo built a defensible set of permanent supply lines from which to scour the countryside. New ports in Xcacek, Progreso, and Cozumel allowed steamship access, and roads were made more efficient with the construction of a military railway system. These rails ran from Chan Santa Cruz (later named Santa Cruz de Bravo in honor of the General) to Peto and later to Vigio Chica.<sup>177</sup> Further roads between the coast and Valladolid, and extensions of civilian rails in the north of the peninsula, consolidated the swift movement of federal forces. With the advantage of mobility and communication, and with vicious tactics including hostage-taking, the army quelled what remained of Mayan resistance—at least for a time.<sup>178</sup>

Constructing the all important roads in the Yucatán required overcoming the grave lack of workers. While racial features disappeared from official rhetoric and army records, this prohibition only applied to nationals. The army turned to Belize, and brought in foreign *corvée* labourers less affected by tropical disease and eager for pay. While the government had modernized its population beyond race, field officers found a ready

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<sup>176</sup> PHO 1/31, Meraz, 6.

<sup>177</sup> *Memoria* 1902, 447.

<sup>178</sup> See “Campana de Yucatán,” *México Militar* (1900), 17-20; Kelley, 68-71; Victoriano Huerta to BR, 5/20/1902, CDX BR Vol 34, Doc. 6750: on chasing down Maya; Victoriano Huerta to BR, 9/3/1902, CDX BR Vol 34, Doc. 6754: use of rail and telegraphs; Victoriano Huerta to BR, 4/6/1902, CDX BR Vol 34, Doc. 6743: taking families as prisoners; PHO 1/31 Eduardo Angeles Meraz, 6 (on Huerta).

supply of African heritage men next door whom they could use for the arduous toil of road and rail building.<sup>179</sup>

Engineers and the military generally worked to colonize their own nation, encountering hostile peoples and climates as they tamed a previously splintered set of *patrias chicas*. To this effort, medical officers contributed against the infection ridden climates of the pestiferous tropics, which they felt could be defeated with careful use of racial traits. The unhealthy southern frontiers required disease resistant forces to conquer on behalf of the nation. The larger project of homogenizing the people beyond racial difference made contortions of language a necessary element of medical discourse in the army. Officers attempted to make race disappear as they deemed it divisive and non-European (i.e. non-modern). At the same time, the need for soldiers genetically resistant to tropical ailments, those with African or certain indigenous parentage, was commonly assumed. Army personnel records with rich biometric details and photos, assiduously avoided racial language or descriptions, silencing differences while noting distinctions. Recruits thus processed lost official acknowledgement of any racial identities, which suited the project of making them into national masses (see Chapter 1).

Yet this created a problem for officers with the task of identifying appropriate men to garrison the Yucatán and Quintana Roo against indigenous uprisings. Maintaining a force required the identification and gathering of two regiments of what the army now termed “disease-resistant” soldiers.<sup>180</sup> In 1906, the units were produced but resistant did not mean immune, and with losses and discharges, it became impossible permanently to

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<sup>179</sup> Victoriano Huerta to BR, 4/6/1902, CDX BR Vol 34, Doc. 6743.

<sup>180</sup> “Territorio de Quintana Roo,” *Memoria* (1906), 12.



provide this garrison. The officers delicately avoided racial language but must have faced additional challenges in finding men, given the personnel records' limitations. Recruiting from areas of higher Afro-Mexican populations, such as Veracruz, and skimming darker skinned conscripts from random units, simply could not restock the regional regiments, and they were disbanded after 1908.<sup>181</sup>

Official silence on race did not erase its significance. A conflict within the Presidential Guards unit illustrated that when Guardsman Francisco Guevara clashed with his Sergeant Rafael Gallardo y Puga, a native of Veracruz with presumably some African ancestry. Beginning with racial taunting of the Sergeant as "Marques de Cuba" and "Conde de África," and foolishly followed with comments about Gallardo's mother and a punch to the nose, the Guardsman basically hanged himself. As a result, Guevara enjoyed a prompt voyage to Quintana Roo for a lesson in malaria and indigenous warfare.<sup>182</sup>

### The Science of Arms

The construction of factories to produce arms and ammunition had a central place in the nationalists' hearts. Since before independence the army had depended on imported armaments, and with recurrent shortfalls in the treasury, the army often lacked weapons. Further, by the late nineteenth-century the skilled engineering of tools of war emerged as the marker of world-class nations, of the well-educated and developed.<sup>183</sup> French and German arms makers held principal place as the manufacturers

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<sup>181</sup> *Memoria* (1909), 57.

<sup>182</sup> AGN, Fondo De Guerra y Marina, Estado Mayor Presidencial Caja 93, Expediente de Francisco Guevara; ironically, Gallardo y Puga was likely immune to the malarial disease which likely shortened Guevara's life.

<sup>183</sup> Frederick M. Nunn, *Yesterday's Soldiers: European Military Professionalism in South America, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), passim.

of the highest quality in specialist weapons, particularly artillery, while the U.S. had made tremendous gains as the producers of large quantities of rifles like the Remington.<sup>184</sup> The regime expected that the products of the newly renovated and expanded National Factory of Arms and National Powder Factory in Mexico City would at least supplement purchases from abroad and help establish federal stockpiles. Of course, the cost and danger of such factories, especially when housed near the City centre, gave pause to some, but the Engineers insisted that they could manage the perils of proving their expertise. The meaning of gunpowder in the process of imperial expansion has garnered intense historical attention as the sine qua non of European colonization

Properly under the Department of Artillery, the fabrication and storage of war materiel clustered around Mexico City. The National Foundry and National Arms Factory were located near Chapultepec, on the outskirts of Tacubaya. The location of the National Powder Factory caused problems that were finally resolved in 1895 when, after years of fear and complaints from the neighbours of Belém near the center of Mexico City, it was finally relocated to a spacious plant in Santa Fe.<sup>185</sup> Ammunition magazines, going by old terms like Molino del Rey or Casamatas, were more diffusely distributed. The largest supply caches and artillery hordes they kept in Almacenes, with their own sub-department and controlled by the staff of the Parque General. The only major

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<sup>184</sup> Ian V. Hogg, and John Weeks, *Military Small Arms of the Twentieth Century* (Illinois: DBI Books, 1981), 116-152; PD to Aurelio Melgarejo (in Liege), 4/11/1891, CPD Legajo 16 Caja 8 Doc. 3769-72: expresses his preference for purchase of more German rifles.

<sup>185</sup> AHDF, Ayuntamiento del D.F., Vol. 34, Exp. 96, 5/6/1898: complaint that Fab. Nac. Pólvara, still located in Belem, lacks proper water supply as well.

establishment outside the environs of Mexico City was the Arsenal Porfirio Díaz, which repaired naval vessels near Veracruz.

Mass production of armaments and rifles was beyond the capacity of the modest factories Díaz had built. At least in peaceful times, the army brass chose to purchase the best arms they could find, upgrading for example, from their old Remingtons to the high quality Mauser 98s. This rifle was so well-engineered that it remained in military service in many countries until the mid-twentieth century. By 1905, more than 50 000 had been purchased, compared to 19 000 of the U.S. rifle.<sup>186</sup>

Early efforts to build a better artillery corps picked up speed as Europeans competed to control foreign sales. This also reflected the rapid improvements to technology, especially for weapons proven in wars across the globe, such as machine guns used in the Russo-Japanese conflict. In the early Porfiriato, the PMF relied mostly on the French firms of Schneider-Creusot and Schneider-Canet to restock depleted artillery stores. Simple field pieces at reasonable prices attracted a bare-bones army, but growing dissatisfaction with the quality of some of these weapons worried the engineers over time.<sup>187</sup> Proving tests of these guns constantly impressed visitors to the factory in Europe, including Sóstenes Rocha who wrote glowingly to his brother Pablo in a letter published by the *Periódico Militar*.<sup>188</sup> Testing at Chapultepec, nonetheless, showed grave problems with reliability and durability among these and among the Bange versions that

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<sup>186</sup> *Memoria* (1906), 15.

<sup>187</sup> See Chapter 4, Footnote 114.

<sup>188</sup> “El ultimo colosal cañon Krupp,” *Periódico Militar* (1/1/1880), 7-8.

engineers examined. This, and considerable politicking, allowed General Manuel Mondragón to contract for his own patented guns henceforth.

Mondragón, a prolific arms designer, began to work with French foundries such as St. Chamond to produce a new generation of artillery. A favorite of Díaz, Mondragón was given great liberty to modernize arms, and to reform the FNA. He also worked with his son, Enrique, an engineering graduate of the Military College and of Drexel in Philadelphia.<sup>189</sup> Working from a College thesis on a project to fortify national coasts and ports, they first worked on establishing enormous cannons to protect harbours such as Veracruz and Salina Cruz. The father was then able to push through funding and production despite political opposition, and in 1907, the government held an inauguration in Salina Cruz. The army now boasted one of the largest cannons in the world, an eleven meter fixed piece that drew wonder and consternation from U.S. observers who shortly thereafter installed similar defenses for the Panama Canal (1909).<sup>190</sup> At \$75 000 a gun, this behemoth fired 500 pound shells from a 10 inch muzzle—impressive, but not a very practical expenditure for the Porfirian government. When Mondragón and his son, returned from a voyage in Europe in 1908, the *New York Times* commented favorably on their new coastal defense system.<sup>191</sup> As a true deterrent to attack and a threat to unwanted shipping, the piece outstripped most naval counters. The interests of the U.S. in the region, deemed at threat by such potent defenses, led diplomats from the two nations to strike a deal for the removal of the Mondragón arms, which were sold to Turkey to

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<sup>189</sup> AGN, CMDF ep-m Caja 359, Cpt. Enrique Mondragón.

<sup>190</sup> Casasola, *Biografía Ilustrada Del General Porfirio Díaz*, 115.

<sup>191</sup> "New Guns for Mexico," *New York Times* (Sept. 5 1908): 4.

defend the Dardanelles.<sup>192</sup> This proved a wise move for the U.S., as in the invasion of Vera Cruz a decade later, their forces did not have to face what might have been formidable firepower.

Other weapons of the Mondragón clan did enter service. The Porfirio Díaz sapper rifle, with special attachments for entrenching, was a common arm for some units near Mexico City. Another variation, considered one of the world's first automatic assault rifles, had a more limited run of production in a Swiss factory. While few reached Mexico, German forces seized and used about 10 000 at the beginning of World War One, before finding them too delicate for general battlefield conditions.<sup>193</sup> About fifty of another armament, the St. Chamond .75 cannon patented by Mondragón, remained in service until the Revolution. These relatively undistinguished pieces worked adequately well, but never gained much affection from officers assigned to them.

What the arms produced by these factories had in common was that they illustrated the possibility for engineers to demonstrate a truly modern capacity; in armaments trade. Proving the ability of the military to make its own weapons, even if not at cost-effective scales, therefore had a powerful appeal to army planners and engineers. Engineers built new tools of empire in factories, for a nation attempting to conquer itself.

## Conclusions

Given guidance and specialized education by select veterans, the military academy graduates became the gentlemen warriors and literate myrmidons that the

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<sup>192</sup> PHO 1/61, Becerril, 17.

<sup>193</sup> James B. Hughes Jr., *Mexican Military Arms: The Cartridge Period, 1866-1967* (Houston: Deep River Armory, Inc., 1968), 19-20.

regime required of them. They exhibited and exemplified what they had absorbed in College about class and caste. They feared neither dueling sabre nor arithmetical proof. They understood law, tactics, engineering, and leadership. They danced waltzes and ordered servants, built bridges or destroyed forts, ate like the French and drank like the Germans. Perhaps, some hoped, they could even embody the bridge between the modern and the traditional.

Once out of Chapultepec's walls, the line officers undertook myriad tasks for which no schooling could fully prepare them. Many moved from sterile classroom to filthy barracks. They found themselves sent to command hard and frightening men with reputations for drunkenness and violence. Their fellow officers hazed them, robbed them, and punished them almost daily. Actually leading troops out in the field against rebels, Indians, and bandits pitted the young men against a steep learning curve. Some fell apart; some excelled; most slid eventually into the opportunistic corruptions of the *busca*. By learning the army system, they found means to steal extra coins for drinking and gambling. Embezzling from forage accounts proved highly popular. For all *prácticos*, whether in garrisons of ten or a thousand, in city or jungle, the common experience included instability. By rapidly shuffling subalterns from post to post, the army attempted to sever federal officers from building local connections or loyalties. By making the officers move so often, the commanders hoped locals would see the army as faceless. The kinds of regional loyalties to charismatic officers that had propelled Díaz into his dictatorship would be avoided, if at a cost to young men constantly on the move, in exile

from home. Adherence to the Gran Familia, the army, would replace the subaltern officer's lingering memories of home and of a mother other than the Patria.

Technical officers with three years more training filled roles including army doctor, naval commander, factory overseer, land surveyor, and barracks builder. They constructed the nation's maps, roads, colonies, and fortresses. They set a military stamp on areas long absent from central control, un-naming and re-naming them as they went. They pioneered the establishment or maintenance of military colonies in remote areas, facilitated recruitment and censuses, and protected foreigners' investments. They also surrounded, advised, and befriended the aging president.

In final analysis, the subaltern officers of each branch represented the best and worst of the Porfirian system. Educated to internationally recognized standards, they also represented a limited echelon of class and ethnic backgrounds that further set them apart from average Mexicans. They built a network of communications and modern improvements for the nation, but did so in ways that alienated them from locals, and, if necessary, did so in order to crush regional dissent. Officers embodied both venal corruption and impressive self-abnegation; some even managed to do so simultaneously as in the case of Victoriano Huerta who combined vicious self-interest with patriotic professionalism. The noteworthy accomplishments and successes of the officer classes included a relative peace, enormous growth (economic and technological), and progress in healthcare and hygiene. They also brought out the regime's worst. Mexicans continue to remember the army for its pogroms against indigenous tribes like the Yaqui and Maya,

its support for land seizing *hacendados* and exploitative foreigners, and as the hand wielding modernity's whip.



## CHAPTER 4

## ANOTHER THEATRE OF WAR: THE PERFORMATIVE ARMY

*“La sabiduría de los congresos, la sutileza maquiavélica en el arreglo de cuestiones internacionales, la inteligencia en la cátedra y la elocuencia en la tribuna, muchos son y mucho valen; pero para formar un conjunto de grandeza nacional, les faltan el necesario, el indispensable complemento de un Ejército: nuestro de poderío, y emblema de la vitalidad y riqueza del pueblo que lo arma y mantiene.”*<sup>1</sup> - *Mexico Herald* cited in *México Militar*.

*“The Mexican people...have built a service which, if ever called upon again, will fill that enemy with bullets and favorable opinions, and it will not be dissipated by a defeat or two, as it was before it was reorganized—or better, recreated—by the soldier-statesman President Díaz.”*<sup>2</sup> - Frederick Remington

The figure of the young cavalry officer in his sharp blue uniform and atop his showy mount entranced the impoverished young Indian girl Julieta, in a strangely poignant and out of the ordinary tale by Francisco Urquizo.<sup>3</sup> Only nine years old and innocent to the world, the girl fell in love with the soldier as he kindly spent time talking to her, in part out of his own home-sickness. She saw him in his military role on display guarding Chapultepec and in military parades and reviews in the city. Eventually, the officer found his own friends, and a girl his own age, and poor Julieta had her heart broken upon spying him in the arms of a señorita. This story, extremely unusual among the works of the staid military author, illustrates the interplay between the performing

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<sup>1</sup> “Ventajosas opiniones extranjeras sobre nuestra ejército,” (*Mexico Herald* cited in) *México Militar* (1900), 157-8.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Remington, “General Miles’s Review of the Mexican Army,” *Harper’s Weekly* (4 July 1891): 495.

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Luis Urquizo, “Julieta,” *De la vida militar* (México: Herrero Hermanos Sucesores, c.1920), 30-42.

army and its audiences. The seeming naïveté of the poor and indigenous, who came to believe in the images portrayed by the parading soldier, led inexorably towards a deep sense of betrayal. The potential of the modern military man had been revealed in public spectacle, a promise of national progress that experience denied. Yet given time, the officer for all his apparent gallantry turned his attentions towards those better able to meet his needs, just as the Porfirian army would work to sell its national idea to wealthy elites at home and abroad.

Always an important part of public ceremony, especially in the form of the military band, the military was on perpetual display in increasingly grand and impressive ways. Public anniversaries and commemorative events routinely featured military parades, honour guards were conspicuous at state funerals and foreign visits, railways were visibly guarded, military and paramilitary units were exhibited abroad, and the president wore his own military uniform on most public occasions.<sup>4</sup>

The military was displayed as a fetish along with railways and the *rurales* (the paramilitary police), all of which exemplified the national agenda of order and progress.<sup>5</sup> The regime directed the military's performances in public spaces where interactions among citizens, foreigners, and government agents occurred. As a public spectacle, the military as an institution enacted an ideal of what the nation should be, constructing an

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<sup>4</sup> Casasola, *Biografía*; Guy P. C. Thomson, "Bulwarks of Patriotic Liberalism: The National Guard, Philharmonic Corps and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico, 1847-88," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22:1 (Feb. 1990):31-68; Matthew D. Esposito, "Death and Disorder in Mexico City," in *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction*, ed. William Beezley and Linda Curcio Nagy (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 87-103.

<sup>5</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 130.

identity through its interaction with the nation's subjects and privileged foreign viewers.<sup>6</sup> Even if the optimal world represented was harshly dissonant with reality, the elite rather arrogantly assumed that their vision would inevitably become the objective for all. Ironically, even criticism of this vision provided a discourse where modernist tenets would be reinforced and broadly inculcated, even though the elite's methods or claims of success might be bitterly contested.<sup>7</sup>

Nationalism and faith in the legitimate power of the nation did not solely build from the projects of the elite, whether civilian or military.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the staged performances had the potential to determine the course and language of nationalism, to provide the bases upon which common classes built their own understandings. The particular priority of the Porfirian elite, positivist, scientific, and European-like modernity, became the standard. It was so engrained that even its critics mocked only the incomplete nature of national development, not the direction it headed. Military recruitment, education, hygiene, culture, and engineering displayed a specific set of norms and ideas to soldier, officers, and their immediate community.<sup>9</sup> The stage did not end there.

Porfirio Díaz and his government used a wide range of strategies to enact the military spectacles to represent the nation. The press and specialized journals afforded an opportunity to reach the literate classes, and to demonstrate modern military knowledge in widely-circulated literature. The regime did its draconian best to limit criticism in

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<sup>6</sup> Diane Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's Dirty War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 30-37.

<sup>7</sup> Tenorio Trillo, 159, and in Lomnitz, 210.

<sup>8</sup> Beezley, vii-xii.

<sup>9</sup> See chapters 1-3.

domestic newspapers, and worked to impress foreign journalists as they could. From the non-readers and other spectators, military bands earned renown in providing entertainment, pomp, and patriotism. Frequent public ceremonies including inaugurations, receptions, and funerals, set the army at the visual centre of nationalism with hints of tradition and tones of modernity. These events, some of them filmed after 1900, reached their apogee in the enormous parades that marked important festival days. At these and in other settings, the Presidential Guard framed the elite project as an ever-present and visually potent symbol.

Building from the arguments at home, the regime actively engaged the international military community to promote the nation. The president sent legations, attachés, and contingents to foreign lands, taking part in Expositions, Fairs, commissions, and exhibitions. Representatives sought out new technology, learned tactics, did business, and displayed Mexican prowess. In the conversation with the cosmopolitan community, the military expressed the ideal nation, and made choices to evolve selectively as an institution.

### The Army in Print and Press

The literature published by the army and its associates projected an image of the military and its ideal relationship to civilians and nation. As with newspaper publishing in general, the Porfiriato gave rise to an evolution of specialist publications that attempted to give voice to the army. These included: the *Periódico Militar* (1879-81), the *Boletín Militar* (1888), the *Gaceta Médico-Militar* (1889-92), the *Revista Militar Mexicana* (1888-1895), *La Vanguardia* (1890-1891), *Derecho Militar* (1895), *Boletín de la*

*Asociación Mutualista Militar / Vanguardia* (1899, changed name in 1900), *México Militar* (1900-1901), and the *Revista del Ejército (y Marina)* (1901 until present).<sup>10</sup> As suggested from their titles, some journals focused on medical or legal specialties; others, like the *Vanguardia*, were openly political tracts calling for Díaz's reelection in addition to other articles. Throughout these journals, army officers propagandized and in their own ways, and to their own audiences, promoted an image of the nation.

The journal editors seemed somewhat self-conscious and most gave readers a justification of their publication in its first issues. The *Revista Militar Mexicana's* editor Ángel Ortiz Monasterio asserted that since war represented the most important factor of progress, it would give readers the scientific and practical arts of war, including advances at home and abroad.<sup>11</sup> The civilian paper *El Nacional* recognized the *Revista's* importance because it was apolitical, and a means to make the army scientific.<sup>12</sup> Former president Manuel González wrote to Díaz urging him to make the *Revista* required reading for all higher officers, and pointed out that it also came in a cheap version ideal for instructing troops.<sup>13</sup> This was not unusual, the *Periódico Militar* had long been obligatory for officers, and subscribing was required.<sup>14</sup> The *México Militar* presented itself as a scientific literary magazine of universal military arts, a claim that explains its frequent bouts of poetry.<sup>15</sup> The *Boletín Militar* gave the most detailed justifications,

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<sup>10</sup> These run dates are approximate, and come from available and cited archival sources.

<sup>11</sup> "Nuestra programa," *Revista México Militar*, (11/1888), 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> "El nacional," *Revista México Militar* (11/1888), 62.

<sup>13</sup> Manuel González to PD, 12/26/88, CPD Legajo 13 Caja 24 Doc. 11711-11712.

<sup>14</sup> Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Guerra y Marina, Comandancia Militar de D.F., Expedientes Personales caja 367, expedientes (1867-1880) [hereafter AGN, CMDF, EP], note in expediente of Cpt. Juan Pevedilla.

<sup>15</sup> "Interés general," *México Militar* (6/1/1900), 4.

claiming it would: unify the officer class with specific information and gossip, inform the public on the army's less known works, share useful military knowledge from foreign and native scientific officers, defend the national honour and integrity, and finally, be a step towards progress and civilization.<sup>16</sup> The editorial ambitions impressed, even if the magazine only managed a brief run in press.

Understanding the mentality of an officer class requires examination of their lore: the composite ideas that form self-representation and group solidarity, and express the experience of living within the military subsystem.<sup>17</sup> The journals of the military present one entry point to approach the study of this lore.

The *Revista del Ejército*, the premier journal of its kind in Mexico, expressed the opinions, concerns, fantasies, and self-image of the professional officer, in his own words and with deliberately chosen content.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, military journals form an integral discourse within the conversation of the international military world—the editors exchanged their journals with other countries and made a point of listing within their pages exactly with whom they exchanged. Journal articles deemed important might be translated multiple times, resulting in a strange circularity as when a French publication translated a Prussian conference to French, and after re-translation into Spanish in Mexico the article returned to Prussia in exchange for a German periodical. Periodicals also influenced each other in profound ways, arguing against other journals' findings, presenting new evidence and ideas, and telling their own histories to set themselves apart

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<sup>16</sup> "Nuestra programa," *Boletín Militar* (4/6/1899, 4/13/1899), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Frederick M. Nunn, "Latin American Militarylore: An Introduction and a Case Study," *The Americas* 35, No. 4 (1979).

<sup>18</sup> Col. E.M. Luis Palacios, ed., *Revista Del Ejército Y Marina*, vol. X (México, D.F.: Talleres del Departamento de Estado Mayor, 1910).

as unique. The *Revista del Ejército* traded journals with fifteen countries and with several magazines within Mexico, a total circulation of twenty-four institutions received it (and reciprocated) in 1910. Editors and contributors to the *Revista* included the best known military educators and reformers in the military, such as Felipe Angeles, Sóstenes Rocha, and Joaquín Beltrán.

Breaking down the magazine's contents by subject matter, military science, cryptography, and mathematics composed the pre-eminent topics of discussion, particularly the application of calculus to techniques of artillery ballistics (around 20% of articles). A close second in terms of frequency, changes in military tactics required by the introduction of new technologies of transportation and machine guns warranted numerous articles. A thorough listing of postings, promotions, demotions, and movement of officers appeared in each issue, as did a brief description of military school reviews and a listing of medical cases seen by the military hospitals. These medical records reveal a high level of illness, averaging around 16%, and breakdown by garrison although they only list general types of illnesses suffered. Military histories filled the greatest space within the issues as the longest type of article and often came in serialized format, continued throughout the year.

Other topics appearing in 1910 included military psychology, United States barracks life, leadership, and education. The journal commented on foreign affairs directly in a segment called simply "Exterior", and implicitly through its many translated articles. "Exterior", a rare inclusion, dealt with only two topics in 1910, the United States defenses in Panama and Japanese naval technology. The majority of translations came

from French sources, in particular from the *Journale de Sciences Militaires*, but German, Belgian, American, and Russian translations also appear in the 1910 edition. The editors re-translated three French articles that had originally appeared in German publications, suggesting that while the editors had interest in Germany their abilities in translating dictated what could be published. A painting of officers in the field also appeared in each monthly issue, subtly implying that the text truly corresponded with the actual state of the depicted Porfirian army. The journal represented the Mexican officer to the world as he wished to appear; it entered the dialogue as the ideal representation of military lore.

The *Revista del Ejército* made it clear that the twentieth century army existed as a place where science dominated, and proficient officers understood their place as experts in new technologies and means of war. These officers shared a language (mathematics, ordinance, military law, protocol) that facilitated their shared literature on military lore. Specifications on new weapons (like the Halle grenade), detailed mathematical formula to evaluate naval power, and charts on explosive yield for TNT could be read and understood by foreign experts. In the journal, artillery and engineering reigned as the epitome of the science inherent to modern warfare (the big guns took pride of place since engineering, after all, could be done by civilians). In reality, Porfirian engineers frequently left the army, with all their years of education, and entered higher salaried civilian careers.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the cavalry always held greater social prestige owing to long tradition, and the rising officers of the General Staff held more influence on policy and deployment than did artillery men. So while the military value of artillery as a

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<sup>19</sup> Kelley, 71-72.



science appeared issue after issue this had much to do with editorial bias and less with the army's priorities, which still favored other arms of service.

The histories related within the journal provided different insights into the military lore. These articles, presented as reminiscences, set an interesting contrast when seen against the scientific and translated pieces that ran in the same issues. Although the majority of contemporaneous fighting faced the army against indigenous uprisings, such as the Apache, Yaqui or Maya, the histories focused on fights during the French intervention. Given that many readers already knew this history, and given the international circulation of the magazine, the motive for its inclusion poses an intriguing question. In part, these articles represent pure self-aggrandizement, they indulged the egos of the remaining officers of those wars, many of whom held important offices, and stroked the pride of Díaz himself. They also offered explicit connections among patriotism, progress, and education in didactic analyses loosely attached to the historical narrative, usually appended as the moral of the story. As part of the conversation with other militaries they offered their clearest message, that of a military that having faced France and won, had now professionalized and could stand alongside any European military. Mexico, the history implied, had finally overcome its own tragic past.

If the military literature presented one face of the regime, the civilian press could not always be counted on to agree. Order, and indeed, Porfirian attempts to modernize and dominate society in general, faced considerable internal criticism. The regime endeavored to limit criticism in the media through the jailing and occasional assassination of journalists, and more subtly by subsidizing pro-Díaz newspapers and periodicals. The

government did not try to suppress the media entirely and, in fact, the atmosphere apparently favoured media expansion, as newspapers increased from nine in 1860 to 531 by 1898.<sup>20</sup> At the same time there remained considerable resistance to the regime (not so much to modern ideals or Díaz himself) not only in large newspapers like *El Monitor Republicano*, but also in the penny presses, cheap illustrated works intended for the working classes.<sup>21</sup> Underground papers produced by exiles residing in the US, like the Flores Magón brothers, also continued to provide alternative visions of the direction the nation should be taking in papers such as *Regeneración* (which began its publication inside Mexico). These newspapers, nevertheless, had relatively minor circulation and were arguably not very influential. While read by some expatriates and other dissident groups, these underground publications did not effectively reach either the poorest (largely illiterate) elements in the country nor the general public in the important U.S. market. Certainly, they did not have the effect on foreign perceptions of domestic culture that mainstream American periodicals enjoyed.

Foreign observers' perspectives on the military, while skewed in many ways, provided their public and important investors with exotic visions of Díaz's military and nation. Wealthy businessmen involved in mining and railroading were also included in the targeted demographic of major periodicals such as *Harper's*, *The Review of Reviews*,

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<sup>20</sup> Garner, 123, 124.

<sup>21</sup> María Elena Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press for Workers, 1900-1910: A Case Study in the Politicization of Popular Culture," (*Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 22: 3, Oct.1990), 497-526; Phyllis Smith, "Contentious Voices Amid the Order: The Porfirian Press in Mexico City, 1876-1911" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Arizona, 1996).

*Scribner's*, and *The North American Review*.<sup>22</sup> American periodicals were an intermediary between the important capitalists and the performances of the military as representative of a modern, stable, and western nation.

These periodicals had a number of similarities. They were illustrated, each was in its heyday in terms of readership numbers, and they all included articles on the Mexican military. These articles came in the form of political opinion pieces, fictions, travelogues, and economic analyses. Some were later expanded into books, (e.g. W.H. Bishop's), and pictures included in the articles were occasionally reworked into larger paintings (e.g. Frederic Remington's works).<sup>23</sup> There were common threads of argument that run through their discourses on the Porfirian military and society. These were: 1) portraying the military as an evolved (or evolving) modern institution, 2) representing Mexico and its people as a modernizing yet alien nation, and 3) evaluating the opportunities and risks posed to American interests. An ongoing dynamic within the articles that pitted the modern (or modernizing) against the exotic Mexico, a dichotomy often reflected in differences between the text and the illustrations. Finally, these articles generally corresponded with the context of U.S.-Mexican relations. From 1870-1885, they examined the prospects for modernizing and investment; in 1885-1897, they examined border issues and favourably reviewed the army (especially in context of border raiders like Catarino Garza); and from 1898-1908 they exhibited worries about the army as a

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<sup>22</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939) p.410; Also see William Schell, *Integral Outsiders*.

<sup>23</sup> W. H. Bishop, *Old Mexico and Her Lost Provinces* (New York: Harper's Brothers, 1883); For examples, Remington painted, "Full Dress Engineer" (1899), "Lt. Engineer Battalion" (1899), and "Drum Corps" (1899), which all appeared in his 1890 *Harper's Weekly* article, now held in the Remington Collection, Houston, Texas.

threat or its ability to maintain order (legally) within Mexico. How this United States media represented the military was influenced, often directly, by efforts of the Porfirian regime to promote their ideal nation. In this sense the American periodicals can be read as a reflection (albeit somewhat unstable and distorted) of the Mexico that Díaz' government envisioned.

One outside observer was the highly influential American author William Henry Bishop. He traveled extensively through Mexico as a guest of the Porfirian regime from 1881 to 1882, attending senatorial dinners, touring with a military escort, and visiting salons and *pulquerías* alike. His book, *Old Mexico and Her Lost Provinces* (1883), was a detailed travelogue taking the reader through much of the nation's geography, and offers important, if anecdotal, starting points for the investigation of a military extremely concerned with its image. He did not give, for the most part, a positive image. Bishop described an incident in 1881 in which a trainload of soldiers and *aguardiente*, en route to Cuautla, derailed. It was a dark night and officers were not present, so the troops, shrugging off the effects of the crash, seized the opportunity to loot the liquor from the wrecked train, and became drunk and excited. At this point, according to Bishop, they began to shoot and stab one another, drunk, in the dark, in the wreckage – a scene of terror and barbarism. In the chaos, accidental fires ignited the alcohol and the ammunition cartridges, resulting in tremendous carnage: 156 killed and a further 68 wounded.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bishop, 190. Casualty figures are from Don M. Coerver, *The Porfirian Interregnum: The Presidency of Manuel Gonzalez of Mexico, 1880-1884* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1979), 204.

Some of the Porfirian repairs to the image of their armed forces seem to have been successful. The army of the day had improved, and one article contended that Díaz had created a well-ordered and disciplined force from unpromising materials.<sup>25</sup> It went on to assert that the modern army had overcome its past difficulties through the growth of a national spirit. The unknown author of “The Mexican Major” agreed, stating that the reforms of the military had brought them up to international and modern standards, quite different from the shabby levies of the past.<sup>26</sup> Captain F.H. Hardie, a representative of the U.S. army, appraised the Mexicans less glowingly; infantry men were disheveled, deficient marksmen, and undisciplined sentries. On the other hand, he found them accustomed to living in hardship and believed that their very rapid dog-trot style of marching made them the premier infantry in the world for their mobility.<sup>27</sup>

Press in Europe also had criticisms, for example the French *L’Autorité* condemned the forced conscription of soldiers. The *Diario Oficial*, voice of the government, immediately published a rejoinder to this, offering as proof a chart showing the level of reenlistment by, presumably, happy soldiers.<sup>28</sup> This fiction at least provided deniability to an army still completely reliant on the *leva* in practice.

As tensions with the U.S. grew, a new tone appeared in the press. If Díaz’s performative army was reassuring to some, it failed to impress Broughton Brandenburg with its trustworthiness. He sensationalized the tension between the neighbours, and his *Harper’s Weekly* article in 1906 had the rather nervous title “War Peril on the Mexican

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<sup>25</sup> Janvier, 815.

<sup>26</sup> Janvier, 755.

<sup>27</sup> Hardie, 1207, 1211.

<sup>28</sup> “El Ejército Mexicano,” *Vanguardia* (1/13/1891), 3.

Border.”<sup>29</sup> He described a country on the verge of a dangerous outbreak, with social order disintegrating into outrages and anti-Americanism.<sup>30</sup> This he saw as the plot of those who opposed Díaz and the United States, who were hoping to incite a general uprising over issues he considered minor such as the Cananea mine strike—today regarded as precursory event to the revolution of 1910. The author saw Bernardo Reyes as the chief anti-Díaz leader. Reyes was all the more dangerous as it was his reforms that had created an effective army. Brandenburg’s review of the army stated that, despite being largely manned by convicts it had become nearly on par with the U.S. or Europeans in efficacy.<sup>31</sup> He, like the Porfirians, recognized the importance of appearing to the larger military community and went on to point out that foreign diplomats and military attachés appraised Díaz’s army in highly favourable terms.

If the army was to persuade its many audiences, the foreign press proved an unreliable ally. Rather, the use of spectacle, particularly given limits on literacy and publication, became the heart of the military performance of nationalism.

### Occupying Public Spaces

The army, to capture the public eye and imagination, put itself on display in numerous ways, not all of them obviously martial. Public spaces were claimed and occupied by the military through the establishment of national armories, barracks, and

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<sup>29</sup> Broughton Brandenburg, “War Peril on the Mexican Border” *Harper’s Weekly*, Vol. 50 no. 2592 (Aug. 1906), 1198-1217.

<sup>30</sup> Brandenburg, 1198.

<sup>31</sup> Brandenburg, 1199.

drill in central plazas.<sup>32</sup> This architecture of power operated as a means of setting the military apart from (but dominant over) society and helped inculcate acceptance of the state monopoly on violence.<sup>33</sup> Less symbolically, the barracks also kept the reluctant conscript from wandering away. The spaces literally occupied were to be neutral from the symbolic freight of earlier liberal practices, such as regional militias, and were zones where specific ideas of modern nationalism could be worked out.<sup>34</sup> A prime example, the Military College's highly symbolic location claimed the end of a Paseo de Reforma lined with national heroic statuary, and shared the dominant heights of Chapultepec with the President.<sup>35</sup> This symbolism, deliberately invoked by the regime, was not lost on foreign viewers.<sup>36</sup>

The frequent presence of the military band in public squares and streets created a harmonious image of the armed forces that resonated with popular senses of tradition and nationalism. The Secretaries of War recognized the value of the band as surpassing mere entertainment, and invested heavily in maintaining bands in each unit. Musicians were expensive, sometimes as many as thirty men with special uniforms, instruments, and training assembled in a unit.<sup>37</sup> They, for the most part, received the same low pay as soldiers, but their directors earned a considerable bonus. They warranted the expense, according to authorities, because bands gave the public an ardor for war and the stomach

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<sup>32</sup> Chávez, 284.

<sup>33</sup> Beattie, 117-121, states that the penetration of military institutions into public and private spaces, similar to universal vaccination, was part of a highly invasive form of nationalism.

<sup>34</sup> Guy Thomson, "Bulwarks of Patriotic Liberalism: The National Guard, Philharmonic Corps, and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico, 1847-88," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 1 (1990), 31-68.

<sup>35</sup> Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario" (*Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 28, no. 1 (Feb.1996), 85.

<sup>36</sup> Reed, 813.

<sup>37</sup> Jesus Camargo to PD 8/7/89, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 16 Doc. 7936; also in AGN, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, CMDF, Expedientes Personales, passim.

to sacrifice themselves for the Patria, they gave soldiers a little taste of home and family, and in battle they would give succor to the wounded as stretcher bearers.<sup>38</sup> The high command believed bands created and instilled patriotism and morale, as they had in National Guards and militias earlier in the country's history.

The army bands represented an early mass media effect that reached large numbers of spectators at home and abroad. Any official government event would call for a band to appear as accompaniment, and with the regime inaugurating statues, factories, museums, boulevards, and public works almost incessantly, the bands were in high demand. They gave a soundtrack to the Porfirian efforts. For example, even at the opening of what amounted to a large sewage draining tube of concrete, the Gran Desagüe, both a cannonade and the music of an infantry battalion were required to soothe the honoured guests. The arrival of a governor or high official absolutely (by regulations) required a military band, and the absence of one led to an inquiry and charges.<sup>39</sup> Ordinary public life in the cities rang with the music of bands practicing or performing, whether in barracks, parks, or the salons of ambassadors.<sup>40</sup> For all that they were common sights, the bands nonetheless enjoyed considerable popularity among regular Mexicans.

The army musician's repertoire went well beyond the marches and pomp that one might associate with martial music—this reflected deliberate choices by directors and composers to best appeal to audiences of civilians, and to foreign critics. The best directors gained international renown for their talents. Juventino Rosas wrote a wide

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<sup>38</sup> "Los músicos," *Boletín Militar* (10/1/1899), 5-6.

<sup>39</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 318 Tnt. A. Alatorre, 1882.

<sup>40</sup> "La música de Zapadores," *La Patria* (3/30/1884), 5: band playing in square, list of music played; AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 323 Cpt. Santiago Avandaño, repertoire of 17B music.



range of waltzes and mazurkas, including “Carmen” in 1888 for Díaz’s wife, and by the 1890s his songs made up a fifth of all music played by the army.<sup>41</sup> While touring in 1885 with the Eighth Regimental band in the U.S., his “Sobre las Olas” attained what soon became world-wide fame. This was cemented when he performed it in 1893 at the Chicago Colombian Exposition, where an audience of 50 000 heard his music. Less than a year later he was dead in a shoddy Cuban hotel, a tragic end to a life of genius, alcoholism, and brief fame. His closest competitor, and also director for the Eighth Regiment and Sapper bands on tour, was Captain Encarnación Payén. He and his band were specifically requested by a number of international exposition committees, with invitations from Portland and New Orleans to Paris and London.<sup>42</sup> After the band played the West End in New Orleans, critics who reviewed the concert remarked on how thousands in the audience greatly appreciated the performance, mostly mazurkas, and saluted Payén as a genius when he ended with a rendition of “Dixie” to thunderous applause and acclamation.<sup>43</sup> The musical diplomacy of the regime complemented that of diplomats and attachés in building connections to broader international audiences.

Beyond music, the military also reached spectators at home with static exhibits and moving pictures. In the 1890s, army commissions of old and respected generals worked to assemble museums that displayed military glory. This culminated in the

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<sup>41</sup> *Juventino Rosas: Notas nuevas sobre su vida*, (Guanajuato: University of Guanajuato, 1969)

<sup>42</sup> W.G. Byron to PD, 7/14/86, CPD Legajo 17 Caja 17 Doc. 8197-98: regarding Minneapolis Industrial Exposition band offer; Encarnación Payén to PD, 10/11/88, CPD Legajo 13 Caja 21 Doc. 10098: confirms military band of 8Regt. for Paris Expo; Franciso Touchon to PD, 2/18/89, CPD Legajo 14 Caja 4 Doc. 1736: asks to go with 8R band to Paris, he previously had been to New Orleans Expo; P. Ornelas to PD, 10/14/90, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 26 Doc. 12603-B.

<sup>43</sup> “La música del 8 regimiento,” *Boletín Militar* (9/6/1888), 4.

opening of a war trophy museum in downtown Mexico City in 1896.<sup>44</sup> The museum primarily featured the colours and artillery pieces taken from the French in the 1860s, perhaps as a measure of diplomacy, no U.S. trophies were on display. Chapultepec Castle likewise impressed its guests with martial inspired artwork and antiques. Reaching out to spectators in new and potent ways, early films featured the military presence in state ceremonies and presidential tours.<sup>45</sup> Early silent films nonetheless reached few viewers in these years given the lack of theatres and the relative paucity of footage. The Alejandro Toscano collection reveals that most film taken after 1905 revolved around the figure of Díaz, often riding the railways, and always surrounded by his General Staff and large entourages in uniform. A telling detail, even at its nascent stage the new media was harnessed to state theatre and martial performance.

## Parades

An important venue for militaries to see their rivals or role models, the parade and official review brought militaries into the eyes of the world at large. Somewhat schizophrenic, armed forces reveled in selective exhibitionism in highly ritualized settings while at the same time jealously guarding their secrets. This applied to the Porfirian military on display as much as that of European nations, although the scale and quality of display varied greatly from place to place. Díaz's armed forces put themselves on stage in a variety of contexts, with different justifications and motives. These contexts

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<sup>44</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 347 Mayor José Gutiérrez Zamora, 7/14/1896: on war trophy commission with Grl. Ignacio Alabone and AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 318 Grl. Div. Ygnacio R. Alatorre, 3/25/1896, with three other generals, authenticating pieces.

<sup>45</sup> Gustavo A. García, "In Quest of a National Cinema," in *Mexico's Cinema: A Century of Film and Filmmakers*, ed. Joanne Hirshfield and David Maciel (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 5-8.

included impromptu honor guards and troop inspections, shows of force, ceremonial occasions, and formal commemorative parading. All part of the visual culture of state showmanship, these presentations displayed soldiers and weapons to exhibit strength, modernity, tradition, solidarity, or belligerence as the director called for.

Regardless of its messages to specific elite audiences, the parade at its heart also represented a fun spectator-focused show that had its own impact upon ordinary viewers. As a young boy, Francisco Urquiza remembered that his greatest joy was watching the military formations on national festival days. Indeed despite his later distaste for actually being in parades, which left one dirty and uncomfortable and bored, he retained his old joy as a spectator.<sup>46</sup>



**Illustration 4.0.1 military parade: Gustavo Casasola, 1904 (SINAFO).**

An article in the *Boletín Militar* in 1889 described a Cinco de Mayo parade where the cannonades, music, and evolutions produced what the author termed a splendid effect on

<sup>46</sup> Urquiza, “Vieja Guardia,” *De la vida militar*, 119.

a public under the hot sun, the crowd showed its appreciation with thunderous applause.<sup>47</sup> Photos from the time reveal large crowds and sense of unruliness (Illustration 4.1). Even the occasional disruption of parades by enthusiastic soldaderas suggested a level of common excitement that such events might instill.<sup>48</sup> The popularity and reception of these events only highlights the significance of their messages.

Through the military parade, the elite articulated ideas about the modern and masculine military in formalized ways. From a privileged seat at a 1905 parade, American observer Thomas H. Janvier saw a well-choreographed military, in fine new uniforms and shoes, and they carried themselves through the streets in a rigid and well-disciplined fashion that he highly approved.<sup>49</sup> This review, expensive, rehearsed, and enacted for a select audience, was one of many highly deliberate performances by the army, a performance that demonstrated proof of a particular vision of *mexicanidad*. The show indicated the kinds of choices that Díaz made regarding modernity in the military. Janvier acknowledged that the dress uniform and shoes were not practical for Mexican warfare. Nevertheless, the marchers were outfitted with full-dress uniforms and drilled for parade in order to send a clear message to the government's invited guests. It is also probable, given the reported figure of around 20 000 troops on parade, that the procession looped back on itself, or otherwise paraded in such a way that each man passed the reviewing stand two or three times, for there was fewer than half that number anywhere

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<sup>47</sup> "5 de mayo," *Boletín Militar* (5/1/00), 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> "Formaciones militares," *La Vanguardia* (9/3/1891), 1-2; continued (9/4/1891), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Janvier, "Mexican Army," 820.

near Mexico City.<sup>50</sup> The discussion of the double-quick speed with which the soldiers marched confirms this. In order to maintain a constant flow of unfamiliar parading soldiers, the men had to pass the reviewing stand quickly to avoid recognition and reposition for the next pass. The painful and unfamiliar shoes may also have prompted the troops to hurry the whole process, which nevertheless lasted two full hours. In this way, the public male of the nation was repeatedly shown to the public, carefully choreographed and costumed, and this had the potential to frame ideas about males and their posture and to create connections with nationalism.

Efforts to convey a particular image to observers were concerted and deliberate. For example, Secretary of War Felipe Berriozábal personally ordered handpicked soldiers of each regiment in the capital to present themselves for interviews with Janvier and for artist Frederic Remington to sketch.<sup>51</sup> Foreigners saw soldiers and officers, both common occupants of city spaces, as dramatically different. Officers, as well as some higher-class men, appeared to these observers as somewhat ostentatious, cosmopolitan, and well armed. In many ways, the dandy and the officer struck similar chords in contemporary spectators. Bishop wrote of the silver covered and heavily armed dandies riding the wide avenues of Mexico City.<sup>52</sup> This figure, representative of a certain type of upper-class masculinity, was a highly troubling figure to many, representing what was seen as a

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<sup>50</sup> For similar parades, see Captain F. H. Hardie, "The Mexican Army," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 31:811 (1892): 1207; Frederick Remington, "General Miles's Review of the Mexican Army," *Harper's Weekly* (4 July 1891): 495. The more accurate estimate of army size is found in Hernández Chávez, "Origen y ocaso," 287. See Discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>51</sup> Allen P. Splete and Marilyn D. Splete, eds., *Frederic Remington: Selected Letters* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 63.

<sup>52</sup> Bishop, "With the Vanguard," 225.

dangerously feminine decadence.<sup>53</sup> While the military man tended to offer a direct contrast to this, some officers seeking to emulate the upper class adopted the conspicuous consumption patterns, use of make-up, and other behaviours that were seen with great suspicion and disdain by many in Porfirian society.

Bishop also spoke of the Paseo de la Reforma (Mexico City's showcase main avenue) glittering with bayonets during the frequent smaller military parades, where the soldiers were mostly small and indigenous and the officers trim and French-like.<sup>54</sup> His description highlighted the racial division in the army, whether real or imagined. The appearance of indigenous soldiers conformed to a particular discourse of positivist racism, emphasized by viewers persistently convinced of the inferiority of the indigene in the ranks. Uniform, posture, military spit-and-polish, and conspicuous wealth all spoke to, and for, a different sort of masculinity from the observed roughness of the troops.

The military parade was an important and recurring display of nationalist rhetoric, projecting power, images and imaginings of what Mexico and mexicanidad might be. As a performance of nationalism, it differed from its antecedents, celebrating history and nation in different ways, emphasizing national citizens rather than regional communities, and drawing attention to modern accoutrements of cosmopolitanism and technology. For example, in performing the modern cosmopolitan nation as best they could, some indigenous Mexican soldiers carried the new Porfirio Díaz automatic rifle, others carried Japanese, American, or German rifles, some wore spiked German helmets, and most had

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<sup>53</sup> Mosse, *Image*, 56, 57; Macías-González, "High Life at the Lagartijo," 230.

<sup>54</sup> Bishop, *Old Mexico*, 127.

French-designed uniforms.<sup>55</sup> In exhibition, the cosmopolitan military had become quite proficient, and according to Prussian observers, the parading army was comparable to any in Europe.<sup>56</sup> This performance supported the goals of the regime by allaying the fears of investors and tourists, discouraging perceived Guatemalan aggression, allowing increased inclusion into international military circles, and even providing mass entertainment. Equally important, nonetheless, the performative military offered an image of Mexico and the military man that was in keeping with the dreams and aspirations of cosmopolitan nationalists.

Performance alone could not create concrete changes to the experience or ideal of masculinity; rather, it was a means for instructing behaviour, coaxing conformity, and suggesting agreement on one definition of acceptable identity. While not creative in an outright way, through repetition and reiteration it could silence alternative visions of nation, making cultural assumptions seem natural. Some historians have argued that the most significant changes to personal identities came into being after the Porfiriato, especially through the impact of changing economic structures and mass media.<sup>57</sup> While it seems obvious that these developments had a significant influence on social and cultural understandings of identity, they did not occur in a vacuum, nor did they come into being *ex nihilo*. Instead, these changes tended to re-use and reinforce previously existing identities and images, including those of gender. The image and the spectacle of

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<sup>55</sup> Warren Schiff, "German Military Penetration into Mexico During the Late Díaz Period," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 39:4 (Nov. 1959), 568-79; Gustavo Casasola, *Seis siglos de historia gráfica de México, 1325-1925*, 4th ed., vol. 3 (México: Editorial Gustavo Casasola, S.A., 1971), 1719, 1331, 1503.

<sup>56</sup> Alexius, 10.

<sup>57</sup> For one example, see Alan Knight, "Weapons and Arches in the Mexican Revolutionary Landscape," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, ed. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 58.

the military man were not entirely persuasive, like many of the Porfirian attempts to image the nation.<sup>58</sup> Although the regime made many unsuccessful attempts at instilling modern identities, these discourses and repeated spectacles inexorably created a visual and behavioural example for understanding the modern nation. From this example came the basic templates and languages for the creation of the new man.

The Mexican regime created a performative army that could emulate European and American modernity, demonstrating and parading as proof and pedagogue of modern nationalism. As a public spectacle it acted out a sense of what the nation should or could be, constructing an identity through its interaction with the nation's subjects and that of privileged foreign viewers. The military, clothed in all the symbolic trappings of nationalism, enacted political rituals and silenced alternate views of the nation. Far from merely defending the country, its primary purpose became the performance of cosmopolitan and nationalist ideals for the gaze of various audiences.

The military had a particular agenda in the message it deployed, one that emphasized the reconstructed national troops. Modern, disciplined soldiers stand erect, rigid, and with their gaze directly ahead. The highly gendered implication of these terms was deliberate, because the military stance was a demonstration of class, identity, and especially, masculinity.<sup>59</sup> Ideals of masculinity permeated society through the image of the modern warrior, especially in the years from 1870-1914.<sup>60</sup> Stance and bearing were essential markers of manliness, with poor posture derided as weak and lacking class. The

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<sup>58</sup> Tenorio Trillo, *Mexico*, 1, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War and Monument in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 97.

<sup>60</sup> Mosse, 51-3, 78.



modern body reveals its social origin, and the military declares its own identity, and allegiance to the regime, through not only uniforms but also the distinctive bearing of soldiers.<sup>61</sup> The conscript understandably did not exemplify this connection to the nation, nor was he generally modern in his self-conception.

While military posture was both symbolically different from, and in theory remedial for, lower class slouching of the industrial or agrarian worker, this hardly meant that the recruit would necessarily interiorize modern, disciplined values. Bishop noted that indigenous people who went to the cities for education would, upon returning to their homes, change back to their old languages, clothing, and customs. Likely the returning (or deserting) soldier reverted to past habits in much the same way. In any case, the highly structured rigour of the modern military generally did not filter down to the ranks, of conscripts with poor hygiene, allegedly smoking marijuana. Perhaps this was indicative of the true intent of a performative military, not to immediately change the troops themselves, but over time to normalize and legitimize nationalist perspectives for specific audiences and spectators.

Concerns over diplomacy shaped the army's message. Early in the Porfiriato heightened tensions and conflicts over jurisdiction and military control over banditry and apaches led to an escalation and, nearly, war with the United States along the northern frontier. This tension proved a significant test and victory for Mexico's diplomatic corps and government agents.<sup>62</sup> Troops under Generals Bernardo Reyes, Jerónimo Treviño,

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<sup>61</sup>Pierre Bourdieu cited in Chris Schilling, *The Body And Social Theory*, (London: Sage, 1993), 129.

<sup>62</sup> For details see Daniel Cosío Villegas, et al. *El Porfiriato: La vida política exterior, parte primera*, (México, D.F.: Clío, 1998).

and Francisco Naranjo defeated both hostile natives and revolution-minded expatriates on the long border, and at the same time cemented new ties and the tentative respect of the army officers to the north. Performance on the shared battlefield bolstered the connections of the two military systems, a connection enhanced further through mutual reviews and troop inspections. As leaders from each side visited the others' encampments they were invariably met with all the pomp and ceremony that protocol demanded; this ritual demonstrated a shared language and understanding of military lore that communicated equality.<sup>63</sup> By 1881, the connections between the two frontier militaries took a further stride closer as General Treviño married the daughter of Brigadier General Edward Ord.<sup>64</sup> Significantly, Ord had previously been a major proponent of annexing Mexico, a stance mitigated greatly by his new position of father-in-law to a tremendously wealthy and influential political officer who officially feted him in a tour of Mexico City. Impromptu reviews and encounters, often improvised, demonstrated both proficiency and respect for a counterpart, and in this case led to more formal ceremonial presentations.

While reviews along the border occurred spontaneously, the frequent and massive parades that the military put on in cities demanded considerable expertise and coordination. Official spectators, carefully chosen and invited, represented the diplomatic corps of Europe, Japan, and the Americas. The Porfirian regime had a carefully and deliberately chosen image to present to the foreign gaze, an image that stressed modernity and stability. The social nature and the pomp are both obvious in this photograph of Díaz with the cream of high society seated upon the reviewing stand (Illustration 4.2).

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<sup>63</sup> Cosío Villegas, *The United States Versus Porfirio Díaz*, 146.

<sup>64</sup> Cosío Villegas, 209, 214, 215.



**Illustration 4.2 Díaz at Review, Gustavo Casasola (1906).**

The wide plains at the outskirts of Mexico City allowed demonstrations on grand scales, and complex unit evolutions. To impressive visuals and music, officers added grandiose speeches replete with modernist rhetoric and compliments to the President.<sup>65</sup> Often lasting all day, the events became so crucial to organizers that one, General Jesús Preciada, delayed redeploying troops to a combat zone to field sufficient men on parade for his independence day (September 16) celebrations in 1885.<sup>66</sup>

Visitors commented favorably on the military and its parade, noting how it appeared comparable to European armies, and that in some respects, may have even surpassed them. The best known parades accompanied the 1910 Centennial of

<sup>65</sup> “2 de abril,” *México Militar* (1901), 651; and “Gran parada de abril 2,” *México Militar* (1900), 530.

<sup>66</sup> Grl. Jesús Preciada to PD, 8/9/85, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 17 Doc. 8399.

Independence in Mexico City where contingents from Germany, Brazil, the United States, and Belgium took part.<sup>67</sup> More often, the Mexican troops received the credit they desired. American journalists, for example, had written in impressed language about the modern mobilization of the troops by rails and deploying of gunboats during tensions with Guatemala.<sup>68</sup> Captain Hardie of the U.S. army attended a parade of some 10 000 troops a decade earlier in 1885, and came away with the impression that the Mexican army had already achieved parity with his own army.<sup>69</sup> Janvier wrote that the army had become a single and modern unit, and giving it his highest praise, claimed that it appeared quite businesslike.<sup>70</sup>

Other observers commented less on function and more on fashion. They noted how gorgeous the officers appeared, or how French the cavalry looked; comments that while a bit condescending at times, demonstrate the relative success of the regime at hiding the worst elements of an often woeful military. Natives had their own observations, and did seem concerned with foreign opinions around them. During one September 15 parade, the General leading one division appeared out of uniform in gaudy yellow boots that set the foreigners to murmuring and mortified the Mexican viewer. The latter went on in his comments to suggest adding heavy cavalry to the spectacle, even though it had no use in Mexican warfare, and remarked on the robust health of the men of

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<sup>67</sup> For a full description of the Centennial as cosmopolitan celebration see Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996).

<sup>68</sup> "Mexican Capable Strategy," *New York Times* (Feb. 13, 1895).

<sup>69</sup> Captain F.H. Hardie, "The Mexican Army," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* (1892).

<sup>70</sup> Janvier, 815.

the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion who seemed as fit as any European.<sup>71</sup> Another spectator admitted his civilian ignorance of military procedures, but expressed his great admiration for the apparent precision, beautiful uniforms, and magnificent horses. The rapid marching and maneuvering by the cavalry he claimed, had an indescribable effect on him, akin to an explosion of light.<sup>72</sup>

The parade could also prove modernity. The Second Reserve, an innovation of Bernardo Reyes, paraded in great numbers in 1901. To Reyes's disappointment, the Second Reserve disbanded by Presidential order only a year later and the parade remained one of their few high points. Another modernist display, Enrique Mondragón's 1903 precision artillery demonstration fired the newest explosive shells making Mexican gunnery appear the equal to that of the world's most technically advanced armies.<sup>73</sup>

By 1883, visitors arrived under modern electric lighting on electric tramways to comfortable stands to observe the show. Along broad avenues rife with monuments displaying history and traditions, the army in its modern accoutrements paraded in a display marked by its universal and cosmopolitan appeal. Highlighting this, the explicitly national and traditional image of the *rurales* performed in the same places, a less than subtle counterpoint to the modern appeal presented by the federal army and gendarmerie. The army, most in French style uniforms, had their own styles of medals, their own pace of marching, some units carried rifles that Europeans could only envy, some wore German helmets and sported Kaiser moustaches. A unique blending, this cosmopolitan

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<sup>71</sup> "Columna de honor," *Revista Militar Mexicana* (10/1/1890), 557-8.

<sup>72</sup> "La gran parada militar del 5 de mayo," *México Militar* (1900), 530-1.

<sup>73</sup> Casasola, *Biografía Ilustrada Del General Porfirio Díaz, 1830-1965*, 91.

hodge-podge of fashions and accessories, framed in the most patriotic rhetoric, could only be essentially Mexican.

The great parades of national holidays provided one venue for the regime to express a vision, yet they were far from the only spectacle in the military repertoire. Smaller processions, such as funeral honours, and semi-private arms demonstrations or reviews, broadcast different messages and fostered alternative responses. Official state receptions, like that put on for Ord in Veracruz following his daughter's wedding, represented an important way for regimes to demonstrate stability and modern sensibility. State funerals, commemoration of historical events, important visits, and inaugurations of industry all provided excuses for a military spectacle.<sup>74</sup> The Porfirian regime hosted diplomats and state visitors at official reviews as a matter of course. Díaz honored influential Americans, specifically General Joseph Wheeler, Secretary of State Elihu Root, and President Howard Taft.<sup>75</sup> Ceremonies, an occasion for high class socialization, allowed the military to put on its best face and show spectators their present competence, and technological mastery, and at the same time their respect for the traditions of the nation's past.

Burying dead officers could be a complicated task. The ordinary military funeral presented a type of everyday public ceremony with generally less expense and effort than those of men like Manuel Romero Rubio's in 1895. They afforded honours in keeping with rank. For the top echelons, journals printed lengthy obituaries and panegyrics with

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<sup>74</sup> For more on state funerals see Matthew Esposito, "Memorializing Modern Mexico: The State Funerals of the Porfirian Era, 1876-1911" (PhD Diss. Texas Christian University, 1997).

<sup>75</sup> Reviews described in "Banqueting Minister Jackson," *New York Times* (July 5 1885); Casasola, *Biografía Ilustrada Del General Porfirio Díaz, 1830-1965*; "How Mexico Impressed General Joseph Wheeler," *New York Times* (Jan. 15, 1905).

full page photos and even poetry. The aging officers of the Porfirian regime, many who had fought in the 1860s, began dying in droves by the 1890s.<sup>76</sup> Yet even for lowly subaltern officers, special funeral arrangements had to be made and this soon over-committed the army. Official attempts to deal adequately with this, and to provide appropriate honours, stretched military manpower in the City of Mexico. As early as 1868, the officer of the day in Mexico City's central military command had complained that he simply lacked the troops, and especially the musicians, for the funerals.<sup>77</sup>

A number of factors came into play. Every time family or neighbours reported the death of an officer, the first priority became identification. During the 1890s, the ironically named Captain Alegría worked incessantly to find the dead, identify them, and arrange for their funerals. As officer of the day, he needed to be sure who had died in order to assess accurately the pensions, notifications, and the number of troops required for the honour guard. Complicating this, some of the dead had no family nearby or in contact, and neighbours might only know the rumoured rank of the cadaver. Theft of pensions from the mentally ill senior officer F. Arce, for example, had been possible only because of his isolated habitation.<sup>78</sup> Other bodies were found through complaints, rendering testimony about identification difficult. The officer took inventory of the deceased's possessions in the event that there was neither family nor a will. In one case,

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<sup>76</sup> François-Xavier Guerra, *Le Mexique: De L'Ancien Regime a la Revolution* Tome I (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 53-61.

<sup>77</sup> AGN, CMDF, eps- Caja 371 Cpt. Fermin Sada, 1868.

<sup>78</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 321CrI. Eduardo Arce, (5/8/1889):136 page file on his victimization through falsified documents, and his death without family or friends.

this painstaking list making even included the make of shoes, and needed signatures from two witnesses.<sup>79</sup>

Once Alegría satisfied himself as to the name and rank of the dead he needed still to arrange an honour guard for next day burials, a challenging organization task at least. As an example, the October funeral of Brigadier General Jesús Sosa called for troops and officers from the General Staff, the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a start. Under the command of Colonel Eugenio Barron, this meant arranging logistics and directing four Jefes, forty officers, almost 500 troops, 151 horses, and around twenty band members. Sosa died at 7:30 p.m. and was buried the next morning at 9, slightly more than 12 hours later.<sup>80</sup> With some high profile cases, politics determined the Jefe in charge, as when Rocha led the honour guard for former president Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, or in the funeral of Carlos Pacheco on the independence holiday of September 15, 1891.<sup>81</sup> More often, they selected the officer in charge simply on availability.

The nation put on display in parades, music, reviews, journals, and funerals built up the military as the primary exemplar of mexicanidad—setting the institution as an extension of the President, who had increasingly reworked the army into his own cult of personality.

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<sup>79</sup> See for example, AGN, CMDF, ep-s Caja 372 Cpt1 Alejandro Silvestrini.

<sup>80</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-s Caja 372 Grl. de Brig Jesus S Sosa.

<sup>81</sup> 1/97/00 Felipe Berriozábal dies; (CPD guía, efímeras) 5/13/89 former president Lerdo de Tejada's body returned to Mexico, Rocha commands honores; 9/15/91 Grl Carlos Pacheco dies.



## President's Guards

The idea of a unit devoted to escort and protect the head of the Republic was far from new, yet until 1900, the guards surrounding the President came from a selection of men taken from the assorted battalions on service in Mexico City. The guard's officer of the day selected a handful of soldiers from a variety of units, with some apparent preference for engineers (to 1895), turning more to sappers (1896-1900), and drawing the rest from cavalry units.<sup>82</sup> For the most part, these soldiers represented the outer shell of security, visible deterrence, while plainclothes bodyguard details handled the practical task of preventing assassinations. The troops, therefore, held a far more ceremonial role as honour guards and sentinels, appearing with the President in public outings as symbols of military and national power. Furthermore, their presence added to the President's own military credentials by association.<sup>83</sup> Having risen to power as a national war hero, Díaz sought constantly to reinforce this image. His public persona was basically a military one and he wore his uniform to most formal State occasions. This especially proved true during the large holiday ceremonies or at special events such as public troop reviews, Military College graduations, or large-scale maneuvers. At the same time, he strategically assumed civilian garb when it suited the audience, as with inaugurations of monuments or railways.

For a number of reasons, the ad hoc system of selecting guards no longer satisfied the military brass by the turn of the century. During the tenure of the reform minded

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<sup>82</sup> *Ley de organización 1899*- article 33 redefines zapadores duties; *Novedades* Caja 100 on transitions to new units.

<sup>83</sup> See Victor Macías-Gonzalez, "The *Lagartijo* at the *High Life*," in *The Famous* 41, 230.

General Bernardo Reyes as Secretary of War (1900-1902), he ordered the formation of this new and more selective detachment. Decreed into existence in July 25, 1900, the unit consisted of troops drawn permanently from the “best soldiers and classes of the army’s regiments” who met certain physical and moral characteristics.<sup>84</sup> The company numbered 50 soldiers with five officers and a flag bearing *picador*. Typically 30 to 40 men formed an escort.<sup>85</sup> The Guards’ duties specifically entailed barracks service, escort detail, providing orderlies (to General Staff and in the Presidential Salon), and *servicio de parejas*. The latter duty seems to have meant simply that pairs, with the more senior soldier responsible for the junior, would undertake miscellaneous errands and guarding, yet oddly appears under the service regulations for the unit.<sup>86</sup> At all high official functions such as funerals, receptions, inaugurations, or parades, the unit took part as a stiff and silent presence built around Díaz. In addition to their formal escort duties, which were restricted to the President, guards drove and maintained the few automobiles used by Díaz, and seem to have also been responsible for grooming their own stable of horses. Several of the Guards provided security and service as orderlies for select members of the General Staff.<sup>87</sup> The relatively recent institution of the General Staff, a measure invented in Europe and simultaneously adopted by the U.S. and Mexico, offered the corporate framework into which the new unit would fit (see Chapter 3). In addition to these

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<sup>84</sup> *Reglamentos* Cap. 2, Art. 4; Letter of 6/25/1900 General Samuel Pezo to Samuel García Cuellar, re: official creation of Guards in EMP Exp. Caja 98 Expediente de Samuel García Cuellar.

<sup>85</sup> *Reglamentos* Art 12 – specifies one major, one captain (1<sup>st</sup>), 2 tenientes, 1 subteniente, 50 guards, 1 sergeant major, and 1 picador.

<sup>86</sup> *Reglamentos* CapV, Art. 20 “servicio de cuartel, escoltas, ordenanzas y parejas”; Art 25, only to offer “escolta a presidente de republica”; Art. 29, 2 Guards to serve as orderlies in Salon de Presidencia

<sup>87</sup> One older Guard Orderly allowed re-enlisting at age 49 in 1909 because he had “always been in service with Gen. Fernando Gonzalez” and “no en servicio actual,” EMP Exp. 97 Cerrardo Barragan.

administrative details, the Guards embodied a modern face for the public to witness. Being in the public eye more than most soldiers, and especially noted by high-ranking diplomats and foreign guests, these men also represented their national military as exemplars of the finest soldiers available –at least in theory.

A number of motivations that reflected the rise of a modern and theatrical performance of nationalism, the personal ambitions and needs within a professionalizing military, and the opportunity for an experiment in class-based voluntary recruitment justified the rather expensive recreation of an honour guard for the regime. First among these, Díaz's government became increasingly reliant upon public ceremonies to recreate a sense of nation, history, and heroism, which tended to reinforce the seeming legitimacy of the regime. From enormous official funerals to ritual inaugurations that set Cuauhtémoc and Benito Juárez monumentally at the centre of the nation, the Porfirian elite worked incessantly to present their own vision of the nation, and to dictate the terms in which it might be discussed.<sup>88</sup> The creation of a new and updated Guards unit with modern arms and uniforms, matched and drilled, to accompany the visual spectacle that surrounded Díaz's swelling cult of personality should not surprise. Rather, one wonders that it took so long to appear.

The second rationale stems from the internal politicking of the military administration. Reducing contact between certain local generals and the national palace doubtless had political implications, if not necessarily motives. Bernardo Reyes, a

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<sup>88</sup> See Matthew D. Esposito, "Death and Disorder in Mexico City: The State Funeral of Manuel Romero Rubio" in *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction*, edited by William Beezley and Linda Ann Curcio Nagy, 87-103 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2000); Tenorio Trillo, *Mexico at the Worlds' Fairs*; Claudia Agostini, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876-1910* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003).

popular general and former governor, understood maneuver better than many of his colleagues. Providing this unit presumably impressed the President with his concern and care for making Díaz look good. This gave Reyes the opportunity to attempt something a bit radical by nineteenth-century standards in terms of its class composition.

The creation of the Presidential Guards mere months after his taking power should not be dismissed as coincidental to his reformist ambitions. Before entering the position of Secretary of War and Marine in 1900, Reyes wrote a beautifully illuminated volume of military history for Vicente Riva Palacios's series on Mexican political and social evolution.<sup>89</sup> Complete with a respectful nod to the outgoing General Felipe Berriozábal, the tome represents nothing less than a declaration of Reyes's intention to join the military elite to the more modernist Científicos in advising the government. The Guards represent on a smaller scale what he hoped to accomplish more widely, namely, the establishment of a voluntary, motivated army of literate and middle-classed soldiers. Concurrent with this smaller project Reyes simultaneously created the Second Reserve.<sup>90</sup> This short-lived, but quite popular, experiment in voluntary middle class military service saw immediate results, with some 3000 recruits drilling in Mexico City and thousands more signing up across the country. Seemingly filling a void in a middle class nostalgic for the National Guard (diminished in the past few decades) and eager for more participation in national life, the Second Reserve could not survive the quite justified fears of Díaz that these classes might one day resent and overthrow him. In 1903, after

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<sup>89</sup> Bernardo Reyes, *El Ejército Mexicano* (México: J. Ballezá y Ca., 1901).

<sup>90</sup> Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, Estado Mayor, and Bernardo Reyes, *Ley orgánico del Ejército Nacional* Nov 1 1900, Art. 234 [p.809], re: Second Reserve.

Reyes's retirement, the regime disbanded the Reserve in the face of vocal public opposition. Nonetheless, the smaller experiment in the Guards continued.

The detachment provided an opportunity for the General Staff, who continued to command the Guard, to undertake something of an experiment in expanding the social composition for, and changing the conditions of, military service. To lead such a unit properly, required and justified that the Staff be paid extra so they could be presentable at public ceremonies.<sup>91</sup> With at least eight different universal recruitment and service programs in serious consideration, it becomes evident that the Staff also envisioned this as an effort to deviate from the usual pattern of conscription and lower class soldiery.<sup>92</sup> It may not be surprising then, that the Guard Reyes called into being consisted primarily of men from middle- and upper lower-class backgrounds. Furthermore, once selected and vetted, these men were not to be treated with the usual disdain that generally accompanied service in the ranks.

For the most part, the Staff succeeded in finding precisely the type of men they sought for the Guards, at least on paper. Around 30% of the recruits came from a family background of small business owners (*comerciantes*), and over 50% came from trades including tailors, carpenters, electricians, mechanics, cobblers, and the like. A small number filled specific functions in the unit, such as the *talabartero* (harness-maker). Only a few came from such lowly professions as porters or day workers, and a handful of older veterans from the *rurales* or *gendarmes* filled out the rosters. Overwhelmingly, this

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<sup>91</sup> Mondragón, 16.

<sup>92</sup> Eduardo Paz, *A dónde debemos llegar: Estudio sociológico militar* (México: Tipografía Mercantil, 1910).

remained a troop with higher than average socio-economic background throughout its lifetime.

The officers maintained this standard by strictly adhering to the regulations for acceptance in the Guard. Upon applying, recruits had to provide three character references and two medical checks, they had to be between 25-45 years old, and they had to be at least 5 foot 5 (165 cm), although they averaged about 5 foot 7 (170 cm).<sup>93</sup> Assuming they had robust health and sound referees, they further had to prove their ability to read, write, and do basic arithmetic, and to display their equestrian skills. They finally had to enter a two year contract, agreeing to a bond of 100 pesos for equipment and mount deducted from their pay at a rate of twenty-five centavos daily. The majority of Guardsmen recruited hailed from Mexico City and State, the Bajío, and Jalisco, and none at all came from important (to Díaz and Reyes) States such as Oaxaca or Nuevo León. More pointedly, none at all came from troubled regions of nation, such as the Yucatán, Sonora, or Chihuahua, where various insurrections and uprisings plagued the regime into the twentieth-century. It may then have been an issue of loyalty, as well as pragmatic hiring, which limited recruitment geographically. Questions of loyalties may also have played a role in the decision to hire younger men.

Aside from occasionally taking old grizzled veterans, the vast majority of new Guards had barely been born when Díaz first took office in 1876. The young new face of the volunteer military had an average age of 25.6 years at entry, although years of work

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<sup>93</sup> *Reglamentos*, Art. 5. Also see “Guardias Presidenciales,” *Boletín Militar* (5/23/00), 5 for regulations (used possibly as advertising) and advertisement of 9/8/00 that the new unit still needs three trumpets, picador, mariscal- should be strong, with good conduct, 25-45 years old, 1.73m—it then asks fellow officers to make recommendations.

and rough lifestyles was evident in the presence of scarring on some 30% of those faces. Here aesthetics also had a part. Perhaps rugged good looks, perhaps the norm of the day, the Guard was also informally screened to include better looking men than usual, and newspapers discouraged the less handsome public from applying.<sup>94</sup> The record further shows that Guards with more European features did not appear regularly, listing only six of the 316 as having green or blue eyes, and these few only remained in service a year or so.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, photographs indicate that they were at least presentable, if not necessarily a showcase of military polish.

Founded primarily to facilitate the performance of Porfirian theatre as honour guards in the public spectacles, the unit also provided an opportunity for an experiment in class-based voluntary recruitment. The Presidential Guard trial had unsettling results for the General Staff planners. The imposition of disciplinary structures inconsistent with the soldiers' expectations led inexorably to a highly unstable roster of personnel. With an extraordinary annual rate of replacement, the institution lacked basic continuity and incoming recruits, not understanding how to circumvent rules properly, were more likely to receive dishonourable discharges, especially in their first year of service. For officers concerned with reinforcing their own social status, these middle-classed Guards merely confirmed stereotypes of drunken and debauched lower classed predispositions. For the

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<sup>94</sup> "Los guardias de la presidencia," *El Imparcial* (July 6 1900), 1, calls for only men featuring a "compleción robusta" to apply for the positions.

<sup>95</sup> EMP Exp. Caja 92, Expediente de José Mariana Pérez (1907 green eyed); EMP Exp. Caja 92, Expediente de Miguel Quinto (1908 blue eyed); EMP Exp. Caja 93, Expediente de Frederico Koelig (1903-4 blue eyed); EMP Exp. Caja 93, Expediente de Guillermo Gray (1903 blue eyes, dies in service); EMP Exp. Caja 97, Expediente de Guillermo Albarrán (green eyes, pernicious discharge); EMP Exp. Caja 97, Expediente de 97 Juan G Bango (1906 green eyes, deserts unit); EMP Exp. Caja 97, Expediente de José Cabrera (blue eyes, 1903 mala conducta discharge).

Guards, boredom and petty punishments pushed them to resent authorities and to seek escape, whether that meant desertion, resignation, or inebriation.

One extraordinary case illustrates this. At around 11 in the morning during March of 1902, residents of the City of Mexico witnessed the unusual spectacle of a Presidential Guardsman drunkenly careening past parading fellow guardsmen and officers—in a possibly stolen carriage—with a known prostitute.<sup>96</sup> This brazen display of disregard for both societal niceties and the disciplinary expectations that surrounded the elite Presidential Guards of the late Porfirian regime (1900-1911) showcased the profoundly troubling state of this unit.

Their experiences indicated, as well, the conflicts involved with occupying an uneasy position between different aspects of class and gendered behaviours in a society refashioning itself as modern. Regulated in dress, language, leisure, and family, the Guards faced new rules that predictably conflicted with how they perceived themselves. Demanding recognition of their position as soldiers and men, they clashed with police, officers, and society more generally. Ultimately, this frontier position between various and conflicting expectations of representing the nation, being soldiers, and being men, proved untenable. For the Guards, these contradictions could only be resolved through behaving badly.

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<sup>96</sup> Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo de Guerra y Marina. Estado Mayor y Guardias Presidenciales, *Expedientes Personales*, Caja 93, Expediente Personal de Francisco Gargallo.



## Taking State Theatre Abroad

Missions outside of Mexico carried officer representatives and contingents of troops to its neighbours north and south, to Europe, and even to Japan. At considerable expense, the Secretaries of War and of Foreign Relations selected and deployed envoys, some traveled for temporary commissions or expositions, and others as attachés spent years abroad.<sup>97</sup> Over the years, Díaz sent many of his senior military Staff on missions to Europe, although sometimes this was also an expedient and face-saving means to exile his political adversaries. Nevertheless, most went to fulfill one or more of three main tasks: to facilitate the business of the arms trade, to gather information from foreign military sources, and to represent an image of modern Mexico.

Diplomatic army officers learned a common military culture and language that looked outside Mexico for much of its new identity. As such, the self-perception of these officers formed relative to foreign militaries in the arms trade, the venue of reviews, parades, and the military journal. Soldiers sent to the U.S. and to Europe as part of the conversation of nations accomplished a number of practical tasks including the negotiation of arms deals, resolution of diplomatic issues, and observing foreign modernization efforts. One important motive was the need for acceptance and membership in the international military circles. Displaying an impressive modernizing army to the military attachés and arms merchants of these foreign nations gave Mexico a credibility that denied the actual, rather poor, state of its military. Evaluating and being evaluated was a form of cosmopolitan inclusion into the modern world, and was an

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<sup>97</sup> *Diario oficial* (6/2/97), details cost of legations to U.K., Latin America, and Germany.

increasingly important part of the Porfirian projection of the nation abroad. It is significant that Mexico was not a simple recipient or mimic of other nations' militaries and their cultures, but that they were in a reciprocated relationship.

The assignment of military attachés also held political ramifications. The skilled Captain Carlos de Gagern spent years in the German legation, at times fighting to receive even his expense money, and his Prussian ties made him ineligible when he wished to transfer to France. Instead, the Secretary of Foreign Relations suggested that he should move on to Italy, Belgium, or Spain. Others among the attaché pool had close relations with Díaz and his General Staff, for example, Francisco García became attaché in Great Britain (1892-97), Fortino Davila served in Washington (1906-1911), Gustavo Salas in France (1908), and of course, his son Porfirio Díaz in Washington in 1893.<sup>98</sup> While perfectly capable, the appointment of Porfirio Jr. to the important Washington D.C. attaché position upon his graduation at age 18 still demonstrated nepotism.<sup>99</sup>

In an interesting aside, an attaché did need to meet the standards of the society where he was stationed, as demonstrated by U.S. Ambassador Clayton Powell's son. Appointed as attaché in Mexico City (where his father resided), the young man reneged on a debt in the Jockey Club, refused to accept a proffered duel, and departed Mexico in

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<sup>98</sup> Tnt. Cor. Porfirio Díaz [Jr.] Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Officials and Tropa, Guardia Presidencial, Caja 94; Tnt. Cor. Gustavo Salas Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Officials and Tropa, Guardia Presidencial, Caja 94; Tnt. Cor. Francisco García, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Officials and Tropa, Guardia Presidencial, Caja 94; Tnt. Cor. Davila Fortino Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Officials and Tropa, Guardia Presidencial, Caja 94.

<sup>99</sup> "Mexico Wants No Loan," *New York Times* (Feb. 26, 1893).

shame shortly after.<sup>100</sup> Porfirio Jr., who had turned down an alternative commission to Great Britain in the Royal Artillery or Horse Guards, spawned a similar dueling scandal as attaché to the U.S.<sup>101</sup> Falsely identified as Díaz two years after Porfirito had left New York, a Lieutenant Francisco Márquez attended a theatre performance. During the show, he talked loudly and incurred dirty looks from a British spectator. Márquez gave the man his card, a precursor to challenging in a duel, but the man tore up the card and beat the attaché with his fists. A German baron advised the Mexican to ask for a duel formally, but since the Englishman's refusal might lead to more fisticuffs, Márquez timidly declined to do so. Diplomatic staff quickly corrected the newspaper by pointing out that Díaz was not in fact in the U.S., and sent the shamed attaché home.<sup>102</sup>

The attachés abroad, for the most part, behaved admirably and were well received by their hosts. Captain Pablo Escandón for example, moved to France with his whole family and convinced the newspapers there that the army included only the upper-most classes, unlike in colonial times.<sup>103</sup> Fortino Dávila earned fulsome praise from his hosts, and the ubiquitous Samuel García Cuellar became a favourite at almost every Exposition held in the United States.

The opportunity to attend and participate in the rash of World's Fairs, exhibitions, student exchanges, and international conferences was a crucial part of foreign relations to the modernizing and investment-hungry Porfirian regime. Military

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<sup>100</sup> William Schell, *Integral Outsiders: The American Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2001), 74.

<sup>101</sup> Robert R. Symon to PD, 12/15/1892, CPD Legajo 17 Caja 37 Doc. 18213: an offer to have PD jr. go to England, joining either Royal Artillery or Guards under the Duke of Cambridge, Edmund Connerrel.

<sup>102</sup> Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), Agregados en EUA, T421, Legajo 1049, Porfirio Díaz jr., (20 fojas).

<sup>103</sup> "Oficiales en Francia," *Boletín Militar* (5/1/00), 5: (note, translated and reprinted from *Le Voltaire*).

delegations attended all the large events, and many smaller ones, even if at times this simply meant sending an attaché and a band. To list only a few destinations they visited: 1882-3 in Paris, 1884 in Cuba and New Orleans, 1892 Madrid, 1893 Chicago and Washington, 1895 U.S. and Paris, 1897 Russia, 1898 Paris, 1900 Paris, 1901 Buffalo, 1904 St. Louis, 1906 San Antonio, and 1907 Jamestown.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, student exchanges from the Military College to Sandhurst or West Point, or from the Navy School to France or Spain, took place, and students from the College also attended some expositions as observers and displays alike.<sup>105</sup> In these events and in daily diplomacy, the arms trade primed the Porfirian ruling elite and their motivations.

The European arms trade had a profound impact on the development of military knowledge in the Americas.<sup>106</sup> Long dependent on foreign made weapons and ammunition, army attachés sought to reduce this vulnerability, and gain prestige, by enhancing the ability to manufacture arms at home. In the meantime, they would also facilitate favourable terms of trade for weapons that Mexicans could not yet produce, or produce only in limited amounts at great expense. Foremost among the foreigners they turned to was France, dealing with the manufactories of Schneider-Canet (Creusot) and Banges, the St. Chamond foundry, and the shipyards of Havre.

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<sup>104</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-a Caja 318 Mayor-Med Federico Abriego, 7/17/1893 to Chicago; AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 345 Tnt. Cor. Med. Eduardo R. García, 1893 Washington and Chicago medical congresses, 1895 International Medical Conference in Russia 1897; AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 347 Cor. Bodo von Glümer, : legation to Berlin; AGN, CMDF, ep-v Caja 375 Mayor-med Daniel Velez: 1895 studies surgery in Paris; *Memorias* (1900) Doc. 21: Military College students sent to Paris Universal Exposition.

<sup>105</sup> Matías Romero to PD, 12/25/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 29 Doc. 14344; Juan F Cahill to PD, 1/27/1890, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 27 Doc. 13207: (re: Sandhurst graduate sent to Mexico).

<sup>106</sup> John J. Johnson, "The Latin-American Military as a Politically Competing Group in Transitional Society," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John Johnson, Rand Corporation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 108.

A large part of the attachés' task was to evaluate weapons that foreigners had offered for sale. As early as 1879, it became evident to experts that the Banges cannon system had become outdated, and Eduardo Paz helped the government to arrange a purchase from St. Chamond of new artillery pieces. His deal revealed the expense of the undertaking; despite near-insolvency, the government agreed to pay 400 000 pesos in ten bimonthly payments for the updated guns.<sup>107</sup> Commissions to Germany in 1890 and 1896 lauded the weapons produced by Krupp, and yet by the turn of the century attachés still turned to the French pieces after comparisons. Manuel Mondragón, who had patents with St. Chamond and had attended St. Cyr, observed demonstrations alongside Japanese and Rumanian diplomats. These tests convinced him of the French guns rapidity of fire and reliability.<sup>108</sup> Further studies bore him out, despite his conflicts of interest, as the British found the steel used at St. Chamond superior to any other in Europe.<sup>109</sup> Attachés sent by Reyes, like Gilberto Luna, continued to support French manufacturing in 1901, and also sang the praises of the Mondragón 75mm artillery they produced.<sup>110</sup> Commissions to Germany, predictably, disagreed with this assessment, and attachés there generally found the Krupp artillery to be better quality but more expensive. To a point, these divisions

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<sup>107</sup> Co. des Hauts-Fourneaux to PD, 1/30/1885, CPD Legajo 10 Caja 4 Doc. 1853: re: evolution from Banges cannons.

<sup>108</sup> "Correspondancia extranero," *Boletín Militar* (4/27/1899), 3: report from St Chamond, Manuel Mondragón to Samuel García Cuellar, 3/24/99.

<sup>109</sup> "Algo sobre las municiones," *La Vanguardia* (5/14/1888), 2.

<sup>110</sup> BR to CrI Gilberto Luna, 5/8/1902, CDX BR Vol. 34 Doc. 6747: re: alternatives to Schneider-Creusot in Paris; Dir. General of Societé Anonyme Capital to BR, June 11, 1901, CDX BR Vol. 35 Doc.7471-74: letter (in French) from Paris on cannons of Schneider-Canet prefers Mondragón piece.

between pro-French and pro-German factions were reflected within the army echelons back home.<sup>111</sup>

Perhaps less rife with conflicts of interest were the regime's naval dealings at Havre. The creation of a modern navy of steam-powered gunboats was beyond the modest abilities of the arsenal in Mexico, and even large sailing vessels had to be commissioned from abroad. As case in point, the regime ordered the purchase of the Training Frigate *Zaragoza*, a vessel of wood and sail, from the shipyards of France in the mid 1880s. In 1888, the attaché wrote to Díaz to update him on the construction, and to volunteer his services in establishing a frigate building program for the Mexican Navy.<sup>112</sup> Three years later, the ship was finally finished and a crew sent from Veracruz to sail it home, for eventual service in both the Pacific and Gulf fleets.<sup>113</sup>

The maiden voyages of the *Oaxaca*, *México*, and *Tamaulipas* allowed the navy to show the flag in various European ports, in Havana, and in Gulf Coast ports as a demonstration of modernity and progress.<sup>114</sup> Properly crewing these and other ships additionally meant sending some naval officers abroad for training until the new naval schools at Veracruz, Campeche, and Mazatlán were finally ready.<sup>115</sup> Showing the flag in

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<sup>111</sup> Max A. Philipp to PD, 10/7/90, CPD Legajo 15 Caja 26 Doc. 12643-4 from Hamburg, has received the commission there to study Krupp arms and see demos; from AGN, CMDF, Caja 349: 1891 German Arty comm., 1877 U.S. commission; AGN, CMDF, Caja 368: 1895 German artillery commission; Periódico Militar (7/1879), 7: Rocha writing on Krupp from Westphalia, 24km range but 500 000 francs cost.

<sup>112</sup> F. Pelissée to PD, 2/16/88, CPD Legajo 13 Caja 3 Doc. 1435.

<sup>113</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-o Caja 361 Brig. Armada Ángel Ortiz Monasterio 7/9/1891 to Havre, France to receive *Zaragoza*; AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 343 Tnt. Armada Alejandro Gomez Baez: in 1890 sent to France to observe work on unfinished *Zaragoza*; AGN, CMDF, ep-g Caja 346 Tnt. Cor. Fernando González: in 1896, Monasterio takes *Zaragoza* from Pacific to Atlantic, temporarily on leave from Presidential Staff.

<sup>114</sup> *La Patria* (11/6/1883), 8: [announcement quoted from *Diario del Hogar*].

<sup>115</sup> AGN, CMDF, ep-b Caja 98 Asp. Armada Luis Borneque: 1/21/1897 sent on Commission to Escuela Naval de España, but fails entrance exam and is discharged.

foreign parts could have a dangerous side. One of the first modern naval decorations was earned by a sailor in the crew of the *Demócrata*, which had set out to plant a flag on Clipperton Island off the Pacific coast. Lacking a proper launch, the captain sent Julián Santos to swim the flag in, and he narrowly escaped from the large school of attacking sharks that chased him back to his ship.<sup>116</sup>

For more advanced vessels, the Navy increasingly turned to shipyards in the United States.<sup>117</sup> Reyes sent Frigate Captain Manuel Azuete to inspect progress made by the Nixon Lewis's Crescent shipyards in New Jersey on five Holland-class submarines, the same facility that built the gunboats *Tampico* and *Veracruz*.<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately, the ships did not meet contractual requirements, and after a lengthy lawsuit, the order was cancelled with a penalty.<sup>119</sup> New gunboats were also ordered. In 1899, General Monasterio, working with the permanent commission, negotiated a publicized deal for some twenty-five steam vessels and gunboats from the Johnson Iron Works, an order requiring the Works to expand greatly their production facilities.<sup>120</sup> On Reyes orders, Azuete also completed the purchase of four new gunboats in New Orleans in 1900.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Suárez Pichardo, 119.

<sup>117</sup> Dir. General of Societé Anonyme Capital to BR, 4/17/00, CDX BR Vol. 29 Doc. 5743: bidding on ships.

<sup>118</sup> Emb. de México (en EU) to BR, 7/26/1900, CDX BR Vol. 29 Doc. 5773: from New Jersey, US has 2 and are buying 5 more Holland class subs; Cpt Frag. manuel Azuete to BR, 9/25/00, CDX BR Vol. 29 Doc. 5790: from NY; Cpt.Frag. Man Azuete to BR, 9/6/00, CDX BR Vol. 29 Doc. 5785: purchase of 5 Holland-class subs

<sup>119</sup> Sec. Relaciones Exteriores, Legajo 311, 4/1907: lawsuit over gun-ships from Nixon Lewis.

<sup>120</sup> "Congreso internacional maritime," *Revista Militar Mexicana* (6/1/1889), 387-88: regime is sending Ángel Ortiz Monasterio, an educated man but also chosen for his nobility—they are keeping his appointment discrete for unspecified reasons; "Mexico Buys Armed Vessels," *New York Times* (Aug. 27, 1899). This huge expansion of the navy, notably, never took place and with Revolution was indefinitely delayed.

<sup>121</sup> Bryan, 71.

The alternative of Italian made ships was explored, but soberly dismissed.<sup>122</sup> Arming the ships was another priority, and commissions to study torpedoes began as early as 1887.<sup>123</sup>

To some degree, attachés managed to sell some of their own arms to foreigners, thus proving if to a limited degree the viability of their national arms industry. At times optimism and sycophantism trumped reality, as when Sergeant Francisco Ramírez wrote to Díaz with hopes that by taking the Porfirio Díaz rifle samples to the Universal Exposition in New Orleans he would be able to sell some 50 000 of them.<sup>124</sup> Sadly for the sergeant's dreams, the rifle was not yet patented and he was unable to display them. Reportedly, the German military attaché was favourably inclined to purchase at least the designs for a particular grenade, and felt that with this weapon in hand no foreign power would dare invade Mexico again.<sup>125</sup> The best arms, nonetheless, remained Mondragón's artillery pieces, especially the 75mm, and his automatic carbine that represented a substantial advance in technological innovation. Ahead of its time, the latter had fatal delicacies that made it unreliable in the field, and was only used in World War One out of some degree of desperation.

Foreign militaries defined their own identities against the counterpart presented to them, and competing in fashions, borrowing ideas, and purchase of technologies were certainly mutual interactions. Military diplomacy revolved in great part around the science of armaments, especially in reporting on the modern and the novel. The semi-

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<sup>122</sup> F. Esteve (Leg. to Italy) to BR, 5/26/01, CDX BR Vol. 34 Doc. 6644: urges fleet build-up.

<sup>123</sup> PD to Vicente Riva Palacio, 6/22/87, CPD Legajo 12 Caja 11 Doc. 5487: in Spain, he's to commission torpedo study.

<sup>124</sup> Sgt Franc Ramírez to PD, 12/25/84, CPD Legajo 9 Caja 2 Doc. 804.

<sup>125</sup> "Ventajosas opiniones extranjeras sobre nuestra ejército," (*Mexico Herald* cited in) *México Militar* (1900), 157-8: Germans impressed with Mexican grenades- they feel that the dangers of invading such a country are now realized by foreigners.



permanent staff of embassies abroad routinely undertook reviews of foreign military troops, and also attended unveiling ceremonies for new technologies, which they then might recommend to their government. The missions and attachés contributed to an artificial template of comparison to countries whose only actual interaction with Mexico found expression in the pages of the military journals. The comparative base came through clearly, for example, in U.S. Colonel William Wade's article about the Mexican army. He evaluated by international standards, placing Mexicans as equivalent infantry to Prussians, better cavalrymen than English, and better at artillery than Americans. His conclusion was that an alliance of U.S. naval ability and Mexican land forces would make an invincible combination.<sup>126</sup> In comparisons at foreign expositions, the army and artillery won extravagant praise and numerous prizes, which despite their ceremonial nature revealed a degree of respect. At the Parisian Universal Exposition of 1900, for instance, the list of gold, silver and grand prizes awarded the Mexican contingent filled pages.<sup>127</sup>

Comparison and chest-buffing did not preclude missions to learn about the best tactics and matériel used by foreign armies, and the legations routinely sent reports back to their Secretariats. The training and gear of the Prussian army, especially after 1870, became a particular object of study for possible emulation. In 1881, Joaquín Gómez Vergara sent a full catalogue and pictures of military uniforms to Porfirio Díaz (then

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<sup>126</sup> "Ventajosas opiniones extranjeras sobre nuestra ejército," (*Mexico Herald* cited in) *México Militar* (1900), 158.

<sup>127</sup> *México Militar* (10/1900), 200. Prizes from Paris Exposition include: grand prizes to FNP, FNA, FN, and for medals – gold to Cor. Mondragón, silver to his son Tnt Cor. Enrique Mondragón, and to Luis Gil, bronze to Cor. Ignacio Luna, Silvers for collaboration to Troncoso, Felipe Angeles, Manuel Mondragón—gold medals to CGE and Colegio Militar also and to a handful of other military engineers.

Secretary of Development) from Berlin.<sup>128</sup> Attaché Gagern followed up on these reports with lengthy studies on German barracks, and a report on the military college system that focused on Lichterfeld. He stressed points he felt Mexico did to improve including scientific training, full literacy, and modernized facilities, which all became priorities for the Military College under Rocha, Villegas and Beltrán.<sup>129</sup> Attention to Europe continued in later years, as Reyes sent a number of military missions abroad to study telegraph systems in Spain and to take part in training in Germany.<sup>130</sup> He also sent a commission under Lieutenant Colonel Pablo Escandón to study the function of European General Staffs in February of 1900.<sup>131</sup>

The social network and image building that came from these interactions among military circles demanded that contingents attend ceremonial events and exhibits that otherwise had no martial application in arms sales or education. An article in *El Universal* reporting on the commission sent to France in 1890 detailed the banquets to which the cadets and officers were treated, a young Felipe Angeles among them, and commented primarily on their bearing and toast-making. As something of an afterthought, it also mentioned that they would be visiting an arms factory to acquaint themselves on the latest development of military arts, and to meet with the French War Minister.<sup>132</sup> Some officers making social and diplomatic trips abroad also received foreign decorations as part of the ceremony. General Joaquín Beltrán, founder of the

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<sup>128</sup> Joaquin Gómez Vergara to PD 4/18/81 (when Díaz was Min. de Fomento) Legajo 6 Caja 2 Doc. 772.

<sup>129</sup> SRE AH Legajo 13, expedientes of Cor. Carlos Gagern (8/29/1882, 9/13/1882).

<sup>130</sup> Bryan, 74.

<sup>131</sup> Tnt. Cor. Pablo Escandón, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales- Estado Mayor Presidencial 1824-1912, Caja 96.

<sup>132</sup> "Comision militar en francia" *México Militar* (12/4/1900), 299-300.

General Staff, received both the Légion D'Honneur from France and the Order of the Sacred Treasure from Japan.<sup>133</sup> In 1910, Díaz junior was granted the Orden Militar de San Benito de Avís from Portugese King Manuel, and Díaz senior was festooned with military decorations from all of Europe.<sup>134</sup> These relatively low-profile affairs built social prestige on one level, but participations in international expositions had a central place in cementing an image of the army in foreign eyes.

The Porfirian departments of war, development, and foreign affairs went to considerable effort to send army contingents to major expositions. The frequent involvement at the World's Fairs provides one set of examples, and has garnered significant historical study.<sup>135</sup> At the Buffalo Exposition in 1901, Mexican soldiers, musicians, and rurales combined to provide an impressive spectacle at the express invitation of the U.S. Secretary of State. He was thrilled with their performance, as were the officers who accompanied him, and the press reported hearing loud "Viva Mexico" cries from the audience.<sup>136</sup> The soldiers enjoyed what they described as modern and hygienic lodgings, while the rurales walked the fairgrounds in pairs on display. The soldiers and musicians later gave a ten minute review for five thousand viewers that, according to General Miles, proved Mexico's progress and standing as one of the great nations of the world.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Bryan, 71.

<sup>134</sup> Tnt.Crl. Porfirio Díaz, Fondo de Guerra y Marina, AGN. Estado Mayor, Expedientes Personales-Officials and Tropa, Guardia Presidencial, Caja 94.

<sup>135</sup> For example, see Tenorio Trillo.

<sup>136</sup> "Desde Buffalo," *México Militar* (6/15/1900), 61-62.

<sup>137</sup> "Los rurales en Buffalo," *México Militar* (8/1/1900), 128-9.

From underneath the shiny exterior, some old disciplinary problems bubbled to the surface of the contingents. Free time may have encouraged gambling and lack of spending money for contraband. In the case of Sergeant Macano Avila, who attended the 1900 Buffalo Exposition as part of the honour guard, claimed to have lost his pistol. The suspicion of Captain García Cuellar, and probably a well-founded one, was that the Sergeant had gambled away his expensive Colt pistol, and should pay for a new one himself.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, other soldiers on tour sold or gambled away rain coats, weapons, or other expensive kit, presumably also to obtain spending money. The composer Juventino Rosas even sold the rights to some of his music in San Antonio to pay for more alcohol.<sup>139</sup> Two soldiers at another exposition were accused of stabbing an American sailor, but later were exonerated when they were shown to be misunderstood Samaritans.<sup>140</sup>

These experiences of course, assumed that the soldiers managed to arrive at all. In 1909, a massive military parade in New York City featured troops from a dozen armies and reported millions of cheering spectators. Unfortunately, the Mexican contingent had become lost and never arrived, although the *New York Times* later proclaimed them found, albeit tardy and confused.<sup>141</sup>

The 1907 International Military Exposition at Jamestown, Hampton Roads, could have been a prime spectacle for demonstrating Mexican military progress, but fell short

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<sup>138</sup> EMP Exp. Caja 98, Expediente de Samuel García Cuellar, letter of 8/15/1901 Commanding Officer to Cuellar, regarding Sgt. (2nd) Macario Avila who lost his pistol at the Buffalo Expo.

<sup>139</sup> AGN, CMDF expedientes personales, passim; and see Helmut Brenner, *Juventino Rosas* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2000).

<sup>140</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.10 (Jamestown).

<sup>141</sup> "Millions Cheer Martial Pomp," *New York Times* (Oct. 1, 1909).

for a number of reasons. Financial crises at home and a cooling relationship with the U.S. discouraged a full effort to shine, despite considerable efforts made by the attaché Fortino Davila. The Mexican embassy rejected the initial invitations to attend, despite the Jamestown organizers' impassioned pleas and compliments on past performances like that at St. Louis.<sup>142</sup> Eventually, and with seeming reluctance, participation was authorized only after the publication of a list of other participating nations with some eighteen Latin American countries appeared.<sup>143</sup> Dávila commissioned a 2200 square foot building for Mexico to stand alongside the 110 buildings of other countries and some U.S. states, but it would not be ready on time for the actual opening of the Exposition.<sup>144</sup> Despite the primarily naval nature of the fair, unrest in Quintana Roo required Mexico's ships, so none could attend the event; the diplomatic guests coming from New York even had to charter their own transport.<sup>145</sup> Instead, the attaché arranged for the General Staff's band and a display of materiel from the National Powder Factory to represent the nation, even as the big show involved over fifty naval vessels from across the globe. In stark contrast to the full company sent to the San Antonio Exposition only a year previous, the army sent only a tiny group to Jamestown.<sup>146</sup> Ultimately, the press reported the event as a great success, and reprinted the speeches given by President Theodore Roosevelt as well as a

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<sup>142</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.10 (Jamestown): letter from President of Jamestown Exposition Company to Ambassador Joaquin D. Casaus (4/11/1906).

<sup>143</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.10 (Jamestown): Ambassador Casaus to Jamestown Expo Co., 5/10/1906; and subsequent report by Special Commissioner for Latin America on numbers.

<sup>144</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.10 (Jamestown), Elihu Root to Leg. Mexico, 3/26/1907.

<sup>145</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.10 (Jamestown), Sec. Relaciones Exteriores to Jamestown Exposition, 3/27/1907, and Sec. State U.S. to Embassy of Mexico, 4/8/1907 (on transport).

<sup>146</sup> SRE AUE en EUA, T 170, Legajo 252 Exp.9 (San Antonio).

full description of the opening day's schedule and highlights.<sup>147</sup> From the Mexican perspective, the government only received a technical report from Davila on electric lighting for warships. It appeared that the heyday of military spectacle abroad had passed, at least for the time being.

Having sent contingents abroad and accepted attachés at home for years, choices had to be made regarding the knowledge gained in the conversation with these other armies. Foreign influences on the army aroused heated debates within military circles. There were three schools of thought supporting French, German, or Mexican doctrines. The latter primarily came from Victoriano Huerta and Félix Díaz and stressed guerrilla tactics and small unit mobility (see Chapter 3). The curriculum of the College generally followed a French model, using French texts, uniforms, and fortifications.<sup>148</sup> The tactics taught were modeled on those of the French, stressing artillery dominance and the importance of the bayonet charge when leading conscripted (low-quality) troops.<sup>149</sup> The French system favoured the aggression and élan that Napoleon embodied, whereas the German favoured the more calculated precision of the Prussian General Staff. In emulation of European states, the adoption of German tactics, marching songs, and spiked Prussian helmets were encouraged by the pro-German General Reyes. While the marching songs and German tactics never caught on, the *pikelhaube* helmet remained part of some units' dress uniforms until the Revolution. Since either French or German

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<sup>147</sup> Roosevelt speeches in "President Opens Jamestown Fair," *Washington Herald* (4/24/1907), 2-6.

<sup>148</sup> Daniel Gutiérrez Santos, *Historia Militar De México, Vol.2, 1876-1914* (México: Ateneo, 1955), 20-22.

<sup>149</sup> Gutiérrez-Santos, 23.

militaries represented an equally optimal (if unlikely) model for the Mexican elite to emulate, choosing between the two models eventually became merely a matter of taste.<sup>150</sup>

Whether the French or German systems were truly effective for fighting a war within Mexico was not crucial; the need for the military to enact cosmopolitan ideals swayed the debate far more powerfully. The editors of the *Boletín Militar* concurred, arguing that there could only be one science of war and unabashedly imitating the Europeans was the only way to advance. International expositions thus served to highlight the similarities of armies, and although Mexico lacked money to construct Prussian quality soldiers, the attempt was more important than concentrating on differences.<sup>151</sup> This perspective ignored the real transformation of the army, and the means by which it was happening.

### Co-evolution of the Military Abroad

In many Latin American countries, foreign missions and military trainers spread their knowledge as part of a “civilizing mission” with the implication that favored status and diplomatic influence would surely follow. These foreign missions, mostly from France and Germany, penetrated with great success into the social fabric and military life in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. In Chile, the inculcation succeeded so well, in fact, that Prussianized Chilean officers began their own military missions to countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay. Mexico, in contrast, never systematically invited foreign advisors and instructors to educate their military in the nineteenth century. A

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<sup>150</sup> Kelley, 69-72, but also important was the Prussian victory over the French in 1871, which swayed Reyes’ support in favour of the German contingent.

<sup>151</sup> *Boletín Militar de Asociación Mutualista* 4437

much-cited article implied that strong pro-French elements in Mexico prevented the success of Prussian agents.<sup>152</sup> Yet the French did not send advisors either, and Mexico constantly moved away from French systems through to the turn of the century, despite the French education of some important Porfirian officers. It has remained a largely unexamined question exactly what foreign influence meant to the Porfirian military, and what the nature of this influence entailed. Compared to the military colonialism that took place in other Latin American armies, Mexico resisted becoming the subject of any single European power.

In place of the establishment of foreign military systems and standardization, the professional Porfirian officers selected between a number of alternative models and sciences of war. Moreover, they did so in tandem with their U.S. neighbour, each undertaking similar reforms and drawing on European experiences in similar ways, although with quite different results. This should not be too surprising as these two military establishments in many ways presented a closer and more persistent contact zone, each army continually seeing the other as rival and neighbour. A critical difference from other Latin American nations, Mexico had immediate ties to the United States. A shared history of warfare and conflict, a high degree of trade and societal connections, and active diplomacy marked a unique relationship that encouraged Mexican development without Europe's direct interference. Whereas armies in Peru and Chile created a new Europeanized military class, Mexico professionalized in a context informed by cosmopolitan ideals and close relations to the United States.

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<sup>152</sup> Schiff, "German Military Penetration into Mexico During the Late Díaz Period."



Reforms on a large scale characterized both the United States and Mexico's military organizations in the late nineteenth century. The two nations co-evolved in a manner that suggests mutual recognition of professional goals rather than catering to the European efforts to influence. By choosing between models, and adapting them, Americans and Mexicans created their own modernity, all the while watching each other's progress. Porfirian officers looked to reform their military through adaptation of tactics, legal codes, and regulations from Europe. In 1881, the administration of Manuel González ordered from its attachés abroad a complete set of French regulations and ordinances, and two years later produced a completely overhauled general ordinance for the military.<sup>153</sup> This new code differed considerably in language and contents from the 1857 regulations it replaced. High rhetoric largely disappeared, and new ordinances appeared establishing a medical corps, a general staff, and standardizing the use of railways and telegraphs. Quite different from the French originals, these ordinances described an explicit plan for guerrilla warfare and the use of bandits and smugglers as scouts, perhaps drawing on successful experiences of the nineteenth century. The document also provided the means to professionalize the army further by stressing accounting practices that diminished graft and beginning the process of federalizing all military installations and materials. These sweeping reforms, bolstered by provisions in the 1900 Organic Law, reshaped basic structures and functions in the military.

Similarly, the United States army at the end of the nineteenth century sought to reform its own organization. In this effort two men stand out: General Nelson A. Miles,

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<sup>153</sup>México, *Documentos históricos constitucionales de las fuerzas armadas mexicanas*, Vol. II (México, D.F.: Edición del Senado de la Republica, 1966).

and Elihu Root, bitter rivals who nonetheless championed many of the same initiatives.<sup>154</sup> Miles, (General in Chief from 1895-1903), and Root (Secretary of War 1899-1903 and Secretary of State under Roosevelt) had tremendous influence on the military reorganization. Both Miles and Root had close contacts with the Porfirian regime.

Miles traveled to Mexico and reviewed their troops several times, and also played an important role in frontier pacification in the 1880s. As part of his political maneuvering for promotion in 1891, Miles went to Mexico on a grand tour and met with Porfirian officials. Accompanied by Frederic Remington, his hopes for positive publicity remained unfulfilled as Remington found Miles distasteful and chose to focus his article (if not his illustration) on the appearance of the Mexican military on parade.<sup>155</sup> In 1894, Miles organized the exhibition of soldiers (including *rurales*) at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago.<sup>156</sup> Six years later, he reviewed Mexican troops yet again at the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo.<sup>157</sup> He likely had sympathy with Díaz on another score, having himself sent troops against civilian unrest at the Pullman Strikes. In terms of reform, after traveling abroad Miles wrote on military theory and pressed Root on the reorganization of the General Staff. Having observed in the Greco-Turkish war (1896) and, if belatedly, commanded during the Spanish-American war, the general had leverage to pressure Root for widespread reorganization.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Miles, 230.

<sup>155</sup> Frederick Remington, "General Miles's Review of the Mexican Army," *Harper's Weekly* (July 4, 1891).

<sup>156</sup> Brian C. Pohanka, ed., *Nelson A. Miles: A Documentary Biography of His Military Career, 1861-1903* (Glendale, California: The Arthur C. Clarke Company, 1985), 225.

<sup>157</sup> "Mexico's Building Opened," *New York Times* (June 15, 1901).

<sup>158</sup> Pohanka, 225-226.

The tenure of Elihu Root as Secretary of War in the U.S. coincided with that of the reform minded Bernardo Reyes in Mexico. Root, as an intimate of Francisco León de la Barra, perhaps remained closer to the civilian elements, but the potential for war in Central America motivated him to keep a close eye on military developments as well.<sup>159</sup> An intriguing parallel materialized in the comparison of Mexican and United States innovations in military education, technology, and organization at the turn of the century under Root and Reyes.

Finding that only one-third of U.S. officers had military education, Root pushed for greater standardization and improvements. Increased professionalism of the Colegio Militar coincided with West Point's new organization in 1901, both institutes receiving as new priorities the sciences of artillery work and the updated development of General Staff systems. Although the 1883 Ordinance had already begun this process, it accelerated under Reyes who ordered more training and exercises than had his predecessors.<sup>160</sup> In the United States, the first General Staff organizations appeared in the 1880s, but in 1901 the General Staff Act and the Army Reorganization Act delineated exactly how the Staff would relate to the modern armed forces.<sup>161</sup> Connected to these efforts, both nations pursued educational improvements—Mexico by opening new schools of artillery, a naval academy, a junior officer school, and new medical colleges. Perhaps only a coincidence, Mexico inaugurated its new Veracruz Naval School only two

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<sup>159</sup> Peter V.N. Henderson, *In the Absence of Don Porfirio: Francisco León De La Barra and the Mexican Revolution* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 17.

<sup>160</sup> Bryan, 70.

<sup>161</sup> Terrence J. Gough, *The Root Reforms and Command* [cited Oct. 3 2004]; available from <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/documents/1901/Root-Cmd.htm>, and "Secretary Root on the Work of the Army," *New York Times* (Dec. 1, 1902).

weeks after the arrival of General Clayton Powell as ambassador to Mexico.<sup>162</sup> In the United States, Root began the process of bringing disparate artillery schools under one standard curriculum, opened a post-graduate War College in 1902, and set up training standards for militia.<sup>163</sup>

Reorganization of reserves also confronted both reformers, with Reyes bringing in an urban Second Reserve (1901-1902) trained by federal officers, while Root brought the National Guard into federal control. The Dick Act (1903) set new regulations and operating rules for National Guard units, and provided funding conditional on individual states giving up their authority. Similar military technologies also appeared in each country with both militaries switching to smokeless powder small arms, Mexico in 1899 (Mausers) and the United States in 1903 (Springfields).<sup>164</sup>

Finally, in both countries the army made efforts to nationalize ownership of all military facilities, magazines, fortifications, and arsenals. For both, this represented the centralization of federal authority over military capacities, although in Mexico it also offered an opportunity to break the grip of regional caudillos on armed power. Reyes pushed through a Constitutional amendment to Article 125 in 1901 that corresponded with designs laid out in the 1883 Ordinances for federalizing all state and city level military property.<sup>165</sup> Root's efforts to nationalize military sites, a suggestion made by

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<sup>162</sup> Gustavo Casasola, *Biografía Ilustrada Del General Porfirio Díaz, 1830-1965* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Gustavo Casasola, 1970), 74, 75.

<sup>163</sup> United States Army, *War Department General Orders, No.155*.

<sup>164</sup> James B. Hughes Jr., *Mexican Military Arms: The Cartridge Period, 1866-1967* (Houston: Deep River Armory, Inc., 1968), 32.

<sup>165</sup> México, *Documentos históricos constitucionales de las fuerzas armadas mexicanas*, 250.

Miles as well, may have come from the French example in their sale of surplus bases to supplement military funding.

Contrasting sharply from its Latin American counterparts, Mexico engaged the international military community on almost even terms. Its selective modernization, technical prowess, and performative aptitudes, offered hints at the army's potential as national and stable institution. This possibility never truly came to fruition. Ultimately, Revolution would shatter the Mexican image abroad, vilify its leadership, and annihilate the federal army—the officer in dress uniform would still break Julieta's heart.

## Conclusions

Making nation real, moving towards a consensus of imagining, entailed significant challenges in making and managing visual elements of political culture. Through rites, rituals, and ceremonies, the government sought to create, or recreate, its idealized mexicanidad. In doing so, and in taking the message abroad, they attempted redefine opinions and assumptions, to show how they had transformed their country. The military provided an exceptionally useful institution for this projection of dreams.

The great expansion in print at the turn of the century afforded the chance to reach an ever growing audience of literate Mexicans and to contact foreigners. Harsh measures to control the domestic press had some impact, and for the most part critics in Porfirian newspapers limited their commentary to specific criminal officers or soldiers, without attacking the institution. Foreign journalists were handled more deftly, bribed with access, wined and dined among the elite, and limited to seeing only the better units in an army proficient at hiding its ugly side. The specialist press of the military periodicals

combined sheer propaganda and boasting, with real institutional development and instruction. Heavily exchanged with other nations and armies, the journal represented a rare means for military self-expression and part of a cosmopolitan conversation.

The power of the military ceremony, with all of its pomp and polish, was deployed by the regime to bring patriotism to the masses. Through huge all-day parades, massive multi-battalion maneuvers, and a multitude of smaller common processions for funerals and inaugurals, the army played a central symbolic role in public spaces. A persuasive form of mass entertainment and mass media, the choreographed parade or review communicated a specific message of military pride and State legitimacy. Díaz's image as warrior and President was further enhanced with the 1900 creation of a special unit of Presidential Guards, whose composition also illustrated internal challenges that faced the army.

Not all foreigners could come to the great parade, and so the military went abroad to spread its ideas and message, and to bring home new technologies, business, and status. The army attended a host of Expositions of various kinds, bringing with them Mexico's best in bands, arms, and soldiers. The attachés and legations, in turn, would learn Prussian tactics, Spanish telegraphs, French naval design, and U.S. army organization, among many other things. They purchased new ships, and showed the flag in ports across Europe and Latin America. With great expense, the military enacted this vast exercise in public relations, foreign policy, and arms trade—and in return, they helped to build the idea of Mexico from abroad.

Despite all of the efforts to transform the institutions and personnel of the army, the harshness of the leva and the continued excesses of the army in suppressing dissent stood in starkest contrast to the shining image portrayed in ceremonies and to foreign eyes. The military represented the power and modernity of the nation, and perhaps not surprisingly, this proved to be a glamour, a façade, and a betrayal.

## CONCLUSIONS

*“Sometimes the poor devils came back with their hands and stomachs empty, railing against such stingy, inhospitable folk. On other occasions it was apparent that the natives were on the receiving end of the inevitable abuses that tired hungry soldiers commit. The miserable soldiers fought blindly for concepts as lofty and incomprehensible as national tranquility, order, peace, progress, duty. What fault was it of the troops if they gave in to hunger, if they appropriated or snatched up whatever lay in their path? ...He understood now that these troops could not be blamed for acting out of hunger. It’s what city people did out of perverse ambition, wearing their white gloves and affecting the best manners.”* – From the memoirs of Subteniente Frías in *The Battle of Tomochic* (1894).<sup>1</sup>

Ravaged, perilous, and bankrupt, Mexico confronted an uncertain future when Porfirio Díaz seized power in 1876. His regime attempted to reconstruct the nation from the centre, and creating an image of stability became a priority in order to restore international credit. This task was complicated by indigenous and military rebellions. Urban and rural criminals worsened the country’s reputation and quality of living, festering in the imaginations of foreigners and blackening the eye of the regime. Regional power-brokers and caudillos undermined the legitimacy of the government, and an uneducated populace felt little loyalty to a still poorly defined nation. The advent of a

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<sup>1</sup> Heriberto Frías, 11.



modern age marked by new technologies and transformative sciences seemed poised to skip Mexico, and leave the country dependent and vulnerable. To all of these challenges, Díaz chose to apply his surest tool—a federal army forged for the task.

The military tried to play an integral role within society that it could not completely fulfill. The officers had been moulded for an idealistic set of tasks that were to resolve the many obstacles to modern advance. Educated as scientific gentlemen, with one foot in a heroic past and the other in progressive future, they embodied the national project. Sent out to invade, occupy, and colonize the furthest reaches of the country, their myriad duties established a centrally driven and modernizing reality. They worked with admirable drive to construct the ideal and envisioned nation, an idea still in its infancy and subject to influence. In doing so, officers and army set a foundation—they did not merely reflect their society, but actively shaped its transformation. The efforts made fell short of accomplishing a coherent nationalism.

The military, while essential to build much of what the nation would become, faltered in constructing the citizenry and loyalties that it sought to instill. Due to a dearth of resources, recruitment continued to rely on *leva* at sword point, and the training of soldiers suffered from shortage of time, ammunition, and instructors. The poor devils that Frías referred to above never did understand his lofty concepts of duty and order, at least not in the same ways that men from other classes purported. Efforts to make the new man faltered. Despite officers' best efforts to strip recruits of regional, rural, or indigenous traits, old loyalties and customs prevailed. This in part reflected the presence of women and children in barracks, as they influenced the process of disciplining troops in various

ways. Like the soldiers, the officers too evinced a taste for criminality and alcohol that set a dark undercurrent to the army's projected image. Nor did the army represent an undifferentiated mass or monolith. The officer corps remained rife with divisions and rivalries that undermined their ability to affect consistent change. Similarly, troops built some unit cohesions, but did not generally see themselves as inherently a caste of their own, as a fraternity in arms with fellow conscripts far away.

Díaz's fragmented and under-funded army had better success as a visual medium to communicate the national transformation to audiences outside of the barracks. Although not entirely able to persuade its own personnel, the military performed nationalism and modernity to civilian and foreign audiences who saw them in parades, reviews, and expositions. They built on historical expectations and martial tropes to create a persuasive glamour. If their spectacle did not reflect the true state of Mexico, to audiences it had become a convincing display of how to understand the new nation and the changing times. From the evaluating gaze of spectators the flaws and potentials in the nationalist military masquerade revealed how the regime orchestrated a march into the modern age. The nation built by rhetoric, rails, and rifles was not perfect, perhaps not even that good, but fissures disappeared in the glittering façades performed and their argument, at least, was taken as the new ideal by the watching masses.

Many legacies of the Porfirian military persisted into the next century. The first, and most obvious, was the federal army as possible instigator and eventual loser of the

1910 Revolution.<sup>2</sup> The decisions made in building and deploying the army reflected a financial pragmatism and a strategic paranoia on the part of Díaz. The military needed sufficient force to eradicate banditry, suppress uprisings, and parade like Prussians. When the Revolution began, conventional strategy did not permit the reduced and demoralized federals to sustain their campaign, and they gradually succumbed to motivated revolutionaries, many of whom had learned warfare in the Porfirian ranks. When Díaz left his country to bitter exile, he is said to have claimed, “half the country rose against me, the other half crossed its arms and watched.” More accurately, his own army with all of its hated practices had put hundreds of thousands of young men into arms, trained them, abused them, and never gained their loyalty. Over the course of many years, Díaz and his regime created and trained enemies whose prowess quickly brought Francisco Madero to power. The training in Porfirian barracks succeeded after all, and the president reaped his whirlwind.

Second and in contrast to most of the conscripts, the well educated officers of the Military College did not simply disappear into the maelstrom of the Revolution. While many fought for Díaz, some quite well, many others chose the side of Francisco Madero. Nothing illustrated this better than the *Decena Trágica*, which pitted officer factions against one another in the streets of the capitol. Notable Revolutionary officers’ writings have appeared throughout this study, including Rafael Aponte, Francisco Luis Urquizo, and Rodolfo Casillas; some like Felipe Angeles appeared as exemplars of the Porfirian army. A telling indication of their valuable training, a significant number of officers

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<sup>2</sup> The most complete analysis see: Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

remained in federal service and facilitated reforms under Secretary of War Joaquin Amaro in the 1920s. As they modernized, the great majority of their reforms represented simple extensions or implementations of Porfirian era programs—even the loathed *leva* remained in use.<sup>3</sup>

The third legacy, during the reign of Díaz the nation had extended its hold over parts of Mexico previously unburdened by persistent federal presence, and carried with them significant changes. The positives of bringing roads, mail, and services to new areas were generally more than offset by the presence of armed thugs who often drank excessively and brawled habitually. They regulated elections and enabled conscriptions, and if they sometimes provided protection from robbers, army deserters also provided manpower to the bandits in the first place. None could doubt though, that the mere presence of the military had changed the landscape that they occupied, whether through engineering, cartography, violence, or spectacle. The army enacted a symbolic and physical occupation that represented to civilians what modern Mexico meant, using the persuasive evidence of technology and force. By 1911, a pattern of political culture had set in place. The national government, whatever else it might be, became associated with the army and its worst practices, including *leva*, graft, and brutality. This perception of the military as oppressive would only be made worse by the Revolutionary excesses of various armies, and remains strong.

This all meant that the modern military retained an ill-repute, and that many Mexicans remembered a shared experience of army oppression and corruption, a memory

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Rath, “Once We Were Warriors, Now We Are Soldiers”: Army, Nation and State in Mexico, 1920-1970 (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Columbia University, 2008).

that continues to shape public opinion.<sup>4</sup> Nor did the army's attempts to provide a basic education or literacy to a broad portion of the male population bear fruit until well into the century, and then more as a result of general primary schooling than of army service. Failures in education and the terror that ordinary people have of their own army play into an essential issue of nation formation, and in this case, of a flaw in formation.<sup>5</sup> A recent study has contended that the fundamental determinants that limit the socio-economic development of a country could be traced to poor education levels, and to distrust of public institutions.<sup>6</sup> This basic finding suggests that another legacy of the Porfirian army underlay political culture. In setting a modern context for the rising public fear of the military and resignation to widespread governmental corruption, Díaz's armed forces did and would continue to hinder national prosperity. Corruption and abuse was nothing new, but an opportunity existed to curtail the worst elements when massive modern reforms and new organizations were seriously pursued under Secretaries of War like Bernardo Reyes and Manuel González Cosío. Further, had the Revolution changed the basic perceptions of the army, rather than adding to its ill repute in act and myth-making, a different trajectory may have been taken. Despite all the dubious credit given the Mexican army for not overthrowing government since Victoriano Huerta in 1913, fear of

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<sup>4</sup> Roderic Ai. Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico* (New York: Oxford Press, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> These failures play into an important old historiographic question; given its geography and wealth of natural resources, why did Mexico not prosper and develop in a manner more like the U.S. or Canada? Three prime examples: Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *Down from Colonialism: Mexico's Nineteenth Century Crisis* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1988); Barbara A. Tenenbaum, *The Politics of Penury: Debt and Taxes in Mexico 1821-1856* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Stephen Haber, ed. *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Kirk Hamilton and World Bank, *Where Is The Wealth Of Nations?: Measuring Capital for the 21st Century* (New York: World Bank, 2005), cited in Reason Magazine (online) 2007-08-20, <http://www.reason.com/news/show/120764.html>

the armed forces remained an important element in the weaving of political culture through the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth century military thus takes a central place in a particular failure in national formation, one with long consequences.

The fourth and final legacy of the army underlies much of this study: the rise of a nationalism that owed much to military theatre and to the dissolution of the primacy of the *patria chica*. This dissertation has attempted to illustrate how the military's frequent failures to reshape the soldier as a new national man nevertheless coincided with successes in framing the languages and meanings of becoming modern and of *mexicanidad*. Through displays of patriotism, insistence on a scientifically driven future, and sheer persistence in proclaiming the national, the military supported the development of a discourse that no longer doubted the natural existence of Mexico, nor how it should transform itself. If the path to becoming modern Mexicans was hazy and disputed, the need to become such was no longer refuted.

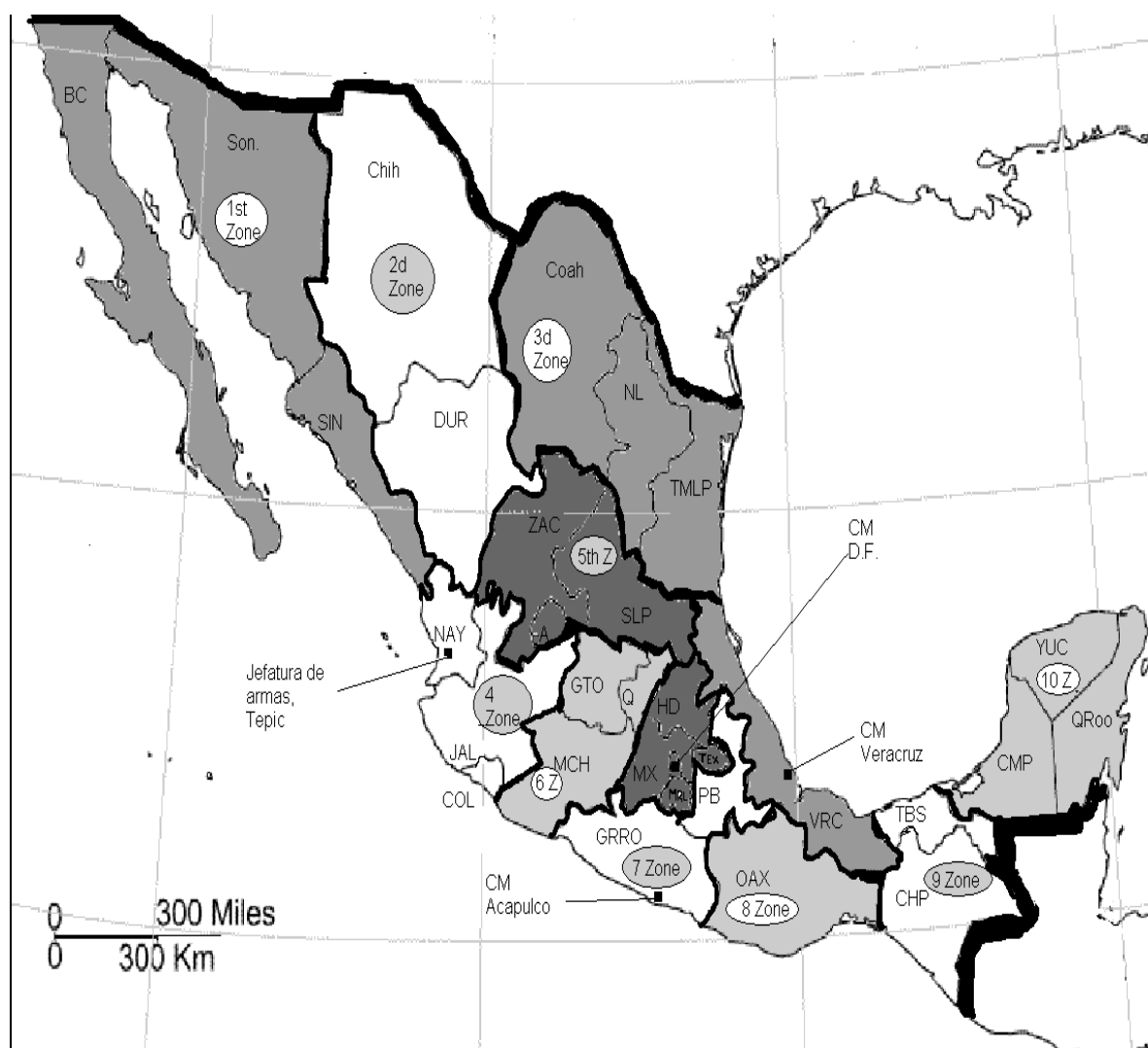
For many thousands of young men, their families, and their communities, the experiences of Porfirian army service determined their entrance to modernity and their reference point to the nation. At the heart of projects of modernizing was a human element, the individual understandings and adaptations to a changing world all around. This study has attempted to give due credit to the people and times examined. It was their lives, hopes, and struggles that built the modern nation.

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<sup>7</sup> William S. Ackroyd, "Military Professionalism and Nonintervention in Mexico," in *Rank and Privilege: The Military and Society in Latin America, Jaguar Books on Latin America*, ed. Linda Alexander Rodríguez (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 219-235.

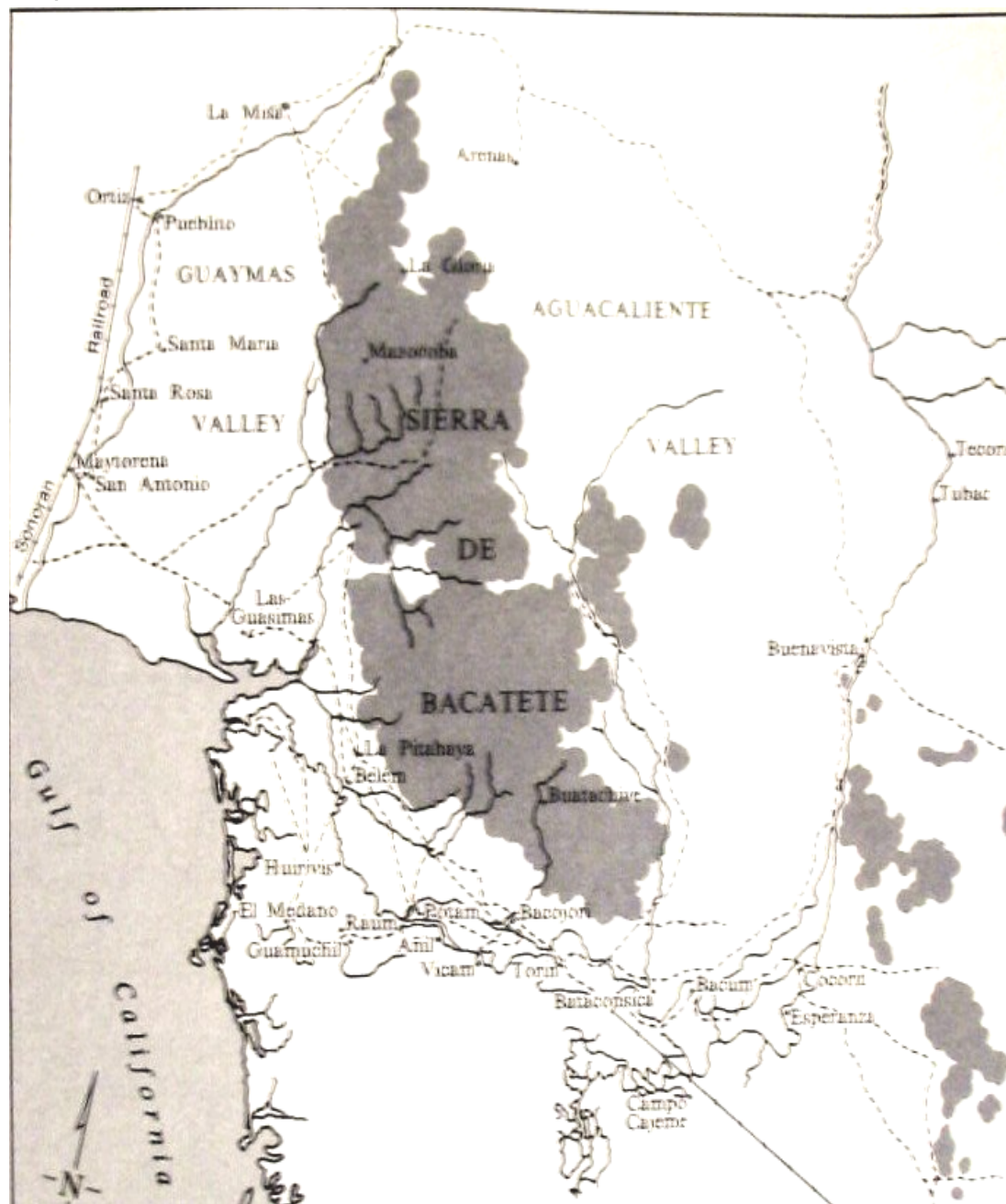
## APPENDIX 1: MAPS

MAP #1



Map 1. Zones and Commandancies of Mexico, c.1902.

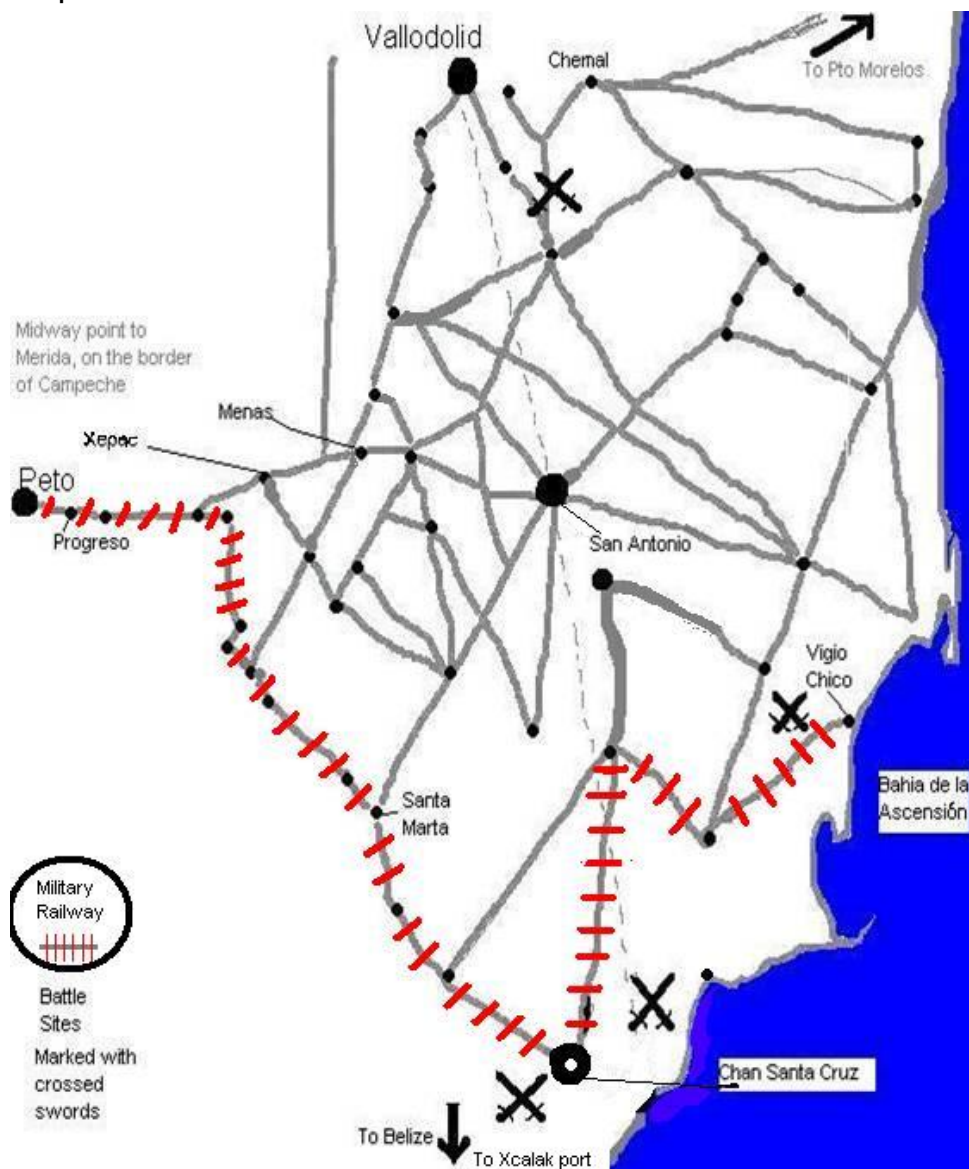
Map #2



Map 2- Detail of Yaqui campaign area, from Francisco Troncoso, and Ministerio de Guerra y Marina. *Las guerras con las tribus Yaqui*. México: Tip. del Departamento de Estado Mayor, 1905.



Map # 3



Map 3- Detail sketch of road and military rail map for Quintana Roo, with Chan Santa Cruz on bottom right, Vigio Chico next up the coast, and Peto middle left, from which ran the completed road to Mérida. Based in part on *Mexico Militar* (1901), 449.

## APPENDIX 2: CORRIDOS

### Corridos

#### *De los indios Mayas con el 28 Batallón*<sup>8</sup>

Voy a cantar un corrido,  
pero no crean es de amor,  
es un corrido de historia,  
del Veintiocho Batallón.

Este corrido de historia  
lo compuso un buen soldado,  
personen lo mal forjado,  
porque le falta memoria.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
quédate con Dios, trigueña,  
porque ya los indos mayas  
están sirviendo de leña.

Año de mil novecientos  
a veintiuno de febrero,  
peleó el Veintiocho guerrero,  
como famoso valiente.

A veintuno de febrero,  
que fué lo que aconteció,  
ese Veintiocho valiente  
a los indios derrotó.

Cuando el Veintiocho salió,  
para el camino de Okop,  
con su jefe David Nose,  
que a la cabeza marchó.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
ya me voy con mucho gusto,  
porque ya los indios mayas

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<sup>8</sup> Mendoza, 21-23.

se están muriendo de susto.

Cuando el fuego se rompió,  
los indios *nomás* gritaban;  
pero el Veintiocho valiente  
puras balas les echaba.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
me voy pa' Guadalajara,  
porque los indios no quieren  
la gorda tan martajada.

Luego que los indios vieron  
que las balas les quemaban,  
dieron media vuelta luego  
y hasta las gordas dejaban.

A los primeros balazos  
Jesús Domínguez cayó,  
que así llamóse el soldado  
que en combate murió.

Cuando el subteniente Lauro  
ya la sange corría,  
porque la herida tenía  
en la inmediación del cráneo.

El subteniente decía  
que nada le había pasado,  
pero si a los pocos días  
quedó el pobre sepultado.

Bravo de pronto llegaba  
y el campo se levantó,  
mandó poner la lumbrado  
y a los indios los quemó.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
al otro lado del mar,  
que ya no tienen los indios  
ni camino que agarrar.

Ignacio Bravo, el valiente,  
los indios hacía correr,

y como buen combatiente  
nunca se le vió agobiado.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
me voy para Veracruz,  
que ya perdieron los indios  
del pueblo de Santa Cruz.

Yo ya me voy, ya me voy,  
por el tiempo del invierno,  
porque ya los indios mayas  
están mirando del infierno.

Con ésta y no digo más,  
tremolando mi bandera,  
porque al Veintiocho en la guerra  
no le han ganado jamás.

Ya con ésta me despido,  
al pie de mi batallón,  
que aquí se acaba el corrido  
de El Veintiocho Batallón.

### *De los Tomochis*<sup>9</sup>

A esos indios del Tomóchic, yo los quiero  
porque saben morir en la raya,  
todititos murieron en la playa,  
combatiendo al Once Batallón.

Salieron los indios pimas  
peleando de tres en dos,  
todos a una voz decían:  
--¡ Que viva el poder de Dios!  
y que mueran los del Once Batallón.

Salieron cinco tomochis  
peleando de tres en dos....

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<sup>9</sup> Mendoza, 23, 24.

*Del desertor o Juan Soldado*<sup>10</sup>

De la edad de quince años  
 recogieron de lave  
 para ir a ser soldado  
 del “Dos” de Morelia.

Toquen, toquen, toquen,  
 clarines y tambores,  
 y tengan escarmiento  
 todos los desertores.

Y me di a querer  
 en mi regimiento  
 y al cabo de un año  
 me hicieron sargento.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Ya no me gustó  
 seguir la carrera  
 y me deserté y  
 me fuí pa' mi tierra.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Estando en mi casa  
 con mi pobre madre  
 llegó la Acordada  
 tendiéndome el sable.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

--¡ Señores, señores!  
 ¿ Que les hago yo?  
 --¡ Ah picaro, pillo,  
*usté* es desertor!

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Lo van amarrado  
 de las sangraderas

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<sup>10</sup> Mendoza, 147-150.

y le hacen brotar  
sangre de las venas.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Y yo van llevando  
para su cuartel  
y la pobre madre  
llorando tras él.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Después, el consejo  
me sentencia a muerte  
y yo me conformo  
con mi triste suerte.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Se lo van llevando  
con el coronel  
y la pobre madre  
llorando tras él.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

--¡ Señor, de por Dios!  
¡Señor Coronel!,  
por la pobre madre,  
conduélase de él.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

El Coronel dice:  
--Estén con cuidado,  
que mañana salen,  
va a haber fusilado.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Y me van llevando  
ya para el suplicio,  
y mi pobre madre  
va a perder el juicio.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

¡ Adiós, mi cuartel  
con sus miradores!  
¡ Adiós, compañeros  
los de zapadores!

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

¡ Adiós, mi teniente  
don Mariano Torres!  
¡ Adiós, mi sargento,  
mi cabo Dolores!

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

¡ Adiós, padre y madre,  
adiós, hermanitos!  
Aquí se purgaron  
todos mis delitos.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

Tirar, compañeros,  
tirar con valor,  
dos en la cabeza,  
tres el corazón.

Toquen, toquen, toquen...

***De Bruno Apresa*** <sup>11</sup>

Día veintinueve de abril,  
señores aconteció  
que fusilaron a Apresa  
y una mujer lo causó.

Este era un soldado raso  
del Segundo Regimiento,  
era de caballería,  
el cual dió muerte a un sargento.

---

<sup>11</sup> Mendoza, 150.

El señor don Bruno Apresa  
en mil novecientos dos  
fue por los diablos tentado  
y un crimen cometió.

Caminaba de Texcoco  
el Segundo Regimiento  
para León de los Aldamas;  
todos con mucho contento.

En el pueblo Cuautitlán,  
éstos iban de partida,  
el enojo comenzó  
por un plato de comida.

Según nos dice la historia,  
y lo debemos de creer,  
que ambos tenían relaciones  
de amor con una mujer.

El señor don Bruno Apresa  
se encontraba haciendo guardia,  
cuando el sargento pasó  
le dió un balazo en la espalda.

También a un cabo lo hirió  
con el mismo proyectil,  
pues era el que acompañaba  
al sargento Medellín.

Al señor don Bruno Apresa  
a Santiago lo llevaron,  
y el veintisiete de abril  
fué cuando lo encapillaron.

El señor Manuel Orera  
un pretexto lo inventó  
diciendo que estaba loco,  
la autoridad no creyó.

Dos años duró en prisión  
haciéndole un gran jurado  
y el veintinueve de abril  
fué cuando lo fusilaron.



Entrando en la cartuchera  
lloraban sus dos hermanas,  
sus lágrimas que lloraban  
ya todas eran en vanas.

Bruno le dijo a la guardia,  
pero con mucho valor;  
--Dejen hablarle al teniente  
para pedirle un favor.

El teniente se acercó:  
--Bruno ¿Qué es lo que deseabas?  
--Pues ¿ Que irán a hacer conmigo?  
--Quién sabe. Yo no sé nada.

Al ruido de los fusiles  
Bruno se puso a exclamar:  
--Ya están haciendo ejercicio  
los que me van a matar.

Bruno Apresa a poco rato  
dijo con mucho valor:  
--Óigame usted mi teniente,  
traígame *usté* al confesor.

El ayudante del jefe  
un coche tomó violento  
para traer al sacerdote  
que vino con gran contento.

Al entrar el sacerdote  
Bruno se le arrodilló  
y el sacerdote le dijo:  
--Pídele a Dios el perdón.

Bruno dijo a sus hermanas  
con muchísimo dolor:  
--No le avisen a mi madre,  
se los ruego, por favor.

Cuando sacaron a Bruno  
el viernes por la mañana  
en un carro de ambulancia,

un padre lo acompañaba.

Cuando se bajó del carro  
muy firme que se paró:  
--Muy güenos días, mis amigos--,  
a todos les saludó.

-- ¡Adiós, muchachos! --les dijo  
cuando el kepí se quitó;  
Bruno, con mucho valor,  
del público se despidió.

Llegó el capitán Guerrero,  
se arrimó para venderlo,  
Bruno Apresa respondió:  
--Déjeme mirar el cuadro.

Cuando levantó la espada  
dijo con mucho atención:  
--El que hable a favor del reo  
cinco años va de prisión.

Cuando le iban a tirar  
un jarro de hojas pidió,  
al punto se lo llevaron  
y el juez no lo permitió.

Ocho balazos le dieron,  
pero morir no podía  
y era por una medalla  
que en la boca la traía.

Un americano dijo  
cuando el kepí lo aventó:  
--Cinco pesos por el *chaco*,  
para conservarlo yo.

El capitán respondió:  
--Pues no le hace que lo compre  
el chaco para guardarlo,  
para recuerdo de un hombre.

Con ésta ya me despido,  
ya se los he repetido:

que hombre como Bruno Apresa  
en el mundo no le had habido.

(By anonymous, with initials E.B.)

## APPENDIX 3: PERMISSIONS

"2008, Año de la Educación Física y el Deporte"



Oficio No. 303- 0626  
 Oficialía Mayor  
 Dirección General de Promoción Cultural Obra Pública  
 y Acervo Patrimonial

SECRETARÍA DE HACIENDA  
 Y CRÉDITO PÚBLICO



**C. STEPHEN NEUFELD**  
 Investigador  
 720 N. 6 Ave., Apt. 103  
 Tucson, AZ 85705  
 Estados Unidos.  
 Presente.

México, D. F., 3 de junio de 2008.

En referencia a su escrito de fecha 29 de mayo del presente año, en el que solicita autorización para consultar y reproducir algunas imágenes de las colecciones especiales del Fondo Reservado Hemerográfico, de la Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, a fin de llevar a cabo la publicación de tesis "Servants of the Nation", le comunico que a partir de esta fecha se autoriza de acuerdo con las disposiciones establecidas en el Reglamento Interno para el Servicio del Fondo Reservado: Colecciones Especiales.

Asimismo, mucho le agradeceré otorgar el crédito correspondiente a la Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público.

Le envío un cordial saludo.

**Atentamente.**

**El Director General**

Arq. José Ramón San Cristóbal Larrea

C.C.P LIC. LAURA BUSTOS CARDONA.- Directora General Adjunta de la DGPCOPAP.- Para su conocimiento.- Presente.  
 MTRA KARLA GABRIELA RAMOS RODRIGUEZ.- Directora de Área de la DGPCOPAP.- Mismo fin.- Presente.  
 JUAN MANUEL HERRERA H.- Subdirector de la Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.- DGPCOPAP.- Mismo fin.- Presente  
 ANGEL A. GONZÁLEZ AMOZORRUTIA.- Jefe del Departamento de Atención al Público.- Mismo fin.- Presente.  
 RSCL/JMHH/naba.-

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- Archivo Histórico del Agua, Mexico City
- Archivo Histórico del Estado de Guanajuato, Guanajuato.
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 Fondo de Bernardo Reyes, DLI  
 Fondo de Félix Díaz  
 Acervos Históricos
- Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, Mexico City.  
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