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Bowler Hats

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Bowlers, often called derbies, for the women of La Paz, Bolivia have become the expression of their identity, community, and locality. Not surprisingly, a recent television program of professional wrestling featured La Paz women, reputedly housewives, wearing their iconic derby. The origin of these hats has been tangled up in a thicket of Aymara romance, town memory, and urban folklore.

Latin American Cultural Objects and Episodes, First Edition. William H. Beezley.

Largely ignored has been the essential role of merchants from the Italian Piedmont.

Other hats beside bowlers top off the typical clothing of indigenous women in the Andes. Hats appear in Peru, Ecuador, northwestern Argentina, northeastern Chile, and, especially, Bolivia, where they make a statement as an emblem of identity. Especially for women from La Paz, consumption of derbies also allows urban Aymara ladies the conspicuous display of their social status. In one of South America's poorest nations, the derby predominates in some communities but there exists a wealth of more than 100 hat styles for both women and men in a population of 6.4 million. Some women, preferring another style, have adopted a Stetson known locally as a "J. R. Dallas," because it resembles what J. R. Ewing wore on the once popular television series (1978–1991). Gunnar Mendoza, director of Bolivia's National Archives in Sucre, once declared, "I don't know of another region in the world that has such a variety of hats." Nevertheless, the derby, called in Spanish a bombín or sombrero hongo (a mushroom hat), predominates as the stereotypical female headgear especially in La Paz. Aymara women, who have dominated market trade, wear black, brown or gray bombines while selling fruits, vegetables, and today, home computers and compact discs. With their hats, they have become a picturesque part of the Bolivian city best known to visitors. Other women wear them throughout the Andes. As a result, hat-making thrives as a business, from home shops and, until recently, the industry-leading but now closed Charcas Glorieta factory in Sucre. Although typical today, the bowlers and similar hats preserve neither preconquest vestige headgear nor uniquely Aymara objects.

Shortly after arriving in the Andes, the Spanish brought guild workers who produced felt to make hats.[1] The fabrication involved the use of arsenic, and ingesting the chemical resulted in madness among the workers. In a strange episode, an entire guild of hat makers went crazy at the same time in Potosí, Bolivia – the richest and largest city in the Americas at the time – and they rioted through the streets. Despite the spectacle of mad hatters, production continued for Spaniards; for the indigenous new felt hat styles came only later.

Indigenous peoples did not immediately adopt Spanish hats because they had long used traditional head coverings, as demonstrated today by archaeological evidence. The monoliths and ceramics of the ancient Tiahuanaco culture centered near Lake Titicaca feature headgear of a flat, rectangular style. Later the ancient Aymara, confirmed in burial remains, adopted a conical hat without a brim. The Inca ruler did not use a hat at all, rather a head band that signaled his authority, although the men and women of this empire wore various caps.

The derbies, now traditional women's wear especially in La Paz, had been typical for barely a century and a half when their adoption completed the evolving women's clothing adaptations in the Andes. Following the Túpac Amaru Rebellion that racked the region from 1780 to 1782, the Spanish crown sent a Royal Inspector with extraordinary authority to evaluate its causes and make proscriptive changes. Inspector José Arreche concluded the rebellion, as a kind of cargo cult, had resulted from identification with traditional Inca society, so in order to destroy the collective memory of the indigenous greatness of the pre-Spanish empire, he ordered prohibitions against speaking Quechua, celebrating Inca holidays, practicing cultural mores, and wearing of ethnic clothing.[2] One royal decree directed Spanish colonial landowners to require that indigenous peoples on their properties adopt the clothing typical of the Spanish provinces of the owner.[3] Villagers were forced to wear Spanish garments that already had become the clothing of Andean mestizos especially in Peru in an adaptation of the clothing worn by Spanish commoners (in Madrid called the Maja). For women it included a skirt with several petticoats, embroidered wrap,[4] a jacket-like blouse, and often a large hat. Andean peoples resented being forced to wear Spanish clothes, and they tended to make changes, creating community distinctions in color, embroidery, and hat styles.

Villagers covered their heads with hats made of feathers, alpaca, tin, plaster, felt, straw, and *tortora* reeds, a type of bulrush that grows from Lake Titicaca, across Peru, to Easter Island. Perhaps the typical *lluchu*, a woven cap with ear flaps, comes from this era and was

modeled loosely on the Catalan beret with flaps from Madrid. An alternative explanation posits that the cap, also called the Ch'ullus in much of highland Peru, dates about 600 CE from the pre-Inca Mocha culture. Female residents of Tarija, near the Argentine border, adopted hats patterned after eighteenth-century women from Andalusia.[5] Men and women from Jatamayu, in the highlands near Sucre, preferred helmet-like headgear, roughly patterned on the helmets worn by sixteenth-century Spanish conquerors, called *monteras*. Here women for weddings and fiestas use a flat hat, with a black cloth brim, two raised points on top, embroidery of green, red, and black threads and an assortment of silver beads and shingles. Various other versions of the montera exist with associated legends that it is a "secret map hat" indicating where Inca treasure had been hidden or that its decoration uses pre-Spanish amulets to preserve indigenous religion. The sheep wool hat called an ovejón became typical in the rural communities of six Bolivian provinces: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Tarija, Chuquisaca, and Cochabamba. In the three lower provinces with tropical climates, women use palm hats. The ovejones were made with molds that enabled the shaping of a variety of hats that were worked until they became rigid. In many communities, men, women, and children wore these. For example, women's hats of Ursia have a high crown shaped, according to one writer, like a warhead with a black strip around them at the base. In Potolo and Ravelo, they adopted low crowns decorated in many colors.

Some communities, especially remote ones, had hats that are not of the ovejón type. The members of the Yura community adopted woven hats of dark blue with low crowns that during fiestas were festooned with stars and moons in the shape of the owner's initials. The Tarabuco community in Chuquisaca province had two styles, the shining montera, like the conquistador's helmet with details representing the community, and the Pasha montera, worn only by women, with an elliptical shape reminiscent of Napoleonic-era hats. These were decorated with embroidery, beadwork, and glass. As a base, the Pasha has white fabric that in case of mourning is exchanged for black. Unmarried females choose woolen hats. Boys in this community

wear black wool caps covered with embroidery called a jokollo, or tadpole, in part because of the tail of the cap and also referring to their adolescence.[6]

Styles in the provincial capitals varied. Striking women's black hats in Potosí resembled those of medieval European witches. Those of Tarifa, at a lower altitude with warmer weather, were made of lighter cloth with low crowns and were worn on the back of the head. The resulting halo reflected the style of the Andalusian settlers who had come to the region. In Cochabamba, they wore the tarro cochabambino (the Cochabamba jar), an all-white hat with a tall crown and wide brim, that featured a black ribbon. According to legend, a Roman Catholic priest ordered an unmarried Quechua woman living with her lover whom she intended to marry (a practice common among community's engaged couples), as penance for adultery, to wear a black ribbon on her hat. At the next mass, all the Cochabamba women wore black ribbons as a comeuppance to the priest and the style persisted.[7] The women also still perform a dance called La Diablada (dance of the devil) wearing these hats. In La Paz, the women adopted this hat shape in black, brown, ivory, or white color without the ribbon.

Cholitas (indigenous females) in La Paz and cholos (both women and men) in the Potosí and Oruro mining districts changed their hat style early in the twentieth century. Italian merchants selling goods in Bolivia received merchandise, including hats, brought from Genoa by a wholesale enterprise based in Tacna, Peru, Laneri, Solari, & Company. Perhaps Tacna's earliest Italian retail company was Canepa Hmos y Cia, founded in 1862. Several other Italian companies developed after the British, French, and Spanish abandoned the region in 1879 when the outbreak of the War of the Pacific sparked the Chilean invasion of Bolivian and Peruvian coastal towns. Italians, who had been mostly involved in small trades,[8] stayed during the Chilean occupation and came to dominate commerce, including merchandise going to La Paz, Potosí, and Oruro. Tacna offered the shortest distance with its well-established trade route that had existed since the mid-sixteenth century when silver from the mines arrived there for

shipment from the nearby port of Arica to Europe and trade goods imported from Europe passed through on the way to Potosí and other mines. Italians, chiefly from Lombardy, Piedmont, and Liguria (especially the capital Genoa), were the largest number of immigrants in Peru from the 1870s until World War II. Tacna's Italians soon became an integral part of the community, recognized in the Plaza de Armas with a portly statue of their national hero, Christopher Columbus. Each October 12, the town firemen cleaned it with their hoses as part of the Día de la Raza, the Columbus Day celebration. The Italian government named one of the resident Italians as honorary consul.[9] The community had an Italian Club (the Círculo Italiano) led by tycoon Dante Abelli, who had tin mines in Bolivia, and Andrés D. Laneri, who managed the wholesale import business from Genoa.[10]

From Tacna, Laneri, Solari & Company shipped to Chile, Peru, and Bolivia various items including luxury clothing and other goods such as Ferrarelle, the famous bottled mineral water from near Naples.[11] The company provided retailers with a multitude of mining tools, preserved foods, and ready-made clothing, including the rather expensive Italian Borsalino and Valera & Ricca hats. The merchandise until early in the twentieth century arrived from the coast after several days' travel by mule when it reached Huanuni near Oruro, and Uncía near Potosí.[12] In Oruro, a group of 40 Italians (in 1889) competed for the commercial trade. In nearby Huanuni, Ludovico Antonio Galoppo, who had left his native Piedmont town of Vallemosse for Chile, lived for some years in coastal mining towns, and then moved to the Bolivian mining zone. He soon created a construction partnership with fellow Italian Marcelo Aglietti di Cossato. Aglietti & Galoppo worked for Simon Patiño's mining company. In 1914, Galoppo turned to retail merchandise with Aldo Ormezzano establishing la Sociedad Galoppo & Ormezzano to import Italian goods to Huanuni. The company successfully sold imported fabrics, draperies, hosiery, hats, stockings, handkerchiefs, shoes, loose wool, and cotton fabrics – all bought from Italy at half price. Galoppo sold his goods in the small general store, where his hats were either tossed in with canned sardines, condensed milk, hard cheeses, other foods,

hammers, nails, and dynamite, or they were dangled from the ceiling between slices of smoked lard and Oxford pig feet. Workers selected hats and other items and the mining company deducted the cost from their pay.

Galoppo's business acumen and market intuition after some years resulted in two decisions on March 17, 1914. His success in developing interest in hats led him to drop the sale of general merchandise and focus only on hats in the hope of obtaining an exclusive contract with the Italian company Borsalino. He wrote to Borsalino's wholesaler that the obstacle to major hat sales, especially to women, was the cost. Women costumers liked the style but only wanted or could afford to spend about 2 lire, so he proposed that Borsalino produce for them a hat made of less expensive materials than the usual quality felt or wool. He wanted bowler-style hats described in the 1912 catalog, but made as "qualitá superiore," with the lowest price materials. He proposed these hats, to appeal to the women, be called the Cappello da Ciola – the Chola hat.[13] It became the iconic derby of women in the Bolivian and Peruvian Andes.

Galoppo's plan worked. The Borsalino Cappello da Ciola had a good reception and other derbies became popular with men in Huanuni in 1915. For the following year, Galoppo ordered 28 dozen cloth hats for men and 18 dozen Cholas for indigenous women and an additional two dozen elegant samples, with brims of at least 5½ or 6 centimeters (about 2 to 2½ inches), stating, "there is nothing worse than a hat without a brim." He also ordered four dozen tongos (caps). Galoppo did not want Borsalino to supply the women's hats to other retailers in Bolivia and suggested such business with other companies might prejudice his dealings with Borsalino.[14]

Galoppo's comments reflected the local competition for hat sales. The Portillo company of Uyuni had begun selling Borsalinos in Huanuni, and in Oruro, Filippo Nannetti had been selling general goods for years. The Marin company had opened a shop in the same community to sell Borsalinos. The hats represented only part of the Italian goods sold by both companies. The Laneri wholesale company did not want to jeopardize successful general sales to these companies

in Huanuni, Uncia, and other nearby places. The company opposed the idea of the Borsalino company giving Galoppo exclusive rights and noted that Portillo and Marin were two of its best customers with business valued at thousands of pounds sterling each year. Marin & Co. of Oruro, for example, had developed a strong relationship with Laneri, who provided an endless variety of assorted merchandise, and the company's warehouses stored products, it was said, "from all climates" with an assortment as complete as the trade fairs of Leipzig and Nizhny Novgorod. Galoppo soon opened Sombrerería Nacional, which eventually earned a reputation for its hats throughout Bolivia.

Even more intense competition existed in La Paz. As early as 1884, the Italian consul in La Paz, Roberto Magliano, reported 300 Italians in the country, with the majority in the capital. They included merchants and pharmacy, clothing, and general store owners, along with 150 Franciscan brothers and 36 Santa Clara nuns.[15] The capital Italians felt numerous and successful enough in 1910 to found the "Sociedad Italiana de Beneficencia Roma." By 1919, G. De Nota was selling Borsalinos in La Paz. His offerings for men included the old style with loose, silk lining. He bought a minimum of 100 dozen per year. The male consumers here, according to reports, wanted a hat that featured both aesthetics and durability. Beyond Laneri's retail clients in the city, another source of hats resulted from his sales to a dealer in the Peruvian town of Yunguyo on Lake Titicaca bordering Copacabana, Bolivia, a short distance from La Paz. The Yunguyo retailer, beyond limited local sales, filled resale orders from nearby La Paz, apparently largely delivered by smugglers. The contrabandistas, who were perhaps women,[16] soon specialized in Ciola or Cholita hats.

The hat vendors in La Paz included a second-generation Italian immigrant couple, Domingo Soligno and his wife, from Buenos Aires, perhaps by way of Salta. They arrived in La Paz confident they could succeed in the haberdashery business with a shop popularizing imported men's hats. Perhaps the Solignos were familiar with their countrymen's enterprise in Bolivia through the trade from Salta to La Paz that had been disrupted by, if not completely replaced with, goods shipped from Antofagasta to Oruro when a railroad opened in 1892.

Soligno ordered a supply of derbies, the style called bowlers by the Irish railroad construction workers who wore them as they built a railroad in Bolivia. The hats that arrived were too small for most workmen and they were brown, and the workmen wore black. Neither the workers nor Bolivian men wanted them. At that point Soligno developed a marketing strategy, perhaps even giving some away as samples, to sell the hats to the Cholitas.[17] He promoted them as more fashionable than the ones with provincial Cochabamba origins they were wearing, indicated the crowns had space for their braids that would hold the hats without pins, and, as an added appeal, claimed that the crown's height signaled the marital status of the woman to potential suitors. Another popular tale claimed Soligno's Borsalinos increased the fertility of women.[18] These Borsalino hats, the bombín, became widely adopted and because of their higher price became the ultimate expression of conspicuous consumption for Cholitas who wanted to demonstrate their economic success.[19] Within a few years, the bowlers became standard. Successful Cholitas displayed their status with lavish jewelry, especially large, dangling earrings, nylon stockings, vicuña shawls, and several Borsalino hats in different colors.[20]

The success of these Italian hat vendors and other merchants who were members of the Italian Club resulted in 1926 in the presentation to La Paz of a statue of Genoese navigator Cristóbal Colón in honor of the centennial of independence. The statue stands in the center of July 16 Avenue in the center of La Paz.

Soligno, José Escobar (who would become a well-known hat maker) and others soon imported the derbies, probably through the Lineri company. Several of the Italian merchants decided to join together to create a factory for clothes items, but they could not agree, and only Soligno continued with the plan. Eventually, he established the Lanificio Boliviano Domingo Soligno (The Domingo Soligno Bolivian Wool Clothing Factory), likely inspired by Lanificio F.LLI Cerruiti,[21] founded in 1881 and based on an earlier company in Biella, Piedmont, his family's Italian homeland. The hats he made and sold, along with those sold by other merchants, connected the Cholitas to

Italy's most fashionable milliner, and the Solari company remained the most important wholesale business for years, at least until sometime between 1929 and 1936, when European events disrupted Italian businesses and American trade.[22]

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Borsalino had been a name synonymous with Italian hat-making. Its founder, Alessandro Giuseppe Borsalino, was born in 1834 in Alessandria, a small town in northwest Italy. By the age of 14, he was working in a hat factory. After visiting other factories across Italy and France to learn more about the trade, in 1850, the aspiring entrepreneur went to Paris, the center of fashion including hats, as an apprentice in the Berteil company. Seven years later, in 1857, he and his brother Lazzaro opened the Borsalino workshop and Giuseppe introduced new handmade, elaborate processes that took many weeks to produce the felt hats. This Italian business pioneer soon became a global captain of industry as the company began the export of hats that became popular after 1914 in Andean South America.

The company made different styles, but two models in particular became associated with Borsalino: the Panama, made from paja toquilla fiber (*Carludovica palmata*), found particularly in Montecristi, Ecuador, processed with a technique called "the fuma" to produce its unique ivory color, and the derby, which was and still is made of felt and a mixture of different furs including rabbit, treated until it produces a soft fabric. The latter became extremely popular and was exported worldwide under the patented name "Borsalino." Its unmistakable shape has reached iconic status over the years. The hats made the company a success. From the beginning, Giuseppe had respect for his workers and their needs, so he developed for them both health insurance and a pension fund. At his death in 1900, the company had nearly a thousand workers, boasted an annual production of one million hats, and exported 60 percent of its production overseas. Teresio Borsalino succeeded his father, headed the company for 39 years, and added to its success. By 1913, it employed more than 2,500 workers with an annual production of more than two million hats sold throughout the world. Teresio Borsalino's nephew, Teresio Usuelli, the

last heir of the Borsalino family, took over as chairman and served until 1979, when he left the company in the hands of Vittorio Vaccarino. In 1986 the company moved from its factory originally located in the center of Alessandria to a new, more efficient and modern site in the town's suburbs. Initially, the old factory housed a hat museum until a few years ago, when the museum moved and the site became Eastern Piedmont University.[23] Roberto Gallo now holds the title of CEO and president of the company and has expanded it to include Asia and the U.S. (with Borsalino America). There are now more than 15 flagship stores in Italy, France, and China. The Borsalino name has continued to figure prominently in fashion history. Today Borsalino's hats extend beyond the classic felt derby and the famous straw "Panama-Montecristi" to new styles targeting the young hat wearer. All the world's fashionable stores, such as Harrods in London and Saks on Fifth Avenue in New York, stock Borsalino's famous hats. The company now has men's, women's, and children's ready-to-wear collections as well as accessories from perfumes to eyewear. With an annual turnover of almost 30 million Euros, Borsalino remains the leader in Italian hat manufacturing. Over the years the Borsalino family has not only made an impact on the history of fashion with their famous hats, but also they have influenced the history of their town. They are renowned for the charitable work they have done since the company started. They have financed public works, from the aqueduct to the orphanage to the old sanatorium, for the city of Alessandria.[24]

Adopting these derbies, the Cholitas joined other famous groups and individuals wearing the iconic Borsalino hat. The Pope had one, as did other church prelates, and they were worn by the Royal Canadian Mounted police, Sephardic Jews, and New Yorker Emma Stebbins, who sculpted the Angel of the Waters at the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park.[25] In the 1920s movie stars adopted the hat. In Hollywood, Charlie Chaplin's Tramp character, Greta Garbo, and Lou Costello, along with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, were well known for their bowler hats, which they used as accessories, twisting the rim, doffing them, and adjusting the angle on their heads to

denote mood. A mainstay expression of anger or frustration, especially in silent films, had an actor punch out the crown of his derby; part of the joke was that the actor could not break the hardened shellac hat unless it previously had been weakened. Later Humphrey Bogart wore a Borsalino, notably in *Casablanca* (1942), as did the famous World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle.

The derby connected the Cholitas to wider styles than the Borsalino. The hats had prominence in England, where they had originated and are called bowlers. Milliners Thomas and William Bowler created the first one in 1849. The Bowlers made the hat to fulfill an order for the firm of hatters Lock & Co. of St James's. Lock & Co. had been commissioned by Edward Coke, the younger brother of the 2nd Earl of Leicester, who had designed a close-fitting, low-crowned hat to protect his gamekeepers' heads while on horseback from low-hanging branches. The keepers had previously worn top hats, which were easily knocked off and damaged. Lock & Co. then commissioned the Bowler brothers to produce the design. They responded with a distinctive hat with a hard shellac resin-treated crown. When Coke arrived in London in December 1849 to collect his hat, he reportedly placed it on the floor and stamped hard on it twice to test its strength; the hat withstood this test and Coke paid 12 shillings for it. In accordance with Lock & Co.'s usual practice, the hat was called the "Coke" hat (pronounced "cook") after the customer who had ordered it. This is most likely why the hat became known as the "Billy Coke" or "Billycock" hat in Norfolk.

This hard hat proved suitable for a number of occupations – street traders, cab drivers, fishmongers, shipyard stevedores, and construction workers. Others such as salesmen, insurance hacks, civil servants, and bank managers quickly adopted it to replace the upper-class top hat and the lower-class cloth cap. The bowler went on to be associated with businessmen in the City of London as part of their dress code. Beyond London, the bowler had several other lives.

It has been largely forgotten, but the bowler, rather than a Stetson or sombrero, was the most popular hat worn in the western United States. Perhaps Frederick Remington's cowboy paintings and

Hollywood western movies popularized the historical inaccuracy. Cowboys, miners, lumberjacks, and railroad workers preferred the bowler, and so did lawmen and outlaws, including Bat Masterson, Butch Cassidy, Black Bart, Billy the Kid, and the Wild West Show's outlaw Marion Hedgepeth, commonly called "the Derby Kid." They all wore the hat with its shellacked crown because it worked as head protection and did not blow off easily when horseback riding or sticking one's head out the window of a speeding train or in any strong wind.[26]

Another region that took up an appreciation of the bowler hat is the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Men of this region use the hat along with a walking stick. Introduced by British colonials in the 1900s, these fashion accessories have become a staple part of the regional costume to indicate social status. Recently a "Bowler Hat Bash" has become part of Nigerian Independence Day celebrations.[27]

In Northern Ireland, the bowler became common in shipyards. Along with a pair of white gloves and a sash, the bowler hat represented the traditional clothing worn by Loyalist fraternities, such as the Independent Loyal Orange Institution, the Royal Black Preceptory, and the Apprentice Boys, when they marched.

Except in these Irish parades, the wearing of the bowler in Great Britain in the 1960s began declining. Central heating was being installed in new homes and in workplaces and hats became less necessary for warmth. Moreover, the rapid growth in private car ownership often made wearing a hat difficult. Coincidently, mass media influences, particularly in music, film, and television, worked against hats. Celebrities and star performers stopped wearing them. Traditional hats fell out of fashion and were replaced by baseball caps, beanie hats, skull caps, hoodies, and cheap umbrellas. Even at weddings, high society horse races, and church, hats for both men and women gave way. They largely died out during the 1970s. One factor that perhaps contributed most to the hat's demise was its association with Captain Mainwaring, in the BBC television series *Dad's Army*, in which as a banker wearing a bowler and as captain of the home guards he represented an outdated, conservative, and pompous comic

character. Another likely cause was the TV comedy show *Monty Python*, in which John Cleese used the bowler in sketches such as his Ministry of Silly Walks. This did nothing for the bowler's social image.[28]

In Bolivia, the importation of Borsalinos ended when World War II prevented commerce with Europe. Moreover, Italian wartime demands for shellac used in the production of both airplanes and small boats greatly reduced the material available for hats. In Bolivia, the local Borsalino-style hat factory, Charcas & Glorieta in Sucre, continued to produce the hats, and a similar, knock-off version was being made in La Paz in various colors, crown heights, and material quality in local workshops.[29] Imports resumed after the war, and beginning in the 1950s, the Broadway House sold these Borsalinos, at a rate of three or four a day, at a price equivalent to $75 each, for over 30 years.

The Borsalino factory closed some time later, but much of the demand was met by Charcas & Glorieta in Sucre. This factory had been founded by Princess Clotilde Urioste de Argandona, a Bolivian philanthropist who received her title from Pope Leo XIII in the late nineteenth century, when her husband served as ambassador to the Vatican. In Sucre, she built a castle surrounded by Venetian-style canals, gardens, and a small zoo. She started the hat factory in 1929 to provide jobs for the people of the town. At some point, around 1950, management of the factory was handed to Italian immigrant Mario Nosiglia from Sagliano-Micca in Biela, where the town's nine hat factories had been reduced to one because of the decline of men wearing hats. He directed the 80 employees who used Bolivian, Uruguayan, and Argentine wool to make 35 different hat forms, some based on U.S. and European designs, and, of course, the Borsalino. Under his direction, the workers began producing 7,000 hats each month. The factory's production continued to expand until 1986 when it reached 500,000 hats or unfinished felt hat casings. This production equaled about half of the Bolivian market and it supplied at least 2,000 hat makers in Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and Chile, who bought casings and molded them into finished bombines that sold for $10 to $20 apiece.

It was well known that during his presidency Victor Paz Estenssoro frequently commissioned Nosiglia to provide his hats.

Charcas & Glorieta in the 1980s relied on the same steam-powered machines installed during construction of the factory. Spare parts and molds had to be made by hand because the factory that built the machinery no longer existed. Perhaps the old machinery explained the company's inability to keep up with demand in Bolivia. In an effort to obtain new or replacement machinery, an executive went to Italy, but unfortunately died just before negotiating for the equipment. So, the company attempted to purchase the Italian hat company Panizza's factory with a $2 million credit, $600,000 of it from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Manager Nosiglia expected the expansion and new machinery to double the factory's output to one million felt hats per year while enabling it to make 60,000 rabbit-fur hats. He said 20,000 felt hats would be exported to Italy for Panizza's former clients. He also claimed the enlarged factory would benefit farmers, who would supply the fur of at least 50,000 rabbits a year and wool from 10,000 sheep, according to company plans. "The economic impact will be extraordinary," Nosiglia declared. Charcas & Glorieta already made beside the derbies thousands of "J. R. Dallas" hats that sold for $15 apiece as well as traditional hats for nearly every region of Bolivia.

Representatives for Sucre's Charcas & Glorieta in the late 1980s negotiated the purchase of the Panizza factory plant and machinery (primarily the front shop, which undertook the first phase of the production of felt). The Bolivian entrepreneurs Alfredo Gimenez and his son Miguel made a partial payment for the restoration of the machinery. Nevertheless, even though the senior Gimenez seems to have been appointed Governor of the Central Bank of Bolivia in 1989, he was not able to provide the necessary amount of foreign currency to pay for the machinery. Consequently, the machinery was never shipped. An Italian intermediary a few years later bought the equipment and probably sold it to one of the former Soviet republics.[30]

When the Nosiglia and Gimenez plans did not work out, the former decided to retire as the Forno family, who owned the majority of

the shares in the company, at first wanted to sell the plant, but instead closed it. Nosiglia, rather than lead an idle life, was involved in opening two new hat factories in Sucre, "La Sucre" and "Chuquisaca." These closed after a few years, and a new factory with different owners opened in 1997, Sombreros Sucre Museo y Fábrica. The factory with about 100 workers produced some 2,000 hats a day and the company won international awards for their hats in 1999, 2000, and 2001. The factory included a one-room museum displaying hat styles from around the country. This factory has now closed.[31]

Nevertheless, the derby remains essential headgear in La Paz for Cholas. Worldwide, the Borsalino's unmistakable shape had retained its iconic status. In 1970, the Borsalino gave its name to a box-office hit, *Borsalino*, that starred Jean-Paul Belmondo and Alain Delon as two French gangsters. A sequel followed in 1974, *Borsalino and Co*. The two films relaunched the Borsalino after what had been a fallow period for hat wearing, on the international fashion scene and in films. John Belushi wore one in *The Blues Brothers* and pop star Michael Jackson often wore a fedora matched with a trench coat just like Bogart.

The relationship between Borsalino and the cinema is so strong that it regularly is featured in exhibitions and shows. One example was the recent exhibition *Cinema Wears a Hat*, held in the Triennale di Milano. This trip through the history of cinema and fashion highlighted how the Italian hat is deeply connected with international films. Memorably, the evil henchman Oddjob in the James Bond film *Goldfinger* wielded a bowler as a lethal weapon. Batman's best-known villain, the Riddler, and the evil lead character Alex DeLarge in Stanley Kubrick's film *A Clockwork Orange* wore signature bowlers. Other Borsalino wearers ranged from Indiana Jones to the great western stars, from Johnny Depp to Audrey Hepburn. Current-day popular music performer and producer Pharrel Williams wears one today.

Borsalino even has its own museum. The Borsalino Hat Museum has over 2,000 exhibits and is located in the old Palazzo Borsalino in Alessandria. It was set up at the beginning of the twentieth century by Arnaldo Gardella. Now it hosts shows, exhibitions, and cultural

initiatives as well as having a section dedicated to showing how the Borsalino hat is made, still following the same traditional manufacturing process.[32]

Hats remain essential clothing in the Andes. One explanation is that the high altitude, where the sun's rays are more intense and few shade trees grow, make hats a necessity. This accounts for the popular saying, "Use a hat, or your brain will melt."[33] Ecuadorian women still wear hats. They initially wore hats of Spanish origin, but then learned how to make them using sheep wool and felting. Different communities or ethnic groups often have their own variations in the style of hat they wear. The hats became part of the traditional outfit in the countryside. Various highland communities today maintain distinctive hats, ponchos, and embroidered blouses for normal daily wear. Women wear full pleated skirts in bright colors, often with embroidery around the hem. A woolen shawl doubles as a means of carrying shopping or babies on the women's backs. Even in Quito, most of the women and the men dressed in traditional clothing wear felt hats.[34]

The hat, especially in Bolivia, is much more than protection from the sun, according to Haroldo de Faria Castro, a Bolivian author on hats. "It is the most important piece of an outfit" worn by the indigenous, he says. There is no shame in walking barefoot, but one must always wear a hat.[35] In La Paz, it is the ultimate symbol of status. As a result, hat-making remains a thriving business in home industry in Jatamayu and other towns to the current factory in Sucre. The cholas still represent the picturesque in La Paz; as one tourist declared, "the style that immediately caught my eye when arriving was the long silky skirts with layers of puffy petticoats, hand-made shawls, alpaca leg warmers, waist length braids, and tilted bowler hats."[36] Hats also have a significant role in Bolivian fiestas. For El Día de los Fieles Difuntos, the hats are usually covered with red or black paper flowers. For weddings, the hats of the betrothed couple are often decorated with pieces of different-colored paper. In religious fiestas, the pasante (the local name for the person who pays the costs of the celebration) receives guests by placing wreaths of large popcorn on their hats. The guests in turn pin 20 or 50 peso bills on the pasante's hat. Each traditional fiesta has its

own clothing with special touches. The Chuncho dancers from Tarija, for example, who dance for San Roque, wear colored feathers on their heads. The Morenada parades feature embroidered and decorated hats as part of this representation of Afro-Bolivian slaves making a satire of Spanish slave-owners. The Tinku ritual combatants wear heavy monteras of hard leather.[37] These are a sampling of fiesta hats. In daily life, hats especially for working men such as miners and construction workers have declined with the adoption of more durable hard hats.

Indigenous women in Puno and in much of Andean Peru also choose to wear the derby-style hat. Coincidentally these indigenous women who wear them are known as Cholas, like those in La Paz, and the hat was styled for them as the Chola hat.

For a sense of identity, status within the community, and definition of style or beauty, many communities continue to wear a representative hat, although the practice probably dates only from the colonial period. The cholitas of La Paz, nevertheless, continue to wear as their status symbol, not much more than a century old, the derby hat.

Notes

This chapter has benefited from the suggestions about research in Italian sources from Lucia Carminati of Texas Tech University, in Bolivian materials from Gabrielle Kuenzli of the University of South Carolina, in fashion essays from Regina Root of the College of William and Mary, and on Italians in La Paz from R. Matthew Gildner, Washington & Lee University.

1 Beverley Chico, "South American Headwear," in Margot Blum Shevill, ed., *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: Latin America and the Caribbean*. Berg Fashion Library, pp. 456–464. eBook.

2 M. Lissette Canavesi de Sahonero, *El Traje de la Chola Paceña* (La Paz, Bolivia: Editorial Los Amigos del Libro, 1987), pp. 17, 19–21; "Las cholitas luchadores," Mundo Hispano Los Cervantinos, http://mundohispanoloscervantinos.blogspot.com/2013/11/las-cholitas-luchadoras.html. The most thorough account of the rebellion is Charles F. Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

3 Haroldo and Flávia de Faria Castro, "Bolívia dos Mil e Um Chapéus," *Revista Geográfica Universal*, no. 44 (May-June, 1978), p. 105, http://unboliviable.tumblr.com/post/11006496682/sombreros-bolivianos.

4 Called the mantón de Manila. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manila_shawl.

5 Canavesi de Sahonero, pp. 25–42; with pictures of Spanish styles, pp. 27–29; p. 28 has a picture of women from Andalusia.

6 Haroldo and Flávia de Faria Castro, "Los Mil y Un Sombreros de la Cultura Boliviana," *Geomunco*, 8, no. 6 (1984), pp. 566–571.

7 "Hats Off to Bolivians – From Derbies to Helmets, They're Tops," *Los Angeles Times* (January 25, 1987).

8 An Italian term baccicia, which translated into the common language as bachiche, used to refer to Italians of modest social status. This term in Peruvian society was used to classify a certain type of business such as pulpero, winemaker, blacksmith, etc. The majority made their way with a small shop, the old pulpería, attended by a man almost always dicharachero, talkative, friendly, a connoisseur of all the neighborhood and sometimes called gringo.

9 Mauricio Belmonte Pijuán, *Polenta: Familias italianas en Bolivia* (Editorial Gente Común: Ambasciata d'Italia in La Paz, 2009), p. 25. See Gabriella De Ferrari's delightful memoir of growing up in her Italian family in Tacna. Her father, Armando, was the honorary consul, and after the monarchy was abolished in 1946, he hosted a party for town elites each June 2, the Day of the Republic. *Gringa Latina: A Woman of Two Worlds* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995).

10 Joaquín Blaya Alende, *El Progreso Italiano en Chile* (Santiago: Imprenta La Ilustración, 1921), pp. 441, 445, with photographs. Selections are included in the online essay at http://www.italianosenchile.cl/documentos/documentos-tacna.html.

11 Alfonso Díaz Aguad and Elías Pizarro Pizarro, "Algunos antecedentes de la presencia italiana en la ciudad de Tacna: 1885–1929," August 29, 2014. http://www.italianosenchile.cl/documentos/documentos-tacna.html.

12 Archivio Storico Borsalino Indice, municipal library, Alexandria, Italy, Mazz 144, 6, 1915–1919.

13 The word "ciola" (without the "h") does not translate into the English language as it is the proper name of the hat in question, which in Peru is named "Chullo." Dario Pavan, archivist, Alessandria Community Library, Italy, to the author, March 28, 2019.

14 "Esclusiva Borsalino. L. A. Galoppo & Galoppo e Ormezzano," Alexandria, Italy, Mazz 144, 6, 1915–1919.

15 Belmonte, "Los sombreros Borsalino de Ludovico Galoppo," pp. 179–182, 60.

16 This seems possible because of the development of smuggling after the plebiscite in 1921 that divided the towns of Tacna and Arica, carried on daily by the women of Tacna, who might well have had knowledge of the practice between Peru and Bolivia. They might even have worn the hats they were smuggling. De Ferrari, pp. 71–72.

17 One travel guide account claims the first shipment of hats was given away to the women. Claudia Looi, "Bowler Hats and the Cholas of Bolivia," http://travelwritingpro.com/bowler-hats-cholas-bolivia/.

18 http://www.bloganavazquez.com/2010/02/07/el-sombrero-bombin-borsalinoy-las-mujeres-de-bolivia/.

19 See the blog entitled "El Mundo Cervantinos," the Hispanic World seen through the eyes of some Italians, "Las cholitas luchadoras" (November 15, 2013). The origin story of the railroad workers is repeated on this website. http://mundohispanoloscervantinos.blogspot.com/2013/11/las-cholitas-luchadoras.html.

20 Lesley Gill, *Precarious Dependencies: Gender, Class, and Domestic Service in Bolivia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 106.

21 Belmonte, p. 89.

22 Archivio Storico Borsalino Indice Mazz 969 Fascicol 13, Rappresentanti cessati dal 1929 al 1936-c/provv:

23 http://www.hathistory.org/borsalino/.

24 http://www.made-in-italy.com/italian-fashion/designers-and-brands/borsalino.

25 https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/obituaries/emma-stebbins-overlooked.html. Liza Bakewell provided this reference.

26 Lucius Beebe, "The Hat that Won the West," *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, Utah (October 27, 1957), https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=336&dat=19571026&id=xQQpAAAAIBAJ&sjid=PkgDAAAAIBAJ&pg=7036,5636283&hl=en. Beebe said that he examined thousands and thousands of photographs of westerners for a book and that resulted in his conclusion.

27 *The Guardian* (October 8, 2016).

28 Don Anderson, "Bowled Over by a Hat Beloved by Orangemen," *Belfast Telegraph* (March 3, 2015), https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/

columnists/bowled-over-by-the-history-of-a-hat-beloved-by-orangemen-30380950.html.

29 http://www.bloganavazquez.com/2010/02/07/el-sombrero-bombin-borsalinoy-las-mujeres-de-bolivia/.

30 Gian Paolo Gamba, Panizza company, email to the author, March 22, 2015.

31 "Las remembranzas de Mario Nosiglia," Belmonte, pp. 223–224. There are some slight differences in this essay with Michael Powell and Jürgen Horn, "A Tour of Sucre's Hat Factory," http://bolivia.for91days.com/2011/06/12/a-tour-of-sucres-hat-factory/.

32 http://www.made-in-italy.com/italian-fashion/designers-and-brands/borsalino.

33 Haroldo and Flávia de Faria Castro, "Los Mil y Un Sombreros de la Cultura Boliviana," *Geomunco*, 8, no. 6 (1984), p. 566.

34 http://movingtoecuador.blogspot.com/2009/10/ecuadorian-hats.html; http://www.ecuadortravelsite.org/traditional_costume.html.

35 "Hats Off to Bolivians – From Derbies to Helmets, They're Tops," *Los Angeles Times* (January 25, 1987).

36 Brittany Robinson, Stars on the Ceiling Travel and Adventure, http://sotcblog.com.

37 Haroldo and Flávia de Faria Castro, "Los Mil y Un Sombreros de la Cultura Boliviana," *Geomunco*, 8, no. 6 (1984), pp. 573–576.

Additional Resources

Readings

E. Gabrielle Kuenzli, *Acting Inca: National Belonging in Early Twentieth-Century Bolivia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

Zoila S. Mendoza, *Creating Our Own: Folklore, Performance, and Identity in Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

Regina Root, ed., *Latin American Fashion Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).