



# Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia

*Marcia Stephenson*

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In Andean Bolivia, racial and cultural differences are most visibly marked on women, who often still wear native dress and speak an indigenous language rather than Spanish. In this study of modernity in Bolivia, Marcia Stephenson explores how the state's desire for a racially and culturally homogenous society has been deployed through images of womanhood that promote the notion of an idealized, acculturated female body.

Stephenson engages a variety of texts-critical essays, novels, indigenous testimonials, education manuals, self-help pamphlets, and position papers of diverse women's organizations-to analyze how the interlocking tropes of fashion, motherhood, domestication, hygiene, and hunger are used as tools for the production of dominant, racialized ideologies of womanhood. At the same time, she also uncovers long-standing patterns of resistance to the modernizing impulse, especially in the large-scale mobilization of indigenous peoples who have made it clear that they will negotiate the terms of modernity, but always "as Indians."

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