SINGleness and the state:
unmarried and widowed women in Guadalajara, Mexico, 1821-1910

by

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ABSTRACT

SINGleness AND THE STATE:
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By
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This is a study of women who lived without men between 1821 and 1910 in Guadalajara Mexico. In these years single and widowed women consistently outnumbered men in the city. I argue that disproportionate sex ratios created obstacles to legal marriage at a time when Mexican political leaders and reformers promoted marriage and motherhood as an important, idealized part of a solution to political instability in the aftermath of Independence in 1821. The same liberal political philosophies that motivated the fight for national Independence, promoted new economic and social reforms that displaced rural peasants forcing many to seek employment in cities. It was a trend that added to the demographic growth and industrialization of Guadalajara and created a growing class of poor urban workers. Among these new migrants were women who arrived to the city widowed and single. Some women never married, or remarried. Others lived in consensual unions and mothered illegitimate children. City officials grew anxious over the presence of unmarried working women who lived outside the boundaries of traditional marriage and patriarchal control. Increasingly, politicians, clergymen, women’s magazines, police and judges of various political stripes debated the role of unmarried women in their efforts to reform what they believed to be the wayward lifestyle that typified the urban poor. For these powerful actors unmarried women became a symbol, symptom, and a cause of rising urban problems including immorality, crime and poverty. Overall, my research demonstrates that authorities in nineteenth-century Guadalajara organized institutions of power such as city police,
criminal courts and Guadalajara’s poorhouse to target unmarried women as a group in need of greater protection, punishment and reform.

This dissertation combines extensive demographic data with fine-grained qualitative and statistical analysis of the lives of mostly poor unmarried women in Guadalajara. It draws on a wide variety of sources to attempt to capture a sense of the lives of women, many of whom found it impossible to conform to the standards of elite gender expectations. Sources utilized here include unique household-level censuses from Guadalajara, religious writings, political essays, proscriptive literature from Latin America and Europe, legal codes, criminal and civil court proceedings, maps, newspapers and state institutional records. Overall, the project is one of the first to focus exclusively on unmarried adult women in Latin America.
Acknowledgments

I have never been able to study anything that was not a personal experience as much as it was an intellectual one. My journey toward the study of Latin America has been a long one, influenced by many individuals along the way. I thank them for the experiences of getting to know them and for their many stories which left me with a greater desire to know and understand Latin American history and culture. To Miyuki Hasegawa and her family I would like to thank first and foremost, for all those wonderful Cuba stories that got this whole thing started so many years ago in Tampa. Also, I wish to express my gratitude to my good friends Claudia Rivas and Juan Manuel Franco along with their sons Fernando and Santiago. Thank you for sharing a bit of Guadalajara with Doug and me, and helping me on my way to what you see here. Their companionship provided us with a sense of family during our stay in Guadalajara and made the research process an enjoyable one.

Of course, where I am today would not be possible without the many mentors who inspired and encouraged me on my path. My high school history teacher, William Hartley, at Lecanto High School was the first to make me realize that studying history could lead to a viable, albeit meager, career. The four years I spent taking his history courses truly shaped and piqued my own interests and left me wanting to know more. His thought provoking and very personal relationship to history, not only more than prepared me for college, it motivated my own studies. He is truly a model for what great teachers and teaching is all about.

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Here at Michigan State University, I’ve been privileged to work with some amazing professors. I would like to thank all of the members of my committee, Peter Beattie, Walter Hawthorne, Miguel Cabañas and Erica Windler. Peter Beattie and Erica Windler really helped me find my niche and interests in Latin American history. Their critiques were always sharp, yet at the same time very constructive. In Guadalajara, Professors Claudia Rivas Jimenez, Juan Manuel Franco, Robert Curley and María Teresa Fernandez Aceves at the Universidad de Guadalajara provided thought provoking insight that helped shape this project.

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I have also been blessed with great friends who have helped me along the way, and were as much a part of this process as they did encourage it. My dearest friends and now “colleagues” who are now scattered about the country and world were my original support network. I will always have our great GCP memories, dance breaks, lunch dates, and gatherings to look back on. Claudia, Monica, Sarah, and Tam have been there through thick and thin and have advised me as both friends and mentors. I do not know what I would have done without them, and although I will always be “little Andrea” in their eyes, I owe much of my success to their constant wisdom.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES......................................................................................................................xi

LIST OF FIGURES..................................................................................................................xiii

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction: Female Singleness in Nineteenth-Century Guadalajara................................. 1
   Singleness in Latin America............................................................................................. 7

CHAPTER TWO
Guadalajara in the Long Nineteenth Century........................................................................ 14
   Colonial Guadalajara, 1529-1821....................................................................................17
   From Independence to Reform, 1821-1867....................................................................26
   The Porfiriato, 1876-1910...............................................................................................40
   Conclusion.......................................................................................................................47

CHAPTER THREE
Discourses on Marriage and the Role of Women in Liberal Society, 1855-1910................. 50
   The Rhetoric of the Liberal Family................................................................................52
   Civil Marriage................................................................................................................55
   The Making of the Ideal Family....................................................................................62
   Husbands, Wives & Mothers.........................................................................................69
   The Marriage Contract in Guadalajara.........................................................................77
   Mothers..........................................................................................................................81
   Conclusion.......................................................................................................................88

CHAPTER FOUR
The Stigmatization of Singleness: Work, Public Space and Danger....................................91
   Unattached Women’s Households in Nineteenth-Century Guadalajara.......................96
   Household Strategies....................................................................................................106
   Ethnicity, Class and Age...............................................................................................112
   Public Space, Danger and Working Women..................................................................126
   Immorality and Dishonor...............................................................................................132
   Conclusion.......................................................................................................................142

CHAPTER FIVE
Immorality and Singleness: Sex, Crime and Prostitution....................................................144
   The Discourse on Poverty and Immorality in Nineteenth-Century Guadalajara............145
   Singleness and Immorality............................................................................................152
   Singleness and the Regulation of Crime.......................................................................166
   Prostitution....................................................................................................................199
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Adult Marital Status by Sex, Guadalajara, 1821-1895 .................................7
Table 2.1 Population of Guadalajara, 1629-1910...................................................... 18
Table 2.2 Marital Status According to Sex and Age, Guadalajara, 1821...................... 25
Table 2.3 Average Age of Female Widows in Guadalajara by Year...........................38
Table 2.4 Ratio of Men to Women by Year, Guadalajara 1811-1895...........................38
Table 3.1 Education in Guadalajara, 1895.................................................................85
Table 4.1 Marital Status According to Sex and Age, Guadalajara 1821.......................94
Table 4.2 Marital Status Guadalajara, 1895.................................................................95
Table 4.3 Adult Female Headship by Marital Status, 1811-1850...............................95
Table 4.4 Adult Marital Status by Sex, Guadalajara 1821-1895.................................98
Table 4.5 Ratio Male to Female by Year, 1811-1895..................................................98
Table 4.6 Industrial Factories in Guadalajara, 1856-1880 .........................................99
Table 4.7 Common Female Jobs by Marital Status 1821........................................108
Table 4.8 Most Common Female Occupations, 1895 .............................................109
Table 4.9 Widow Headed Household Structure by Calidad, 1821.............................113
Table 4.10 Position in Household by Ethnicity, Single Women, 1821.........................115
Table 4.11 Widow and Single Women’s Residence Patterns by Age, 1811-1850 ..........119
Table 4.12 Adult Widow and Single Women’s Position Within Another Household, 1811-
1850....................................................................................................................121
Table 4.13 Widow Headed Household Composition by Age, 1821.............................122
Table 4.14 Widow Household Composition by Sex, 1821.......................................123
Table 4.15 Civil Status of Registered Prostitutes Treated at the Hospital Civil, 1902 ……..135
Table 4.16 Working Women, Guadalajara, 1821-1895………………………………………….... 139
Table 4.17 Ethnicity and Marital Status of Working Women in Guadalajara, 1821 ………… 140
Table 4.18 Class Status of Working Women, Guadalajara, 1821…………………………………140
Table 5.1 Single Women in the 1821 Guadalajara Census………………………………………..155
Table 5.2 Marital Status of Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903……176
Table 5.3 Occupations of Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903………177
Table 5.4 Origin of Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903………………178
Table 5.5 Skin Color at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903……………………………..178
Table 5.6 Women Sentenced in the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903…………………….179
Table 5.7 Crimes Committed by Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903…………………..……………………………………………………………………………….184
Table 6.1 Occupations and Crimes Committed by Female Inmates at the Jalisco State
Penitentiary ……………………………………………………………………………………………..230
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 City Plan of Guadalajara, 1842 ................................................................. 20
Figure 2.2 Urban Growth of Guadalajara, 1542-1906 ............................................. 48
Figure 2.3 “La Calle de San Francisco” in the Late Nineteenth Century ............... 49
Figure 4.1 “La Plaza Principal de Guadalajara Hacia 1835” ........................................ 111
Figure 4.2 “La Plaza Principal de Guadalajara en 1864” ........................................ 111
Figure 4.3 “La Casera” .............................................................................................. 118
Figure 4.4 “La Lavandera” ....................................................................................... 128
Figures 5.1-5.5 Skin Color in Jailhouse Photographs ................................................. 180
Figure 6.1 “El Hospicio” ............................................................................................ 209
Figure 6.2 Cuartel Divisions and Notable Buildings in Guadalajara, 1896 .............. 222
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: FEMALE SINGLENESS IN GUADALAJARA MEXICO, 1821-1910

On the morning of the eighteenth of October 1886, Dominga González, a thirty year old widow originally from the nearby village of Tlajomulco found herself in a Guadalajara police station calling for the apprehension and arrest of Lucio Cabrera for *rapto*, or kidnapping with the intention to seduce her sixteen year old sister Prejedis.\(^1\) The case sheds light on the dangers and dilemmas of being unmarried women and the challenges and contradictions they presented to state and local officials as “un-protected” females in a patriarchal society. As such, it provides a revealing introduction to this dissertation’s unique focus on the lives of unmarried women in nineteenth-century Mexican society.

It was Dominga who first became worried after hearing rumors from a neighbor that Lucio intended to have relations with her sister. Indeed, between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. the previous evening she tracked down her “honorable” sister in the company of Lucio. She went on to explain that she and Prejedis had migrated from their natal village of Tlajomulco alone. Their parents, Medardo González and Ricarda Mondragon, still lived in Tlajomulco and were unable to come to court. Therefore, to “preserve her father’s honor” she had come to ask the court that the defendant be charged with *rapto*. Lucio, a twenty-six year old married brick-maker had lodged with the González sisters after migrating to Guadalajara a year earlier from Tlajomulco, describing them as fellow “paisanos,” or fellow provincials. He admitted to having relations with

\(^1\) BPEJ *Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919*, Ramo Criminal, “Contra Lucio Cabrera por rapto,” Caja 11, Exp 88,208. The 1871 Mexican Penal Code defined *rapto* as the abduction of a woman against her will by the use of physical violence, deception, or seduction in order to satisfy “carnal desires” or to marry. See, *Código Penal para el Distrito Federal y Territorios sobre delitos fuero común y para toda la República sobre delitos contra la Federación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Flores y Monsalve, 1874), 194.
Prejedis, but argued she was already a “dishonored” woman who had “illicit relations” with him of her own “free will.” In response, Dominga insisted that her sister was “honorable” and that even though she did go with Lucio she did not have “romantic relations” with him or any other man. In a shocking turn of events, Prejedis’ turned on her sister and admitted to having a sexual relationship with Lucio. She further stated that she never asked her sister to bring a case against Lucio, nor did her sister have the authority to do so because she no longer lived with Dominga.  

The story of these two sisters reveals intriguing aspects of a much larger phenomenon. From 1820 to 1910 widowed and unmarried adult women made up fifty to sixty per cent of the entire urban population of Guadalajara, Mexico’s third largest city at the time. Like Dominga, almost half of these women headed and managed their own households. Mexican authorities associated unmarried women with danger, prostitution, disorder, poverty, and an unnatural state. Mexico’s long struggle for Independence was followed by decades of civil war and instability. War, inflation, epidemics, famine and banditry contributed to the conditions that made female headed households more common and simultaneously fueled a sense of moral panic that many

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3 Unless otherwise state, in this work I define an adult in accordance with the legal age of majority, which by 1866 was twenty-one years old. For more on changes to this law see Silvia Arrom, “Changes in Mexican Family Law in the Nineteenth Century: The Civil Codes of 1870 and 1884,” Journal of Family History 10, no. 3 (1985), 308.


5 Data was collected for the years 1811 to 1895. Sources for 1811-1850 come from Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822, CD-ROM Database (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006); Censuses of Guadalajara, Volume 2 1791-1930, CD-ROM Database (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2008). For 1895, see Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (AHJ), Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895); See Table 1.1.
attributed to the breakdown of the traditional male-headed family household. Ironically, these observers misidentified the causes of this social phenomenon in urban Mexico where many unmarried females migrated for greater security and employment opportunities. A growing majority of urban single and widowed women did not fit easily into national development projects of Mexico’s nation builders who idealized strong patriarchal families as the foundation of stability and a just social order. As a metaphor for patria the patriarchal family became a symbol for “good public order” across nineteenth-century Latin America, and the ideal engine for the reproduction and education of the nation’s future generations destined to “govern and populate” the fatherland’s territory. Doris Somner suggests that this preoccupation was not limited to the foundational romance novels of Mexican nation, but it was magnified by the fact that for much of the nineteenth century war, famine, force migration and disease stymied the national population growth. Part of the problem however, was that the rhetoric of the patriarchal family emphasized marriage and motherhood within the domestic sphere at a time when more and more poor women found it difficult to remain within the traditional family or find suitable partners. In this work I posit that rising numbers of single and widowed women not only contradicted stereotypical models of the ideal family, but posed challenges which forced local and state officials to deal with a growing number of women who lived without men. Previous studies of gender during this period focus on singular themes such as crime, honor or inheritance laws as a means to analyze single or widowed women. This work focuses exclusively on the social status of being unmarried women, be it widowed or never married, a state which I refer to

as “singleness.” I use this term because I wish to suggest that there was a growing number of poor women throughout the nineteenth century who did not contract legal marriage and many who lived apart from male authority, or “unattached” from men. This signaled a major shift for women from previous periods. Such an approach allowed me to give greater depth of analysis to the lives of unattached women to determine how they navigated the dangers and opportunities that the tumultuous circumstances of nineteenth-century Mexico presented them. At the same time it allowed me to better understand how Conservative ideals of family and Liberal ideals of individualism in relation to the family both took a dim view of unattached women. In this way, stories like those of Dominga and Prejedis are emblematic of a much larger conflict over family and appropriate gender roles in nineteenth-century Mexico.

Dominga’s story, a middle aged widow and her young single sister, is more than a story about *rapto*. It reveals aspects of a common narrative about migration, widowhood, singleness, working class life, danger, sexuality, urbanization as well as women’s individual and family honor. These were themes that affected many unattached urban women in nineteenth-century Mexico. The González sisters and Lucio shared a similar rural-urban migratory experience that many nineteenth-century *tapatíos*, individuals from or of Guadalajara, faced which was the result of economic change and urban growth. The participants in Dominga’s testimony all hailed from the nearby village of Tlajomulco, a small mestizo pueblo approximately thirty kilometers south of the city, and their shared origins brought them together in Guadalajara. Both sisters, without husbands, had likely migrated to urban Guadalajara out of necessity. While we do not know the

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7 At the time there were numerous ways to identify an unmarried woman in official documents including single, alone or “free from marriage.” Widows, although women who were once married, are categorized with a group I refer to as unattached, as they were frequently part of the growing population of women who lived outside of patriarchal authority. For more on status, see Chapter 3.
sisters’ occupations their residence was in district seven, a poor borough of the city, and their friendship with Lucio, a brick-maker, is an indication of their working class status. The sisters also depended on each other, migrated together, lived together, and helped each other maneuver daily life in the city. In Guadalajara Dominga became the head of the household in the absence of their father, taking her responsibilities for protecting her sister’s honor seriously. It was she who brought the trial against Lucio to court to preserve the patriarchal honor of her family against the wishes of her sister. Despite Lucio’s previous run-ins with the law and his status as a married man, it was Prejedis’ honor, as a young single woman, that came under scrutiny in a Guadalajara courtroom. She and her family had the most to lose from her romantic encounter with Lucio, and it is likely the reason Dominga so adamantly insisted on her sister’s honorable reputation. Prejedis challenged her sister’s authority to do so, however, observing that she no longer lived with her sister. Although the charges did not end in a conviction and created tension between the two sisters, the testimony reveals how these two “independent” women navigated changing circumstances and lines of authority.

Autonomous women, like Dominga and Prejedis who lived outside of the vigilance of a male patriarch, were a vibrant part of the public urban landscape. A growing population of poor urban single and widowed women hocked their wares, commuted to work in city factories, did errands, washed laundry in public fountains and rivers, and ran businesses outside their homes and in city streets and plazas. For these reasons, widowed and single women were much more visible in public and the historical record than their married counterparts. In nineteenth-century Guadalajara, they were six times more likely than married women to end up as defendants in

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8 In court testimony the sisters reside in Cuartel 7 in small one-room efficiencies. The district is described by Claudia Rivas Jiménez as a growing urban neighborhood of lower class craftsmen by 1888, see “Defense of Craft: Guadalajara’s Artisans in the Era of Economic Liberalism, 1842-1907” (PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 2008), 153.
courtrooms. They made up the majority of females who were inmates in prison, beggars on the street, and residents of state-run nursing homes. In addition, as single and widowed mothers their children were over represented in orphanages and state-run schools. 9 Although the reformers who preached that a strong patriarch in the home maintained order in society at the microlevel, my work demonstrates that the patriarchal dialogue was pervasive outside of the home. In city courts, newspapers, censuses, jails, hospitals, schools and behind the walls of the city poor house, judges, lawyers, journalists, doctors, reformers, writers and clergy sought to re-create a sense of patriarchal control over unattached women.

This is a study of those unmarried and widowed women and the institutions they came into contact with. Through my analysis of a wide variety of sources I uncover a public discourse, a set of ideas infused in official language, practices, attitudes and behaviors, that attempted to marginalize unmarried and widowed women as dishonorable, immoral, dangerous, impoverished and in need of reform and protection. In this way, my approach employs a Foucauldian methodology of history, embracing the relationship between public discourse and power. As Michel Foucault explains, “in any society there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.” 10 The dialogue that took place in Guadalajara, often by well-to-do men in positions of power such as lawmakers, priests, judges, lawyers, police and reformers,  

9 For working women see Chapter 3; For women in the poorhouse, see Chapter 5; Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Libros de Penitenciaria, “Album de sentenciados: Departamento de Mujeres, 1868-1905. According to documents 53% were single, 14% widowed, 34% married, and 14% were unknown or did not provide marital status. Overall, the total number of girls detained were 646 women between these years.

10 Michel Foucault, “Two Lectures,” in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings by Michel Foucault (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 93.
sought to structure women’s daily life and played a significant role in historical change. While my research emphasizes the ways in which the state encroached on women’s lives, it also suggests that the existence of great numbers of unattached women influenced the politics of nineteenth-century Mexico by pushing the boundaries of the ideal family.

<table>
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**Singleness in Latin America**

Others have noted the phenomenon of single and widowed women and their children as a common feature of nineteenth-century Latin America. Scholarship on the subject links social and political changes to a changing economic system which greatly impacted women in

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11 Each column represents the rate of adult women compared to men that were single, married or widowed for the years listed. The most complete years are those for 1821 and 1895. 1824, 1838 and 1842 are used for ratio comparison as the data collected for those years is a sample and does not include all city districts. Sources for 1821-1850 were taken from *Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822*, CD-ROM Database (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006); For 1895, see Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (AHJ), Mapoteca, “Comptu General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895).

particular. In the early nineteenth century, labor demands on women shifted from subsistence-based agricultural production to domestic and eventually industrial manufacture. Many scholars attribute increases in rural-urban migration to this shift. In parts of Mexico the transition to industrial manufacture created “cities of women” made up primarily of widows and young single women working in the growing textile industry. High proportions of women living without men in cities across Mexico were also the result of years of war, leaving many women of all ages widowed and reducing the numbers of potential marriage partners. Like Guadalajara, in many nineteenth-century Mexican cities females headed more and more households. Widows headed up to 85% all female-headed households in Mexico City. Mexico City also boasted a higher proportion of single and widowed women than men in the nineteenth century. Such findings demonstrate that despite the rhetoric of powerful urban actors who sought to promote the model of a male headed household, many single women could not achieve this status even if they were desirous of doing so. The reality was that female headed households were a much more common phenomenon in nineteenth-century Latin America. Recent scholarship finds that the Latin

15 Marie Eileen Francois, A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750-1920 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 156-57.
American family had higher rates of “non-marriage,” illegitimacy and female household headship than formerly imagined. This data is evidence of the “contentious co-existence” between female singleness within the Latin American family and the ideal of a male-headed household.  

Patterns in urban Guadalajara mimic the difficulties that state leaders had in reconciling a reliance on the patriarchal family with the urban realities of large populations of single and widowed women living outside of male authority. Historiography on unattached women in Latin America explains the commonly held stereotypes that existed regarding single and widowed women in the past. In colonial Mexican society there was an “overall resentment of female loners,” especially widows and single women who did not submit to a male patriarch and maneuvered independently within society.  

Similarly, in times of political instability the existence of unprotected women, such as widows and single women who lived outside of a patriarchal family, created concern within an already unstable environment. While the stigma of being “dangerous loners” often befell single men as well as women, tensions over their presence in society can be traced to political motivations.  

In the chaos that followed Independence new discourses emerged that tied nation, family and state together. In large measure unmarried women and poor working women threatened national growth and plans to

18 Rebecca Earle noted heightened concern over single and widowed women’s honor in war torn Independence-era Colombia. See Rebecca Earle, “Rape and the Anxious Republic” in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2000).  
make a strong family the foundation of a strong nation. High proportions of spinsters in Mexican society went against expectations that “women were born to be wives and mothers,” in order to “nurture future generations” of young citizens.  

While there is considerable debate over how powerful the Mexican state really was in the nineteenth century, there is little doubt that liberalism influenced state policy and ideology. The following chapter chronicles the ways in which political theory was put into action between 1821 and 1910. The chapter demonstrates the importance of the nineteenth century, as drastic changes in the direction of Mexico’s federal government affected single and widowed women through various legal, economic and social reforms. The section also provides a more detailed history of Guadalajara, addressing specific factors that led to its emergence as a major urban industrial center which increased the rate of single, unmarried and widowed women living there.

In chapter three I demonstrate the value that national leaders placed on marriage and reproduction in legal and political contexts that stigmatized single women and widows, as an emerging Liberal rhetoric emphasized an ideal monogamous, nuclear, and legally married

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21 Silvia Arrom suggests that many works have overestimated the actual authority of the Mexican state in the nineteenth-century. See Silvia Arrom, Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 285.

family. It firmly establishes that the study of unattached women during the transitional period of 1821 to 1910 is particularly significant because of the influence that liberalism had not only on Mexican society and culture, but in the propping up of legal marriage and motherhood as the solution to instability. For this reason, alarming rates of singleness and non-marriage among Mexican women became one of many new urban social “problems” to be dealt with by city officials and moral reformers.

Chapter four explores the ways in which single women who lived outside the supervision of a male patriarch became a nineteenth-century urban “problem.” The growing presence in the public sphere of poor, single and unmarried working women stirred panic in a society focused on marriage and motherhood. As women who lived and worked outside of the protection of patriarchy, their honor came under scrutiny by city officials who grew anxious over spikes in prostitution, crime, disease, and poverty. New reforms targeted particular elements of Guadalajara’s poor population. Among those would be the numerous urban working women, petty criminals, prostitutes, and single and widowed mothers believed to be in need of

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23 Carmen Ramos Escandón argues that in both ideological and legal terms state leaders sought to strengthen the role of the family from the late colonial period into the twentieth century (1790-1911) see Ramos Escandón “The Social Construction,” 278.


punishment, protection and reform by a paternalistic state. The subsequent chapters, five and six, explore changing approaches throughout the nineteenth century designed to eliminate poverty. Such plans often targeted the poor and their way of life for reform through a paternalistic rhetoric that was steeped in race, class and gender biases. It was a discourse that would filter through city courts, jails and the Casa de Caridad and impact the large population of single, unmarried and widowed women it came into contact with.

This work firmly positions itself within recent scholarship that identifies two strands of debate surrounding whether or not the impact of liberal change was positive for women. The seminal works on women in Mexico written by Silvia Arrom imply that liberal reforms, because of their emphasis on the individual decreased patriarchal control over women. On the other hand, Elizabeth Dore suggests in fact, “state policies had more negative than positive consequences for gender equality,” and calls on scholars to reassess women’s lives in the long nineteenth century. I argue that when examined through the lens of single and widowed women, a growing discourse emerged in the nineteenth century to protect the patriarchal institution of marriage and marginalize those who lived outside of it. This is not to suggest that marriage and patriarchy were unimportant in the colonial period, but they took on heightened significance in the chaotic years following Mexican Independence. At the same time, urban industrial growth brought rural women into Guadalajara increased rates of non-marriage by


skewing an already imbalanced sex ratio and diminishing women’s marriage options. Urban living also forced women into low paying and demanding work that often left them vulnerable to attacks on their personal honor and added to new social problems such as child abandonment, infanticide, criminality, prostitution and poverty. This is not to suggest that women did not learn how to re-appropriate the rhetoric that conspired against them, or carve out opportunities for personal and economic independence. Admittedly, life for poor and unattached women did not become easier throughout the long nineteenth century despite a changing liberal political climate. Ideologically however, I suggest that as a case study an examination of Guadalajara’s unattached women offers a unique perspective from which to re-examine the process of nation building through a gendered lens.
CHAPTER TWO

GUADALAJARA IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

This chapter examines the political foundations of nineteenth-century Guadalajara in order to understand why the time period of 1821 to 1910 is central to understanding a new discourse regarding female singleness. It was a discourse heavily influenced by nineteenth-century classical Liberalism, and resulted in the growth and development of the city into one of the most important in Mexico.\(^\text{28}\) I argue that the roots of liberalism extend from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, a period often referred to as the long nineteenth century.\(^\text{29}\) Guadalajara, located in the western state of Jalisco over six hundred kilometers from the nation’s capital of Mexico City, was one of the most economically and politically important in the nation.\(^\text{30}\) It was often at the local level, in Guadalajara’s streets, plazas, courtrooms, jails, hospitals, churches and other social institutions where the politics of the age touched the lives of single and widowed women. For example, it was Liberal economic and political reforms that

\(^{28}\) In this chapter I use the term Liberalism to reference the nineteenth-century political philosophy. Although at the the time it inspired both liberal and conservative wings, it should not be confused with contemporary definitions of “liberal.”

\(^{29}\) Numerous historians make note of this period, as well as many gender historians. The idea is that the transition from a colony to a nation was a process that evolved over time, often borrowing from previous eras. Elizabeth Dore, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century,” Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux, eds. in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

displaced rural people and spurred a massive migration of poor women to urban centers in search of work in places like Guadalajara. It was here among members of the church clergy, moral reformers, writers and municipal and state officials that Liberal ideas motivated a discourse on marriage and family that was hostile toward many of these women and suspicious of the growing presence of poor, unattached, working women in places like Guadalajara. New ideas inspired by Liberal philosophy led many nineteenth-century city planners and social reformers in the city to turn their attention toward the poor, often blaming them for new urban social problems like crime, disease, prostitution and immorality. Unmarried women became a focal point for modernization projects in Guadalajara, as judicial, correctional and welfare institutions promoted patriarchy and espoused a rhetoric of reform and protection.  

In this study I argue that the seeds of such initiatives, which most studies associate with the Porfiriato (1876-1910), were planted much earlier in the tumultuous years that preceded Mexico’s Independence in 1821. From 1821 to 1910 Mexico and its states experienced a period of great transition as the national government evolved from a colonial vestige of Spain into an independent and centrally governed nation. Most histories divide this period into two distinct eras: the chaotic and tumultuous years after Independence from 1821 to 1876, and the more orderly time of the Porfiriato from 1876 to 1910. Most scholars highlight the obvious political markers of Mexico’s Independence wars (1821), the War of Reform (1858-1861), the French occupation (1861-1867) and the return of Benito Juarez to power by 1867.  

31 These themes serve as the basis for the rest of the dissertation and are discussed in greater detail in chapter 4, 5 and 6.  

32 Examples of this periodization are numerous. See Charles A. Hale, Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821-1853 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). More recent works are numerous, see Timothy Anna, The Forging of Mexico, 1821-1835 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998); Christon Archer, The Wars of Independence in Spanish America (Wilmington:
scholarship for the early Independence period focuses on political violence and instability. The second period coincides with the presidency of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910), often referred to as the *Porfiriato*, and includes a much more diverse body of political, social and cultural scholarship.  

I argue that it is important to view the period (1821-1910) as a whole to best understand how Liberal political ideas evolved and affected women, rather than to view it as separate eras with disparate political influences.  

My work paints a broader picture of female singleness by examining both the early period of post-Independence in 1821 and the time leading up to the Mexican Revolution by 1910. In doing so I argue that the two periods are intrinsically linked by Liberal political theories which evolved into various social, cultural and economic


The period of the Porfiriato is even more numerous, a general overview is Charles Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*.  

reform measures as the century progressed. These reforms directly impacted the growth of Guadalajara and increased female singleness, non-marriage and widowhood. My approach reveals the origins and longevity of a dialogue that would increasingly marginalize and attempt to reform poor, unmarried and unattached women.

**Colonial Guadalajara, 1529-1821**

The city of Guadalajara mirrored the process of political transition and incipient industrial growth that attracted unattached women to urban centers across Latin America. While most studies on women in México and other Latin American countries have been largely capital-centric, this work draws more comparative conclusions about women’s lives and roles in México. By the late colonial period Guadalajara emerged as an essential commercial, financial, political, and cultural center. The city experienced a nearly three hundred percent rate of growth in population between 1821 and 1910. The city’s economic and social opportunities attracted unmarried and widowed women. Eighteenth century travelers to the city commented that residents thought of their city as the “la segunda de México,” or second only to Mexico City. By this time too, its political influence extended north to the provincias internas and to the intendancies of Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí. Economically it was the

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35 María Teresa Fernández Aceves calls attention to this as a problem with ,“Imagined Communities: Women’s History and the History of Gender in Mexico.” *Journal of Women’s History* 19, no. 1, (2007).
37 See Table 2.1
38 Juan B. Iguiniz, ed., *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos. Relatos y descripciones de viajeros y escritores desde el siglo XVI hasta nuestros días*, 2 vols (Guadalajara, 1950), 124.
second or third largest contributor of national wealth after Mexico City and Puebla. Its significance as an important city in the history of Mexico would expand into the nineteenth century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1629</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1738</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>22,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>24,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>38,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>51,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>82,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>101,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>119,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of the region can be traced back to the colonial era. The area of western Mexico all the way up the Pacific coast to present day Sinaloa was the target of conquest by Nuño de Guzmán in 1529. Naming the region Nueva Galicia after his native province of Spain, Guzmán established several towns and gave out encomiendas. It was here that the city today known as Guadalajara was founded in 1530, in what was then the indigenous town of Nochistlán. In 1541 it relocated to its present location in the Valley of Atemajac, 675 kilometers

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Printed data on the population of Guadalajara varies and most data is based on estimates. The table presented here is accumulated from the following sources: For the years 1600, 1858, 1900 and 1910 see Luis Páez Brotchie’s prologue in Maríano Bárcena, *Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880*. (Reprint ITG, Guadalajara, 1954), xxxv; For all other years see Oliver Sánchez, “Intensidad de la crisis demográficas,” 23.

northeast of Mexico City. By 1560, Guadalajara became the capital of Nueva Galicia. Becoming a capital city was fundamental to Guadalajara’s expansion. That same year the crown established an audiencia (royal court) making it the second most important town in New Spain, second only to the viceregal capital of Mexico City. As an audiencia, it functioned as a legal and administrative body of the Spanish crown in order to keep the colonies connected to Spain. Mexico City was the first and only other Mexican audiencia. In addition, the Catholic Church established a bishopric in Guadalajara which made it both a religious and political center. Both the presence of the audiencia and the bishop gave the town a considerable territory for which it wielded great political, legal and administrative power. Such authority was critical to its future development. 42

From its inception the organization of the city followed a similar pattern to Spain, in which streets ran in a traditional grid pattern around the central plaza. 43 The plaza was home to the city’s ecclesiastic and civil authorities, showcased by its main buildings: the cathedral, city council and court. Around the plaza resided the houses of important families, those of the conquistadors, bureaucratic employees, encomenderos, and later elite hacendados. Urban poor and working class residents congregated on the periphery. In this way the spatial layout of the

42 From Nochistlán Guadalajara was moved in 1533 to Tonalá. Shortly after in 1535, it moved to Tlaxcoyán. From Tlaxcoyán it was moved to its present location; See Luis Pérez Verdía, Historia particular del estado de Jalisco, 2ª ed., (Guadalajara, Imprenta Gráfica, 1951), 125; Carmen Castañeda, La educación en Guadalajara durante la colonia, 1552-1821, México, El Colegio de Jalisco, El Colegio de México, 1984, p. 33; It took several years for Guadalajara to become the eventual capital of Nueva Galicia and there was some back and forth between the city and Compostela for the honor. See José Cornejo Franco, “Guadalajara colonial”, en Obras completas (Guadalajara: UNED, 1985), 43.

43 See Figure 2.1
city was intended to not only organize space, but support longstanding and new social hierarchies.  

Figure 2.1 City Plan of Guadalajara, 1842

44 Eduardo López Moreno, La cuadrícula en el desarollo de la ciudad hispanoamericana: Guadalajara, Mexico (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), 19.
45 Reprinted in Moreno, La cuadrícula, 143.
In its early years Guadalajara’s merchants made the city a trading hub for the northern mining camps in Zacatecas, which depended on Nueva Galicia’s agricultural goods. Due to problems with water and poor soil quality, agriculture in Guadalajara was primarily based on raising livestock.\textsuperscript{46} Eventually the region became involved in a long distance and lucrative trade in cattle, mules, and horses. Throughout the colonial period the livestock economy would be the region’s mainstay.\textsuperscript{47} It would be cattle ranching that would come to define Jalisco both ethnically and culturally. Animal husbandry was less familiar than cultivating crops among the indigenous populations of Mexico, and therefore Jalisco’s ranching culture attracted a more mestizo population, or those of mixed race.\textsuperscript{48} This helps to explain the racial makeup of Guadalajara and Jalisco. Consequently, cattle ranching would also give rise to the iconic charro, or cowboy culture, still celebrated today as unique to the region and adopted as a national symbol of Mexican identity. At its core, the charro mystique embraces an intense attachment to regional homeland, or patria chica; a passion for horses, weapons and risk-taking; love for freedom; and a fierce, aggressive and proud individualism.\textsuperscript{49} For this reason, the region gained a

\textsuperscript{46} Helene Riviere D’Arc, “Las fases del crecimiento y del desarrollo de Guadalajara y de su region durante la colonizacion,” in José María Muria, ed., \textit{Lecturas Historicas de Jalisco Antes de la Independencia}, Tomo II (Guadalajara: Unidad Editorial, 1982), 29-46.

\textsuperscript{47} Ramón María Serrera, \textit{Guadalajara ganadera. Estudio regional novohispano, 1760-1805} (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1977), 75-76.

\textsuperscript{48} The work of Chevalier argues that the attraction to ranching was connected to the use of horses to perform many duties. Horses granted individuals with status and a sense of freedom and allowed many of the castas to move up in status during the colonial period. See Francois Chevalier, \textit{Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 112.

\textsuperscript{49} Jean Meyer, “Perspectivas de análisis sociohistórico de la influencia de Guadalajara sobre su región” in \textit{Regiones y ciudades en América Latina} (México: SEP), 157-158.
reputation and association with banditry and rural uprisings often provocation larger rebellions.
In particular, the region is most known for those that spurred Independence beginning in 1810.\textsuperscript{50}

For the most part, Guadalajara remained a rural agricultural and artisan center up until the eighteenth century. Eventually, the city diversified its economic base as the western region’s mercantile, financial, bureaucratic, and cultural center thanks in part to the Bourbon reforms.\textsuperscript{51}

The Bourbon reforms were a series of economic and social reforms that attempted to modernize Spain and its colonies under the reign of Charles III (1759-1788). Ultimately the crown hoped to concentrate its wealth through a series of economic and social reforms that would reassert royal domination over colonial resources by gaining greater control over trade and weakening wealthy sectors like the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{52} In the Jalisco region these new measures stimulated the city’s early commercial expansion, urban development and population growth. Prior to 1759 all commercial transactions in Mexico processed through the eastern port of Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico or the Pacific port of Acapulco. Due to Spanish mercantilist trade policies which fostered monopolization, until 1768 Mexico City merchants handled most trade leaving the country, which prioritized the early growth and development of Mexico City over Guadalajara. Bourbon trade reforms opened up the port of San Blas to local Guadalajara markets and trade with Mexico City and California in 1768.\textsuperscript{53} Between 1791 and 1804 the state constructed several bridges connecting Guadalajara to nearby towns of La Laja, Zapotlanejo, Calderón, and

\textsuperscript{50} Some of the most notable works on rural violence and uprisings are Tutino, \textit{From Insurrection to Revolution}; Van Young, \textit{The Other Rebellion}.
\textsuperscript{52} For more on their impact in Mexico see David Brading, \textit{Church and State in Bourbon Mexico: The Diocese of Michoacan 1749-1810} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
San Juan de los Lagos. Around the same time state road projects cleared direct routes to Colima, Tepic and San Blas. This opened up Guadalajara economically to other parts of the state and solidified its power over the region, but it also opened up Guadalajara to rural in-migration.

The result of these economic changes shifted Jalisco’s economy away from subsistence toward commercial agriculture on elite owned haciendas, or rural estates. By this time trade increased the city’s merchant class and stimulated greater commercial growth. The new class of prosperous merchants combined forces with old elite families through intermarriage and credit relations to control the largest and richest haciendas of central Jalisco that produced for the urban markets. The rise of these haciendas forced neighboring rural villages into an expanding urban economic and social network by the early nineteenth century, and began the earliest waves of rural to urban migration. Indeed, the city’s population increased by almost fifty percent in 1823.

This also fostered the development of textile manufactures. Mainly focused on cotton, Guadalajara and other cities such as Mexico City, Puebla, Veracruz, Tlaxcala, and Querétero capitalized on this industrial growth from the late 1700s to 1821. By the late eighteenth century there existed a small scale industry in Guadalajara. Textile factories employed predominantly women because they could be paid less than men. Single and widowed women comprised a

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54 Ibid., 108.
55 Ibid., 129.
57 The population of the city went from 22,163 inhabitants in 1777 to 46,804 by 1823. See Luis Páez Brotchie’s prologue in Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880, xxxv.. See also Rodney D. Anderson, Guadalajara a la consumación de la independencia: estudio de su población según los padrones de 1821-1822 (Guadalajara, México: Gobierno de Jalisco, Secretaría General, Unidad Editorial, 1983), 45.
majority of these new textile workers. As early as the mid-eighteenth century urban textile centers across Mexico essentially became “city of women.” In Puebla for example, the majority of the city were widows and young single women. The process extensively tilted the sex ratio and increased singleness, as it would by 1821 in Guadalajara. In such places women faced few options for marriage and devoted their lives to spinning.  

Young women in particular, between the age of fifteen and twenty four outnumbered young single men in Guadalajara by twenty percent in 1821. The pattern only increased with female age. At the same time, marriage rates among men and women aged twenty five to fifty four were comparable. With few available men to marry, those who arrived in Guadalajara single had limited choices. I believe the patterns demonstrate the existence of a large, and often young, female labor pool. In fact, studies of early Mexican industrialization suggest that the use of female labor was so extensive that it slowed the pace of economic progress. The widespread availability of cheap labor performed by female hands made it unnecessary to mechanize production. Ultimately many of these changes laid the groundwork for future Liberal economic reforms.

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59 See Table 2.2.
60 Carmen Ramos Escandón, Industrialización, género y trabajo femenino en el sector textile mexicano: El obraje, la fábrica, y la compañía industrial (Mexico City: CIESAS, 2004), 25.
### Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age 15 - 24</th>
<th>Age 25 - 34</th>
<th>Age 35 - 44</th>
<th>Age 45 - 54</th>
<th>Age 55/over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1438</td>
<td>2146</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>1654</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>2263</td>
<td>1615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bourbon reforms emphasized social change, believing that an orderly citizenry contributed to economic growth. As a result, many new ideas promoted “rational reform, education, orderliness, and empirical analysis [which] maintain[ed] that humans had the power to change the environment and reform society.”

These early reforms targeted social problems such as disease, overcrowding, crime and poverty created by the growth of urban cities and populations in places like Mexico City and Guadalajara. They aimed to “civilize” and educate the lower classes in order to foster economic development and establish civil obedience. Therefore, they had a social welfare element which catered to a growing number of poor women, many unmarried, single and widowed and some with children. It was in this period that Mexico City opened a central orphanage (1767), poorhouse (1774), hospital (1779) and state pawn shop.

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61 Data for the table was compiled using the Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006).
Guadalajara also saw the expansion of its social welfare institutions with a hospital (1781), soup kitchens (1784) and poorhouse (1805). All of which would continue to be run by religious orders until the mid to late nineteenth century. Many of the social transformations of the colonial period set a precedent for reforms that would take root after 1821.

**From Independence to Reform, 1821-1875**

It was in the aftermath of Independence in 1821 that state, military, and even religious leaders looked to chart a new political course for the young nation of Mexico, leading to years of heated debate, factionalism, and political disorganization. In these years, members of emerging liberal and conservative parties disputed the direction of the newly formed nation. Divisions arose over whether the new government would be centralist or federalist. Federalists desired greater autonomy for states, and were generally rural in their allegiances, while Centralists argued for a stronger Federal, or central government, and tended to be more cosmopolitan. In reality however, these divides were superficial as both “liberals” and “conservative” ideals of the

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66 Anna, *Forging of Mexico*. 
period derived from the same political roots, Liberalism. Therefore the tenets of Liberalism, while varied, pervaded Mexican politics from its earliest efforts at self-government in 1821 well into the stable years of the Porfiriato. Ultimately Mexicans became solidly influenced by Liberalism, evidenced by the dramatic period of Liberal reform known as La Reforma. Such events were precipitous of the form that government and politics would take in Mexico after the wars for Independence. New reforms that focused on greater representative government, individual rights, secularism, anti-corporatism and capitalist economic development had a tremendous impact on Mexican society and women. The secularization of Mexican society limited women’s involvement in decisions about marriage, divorce, education and charity. In addition, land and economic reforms displaced rural peasants forcing them out of their natal villages, a majority of whom were women, to seek employment in cities. During this middle period, political leaders laid the foundations for liberal ideas that would eventually filter into a public discourse that propped up patriarchy and marriage.

Mexico first became a constitutional monarch under the emperor of Iturbide in 1821. In 1824 after passage of the first Constitution a Republican government replaced Iturbide, organizing Mexico as a federal republic composed of nineteen states and four territories, with separations of powers, executive, legislative and judicial branches. In many ways, Mexican Independence and state formation drew inspiration from the European Enlightenment. This is one reason why scholars frequently term the era the “long nineteenth century,” due to some of the continuities from the late eighteenth century that followed Latin America into the nineteenth and eventually twentieth centuries. The Mexican constitution of 1824 is one example of the strong influence that Spain continued to have, as it borrowed heavily from the Liberal Spanish

charter of 1812. Many events taking place in Spain had lasting impacts for Mexico (and much of Latin America). In Mexico the demise of the Spanish monarchy in 1808 led to the creation of a parliament, known as the Cortes. The Constitution of 1812 established a representative government for the worldwide Spanish Nation in which all free men, regardless of race or status, became Spaniards. Other examples include the establishment of jails, hospitals and poor houses under the Spanish that retained their original objectives decades after Independence.

Beginning in 1833, more “conservative” and centralist caudillo (rural political bosses) presidents ran Mexico, such as the once liberal turned conservative Santa Anna, who served eleven different times as president between 1833 and 1855. In Jalisco, the gubernatorial seat shifted frequently between 1846 and 1853.

Liberals returned to power in 1855, passing sweeping Liberal legislation known as “The War of Reform,” or La Reforma. In 1861, foreign intervention by the French established a constitutional monarchy under the emperor Maximillian, temporarily halting Liberal projects. Mexican Liberals finally restored a federalist Republican government under the leadership of Benito Juarez in 1867. Despite chaotic shifts between 1821 and 1867, Mexico’s federal government was in agreement of the fact that it would embrace the

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70 See Chapter 6.
72 Hale, *Mexican Liberalism.*
idea that *el buen gobierno* would be representative and built on Liberal republican principles.\textsuperscript{73}

Social, legal and economic reforms passed during the period are indicative of these Liberal foundations and demonstrate the ways in which the political realm trickled down into the everyday lives of Mexican citizens, especially women.

A central tenet of Liberalism was the secularization of society and the debates between church and political leaders over this process frequently hinged on issues and institutions of great concern to women, such as marriage, divorce, education and social services for the poor. Moreover religion had a tremendous influence in Guadalajara politics. Prior to *la Reforma* the Catholic Church wielded a great deal of power and influence in Mexican society. Not only was the Church a large landholder, it also played a great role in civil society; in charge of the registration of all births, marriages and deaths, operated an ecclesiastical court system and held a near monopoly in education and charity.\textsuperscript{74} The Church’s wealth, generated by the income that came out of fees for marriages, masses, baptisms and funerals, as well as their opportunities to profit in commerce, real estate, mining, agriculture and manufacturing led to efforts to diminish Church power. As the second largest diocese, serving a population of over 600,000 members, the diocese of Guadalajara was a target of reforms aimed at weakening the Church’s influence in the financial and judicial affairs of society.\textsuperscript{75}

Traditional debates place the church in a conservative role, but many authors maintain that the Catholic Church in Guadalajara was influx with many of the political ideas of the age,

\textsuperscript{73} Alicia Hernández Chavez, *La tradicion republicana del buen gobierno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

\textsuperscript{74} For more on the Church’s influence in Colonial Mexico, see Brading, *Church and State*; Nancy Fariss, *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico, 1759-1821*. (London: University of London Press, 1968).

\textsuperscript{75} Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*. 

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and in some cases evolved with Liberalism. As early as the mid-eighteenth century many clergy
drew on ideas of rationality, reason, and individual rights in their debates with Church leadership
over the spiritual direction of churches and convents. In addition, some clergy sought to translate
these ideas into less Baroque forms of religious practice. There is much evidence to suggest
that changing political and social ideologies influenced the Catholic Church in Guadalajara.
New forms of “enlightened Catholicism” rejected baroque sentiment centered on public piety
and pomp in favor of modesty, humility, self-control, and the individual conscience—casting out
vanity and formulaic rituals. Elites and many early Liberals in the city embraced these ideals.
Until the 1850s the Church in Jalisco attempted to position itself within Liberalism rather than
fight against it. For example, the diocese of Guadalajara was neither conservative nor
reactionary in its views toward Liberalism, but combined a “providential understanding of
nationalism with Liberal concepts of good government, especially constitutionalism and liberty.”
In this way it hoped to both make the Church relevant and protect its institutions from state
intervention. As evidence, members of the clergy in Guadalajara served in political office
until reforms laws prevented them from doing so.

76 Margaret Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-
1863* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); See also Brading, *Church and State.*
77 Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham:
78 Brian Connaughton, “The Enemy Within: Catholics and Liberalism in Independent Mexico,
1821-1860,” in *The Divine Charter: Constitutionalism and Liberalism in Nineteenth-century
79 Connaughton, *Clerical Ideology,* 308; 16.
80 Anne Staples, “Clerics as Politicians: Church, State and Political Power in Independent
Mexico,” in *Mexico in the Age of Democratic Revolutions, 1750-1850,* edited by Jaime E
Rodríguez (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 1994); Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, *Liberalismo e*
By 1859, however, the Mexican state and Catholic Church parted ways over legal codes that instituted civil marriage and divorce. In response the church produced extensive literature that questioned the legitimacy of civil marriage and expressed concern for women who would suffer a loss of honor without the protection of religiously sanctioned marriage. They argued that without the inherent threat built into religious marriage, which could determine salvation, men would be less likely to marry. In addition to legal reform the state intended to remove the influence of the church in matters of education. New reforms regarding mandatory education were passed as early as 1842 in Jalisco, mandating obligatory education for boys and girls between the age of five and twelve. Although lawmakers intended to prohibit religious interference in education, many studies concur that most of the reforms would not sustain any real social impact until late century, and even into the twentieth in rural areas. Although state leaders passed education reforms, primary education in Mexico would remain profoundly hierarchical and religious throughout the nineteenth century.

In addition to schools, the state also took measures to weaken the role of the Catholic Church in private charity as part of its goal to fully separate Church and state. This was an area of great consequence to the rising numbers of single, widowed and unmarried women with

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81 “Ley del Matrimonio Civil 23 de Julio de 1859,” Legislación Mexicana, vol 8, 696; For church literature in Guadalajara see Chapter 3.

82 José María Múria, Breve Historia, 119; Obligatory education is mentioned in BPEJ, Misc., #73, 1“Instruccian PriMaría, informe que el Inspector general de Instruccion PriMaría del Estado de Jalisco” by Lopez Cotilla. (Guadalajara, 1851), 20.

children who benefitted from Church-run medical and childcare services. Previously church-run institutions in Guadalajara such as hospitals, jails and the Casa de Caridad, which functioned as an orphanage, school, and nursing home would now fall under state management by 1874. With this shift also came a new agenda of “civil Liberalism” toward the benefactors of state welfare, many of them women. State run institutions eliminated religious rituals and continued to emphasize a need to reform and educate the poor in order to become more productive citizens in society. 84 The authorities who issued ordinances from institutions like the city poorhouse in Guadalajara, known as the Casa de Caridad, upheld a patriarchal perception of needing to protect deserving single and widowed women that utilized its services. 85

Perhaps the government’s Liberal economic reforms of 1856 had the greatest impact on women in Jalisco, as they spurred increased growth of the city and the development of even more industries. New measures repealed ecclesiastical fueros (special dispensations which exempted clerics from standing trial), nationalized and sold church property, limited fees for religious sacraments, and secularized the registry of births, marriages, adoptions and deaths. 86 One school of thought argues that from 1856 to 1863 Mexico underwent a “revolution” aimed at moving away from the Church’s more feudalistic economic, social and political institutions in order to make room for economic developments that transformed Mexico into a more capitalist

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84 Arrom, Containing the Poor; Anayanci Fregoso Centeno, “Hospicio Cabañas: la instrucción y la caridad como productoras de representaciones de maternidad y niñez, Guadalajara, Siglo XIX” (paper presented at the Congress of Latin American Studies Association, Montreal, Canada, September 5-8, 2007).
85 See chapters 5 and 6.
society. Others argue that the reforms served only to consolidate wealth in the hands of Mexico’s elite and failed to alleviate national debts. If anything, Liberal economic reforms fueled many of the problems that rural peasants faced over land disputes and economic disenfranchisement in the build up to the Mexican Revolution by 1910.\textsuperscript{88}

Reforms focused on securing private property rights such as the 1856 \textit{Ley Lerdo de Tejada}, which privatized large amounts of land formerly owned by the church, and incidentally those held collectively by rural communities, aimed to decrease both the economic and political power of the Catholic Church in favor of a more secular state.\textsuperscript{89} It also served to produce badly needed revenue for the indebted young nation by requiring that a 5 percent commission be returned to the government for each land sale, as well as increasing tax revenue for each newly privatized property.\textsuperscript{90} The new law inadvertently monopolized land in the hands of Mexico’s wealthy and stripped many rural indigenous villagers of their land. As happened elsewhere, in Guadalajara local and foreign elites took advantage of their newfound opportunity to purchase land, buying up large parcels of previously owned Church property.\textsuperscript{91} In one instance, the wealthy Guadalajara merchant José Palomar purchased the entire block where the \textit{Molino de}

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.


\end{footnotesize}
Chocolate factory had stood, and the Frenchman Emilio Signoret purchased twenty-one houses in a single day. In the hinterlands around the city as well, those with means purchased the large ranch estates formerly run by the Church. The impact on Jalisco’s indigenous and peasant populations was devastating, many lost lands they had inhabited for centuries. Without access to land for agricultural production, they faced poverty and forced migration. The Ley Lerdo became integrated into the 1857 national constitution, cementing the Liberal ideals of individual rights, property ownership and free trade into Mexico’s economy as part of sweeping Liberal changes that took place. In Jalisco, the chain of economic events to come out of these reforms hit rural peasants and the urban poor the hardest, expanding rural to urban migratory chains, many of whom would be women, and widening the gap between the rich and poor. Years later, even lawmakers in Jalisco recognized the disastrous consequences and contradiction of many laws to come out of the War of Reform, or La Reforma, which frequently served elites. In 1873, the Guadalajara lawyer Anastasio Rojas called attention to what he termed “a state of tyranny” in Jalisco, arguing that public leaders aligned themselves with the state’s aristocracy.

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95 Several scholars of Guadalajara point to the reforms as creating a more capitalistic society that widened the gap between the rich and poor, for example see Trujillo, “Léperos.”, 207; Jiménez Pelayo et al, *El Crecimiento Urbano*, 107-163.
and had “forgotten the cause” of “real democracy” in which they had been fighting for the past sixty years.  

As indigenous community members and small landholders lost access to land the economic structure shifted even farther away from subsistence-based to market-driven economies, and more than ever, rural peasants needed to earn money to subsist. In the process, the city of Guadalajara began to rapidly grow in size. Rural towns around the city were well-established and sustained this growth into the eighteenth century, but the land reforms of the 1850s shifted the balance dramatically in favor of the haciendas, the large rural estates of wealthy landowners, at the expense of rural peasants. The loss of agricultural lands, combined with efforts by state-leaders toward modernization and industrialization, led to waves of migration into the city. By 1858, the city had grown by three hundred percent, making it the third most densely populated city in Mexico, after the capital and Puebla.

In numerous cities across Latin America the changing economy of the countryside and the movement toward early forms of industrial production increased rural to urban migration, bringing more single and widowed women into cities looking for work alongside men. It was a documented phenomenon that scholars argue took place elsewhere in Mexico such as Mexico City and Puebla, as well as Latin America in São Paulo and Buenos Aires.
Guadalajara indicates that often more women than men migrated to cities. Likely this had to do with the fact that rural men frequently remained in the countryside to work jobs in mines or on haciendas, whereas common work for poor women, like domestic service and factory work shifted to cities.\textsuperscript{100} Single and widowed women were especially attracted to jobs in the burgeoning textile industry in Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{101} Although the wars for Independence destabilized industry in Jalisco, there was a resurgence after the 1840s that attracted even greater numbers of female workers.\textsuperscript{102} Between 1821 and 1850, there were ten percent more women of marriageable age than there were men in Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{103} Therefore, many women who arrived unmarried likely remained so given the limited pool of potential male suitors.

Some might question whether or not the increase in adult female singleness and widowhood in Guadalajara was a result of the wars for Independence. It is true that in these years violence plagued Mexico and resulted in abnormally high mortality rates among young men. By 1821 eleven years of war ended as Mexico celebrated its victory over Spain for national independence. However, in Jalisco most fighting occurred in the countryside and by 1816 had

\textsuperscript{100} For Mexico see Wasserman, \textit{Everyday Life and Politics}, 23-33; Elizabeth Kuznesof found similar patterns for Brazil, see “The Role of the Female-Headed Household in Brazilian Modernization: São Paulo, 1765-1836,” \textit{Journal of Social History} 13, no. 4 (1980), 598

\textsuperscript{101} Guy Thomson, “Cotton Textile Industry.”

\textsuperscript{102} Overall this allowed the city of Guadalajara greater integration into the regional economic system, which relied upon it as a market for its rural agricultural goods and a source of credit and capital; See Ramos Escándon, \textit{Industrialización, género y trabajo femenino}, 71; 162; Murúa, \textit{Breve Historia}, 100-109; Van Young, \textit{Hacienda and Market}, 1-6.

\textsuperscript{103} See Table 2.4; For a discussion of female work during this period see Chapter 4.
come to a halt in the region all together.\textsuperscript{104} While this might account for larger numbers of single and widowed women migrating into the city, it does not address the consistent presence of single and widowed women there after 1821.\textsuperscript{105} Although there was a slight increase in young widows in 1813, the overall percentages of widowed and single women steadily increased across the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{106} In Mexico and other parts of Latin America scholars have consistently argued that a growing demand for female labor in urban centers maintained the unequal sex ratio. My research confirms that this was true for Guadalajara’s female migrants. While there appears to have been a consistently increased number of single and widowed women of all ages, the sex ratio narrowed throughout the decades.\textsuperscript{107} Other studies of Guadalajara suggest higher mobility rates among the rural poor in the less turbulent 1840s than in 1821. Therefore, rural women did not come because of war, but rather as a part of a consistent cycle of migration connected to economic survival.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{104} For insurgency in Guadalajara see Van Young, \textit{The Other Rebellion}, 9.
\textsuperscript{105} See Chapter 1, Table 1.1.
\textsuperscript{106} See Table 2.3.
\textsuperscript{107} See Table 2.4.
Table 2.3\textsuperscript{109}

Average Age of Female Widows in Guadalajara by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4\textsuperscript{110}

Ratio of Men to Women by Year in Guadalajara, 1811-1895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>2265</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>15358</td>
<td>43.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>5144</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>8315</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>37813</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{110} The most complete data is reflected for 1821 and 1895. The years in between are used only to show rational patterns, but is based on data from a sample rather than a complete set of censuses. Data for the table was compiled using Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822; Censuses of Guadalajara, 1791-1930, Volume 2; Data for 1895 was taken from the AHJ, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895). The most complete data sets exist for 1821 and 1895; For more on this discussion see Chapter 4.
Once in the city migrants and the urban poor typically congregated in neighborhoods close to factories, where many worked. For this reason, particular neighborhoods including the outlying barrios of San Juan de Diós, Analco and Mexicaltzingo were notoriously crowded by “poor people and factory workers.”\footnote{Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara, Ramo Obras Públicas. Paquete 62, legajo 91, 1840.} Overall, Liberal reforms intensified an existing cycle of rural to urban migration and the city’s growth. The process and the proportion of growth did little to alleviate problems with overcrowding and poverty in Guadalajara.\footnote{Trujillo, “Léperos,” and Jiménez Pelayo et al, \textit{El Crecimiento Urbano}, 107-163; For information regarding increases in population see Table 2.3.} In fact, although many historians ascribe extensive social reform measures with the Porfiriato, municipal codes and construction projects from Guadalajara during the reform years suggest a sustained concern with the rapidly growing poor and immigrant populations. Disease was of major concern in the city by 1850, as an epidemic of cholera killed over three thousand residents. Most of those killed lived on the periphery in city’s the poorer barrios. Public health officials blamed the hygiene of the poor who they argued accumulated trash and excrement in their homes and frequently threw it into city streets.\footnote{Lilia Oliver, “La mortalidad, 1800-1850,” in \textit{Lecturas históricas de Guadalajara: Demografía y Urbanismo}, eds. José María Muriá y Jaime Olveda (México: Colegio Regiones de México, 1992),106. Lilia Oliver, \textit{Un verano mortal} (Guadalajara: Unidad Editorial del Gobierno de Jalisco, 1986), 42.} It was common of all city residents to deposit excrement into city streets where a cart pulled by mules came to collect it and deposit it outside the city. Other sources of contamination included public fountains, where the poor gathered water, bathed, and washed laundry.\footnote{Jiménez Pelayo et al, \textit{El Crecimiento}, 140.} To combat the spread of disease, new laws focused on the poor and the areas where they lived. For example, in 1852 Jalisco’s governor published a mandate to curtail disease and strictly enforced the washing of city streets. The code applied to all small plazas, markets, and
carriage sites and imposed fines on those caught throwing trash or water into public streets. In addition, the law prohibited washing and drying clothes on sidewalks and the sale of food on the streets. Such laws undoubtedly had major consequences for poor working women because women predominated in occupations such as laundry services and food sales. In that same year the mayor of Guadalajara sanctioned the building of a fortification on one side of the city to deter thieves and smugglers from entering the city. Early measures undertaken during the reform years focused on the poor as the source of disease, filth and crime in the city. The state simultaneously embarked on a series of projects to improve and beautify the city by caring for existing sidewalks and constructing a new western alameda (or tree-lined avenue). In 1856 the city employed contractors to build the Teatro Degollado, bringing theater and opera to elite residents. City leaders also took some initiatives to secularize Church property; they ordered a number of churches to be demolished and repurposed others. For example, El Beaterio de Santa Clara which had been a school of Christian doctrine and manual arts for girls became a military hospital. While there was some attempt at social reform projects during these years, Guadalajara experienced economic downturn between 1860 and 1876 that temporarily halted the efforts of city officials until the more stable years of the Porfiriato. The War of Reform and the French intervention were bloody and devastating not only to Mexico’s population but to its economy.

The Porfiriato, 1876-1910

The Porfiriato was known and named for the dictatorial leadership of Porfirio Díaz, who held the presidency in Mexico from 1876 to 1910. Politically speaking, although still heavily

115 BPEJ, Miscelánea, 157, Jesús Lopez Portillo (governor at the time), Bando de buen gobierno del gobernador constitucional del estado de Jalisco (Guadalajara, 1852).

116 Jiménez Pelayo et al, El Crecimiento, 156-163.
influenced by early nineteenth century Liberal goals of political freedom, secular society, individualism and free market economics, in this period Liberalism became more heavily influenced by Positivism. 117 Positivism was not a separate ideology, but a “scientific method” for formulating and adapting earlier Liberal ideas. 118 In Mexico, an elite cosmopolitan group of Mexico City científicos, or scientists, transformed it into the ideals of “order and progress” that were the centerpiece of the Díaz regime. Hence, it did not replace Liberalism, which remained the basic ideology among científicos and government leaders throughout the Porfiriato. Instead it became less ideological, and there was an ascendency of ‘scientific politics’ over doctrinaire Liberalism. 119 For this reason, most studies of women in nineteenth-century Mexico focus on the Porfiriato because under the heavy-handed dictatorship of Díaz, the Mexican state was well organized and had the authority to carry out Liberal legislation. To maintain power and enforce laws he used his secret police to torture and suppress uprisings, rig elections and subdue the freedom of the press. 120 Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the notions of order and progress which are so often ascribed to the age of Díaz were rooted in important historical transitions in Mexico and around the world; namely those that took place after Independence and during the Reforma, and in some cases even earlier.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Porfirián social reformers and politicians promoted notions of “order” and “progress” as a means to modernize Mexico and keep pace with European nations. Díaz and the científicos frequently defined progress in economic terms, and

117 Hale, Mexican Liberalism.
118 Hale, The Transformation of Liberalism, 14.
119 Ibid.
therefore reforms focused on opening avenues to free trade, private property, and economic expansion on a global scale. They placed much emphasis on order, as they believed that an ordered society and citizens was the best avenue for political stability and by consequence economic growth. In response to the weakened state of the Mexican economy after the Wars for Independence and years of upheaval, Porfirián economic policies focused on opening up the country to foreign investment and trade. These policies often favored foreign sponsored technology and industrialization, in addition to trade agreements which introduced cheaper goods into Guadalajara that local artisans had once produced. Much evidence suggests that during this period these policies shifted capital away from agriculture, mining, and local craft sectors, further weakening the rural economy. Much of the focus of policy by state and local governments centered on cities, as places where elite residents and politicians lived and where commercial transactions were made. In this way, Mexican cities could demonstrate and represent progress to foreign investors. In Guadalajara, for example, municipal governments installed telegraphs and cut down many of the city’s notorious tree-lined avenues to accommodate streetcars by 1878. Other modern imports included wider sidewalks, telephones, and electric lighting by 1884. Innovations fostered greater communication for business and commerce, and beautified the city. To maintain these standards city officials passed laws that mandated the maintenance and care of sidewalks by city residents. Elites enjoyed shopping in the newly renovated downtown, often at foreign owned department stores that

121 Agostini, Monuments of Progress, xi-xii.
123 Jiménez Pelayo et al, El Crecimiento, 166.
introduced them to the latest European fashions. Shortly thereafter the city welcomed the first railroad, the *Ferrocarril Central* in 1888. The arrival of locomotive transportation increased commercial activity by connecting Guadalajara with the rest of the country, and increased industrial production by bringing in foreign machinery needed for manufacturing. At the same however, it allowed for more and more goods to be imported from Europe and the United States, such as clothing, groceries, medicine, mechanical equipment, notions and hardware. This too undercut the local economy as certain goods once made by hand by artisans in Jalisco could not compete with the cheap price of mass-manufactured goods. It was also by 1898 that elites began to construct some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city. With telling names such as *Colonia Americana, Francesa, Moderna* and *Reforma*, the impressive mansions built in these new divisions with their mammoth courtyards, gardens and iron gates, broke up the colonial *cuadrícula* pattern and introduced even greater class distinctions and segregation among urban inhabitants.

The other aspect of *Porfirian* ideals was a notion of progress that excluded sectors of society deemed undesirable and adverse to modernization. In addition to making the city more attractive for investment and appear more cosmopolitan, elite residents in conjunction with municipal government officials hoped to create greater divisions in society to identify and isolate those inhabitants who did not their proscribed vision. For example, in 1881 public works departments installed public baths and showers around the city as a way to dissuade urban residents

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126 Jiménez Pelayo et al., *El Crecimiento Urbano*, 190.
accustomed to bathing in the city’s San Juan de Diós river.\textsuperscript{127} City planners also attempted to build on existing codes to improve sanitation and prevent the spread of disease.\textsuperscript{128} Other measures, such as an increased presence of city police and state takeover of welfare and reform institutions such as the poorhouse, hospital and penitentiaries (although they did not originate during the \textit{Porfiriato}) demonstrated a desire on the part of city officials to “clean up” and reform uncivilized elements of society to better fit modern notions of progress.\textsuperscript{129}

Overall, \textit{Porfirian} economic reforms had the greatest influence on Guadalajara and brought even greater numbers of rural migrants to the city, many of them widowed and single women. New economic policies led to continued urban growth in Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{130} By the 1880s cosmopolitan \textit{tapatios}\textsuperscript{131} believed their city was fully “modern,” and prided themselves on the fact that during the warfare of the previous decades they were the only Mexican city to initiate new construction projects, including a poorhouse, impressive opera house and state prison. By 1890, the city added an additional five hundred city blocks compared to its dimensions in 1800, and boasted over twenty-four churches, twenty public plazas and over fourteen bridges to connect the city to the other side of the Río San Juan de Diós.\textsuperscript{132} Economically Jalisco faced major transitions in agriculture that shifted the region’s economic focus toward industrial

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 166.
\textsuperscript{128} BPE, Miscelánea, 157, Jesús Lopez Portillo (governor at the time), \textit{Bando de buen gobierno del gobernador constitucional del estado de Jalisco} (Guadalajara, 1852); Ibid, 1
\textsuperscript{129} Jorge A. Trujillo and Juan Quintar, \textit{Pobres, Marginados y Peligros} (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2003), 205; Subsequent chapters go further in depth on this subject, see Chapters 4, 5 & 6.
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Tapatio} is a nickname to describe a person from Guadalajara.
\textsuperscript{132} Bárcena, 22-39; 81.
manufacturing by the turn of the century. Throughout the Porfiriato the state of agriculture was miserable. Although it remained the biggest industrial sector for the state, several crises, including freezes and droughts occurred in 1886, 1889, 1891, and 1893 created imbalances for the Jalisco economy. Overall, the local cultivation of corn, wheat and beans diminished and caused widespread price increases for basic foods. 133 Porfirián trade policies welcomed foreign investment which made Guadalajara a more attractive place for entrepreneurs to build modern factories. Indeed, between 1876 and 1905 Jalisco became one of the most important zones of textile production in the nation. 134 Although textile factories began to arrive in Guadalajara as early as the 1840s, by 1878 ten new factories opened which specialized in the construction of yarns and fabrics. By 1889, strong capitalists from France formed the Industrial Company of Guadalajara, merging two major factories in the city. Other burgeoning industries included soap, electric, oil, tequila and tobacco factories. 135 By the 1880s, new factories also began to mass-produce goods once made by artisans in trades like carpentry, furniture making, shoemaking, meatpacking and blacksmithing. 136 The rise of these new industries and the introduction of factory jobs combined with a weakened agricultural sector and inflation, led to massive migrations of rural peasants from Jalisco into Guadalajara. While urban and rural residents watched the prices of corn, beans and chile rise in upwards of one hundred percent, wages only

133 María A. Aldana Rendón, Desarrollo económico de Jalisco 1821-1940 (Universidad de Guadalajara, 1979), 83.
134 Jan Bazant, “Estudio sobre la productividad de la industria algodonera mexicana, 1843-1845.”; Lucas Alemán y la Revolución Industrial en México,” in La industria nacional y el comercio exterior (Mexico: Banco nacional de comercio exterior, 1977), 31; Ramos Escandón, Industrialización, 162-164.
135 Aldana, 141.
136 Bárcena, Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880, 147-48; Also see Chapter 4, Table 4.6.
increased by sixty percent throughout the Porfiriato.\textsuperscript{137} Therefore, the option of factory work appealed to an ever expanding class of industrial workers made up of rural migrants and artisans.

Overall, single and widowed women continued to make up a majority of the growing urban population. As the city began to grow by 1895, adult women continued to outnumber men by five percent.\textsuperscript{138} Therefore, adult female singleness remained a constant throughout the century. The need to earn wages and the availability of commonly held female jobs as domestic servants, laundresses, cooks and factory workers attracted women to Guadalajara. Textile work in particular was a female-dominated and growing industry. Textile factories and their products varied as did skills required to perform certain jobs. For example, \textit{La Prosperidad Jalisciense} and \textit{La Escoba} supplied yarn and cotton to local artisans, while others specialized in finer textiles and skills, such as \textit{La Caja del Agua} which produced silk \textit{rebozos} (shawls). Jobs in these factories included positions as combers, spinners, dyers, and weavers which were predominantly female, but occasionally included men. Women worked exclusively as \textit{canilleras}, or spoolers.\textsuperscript{139} Cigar factories also commonly employed female workers. By 1880, the city had five tobacco factories, all with a majority of female workers. The \textit{El Buen Gusto}, founded in 1864, employed mostly women, having 540 female workers and only 60 male. The same was true for, \textit{La Simpatía} which employed over 300 women, \textit{La Flor de Orizaba}, hired 150 women and 25 men, \textit{and La Esperanza}, which took on 80 women and 16 men.\textsuperscript{140} Thus, rapid industrialization by the

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{137} It is estimated that corn rose by 108\%, beans by 63\% and chile by 147\%. See \textit{Estadísticas Económicas del Porfiriato. Fuerza de Trabajo y actividad por sectores} (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1965), 17.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{138} See Chapter 1, Table 1.1; Table 2.4.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{139} Bárcena, \textit{Descripción de Guadalajara}, 147-165.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
latter part of the century played an important role in the increased migration of women to the city, many of whom were single or widowed and unattached.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that the transformations of the long nineteenth century contributed to the growth of Mexican cities and encouraged the increased migration and presence of unattached women in Guadalajara. Industrial and urban growth led rural women to seek opportunities in the city. Single and widowed women in particular, frequently driven by a lack of familial or spousal support, ended up in Guadalajara to work as domestic servants, laundresses, cooks or as factory workers. Their lives were deeply entangled in an evolving political and economic climate that pervaded all facets of life. The next chapter explores how unattached adult single women became a common yet stigmatized part of Guadalajara’s urban population.
Figure 2.2\textsuperscript{141}

Urban Growth of Guadalajara, 1542-1906

\textsuperscript{141} AHJ, María de los Angeles Partida Flores, “Mapa del Crecimiento de Guadalajara,” PL 7. 895.599. 2002; For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.
These images of a street located in the center of town depict some of the new innovations brought to Guadalajara by the late nineteenth-century. Notice the trolley tracks, widened sidewalks and European style architecture. Photo reprinted in Iguiniz, *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos*. 

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142 These images of a street located in the center of town depict some of the new innovations brought to Guadalajara by the late nineteenth-century. Notice the trolley tracks, widened sidewalks and European style architecture. Photo reprinted in Iguiniz, *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos*. 

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The role of single women in Mexican society became more relevant in the context of its Liberal political and legal changes. The strength of Mexico’s traditional patriarchal family represented the last semblance of order in society after Independence. Facing political disintegration the early Republic looked to male household heads to maintain order in their homes to counter political instability and enforce changing notions of behavior and conduct in a modernizing nation. Although the importance of the family within the social and political culture of the colonial period cannot be underplayed, in post-Independence Mexico the role of women as wives and mothers took on greater nationalistic tones. Young governments across Latin America looked to “male elders to represent both the family to the state and the state inside the family.” Thus, an ideal patriarchal household was comprised of a husband who headed the family, a wife and children. This ideal family would become the centerpiece of a modern society founded on the principles of Liberalism. In effect, state leaders became more involved in ideological debates and legislation regarding the function of marriage. Increasingly, as Liberal

144 Ibid., 276.
ideology influenced greater secularization in Mexican society, the state slowly attempted to replace the role of the Catholic Church in private life. This chapter reveals that legislation intended to strengthen marriage and the family in nineteenth-century Mexico sparked contentious debates among politicians, the Catholic Church and women themselves.

By the time of *La Reforma* in the 1850s, politicians took a greater interest in marriage because they argued that national progress rested on the family, with fathers and mothers who passed on the ideals of civic responsibility to their children. New legal codes and popular rhetoric served to strengthen the role of patriarchs within the family, and reinforce already proscribed gender roles for women as wives and mothers living under the surveillance and protection of a strong patriarchal head. Although politically marginalized, Liberal governments mobilized women around the notion that fathers were the authoritative figures within the family, while mothers and wives were the “moral compass.” Through similar reforms the state sought to promote wives and mothers as the chief managers of their households and educators of the nations’ future citizens, their male children.146 Greater emphasis on marriage and family left little room for a growing population of unmarried, widowed and single women in Guadalajara. The political rhetoric of liberals and conservatives marginalized the growing population of single women who, even if they desired to marry, found it increasingly difficult to find a partner.

Indeed by late century, between 1895 and 1908 legal marriage was on the decline in Mexico.147


The Rhetoric of the Liberal Family

Family and marriage have always been important in Mexican society. Compared to studies of family history in the United States and Europe, the Latin American family played a more central and active role in national development from the colonial period onward. The colonial Mexican family was deeply patriarchal, with husbands wielding considerable control over their wives and children. Women held greater responsibility in preserving the honor of the family by maintaining sexuality purity before marriage and restraint afterward. For men honor defined his power and hierarchy within the family rather than his virtue. Colonial legal codes placed men as legal heads of household. For these reasons, husbands controlled all assets including their wife’s property and held legal guardianship rights over children. Fathers also played an important role in choosing marriage partners for their children by the mid-eighteenth century. Wives enjoyed extremely limited juridical power and legal codes mandated “obedience” to husbands. She did however have some legal identity within ecclesiastical courts where wives could file for annulment and write their own will. Colonial law also provided legal protection over women’s dowry and any property she brought with her to marriage. As a whole however, studies of the colonial Mexican family suggest that prior to the nineteenth century, the family maintained a more “corporate” identity and political leaders preferred problems be

handled in the privacy of the home or within the church. Work by historians like Elizabeth Kuznesof however, suggest that by the nineteenth century the family became a much greater “agent” of social change. Both the Catholic Church and Mexican state viewed the family as the “pillar of society” and for this reason they had a deep-seated interest in the preservation of marriage.

Increased importance given to the family and marriage became part of the political debates of Mexico’s mid-nineteenth-century reform years and continued into the Porfiriato. As early as 1859, the Guadalajara-born writer and priest Agustín de la Rosa professed that the family was “one of the most powerful elements of decorum in society, of honor and morality, of well-being, of power and prosperity of nations and the universe.” De la Rosa was deeply inspired and wrote extensively on the virtues the European Enlightenment. As with many of the ideas floating around in the period, Latin American intellectuals looked toward Europe for models of development. Evidence of the fact abounds in the collection of rare books housed in Guadalajara’s public library. In La Familia, first published in Italy and republished in Spanish by the Italian born writer Lorento del Pozzo by 1888, a chapter titled “Government and Family: Fountains of Individual and National Prosperity,” explained that he felt the need to have the book translated as Italy and Mexico were experiencing similar problems which required immediate solutions. Living in México City, he argued that the family was a “fundamental pillar in the social foundation,” and emanating from this “natural institution” the nation was bestowed with

150 Seed, To Love, Honor, and Obey.
152 BPEJ, Num de Misc: 12, # of doc: 4, Agustín de la De la Rosa, “El Matrimonio Civil, considerada en sus relaciones con la religion, la familia, y la sociedad,” Guadalajara, 1859.
the great civil institutions of marriage, inviolable patria potestad, ideas of property, supreme authority, and inheritance rights.”

Like many political theorists of the age, Del Pozzo saw the family as a model of society and believed that the “purpose of the family was to form a cohesive unit in order to serve a common good and to propel the “ever increasing progress" of the nation.

In fact, well into the twentieth century legislators and reformers would rely on the model of a strong family in times of political chaos in Guadalajara. In 1912, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra brought forth a proposal to the Jalisco congress to implement a homestead act in the state of that revolved around the family. The premise of the act was to allow disenfranchised rural peasants and the poor working classes of Guadalajara an opportunity to settle and cultivate land, with the only stipulation being that homesteaders be married. In his initiative “El Bien de Familia,” he suggested that his ultimate goal was to “protect the domestic home and preserve the power of the family” in society. At the same time, he intended for the plan to fix Jalisco’s problems in the Revolutionary period.

Indeed nineteenth-century thinkers believed that an ordered and disciplined family would pave the way for progress, economic growth and social stability in Mexican society. They believed the solution to the ills of Mexican society lay within the family through husbands and wives, who were both expected to contribute to the rearing and raising of good citizens. This responsibility was critical, as a lack of proper guidance within the home could have a negative

153 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, #291, doc 2, Lorento del Pozzo, “La Familia: Preceptos de educación de un padre a su hijo: Enseñadelo á ser buen ciudadano, buen marido, buen padre,” in La Familia: Preceptos de educacion de un padre a su hijo (Mexico, 1888), 4-5.
154 Ibid., 5.
155 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, 752, doc 1, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, “El bien de familia,” Initiative presented at the Congress of the state of Jalisco, 1912, 21.
impact on society. As del Pozzo lamented, "if we consider that the family is the compendium of
the nation, it would be easy for us to understand that domestic disorder and confusion would lead
to many evils that afflict the entire social body." Therefore, the family became central to the
narrative on state formation.

Civil Marriage

By mid-century, law makers in Mexico challenged the role of the Catholic Church as
guardian of family laws. In keeping with its political goals to secularize society and increase the
ability of the national government to control the population it created the civil register in 1859,
known as the Ley Orgánico del Registro, it required state registry of all marriages, births and
deaths. In this way, the state aimed to seize family organization away from church control. For
many, full Independence required that religious and political matters be separated. Much
debate between religious and political leaders ensued in Guadalajara in the aftermath of these
new laws. The most heated were those regarding civil marriage. Despite attempts at similar
reforms during the Bourbon era, the civil marriage law was unique in that state governments
no longer entrusted the registration and annulment of marriage to the Catholic Church. The
law also had broader implications for state involvement in the family. As Carole Pateman
argues, the rise of the modern nuclear family consisting of father, mother and children,

158 See Verena Martínez Alier, Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A
Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society (London: Cambridge University
Press, 1974); Ann Twinam, Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality and
159 “Ley del Matrimonio Civil 23 de Julio de 1859,” Legislación Mexicana, vol 8, 696.
originated in the nineteenth-century “marriage contract.” Legislative debates over civil marriage illuminate the controversies that surrounded a sacrament that some desired to secularize. In Mexico, increased state emphasis and regulation of a nuclear, monogamous family model, both legally and ideologically, worked in tandem with the overall process of state consolidation. Many intellectuals and politicians believed that marriage sustained order in society and bred a strong and patriotic citizenry. The Catholic Church however, seeing marriage as a sacrament, found the political utility arguments employed in legal and popular dialogue sacrilegious. In addition, they believed marriage unified “the precious values of family with society.” Both sides of the debate however, validate the trust that state leaders placed on marriage and family for the future development of Mexico.

Although the 1859 law did not ban religious marriage, it required that all church marriages be registered with civil authorities to legalize the union. Conservatives in Guadalajara like opposed civil marriage and argued that Liberal notions of “progress” and individual “happiness” coming out of Europe were not only irreligious, but harmful to the family. Indeed, they relegated Mexicans to a state of “bastardy.” From a Catholic perspective, marriage was a sacrament of the heart and conscience, and individuals should not be “focused on the material utility that results

162 De la Rosa, 31.
163 France was the first Catholic nation to institute Civil Marriage in 1804. See Carmen Diana Deere and Léon, “Liberalism,” 636-38.
from marriage.” According to de la Rosa, the legislation of civil matrimony was based in “purely material interests,” not only for individuals themselves, but also for the state.  

Religious thinkers like de la Rosa provide historical snapshots of how church leaders and their key allies interpreted the state’s agenda through its reform laws. De la Rosa’s arguments draw attention to the growing presence of the state in what he felt were the personal lives of city residents, not to mention a matter of one’s soul. He contested what he saw as the manipulation of the conjugal union between man and woman for political and economic ends, believing that marriage was not intended to “propagate wealth for men—as if it were plants or beasts; nor is it to provide to society good and complete citizens—as is the intention of an irreligious politic.” He found the concerns placed in marriage on financial well-being disheartening, and noted that for some politicians it was the “supreme end of society.” Citing articles of the law, he chided the proponents of civil marriage, and their belief that it be “written on paper, not in the heart.” He was also critical of the state’s interpretation of marriage as a means intended to produce legitimate offspring, order procreation around sons and educate children to serve the needs of the state. He found these goals to be in contrast to the teachings of the Catholic Church, whereby “marriage was intended to conserve and multiply man, but in a dignified and rational manner, propagating fathers and sons of virtue.” Although he too believed that marriage played an important role in shaping society, he emphasized a religious one “of dignified men . . . worthy of

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164 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, Agustín de la De la Rosa, El Matrimonio Civil, considerada en sus relaciones con la religion, la familia, y la sociedad (Guadalajara, 1859), 4.
166 Ibid., 15. De la Rosa cites section 4, article 2 of the Ley Ortega, written by Sr. González Ortega, 1859.
inheriting the earth.” ¹⁶⁷ Thus, the law and the debate it fomented suggest that both the church and civil government began to weight the value of marriage more heavily.

De la Rosa’s interpretation of the law echoed the political concerns widely of numerous other clergy members in Mexico that feared civil marriage might weaken the significance of religious unions. ¹⁶⁸ Unlike liberal leaders, the church hierarchy believed that marriage was a sacrament sanctioned by God. In the eyes of the church the “union of two hearts” was based on conjugal love, something that was “inaccessible to politics.” ¹⁶⁹ The direct intervention of the state in civil marriage replaced a sacrament with which Catholics believed to be “a profane contract.” ¹⁷⁰ For the Catholic clergymen and their supporters in Guadalajara, marriage was a religious pact, and they feared the presence of the state in matters of religion, as it threatened their own role in private life. If “marriage was an object of religion, and Christians were an object of faith,” then “the church depend[ed] on the propagation of children … raised and educated as Christians” in the continuation of Catholic belief and ritual. ¹⁷¹ Rather than a sacrament, de la Rosa believed that civil marriage having become a “simple civil negotiation” stripped of its religious “sanctity” governed and legislated by the state according to the “pompous science of [the] decade,” would open “up Mexican domestic society to an age of degradation, immorality, and misfortune.” ¹⁷² Marriages without religion would lead to “unions of fleeting passions, fake marriages of interest, ¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
¹⁶⁸ Wasserman, Everyday Life and Politics, 139.
¹⁶⁹ De la Rosa, 26.
¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 44.
¹⁷¹ Ibid., 14.
¹⁷² Ibid.
or feigned and forced marriages." In this way, de la Rosa argued that the new laws had a direct impact on the honor of the family, and by extension women. If left up to the state “passions” might rule society, increasing the rate of non-marriage.

Women also feared that the push toward civil marriage would undermine sacramental marriage and put the honor of wives in jeopardy. Without the fear of breaking a sacred vow, women believed it could also make it easier for husbands to abandon their wives. A husband who no longer respected the conjugal union “would begin to act on his whims . . . leaving his young and inexperienced companion in solitude and loneliness.” With this set of values “marriages will lack love and confidence,” and husbands and wives will be denied “a true union.” Essentially, from a religious perspective, women feared that civil marriage would ruin the “faith of marriage” and “each day make more impossible the holy alliance blessed by the church through the sanction of heaven.” In line with the Catholic Church, women also believed that marriage served as a “blanket” of protection as “marital authority . . . protects and supports [women’s] feeble nature, [and] inexperienced youth.” From this perspective, the diminished importance of religious marriage was not only a potential threat to the family, but also a danger for women. It had the potential to leave even more women involuntarily single and abandoned.

In 1856, over five hundred women in Guadalajara raised their voices in protest over what they believed was an assault on private life and Catholicism in Mexico. In a tone that was ardently xenophobic and anti-protestant, a group of Catholic women from the city went before

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173 Ibid., 33.
174 BPEJ, Miscellaneous #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, Manuel de la jóven adolescente, 23.
175 Ibid., 24-25.
the Jalisco state congress to argue against recent liberal changes to the state constitution. These women feared that the liberal direction of the nation was anti-Catholic. Among their complaints were inclusions made to the national constitution by liberal lawmakers favoring greater religious tolerance. They argued the necessity for a strong Catholic culture in Guadalajara. In a petition presented to Congress, signed individually by a group of married, widowed and single women, they made their case for religious “intolerance.” The women argued that “men more interested in liberty than conscience” had infiltrated national and state politics. The women who signed the petition strongly believed that Mexico was a Catholic nation, and the extension of the state into religion would lead to the spread of Protestantism in the country and a lack of respect for the sacrament of marriage. They argued that “the ladies (of Guadalajara)” refused to fall into “a cult like Protestantism, that detests the most sacred rituals [and] that supports the union of marriage as only a law of convenience.” 176

The petition offers important historical insight into how a group of activist conservative women perceived Liberal reforms. For them, liberal ideas were as foreign to Guadalajara as Protestantism. They expressed their outrage over politicians who wished to “take advantage of the examples that other nations have given us,” but insisted that “after the vertigo that causes the furor to innovate, they will return again to hear the voice of reason.” Although civil marriage laws had not yet been enacted, debates over the issue had begun and these women felt compelled to address it. They argued that rather than mettle in the affairs of the home, state legislators “should busy themselves with building canals, railroads, eliminating thieves and killers, and try to govern without the blindness of political parties who only care about administrative measures”

176 BPEJ, Miscelleanus 12, doc3, *Real Cedula*, “Representacion que las senoras de Guadalajara dirigen al Soberano Congreso Constituyente, sobre que En la Carta Fundamental que se discute no quede consignada, La Tolerencia de Cultos en la Republica” (Guadalajara, 1856), 8.
rather than “to distract and pacify those that come to do good work and uphold the family.”

The women of Guadalajara believed that religious marriage played an important role in the family, and that it was not a matter of state consideration but a private one, and a Catholic one at that. In this way there were also elite class considerations in their arguments. Part of their aversion to civil marriage originated in their belief that it gave license to the widespread practice of informal unions and the practice of amasiato (taking a mistress or consensual lover) that was common and frequently associated with the urban poor and mestizo classes.

Overall, these women rejected the influence of Liberalism in Mexican governance as the state became more involved in matters that were once the domain of the Catholic Church. Given the limits of the documentation, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these female protesters from Guadalajara were representative of the larger population of women. Their message does however seem to make a strong case for Conservative values. In this way the women do share a characteristic regional conservatism often associated with Guadalajara.

Those who came before congress in 1856 evolved into new women’s Catholic confraternities. Most notable was the very active Sociedad Católica Nuestra Señora de la Rosa Hijas de María,

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177 Ibid., 5.
which was active in the city from 1894 until 1926. Other studies demonstrate a strong political activism among conservative women in Guadalajara well into the twentieth century.¹⁸⁰

Aside from the cultural backlash opened up by the civil marriage debate in Guadalajara, arguments concerning the function of marriage in Mexican society are revealing in other ways. The debate reflected not only a growing involvement of the state in women’s lives, but the way in which the significance and purpose of the union between men and women shifted to support national goals. The church and religious community criticized the state for its intentional manipulation of the marriage contract, and its involvement in matters which had both moral and eternal consequences. In its view, civil marriage regulated by the government infringed on spiritual laws. As a whole, however, the civil marriage debate shed new light on marriage itself, both by civil and religious mandate. This new vantage point would only heighten the importance placed on marriage in nineteenth-century Mexican society.

The Making of the Ideal Family

Although the Church and many women in Guadalajara opposed state sanctioned marriage and the role that the state assumed within the family, Liberals and Conservatives agreed that the power and role of husbands within families should be strengthened. The cornerstone of stability in society would be the family, but a strong family depended on a strong patriarch and reformers believed women should yield to male authority because it was conducive to the progress of the

The family constituted one of the first sites of power in society, and marriage established the “social organization regulated by specific legislation” necessary to delineate power relationships among family members. In nineteenth-century Mexican society law and custom granted husbands considerable authority over wives and children. In his analogy between governing and fatherhood, the Guadalajaran religious writer Agustín de la Rosa commented that like “a father that is not well possessed of his Christian values, a lax government . . . permits the entrance and development of corruption.” Given the connections that state leaders made between maintaining order in society and the patriarchal family, “a repressive society” would require a “a repressive family.” Such a family required a strong male leader. These goals served only to further stress the importance of marriage and family over singleness and non-marriage. In turn, new legal codes, reforms, and proscriptive literature intended to strengthen the role of male heads of household and set the perimeters for individuals within the family.

These conceptions of family became idealized at a time when fewer and fewer Mexicans lived in a male-headed nuclear family. In Guadalajara between 1821 and 1888, less than half of urban residents resided in a male-headed nuclear family. Widowed or unmarried women headed the other half. Female-headed households threatened liberal goals that counted on male

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183 De la Rosa, *El Matrimonio Civil,* 19.
185 Data from the census reveals that by 1821 41% lived in a nuclear family model, and from 1838-1842 42%, and by 1888 46.5%. See Claudia Rivas Jiménez, “Defense of Craft:
domination within the private sphere. For this reason, legislators focused their efforts on new laws after 1859 to heighten men’s control over wives and daughters and promote the male-headed household as an ideal for Mexican society.

In many ways, the reorganization of the Mexican family in the nineteenth century is reflected in the reform of its legal codes. As already noted, a main point of contention over these new laws began in 1859 between state and church officials over civil matrimony and divorce. One of the first Latin American countries to do so, Mexico mandated obligatory civil matrimony in 1859 and eventually adopted a civil divorce by mutual consent law in 1870. Recent interpretations of the laws suggest that their official intention was to make marriage more appealing through the option of divorce and re-marriage. The Catholic Church opposed civil marriage because it feared it would lead to the legalization of divorce, and “civil divorce” would “harm and degrade women by taking away the protection and security of un-dissolvable marriage.”

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186 Guadalajara’s Artisans in the Era of Economic Liberalism, 1842-1907” (PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 2008), Appendix L, Table 4.11.
189 Deere and León, “Liberalism,” 642.
argued that civil marriage with the option to divorce gave men a considerable amount of authority and stripped away some the safeguards that religious marriage afforded women.

Evidence from Guadalajara indicates that many women opposed civil matrimony and divorce as well. Some feared that divorce made marriage a contract between individuals and less focused on Catholicism’s emphasis on the union of two souls. While the option to divorce might potentially give women leverage within marriage, it also required that they had enough economic resources outside of marriage to separate from their husbands. The introduction of divorce in the Latin America was a radical transformation as it suggested, unlike Catholicism, that the individual happiness of men and women was greater than that of the family. Some studies suggest that men benefited more from new divorce laws, and that liberal lawmakers did not envision it as a boon for women. It allowed men the freedom to extinguish unwanted marriages without suffering the loss of honor that so often afflicted women. Conversely, for religious Conservatives, female initiated divorce was a “repeal of the rights of husbands,” and rebellion against “marital authority.”

Although women in Guadalajara petitioned for divorce more often than men in the years after the passage of the law, divorce proceedings remained rare. Between 1879 and 1886 sixteen women and only four men sought a civil divorce in Jalisco’s civil court. The majority of divorces occurred from 1879 to 1884 and declined in frequency in subsequent years. Fifty

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190 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Manuel de la joven adolescente o un libro para mis hijas. Educación cristian y social de la mujer” (Barcelona, 1883), 21.
192 For a discussion see Dore, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back,” 25; and Deere and León, “Liberalism.”
193 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, #758, doc 1 Faustina, Saez de Melgar, Manuel de la joven adolescente o un libro para mis hijas. Educación cristian y social de la mujer (Barcelona, 1883), 24.
percent of the cases cited abuse as the main cause and twenty five percent filed due to adultery.  

It is important to note however, that even before civil divorce became an option for women ecclesiastical divorces, or annulments, did increase between 1840 and 1862. Like civil divorce, most were brought by women for adultery or abuse against their husbands. Records indicate that after the passage of the divorce law annulments ceased between 1871 and 1885, but resumed again after 1886. It appears that annulments declined in the latter years of the century, likely a result of the availability of civil marriage and divorce. Overall, I would argue that women typically reserved divorce and annulment for extreme cases of abuse or infidelity, and the infrequency of these cases indicate that divorce laws only offered a few women recourse within marriage. Ultimately the evidence indicates that men still held the upper hand in marriage despite greater opportunities for women to contest abuse. Furthermore, the data does not reflect involuntary separation, such as the spousal abandonment frequently described by women to judges and welfare agencies. In these cases men often fled to other cities or parts of town and failed to provide for their wives. While many women attempted to seek justice or assistance in these cases, there was often little that could be done to ensure husbands fulfilled his duties to provide for his wife and family.

One of the most consistent liberal legal reforms across Latin America was the change made to the legal age of majority and consent, the age when a son or daughter no longer required parental permission to marry. This change had a significant impact on the role of male patriarchy within the family. By 1866, both the age of majority and consent shifted from age twenty five to twenty-one.

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197 See Chapter 5 and 6.
twenty one for men and women in Mexico. With the exception of voting, this change gave single women equal rights with single men, who now at the age of twenty one were permitted to inherit and manage their own property and income, as well as marry without the consent of a guardian. The 1870 code also mandated that until the age of thirty, single women required permission to move out of their parental home. Lowering the age of consent may have increased individual freedom, but at the same time the protection of the church over consent diminished, opening potential loopholes for patriarchal control over children and single daughters.

With few inheritance protections built into the law for married women, dowries functioned as a support system in case of widowhood or ecclesiastical divorce. The 1870 Civil Code in Mexico made dowries an optional part of civil marriage, and women lost special dispensations from the colonial period that had protected their dowries from their husband’s creditors in the case of widowhood or divorce. Although it is important to note that the dowry was already in decline as a cultural practice in Latin America beginning in the eighteenth century, control over a wife’s financial resources gave husbands a considerable new advantage in the marriage contract. Furthermore, the 1870 codes maintained restrictions that prevented married women from entering into legal contracts, undertaking litigation or selling or buying property without her husband’s permission.

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198 Manuel Mateos Alarcón, *Lecciones de derecho civil: Estudios sobre el Código Civil del DF, promulgado en 1870, con anotaciones a las reformas introducidas por el Código de 1884* (Mexico City: Librería de J. Valdes y Cueva, 1904), 34; Arrom, “Changes in Mexican Family Law,” 308.
200 Ibid, 650; See also Nazzari, Muriel. *Disappearance of the Dowry: Women, Families, and*
By 1880, liberal legislation introduced the separation of property and testamentary freedom. Despite these changes, many new laws had stipulations that required prenuptial agreements in order for true separation of property laws to be enacted. While the new mandates may have increased women’s access to their own property and income, it may also indicate a potential loss of income for women who married with little resources. In accordance with Liberal thought, the law served to protect men’s private property before marriage through a prenuptial agreement. In addition, women who did not work outside the home lost some of the recognition of their domestic labor, embodied in previous laws such as the gananciales regime which mandated husbands had to share their possessions with wives. The separation of property was likely promoted as an option in Mexico because it “fit the more flexible, diversified economy, and society of the nineteenth century.” At the same time, María Francois’ study of credit in nineteenth-century Mexico suggests that throughout time the decline in the dowry contributed to an overall decline in women’s movable property. Thus, changes to property and inheritance also served to strengthen the financial role of husbands in marriage.

Therefore, while nineteenth-century reform laws did add many benefits for married women, legal studies confirm that they also served to reinforce men’s position in Mexico as heads of household and family. Married women were still legally required to reside with their husband’s in the same residence, and husband’s maintained patria potestad over children in cases of


Arts. 2009, 2102, 2110–13, 2120, 2121, 2205, and 2208–9, 1870 Mexican civil code.

Deere and León, “Liberalism,” 668.


Francois, A Culture of Everyday Credit, 10.
divorce or separation. Some arguments suggest that married women truly suffered a loss of legal capability through these new legal codes, reverting them to a state of “incapable persons or minors” in the eyes of the law.  

Although numerous works argue that patriarchal control did not go unchallenged, Mexican women’s full legal independence would not take place in Mexico until 1917. Additionally, social and cultural shifts in the use of dowries and the introduction of testamentary freedom put daughters in more uncertain positions, offering fewer guarantees and greater vulnerability because it reduced their bargaining power in marriage.  

While many changes to the legal code in Mexico served to enhance individual freedom, many proved to strengthen patriarchy in order to firmly establish the family as a centerpiece of the new state.

Husbands, Wives & Mothers

As the family took center stage in Mexican national politics, the role of marriage also took on new significance by the 1850s. Overall, the introduction of civil marriage and divorce increased state intervention in the domestic sphere, bringing the public into the private

207 Ibid., 669-671.
The changes had a profound impact on women, particularly in terms of marital status. Legal codes sought to strengthen the family by giving greater authority to husbands. This too brought about a redefinition of women’s role in the home as wives and mothers. Nineteenth-century Mexican liberals believed women, in conjunction with their duties in the family as wives and mothers, had an important role to play in national development as educators of productive citizens, efficient managers of the home, and sources of comfort for their working husbands. Liberal and conservative reformers, journalists, and religious activists all utilized a rhetoric intended for elite audiences which emphasized highly class-based and gendered ideals for married women to set them far apart from the numerous poor and unattached women in the city.

The belief that biologically men and women served different functions in society which relegated them to different spheres was the foundation for the ideal patriarchal family. An 1866 Guadalajara editorial described male and female character as diverse, ascribing men the qualities of “strength and power,” while women were “delicate and beautiful.” According to the article this explained why “the theater of the man was the world, and for women it was the domestic home.” In the home, a woman’s role was a private one and facilitated her husband’s public duties; in return her husband would protect and provide for his family. In this regard, liberals, conservatives, and clergy agreed. In his lecture on the education of girls, a Guadalajara bishop

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209 A similar argument has been made by Abascal Johnson, “Entre la sevicia y la dignidad,” 240. In her article she utilizes an ecclesiastical divorce case to show how this process was occurring as early as the 1830’s by the Catholic Church. A similar argument can be made now for the state. 210 Dore, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back,” 23; Escandón, “The Social Construction.” 211 Arrom, The Women of Mexico City, 15-52. 212 “¿Por qué la mujer debe ser más pura que el hombre?” in El Imperio, núm 24, Guadalajara, March 24, 1866.
took his reasoning further and suggested women could not be educated or perform jobs the way men do because their curiosities are often “vain and pretentious.” Because women suffered from a “more feeble and curious spirit than men,” it made it difficult for them to dedicate themselves to their studies. In essence, women’s function in society was to “manage their households well and obey their husbands.” Given women’s inability to “govern the state, fight wars, or enter the priesthood,” they had no need of learning the affairs of men such as “politics, the art of military, jurisprudence, philosophy or theology.” He reasoned further that women could not perform physical labor because their bodies, like their spirits, were less strong and robust and instead must resign themselves to things they can perform “tranquilly” in the home.  

These biologically determined gender differences suited women for the duties of wife and mother, and better prepared men to be leaders inside and outside the home.

While women’s biological differences warranted the separation of male and female space in society, early modern scientific studies backed notions that women and men occupied different roles in the home. Despite seeing women as physically, mentally and emotionally incapable of performing duties outside of the home, women’s most important role would be as supportive wives and mothers within the home. Much of the proscriptive literature on gender directed its attention toward elite society. It was in these homes where women, freed from the necessity of working outside the household could best perform such duties. Although they disagreed on the intentions of marriage, the Guadalajara church and state agreed that “a judicious woman . . . is the soul of a great house. She maintains order to maintain the well-being and health of her family, and men, who have all the public authority would not be able to do their

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213 BPEJ, #286, doc 3 “La educación de las niñas,” 2-3.
214 Ruggiero, Modernity in the Flesh, 24.
jobs without the help of women.” Therefore, if Mexico was going to be “unified” with the help of the patriarchal family, women’s role would be fundamental “in civilizing [the family] through her care, attention and natural authority.” Her “consistency in the house and attention to the minutia” was paramount to its success. 215 The gendered rhetoric promoted by both state and ecclesiastic officials established bourgeois married women’s roles as fundamental to the achievement of national progress.

According to liberal reformers, a successful marriage required a wife who put the interests of her husband and children first and maintained honor within the home. Such ideas were not new to nineteenth-century Mexico, but were passed down from the colonial period and based on the ideals of the elite patriarchal family model. It was an ideal established for the privileged. This is not to say that the working classes and poor did not share similar beliefs regarding the honor of wives and mothers. 216 However, the messages geared at elite women emphasized household management and education, whereas instructions for poor women focused on proper hygiene and childrearing. 217 By the 1880s, the idealized elite female world was to be centered entirely on family life and marriage. 218

In 1883, the widely popular Spanish novelist, journalist and liberal reformer Faustina Saez de Melgar advised Latin American women of both their Christian and social obligations to modern

215 Ibid., 4.
216 Several scholars of Latin America suggest that gender ideals set forth for elites were not ignored by sectors of the lower classes and poor, See Lyman Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, eds., The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America.” (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).
society in her manual on women’s education. Melgar published extensively in Spain and Latin America. As a liberal woman she advocated strongly on behalf of the education of middle class women. Ironically, she made a name for herself in the publishing world by instructing women on their place within the home.\(^\text{219}\) Believing in the progress and advancement of liberal ideologies, she promoted the notion that if one wished to reform society, they had to begin with the family. In her view, domestic virtues could translate into public ones.\(^\text{220}\) Foremost she recognized women’s primary obligation to her husband, noting that only through marriage could women fulfill their “maternal” role in life. According to Melgar and in teaching with the Catholic Church, "woman was born to obey man; not to be his slave, but his only companion and sister, to which he owes protection and all class of consideration."\(^\text{221}\) Thus, Melgar believed the marriage union was a reciprocal one, whereby both wives and husbands shared obligations and duties to one another. Although she agreed that the home was a man’s “empire,” had to provide and protect his wife and children in exchange for submission.\(^\text{222}\)

Part of the political backdrop of nineteenth-century Mexican life was a greater emphasis on new sciences as guarantees of advancement, and women’s expected role in the home was to be conducive to that progress.\(^\text{223}\) In keeping with the times, the writing of Saez de Melgar professed a “domestic science,” which argued that women were responsible for ordering the home. Similar to arguments made for state organization, a prosperous home was the product of

\(^{220}\) BPEJ, Miscellaneous #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, *Manuel de la jóven adolescente*, 5-6; 8.  
\(^{221}\) Ibid, 25.  
\(^{222}\) Ibid., 26.  
\(^{223}\) Ruggiero, *Modernity in the Flesh*, 2; 23.
hard “work, economy and order.” Like so many biological arguments made by state and Church leaders Saez de Melgar believed these were not only the central tenets of domesticity but women’s “domestic virtues.”

In order for a "woman to be respected and esteemed, she should be kind, attentive and respectful in society, [and] complacent, affectionate and good " in the home." Thus, the prosperity of a man’s home was tied to the virtue of his wife.

Wifely expectations expected women to be good household managers, as the “good order and handling of the house contributes and sustains the work of the father.”

According to Saez de Melgar, economy in this regard meant that women manage a household budget and avoided extravagance by “quieting their minds of ridiculous vanity.” She believed women’s virtue was selflessness to her family, and that the vanity of the time stemmed from fashion and other false idols, which she argued allowed for acceptable forms of narcissism among women. In addition to thrift in maintaining the household income, women should be selfless in domestic duties. A wife should wake before her husband and perform chores regularly to ensure “cleanliness and order” at all times.

Outside of household duties, a Christian wife with her virtues closely tied to her family’s honor, was expected to venerate “the aged and priests,” devote all of her “eternal affection” to her children, and “her charity to the poor.”

Domestic science in concert with Christianity easily filtered into Mexican society. Writers in Mexico believed that man was the head of the household, in the same way that Christ was the head of the church. Similar to the relationship between individuals and God, man and

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224 BPEJ, Miscellaneous #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, Manuel de la jóven adolescente, 84.
225 Ibid., 94.
226 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, #291, doc 2, Lorento del Pozzo, “La Familia,” 142.
227 Ibid., 85; 86; 89.
228 Ibid., 93.
woman provided for each other and were both obligated to one another. Indeed, the reciprocal relationship between man and wife was closely tied to women’s honor. According to one newspaper article, “a dignified, pure, and modest woman has on her side the protection and boldness of her husband.” Likewise, writers in Guadalajara linked the honor of the household to its women, as women represented “affection and kindness” in society, and their greatest qualities found in their “modesty, moral beauty and honor.” At the same time, with so much of a household invested in its females, a home could be as easily corrupted by a bad wife and mother who brought “dishonor into the home.”

Conservative privileged women in Guadalajara tended to believe in many of the basic ideals set forth in Saez de Melgar’s manual, and utilized the importance given to their role in society as wives and mothers to protest in their petition to congress over religious rights in Guadalajara. The women prefaced their complaints by saying

How strange it seems that women, who do not enjoy full rights of citizenship, would take part . . . in a public debate; strange is right, it seems to our sovereignty that the woman, whose destiny is believed in society to be reduced to the care and concerns of the domestic home (hogar doméstico), now manifest excessive interest because they cannot agree to the law of tolerance of religions in our Republic.

229 Montsabre. El Matrimonio. Pedro Armengol y Cornet (traductor) (México, Juan de la Fuente Parres, Editor, 1888), 120.
231 “Muy importante par las señoras y señoritas,” en La Gaceta de Guadalajara, año vii, núm 30 (Guadalajara, 23 de Octubre de 1904), 11.
232 “Unas palabras a las madres” en La linterna de Diógenes, año v, 198 (Guadalajara, 25 de Abril de 1891), 2.
233 BPEJ, Misc #12, doc3. Real Cedula, 172, “Representacion que las señorases de Guadalajara dirigen al Soberano Congreso Constituyente, sobre que En la Carta Fundamental que se discute no quede consignada, La Tolerenica de Cultos en la Republica” (Guadalajara, 1856), 3.
The over 500 widowed, single and married women who signed the petition would later form The Catholic Society of Our Lady of the Roses, an organization that promoted Catholicism in the face of increasing secularization during the latter part of the century. In addition to operating a religious school, they published a newspaper that provided religious news, advice to women and religious devotions. Few records exist for the period, but the well-organized structure of the association consisted of a president, vice president, several secretaries, and a social as well as foreign relations committee. Before their formal organization in 1894, the group of women that presented themselves before congress were not contesting their role as wives and mothers, but rather utilized the rhetoric of dutiful wife and homemaker to make a case for their arguments concerning religion in the city. Their petition goes on to say that,

> It seems convenient that the woman, shut away in the confines of the domestic home, occupied only by her sacred duties of the family, far enough away to participate in the vehement passions which move men to fight for their respective flags with frenzy, instead before invoking in her house and in the temple with fervent and continued deprecations to the true God, so that the children of the same motherland are not torn apart from within their own womb; it seems convenient that the woman with that solemn voice and love of religion given to her by nature, would speak to destroy irreligious fascination, imparting the most sweet affections of wife, of mother and of sister; telling men with simplicity who have made such precious links [in their mind regarding religion] to open their eyes and look.

While the petition hints at some of women’s displeasure and sense of confinement at being “shut away” in the home, it also upholds their belief in homemaking as a grave responsibility. From what they do say however, it is not as easy to determine whether or not they were actually critical of their expected role within the home. In their appearance before the Jalisco Congress in 1856 they seem to concur with set ideals regarding both their natural and idealized position in the

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234 Archivo del Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (AHA), Gobierno, Cofradías, Sociedad Católica Nuestra Seora de la De la Rosa Hijas de María, 1894-1926, Caja 1.
235 “Representacion que las señoras,” 4.
family, and use it to benefit their credibility in state politics. They argued that as wives, mothers, and sisters whose central job it is to instill Christian virtues in the home they have a particular foresight. It is not only their belief, but their duty to make the male politicians making decisions aware of the potential disharmony they may cause within society. Although the issue at hand was not whether or not individuals would go against all religion, they understood a separation from Catholicism went against their own education and teachings.

**The Marriage Contract in Guadalajara**

The 1859 civil marriage law and subsequent reforms to the Mexican civil code in 1870 and 1884 upheld and wrote into law that men and women had a legal duty to be faithful and to contribute to marriage’s primary objective, which was mutual aid. The basis of which was a system of honor in which men provided financially and emotionally for their wives, while women remained faithful and virtuous as spouses and mothers. Civil and criminal court litigation between husbands and wives in Guadalajara confirms that they ascribed to these legally defined roles. In a random sample of divorce and adultery cases from 1855 to 1910, women and men of all classes used discourses which placed great value on honor within marriage.

In the 1870 divorce of María Antonia Madrigal and Santiago Vallarta in Guadalajara, María claimed the reason she filed for separation against Santiago was his failure to provide for her financially throughout their four year marriage. In her testimony, she claimed that “he never fulfilled his obligations.” In her inventory of reasons she cited he did not provide her a daily

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236 Código Civil del Distrito Federal y Territorios (Mexico: Imprenta de José Batiza, 1870), Art. 98, 45.
allowance, nor a “home, clothing, or companionship.”\textsuperscript{237} Her husband’s inability to support her, forced her to start her own small business out of their small rented home. She did not elaborate further on the type of business she started, but noted that she had to work in order to provide her with the basic necessities of clothing and food. The socio-economic status of María and her husband is unclear, although running her business from home was likely an indication of their lower income level. As a secondary charge, she also admitted to being abused by her husband, who at times beat her so severely she was forced to go out with bruises and cuts on her body, causing her great shame. Several of María Antonia’s admissions allude to her belief in reciprocal and honorable obligations by both husband and wife. His failure to provide financially forced her to work outside of the home, and his mistreatment, witnessed publicly, caused her to feel a sense of dishonor.

While the abuse María faced tested her own honor, men in her same situation felt that cheating wives brought great shame to their households. Such was the case for Gabriel Delgadillo who filed a divorce case against his wife Juliana Robledo in 1894. The couple was likely of a higher social status because Gabriel owned his own farm, listed as a \textit{hortelano}, yet he lived in the city. For an elite landowner like Delgadillo, acknowledging the affair publicly dealt a blow to his honor as a man. In his testimony he concedes that he does not wish to “make [his] dishonor public,” but given that his wife now accuses him of infidelity “with the cynicism of a prostituted woman,” he now seeks the state’s intervention. Several witnesses testify to seeing Juliana in public places with her long time sweetheart, Esteban Ramos. Evidence from their testimony suggests the two had over a year-long affair. Particularly damning testimony came from the widow Hilaria Henriquez who claimed that Juliana had an affair with her seventeen

year old son. In the end the case goes unresolved as Delgadoillo chooses to close the case out of fear of “creating a public scandal.” Delgadoillo understood that his wife’s actions were a detriment to his personal honor. As the head of the household, his role as patriarch warranted greater control and order within the home. At the same time however, he felt Juliana’s actions justified the title of “prostitute” and a loss of her honor as a wife. Not only was a woman’s promiscuous behavior a failure to abide by the sexual honor codes established for marriage, but it also served as a social commentary on their abilities as good wives and homemakers.  

A failure to fulfill the expectations for honor within marriage was at the heart of most of the marital disputes heard before the Jalisco Supreme Tribunal. In 1874, José María Villareal filed an adultery case against his wife Guadalupe Escota. Although testimony did not indicate Villareal’s occupation, the couple resided in a poor neighborhood on the periphery of town. In the case Villareal made mention of the fact the he and Escota were legally married. He expressed devastation regarding his wife’s infidelity remarking that her actions caused him “personal harm,” injuring “the most delicate honor of a man.” When his wife of twenty years ran off with a family friend, a man almost twenty years her junior in a two week escapade to the countryside, he felt she betrayed the “most sacred obligations that the laws, morality, and society imposed” upon husbands and wives. Through his testimony he revealed not only his own shame, but the embarrassment that Escota caused their family. According to Villareal, in addition to infidelity, she abandoned the “domestic home” and left her children orphaned. In his defense, the twenty year old accused lover of Escota, Pablo Sánchez, told the court that Escota told him her

239 Both resided in Cuartel 7 also known as Mexicalzingo. Cuartel observations are taken from Eduardo López Moreno, La cuadrícula en el desarrollo de la ciudad hispanoamericana: Guadalajara, Mexico. (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), 22.
husband mistreated her and was so aged he could not leave the house to catch them. For the two lovers, these reasons were justification to carry on the affair. In his closing arguments, Villareal commented that he never imagined he would be in criminal court, divulging his own dishonor, accusing his wife and friend of adultery and feeling the weight of embarrassment it would cause his family. Perhaps for these reasons, he pardoned the accused of their crimes releasing them from prison after serving only twenty two days and the case was dismissed. While Villareal felt that his wife’s affair brought shame upon himself and his family and that as a mother she was a “bad example” to his children, she also believed that his mistreatment and old age justified her actions.  

Cases of divorce and adultery provide rare opportunities to examine perceptions of honor within marriage since few cases actually went to trial prior to the twentieth century. Even fewer involved female adultery. Court cases are also rich in details on daily life, and their examination reveals not only a private sense of marital right and wrong, but the “official construction of gender relations” imposed by the state. This would become important in the state’s treatment of women it perceived of as lacking honor; the female poor, unmarried, single or widowed women they encountered in criminal courts and state welfare agencies who lived outside the confines of a patriarchal household and did not ascribe to proper gender roles. Just as these women would become associated with poverty, shame, and immorality, so too could a broken marriage lead to a similar loss of status among married men and women. At the same time the cases highlight that not only did state and church officials uphold an ideal sense of honor for

male and female gender roles within marriage, but that common residents of the city of varying classes also believed in their validity. Studies of other parts of Latin America reveal similar patterns, in that members of the poor classes maintained a sense of honor similar to elites. Therefore, reform laws like the 1859 Civil Marriage law followed by subsequent legislation governing separation and eventually divorce increased the participation of the state in the affairs of husbands and wives, both literally and figuratively. In effect, it increased the state’s presence in women’s lives and its expectations for them as wives and eventually mothers.

Mothers

The value that church and state leaders placed on women in national projects is also revealed in their efforts to proscribe women’s roles in the family as good mothers. Across Latin America efforts centered on mobilizing women around notions of “republican motherhood,” an idea that women needed to become educated in order to produce educated, orderly and productive citizens. Even in Guadalajara, the popular politician and educator Manuel López Cotilla, argued that the education of Mexican citizens had a direct impact on the “material progress” of individuals and of modern governments. Not only did he believe that education could promote the “general good,” but that it could influence “the destiny of society.” Reformers of the time believed that “a nation is happy, flourishing and powerful when . . . its citizens are educated,

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244 BPEJ, Misc, #73, 1“Instruccion PriMaría, informe que el Inspector general de Instruccion PriMaría del Estado de Jalisco” by Lopez Cotilla. (GDL, 1851).
industrious and moral.” On the contrary, a "weak, poor and disdainful” nation produced "ignorant, lazy and corrupt" citizens. If Mexican society were to advance politically and economically, it required instilling new values in the way people thought, their work habits, and civic obligations. This type of transformation required education at an early age, and therefore imbued motherhood with a newfound civic obligation. Thus, women were given the task and responsibility of churning out good citizens. While this was not necessarily a nineteenth-century phenomenon, within the political context of the period the importance attached to Republican motherhood became increasingly significant.

The changing emphasis on mothers from caretakers to teachers began as enlightenment thought influenced changing concepts of childhood and children which promoted “childhood as an innocent stage of life, combined with a new attentiveness to children in order to create orderly clans.” Heightened attention to children came across in colonial reforms aimed at reducing child mortality (often condemning hygiene and the use of wet nurses by mothers) and the introduction of new pedagogies that promoted rational education. As the Independence period led to even greater instability in society, the pre-occupations of the colonial period would spill over into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the achievements of a country’s youth began to be synonymous with its progress. Well into the twentieth century, state leaders believed the education of children was a tool for nation building in Mexico, “subordinating the household

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246 Arrom, The Women of Mexico City, 15.
to the interests of national development.”

An increased emphasis on children, however, also heightened the role of mothers as the educators of their children. The notion of “republican motherhood” implored women to raise and educate their children to become good citizens, the implications of which influenced women’s education and modified gender roles as a whole.

Reformers and writers believed that the way to move Mexico forward was through the education of women and by extension their children. The project of liberal education began in Mexico during the Bourbon era (1700-1821), but it took on new meaning in the nineteenth century as a way for Mexico to overcome the political chaos of the period, progress as a modern nation, and instill Liberal values in its citizenry. In many ways, the type of education that reformers referenced was not necessarily a formalized education. As del Pozzo argued the type of education required of "civilized nations" was “cultivated of the heart,” and therefore it did not happen in schools but "in the intimacy of the family, where the good or bad qualities of children manifest themselves plainly, and they are of the father and the mother.” It was the duty of the mother to be gentle and loving, and the father to discipline and show paternal authority over his children. Both parents however were to lead with examples of good and virtuous behavior.

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the same year similar attitudes existed in Guadalajara, in a column on the purity of women, a journalist placed great emphasis on women’s role in leading their children by virtuous example. Therefore, the family comprised of a husband, wife and children would be the focus of the new nation, and through education and examples set by mothers and fathers a young citizenry would learn its new role in society.

The post-Independence era ushered in a wave of progress for Jalisco’s education system, introducing the sciences to school curriculum in 1827, followed by obligatory education for boys and girls aged six to fifteen by 1842. As expected, female education centered on the proscribed ideal gender roles laid out for women both in the family and society. Early education in Guadalajara was segregated by sex, with girls taking courses in the humanities, fine arts, math, religion, home economics and French with “appropriate” electives such as cooking, sewing and embroidery. While women and men took similar classes for primary education, men had opportunities to advance into secondary and professional study, learning advanced math, philosophy and science. In 1895, while almost as many young boys as young girls attended primary school, of all secondary school students, boys outnumbered girls four to one. Even fewer women entered professional school, making up only 141 students that year. As a result, the limited nature of women’s education served to instill dominant ideals on women’s proper role in society as well as prevent them from moving beyond dictated proscriptions.

253 “¿Por qué”, El Imperio, 3.
254 The introduction of science is noted in BPEJ, #73, doc 15 “Manifestacion La Junta Directiva de Estudios por conducto del Ministerio de Instruccion Pública” (Guadalajara, 1865). Obligatory education is mentioned in BPEJ, Misc., #73, 1“Instrucción PriMaría, informe que el Inspector general de Instruccion PriMaría del Estado de Jalisco” by Lopez Cotilla. (Guadalajara, 1851), 20.
255 BPEJ, #73, 11, Misc. “Enseñaza pública” (GDL, 1863), 17.
256 See Table 3.1.
Table 3.1
Education in Guadalajara, 1895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary (age 6-15)</td>
<td>2673</td>
<td>2298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (15+)</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>253</td>
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Just as the family would play a strong role in maintaining order in nineteenth-century Mexico, it would also be expected to reproduce the values and norms of a new Liberal society. In order to raise a strong citizenry that would promote national development and the ideals of Liberalism mothers were to become teachers to their children. While the government would provide formal institutional education and the moral and material support that families needed, it was the role of mothers as the "heart" of the family, to provide life lessons, nurture their children, teach them virtues and good behavior, and help them to improve themselves. Only parents, given the capacity to govern within the home, could prevent laziness in their children and instill the values of "volition, valor, activity and work… for the common good." Del Pozzo, like many reformers of the period, believed that the family had an obligation to the state and the state to the family, together they could “form capable, active, proven and apt men in order to give back to the country and follow its laws.” He indicates that the state and family were intertwined and their combined efforts would reap the benefits of a prosperous family and state. While the relationship was a supportive one, the state needed the family to succeed, while the family did not necessarily depend as heavily on the state.

257 Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895).
In order to possess children of good habits, del Pozzo advised mothers to assign their children jobs within the home to accustom them to the habit of work, and prevent laziness and oversleeping from a young age. She should constantly monitor her children and provide correction when necessary, and install the habits of “honesty and virtue” through her own example. If a mother were too docile her children would become lazy and lack a desire to work. Part of a mother’s job was also to teach her daughters "the necessary rules of governing a house" as a means of reproducing notions of an ideal wife and mother. Young children were to be given basic education by their mothers through example, teaching them lessons from daily life to accustom them to work, make good use of time, how to work the most efficiently so that they will have these skills in their future occupations.

The liberal rhetoric placed a great weight of responsibility on women as mothers. Their mothering skills, or lack of them, had the power to produce both good and bad citizens and was reflection of their own honor. Scientific thinking emphasized the early years of children’s lives as critical to their development and without mothers or with bad rearing, some in Guadalajara feared children could become “corrupted” at a young age. For this reason, the education of women became critical. According to one Guadalajara archbishop, a poorly educated woman could do more harm in society than a man because she would pass on “disorder” to her children. He commented that “poorly instructed” children not taught to apply themselves “will always have an errant imagination.” Such children, forever needing to “feed their curiosity” would

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259 BPEJ, #286, doc 3 “La educación de las niñas,” 6-7; 10.
260 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 34; 89; BPEJ, Miscellaneous, #291, doc 2, Lorento del Pozzo, “La Famila,” 142.
261 Ibid., 143.
262 BPEJ, #286, doc 3 “La educación de las niñas,” 5.
“consume themselves with the vain and dangerous.” Therefore, as the “soul of the house,” responsibility lay with mothers for the rearing of both good citizens and criminals. Consequently, social reformers of the time believed a women’s role in the family was paramount to its success and had the potential to erase social tensions and remedy social evils in society.

Motherhood not only had the power to effect positive change in society, it was also a female “virtue.” Christian reformers prized it as a “holy mission” and gift from God, requiring complete and total selflessness on the part of women. As dutiful wives and mothers, women were “the sacred tree of the family, which infused faith, charity, and love in the domestic home.” She was to be an example to her children, exemplifying the qualities of “moderation, temperance and kindness” to avoid “planting bad seeds” in them. Advice for mothers varied according to class. Literature and sermons directed to poor women emphasized proper hygiene in child rearing, while advice for elite women warned against amusements and diversions outside the confines of the home. Anything else was believed to "only satisfy the senses,” unlike the true pleasures of the family, “which were rooted in the soul and make the heart beat,” which is the "pleasure women feel each moment in the domestic home; a pleasure enjoyed by all mothers all hours of the day.”

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264 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 89.
265 Julio Guerrero, La génesis del crimen en México (Paris, Mexico: Vda de Bouret, 1901); Carlos Roumagnac, Los Criminales en México (Mexico: El Fénix, 1904).
266 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 27-28; 36.
268 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 33; 30.
Liberal and Christian reformers laid out expectations of motherly virtue and honor for women to follow and re-produce in their daughters. As mothers, women were responsible for the education of their girls as well as their actions. From a mother, girls learned the example of "submission and respect for their husband as head of the house," as well as "obedience and respect for their superiors."269 It was also a mother’s obligation to protect her daughter’s virginity and seduction by men through teaching them proper feminine behavior and leading by example and advice. The responsibility of mothers over their daughters was to constantly monitor them, never leave them alone, prevent any deception by men and make them aware of the dangers of life and consequences of falling into situations of sexual deception.270 Just as hard-working, honorable and educated children became reflections of the nation, so too did they echo the honor and behavior of their own mother. This made the task of motherhood all the more important to state leaders and reformers.

Conclusion

As a means to achieve their own goals of national progress, government officials intervened in spaces where the church had previously occupied. While it upheld long-standing ideals of gender appropriate roles, civil marriage was symbolic of the state’s position that legally binding marriage between man and women would be the foundation of the new nation. As a case study, strong conservatism of Guadalajara reveals that the transition to secularism was not a smooth one. The ideological transformations and reforms of the century were often met by

269 Ibid., 30; 33.
confrontation from clergy and lay society, including women. Despite the fact that Liberal ideals of individual liberty and happiness influenced the process of modernization and state organization, women’s rights continued to be defined in terms of their relationship to fathers, husbands and children. Debate over civil matrimony and divorce among liberals and conservatives shows that religious and civil authorities shared archetypes on the family, marriage, and ideal gender roles for men and women. Legal and popular rhetoric of the time promoted both harmonious and hierarchical relations between husband and wife as the basis of the nuclear family. State leaders and local authorities believed the family and marriage were indispensable to the order, peace, and progress of the nation. According to Silvia Arrom, the family was “the basic social unit on which the entire structure rested, with men governing wives and children just as they were in turn governed by the state.”

Both legal and popular discourse promoted the idea that women’s honor was paramount to the preservation of family honor, and that despite their nature as “ethereal, fragile, [and] dependent beings,” their function was to reproduce within the context of legal marriage.

Neither church nor state questioned this role. As the century progressed, the importance of women’s roles as wives and mothers deepened as it became linked with state efforts to improve and reproduce a sense of order and obligation in society. By utilizing the rhetoric and popular image of patriarchal fathers, devoted

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wives, and educated and virtuous mothers, reformers, writers, religious leaders and politicians promoted an ideal Liberal family to advance the goals of the nation. At the same time that state leaders and legislators firmly established the patriarchal family model, centered on a nuclear monogamous arrangement between husband and wife as the solution to state ills, female singleness was on the rise in Mexico. By the latter part of the century, more adult women would be single than married, and the overall increase in the number of single women would rise nearly ten percent by the close of the decade.\textsuperscript{274} A discussion of the rhetoric of the liberal family has important implications for the study of single women. With growing emphasis directed at the family and women’s ideal role within it, those who remained single into adulthood became increasingly marginalized as the century progressed. As neither wives nor mothers in some cases, singleness was looked upon as an abnormality, a way of life for women of loose morals or poverty. By and large as the family became fundamental in matters of state organization, and the ideal patriarchal family took center stage, little room existed for unmarried women in liberal society.

\textsuperscript{274} See Chapter 1, Table 1.1.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE STIGMATIZATION OF SINGleness: WORK, PUBLIC SPACE AND DANGER

It was work that attracted poor single and widowed women to Guadalajara in the years after Independence, and work which distinguished and marginalized them as a threat to the Mexican family and society. Compared with men, Guadalajara’s adult female population was as often widowed and single, as it was married. Many lived and worked “unattached” from a male patriarch, with large numbers heading their own households. These factors distinguished them from traditionally married women. City officials and reformers did not value their labor as women who worked in the public sphere, a space reserved for men and deemed dangerous for proper women. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century both liberals and the Catholic Church exalted women’s roles as wives and mothers. As the role of the patriarchal family became an integral, if contentious, part of state development plans so too did the value placed on marriage. Evidence from legal reforms, court cases, and writings on motherhood and women’s education in Guadalajara demonstrated that the family served as the centerpiece of stability and progress, and women’s rights were circumscribed within that sphere. For most educated Mexicans, to be a single woman was unnatural. Although many women would spend at least part of their adult lives unmarried, cultural expectations pressured women to marry before they grew too old and became spinsters. Newspaper columnists in Guadalajara argued that

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275 See Chapter 1; Also see Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.
276 The use of the term “unattached,” is meant to incorporate single and widowed women who did not live with a spouse or partner, and instead headed their own household or lived with other women.
277 See Table 4.3.
singleness was involuntary, and at some point all women’s desired goal was marriage. This belief was so strong that writers demeaned early feminist movements in Latin America as something supported only by “ugly and single women.” Indeed, stereotypes of the time associated the married population with the ideals of honor, order and prosperity, and unmarried individuals with “irresponsibility, intemperance, and sometimes revolution.” Such stigmatization left little space for poor single and widowed women to navigate nineteenth-century life in Guadalajara.

It is important to note that women have always worked, but it was not until the nineteenth century that the work of the poor and lower classes left the home, introducing a new dimension by living outside the traditional supervision of patriarchs or relatives. Prior to that time women’s work, outside of domestic chores, concentrated in agriculture and pre-industrial manufacturing, as artisans of spinning, knitting and sewing. Frequently, women conducted these jobs in the home to contribute to family subsistence. Beginning in the 1840s and peaking by the 1870s, industrialization radically transformed this system in Mexico. Technological changes and accelerated production transformed the conditions under which they labored, both economically and socially. As women converted from “independent artisans” to factory workers, their work moved from the home to factories in the city. It was this new type of work that differentiated

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279 “Problemas sociales. La mujer, la ciencia y el trabajo,” *El Jalisciense* II, 139 (Guadalajara, May 2, 1907), 1.
281 This is a point that Carmen Ramos Escandón is careful to draw attention to, see *Industrialización, género y trabajo femenino en el sector textil mexicano: El obraje, la fábrica, y la compañía industrial* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 2004), 29.
282 Ibid., 29-30. For a general historiography of how nineteenth-century industrialization impacted women see, Daryl Hafter, *European Women and Preindustrial Craft* (Bloomington:
the unattached working woman from the honorable married one. Despite the fact that working class and poor married women frequently labored alongside single women, household headship and solitary living separated the two groups. While both groups might find it necessary to work, a woman without a spouse found it absolutely essential for survival. Between 1811 and 1850, more than half of all married and single women headed their own household in nineteenth-century Guadalajara. Although it was not possible to gather this type of data for later years due to source limitations, the assumption can be made that this number only increased as more women entered the city and the rate of legal marriage declined during the Porfiriato. Deeper analysis of these women’s households in Guadalajara reveals an overwhelming presence of single and widowed women, and also draws attention to the strategies they employed to survive in a society that marginalized them and demeaned their labor. Often their ability to do so depended on factors such as age, class, proximity to kin, or race and ethnicity. As the century progressed laboring and independent women became the target of scrutiny by jurists, reformers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, lawmakers, writers, and census takers who viewed them as a stark contrast to the ideals of maternity and the laws of nature. Moreover, their heightened presence in public spaces as working women raised questions about their potential to threaten the Republican foundations of family honor and society. Single and unmarried women’s socio-economic status


See Table 4.3. The data reflects the overall percentage of single, married or widowed women who were noted in the census as the head of the household. This was often indicated by the order in which residents were listed. Later census material in this study did not give the detail level that many of the earlier censuses provided, making an assessment regarding headship difficult; For the drop in legal marriage see Moises Gonzalez Navarro, “El Porfiriato, vida social,” Historia Moderna de México (Mexico: Editorial Hermes, 1957), 320.
often shaped the debate. Many feared that poor single working women in particular were at a greater risk of becoming prostitutes. By the nineteenth century civil and social status intertwined, often at the expense of the honor of many single and widowed women. The negative stereotypes that surrounded them focused on their roles as working women, their presence in public space and the questions it raised about their overall character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age 15 - 24</th>
<th>Age 25 - 34</th>
<th>Age 35 - 44</th>
<th>Age 45 - 54</th>
<th>Age 55/over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1438</td>
<td>2146</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>1654</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>2263</td>
<td>1615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

284 Data for the table was compiled using the *Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database.* (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006).
Table 4.2\textsuperscript{285}
Marital Status Guadalajara, 1895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>12665</td>
<td>14213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>11837</td>
<td>11996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>7348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors</td>
<td>10768</td>
<td>10872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3\textsuperscript{286}
Adult Female Headship by Marital Status, 1811-1850

| Year | Single | | | Widowed | | |
|------|--------| | | N    | | |
|      | %      | | | %    | | |
| 1811 | 9 14.7 | | | 37 42 | | |
| 1813 | 30 21.2 | | | 116 54 | | |
| 1821 | 227 16.4 | | | 1120 46.1 | | |
| 1824 | 111 17 | | | 520 47.6 | | |
| 1838 | 26 21 | | | 156 43 | | |
| 1839 | 47 20.3 | | | 199 44.8 | | |
| 1842 | 119 15.2 | | | 663 42 | | |
| 1850 | 29 17.4 | | | 89 56.6 | | |

\textsuperscript{285} Data available for 1895 did not allow for a breakdown of individuals by their age groups, although it did separate minors. Data for the table was taken from the Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895).

\textsuperscript{286} Ibid; Data was collected using census data. For some years, such as 1811, 1813, 1838, 1839 and 1850 only a sample of cuartels is available. The most complete data exists for the years 1821.
Unattached Women’s Households in Nineteenth-Century Guadalajara

Between 1821 and 1910, Guadalajara’s population grew from 38,087 residents to 119,468. ²⁸⁷ Most studies do not attribute this growth solely to natural increase, but emphasize continued patterns of rural to urban migration. ²⁸⁸ Economic downturn after Independence followed by land reform in the 1850s and Porfírian economic policies by the 1870s stripped rural peasants of land and crippled rural agricultural markets. These changes coincided with a growth in industrial manufacturing leading to an “explosion” in “las clases productoras,” or the working classes in Guadalajara by the 1880s. ²⁸⁹ Throughout the period large numbers of rural peasants migrated into the city to seek employment. Those who migrated were often single or widowed. ²⁹⁰ In earlier years, it appears that more women than men arrived in the city. On average, between 1821 and 1842 the adult female single population outnumbered single men by upwards of twenty percent. ²⁹¹ In these years studies suggest that while men might take up jobs in mining or migrate to outlying large-scale farms or haciendas, ²⁹² popular occupations such as

²⁸⁹ Bárcena, Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880, 148.
²⁹¹ See Table 4.4.
domestic or factory work for women often centered in cities. By 1895, the ratio between men and women decreased to about five percent. The aggregate data should be read carefully however, as I do not believe it suggests that less women migrated to the city in these years. Instead, I would argue that it reflects the increased scope of industrialization that attracted more men into the growing urban manufacturing sector during the Porfiriato. Between 1856 and 1880, Guadalajara introduced a number of new industrial sectors. A rise in mass-production of former artisanal trades, such as carpentry, shoemaking, meatpacking and ironworks likely brought more men to the city. Despite this difference, the overall data from 1821 to 1895 suggests not only high rates of female migration, but the existence of a pattern which left many urban single and widowed women fewer marriage (or remarriage) options than men. Women in the city consistently outnumbered men throughout the century, perpetuating a cycle of singleness.

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294 See Table 4.4.
295 Bárcena, Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880, 147-48; See Table 4.6.
296 See Table 4.5.
### Table 4.4

**Adult Marital Status by Sex, Guadalajara, 1821-1895**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1821 Men</th>
<th>1821 Women</th>
<th>1824 Men</th>
<th>1824 Women</th>
<th>1838 Men</th>
<th>1838 Women</th>
<th>1842 Men</th>
<th>1842 Women</th>
<th>1895 Men</th>
<th>1895 Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2102</td>
<td>3535</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>1601</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1465</td>
<td>2112</td>
<td>12665</td>
<td>14213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5896</td>
<td>5886</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>2244</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>3156</td>
<td>3056</td>
<td>11837</td>
<td>1196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>2572</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1159</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>7348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Table 4.5

**Ratio Male to Female by Year, 1811-1895**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male N</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female N</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>2265</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2917</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>15358</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>19309</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>5144</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>6824</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2945</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>2528</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>8315</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>10058</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>1393</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>37813</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>44642</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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297 Data for the table was compiled using the *Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database*. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006); For some years, such as 1824-1850, only a sample of cuartels is available. The most complete data sets exists for 1821 and 1895.

298 Ibid; Data for 1895 was taken from the AHJ, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” *Oficio del Concentración del Censo* (Guadalajara, 1895).
Table 4.6
Industrial Factories of Guadalajara, 1856-1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factory Type</th>
<th>Number of Factories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meatpacking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry/Furniture</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilding (Gold)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookbinding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta &amp; Wheat</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hat</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironworks</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Cleaning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silversmithing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawlsmithing</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanneries</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Stocking</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Pottery</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glue</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumber</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Instrument</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrel</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varnish</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalworks</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinworks</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithography</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leatherworks</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data was collected from Bárcena, Descripción de Guadalajara en 1880, 147-48. Data for 1856 is not as complete as for 1880, although in some areas it appears that new factories emerged in industries which had not previously existed.
The presence of so many single women in a period of chaotic political shifts in which Liberal reformers ardently pushed for reforms that strengthened the marital unit and emphasized the family as the centerpiece of a new liberal Mexico, raises important questions regarding where single women fit into the newly Independent nation. Unattached women in Guadalajara lived and worked outside the boundaries of a traditional patriarchal family evidenced by the interworkings of their households. In this section I hope to offer a snapshot of their daily lives by taking a closer look at what they were doing, who they lived with and how they got by. While most studies rely on censuses to gather quantitative information, the Guadalajara censuses offer rare opportunities to read between the lines and open a window into the daily lives of single and widowed women. Unlike other censuses taken at the time, data from Guadalajara’s 1821 to 1850 censuses includes all members of the household and provides information on ethnicity and class (for 1821 and earlier years). A census of such detail was rare outside of Mexico for the time period, and even cities in the United States did not take an individual-level census until 1845. The best and most complete data available is for 1821. It would not be until 1895, that the city conducted a similar and complete census. Historians of Guadalajara note that the

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300 B.J. Barrickman’s work on a rural Brazilian census showcases the ways in which census data can also be read qualitatively. In Brazil, he contends that the census served as a political tool, identifying individuals and households to determine citizens from non-citizens, and as a social lens, as census takers ordered and classified the population reinforcing the hierarchical structures of Brazilian society. B.J. Barickman, “Reading the 1835 Parish Censuses from Bahia: Citizenship, Kinship, Slavery and Household in Early Nineteenth-Century Brazil.” *The Americas*. Vol. 59, no. 3, (2003).

301 In the aftermath of Independence lawmakers eliminated the category of calidad (quality) to denote one’s caste from official records. For more on the caste system in the colonial period see Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

political disorganization from 1857 to 1895 created inconsistencies in systems of government and instability within public administration. Therefore, most census data between those years would have many errors.\(^{303}\) When read qualitatively, however, for the data that is available census categories for, *estado* (marital status) and *officio* (occupation) demonstrate an official concern with singleness and widowhood that emphasized their state of poverty, virtue and a pervasive disregard for female work. Census takers often viewed single and widowed women in a paternalistic manner and made no qualms about expressing their views in writing, commenting on female occupations and the sexual honor of their widowed and single neighbors. A closer examination of women’s households suggests that despite many of the obstacles they faced, they utilized economic strategies to build strong and independent homes. Some retained household headship, replacing the need for a patriarch in their lives. Many also relied on the advantages of class, ethnicity and age to maintain their households and create important female networks.\(^{304}\)

What it meant to be “unattached” by the nineteenth century frequently hinged on what a single or widowed woman lacked when compared to being married. The lived difference for women was very different than for men, and had important economic and social consequences. The lack of or loss of a spouse severed several forms of presumed support within the marital unit, such as economic, service, social and even emotional support. Without a spouse, single or widowed women were more likely than men to experience economic hardship.\(^{305}\) This is an


especially important point for widows in Mexico, who lived under the Hispanic legal system. In the colonial period a woman of good to moderate means might depend on her dowry to support her after the death of a spouse. Colonial laws in Spanish America mandated that the first four-fifths of an estate be passed down to a man’s legitimate children, known as the *legítima*. This left only one-fifth to be freely willed to someone of the testator’s choosing, but even this amount was not guaranteed for wives. As a result, colonial tradition dictated that, despite the law, up to one-fourth of the estate of a wealthy husband could be given to widowed women who lacked a dowry in circumstances where husbands “did not leave [them] the means to live honestly.” By the 1880s, new liberal governments in several Latin American countries modified these laws to include wives as necessary heirs.  

306 Mexico did not, and therefore poverty during widowhood continued to be a problem for many women.  

Ultimately, for many women the loss (or lack) of a spouse resulted in less control over economic resources. 307 A common thread in studies of widowhood in Europe was the poverty-stricken nature of widow’s lives. Around the same period in parts of France, for example, two-thirds of all widows had below average income levels, and many made up the majority of those

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307 For a comparison of Spanish civil law versus English common law systems as they pertained to women during this time period see Deborah Rosen, “Women and Property across Colonial America: A Comparison of Legal Systems in New Mexico and New York,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2003).
receiving public assistance.\textsuperscript{308} In other parts of Mexico scholars note an overwhelmingly high proportion of widows and single adults among the ranks of the Mexico City poor house and in line at government sponsored pawn shops.\textsuperscript{309} In Guadalajara in the nineteenth century, widowhood was often synonymous with poverty, and census takers frequently made mention that a widow was not only a \textit{viuda}, but a \textit{viuda pobre} (poor widow).\textsuperscript{310} Like the Mexico City poor house, the central orphanage in the city known as the \textit{Casa de Caridad} (later renamed the \textit{Hospicio Cabañas}) served as a refuge for many of the cities impoverished and aged population, widows and single women included.\textsuperscript{311} The institution did extend refuge to men, it do so usually only to those that were ill or disabled.\textsuperscript{312} Overall, the historiography on nineteenth-century widowhood intimates that those without spouses, children, or relatives were more likely to succumb to pauperization.\textsuperscript{313}

Greater exposure to poverty separated poor and working class women from elite women because it often required them to find work outside the home. For single and widowed women economic stability was essential to daily survival, but variables such as their age, whether or not they had children, or their age limited their earning potential in the city. Most women labored in


\textsuperscript{310} See \textit{Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822}. There are 35 comments in one \textit{cuartel} alone stating a widow appeared poverty-stricken. Cuartel 6, 1821.

\textsuperscript{311} Archivo Archidiócesis de Guadalajara, “Obras Asistenciales,” \textit{Casa de la Caridad y la Enseña, 1784-1834}, C. 1, 12.

\textsuperscript{312} See Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{313} Arrom, \textit{Containing the Poor}, 101-103.
typically female occupations which were un-skilled and poorly compensated. In Guadalajara, some of the most common occupations for women remained the same between 1821 and 1895. Most women worked as domestics, followed by seamstresses and those engaged in textile or food-related industries. Employment available to women was almost always the lowest paid, with women typically earning one-third to half as much as men in similar industries. By the nineteenth-century employers of proto-industrial jobs sought out women because they could be paid them less than men. Factory owners, for example, reserved wage labor positions for single, younger women. As most wages were paid by the piece, rather than time, days were often monotonous and long. In La Concha tobacco factory for example, which employed over 300 female employees to work as cigar rollers by 1880, paid women per set of cigars. Each set contained sixty boxes of forty cigars, and paid women four reales, or about thirty three cents. Some women could roll as much as two sets during an average ten hour workday. During the same period while a female cigar roller might earn 8 reales a day, a wetnurse averaged 12 reales, or one peso, as did seamstresses. In the entire factory, there were only 10 men, usually who worked in skilled trades or as overseers and managers. Of the women working at La

314 See Tables 4.7 and 4.8.
316 Francois, A Culture of Everyday Credit, 88: Juan Javier Pescador, “Vanishing Women: Female Migration and Ethnic Identity in Late-Colonial Mexico City,” Ethnohistory 42, no. 4 (Fall 1995), 618.
318 BPEJ, Archivo del Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919, Ramo Civil, 1885, C. 2, 150,20; Susie Porter discusses wages for seamstresses during this time, see Working Women, 33.
Concha the majority were single and widowed migrants from other parts of Jalisco. A similar ratio of male to female workers was true of all five tobacco factories that operated that same year.

Concrete data for female occupations is difficult to ascertain and should be read cautiously. The Guadalajara census of 1821 provided occupational information for about 18% of all women, compared to 80% percent for men. The commissioner of one neighborhood in 1821 provided justification for this phenomenon by commenting that most “were only spinners or tortilla makers, which represents the poverty in which they are found.” This comment provides an indication of not only some of the most common female occupations, but also cultural perceptions regarding single and widowed working women and the value placed on women’s labor. By 1895 as well, adult women were 11 times more likely to be listed as having “no occupation” than their male counterparts. The lack of occupational data for women seems suspicious given the fact that the number of poor single and widowed women, who had no choice but to work, did not decrease at the same pace. I contend, as do other scholars of working women in Mexico, that these numbers likely indicate a desire to exclude women from industry, rather than a real absence of them. Susie Porter makes a similar argument in her work on women

319 Bárcena, Descripción de Guadalajara, 159-161.
320 The listing of “sin officio,” or “sin destino” was common to indicate no occupation within the censuses of Guadalajara, and was a pattern found elsewhere. In Dijon, France 70.2% listed widows with no occupation according to Baker, and Clarkson found a rate of 80% in England. See Baker, “Survival Strategies of Widows in Dijon,” 58; L.A. Clarkson and Margaret E. Crawford, “Life after Death: Widows in Carrick-on-Suir, 1799.” Women in Early Modern Ireland, ed. Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O’Dowd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 248.
322 Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895); See Table 4.7.
in Mexico City, suggesting that it has more to do with changing perceptions of female work by the late 1800s. Overall, male officials did not consider domestic labor by wives and dependents an occupation. While working was a viable option toward economic independence, barriers existed in finding self-sustaining employment for many unattached women.

**Households Strategies**

For this very reason unattached women employed numerous strategies, in addition to working, in order survive in urban Guadalajara. Those with the ability to do so headed their own households. They used their class status and acquired property in old age to make do. They relied on family, and those who did not found commonality with other women. Some devised strategies, such as taking in boarders to make ends meet. Older women benefited from inheritances and lived as landlords. Some merged their lives with family members or forged strong female networks to create a larger and more economically prosperous unit. Others without resources took up residence as servants in the home of wealthier city residents to make ends meet. Overall, household details from the census relate the fact that unattached women were present and very visible within the urban landscape.

Heading a household indicated a level of economic autonomy, but it was also a marker of social status in cities all over the world. For example, comparative studies of widows in nineteenth-century northern Europe found they were more likely to remain independent, or retain headship of their household if they resided within urban areas. In cities, women had more options. In addition to finding work as wage laborers, women could take in boarders, perform

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food or domestic service jobs, or live close to nearby kin. Moreover, studies of Mexico indicate that urban centers were an important source of economic mobility for all women. Economic incentives were the supreme motivation behind the migration of Indian women of all marital statuses to Mexico City in the late-colonial period. Once in the city, a majority of these women headed their own households.\textsuperscript{325} Similar patterns were found for nineteenth-century São Paulo, where female headed households were by far the norm in the city, as women migrated into urban areas to meet increasing female labor and domestic manufacturing demands, and men stayed behind to work in mines and as agricultural laborers in the countryside.\textsuperscript{326}

Many of the patterns uncovered by researchers of singleness in other regions can also be found in nineteenth-century Guadalajara. Women utilized numerous strategies to make ends meet in a society bound by gendered divisions of labor and inequality. In Guadalajara, almost half of all adult female widows and nearly one fifth of single women headed their own households between 1811 and 1850.\textsuperscript{327} A significant portion of these women took in boarders (16%), and nearly half (40%) opened their homes to close relatives, including siblings, parents, and children.\textsuperscript{328}

Although even nineteenth-century women belied convention by working in such unique trades as mule skinners, tanners, and even the occasional street performer,\textsuperscript{329} the majority of

\textsuperscript{325} Pescador, “Vanishing Women,” 618-621.
\textsuperscript{327} See Table 4.2.
\textsuperscript{328} \textit{Censuses of Guadalajara}, Volume 1 & 2.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid., In the 1821 census there are several interesting, albeit rare, female occupations. The single Augustina Isaguirre for example was listed as a \textit{cómica}, what was most likely a form of street performance. Master Index number 827.
Guadalajara’s single and widowed working women labored as domestic servants, laundresses, tortilla makers, food venders or small merchants, and seamstresses. These jobs suggest the importance of living in the city, as they include service and wage-labor jobs important for its everyday functions, but it also lent women access to public space and opportunities to forge female networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Female Jobs by Marital Status, 1821</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cigar maker</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundress</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Shoemaker/seller</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Wetnurse</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawl maker/seller</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seller/dealer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Beggar</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamales maker/seller</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Women Listed w/ Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

330 See Tables 4.7 and 4.8.
331 Censuses of Guadalajara, Volume 1.
### Table 4.8

**Most Common Female Occupations, 1895**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Students</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>3248</td>
<td>1684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Peddlers</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprietors</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Administrators</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigar Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroiderers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmakers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Workers</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatmakers</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weavers</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstresses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>1354</td>
<td>4183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Empleados particulares</em></td>
<td>247</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundresses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesalinas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molé Grinders/Sellers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortilla Makers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Occupation, Adults</td>
<td>1519</td>
<td>16605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Pressers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawl Braiders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The urban heartbeat of Guadalajara, like many European cities was the *plaza*, or town square. This organization derived from its colonial past, following the grid pattern, or *cuadrícula*, common of most cities in Spain. By 1821, Guadalajara was divided into twenty-four *cuarteles*, or districts. At the heart of each *cuartel* was a central plaza and public fountain. It was here that many working women converged to do laundry, collect water, and sell handmade goods, prepared foods, spices and produce. In 1880, the city boasted three central markets,

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332 Ibid.

333 Eduardo López Moreno, *La cuadrícula en el desarrollo de la ciudad hispanoamericana: Guadalajara, Mexico* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), 19.
where vendors of fruits and vegetables, grains and other basic goods convened, and maintained twenty-three public baths around the city. In this way, plazas served to facilitate basic needs of commerce and water supply, but they were also places of public gathering, socializing and entertainment, both for urban residents and working women. The presence of laboring women is undeniable in images of the central square both in 1835 and 1864. As one visitor to Guadalajara noted in 1826, the washerwomen often gathered near the main plaza in the shallow parts of the river San Juan that ran through the city, beating their laundry with stones and gossiping amongst each other. Women grinding and pounding clothes on stones in public was considered sensual and also called into question laundresses’ propriety. In this way, city plazas, markets and urban occupations afforded women greater access to public space, and led to the creation of important female support networks.

335 See Figure 4.1 and 4.2.
Figure 4.1
“La Plaza Principal de Guadalajara Hacia 1835”

Figure 4.2
“La Plaza Principal de Guadalajara en 1864”

\[^{337}\] Photo reprinted in Juan B. Iguiniz, *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos: relatos y descripciones de viajeros y escritores desde del Siglo XVI hasta nuestros días*, Volume 1, 1586-1867 (Guadalajara: Banco Refaccionario de Jalisco, 1950), 160.

\[^{338}\] Ibid., 271.
Ethnicity, Class and Age

A closer look at households headed by widows and single women in 1821 not only confirms that many lived outside the bounds of the ideal patriarchal home, but that the impact of being an unattached woman varied when such factors as ethnicity, class and age are considered. In a comparison of widow-headed households, which comprised the majority of female headed households as a whole, ethnic differences become apparent. While Indian women tended to head smaller households, averaging between 1 and 4 members, Spanish\textsuperscript{339} widows averaged between 2 and 7 members. A larger household, of working age members, had the potential advantage of providing more sources of income for Spanish women. Although Spanish and Indian widows shared a similar rate of overall headship Spanish women tended to head more nuclear families, which were comprised of related members. It is interesting to note that Spanish women headed sixty-five percent of all nuclear families, compared to only twenty-five percent for Indian widows.\textsuperscript{340}

\textsuperscript{339} Spanish, or español, dealt more with one’s ethnicity than birthplace. The term was widely used in the censuses.

\textsuperscript{340} See Table 4.9.
Indian widows by contrast were more likely to live alone, or head a solitary household. Of all solitary headed-households, Indian women headed almost half. Distinctions between Indian and Spanish women may deal with their differing migratory patterns. Studies of Mexico indicate that Indian women often migrated into the city alone and without family, having left behind kin in the indigenous villages that surrounded the city. As for single women, an overwhelming majority of all those who headed their own household were Spanish. Single Spanish women were also much more likely to live with family members, or independently as a

See Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006). A “solitary” household is defined as a having a single resident. A “no family” designation implies there are multiple residents, but that members are un-related to one another. A “nuclear family” implies the presence of parents and children co-residing in a household. An “extended family” is defined as a nuclear family with additional related members co-residing. A “multiple related” distinction implies more than one nuclear family present in the household, although families are related, whereas a multiple un-related family implies the presence of more than one un-related family who co-reside in the same household. For additional details see, “Codebook: A Brief Explanation,” last modified 2003, http://www.fsu.edu/~guadalaj/english/codebooks/codebrief.htm.

See Table 4.9.

boader within a household, while single Indian, *mestiza* and *mulata* women were grossly over represented as domestic servants residing in the household of their male or female employers.\footnote{344} As a study of Mexico City suggests, Indian women often left their homes in the surrounding villages to work in the city, and entered their new surroundings alone.\footnote{345} Therefore, it is likely that Indian women tended to take in more un-related boarders and work as domestic servants, than their Spanish counter-parts, because they had fewer networks in place within the city. While Spanish women tended to head larger households that contained more related members as a possible means for increasing economic stability, Indian women were more likely to take in boarders and servants. Taking in boarders was an additional way to earn extra income, and was typically a female and widow dominated line of work. Both in Mexico City and Guadalajara, by the late nineteenth century two-thirds of all landlords were women.\footnote{346} The data confirms the connections that can be made between ethnicity and class. While Spanish women from Guadalajara could depend on their families for financial support, Indian women who often arrived as migrants had to forge different and more independent connections to make ends meet.

\footnote{344 See Table 4.10.  
345 See Pescador, “Vanishing Women.”  
346 For Mexico City see Francois, *Culture of Everyday Credit*, 156; In Guadalajara, in 1895 228 proprietors were listed as men and 784 were women, a different of 77% female. See Table 4.7.}
Table 4.10

Position in Household by Ethnicity, Single Women, 1821

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mestizo</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mulata</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarder</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin of Head</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relative</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The home of Josefa Hernández sheds light onto the connections between ethnicity and class. Josefa, an Indian widow listed as one hundred years old, oversaw a household of over ten boarders in 1821, all of which were un-related and were listed as Indian, no “Don” Spaniards, or other “castes.” Her home provides some indication that taking in boarders provided a measure of means for women in older age, and presents important questions about ethnic and class divisions in the city. Her age also sheds light on the phenomenon and stereotype of the aged female landlord. Widows in particular maximized the potential of inherited real estate after the loss of a spouse. In the city, they rented rooms and small apartments to a burgeoning population.

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347 See Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006).
348 The use of “Don” or “Doña” at this time was often assigned as a title of reverence to individuals of elite status. It too was phased out in many parts of Mexico after Independence, see Peter Guardino, The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 174.
of urban workers and the poor who arrived as migrants and lived a transient lifestyle.\(^\text{350}\)

Working as a landlord offered elderly women an occupation that they could likely still perform into old age, and could do so within their own home. It was not an easy job however, and was therefore not for the faint of heart. There are numerous examples from the Jalisco civil court records depicting shrewd widowed landlords who pursued tenants in court for unpaid and back rent. This was true for the widow Rafaela Palomar who owned and managed several properties in Guadalajara. In 1890, she went to court at least twice to collect unpaid rents and even went so far as to try to evict a female tenant who had not paid for several months.\(^\text{351}\)

The image of the elderly casera, or female landlord, was the subject of one of several lithographs in a series of illustrated popular Mexican caricatures in 1855. Among the caricatures were common female occupations from the post-Independence period.\(^\text{352}\) According to a description by the nineteenth-century Mexican historian, writer, and poet, Niceto de Zamacois, the Mexican landlady was at best “disagreeable,” almost always a “widow,” poor, demanding of monthly rent, and as “bitter as all the concoctions of chemists ever made.”\(^\text{353}\) At the same time de Zamacois makes mention that the life of a landlady was a precarious one, often they did not earn enough to get by and therefore made frequent visits to the Monte de Piedad, or the public


charitable pawn shops. Depicted as haggard and worn, the aged female landlord is shown with a set of keys and lease in hand. The popular representation of the decrepit female landlord dealt with another set of stereotypes entirely. It was not uncommon for widows and spinsters of old age to be labeled as hags, witches, feeble, and incapable of caring for themselves. Such attitudes were justified by popular perceptions in other parts of the world that older women had decreased reproductive abilities. According to one nineteenth-century scribe, “‘an old woman is for nature only a degraded being, because she is useless to it.’”

Despite the negative portrayal, fortunate widowed women took advantage of the benefit of inheriting money or capital rendered to them by their late husbands. By 1895, female proprietors outnumbered males 784 to 228 respectively. In addition to being overwhelmingly female, evidence from Guadalajara and elsewhere in Mexico indicate that widowed women dominated the occupation of proprietor.

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354 Ibid. Historians have noted the frequency with which many single and widowed women, especially proprietors utilized services of the Monte de Piedad. Francois, A Culture of Everyday Credit, 84.
356 See Table 4.8.
For widows especially, older age might lend itself to increased autonomy and greater residential stability. Similar with patterns of headship found in other studies, younger widows (under the age of 39) in Guadalajara tended to initially reside as members of a household. As they aged, and potentially increased their means, widows from age 40 to 60 appear to have been more likely to head their own households. This pattern would begin to decline with advanced age, likely due to mortality. In Guadalajara there were fewer widow-headed households as

358 de Zamcois, “La Casera,” 226-7; For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.
women approached their 60s and 70s. This was a common pattern found in Europe as well. As widows aged they began to reside within a household, rather than as heads. It may indicate the importance of age as a factor in women’s ability to work and maintain a level of independence. Single women, on the other hand, were much more likely in younger age to either head their own households, or live as a dependent in a household headed by someone else, the latter being the most prevalent resident pattern for younger single women. Marriage patterns explain much of this trend as between the age of 25 to 35 years, the proportion of single women in Guadalajara dropped significantly, from roughly 3200 single women to only about 390 between 1811 and 1850, indicating it was likely the most common age range that women married between 1811 and 1850. Therefore, age played a major role both in women’s marital status and residency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 15 - 24</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>20.12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3235</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25 - 34</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35 - 44</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45 - 54</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55/over</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much can be said about the women who did not head their own households in nineteenth-century Guadalajara. The majority of both widowed and single women not heading their own

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359 See Table 4.11.
360 *Censuses of Guadalajara*, Volume 1 & 2.
household lived as boarders or servants within the homes of others (36.2% and 23.9% respectively). These patterns corroborate studies that find that widowed and single migrants who arrived without family or connections in the city, lived as boarders and typically took jobs in domestic work. The younger they were however, the more likely it was that they relied on family networks. Not surprisingly, a large percentage of the younger population of single and widowed women sought residence with relatives or parents.  

This was especially true of the urban poor and working classes who depended on family to survive. This reliance is visible in the residency patterns of Petronila Gonzáles. In 1811, she was listed as “negra,” 17 years old, single and living with her eldest brother, their mother, and four siblings Victoria, Eusebia, Francisca, and Narcisa, ages 14, 11, 8, and 6. The family rented an asesoria, or small apartment on Calle Jarana, although her brother José Gonzáles was unemployed at the time. By 1824, Petronila married Vicente Huerta and had two children, but continued to reside in the household of her brother José, who now worked as a lay clergyman. Also in the home was her sister Eusebia, but the younger Gonzáles girls, now 21 and 19, were no longer in the home. It is likely they would have been sent out of the home to work or apprentice. Such examples reveal the continued importance of family networks throughout the stages of women’s lives.

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361 See Table 4.12.
362 An asesoria was usually a small apartment or room in a larger dwelling, usually the rooms that bordered the street and courtyard within a larger home were rented out this way.
363 Ibid., Master Index #’s, 14421 & 25026.
Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th></th>
<th>Widow</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child of Head</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling of Head</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent of Head</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Law of Head</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relative of Head</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarder</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note however, that while most widowed heads of household were between the ages of 40 to 59, the majority of the members of their households were more than half as likely to be younger (almost 60%) between the ages of 10 and 35, implying that widows often lived with others who were within a working age limit and were capable of adding economic resources to the household.\(^{365}\) These statistics imply a possible devaluing of aged female labor, as well as difficulties in finding suitable jobs for elderly women, corresponding to the overall ageism ascribed to older women in society.\(^{366}\)

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\(^{364}\) Censuses of Guadalajara, Volume 1 & 2.

\(^{365}\) See Table 4.13.

Table 4.13
Widow Headed Household Composition by Age, 1821

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th></th>
<th>Members</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month to 4 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5 - 9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 10 - 14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 15 - 24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25 - 34</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35 - 44</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45 - 54</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and over</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to family, women relied on other women through strong female networks. In 1821, within the household of María Antonia Medina, a fifty-year old widowed seamstress, resided three of Medina’s female relatives who were also seamstresses. Such households were common in urban Guadalajara, signifying a strong familial, as well as female presence, in female-headed households. While about 20% of all widow-headed households contained no men, barely 1% existed with no other females. A majority of widows’ households were comprised of female members (about 60%), and of the children and boarders that resided within widow-headed households 57% and 63% respectively were female. On average, widow-headed households in Guadalajara tended to overwhelmingly contain single, un-related female members. Additionally, they typically contained, on average, only 1 to 2 men but between 1 to 4 females. These numbers lead to the conclusion that a majority of Guadalajara’s widows tended to co-reside or “cluster” with other widowed or single women. Other studies on family

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367 See Censuses of Guadalajara, Volume 1.
368 See Table 4.14.
history note female co-residence as a strategy to reduce household expenses by pooling domestic labor. Take for example the case of Dolores Dábalos. In 1824, she was the eldest of four siblings, a single female of 18 years, living within the home of her father José María, a porter, and mother Inés. By 1839, Dolores was still single, but now resided within the home of the widow Juana Ramírez, a young married resident Juana Robles and Juana’s two small children, María and Maximiano. It highly plausible that the women worked in a similar profession or that Dolores and Juana rented a room in the widow Ramírez’ home as boarders. After 1839, Dolores does not appear in the existing censuses, but being close to the age of thirty-five, it is likely she may not have ever married.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male N</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female N</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child of head/spouse</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>1569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling of head</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild of head</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/daughter-in-law</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same name as head</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative of head</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified child</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarder</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1693</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>3587</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>5280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

369 For more on the concept of clusters see Clarkson and Crawford, “Life after Death,” 248.
370 Censuses, Phase 2, Master Index #s, 24408 & 43077.
371 Censuses of Guadalajara, Volume 1.
Also noteworthy, was the household of the eighty-year old widow, Gertudis Guzmán. In 1839 she shared a home with an un-related thirty-year old widow named Sixta Juárez and her middle-aged, single sister Petra Juárez, and a young married couple, María Ruelas and Pitanio Giménez. By 1842 however, patterns in the home changed and Sixta became the head of the same residence. One possibility could be that Gertrudis died, leaving the two sisters to manage the home. Petra continued to live with her sister Sixta, but in only three short years now appeared in the census as widowed instead of single. Four young children resided in the home with the surname of Sánchez, aged 13, 10, 7 and 3, who had not previously lived with the sisters. It appears that the children belonged to Sixta, or were under her care as the census taker listed them underneath her and not Petra. Pitanio’s wife María, continued to reside with the sisters, although Pitanio was absent.  

Sixta’s situation reveals an important system of female networking. Despite the fact that María was married and unrelated to the women, the three most likely shared a friendly relationship after living together for many years. Although we do not know exactly where María’s husband went, she continued to live with the Juárez sisters in his absence. It is also interesting to note the presence of the four young children in the home. It is unclear whose children they were, but it is apparent that they were under the care of Sixta. Studies of child circulation, note the common practice in Latin American cities from the colonial and into the twentieth century of sending children out of the home as young as eight and as old as twenty-five to work or apprentice. This is corroborated for Guadalajara, where the average age of child apprentices, boarders or domestic servants was between the ages of ten and fourteen. It is

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372 Ibid., Master Index #’s, 44965 & 49464.
entirely plausible that the Sánchez children belonged to another family and moved in and out of the home as boarders or apprentices. Overall, these figures and examples disclose intimate details of the households of unattached women. While taking in boarders, kin, or other single or widowed women could potentially contribute to household income, it also sheds light onto the important cultural linkages between women’s daily lives and their relationships to family and other women.

Overall, a closer examination of single and widowed women at the household level asserts the importance, frequency, and increasing number of women who lived unattached. Despite women’s overall position within a patriarchal society and the stigma attached to being “unattached,” single and widowed women carved out opportunities for themselves in an urban context. At an economic level, they maximized the jobs available to them, and structured their households in ways that sustained financial independence. The maintenance of important familial relationships and female networks, evidenced in the censuses, further exposes important social and cultural imperatives to the organization and maintenance of their daily lives. Analysis of women’s role as heads of household, the household and networking strategies they employed, along with the interpenetration of variables such as age and ethnicity showcases important parallels and tensions between women’s expected role in Mexican society, and their actual daily lives within households. Inevitably the discourse on the ideal patriarchal family was geared toward elites. It isolated the poor and stigmatized them for what they perceived as a lower-class lifestyle, in which women worked in the public sphere. As the century progressed, these women increasingly became construed as dangerous, immoral and unnatural.
Public Space, Danger and Working Women

The growing presence of working women in Mexican cities, the majority of whom were single and widowed, signified an important shift in the *buenas costumbres*, or proper customs of the age. Elite women did not venture into public un-chaperoned, much less work in public settings where their virtue could be brought into question. This practice had the effect of naturalizing social hierarchy because working class women could not be so well protected which put their honor in check. By the late nineteenth century the issue of working women was a tense subject in Mexico. Many believed that the growing number of women, who chose to abandon their duties within the home by working in public, would lead to the social breakdown of the family. The dialogue frequently hinged on class-based notions of acceptable female work. According to one Guadalajara newspaper article, only “appropriate jobs” which could be performed in the confines of home, such as making “tapestries, embroidery, china or fan painting, or giving piano lessons” were acceptable occupations for honorable women. This ideal was not attainable for the large majority of Mexican women who were not a part of the elite classes. Often single and widowed women who supported themselves had no choice but to work outside the home, with the majority working as servants, weavers, seamstresses, tortilla makers,

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374 See table 4.4.
376 “El trabajo de las mujeres. Los derechos de la mujer en la sociedad humana,” *Juan Panadero*, Guadalajara (Dec 11, 1898), 1-2; This was a theme that would continue to influence public discourse on working women well into the twentieth century, see Porter, *Working Women*, 51-72.
molé grinders, cigar and other factory workers. The increased presence of poor working women in public space only heightened concerns over their proper place in modern society.

One of the most common and public of female occupations, *lavanderas* (washerwomen) were a prominent fixture in public spaces, particularly city fountains, rivers and streams. It was there that many did the bulk of their daily labor, but also where they gathered to socialize publicly. Popular caricatures of the Mexican *lavandera*, portrayed her as being of lower status, both socially and racially. In 1855 the Mexican doctor, writer and historian Hilarión Frias y Soto described the Mexican washerwoman as *morena*, or darker skinned, and having “wide hips” and a “large mouth.” The nature of her work as a laundress contrasted greatly with that of nineteenth-century femininity, exhibited by her “muscular arms” which were made darker by exposure to the sun and her “tough black skin.” Such traits were necessary to perform the difficult and laborious task of “scrubbing” and “beating” clothing against stones. While working laundresses were “happy, singing, laughing and chattering with fellow work-mates.” Washing clothing was a process that began early, as women went around collecting dirty clothing. After washing they were carefully hung and ironed and by the day’s end delivered to their respective homes. Although Frias y Soto’s description venerated the Mexican *lavandera* for her diligence and hard work, he also lamented her as “ignorant and unpolished,” leading a life of poverty, misery and endless fatigue to the point of “paralysis.” The portrait suggests not only the creation of a popular caricature of the female profession by mid-century, but also the

377 See Table 4.7.
379 Ibid.
pervasive presence of the *lavandera* and other working women in urban spaces, which unnerved many writers and reformers.

**Figure 4.4**

“La Lavandera”

Many viewed the overwhelming number of women working, like *lavanderas*, as a potential threat to the very foundations of family and home. The academic writings of the nineteenth-century Mexican sociologist Antonio Moreno based much of his concern over working women’s roles in public as a potential threat to men and the household. The fear was

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Hilarión Frias y Soto, “La Lavandera,” 292; For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

128
that if women worked they would lose their love of home and motherhood, as their lives became “more public rather than intimate.” Moreno believed that women emancipated from “intimate life,” publicly shamed “manly prerogatives and the social domain that should be his alone.” According to Moreno, working women “no longer had the cast of mystery, nor the veiled gauze … of the domestic angel.” Such ideas cemented the notion that work separated women from their proper role within the family.

Concern over the increased presence of single working women in public spaces dealt not only with the effects it had on the family and home, but on working women themselves. The separation between the intimate space of the home and that of public space was significant in nineteenth-century women’s lives. Popular and religious beliefs understood the confines of the home as a place of order, safety, and family, and as cities swelled in the latter nineteenth century bringing with it new social problems of overcrowding, epidemic disease, and crime public space became increasingly perceived as dangerous territory for women. For single working women especially, the urban streets of Guadalajara harbored unwanted dangers. One concerned journalist wrote in 1900 about the “ugly custom” of men who hung out in plazas, streets and sidewalks only to jeer and harass women who had to traverse city streets and sidewalks alone. These “streetdogs” who made a habit of this behavior were considered to be men of low morals and “improper to a cultured society.” The presence of such men posed a danger to unprotected women. Sometimes harassment of single women turned into physical assault. On a

383 “Una fea costumbre,” El Sol de Guadalajara, June 1, 1900.
Saturday afternoon in November 1886, the young single Benita González was walking to her home from work alone. Shortly after passing the city cemetery, she was approached by three unknown men. After asking her for a cigarette, the three men brutally stabbed and robbed her. She was found hours later by a policeman unconscious in the cemetery.

Unattached working women who had no male patriarch to protect them contended with dangers in the workplace. Many single women who worked in domestic service faced abuse and harassment from male household members who made unwanted sexual advances. As was common elsewhere in Latin America, domestic servants in Guadalajara suffered abuses at the hands of their employers. This reality was all too real for the young widowed domestic María Gómez. In 1890 Ignacio Moreno, María’s boss, accused her of theft. In his testimony he claimed María had run away from her duties without warning, taking along with her two watches, a pistol, a sarape and three handkerchiefs. María denied the charges and explained that she fled the home after experiencing both physical abuse and sexual harassment by Ignacio. She described the evening she left saying that Moreno arrived to the home drunk and attempted to have “relations” with her, when she refused he hit her. According to María, however, this was not the first time she faced abuse by her employer. In her testimony she explained that on several other occasions Moreno entered her bedroom without her consent and she consistently refused him. He also boasted to friends implying he had had sexual relations with her. It was his consistent attempts to pursue her and harassment that caused María to flee the home. Perhaps if it were not for the damning testimony of Moreno’s own sister who witnessed the attack that evening, María’s story would never be validated. Further evidence from a medical exam confirmed signs

385 Graham, House and Street.
of stress on María’s body, demonstrating she had struggled against Moreno. In light of the
evidence against him Moreno dropped the initial theft charges.  

María’s story reveals the harsh reality that many working girls faced, particularly those
that worked behind closed doors and without any protection. These were the dangers that so
many in Guadalajara feared for a growing female working population. Working outside the home
lent itself to greater freedom for sexual encounters, precisely because women worked and
sometimes lived outside the sphere of the home and family. Historian María de los Angeles
Pérez Salcedo demonstrates that rape was most common for working women. Actual rapes were
defined as “violations.” Mexican law distinguished it from *rapto* (kidnapping) or *estupro*
(deflowering), which jurists frequently argued implied a level complicity or consent by the
females involved in exchange of a promise of marriage, equating it to a type of seduction. In
Guadalajara, there were 48 rape and 446 seduction cases that went to trial between 1857 and
1910. More than thirty percent of all rape cases involved girls who were working at the time of
the rape. Of these cases, two women were factory workers, seven were domestic workers, and
six were performing daily tasks like getting water, carrying honey, or cutting corn.  

Although it is unclear whether or not violence against women was the result of the city’s growth or

\[386\] BPEJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal,
“Contra María Goméz por robo,” 1890, Caja 7: 99,528.

\[387\] In Mexican criminal law jurists often confounded estupro and rapto (kidnapping with the
intent to seduce). Both crimes however could be classified as consensual on the part of the
females involved, often through promises of marriage. It was this distinction which separated
them from violación (rape), which seemed to imply non-consensual sex often through the use of
force or violence. See Kathryn A. Sloan, Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor

women’s greater presence in public spaces, emphasis in both print media and court cases reflects heightened connotations between women, work and danger.  

Immorality and Dishonor  

By the Porfiriato, popular discourses on the Mexican working woman and the negative stereotypes which associated her with the dangers of female prostitution, poverty and singleness were rampant. As more and more women entered the work force in cities across Mexico, scrutiny over occupations outside of the home linked working girls to growing social ills in society. It was not only women’s absence from the domestic home that concerned so many in Guadalajara at the time, but the growth of particularly “immoral” occupations such as prostitution which were viewed as an affront to the family and society. The issue of single women and poverty never fell far from the debate. Far too often social reformers blamed the plight of poverty faced by many single and widowed women as the root cause of women’s immoral behavior.  

Working outside of the home became increasingly linked not only to singleness but the disreputable profession of prostitution. As early as the 1840s some tapatíos argued that prostitution was a necessary evil. It was tolerated because men needed to satisfy their natural sexual impetus. A clear example of this perspective is the 1845 bestiality case against Santiago Martínez. According to court documents Martínez was arrested on charges that he fornicated with a neighbor’s donkey in the small town of Santa Anita, just thirty kilometers outside the city center. As a forty year old widow his defense attorney argued that men like Martínez, deprived

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389 Similar arguments have been made for Victorian London with compare to the Mexican situation, see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger In late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
of “the natural union of the two sexes” suffered greatly, and were led to commit unspeakable crimes like bestiality and sodomy. In his estimation, the real crime was that Martínez lived in the “boonies” where prostitution was not tolerated. 390 This was a popular trope in other parts of post-Independence Latin America. The work of Peter Beattie on Brazil argues that from the colonial period to post-Independence, reformers used similar arguments to attack “obligatory celibacy” among men housed in prisons, poorhouses, asylums and military barracks. Not only was it “unnatural” but prevented men from “heterosexual release.” For this reason, colonial officials arranged conjugal visitation for men with disreputable women. 391 Concern over the involvement of honorable women and girls in sex work led to the legalization of prostitution in Mexico by 1866 and subsequent regulation in Jalisco by 1870. 392 This is not to say that despite being illegal in previous years that prostitution in Guadalajara was hidden from the public. In the 1821 census, an entire street noted as Calle de Tentación (Temptation Street) housed mostly single women living alone with their children. 393 Most studies however, directly link the rise in interest regarding female prostitution and its growth to the modern city. 394 While earlier

392 BPEJ, Reglamento de las casas de tolerancia de 1866 (Guadalajara, 1866).
394 For Mexico see Katherine Bliss, Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); James Alex Garza, The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime and Vice in Porfírian Mexico City (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007). Similar arguments have also been made for other parts of Latin America and Europe, see Donna Guy, Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitutes, Family and the Nation in Argentina (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight.
attitudes such as those of Martínez’ defense attorney intimated that prostitution had a civilizing effect on society, by late century, attitudes in Guadalajara about prostitution began to emphasize its demoralizing impact on the public.\textsuperscript{395} Scientific arguments emphasized a eugenic view that prostitution and prostitutes were a blight on society, and a marker of social and moral weakness.\textsuperscript{396}

Growing preoccupation over female sexuality in Guadalajara led to the belief that single women, many who lived without male protectors, were more likely to engage in “sins of the flesh” and therefore needed to be more strictly controlled and watched over.\textsuperscript{397} There was a constant fear that especially poor single women were at greater risk of becoming prostitutes. So much so that the Guadalajara factory owner Mauro A. Tostado proclaimed at the opening of his shoe factory in the city in 1895, that he would produce inexpensive, well-made shoes by the hand of female workers in order to help her with subsistence and “prevent her from falling into prostitution.”\textsuperscript{398} It is important to note that although the majority of single working women were not prostitutes, the majority who registered under new laws as working prostitutes in Guadalajara were single women. Although this data should be read cautiously, as it does not capture those women who continued to work illegally, it does highlight the connotations made by people like Tostado. It also comprises the only available sources on prostitution in the city, as

\textsuperscript{395} BPEJ, \textit{El Católico}, Vol 2, no 3 (Guadalajara, October 16, 1887), 2.
\textsuperscript{397} Benítez Barba, “Raptadas tapatías,” 296; Peter Beattie found similar cases made by Brazilian military officials in the 1850s, “Jealous Institution,” 196.
\textsuperscript{398} José María Murúa, \textit{Historia de Jalisco. Desde la consolidación del porfiriato hasta mediados del siglo XX, Tomo IV} (UNED: México, 1982), 136-7.
clandestine prostitutes rarely left behind records. By drawing parallels between non-marriage and working women, Tostado suggested that a woman without a husband and without a good job could be more easily persuaded into the vice-ridden world of prostitution. While there were a few married and widowed women among the population of female sex workers in Guadalajara, over ninety percent were single.  

| Civil Status of Registered Prostitutes Treated at Hospital Civil, 1902 |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
|                 |    N|     %|
| Single          | 152 | 91.6|
| Married         | 10  | 6.02|
| Widowed         | 4   | 2.4 |

Despite Mauro Tostado’s claim that a factory job could steer single women away from prostitution, as new skilled jobs opened for middle class women in education, offices and sales, more commonly held jobs for poorer women such as factory work and domestic service became associated with women of low morality and prostitution. The famous 1908 study by Dr. Luis Lara y Pardo on prostitution in Mexico suggested that the majority of prostitutes had worked in domestic service. In his estimation, the life of a servant was the ultimate form of “parasitism,” since their work produced little and their job centered on living off of the wealth of others. He

399 See Table 4.15.
400 Data on prostitutes in Guadalajara is extremely limited in the archives. Most of the records dealing with the registration of prostitutes only exists in the regulatory bodies that oversaw them. For more see Jorge Alberto Trujillo Breton, “La prostitución en Guadalajara durante la crisis del Porfiriato, 1894-1911,” Dissertation (Universidad de Guadalajara: Guadalajara, 1994), 251-254.
concluded that this form of work could easily lead one to a life of prostitution.\textsuperscript{401} Earlier works such as the 1895 report on prostitution in Guadalajara by Miguel Galindo argued that certain types of work influenced immorality in women. He noted that in factories women learned vices at a young age and therefore become “indifferent” to them. In his estimation, the intermingling of men and women made matters worse. It was where “men learned their way to the cantina . . . and the gambling houses” and “women lost their modesty.” He argued that factory work increased a woman’s chance of falling into prostitution, and noted the reputation of “\textit{medieras} and \textit{cajistas},” or knitters of stockings and typesetters, who were well-known in the brothels.\textsuperscript{402}

What many feared about prostitution was its very public nature. Indeed, in both legal and popular documents, writers referred to prostitutes as “\textit{mujeres públicas},” or public women.\textsuperscript{403} Scholars who study prostitution in Guadalajara argue that the term “\textit{públicas}” literally associated prostitutes with public space, a territory reserved for men. The expression reserved this negative stereotype of being a “\textit{pública}” purely for women, as men would not suffer any loss of reputation for entering a brothel.\textsuperscript{404} Although there were male prostitutes, there was no equivalent expression for “public men” (\textit{públicos}). Just as authorities perceived working women to be a threat to working men’s masculinity and the family, so too was prostitution. In the estimation of social reformers and scientists, like other forms of female work which brought women into

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{402} BPEJ, Miguel Galindo, Miscellaneous 492. \textit{Apuntos sobre la hygiene en Guadalajara: tesis de recepción} (México, 1908), 119.
\textsuperscript{403} The term is used throughout the legal records of Guadalajara and in newspapers during the time period. For more on the term and other nicknames, see Trujillo Breton, “La prostitución en Guadalajara,” 80-1.
\end{flushleft}
public spaces, prostitution was an abhorrent practice that threatened to destroy the fragile customs which sought to civilize both public and private space. Numerous newspaper articles in Guadalajara called attention to the growing problem of prostitution in the city. One editorialist made note of the growing number of prostitutes present in “populous” spaces throughout the city and called attention to the “scandal and pernicious example” they posed. The author believed their presence not only threatened the “buenas costumbres” of the day, but had the potential to “destroy the integrity and virtue of cities.” What the author found particularly offensive was the presence of these “daughters of vice” who appeared in the streets with their “faces painted and bodies scantily clothed.” The piece went on to suggest that these “misfortunate margaritas” would bring only indecency to the “health and cleanliness” of “happy homes,” implying the disruption of honorable marriages. The author went on to argue that the "vice" that prostitutes "present in public," had an enormous consequence on society. Little by little reformers argued female prostitutes and their male customers would destroy honorable families. In the end, he argued that more should be done to influence and moralize against the vices of prostitution that were rampant in the city.

In the subsequent chapter, I explore the social and criminal ramifications of prostitution that were a large part of the concerns of social reformers and city officials during the Porfiriato.

In large measure, the writers, scientists and businessmen who debated the problem of female prostitution associated with poverty among Guadalajara’s working single and widowed women. Adult female singleness, poverty and immorality were seen as inseparable issues. Some even suggested that the continuous waves of female migrants looking for work in cities across Mexico had created the problem of female singleness. According to the rhetoric rural migrations

405 “El Vicio Clandestino,” El Sol de Guadalajara, July 4, 1900.
of poor women had created an imbalance in the sexes, leaving all women less opportunities to marry. Poor women were especially at a disadvantage because they were less desirable marriage partners, and without husbands they would continue to be unable to support themselves. This produced a vicious cycle of female singleness, poverty, work and prostitution.

It is true that the majority of working women in Guadalajara were in fact single, but the debate over women’s work must also be tempered by questions relating to their ethnicity and class. Social status was an underlying element in the relationship between work and adult female poverty. Ultimately the ideal gender roles of the time did not fit working class women’s lives and the majority of women, both single and married, had to work out of necessity.

Data on working women and their marital status in Guadalajara is difficult to assess due to the limitations of most sources, however several conclusions regarding women’s work can be made utilizing data from censuses. Although the 1821 and 1822 censuses of Guadalajara recorded that only nineteen percent of all adult women had an occupation, data from 1895 suggests a much higher proportion of working women, around sixty percent had jobs. This may not suggest that more women were working by late century, but rather reflected a growing concern about working women.

406 Porter, Working Women in Mexico City, 61.
407 Tuñon, Mujeres, 293.
408 See Table 4.16.
409 The listing of “no occupation” for women was common within the 1821-1822 censuses of Guadalajara, and was a pattern found elsewhere. In France, 70.2% of widowed women living alone were listed with no occupation and rates as high as 80% have been noted in England. See Lee Baker, “Survival Strategies of Widows in Dijon During the French Revolution,” Women’s Studies 31, (2002), 58; Clarkson and Crawford, “Life after Death,” 248.
Table 4.16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Women, Guadalajara, 1821-1895</th>
<th>1821</th>
<th>1895</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of adult women</td>
<td>13732</td>
<td>33770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women recorded with a job</td>
<td>2566</td>
<td>20443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of all Women Working</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the census of 1821 provides more specific information as it included details such as class and ethnicity, which became illegal to record later that same year. By the early nineteenth century, the majority of women with an occupation in Guadalajara were single. Although it was more common for women to work when they were single or widowed, a closer examination reveals that such generalizations varied according to ethnicity and social class. Evidence there suggests that women of indigenous backgrounds and those of lower socio-economic status were over represented among the female working population no matter their marital status. For example, although the majority of Spanish and Indian working women were single, Indian women were two times more likely to be married and work than Spanish wives. As a whole, however, an overwhelming majority of all employed women were from the working poor classes. Such evidence confirms that despite an ideal image of a woman’s place within the home, working outside of it was a way of life for most Tapatía women, especially among the lower classes and those with indigenous heritage.

Data for 1821 was compiled using frequencies to determine the adult female population and those listed with jobs using the *Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822*, CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006); For 1895 data see Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Mapoteca, “Computo General del Censo,” Oficio del Concentración del Censo (Guadalajara, 1895).

See Table 4.16.
See Table 4.16.
See Table 4.17 and Table 4.18.
As the century progressed so too did the scientific arguments which linked typically lower-class female occupations with poverty and sexual immorality. Contemporary Mexican scientists reasoned that because women learned morality, and it was not biologically determined, it was only natural that members of the lower classes suffered from greater moral inferiority. The scientists did not limit their criticism to domestic service and prostitution alone, but other commonly held jobs for poor women came under scrutiny as well.

414 Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006). 1821 data was cross-tabulated according to noted civil status, ethnicity, sex, and recorded occupations according to listed census categories.

415 Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006). 1821 data was cross-tabulated according to sex, social titles and recorded occupations according to listed census categories.

For example, the Spanish-born writer and journalist Faustina Saez de Melgar called attention to wet-nurses in 1883, chiding not only mothers for failing to comply with their obligations to nurse their own children, but she also the women who worked in the profession. She believed that the duty of wet-nursing forced women to "abandon their [own] children" and the home. 417 Often hygiene campaigns aimed at wet-nurses saw them as a “physically polluting presence,” a cadre of workers made up of the “immoral” classes. 418 As was the case in other parts of Latin America the profession of wet-nursing was a marker of social status, often performed by poor women out of necessity. The very sad case of the wet nurse María Trinidad Flores reveals the extreme sacrifices women made as wet nurses and the circumstances which propelled them into this line of work. In December of 1888, Flores accepted work in Guadalajara’s Casa de Cuña, a wing of the city’s orphanage that housed orphaned babies. Although she was married and still nursing her one year old son, her husband encouraged her to take the job as they were in “extreme need.” She migrated from her small town of Santana Acatlán, a distance of forty five kilometers, to accept the position at the rate of five pesos per month. Two months later her husband was soliciting orphanage administrators to release his wife from her duties because their own son had taken a turn in health and “lacking the affections of his mother was suffering from a grave illness.” 419 Several days later the orphanage denied his request on the grounds that the young baby in her care was also in poor health and could die if they substituted his wet-nurse at such a young age. The story reveals interesting aspects about the life of wet-nurses. Poor women hired as wet-nurses were often unable to care for their own

417 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 118. 418 Lauderdale Graham, House and Street, 120. 419 Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Beneficiencia, B-5 Instituciones de Protección, Caja 159, exp. 889-832.
children during the course of their tenure as nurses. A decision to wet-nurse was not taken lightly, and for María Trinidad her own circumstances were dire enough to warrant her leaving her young son and migrating to Guadalajara. At the same time, orphanage staff strictly monitored wet-nurses in order to prevent them from abandoning the infants they suckled. Despite the illness of her own son, María was unable to leave.

Despite the often desperate reality that placed poor women like María Trinidad in positions as wet-nurses, Saez de Melgar built on stereotypes of wet-nurses as being individuals of ill character and low morals. She commented that "with the milk that is transmitted to infants also come illness and vices of the wet-nurses, and her instincts, good or bad." In her list of diseases which could be passed from nurse to baby, she notes both syphilis and herpes. Her reference makes clear that poor women’s work became increasingly tied to the integrity and sexual honor of working women. Thus, as the nineteenth century moved forward social perceptions of working women in typically held professions began to be linked to larger social concerns over the poverty and sexual immorality of unmarried women.

Conclusion

Begin inning in the 1850s, state and national leaders blamed a whole host of urban social problems on the breakdown of the husband-headed household among Mexico’s poor. Thus, single women became scapegoats for broader social phenomenon that limited their abilities to marry and form stable families that resulted from land reform, rural economic instability, warfare and banditry which contributed to urban migration. As a result single women emerged as a problem rather than the reality of growing industrialization and urbanization. The equation left

420 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 118.
little space for them to negotiate traditional gender roles. Despite their need to work and build independent households in order to support themselves, their presence in the public eye caused alarm as an affront to women’s proper roles in society. This concern led to a stigma that associated laboring women with danger, immorality, and as symbols of the deterioration of family and society. Growing preoccupation over single women and their sexuality would lead to greater forms of regulation by the middle and latter portions of the century.
The honor of unattached women who often lived and labored outside of a patriarchal home became increasingly scrutinized in post-Independence Mexico, not only for their work in the public eye, but as part of a larger discourse regarding immorality among the poor. Social reformers, writers and law enforcement officials specifically targeted unattached women for correction because they suspected that these women more often committed sexual and criminal improprieties. After 1821 the maintenance of female honor became paramount not only to the success of the family but the nation. Husbands, fathers, and other male relatives were responsible and held accountable for protecting the honor and virtue of their female family members. However, the reality of industrial and urban growth revealed that most common Mexicans could not fulfill idealized gender and family roles, in part because a significant number of Guadalajara’s female residents lived outside the confines of a traditional patriarchal family or marriage. Unattached women in urban Guadalajara heightened concerns and fears over their morality and place in public life. Often stereotyped as vice-ridden prostitutes, authorities focused their reformist zeal on adult female singleness precisely amid a demographic crisis which alarmed local authorities and heightened anxieties toward over-crowding, crime, and disease in Guadalajara. In the absence of men, the role of the state mimicked a paternal relationship to sectors of the lower classes. Data from criminal and civil court cases, legal regulations and jail and hospital records suggests that the mostly male-authorities of the newly formed state government and police forces of Jalisco acted as both protectors and prosecutors of single and widowed women. Beginning in the 1850s, state authorities more aggressively displaced the
Catholic Church in areas of social welfare, penal correction, judicial matters and family law over
the course of the nineteenth century is a critical period in which to examine this issue as it was a
period of state organization, in which power over judicial, correctional and social welfare
decisions transferred from the church to state governments. Nineteenth-century Guadalajara’s
provincial and conservative religious traditions contrasts with the more cosmopolitan and secular
character of Mexico City and offers a unique case study for comparative regional history.
Despite experiencing similar demographic and urban growth at a rate similar to Mexico City,
Guadalajara had fewer resources to handle the problems associated with a growing urban
population.\footnote{Lilia Oliver Sánchez, “Intensidad de la crisis demográficas en las ciudades de México y
Guadalajara, 1800-1850,” \textit{Takwá} 8, (Fall 2005), 36.} This chapter highlights the intersections between adult female singleness and
immorality examined through the lens of criminal court cases and the regulation of prostitution.
By exploring new state institutions in charge of controlling and policing the population in
Guadalajara, it argues that the shift from church-run to state-led criminal courts, prisons and
hospitals all served to impose a newly organized governing and policing body onto urban
residents, particularly its poor, single, and female population. In large measure, city officials
marginalized single women for correction and reform in greater numbers than married women
given their greater presence in and before institutions of power.

The Discourse on Poverty and Immorality in Nineteenth-Century Guadalajara

By the 1850s, the intensity of Guadalajara’s demographic growth posed social and urban
problems that city planners had never experienced before.\footnote{Ibid., 20-23.} Previously, the city’s governance
did little to regulate development, increase its surveillance of dangerous classes or coordinate
services. Waves of urban migration exposed the deficiencies of weak urban planning and infrastructure. Local authorities grew leery and anxious of an ever-growing poor and unemployed migrant population with limited housing and financial resources to access goods.

The problem of population growth was so persistent in colonial Guadalajara that as soon as the beloved bishop Fray Antonio Alcalde arrived in the city in 1771 he began to take measures to combat unemployment and to segregate and control Guadalajara’s poor. In one of his first acts as bishop, he oversaw the construction of a textile factory north of the city to put the hundreds of poor residents who “swarmed the city” to work. As part of the same measure, he later constructed worker housing there. This housing project called Las Cuadritas, included 158 small one-story houses which took up sixteen city blocks. These tenement style homes were typically rented by the room, and multiple families often lived in one house.423

Six years later in this same part of town he initiated the construction of the hospital San Miguel de Belén, (today called Hospital Civil) to treat many of the problems related to the health of these new indigents.424 Growing unemployment which exacerbated social problems and poverty led bishop Alcalde’s successor Juan Cruz Ruiz de Cabañas to open the city’s first poorhouse in 1805, Casa de Caridad y Misericordia (later referred to as the Hospicio

423 Rodney Anderson’s work suggests that this part of town also had higher rates of households with multiple families and un-related members. See Rodney Anderson, “Los Barrios,” in Lecturas históricas de Guadalajara: Demografía y Urbanismo, eds. José María Muriá y Jaime Olveda (México: Colegio Regiones de México, 1992), 329. Dr. Anderson’s work suggests that this part of town also had higher rates of households with multiple families and un-related members

Clergy and local authorities feared the city was growing more dangerous and insecure because of the masses of unemployed and urban poor. The Hospicio served as an orphanage, a school for poor and orphaned children, and home to beggars and other aged or handicapped homeless in the city. Mexico City experienced a similar pattern of migration and urban growth where local authorities came up with similar institutions and programs to deal with an ever-growing number of urban poor residents. As Silvia Arrom shows, similar fear and anxieties over the threat that poor migrants had on the economic and social development of the city led to extreme regulations which outlawed begging and enforced the roundup and internment of city mendicants in the newly established poor house.

Several recent works point to late eighteenth century Bourbon reforms as a point of transition in the treatment and perception of Mexico’s poor. They argue that the growing presence of poor migrants in urban centers heightened concerns by Church and state officials and elites who associated the city’s poor with urban social problems. The work of Silvia Arrom contends that prior to the 1774 decree which attempted to eradicate begging in Mexico City, almsgiving was a common and Christian practice in the city.

Increasingly however, as populations in urban centers like Mexico City and Guadalajara swelled local authorities and Mexican elites came to associate the “subversive lifestyle” of the poor, with growing urban

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426 Jiménez Pelayo, Olveda and Núñez, El Crecimiento Urbano, 125.
427 Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado (AHA), Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Caja 1, 1789-1849; Also see Chapter 6.
428 The Mexico City poor house was established in 1774. See Silvia Arrom, Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 2.
429 Ibid.
problems such as crime, disease, immorality, non-marriage and social disorder. In their estimation, the drunkenness, gambling, consensual unions, and impoverished nature with which they characterized lower-class life was the root cause of urban problems. By the mid-nineteenth century these biased attitudes deepened and many local officials labeled certain individuals as “cero sociales,” or social zeros. Described as prostitutes, hoodlums, beggars, street children, homeless aged, and invalids, local authorities in Guadalajara believed they were the product of urban problems such as illness, unemployment, abandonment, and poverty. Elites in Mexico considered “social zeros” a blemish both on their city and the nation, and they believed they should not expose their illnesses, helplessness, deformities and misery in public places and even less to foreign visitors.

Numerous traveler accounts about Guadalajara concord with elite Mexican stereotypes of the urban poor, often describing the lifestyle of the city’s poor as violent, promiscuous, raucous and rebellious. In 1844, the Frenchman Mathieu de Fossey commented that “not a day goes by that one does not find a few dead in the streets from a brawl,” with the most fatal occurring during feast times. Others, such as the French doctor Ernest Vigneaux wrote in 1854, describing the city’s commoners as “gay and celebratory,” which he argued aroused “turbulent” feelings and “energy” that led to vice. He went on to write that “all of them get together in a

430 Robert Buffington, Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 25.
filthy manner without distinction of age or sex, dirty, almost naked, and shameless.” More poignantly Dr. Vigneaux noted their unwillingness to submit to the authority of both the army and local police.

As the century evolved so too did the discourse on urban poverty and crime in Mexico. Especially after 1850, Mexican authorities increasingly equated poverty with crime. The Mexican writer Adolfo Llanes y Alcarez wrote in 1876 that “poverty is a crime.” He lamented that “to be born poor is the equivalent of being born delinquent.” He went on to suggest that “poverty leads to such little happiness that all turn their backs on it. A poor person is like a leper that nobody wants to be around for fear of contagion.” Further evidence from the work of Guadalajara historian Jorge Trujillo argues that the fears and anxieties of local officials and elites expanded during the Porfiriato (1876-1910). He argues that the dominant classes created a particular typology of the “dangerous classes” based on their own fears, prejudices and ideology based on racial, class and gender hierarchies. While elites associated their own class, the “gente decente” (decent people) with virtue, wealth and power, lower-classes remained poor, fragile and defective.

434 Adolfo Llanes y Alacarez, La mujer en el siglo diez y nueve. (Mexico: Imprenta de la Colonia Española, 1876), 81.
Evidence of these ideas existed in the physical layout of Guadalajara, suggesting a desire by elites to segregate classes. In 1790, the Governor ordered the division of the city into a fourteen cuartel system, in which different blocks of the city were organized into districts. Reformers hoped that the new organizational system would ease surveillance of the growing poor and working class population. For this reason, each cuartel had a juez mayor (judge of the peace) whose function it was to maintain peace, foment work, and prevent idleness among residents. Also for each neighborhood in the cuartel an alcalde menor de barrio (selectman of the neighborhood) was named to “ease the administration of justice.” Their functions were to patrol their portion of the city, intervening in public disturbances such as drunkenness, brawls and domestic disputes. In terms of the welfare of the community, they were to ensure that each district had a doctor, midwife and pharmacist in their jurisdiction. They were responsible for the welfare of orphans, widows, and beggars. Sometimes, male orphans of working age were assigned to a master to learn an oficio (trade). In the case of beggars, some were sent to jail to work on public works. By 1809 the commander of the royal army modified the cuartel system, demanding greater division of the city into twenty-four cuarteles. He argued that the changes needed to be made for public security purposes “as an appropriate means to secure the public peace and to facilitate the Junta de policía (city police) in carrying out its objectives.” After 1821 the state consolidated all matters pertaining to public security under the Jefetura

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436 Eduardo López Moreno, *La cuadrícula en el desarrollo de la ciudad hispanoamericana: Guadalajara, Mexico* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), 19; See Chapter 2.
política, which served as the main intermediary between the Ayuntamiento (municipal government) and the state Governor. Each canton, or sector, of the city had a Jefe Político, or police chief (formally the alcalde in colonial period). The responsibilities of the Jefetura política included the persecution of vagrants, apprehension of criminals and the registration of crimes. In general, its role was to uphold laws and codes, preserve public order, guarantee the safety of city residents and prevent robberies and crimes.

The Jefetura política together with an expanded cuartel system served to maintain order in the post-Independence period. In large measure the cuartel system, which by the late nineteenth century occupied some 976 city blocks, was a system that segregated the city along class lines. Within this space the western area of the city made up the “gente decente,” which included merchants, professionals, industrial workers, and bureaucrats. The eastern portion of the city housed the remaining population of factory workers, technicians, small merchants, artisans, rural migrants, and those deemed “gente trueno” (raucous classes). Thus, the official discourse of the ruling class supported the notion that the lifestyle of the poor caused immorality and crime in the city.

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441 González Llerenas Fidenlina, “La reglamentación sanitaria de la prostitución en Guadalajara y sus reformas, segunda mitad del siglo XIX,” 386.
Singleness and Immorality

Scholars have noted aspects of the so-called “subversive lifestyle” of Mexico’s poor that included high rates of non-marriage, consensual unions, and illegitimacy. The same notions that family morality and national prosperity went hand in hand reverberated in public space and official discourses. Numerous scholars highlight the ways local authorities believed non-marriage led to consensual unions, domestic violence, illegitimacy and child abandonment which they argued encouraged criminality and crime.444 Robert Buffington argues that Mexican officials concerned with the private lives of marginal social groups, formerly a church prerogative, became integrated into the discourse concerning lower-class criminality.445 In many ways, authorities suggested that singleness was a part of a lower-class lifestyle that encouraged immorality and criminality.

Increasing preoccupation with female singleness and immorality were not confined to the debates of journalists, reformers and scientists, nor to the issues of work and public space as argued previously. Ideologically, the Mexican nation was undergoing a transformation and its citizens were an integral part of that change. The dichotomies in society over good and bad women were clear. While mothers, wives and reputable single women were privileged members of society, the growing number of poor, single and working women in public spaces became stigmatized as bad women whose sexual morality was suspect. The nineteenth century marked a turning point in which women’s social and civil status became markers of her honor. Ultimately a single woman was an unmarried woman, and little room existed for her honor to co-exist alongside the Republican wives and mothers. For this reason they became much more visible to

445 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen, 25.
religious writers, census takers and judges who were anxious about their proper place in modern
Mexico. Often tensions arose around the issue of single women’s sexual honor. In place of
absentee male patriarchs the Church and state became concerned with the sexual honor of single
women, and the rhetoric behind “good” and “bad” women was not only used popularly, but
individuals applied it to political and legal contexts.

By the nineteenth century the issue of female sexuality and singleness were synonymous.
Often single women became fodder for the hysteria over a perceived moral decay in Mexican
society which some attributed to growing secularization. Church leaders put single women at the
heart of the civil marriage debate. As early as the 1850s, religious writers in Guadalajara
expressed concerns over what an increased emphasis on civil unions might mean for the sake of
unmarried women’s virtue. Without the consequences attached to religious marriage, single
women could fall into more illicit relations with men. According to the Guadalajaran priest,
Agustín de la Rosa, single women would become “toys” for men’s “passions,” “slaves to their
whims,” and “defenseless victims to their crazy games.” The consequences of such liaisons
would lead to illegitimate children, who would end up aborted or abandoned by ill fit mothers.
De la Rosa believed that without the protection of marriage as a “sacred and inviolable” union,
women would be left with the options of “concubinage” or “adulterous relationships” with
men. Not only did de la Rosa fear consensual illicit relationships between men and women,
but he argued that civil marriage would also put single women and girls at greater risk of rapto,
or abduction through violence or coercion. The Jalisco criminal code defined rapto as sexual
relations “against the will of a woman through the use of physical or moral violence, trickery or

446 BPJ, Num de Misc: 12, # of doc: 4, Agustín de la De la Rosa, “El Matrimonio Civil,” 43.
447 Ibid., 41.
seduction in order to satisfy a lascivious desire or in order to marry her.\textsuperscript{448} Without the consequence of marriage built into most Church laws on \textit{rapto}, he believed that it would “incite \textit{raptores}” and “impede abstinence” among young men and women.\textsuperscript{449} In de la Rosa’s depiction of a society without religiously sanctioned and morally monitored marriage, unmarried women would suffer the most. His argument suggests that religious marriage offered both men and women a number of protections that prevented immoral behavior and maintained decorum in society. By and large however, his writing emphasized the connotations between non-marriage and illegitimacy, a problem he blamed on poor single women who frequently lived in consensual union rather than legal marriage.

In reality, the stigma that single women faced had less to do with their marital status than it did with the ideals held both by the state and the Church regarding female sexual honor. Even at the level of municipal government census takers were preoccupied with female singleness. The census of Guadalajara is useful in identifying the ways in which census takers analyzed civil status to pass judgment on single and widowed women’s social status and sexual honor. The categories used to define women’s civil status as single shed light on social and even personal commentaries regarding their sexuality. Apart from widowhood an unmarried single adult woman might be identified as single (\textit{soltera}), or a maiden (\textit{doncella}). In nineteenth-century Guadalajara the title \textit{doncella} inferred virginity, while the title \textit{soltera}, or single, implied a woman was no longer virginal or had been violated. Of all the \textit{doncellas} listed in the 1821 census the majority were between the age of fifteen and twenty four, but many more were listed in age groups beyond these years, implying the status was not only for young girls but could also apply

\textsuperscript{448} Benítez Barba, “Raptadas tapatías,” 292.
\textsuperscript{449} BPJ, Num de Misc: 12, # of doc: 4, Agustín de la De la Rosa, “El Matrimonio Civil,” 41-2.
to spinsters. Based on data analyzed for class and ethnicity, it appears that census takers applied the term consistently regardless of social status. Not only were these categories significant to the census, but they were also a common component of legal documents, which labeled unattached women in a variety of ways including widowed, single, celibate, alone, free of marriage, and *doncella*. \(^{450}\) The diversity of categories used to describe both the degree of women’s singleness in addition to her sexual experience is indicative of the level of concern placed on a woman’s sexual honor at the state level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age 15 – 24</th>
<th>Age 25 – 34</th>
<th>Age 35 – 44</th>
<th>Age 45 – 54</th>
<th>Age 55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soltera</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doncella</td>
<td>1376</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sola&quot; w/children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sola&quot; w/out children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sola&quot; Doncella</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sola&quot; Viuda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The very thorough census taker of cuartel nineteen went so far as to note whether a woman was single and had children separately from those single women who had no children, as well as

\(^{450}\) See Table 5.1; The censuses I explored for Guadalajara did not inventory convents, therefore the use of the word celibate, although rare, appears to have been used interchangeably with *doncella*. In addition, the popular connotation of the term was corroborated through criminal records. BPJ, *Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco*, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal. \(^{451}\) Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006). 1821 data was analyzed according to noted civil status, age and sex according to listed census categories. Similar information was not available for later years.
those women who were single but widowed or still virgins. The home of María del Carmen sheds light on this reality. At the age of fifty, she was recorded as single with children and headed a household of five people. Three members of the home were her children; José age twelve; Candelario age eleven; and María Jesus, fifteen. Both she and her children appear without a surname, likely an indication that she was never married and a sign of her family’s lower class status. As was customary in Latin America children took their father’s surname, in cases where paternity was questionable or children were illegitimate they often acquired the surname of their mother, or none at all. In the census this was noted by listing individuals with only their first names. Also living in the home was Juan Gutiérrez and Trinidad Valle, both were employed adult men living as boarders in the home. The same census taker also noted the case of the thirty year old María Corona, also given the lower class and less honorable “solteras,” or single designation. She resided as a boarder in the home of a nineteen year old whose relationship with Corona was not listed. Her status as a boarder living with an unrelated male, likely indicated that the census taker did not hold her honor in high regard. In contrast to María del Carmen and María Corona, the same census taker listed María Josefa as “single without children.” To be a woman without children likely indicated greater sexual honor. However, at the age of thirty and working as a domestic servant in the home of Pedro Alvarez, it is possible that the census taker believed her to be a spinster. Perhaps the same census taker knew of the good reputation among the Estrada sisters, because he made note that the sisters, who all resided as boarders within the home of Felipe Mata and ranged in age from forty to twenty-seven, were single but doncellas.452 The many categories of non-marriage, including solteras, solteras sin

452 Censuses of Guadalajara, 1821-1822. CD-ROM Database. (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, 2006). Index #46560-46565. For the case of María Corona index# 46940. María Josefa index #46796. Estrada sisters, index# 46851-46854
niños, and doncellas, and the connotations they carried regarding sexual honor, non-marriage and class status reveals the concern that even local bureaucrats placed on single women’s honor. Given that sociologists and criminologists portrayed single women as being more sexually promiscuous, evidence from seduction cases highlights the importance that being a doncella, or virgin, could have for an unmarried women’s honor. In the 1886 seduction trial against Alancio Mejía, the father of sixteen year old Catarina Estrada argued that his daughter had been a “doncella” prior to her encounter with Mejía. In his defense Mejía claimed that she entered relations with him voluntarily and that she was not a doncella because she had lost her virginity to Prisciliano Sanchez. In fact, he claimed that she lied in court on the advice of her own father. In the end, Mejía was released and Catarina served eight months in prison for perjury. Whether or not Catarina’s father knew of her previous relationship and loss of virginity is unclear, but his advice that she conceal her prior sexual experiences in court is an indication of the connection between her honor and that of the family. In the case against Atilano García, however, the father of María Yermeño was unaware that his daughter had already lost her virginity and accused Garcia of deflowering his daughter and taking away her doncella status. As the proceedings continued María revealed that she had lost her virginity to a soldier by the name of Rafael Flores, who had since died. Upon this admission María’s father dropped all charges against Atilano. In both cases fathers brought suit against the men they believed had taken away the honor of their family and daughters. However, the court dropped the charges when the

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men involved cast doubts upon whether the girls were “chaste” prior to their encounters. This was a common way to avoid prosecution, as judges and lawyers viewed a girl who no longer had her virginity as having little honor to protect. It was the responsibility of the young women to remain virgins and their failure to do so put them at odds with the ideals of feminine behavior and morality. The cases reveal the ways in which an unmarried woman’s reputation as well as her family was easily shattered in the face of sexual impropriety, although it did not pose the same type of threat to their male suitors.

Thus, women’s virginity and sexual morality held important merit in Mexican society. It was a marker of a single woman’s honor that she remained chaste before marriage, and her male protectors who failed to defend their wives, daughters and dependents from the sexual aggression of other men also had their honor besmirched. As a tradition passed down from the colonial period, a woman’s honor was linked to her family, the bearer of which was her father or male head of household. As evidenced by both the census and legal cases, it was a belief still maintained well into the nineteenth century. For this reason, it is interesting to note the differences in cases in which there was an absence of a male patriarch or father figure. Unlike María and Catarina, judicial officials treated the sexual honor of the forty year old widow Mateana Casillas much differently. In the rape trial against Miguel Delgadillo, she was treated as


though she had no honor worth protecting. According to court testimony while Mateana was fetching water Miguel began taunting her for a kiss. When she rejected his advances he became angry, a struggle ensued in which he forced Mateana into a nearby house and shut the door. Although she tried to fight him off, he beat and raped her. According to court records, Miguel had a long criminal history and had even served jail time. Despite physical evidence including several cuts on Mateana’s fingers, the defense for Miguel argued that Mateana’s age and status as a widow were indications of her complicity. The fact that she was not a virgin made it impossible for Miguel to be charged with violación, or rape, since the crime could only occur on a “doncella.” As an older women, defense attorneys argued that she had “passed the age of danger” which stirs the “sensuality of men.” According to the reasoning of the defense, as a widow Mateana was no longer a virgin and therefore could not make a case for the violation of her sexual honor. At forty she was too old to be found desirable by men, therefore they argued that the incident had to involve some complicity on her part. For this reason, the court opted to try Delgadillo for “estupro,” or deflowering, which was often used interchangeably with seduction and frequently implied volition. In the end, without any witnesses to testify to the crime, the court proposed the two marry as a way to repair Mateana’s honor rather than continue the case. The court believed this was a reasonable option for an older widow, who likely had few prospects for remarriage. Upon receiving the court’s decision Mateana refused to marry.

upholding her honor she insisted the attack was violent and involuntary. Not only would she not marry, but the experience brought her “hatred” for the defendant. She admitted it was painful to even see him while she “suffered patiently.” In his rebuttal, the prosecution reminded the court that “estupro” was punishable by death and sought retribution against Delgadillo for the crime. Eventually the judge retracted his decision for the two to marry, but upheld its position that the incident was not “violación.” Instead it argued for the crime of “estupro,” leaving open the possibility of consent by Mateana and sentenced Delgadillo to only three years in prison.\(^{459}\) Ultimately, the court’s decision upheld the notion that an older woman without a husband and no longer virginal had less honor to defend and to protect. The judge and defense attorney used both her civil status and age against her in the courtroom to prove that she was no longer desirable to men for lack of youth and purity, therefore it was impossible to take away the honor of an old widow such as Mateana. In this way the court room was a place where elite and working class men alike could reaffirm male prerogatives.

Despite attempts by judges and lawyers to impose an unfair double standard and question her rights to her own honor she was persistent in her efforts to prosecute the offender. She spurned their offer to marry the man who had raped her, and insisted that his offense was of a criminal nature and not one of seduction. It is an important testament to unmarried women’s agency. Numerous other works address women’s agency in the defense of their own honor within seduction and deflowering cases across Latin America. Their work suggests that despite attempts by legal officials to deny them honor on the basis of class, race and gender discrimination, many women and their families fought in the face of what were incomprehensible odds to secure a

piece of dignity for themselves. By and large criminal investigations in deflowering and seduction cases which examined single or widowed women in conjunction to their social status and sexual honor reveal how closely the two were linked in nineteenth-century society.

Unmarried women created anxiety for many local officials in part because female singleness in a post-Independence Mexico was a complex issue. Just as both church and state leaders feared, many single and widowed women never legally married. Despite the common usage of the term to describe single women in court documents as “free from marriage” (libre de matrimonio), women listed as “single” were not always completely unattached from a male companion. Given the greater percentage of single women in Guadalajara and the higher proportion of women to men, it was more common for women to enter into “informal” relationships with men who were often married. In such relationships it was often single women who were at a social disadvantage because of the stigma attached to their mores, and their lack of legal rights compared to married women. In legal disputes, defendants and jurists alike often placed blame on the women who entered into such relationships.

The 1882 adultery case of forty-one year old Saturnino López is one example of how men were able to utilize single women’s marginalized sexual honor to their advantage. In the case Saturnino’s wife, forty-one year old Nicanor Cruz testified that her husband was having an affair with the twenty year old, single Yrenea Castro. In the case Yrenea’s neighbor Claudia Rojas confessed that Yrenea told her of the affair and even witnessed Saturnino entering her house. Yrenea did not deny the affair and revealed to the court that the two met at an Easter festival eight months earlier. According to Yrenea’s testimony the relationship was a close one, not only

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did he often stay the night but frequently helped her with household expenses. Despite Yrenea’s portrayal of their relationship as something akin to that of boyfriend and girlfriend, Saturnino denied both Yrenea and Claudia’s testimony, saying that the relationship was only a fling and that Yrenea was nothing more than a “mujer pública,” or prostitute. In the end his public slandering of Yrenea helped him to win back his wife, who decided to drop the charges, pardon his offense and continue to live with him if he agreed to meet his obligations as a husband. Without the protection of marriage a single woman’s sexual honor was more easily called into question than their male counterparts. More often than not men took advantage of single women’s weak legal and social position in court cases.  

The 1865 case of nineteen-year-old Josefa de los Santos was a bit different. As the daughter of a poor widow, she found herself working as a domestic servant in the home of Don Aniceto Calderon. The life of a domestic worker put single women at a much greater risk for both adulterous and involuntary sexual encounters, and such was the case for Josefa. According to criminal court proceedings Josefa claimed she was frequently pursued by Aniceto’s son Maximiano, who according to Josefa had promised marriage. She indicated that after dealing with his persistent pleas she allowed him “to use her carnally;” their sexual relationship became consensual. Upon becoming pregnant she left the Calderon home to have her baby, Cornelio. Maximiano came to see her and continued to promise to marry her. She provided details of their conversations in which Maximiano told her he had arranged for their wedding in a nearby village since his father forbid the union given her lower class standing. After she had the baby she returned to her work as a servant, but in another home and she and Maximiano continued their love affair. Maximiano devised many opportunities for the two to run away together, even

461 BPJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal, “Contra Saturnino López and Yrenea Castro por amaciato,” 1882, c.1, 75,564
staying in the house of friends and relatives to evade his parents. Throughout their two-year affair Josefa contended that he continued to promise marriage, and after getting pregnant a second time, she decided to seek justice through the court system. In response, Maximiano admitted to carrying on a relationship with Josefa under the premise that he would marry her, but candidly divulged to the judge that he did it only to “satiate his carnal appetite.” He went on to say that having sex was Josefa’s idea. Not only did she direct him, but begged for sex when he would pass by the home where she worked. To downplay his relationship and slander Josefa he refused to acknowledge paternity of her two children, commenting that “as a mujer pública” he did not know whether or not the two pregnancies had resulted from their “relations” together.462

Supporting testimony from Josefa’s mother and a widowed neighbor offered evidence that Josefa and Maximiano shared more than a tryst, as did two love letters written by Maximiano. Despite mounting evidence against him, Maximiano continued to deny her claims that he fathered her children. Instead he resorted to tarnishing Josefa’s reputation as a “woman that has let everyone borrow her.” To add insult to injury he claimed he often paid her for her services as a prostitute. In a shocking twist defense attorneys called on the testimony of Luis Sánchez, a single laborer, who testified that he too had carnal relations with Josefa, substantiating the claims of her promiscuous lifestyle. Josefa ardently protested, telling the court that it was a lie conjured up by Maximiano’s father and asked that the court punish him for such “blasphemy.” The defense went further by calling on the cousin of Maximiano who offered up a laundry list of other men rumored to have had “relationships” with Josefa, although he admitted he never saw

them with his own eyes.\footnote{Ibid.} By using testimony that targeted the honor of Josefa, the defense argued that she had a “reputation for scandal” and “prostitution” and the only thing that Maximiano was guilty of was his “bad faith in a woman who took advantage of him.” In the end however, although the court felt there was sufficient evidence to prosecute Maximiano for the original charge of kidnapping with the intent to seduce, or \textit{rapto}, commenting that he only used Josefa to “satisfy his foolish appetite,” they did not charge him because they believe her actions were voluntary. In its final ruling the court defended Josefa, noting that in reality she was “tricked” as a “poor woman whose simplicity made her believe in false promises.” Although it finds his “audacity” alarming, given the “inequality” of blood between Maximiano and Josefa that proves he never intended to follow through with his marriage promises, they cannot prosecute him for the crime of \textit{rapto}. The court absolved him of any crime, but ordered him to acknowledge his two children, end his “illicit relations” with Josefa and compensate her to “salvage some of her rights.”\footnote{Ibid.}

testimony she claimed Maximiano continually “bothered” her until she finally agreed to sexual intercourse, but only with the security of a marriage promise. Although it is difficult to determine the extent to which Josefa engaged in relations willingly, court testimony and other evidence suggest that the relationship between the two was more intimate and long lasting than a fling. Over the course of their more than two year relationship, she birthed two children to Maximiano, received love letters and the two ran off together on multiple occasions to the home of friends and relatives. Both Josefa and Maximiano admitted the barrier to their marrying was Maximiano’s father who disapproved of the union. Court officials reaffirmed that belief and viewed Josefa as an unequal match for Maximiano. In defense of his own honor Maximiano resorted to attacking Josefa, an easy target given her class and social status as a single woman now with children. In the end, however, there was enough supporting evidence to prove to the court that Josefa and Maximiano shared more than a fling and that Josefa was not the “prostitute” Maximiano tried to portray. In the absence of a patriarchal figure and as the daughter of a widowed mother, the court took pity on Josefa’s circumstances by requiring that Maximiano perform his moral obligations to acknowledge paternity over his children and support them financially.

The mere fact that the state continued to prosecute adultery cases outside of divorce proceedings just as the Catholic Church had, is evidence that women desired reparation of their own honor in the post-Independence period. Although in the colonial period little effort was made to regulate the behavior of lower classes by the state, in the nineteenth-century honor became part of a national agenda. Whereas previously the honor of the lower class was the domain of the church these cases reveal the intrusion of the state in its judgments on the honor of

unmarried women. Both Yrene and Josefa, despite their transgressions and violations of honor codes not intended for their class, felt they had honor worth defending. At the same time however, the state continued to use their negative social status as unmarried women engaged in “illicit” relationships who lacked legal rights, patriarchal protection and honor due to their sexual improprieties, non-married status, and lower class origins. As a whole seduction and adultery cases reveal the intersections between female singleness, immorality and criminality.

**Singleness and the Regulation of Crime**

The fears and anxieties that associated unmarried women with immorality and fueled the prejudices of jurors, lawyers and defendants in seduction and adultery cases, also influenced the notion that poor women without men were more likely to commit crimes. In fact, as urban crime rates rose more women entered prisons and elite anxiety over the phenomenon increased. Especially by the time of the *Porfiriato*, women in prison de-stabilized the role of supporting

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wives and mothers within the family, and in turn had the potential to undercut national progress. In fact, the issue of non-marriage made up a significant part of early Mexican criminologist Carlos Roumagnac’s theory on the causes of female crime. In his 1904 report, Roumagnac noted that the majority of female offenders in Mexico City were single, poor and between the age of twenty and forty, with little or no education. Half of those he studied were migrants to Mexico City from nearby towns, and all had worked for wages in the public sphere as prostitutes, domestics, laundresses, seamstresses, clerks or tortilla makers.

In his detailed analysis of some female criminals he noted a common pattern of betrayal and exploitation. Trusted men, usually fathers or lovers, betrayed these unprotected women. This betrayal led women into a life of crime. In one of his more detailed case studies of the inmate designated “María V,” he remarked on her “betrayal” at the age of thirteen while working as domestic servant by the twenty-two year old son of her patron. Many others in his study suffered mistreatment by alcoholic and abusive fathers. According to his evaluation, these betrayals led women farther from the protection of the patriarchal family and out into the “street,” the ultimate realm of vice and crime.

Roumagnac stereotyped the lower-class lifestyle that many of his single female subjects were born into, noting their propensity toward sexual promiscuity, drinking, prostitution, and criminal behavior. He associated their nature with improper moral training from a young age. Thus, dominant criminological discourse equated crime with social class and singled out unattached women as having a greater propensity toward crime for

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468 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen, 66.
469 Carlos Roumagnac, Los Criminales en México (Mexico: El Fénix, 1904), 105-6.
470 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen, 82. Dangers of the street referenced in Chapter three and see Anne Staples, “Policía y Buen Gobierno,” and Steve Stern, The Secret History of Gender.
471 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen, 76-77.
their lack of patriarchal protection. As other scholars of Mexican crime suggest, this explanation was a carryover from the colonial period and continued to be relevant in the nineteenth century.

472 Overall, popular notions of crime and criminal behavior reveal much about elite preoccupations with the lower-classes, especially single women and their criminal and sexual deviance. 473

This issue becomes apparent when looking at institutions that historically regulated female crime, such as the Casa de Recogidas. In Guadalajara, the institution served as the central prison for women from the colonial period to the twentieth century. In many ways the historiography of penology in Jalisco reflects the transitional period in perceptions of crime and criminality in Mexico. Other works note the transfer of power from religious-run to state-run institutions in the post-Independence period as a way to create continuity. 474 In the chaotic decades following Independence, elites found comfort in criminological theories of reforming refractory social elements to stabilize and strengthen the role of the state. Historians who examine this period in Latin America suggest that the transition to state-run prisons as a “loci of social control,” altered relations between the state, urban poor classes and women. 475


473 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen, 8.


Colonial forms of correction in Mexico focused on isolation and surveillance, strategies rooted in the traditions held by religious and philanthropic movements of the Enlightenment. However, the increasing influence of positivism and penal science encouraged a penal system that emphasized rehabilitation and reform under the Porfiriato. Although consensus on a more rehabilitative penal system was reached by the 1840s, political and financial instability delayed the construction of new penal institutions until the 1890s. Given the class, race and gender stereotypes espoused by many early Mexican criminologists and city planners, a focus of early reform was transforming the bad habits of criminals that they believed derived from their lower-class upbringings. In 1879, reformers in Mexico City critiqued the national prison, known as Belén, because men, women and children were housed together, allowing for socialization and entertainment rather than correction. The first modern penitentiary to begin to emphasize reform opened in Mexico City in 1900, with others to follow shortly after in Guadalajara and Puebla.

This newfound emphasis on reform had a major impact on women in prison. Guadalajara provides some counterpoints to data for Mexico City. In Guadalajara, prisons segregated women and men as early as 1800. A map of the city shows that both in 1800 and 1842 male and female criminals were housed in separate facilities. The Casa de Recogidas or Recogimiento de

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Mujeres Perdidas (shelter for lost women) was founded by the city’s Bishop in 1748. A holdover from Spain, in its early form it functioned more like a convent for female prostitutes, beggars, criminals and other wayward women. In this way it differed from colonial beatarios, as places where poor women could enter without the required dowry of most convents, or where men could deposit their fiancés until their wedding days, or when wives or daughters misbehaved. Life inside the Recogimiento was very rigid and functioned on an hourly schedule similar to that of a religious order. In Guadalajara, a female rector oversaw daily operations and provided costs and inventory of prisoners to the director of the all-male penitentiary. Although documentation on its inter-workings are scarce, early accounts note that within the casa there was strict discipline at all times. The women dedicated eight hours each day to spinning and knitting, and an additional eight hours to attending mass, doing the rosary, cleaning and preparing meals. Within the casa women had jobs cooking, cleaning and serving, while others were employed as servants, wardens, or as head of the textile workshop. According to criminal cases it was here that women awaited trial or served time or labor after being sentenced. Beginning in 1868 the Casa de Recogidas fell under the direction of the Jalisco

481 Ibid.
483 There have been very few writings on the Casa de Recogidas in Guadalajara and little information aside from daily inventories exist within either the Archbishopric Archives or the State Archives. Data here is derived from the article by Carmen Castañeda, “La casa de recogidas de la ciudad de Guadalajara,” Boletín del Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (1978).
State Penitentiary, as the Departamento de Mujeres, although colloquially it was still referred to as the Recogimiento, or las recogidas into the twentieth century.  

Although most representations of the Casa de Recogidas in Mexico and elsewhere suggest it served the function of a prison and less of a shelter for women by nineteenth century, several incidents in the criminal cases of Guadalajara suggest that some women and the state still recognized it as a place of protection for poor and unmarried women. The 1837 divorce trial of the elite Spanish wife Teresa Colza, illustrates that early in the century the Casa de Recogidas became associated with a place of protection for women. It was there that her husband “deposited” her for more than two years while she waited out divorce proceedings. In her opinion she believed it was “unfair that she should be punished” in a place for “prostitutes, bums, and criminals.” Teresa believed she should be able to be put in an honorable house for her security and protection. Her statements indicate that by the 1830s the Casa de Recogidas began to assume the role of both prison and shelter for women, largely of the poor and lower class. The poor also envisioned it as a place for their protection well into the nineteenth century. In the 1890 theft case against María Gomez, a young, widowed, servant, her employer accused her of stealing and fleeing her job. According to testimony by María she fled the home not because she stole, but because her employer tried to violently seduce her. At the age of twenty-four she was a migrant to the city from Zapatitlán, a city over 200 kilometers from Guadalajara, and she likely had no friends or relatives to which she could turn. In despair and “in the name of

484 Feranando Martínez Reding, ed. Prevención y readaptación social en Jalisco (Guadalajara:Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, 1982); See also AHJ, Libros de Penenticiaría, “Album de sentenciados: Departamento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” 1 Bis 1868-1873.  
her honor she rushed to the “recogidas.”  

The case suggests that many poor women still relied on the casa for its colonial use of protecting women’s virtue and honor in times of need. The state also recognized its use as a place of protection for women. In 1894, the married domestic servant Emilia Cervantes turned up at the city hospital to be treated for knife wounds to her left hand. She confessed to hospital workers that her husband was responsible for her injuries and complained that she could no longer bear to live with him. In addition to physical abuse she said he was not a good provider. Shortly thereafter the Supreme Tribunal admitted her to the “las Recogidas.” In this sense, the role of the women’s penitentiary had come full circle by the late nineteenth century. Not only was it a place to incarcerate immoral women, but a place where women were kept safe and out of the public sphere. The conception of a women’s prison as a convent suggests the connections that criminologists and reformers felt toward the women who lived behind its walls. Just as convents were shelters for unmarried women who would devote themselves to a life wedded to God, wayward women could also benefit from this form of sheltering. In accordance with reformist thinking of the period delinquent women were the result of a poor upbringing which left them alone and un-protected. By consequence they easily fell into the vices and dangers of the street. Imprisonment in a type of reformatory convent that taught women proper forms of work, discipline, and religiosity and provided protection in a cloistered environment positioned the state in a patriarchal role over these women. At the same time women, like Teresa an Emilia, viewed and utilized the prison in ways conducive to their own situations.


It is important to note that the most complete data for the women’s prison in Guadalajara exists for the period from 1868 to 1903 with sparse information collected between 1868 and 1879 or from 1903 to 1926. The reasons for this are likely twofold. By 1880 both the Mexican nation and the state of Jalisco experienced greater political stability than in previous periods. This allowed for greater organization at the judicial level and better maintenance of records. A drop-off in data by 1903 can more likely be explained by early political disintegration in the build up to the Mexican Revolution than a decrease in crime rates.\(^{488}\)

Typically, as was the case elsewhere in Latin America, the majority of women serving time in prison were poor and unmarried. Arrests among elite or married women were rare.\(^{489}\) Prison data that exists for the period 1868 to 1903 is the most detailed, providing specific information for each inmate including their name, dates entered and sentenced, crime committed, length of sentence, parents name, age, marital status, birthplace, occupation and physical characteristics including skin color. What is most fascinating about this period is that each inmate was also photographed.\(^{490}\) These categories signify the ways in which criminality and notions of class, race, gender and legitimacy intertwined at the judicial level. The fact that jailors recorded such

\(^{488}\) Moisés Navarro González, “El Porfiriato vida social.”


\(^{490}\) In the books of those sentenced, data cuts offs around 1903 and does not pick up again until 1926, likely due to build up of the Revolution of 1910 as well as the construction of a new prison in the early decades of the twentieth century. See AHJ, *Libros de Penitenciaria*, “Album de sentenciados Deptaramento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”
specific data as early as the 1860s suggests that elite anxieties, expressed later by criminologists like Carlos Roumagnac, were founded on pre-existing stereotypes and class hierarchies.

Single and widowed women were a prominent fixture in Guadalajara’s prison. They outnumbered married female delinquents four to one. The data collected in the sentencing of female inmates also suggests the continued emphasis that class played in the perception by local authorities of typical female criminals. Information regarding women’s occupations, birthplace, skin color and the names of their parents indicate a level of concern with their class status. In Guadalajara, the majority of imprisoned women tended to fit the stereotype attributed to them by reformers and criminologists. Of those in jail, the majority worked in the lowest paid trades including domestic service, food preparation, washing and textile work. Jailors recorded a significant portion of women under the odd label of “sus labores,” or one’s labors. From further research in trial records I was able to locate one of the women listed with this occupation in a high profile murder case from 1895. From elaborated biographical information I discovered that she was in fact a well-known prostitute. I believe the term might be a reference to prostitution, although it is not clear. It could also be a term that implied women who worked odd jobs. In addition to occupations, more than sixty per cent of female prisoners were migrants to Guadalajara, and nearly seventy five per cent were listed as having trigueño or moreno skin color. Analysis of jailhouse photographs suggests that moreno and trigueño were used interchangeably to imply mixed-race or mestiza ethnicity, those of both Spanish and indigenous

491 See Table 5.2.
492 See 5.3.
493 See Tables 5.4 and 5.5.
ancestry. Other categories indicate gradations of skin color, such as *apillonado*, (a lighter version of *Moreno*), *rosado* (light or pink-toned), and *blanco* (white). The collection of data regarding skin color and migratory status corresponded to criminological theories regarding crime among the poor. The further notation of the names of parents and legitimacy of birth cemented connections between crime and social status. Statistics from prison records worked in conjunction with elite anxiety over the growing presence of poor migrants for which they attributed emerging urban problems. Unmarried, poor, *mestizo*, working women stood out in this group of marginalized criminals. Indeed the issue of urbanization affected not only the stereotypical criminal, but also the treatment and containment of them as well. Although it is difficult to ascertain, given the sporadic nature of some of the early criminal records, spikes in the number of women sentenced to serve jail time rose in the years after 1887. This increase coincided with both the growth of the city and elite concerns over the growth of female crime.

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494 See Figures 5.1 and 5.2.
495 For examples see Figures 5.1-5.5.
496 See Table 5.6.
497 Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen*, 64.
Table 5.2

| Marital Status of Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903 |
|------------------|-------|------|------------------|
|                  | N     | %    | Valid Percent    |
| Single           | 283   | 43.8 | 50.9             |
| Widowed          | 76    | 11.8 | 13.7             |
| Married          | 186   | 28.8 | 33.5             |
| Doncella         | 5     | 0.8  | 0.9              |
| Celibe           | 6     | 0.9  | 1.1              |
| Total            | 556   | 86.1 | 100              |
| Unknown          | 90    | 13.9 |                  |
| Total All Inmates| 646   | 100  |                  |

Data for the tables on female inmates was compiled using the sentencing books found in the state archives. As noted in the tables not all categories were recorded for each inmate and the years 1880-1903 were more complete than earlier or later periods. Photographs appeared more regularly after 1880, but there are photos for the previous years. AHJ, *Libros de Penenticiaría*, “Album de sentenciados: Deptaramento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”
Table 5.3
Occupations for Female Inmates of Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sus Labores</em></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole Grinder/Seller</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawl Braider</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Ironer</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundress</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortilla Maker</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Seller</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatmaker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Worker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Occupation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking Knitter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmera</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolatier</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake-maker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair-maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lozeca</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>539</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unknown</strong></td>
<td>646</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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499 Ibid.

500 The use of *sus laborers*, her labors, may have been used as a euphemism for prostitution. A reference to a high profile prostitute who was listed in the register under this title appeared in the work of Guadalajara historian Trujillo, “La prostitución en Guadalajara,” 80-1.
Table 5.4

Origin of Inmates at Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Guadalajara</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants born Elsewhere</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5

Skin Color at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trigueno (Olive)</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreno (Brown)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosada (Pink)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanco (White)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apillonado</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>646</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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501 Ibid.
502 Ibid.
Table 5.6
Women Sentenced in the Jalisco State Penitentiary by Year, 1868-1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

503 Ibid.
Antonia Navarro (1895) and Bernarda Valadez (1895). Both listed as *trigueño*.

Agustina Vasquez (1896) and Dorotea Morales (1895). Both listed as *moreno*.

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Cresencia Salazar (1896) and Eufacia López (1900). Listed as *apillonado*.

María Rodríguez (1896). Listed as *Rosada*. 
There are also important correlations to be made between class and the type of crimes committed by female offenders. As was the case in many other cities in Latin America and Mexico, domestic servants suffered extreme forms of marginalization. Often women who worked in domestic service were poor urban migrants who had few other skills or connections in the city. By 1908 scientific studies equated the occupation with the lowest form of menial labor, associating it with scrounging a life off the wealth of others like “parasites,” which led to vices like prostitution. Indeed, domestics made up the majority of all imprisoned women in

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Guadalajara from 1868 to 1903.\textsuperscript{507} Additionally, domestics committed more than one third of all robberies and twenty seven per cent of all homicides.\textsuperscript{508} It is important to note that domestic work was the most common occupation for women, which may account for their overrepresentation in prison records. However, there were some important limitations placed on female domestics that made them more susceptible to particular crimes. Servants, for example also made up the largest group of women to be involved in child abandonment and infanticide cases, making up thirty one and forty one per cent of all cases respectively.\textsuperscript{509} Such crimes were common among servants and increased in Mexico by the late nineteenth as a result of increased migration and economic disruption in the country-side. Domestic workers were often unable to keep or care for their children given the nature of their work. Unlike other occupations where women could often keep their children with them during the day, a domestic often lived in the home of her patrons and would not be able to perform her motherly duties and tend to children.\textsuperscript{510}

\textsuperscript{507} See Table 5.3.

\textsuperscript{508} Between 1868-1903 there were 140 cases of theft and 37 homicides committed. Of those, 50 domestic servants were sentenced for theft and 10 for homicide. AHJ, \textit{Libros de Penenticiaria}, “Album de sentenciados: Deptaramento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”

\textsuperscript{509} Between 1868-1903 there were 29 cases of infanticide and 13 cases of child abandonment committed. Of those 12 domestic servants were sentenced for infanticide and 4 for abandonment. AHJ, \textit{Libros de Penenticiaria}, “Album de sentenciados: Deptaramento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”; See Table 5.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodily Harm (Fighting)</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infanticide</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adultery</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concealment of Robbery</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with Injury</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Abandonment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicity in a Crime</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of Trust</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting Stolen Goods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery and abuse of confidence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery within the home residing in</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery with Violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries leading to death</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation/Forgery of money</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigamy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suposicion de parto</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults</td>
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<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposicion de infante</td>
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<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Escape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grave Injury</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual Drunkenness</td>
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<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Known</strong></td>
<td>646</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
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*Table 5.7*

Crimes Committed by Female Inmates, Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903

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Ibid.
In large measure, infanticide and child abandonment were largely a problem for unmarried, poor, migrant women who had neither the resources nor support system in place to care for a child of their own. The infanticide case of twenty-one year old Luisa Nuño, a single domestic servant originally from Zapotlanejo, a mestizo village roughly thirty kilometers east of the city center, reveals how desperate a woman could become when faced with unwanted pregnancy. On October 4, 1909 she confessed that she hid both her pregnancy and birth from her employer, giving birth to the baby in the very same home where she worked. In her testimony she admitted to the court that after having the baby she took it outside and beat it to death against a stone, “out of fear of losing her job.” Resorting to infant infanticide demonstrated the lack of options that Nuño felt she had as an unmarried servant without economic or familial support.

Unwanted pregnancies among servants could also lead to child abandonment or a resort to informal channels of adoption and child circulation. In the infant abandonment case of two month old Luís Sandoval earlier the same year, a couple contacted Guadalajara police when they found him left in the portico their home. His mother Secundina Sandoval was a migrant to Guadalajara and at the time of the case was forty years old, single, and working as a domestic servant. According to the testimony of her friend and co-worker, a fifty-two year old, widowed, domestic servant named Guadalupe Hernández, Secundina pleaded with her to take the baby because she did not have the resources to support or care for the child. Guadalupe informed her that she knew of a woman who placed babies with families. Guadalupe said she would go with her to inquire about it, but could not go at that moment. Secundina, unable to wait any longer went immediately to the home and left the boy at the front door. Upon sentencing Secundina pleaded with the court that she did not have the means to provide for her son, nor would she be

able to work because “no house would take a servant accompanied by a baby.”

Cases such as these reveal that child abandonment was a common problem for many poor unmarried women. Women who resorted to violence and abandonment were cast out as “ungrateful,” “cruel,” and “ugly” mothers in daily newspaper reports. To many elites and local authorities abandonment and infanticide were the ultimate rejection of maternity. Often they were crimes of desperation perpetrated by unmarried and poor women. Overall, however cases of infanticide and abandonment prosecuted in Guadalajara were a small percentage of the total number of crimes committed. Part of the reason may be that the majority of unmarried and widowed poor women in similar situations sought assistance through public hospitals and orphanages, which were put in place beginning in the late 1700s, before resorting to such extreme measures.

The most common crime committed by domestics was robbery, which made up thirty-seven per cent of all incarcerated servants. As one of the lowest paid forms of work, and with greater access to household items of value, it too was a crime born out of economic necessity. It was a difficult crime to prove, and in some cases employers brought forth false or presumptive accusations. This was not only common in domestic work. Law enforcement officials commonly profiled sectors of the poor as the culprits of theft, particularly those most vulnerable such as the homeless. It was not uncommon for police to charge beggars with vagrancy when

515 See Chapter 6 for more on the city orphanage and other services provided to unmarried, pregnant women.
516 Between 1868-1903 there were 140 cases of theft. Of those, 50 domestic servants were sentenced for the crime. Data was collected from AHJ, *Libros de Penenticiarían,* “Album de sentenciados: Deptaramento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”
charges of theft could not be confirmed. Such was the fate of the homeless man Máximo García, picked up by police for a presumed theft in Guadalajara in 1871. When sufficient evidence did not materialize to prove the theft, the court charged him with vagrancy. Police believed his “idleness” created the impetus for him to steal. In most cases, accusers claimed that goods were stolen to pawn in exchange for cash. Court cases involving typically poor, unmarried, servants, often who arrived in Guadalajara as migrants, is revealing of the economic reality of their lives so often depicted by criminologists and reformers.

Many of the robbery cases in Guadalajara were the direct result of a real problem with cash flow. In nineteenth-century Mexico, the growing poor urban population faced high unemployment, low wages, and a growing cost of living. In Guadalajara, as elsewhere, the poor earned their living through begging and sporadic employment. The work of Marie Francois highlights the concern over cash flow in her work on the state-run Casas de Empeño, or pawn shops in Mexico City. Pawning was particularly high among “needy” women and widows, who were “the most visible pawning customers” throughout the nineteenth century.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the average working male earned three times as much as women, even in the same profession. For this reason, many turned to pawning as a way to meet the needs of their households. The most common goods they pawned were those they had the most access to,

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520 Francois. A Culture of Everyday Credit, 147; 4.
typically household clothing and bedding items. Elite concerns and anxieties over the theft and pawning of their personal belongings by domestic workers became so common a problem that in 1852 Mexico City officials instituted a servant law, which policed pawning by domestic servants. It was also a common occurrence in Guadalajara. Numerous servant theft cases led to pawning or attempted pawning of the stolen goods in exchange for money. There were also cases where servants even attempted to steal their employer’s own redemption tickets.

Closer analysis of specific cases reveals how the crime also reflected the perceived immorality of the lower classes who made up the city’s prison inmates. Often the crime of robbery perpetrated by domestics against their employers led to a secondary sentence of robbery with “abuse of trust.” As workers within the private homes of the city’s elite and well-to-do, employers expected their servants to be loyal to the family and contribute to, not disrupt, the harmony of the home. In 1850, police filed a robbery case against Nicolasa Ramírez, a nineteen year old, single, domestic who had been arrested with her boyfriend on three other occasions for robbery and the receipt of stolen goods. In this case, her boss accused her of stealing three pawn shop redemption tickets from the home, in addition to a serape, some petticoats, a shawl, a veil, and cloth. According to court documents Nicolasa and her boyfriend Juan González admitted that they then attempted to sell the items for cash. What is most revealing about the case is what the defense attorney suggested in his closing arguments. He painted a portrait of the defendants as “poor people” who are “simple and rustic,” suggesting this was evidenced by their honest

521 According to Francois’ data, the average working woman earned 1 peso a day, while men earned 3 pesos a day. Ibid, 88; Francois notes the most commonly pawned clothing pieces were rebozos and petticoats. See pg 38.
522 Francois, 108.
523 BPJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal, “Contra María Ysabel González por robo,” 1890, Caja 2, 98317
confessions. He belabored the point by commenting that their relationship was an “illicit romance.” Although he believed that the case was a clear example of robbery with a breach of trust, he did not believe the pair deserved the proposed (and very harsh) sentence of three years in a military prison.  

A look at how the judge sentenced Nicolasa is telling of the concerns that male jurists had regarding female criminality. The harshest sentences recorded between 1868 and 1905 in Guadalajara were for homicide or infanticide cases, and typically carried a sentence of ten years on average. For most robbery and robbery with abuse of trust convictions, the average sentence was one year. In Nicolasa and Juan’s case, the defense argued the couple should get what they deserved “in accordance with the laws that governed society and the family.” He noted that Nicolasa’s responsibilities in the home were limited to the kitchen, grinding flour and making tortillas, and therefore she did not occupy an intimate space within the family’s home. On the contrary, he argued that a “tortillera” deserved little trust within the home because she “dispensed little trust to others” through her work and it would be inaccurate to call her a “domestic.” His comments imply that the role of a domestic, as a member of one’s family and a part of its intimate space, was taken very seriously in nineteenth-century Mexico. The state penal codes saw it as a grave crime, and established laws against it designed to “guarantee the security of the domestic home.” The crux of his argument lay in the fact that Nicolasa and Juan were of lower moral and class character. Considering their “simple nature,” they made the right

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524 BPJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal, “Contra Nicolasa Ramírez por robo y abuso de confianza,” 1850, Caja 1, 10,811
judgment in confessing to the crime. He also suggested that less should have been expected of Nicolasa given her status in the family home as lowly kitchen help. In the end the court condemned Nicolasa and Juan to four months of public works.  

The loyalty which employers expected of their in-house servants is evidenced by the 1871 theft and abuse of trust case against Hilaria Ramirez. Hilaria was a servant in the home of María Micaela Viscarra. In the case, witnesses testified that she left the home with stolen goods. She then gave the items to Pablo Lopez, whose relationship with Hilaria was not made clear. The two were caught red-handed with the stolen goods in their possession. Despite the fact that police retrieved the items, the court emphasized the disloyalty of the crime committed by Hilaria, who was “adopted” into the Viscarra home and shown “hospitality.” The court sentenced her to six months in prison.  

In reality, abuse of trust cases dealt less with the actual crime of robbery and more with the moral character of the female domestics involved. Servants even preyed on other poor women and stole from each other. In 1878, a dispute erupted between two servants over a pawned item of clothing. María Cesária, a thirty year old who recently separated from her husband, accused her friend and former co-worker Feliciana Galves of stealing money from her. According to María Cesária the incident occurred two years earlier when the two were working as domestics. María Cesária, then married, came to Feliciana asking if she could pawn a shawl for her because she was in need of money. Although it is unclear from court documents Feliciana was probably single and of adult age and therefore had the freedom to conduct business at the pawn shop without approval from a male relative unlike

527 BPJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal, “Contra Nicolasa Ramírez por robo y abuso de confianza,” 1850, Caja 1, 10,811
María Cesária. Given the state of María Cesária’s relationship with her husband it is also likely that she did not want him to know about the transaction. The women both resided in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Guadalajara at the time in the San Juan de Diós barrio. Described in the short novel María Luisa as “tumultuous” and full of “atrocious molenderas, women who live badly, unruly thieves, clandestine affairs, with everyone drunk, living day to day, unclean and immoral,” it fit many early descriptions of poor urban life in Mexico. Therefore, the issue of pawning goods was likely a way of life for poor urban residents, whether criminal or not. In the end Feliciana agreed, but before she could return to the house María Cesária’s husband came and took her away, leaving her unable to deliver the money. In the end María Cesária “pardons the offense” and the court does not proceed with charges against Feliciana. In many ways, although often the women detained and accused of theft were demonized as immoral robbers and thieves, the harsh realities of poor women’s lives led to thefts and pawning by those in need of money. In some cases, women helped each other navigate the difficulties of singleness and life in urban Guadalajara.

For this reason, domestic servants became easy targets in theft cases. The ways in which they defended themselves and fought against the harsh realities of their job and social class is a testament to their own agency. In the 1865 trial against the eighteen year old, single María Pilar Franco, *Culture of Everyday Credit*, 21.


Venegas, her employer Manuel San Leon Ochoa accused her of stealing money from him. In her defense, María Pilar told the court that not only were the accusations false, but Ochoa had brought charges against her for malicious reasons. She told the court he often made unwanted advances which she continually resisted and used all the methods possible to avoid him. In fact, to prevent Ochoa from entering her bedroom at night while she was sleeping, which he often did, she propped something against the door in order to make it impossible for him to open. Out of frustration he created the false charges. Court documents reveal that María Pilar migrated to the city from Tepíc, a city nearly 230 kilometers west of Guadalajara. As a young, single, migrant to Guadalajara María Pilar likely had very few options for employment and had to do everything possible to keep her job. Despite her lecherous employer, she devised methods to deal with the harassment. She emphasized to the court that because he felt rejected he restored to trumping up criminal charges. Her persistence and strength in the face of these challenges not only frustrated her employer, but testified to her own abilities to defend herself despite not having family or friends to support her in the courtroom. In the end, her lawyer did not attempt to address the seduction charges she raised, instead he focused on the more logical argument that she did not have the money in her possession, and that there were other workers inside the house including a cook who could testify to her innocence. In the end the judge absolved her of all charges.  

Comprising nearly forty per cent of all arrests, the most common crime reported in the Guadalajara women’s prison was bodily harm, usually the end result of fighting between women. Not only was fighting one of the utmost examples of women behaving badly in public, it also epitomized the links made between criminality and lower-class lifestyle. Evidence

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534 See Table 5.7.
from charges brought against women for fighting provides clear examples of the perceptions held by police, judges and lawyers toward unmarried women’s immoral character and lifestyle. Often judges and lawyers drew attention to such factors as their presence and work in public space, drunkenness, and involvement in illicit relationships as the root cause of many street fights.

Many fights took place in the city plaza where individuals and working women often congregated during the day alone and without the male supervision that elite women might have. Throughout the colonial period, Guadalajara’s main plaza served as the civil, ecclesiastical and mercantile center of the city. It was in this neighborhood that the most elite residences were first established and continued to expand throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 

Although the urban poor lived on the periphery of this center, foreign travelers noted their overwhelming presence in the plaza hocking their wares and begging. Travelers both in the early and latter part of the century noted that the principal plaza was the area frequented by commoners, usually Indians and lower classes. Classes described by the Austrian archeologist and foreign traveler to the city in 1838, Isidore Lowenstern, as “uncultured, illiterate, half-naked, starved, alcoholic, fanatical and violent.” It was these stereotypes of Guadalajara’s urban poor that set the tone for numerous criminal cases involving poor single and widowed women.

The plaza, as a central meeting point, place of commerce and socialization, was a common spot for arguments to occur. In 1890, it was where Porfira González, age sixteen, claimed that

536 Lowenstern in *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos*, (1838) 165-8; Manuel H. Pastor in *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos*, (1899) 161.
537 Lowenstern, *Guadalajara a través de los tiempos*, (1838) 165-8.
the daughters of the forty-year old widow Micaela Rivas taunted and eventually beat her up as she was merely passing by. Interestingly enough the court felt that it was Micaela, as the mother and person responsible for the teenage girls, who should be held accountable for their bad behavior.\footnote{BPJ, Archivo del Supremo Tribunal de Justicia de Jalisco, 1822-1919. Ramo Criminal, “Contra Micaela Rivas por golpes,” 1890, Caja 2, 98394.} It was not common for the court to prosecute parents in cases of fighting, no matter how old the children were. Perhaps the court ascribed to the beliefs espoused by one Guadalajara doctor, who wrote at the turn of the century that the “children of misery come into the world with baggage, accompanied and persecuted by misfortune; they come with the psychological flaws of their parents, with the degeneracy of those from the brothel or tavern.”\footnote{BPEJ, Miscellaneous, 492, Miguel Gallindo, “Apuntos sobre la hygiene en Guadalajara,” Tesis de recepción, Facultad de Medicina de Guadalajara, (Guadalajara, April 8, 1908), 174.} In the end, there was not sufficient evidence to charge Micaela with any crime, but the case highlights the fact that the court felt that she was the cause of her children’s criminal activity. Without a strong male patriarch to maintain order in the home her weak parenting skills allowed her children to fall into mischief.

There were also other aspects of lower class life that allowed judges and lawyers to pass judgment on victims within the courtroom. The lifestyle choices of some urban and working poor women came under scrutiny in the case of Adelaida Hernández. On March 10, 1890 she awoke in a Guadalajara hospital strapped to her bed with a head contusion. On the same day that police admitted Adelaida to the hospital, they placed Valentín Ortega in jail for the crime. According to court documents, Ortega was Adelaida’s lover and police had a suspicion that he had been involved in the incident. When she woke up in the hospital the thirty year old domestic from Guadalajara was immediately questioned regarding her injuries, to which she told hospital
doctors she had been drinking on the night in question and had no idea who caused her injuries. She also denied any relationship with Ortega. Ortega told a different story to police investigators, explaining that he and Adelaida had “illicit relations” over the course of the last fifteen days. On the night in question he told police that she was “completely inebriated” and fell into a fountain injuring herself. After nearly three months, court documentation on the case resumed stating that on the 7th of May after “some debate” Adelaida confessed to the court that she did in fact know Ortega, but she still did not remember who hit her that night. At the same time Ortega maintained his innocence. On May 10, the court released Ortega from prison on the basis that there was no evidence to keep him in jail. In the case both the state and the city hospital conspired against the testimony of Adelaida and Valentín, detaining them for nearly three months without having sufficient evidence to continue the case. Despite the fact that Adelaida attempted to defend her dignity by denying a sexual relationship with Ortega, lawyers likely interrogated her to the point that she confessed to having an affair with Valentín. Their motivations for doing so are unclear, but we do know that it was not until this point that they agreed to finally close the case and free the two involved. The case stands out for the fact that judges and lawyers, despite lack of evidence, desired to expose her to the court as both a drunk and an immoral woman. Their goal was to find her at fault, rather than find the real suspect.

The issue of adulterous or illicit relations proved to be a formidable motivation in many assault cases involving unmarried women. It is also within such cases that the biases of the court against the morality of unmarried women came to the fore. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century Mexican writer Guillermo Prieto wrote extensively on Mexico’s underclass

men and “su mujer,” or the women with which they were romantically involved. The concept of “su mujer” could imply an informal union or an extramarital affair. In defining this group of marginalized poor Prieto often described them as typically “mestizo, of illegitimate birth, adulterous, [and] mischievous… with an inclination toward crime.” He added that typically they “enjoy idleness, robbery, drunkenness and love.” This propensity for crime was linked to “petty crime, heavy drinking and fighting.” According to Prieto, these villains first needed their “legal woman and sweetheart,” implying both a married wife and a mistress.541 He went on to explore the characteristics of “their women” as “clean, hardworking, heroic in love, ferocious in jealousy, suffering in misery, sublime in abnegation, fanatic in danger, tender mothers and incredibly fickle, prone to fits of rage, passion and happiness.”542 Describing sexual relations among Mexico’s poor in the nineteenth-century psychologist Julio Guerrero wrote the sex of the poor was “animal-like, without modesty” and that they “romped like dogs.”543 In this way, both writers and early social scientists viewed the love life of the poor as adulterous, promiscuous and raunchy. Criminal court proceedings against unmarried, poor, women often presented similar stereotypes, and judges and jurors frequently drew similar conclusions in many Guadalajara courtrooms.

Adulterous affairs could lead unmarried women to commit violent crimes. In an 1865 case, prosecutors claimed that Nicolasa Silva injured the soldier Francisco Vargas with a machete. According to court records, the forty year old Nicolasa had been in a relationship with the

542 Prieto, Memoria, 128.  
eighteen year old Vargas. Five months earlier Vargas broke up with Nicolasa, who had a difficult time accepting the breakup. Shortly after, she found out that he was seeing another woman and for that reason attacked him with the machete. Vargas pardoned the crime, not wanting to press charges. Despite that fact, the lawyers and judge involved in the case agreed that Nicolasa acted out of jealousy. Despite the fact that she admitted both her guilt and shame over the incident, the court felt little mercy toward her. In her sentencing, the court noted the fact that she possessed a weapon and had the audacity to harm a soldier put them on edge. To punish her they sentenced her to “six months of hard labor according to her sex” for the crime. This was likely an indication that she was given some sort of gendered work inside the prison. Possession of a weapon concerned elite officials in general in the nineteenth century given a greater desire of surveillance over the urban poor classes, but for a woman to commit such a crime and against a soldier was especially heinous. The case illustrates a heightened concern over female criminality, and the judge’s desire to make an example out of Nicolasa, despite Vargas’ plea to acquit her.

An illicit affair seemed to also be at the heart of a brutal beating against Rosa Hernández. On a Friday afternoon in 1874, twenty-one year old Rosa was selling tortillas in the plaza when she encountered the mother of her lover, Modesta Silva. At the time Rosa was eight months pregnant, a child conceived out of wedlock with Modesta’s son Apolonio. According to Rosa, Modesta began to argue with her. Nearby, Modesta’s niece Cresencia Montelongo overheard the two women fighting and came to see what was going on. According to Cresencia she then heard Rosa insult her aunt. The two women began fighting and Cresencia struck Rosa several times as

545 Buffington, Criminal and Citizen.
they both fell to the ground. The fight roused the attention of local police and all three women were arrested for fighting. Given Rosa’s state of pregnancy and her injuries she was sent to the hospital, while Cresencia and Modesta awaited trial in the Casa de Recogidas. Based on court documents what provoked the fight is unknown and witness testimony varied. While Cresencia and Modesta maintained the same story that they argued with Rosa and became upset when she insulted Modesta, Rosa told a different story. Upon her admittance to the hospital she told doctors that Modesta approached her with insults and that both women began to beat her up and even threw a rock at her until she fell to the ground. It was then that the police came and arrested all three women. As a migrant from Atotonilco, Rosa worked selling tortillas to make her living. Both poor and pregnant she found herself being ridiculed by her lover’s own family. We do not know the insults that Modesta and Cresencia called her, but likely the altercation had to do with her affair with Apolonio. Although the officially court ruled in her favor, it sentenced Cresencia and Modesta to rather lenient sentences, one month and fifteen days jail time respectively. Each woman walked away from the case paying fines in exchange for jail time. Although there are many unknowns about the case, what is known tells us a lot about the ways in which the court perceived of Rosa and her station in the city. Initially, all three were arrested for fighting, although Rosa was the only one to exhibit any injuries. Rosa, although seemingly the victim, was found equally guilty. The location of the incident is also significant, as it was the public plaza where Rosa was working and where she was confronted by the two women. Rosa’s presence in public, an unprotected and dangerous space for unmarried women, may have invited the violence brought against her. It also raised the issue of morality among single women. Both Rosa’s affair and subsequent pregnancy seemed to be the root cause of the argument as she admitted to hospital doctors upon her admission. Finally, the role of the city hospital in policing urban
crime and crimes of women is also significant. Immediately following her arrest, Rosa was sent to the hospital for examination and it was there that she was asked to provide her first testimony. In this way, both institutions worked in tandem to police the morality of unmarried women.

**Prostitution**

The women’s prison, local police, and courtrooms were not the only places where the issue of female criminality and immorality interacted. The city hospital was often a point of contact in most criminal court cases, especially when injury or pregnancy was involved. The hospital maintained separate wings for male and female prisoners and employed numerous techniques, including beds with restraints and ward guards, to prevent escape. It was here that police often questioned and held criminals arrested in connection with crimes. The hospital also served an important role in regulating particular aspects of female crime. Most notably it worked in conjunction with the newly organized *Comisión de salubridad* (public health commission), the *Ayuntamiento* (municipal government) and the *Jefetura Política* to begin to monitor prostitutes by 1866. Prostitution was largely the domain of unmarried women, although some married women appear to have worked in the profession. Precise numbers of prostitutes in Guadalajara are extremely hard to document, given that even after regulation in 1866, numerous women

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worked in the trade without registration. However studies suggest that by 1905 Guadalajara had roughly two hundred legally registered prostitutes.  

In accordance with new city ordinances written by the municipal government, state regulated prostitution was legalized in Guadalajara in 1866 and put into practice by 1870. The new ordinances allowed prostitution in highly monitored _Casas de tolerancia_, or brothels. Reasons for regulation in Guadalajara were similar to those of the capital, influenced by ideas coming out of continental Europe, urban officials and elite residents expressed concern over public hygiene and sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis. The policing of female prostitutes by the mid-nineteenth century coincided with a general concern over public health among the poor urban classes which began in the late eighteenth century. Ruling elites viewed the poor and their “bad hygiene” as the source of widespread epidemics of cholera and influenza outbreaks which plagued Guadalajara beginning in 1784 and throughout much of the nineteenth century.

While elites mostly congregated in the center of the city in spacious homes, the poor tended to live in close quarters. Disease spread easily in the poor _barrios_ from contaminants present in the streets, air, and water due to overcrowding. In these neighborhoods the practice of defecating or throwing feces onto city streets and sidewalks was commonplace, as was the killing of animals for food. The accumulation of waste and decay in city streets caused contamination in the air as

549 González Llerenas, “La reglamentación sanitaria,” 362; Katherine Bliss, _Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City_ (Penn State University, 2002).
550 Jiménez Pelayo, Olveda and Núñez Miranda, _El Crecimiento Urbano_, 122; Sánchez, “Intensidad,” 23-26. The cholera outbreaks in Guadalajara were severe and the city suffered high rates of mortality particularly between 1813 and 1815. It would suffer smaller outbreaks between 1823 and 1825, 1830, 1833, and 1850. Sánchez notes higher rates of mortality in Guadalajara than Mexico City due to a smaller number of public hospitals.
well as the water, as much of it washed into the river San Juan de Diós and public fountains where the poor often bathed. In addition, the conditions under which many destitute families lived likely contributed to the rapid spread of infection. Tenements in the working class barrios were often rented by the room and offered little space or amenities. Often times an entire family shared a mattress or slept on the floor and had only the door for air circulation. Poor families were also more likely to go longer periods without washing their clothing. Thus, mortality rates during periods of epidemic disease were highest in the poorer areas of the city.\textsuperscript{551} The Church responded in 1786 by constructing the city’s first public hospital, the Hospital de Belén, in the working class barrios north of the city. In its first year almost 7,000 patients were treated.\textsuperscript{552} In addition, in 1852 the governor of Jalisco published a mandate to curtail disease and strictly enforce the washing of sidewalks. The code applied to all plazuelas, markets and carriage sites, and imposed a hefty fine for anyone caught throwing trash or water into public streets, washed or dried clothes on sidewalks, or sold food on the streets.\textsuperscript{553} Public health arguments regarding the spread of disease among the poor would also persuade city officials to begin mandatory medical exams for city prostitutes.

Prior to 1866 prostitutes practiced somewhat un-policed, but new regulations changed these circumstances. The new codes required prostitutes to adhere to a series of requisites including inscription, fees, obligations, prohibitions and constant vigilance by city health officials and police. The measures had a grave impact on the freedom and mobility that prostitutes once

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{551} Ibid., 24-29. \\
\textsuperscript{552} Jiménez Pelayo, Olveda and Núñez Miranda, \textit{El Crecimiento}, 109-110; 116; 122. \\
\textsuperscript{553} BPEJ, Miscelánea, 157, Jesús Lopez Portillo (governor at the time), \textit{Bando de buen gobierno del gobernador constitucional del estado de Jalisco} (Guadalajara, 1852).
\end{flushright}
The 1866 regulations required prostitutes register with the *Jefetura Política*, or city police. Upon registering they received a *libreta*, a small book which served as both proof of their license and maintenance of their mandatory medical exams. This was done voluntarily or by force if a woman was suspected of being a prostitute. A woman might be suspected of prostitution if she was always around other prostitutes, hung out in brothels, arrested in public for conduct contrary to *buenas costumbres*, reported a venereal disease, provoked fights or became a threat to public health. Upon registration city police gathered information such as name, birthplace, address, civil status, physical characteristics, the circumstances which had led them to register or become a prostitute, as well as where they would live and where they would practice. In addition to registration, the *Comisión de salubridad* required that all prostitutes submit to a medical examination conducted at the *Hospital de Belen* to check for venereal disease. Ordinances required that prostitutes pay for their exams and any treatment they received.

As a policed profession, female sex work came under heightened police surveillance. Once registered, regulations required that a prostitute carry her license with her at all times to be shown to clients and police officials. She was also expected to notify police if she changed brothels or residence and continue to undergo medical exams twice a week. In addition, ordinances dictated the boundaries of moral behavior for registered prostitutes, who were prohibited from loitering or advertising publicly in doors or windows of the brothels or calling out to men on the street. Regulations also stipulated they not appear in public if wearing inappropriate clothing or pregnant, and prohibited them from going to the main plaza at night or

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554 Ibid, 364.
saying obscene things in city neighborhoods or near the military barracks. A prostitute caught
violating the regulations faced harsh punishments including arrest or monetary fines. The law
considered women who practiced clandestine prostitution vagabonds and police treated them
accordingly. A woman could be de-registered only if she provided evidence that she had turned
her life around or was able to support herself without working as a prostitute through legitimate
marriage, inheritance, or gainful employment in a new profession.\footnote{Ibid.} In this way the
legalization of prostitution after 1866 attempted to both monitor and mitigate the presence of the
immoral prostitute in the public sphere.

Modifications to the original ordinances were made in 1879, and mandated that men under
the age of twenty one were not allowed in brothels, despite the fact that the minimum age for
registered prostitutes was twelve. The law suggests a belief that female prostitutes had the
potential to corrupt young men. By 1890, city police created more organized and structured
codes to deal with women of ill repute and prevent them from further corrupting society. New
prohibitions prevented prostitutes from visiting honorable families, living near schools,
beneficence establishments or markets. In order to preserve the sanctity of the family, they were
not to address men with ladies or children. To make the public sphere safe for honorable women,
they were not to invite scandal into public places and expected to dress and behave properly
when outside the brothel. In this period, police also began to classify prostitutes according to
where they practiced, distinguishing between those who practiced solo in their homes and those
who lived and worked in brothels. City police also introduced a new system for de-classifying
prostitutes which assigned them a sponsor, an “honorable” person who could assure their good
conduct for a period of at least six months. A prostitute could also be removed from the register
if they provided evidence of marriage for a period of two years or more.  

New regulations that made particular mention of the actions and behavior of prostitutes in public coincide with the growing desire to protect the honor of the family. In addition, new rules which de-classified prostitutes who married suggest a connection between honor and marriage that was not attainable to the unmarried prostitute.

By 1900, the limitations placed on prostitutes and their movements increased and became even more specific. Police prevented prostitutes from entering the main plaza, its portales (porticos of the city plaza), bakeries, cantinas, and all central gardens or streets of the city. It also began to more strictly classify prostitutes in order to better track the whereabouts of registered prostitutes. New codes created three classifications of brothels to determine whether or not a prostitute lived and worked under the dependence and vigilance of the dueña, or a madam, whether she only worked at the brothel, or if she worked from her own home and took in clients.  

City codes classified a dueña as a woman that oversaw a minimum of two working girls, and was thirty five years or older.  

Often these madams were retired prostitutes who could no longer work, as the working years of most female prostitutes began around age fourteen and ended by their thirties.  

It is interesting to note that regulations required the dueñas to register the entrance and exit of girls, as well as assist in their weekly medical exams and advise them on how to treat diseases. In addition, it was her responsibility to “prevent disorder and scandal” both inside the brothel and outside its doors. For these reasons, city ordinances

557  BPEJ, Misc, 726, Doc #: 27, “Reglamento de la Prostitución expedido por el Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara,” (Guadalajara: 1890).
559  BPEJ, Misc, 726, Doc #: 27, “Reglamento de la Prostitución expedido por el Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara,” (Guadalajara: 1890).
required that she close the doors at 11pm, recover lost objects and give them to the police and cover the brothel windows. It was prohibited to serve alcoholic beverages, host parties or dances without the authorization of the Jefetura política. Regulations also specified that dueñas were not to permit gambling or the reception of drunks, armed persons, or men under the age of twenty-one. It was also her duty to uphold female honor and virtue where possible by not allowing girls to work without licenses, or permit married women, widows or single women with children to enter or work inside the brothels. Interestingly enough, by 1900 municipal codes no longer required maids under the age of forty working as prostitutes to register. Therefore, while it continued to hold the honor of married women and single mothers in high regard, it upheld that the honor of older women was not worth monitoring. Ultimately municipal officials believed it was the responsibility of the dueñas to maintain order within their “houses” as a way to assist in the regulation of female prostitutes. Those who did not faced fines or arrest by city police, who were allowed to search or enter the brothels unannounced. Portrayed as older women, these matriarchs of the bordello were expected to also moderate the negative honor that prostitution bestowed upon single women.

After Independence prostitution became increasingly treated as a matter of public safety and health that led to the registration and examination of prostitutes by city police and public health officials. Changes over time in the treatment and handling of female prostitutes however, demonstrates heightened concern over the sexual honor and morality of unprotected and unattached women. Regulations which closely observed their residence, presence in public places and interaction with “honorable” families, indicate a desire to mitigate the potential for their trade to harm the honor of the family. Laws which required that girls working in brothels be

561 González Llerenas, “La reglamentación sanitaria,” 373-4; 386.
closely monitored by dueñas, and restricted those who could become registered prostitutes based on their age, marital status or whether or not they were mothers, indicates a desire by city officials to protect the morality of unattached women.

Conclusion

In the post-Independence period dominant discourses regarding the public good targeted the poor for the rapid rise of urban social problems such as the spread of crime, prostitution and disease. Unattached women who resided outside of patriarchal control faced greater state intervention into their private lives by newly organized institutions given the charge of maintaining public order, such as city courts, police and public health departments. Under the auspices of protection, these institutions imposed a desire to both correct and police the morality of unattached women who lived outside the boundaries of patriarchal control. In criminal court cases, judges and lawyers frequently drew attention to the sexual honor of unattached women. Despite often being the victim of crime, unmarried women’s honor often played a role in determining guilt, the cause of a particular incident or in the severity of sentencing. In addition, changing ordinances which legalized prostitution sheds light on a growing desire to regulate and police the sexuality of unmarried women. Overall, sufficient data exists to suggest that the honor of unattached women was called into question more so than married women given their presence in and before institutions of punishment and reform.
CHAPTER SIX
POVERTY, SINGLENESS AND PUBLIC WELFARE

The need to reform Guadalajara’s growing unmarried population extended beyond newly state-run criminal courts, prisons and hospitals and into its earliest welfare institutions. Opened in 1805, the city’s first central charity house, the Casa de Caridad y Misericoridia (House of Charity and Mercy, eventually renamed the Hospicio Cabañas in 1859)\(^{562}\) served the growing needs of a widening population of single and widowed women and their children. Similar to policies, practices and institutions of penology, the establishment of the Casa de Caridad coincided with a desire to “clean up” city streets and reform the poor in the colonial period, but evolved alongside a similar trajectory with Mexico’s political twists and turns after 1821. Although initially founded by the Catholic Church it shut down temporarily to serve as a military barrack during the wars for Independence. In the chaotic rebuilding period that followed it went through phases of closure and reconstruction, but continued to be run by the Church in conjunction with some support from state and city officials as well as local benefactors. The institution eventually came under state management in 1874 as part of the rising tide of modernization during the Porfiriato and a desire to centralize the authority of the state.\(^{563}\)

From its beginnings the Casa de Caridad was intimately linked to debates that surfaced among city officials and reformers over how to address the growing presence of the poor within

\(^{562}\) Even though the name of the institution changed, research I conducted indicated that even after 1859 residents of Guadalajara continued to refer to the charity house as the Casa de Caridad. Although state and city officials, and even today, the institution is more popularly referred to as the Hospicio Cabañas, to maintain consistency, I will refer to it as the Casa de Caridad.

\(^{563}\) Luis M. Rivera, Hospicio Cabañas. Monografía histórica (Guadalajara: Publicaciones del Comité Central “Pro Cabañas,” 1924), 18-35.
the urban landscape. Discussion often hinged on an evolving discourse on poverty and reform that filtered through the administration of the charity house; utilized by both church and state managers. While once perceived as an important part of the Catholic faith, formerly pious notions of caridad (charity) took on new meaning after the 1780s. In large part this dealt with a changing perception of the poor by city and church officials and the need to distinguish between the deserving, those who were in true need of assistance, and the undeserving, the idle, lazy and vice-ridden. In effect, this process not only marginalized sectors of the poor, but weeded out those who could benefit from welfare reform from those that should be reformed through punitive coercion. From its beginnings in 1805 until 1910, despite transitions in administration, the Casa de Caridad functioned as an institution of reform by educating the children of the poor, many of them unmarried and widowed women. Inherent within such arguments was a paternalistic attitude toward the poor, particularly when it came to unattached adult women.  

Given the circumstances of life in nineteenth-century Guadalajara it is not surprising that a much greater proportion of poor, unmarried, abandoned, pregnant, unemployed, migrant, widowed, or elderly women took advantage and were offered aid through the Casa de Caridad. It was one of the factors that drew rural migrants into the city from the countryside.  

Documentation from the charity home, police records and administrative reports demonstrate that the public authorities felt a greater need to “protect” and intercede on behalf of single, abandoned and widowed women. Not only did the mission of the institution seek to “reform” these women and their children, but its methods served to reinforce the patriarchal family and race, class and gender hierarchies. However, while evidence from the Casa de Caridad affirms

that unattached women depended on state assistance in greater numbers than married women, it also suggests that women played a role in shaping state services. In many cases, single women used the very same rhetoric that justified greater state intervention into their lives to further their own objectives.

Figure 6.1

“El Hospicio”

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565 Photo reprinted in Juan B. Iguiniz, Guadalajara a través de los tiempos: relatos y descripciones de viajeros y escritores desde del Siglo XVI hasta nuestros días, Volume 1, 1586-1867 (Guadalajara: Banco Refaccionario de Jalisco, 1950), 58.
The Casa de Caridad y Misericordia

Institutions of charity, like the Casa de Caridad, date back to fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe when the first public hospitals, orphanages and schools opened to the poor. They carried over to the New World from Spain often by religious orders. Colonial Guadalajara had several institutions that served the poor. In the early part of the eighteenth century the Colegio de San Diego functioned as an asylum for orphaned children, but the school mostly served young Spanish girls who it presumed required greater protection to preserve their virginity. It catered to the orphaned, poor doncellas of the city, who could be proven to be virtuous and legitimate children of honorable Spanish parents. The institution acknowledged the particular “risks” that young poor women faced and wished to prevent Spanish girls from falling into “danger.” It was not until the Bourbon reforms that the Spanish crown introduced reforms in respect to social welfare. Between 1767 and 1775, the earliest changes took place in Mexico City with the introduction of the first central foundling home, poorhouse, public hospital, and the colonial government-run pawn shop, or Monte de Piedad. Shortly after in 1786 Guadalajara boasted its first hospital for the poor, the Hospital de Bélen, and by the turn of the century opened the Casa de Caridad y Misericordia (House of Charity and Compassion). Unlike Mexico City, the Casa de Caridad provided a variety of services to the poor under one roof. It became the largest and most important institution of public charity in the state of Jalisco. At its zenith the Casa

567 AHA, Gobierno, Obras Asistenciales, Colegio de San Diego, Caja 1, exp 37; Ibid., Exp 1.
568 Silvia Arrom, Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 14. In Guadalajara, the first Monte de Piedad was opened in 1849. See BPEJ, Miscellaneous 751, doc 7, Augustín Rivera, “Los Montes de Piedad ante el Derecho Canónico,” Tipografía de José Martín (San Juan de Lagos, 1880), 2.
boasted over 118 rooms comprised of dormitories, offices, nurseries, classrooms and dining halls, in addition to 48 covered corridors, 21 passageways, 22 gardens, 22 fountains, 5 kitchens, a chapel, library, and garden. Within the labyrinth of rooms and patios that made up the impressive structure there was a foundling home, orphanage, primary school for boys and girls, asylum and nursing home for indigent migrants, unemployed artisans and journeyman, as well as those who were physically incapable of work due to a disability or old age. The history of the Casa de Caridad y Misericordia sheds light onto the important transition from church controlled public charity to state-run beneficence, and is important in ascertaining the policies, institutions and practices utilized by state and city officials to handle the poor, particularly unattached women.

The origins of the institution are deeply connected to economic and social changes which motivated local and ecclesiastic officials to address the problem of urban poverty through vigilance and reform in the late 1700s. After a ten month trip exploring the socio-economic conditions of the region, the city’s newly appointed bishop Juan Ruiz de Cabañas, noted the hardships of daily life for Guadalajara’s poor. Inspired by similar institutions he encountered on a visit to Mexico City, he began planning the Casa de Caridad y Misericordia (House of Charity and Compassion). By 1801 he gathered funds from the Diocese of Guadalajara, local city government and private donations from the religious community. In 1803 he wrote to King

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569 BPEJ, Miscellaneous #164, doc 48, “Estado General del Hospicio de Huerfános de GDL,” (Guadalajara, 1892), 3-4.
Carlos IV for final approval and by December received consent for both the project and its ordinances. The proposed institution would serve the growing class of Guadalajara’s poor.

The founding of the establishment reveals the often contentious transition from religious to secular control. In February of 1810, on the eve of Mexico’s War for Independence the Casa de Caridad opened its doors to sixty-six boys and girls. Although it was funded by both state and church sources, the governing of the Casa was almost entirely in the hands of the Church. It was headed by the Ecclesiastical Cabildo and the Bishop, who designated a vicar to manage and direct the house. A committee known as the Junta de Caridad, made up of clergy and secular men, made all other decisions. Charity work at the house came to a screeching halt only eight months after it opened at the onset of Independence. Throughout the course of the war the structure served as military barracks. It would not be until 1829, after relocating the military and making needed repairs that the establishment reopened, but debate began to mount over the future of the church-run institution. In 1833, the Liberal vice president of Mexico, Valentín Gómez Farías, supported by the legislature of the state of Jalisco and its governor Pedro Tamez, a member of the Partido Liberal, ordered that the Casa remain a military fort. Liberal reformers believed in the separation of Church and state and sought to diminish the role of the Church in public welfare. Church clergy argued that the Casa was an institution of welfare primarily funded by the Church and private donations from the faithful. The argument salvaged the Casa for the time being. With the help of the diocese, the building underwent reconstruction from

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571 BPEJ, Miscellaneous, “Hospicio de Guadalajara,” Tipografía del Hospicio (Guadalajara, 1889), 3.
492, Miguel Gallindo, “Apuntos sobre la hygiene en Guadalajara,” Tesis de recepción, Facultad de Medicina de Guadalajara, (Guadalajara, April 8, 1908), 174.
1836-1845, adding a cupola to the chapel and new courses which emphasized the skilled trades of making rebozos, shoes, clothing and furniture.  

By 1859, as part of larger structural changes taking place in the Catholic Church and the city the Sisters of Charity, a female religious order, took over the management of the newly renamed Hospicio Cabañas and the Hospital de Belén. The more secular name change and new administration were indicative of a growing demand for the Catholic Church to restructure itself in the face of growing criticism and rising liberalism in Mexico during La Reforma. The nuns came to Mexico in 1843 from France and were well regarded for their charitable and moral educational work. By the middle of the 19th century there were over 400 sisters in Mexico working in various welfare institutions. The Sisters of Charity managed to evade expulsion in the 1860 Law of Reform with the help of the state governor who argued they were a charitable organization and not religious, and therefore their work within the institution fell under the category of beneficence. The following year this was put into law by the State of Jalisco through a decree which stated all Establishments of Beneficence in the city could remain open and retain control of their property and capital so long as members of the clergy were not a part of their administration. This allowed the Sisters of Charity to remain at the Casa. In 1874 however, just three years after the Sisters were recognized for their good work by the Governor of the State of Jalisco in a ceremony held outside the Casa, state leaders officially ended their

572 Ibid., 65.
573 González Navarro, La pobreza, 58; See also AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, 1789-1849: Box 1, “Establecido de las Hermanas de Caridad en el Hospicio y Hospital de Belen.”
574 AHJ, B-6-891, inv 923, c. 240.
575 Rivera, Hospicio Cabañas, 80.
tenure at the institution. Their expulsion was directly connected to Mexico’s new Liberal party
president Lerdo de Tejada, who opposed the participation of the Catholic Church in social
organizations.

The expulsion of the Sisters of Charity in 1874 stirred debate about secularization in Jalisco
which centered on charity, and whose obligation it would be to manage and provide aid to the
poor. Some suggested that charity was outside the state’s jurisdiction because it promoted
idleness and was counter-productive to tackling the problem of urban poverty. Others believed
the modern State was obligated to provide citizens with the most basic needs of food, clothing
and shelter to enable the poor to get jobs. They contended that without any assistance, the lower
classes would become an even greater burden on the state. Under state control the Casa came
under the direction of the Office of Public Education, but in large measure its bylaws and
curriculum, with the exception of religion, seem to coincide with earlier policies and practices.
For the first time, however, the state government was responsible for hiring staff and managing
its day to day operations. As the nation underwent a period of reorganization during the
Porfiriato so too did the Casa de Caridad. With the rise in urban poverty and population in these
years the size and need of the city’s poor grew. Plagued by mismanagement, overcrowding and
budgetary constraints however, the charity house nearly fell into ruin by 1883. In that year the
state restructured the institution and created stricter policies to control admissions. State
managers required mothers to prove their insolvency and the legitimacy of their children with
legal documentation. That same year the Governor announced new regulations intent on re-
establishing order and improving conditions in the institution’s various departments. There
would also be restructuring that took place at the state level. To replace the more religious notion

576 González Navarro, La pobreza.
of charity, state leaders placed emphasis instead on providing for the wellbeing of its citizens and
the direction of the charity house fell under the newly formed Department of Beneficence by
1896.577

Overall however, continuities remained in the everyday organization, practices and policies
of reforming the children of the many poor single and widowed mothers it aided. The story of the
Guadalajara institution contrasts greatly with the poorhouse in Mexico City. There Silvia Arrom
argues that after 1871 the institution began to focus less on reform and transitioned into an
orphanage and boarding school.578 This was not the case in Guadalajara, and the charity house
continued to cater to adult female beggars and the elderly in conjunction with its educational
departments for orphaned children well into the twentieth century. In addition, while city
officials demolished the Mexico City poorhouse in 1905, the original Hospicio Cabañas
continued to function into the 1960s. In this way it provides an interesting counterpoint to the
Mexico City narrative that frequently dominates histories of Mexico.

Given its divisive history documentation on the Casa de Caridad is scattered between both
state and church archives, and records were more accessible for the years following state
takeover. Overall, the Casa’s history is indicative of broader changes that took place both on the
national and local political stage. Its shift from church to state control revealed changing
conceptions of charity in Guadalajara. Whereas the Catholic Church had deemed charity part of
the “pious works” of religious orders, under the state it became characterized as

577 AHJ, Beneficiencia B-6, Reglamentos y Leyes, “Reglamento del Hospicio de Guadalajara,”
1883, f. 883-5937; Rivera, Hospicio Cabañas.
578 Arrom, Containing the Poor, 4.
“beneficence.” The shift is significant in that it implied an increasing role of the state as beneficent toward the poor, a transition that would take on paternalistic undertones. While a change in terminology reflected new ideas about welfare versus charity, both the Catholic Church and the state frequently relied on stereotypes and condescending attitudes toward the poor to legitimize their role as reformers. Thus, from its inception in 1805 until 1910, the Casa de Caridad was part of a broader debate over urban social problems and measures required to address poverty.

The Discourse on Poverty and the Marginalization of the Poor

The origins of public welfare institutions like the Casa de Caridad in Guadalajara are linked to changes in both the rural and urban economy analyzed in chapter two which created a large urban underclass. A dramatic rise in urban industrial manufacturing combined with a loss of land in the countryside, brought an influx of rural peasants to cities across Mexico and widened the gap between the rich and poor. The consequence of rapid population growth was an ever expanding class of poor city dwellers, among them a majority of single and widowed women, who came to Guadalajara in search of employment. The city itself was ill-equipped to deal with these newcomers, lacking sufficient space, goods, services and most importantly jobs. Beggars and the unemployed alike swarmed the city’s central plaza, attracted to its public fountains and opportunities as the city’s commercial and mercantile center. There they could bathe, wash

579 Charity institutions were categorized as “Obras Assistenciales” or “Obras Pias” according to the records of the Catholic Church in Guadalajara. State charity institutions fell under the authority of the Department of Education as Public Beneficence after 1874.
clothing, beg for money, sell their goods, sleep under the shade of the portales or look for work.

Their growing presence in the most important part of the city unnerved municipal and ecclesiastic officials. As the civil, ecclesiastical and mercantile center of the city, the main plaza was the seat of local power. It housed the Cathedral, Governor’s Palace, military barracks and many of the city’s wealthy residents. It was also where all religious and civil celebrations were held. It was not only the presence of the poor which alarmed officials, but the increase in urban problems which began to become associated with them such as crime, and disease. Not to mention rising rates of illegitimacy, single or abandoned mothers, and declining rates of legal marriage.  

Previously the city existed without needing to regulate its growth or eradicate poverty, but the commercial growth, urban expansion and demographic increases that Guadalajara experienced by the late eighteenth century posed social and urban problems it had never dealt with before, forcing local and ecclesiastical officials to respond.

In colonial Mexico the poor had an important role to play in the Catholic faith and in the salvation of the wealthy. Not only was charity an accepted practice, but it was promoted as a requirement of the rich to give and a right of the poor to solicit. For this reason, colonial Catholic charity had fewer concerns to eliminate poverty because it gave opportunities for the wealthy to be charitable and attain salvation. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked a transition in the attitude and treatment of the poor. Bourbon-era public welfare reforms aimed to maintain order and clean up city streets. It was a policy put into even

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581 Trujillo, “Léperos.”
582 Ibid., 110; Jiménez Pelayo, Olveda and Núñez Miranda, El Crecimiento, 109; 125.
583 González Navarro, La pobreza, 56. Silvia Arrom points out that while begging was acceptable, vagrancy had always been persecuted. See Arrom, Containing the Poor, 1-2.
greater practice after Independence. From an elite perspective the raucous and unsanitary lifestyle of the poor caused new urban problems that outweighed salvation, such as epidemic outbreaks of disease, increasing rates of crime, public begging and vagrancy, and other problems linked to the break-down of the family such as illegitimacy and spousal and child abandonment.  

City and ecclesiastic officials blamed the wayward lifestyle of the city’s urban poor which they believed caused these problems. By the 1870s and 1880s, this rhetoric became infused with nationalistic concerns as Porfirian reformers sought to eliminate poverty as “a stain that shamed society and the country.” To combat such problems local authorities in Guadalajara sought to reform the poor by monitoring and marginalizing their presence in the public sphere through well-organized police and welfare institutions. While the reforms were intended for all of the city’s poor, the impact on single women is important in understanding how the church and state would target them and their children through reform measures.

Embedded within the language of reform, written into law and used by social reformers, police, foreign travelers and city and ecclesiastic officials, were clear racial and class stereotypes which justified new legal codes and institutions that targeted the poor. In stark contrast to the “gente bien” of Guadalajara, described in 1838 by a foreign visitor as well-dressed, articulate, educated and of a solid moral background, the city’s poor were written off as “lepéros” who

585 Trujillo, “Léperos,” 207. Similar attitudes existed in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Mexico City see Arrom, Containing the Poor.
586 Ibid., 122. Also see Chapter 4.
588 See Chapters 4 and 5.
were unrefined, un-educated, “half-naked, starved, alcoholic, fanatical and violent.”

Guadalajara’s civil and religious leaders similarly argued that the poor’s proclivity toward fighting, foul language, and public scandal created disorder and crime in the city. In Mexico City, officials passed laws to curb scandalous behavior. They banned public nudity, restricted boisterous religious celebrations, public drinking and gambling and passed ordinances intended to reduce concubinage. In Guadalajara, as early as 1784 city officials passed similar measures that limited the use of firearms, the sale of alcohol and instituted curfews. In 1790, Guadalajara’s royal Governor organized cuartel, or neighborhood police to enforce city codes. In fact the term policía refers to the “good governance” of the poor, which by the nineteenth century included imposing new moral codes and manners on the poor. Military officials added new cuartels in 1809 to better police the burgeoning urban poor population. Measures geared toward monitoring the actions of the poor coincided with efforts to sanitize and beautify the city by cleaning the filth that was everywhere and remove the poor from the streets where they congregated to socialize, work, eat, very often sleep, and beg. Late eighteenth century

590 Arrom, Containing the Poor, 15.
591 For attitudes regarding the poor see Trujillo, “Léperos,” 205-229. On city ordinances see Jaime Olveda, La oligarquía de Guadalajara. De las reformas borbónicas a la reforma liberal. (Mexico: Colegioe Regiones, 1990), 86.
592 Nacif Mina, 9-11.
593 Jiménez Pelayo et.al, El Crecimiento,134; Also see Chapter 5.
594 Arrom, Containing the Poor, 15. Literature on these efforts in Mexico City is extensive, see J. P. Viqueira Albán, ¿Relajados o reprimidos? Diversiones públicas y vida social en la ciudad de México durante el Siglo de las luces (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987), chapter 3; Michael Scardaville, “Alcohol Abuse and Tavern Reform in Late Colonial Mexico City,” Hispanic American Historical Review 60, no. 4 (November 1980); Pamela Voekel,
Mexico City ordinances outlawed panhandling and involuntarily interned individuals into poorhouse, or the Casa de Caridad in Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{595}

Other measures emphasized removal of the poor altogether from city streets. This frequently involved relocating the poor from the city center, where the city’s elite took up residence, to the periphery. Some of the first measures of physically relocate the poor began in 1771 by the Catholic Church. Church officials moved the city’s poor to the northernmost boundary of the city, in an area known as Las Cuadritas where it offered affordable rented housing to workers.\textsuperscript{596} In effect the Church created one of the city’s poorest barrios where the poor could work and live out of the way of the city center.\textsuperscript{597} This was a pattern that would repeat itself throughout the nineteenth century as the urban poor settled on the margins of the city, often attracted by factories located there. In addition, the outskirts of town served as the first stop for large migrant populations who arrived to the city from rural towns in Jalisco. For this reason poor barrios emerged on the periphery, far from the center and elite neighborhoods. In addition to Las Cuadritas in the north, poor people and factory workers crowded the cuartels of San Juan.

\textsuperscript{595} The first ordinance passed in Mexico City was in 1774, See Arrom, \textit{Containing the Poor}, 2; Individuals could be interned involuntarily to the Casa de Caridad by the Junta de Caridad or by local police. See Rivera, \textit{Hospicio Cabañas}, 18-35.

\textsuperscript{596} Jiménez Pelayo, Olveda and Núñez Miranda, \textit{El Crecimiento}, 109-110; 116; 122.

\textsuperscript{597} Rodney Anderson, “Los Barrios,” in \textit{Lecturas históricas de Guadalajara: Demografía y Urbanismo, eds. José María Muriá y Jaime Olveda} (México: Colegio Regiones de México, 1992), 329. Rodney Anderson’s work suggests that this part of town had the highest rates of households with multiple families and un-related members, which are key indicators of fracture and poverty.
de Diós, Analco and Mexicaltzingo. Analco and Mexicaltzingo, located at the southernmost boundary of the city, were formerly indigenous villages that became subsumed by Guadalajara in 1821. San Juan de Diós to the east, divided the center of town from the San Juan de Diós river. Throughout the nineteenth century, and even today, it was comprised mainly of the poor working classes and had a reputation for crime and a seedy nightlife. Like Las Cuadritas to the north which housed the first public hospital, this neighborhood would become home to the Casa de Caridad. It was in these barrios where the greatest need for social services existed, as the poor were often hit hardest during epidemic and economic crises. In this way the relief provided by the Church, and eventually continued by the state, served to maintain long-standing class hierarchies within the city by relocating the poor to outlying areas.

599 Eduardo López Moreno, *La cuadrícula en el desarrollo de la ciudad hispanoamericana: Guadalajara, Mexico*. (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), 22.
600 The work of Lilia Oliver demonstrates that during numerous cholera outbreaks in Guadalajara, the majority killed were the poor and those who lived on the periphery, see Lilia Oliver, *Un verano mortal* (Guadalajara: Unidad Editorial del Gobierno de Jalisco, 1986), 42; See Figure 6.2.
While the ruling elite saw themselves as powerful and virtuous, it was the poor who were “fragile and defective” and in need of reform and protection. The very same paternalistic, classist and racist rhetoric which permeated the patrolling and spatial organization of the city permeated the halls of the Casa de Caridad. As a reform institution it served a similar function by removing the “bad” elements and unsightly beggars from the streets, not to impugn the poor

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601 The original map, which specified cuartel numbers, locations and notable buildings comes from the AHJ, Mapoteca, “Plano general de la ciudad de Guadalajara, 1896;” Information for additional notations was taken from Rivas Jiménez, “Defense of Craft,” and Olveda and Núñez Miranda, El Crecimiento Urbano. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

but to reform the deserving poor. Those offered shelter at the institution were forbidden from  
begging for alms “publicly or privately.” The charity house emphasized the need to “civilize”  
the lower classes in order to promote economic development and civil obedience “for the sake of  
the country, the public, the Church and state.”

For these reasons, a major goal of the Casa was to instill order, work ethic, morality and  
civility in its residents. Once in the poorhouse the goal was to produce industrious workers who  
could provide for themselves, making them an asset to society. At the Casa de Caridad  
residents were instructed in Christian values and taught job skills so that they could be  
reincorporated into society. According to Bishop Cabañas, education was indispensible to  
removing the “ignorance” of the masses. This belief would be championed even during periods  
of greater state intervention at the Casa de Caridad, especially after Independence as the new  
government of Mexico favored education as the “basis of all social progress.”

The Casa offered assistance to those deemed “the truly needy.” The majority of its residents  
were abandoned babies and poor and orphaned children, but it also made room for adults who  
were unable to work due to physical disabilities, age or lack of proper education. Part of the  
paternalistic rhetoric of reform defined in the ordinances that guided the Casa de Caridad and

603 Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado (AHA), Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio  
10-11.
604 González Navarro, La pobreza, 56.
605 Arrom, Containing the Poor, 15.
606 Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado (AHA), Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio  
607 Carmen Castañeda, La educación en Guadalajara durante la Colonia, 1552-1821  
(Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1984), 224-225; 229.
608 Ibid and Silvia Arrom Containing the Poor.
upheld by social theorists, police and city officials was a distinction between the deserving and undeserving classes of poor. Among the deserving were those in dire need of assistance, not because they were lazy but because they were unable to work and therefore most vulnerable, such as infants, young children, the sick, disabled or aged.\textsuperscript{609} In stark contrast to the truly needy were hoodlums, prostitutes, vagabonds or the picaresque lépero, who lacked resources due to laziness and vice. The lépero, a term popularized by the mid-nineteenth century, was typically stereotyped as a petty criminal. Often such class based arguments had racial undertones, as the lépero was frequently portrayed as mestizo or Indian and associated with drinking pulque in addition to having an affinity for fighting, pick-pocketing, and promiscuous relations with women.\textsuperscript{610} Institutions of beneficence like the Casa de Caridad originated to protect the helpless, while police, correctional institutions and military impressment targeted the refractory and marginalized sectors of the poor.\textsuperscript{611}

What would define a new discourse on poverty by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Guadalajara was greater emphasis on reforming and protecting the “truly needy,” or honorable poor.\textsuperscript{612} Through instruction at the Casa de Caridad residents received the “proper”

\textsuperscript{609} AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Box 1, 1789-1849, Article 1, p 3-4.
\textsuperscript{611} AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Box 1, (1789-1849), 2-6; Trujillo,“Léperos,” 211.
\textsuperscript{612} AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Box 1, 1789-1849.
education and rearing they lacked, which had or could lead to further uncivilized behavior. Inherent within the arguments that made up new city ordinances, established cuartel police, inspired removal programs and formed institutional regulations which distinguished between the deserving and undeserving classes of poor were class and race-based constructions of the period. The Casa de Caridad shaped its interactions with single and widowed female patrons and their children around new ideals of perfecting the poor. In reality, the Casa existed to discipline the deserving members of the lower classes from an elite perspective. It embodied a paternalistic rhetoric of reform which emphasized the need to transform the poor into more refined, educated, moral and productive citizens. Not only did elites see the poor as those in need of reform, but believed they were the most capable of providing it.

Singleness and the Casa de Caridad

The Casa de Caridad’s paternalism toward the poor shaped its primary goal of educating and rearing needy children often translated into a patriarchal approach toward their mothers. Although it would go through various transitions, the Casa predominantly served the needs of a growing unmarried, widowed, and abandoned population of women with children. Through a rhetoric which emphasized the need to “protect” and reform the poor, especially children, Casa administrators and staff, along with city police and state welfare officials attempted to define the proper mother, family, and home. In the absence of a male patriarch, the Casa stood in to protect

613 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, May 18, 1875, “Letter from Jefetura Simón Delgadillo to Department of Public Beneficiencia” Box 158, f. 875.
the honor of young women and girls and provide proper rearing and education to the vulnerable children of single mothers. This was a task unfit for the large population of poor unmarried and widowed women that it served due to the stigma associated with their class and sheer lack of resources. At the same time, single and widowed women played a role in shaping the services provided at the Casa and in many cases re-appropriated the language of reform and the rhetoric of protection to their benefit. Institutional documentation such as admission requests, police referrals, regulations, correspondence, resident and employee data, budgets, school records, retrievals, and adoptions all support the notion that the Casa assumed a patriarchal role in the lives of many children and their families which had a distinct impact on widowed and single women.

Widowed and single women with children had a much greater need for the services offered at the Hospicio. They felt the economic and demographic changes that were occurring around them more than a married woman with spousal support. Throughout the nineteenth century as prices for basic foodstuffs continued to rise at higher rates than real wages, it increased pressure on the household. A working woman on her own typically earned less than a man and toiled in lower paying occupations.  

Therefor e, while a single woman in Guadalajara working at a cigar factory or as a live-in maid could survive on her own earnings, a woman with even one child would have a much harder time making ends meet.  

See Chapter 4; For a discussion in Mexico on the gendered divisions of labor see Marie Eileen Francois, A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750-1920 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 88; Juan Javier Pescador, “Vanishing Women: Female Migration and Ethnic Identity in Late-Colonial Mexico City,” Ethnohistory 42, no. 4 (Fall 1995), 618. See Kuznesof, “Gender Ideology, Race, and Female-Headed Households,” 162.

Francisco, A Culture of Everyday Credit, 24; Estadísticas Económicas del Porfiriato. Fuerza de Trabajo y actividad por sectores (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1965), 17.
mother Rafaela Maldonado, who admitted in her petition to the Casa de Caridad that her work making tortillas “was not even enough to eat poorly, let alone [pay] for anything else” for her two young daughters. For this reason, she sought “a place of mercy” (lugar de gracia) for her children at the school for girls within the Casa. 617

The economic circumstances of everyday life for widowed women in particular could change dramatically from one minute to the next making the Casa de Caridad a valuable resource. Shortly after Christmas in 1907, Jesús Morales pleaded with the Casa to help her with the raising of her three young children. Her husband, a tinplate maker had died a year earlier of from a rare heart condition that forced her to take on work as a domestic servant, which she explained did not provide enough money for her to support the family. During the period the salary of a craftsman would support a family of five comfortably, but the salary paid to a woman as a domestic could not adequately support Jesús’ family. 618 A similar fate met Antonia Díaz after the death of her middle-class husband, who was a doctor, surgeon and obstetrician in the city. As a result Antonia went from a middle class housewife to a domestic servant who found it difficult to support her three children on her small salary. As a middle class woman, however, she understood the importance of her children’s education and sought assistance from the Casa to help secure her children’s future. 619

It was not only the financial strain that domestic work placed on the widow-headed household, but the inability to provide childcare to their own children while working. For Jesus

617 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, Box 181, f. 901-5706.
618 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, December 27, 1907, Box 168, f. 896-5628; For more on craftsmen’s wages see Claudia Rivas Jiménez, “Defense of Craft: Guadalajara’s Artisans in the Era of Economic Liberalism, 1842-1907” (PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 2008), 53.
619 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, 1894, Box 164, f. 894-5581
Valdez widowhood had left her in a state of “extreme poverty.” In a solicitation to the office of beneficence she explained that the death of her husband left her with few other options but to find work as a servant. She commented that her salary could not support her daughters Tomasa and Yrene. Working as a domestic she spent her whole day serving in someone else’s house, leaving her precious little time to care for her kids or see to their education. 620 Being the sole caretaker of a child added a great deal of financial and social responsibility to widowed women. For Eucebia Ybarra, a sudden illness left her unable to continue working. Being “alone (mujer sola) and useless” she admitted she was barely able to provide herself with basic necessities “much less those of her young daughters Ysabel and Refugio,” for whom she petitioned for a place in the Casa. 621

Just as in widowhood, the absence of spousal support greatly affected women’s ability to continue to feed and raise their children. Abandonment for unmarried and married women could produce similar consequences forcing women to seek aid at the Casa. In 1894, Teresa Ybarra found herself abandoned by the father of her four children, José Moreno. According to birth records José and Teresa maintained an informal union for more than seven years in which she bore four children. Although he recognized all of them as his children at birth, Teresa claimed he had stopped helping her support the children and she continued to struggle on her own. 622 There were also married women who because of abandonment fell into a form of involuntary singleness. In 1903, Rosario Guerrero desperately sought a spot for her teenage daughter in the school at the Casa because her husband abandoned her and their children. In addition to thirteen

620 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, 1903, Box 185, f. 903-3099.
621 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, 1888, Box 159, f. 888-827.
year old María del Carmen, Rosario was nursing two small babies. She explained that breastfeeding her children “whose care was absolutely critical” at that moment, prevented her from being able to work and provide for María del Carmen’s education.  

Often the problem faced by single mothers was their inability to work and meet their childcare responsibilities. Such circumstances were the main cause of abandonment and in some cases infanticide. In fact, almost half of all infanticide and abandonment cases between 1868 and 1903 were committed by domestic workers. While it is difficult to make judgments about the frequency of such crimes and occupation, the causal connection between domestic work and abandonment is strong both in the criminal court documentation and Casa de Caridad records. Working as a live in maid made it difficult for single mothers to attend to their work and their children, especially young children. Most employers would fire a pregnant domestic and would not tolerate a live in mother with an infant. Whereas a washerwoman or seamstress might be able to keep her child with her and even feed and watch children between work intervals, a servant had overseers and bosses who expected her to work consistently. In many instances, they feared being fired should their mistress or master find out. It is also interesting to

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623 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Solicitas,” 1903, Box 185, f. 903-3099
624 See Chapter 5.
625 See Table 6.1.
626 The work of Ann Blum suggests similarities in the rate and causes of abandonment by domestic workers in Mexico City see “Abandonment, Adoption and Reproductive Disruption.” Childhood, Vol. 14, No. 3, 321-338 (2007) and “Public Welfare and Child Circulation, Mexico City, 1877-1925.” Journal of Family History, 23, no. 2 (1998); Also see Chapter 4.
note that an overwhelming majority of criminal abandonment cases involved migrant women. Women not originally from Guadalajara were less likely to have relatives or a system of familial support that would have allowed them to keep their children.

<p>| Table 6.1 | Occupations and Crimes Committed by Female Inmates at the Jalisco State Penitentiary, 1868-1903 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child Abandonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole Grinder</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Ironer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawl Braider</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sus Labores</td>
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<td>Hat Maker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoe Maker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate Maker</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket Weaver</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

627 Out of the 13 cases of women tried for child abandonment between 1868 and 1905, 12 were originally from another part of the state. AHJ, *Libros de Penenticiaria*, “Album de sentenciados: Departamento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”

628 Data for the tables on female inmates was compiled using the sentencing books found in the state archives. As noted in the tables not all categories were recorded for each inmate and the years 1880-1903 were more complete than earlier periods. AHJ, *Libros de Penenticiaria*, “Album de sentenciados: Departamento de Mujeres 1868-1873,” and “Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905.”
Other occupations, such as prostitution lent itself to higher rates of unwanted pregnancy, which much like domestic service affected their ability to continue to work. For these reasons, infanticide was more common among women of that occupation according to data from Guadalajara’s prison records. To avoid such extreme measures, a mother was able to bring a newborn to the Casa’s foundling home, or Casa de Cuna anonymously. While solicitations for entrance into the Casa’s other departments were lengthy and frequently rejected, babies could not be turned away. The department of orphaned infants took in babies from one day to two years old, providing each child a wet-nurse. Although the institution did not have a foundling wheel as was common in other parts of Latin America, children were frequently left outside its doors. In the early morning hours of April 22, 1896 a baby girl was found in the portico of the Casa. The baby was in a basket with a heartfelt note offering prayer to whoever should find her and indicated the child was four days old and not yet baptized. Administrators at the Casa acknowledged their role in saving the small child and named her María Amparo (María Protection).

The Rhetoric of Protection

In this way the Casa acted as a protecting and paternal figure toward children, many born into families headed by single and widowed women. Children were the link between unattached women and the charity house. It was their sons and daughters which the institution deemed as the most vulnerable of the poor due to the lack of a strong male patriarch in their lives. From its colonial beginnings the Casa viewed itself as a manifestation of the King of Spain, who was

629 See Table 6.1.
630 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Entradas,” 1896, Box 166, 896-2030.
supreme “patron and protector” of those under his dominion and especially of those who resided in the “public establishments” of the New World. According to an 1819 draft of its ordinances, the Casa embodied the “paternal, charitable and sovereign disposition” of the King.  

Even in later years when the charity house came under state management it was classified as an “institution of protection,” along with the state funded pawn shop, the home for “repentant women,” the women’s prison, and state run daycares. In the absence of the patriarch of the nineteenth-century family, the institution stepped in to provide protection. The idea was one promoted by the institution itself, as well as city and state officials, residents and mothers alike.

Bishop Cabañas, the institution’s founder, viewed the children received at the Casa as the innocent victims of their parents’ wayward lifestyles. He believed the majority of the poor to be “ignorant [and] employed in propagating vices, scandals, sins, [and] idleness.” According to Cabañas it was idleness above all which led them to occupy themselves instead with “arrogance, drunkenness, robbery, [and] murder.” For the bishop it was the children born of the poor who suffered “living on the streets, plazas, paseos, and other public passageways.” It was the young who were frightened, unseen, unheard and “most lamentable.” He feared that if children were not reformed from a young age their parents had the potential to “corrupt customs… pervert

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632 Based on the organization of the collection at the AHJ which listed the organizations as part of the Institutions of Protection under the jurisdiction of the Jalisco Department of Beneficience. Other categories included Administration, Cemeteries, Hospitals and Public Health, Philanthropy, and Laws and Ordinances. The Casa de Amiga Obrera was founded in 1887 in Mexico City and offered free childcare to female workers during work hours. Its use in Guadalajara would not expand until the early part of the twentieth century. See González Navarro, La pobreza, 96-97.
peace, obstruct good order, temper piety,” and in effect “condemn their souls” to hell.\textsuperscript{633} In this way he viewed the Casa de Caridad as a sanctuary for children, a refuge to “protect” and salvage their souls.

The Casa’s goal of supporting, rearing and protecting the children of broken homes continued under state management. Police shared this vision and remitted hundreds of children to the charity each year. In an 1875 letter, city police chief Simón Delgadillo described the charity house as a place of refuge for the city’s orphans, particularly those of “a tender age,” who are alone in the world, “lacking family or anyone who might take interest in them.” He went on to suggest that this “class of unprotected children needed to be pulled out of mendacity, crime, abandonment and danger,” suggesting it was their “right to demand that the government provide them support and an education in order to become useful citizens” later in life. Similar to political debate over state funded charity, Delgadillo argued that it would be “abominable” if police arrested and tried abandoned and orphaned children as vagrants and placed them in city jails, without extending to them the “education they needed” and locked them away “where they would acquire criminal habits or be hurled into an irremediable prostitution at an inexperienced age.”\textsuperscript{634} The police chief’s comments indicate that local officials believed in the rhetoric of protection as a means of reforming the poor.

It was not uncommon for police officials to track the activities of children found on the streets and jail those caught begging or violating vagrancy laws. Such was the fate of a 10 year old unnamed “vagabond boy” picked up on the streets of Guadalajara in 1888. In this case

\textsuperscript{634} AHJ, \textit{Beneficiencia}, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, May 18, 1875, “Letter from Jefetura Simón Delgadillo to Department of Public Beneficiencia” Box 158, f. 875.
however, despite being over the approved age limit for boys accepted at the *Casa de Caridad*

police felt the child needed aid from the charity house rather than punishment. Correspondence

between the police department and the Director of Beneficence reveals that police took pity on

the boy who believed that because the boy had “no parents or persons he is subject to” was being

bullied by some of the other street boys. For his safety, police officials temporarily placed him

in one of the jail cells until they could find him room at the *Casa*.  

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The notion that the *Casa* provided children a level of “protection” that their parents were

unable to provide from the dangers often associated with poverty and the streets was well

understood throughout the state. In a request from the Governor’s Office to the Director of

Beneficence to admit Marcos Marin into its School of Arts for boys, the author imparted the

language of protection to draw attention to Marcos’ case. Describing him as “extremely poor,

but of good conduct and in much need of protection.” The letter emphasized his economic need

as well as his ability to be reformed given his moral character.  

636

The School of Arts was for boys between the ages of 6 and 13. In 1888, there were over three hundred male and female

orphaned children under the age of twelve living at the charity house.  

637

Children who had come to the *Casa* as orphans were automatically enrolled in the school, but it also accepted

applications from parents or took in children remitted by the police or government. During the
day boys took classes in reading, writing, math, grammar, geography and religion. After these

635  AHJ, *Beneficiencia*, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, 1888-1889, Box 159, f. 888-829
636  AHJ, *Beneficiencia*, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Recibo de asilados,” Caja 159, 1888-
1889, 888-827
637  Ibid, Caja 159, 1888-1889, 888.
classes, the children focused on learning trades taught at the Casa. From the perspective of the state, the school afforded a refuge for Marcos to acquire a basic education and learn a trade in order to have a career and become an upstanding citizen, without succumbing to the dangers of the streets or tainting his good nature.

Of course, the rhetoric of protection was something that mothers could also employ to assuage Casa administrators in their solicitation letters. When in 1894 Yrenea González sought a place for her son in the charity house she confessed that her work as a domestic forced her to neglect her son, leaving him “constantly abandoned in the street.” She acknowledged that her behavior was reckless, but admitted that she had few other options given the nature of her job. Similar to the argument made by police chief Simón Delgado years earlier, she acknowledged that if her son continued to play all day in the streets he would soon “acquire vices” which would “convert him” into an “undesirable member of society.” To make her case she added that if he was not admitted to the Casa he would have no chance at becoming “honorable.”

The protection of honor, particularly female honor, was the supreme duty of a family’s patriarch. Although it was less common for fathers to place children in the Casa, several cases exist within the documentation fathers also recognized the institution as a safe haven for their children when they were unable to perform their patriarchal duties. This was the case of the factory worker Rafael Morfín, who in 1875 requested help providing a “secondary education” for his two daughters Refugio and Julia. He explained that on his meager salary he was “scarcely able to keep up with feeding his family,” and without the “protection” of the Casa his daughters

639 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Altas y Bajas, June 1894,” Box 162, f. 893-5546.
would be unable to continue their education and development. To assure officials of his responsibility as a father, he added that when his circumstances improved, or he could pawn some goods, he would return for his daughters and pay the necessary tuition. In this way Guadalajara’s poor used the charity house as a temporary space of patriarchal control for young girls.

Children and relatives also used the language of patriarchy in their solicitations to the charity house. In 1900, Dolores Torres reasoned with the Director of Beneficence that her own circumstances were the product of an absent father. To make her case for assistance she claimed that he abandoned her and her two brothers, leaving them with few resources to survive. Not only did her father not perform his duties in providing for the family financially, his absence had left her without protection. As a result she lost her virginity before marriage when she entered into an illicit relationship with a man who she claimed “seduced and abandoned” her. Lacking the support of her father, Dolores sought the aid of the Casa to step in and help care for her young brothers. Similarly, a request for admission by Juana Peréz de Uribe, the widowed grandmother of six year old Angel Uribe, recognized the Casa as a place where Angel might benefit from male role models. She acknowledged that Angel’s mother was a prostitute, and until now it was Juana who had provided him with clothing, food and education. Given the nature of his mother’s work and the fact that Angel took the surname of his mother, it is likely that he was an illegitimate child. The fact that Angel was six years old, the age at which children were first admitted to elementary school, indicated his grandmother’s desire for him to receive a

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640 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, Box 158, 1870-1887, f. 875.
641 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Solicitas,” 1900, Box 177, f. 900-2919.
642 “Solicitas,” 1892-1893, Box 160bis.
proper education and training for a future job. In the absence of a father, Angel would have strong male role models in the form of Casa teachers and priests and be reared and educated in a manner that was expected of the nineteenth-century family and patriarch.

Single mothers who lacked the support of a male patriarch also viewed the Casa as an asylum to protect the honor of their daughters. In 1889, the mother of 16 year old Cecilia Villavicencio believed her daughter would be best living under the “strict care and vigilance” of the Casa. The solicitation explained that Cecilia, who was “completely poor” but from a good family “wished to live honestly.” She needed to flee her home due to the threat of seduction. Fearing it would lead to “terrible and irremediable consequences,” the request to the Director of Beneficence sought charity in order to “free her of disgrace.” In exchange, it asked that she attend school or serve as an assistant to the female director, Señora Luz Herrera, for three or four months. The request went on to say that it understood the director to be someone who was “favorable toward those who suffered and yearned for the protection of virtue.” One day later the director obliged, placing Cecilia in the Casa temporarily. 643 This was true for Francisca Martínez, although married her husband was absent. Fearing she was unable to “control” her “dangerous” daughter, she requested that she stay in the Casa. 644

Children who lived temporarily and permanently at the charity house truly lived in a “vigilant” and cloistered manner. Highly regimented daily routines which varied according to sex reflected the ways in which the institution served as an asylum to preserve female honor and maintain important gender, class and age distinctions. On most days boys and girls woke up at 6:00 a.m., washed, made their bed and attended Mass at 7:30 a.m. By 8:00 a.m. children began

644 Ibid, 901-5706.
classes, followed by Catechism with the priest. Although segregated, boys and girls studied some subjects in common such as reading, writing, math, grammar, and geography, which the institution believed were “absolutely necessary in order to be able to progress” in their future jobs. School was interrupted from 12:00-2:00 p.m. for lunch and the customary siesta, or nap. Afterwards children worked in the shop or learned gender appropriate trades until 5:30 in the evening. These courses focused on certain trades taught at the Casa. Girls mastered sewing and labors of the hand “appropriate to their sex” such as washing, ironing, cooking, embroidery, sewing and knitting, while boys might be trained in crafts such as shoemaking or carpentry. As a way to foster the moral and religious training at the heart of the institution, children ended their day with recitation of the rosary and prayer from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., followed by supper and bedtime. The monotony of their cloistered lives varied only on Sundays and feast days when classes ended early and boys in good standing were allowed to leave the Casa chaperoned by their male teachers. Administrators believed it was good for the young boys to take in fresh air and get exercise. The girls who lived at the institution were denied this right and were only allowed to go out into the patios of the charity house. Even then girls were under the strict vigilance of their female teachers. As a result, from as early as the age of six when boys and girls began attending formal classes the Casa’s employees represented parent figures; teaching children their appropriate gender roles and responsibilities within Mexican society. Boys were to grow up to be men with a trade or profession and to be productive members of society, while girls were raised to understand their role in the home as household managers, mothers and wives.

645 It is important to note that by 1883 the regulations do not specify whether or not this also applied to girls, although it appears that under the Sisters of Charity it was still a rule. AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Article 5, Box 1, 1789-1849, 20-21; AHJ, Beneficiencia B-6, Reglamentos y Leyes, “Reglamento del Hospicio de Guadalajara,” 1883, f. 883-5937.
Undoubtedly the distinctions made between boys and girls stemmed from a desire to protect the honor of its female pupils. While boys had access to the public sphere and all its potential dangers, girls remained secluded and “protected” from public dangers behind the stone walls of the Casa de Caridad.  

The idea that girls needed to be kept off of city streets and therefore out of harm’s way to protect their honor is evident in the codes that regulated when orphaned children were allowed to leave; what was called a “definitive exit.” Regulations suggest that both boys and girls were free to leave when they were of a “competent age” and able to work outside the Casa, usually by age fourteen. In practice however, it appears that girls stayed at the institution for a much longer period than did boys. In many cases they stayed until regulations forced them out at the age of twenty four, or evidence emerged that they had family or relations living in the city capable of “protecting” them.  

Although regulations prior to 1849 did not specify an exact age for boys, later regulations mandated that boys exit by the age of twelve and in some cases be forcibly removed. According to documentation, officials expressed concern that sexually mature boys and girls might lead to the romantic mingling within the home. Casa administrators took such matters extremely seriously, going so far as to request the removal of the blind boy Daniel Robles in 1895. At thirteen, passed the age at which boys were to leave, Robles had apparently caused some “inconveniences.” Although correspondence did not provide specific details, it suggested they related to his “advanced puberty.” As a result Casa workers punished him by  

646 For a discussion of the gendered distinctions between the private and public sphere see Chapter four. 

647 Evidence from Casa documents shows that girls who exhibited a desire to leave had to have proof that they could work and support themselves or have relatives that could serve as their guardians. See cases AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, “Salidas Definitivas,” 1894, Box 163, f. 894-1666, Exp 374 and f. 894-5564, Exp 213.
isolating him from the rest of the children. The director then petitioned the Department of Beneficence to remove Robles from the school, citing both his transgressions and the fact that he had passed the age designated in the ordinances as reasons for which he “should no longer enjoy the grace of beneficence.” Although the response from the Department of Beneficence was lukewarm, recommending the boy stay on until they resolved the “incident,” the rule exemplified the gender distinctions inherent in protecting sexual honor. While it is unclear what Daniel did to justify his swift exit, his case reveals the greater need to preserve the honor of girls. Barely allowed outside the confines of the charity house, Casa administrators were better able to monitor and prevent female interactions with the opposite sex, but there were few controls that could be placed upon them with boys inside the home. For this reason, the only way to prevent the comingling of the sexes would be to relinquish boys at a younger age, as they were considered to be the less vulnerable of the sexes and in less need of protection than girls. Just as the patriarch of the home was chief guardian of female sexual honor, the Casa de Caridad took measures to carry out this obligation by preventing girls the opportunity to have sexual encounters or be influenced by the sexual desires of young men.

Defining Proper Mothers

In later years, as the needs of the poor became greater and space more limited at the Casa, the institution redirected its concern for female honor toward mothers. By 1883, new regulations which sought to admit only the most deserving and respectable poor required mothers to provide

648 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, Box 165 bis, 895-1930; See also AHJ, Beneficiencia B-6, Reglamentos y Leyes, “Reglamentos del Hospicio de Guadalajara,” 1883, f. 883-5937, Chapter 3, Article 28.
documentation to substantiate their claims of insolvency and confirm the legitimacy of their children. Changes to the solicitation process to admit only the legitimately-born was a shift in practice from previous years. While it undoubtedly served to cut admissions, it also demonstrated that the charity house took part in a wider nineteenth-century debate focused on defining the limits of proper nineteenth-century motherhood.

Accepted documentation included birth certificates indicating names of the father and mother, death certificates (in the case of widowhood), and insolvency reports from creditable sources. Instituted after 1883, the new state mandated regulation created a much more bureaucratic admission policy making it easier to isolate and turn away certain sectors of the poor. Acquiring documents in the nineteenth century was not an easy task for the poor, as certified legal documents cost money. In 1894 Margarita Lomelí, a widow with two daughters, told the Department of Beneficence she was only able to provide partial documentation to meet its requirements. She explained that she was unable to secure the death certificate for her husband because she could not afford it, as each document cost fifty centavos. A similar fate met the teenage Carmen Ramírez that same year when she requested a place for her four year old sister, María Quintero. Cármen, who was single and worked as a domestic, explained that the sisters had been orphaned by their parents forcing her to take work in someone’s home. Her low paying job and the nature of her work prevented her from caring for her little sister. Therefore, she hoped that through the “true charity” of the Casa de Caridad her sister might finally receive the “education and care” that Cármen felt unable to provide “due to her ‘complete poverty.’”

\[650\] AHJ, Maríano Coronado, “Bases Reglamentos del Hospicio de Guadalajara,” 1883, Chapter 2, Article 3, Beneficiencia, B-6, Reglamentos y Leyes, c. 240, f. 883-5937.  
\[651\] AHJ, Caja 164 bis, f. 894-5607, exp 165.
the end, the charity house denied María Quintero admission because Cármen failed to provide accompanying justification to substantiate her story.

Ultimately, the new regulations aimed to prove that those requesting charity were both honest and honorable individuals, and therefore deserving of public charity. Honor was central to an 1888 solicitation from the unmarried Luisa García. Having two children born out of wedlock she felt a greater need to attest to her own good reputation and asked others to do the same in supporting documents. In the request, Luisa explained that she was the mother of two little boys, Salvador age 6 and Miguel age 3, who “without a father, nor fortune, suffered” in her care. The letter described Luisa as “celibate,” a possible indication that she had remained chaste since having her children. Although unmarried, it is unclear whether Luisa had a lover who died or whether she was abandoned when she wrote that for the last four years she “had found herself entirely isolated without resources or protection from anyone.” Given her circumstances she sought “official charity” to “save her innocent children. . . [who are] victims of misery.” Attached to her request was a letter of support attesting to her “honesty and good conduct” and “the urgent necessity” which forced her to solicit aid from the government. A letter signed by ten different men indicated that they knew Luisa for many years and could attest that she was “completely honorable and poor.” The case reflects a shift in the importance attached to a mother’s honor in the Casa de Caridad by the late nineteenth century.

At the same time mothers utilized the language of honor to secure aid to their children. Such was the case for the widowed Eucebia Ybarra. In 1888 she solicited the Department of Beneficence on behalf of her two daughters twelve year old Ysabel and seven year old Refugio Martínez. Described as honorable, she concluded however that her current “necessity . . .

652 AHJ, Box 159, 1888-1889, f. 888-827
exposed her honor to danger.” Although brief, the remark suggests the distinction that both Eucebia and state beneficence workers likely made between the honorable and dishonorable poor. In providing assistance to honorable women state welfare organizations hoped to prevent the respectable women from turning to crime and vices like prostitution to earn money. Understanding this, Eusebia was able to appeal to official concerns regarding the honor of mothers. Days later a letter from a male relative confirmed Eusebia’s integrity and her two daughters were admitted. 653 Thus, honor formed an integral part in defining a proper mother in the nineteenth century, particularly those deserving of charity at the Casa de Caridad.

When compared with the ideal Republican mother, the many poor unmarried mothers who Casa workers and state beneficence agents encountered often stood in stark contrast. In addition to the mothers who actively solicited a “place of mercy” for their children and were free to visit and eventually return for them, the Casa sheltered abandoned children. Guadalajara newspapers demonized mothers who abandoned their children as “ungrateful,” “cruel” and “evil.” One article directed its outrage toward the mother, calling out her lack of natural maternal instinct and juxtaposing her with the “good” and caring woman who found the child and brought it to the Casa de Caridad. 654

In 1900, religious reformers extolled the virtues of motherhood and maternal instinct. In her manual on women’s education, the Spanish born Faustina Saez de Melgar, recited a parable in which the moral was that all women had maternal instinct. In her story a woman confessed to her priest that she killed her first three children immediately after their birth by hurling them into the ocean. As her penance, the priest told that woman that she must raise her fourth child for a

minimum of two months to absolve her of her sins. Two months after her fourth child was born, she admitted to feeling a strange sensation she had never felt before, “a pure pleasure that equaled no other pleasures she had ever felt.” Her natural instincts of maternity kicked in. Saez de Melgar goes on to say that the “innocent creatures” which she had "kissed and thrown into the ocean like a crazy woman" had been her "angel of salvation." The woman in the story became a “good mother” and an “honorable woman through the blessed influence of lactation and of maternity.” The story highlights women’s natural inclinations toward motherhood to evoke a sense of normalcy in women’s roles as mothers. Those who did not fit into the stereotype of a selfless mother, or felt unable to care for their children, were “crazy” and dishonorable. Other researchers suggest popular beliefs that women’s desire to be a mother was both “natural” and “instinctual.” Being a mother was something that all women “desired in order to meet their social and biological function as reproducers and good mothers.” Emphasis placed on motherhood and women’s natural inclinations of maternity limited women’s ability to have other social functions. In Mexico, women who rejected or rebelled against maternity set a bad example for society. As one article written in Mexico City in 1886 suggested, shunning motherhood was criminal. Other journalists believed that a good mother was to act as a “slave to her children.” “Buenas maneras,” or good customs, posited that honorable motherhood required legal and lawful marriage. Bourgeois ideas excluded a large population of poor women who

655 BPEJ, #758, doc 1, Saez de Melgar, “Educación cristian y social de la mujer,” 30-31.
658 “¿Por qué la mujer debe ser más pura que el hombre?” in El Imperio, núm 24 (Guadalajara, March 24, 1866), 3.
faced greater barriers to marriage due to frequent urban mobility which separated families and created an imbalance in the sex ratio. Therefore the honor of poor mothers was more often suspect, given that consensual unions and illegitimacy were customary among the poorer and rural classes in Mexico. Elite concerns over abandonment therefore focused attention on the women involved, as it was widely understood that motherhood was a natural inclination. Women who lacked such tendencies were suspect, regardless of the material or social circumstances surrounding a child’s birth.

Although poor mothers frequently abandoned children anonymously, as shown by the many children left at the Casa or remitted there by police, mothers arrested and tried for abandoning infants faced criminal prosecution. Between 1868 and 1905 the Guadalajara criminal court system convicted and punished thirteen mothers with abandonment of an infant, with the average sentence of between one and two years jail time. Only crimes like robbery, adultery and assault averaged similar sentences. While their mother’s served their sentences, judges sent the children to live at the Casa de Caridad. This was the fate of Lorto Ramírez whose mother Urbana Macías abandoned him at only eight days old. Macías worked as a shawl braider and migrated to Guadalajara from the nearby state of Guanajuato. The judge in her case ordered that she serve a one year prison sentence, and remitted her baby to the Casa. While some scholars

662 AHJ Libros de Penitenciaria Procesados Mujeres, 1880-1905 (10 bis B) and AHJ, Beneficiencia Caja 165 bis, 895-2026.
argue that abandonment was the product of a changing urban landscape filled with war, illness, unemployment and poverty, reformers and elites of the time blamed child abandonment on the “malas costumbres,” or so-called bad customs or influences of the poor. In Jalisco, newspapers derided the physical and moral defects associated with Guadalajara’s underclass as “alcoholic,” disease-ridden, uneducated, prone to “amasiato (unwed lovers), abandonment, [and] excessive filth.” In general, journalists and reformers attacked the poor who they perceived lacked “principles of morality.” In this way singleness and non-marriage as characteristics of a poor lifestyle became intrinsically linked to the problem of child abandonment, a problem left to the Casa de Caridad. In these cases, mothers who abandoned their children were undeserving mothers in the eyes of the Casa.

From the perspective of Casa workers, police, and criminal court judges, certain women were unfit for the responsibilities of motherhood. It would become the duty of the charity house to take in and care for the children of “bad” mothers. A mother who had difficulty caring for her children, however, did not always abandon nor wish to separate from her child. In these instances police and court judges passed judgment on women to determine whether or not a child should be forcibly separated and placed at the Casa, in effect defining the role of a proper mother. This was true for Julia Amador, the mother of six year old Horacio Martínez. In the spring of 1894, police found Horacio wandering the streets of the city without an adult guardian. Through some detective work officers discovered Julia later that day in a “complete state of drunkenness.” Public drunkenness was both a crime, and from an elite perspective a so-called characteristic of the immoral lives of the lower classes. Interestingly after locating Julia police

664 BPEJ, El Globo. Guadalajara, November 1, 1910.
did not reunite mother and son, but instead took Horacio to the city jail and eventually “deposited” him in the Casa. The reason for this is unclear. Space at the Casa in 1894 was extremely hard to come by, and it does not appear that Julia spent time in jail because she does not show up in any criminal records. Therefore, it seems the decision to remove Horacio from her custody was one made by police officials, possibly linked to abusive authority by police who took revenge on poor women. What is clear is that Julia did not appreciate police efforts and quickly went to work to try to reclaim her son. It would take several months before Casa workers permitted little Horacio to leave with his mother.

At other times, city police defined the limits of motherhood. In the autumn of 1888 cuartel police wrote to the governor’s office regarding the state in which they had encountered the mother of María Cardenas. In the letter they stated that the mother, Marta Rota was “completely poor and unable to move.” They described Rota as an “invalid” who did not leave her bed. Marta had come to Guadalajara with her husband from the hardscrabble farming village of Zapotlán el Grande, but shortly after he passed away leaving seven year old María in the care of her mother. Police commented that because the girl had no “protection in the city” she was susceptible to “danger” as a young woman without anyone watching her. For this reason, before even receiving a response from the Beneficience office, cuartel police removed the girl from the home, presumably placing her in police custody.

After 1833, the administration of the Casa would be predominantly female and at its zenith (1859-1874) run by the Sisters of Charity. In this way the institution stands out from others, such as state and local governments, courts and police forces. Perhaps in dealing mostly with young

665 AHJ, Beneficiencia, C. 164, f. 894-5582 and 894-5577.
666 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, C 159, 1888, f. 888.
children both the Catholic Church and the city and state officials who supported the institution believed its leadership should be those most suited to tend to the young. In doing so they looked to celibate nuns to be pious and honorable representatives of motherhood. In this way the charity house not only took up the role of patriarch through its efforts at protecting the city’s poor, but also as mother, further highlighting the ways in which it defined appropriate roles for mothers. This is clearly exhibited through the care that the institution provided, its emphasis on education, and the active role of its frequently female staff, which would epitomize the proper nineteenth-century mother.

It was the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter that poor unmarried and widowed mothers so often were unable to provide for their children that sent them to the charity house. When children arrived they were divided according to their needs in several different departments. In the Casa de Cuna wet-nurses partnered with infants until the age of two. 667 Therefore, in the earliest stages of life with the help of other mothers who worked as wet-nurses, the Casa de Caridad was able to meet the most basic and vital need given to a child by their mother. After infancy, children were divided into one of two departments for poor and orphaned children. By the age of six (seven in later years), boys and girls were segregated and spent much of their day attending primary schooling. 668 In between classes, the charity house provided children’s daily meals. Breakfast consisted of some form of warm beverage, such as chocolate or atole, accompanied by milk and bread. The midday meal was much larger and typically

667 There were live-in wetnurses and in some instances children were sent out to live with their nurse. AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Caja 1, 1789-1849, Article 8, 37; AHJ, Beneficiencia, 1860, C. 157, f. 860.
included soup, meat, beans and tortillas. In addition children had a small supper of leftover meat, rice, potatoes or beans. Besides food, the Casa had a strict dress code which required each child be provided with his or her own uniform. Boys were furnished a jacket, vest, pants, shirt, socks, shoes, underwear and a hat, while girls received a shawl, blouse, skirt, jacket, petticoats, and shoes.  

By the latter part of the nineteenth century however, it was not only the basic needs of clothing, food and shelter which mothers felt obligated to provide their children. Increasingly petition letters sought assistance from the Casa de Caridad for education.  Widower Juan Curel, implied that the education of his eleven year old daughter Guadalupe was the responsibility of a mother. For this reason, he expressed his wish for Guadalupe to attend school at the charity house because she “lacked a mother to attend to her education.”  

Although it is unknown whether or not the Casa admitted Guadalupe, the case demonstrates the weight of a mother’s responsibility to educate her children, a charge that was especially difficult for mothers without means. This was the sentiment of a 1903 solicitation request from the widow Trinidad Carillo. She explained that because she was blind she was unable to provide her children an education, without which she believed her children would “suffer.”

Education at the Casa was a fundamental part of its mission to reform the poor by giving their children “Christian and civil instruction” in order that they become “self-sufficient, with solid spiritual and moral convictions to have an impact beneficially on the whole

community.” Such goals paralleled demands on mothers in Latin America and Mexico, whose supreme goal was to educate and raise “orderly and productive citizens” for the good of the emerging nation. New emphasis on the patriotic role of mothers required they be both educated and honorable in order to lead by example. There could be no greater “mother” to serve as a role model and educator to the children of the poor than the pious order of French nuns who would come to run the establishment by 1859. The wars for Independence disrupted reform work at the Casa, forcing the home to close its doors for long periods from 1810 to 1829 and again from 1836 to 1845. It was not until the Sisters of Charity took over, well-respected for their educational and social work, that the establishment entered its “golden age.” So noteworthy were their educational achievements that shortly after in 1860 they opened an exclusive all girl academy in the Casa. Classes at the school were taught by the best male and female professors in the city and catered to the most prominent Tapatía families. The school served the needs of Jalisco’s elite by offering an exclusive European education to their daughters, at the same time the academy boosted revenue for the charity house. Whereas poor girls acquired a basic education with training in traditionally female trades and domestic work, elite girls gained a much broader education. In addition to basic courses in reading, writing,
math and grammar, the daughters of the elite learned drawing, French, English, geometry, geography, botany and music.  

Incidentally during the tenure of the Sisters of Charity the institution became predominantly female-run, employing the first female director and hiring a large percentage of women to work as nurses, teachers and staff. In many ways the women of the Casa de Caridad embodied the ideal of the “Republican mother.” Both the nuns and the live-in female workers who were in charge of childcare, cleaning, cooking, nursing and teaching at the establishment possessed the expected moral virtues of selfless and pious women who were educated and performed domestic work. Not only this, but they remained within the confines of the home. In this way the lessons girls learned at the Casa emphasized discipline in the confinement of the home, teaching young girls how to become selfless wives and learn the domestic arts associated with marriage and the home. By extension this also prepared them to work as nannies and domestic servants. For the girls without mothers or separated from them, the women of the Casa served as strong examples of the proper comportment, refinement and manners expected of women. Even elite families felt safe entrusting the Sisters of Charity with the moral and practical development of their daughters. Thus, the sisters of the Casa de Caridad played an important role in both defining and performing the duties of a suitable nineteenth-century mother. Often the elite ideals they passed down to young girls contrasted greatly from the lives of their own mothers, many of whom were poor, unmarried or widowed, and had little choice but to work outside the home.

676 BPEJ, Miscellaneous 73, doc 10, “Colegio de niñas en el hospicio,” (Guadalajara, 1863).
Preserving the Patriarchal Family and Home

In addition to offering poor children good examples of motherhood, the Casa de Caridad did its best to model a proper nineteenth-century home within a large bureaucratic institution. From the perspective of reformers, those it served were the product of broken homes, through abandonment, non-marriage, crime, illness or death. Therefore, it sought to mold children within the context of the ideal patriarchal setting of home and family. From its inception in 1805, Bishop Cabañas intended the Casa de Caridad to serve as a home for the poor. At the head of the home was the King of Spain, “the great father of families” who directed the institution and its workers to “cultivate the children of the inhabitants” of Mexico. Eventually this authority transitioned first into the hands of the Sisters of Charity and eventually the state. It appears that the organization operated under its preliminary regulations from 1805 until 1874. At that point the state modified and streamlined the original bylaws, although some consistencies remained in its overall direction. Well into the nineteenth century however, it continued to emphasize the important role of patriarchy. From its efforts to preserve the patriarchal family when it existed, and create one when it did not, the Casa served to rectify the wrongs of the nineteenth-century family and home and deal with the problems created by singleness and widowhood.

Ultimately the goal of the Casa de Caridad was to preserve the patriarchal family when possible. For this reason it accepted boys and girls when they had no parents or when their parents demonstrated an inability to provide them “rearing or education” due to their “great poverty.” However, in the case of adults its admission policies were much more limited. The

only instances in which adults were accepted at the charity house were in cases where they could not work due to a lack of education or physical disability. In these cases, the regulations of the institution allowed wives or children to accompany adults, and even specified that they must be housed together. Evidence from the institution suggests that such cases were extremely rare, as the majority of adults that resided within the Casa were often elderly and without family. The marital family unit was extremely important symbolically and palpably and the Casa’s ordinances preserved family cohesion as best it could.680

In the absence of a patriarch the Casa assumed the role of father, as a majority of the children who arrived each day had no fathers providing them protection, education and sustenance, and in some cases no parents at all. While it was common for children of illegitimate birth to take the surname of their mother, orphans who arrived at the establishment frequently had no last or first name. Hence, the Sisters of Charity are credited with beginning the practice of giving orphaned children of unknown parentage the surname Cabañas, after the institution’s founder. Similarly the nuns instituted the practice at the Hospital de Belén, where they gave babies the name Alcalde, after the city’s first bishop and founder of the hospital. In this way the charity house acknowledged itself as a patriarchal figure in the life of orphaned children. The gesture of naming a child after the institution’s founder, Juan Ruíz Cabañas, implies the “parent-child” relationship that Casa workers assumed between the institution and the young children it raised. Just as the King of Spain had been the “father” of the poor, the former bishop, revered for his work with the less fortunate, became the symbolic figure of paternity to the city’s unwanted children. In this way a makeshift family was forged. Even in cases where a child’s parents were

known it appears that Casa workers used the surname to differentiate which children it had raised from infancy.

Although the Casa acknowledged that taking in orphans was not its principal function, the institution prided itself on caring for “the innocent classes of abandoned children.” According to its original ordinances orphans “formed the pious heart of the institution” and their care was most “precious” because they had no other family. The case of Beatriz Cabañas sheds light on the significance of the Cabañas surname and the bond of family that it sometimes created. Beatriz was born in 1874 in Atotonilco del Alto, a small pueblo in the mountains north of Guadalajara. Found abandoned at three months city officials in Atotonilco sent the baby to Guadalajara to live at the Casa de Caridad. All that officials from Atotonilco knew about the baby was that her father’s name was Felipe Sánchez and that she was not yet baptized. Given her age when she arrived, clergy within the charity house quickly administered the sacrament of baptism. Interestingly enough, despite the fact that the baby’s father was known Casa workers christened the child Beatriz Cabañas. Beatriz would spend much of her childhood and young adult life at the institution, presumably making her way through its various departments beginning with the foundling home where she was nursed to the school for orphaned girls where she would receive a basic education and training. At the age of twenty Beatriz still lived at the home, and was by that time employed as an assistant to the director of a new correctional department. It was very common for female residents to remain at the home until the age of twenty four, after which regulations required they set out on their own. It is doubtful however that they did not assist them in any way, or help them to find work. Frequently, because of this

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681 AHA, Justicia, Obras Assistenciales, Hospicio Cabañas, “Ordenanzas de la Casa de Caridad,” Caja 1, (1789-1849), Article 3, “Clases de pobres que se admitan,” 8; Title 3, Section 21, 14.
regulation and in accordance with others that allowed exemplary orphans of “good comportment” to be hired as employees, girls stayed on to work as department assistants, nannies, nurses, maids, and short order cooks. By 1897 upon turning legal age, it appears Beatriz departed the Casa to make a life for herself in Guadalajara. Her freedom was short lived however, because by the fall of the following year Beatriz wrote Casa administrators asking to be re-admitted. In her request she explained the “motives” for which she left had “ceased” and now she wished to return because she was completely “alone” and without family. Sadly, the charity house did not accept Beatriz back, due to age limits. As a child raised in the institution and branded with the Cabañas name, the only “home” that Beatriz knew was the charity house. In this way, particularly for the children of Cabañas, the establishment served as her only sense of protection and family.

Despite the outcome for Beatriz, the sense of family at the Casa was fundamental to its objectives and taken quite seriously by administrators who strictly adhered to their patriarchal duties. They understood that children learned their proper place in society within the home from parents who taught sons and daughters civil and moral virtues. Just as the role of father and mother was to instruct and guide children, this too would be the role of the Casa de Caridad in the lives of the children it served. By giving them a civil and religious education they would be “rehabilitated . . . for their own happiness and for the public good.” Imitating the duties expected of male heads of household in nineteenth-century Mexico, regulations advised that children were to be instructed with “love and gentleness” in “Christian doctrine, buenas costumbres,”

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682 AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, C.164 bis, exp 203, f. 894-5617.
683 The details of Beatriz’ life were pieced together using two separate documents found in the Beneficence records at the AHJ. The first was an employee roster for the year 1894, and later her solicitation request to re-enter the home in 1898. AHJ, Beneficiencia, B-5, Instituciones de Protección, C. 166, f. 896-2083; C.170, f. 897-5652
moderation, fear of God, respect for sacred things, and obedience to their superiors.” Such objectives encompassed what was divided into two categories of education: civil and religious.

In the same way that fathers and mothers taught their children how to perform their appropriate class and gender roles in society, a civil education in trades and domestic skills was intended to mold orphaned children into upstanding spouses and parents. While such skills were often passed down from parents this became part of the training at the Casa to help the children of the poor support themselves and become hardworking members of society after leaving the institution. This also helps to explain the much earlier exit of boys, typically at age twelve, from girls who frequently stayed on until their mid-twenties. In addition to a basic education, boys studied under male teachers to learn trades. These same teachers served as guardians to the boys when allowed free time on Sundays and feast days. Once boys had reached what was a considered a “competent age” and exhibited maturity, the Casa placed them in apprenticeships with reputable artisans such as silversmiths, carpenters, painters, masons and stonecutters. From both their male teachers and those they apprenticed with the charity house provided boys with mentors and a modest career in order to become working members of society and sustain a family.

Casa workers expected girls, however, to “proceed with the precautions required of their sex.” Their most important role models were their female nuns and teachers who prepared poor girls for their roles as wives and mothers through classes in sewing, knitting, ironing, and cooking. Additionally, staying on to work at the Casa as maids, nurses, nannies and cooks taught them skills useful for traditional female occupations. The ultimate goal however was to marry

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girls off to “working artisans of buenas costumbres.” The Casa was also much more protective of female orphans. While boys needed to find work, the honor of girls was of primary importance. In the event that girls could not be placed under the supervision and “protection” of kin or a husband, the Casa made it a priority to find them work in the homes of respected city residents as domestic servants. Girls were frequently hired out once they had reached adulthood if they “lacked family to protect” them. This became a reality for María Agustina who at twenty four was no longer able to remain at the Casa, and because she “lacked family to protect” her was sent to live in the home of Luisa Azpeitia Palomar de Morett. In other cases, when a girl reached legal age she might also petition to leave on the basis that she was able to find honest work. Rafael Cabañas made such a request in 1894, on the grounds that she had knowledge of “embroidery, textiles and other manual labors.” While the much later exit of girls at twenty-four might be connected to the legal “age of majority” for women, the difference in the age of exit for boys and girls was connected to preserving the honor of its young female residents. By sending girls out to work in reputable homes or occupations, the Casa both protected their honor and reinforced class expectations for the children of the poor.

Class was also reinforced through education. By 1859 the direction of the charity house became increasingly influenced by its private donors who insisted the Sisters of Charity take

685 Ibid., Article 5, 24-26.
687 AHJ, “Salidas Definitivas,” Leg 213, 894-5564
over the management of the institution. Wealthy patrons many of whom were of the political and economic elite within the state of Jalisco, hoped to see the Sisters of Charity open a private school for their daughters. In 1861 the Casa opened the prestigious Colegio de Niñas for girls from the most prominent Tapatía families with classes taught by the best professors in the city. At the Casa education of poor girls emphasized a basic primary school education combined with the practice of domestic skills so that they would be able to work both inside and outside the home. In the Colegio de Niñas however, elite girls received a competitive education from the French order of nuns. To prepare them for a well to do marriage, the school offered advanced courses in math and science and challenging classes in Castilian grammar and French. In addition, they had the opportunity to learn fine arts by taking lessons in piano, singing and drawing. Such classes varied drastically from the sewing, cooking and ironing lessons given to poor girls. The education of elite girls was not intended to prepare them for a life of work, assuming they would have servants and maids, but instead trained them to be knowledgeable

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689 José López Portillo y Weber, Guadalajara, El Hospicio Cabañas y Su fundador (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1982), 112-113; Rivera, Hospicio, 67.
690 Men like Juan Palomar who amassed his fortune through good dealings in trade. He assisted economically in the construction of the Hospital de Belén and the Hospicio Cabañas. He was alderman, deputy of the Congress of the Union from 1850-1851 and in 1853, temporary governor of the state of Jalisco, as well as responsible for the management of Private Welfare of Guadalajara. Others like Dionisio Rodríguez was director and principal benefactor of the School of Arts and Trades (Escuela de Artes y Oficios) in Guadalajara, founded in 1841. In 1877 he was recognized by the state for his philanthropic work in the city. See Anayanci Fregoso Centeno, “Dolores Palomar Arias: 1898-1972. La familia y la religión en la construcción del sujeto” in Siete historia de vida. Mujeres jaliscienses del siglo XX (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2006), 45-46; Colección de los decretos, circulares y órdenes de los Poderes Legislativo y Ejecutivo del estado de Jalisco, Tomo 6 (Guadalajara: Tipografía de Banda, Exconvento de Santa María de Gracia, 1878), 459-60.
691 Rivera, Hospicio Cabañas, 76-77.
companions and educators to their husband and children. Although both poor and elite girls were educated at the same institution and even shared materials and teachers, what separated those who paid to attend the Colegio de Niñas from those who were extended charity for a basic primary school education was a distinction between their future work and marriage opportunities. In this way, the Casa prepared girls of different class backgrounds for their proscribed roles in Guadalajara.

Although civil education was a cornerstone of the institution, its efforts to inculcate strong morals and virtues were rooted in a long tradition of Christian education. Moral instruction also presented children with strong role models and patriarchal figures in the form of priests. At least two members of the clergy resided at the Casa to celebrate mass, administer sacraments and lead catechism. Above all they were responsible for “promoting the exercise of piety and religion.” In order to foster these goals the institution’s directives required that priests proctor exams on Christian doctrine four times annually. Exams were open to the public and supervised by the institution’s governing body the Junta de Caridad, which encouraged the attendance of the city’s “fathers of families.” By calling on male heads of the households the Casa hoped to continue to educate those responsible for the Christian instruction of their families and allow them opportunities to present themselves as good patriarchs, a role taken up by priests who guided the flocks of poor and orphaned children of the charity house. At the same time priests as the patriarchs of the institution, were responsible for doling out punishment and corrections.

692 BPEJ, Miscellaneous 73, doc 10, “Colegio de niñas en el hospicio,” (Guadalajara, 1863).
694 Ibid., Article 6, “Policing,” 29.
As a “home” for the poor, the Casa embodied the patriarchal idea of home and family that was critical in the nineteenth century. This was especially true for children who lacked a father, either from abandonment or as the sons and daughters of single and widowed mothers. The patriarchal duties of a father were something that poor single or widowed mothers frequently could not provide as they had a much greater financial strain on their one-parent households. Limited in their work opportunities and financial resources they often sought the “protection” of the Casa de Caridad. In these instances the charity house stepped in to meet patriarchal obligations to rear and educate the children of the poor in order to guide them in their appropriate roles in society. In this way, the Casa shaped the perimeters of the proper nineteenth-century home as one with a strong sense of patriarchy to guide children in their spiritual, educational and vocational work and offer protection or punishment when needed.

‘Sola’: Women without Family in the Casa de Caridad

The idea of the Casa as a patriarchal home of “protection” extended not only to the children of single and widowed women, but to women themselves. In advanced age poor widows or unmarried women who lacked the support of family could seek shelter at the charity house. Casa administrators sympathized with women in extreme situations, such as the case of Juvencia Alvarez. In 1894 she was elderly, unmarried, “alone” and in need of assistance as she explained due to “her illnesses, advanced age, and the sad circumstances of not having a single family member to take her in.”695 The Casa extended assistance for women like Juvencia through its department of ancianas, or elderly women. Although the institution did offer support to both male and female beggars through separate departments for mendigos and mendigas (beggars),

695 894-1705 Exp 350
this aid was specifically geared toward those who were homeless and unable to work due to permanent disabilities. Similar to the children educated at the charity house, *Casa* regulations mandated the movement, behavior, dress, and actions of its adult residents according to sex, suggesting a level of patriarchal control over those it deemed in need of reform.

The *Casa* provided both female beggars and elderly women with the basic necessities of food, clothing and accommodations; in exchange it imposed rigid gender roles and restrictions on their daily lives. Just like boys and girls, they housed adult men and women separately, although all residents participated in the daily routine of the *Casa*, which in early years included attending Mass and reciting prayer. Outside of these times, to prevent idleness they were to serve the *Casa* in whatever capacity they were able according to their “abilities and condition.” Tasks assigned to adults varied and were typically gendered. Adult males performed outdoor chores, while women worked in the kitchen, nursery or washed clothing. Clothing was to be modest and typically a peasant style, with blouses and skirts of thick course cotton. Women were expected to dress simply without much adornment and keep their clothing clean to portray their “composure” and “honesty.” *Casa* rules did not permit men or women to leave without permission from the administrator. The rule was “especially urgent” in regard to women who needed written permission from the director. Bylaws allowed residents to share rooms with their “legitimate” spouses, but it strictly forbade the admission of *amacios*, or unmarried lovers. There was great concern in the *Casa* over “illicit correspondence” between men and women, so much so that it made provisions for such circumstances. In the event that residents already admitted were found...
to be residing together or having sexual relations, ordinances stipulated that they be encouraged to marry. For these reasons, rules kept adult men and women separated. 696

Dictates at the Casa which governed women’s daily activities, wardrobes, the ability to come and go as they pleased and even their love lives convey the sense of patriarchal control imposed on single and widowed women who took refuge at the institution. They also speak to the ways in which administrators perceived poor women, particularly in the rules which stipulated appropriate behavior and dress. References to being clean, honest and legitimate suggest heightened concern by Casa officials over the honor of its unmarried female residents and a desire to monitor and reform them. Casa workers supervised and expected women to be compliant and follow regulations. Adult women caught disobeying the rules faced repercussions. In some instances charity house officials attempted to modify behaviors or use corporal punishments. 697 More often punishments and corrections given to adult women demonstrated the link between the charity house and other state institutions that policed the actions of unattached women. For example, it was common for the charity house to remit individuals who displayed delinquent behavior to city police. In 1897 when two beggar women from the home were caught fighting they were promptly sent to police for “correction and protection.” 698

Similar measures were taken when Casa workers discovered adult residents stealing or attempting to run away.


697 Ibid, 23.

698 AHJ, C. 164bis, f. 894.
Adult women, especially those who were more vulnerable, were sometimes mistreated at the Casa de Caridad. Although the indigenous population of Jalisco was small, some of the regions previously more isolated indigenous groups began to migrate into the city during the Porfiriato alongside other rural peasants. Under the Sisters of Charity complaints surfaced about the French nuns treatment of Indian women both in their care at the charity house and in the city hospital. Newspapers called attention to mistreatment at the hands of the sisters on the cadavers of Indian and mestiza women. The story published in 1874 said that the nuns were shaving and selling the long thick hair of those who had died. Although the newspaper’s investigation concluded that the rumors were untrue, it did confirm that the sisters had cut the hair of women without the permission of a doctor. The story forced the hospital to enforce new regulations requiring employees to get doctor permission to cut the hair of deceased patients. The story however hints at potential discrimination toward indigenous groups in Guadalajara. Frequently Huichol Indian children were distinctly noted in Casa documents. In addition, evidence from Casa records shows that as late as 1901, Beneficience officials gave permission for residents to hire out Indian women housed as mendigas for use as domestic servants. This was clearly a departure from protocol of previous years as no evidence or regulations existed for hiring out adult women for such purposes.

At the same time, evidence from Casa records shows that unmarried and widowed women of old age played a role in shaping services and at times rejecting institutional control. This was

699 Gerónimo Gómez Romero, “Quien lo creyera,” Juan Panadero, April 21, 1874.
700 The Huichol were relatively scarce in number and are one of Jalisco’s few indigenous groups to maintain much of its pre-conquest identity into the twentieth century. See Stacey Schaefer and Peter Furst, People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
701 AHJ, C. 159, f. 888 and C. 181, f. 901-5703.
true of Andrea Esparza who wrote to request asylum at the Casa in the winter of 1897 after she recently lost the only place “where she had truly been considered family.” At the age of sixty she explained she had no family, “not a soul,” to help support her and little money. Andrea would live at the charity house throughout the winter and into the summer months, but by June of that year she requested permission to leave citing “family reasons.” Although it is unclear if new family members emerged in Andrea’s life or if she falsified her admission request, her case is indicative of numerous other adult women whose time at the Casa was brief. The case may also be indicative of her own desire to leave the institution and gain some freedom outside its walls.

This was true for many adult residents, who frequently attempted to run away and “escape” the charity house. Numerous documents suggest the “fleeing” of beggars, both male and female and even of elderly woman from the department of ancianas. In some instances they fled with stolen goods such as clothing, food or kitchen materials. Their desire to leave, especially those who merely “escaped,” suggests possible displeasure with the very cloistered and regimented life forced upon them at the institution. Escape was much easier for adult men who had the freedom to move about outside the institution and frequently their attempts to run away took place while performing outdoor chores such as painting, cleaning and taking out trash. Women were not allowed outside of the interior patios or passageways without permission, this forced Ursula Evangelista an elderly woman housed in the department of ancianas to wait until attendants had left for the night to make her “escape.” In 1893, Casa workers documented the “flight” of a mendigo with a stolen basket prompting the director to write to Department of Beneficence officials that not only did she feel the beggars did not “appreciate the charity” they were given

702 AHJ, C. 170, f. 897-5638.
703 Cases are too numerous to list but several reported by Casa officials include AHJ, c. 175, f. 899-2729 and c. 164, f. 894-1828. For the escape of Ursula Evangelista see c. 167, f. 896-2217.
but in fact “did not want it.” 704 While the director’s comments were likely made out of frustration and anger, given that the stolen basket had belonged to her, they also indicate that adult residents were uncooperative. Whatever their motivations, frequent “escape” and “flight” by adult residents indicate a sense that they felt imprisoned in the institution. By leaving they made their desires for freedom and detachment from the home abundantly clear.

Women’s Agency

Authorities sent some women and their children to the Casa against their will, but others played a greater role in shaping and utilizing its services. Documents from the institution suggest that the single, unmarried and widowed women who sought charity at the home frequently utilized the rhetoric of reform to their benefit. In addition, unique cases highlight the ways in which women carved out spaces for themselves at the institution. Overall, their interactions with the charity house suggest the agency of unattached women in their dealings with the state.

The language written into solicitations for charity at the Casa de Caridad is rich in the rhetoric of nineteenth-century reform. Women frequently called upon state institutions and the government as purveyors of “protection” for themselves and their children. These same ideas were central tenets of the paternal and patriarchal origins of state welfare. Single and widowed mothers also called attention to the dire nature of their own material and personal circumstances which made them unable to care for their children. Their petitions emphasized that their husbands or lovers abandoned them which left them destitute and unable to provide for their families. Others exposed the realities of widowhood, low wages of female work and the difficulties of working and tending to children. Here too mothers made use of popular notions of

704 AHJ, C. 161, f. 893-5520.
the proper family, home and mother of the nineteenth century. Although children received clothing, food and shelter at the charity house, mothers frequently made mention of their desire, above all, to give their children an education to become “useful” to their family and society. Their word choice implies how connected poor women were with the language of reform which called on mothers to rear good citizens.

The ability of mothers to repurpose reform language is evident in the request from María Rodríguez, an unmarried woman with three children. Working as a domestic she struggled to support them in the aftermath of their father’s death in 1889. María wrote an impassioned request on the behalf of her children for a “place of mercy” at the charity house in 1894. Calling attention to her “sad state” she wrote of her “wish to take refuge in the protection of the government.” Her words affirmed the connection mothers made with the charity house as representative of a protective and patriarchal government, and it was a sentiment shared by other single and widowed women without spousal support. Magdalena Ruiz, for example, wrote of her “misery” in being unable to provide her eleven year old son “instruction and education.” The wording of her solicitation highlights both her responsibility to provide education as well as her son’s role in becoming a benefit to the community. She wrote that “only with the help of the establishments of the supreme government would her son be able to obtain a primary education and a trade that would later make him a working man and useful to society.”

The many instances in which women addressed their obligations to provide children with more than just sustenance and support their education is evidence that the discourse on patriotic motherhood was widespread.

705 C. 163bis, f. 894-1814.
Not only would the single and widowed women take advantage of the services offered at the charity house, but over time they played a role in shaping the types of services it provided, often presenting Casa workers with unique and unusual circumstances to confront. The story of María Concepción Plasencia sheds light on the ways in which migrant women both perceived of and utilized the Casa. As a young, single, migrant María Concepción arrived in Guadalajara in 1899 hoping to improve her circumstances. From Tepíc, a village over two hundred kilometers from Guadalajara, she became an orphan after her father died in 1897. Displaced and without family to help her, at the age of twenty two she wrote state government officials to request a pensioned place in the institution. A pensioned resident was someone who paid a monthly stipend, implying that María Concepción had some means to support herself after her father’s death.

Understanding the limitations of her situation as an orphan from a rural village who “lacked family to help her get by,” she expressed her desire to “learn something in order to allow her to become useful.” The request suggests her desire to receive an education at the charity house. At the time there would have been few educational opportunities for a young girl of her age in Tepíc. Given the reputation of the Casa de Caridad in the state it is possible that María Concepción saw it as a means to greater opportunities. Despite her desire to receive an education, it appears that although Casa officials admitted her they were unable to provide her a place in one of its schools. Partly for limited space and her age they offered her admission in the department of ancianas which she accepted, arriving March 22 of 1899. Only two days later however, María Concepción requested permission to leave. Her rapid departure leaves many questions unanswered and leaves open the possibility that as an outsider to Guadalajara the Casa de Caridad served as her first site of introduction to the city. After staying for a few days

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707 C. 175, f. 899-2729
perhaps she learned from other residents or staff of opportunities to live, work or study outside the institution. In any case her first point of contact with Guadalajara was the institution. Although she decided not to stay for a longer period, as a young single woman her first few days in the city were in a safe and “protected” environment.

Other scenarios in which girls attempted to enroll themselves in school at the Casa demonstrate the initiative of young single women to direct their own education and future careers. Elite girls attending the Colegio de Niñas had access to courses that would likely have been closed to most other young women in Jalisco. The Colegio functioned as a secondary school for girls, although evidence from Casa records suggests that some young women came to the institution to study specific majors, treating it more like a university. In 1894, Juana Barajas came to the institution specifically to study photography, a career closed to most women. 

Even girls of the lower classes made requests to study specific subjects. In 1889, Ygnacia Hernández came to the Casa to study art. In addition, orphaned and poor girls took advantage of career opportunities to stay on as employees of the institution. In 1894, Casa workers recognized several students for their “good comportment,” Josefa Aquiar, Victoria Cabañas, María Ortiz and Lucia Cabañas and hired them to work as nurses, nurse assistants, and kitchen staff. Several would stay on until regulations required their final exit.

Women in Guadalajara also took advantage of employment opportunities at the Casa. As a predominantly female-run institution it employed Mexican women in positions as administrators, teachers and staff. Work at the charity house was very different than other jobs because some of

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708 AHJ, “Salidas Definitivas,” 1894, C. 164, f. 894-1828
709 AHJ, 1889, C. 159, f. 889-833.
710 894-5617exp 203
the staff resided on premises and most took meals there. An example of the volume and type of work available at the institution comes from an 1875 personnel census which indicates a payroll of eighty employees. Among them were female teachers in the Colegio de Niñas and the school for poor girls who taught embroidery as well as two female assistants and a supervisor. Although all of professors in the school for boys were male there was a female supervisor. The attendants and nurses for all other departments, such as the wing for male and female beggars and ancianas, were female. The foundling home also employed four female nursery workers as well as sixteen live-in and fourteen hired out wet-nurses. Wet-nursing was an important occupation for poor women with young children and having the freedom to work inside their own home was invaluable. Other traditionally female occupations at the Casa were in the kitchen, where most cooks, tortilla makers, atole grinders, and chocolatiers were women. By that time women also dominated in administrative positions with an all-female staff including the directora at the time Rafaela Suarez. Female employees, as insiders at the institution, were also instrumental in the solicitation process required of unmarried and widowed mothers. Dolores Zamorano Alemán, a professor at the charity house school, wrote in 1903 to help her widowed friend Herculana Balvaneda find care for her two sons Mateo and Rosario Vasquez. A letter of reference from Dolores was able to both attest to Herculana’s honor and verify that she suffered from a chronic illness which made working difficult. The reference from Dolores exhibits the ways in which women helped other women and also how someone like Herculana used the connections she had to the institution to gain access for her children.

711 AHJ, “Lista del Personal Empleados/Asilados,” January 20, 1875, c. 158, f. 875.
Other cases show the relationships forged between Casa employees and residents. Estéfana Torres, a single woman and professor in the Casa school cemented a close bond with one of her students Teresa Milanés ó Montero. According to Estéfana the two had formed a strong relationship since Teresa began as a student in her classroom. So close were the pair that on holiday vacations Teresa stayed with Estéfana at her home, and in more recent years Estéfana had become Teresa’s godmother. Little Teresa had arrived at the institution in 1894 at two years old. She was the child of Rodolfo Montero and Concepción Godínes. Concepción was an illegitimate child and it was her mother Jesús Godínes, Teresa’s grandmother, who brought the girl to the Casa. The bond shared between the teacher and her student culminated in a request to adopt the girl shortly after Christmas in 1902. Estéfana wrote that she voluntarily wished to “adopt the girl as a daughter.” The tone of the letter intimates that the two shared a special bond, and it is unlikely that Estéfana planned to adopt her for use as a house servant. This practice became more common in Mexico City at the time. Instead Estéfana, a working single woman planned to act as a mother to Teresa, providing for her “education and subsistence.” By January of 1903 the Casa granted the adoption. Although it is unclear what became of Teresa’s biological mother and grandmother.

Numerous other examples point out the ways in which single and widowed mothers shaped the services provided to them at the Casa. Mothers had to be savvy about when and how they approached the institution. Throughout the nineteenth century space at the charity house, especially for children, was limited. State governments frequently demanded that Casa officials

714 AHJ, 1903, c. 185, 903-3095
reduce residents and make budget cuts.\textsuperscript{715} Strict quotas forced charity officials to turn mothers away, even those in extremely dire circumstances who qualified for assistance and presented all the appropriate documentation. The limited space at the Casa was obviously on the mind of Gumesinda Servin who in 1894 removed her fifteen year old daughter Agústina Gutierrez. Having received and education and training Gumesinda hoped for Agústina to begin working to help support the family. With the newly open vacancy left by her daughter, Gumesinda requested that her eight year old son Benjamin be placed in the school for boys.\textsuperscript{716} It was an effective strategy for Gumesinda, a single mother who depended on her children to help support the household. With her daughter now able to work, her son could receive an education and learn a trade. In a few short years he too would be ready to work and contribute his earnings.

Residents themselves, especially those living involuntarily at the Casa, often flaunted the rules. In the Spring of 1894 Directora Juana Ursúa sent a hastily written letter notifying the Director of Instruction and Public Beneficence that two young sisters, both wearing all of the clothing they owned, had “escaped” from the institution. Apparently it was not the first time the girls had caused trouble at the house. Signifying her disdain for the Camarena sisters the director noted they were “the most un-educatable girls in the Hospicio.”\textsuperscript{717} Wherever the sisters were going or wherever they ended up it is clear that they did not wish to stay at the charity home. Just

\textsuperscript{715} Correspondence between the Secretary of State and officials at the Department of Beneficence in 1888 suggests a desire to reduce costs by restricting the number of individuals to a set number, which frequently varied. Typically cuts were made in the departments that aided adults first and then children and were instituted gradually rather than all at once. See AHJ, C.159, f. 888-822 and 888-817.
\textsuperscript{716} AHJ, “Altas y Bajas,” 1894, C. 162, f. 893-5546.
\textsuperscript{717} 894-1703 Legajo 392
as foot-dragging and other obstinate behaviors can be perceived as a “weapons of the weak,”\textsuperscript{718} the actions of the Camarena sisters hint at their unwillingness to be part of the reform effort at the Casa. Instead, the sisters opted to band together and plan their escape.

While escape was a means to gain freedom for those involuntarily placed at the home, instances in which women voluntarily remained hint at their preference for life inside the Casa. The elderly Ignacia Flores decided she would rather live at the home than go back to work as a domestic. In the winter of 1901 a Guadalajara businessman, Marcelino Salvado, wrote the Director of Beneficence looking for a domestic servant to work in his home. His request specifically asked for permission to remove Ignacia Flores for the job, a Yaqui Indian woman housed in the department of mendigas. He promised to return her to the establishment if he had to leave the city or if he found her incapable of the job. The Director of Beneficence responded that Ignacia was “free” to take work as a domestic and gave the institution “permission” for her to leave with Marcelino. On January 16, however, the female director of the Casa Jesús Ruíz, wrote to inform the office of Beneficience that Ignacia had not left with Marcelino explaining that she declined the job of her own “volition” and therefore was still living at the institution.\textsuperscript{719} The circumstances of the situation are interesting on multiple levels. Although it was not uncommon for city residents to hire charity house residents to work as maids, it was usually a scenario reserved for younger girls. In addition, Marcelino specifically requested Ignacia, an Indian woman frequently referred to as “the Yaqui Ignacia.” What the case demonstrates above all is Ignacia’s decision made of her own free will to live on and work in the Casa rather than leave with Marcelino.


\textsuperscript{719} C. 181, f. 901-5703.
Conclusion

The *Casa de Caridad* was an institution born out of an evolving discourse on poverty and reform; first as a charity organization of the Catholic Church and eventually a state-based institution of beneficence. Despite its progression, its mission to reform the poor through education and work remained consistent. In particular, the services it provided exclusively to single, unmarried and widowed women and their children emphasized a desire to strengthen the patriarchal family as one of the most important features of nineteenth-century Mexican society. The charity “home” would be a place to instruct them morally and socially. By taking in and rearing children without fathers and mothers without husbands or guardians, the institution sought to reform the poor into men and women capable of reproducing their appropriate class and gender roles. In doing so it came to define the state as a more appropriate father and mother and the charity house as a better home for the children of the poor, a place where they would be less “corruptible.” Despite elite perceptions that defined single, unmarried and widowed women as less capable mothers and the poor as immoral, women seized these ideas and re-appropriated them to their advantage. They forced *Casa* workers to confront their varying needs and at times exercised their own will despite its rigid regulations.
CONCLUSION:

SINGleness AND NINeteenth-Century POLITICS IN MEXICO

In 2004 I was preparing a conference paper on transient populations in Guadalajara between 1821 and 1822 with a fellow researcher from the Guadalajara Census Project. The piece was an outgrowth of research the institute conducted to measure urban mobility, both rural to urban migration and movement within the city itself. I had the task of collecting data on the city’s single and widowed female population. Although I had spent many years transcribing, coding and entering the data, it was not until that moment that I realized, after running and selecting for variables such as marital status, the overwhelming presence that single and widowed women had in the city. I was astonished to see an overrepresentation of single and widowed women in Guadalajara compared with men of their same age range. In addition, this group of women seemed to be highly mobile; migrating in and out of the city and frequently moving in an out of new homes within the city. As a whole our findings suggested a great deal of mobility in the span of one year. We published our findings in Mexico in 2007, and concluded that military battles and mortality during the War for Independence could not solely account for such movement, as most of the fighting in the region had ended by 1816. Instead, our data led us to conclude that it was in fact economic factors that spurred the consistent flux of

721 For insurgency in Guadalajara see Van Young, The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9; Also see Chapter two.
the urban poor. Although we seemingly answered what we had set out to, I still had lingering questions about the imbalance of women to men in the city, and why I saw so much variation between married and unmarried populations. These are the questions that led to this dissertation.

From this springboard of my work on the city in 1821 and 1822, I have demonstrated that the years that followed marked a watershed moment for unattached women. In the aftermath of Independence in 1821, a changing political landscape drove major economic and social changes that changed the lives of single and widowed women. Continued economic reforms that promoted private property ownership, trade, and commerce forced migrants from rural villages into cities in search of paid employment. Laws like the *Ley Lerdo* monopolized both rural and urban lands in the hands of Guadalajara’s elite. By the 1870s, these policies introduced new technologies and foreign investment that physically changed the look and feel of city life and opened up a new age of industrialization. Such policies had the effect of bringing in cheaper, mass-produced goods that destroyed regional artisan trades and forced even greater migrations of rural people into the city to work in factories. Women were among the many new rural migrants attracted and recruited into traditionally female occupations, like domestic work and jobs in city textile factories. As a result, Guadalajara continued to grow in size and population between 1821 and 1910. Therefore, entrepreneurs began a process of industrialization that both attracted migrants and expanded the numbers of working class and poor residents. It was this group who then became the victims of a classist discourse used by city and state officials on immorality, punishment and reform. It was a story of rural immiseration that many middle-class and elite Mexicans benefitted from and then blamed the victims for circumstances that were largely of their creation.

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722 Rivas and Vicente, “Ciudad en movimiento.”
Poor, unmarried and widowed women comprised the largest percentage of women to make up this new group who found it absolutely essential to work for wages. Unattached women like the migrant sisters Dominga and Prejedis discussed in the introduction, both migrated to Guadalajara from the smaller nearby mestizo village of Tlajomulco. Presumably, as a young widow of only thirty Dominga had little choice but to work to support herself and help out her family. In fact, her younger unmarried sister followed to live with Dominga to help support their parents back home. Stories like theirs abound in court cases, police reports, and admission requests to the city poorhouse. In these documents, unattached women often evoked their personal hardships as unmarried, abandoned or widowed women, which led many to seek employment. At the same time a disparate ratio of women to men, of more than ten percent, led to a diminished pool of possible marriage partners. Inevitably these factors heightened an existing pattern of singleness and non-marriage.

What is most interesting about this rise in female singleness is that it occurred after the Wars for Independence in 1821. This phenomena spawned a new dialogue emerged amongst jurists, members of the Catholic Church, religious reformers, journalists and lay people who argued that the stability of the young nation of Mexico rested on the shoulders of a traditional patriarchal family. Years of war and foreign intervention left Jalisco and the city of Guadalajara politically disorganized in its infancy as an independent nation. For many the ideal republican family, defined by a mother and children overseen by a strong male patriarch, was the only way to maintain a sense of order through the uncertainty and chaos of the times. New legal codes introduced civil marriage and divorce in Mexico in 1859. As part of La Reforma (1855-

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724 José María Muriá, Historia de Jalisco, Volume 3 (Guadalajara: UNED, 1981), 183.
1876), state and national leaders became increasingly motivated by liberal desires to secularize society in order to consolidate both social and economic power in the state. While some historians argue that these measures had positive consequences for women, others maintain that it only gave men greater authority and leverage. Such factors as the decline in the use of dowries, the limitations of female work, and property and inheritance laws that favored men left few women the financial capital required to support themselves after a divorce.\footnote{Deere and León, “Liberalism,” 642.} Divorce cases in Guadalajara confirm that well into the century most women utilized the new law for extreme cases of abuse or infidelity, and rarely did divorce cases go to trial.\footnote{Claudia Lizette Castellanos Sánchez, “La sumisión como condición femenina: el divorcio de Refugio Rodríguez,” en Mujeres jaliscienses del siglo XIX. Cultura, religion y vida privada, edited by Vázquez Parada, Lourdes Celina and Dario Armando Flores Soria (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2008), 263-4; AHA, Justicia, “Matrimonio/Nulidad,” Caja 9, Exp 7-8.} Debates that ensued over the enactment of civil marriage legislation made clear the growing importance attached to legally-binding marriage. Over all, new civil codes introduced in Mexico by 1870 served to strengthen the role of male patriarchs within the family. Reformers and jurists who called on the stability of the ideal family clearly took a disparaging view at those members of society who engaged in forms of non-marriage, such as consensual unions and concubinage, as many of the poor had always done in Latin America.\footnote{Milanich, “Whither Family History,” 451-2.} As reformers laid out the proper and expected roles for husbands, wives and mothers, they grew concerned over the impact that unmarried and unattached women, who frequently lived outside the authority of a male patriarch, might have on society. Scholars such as Steve Stern demonstrate a long history in Mexico of violence toward

\footnote{Deere and León, “Liberalism,” 642.}

\footnote{Claudia Lizette Castellanos Sánchez, “La sumisión como condición femenina: el divorcio de Refugio Rodríguez,” en Mujeres jaliscienses del siglo XIX. Cultura, religion y vida privada, edited by Vázquez Parada, Lourdes Celina and Dario Armando Flores Soria (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2008), 263-4; AHA, Justicia, “Matrimonio/Nulidad,” Caja 9, Exp 7-8.}

\footnote{Milanich, “Whither Family History,” 451-2.}
lone women who, because of their independence from a male guardian, could become more susceptible to “pursue a deviant sexual morality.” 728

Simultaneously, liberal economic reforms brought scores of women into Guadalajara to work. Although both married and unmarried women frequently labored for wages, the latter group increasingly came under the scrutiny of reformers and city officials who viewed their presence in the public eye as a potential threat to the ideals of family and society. They called attention to specific occupations to admonish the integrity and honor of unmarried and unattached women, such as domestic work which early social reformers associated with a type of parasitism akin to prostitution. Even municipal bureaucrats took pleasure in distinguishing between honorable and dishonorable single women, using categories to denote their sexual improprieties and the legitimacy of their children. In other instances popular depictions of female work, such as the widowed proprietor, drew attention to women’s age and personality to exclude them from the ideals of femininity. Among the working women of Guadalajara, numerous examples demonstrate how women continued to work and live their lives despite a climate that was hostile to their public presence. Shrewd widows, like Rafaela Palomar, managed her many rentals and utilized the civil court system to collect monies owed her. 729 Typical female jobs as servants, laundresses and factory work paid miserably, as women frequently admitted their wages were barely enough to support themselves, let alone any children. Significant data collected from women’s households suggests that at times women banded together, cohabitating with other women or family members to save money. Others took in boarders as a strategy to

728 Stern, Secret History, 47-48.
However resourceful, city officials and reformers believed that working women called attention to themselves by working in public, a space associated with danger and prostitution. Judges and prosecutors alike frequently called attention to this aspect of life for many poor and unattached women who they believed welcomed danger onto themselves and their person. At the same time, their absence from the home and their inability to fulfill bourgeois Republican ideals of wife and mother increased public scrutiny of their personal honor.

As the number of poor working women in Guadalajara grew, their presence caught the attention of social reformers, judges, lawyers, city police and welfare institutions who linked this group of often unmarried and “unprotected” women with an increase in urban social problems. It was a discourse steeped in class, race and gender biases, as very often the conversation emphasized a supposed “wayward lifestyle” of the poor as the root cause of new social ills. Reformers and sociologists argued that the proclivity among the poor toward non-marriage led to promiscuity, adultery, illegitimacy and concubinage. Furthermore, they argued that such values led to criminal mischief including robbery, using weapons, brawling, drinking, abandoning their children or committing infanticide. As unattached women they had no authority figure to punish them, therefore lawyers, judges, and city police believed that it was their duty to step in as arbiters of correction and reform. In this way newly organized state institutions of policing and control, such as criminal courts and the penitentiary, acted as patriarchal figures to potentially dangerous women who lived outside of traditional families.

The idea that the poor could and should be reformed to become more productive members of society was not a new concept. It was an idea that began to play out in Guadalajara
in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as evidenced by the construction of the *Casa de Caridad* in 1805, along with a host of other services such as public housing, hospitals and cemeteries to serve the poor. The function of the institution was to take in and reform poor children by extending them basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter and provide them with a rigorous education and a moral upbringing. While the institution catered mostly to orphaned and abandoned children, it did provide some assistance to elderly, homeless and disabled city residents who were incapable of physical work. The institution, which would eventually be renamed the *Hospicio Cabañas* after its founder, still stands today and is one of the cities often visited landmarks for its José Clemente Orozco murals. In the nineteenth century the *Casa* underwent major changes along with the nation, transitioning from the control of the Catholic Church to the Sisters of Charity, and eventually to the state in 1874 and came under its newly organized Department of Beneficence by 1896.\(^{731}\) Despite this transition the charter of the institution remained fraught with a paternalistic rhetoric of reform and protection toward Guadalajara’s poor, often referencing the unfortunate environment in which many of the city’s children were raised. It was critical of the “ignorant” behavior of parents and the “parasitic” children they raised who failed to contribute to society.\(^{732}\) In essence, Cabañas envisioned an institution that rehabilitated children in order to prevent them from becoming like their parents. Poor single women with children and widowed women in particular came to depend on the services offered at the institution. In kind the *Casa* took on a paternalistic role in the life of the children it served and attempted to mimic a traditional patriarchal family and home by protecting, disciplining, educating and providing for them. As a patriarch, it offered children

\(^{731}\) See Chapter 6; AHJ, *Beneficiencia*, B-5, Instituciones de Protección,

discipline and supervision through strong male role models such as priests and male teachers. At the same time, its mostly female staff of nannies, nurses, teachers, cooks, and administrators offered them examples of what a good mother should be and how to behave. Both boys and girls learned skills necessary to perform their roles in society as future husbands and wives through a gendered division of education. At school boys received an education that included math and science in addition to skilled trades like shoemaking, while its female curriculum emphasized humanities and trades such as embroidery and sewing. \(^{733}\) Despite the institution’s attempt to undermine and admonish the parenting of the poor, single and widowed women re-appropriated the language used by the institution and its workers to gain access to services and shelter for themselves and their children.

Overall I have argued that political changes taking place in Mexico and Guadalajara between 1821 and 1910 are significant to the study of singleness. Economic and social reforms that began in the colonial period expanded during *La Reforma* (1855-1876) and led to the rise and growth of Guadalajara, but especially between 1876 and 1910. It was in the city that many unattached women ended up to work. Once there, they became embroiled in a debate between church and state leaders over the centrality and importance of legally binding marriage, the result of changing legal codes inspired by liberal principles of secularism. In the chaos that ensued, many felt that stability could only be found within the home in the leadership and oversight of a male patriarch. His maintenance of order at the household level would set a precedent for society. The importance that many attempted to associate with civil or religious marriage made it a central issue in places like Guadalajara by the 1850s, attaching increased value and honor to married women. Those who lived outside traditional boundaries and did not uphold their

\(^{733}\) Ibid.
expected roles in society became cause for concern. As part of a continued desire to maintain order in society and monitor the poor, state governments and city officials created institutions and ordinances to police, control and at times protect the urban poor. In all, unattached women became a focal point for these new institutions and for the discourses that legitimized them.

My work demonstrates that the goals Republican governments set out to accomplish after Independence revolved around highly gendered projects, in addition to their many racial and class undertones. Although women were rarely involved in lawmaking or as officials within institutions of power, correction and reform, they played an important role in shaping the political landscape. Even within the Casa de Caridad female administrators answered to the regulations of male clergy and then of state lawmakers. An examination of women according to marital status offers a unique perspective to the political framework of the post-Independence period and attempts to make visible a group that was highly marginalized. Between 1821 and 1910, officials and reformers treated single and widowed women as an isolated group because of a supposed threat they posed to the honor of families and the values of legal marriage. Despite this fact, most histories of single and widowed women lump them together with a larger gender narrative, or as a part of histories of the family. My work seeks to reconsider their position both within histories of the family and within Mexican society. Many Mexican women never became wives or mothers. Others took up with lovers, lived in consensual unions and bore children, but never legally married. Such distinctions are important and they retell a different story of political, social and cultural change for many women.

I also believe that this approach forces historians to reconsider the parameters of what is traditionally defined as “politics.” Politics as it is referenced for the nineteenth century is often presented in its most literal form—relations of the state, national government, and political
personalities. An emphasis on cultural transformations for all of society, and for women must play a greater part in our understanding of nineteenth-century Mexican politics. In fact, in many cases, women are absent all together, ignoring the seminal argument of Joan Scott’s call for a broader definition of the “political,” that recognizes the importance of the politics of gender relations.  

The work of Ann Stoler strengthens this argument, in articulating that historical interactions were often located in the “microsites of governance,” or the “intimate domains [of] sex, sentiment, domestic arrangement and child rearing.” In her assessment, these private spaces have both social and cultural significance. In nineteenth-century Guadalajara, in the places where unattached women rented rooms, washed laundry, toiled as spinners, argued with the wives of their lovers or within the courtyards of the Hospicio, the personal became political. Their lives became part of larger narratives regarding marriage and women’s roles, work, public space, criminality and poverty. By using single and widowed women as a prism, I am able to shed light on the ways that changing conceptions of the family and marital status, impacted legal, political, social, and cultural aspects of Mexican state-building throughout the nineteenth century—adding a new dimension to current studies of political history.

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