

WOMEN, PEONAGE, AND
INDUSTRIALIZATION:
Argentina, 1810–1914*

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In recent years, a body of literature analyzing development and modernization since the world wars has emphasized the diverse tasks women perform in premodern agrarian societies as compared to incipient industrial economies. The greater input of women in many nonmechanized societies, compared to their role thereafter, has been seen as the key to understanding why the introduction of machine technology has often resulted in the subsequent general unemployment or underemployment of working-class women.¹

Much of the data related to the history of working women are based upon historical studies of the industrial, commercial, or bureaucratic development of Europe and the United States, or upon anthropological and sociological studies of contemporary Africa and Asia. Similar works pertaining to contemporary Latin America have pointed to changing demographic and fertility rates and to the nature of tasks defined as women's work as additional factors to be considered. Further, the coexistence of modern and premodern forms of female employment, so characteristic of developing areas, has been grouped into four main categories: household production, simple production of merchandise, capitalist organization, and state public administration.²

These studies help explain how poor Latin American women often find it difficult to secure employment in the modernizing sector now, but few studies exist that confirm this problem historically. Features such as international trade, regional work attitudes, the transition from slave labor to peonage in rural areas, and the formulation of industrial labor legislation in urban areas are analyzed rarely from the perspective of female work opportunities, yet they both affected directly the sexual composition of the labor force.³ Equally important is the combined effect of both types of labor systems.

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The evolution of women's work in Argentina provides an ideal historical example of the effects of modernization on females. On the eve of independence in 1810, women's cottage industries formed a mainstay of the provincial economies in the north, west, and center of the country and became even more important after the outbreak of war. Traders in the interior, especially from Tucumán, sold cotton, woolen and fur garments, and foodstuffs, prepared in slave workshops and at home by women of all classes, to workers in the mines of Potosí, Bolivia.⁴ These products, in addition to livestock and finished leather goods, constituted the basic items of trade. In contrast, the eastern riverine provinces, less populated and more exclusively dependent upon pastoral activities, had minimal levels of female artisan activities. Proportionately few women, the availability of cheap imported European textiles, and the unsuitability of cotton cultivation there had discouraged strong female work traditions in the littoral.⁵

In less than a century the coastal area eclipsed the interior in economic, demographic, and political importance. Populated by European immigrants and stimulated by the export of cash agricultural and pastoral products, the littoral, particularly the capital city of Buenos Aires, also became the principal urban industrial site. Thus, the transition from colony to nation, from slave owning to wage labor and peonage after 1813, and from rural to dominantly urban social patterns after 1914 fundamentally transformed the regional fabric of Argentine society. Buenos Aires, an outpost until the late eighteenth century, became the hub of the new nation. Changing market conditions due to wars and competition, first with European and then with coastal manufactures, caused the interior provinces to stagnate. They ultimately became economic and political tributaries of the capital.

The decline of cottage industry in the interior as well as the spectacular economic development of the coastal region resulted in a drastic reduction in the percentage of adult women who either claimed a profession or received remuneration for their labor. Although it is impossible to determine the exact proportion of female artisans or salaried women workers in early nineteenth-century Argentina, evidence suggests that a greater proportion participated in artisan tasks in 1810 than that 58.8 percent of all women over the age of ten who reported in 1869 that they claimed a trade. By 1914, when the third national census was taken, the percent of identified female workers had dropped to 27.4, even though their actual numbers had increased throughout the period.⁶ Furthermore, the geographical location and type of work had changed, and the nationality of the woman worker had become a factor as well.

Many difficulties involved in tracing the general impact of modernization on women in Argentina become less formidable when viewed regionally. Since the coastal pastoral sector had few traditions that per-

petuated defined economic roles for females, it can be presumed that there would be little justification for urging the employment of women there. Similarly, while the interior, with its female work tradition, might concern itself with the plight of unemployed women, economic conditions would ultimately limit attempts to find them work. In both regions distinct patterns of labor legislation related to peonage, added to the advent of modern protective industrial legislation influenced by European conditions, all created precedents that led to the channeling of women into domestic service or unemployment. In this way, the changing reality of work and the demand for labor enables us to place Argentine women in the world created by modern economic development.

THE EXPANSION OF FEMALE COTTAGE INDUSTRY, 1810–1869

The reliance upon women's work that distinguished the interior from the coastal area in 1810 continued to characterize the inland provinces until the 1870s. Partial census data, as well as travellers' accounts of those years, point to the availability and need for female laborers in the interior. For example, local censuses for the interior provinces of La Rioja (1855), Catamarca (1812), and Tucumán (1845), along with those for the riverine provinces of Corrientes (1820, 1833), Entre Ríos (1849), and Santa Fe (1816), all showed those provinces to have more female inhabitants than male. This imbalance can be accounted for by military conscription, the tendency of male immigrants to remain in the littoral, and by the migration of native-born men from the interior to the coast or to other interior provinces in search of work.⁷ These factors, added to the casualties of the civil wars, reinforced those economic patterns that could be maintained by women, and thus females remained a dominant force in the economic life of the interior.

Provinces in the northwest had been hard hit by the wars of independence due to requests for provisions and military recruits, both of which seriously hampered a once thriving trade in mules, textiles, and food.⁸ When the English Captain Andrews, a mining specialist, made a tour of the northwest in 1825, he noted the sharp reduction of male economic activities occasioned by the wars. According to him, Santiago del Estero province's livelihood consisted mainly of the trade in "ponchos, pilliones [*pellones* or fur saddleblankets], and woolen fabrics for men and women's dresses." All these goods were the output of traditional female handicrafts. In Salta he noted similarly that the provincial economy had deteriorated seriously, and that its earlier mainstay, cattle and mule raising, still languished because of a paucity of male ranchers. Nevertheless, he had hopes that the nascent sugar industry would thrive and that it would replace livestock as the dominant male economic activity. Upon reaching the northernmost province of Jujuy,

Andrews observed that a renaissance in international trade had already begun there, and that a major component was the production of woollen articles that were traded locally and in Peru.⁹

Andrews' analysis of the nature and extent of women's productive activities was confirmed by the visit of another British traveller, Woodbine Parish, in 1837. Working-class women, he reported, continued to produce the main items of regional and international trade in the interior, and even middle-class women supplemented, or often provided the bulk of, family income through embroidery and weaving. Further, Parish noted that cottage textiles, along with other regional economic pursuits, were becoming linked to the peonage-based sugar industry, because Indian laborers (principally male) could be induced to work the harvest season with payments in coarse cloth, often hand-woven. This relationship between dominantly female and male pursuits persisted into the 1850s in some areas, and probably later in others not yet affected by the introduction of British textiles, which was facilitated by railroad construction.¹⁰

One other northwestern province, Catamarca, also became known for its female artisans, a reputation that has endured into the twentieth century. Although the textile fame of Catamarca was eclipsed at first by more extensive production in Tucumán, Santiago, Jujuy, and Córdoba, eventually the lack of alternative economic pursuits, isolation from competitors, and the uncertainty of the principal male activity, mining, enabled a number of towns in Catamarca to sustain production of traditional ponchos and shawls of wool and llama. Originally a center of cotton cultivation and spinning, this province adapted to market demands and soon entire families of daughters and other female relatives replaced a slave labor textile production system and specialized in woollen production.¹¹

Other interior provinces outside the northwest depended upon female labor to varying degrees. The western provinces of San Luis and San Juan, for example, also benefitted from women's work, although on a much more modest scale. Perhaps the most vivid picture comes from a former Argentine president, Domingo Sarmiento, in his account of San Juan in the 1820s and 1830s. A man of modest middle-class origins, Sarmiento credited his mother's and sisters' needlework, weaving, and jam production for the survival of his family during the civil wars and economic insecurity of those years. He also recounted poignantly how his female relatives, aided by domestic servants, tried other activities such as candlemaking in an attempt to make more money.¹² Their experiences differed markedly from middle-class women in the coastal area, who, unless widowed, were not prepared to work.¹³

The central province of Córdoba, commercial gateway to the interior provinces of the northwest and west, was often caught up in both

civil turmoil and attacks by Indian marauders. Consequently, as in the northwest, the military needs of the province tended to discourage male oriented pursuits for many years. In the interim, local products of female handicrafts, ranging from textiles to food and sweets, helped maintain trade.

PEONAGE AND WOMEN WORKERS

The shortage of male labor in Córdoba was so great in the 1830s that women known to be poor or convicted of crimes such as vagrancy were put to work on public projects. Their assignments ranged from road building to working in a candle factory run by the police, who sold the product of female convicts' labor to the local military garrison.¹⁴ Women were also forced to work for employers chosen by the local police and were rearrested if they abandoned their job.¹⁵

The fact that female convicts were put to work in Córdoba as replacements for a scarce male labor force, or forcibly dispatched there and elsewhere in the interior to work as domestic servants, demonstrated the main function of peonage in Argentina: the regulation of a scarce labor supply to secure sufficient numbers of workers for critical areas of the economy. This was accomplished by the enactment of anti-vagrancy laws, labor contracts, and involuntary servitude caused by indebtedness. For the interior this meant the control of laborers of both sexes so long as there was need for their labor. Women comprised the domestic servants desired by the merchant and rancher class, while men were either put to work in the countryside as cowboys or agricultural laborers or conscripted into the militia. Only the lower class—the slaves, ex-slaves, and poor of humble birth—were affected by these laws. Middle- and upper-class men and women who became impoverished or who worked as artisans were neither arrested nor forced to register.

Peonage in this region also signified the application of work and vagrancy laws as prescriptive measures to regulate female morality. The supervision of female conduct, or at least the desire to codify such supervision, created another main distinction between the application of labor laws to working men and women. The result was that men were much more frequently assigned to work by the police than women, but women were more frequently arrested for activities deemed immoral. Although antivagrancy and worker registration laws had existed in the Argentine interior since 1772, such legislation did not include provisions specifically related to women or to female morality. The wars of independence and the presence of a large number of female ex-slaves in interior cities after 1813 prompted officials to enact special female antivagrancy laws. In Tucumán province, where a general antivagrancy decree had already been issued in 1823, Governor Heredia supplemented

it with the first *ley de conchabo*, or forced labor law, in 1832, one that specified that women be steered away from prostitution by giving them honest work. In fact it ordered all women "who cannot live honestly" to seek proper employment in eight days or be considered vagrant and idle (*ociosa*). The police were instructed to find them employment if necessary, but to work with "discretion" and not interfere in the "private domain of families."¹⁶

In Jujuy, similar antiprostitution legislation was enacted in 1836. In the explanation that accompanied the decree it was observed that the government had "gradually tried to extinguish slavery . . . but in its place another type of servitude, much graver and more repugnant, has been substituted." Consequently all women reputed to behave in an "abandoned and scandalous fashion" would be sent back to their families. If parents or other relatives were too poor to care for them, the police and local judges would find the women suitable employment and determine the salary. The decree was also designed to restrict child labor by encouraging more women to work. As in the case of Tucumán, police in Jujuy were to refrain from forcing women to work against the wishes of male relatives.¹⁷ This decree preceded the enactment of male-focused work laws in 1843, 1849, and 1851.¹⁸ All the earlier laws were based upon the belief that there existed an acceptable economic alternative to prostitution, and that the police would be able to find work for those women who needed employment.

The relationship between peonage legislation and women's work in Argentina has been overlooked because much of what has been written about antivagrancy, forced labor (*leyes de conchabo*), rural codes, and passport legislation deals with the coastal area. There, antivagrancy laws deriving from a pastoral society forced rural native-born workers to choose between an autocratic rural employer or military service.¹⁹ According to Gastón Gori, such laws "before the end of the nineteenth century reflected an extremely particularistic social environment which was intimately linked to a pastoral economic system, to the misery of the rural workers, and to military necessities, all of which needed male labor and led to the abandonment of women and children."²⁰ Those needs, he believes, diminished after 1870 when immigration and the cessation of civil disorder made antivagrancy laws less crucial. His study also includes the admonishment that such legislation proved to be arbitrarily enforced and dependent upon the whims of rural judges. Nevertheless, these laws helped shape the social environment of the pastoral region of eastern Argentina while they dealt with females in an indirect fashion.²¹

Examination of the legal codes regarding nonslave labor in the littoral from 1804 on confirms Gori's thesis. Originating in legislation that helped regulate the labor of transients and cowboys in the province of Buenos Aires, the codes were later adopted almost word for word by

neighboring provinces with similar pastoral pursuits. According to the laws, workers, especially those accused of vagrancy, were threatened with terms of forced labor or conscription in the army. Poor people were required to have papers identifying their employers and passports in order to proceed from one province to another. By 1865 most of these laws had been incorporated into a comprehensive rural code under the control of justices of the peace, and by 1870 immigrants were excused from the most onerous provisions. Few regulations referred specifically to women, and it appears that few women were forced to comply with the many provisions.²²

Additional surveys of provincial archives and police records will be needed to confirm the patterns set in interior and coastal provinces by their postindependence antivagrancy laws. Nevertheless, several initial observations confirm regional tendencies and suggest ways to approach analysis of such materials. First, unlike the coastal area, interior provinces definitely relied upon the police, rather than on justices of the peace, to keep vigil over workers. The implications of who monitored peonage remain to be investigated. Second, interior provincial police codes contained many more provisions for worker registration and capture of vagrants that remained in force longer than those in the littoral. Third, interior provinces were more preoccupied with the desire to employ women in order to prevent immorality. Accustomed to female laborers, and more influenced by colonial traditions under which the Church kept vigil over private and public female conduct, provincial officials seemed to believe that there was a community obligation to employ poor women in supervised household work, but not in skilled artisan tasks.²³ Coastal legislators felt no such obligation. Finally, the intent of inland labor laws generally reflected the needs of a society that, prior to the 1870s, was dominated by a variety of rural and urban commercial interests as contrasted with the experience in the littoral, where rural pastoral elites influenced labor legislation.

By the time the first national census was taken in 1869, the Argentine interior had already passed its most extreme stage of dependence upon female cottage industries. Still buttressed by these now declining industries, interior provinces were gradually becoming characterized by subsistence agriculture and stockraising and by pockets of prosperity from wine and sugar industries. According to the census takers, "of 61,424 widows, 247,602 single women and more than 25,000 orphans in the republic, nearly 140,000 are seamstresses, laundresses, weavers, ironers, cigarmakers. . . . The result is that half the female adult population waits with uncertainty for daily sustenance."²⁴ If compilers had noted regional trends, they would have still found women far better off in the interior at that time than in the littoral. At least in the interior many still eked out a meager existence in crafts and food production in

comparison to their counterparts in the littoral whose washing, sewing, breadmaking, and domestic service earned them even less. In the province of Buenos Aires, for example, there were only 556 weavers, 1,815 cigarmakers and 2,208 bakers included in the census, compared to more precarious professions such as laundresses (9,322), domestic servants (15,793), seamstresses (15,219), and ironers (3,598). In Santa Fe province a similar situation prevailed and the majority of women there also labored as seamstresses, maids, and laundresses when they could secure employment.²⁵

In sharp contrast to the occupational breakdown in the littoral was the artisan nature of female workers in the interior. In Córdoba province there were 13,694 weavers; Tucumán had 7,635 weavers, 1,429 saddleblanket makers, 1,552 cigarmakers, and 592 wool spinners. Over one-half of Santiago del Estero women listed their occupation as weavers (32,181), and in the poor province of Catamarca, 6,898 were recorded as weavers and 5,533 as seamstresses, and only 2,562 people labeled themselves as domestic servants.²⁶

By 1914 the opportunities for women within these two regions had diminished for all, but the decline of artisan activities was especially notable in the interior. Faced with increased competition from imported factory-made goods and unable or unwilling to migrate to incipient industrial areas in Buenos Aires and Rosario (Santa Fe), women retreated from artisan activities or found work as their coastal counterparts had done earlier—in low-status and poorly paid jobs as laundresses, ironers, and maids. In contrast, the rise of factories in the littoral, along with increased need for maid service, enabled women in that region, especially immigrant women, to find jobs.

PEONAGE AND THE DECLINE OF WOMEN'S WORK IN THE INTERIOR, 1870–1914

Since Córdoba province was apparently the only one that enacted further female antivagrancy and forced-work laws after 1860, the causes and effects of such legislation merit consideration. In July 1869, Cordobese officials ordered that all women, "whom according to current Laws and Regulations are condemned to prison or public works for a period of not less than six months, can be sent for an equal time to the frontier." A little more than a year later a new female antivagrancy act again authorized public officials to force vagrant women to relocate to rural areas for a period not to exceed four years.²⁷

Why were Cordobese officials so concerned about unemployed women? The need to populate the frontier areas to ward off Indian invasions was usually accomplished through the construction and defense of military forts, not communities of female vagrants. Perhaps the

best answer is that Córdoba, as the closest of the interior provinces to the coastal area, was consequently among the first to feel the impact of national economic and political unification. As a result, the provincial wool industry was hard hit by an international wool market crisis, and by the subsequent inability of that province to sell its wool to exporters in Buenos Aires. Wool washing, as well as spinning and weaving, had been an integral part of female economic activities in Córdoba, and the disappearance of export markets had thus led to widespread female unemployment.

As Ezequiel Paz wrote in May 1869:

an industry here has completely disappeared and the workforce of thousands of women who earned their livelihood washing wool and the large investments in ranches and equipment for this operation are today left unutilized. This has been the greatest consequence [of the wool crisis] that Cordobese people have suffered. Working women, unable to continue their traditional work, have no other employment possibilities so suited to their conditions. . . . These unfortunate facts would not be so important if Córdoba had some other industrial activity whose productive needs were suited to female labor, but in our interior provinces it is impossible to diversify suddenly the use of this type of labor as it is in the coastal provinces where the cities need women workers.²⁸

Paz concluded that women in Santiago del Estero province were also being adversely affected by increased female unemployment due to the international situation. Thus as testimony to the decline in traditional female work and the lack of new work opportunities, added to the fear of increased immoral behavior due to such conditions, new antivagrancy laws were enacted to remove women physically from established towns and rural communities. Thus, thousands of women who might have been included in the 1869 census as laborers were among those listed as unemployed.

These new Cordobese antivagrancy laws and others, despite the haphazard administration that typified all police enforcement at that time, were applied to women as late as the 1890s. The number of arrests and the registration of female servants, however, compared to corresponding figures for other provinces such as Tucumán, indicate that the laws were rarely applied to find women work, but rather as a warning against turning to prostitution. In 1880 only 146 women were arrested; in 1882 this number increased to 247, and to 313 in 1887. Most of these arrests were for drunkenness and yet, during this same time period, women fearing the application of the new antivagrancy laws were reported to have run at the sight of a policeman.²⁹ Fears of enforcement became a reality two years later when the police, in the process of seeking pay raises, presented recent arrest statistics to demonstrate the need for their services. At that time the number of women arrested for crimes other than inebriation totalled 175, 148 of whom were charged with vagrancy; no adult men faced similar charges. Since no sex distinc-

tions were made among the 9,140 people arrested for drinking, the principal charge against women in earlier years, it may also be assumed that the total number of women arrested was much higher. Equally important, only 434 women were listed in the Servants' Register.³⁰

Córdoba responded in a unique fashion by enacting special legislation, but it was not the only province affected by the weakened demand for female handicrafts and production. The reaction of other interior provinces to high female unemployment depended upon the dominant economic activity in the area as well as on the demand for household servants. Tucumán province, due to its increased need for male field hands to harvest sugar and household servants to meet the demands of a relatively affluent urban group, periodically revised forced work laws through its Police Codes of 1856 and 1877, and *Ley de Conchabo* of 1888. One of the few provinces with a relatively efficient police force, Tucumán archives contain extensive evidence of female worker registration.

In the early years of the sugar industry, when there was no tariff protection for local production, female registration was sporadic. For the most part, women were arrested for having run away from their employers. In 1870, before enactment of the 1888 law that technically prohibited debt peonage, women were jailed for leaving their employers while still in debt to them and for similar offenses.³¹ The publication of provincial statistics in 1882 offers a more complete view of female crime that year: of the 452 women arrested, 249 (or 55 percent) were charged with vagrancy and scandal (men charged with the equivalent offence represented .5 percent of total male arrests). However, only 87 women (19.2 percent) were arrested for drunkenness and scandal (their male counterparts represented 46 percent of the total) and 38 women (or 8.4 percent) were charged with running away from employers (18.1 percent of all males arrested were accused of similar offences). In other words, antivagrancy measures in Tucumán were applied with greater frequency to women than to men.

Tucumán archives also contain extensive evidence of female worker registration that can be compared with that for their male counterparts and with the corresponding data from Córdoba. Complete statistics exist for three years: 1882, when 1,559 women were registered out of 16,339 workers; 1888, when 3,406 women were recorded out of 30,672; and 1895, when 2,533 women out of 34,181 people registered. In all cases the laborers were unskilled and earned less than 50 pesos per month, and women were listed as domestic servants despite the fact that all skilled female workers earned far less than the minimum amount necessary to be exempt from registration.³² The relatively constant number of women arrested and registered in Tucumán, compared to

Córdoba, gives credence to economic demand as well as moral concerns that led to the incarceration of females.

If the application of antivagrancy and forced work laws disappeared in the coastal areas after 1870, as Gastón Gori suggests and evidence indicates, no such diminution appears in the interior until the end of the century. In the case of Tucumán, poor sugar harvests led to the abrogation of forced labor laws in 1896 so that plantation owners would not have to hire all the unemployed peons sent to them by the police. Yet in other places with more stable economic activities—such as lumbering and mate gathering in the northeastern provinces after 1900, sugar plantations in Salta and Jujuy, and sheep ranches in the far south—contract labor and debt peonage continued well into the twentieth century.³³ The universal military conscription law of 1901 eliminated the threat of arbitrary conscription, but other statutes remained in effect, especially for the native born.

As long as antivagrancy and worker registration laws were enforced at all in most interior provinces, poor women continued to be victimized in a sporadic fashion, depending upon the province, its willingness to enforce moral codes, the labor needs, and alternatives to female employment. When poor women were forced to carry work papers, they were uniformly described as *sirvientas*, regardless of the tasks at which they might have worked. When women were arrested, they were accused of vagrancy, failing to carry work papers, or exhibiting scandalous behavior. Yet, despite the way the peonage system was applied to women caught in its provisions, the fate of the majority of women in need of work, who were ignored by provincial authorities in both the littoral and the inland provinces, was far worse. Not deemed exploitable by the most important sectors of economic activity, they became invisible.

Just as the opportunities for women declined in Córdoba, they soon began to disappear elsewhere in the interior. Perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate the decline of skilled female employment in the interior, as well as its alternatives, is to compare the 1895 national census with that of 1869. Traditional occupations such as weaving still appeared in 1895, but in Tucumán province the numbers decreased from 7,635 to 4,944. Saddleblanket makers no longer appeared as a category. Catamarca province experienced a real decline of almost 2,000 weavers. In Salta and Jujuy local women beer brewers also disappeared from the list. In the northwest, domestic service and the sewing trades declined, as well as weaving. Only Tucumán and Santiago recorded increases in the number of seamstresses (*costureras*), but not nearly enough to compensate for the loss of over 5,600 weavers there. Furthermore, only Santiago del Estero showed an increase of household servants compared

to the first census. In general only laundresses and ironers increased their numbers in a significant fashion.³⁴

In total, the number of weavers in Argentina declined 54,653 in twenty-six years while the general population doubled. At the same time the number of washerwomen in the nation increased by 44,363, dressmakers (*modistas*) by 8,091 and, ironers by 18,088. Equally significant was the doubling of the number of part-time male and female *jornaleros*. These working-class people, added to those who claimed no employment, led census takers in 1895 to comment that "masculine employment percentages have increased to 866 per thousand, but in contrast, female employment has diminished to half that amount, as it equals only 445 per thousand. This demonstrates that we still have not learned how to give a useful and remunerative direction to women's work and that destitute of a means of subsistence, women have to depend upon men's protection."³⁵

WOMEN AND ARGENTINE INDUSTRIALIZATION, 1875–1914

The decreased demand for female labor in the interior was in part compensated for by the development of industry in the coastal area, principally in the city of Buenos Aires. Among the first enterprises was a wool spinning and weaving factory, which began operations in 1873. President Sarmiento, the man whose mother had supported his family through cottage weaving, gave the inaugural speech. Still concerned with the nature and availability of women's work, he welcomed the attempt to initiate the textile sector in Argentina, since he believed it would enable women to "live honestly from their work."³⁶ Sarmiento's aspiration for mechanized jobs for women, especially in the textile industry, was filled only partially.

Besides the prospects of new urban industries, the coastal area also witnessed a vast expansion of farmland under cultivation. The introduction of machinery, particularly threshing and plowing machines, converted the former importer of grains into one of the world's principal cereal producers. With men running the machines and performing the bulk of the harvest labor, the locus of grain production shifted from the interior to the coastal pampas area, and from male and female to dominantly male harvest labor. Further mechanization and the reliance on seasonal harvest labor consisting of migrant male Europeans enabled the population of rural areas to increase rapidly Argentine cereal production.³⁷ Fencing and the introduction of pedigree cattle and sheep had similar repercussions in the cattle industry. Consequently the need for female labor in agroindustry was also circumscribed.

The main demand for female labor came from the bustling cities of the littoral where a variety of new businesses offered significant op-

portunities for working-class women. Industries associated with the production of locally consumed food, cigars, shoes, and clothing tended to hire females. Initially they also served as the main labor force in the production of *alpargatas*, or jute-soled canvas shoes, burlap bag assembling, shirt and hat factories, tailors' shops, and commercial laundries. Of all the women employed in the aforementioned businesses, many had no contact with machinery other than sewing machines, and even those were often operated by men. Furthermore, many never saw the inside of the factory, as they worked at home and were paid by the piece. Typically they were engaged in the production of garments, although a similar situation existed in the shoe industry, where women hand-finished leather uppers at home until new machines and male technicians in the factories displaced them.³⁸

According to Adrian Patroni, who conducted a survey of the Argentine labor force, in the late 1890s the demand for unskilled male laborers in Argentina decreased as women and children were hired to perform nonmechanical tasks. In the case of hats, jobs for everyone declined with mechanization. As for the cigar factory employees, only women and children were hired to wrap the packets.³⁹ Thus, at least in the beginning, women were an important component in coastal industries. By 1895, the city of Buenos Aires far outstripped traditional artisan centers of the interior in the numbers of women employed in specialized tasks such as cigarwrapping and shoemaking. Equally significant was the number of women employed as household servants. In the city and province of Buenos Aires the number of domestic servants had more than doubled, while the number of washerwomen and laundresses almost equalled that of household help in terms of percentage increase. This meant that women could benefit both directly and indirectly from the increased economic wellbeing experienced by that city.⁴⁰

Immigrant vs. Native-Born Women

Of the women who could find jobs within the artisan and household service sectors in the city of Buenos Aires, initially immigrant women had more work opportunities than the native-born; this advantage was also evident in the commercial sector as well. In 1895, immigrant women equalled only 19 percent of all women in Argentina above ten years old; in the city of Buenos Aires, however, immigrant women outnumbered the native-born by a two-to-one margin, and there they had already begun to displace Argentine women in a number of professions. For example, there were proportionately more foreign-born *modistas* and shoemakers than natives. Similarly, aliens outnumbered, proportionately, their Argentine counterparts as *alpargata* makers, ironers, washerwomen, cigarmakers, dressmakers, hatters, tailors, and merchants (as

seen in table 1, which also demonstrates the paucity of work for alien women in Córdoba province).

By 1914, the percentage of all foreign-born women over the age of ten had increased from 19 to 24 percent of all Argentine residents, and the percentage of those employed increased from 21 to 28 percent. Thus, as women in general were being forced in greater numbers out of the paid labor pool, immigrant women managed to increase their participation nationwide.⁴¹ Although this was a temporary phenomenon, a comparison of the same two areas, Buenos Aires city and Córdoba province, indicates which sectors then employed the most women, especially immigrants. Once again, in contrast to the capital, the small numbers of female craft workers in Córdoba were related not only to the lack of work for women, but also to the general decline of all industrial and artisan pursuits in that area. Further, by 1914, as seen in table 2, immigrant women in Córdoba only outnumbered Creole women as merchants. In Buenos Aires, on the other hand, although immigrant women were employed more frequently than in Córdoba, they were losing their predominance in a number of jobs.

TABLE 1 *Selected Female Employment in Buenos Aires City and Córdoba Province, 1895*

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Buenos Aires City</i>		<i>Córdoba Province</i>	
	<i>Native Women</i>	<i>Foreign Women</i>	<i>Native Women</i>	<i>Foreign Women</i>
Alpargata makers	22	199	—	1
Embroiderers	327	371	173	19
Cigarmakers	154	523	124	2
Seamstresses	5608	7549	17275	232
Dressmakers	1625	3330	214	69
Bakers	17	31	201	13
Tailors	18	213	10	7
Hatters	59	160		
Shoemakers	394	1195	146	15
Weavers	43	86	4810	2
Cooks	2501	4366	1344	110
Household Servants	7003	9473	6691	251
Ironers	2488	3654	2284	71
Laundresses	1031	3082	7910	129
Merchants	362	1706	439	307
Commercial Employees	413	166	17	1
Total in Area	79647	123239	98811	10260
Total Unemployed	51039	80779	48668	6751

Source: see note 40.

WOMEN AND INDUSTRIALIZATION IN ARGENTINA

TABLE 2 *Women's Principal Occupations in Buenos Aires City and Córdoba Province, 1914*

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Buenos Aires City</i>		<i>Córdoba Province</i>	
	<i>Native Women</i>	<i>Foreign Women</i>	<i>Native Women</i>	<i>Foreign Women</i>
Alpargata makers	75	78	1	—
Shoemakers	1041	1731	316	26
Embroiderers	843	730	142	22
Shirtmakers	191	328	—	—
Basketmakers	16	19	1	1
Candymakers	33	27	15	1
Cartonmakers	103	95	1	1
Cigarmakers	558	773	67	1
Mattressmakers	12	17	6	4
Tie makers	132	72	—	—
Corsetmakers	429	457	9	6
Packagers	127	155	4	1
Seamstresses	9736	9460	20626	783
Matchmakers	27	55	9	2
Weavers, Spinners	443	562	2696	20
Laundresses	674	3652	8902	404
Dressmakers	9223	9972	2778	607
Bakers	—	70	117	11
Ironers	4384	5138	2258	152
Tailors	36	420	49	21
Drycleaners	82	111	11	1
Parttime (<i>jornaleros</i>)	333	1283	1929	365
Domestic servants	7624	27989	6607	1279
Servants (<i>mucama</i>)	7458	10733	—	—
Cooks	12575	9097	3463	620
Nursemaids	1290	925	—	—
Teachers	6789	2212	1862	202
Merchants	497	2974	408	541
Commercial Employees	3332	2966	37	17
Total in Area	209049	296442	161223	45207
Total Unemployed	120314	127361	100418	36247

Source: Argentine Republic, *Tercer Censo Nacional*, 10 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1917–1919), 4:201–12, 255–62.

The migration of European females to Argentina and their ability to locate employment in newly formed industry and commerce in the capital city and in Córdoba province reveals why few native-born women from the interior migrated eastward at that time to find work. Even though second-generation Argentine women had begun to displace aliens in some trades, many immigrant-owned factories and shops, which comprised 81 and 74 percent, respectively, of all establishments in Argentina, often agglomerated immigrants of the same nationality;⁴² in contrast, few native-born Argentines owned such firms. Creole workers, both male and female, untrained in most factory tasks, were also considered less efficient workers. Thus, when jobs for females appeared, those women affected by changing economic conditions in the interior could not take advantage of the immigrant-directed and non-textile related industrial boom in the littoral.

Women and Industrial Legislation

The large numbers of women engaged in sewing trades in Argentina superficially resembles a comparative stage in other nations undergoing industrial transformation. Yet, besides the fact that nations with strong textile industries also utilized piece-work wages and sweatshop conditions in the garment trade, the Argentine experience provides a strong and significant contrast. In Europe and the United States the textile industry provided one of the first sites of applied technological innovation through the cotton gins, the mechanization of looms and sewing, new dyes, and the reorganization of garment production.⁴³ In the Argentine case, none of these transformations occurred prior to the 1930s. Even the garment industry rarely used large-scale factory procedures for most production, since their market was restricted to local consumption. Thus, even the industrialization of the most traditional area of female employment failed to integrate women into the technologically advanced part of the modernization process.

Although weaving wool and cotton had served as an economic buttress in the interior during the early nineteenth century, cotton cultivation practically disappeared by the turn of the century, as fewer women chose to spin thread and weave cloth when they could purchase factory-made British and U.S. products. A similar situation existed among the wool weavers. Even the company praised by Sarmiento found it difficult to produce woolen cloth at a profit in Argentina, and closed down. Consequently by 1914, wool and cotton spinning and weaving were either absent or poorly represented in the Argentine industrial sector. According to a report of 1909, only one cotton thread mill with 9,000 spindles and five cotton weaving mills with 1,200 looms operated in Argentina. Those six firms employed 1,575 workers.⁴⁴ These

factories, added to wool mills and the production of thousands of seamstresses and rustic weavers working at home, provided only 22.6 percent of all textiles sold in Argentina by 1914, mostly in the form of rugs, blankets, knitted stockings, and underwear.⁴⁵

The backwardness of the Argentine textile industry can be attributed to three interrelated factors. First, the politics of free trade, accepted by most Argentines, emphasized the international division of labor that relegated Argentina to a producer of raw materials unless such products could be obtained at a lower cost elsewhere. Thus, even though Argentina had always had small amounts of land devoted to cotton cultivation in the interior, the prospects of entering the world cotton market did not exist for Argentina until the 1920s, and the few attempts made to expand cotton production prior to that date had failed.

Second, traditional objections to a large-scale textile industry, added to a paucity of locally produced cotton, further bolstered the free-trade philosophy. Importers of textiles, particularly from Great Britain, deplored efforts to restrict such importations, particularly if tariffs were the only means by which the local textile industry could expand. Even the representatives of organized labor in Argentina objected to a domestic textile industry because it would add to the cost of living for immigrant workers. Consequently, manufacturers could count on no labor support for the tariff protection that they deemed crucial for further expansion.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Argentine political reformers as well as freetraders adopted the ideology of protective legislation for women long before female labor exploitation by industry became a major feature of Argentine industrial patterns. Influenced by European socialist thought, which was a response to the heavy dependence upon women and children for many industries in Europe, Argentine legislators, particularly those from the coastal area, pioneered industrial labor legislation designed to prevent such exploitation before it became a significant problem in their country. Intended to benefit working women by protecting them from abuse, such industrial labor legislation, although poorly enforced, often resulted in discouraging the expansion of industries that relied on female labor. These legislators saw no conflict between their desire to protect women and the prospects that women might be prevented from working, because they basically believed that women should not work in an industrial setting.

A perfect example of how reformers rejected women's participation in industry, even though they recognized that the alternatives for poor women were even more exploitative, comes from the career of Juan Biale Massé. A Spanish physician and the first professor of labor law at the National University of Córdoba, Biale Massé was commissioned by Minister of the Interior Joaquín V. González in 1904 to study the condi-

tions of workers in the Argentine interior. He returned three months later with a three-volume work filled with statistics, interviews, and photos. From those pages the situation of poor Argentine men and women becomes evident. In a special section on women and children he informed the reader that initially he believed that industrial societies, such as the ones developing in Buenos Aires and Rosario, exploited women more than agrarian ones, but after returning from his trip, he had changed his mind.⁴⁶

In his tour through the interior he had seen situations that made industrial exploitation seem insignificant. When he stopped in San Juan province, for example, he noted that domestic service was not common for women. Those employed this way were subject to extreme exploitation because

The women from the countryside *give* their little girls away as if they were puppies. The ladies of the recipient family care for the children more or less affectionately, and sometimes the wards are considered part of the family. But what usually happens is that . . . the *chinita* is considered artless and incapable of reason . . . and the result of all this is a detestable form of slavery. . . . Consequently female servants who work for wages are scarce, earn little, and are not given steady employment.⁴⁷

Alternatives to domestic service were laundering and ironing, both of which were even less remunerative and more insecure forms of work. Such women worked in their own homes for a variety of employers, all of whom had an enormous choice of which poor women might do their laundry. Yet other jobs related to agroindustry were closed to women. The major industries, such as preserved fruits, would not employ females even though they often made better employees. In the case of the sugar industry in the northwest, wives might accompany their husbands in harvesting, but they received no salary of their own unless they worked as cooks for bachelors.⁴⁸

In Tucumán, Córdoba, and La Rioja, among other provinces visited, the physician continued to find both the conditions of women's work, as well as the remuneration, deplorable. Clandestine prostitution and tuberculosis were widespread phenomena and direct results, according to him, of the underemployment of women as laundresses and poorly paid maids. Only in the western province of Mendoza was domestic labor relatively well paid, and it was in that province that upper-class women had established a school to train servants. This contrasted sharply with the *gente decente*, or upper class, of Tucumán who, according to Biale Massé, had so many impoverished women that 25 percent of the seamstresses in the capital city came from that class.⁴⁹

Yet, despite the bleak picture painted of conditions in the interior, and even though he documented the desperate conditions for men there

as well, the physician still objected to the employment of women in industry in all areas of Argentina. As he put it:

The mission of women, since each sex has its role in the perpetuation of the species, is maternity, nurturing and educating children. . . . For married women factory life is incompatible with these functions, as it is in general for the single woman, a minor, as [work] can affect her reproductive organs. . . . Work for women is unacceptable except for the misfortune of destiny: for the widow without means of support, and for the unmarried woman who has no family to care for her, or for those called the *third sex* . . . women who for one reason or another remain unmarried.⁵⁰

When forced to earn a living, women should receive equal pay, but Biale Massé basically rejected the idea that women needed to work. Thus, even though he demonstrated that the male-dominated agroindustry existing along with a subsistence economy in the agrarian and pastoral areas of the interior combined to abuse working-class women even more than in urban industrial areas, he concluded that even "honest" work was unsuited for women of childbearing age. And, rather than improve working conditions for all, the physician remained content to suggest more reliance on cheap imported products and the exclusion of women and children from night labor and unsafe industries that remained.⁵¹ In this way he paralleled the view of the Argentine Socialist party as well as of many Argentine legislators at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵²

By the time modern industries were seen in the interior, reformist legislation had started to constrict the view of appropriate work for women. In August 1905, the Argentine Congress enacted a Sunday rest law for industry and commerce in the capital city. Women were protected by this law only if they worked in factories and shops, although in practice few businesses complied with the loosely enforced provisions. Two years later, however, national law number 5291 further delineated the special conditions necessary for factory-employed women and children, which included limited work hours, prohibition from working in "dangerous or unhealthy" industries, special rest privileges, and the right of mothers to nurse children.

During discussions of the 1907 law, national legislators admitted the law was premature, but urged its passage as a sign of progressivism. They also attempted to extend the authority of the provision not only to Buenos Aires, but also to national employees and federal territories. The end result of these laws was detrimental to women as seen in industrial census figures for the capital city as early as 1914. At that time as many women worked at industrial tasks at home as in the factory. Similar conditions also existed in many commercial establishments. Out of reach of factory inspectors and protective legislation, these women, along with

all domestic servants, had no legal protection from dangerous or unhealthy working conditions.⁵³

Gradually other provinces followed the lead of the national capital and enacted their own Sunday rest laws and protective legislation that resulted in further directing working-class women away from factories and into household work not protected by law. The province of Salta was one of the first to grant Sunday rest to industrial and retail employees, but exempted domestic servants from the provisions. Buenos Aires and Córdoba provinces had similar loopholes for household workers, and agricultural and pastoral employees.⁵⁴ Mendoza province was even more explicit about how women could be exempted from Sunday rest if needed. It insisted that not only domestic service be exempted, but also women working in hospitals, hotels, boarding houses, and bath houses. Although work in the factory for women appeared to be the major source of exploitation, the same government that passed progressive factory laws in 1918 enacted a national home work law that excluded from inspection conditions of household service, as well as any place where family members constituted the work force supervised by another relative.⁵⁵ As for specific industrial legislation related to women, Santa Fe followed the lead of the national capital by passing law number 11.317, which delineated the regulations for industrial establishments and listed thirty-six industries in which women were forbidden to work; these included the production of chemicals, liquors, and certain aspects of textile processing.⁵⁶ As in the past, although these laws were often left unimplemented or arbitrarily enforced, they still expressed the attitudes of the interior and coastal provinces regarding women's work in an industrializing society.

CONCLUSIONS

From a regional perspective, the linkages can be seen between the decline of skilled work for women in the Argentine interior and such diverse phenomena as peonage and industrial protection laws. These were both expressions of value systems attached to the modernization of the labor force in rural and urban areas. Both tried to direct female labor away from economic activity unless they were deemed essential as a source of labor. Such forms of labor management operated at different times because the transformation of the countryside preceded that of the city, and their application depended upon the region. Yet, ultimately, urban-focused labor legislation replaced that of the rural areas, and in a similar fashion the ideology of enforcing morality and preventing prostitution or that of ignoring women was replaced by the paternalistic desire to segregate women from factories in order to preserve them for child-bearing.

The ultimate results of such policies depend upon the region one considers, whether the workplace was urban or rural, as well as the type of employment sought by women. The countryside in Argentina, traditionally active with female artisans prior to industrialization, becomes the area with the highest rate of female unemployment. This is true even outside the capital city of Buenos Aires.⁵⁷ Within the urban industrial sector, women performed nonmechanized and low-paid tasks.

Immigration and internal migration over time also affected the prospects for employment for women during modernization. From 1869 to 1914, the immigration of females limited the patterns of mobility for Argentine women. Thereafter, in response to reduced numbers of immigrants and expanding industries in the capital city and elsewhere, women from the interior began to migrate to the coastal area in search of work.⁵⁸ That fact, added to the expansion of cotton cultivation there after the war, as well as increased production of textiles, further improved the opportunities of women within the industrial sector.

Throughout this investigation of distinct regions, another variable related to industrialization that has not been assessed is the increased opportunity for employment as maids and domestic servants caused by the expansion of commerce and industry. In areas with weak urban industries, such as those in the Argentine northwest, the demand for maids was restricted. The alternatives, washing and ironing, were even less satisfactory for both employer and employee. In contrast, the coastal area, with its active cities and prosperous hinterland was better able to integrate female labor in the service trades as well as in industry. Thus one more conclusion that can be drawn is that measurement of the type and demand for domestic labor present in an industrializing society can be another index of how successfully women have been able to participate in and benefit from modernization.

The final confirmation of these tendencies of modernization in Argentina will be possible when additional studies of coastal and interior provinces are undertaken, particularly in the western mountain area as well as in the humid as compared to the dry-pampas section of the littoral. Equally important, similar studies should be undertaken for other Latin American countries to test the ideology and timing of legislation and changing economic patterns that affect women's work. In that way modernization in dependent industrializing societies of Latin America can be integrated with the history of working women.

NOTES

1. The number of theoretical and case studies of women and work has increased significantly in the past ten years. Among the pioneering works are Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York, 1970); Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, 1974); Nadia H.

- Youseff, *Women and Work in Developing Societies* (Berkeley, 1974); and June Nash and Helen Icken Safa, eds., *Sex and Class in Latin America* (New York, 1976). Marysa Navarro, "Research on Latin American Women," *Signs* 5:1 (Autumn 1979): 117–19 discusses the most recent literature on women's work in rural areas of Latin America.
2. Elizabeth Jelin, "The Bahiana in the Labor Force of Salvador, Brazil," in *Sex and Class in Latin America*, p. 129. See also Emily M. Nett, "The Servant Class in a Developing Country: Ecuador," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 8 (July 1966): 437–52; Margo Lane Smith, "Domestic Service as a Channel of Upward Mobility for Lower-Class Women: The Lima Case," in *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, ed. Ann Pescatello (Pittsburgh, 1973), pp. 191–207; and the essays on women and development in *Latin American Perspectives* 4: 1–2 (Winter and Spring 1977) and *Signs* 3:1 (Autumn 1977). For general and bibliographic discussions of women and work in Latin America see Asunción Lavrin, ed., *Latin American Women; Historical Perspectives* (Westport, 1978), pp. 302–20; Navarro, "Research on Latin American Women," pp. 111–20; and Zulma R. de Lattes and Catalina Wainerman, "Empleo femenino y desarrollo económico," *Desarrollo Económico* 17:66 (jul.–set. 1977): 301–17.
 3. For a review essay of recent literature on peonage, which fails to question what happened to women during the transition from slave to free labor or during the process of modernization in general, see Arnold J. Bauer, "Rural Workers in Spanish America: Problems of Peonage and Oppression," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59:1 (Feb. 1979): 34–63.
 4. Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Politics, Economics and Society in Argentina in the Revolutionary Period*; Cambridge Latin American Studies Vol. 18 (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 57–58; 12.
 5. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58; Pedro Santos Martínez, *Las industrias durante el virreinato (1776–1810)* (Buenos Aires, 1969), p. 48.
 6. These are adjusted figures based upon Zulma Recchini de Lattes' study in Zulma Recchini de Lattes and Alfredo E. Lattes, comps., *La población de Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1975), pp. 149–67. See also R. de Lattes and Wainerman, "Empleo femenino," pp. 301–17; Nancy Caro Hollander, "Women in the Political Economy of Argentina," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1974, p. 55.
 7. Ernesto J. A. Maeder, *Evolución demográfica argentina desde 1810 a 1869* (Buenos Aires, 1969), passim; Alfredo E. Lattes, *La migración como factor de cambio de la población en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1972).
 8. Letter from Manuel Lanfranco, Sindico Procurador to Cabildo, Jujuy, 25 June 1812, Jujuy Province, *Archivo Capitalar de Jujuy*, 4 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1974), 4: 564–67 graphically describes the initial impact of the independence struggle on the commerce and industry of Jujuy; Halperin Donghi, *Politics*, pp. 239–69.
 9. Captain Andrews, *Journey from Buenos Ayres Through the Provinces of Cordova, Tucumán, and Salta, thence by the Deserts of Caranja to Arica, and subsequently, to Santiago de Chili and Coquimbo . . .*, 2 vols., reprint of 1827 ed. (New York, 1971), 1:159, 302–3; 2: 14–16.
 10. Sir Woodbine Parish, *Buenos Ayres and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata* (London, 1838), pp. 256, 265, 269, 288; A. Belmar, *Les provinces de la Fédération Argentine et Buenos Ayres, description générale de ces pays sous le rapport géographique, historique, commercial, industriel et sous celui de la colonisation* (Paris, 1856), p. 77; Victor Martin de Moussy, *Description Géographique de la Confédération Argentine*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1864), 3: 110. Inventories of cloth for Indians still formed part of the bookkeeping process in the Tucumán sugar factory and plantation of San Pablo in 1888, although the origin of the weaver is unknown; San Pablo Factory, *Inventario I, 1876–1890*, pp. 201, 218.
 11. Esther Hermitte and Herbert Klein, *Crecimiento y estructura de una comunidad provinciana de tejedores de ponchos: Belén 1678–1869* (Buenos Aires, 1972); pp. 37–38; Martin de Moussy, *Description Géographique*, 3:370–71; Federico Espeche, *La provincia de Catamarca* (Buenos Aires, 1875), pp. 192–93; Esther Hermitte, "Ponchos, Weaving and Patron-Client Relations in Northwest Argentina," in *Structure and Process in Latin America: Patronage, Clientage and Power Systems*, eds. Arnold Stricken and Sidney M. Greenfield (Albuquerque, 1972), pp. 159–77.
 12. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Recuerdos de provincia* (Navarre, 1970), pp. 99, 102–4.
 13. Susan Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires 1778–1810: Family and Commerce*, Cam-

- bridge Latin American Studies, Vol. 30 (Cambridge, 1978), p. 34. Middle-class women in the interior were allowed to work throughout the nineteenth century, although they soon shifted from needlework to teaching. Other early examples are found in Hermann Burmeister, *Descripción de Tucumán* (Tucumán, 1916), p. 51.
14. List of poor people to be put to work on public projects, Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Córdoba [hereinafter referred to as AHC], Gobierno, 1835, T. 139, ff. 310–11; expense account for Córdoba police, Anexo B, 15 February and March 1838, AHC, Gobierno, 1838, T. 555, ff. 323, 325.
 15. Scattered evidence of women's arrests abound in the Córdoba archives and need a more comprehensive analysis. Having picked several years at random, I found accounts of women's arrests for all years. An example of this was the year 1859 in which the Subintendente de Policía reported arrests for February, May, June, and November. During those months women were sent to jail, among other reasons, for running away from their employers; for their employers' dissatisfaction with employees; for helping other women, especially minors, flee employers; and for refusing to serve employers assigned to them by the police. AHC, Gobierno, 1859, T. 3, ff. 297, 285, 302, 396, 398, 400, 428, 392, 394, and 581.
 16. Marcela B. González, "Sobremonte y la papeleta de conchabo," in Academia Nacional de Historia, *Primer congreso de historia argentina y regional* (Buenos Aires, 1973), pp. 526–32; Manuel Lizondo Borda, *Historia de Tucumán (siglo xix)* (Tucumán, 1948), p. 78; Julio López Mañan, *Tucumán antiguo* (Tucumán, 1972), p. 51; Tucumán province, *Actas del Cabildo, Prólogo y notas de Manuel Lizondo Borda*, 2 vols. (Tucumán, 1940), 2: 398–400.
 17. Jujuy Province, *Registro Oficial. Compilación de leyes y decretos de la provincia de Jujuy desde el año 1835 hasta el de 1884*, 3 vols. (Jujuy, 1885), 1: 41, 43–44.
 18. Decree of 1 October 1843, *ibid.*, pp. 167–68; 7 October 1849, p. 248; 12 April 1851, p. 323.
 19. The classic literary treatment of this theme is José Hernández, *El gaucho Martín Fierro y la vuelta de Martín Fierro* (Buenos Aires, 1960). See also Gastón Gori, *Vagos y mal entretenidos*, 3d. ed. (Buenos Aires, 1974); and Ricardo E. Rodríguez Molas, *Historia social del gaucho* (Buenos Aires, 1968). There are also studies of labor legislation for interior provinces that are less widely known. Aníbal Arcondo, "Notas para el estudio del trabajo compulsivo en la región de Córdoba," in *Homenaje al Dr. Ceferino Garzón Maceda* (Córdoba, 1973), pp. 133–45; Jorge Balán, "Migraciones, mano de obra y formación de un proletariado rural en Tucumán, Argentina, 1870–1914," *Demografía y Economía* 10:2 (1976): 201–34; Donna J. Guy, "The Rural Working Class in Nineteenth Century Argentina: Forced Plantation Labor in Tucumán," *LARR* 13: 1 (1978): 135–45; and Marcela B. González, "Sobremonte y la papeleta de conchabo."
 20. Gori, *Vagos y mal entretenidos*, p. 11.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 63.
 22. These comments are based upon an examination of compilations of laws for the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, and Santa Fe. I wish to thank Jan Stepan of the International Relations Library of the Harvard Law School for his permission to use these and other volumes in the collection. Specifically, the works consulted were Buenos Aires Province, *Leyes y decretos promulgados en la provincia de Buenos Aires desde 1810 a 1876*, 9 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1877–79); Entre Ríos, *Recopilación de leyes, acuerdos y decretos de la provincia de Entre Ríos desde 1821 a 1873*, 2 vols. (Uruguay, 1875); Entre Ríos, *Recopilación de leyes*, 6 vols. (Paraná, 1922); Santa Fe, *Leyes y decretos de la provincia de Santa Fe, recopilación oficial, 1815–1891*, 16 vols. (1892). George Reid Andrews claims that even though the need for female domestic labor existed in Buenos Aires between 1830 and 1853, no special laws were passed. George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison, 1980), pp. 60–61.
 23. To date little work has been done on the relationship of women to the Catholic Church in colonial Argentina. However, studies such as Asunción Lavrin, "The Colonial Woman in Mexico," in *Latin American Women*, ed. Lavrin, pp. 23–59, should serve as models.
 24. Argentine Republic, Superintendente de Censo, *Primer Censo de la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1872), p. xlv.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–73, 118–25. Since the 1869 census does not reveal sex in occupations, these figures include some male workers. However, the 1895 census does separate male from female workers, and at that time these professions were practiced by men who rarely comprised more than ten percent of the total work force for each category.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 642–48.
27. Córdoba Province, *Compilación de leyes, decretos, acuerdos de la exma. Cámara de Justicia y demás disposiciones de carácter público dictadas en la provincia de Córdoba desde 1810 hasta 1900*, 2 vols. (Córdoba, 1870), 2: 675, 827–28.
28. Ezequiel N. Paz, *Derecho de exportación. Mercad americano y nuestros productos. Serie de artículos publicados en la prensa del Rosario*, 2da. ed. (Rosario, 1869), pp. 33–34.
29. Anibal Arcondo, “Notas para el estudio compulsivo,” p. 143; report on police statistics from Oficina de Estadística, 20 June 1882, AHC, Gobierno, 1882, T. 5, f. 169; Córdoba Province, Oficina de Estadística, *Memoria de la Oficina de Estadística General. 1887* (Buenos Aires, 1888), p. 85.
30. Chart indicating statistical composition of arrests made between 1 April 1888, and 31 March 1889, with indications of nature of the crime, AHC, Gobierno, 1889, T. 19, ff. 101–09. Foja 110 lists 434 women in the Servants’ Register during the same period of time.
31. Donna J. Guy, “The Rural Working Class,” especially footnotes 25 and 26 and figures 1 and 2; Archivo Histórico de Tucumán, Comprobantes de Cortaduría, 1870, T. 176, ff. 130, 311, 628.
32. “Criminal Statistics, Admissions to the Police Jail of Tucumán City During 1882 According to Crimes, Sex and Education of Delinquents, Tucumán Province,” *Registro estadístico correspondiente al año 1882* (Buenos Aires, 1884), p. 77.
33. Alfredo L. Palacios, *Pueblos desamparados. Solución de los problemas del noroeste argentino* (Buenos Aires, 1942); Ian Rutledge, “Plantations and Peasants in Northern Argentina: The Sugar Can Industry of Salta and Jujuy, 1930–1943,” in *Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Rock (Pittsburgh, 1975), pp. 88–113; Donna J. Guy, *Argentine Sugar Politics: Tucumán and the Generation of Eighty* (Tempe, 1980), p. 132.
34. Argentine Republic, Comisión Directiva de Censo, *Segundo Censo de la República Argentina*, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1898), 2: 513–16, 552–55, 365–66.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. cxliv, cxliii, cxlii.
36. Sociedad Industrial de Río de la Plata, *Lista de accionistas. Discursos pronunciados en la inauguración de la fábrica de paños* (Buenos Aires, 1874), p. 13.
37. James R. Scobie, *Revolution on the Pampas: A Social History of Argentine Wheat, 1860–1910* (Austin, 1964).
38. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Special Agents Series No. 37, “Shoe and Leather Trade in Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay,” by Arthur B. Butman (Washington, 1910), p. 11; No. 177, “Boots and Shoes, Leather and Supplies in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay,” by Herman G. Brock (Washington, 1919), pp. 52, 54–55. As late as 1910, 90 percent of all shoe uppers were finished at home by women, although eight years later most work was done in the factory.
39. Adrian Patroni, *Los trabajadores en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1897), pp. 94–95, 99–100.
40. Argentine Republic, Comisión Directiva del Censo, *Segundo Censo*, 2:cxcl, 48–50, 139–42, 297–300.
41. Lattes and Lattes, *La población de Argentina*, p. 154.
42. Oscar Cornblit, “European Immigrants in Argentine Industry and Politics,” in *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America*, ed. Claudio Veliz (Oxford, 1967), p. 227. See also James R. Scobie’s fine study of urbanization patterns in Buenos Aires and how it affected immigrant women and their work. James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires, Plaza to Suburb, 1870–1910* (New York, 1974), pp. 152–53, 226. He also stresses the agglomeration of European immigrants by nationality into tenement housing; see table 8, p. 267.
43. Edward Chase Kirkland, *Industry Comes of Age; Business, Labor and Public Policy, 1860–1897* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 1, 325–32, observes that the U.S. textile industry was the first to create a foreign market and that its main workers were women and children. In fact, “the movement of industry toward pools of labor was usually a movement

- toward women and child laborers" (p. 328). Tom Kemp, *Historical Patterns of Industrialization* (New York, 1978), chapter 4, reviews the historical viewpoints regarding the relationship of the textile industry to the industrial revolution and points out that in the mid-nineteenth century, Marx was aware that textile and metal trades were still outstripped as employers by rural work and domestic service, but patterns of the future had already been set in England. Samuel Lilley, "Technological Progress and the Industrial Revolution 1700–1914," in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe, The Industrial Revolution*, ed. Carlo M. Cipolla, pp. 187–226 integrates the history of the modernization of textile manufacture with other trends in European economic history.
44. U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufactures, Special Agents Series No. 40, "Cotton Goods in Latin America, Part III, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay," by W. A. Graham Clark (Washington, 1910), p. 24.
 45. Argentine Republic, *Tercer Censo Nacional*, 10 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1917–1919), 4: 384–89; Emilio J. Schleh, *La industria algodonera en la Argentina, consideraciones sobre su estado actual y su desarrollo futuro* (Buenos Aires, 1923) summarizes efforts made after the war to stimulate the cotton and textile industries.
 46. Juan Biale Massé, *El estado de las clases obreras argentinas a comienzos del siglo*, 2d. ed. (Córdoba, 1904, 1968), p. 423.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 596.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 611; Mark Jefferson, *Peopling the Argentine Pampa*; Research Series No. 16 (New York, 1926), p. 33.
 49. Biale Massé, *El estado*, p. 424, 553–54, 151, 566. Among the interior provinces, Mendoza provides the exception to the general status of women in that region during the nineteenth century.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 426.
 51. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
 52. Richard Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina 1890–1930* (Austin, 1977), Chapters 4 and 5.
 53. Law No. 4.661, Congreso Nacional, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Sesiones*, 1905, 3:811–12; 1907, 2:192–93. It was up to the Argentine president to determine which industries were dangerous or unhealthy. Ministerio de Agricultura, Dirección General de Comercio e Industria, *Censo Comercial e Industrial de la República, Boletín No. 20, Capital Federal* (Buenos Aires, 1914), pp. 22–23, 60–61; Nancy Caro Hollander, "Women and the Political Economy of Argentina," pp. 109–11; Carolina Muzzilli, "El trabajo femenino," *Boletín Mensual de Museo Social Argentino*, 15–16 (1913):65–90. *Boletín Mensual de Museo Social Argentino*, 15–16 (1913):65–90.
 54. *La Vanguardia*, *Leyes del trabajo nacionales y provinciales con sus decretos reglamentarios hasta el año 1943*, 8th ed. (Buenos Aires, 1943), pp. 495, 542. These laws were passed between 1905 and 1908.
 55. 1906 law, *ibid.*, pp. 636–37, 481–82.
 56. Santa Fe Province, *Ley 11.317, trabajo de mujeres y menores. Decreto reglamentario* (Santa Fe, 1927), p. 408.
 57. República Argentina, *Segundo Censo*, 2: 139–42.
 58. Elizabeth Jelin, "Migration and Labor Force Participation of Latin American Women: The Domestic Servants in the Cities," *Signs* 3:1 (Aug. 1977): 131.



Wooden altar figure, Quito, eighteenth century. Private collection.