UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Promise of Gender Progress: the civilizing project of biopolitical citizenship

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

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2017

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

To my grandparents Mama Sol and Payito who taught me that love buds from the humblest desire to give.

To Judith Rosenberg whose feet no longer walk this earth but whose warrior dancing spirit still frolics in our hearts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my mother, Isaura Pineda, and my brother, Benjamín Pacheco, for believing in me and encouraging me to complete my doctorate. Their fighting spirit is my inspiration, the warmth that fuels and centers me. I thank my father, Miguel Pacheco, who has always kindly supported me. I thank my aunts and uncles Fernando Pineda, Marina Pineda Castañeda, Alejandro Pineda, Elizabet Díaz, Antonio Pineda, Elisabeth Sánchez, Graciela Pacheco, and Sergio Suárez for graciously hosting me in their homes.

My Huastecan family generously trusted me despite the difficult tensions that arise from a relationship bred in part out of research. I especial thank the Díaz, Guzman, and Vera families whom I have come to love as my own. Our friendship has been sealed over many trips to the river for frolicking and fishing, the late-night dancing to the sound of huapango, and the many zacahuiles and huevinas we have shared with much delight. I hope to reciprocate this Huastecan spirit through a life-long commitment to solidarity and union.

I thank every Instancia staff, especially Ivonne, Lic. Diana, and Maestra Olivia for offering me their time, trust, and generosity. The same goes for the municipal judges, school officials, nurses, and other local officials who opened their hearts and doors to me.

I thank Nancy Postero for always challenging me. I was lucky to have a female graduate advisor of her academic caliber and humanity. It was her mentorship which allowed me to weather the uncertainty and hostility of graduate

school as a female student. Her work on citizenship and liberalism indelibly shaped my intellectual trajectory.

Joseph Hankins and I began our careers at UCSD together, and I will forever be grateful to him for his kindness, humility, and guidance. He has shown to many of us that graduate school can be a place for horizontal intellectual inquiry and collaboration. I thank him for introducing me to challenging theoretical material on liberalism, affect, and labor, which was so formative for many of us graduate students.

I thank David Pedersen for inspiring me to question the parameters of the field of Anthropology and to constantly question “savage slot” anthropology. He modeled various ways of challenging these tropes through our research, teaching, writing, and interpersonal approaches.

I thank Gloria Chacon, Elana Zilberg, Natalia Roudakova, and Eric Van Young for their instruction, mentorship, and guidance. Nikki Gee in the department of Anthropology is the cornerstone of our department. Her administrative knowledge keeps our collective lives functioning smoothly. Thanks to her keen eyes I was able to avert many administrative pitfalls and get through the hoops in the system.

I thank Dr. Jesús Ruvalcaba Mercado, Ana Bella Pérez Castro, and Juan Manuel Pérez Zevallos who have assisted my research and inducted me into the warm and dedicated community of Huastecan scholars in Mexico.

I thank my friends and fellow graduate students Esin Duzel, Waqas Butt, Natasa Garic-Humphrey, Tania Islas Weinstein, Tomo Sugimoto, Julien Clement,

Ricardo Fagoaga, Whitney Russell, Ramsey Ismail, Morgan Chalmiers, Amy Rothschild, Hafeez Jamali, Abdul Haque Chang, Ulices Piña, Jeanine Webb, Brendan Thornton, Claudia Chávez, Michael Berman, and Derrick Washington. Our vibrant intellectual discussions, camaraderie, and commiserating made graduate school a great place to form livelong friendships.

I thank Héctor Ramírez who was my partner for part of my graduate career. His friendship and sharp intellectual acumen were crucial foundations for many years. I thank my friends Luis Abarca, Miguel Guerrero, Tanner Smith, Adám Net, Elizabeth López, Angel Acevedo, Richard Burst-Lazarus, Gloria Cruz, Mely Méndez, Erica Duque, Jorge Esparza, Samantha Barrón, Sammy Mitchell, América Martínez, and Alejandro Reyes for your invaluable company.

To my beautiful companion Georgette Gómez, thank you for nourishing me day after day in the hard year of dissertation writing. When writing became a daily obligation, it was your home and embrace which made me whole. Our puppies Frijol and Canela are my most loyal friends. Home is where we are.

To my grandparents Soledad Servín and Hilario Pineda, thank you for loving me so selflessly and offering me everything you had. In your home, I found unparalleled peace and nourishment. Our memories in Rosario Castellanos 171-A are my most cherished wonders. Your bodies smoothly serenading each other to the music of danzón in your living room is a testament to the beauty of an era.

Judith Rosenberg was an amazing spirit who touched so many of our lives. Judith bravely accompanied me to the Huasteca via a twelve-hour bus ride on the winding highways. She extended her solidarity to my Huastecan friends

and danced her heart away to the banda music that was played at nightfall. Judith showed us all how to live meaningfully—always with a smile, a quarky joke, and a whimsical dance move.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Promise of Gender Progress: the civilizing project of biopolitical citizenship

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Gender and sexuality are a field through which modernity is imagined, measured, and used to justify racial hierarchies, colonization, and dispossession (Stoler 1995; Rofel 1999; Povinelli 2006, Hirsch & Wardlow 2006). Nation-states have played an important role in mobilizing modernity as an aspirational pathway (Dirks 1990). In Mexico, state policy has become especially interested in socially engineering gender practices since the 1970s within a global preoccupation with

overpopulation (Soto Laveaga 2007). My dissertation traces how the notion of gender progress, which in the 1970s was expressed as a concern for smaller families, agentive and working women, and a rejection of the Mexican macho, broadened to include the objective of eliminating gender violence and parentally arranged marriages.

I explore how local public servants in the Huasteca region are not only steering the indigenous population towards the ideal of the small nuclear family through conditional cash-transfer programs (Smith-Oka 2013), but also towards the ideal of the dual earning family and non-violent and egalitarian masculinities. I show how, ironically, indigenous women fulfill the ideal of the agentive working woman by working as maids in Nuevo León and Hidalgo where they are vulnerable to sexual violence. I also show how in the process of seeking wage-labor, young indigenous male migrants who aspire to a notion of liberal love by dating outside their local communities learn their subordinate place in the nation by dating mestizas.

My dissertation argues that both state practice and indigenous peoples' moral reckoning conceptualize gender progress as a move away from the gender barbarous, non-reflexive Indian. In this way, both state practice and indigenous peoples are placing value on a reflexive and modern indigeneity through the embodiment of new kinds of courtships, marriages, and paternities. I posit that, in Mexico's post-NAFTA economic conjuncture, gender progress is filling the vacuum left by the end of state-sponsored peasant agriculture and peasant citizenship. Thus, while gender progress serves to reproduce new (albeit

rehashed) categories of otherness, it may be the most accessible platform by which otherwise marginalized indigenous subjects sidelined to precarious forms of employment can make claims to agency, respect, and national relevance.

INTRODUCTION

I attended my first Father's Day celebration in the Huasteca region without any expectations. Noemi Vera, a Nahua woman in her early forties, invited me to attend her church's celebration in the Nahua community of Ocotíc in the municipality of Zacualco.[1] A comment in the sermon drew my attention. The pastor noted that men occupied a privileged position in the world as leaders of families and governments, yet this came with a price since the devil was especially interested in tempting leaders. The pastor explained that this was compounded by men's natural weakness, a point which the Adam and Eve story clearly made plain. The pastor's message contradicted the work of the *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer* or Local Women's Agency, which I was following. The psychologists, lawyers, and social workers of the Instancia were avidly teaching the local population that men and women were equal and that they should share authority in the household as well as housework.

A more contradictory set of fatherly ideals was presented the following day in the Father's Day celebration in the small village of Ocotlán. The four male village school teachers had organized an evening program in the village auditorium for the whole town in conjunction with the townswomen and school children. The event began at nightfall with opening remarks by one of the teachers who served as the MC. About twenty fathers were seated apart from the women and children and faced the table where the ceremonial table was placed

[1] Names of ethnographic subjects and places are pseudonyms. There is one exception. The city of Huejutla is a large city which I refer to by its actual name.

and the teachers were seated. Each father wore the colorful hand-made wreath made of fresh flowers made that day by their wives. Some had a *caguama* or a 32-ounce bottle of beer on the school desks where they sat. The MC noted that the teachers who had organized the event were fathers and thus had shared the joy of seeing a child of theirs born. He added that fatherhood implied challenges for “it [wasn’t] easy to be the one who [was] in control of the home”.[2]

As the teachers played lively *banda* music on the speaker system, the MC then queued the women folk to serve their fathers or husbands dinner. Next, a group of school children sang *Las Mañanitas*, a happy birthday song. The MC instructed the women and children to present their husbands and fathers the gifts they had prepared for them. At this point, the teachers handed each father and themselves a red bandana, a traditional gift for men. A group of school children then performed an animated polka dance for the audience.

The MC then announced a reflection and the teachers turned off the lights in the auditorium. The reflection was a short YouTube video about a father who narrated his visit to his son’s school. The narration was accompanied by a melodramatic melody that played in the background. The father recounted he had begrudgingly attended a mandatory school meeting at his son’s school. At the meeting, he had been busy thinking about a promising business venture and had missed what the teacher was saying. When he heard his name being called he got up to pick up what he thought was his son’s report card. When he noticed

[2] In Spanish: “*no es fácil ser el que lleva la rienda en el hogar*".

the report card was full of twos and threes, he quickly put it away so that no one else would see it.

The man went home in a fury, wondering why his son could perform so badly when he was a good provider for his family. He found his son in his room and began berating him for having embarrassed him. He took out his belt and hit him several times, leaving his son crying in his room. His wife simply shook her head, but didn't say anything. A bit later, his wife asked him to look at the report card carefully. The father looked at it again and noticed it read "Report Card for Juan's father": 2 in spending time with his son; 3 in making sure his son finishes his homework; 2 in spending time with his family; and 3 in showing his love. At this point, the father was overcome with remorse and went looking for his son to plead for forgiveness. The video ends with the boy saying, "I love you Dad".

The second video the teachers played was about a father who resented having a baby girl at first, but in time learned to love his daughter. When she was diagnosed with a fatal heart condition, the father gave up his life to donate his heart to his daughter. The video finished with the message, "Give the best gift, give love".

After the video, the teachers asked if any of the fathers wanted to say something. Only Jonatán Díaz got up and said, "We are very happy and thankful because our children are our happiness". With that he invited the townspeople to hear *huapango* music at his house and thanked the teachers, shaking each of their hands before taking a seat. The MC made his closing remarks and invited the townspeople to stay and dance. While the Díaz patriarchs stayed to dance

with their wives, Fernando, the youngest son who had just gotten married a few months ago decided to head home with his wife, Talía, and some of his nephews and nieces. Since there was a sense that trouble was brewing due to the heavy drinking men had been doing throughout the day, I followed the party that went home.

While we sat around in the courtyard playing huapango and eating leftover tamales, Jonatán's fifty-something-year old father, Don Erasmo, straggled in looking for food. I asked him if he had liked the event. Don Erasmo said that the teachers were right, that sometimes it was necessary to discipline your children. He added that while he had used the belt with all his sons, he had used it most of all with Jonatán. Don Erasmo had apparently missed the essential message of the videos that fathers be emotionally involved in their children's development rather than simply provide for and discipline them. Perhaps Don Erasmo was too inebriated or did not understand enough Spanish.

Whatever the case, even though Don Erasmo seemed to support physical disciplining of children, his grown-up children appeared to think differently. While in Ocotlán, I never witnessed Jonatán, his oldest son, or Anselmo, the second oldest, hit their children. The day after their youngest brother's wedding earlier that year, Jonatán had shared with me his reflections about parenting in the company of his four children ages three to sixteen. Jonatán recounted that he had not enjoyed his older children because he didn't have the time nor the awareness to care for them. Jonatán explained that at the time, he and his family

were living with his parents and farming his father's *milpa*.[3] His father made him carry out the heaviest tasks while reserving for himself the easier tractor work. His father also collected the income derived from their farm sales, and so Jonatán had to ask his mom for money for his family. Jonatán's wife, Laura, desperately wanted them to become independent and have their own *milpa* and house.

Jonatán recounted that when he finally had the courage to split from his parents, obtain his own *milpa*, and build his own house, his family's health improved. His children became plumper because he and Laura took charge of their meals. His younger children had been born in these conditions and so Jonatán was enjoying their childhood more than the older ones. He said he even took the time to play with the younger two. Jonatán claimed that while he had physically disciplined the older two, he was not doing so with the youngest two. His youngest daughter of nine years old who was listening quickly contested this statement, insisting Jonatán did hit her. While the two quibbled for a few minutes, the girl let her father have the last word. Reflections such as Jonatán's show how important being a good father was to Jonatán and what this looked like for him. Not only did Jonatán consider himself a good provider, but also emotionally invested in his children's upbringing, health, and quality of life.

The following year, I attended Ocotlán's Father's Day celebration with much anticipation. That year the male teachers had been replaced by a group of

[3] Farming plot.

female teachers who did not show reflective videos. Their celebration had more dance numbers by the school children and an entertaining three-legged race in which teams of fathers paired with their youngest child competed to reach the finish line. As opposed to the previous year, these teachers had chosen to make fathers play with their children rather than simply encourage them do so. The teachers' closing remarks included a warning to the public to drink in moderation. The night went down much quieter than the year before. The next morning, Don Erasmo explained that that the community of Ocotlán had decided to permanently ban the sale of alcohol in the community to stop men from beating their wives. Don Erasmo explained that while not all husbands in Ocotlán beat their wives, there were a few bad apples who did. Thus, while men could bring alcohol to the town, they could no longer find it in the community store or resell it on an individual basis.

As these Father's Day celebrations show, the Huasteca region of Hidalgo is not exempt from the reflections on what I call gender progress that are diffuse in the rest of Mexico and around the world. Gender progress consists of the ideals of gender egalitarianism, nonviolent masculinities, self-chosen marriages, and the superiority of small nuclear families in which the bonds between spouses and between parents and children pivot on emotional involvement and satisfaction. In the Huasteca region of Hidalgo, I found public school teachers, nurses, judges, and the staff who work in the *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer* or Local Women's Agency promoting gender progress. These state agents advocated for gender progress in a way that couched non-compliance as part of

indigenous peoples' supposed backwardness. I also found that Nahuas had internalized this concept of gender progress and mobilized it to judge themselves and others as either gender backwards or enlightened.

The mandate that the Nahua population adhere to gender progress seemed to elicit more urgency than the alleviation of the taxing poverty in which Nahuas in the Huasteca lived. It was this incongruence that piqued my focus on gender progress. Why has the expectation that Nahua peasants become emotionally involved parents, and non-abusive husbands become so important for the state? Even more perplexing is why Nahua peasants seem to be personally invested in embodying gender progress especially given that other aspects of modernization remain elusive? Furthermore, is it possible for indigenous peoples to embody gender progress when the concept itself is steeped in colonial binaries and relationships that define racialized subalterns as external to progress?

Historical Trends

I explore the ascending relevance of the concept of gender progress for Huastecan Nahuas and other rural indigenous populations in relation to the gradual sidelining of peasants and small-scale agriculture within the nation and the national economy. Peasants gained official recognition within the post-revolutionary corporatist framework. From the 1930s to at least the 1960s, their productivity was acknowledged as essential for the country's development. What's more, peasants had access to a constitutional promise of the post-

revolutionary state to redistribute land in the form of *ejidos* and *comunidades*, a project which ultimately placed slightly more than fifty percent of the national territory in their hands.[4] In 1992, this "peasant protagonism" was foreclosed when the neoliberal Mexican state abolished the constitutional measure safeguarding redistribution, in effect proclaiming an end to agrarian reform (Richard 2008).

Peasant protagonism had been highly gendered with the male peasant serving as the ideal agrarian rights bearing subject. This male agrarian subject was projected by the state to be a patriarch who would represent his nuclear family before the ejido assembly, a local government body created by agrarian reform (Baitenmann 2007). Peasant women were interpellated by the state as cultivators only as an afterthought and with much less institutional support than male peasants. Their role was understood to be primarily as housekeepers and caretakers, instrumental to the agrarian project as vectors of hygiene campaigns and domestic reforms (Vaughan 2000; Varley 2007). Thus, the peasant family and its sexual division of labor was considered intrinsic for national development.

In the post-revolutionary period, the Mexican state shaped "permissible modes" (Escobar 1995, 6) of gender and sexuality by representing Mexicanness as masculine and specifically macho. As Matthew Gutmann observed, "the fate of machismo as an archetype of masculinity has always been closely tied to Mexican cultural nationalism" such that "the macho became 'the Mexican' (1996, 241)." Analisa Taylor argues that gender figured prominently in post-revolutionary

[4] *Ejidos* and *comunidades* are one of three property types enshrined by the Constitution of 1921. They are tracts of land that are parceled for individual use but are held collectively by a group of *ejidatarios* and *comuneros* who have usufruct rights.

indigenismo by advancing the idea of the mestizo as the prototypical citizen of the Mexican nation (2009). According to the narrative of *la Malinche*, the mestizo had been born from the violation of his Indian mother by his Spanish father. The mestizo was to assume the challenge of building a new nation by distinguishing himself from his victimized Indian mother and victimizing Spanish father. Indian men were largely excluded from the prototypical Mexican masculinity since they were erased by this national narrative. Indian women, on the other hand, were included largely as victims and vessels.

While this paradigm of macho and mestizaje-oriented citizenship continues to be relevant, it appears obsolete vis-à-vis the Mexican state's current push to abate machismo and promote gender egalitarianism. For historian Gabriela Soto Laveaga, the Mexican state laid use of slogans, public relations, and soap operas to reorient itself away from the image of Mexicans as macho men and submissive women by upholding the image of dutiful men and agentive women as the new prototypes of a modern and less densely populated Mexico (2007). This new vision reflected the concerns of policymakers who were vexed by the massive migration of peasants to urban centers in the 1960s.

These concerns were echoed by international calls to stop population growth in the developing world. Population control policies were expected to solve poverty and mitigate the pressure on the developing world's supposedly limited resources. The precarious position of so-called developing states made them especially susceptible to comply with this rising international paradigm. Population control was also said to advance women's integration into

development by helping women break free of their role as caretakers and housekeepers. It was expected that once freed of such roles, women would be able to participate in the paid labor market more fully, and that such participation would further discourage them from having too many children.

Population control policies followed international platforms in the 1950s that had defined gender progress as guaranteeing women's equality with men. Led by the United Nations, governments the world over were tasked with eliminating discriminatory laws that kept women at a subpar status. This first gender progressive framework was embedded within the classical liberal idea of citizenship in which women were to be guaranteed the same rights as men. By the 1970s, women's entry into paid employment and the number of children they had were considered prime indicators of women's equality.

Improving the nation through reproduction rather than by redistributing resources from the rich to the poor built upon earlier programs of eugenics and puericulture that had influenced Mexican policies. These discourses posited that to improve the nation's racial stock it was necessary to inhibit the reproductive capacities of the poor, sanitize their habits, and eliminate alcoholism. Eugenics and puericulture drew attention to hygiene, reproduction, maternity, and marriage as ambits through which the health of the nation could be perfected. These scientific discourses underscored the national implications of the maternal and reproductive agency of women, especially that of poor women (Stepan 1991).

Since the 1950s, Mexico kept abreast of these international platforms, reconstructing itself as a force of gender progress or gender modernization

beginning with extending women the right to vote in 1953. In the 1970s, Mexico took on a proactive role by hosting the first UN World Conference on Women and making some key changes to its constitution and federal laws to reflect the spirit of population control and women's equality. Mexico became a posterchild for population control policies, earning international accolades for its speedy reduction of its annual population growth from 3.5% in 1974 to 2.1% in 1986 (Soto Laveaga 2007, 27).

In the 1960s and 70s, currents of second-wave feminists came to question whether the Mexican state could claim such moral high ground when it was involved in massacres and cooptation of social movements. These feminists were also critical of the double-shift women were facing due to their entry into paid labor and the gendered labor niches that were opening for women. While second-wave feminists initially organized independently from and in opposition to the PRI-dominated Mexican state, some currents modified their stance in response to the state's democratizing of the electoral system and its active courting of feminists in shoring up its legitimacy. Henceforth, these feminists came to occupy positions in the legislature and as consultants of the state.

Feminists first collaborated with presidential administrations of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) over sexual and domestic violence. These issues emerged from second-wave feminist concerns with "the personal is political". Not only did sexual and domestic violence serve to unite different socioeconomic classes of women but also to garner public and state support for feminist causes due to their affective charge and emphasis on bodily integrity

(see Keck & Sikkink 1998; Lang 2003; Hall 2004; Larrauri 2007). As these issues became internationally recognized and generously funded under the term violence against women in the 1980s and 90s, the NGOs, which feminists had established to provide direct services to survivors enjoyed an effervescence (see Keck & Sikkink 1998).

The results of this collaboration between feminists and the state included criminal reforms and specialized agencies where victims could report crimes pertaining to sex and domestic violence. Several feminists suggest that this collaboration pivoted on a “punitive populism” by which law and order initiatives gained popular support through the seemingly honorable act of prosecuting sex offenders (Larrauri 2007). Studies on rape sentencing and convictions in Mexico suggest, however, that the penal apparatus has scantly been used to criminalize perpetrators of sex crimes. The Mexican penal apparatus seems to be directed at incarcerating a greater number of indigenous peoples who are involved in social activism or the small-scale drug trade (Hernández Castillo 2013). These two seemingly unrelated phenomena—indigenous peoples’ turn to the petty drug trade and social protest—are in effect rooted in the depreciation of small-scale agriculture that has taken place since Mexico’s liberalized its economy.

The diffusion of gender progress has also reinforced racial difference. In the 1970s, the state portrayed the Indian rural dweller or peasant as the paragon of the unreflexively reproducing Mexican (Soto Laveaga 2007). While Mexico’s governing elites have long justified the oppression of indigenous peoples by disparaging their sexual, gender, and kinship practices as bordering on the

animalistic, since the 1970s these sentiments have evolved into the characterization of Indians as overpopulating automatons, illiberal parents who sell their underage daughters in marriage, or stubbornly androcentric cultures. This process of othering of indigenous peoples through gendered concepts exemplifies the profound racism that prevails in Mexico. That these views had political ramifications became evident in the early 2000s when Mexican academics, pundits, and legislators rejected the demands of the indigenous movement for autonomy by claiming that to extend indigenous peoples autonomy would be to give indigenous men free rein to abuse indigenous women. In 2001, legislators passed a watered-down version of autonomy through the Law of Indigenous Rights and Culture (Hernández Castillo 2013, 300).

Ethnographic site: the Huasteca of Hidalgo

The Mexican state's gender disciplining takes on colonial and racial hues in the Huasteca, a region that is largely indigenous. The Huasteca region is most often defined as encompassing eastern San Luis Potosí and Hidalgo and northern Veracruz, though it also is said to include smaller parts of Queretaro, Puebla, and Tamaulipas. Geographically, its limits are typically taken to be the Soto la Marina river to north, the Sierra Madre to the west and the Gulf coast to the east, and the Tuxpan or Cazones river to the south. According to sixteenth-century friar Bernardo de Sahagún, Cuextlan was the name originally given to the area by the Aztecs, which the Spanish hispanized as "Huasteca" (Ochoa 1990, 133). Today, the region is a multilingual, multiethnic, and multiracial region

populated by Nahuas, Teenek, Otomíes, Tepehuas, Pames, Totonacas, Chichimecas, and mestizos, with cultural influences shared by the indigenous groups in the area (Ruvalcaba Mercado & Pérez Zevallos 1996).

The *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples-CDI) and the United Nations Development Program (PNUP) classified the Huasteca, as one of twenty-five indigenous regions of Mexico (2006). This report stated that the indigenous population of the Huasteca constituted 59% of the region (CDI-PNUP 2006, 130). This percentage is higher in the Huasteca Hidalguense. Its eight municipalities have a percentage of indigenous speakers between 60 and 96% (INEGI 2015a, 51).

The social geography of the Huasteca is marked by inequality and racial segregation. In the same year, the per capita GDP of the indigenous population was $2,750 compared to $4,884 of the non-indigenous population (PPP dollars) (CDI-PNUP 2006, 193). Indigenous peoples live dispersedly in small villages while mestizos occupy municipal head towns that have historically served as the centers of local power. Historically, the indigenous peoples of Huasteca have struggled against dispossession, resource extraction, and control over their own bodies. The Huastecos or Teenek were the first to settle in this area between 1,500 and 1,200 B.C. (Martínez García 2013, 26). They faced the Chichimeca nomadic groups to the north and the Tepehuas and Totonacas to the south (Ibid). About fifty years before the Spanish arrived in the area, the Teenek faced the Aztec conquest and its tributary demands (Herrera Casasús 2004, 231).

Historian Myrna Santiago argues that the Aztec and the Spanish ascribed the role of “supplier” to the region (2011, 41). Between 1522 and 1531, Hernán Cortés and Nuño de Guzman distributed the first *encomiendas* in the area (Herrera Casasús 2004, 231). However, the Spanish were the first to envision drastically restructuring the region in the form of pasture lands resembling those of southern Spain (Ibid). The Spanish judged the Teenek population unfit for labor and exchanged about 15,000 of them for cattle and horses in the Caribbean (Pérez Zevallos 2001). The ravages of war, enslavement, and the spread of the Pox decimated the remaining Nahua and Teenek population, leaving the Spanish without the vital labor force necessary to cut down the forests (Santiago 2011, 41).

As the indigenous population began to recover after the sixteenth century, conflicts over land and its resources between Indians and the Spanish escalated (Ruvalcaba Mercado & Pérez Zevallos 1996). At times, the indigenous inhabitants of the Huasteca succeeded in expanding their territorial land base. In the mid nineteenth century, for example, indigenous inhabitants fought through and against liberal disentailment laws, which sought to break apart and privatize collective landholdings held by the church and Indian communities. The indigenous populations of Hidalgo and Veracruz enlarged their land base by thwarting the implementation of or engaging the opportunities provided by the disentailment laws (Escobar Ohmstede 2002; Ducey 2002).

In the twentieth century, usurpation of land by ranchers intensified. Ranchers in possession of the best land developed patron-client relations with

Indians that entailed renting out land to Indians in exchange for their labor and taking responsibility for their welfare in times of need (Schryer 1993). This exchange was exploitative as ranchers siphoned Indian labor not only for their own haciendas, but also for the maintenance of their mestizo towns and municipalities (Briseño 1993; Schryer 1993). Such was the importance of Indian labor that as Romana Falcón notes of the Huasteca of San Luis Potosí, the richest landowners were those with the most Indians (1984).

These patron-client relations went hand in hand with racism and paternalism. Mestizos viewed Indians as inferior due to their distance from what were considered to be mestizo centers of modernity and civilization (Briseño 1993). Ranchers often interfered in the internal affairs of client Indian communities, for example by exercising veto power over the appointment of authorities whom they used in turn to secure their interests (Ibid). At times, landowners recurred to the use of force to secure Indian labor such as by razing entire communities or murdering Indian authorities (Briseño 1993). Competing landowners were known to aid terrorized Indian communities in an effort to expand their patron-client base (Falcón 1984; Briseño 1993).

The promise of agrarian reform went largely unfulfilled in the Huasteca, a region known as a bastion of *cacicazgos* (Falcón 1984).[5] In collusion with state and municipal governments, ranchers in the Huasteca routinely thwarted presidential decrees ordering land restitutions through the power of their rancher

[5] *Cacicazgos* refer to large land bases presided by *caciques* or powerful landowners known for their authoritarian use of power.

associations (Briseño 1993). During the Cárdenas presidential administration (1934-1940), the federal government expropriated significant amounts of land and broke up some of the most entrenched *cacicazgos* (Ibid). Nevertheless, usurpation of Indian land continued. By 1952, 93.5% of land of agricultural use in the Huasteca Hidalguense was held as private property with the remaining 6.5% held as social property—that is as *ejidos* and *comunidades* (Martínez García 2013). In the 1970s, the Secretary of Agrarian Reform reported 756 estates were held by private property owners in *ejido* land belonging to peasants (Vargas 2005, 110).

Around this time, the patron-client relations that tied peasants and landowners together entered a crisis. Increased pressure over the land base by a growing peasant population combined with a growing reluctance by cattle owners to both rent land and hire the Indian population (Schryer 1990; Briseño 1993). This reluctance stemmed from an intensification of land use by landowners who sought to meet the increased demand for beef in Mexico City and the US (Briseño 1993).

Between 1960 and 1980, landless inhabitants of the Huasteca region of Hidalgo and to a lesser extent Veracruz led massive land seizures against private property owners. At their peak, 80,000 rural inhabitants took part in these territorial contestations and recovered nearly 56,298 acres in the Huasteca of Hidalgo (Ávila 1986; Matías Alonso 1986, 108). After a frenzied period of human rights violations and military attempts to quash the peasant land movement, the

federal government legalized the tracts seized by peasants (Schryer 1990, 293-296; Vargas 2005).

This redistribution of land through a grassroots struggle reinforced a peasant consciousness. In communities settled on “recovered” land, a sense of collective triumph and pride in land seizures is transmitted through collective narratives in which Nahuas view themselves as having transitioned from life as *peones acasillados* o *jornaleros* toiling on land owned by mestizos towards a dignified sense of having attained the status of *campesinos*.

However, the younger generations have turned their backs on the very land for which their parents and grandparents fought. Migrating to Mexico City, Monterrey, or Guadalajara has become a rite of passage for youths upon completing middle school. This steady migration points to the crisis of peasant agriculture; peasant farming is a riskier and less dependable subsistence strategy for the rural indigenous population today. Peasants are interpellated by the state primarily as recipients of poverty alleviation programs rather than as productive elements of the nation (Grammont 1995, 109-117).

In the face of the precarization of peasant agriculture, rural inhabitants are diversifying their economic strategies by engaging migratory wage-labor, petty commerce, and migration to the US (Grammont 1995, 109-117; Hamilton 2002; D’Aubeterre Buznego 2011). Indigenous peoples’ incursion into the labor market since the 1970s is occurring within a feminization of the labor market, that is jobs are becoming deregulated, flexible, and servile, resembling the types of occupations historically reserved for women (D’Aubeterre Buznego 2011).

In the twenty-first century, the “flexible” insertion of indigenous peoples in the labor market is evident in their wide-scale mobility. According to the 2000 census, 11.1% of the indigenous population resided in an entity different from that of its birth (INMUJERES 2006, 10). Furthermore, the population of indigenous migrants is largely young. As reported in 2000, among the indigenous language-speaking population which changed residence at least once in the last five years, 63% were between the ages of 15 and 34 (INEGI 2004, 46).

Additionally, the settlement tendency of indigenous peoples in Mexico is towards a centralized form of urbanization, but also a wide-scale dispersal in localities with less than a thousand inhabitants (Pérez 2002; Yanes 2010). According to the 2000 census, there were 3.6 million indigenous people living in rural zones versus 2.4 million in urban zones, with the metropolitan areas of Mexico City; Monterrey, Nuevo León; and Guadalajara, Jalisco holding the largest concentrations of indigenous population (Ibid). At the same time, in the years 2000 and 2005, indigenous people were counted in 99% of the municipalities in Mexico (CDI-PNUD 2000 & 2005).

Indigenous migrants are concentrated in low-paying and low-status labor occupations. Severine Durin has identified three indigenous labor niches in the metropolitan area of Monterrey (MAM)—that is occupations in which the percentage of the indigenous economically active population working in that sector is larger than the non-indigenous economically active population (2009, 33). In the MAM, indigenous people are employed in greater percentages than the non-indigenous population as assistants and peons in the craft and industrial

manufacturing process; street vendors and street service workers; and domestic workers (Ibid, 36). Indeed, about 79% of indigenous women who are economically active in the MAM are employed as domestic workers (Ibid).

On the other hand, the flexibilization of labor has reinforced the value of rural land. Despite that *ejidatarios* and *comuneros* were given the opportunity to privatize and sell their *ejido* and *comunal* lands, rural inhabitants have been found to value working and conserving their land as economic security rather than selling it (Hamilton 2002). In many regions in Mexico, migrants who cannot support themselves continuously through wage-labor in cities often return to work their land for part of the year or hire workers to farm their lands (Castellanos 2010; Valle Esquivel et al 2011). Indeed, for many of my Huastecan friends, city life was too risky and costly. Those who lost their jobs or became injured returned to the Huasteca to resume farming or growing livestock. They claimed that in the countryside one could live off the land while in the city everything, even water, was for sale.

Theoretical Interventions

In examining the influence of gender progress for indigenous peoples, I make contributions to the theoretical fields of citizenship, indigeneity, and gender. This dissertation conceives citizenship as a contested field of normativity shaped by state practice and hegemonic cultural paradigms by which subjects and groups contest their categorization along a spectrum of normativity and otherness (Krupa and Nugent 2015). While the classic model of liberal citizenship

is about including and excluding subjects from rights and entitlements, I focus on the biopolitical aspect of citizenship. Drawing from Foucault, I understand biopolitical citizenship to encompass the expectations that national narratives and programs project as the basis of good citizenly conduct for the good of the nation, its growth, development, and health (1990).

I trace how gender progress has become a critical ambit of biopolitical citizenship and how this type of disciplining of citizens has been articulated discursively and mobilized through economic structures supported by the Spanish crown and the Mexican state. While Foucault who was invested in decentering the state views biopolitical techniques as part of governance rather than solely state practice, in Mexico, the state's proactive role in development efforts calls for a critical look at is biopolitical techniques and apparatus. My research tracks the way the Mexican state is devising itself as a gender progressive state by developing an apparatus of local, state, and federal institutions and campaigns that discipline the citizenry into embodying gender progress. I argue that the Mexican state's sponsorship of gender progress, based on a global concern with overpopulation and more recently gender violence, has in effect set a new threshold for what constitutes good and responsible citizens.

This field of biopolitical citizenship is permeated by "coloniality" or the imposition of race as a logic that organizes social life (Quijano 2000) and its articulation with the Eurocentric "colonial/modern gender system" of heterosexuality, patriarchy, and sexual dimorphism (Lugones 2007). By turning to these frameworks, my research seeks to underline the way modernity is at its

core a civilizing project that produces categories of racial and gendered others. The drawback to these frameworks is that they characterize coloniality and the colonial/modern gender system as timeless logics. To correct this, my study adopts an openness to historical processes to enquire how specific forms of power, knowledge, and expressions of desires are produced and distributed in precise moments (Foucault 1980; Stoler 1995; Rofel 1999).

Mexican scholars argue that rural indigenous agencies are taking shape within what they call "*nuevas ruralidades*" or "new ruralities". Under this thematic, scholars underscore the ample changes in the social, economic, and subjective make-up of the countryside including the expansion of communication networks, public infrastructure, compulsory education, especially at the middle school level, and migration (Urteaga 2008). According to Julieta Valle Esquivel et al, these transformations are enabling "*desplazamientos*" or displacements in rural inhabitants' symbolic horizons, which subjects experience as a re-embedding in a wider world of mass culture linked to capitalist expansion (2011).

These authors argue that this sense of affective displacement points to a "distancing" similar to that felt by migrants, but that is not contingent on migration. Likewise, Julie Chu recognizes that subjects devise ways of inhabiting the world as "cosmopolitan and future-oriented" without the need to migrate (2010, 12). For these subjects, to feel emplaced is to long for what Chu conceives as a "spatial-temporal extension" of the self "within a larger global and transnational social field" (ibid).

Scholarship on *nuevas ruralidades* suggests that subjective displacements and migration have opened new opportunities for indigenous subjects to "reposition themselves socially and politically" (Valle Esquivel et al 2011), which is especially significant for women and youth who have occupied marginalized positions in the countryside. These scholars suggest that these re-positionings may signal the emergence of an "indigenous modernity" that challenges age-old understandings of indigeneity as rural, archaic, and fixed (Ibid, 74).

I cautiously embrace the idea of "indigenous modernity" precisely because I find that structurally indigenous peoples continue to occupy a subaltern position within the countryside and the localities to which they migrate. To underscore this continuing precarity, most notably the relegation of Indian women to paid or unpaid social reproductive labor, I draw from Giorgio Agamben's concept of bare life. As opposed to Giorgio Agamben, who defines bare life as that which is exposed to lethal violence, I follow Ewa P. Ziarek, who argues that bare life can also be exposed to rape and exploitation (2012). I argue that Indian women are recognized in Mexico for their role as the prototypically sexually violated mother known as "*La Malinche*". The rape of Indian women has had a biopolitical role in the nation in so far as it has been vital to the project of *mestizaje*.

Nevertheless, I also recognize that one of the ways indigenous peoples negotiate their desires and necessities for upward mobility, recognition within the nation, and new ways of being indigenous is through their gender and sexual practices. In the context of uneven capitalist development and the colonial relegation of indigenous peoples to the countryside, indigenous peoples face

ample pressures to distinguish themselves from the gender regressive, rural Indian. I show how Nahuas and Teenek endeavor to shed the markers of indigeneity and rurality that are stigmatized in Mexican society.

Perversely, because Indian women are more Indian, and Indians are more female, as Marisol de la Cadena (1995) and Andrew Canessa (2012) have noted, attempts at distancing oneself from indigeneity is by default masculinizing. As Marisol de la Cadena concluded through her work in Peru, Indian men's ethnicity is more elastic and includes the possibility of cultural mestizaje while Indian women are "the least ethnically or socially mobile, and their Indian identity approaches closure" (Ibid, 333). This nested hierarchy is the result of the patriarchal tenets of European colonization and the complicated processes by which indigenous peoples have internalized the male-female hierarchy as a marker of civilization, citizenship, and social membership (Lugones 2007). Thus, one of the cunnings of recognition, if we may borrow a phrase from Elizabeth Povinelli (2002), is that getting ahead for indigenous peoples serves to cruelly redraw the borders between the masculinized and feminized.

As indigenous peoples battle to lay claim of biopolitical citizenship through the ways in which they perform gender, reproduce, relate to their partners, and plan to rear their children, they are made complicit in advancing the feminization and devaluation of the Indian masses, those others who are gender regressive. Thus, as indigenous peoples negotiate their desires and necessities for upward mobility and recognition both within the Mexican nation and their indigenous communities, it is imperative that ethnographic studies such as this one shed

light on the nefarious ways in which gender progress is serving as a new disciplinary force that creates new (albeit rehashed) categories of unwanted persons.

Methodology

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and interviews, for fifteen months starting January 2015 through December 2015 and then a second period between June 2015 and September 2016. I conducted this work principally with Nahua men and women in the Huasteca region of the state of Hidalgo and in the metropolitan area of Monterrey, Nuevo León, where many migrate for work. My past relationships with socialist communities in the area served as the starting base for my research. Three families supported my research. The first two, the Díaz and the Guzman families, are related to one another through their matriarchs who are sisters. The Díaz family lives in the small village of Ocotlán and is comprised of Don Erasmo and Doña Olivia and their four adult children who each have their own wives and families. The youngest of the Díaz children, Fernando, served as a very dear and close friend. He is the subject of the new masculinities that are made possible by migration and the idea of gender progress, which I discuss in Chapter four.

The Guzman family are new residents of the mestizo headship of Tepetzalan. They moved from the small village of Acopilco about three years ago and settled in a barrio that once belonged to a neighboring Nahua community, but was recently annexed by the headship of Tepetzalan. Due to its recent

addition, it lacks the services that the rest of the Tepetzalan neighborhoods enjoy. Located beyond a ravine, the piece of land which the Guzman family bought and reside in typically gets flooded. Two of their children, Natalia and Jacinto, feature as migrant protagonists in Chapters three and four.

The last and unrelated family is the Vera who live in the larger Nahua village of Ocotíc.[6] While the Vera are not protagonists in the rest of the chapters, they impact my vision of the Huasteca, especially as a reference point to the land struggles of the region and the impact of migration. In the town of Tepetzalan, I also worked with Doña Fabiola Peralta, a prominent mestiza widow in her late sixties. I began renting from Doña Fabiola after I came down with a life-threatening allergic reaction to the dirt floors of the Guzman family's home. I interviewed Doña Fabiola and carried out participant observation of the relations between her and the Nahua maids she employed. These relationships of exploitation are the subject of Chapter three. In Monterrey, Nuevo León, I also carried out fieldwork with Teenek youth migrants from the Huasteca of San Luis Potosí and Veracruz.

I also carried out ethnographic research with state agents involved in promoting gender progress in the municipalities of Tepetzalan, Joquicingo, and Huejutla. The state agents I interviewed and observed included a school principal, a nurse, a local judge, and the staff of two local women's agencies or

[6] I refer to names and places using pseudonyms, using Nahuatl pseudonyms when the original place name is in Nahuatl.

Instancias Municipales de la Mujer. I also carried out fieldwork with the Indigenous Women's House or *Casa Indígena de la Mujer* in the city of Huejutla.[7]

As a thirty-three-year-old mestiza, research with Nahua farmers was the equivalent of studying down as I enjoyed a more privileged economic and racial status. This greatly facilitated my research as well as stymied it. Due to my age and gender, some of the first migrants to open up to me were young, unmarried men who enjoyed talking to me about their sexual conquests and romances. Women, both young and old, on the other hand, were less forward with me as I transgressed local gender expectations as a single and childless woman in her early thirties. Only over time was I able to gain their trust.

As a mestiza, Nahua men and women identified me as a *xinolah* or city woman. My Nahua interlocutors described me as tall (I'm 5'3"), *blanquita* or light-skinned, and often made comments about my body composition being entirely different than theirs. In one occasion, Noemi Vera tried to complement me by saying that I was so beautiful I could be part of a *telenovela* or soap opera cast. In another occasion, Don Erasmo warned me not to wear *manta* (traditional cotton) embroidered blouses, as I was known to wear, to his son Fernando's wedding because I should wear something more beautiful. More than once, I was asked to stop wearing these blouses, which are associated with Indianness. These descriptions show how as a mestiza I was associated with dominant beauty standards and expected to dress like a "modern" mestiza.

[7] Actual name of the city.

My educated, mestiza, and Mexico City/American background greatly facilitated my research with mestizos in the Huasteca region in which open racism is rampant. Mestizo state municipal agents, including judges and public-school teachers, welcomed me into their offices and made generous offers to take me around the region. Mestizos in town often thought I was a distant relative of Doña Fabiola, who has blue eyes and is much more light-skinned than I. On more occasions than one, my budding relationship with Doña Fabiola's family led to situations in which the Peraltas expected me to stop spending so much time with my Nahua friends, and vice versa. Doña Fabiola's family also asked me to stop defending the Nahua maids so much. In Monterrey, my mestizo housemates also complained that the English classes I offered to only indigenous persons were an instance of reverse racism. While negotiating these relationships was a challenge, especially because I was a guest in these mestizo households and government offices, in the end it taught me a great deal about the racial disparities and ongoing racism in Mexico.

A word about the author

My interest in the Huasteca region grew out of an activist concern with racism. As a Chicana from McAllen, Texas, I became politicized as an undergraduate by the racial disparities at Dartmouth College, an educational institution that was born out of a mission to civilize Native Americans. I found resonance in the ongoing Zapatista struggle in Chiapas, Mexico, in which indigenous groups were defying the Mexican government for land, autonomy,

and a new national economic and political model. Compelled to learn from these struggles, I volunteered with an NGO supporting indigenous women in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas through a Dartmouth summer fellowship. It was through this NGO that I first visited indigenous communities who were opposing the privatization of electricity. These encounters motivated me to obtain another fellowship upon graduating college to volunteer with a women's rights NGO in the state of Oaxaca. Through this organization, I learned about feminist struggles against femicides in Oaxaca and indigenous women's struggle to gain a voice in their communities. The year 2005 was an important year in Oaxaca as the teacher's strike grew into a mass popular uprising against the state government.

My experiences in Mexico drove me to study indigenous politics through a Master's degree in Latin American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. I took anthropology courses that were most helpful in understanding the contradictions between Mexico's multicultural rhetoric and the indigenous struggles I had come across in Chiapas and Oaxaca against dispossession. Through these classes, I became interested in exploring the binary between class-based and identity-based platforms for indigenous peoples. My contacts in Chiapas suggested I explore this question with the historic socialist peasant organization of the Hidalgo, the one independent organization that remained from the legendary land struggle of the 1970s and 80s. With the permission of the Huastecan socialist peasant organization, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork on the meaning of socialism for a primarily indigenous base of *milpa* farmers (see Pacheco 2008).

For years after the end of my master's program, I continued to visit the socialist communities in the Huasteca. In 2010, in consultation with the socialist organization, I returned to explore how non-socialist peasants in the area were responding to the government's land privatization program. In the end, this topic proved to be too male-centered since land issues were handled primarily by men. For my dissertation research, I opted to study migration since over the course of my visits, I had noticed how common it was for young people to leave the Huasteca for Mexico City, Monterrey, Pachuca, and even Cancún in search of work. While some returned, most did not. It appeared that for these younger generation of Huastecans the land had lost its productive value.

In 2015, I returned to study youth migration with an eye towards the new romantic aspirations that wage-labor entailed for erstwhile farmers. At this point, my previous focus on land dispossession did not allow me to think about the state in any other way except through its repressive and land privatizing arms. This changed when in 2015, one of my seventeen-year-old friends, Nayelli, became pregnant out of wedlock by an older inhabitant of Tepetzalan who happened to be married. When he expressed no intention of supporting the child, Nayelli and I found ourselves in search of a way to secure child support payments. We ended up in Tepetzalan's *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer*, the local women's agency. Our visit to the *Instancia* opened my ethnographic panorama to the municipal efforts underway across Mexico to eliminate gender violence and bring about gender equality.

I soon found out how these efforts were tied to civilizing efforts and racism with deep historical resonance. It is my intent to contribute to understandings of how contemporary racism and racial hierarchy in Mexico are reinforced through the discourse of gender progress. On the other hand, I wish to call attention to the void left by the withdrawal of post-revolutionary peasant recognition. Bereft of opportunities for economic upward mobility and symbolic recognition, gender progress is one way in which indigenous peoples can lay claim to citizenly value and agency.

CHAPTER ONE: The Promises and Perils of Biopolitical Citizenship for Women and Indigenous Peoples

As a postcolonial nation, Mexico's citizenship regime emerged from the deeply unequal and violent relations of racialized and gender colonization and exploitation. In this chapter, I consider the struggles over equality waged by indigenous peoples and women and how these struggles have taken shape within liberal models of citizenship. While the classic model of liberal citizenship is about including and excluding certain subjects from rights and entitlements, biopolitical citizenship refers to how different groups of people are incited to act according to a rationale that places the growth, development, and health of the polity at the center of governance. Women and indigenous people are expected to judge themselves and be judged as proper Mexican citizens in line with this biopolitical logic. Even if indigenous peoples have attained formal inclusion as Mexican citizens, they are most often than not regarded as non-normative citizens, populations who have yet to adopt the behavior considered ideal for the national good.

I examine Mexican classical liberal as well as biopolitical citizenship through the intersections of sex, gender, and race. Mutually constitutive, historically-situated, and relational, these categories have been critical to the distinctions and mobilizations of Mexican citizenship. As Michel Foucault has argued, sexuality or the practices and identities related to sex has served to organize both the body and the population (1990). Gender as the gamut of

characteristics that are said to oscillate between the feminine and the masculine has been a fundamental category in organizing populations. As for race, I draw upon Ann L. Stoler, who revises Foucault's work by applying an imperial geopolitical lens (1995). Stoler frames race, and specifically racialized colonial bodies, as always informing what is normative. Through Stoler's contributions it becomes evident that race, but also gender and sexuality are internal categories to biopolitical citizenship, guiding who is entitled to be included and under what terms.

In thinking about how liberal and biopolitical citizenship evolve over time, I consider the insight of Elizabeth Povinelli who draws attention to the limits of liberal rational critical discourse (2002). While normativity is continuously debated in the public sphere, there are times when people feel the need to divert certain questions about what merits liberal recognition away from rational critical discourse and to moral judgement. It is the role of moral judgements to provide a sense of self-evidentiary tVanesa with respect to what is good or repulsive. In sum, we can say that moral judgements are also built into liberal and biopolitical citizenship.

Any contemplation of citizenship is inadequate without consideration for modernity. Modernity is an even grander story than citizenship, serving to place various groups of people according to a teleology of civilizational and individual progress. Modernity is compelling in so far as nation-states organize their populations around it (Dirks 1990). Yet, it is especially motivating for those who are excluded from "a Eurocentric universalist modernity" (Rofel 1999, 8). As

Dipesh Chakrabarty has noted, with respect to modernity, the “Third World” has been perpetually relegated to “the waiting room of History” (Chakrabarty 2000, 8-9). In this vein, Lisa Rofel defines modernity as the “continuously shifting site of global/local claims, commitments, and knowledge, forged within uneven dialogues about the place of those who move in and out of categories of otherness” (1999, 3).

While both citizenship and modernity traverse on the same terrain of normativity, each point to a different set of eyes watching our performances. As Danylin Vanesaerford reminds us, “Foucault’s account of discipline presumes an exchange of gazes between a subject and a surveilling other imagined as watching from on high” (2009, 4). The Western gaze is the ultimate “surveilling other” of citizenship in Mexico. In postcolonial nations such as Mexico, modernity is a civilizing discourse that portrays indigenous peoples, and most notably indigenous women, as the embodiment of backwardness and savagery against which modern subjects should construct themselves.

These conceptual elements will help us understand the discriminating aspects of liberal and biopolitical citizenship in including and excluding groups of people from formal rights as well as in disciplining them—the ways in which bio-power serves to normalize certain behaviors and aspirations as citizenly behavior. With fewer civil rights than men, women in Mexico were expected to contribute to the nation through their (unpaid) reproductive labor and obedience up until the 1970s. Similarly, indigenous peoples have been charged with providing the cheapest productive and reproductive labor while also assimilating

to a Europeanized mestizo ideal. I explore how the distribution of liberal rights has changed over time to create women and indigenous citizens as well as new sets of citizenly behavior for each.

1.1 The Normative Citizen

T.H. Marshall's formulation of citizenship made the concept useful for posing questions of disparity. Marshall's outline of citizenship included three facets: the civil, political, and social (1950). For Marshall, civil rights encompassed the rights "necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice" (Ibid, 10-11). Political rights included the "right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body" (Ibid). Lastly, social rights included "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (Ibid). It was the last category that proved the most salient for T.H. Marshall who envisioned a practicable synergy between capitalism and labor (Walby 1994).

Writing in the context of Great Britain, T.H. Marshall pointed out that citizenship had been achieved progressively, with civil rights attained in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth, and social rights in the twentieth (1950, 14). Many scholars pointed out the limitations of Marshall's

account for it failed to address the progression of rights of various minorities. Sylvia Walby, for example, claims Marshall leaves out women altogether, ignoring the fact that “First World” women won political rights before most of their civil rights (1994, 384). Of course, Walby failed to consider differences of race. Melinda Chateauvert sustains that African-Americans in the US won all three types of rights in just thirteen months between 1964 and 1965 through the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and the Economic Opportunity Act (2008). Nevertheless, Walby’s insight led her to point out that citizenship has progressed differently for different peoples and that it is not necessarily linear, obeying to the interests of the state in particular “rounds of restructuring” (1994, 384).

Despite these significant historical revisions, Marshall was pivotal in bringing attention to social parity as a relevant measure of citizenship (Walby 1994; Chateauvert 2008). While Marshall was concerned with class inequality, other scholars used Marshall’s conceptualization to measure the inequalities between women, immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and white, heterosexual men (Chateauvert 2008, 200). The major limitation of this approach is that, as Sylvia Walby states, Marshall’s conceptualization framed the issue of social citizenship as if “there is a single model of citizenship” to which minority groups should aspire and measure themselves against (1994, 385). Walby wonders whether minorities should even aspire to what amounts to white male citizenship if “citizenship is so imbued with […] specific assumptions […] that it is necessarily only a partial rather than a universalistic project” (Ibid, 379). Of course, the question becomes whether citizenship can be expanded to

encompass other practices such as caregiving, with which it currently is incompatible, according to Walby.

Writing from the vantage point of colonial rule, Uday S. Mehta is much less optimistic about the openness of liberal citizenship. He writes, “In it its theoretical vision, liberalism, from the seventeenth century to the present, has prided itself on its universality and political inclusionary character. And yet, when it is viewed as a historical phenomenon […] the period of liberal history is unmistakably marked by the systematic and sustained political exclusion of various groups and “types” of people” (1997, 59).

Mehta tracks the way liberal theorists and statesmen employed certain provisions to bar entire “civilizations” from self-rule. James Mill, for example, who never visited India, vindicated British colonization on the pretext that India was too chaotic and shadowy to govern itself (Mehta 1997, 74). His son, John Stuart Mill (JSM), conditioned the right to representative government on whether a civilization was sufficiently advanced and employed race as a fundamental metric. Thus, while JSM supported the end to British colonization of Australia and America on grounds that these populations shared British civilization, culture, language, and race, he recommended authoritarian British rule over India. Citing his profuse studies on India, JSM concluded that India was not “capable of being improved by free and equal discussion” (Ibid, 75).

Thus, even while “the declared and ostensible referent of liberal principles is quite literally a constituency with no delimiting boundary, namely that of all humankind”, liberal principles require a “thicker set of social credentials that

constitute the real bases of political inclusion" (Ibid, 61, 63). These social credentials are necessary to protect liberal institutions from the menace of "free" individuals (Ibid 1997, 65). John Locke, for example, included those who were obedient to "natural laws" thought to be handed down by God to ensure citizenly moderation (Ibid, 65). Similarly, in *Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke laid down precise instructions on how children were to be bred (Ibid). While social breeding and religion or moral rectitude were essential determinants within Britain, race and civilizational attainment played the same role in the colonies.

More recently, Melinda Chateauvert shows how in the 1960s the sexual behavior and family models of African-Americans became the new litmus test for liberal inclusion just as race-based exclusion was deemed unconstitutional (2008). White, bourgeois notions of respectability were codified in laws and policies in which the right to vote and to be eligible for welfare rights depended on "good character" and "parental responsibility" (Ibid, 203). Such laws were used to disenfranchise African-American fathers who had children out of wedlock in the 1960s and to render single mothers who did not reveal the identity of their children's fathers ineligible for welfare in the 1990s. Scientific discourse in the 1960s served as a platform in which African-American behavior was debated and ultimately considered too "wild and primitive" to be American. Notable black scholars such as W.E.B. Dubois contributed to this public debate by measuring African-Americans' "racial 'progress toward civilization'" against their attainment of the European ideal of the nuclear family (Ibid, 201). Civil rights lawyers also

helped maintained such European norms by laboring to portray African-Americans as respectable rather than challenge the roots of such normativity.

Chateauvert offers the concept of sexual citizenship to highlight the importance of the “adult right to organize one’s sexual life as one desires, and to have one’s privacy respected and recognized in law and social policy” (2008, 199). She argues that African-Americans have been denied equal sexual citizenship as they have been denied the rights mentioned above. Echoing Mehta’s assertion that it is the “thicker” set of culturally-specific expectations that enable subjects to be politically included, Chateauvert shows how struggles over membership are waged in the “private” domain of “sexual expression, household structure, and gender roles” precisely because it is these spaces “that determine a person’s political, civil, and social status” (Ibid, 205, 201).

Why do intimate practices such as parenting, family models, and sex have such pull within liberal democracies? Perhaps their uniqueness lies in that such issues easily lend themselves to be weighed in terms of moral tVanesas. Elizabeth Povinelli sustains that liberalism has historically supported a critical rational discourse that suspends so-called biases in the hopes of perfecting itself in order to become the “the end of history” (2002, 14). Yet, this pathway is often trumped when certain questions are processed through moral judgements instead. Moral inferences work by weighing something as either self-evidently good or repugnant. While liberalism may debate whether a certain practice or people counts as good or repugnant, the concepts of the good and the repugnant as real and distinct values are not (Ibid, 176). In this way, liberals often reassess

past liberal practices as “prejudicial” and seek to correct them, but they do not undermine the ontological veracity of the good and repulsive (Ibid, 11, 177).

For example, even while the value of African-Americans’ sexual practices are debated publicly and scientifically, these debates are pervaded by moral impasses in which single motherhood and the bearing of children out of wedlock are regarded as “self-evidently” and “undeniably” repulsive. So too, the Mills reach similar impasses where they conclude India is simply inscrutable or incapable of being improved. In Mexico, the notion of the savage plays this function. It signals the repulsive for liberal Mexican society—that which defies inclusion.

The importance of moral judgement in liberal societies reminds us that subaltern struggle must concern itself with normativity rather than simply formal inclusion or equality. This is why Chateauvert’s definition of sexual citizenship is insufficient given that it merely demands that African-Americans be granted the right to privacy and to live sexually as they desire. Michel Foucault has been the most ardent critic of such idealizations of “freedom” and “desire” for he argues that power works precisely by inciting desire and will, rather than by solely restricting freedom. He claims viewing power “as a pure limit set on freedom” is precisely what allows people to accept a liberal regime for who would “accept it if they did not see it as a mere limit placed on their desire, leaving a measure of freedom—however slight—intact?” (Foucault 1990, 86).

In effect, Foucault’s cautions us against defining citizenship in terms of rights and against a state-centric model of power. He suggests a new type of

power emerged in the seventeenth century and flourished in the nineteenth, one with a logic different from “sovereignty”. Bio-power, as he calls it, came to dispute the centrality of sovereignty as a form of governance that was based on the right to “*take* life or *let* live” (Ibid 138). In contrast, bio-power is a “power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (Ibid, 136). Whereas sovereignty relied mostly on prohibitions and punishments, bio-power utilizes institutions such as schools to regulate both the body and the population (Ibid, 89).

Yet, Foucault warns that bio-power has not supplanted sovereignty, but rather forced it to justify itself “on behalf of the existence of everyone” (Ibid, 137). In another text, Foucault refers to bio-power as governmentality. Governmentality is a form of power, which “has as its purpose…the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc. (1991, 100)”. As in the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault warns that governmentality does not replace sovereignty, but rather that what is in operation is the triangle of “sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security” (Ibid, 102).

Foucault suggests that sexuality becomes bio-power’s preferred field action, not just its product. Defining sexuality as the body’s potential to produce, consume, and experience pleasures and affects, sexuality becomes instrumental to bio-power since it serves as “a means of access both to the life of the body

and the life of the species" (1990, 108, 146). Bio-power acts upon the body and the population through "anatomo-" and "biopolitical" techniques, respectively (Ibid, 139). Sexuality's "anchor" becomes the family, which is transformed to do more than ensure the transmission of names and property. The family becomes "an obligatory locus of affects, feelings, love", the "privileged instrument for the government of the population" (Ibid, 108; Foucault 1991, 100).

In Foucault's framework, sexuality is central to bio-power. Yet, the question many scholars have asked is what role does race play in directing the vitality of bodies and the population? For Foucault, bio-power has modified the previous function of race. Under sovereignty, race is expressed according to the "symbolics of blood" in which "power spoke through blood" and the concern with purity of blood (Ibid, 147). In contrast, race under bio-power comes to be resignified through the biological and eugenic concerns with the "promises" and "menaces" of heredity (Ibid, 124). Nazism, for Foucault, illustrates a modern deployment of race that is nevertheless tied to the symbolics of blood. Foucault claims Nazism mobilized the "oneiric exaltation of a superior blood" to draw support for "the type of political power that was exercised through the devices of sexuality" (Ibid, 149-150). Thus, for Foucault, race in the twentieth century continued to be tethered to the concern for purity of blood.

Ann L. Stoler proposes a different interpretation of the role of race (1995). She starts by questioning the absence of colonial bodies in Foucault's account. She asks whether "the masturbating child, the 'hysterical' woman, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult" can "exist as objects of knowledge and

discourses in the nineteenth-century without a racially erotic counterpoint, without reference to the libidinal energies of the savage, the primitive, the colonized […]?" (Ibid, 6–7). Stoler affirms that knowledge of racialized bodies "provided the contrasts for what a 'healthy, vigorous, bourgeois body' was all about" (Ibid, 7). In this way, normative bourgeois practices and sexualities in the colony and metropole "emerge tacitly and emphatically coded by race", defining "the 'interior frontiers' of national communities" and "mark[ing] out those whose claims to property rights, citizenship, and public relief were worthy of recognition and whose were not" (Ibid, 7-8).

I adopt Stoler's formulation of race, in which race plays a directive role in bio-power, providing a relational map of what conduct is thought to be biopolitically efficacious for the nation and who counts as (biopolitical) friend or enemy of the nation. I also take up her attention to the way bio-power shapes gender and sexual norms in both metropole and colony through what Stoler calls the "education of desire" (1995).

Yet, how can we bring two different notions, that of citizenship and bio-power together? Foucault paves the way by that suggesting that the most important facet of modernity is the "'governmentalization' of the state" (1991, 103). It follows that citizenship, too, has undergone governmentalization. What does this mean? Whereas citizenship under sovereignty is concerned with birth right in calculating who is to be taxed and deployed in wars, a governmentalized citizenship holds off citizenly recognition and entitlements to those who are normative in the biopolitical sense. In a related manner, Aihwa Ong claims that

citizenship has been unmoored from a territorial framework due to its governmentalization by a neoliberal logic (2006). She argues that in Malaysia citizens are no longer those who have territorial claims to a nation-state but those who are self-governing subjects (Ibid, 16). Foreigners who are educated and have purchasing power may be entitled to more protections and rights than low-skilled Malaysian workers.

In the same vein, I argue that the biopolitical citizenship of indigenous people has eclipsed the mid-twentieth century liberal agrarian citizenship extended to indigenous peoples by the post-revolutionary state. With the agrarian pact rescinded in the 1990s, indigenous peoples are expected to demonstrate their citizenly value through their enactment of sexual, affective, and gender normativity. Vania Smith-Oka has shown how entitlements to cash transfers, which under Marshall's typology fall under social rights, are conditioned on indigenous women's good mothering, including having fewer children and giving birth to them in hospitals rather than through midwives (2013). Similarly, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the debates surrounding the Mexican government's refusal to implement the San Andrés Accords on the pretext that Indian men were too violence-prone to allow indigenous peoples territorial autonomy.

Before turning to a similar line of analysis for colonial Mexico, I want to make one more claim about the role that race and colonization played in bio-power. It appears that the racialization of colonial bodies and the imposition of a racial division of labor provided the material wherewithal and economic *savoir*

that fueled the full-blown development of capitalism and bio-power. In Foucault's otherwise Eurocentric genealogy of bio-power, it was the technological improvements in agriculture of the eighteenth-century which allowed the West "a measure of relief" from the plagues and starvation that had allowed death to prevail (1990, 142). The anatomo-politics so critical to capitalism were deployed on the proletariat until the development of heavy industry required a steady supply of skilled labor (Ibid, 126). It was then that anatomo-politics transformed the body into a "machine" characterized by the "parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility" (Ibid, 141, 139). It was only out of the "conflicts…over urban space: cohabitation, proximity, contamination" that the proletariat was "granted a body and a sexuality" (Ibid, 126). It was then when bio-politics were deployed on the proletariat to regulate their newly recognized sexuality through housing policies and public hygiene (Ibid). These processes permitted the West to surpass "the threshold of modernity" (Foucault 1990, 143).

Colonialism from the sixteenth century onward provided similar conflicts over cohabitation, proximity, and contamination. Colonialism also generated the "technologies of control" necessary for the explosion of capitalism and bio-power. Modernity/coloniality theorist Aníbal Quijano makes this very point (2000). He sustains that the colonial exploitation of racialized bodies enabled the West to accrue the capital necessary to orchestrate the shift from mercantilism to capitalism. According to Quijano, race functioned as the foundational axis of difference separating "modernity" from its underbelly of "coloniality". Quijano argues it was the "coloniality" of raw exploitation, slavery, and primitive

accumulation that made the progress and wealth of “modernity” possible. Both the “modernity” and “coloniality” sides of bio-power are described by Foucault, although he sees them as disconnected. On the one hand, “Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a space in which they could be distributed in an optimal manner” (Foucault 1990, 142). Meanwhile: “Outside the Western world, famine exists, on a greater scale than ever; and the biological risks confronting the species are perhaps greater, and certainly more serious, than before the birth of microbiology” (Ibid).

Scott L. Morgensen claims that governmentality or bio-power was exerted on indigenous peoples in a multitude of ways, all of which converge on letting indigenous peoples die through “containment, erasure, and amalgamation” (2011, 59). Morgensen invokes Patrick Wolfe who argues that indigenous peoples’ elimination is achieved not only by destroying life, but also through efforts to incorporate indigenous peoples and their lands to the settler nation (Ibid, 54). Amalgamation includes *mestizaje/metissage* and all the other ways in which indigenous peoples contribute to “settler productivity” (Ibid, 57).

Morgensen deploys Giorgio Agamben’s reworkings of Foucault to contend that the elimination of indigenous peoples was effected through the state of exception made possible by Western law (2011). Parting from Foucault’s notion of governmentality as the “power to ‘make’ live or ‘let’ die”, Agamben argues that governmentality’s power to “let die” is found in Western law’s concept of *homo*

sacer (Ibid, 55). In Roman law, *homo sacer* is a subject who can be killed without being sacrificed or subject to a homicide. Agamben argues that *homo sacer* is the state of exception in which political life is reduced to “bare life”. For example, in Roman law, the *pater familias* could kill his son for his disobedience without this being considered a homicide. Furthering this argument, Morgensen claims that indigenous peoples were likened to sons whose disobedience to the Roman *pater* could “leave their consanguinity open to excision” and therefore “near the state of exception” (Ibid, 62).

Morgensen’s insight leads me to recognize that biopolitical citizenship historically has been aimed at indigenous people’s elimination through their containment, erasure, or amalgamation. Thus, in acknowledging the promise of sexual and gender normativity for indigenous peoples, I keep in mind the extent to which the colonial roots of bio-power are aimed at the elimination of indigenous peoples.

1.2 Mexico’s Liberal and Biopolitical Citizenship Regimes

1.2.1 Colonial Period

Indigenous peoples in New Spain gained a protoliberal set of rights once the bodily techniques of bio-power threatened their very existence and with it the Spanish colonial enterprise. Indigenous peoples were first granted corporate rights by way of the doctrine of *miserabiles.* Through this doctrine, members of the clergy persuaded the Crown to institute a dual republic model which entitled Indians to corporate land and certain cultural rights in exchange for tribute. As

Morgensen claims, Indians were now to contribute to the settler colonial enterprise.

Indian subordination at the hands of Spanish settlers initially coalesced around the encomienda system. Since the war against the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish Crown had pursued a model of expansion known as medieval contractualism which entailed rewarding private armies for carrying out military conquests in its name. In the West Indies, this took the shape of colonial exploration and conquest. Spanish explorers were rewarded with *encomiendas* or rights to exact tribute from Indian settlements mostly in the form of labor on the condition that they convert them. When the encomienda system proved disastrous for the native populations of the West Indies, outspoken members of the Spanish clergy sympathetic to Indians urged the Crown to prevent a similar catastrophe in New Spain (Borah 1983).

To contest the brutal exploitation of Indian labor, members of the Spanish clergy argued that Indians were too weak to be enslaved as compared to Africans. Franciscan missionaries insisted that the Crown adopt a paternalistic and protective role in relation to the Indians and a more disciplining stance against the *encomenderos* (Ruíz Medrano 2010, 25). This sector of the Spanish empire, notably represented by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, was influenced in the sixteenth century by the Christian humanist tradition of Erasmus of Rotterdam who believed in conversion through example and who also protested the material justifications for “just war” (Ruíz Medrano 2010, 27). Franciscan missionaries such as de las Casas deployed the papal bull of 1493, which

granted Castile and Portugal temporary dominion over America on the condition that they convert its inhabitants to Christianity, to sway the Crown to comply with its missionary obligations (Ruíz Medrano 2010, 25).

This argument had long-lasting implications, one of which was to justify the infantilization of Indians. Members of the Dominican and Franciscan orders of the Spanish clergy invoked the European legal category of *miserabiles* in asking the Crown to award Indians special treatment. In Europe, *miserabiles* included minors, the poor, rustics, widows, the elderly, and disabled whose wretched condition entitled them to special protections from the church and state (Borah 1983; Ruíz Medrano 2010, 25). The doctrine of *miserabiles* influenced the Crown's decision to implement a dual republic model that extended Indians certain political entitlements as distinct nations. As "nations", Spanish and Indians represented distinct ethnic-ancestral groups entitled to different territories and discrete forms of government or "*repúblicas*" (Thurner 1997, 6). Spanish law, for example, forbade non-Indians to hold office and live in the *repúblicas de Indios* (Ducey 2004, 6, 7).

Henceforth, the Crown issued tighter controls over *encomiendas*, which were not well-enforced. While Charles V ordered Cortés to stop awarding *encomiendas* in New Spain in 1523, Cortés simply disobeyed these orders (Swarthout 2004, 32). To curb the authority of *encomenderos* and ameliorate the exploitation of the Indians, the Crown created the *Consejo de las Indias* in 1524 (Ruíz Medrano 2010). This body was to advise the Crown on all matters regarding the Indians in New Spain. In 1529, the *Consejo de las Indias*

proclaimed Indians free “vassals” of the Crown and thereby made it unlawful to grant them in *encomiendas* (Ibid).

These laws illustrate Foucault’s point that it was the excesses of bio-power which led to a liberal discourse of rights. As Foucault points out, “The ‘right’ to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness […] was the political response to all these new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty” (1990, 145). As we explained earlier, it is Agamben’s claim that sovereignty is the condition for governmentality’s power to “let die”. The system of *encomiendas* was made possible by the state of exception. While the doctrine of *miserabiles* sought to close in on this state of exception, it did so, as Morgensen argues, while continuing to harness Indian survival to the productivity of the Spanish empire (2011).

The Spanish Crown advanced its efforts to amalgamate indigenous peoples into its settler colonial project. Despite the rhetoric of separate forms of government, in the late 1530s the Crown intervened in the *repúblicas de Indios* by working to reconstitute them in the image of European town councils (Lockhart 1999, 47; Ducey 2004, 6, 7). These interventions were dressed in biopolitical arguments that placed Indians’ salvation as an alibi for further encroachment. The Spanish claimed that by providing a contingent of nearby Spanish officials who could model good Christian behavior Indians would become Christians more quickly and effectively (Borah 1983, 33-34). Ironically, the Crown chose the *Consejo de las Indias*, which had been established to protect the Indians, to carry out these interventions.

In 1530, the *Consejo* reorganized *encomiendas* into *corregimientos* or municipal districts that coalesced various Indian settlements under the authority of a *corregidor*, now the lowest rung in the hierarchy of Spanish colonial rule (Ruíz Medrano 2010, 22-26). At the same time, the New Laws of 1542 authorized those Indian customs which were perceived as unthreatening to Christianity (Ibid, 34). This careful disciplining of Indians shows the fine-tuned calculations that were essential to bio-power in ensuring the preservation of Indians for the benefit of the colonial enterprise.

Pressure from colonial elites, including *encomenderos* and the clergy, had forced Charles V to scale back the relatively progressive New Laws of 1542 which had abolished Indian slavery, prevented *encomiendas* from being inherited, and mandated the removal of Indians from abusive *encomenderos*. The precipitous decline of the indigenous population due to disease and exploitation eventually led to the demise of the encomienda system at the end of the sixteenth century. A change in tribute requirements, which allowed tribute to be paid in cash or kind rather than labor also drove many Indians to seek wage-labor in Spanish towns or haciendas. Some Indians evaded their tribute obligations altogether by moving into Spanish towns. At the same time, Spaniards and Europeanized mestizos increasingly settled in Indian towns (Swarthout 2004, 36-38).

These processes as well as increasing *mestizaje* gradually blurred the distinction between Spanish and Indian republics. While the Iberian concern for ‘purity of blood’ had long discouraged miscegenation among Indians, African

slaves, and Spaniards, the mixed population grew exponentially beginning in the seventeenth century. Initially, the mixed population had been small enough to accommodate in either the Spanish or Indian republics, but it soon outgrew this bifurcated system of settlement.

To reckon with the surge in mixed populations, the Crown adopted a pigmentocratic classification system. The darker and poorer mixed segments came to be legally referred to as *castas* while those who could pass as white in terms of skin color and customs were classified as whites and Spaniards (Swarthout 2004, 39-42). In contrast, those who lived in indigenous towns, spoke an indigenous language, and wore native dress were referred to as Indians. Even though Indians were legally superior to *castas*, they were considered socially inferior to them due to their lack of Spanish language, dress, and customs. Indians and *castas* were barred from certain positions within the church, guilds, and professions (Swarthout 2004, 39-42).

In the colonial period, the Iberian honor system greatly influenced normative ideas of behavior. These norms often conditioned a person's entitlements (Chaves 2000). Honor was classed, raced, and gendered such that elites considered themselves to possess honor while the lower-classes and non-whites were thought to lack it (Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera 1998, 3-6). Elite men accrued honor by practicing assertiveness, valor, authority, and domination of women (and racial subordinates) (Spurling 1998, 45). Vis-à-vis the "open season" that was declared over racialized women's bodies, white women were to embody sexual control, discretion, and shame. It was the responsibility of white

women to safeguard white racial endogamy and class privilege (Nelson 1999). Yet, much like the lower-classes, women were considered less virtuous due to their putatively weak nature and were thus subject to strict control over their sexuality (Spurling 1998, 45).

Iberian gender relations made indigenous people's amalgamation into the Spanish settler project a deeply gendered and sexualized process. Indigenous peoples of the Americas were often compared to European women. From the onset, the "discovery" of the Americas was conceived as a masculine conquest of feminized lands (Canessa 2012, 245). The synchronic devaluation of those racialized and feminized engendered a complex hierarchy such that Indian women became more Indian, but also Indians more female (de la Cadena 1995; Canessa 2012).

This racialized, gendered, and sexualized bio-power is tantamount to what Stoler calls the "education of desire" (1995). The premium placed on Spanish customs and a lighter skin-color compounded with Indian subordination to propel phenotypical and cultural "whitening". For racial subalterns, whitening through racial mixing has been a key strategy in pursuing social mobility (Telles 2004). Yet, whitening the nation was also imposed on lower-class, dark-skinned women by white men's "sexual predation" (Hale 2006). Such was the importance of whitening, that white men were thought to fulfill a civic duty by impregnating racialized women (Stephenson 1999). In fact, being sexually accessible to white men characterized racialized women's experiences during the colonial period (Athey & Cooper Alarcón 1993).

White men's de facto sexual impunity not only displaced Indian and Afro-descendant men, but also constructed a form of masculine social capital built upon "erotic violence", which racialized men came to aspire to in some cases (Davis 1985; Dussel 1995, 46-48; Canessa 2012). This is the subject of chapter three and four, which addresses the sexual violation of Nahua and Teenek women and the aspirations of young Nahua men in dating light-skinned mestizas. In sum, these patterns index the premium placed on whiteness that are the hallmark of white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 346).

In the colonial period, natural laws stipulated that men and women were unequal (Dore 2000, 11). Colonial laws placed wives along with children under the control of the paterfamilias such that a husband effectively functioned as his wife's guardian, managing her legal affairs and property (Arrom 1985b, 65). On the other hand, widows and emancipated single women enjoyed more rights, including those of contract and ownership of property (Ibid). Spanish law also entitled all women to an equal share of their parents' wealth and property (Dore 2000, 12).

In the realm of marriage, liberal ideas of individual will surface in the late sixteenth century. As per the tridentine reforms of 1585, all persons, including women, Indians, and slaves were granted the right to choose their partners (Cortés 1988). The tridentine reforms sought to redefine marriage as a primary site in which individual free will would be safeguarded. This principle was sacrificed, however, when *mestizaje* began to threaten colonial racial hierarchies and white class privilege in the late eighteenth century (Seed 1988). Secular laws

were passed in the 1770s to shore up the rights of wealthy parents in vetoing their children's choice of spouse if he or she was of lower economic or racial standing.

As efforts to counter the social mobility of the *castas* through restrictions in marital freedom was gaining sway, liberal ideas of individualism and universal male equality were adopted by the Spanish Crown through the Constitution of Cádiz of 1812. Antonio Escobar Ohmstede argues that the first attempts at homogenizing the adult male population were made at this time (2004). This Constitution extended equal Spanish citizenship to all adult males born in the Empire, except those of African descent, levying upon the former a uniform tax. The Cádiz Constitution ushered in the concept of individual rights and eliminated the colonial pact by which the Crown had granted Indians rights to corporate land in exchange for tribute. Escobar Ohmstede sustains that these liberal reforms merely recognized Indian men as fiscal contributors and laborers, but not as political agents (Ibid).

As I have emphasized throughout, bio-power predated liberal citizenship. In the colonial period, anatomo- and bio-politics operated via the siphoning of Indian labor effected through the encomienda system and then wage-labor. It also operated through the dual republic model, which instituted minimal opportunities for Indian self-rule and was highly prone to Spanish interventions. In chapter three, I will describe how indigenous labor was gendered as well. The ongoing Christianization of the population was also an early form of bio-power that served to amalgamate the Indians. Lastly, the biopolitical emphasis on

cultural and phenotypical whitening closely related to a patriarchal gender system were effective in normalizing the sexual coercion of racialized women, the heightened surveillance of white women, and the glorification of male sexual violence. While at this time, the notion of the normative citizen is not yet in operation, that of the liberal citizen is nascent. Nevertheless, the techniques of bio-power have already shaped a normative hierarchy whose gravity is felt by all colonial subjects. What's more, the tribute obligations of indigenous peoples and African slaves have transformed New Spain into a profitable colonial venture.

1.2.2 Republican and Liberal Periods

Independence from Spain ushered in a period of instability in which liberals and conservatives fought each other for the power to build a state (Dore 2000, 14). While conservatives supported a centralist state and a robust role for the church, liberals sought to supplant the old elites and to institute free markets, a federal government, and a secularized society. Liberal elites also sought to dismantle the corporate benefits enjoyed by the Church and Indian communities, which they saw as stymying economic growth.

As for the status of women, liberals professed a modernist and secularist outlook that led them to challenge the church's authority in domestic matters and to expand women's rights in some respects, a platform which Elizabeth Dore calls protodevelopmentalist (2000, 16). In lieu of natural laws, liberals in the nineteenth century relied on biological explanations that saw gender roles as pivoting on sexual differences (Molyneux 2000, 44). Nevertheless, both liberal

and conservative camps endorsed a patriarchal family as the foundation for the nation, one which would ensure stability in the face of a weak or non-existent state (Dore 2000, 15). Key to this social order was the subordination of wives to their husbands. Unbound women were thought to “risk the continued mutiny of the population against the established authority, and undermine the stability of the Mexican state” (Arrom 1985b, 231). In the same vein, political leaders of both leanings compared themselves to patriarchs who were justified in disciplining unruly subjects.

Liberals attempted to manage the racial diversity of the country by instituting a vision of color-blind equality that took for granted the supremacy of the European race and culture. In 1821, the newly independent Mexican state rescinded the legal racial categories employed at the time of colonial New Spain (Alonso 2004, 461). In this way, post-independence liberal politicians officially denied the existence of Indians by claiming that they had been made equal before the law, in other words unrecognized within a universal citizenry modeled upon the West (de la Peña 2006, 280).

A clear discourse of *mestizaje* that championed the mestizo elements of the nation emerged as early as the 1850s (Franco 1989). Mexicans were described as neither Spanish nor Indian, a new race born out of mixture. The discourse of *mestizaje* responded to European thinkers such as Gustave Le Bon who considered inferior races to be unimprovable. Instead, Mexican thinkers such as Justo Sierra defended the mestizo as a positive and dynamic element in national life (Stepan 1991, 145). Nevertheless, liberal elites re-embedded the

mestizo into an evolutionary racial scheme in which Indians were disparaged as the most primitive, mestizos as a redeemable segment, and the European as the blood that advanced evolutionary progress (de la Peña 2006, 280; Knight 1990, 78).

These ideas advanced settler colonialism by justifying the assimilation of the Indian by eliminating previous colonial protections that had granted indigenous peoples limited self-government, collective landholdings, and special courts of law (de la Peña 2006, 282). In 1856, a law was finally passed that authorized the privatization of corporate lands held by indigenous communities and the church. Yet, imperial threats to the Mexican republic compelled liberal elites to temper this edict. The struggle between liberals and conservatives opened a space for lower-class men to be recognized as formal citizens, while the same was not possible for women.

Between 1846 and 1867, Mexican federalists sounded the alarm twice for national defense: first against the US invasion and soon after against the French occupation. In both moments, coalitions of political elites saw otherwise marginal subjects as necessary allies in their struggle for political power. Indian peasants across Mexico creatively responded to the call by weighing in local concerns alongside the broader question of which national model of government would best respond to their needs, and ultimately put their lives on the line for a popular version of liberalism, which promised greater local political autonomy (Mallon 1995; Saka 2013).

Highly outnumbered and poorly armed, both Indian men and women heroically fought for the liberal cause. In the end, however, liberals only extended citizenship to all males in 1855 (Mallon 1995, 78). Guided by the definition of combat as “men's work”, liberal elites did not reward women for their contributions on the battlefield as combatants and cooks (Ibid, 76). Carol Pateman has argued that the exclusive entitlement of political rights to propertied men implicated in the “Liberal Contract” is tantamount to a “sexual contract” since political rights included the patriarchal control of women (1988). In 1855, male peasants were made participants in the “sexual contract”.

After the passage of an 1856 law that privatized communal lands held by the Church and indigenous communities, liberal elites issued protective clauses that gave indigenous male heads of household preferential access to purchase individual plots within former communal lands (Mallon 1995, 98-99). Indians of the Huasteca region of Hidalgo and Veracruz, for example, extended their land base by both thwarting implementation of disentailment laws and by purchasing enough lots to reconstitute their communities as *condueñazgos* (Escobar 2002; Ducey 2002).

Liberals’ slighting of Indian women’s contributions to the liberal cause mirrored their wider ambivalence towards women’s equality and rights. This stance was made apparent once liberals defeated the conservatives and enacted codes of law. For Ana María Alonso, liberal reforms merely “rationalized” patriarchy by “re-inscribing” it in law (1995). For one, the 1857 liberal Constitution reaffirmed citizenship as the prerogative of adult males (Ibid, 32). Women’s

subordinated role in the nation reflected their equally submissive role in the family under liberal law. The 1870 Civil Code reaffirmed the husband's patriarchal authority by continuing to require husbands to protect and feed their wives and the latter to obey their husbands (Ibid). The Civil Code of 1884 continued to appoint the husband as the legal guardian of his wife, including the right to administer her property (Ibid). On the other hand, the civil codes of 1870 and 1884 legalized divorce by mutual consent but did not permit remarriage (Ibid).

Ana María Alonso claims formal liberal citizenship merely "re-inscribed" the institution of patriarchy, which in my interpretation, had been operating at the level of bio-power. The codification of women's exclusion from political rights was consonant with their relegation to the family and patriarchal authority. What was perhaps not as clear is why single women and widows were not extended political rights. Nevertheless, with the gradual consolidation of a Mexican nation-state, some aspects of bio-power were acquiring a citizenly weight. For example, women were publicly recognized for their contribution to the nation as mothers and guardians of morality. Likewise, *mestizaje* and the disentailment of indigenous corporate land were regarded as beneficial for the nation.

In other ways, liberals used the law to normalize new modes of punishment. Liberals redefined physical violence, both at the level of politics and the home, as a "barbarous" violation of free will and reason (Alonso 1995). Liberals favored electoral democracy as the mechanism for the expression of popular will and "rational" laws in ensuring order. In this direction, the 1871

Criminal Code substituted public executions with prison sentences and punished wife battering regardless of its severity. The same penal code also punished the murder of an alleged adulterous wife for the first time in Mexican history even though it imposed harsher penalties for female adulterers (Ibid, 31-32).

These changes represent the shift from a pre-modern mode of discipline focused on punishing the body to the carceral mode focused on reforming the soul (Foucault 1995). The elimination of the state of exception that had defined adulterous women as a type of *homo sacer* also points to an important moment in Mexican history. This moment represents a shift in which liberal laws closed the possibility of the state of exception through which women's bodies were "let die". However, whether that state of exception was terminated is up for debate. For example, Ana María Alonso observes that in the case of wife battering judges and lawyers only sided with female victims who could prove to be morally upright (1995). In this way, the honor code that was a measure of women's biopolitical citizenship also came to condition their liberal citizenship, specifically their civil rights.

This tendency illustrates the extent to which the limits of liberal reason continued to be guided by what was perceived as the self-evident value of the honor code. What's more, if the liberal state likewise neglected to punish wife murder then the liberal state created a de facto state of exception. The role of a de facto state of exception with respect to indigenous women's sexual violation is the crux of Chapter three.

Liberal legislation continued the tendency of Spanish colonial laws to extend single women the most rights. The civil codes of 1870 and 1884 granted widows and separated or single women parental authority for the first time in Mexican history (Arrom 1985a). Liberal laws also undermined patriarchal authority by freeing single adults from parental authority at the age of twenty-one, no longer until the father's death, as had been the case (Dore 2000, 18). One setback for all women was the abolishment of mandatory partible inheritance by which parents had been compelled to divide their property equally among their sons and daughters (Ibid, 19). This measure was touted as modernizing since it brought Mexico in line with the most "civilized country" of England who practiced primogeniture inheritance (Ibid). Not only did this reflect a rise in the significance of private property as Elizabeth Dore notes, but also the growing tendency to validate reforms vis-à-vis Western standards (Ibid, 20).

Liberal leaders turned to education as a medium to strengthen the family, which they viewed as the backbone of the nation amid the political turbulence of the time (Macías 1982, 8). Liberals hoped that education would transform what they considered to be passive and unduly religious women into modern mothers who would raise decisive children (Ibid). In this direction, legislation was adopted in 1842 to make public education obligatory for girls and boys ages 7 to 14 (Arrom 1985a, 20). Yet, it was only after the defeat of the French invasion that the liberal state was able to implement these measures. Public schools proliferated in the 1860s and 70s during the mandates of Benito Juárez (1858-

1872) and Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911) who made the influence of the secular state much more of a reality (Alonso 1995, 32).

Porfirio Díaz brought thirty-five years of radical transformation to the country under a centralized state. With the building of a massive railroad network between 1877 and 1910, Mexico shifted from a predominantly rural to an urban nation (Lester 2005, 281). The selective networks of railroads, highways, and telegraph lines favored the industrialization of some regions over others. After sixty years of protectionism since the War of Independence, Díaz opened the country to foreign investment. While foreign investment bolstered the country's industrialization, Díaz held a tight grip on workers through Vanesaless repression of labor struggles (Ibid, 282).

Díaz also redirected domestic production towards exports, restructuring land tenure away from peasants and towards private property owners, including foreign investors and hacienda owners. In this way, what had been liberalism's appeal for federalist Indians in the Wars of Reform—an expansion of local autonomy—had become a double-edged sword by the eve of the twentieth century (Saka 2013). Greater local autonomy had empowered hacienda owners who gradually amassed land at the expense of peasants. The liberal affront to Indian communal lands drove the Yaqui of Sonora and the Maya of Yucatán to lead prolonged insurgencies against the Juárez and Díaz regimes (Brewster Folsom 2014; Richmond 2015). In retaliation, these regimes subjected the Yaqui and the Maya to military repression, forced relocation, and enslavement.

The Díaz regime viewed incorporating women into paid employment as an economic necessity for the country but also as a substitute for welfare protections. Female employment was considered essential for women who faced abandonment or lack of support (Macías 1982, 8; Molyneux 2000, 44). Liberals also sought to steer women away from female prostitution, which had risen due to Díaz' economic reforms. While Díaz' economic reforms had proven advantageous for middle- and upper-class women, poor and rural women had fallen deeper into poverty. During the Díaz regime, thousands of educated, middle and upper-class urban women entered white-collar professions as doctors, lawyers, teachers, writers, bookkeepers, and telegraphists. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of impoverished women turned to debt peonage in the haciendas, domestic work, prostitution, and low-wage work in the textile mills (Macías 1982, 8-12).

In this highly polarized context, a feminist movement led by middle-class, educated women emerged at the eve of the twentieth century. These women focused on expanding women's civil and social rights including educational opportunities and workers' rights rather than on the female vote. At this time, few countries in the world had issued the female vote. Some feminists also became involved in poverty relief efforts, offering training opportunities for working-class women. A major focus of this first wave Mexican feminism was to overturn the "double standards" of the 1884 Civil Code, which penalized female adultery more harshly and deprived married women of legal rights including parental authority. Feminists differed on whether to stress the promise of these reforms for women

as independent actors or as mothers, daughters, and wives (Macías 1982, 13-15). As we have seen, liberal policymakers had mostly strengthened women's civil and social rights to make them better mothers. On the other hand, liberal policymakers acknowledged the importance of enabling women to be financially self-sufficient.

At the turn of the twentieth century, biopolitical and liberal citizenship were crosscut by a deep modernity/coloniality divide. Biopolitical and liberal citizenship had fostered the vitality of urban, middle- and upper-class Mexicans, including women who experienced the benefits of public education and entrance into white collar jobs. While women were excluded from equal liberal citizenship, economically privileged women functioned as normative biopolitical citizens so long as they contributed to the nation through their unpaid and paid labor as docile workers, modern mothers, and guardians of morality. In contrast, liberal reforms subjected peasants, Yaqui Indians, and textile, railroad, and mine workers to spaces of coloniality marked by exploitation, dispossession, and military violence. Lower-class and racialized women were allotted a role in the least well-remunerated niches of reproductive and productive labor. Notwithstanding the ravages experienced by the Yaquis and Mayans, in some cases Indians mustered the monies and clout necessary to retain and even expand their landholdings in the form of *condueñazgos*. Overall, Indians were excluded from the bounties of modernization and forced to seek recognition through biological or cultural assimilation to the mestizo ideal.

1.2.3 Revolutionary Period

The Mexican Revolution was led by a motley assortment of groups who opposed the Porfiriato. Drawing mass participation, women and peasants played a vital role in the Revolution as combatants, camp followers, nurses, and commanders. Yet, the paternalistic and highly centralized state that emerged in its wake cautiously integrated peasants and women into the Revolutionary project. Post-revolutionary leaders embraced modernity, socialism, anti-clericalism, and scientific materialism in ways that both distinguished Mexico from Europe and other Latin American nations (Stepan 1991, 55). The primary goal of revolutionary leaders was not to equalize all segments of Mexican society, but rather to forge a nation of duly nationalized subjects through a tightly controlled corporatist structure.

While post-revolutionary leaders recognized the need to incorporate women, they held back on awarding them the vote in the 1917 Constitution. Post-revolutionary leaders were weary of giving women the vote since they claimed women's supposedly excessive religiosity was a menace to the revolutionary project (Molyneux 2000, 51, 53). It appears that the biopolitical production of women as guardians of morality was now considered antithetical to the secularist goals of the Revolution. Post-revolutionary leaders passed reforms aimed at modernizing the country by curbing women's subordination. As early as 1914, President Venustiano Carranza legalized absolute divorce (Varley 2000, 242). In 1917, the Law of Family Relations, later incorporated into the 1928 Civil Code,

finally awarded married women equal parental rights and the right to engage in contracts (Ibid). Article 167 of the 1928 Civil Code also absolved married women from obeying their husbands (Ibid).[8] Nevertheless, several articles reified a breadwinner-homemaker relationship between husband and wife. Article 164 continued to require that husbands support their wives while article 163 entitled husbands to decide the location of the couple's residence. Article 168 made women responsible for housework.

A few southeastern states took the lead in extending women's rights. Yucatán became a liberal "laboratory" for feminist reforms under the leadership of revolutionary governor Salvador Alvarado (Smith 2009). Facing opposition for his redistributive policies, Alvarado cultivated alliances with the feminist movement. Working closely with them, Alvarado hosted the first national feminist congresses, in which participants agreed to fight for the female vote. Alvarado also expanded schooling for girls and boys and adopted Carranza's absolute divorce in 1915. More pathbreaking were Yucatan's reforms in the realm of women's domestic and sexual labor. Alvarado banned unremunerated domestic servitude by instituting a minimum wage and a maximum workday for domestic workers. While Alvarado banned brothels, he relaxed the strict hygienic regulations that had been issued for prostitutes in 1910 (Pérez 1988). In 1923, Alvarado's successor, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, pushed these reforms further by

[8] This article specified that, "husband and wives shall enjoy equal authority and consideration within the home and shall therefore decide by mutual agreement on everything to do with the running of the home" (Varley 2000, 242).

allowing married persons to obtain a divorce without their partner's consent or knowledge[9]. The state of Veracruz also granted married women equality through its 1932 Civil Code (Chenaut 2001).

Feminists' demands for women's political rights gained momentum after the Revolution. The threat of US expansionism and neocolonialism gave way to a revolutionary Mexican feminism strongly embedded in nationalism, constitutionalism, and *marianismo* (Pérez 1999, 35). Considered the counterpart to machismo, marianismo has been used to refer to the influence of Catholicism in consolidating a Latin American femininity that emphasizes motherly submissiveness, sexual chasteness, and abnegation (Stevens & Pescatello 1973). Many feminists invoked a platform in which women were fundamentally different from men. For example, they sustained that women's entrance into the political sphere would ameliorate corruption since women had better scruples (Molyneux 2000, 45).

These arguments echoed the Iberian honor code as well as the liberal mantras through which liberals had sought to keep women under patriarchal control by playing up their motherly roles. Thus, it is of no surprise that women's political rights were extended under idioms of difference. Women first gained the right to vote at the municipal level since it was argued that the municipal level was more attune to family issues. Yucatán broke this pattern by becoming the

[9] Ironically, this reform transformed divorce into a largely male-initiated reform and was later repealed (Smith 2009).

first state to allow women to vote in both municipal and state elections in 1923. Chiapas and Tabasco followed suit in 1925.

President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40) undermined the power of *hacendados* and the Church by distributing over 50 million acres of land to peasants and by expanding rural primary schools that were coeducational and socialist (Stern 1995, 328). School curriculums, nevertheless, avoided sex education and attacking the sexual division of labor given widespread support for these (Ibid). In the heyday of corporativism under Cárdenas, female sections formed within the sectors recognized by the state: workers, peasants, and popular organizations (Molyneux 2000, 52). Feminist activism on behalf of suffrage and other reforms intensified during this time.

This momentum coalesced in the formation of the Frente Único pro Derechos de la Mujer (United Front for Women's Rights- FUPDM) in 1935 organized by female militants of the Partido Comunista Mexicano (Mexican Communist Party-PCM) and the official state party or Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party-PNR) (Ibid; Tuñón Pablos 2011, 102-104). While the FUPDM succeeded in attracting fifty thousand members in support of female suffrage in the late 1930s, president Cárdenas turned his back on the female vote when he realized it would likely hamper the election of his chosen successor (Tuñón Pablos 1992; Macías 1982). Mexico's entry into World War II on the side of the Allied powers between 1940 and 1946 prompted the FUPDM to shift its agenda away from female suffrage towards social welfare issues (Molyneux 2000, 52). Following the War, the powerful FUPDM eventually

integrated itself with the official party, by this time renamed the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (Mexican Revolutionary Party-PRM), in which gender specific demands took second place (Tuñón Pablos 2011, 127).

Nevertheless, middle- and upper-class women continued to press for political rights under the permissible idioms of marianismo, arguing that the vote would allow women to raise better citizens. Calling for a “feminine” feminism, these activists disparaged American suffragists whom they considered “excessive”. Beginning in the late 1930s and into the 40s, Mexican feminists led by Amalia Castillo Ledón used the budding international arena to leverage their demands for the vote. The Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres (International Women’s Commission-CIM), an international organization subsumed within the Unión Panamericana (Panamerican Union) based out of Washington, D.C., was a key platform utilized by Mexican feminists.[10] The CIM was dedicated to improving women’s status in Latin America through legislative reform (Tuñón Pablos 2011, 127-131).

Under the post-revolutionary state’s corporatist project, male Indian peasants were recognized as a key sector. The post-revolutionary state had enshrined agrarian reform in Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution, which entitled corporations of peasants to petition the state for land grants. As “sons” of the state, peasants were tethered to the state through the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* established during the tenure of President Cárdenas in 1938

[10] The Unión Panamericana became the Organización de Estados Americanos (Organization of American States) in 1948.

(National Peasant Confederation-CNC) (Nugent and Alonso 1994, 228). Given peasants' especially bold performance in the Revolution under General Emiliano Zapata's slogan of "land and liberty", the post-revolutionary state sought to ensure their loyalty by offering them the "gift" of agrarian reform (Ibid, 229).

Agrarian reform was part of a larger project of modernization of the countryside by which the post-revolutionary state sought to eliminate debt peonage and subsistence production, which it considered feminized, in favor of masculinized wage labor (Olcott 2002). The post-revolutionary state offered peasant men masculine dignity through privileged access to corporate land ownership, political recognition, and acknowledgement of their authority over the peasant household (Ibid). This was another moment in which the state reaffirmed peasants' rights to the "sexual contract" as described by Pateman.

The bureaucratic channels that linked peasant men to the state revolved around the framework of agrarian rights and a new form of rights-bearing individual, the *ejidatario* (Baitenmann 2007, 186-187). Post-revolutionary agrarian reform sought to create family farms in which land was viewed as a family patrimony managed by male providers (Hamilton 2002, 121; Baitenmann 2007, 186). Thus, the amount of land allocated to individual *ejido* parcels was calculated to meet the minimum needs of a nuclear family (Ibid, 185). Once approved by the Agrarian Department, male land petitioners became *ejidatarios* who had a right to a parcel of land within the corporate land grant or *ejido* and the right to vote and take office in the *ejido* assembly. In this way, women were excluded from formal rural political citizenship and were forced to rely on

ejidatarios to represent them before the *ejido* assembly. It was not until 1971 that president Luis Echeverría reformed agrarian law to grant equal agrarian rights to peasant women (Ibid).

Despite that rural Indian women had heroically fought alongside peasant men in the Revolution, the state recognized them as playing a central role only in the modern reproduction of the rural labor force (Olcott 2002, 109). In addition, the state sought to distinguish peasant women from the suffragists, whom the state considered an assault on the traditional family, and the fascist and Catholic movements, which the state also viewed as contrary to the Revolution. Much like in the nineteenth century, the rural policy of the post-revolutionary state was geared towards “rationalizing” patriarchy and domesticity by enlisting mothers in the work of producing “healthy, efficient, patriotic citizen-workers” (Vaughan 2000, 196).

While shaping rural families to fit the European nuclear family ideal was a goal of the post-revolutionary state, Mary K. Vaughan notes that the state largely lacked the institutional capacity to implement this vision (Ibid). The state sought to undermine the authority of elders, both men and women, “in favor of youth, the conjugal couple, the nuclear family, and ironically the female head of household” (Ibid, 202). The nuclear family was to be subject to the guidance of public education, rural clinics, and the dictates of the market (Ibid). Yet, far from challenging patriarchy, the state sought to make rural women key participants in the state’s programs in hygiene, nutrition, healthcare, and community well-being (Ibid). The state mobilized teachers, nurses, and social workers to educate and

empower rural women to be active participants in the state's campaigns for public education, modern parenting, and temperance in rural communities (Vaughan 2000; Olcott 2002). While the state encouraged women to participate in peasant labor, peasant women were most consistently recognized as wives and mothers whose revolutionary struggle was to be subordinate to the interests of their husbands and motherly obligations (Olcott 2002).

1.2.4 The Eugenization of Biopolitical Citizenship

The expanding discourse of eugenics in Mexico in the 1930s provided a nexus between certain feminist demands pivoting on sex reform and the larger importance of reproductive policies for the well-being of the nation. The revolution's secular and anticlerical stance provided the perfect conditions for a leftist interpretation of eugenics in which science was entrusted with improving the human condition. Longtime social anxieties became filtered through the prism of eugenics such that public concerns with the poor, criminals, prostitutes, and Indians were reformulated in terms of these groups' hereditary imprint on the nation. Even while eugenic legislation was enacted in Mexico, the impact of eugenics in Mexico as well as Latin America was mostly felt at the level of cultural prescriptions (Stepan 1991, 55, 100, 128-130).

In Mexico and Latin America, eugenics stayed close to the late nineteenth century French science of childrearing known as puericulture. Puericulture sought to protect child health from diseases and other unsanitary behavior by understanding the impact of child rearing and maternal hygiene. In France,

puericulture responded to a concern with high maternal and infant mortality and a pronatalist policy that sought to ensure a bigger and healthier population. In Mexico, the demographic devastation of the Revolution led post-revolutionary leaders to embrace French conceptions of puericulture.

Mexico's penchant for puericulture shaped its engagement with Mendelian eugenics sweeping through Britain and the US. With the rise of eugenics, French scientists adopted a neo-Lamarckian framework in which ills such as alcoholism, venereal diseases, poverty, mental health, and delinquency were symptoms of a "poisoned" heredity. Neo-Lamarckian eugenics fused with puericulture to emphasize the role of environmental factors in negatively impacting the "race". Unlike the "negative" or "positive" eugenics being implemented in Britain and the US which focused on inhibiting the reproduction of the unfit or encouraging the production of the fit, Nancy Stepan claims that the French and Latin Americans placed an emphasis on "preventive" eugenics. Preventive eugenics sought to eliminate "racial poisons" through public health campaigns that were focused on eradicating diseases, unsanitary behavior, and vices. A weakness in Stepan's account is that she does not provide enough evidence of the type of campaigns implemented by Mexico. The exception is her account of the state of Veracruz' campaign to treat venereal diseases, which I will discuss shortly (Stepan 1991, 80-87).

The ties between puericulture and eugenics in Mexico are extensive. The first classes on eugenics were provided by the head of puericulture in 1919. It was in the Mexican Congress of the Child held in 1921 and 1923 where eugenics

were first discussed publicly. In the first congress, a slim majority approved the sterilization of criminals. The Society of Puericulture, formed in 1929, contained a eugenics section which addressed issues of heredity, disease, child sexuality, sexual education, and birth control. Members of the Society of Puericulture went on to establish the Mexican Eugenics Society for the Improvement of Race in Mexico City by 1931. As the society grew, it came to include doctors and scientifically oriented reformers representing public health departments from twelve states in Mexico, including the federal Department of Public Health (Stepan 1991, 55, 57-58, 109, 129 n. 68).

Despite their overall preference for “preventive” eugenics, Mexican eugenicists supported the use of “negative” eugenics such as birth control amongst the poor to ensure that they would have better chances of health and adequate provision of their children. They also proposed “negative” eugenic interventions such as marriage prohibitions for those with conditions thought to be transmissible through heredity. In 1928, premarital medical examinations were required by law and marriage licenses were withheld for individuals with morphine addiction, chronic alcoholism, idiocy, and mental illness. However, the tendency of the population to live in free unions greatly reduced the effectiveness of this measure. Since the middle class could easily purchase marriage certificates, these examinations were unsuccessful in reaching the poor, presumably the targets of the policy, and possibly further discouraged them from formalizing their unions (Stepan 1991, 55, 110, 125).

While the influence of Catholicism in Latin America made sterilization generally anathema, the anticlerical positioning of some Mexican revolutionary leaders led them to support the extreme measure. In 1932, the state of Veracruz was the only state to approve eugenic sterilization under the auspices of revolutionary and radically anticlerical governor Adalberto Tejeda. The state's eugenic law established the Section on Eugenics and Mental Hygiene within the state department of health to address inheritance, criminality, prostitution, alcoholism, and children's mental conditions. Two years earlier, Tejeda had already abolished prostitution and made it legal for the state to identify and forcibly treat individuals diagnosed with venereal diseases, especially prostitutes. Prostitutes were considered a threat to the nation due to their perceived role in transmitting venereal diseases thought to be inheritable (Stepan 1991, 132; Stern 2011, 438, 442).

In the same tenor, Veracruz' 1932 eugenic law allowed the sterilization of the insane, idiots, and so-called degenerates with the approval of three physicians. The same measure also legalized birth control, introduced sex education in schools, and limited the sale of alcohol. The legalization of birth control was intended to balance the supposedly lopsided reproduction of the "less desirable" classes who unlike the middle and upper classes could not readily access birth control. It was hoped that such measures would prevent "degeneration" in the Mexican race (Stepan 1991, 132; Stern 2011, 438, 442).

Veracruz' experiment with sterilization did not spread to the rest of Mexico. In 1933, the Mexican Eugenics Society debated the Veracruz measure, with

several notable physicians declaring their opposition. The following year, the Society held meetings on eugenics in collaboration with the most prestigious scientific society in Mexico. After discussing the new Nazi sterilization legislation, members condemned sterilization as an “anachronism” in Mexico. Yet, even while sterilization had always been sidelined in Latin America, the drive to cleanse the population of factors considered harmful to heredity through the “softer” means of preventive eugenics was profound, egging populations to govern themselves according to modern biologized reproductive norms. In fact, Stepan argues that the “soft” veneer of Latin American eugenics allowed them to persist until the 1960s well after the decline of Mendelian eugenics in Europe. For example, *Eugenesia*, the journal produced by the Mexican Eugenics Society, was published until 1954 and the society’s leader continued to publish on eugenics up until the 1970s (Stepan 1991, 17, 133; Stern 2011, 433).

The post-revolutionary *indigenista* discourse of *mestizaje*, while colonial in its roots, was revitalized through eugenics. *Indigenismo* was a set of policies and institutions which were created in the 1920s to celebrate Mexico’s indigenous civilizations and to incorporate the living Indians selectively into the nation (Knight 1990, 86-88). This project made anthropologists handmaidens of the state, entrusting them to study indigenous cultures and to provide the state with sensitive integrationist methods (Friedlander 2006, 195). In the apogee of *indigenismo* in the 1920’s, revolutionary thinkers and policymakers countered European theories of hybrid degeneration by proposing *mestizaje* as a type of constructive miscegenation. In this spirit, José Vasconcelos penned the idea of

the “cosmic” race on which he published in 1924 and 1925. Vasconcelos claimed that Latin America’s contribution to universal history was its “cosmic”, mestizo race, which united all races. Yet, rather than fostering existing diversity, revolutionary leaders hoped that *mestizaje* would engender a homogenous Mexico that would converge on the Europeanized mestizo ideal (Stepan 1991, 147-151).

Far from relying on sterilization or legal measures, revolutionary leaders such as Vasconcelos placed their hopes on “spiritual eugenics”—self-governing Mexicans that would naturally choose to mate with the “superior” individuals of all the races, rejecting the abnormal, ugly, and unhealthy. Vasconcelos went so far as predicting the disappearance of the negro “race”, for example. Similarly, the Mexican Eugenics Society espoused the selective inclusion of all Mexicans with the understanding that *mestizaje* was eugenic: it entailed “improving” the Indian masses through mixture with the “superior” elements of the European races (Stepan 1991, 148-152).[11]

Besides being racially and culturally specific, the mestizo was clearly a male subject. This could be gathered from a post-revolutionary national narrative disseminated through school textbooks, in which the mestizo was depicted as emerging from the union between the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés and his Indian mistress and translator, la Malinche (Taylor 2009). As the

[11] Mestizaje as a post-revolutionary state ideal went hand in hand with other eugenic state measures in the domain of immigration. In the 1930s, Mexico expelled hundreds of Chinese from the state of Sonora and rejection a request by the US to resettle a group of American blacks in Mexico under the premise that accepting them would worsen Mexico’s ethnic problems (Stepan 1991, 148-152).

future of the Mexican nation, the mestizo was to distinguish himself from his Spanish and Indian ancestry. This narrative feminized indigenous peoples and placed them in a time frame that preceded settler subjects. According to Elizabeth Povinelli, this temporal maneuver has been commonly deployed against native peoples to negate them a commonality with settler subjects (2011). Both Povinelli and Scott Morgensen agree that *mestizaje* discourses also serve to eliminate indigenous peoples by severing their chain of descent (Ibid, 20).

The discourse of *mestizaje* underscores the post-revolutionary state's deeply masculine national project. As Matthew Gutmann observed, "the fate of machismo as an archetype of masculinity has always been closely tied to Mexican cultural nationalism" such that "'being *mexicano'* has been a male Mexican project" (1996, 241). Hidden behind this mestizo was the selfless and submissive woman whose significance pivoted in her supporting role as mother, wife, and daughter. However, eugenics biologized, rationalized, and modernized Mexican women's biopolitical citizenship, pointing to the expanding influence of science over national reproduction.

As in Europe, an affinity between eugenics and some strands of feminism developed in Mexico. The puericultural roots of Mexican eugenics were compatible with the motherly platform of Mexican feminism. While Mexican eugenicists were for the most part anti-feminist, they converged with some feminists on the importance of sex education, legalization of birth control, and

campaigns against drugs, alcohol, and prostitution (Stepan 1991, 130).[12] In 1932, for example, the National Block of Revolutionary Women, one of the organizations that arose in the vacuum left by the FUPDM, asked the Secretary of Public Education to include sex education in technical schools for all children under sixteen years of age and suggested it consult the Mexican Eugenics Society for a program. At the bidding of the Secretary of Public Education, the Mexican Eugenics Society offered its "Project for Sex Education and the Prophylaxis of Venereal Diseases and Alcoholism". Yet, the idea of sex education caused such a scandal in the national press that the Secretary of Public Education was forced to resign (Ibid).

In Latin America, eugenics had its greatest impact at the level of cultural norms, as Nancy Stepan notes, but also through its influence in public health (1991, 17; Stern 2011). The puericulture roots of Latin American eugenics and its emphasis on maternal and infant health care, sexual hygiene, sexual education were repackaged in the United Nations' population control paradigm of the 1960s sans the references to race. While eugenics emerged at a time in which Mexican policymakers were zealously pronatalist in the aftermath of the Revolution, by the 1950s, Mexico echoed the anxieties with the overpopulation of the developing world that swept much of the West and whose most important mouthpiece became the United Nations.

[12] Women's participation in eugenic circles was mostly limited. As compared to Argentina and Brazil, the cases analyzed by Stepan, Mexico's eugenic society had more founding members that were women--five out of twenty. Yet, as the society grew, the proportion of women did not.

Under this new guise, the eugenic preoccupation with maternal and infant health care, sexual hygiene, and sexual education would be redirected at reducing the population of the developing world and at fomenting its health rather than perfecting the “race”. The eugenic “identity” imposed on poor women implicating their avoidance, termination or care of a pregnancy carried over into the UN’s population control program, which contained an explicit focus on women’s reproductive rights.

The UN’s program would also replicate the tendency of eugenics to biologize what were deeply moral judgements of the value of the poor and the racialized. Vis-à-vis Elizabeth Povinelli’s work, the discourse of biology and public health opens a space in which civil society can critically and rationally debate the role of the poor and the racialized without seemingly laying recourse to moral judgements (2002, 11). However, as I will show, public health debates end in pronouncements of self-evident moral tVanesas that have traces of racial difference. In this way, such discursive spaces function as an “anti-politics machine”, circumventing what are deeply political questions by rendering poverty technical (Ferguson, 1994).

1.3 Women’s Rights: Developing a Modern Female Workforce

The “eugenic identity” extended to women in the early twentieth century was conservative in so far as it relegated women to their reproductive role, as Stepan notes (1991, 110). Yet, once states shifted to an anti-natalist stance, a concern with women’s eugenic identity was steered towards inhibiting

reproduction. Policymakers would soon claim that curbing women's reproduction benefitted women themselves. Yet, how did a biopolitical concern "on behalf of the existence of everyone" become wedded to an explicit promise of women's individual well-being (Foucault 1990, 137)?

The birth of the United Nations helped make the leap from collective to individual welfare. As a founding member of the UN, Mexico became part of the UN's belief "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small…" (UN 1945). This emphasis squarely entitled all persons to equal rights and made equality on a global scale a task of all governments. As a "developing" country, Mexico now had to commit to a greater homology with the West as the symbol of human progress. The pressure to catch up to the West was especially felt with regards to the female vote since women in the "developed" countries of the West and in some countries of Latin America had already attained this right (Tuñón Pablos 2011, 133-135).

To advance on this front, the UN created the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946 with representation from Mexico (Bernal 1984, 285). In response to pressure from the UN and the Mexican feminist movement, president Miguel Aleman (1946-52) granted women the right to vote and run in all municipal elections. Not yet in line with a vision of women's rights in which their personal development is placed at the center, the Aleman administration framed the female municipal vote as enhancing women's domestic role as well as

ensuring the country's modernization (Molyneux 2000, 53; Tuñón Pablos 2011, 133).

International pressure mounted with the UN's passing of the "Convention on Women's Political Rights" in 1952, which affirmed women's right to vote, run, and occupy public office (Bernal 1984, 285). To comply with Mexico's commitment to international agreements, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines finally granted women the right to vote and run in national elections in 1953 (Tuñón Pablos 2011, 145). Unsurprisingly, state discourse continued to couch the female vote in ways that reinforced women's supporting roles as mothers, wives, and housemakers rather than as independent political agents (Ibid, 144). Nevertheless, the ruling party, now called the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party-PRI), greatly benefitted from the female vote since it strengthened its party base (Ibid). Whereas Cortines had won the presidential election with 74.32% of the vote, his successor, Adolfo López Mateos obtained 90.56% of the vote (Ibid, 145). Esperanza Tuñón Pablos observes the irony behind women attaining the vote at a time in which the Mexican political system was characterized by a one-party electoral system and a centralized state (Ibid).

Concurrently, the Mexican state became interested in expanding its labor force as well as its quality, turning to women to fill this void. Mexico had been implementing an import-substitution model of industrialization that was geared towards modernizing the country and its citizens. Known as the "Mexican miracle", from 1940 to 1968, Mexico expanded its roads, dams, industry,

irrigation, and banks, swiftly elevating living standards in the cities and the agribusiness sector in the north. Concerned with the lack of female participation in the labor force, the state determined that the country's modernization required a new kind of Mexican woman, one that participated in remunerated labor, had less children, and was more agentive.

The 1950 census revealed the disadvantages faced by women: more men than women received formal education; more girls under twelve years of age were employed; female heads of household tended to be disproportionately illiterate; and women were having an average of seven children in their lifetimes (Tuñón Pablos 2011, 138). To facilitate women's modernization, the anatomo- and biopolitical techniques that had shaped women into primarily caretakers and low-skilled workers were adjusted at the level of discourse and law, including extending women more political, civil, and social rights.

1.4 Women in Development: Mexico's New Interest in Population Control

While the ravages of the Mexican Revolution had impelled Mexico's post-revolutionary policymakers to embrace unlimited reproduction, by the 1960's, policymakers were identifying overpopulation as an urgent national problem (Soto Laveaga 2007, 23). These concerns were being echoed across the globe by policymakers who saw population growth as the obstacle to poverty reduction and healthcare provision. The populations who were portrayed as reproducing excessively were those who contributed to poverty, namely developing countries, and within these, the poor and racialized.

This vision responded to a neoliberalization of the state and economy in which the objective was to reduce the state's welfare provision in favor of a "smaller" state. Responsibility was a new social value that citizens were expected to embody if they were to become the self-regulating and self-reliant subjects who did not depend on a welfare state. In this new climate, the patriarchal techniques of bio-power which had contributed to shaping women into primarily caregivers had to be modified to imbue women with new aspirations through their wider public contribution.

Integrating women into wage-labor was a strategy of corporations and governments who sought to maximize profitability by shifting to neoliberal capitalist modes of production (Eisenstein 2005, 495). These modes envisioned the de-industrialization of the so-called developed countries and the expansion of export manufacturing in developing countries. Capital privileged the service and finance sectors over manufacturing (Ibid, 491). In turn, these sectors were managed according to "dual" market structures with a small "well-paid bureaucracy at the top and a large pool of poorly paid workers at the bottom" (Ibid, 499). In the US, these strategies in combination with outsourcing to lower-paying contractors led to the proliferation of low-wage, dead-end jobs and the annihilation of the family wage paid to working males. Families compensated by incurring debt and sending more household members to work, thereby increasing the number of dual-income-earning families. To this end, legislation that prevented women from working night shifts and that limited the amount of weight women could lift was repealed between 1964 and 1969 in the US. Abetted by

second-wave feminism which celebrated women's economic independence, these reforms were accompanied by the re-articulation of women as individuals rather than as solely mothers and wives.

In the developing world, structural adjustment programs imposed on indebted countries by international finance institutions further pressured the Mexican government to relinquish state-led development and to turn to exports. Developing countries enticed multinational corporations by setting up free trade zones with zero or reduced tariffs and taxes and by promoting women's so-called "nimble" fingers. The first maquiladoras were opened on the US-Mexico border in 1965. According to Ellen Rosen, in the developing world, low-paid jobs that go to women make up about 80 percent of the labor force (Eisenstein 2005, 505). Pyle and Ward note that across both the developing and developed world, women workers have come to be overrepresented in sex work, housework, and export production (Ibid, 503).

The UN provided leadership in articulating women's entry into the labor force with women's equality. Having addressed women's political rights through its "Convention on Women's Political Rights", the UN turned to "women in development" in the late 1960s. This discourse saw women as absent from public life due to a host of laws that barred their access from the civic sphere and paid employment. To advance women's integration, the UN passed the "Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" in 1967. The premise of the declaration was that "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum

participation of women as well as men in all fields" (UN 1967). This liberal charter asked states to make the legislative changes necessary to make women equal to men. The declaration urged states to grant women the rights to engage in legal contracts, acquire and dispose of their property, dissolve their marriages, choose any profession, and receive equal pay for equal work. The declaration also included social rights such as equal access to education, childcare, and paid maternity leave.

Thus, the UN declaration aimed to bring women squarely within the singular model of citizenship established for men that had allowed the full gamut of liberal rights to supplement and be compatible with capitalism. In other words, the UN was invoking the vision of T.H. Marshall who saw political, civil, but especially social rights as a necessary means to make citizenship consonant with capitalism. By recognizing women's rights to childcare facilities and paid maternity leave, the UN declaration took small steps towards making liberal citizenship compatible with caregiving. Yet, by making childcare facilities and paid maternity leave a prerogative of women, the declaration reified men's unencumbered position with regards to childcare. In this manner, the UN reified sexual inequality and reinforced caregiving as women's responsibility.

At the same time, states were beginning to identify overpopulation in the so-called developing world as the primary obstacle to the wellbeing of developing countries. Family planning was touted as the silver bullet that would enable developing countries to enter an age of economic growth and improved living standards. This is reflected in the UN's International Conference on Human

Rights held in Tehran in 1968. Resolution XVIII of the conference stated that, “the present rapid rate of population growth in some areas of the world hampers the struggle against hunger and poverty, and in particular reduces possibilities of rapidly achieving adequate standards of living…thereby impeding the full realization of human rights” (UN 1968). The UN reasoned that since overpopulation was stymying human rights, it needed to recognize family planning as a human right to solve the problem. To this end, Resolution XVIII endorsed the following, “couples have a basic human right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and a right to adequate education and information in this respect (UN 1968).”

The UN’s neo-Malthusian agenda would not end there. UN member states convened in Bucharest in 1974, designated as World Population Year, to draft a World Population Plan of Action (WPPA). This plan of action set development goals for all member states to follow, among which reducing population growth was primary (Soto Laveaga 2007, 20). The WPPA affirmed that population growth “can…[hamper] the achievement of sustained development” (UN 1974). This was especially the case in developing countries who had not sufficiently decreased their fertility rates even as their mortality rates were declining.

The WPPA introduced the notion of “responsible parenthood” to emphasize the right of couples and individuals to obtain “adequate education and information” but also the “means” to exercise family planning (Ibid). Responsibility entailed considering “the needs of their living and future children, and their responsibilities towards the community” (Ibid). Rather than

strengthening parents' more expansive social rights, the WPPA raised a biopolitical and anatomo-political norm, that of parental self-responsibility, to the level of a right. Likewise, rather than obligating states to guarantee the welfare of children, the WPPA obligated states to make information on family planning available as well as the means to exercise this right.

In its efforts to curb population growth, the WPPA identified women as critical agents. The WPPA claimed that women had been reduced to their reproductive labor such that only their full integration into "development" would allow them to thrive. The WPPA touted that women "have the right to complete integration in the development process particularly by means of an equal access to education and equal participation in social, economic, cultural and political life" (UN 1974). Thus, the WPPA affirmed that women's greater participation in community life not only "can contribute, where desired, to smaller family sizes", but that "the opportunity for women to plan births also improves their individual status" (Ibid).

While the WPPA had few instructions on how states were to achieve these goals, it differed from the UN's Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in that it recognized men's role in fulfilling family responsibilities. The WPPA recommended the "removal of obstacles to [women's] employment" and that "the necessary measures should be taken to facilitate [women's] integration with family responsibilities which should be fully shared by both partners" (Ibid). While this was a necessary amendment, the WPPA ignored the demands for wages for housework being made by feminists in the 1970s.

As the development paradigm gained sway within national and international public health institutions it exerted significant influence over the sexuality of peoples in the “developing” world. Family planning became an effective tool of bio-power that disciplined classes and racialized bodies and populations with the goal of improving society. Despite the voluntary framing of family planning, this “right” soon became an expectation of all those aspiring to modernity, especially for those whose fertility rates were considered problematic by this new international standard. One of the results was the growing prestige of low fertility and, inversely, the “reproductive stigma” that marked those who did not assume modern fertility patterns (Schneider and Schneider 1996). Similarly, while the WPPA avowed the “sovereign right” of states to decide their population strategies in keeping with human rights, developing countries were required to implement population growth control policies to receive international loans (Oudshoorn 1997; Soto Laveaga 2003).

Mexico became a distinguished participant in the UN’s neo-Malthusian agenda. The UN followed World Population Year by designating 1975 International Women’s Year and declaring 1976-1985 the Decade for Women. Mexico came under the international limelight when it was designated as the host of the UN’s first World Conference on Women planned for June 1975. This conjuncture spurred the Mexican state to act on family planning and women’s rights, even if undemocratically. The Echeverría administration invited feminist organizations to voice their demands and assess his administration’s proposed reforms (González Juárez 2007, 125). Feminists responded by demanding that

Echeverría decriminalize abortion; provide free access to contraceptives; and provide state funded daycare centers, cafeterias, and laundries (Ibid). Echeverría ignored most of their demands, acknowledging only the issue of contraceptives, which the UN had already approved through its platform on family planning.

In 1974, Echeverría decreed a set of reforms to adapt the Mexican Constitution to UN standards as stipulated in the 1974 World Population Plan of Action. Article 4 of the Constitution was modified to pronounce men and women equal before the law and to extend every person “the right to decide in a free, responsible and informed manner on the number and spacing of their children” (Soto Laveaga 2007, 20-23; González Alvarado 2007, 84). This constitutional change implied an obligation for the state to guarantee the necessary conditions so that Mexican men and women could carry out family planning (Bernal Gómez 1984, 293). Yet, legal scholar Beatriz Bernal Gómez claims that Article 4 also incited Mexican men and women to assume a family planning mentality. Bernal Gómez notes that the language of Article 4 carefully placated both the international community’s call for population control and the pronatalist Mexican camp led by the Catholic Church by making it clear the Mexican state would not implement any coercive population control measures (Ibid, 301).

Echeverría’s other set of reforms were oriented towards facilitating women’s greater insertion into the labor market and reformulating gender roles within the family. Echeverría claimed that Mexico’s economy needed women’s participation to advance “the complicated task of development” (Bernal Gómez 1984, 303). In keeping with the WPPA, Echeverría painted women’s deeper

insertion into the paid labor force as beneficial for women themselves. Echeverría claimed that work was “liberating” for women since it served to form “free consciences” (Ibid, 292).

In this spirit, Echeverría modified and repealed parts of Article 123 of the Constitution and several articles of the Federal Labor Law that had restricted women’s access to employment (González Alvarado 2007, 84-85). These protectionist laws had barred women from overtime work, night shifts in industrial labor, and work in dangerous and unsanitary occupations (Bernal Gómez 1984, 304).

At the same time, Echeverría expanded maternity protections (Bernal Gómez 1984, 305). Bernal Gómez rightly argues that maternity protections were geared towards safeguarding the family rather than women per se (Ibid). Protecting the family had been fundamental to the UN’s turn to development. The resolutions of the Tehran Conference of 1968 and the World Population Plan of Action of 1974 both acknowledged the family as “the basic unit of society” and called for its protection through legislation. So too Echeverría’s modifications to Article 4 explicitly entrusted the law to “protect the organization and development of the family”.

More controversial were Echeverría’s reform to Article 164 and 168 of the Civil Code. While the first established that both spouses were expected to contribute economically to the household, the second stipulated that spouses were to agree on all matters related to household management (González Juárez 2007, 125). Mexican feminists decried these reforms on grounds that they

imposed a double standard on wives by requiring them to work outside the home while failing to make housework an obligation of both spouses (Ibid). In this way, reforms to Article 168 contravened the World Population Action Plan which had recommended that states take measures towards ensuring that family responsibilities would “be fully shared by both partners” (UN 1974).

Family planning was also an opportunity for the Mexican state to implement a eugenic reduction of its rural population. In fact, a concern for the quality of its population had served as one of Mexico’s principal motivations in supporting family planning (Soto Laveaga 2007). Implementation of agrarian reform measures had bolstered rural populations. Yet, even when peasant food production had fueled a rapidly urbanizing nation, peasants lived at subsistence-level incomes (Warman 1980; Hewitt de Alcántara 1978). After Cárdenas, land redistribution had come to a halt, forcing landless peasants to flock to the cities. The state resented their urban demands for public resources and contributions to unemployment rates (Soto Laveaga 2007). By the 1960s, the state sought to limit the migration of dark-skinned and indigenous rural migrants, which they perceived as a spatial transgression of a racial rural-urban divide (Soto Laveaga 2007).

At the same time, Mexican policymakers were beginning to associate the country’s high birthrates with stereotypical images of passive wives and renegade, migrant, and macho husbands. Advancing women’s equality, especially through family planning, was deemed necessary in the struggle to

reshape Mexican citizens into dutiful men and agentive women who could engender a modern and less densely populated Mexico (Soto Laveaga 2007).

While in the rest of the world family planning initiatives were spearheaded by NGOs, in Mexico, it was the state who took the initiative (Soto Laveaga 2007). In 1976, the Echeverría administration created the country's first National Population Council (CONAPO) to implement population growth control policies and improve maternal and infant health standards. Through soap operas and publicity campaigns that aired on the radio, television, magazines, newspapers, and posters, the Mexican government advocated for women's non-reproductive roles, which could expand their personal "development", as well as the value of family planning. Under slogans such as "the small family lives better", having more than two children stigmatized parents as irresponsible citizens (Ibid, 26). Parents were not only expected to plan their families according to their incomes but also to be emotionally involved, a characteristic which fathers were especially presumed to lack (Ibid, 25).

In these campaigns, the poor and indigenous were portrayed in public campaigns as the prototypes of parental irresponsibility (Soto Laveaga 2007, 25, 28). In one poster analyzed by Gabriela Soto Laveaga, a woman is portrayed kneeling on the sidewalk with her baby strapped to her back and a toddler by her side. The caption read, "With such modest means, is it right for them to have so many children?", with "them" likely referring to Indians. This racial and classist perspective is echoed in a widely circulated book on population control methods authored by Dr. Carrasco Narro, a prominent physician, and published in 1966

titled, “El Control de la Natalidad en México: Métodos, Planeación Familiar”. In it, Dr. Narro explained, “We need quality in men, not the quantity who come and go like nomads, practicing fleeting employment or asking for a bracero visa to cross the border and gain a couple more dollars” (Soto Laveaga 2007, 24).

The image of poor men as aberrant and vulgar has historical roots. In Mexico, the middle and upper classes used the term *macho* to disparage the *pelados* or urban working-class and unemployed males, some of whom were rural migrants (Limón 1989, 1994). Similarly, in the US the term *macho* had been used in reference to Mexican, Mexican-American, and Latin American men as distinct from white men (Gutmann 1996, 227). As I will elucidate in Chapter 2, the Indian woman has also served as the archetypal passive and suffering woman whose service to the nation was reduced to her social reproductive functions.

By the mid-1980s, Mexico’s population control program had proven so successful it was cited as an example for other nations to follow (Ibid, 20).[13] In 1986, Mexico was awarded the UN’s Population Prize as it had reduced its annual population growth from 3.5% in 1974 to 2.1% (Soto Laveaga 2007, 27). Mexico’s population control interventions have continued to bear fruit. Between 1970 and 1990, Mexico’s fecundity rates were reduced from 6.54 children per woman to 3.35 (Barroso 2004, 86).

Yet, Mexico’s efforts have not been as successful in regions with a higher indigenous population. The Echeverría and López Portillo administrations

[13] For example, Mexico was chosen to host the second World Population Conference in Copenhagen in 1984 (Soto Laveaga 2007, 20).

expanded rural clinics and hospitals as well as made contraceptives available through the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) to all individuals irrespective of their membership in the system (Soto Laveaga 2007, 28, 30). More recently, conditional transfer programs have been implemented since the 1990s to discourage rural women from having too many children and to refrain from having children in older age (see Smith-Oka 2013). While conditional transfer programs are ongoing, in 1994 there was a regional gap in fecundity rates: in northern Mexico and Mexico City the average number of children born per woman was between 2 and 2.5 while in southwest Mexico, where there is a higher indigenous rural population, it was 3.8 (Barroso 2004, 89).

The international campaign for women in development propagated a eugenic solution to poverty and health that relied on stifling the reproduction of the poor rather than addressing the unequal distribution of resources. In this way, the women in development platform was a response to the social movements that spread across many parts of the globe in the 1960s, which called for democratization and a turn to socialist and communist economies. Rather than reinforce these calls, the women in development paradigm supported a smaller state, one which focused on offering depoliticized interventions in the name of maternal and infant health and improving women's lives through access to remunerated labor and family planning.

The irony is that, despite its promises to help women, the women in development platform placed the onus of population control on women's bodies. Even today, sixty years after the birth control pill was released, the health risks

implied by birth control are not fully understood. As we will see, the women in development paradigm also resulted in a lopsided effort to draw women into the paid labor force without placing as much emphasis on redistributing the brunt of reproductive labor to men or on encouraging states to publicly support this labor. The latter option was greatly undermined by the Mexican state's turn to a smaller welfare state. The combination of both a decreased welfare state and the continued relegation of reproductive labor to women has resulted in women having to work a second or third shift or delegate such labor to poorer women.

1.5 Unfit for Self-determination: Indigenous Biopolitical Alterity

What's more, in the process of curbing rural population growth, the Mexican state redressed the historical colonial binary between mestizos and Indians. Indians now stand as the epitome of the reproductively negligent subject while mestizos are regarded as reproductively normative. In this way, the women in development paradigm supported a kind of biopolitical citizenship that was deeply gendered, racialized, sexualized and anti-redistributive. In this model of citizenship, not only are Indians and the poor to blame for their poverty, but they are to be subject to ongoing interventions couched at their sexual and reproductive civilizing. Thus, this neoliberal, biopolitical citizenship not only spells what kinds of conduct is citizenly, but also which types of persons count as citizens.

The idea of indigenous sexual backwardness resurfaced in the national debates surrounding the question of indigenous autonomy between 1994 and the

early 2000s. In 1992, Mexico passed a set of constitutional reforms that sought to formally rescind a model of citizenship based on a color-blind notion of universal membership. These reforms recognized indigenous peoples explicitly as full citizens and redefined the Mexican nation as pluricultural. Article 2 of the Constitution was modified to recognize indigenous autonomy at the level of the community, while it left it up to individual states to determine what form this would take (Sieder 2016). The 1992 reform made discrimination based on race or culture unacceptable and embraced cultural and racial difference. However, these reforms required secondary legislation to be implemented and willingness of the state to guarantee them.

The top-down and empty nature of these reforms passed by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari would be made explicit in the state's dealings with the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional who staged an uprising in 1994 in the southern and mostly indigenous state of Chiapas. The EZLN decried Mexico's integration into NAFTA and its history of colonial relations which had long sidelined indigenous peoples. The state and the Zapatistas tried to reach a peace settlement by negotiating a set of agreements known as the San Andrés Accords of 1996. The administration of Ernesto Zedillo, however, failed to implement the accords or continue with further negotiations as had been agreed upon by the Zapatistas and the government. A congressional committee known as the Commission for Harmony and Pacification (COCOPA) drafted a law initiative based on the San Andrés Accords, which the Zapatistas approved in

1996. When the government rejected the law, negotiations between the Zapatistas and the government faltered once again.

After a five-year hiatus of military incursions into Zapatista communities and attempts by two mediating bodies to broker an agreement, the incoming administration of Vicente Fox Quezada, who defeated the PRI in 2000, promised to resolve the Chiapas conflict. Fox sent the COCOPA initiative to Congress in 2000. At this time, notable pundits and congressional representatives weighed in on these debates, energetically rejecting the COCOPA initiative, which included provisions for indigenous territorial autonomy, under the pretext that such autonomy would result in the violation of indigenous women's rights (Sieder 2016).

The Zapatistas made their voices heard by organizing a march from Chiapas to Mexico City in support of the initiative. The march culminated with *Comandante* Esther's address to Congress in which she clarified that indigenous peoples, and specifically women, were capable of discerning which indigenous customs to keep and which to reform. Through what is sometimes called double militancy, indigenous women have remained part of the larger indigenous movement and its struggle for self-determination at the same time they have sought to define indigenous cultures as dynamic (Hernández Castillo, Stephen, & Speed 2006). The banner of the indigenous women's movement, "*cambiar permaneciendo y permanecer cambiando*" or "to change while remaining and remain changing", reflects this understanding of culture (Hernández Castillo 2007, 272).

Despite these interventions, Congress passed a watered-down version of the COCOPA initiative in 2001. The “indigenous law” eliminated the legal right to indigenous peoples’ collective use of natural resources and denied indigenous communities the status of formal entities within the federal structure (Mora 2007, 71). The debates surrounding the indigenous peoples’ right to territorial autonomy illustrate how common representations of Indians as biopolitical others were critical to their denial of rights. Images of indigenous peoples as overpopulating automatons, illiberal parents who sell their underage daughters in marriage, or incorrigibly androcentric serve as concrete examples of the profound racism that persists in Mexico. These images also illustrate how concerns with gendered violence were the new biopolitical standard used in determining indigenous peoples’ worthiness.

1.4 Conclusion

I have distinguished liberal citizenship from biopolitical citizenship and to show the tensions between these two forms of citizenship in Mexico’s history. While women and indigenous peoples have been formally recognized as full citizens with political, civil, and social rights, Mexicans have suffered serious setbacks to their social and civil rights due to Mexico’s shift to a smaller welfare state and to a deregulated economy since the late twentieth century. What’s more, the extension of liberal rights has been often geared towards facilitating a certain conduct that is conducive to a good national order.

The concept of national order in the twentieth century has prioritized gender and sexual modernity as salient markers of the good biopolitical citizen. Yet, the modernity/coloniality that traverses biopolitical citizenship represents a peril for indigenous peoples in so far as they are considered bio-politic's internal other. Biopolitical citizenship or normative behavior recognized as citizenly is traversed by racially coded ideas of modernity in which indigenous peoples continue to stand in for the backward elements of Mexican society. In this context, Comandante Esther's affirmation that indigenous peoples are capable of rationalizing their own concepts of gender and sexual citizenship is an affront to the Western gaze and the coloniality implicit in modernity.

CHAPTER TWO: Cultural or Racial Impasses? The Limits of the "Sensitizing" State

Gender progress is nothing less than a cultural revolution, one that requires foot soldiers on the ground. These foot soldiers abound at the local level. From this angle, one sees the agents of the gender progressive state at their closest and most emotional proximity to the target Nahua population. In some cases, state agents are even of Nahua descent. In the Huasteca of Hidalgo, state agents who work in public schools, the *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer* or Local Women's Agency, and the *CAMI* or Indigenous Women's House promote gender progress. *Instancia* agents, for example, describe themselves as a "solidary authority" that is distinct from the "imposing authorities" of the municipal prosecutor's office and the Center of Attention for Intra-family Violence (CAVI). While the latter are supposed to be implementing the gender progressive reforms made in the last thirty years, *Instancia* staff saw them as antagonistic to women. These public service workers develop empathy for Nahua women who are said to be devalued, beat, sold as brides, forced to marry, and sexually abused by their parents or siblings. The *Instancia* staff along with public educators and judges strive to empower the Nahua population to arrive at a gender progressive stance through a process of "sensitization" or "*sensibilización*".

Echoing other national and international arenas in which gender violence is being defined, these state agents promote an explanation of gender backward

behavior in which the culture of the poor and indigenous is identified as the root of the problem (Merry 2003; Newdick 2005). In the eyes of state agents, the gender backward, unreflexive Indian exists most pristinely far from the municipal centers of progress and mestizos and mestizas. Nahua culture in this context is defined as isolated, bounded, and obstinately resistant. State agents blame Indians' patriarchal values on their supposedly obstinate attachment to tradition. These attitudes show how the idea that indigenous peoples are more rooted to tradition continues to identify them as unable to properly reason or reflect on the value of progress.

2.1 1970s: Feminist Revolutionary Imaginaries

How did a biopolitical emphasis on working women and the benefits of the small Mexican family lead to a concern with gender violence? By exploring the personal as political, second-wave feminists in the 1970's came to identify the issues of domestic violence, rape, and abortion as pillars of the movement. While feminists saw these issues as central to their liberation, the Mexican executive addressed the first two issues by integrating them into its public security and modernizing platforms. While feminists of the period challenged the gender progressive claims of capitalist modernization and the authority of the Mexican state to promote gender progress, they contributed to a carceral and punitive response to rape and domestic violence. In this way, feminists became strange bedfellows with the emerging Mexican "penal state" (Hernández Castillo 2013).

In Mexico, post-suffragist, second-wave feminism developed within the crucible of the Left. The Left became emboldened after the 1968 student massacre, in which more than 400 students and civilians were murdered at the hands of government forces during the administration of President Luis Echeverría. Feminists joined fledgling oppositional parties and human rights organizations in denouncing the Mexican government by calling for democracy or outright socialism (Bedregal et al 1991, 49-50; Lamas 2011, 18). Second-wave feminists were cautious of the state, which at the time, was understood to be indissoluble from the corrupt tendencies of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which had relied on cooptation and repression to maintain power since the 1920s (Bedregal et al 1991).

In the 1970s, feminism took root in small discussion groups comprised of middle and upper-class professional and university women. Many of these early feminists engaged in double militancy within Leftist organizations and parties. Deeply influenced by American and European feminism, Mexican feminists reflected on the political implications of their personal lives. They debated the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, the role of the family in ideological reproduction, and the role of housework in advancing capital and women's oppression (González 2007, 67-68). Examining oppression in everyday life, especially in the private sphere of sexuality, housework, and reproduction, was a hallmark of second-wave feminism in both the First and Third World (Fraser 2009, 103).

Women's social reproductive labor was one of the central issues for second-wave feminists. Social reproductive labor refers to the labor which "maintains people on a daily basis and intergenerationally—work that women traditionally expended in their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers" (Glenn 1991, 1339). The foundational text that incited second-wave Mexican feminists to organize was Marta Acevedo's 1970 report "*Las Mujeres luchan por su liberación. Nuestro sueño está en escarpado lugar*" (González 2007, 122).[14] This text addressed the oppression that women's social reproductive labor represented. In this text, Acevedo expounded a feminist Marxist analysis by which reproductive labor was recognized to have use-value but was deprived of exchange value simply because it was performed by women (Ibid, 123).

Some feminists sustained that more women in Mexico would develop a feminist consciousness if they stopped relying on the cheap labor of poor women who worked as their maids. In an article published shortly after Acevedo's, Rosario Castellanos argued that Mexican women's reliance on maids stifled their revolutionary consciousness. She posited that when the last maid would disappear in Mexico, "then we [would] see the first enraged, rebellious woman" (Lamas 2011, 17). While some Leftist feminists focused on organizing and improving the lot of maids, the class make-up of feminists would not be diversified until the economic crises of the 1980s with the rise of "popular" feminists.

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[14] This report was based on the author's visit to the fiftieth anniversary of women's suffrage in the US celebrated in San Francisco (González 2007, n.4 page 154).

Early in the 1970s, the *Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres* (National Women's Movement-MNM), established in 1973, was the first feminist organization in Mexico to focus on the issues of sexual and domestic violence. Replicating the structure of the US feminist National Organization of Women (NOW), the MNM sought to fight for women's legal, social, and political equality (González 2007, 79). By examining nearly all of Mexico's legal codes, the MNM was among the first to articulate the issues of abortion, and sexual and domestic violence as a matter of women's legal discrimination (Bedregal et al 1991, 50). North American and European feminists had already linked sexual violence with women's oppression (Ibid, 52). In 1974, the MNM made the decriminalization of abortion, which feminists came to call "voluntary maternity", and rape and battering its top priorities (Ibid, 51).

In the mid-1970s, the UN reinforced its work on behalf of eliminating women's discrimination and fomenting their equality. This lens represented North American and European liberal frameworks that were focused on the individual as a rights-bearing subject (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 168). In 1974, the UN's Committee on the Status of Women began to work on transforming the 1967 UN "Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" into a Convention with binding force. In addition, the UN designated 1976-1985 the Decade of Women and Mexico City as the host for the UN's first International Women's Conference. At this time, the discrimination and equality lens did not address rape and battering (Ibid).

The UN's efforts impelled the Mexican government to take a greater stance with respect to women. The Mexico City Attorney General's Office took the initiative by inviting feminist groups to give conferences in Mexico City's sixteen different delegations throughout 1975 (Bedregal et al 1991, 51-52). The MNM responded positively to the state's invitation, giving over 140 conferences throughout the city on various topics including sexual and domestic violence and abortion, the latter proving the most controversial (Ibid).

A group of feminists critical of the UN and the Mexican state led by the *Movimiento de Liberación de la Mujer* (Women's Liberation Movement-MLM) organized a simultaneous counter-conference. Together they formed the Women's Front against the International Year of Women. These feminists claimed the UN's notion of equality entailed women's equal right to be exploited. They also criticized the UN for supporting capitalist development and for defining peace as the stability required for capitalism. The MLM also called into question the basic premise of the UN's interventions, positing that they symbolized a paternalist and sexist attitude. As the MLM noted, "…the creation of an international year for women is the direct result of an attitude of tutelage, sheltering, and protection. Once more, by conceding us a year we are confirmed as weak beings in need of help. In this manner, a cultural belief—no longer a biological one—in the weakness of women as inferior beings is reinforced. This conception…is called sexism…" (González Alvarado 2007, 89; my translation). The MLM's sentiment echoed the international feminist community, which took issue with the highly male-dominated body of the UN and its top-down

implementation of proposals intended to improve women's status (González Alvarado 2007, 89-91; González Juárez 2007, 127).

With the divisive state of Mexican feminism made apparent by the World Conference on Women, some feminists determined to coordinate efforts and develop a stronger and more unified front. In this direction, members of the MLM and the MNM formed the *Coalición de Mujeres Feministas* (Feminist Women's Coalition-CMF) in 1976 (González Alvarado 2007, 92). The CMF took up the same agenda items as the MNM—the decriminalization of abortion and rape and battering. Despite all the divisions within the movement, rape and battering continued to unify it.

Feminists were also critical of the liberatory promises of paid employment. By the mid to late 1970s, contributors to second-wave feminist publications such as *Fem*, *Cihuat*, and *La Revuelta* reflected on the limitations of women's insertion into the labor market. For these women, it was becoming apparent that wage work was not a guarantor of women's equality. Not only were women mostly relegated to forms of work that were extensions of women's traditional gender roles, but they were also paid less when they performed traditionally male labor (González Juárez 2007, 129-131). On the other hand, some feminists saw the value of wage work in providing women an alternative to the isolation of domestic work (Ibid).

The year 1977 proved to be a watershed for the feminist movement's greater role in the public arena (Bedregal 1991). Feminists disseminated their platforms before schools, unions, and popular and professional organizations

and drafted specific proposals, some of which they addressed to the state (Ibid; González Ascencio 1993). In 1977, the CMF submitted the first feminist proposal on the free provision and decriminalization of abortion to the national Chamber of Deputies, which the Chamber merely ignored (González Alvarado 2007, 93). The following year, the CMF submitted the first feminist legislative proposal on rape reforms to the Mexico City Attorney General's Office (Vega 2007, 203). The latter included five essential demands: redefine rape as a violation of the "personal integrity" of the victim rather than solely their "sexual freedom"; redefine rape to include oral and anal rape and rape by a foreign object other than a penis; broaden services to include medical, psychological, and legal services; decriminalize abortion in the case of rape; and raise the minimum sentence to force more aggressors to serve jail time rather than getting off on low bail (Stevenson 2000, 159). This proposal was to serve as the cornerstone for future legislative proposals presented in the 80s and 90s (Bedregal et al 1991).

Feminist legal specialists who drafted the rape reforms claimed the federal and state penal laws on sex crimes were too lenient and at the same time heavily centered on the perpetrator in the 1970s. Rape sentences were so short that convicted rapists were often released on bail. In the case of the crime of "*estupro*" in which the victim was led through false promises of marriage to willingly have sex, the perpetrator could be forgiven if he married the victim. Rape was also restricted to vaginal and penile forms, without consideration for anal, oral, or non-penile rape (González Ascencio 1993; Lima 2004, 47-49).

Reporting procedures at the municipal prosecutor's offices, which function as a combination of police stations and city hall, prohibited victims from being accompanied by close friends or relatives. Municipal prosecutor's offices often revictimized rape victims by harassing, ridiculing, and absurdly questioning victims about their private lives and attempts at resisting their violations. Victims were also expected to make their declarations with little privacy and to identify their offenders without guarantees for their safety or anonymity. Victims also endured a physical examination with little privacy and were asked to identify their aggressors face to face (González Ascencio 1993; Lima 2004, 47-49).

While the CMF called for broad reforms, in the following years the executive and legislative branches of the state only focused on the CMF's calls for increasing sentences (Azzolini 1991).[15] The CMF's full set of reforms would take twenty years to be transformed into federal law. This was partly due to the limited support the CMF enjoyed with the rest of the feminist movement, which had not yet prioritized the legal sphere as a site of struggle (Bedregal et al 1991, 57). The CMF did succeed in getting the Mexico City Attorney General's Office to formulate decrees prohibiting the divulging of rape victims' names to the press and allowing rape victims to be accompanied by a friend or family member during their medical examination (González Alvarado 2007, 93). In 1979, the CMF also

[15] The question of sentences, however, is not so straightforward, as many feminists support lessening sentences to encourage the reporting of rape by women who have emotional ties to the rapist. Judges are also more inclined to convict when sentence ranges are less drastic.

created the *Centro de Apoyo a Mujeres Violadas* (Support Center for Raped Women-CAMVAC) in Mexico City.

The question of autonomy continued to weigh on the minds of feminists and eventually led to the fracture of the CMF. One current, including the MLM and other feminist groups, supported forming a block with leftist parties, popular organizations, and unions while maintaining autonomy from the state, the PRI, and right-wing parties (Bedregal et al 1991, 59; González Alvarado 2007, 92; Suárez 2012, 41). The other major current vied for autonomy from all parties and considered gender issues paramount to those of class. The former group left the CMF and formed the Frente Nacional de *Lucha por la Liberación y los Derechos de las Mujeres* (National Front of the Struggle for Women's Liberation and Rights-FNALIDM) in 1979.

The FNALIDM was a strong indication of the desire of feminists to work within the Left and to maintain an intersectional perspective that merged class and gender analyses. The FNALIDM integrated different feminist groups, segments of the *Partido Comunista Mexicano* (Mexican Communist Party-PCM), the Trotskyist *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (Worker's Revolutionary Party-PRT), democratic unions, and gay organizations. These organizations drafted a document in which they pronounced themselves in support of human rights and political liberties and in opposition to imperialism, colonialism, fascism, and military dictatorships in Latin America (Bedregal et al 1991, 80 n. 32-35).

The FNALIDM made demands at the intersection of class and gender. They vied for women's control over their bodies, free exercise of their sexuality, women's economic independence, and the recognition of housework as a productive activity (Bedregal et al 1991, 80 n. 32-35). It also demanded the state provide housewives, domestic workers, and peasant women social security (González Juárez 2007, 136). The FNALIDM demanded the absorption of social reproductive labor by the state through its provision of free daycare centers, medical services, laundries, and cafeterias (Ibid, 135). In the absence of the former, the FNALIDM proposed that women workers be allowed to retire earlier in recognition of their double shifts (Ibid, 138). By 1982, however, the FNALIDM dissolved due to the irreconcilable differences between the PCM and PRT as well as its admitted failure to secure a grassroots base (Ibid, 96). Nevertheless, with over 500 militants at its peak, the FNALIDM imprinted the feminist movement with a strong leftist influence that would endure through the 1980s (Bedregal et al 1991, 60).

The 1970s ended with a highly fractured feminist movement that was cautious of the Mexican government and that privileged a Marxist feminist analysis. While deeply affected by the volatility and divisiveness of the Left, feminists of the 1970s found consensus in the issues of sexual and domestic violence and the legalization of abortion. Despite its sympathy for the working class, feminists of the 1970s remained largely middle and upper class. The feminist movement mirrored the larger fledgling civil society desirous of revolution whose terms of engagement with the state were beginning to shift as a

result of democratization. These new terms included the Mexican state's interest in modernizing the country through family planning and combating sexual and domestic violence, above all rape.

2.2 1980s and 90s: The Crucible of Rape

In the 1980s, Mexican feminists became increasingly professionalized and institutionalized through their participation in the formation of non-governmental organizations and academic programs on gender studies. Once again, feminists debated the loss of autonomy and hierarchization that would result from seeking international funding and becoming integrated into the university system (see Tarrés 1998). The first feminist NGOs to provide direct services to victims of rape and domestic violence were opened in the late 1970s. Through their services, NGOs were also in the position to compile the first statistics on rape and domestic violence. One of the first NGOs to be founded outside of Mexico City was the *Centro Contra la Violencia* (Center Against Violence- CECOV) established in the late 1980s in the northern state of Sonora. A CECOV study from 1989 was the first to show that rape was overwhelmingly perpetrated by family and friends. According to this study, 51% of perpetrators were family members, 35% acquaintances, and 14% strangers (Stevenson 2000, 162).

The first university to establish a women and gender studies program was the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana de Xochimilco in 1982 followed by the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia and the Colegio de México a year later (Bedregal et al 1991, 80 n. 31). In 1984, the Universidad Autónoma

Nacional de México established a women's studies program within its Psychology department. Various psychology departments also opened clinics that offered services directly to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence (González Ascencio 1993). Several academics undertook research and service projects on the issue of sexual and domestic violence in conjunction with the state (Bedregal et al 1991, 180).

A watershed moment in the relationship between the Institutional Revolutionary Party-dominated state and feminists was the offer by the state government of Colima to open a shelter for victims of sexual and domestic violence. This conjuncture was precipitated by the election of the first female governor in the country, Griselda Álvarez Ponce de León, in 1979 (Suárez 2012, 37). The *Colectivo Feminista de Colima* (Colima Feminist Collective- COFEMC), formally established in 1980, engaged the newly appointed governor by asking her a series of demands whose breadth is suggestive of the intersectional approach of feminist analyses of the time. The COFEMC asked the state of Colima to legalize abortion; provide free laundries, day care centers, and cafeterias; eliminate the state's beauty contest; and provide a center for victims of sexual and domestic violence (Bedregal et al 1991, 146-47).

While Álvarez Ponce de León dismissed the rest of the COFEMC's demands, she engaged the idea of a state-supported center for victims of rape and domestic violence and asked the COFEMC to submit a proposal for the center. This was surprising given that the COFEMC consisted mostly of women who militated in the Trotskyist *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores*

(Workers' Revolutionary Party-PRT) (Ibid, 36). While the COFEMC debated the perils of working with the state, the collective felt that not engaging this opportunity would prevent them from being able to criticize the project put on by the state. The COFEMC submitted a proposal modeled on the structure of CAMVAC in Mexico City, which contained separate areas that offered legal, medical, and psychological assistance. To their surprise, Álvarez Ponce de León submitted their proposal to the legislature for rubber stamping without modification and offered the COFEMC the opportunity to run the center. The COFEMC accepted the offer and the *Centro de Apoyo a la Mujer* (Women's Support Center-CAM) opened in 1983, becoming the first state-sponsored center of attention for victims of rape and family violence in the country (Bedregal et al 1991, 149).

While an important precedent for the collaboration between feminists and the state, the CAM proved the limits of this model. The CAM was provided a meager budget and subsumed within the structure of the state Attorney General's Office. The CAM also struggled to maintain its collective decision-making structure in the face of the state's bureaucratic functioning (Bedregal et al 1991, 150-157). Additionally, the CAM's operations became vulnerable to the dispositions of subsequent unsympathetic governors and attorney generals (Bedregal et al 1991, 150-165).

The issues of rape and domestic violence did not only bring feminists and the PRI to collaborate. The working-class women who organized in the Urban-Popular Movements (UPMs) emerging out of Mexico's economic downturn in the

1980s also converged with feminists on the issue of sexual and domestic violence. The collapse of petroleum prices in 1982, which sent Mexico's economy on a downward spiral, prompted UPMs to mushroom all over the country in demand of food subsidies and urban infrastructure. In the early 80s, there were several national meetings among women workers, "*colonas*" or squatters, peasants, and teachers, in which women recognized themselves as social protagonists even while they maintained a distance from "strategic" feminist concerns such as abortion (Bedregal et al 1991, 61, 83 n. 51).

The economic crisis of the 1980's bolstered opposition parties, catapulting many feminists to run for congressional seats and to seek legislative reform for abortion and sex crimes. It was the latter, which proved palatable for the legislature heavily influenced by the executive. In the presidential election of 1982, a record number of representatives from opposition parties were elected (Stevenson 2000, 164). For the first time, the proportion of women reached double-digits in both the Chamber of Deputies (11.3%) and the Senate (12.5%). These victories brought the incipient rape reform movement closer to the critical mass of female legislators needed to pass legislation.[16]

Female legislators of the *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* (Unified Socialist Party of Mexico- PSUM) and the PRI introduced two separate bills to reform sex crimes codes, but they failed to consolidate the necessary cross-party alliances to get either of them passed (Ibid, 165). In 1984, President de la Madrid

[16] Linda Stevenson calculates that a 15% threshold of female legislators was required in the Mexican Congress, along with the support of other sectors, to successfully pass sex crimes initiatives into law (2000, 155).

coopted their efforts by extending a proposal to Congress, which rather than include a more comprehensive reform, only raised the federal penal code sentence for rapists from 2-8 years to 6-8 years. Congress rubber-stamped de la Madrid's proposal without considering the proposals presented by the legislators (Ibid).

The 1985 earthquake dealt yet a more decisive blow to the legitimacy of the PRI, intensifying the struggle for a more democratic Congress. The 1988 executive and congressional elections were a watershed in Mexico's electoral panorama. In Congress, female representatives increased their representation to 12.2 percent in the Chamber of Deputies and 18.8 in the Senate (Stevenson 2000). For the first time since the early twentieth century a non-PRI presidential candidate nearly won the election.[17] Widespread claims of electoral fraud placed the PRI's rule into question, impelling president Carlos Salinas de Gortari to court favor with sectors long critical of the state, including feminist groups (Lang 2003). Female deputies put forward a single proposal on rape reform which included the original five demands of the CMF (Stevenson 2000, 168). Following his predecessor's example, President Salinas de Gortari got Congress to pass his proposal, which raised the minimum penalty for rape from 6-8 years to 8-14 years in early 1989 (Duarte and González 1994, 7-8, González Ascencio 1993).

Besides raising the minimum penalty, Salinas de Gortari's administration incorporated the issue of sex crimes and domestic violence into his reforms for

[17] Candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas represented a congressional coalition of leftist parties and the Democratic Tendency of the PRI.

public security. His administration set up a Commission for Women's Integration into Development, which was tasked with ensuring that the rest of his administration worked towards incorporating women into the country's development and modernization. In this direction, the Commission collaborated with the Sub-commission on Public Security, which agreed to improve attention for victims of sexual and domestic violence, develop models for their specialized treatment, and increase the reporting of sex crimes and domestic violence (González Ascencio 1993).

An important catalyst for sex crime reforms was the organization of the First Forum of Popular Consultation on Sex Crimes by the lower chamber of Congress in March of 1989 (Ibid). Attended by deputies, lawyers, psychologists, and criminologists, the forum provided a space for the discussion of over a hundred proposals on the issues of sex crimes, five of which contained concrete proposals for legal reforms (Ibid, Bedregal et al 1991, 41). Generally, these proposals called for increased security for victims, comprehensive reparations for victims, friendlier reporting procedures for victims, and the humanization of criminal investigators and judges (González Ascencio 1993). According to feminist activist Ximena Bedregal, the forum was dominated by specialists and lacked the perspective of women victims of sexual and domestic violence (Bedregal et al 1991, 41).

At the same time, nineteen women from middle-class families of a neighborhood in the south of Mexico City came forward to denounce having been raped by high-level judicial police at the service of the sub-prosecutor of the

Federal Attorney General's Office (Duarte & González 1994, 9; González Ascencio 1993). While these women's cases were almost dismissed on claims of inconclusive evidence, media coverage and public support helped move the cases forward until four of the aggressors were ultimately charged and imprisoned (Stevenson 2000, 171). These serial rapes garnered mass support for a broad set of legislative reforms as well as brought human rights organizations to collaborate with feminists in fighting the impunity of the judicial police (Ibid).

By April 1989, the Mexico City Attorney General's Office established the first Specialized Agency for Sex Crimes (AEDS) in one of Mexico City's delegations (González Ascencio 1993). AEDS were the product of the partnership between the head of the Mexico City Attorney General's Office and María de la Luz Lima Malvido, a prominent legal scholar who pushed for a victim-centered approach to criminology (Ibid). According to Lima, AEDS were structured to provide services that were more sensitive to the needs of the largely young and female victim base of sex crimes (2004, 43-46). AEDS were to be preferentially staffed by female criminal investigators, social workers, medical examiners, psycho-therapists, and police in the hopes of eliminating the humiliation and sexual harassment that was often perpetrated by male personnel (Ibid). Staff were to be sensitive to the plight of victims, providing separate areas for the physical examination and the interviewing of the accused as well as Gesell cameras for the identification of perpetrators that would prevent face-to-face encounters between the victim and the aggressor (Ibid, 50). AEDS were

also to provide short-term psychological therapy to victims and their families and to refer them to other agencies for more prolonged treatment if necessary (Ibid). The Attorney General's Office also enlisted distinguished feminists to train the personnel of AEDS (González Ascencio 1993).

By 1991, the Mexico City Attorney General's Office had established three more AEDS in Mexico City (Ibid, 30). As hoped for, the number of women victims who pressed charges more than doubled (Ibid, 55). The specialized model of AEDS was replicated for the issue of domestic violence. In October of 1990, the *Centro de Atención a Víctimas de Violencia Intrafamiliar* (Center for the Attention of Intrafamily Violence-CAVI) was established in Mexico City. Like the AEDS, the CAVI was subsumed under the umbrella of the Attorney General's Office and was intended to serve the more long-term needs of women caught in the cycle of violence (Lima 2004, 74).

While various scholars positively assess the work of AEDS, critics point out that they did not provide badly needed alternative forms of conflict resolution and were out of reach for rural victims (Stevenson 2000, 169). Miriam Lang also notes that the primary intent of the CAVI was to improve public safety and prevent crime rather than improve women's status (2003). This was because domestic violence was seen as engendering "anti-social behavior" and crime (Ibid, 79).

The serial rape cases involving judicial police revamped the struggle for legislative reforms. In 1990, a feminist lobby group called the *Grupo Plural Pro-Víctimas* comprised of reporters, NGO representatives, intellectuals, and

deputies was formed to devise legislative proposals for reform and provide supporting material. In May 1990, female legislators who were members of the *Grupo Plural* presented a new proposal for rape reform in the Chamber of Deputies which contained the original points introduced in the CMF's 1978 set of reforms except for the legalization of abortion. This time, their efforts were successful. Female legislators shifted strategies to garnering cross-party alliances and engaging the support of a diverse range of feminist and human rights organizations (Stevenson 2000, 172).

Following the 1990 reforms, state governments replicated the AEDS model in their states (Stevenson 2000, 184). The state of Nuevo León established its first AEDS in 1991 and the state of Hidalgo did so in 1993 (Lima 2004, 33). In 1991, the Mexico City Attorney General's Office also responded to the demands of feminist reformers by creating the *Fiscalía Especial para Delitos Sexuales* (Special Prosecution's Office for Sex Crimes) in Mexico City (Lima 2004, 72-73). This office was to collect information on sex crimes and improve its criminal investigation.[18]

Following this slew of victories, the remaining set of rape reforms originally proposed in 1978 with the addition of the penalization of conjugal rape were passed in Congress in 1997. Thanks to a comprehensive package of electoral reforms passed in 1996, a plural majority of opposition parties was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 and the percentage of female deputies climbed to

[18] Municipal prosecutor's offices were to refer those cases to the Fiscalía in which victims were hospitalized due to aggression, the crime was perpetrated by multiple aggressors, the perpetrator was a civil servant, or the crime was committed in conjunction with another violent crime (Lima 2004, 72-73).

17.7% percent. Reformist legislators passed the comprehensive list of reforms by consolidating multi-party and even presidential support (Stevenson 2000, 175).

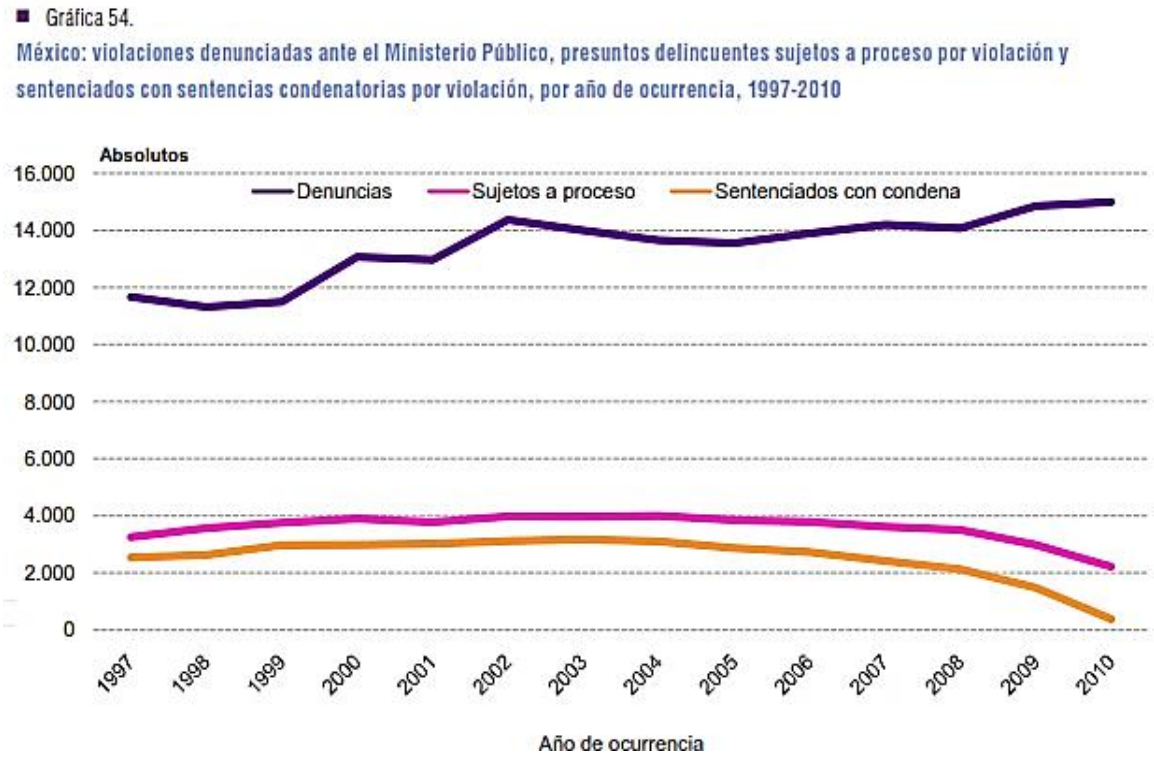
2.3 The Gender Progressive Mexican State: An Uneven Topography

The evolution of rape reforms between 1970 and 1997 illustrate how a focus on integrating women into development shifted to prioritize women's safety within Salinas' public security reforms. Rape reforms took place just as citizens were stripped of social welfare rights and worker protections within the shift to reduced social spending and deregulated markets by which Mexico sought to make itself competitive on the global stage. At the same time, dissent was funneled away from the streets and into electoral channels where fraudulent elections such as those of 1988 tarnished the promise of a democratized electoral system. In this context, the protections extended to women against the threat of sexual and domestic violence were undermined by Mexico's message to capital that poor Mexican women would be part of the global race the bottom (see Wright 2007; Schmidt Camacho 2005).

Despite reforms, critics point to persistent deficiencies in the Mexican justice system in processing sex crimes. According to a 2012 report, less than three out of every ten cases of reported rapes in Mexico between 1997 and 2010 were consigned, that is passed from the investigation to the trial phase (Echarri Cánovas et al 2012). More worrisome is that this rate of consignment only worsened towards the latter years covered by the report. The conviction rate was no less dismal. Only half of consigned rape cases ended in convictions between

2006 and 2010. Criminal impunity resulting from low levels of consignment is a widespread problem in Mexico (Kingman-Brundage 2016, 27). Laurence Pantin estimates that for the years 2011-2012 impunity was as high as 96.4% (Ibid). As distinct from the downward trends of consignment and conviction, the 2012 report showed that the number of women who reported rape increased (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Opposite trends: Rapes reported to the public prosecutor's office (purple), consigned rape suspects (fuchsia), and those convicted of rape (orange) (Echarri Cánovas et al 2012, 78).



A more recent report issued by the *Comisión Ejecutiva de Atención a las Víctimas* (Executive Commission for the Attention of Victims-CEAV) from 2016, showed that only three out of ten cases of reported sex crimes reached the trial phase between 2010 and 2015 (CEAV 2016). What's more, the CEAV calculated that the number of sexual crimes committed in Mexico per year between the same period was 600,000, 94% of which went unreported. Thus, out of a hundred cases of sexual crimes committed per year, only six were reported and of those six, only two reached trial.

A 2006 Human Rights Watch report provided a more thorough analysis of justice for sex crimes and domestic violence in Mexico. This report suggested that the wide-scale impunity for domestic and sexual violence in Mexico was due to the following:

1). Underreporting and underestimation of the extent of the violence;

2). An inadequate legal framework for its prevention, protection, and punishment;

3). Lax implementation of existing legal standards (Mollmann 2006).

These factors were considered interrelated since lax implementation lead to underreporting and underreporting lead to conformity with the current laws. The report conceded that it was difficult to estimate the extent of domestic and sexual violence. Victims were more likely file a police report if the aggressor was a repeat offender or a stranger. Since most crimes of domestic and sexual violence are committed by acquaintances, it was safe to assume that most crimes went

unreported. Furthermore, the fear of being mistreated at the municipal prosecutor's office further dissuaded many rape victims from filing a report.

When interviewed by Human Rights Watch, a government official working for the National Health Ministry estimated that approximately 120-130,000 rapes occurred annually in Mexico, affecting 0.23-0.25 percent of the female population. NGOs, however, claimed this figure was much higher. The 2003 National Survey on the Dynamic on Domestic Relations (*Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares*), for example, found that 7.8 percent of Mexican women over fifteen years of age had suffered sexual violence in the twelve months prior to the study. The Human Rights Watch report calculated this number to be four million women and girls (Mollmann 2006). This estimate is far larger than the CEAV's figure of 600,000 sex crimes committed per year between 2010 and 2015.

The Human Rights Watch report of 2006 also highlighted the disparity in the classification and sentencing of sex crimes throughout Mexico's thirty-one states. Not all state laws complied with the Constitution, federal laws, and international treaties, as they are expected to (Ibid). Typically, state laws recognized three types of crimes associated with sexual intercourse: rape (and statutory rape); incest; and "*estupro*", defined as intercourse with a girl above the age of consent based on seduction or deceit, as opposed to force (Ibid). The report underlined a low age of consent for sexual intercourse as one of the major problems in Mexico.

Since the date of the Human Rights Watch report, there has been some improvement on this issue. In 2006, twenty-one states had an age of consent of twelve (Ibid). By 2015, only fifteen states in Mexico did so (CNDH 2015). In 2006, the highest age of consent was fifteen and it was held by one state. By 2015, this had increased to four states while two states had set a new bar of sixteen. In Hidalgo and Nuevo León, the sites of my research, the age of consent currently is fifteen and thirteen, respectively.

The 2006 Human Rights Watch report condemned state legislation which required *estupro* victims to be “chaste” or “honest”. By this measure, there has also been significant improvement. In 2006, thirteen jurisdictions included such clauses in their classifications of *estupro*. By 2015, only two states did so. Likewise, the Human Rights Watch report also denounced the eleven states whose legislation forgave a perpetrator of *estupro* if he or she married the victim. By 2015, only five jurisdictions waived penalties or foreclosed the statute of limitations on jail sentences if the perpetrator married the victim.

Weak implementation of existing laws is one area identified by the Human Rights Watch report that has not seen much improvement. The 2006 report claimed that a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of laws was the pervasive distrust of rape victims’ testimony. The report noted,

> that rape victim testimony often is treated as highly suspicious by prosecutors and courts, more so than testimony on other types of crimes. Routinely, women are aggressively questioned on whether the intercourse was involuntary, whether the victim somehow provoked or deserved the assault, and whether the assault occurred at all. Fair trial standards, of course, require that convincing evidence be presented to prove all elements of a crime,

> but the distrust of victim's rape testimony seems to be taken to an extreme, ultimately impeding fair trials.

The report quoted the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Yakin Erturk, in her 2005 report on Mexico, which confirmed that police and prosecutors routinely failed to accept and follow up on complaints related to violence against women. Also quoted by the report was Radhika Coomaraswamy, the 1997 UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, who noted that the trivializing attitude towards rape victims "greatly influence[d] whether the woman victim will pursue her complaint".

The 2006 report also noted that the specialized agencies on sexual crimes, designed to be the only place where rape victims can make their reports, were too few to be accessible. Training on gender-based violence for public prosecutors, forensic doctors, and other expert witnesses was also deemed to be lacking. The report added that forensic medical reports were aimed at examining for signs of devirginization rather than signs or symptoms of forced vaginal penetration. This emphasis on rape victims' chastity, which I showed to be so crucial to colonial and postcolonial notions of women's biopolitical and liberal citizenship, continues to prevail amongst prosecutors and judges. Lastly, the report noted that court fees and bribes from victims were expected to move a case forward, making justice unaffordable for the poor.

The Human Rights Watch report recognizes that the health system offered a more reliable response to domestic and sexual violence than the justice system. The report attributed this uniformity to the *Norma Oficial Mexicana para*

la Atención Médica de la Violencia Familiar (Official Mexican Norm for the Attention of Family Violence-NOM-190-SSA1-1999) passed in 1999 and which came into effect in 2000. This norm required health providers in the public, social, and private sectors to detect, diagnose, treat, and rehabilitate cases of family violence and to receive training on family violence. The norm also required health providers to notify the Municipal Prosecutor's Office of cases in which lesions could presumably be related to family violence through an official form (see Appendix 1) and to fill out two different types of records that were to be relayed to the Secretary of Health for statistical tracking. This norm also required health providers to provide emergency contraception to victims of sexual violence who obtained clearance by judicial authorities. The 2006 Human Rights Watch report found, however, that most state health ministers interviewed for the report did not know about the norm. The 2006 report cited a previous report by the Secretary of Health of 2003, which had likewise found scant training and dissemination of the norm.

This norm was replaced in 2009 by NOM-046-SSA2-2005, which introduced administrative, civil, and criminal penalties for those who failed to implement it. Norm 046 required health providers to offer emergency contraception to pregnant victims of sexual violence based solely on their testimony. Norm 046 came into effect after the passage of the watershed legislation called the *Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia* (General Law of Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence-LGAMVLV) in 2007. This law constitutes Mexico's most serious attempt to

ensure that the federal government, states, and municipalities bring their laws in conformity with the international treaties on violence against women signed by Mexico. The law's stated aim is the following:

> The object of the present law is to establish coordination among the Federation, federal entities, and municipalities to prevent, sanction, and eradicate violence against women, as well as the principles and modalities to guarantee their access to a life free of violence that favors their development and well-being in conformity with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, as well as to guarantee democracy, the integral and sustainable development that strengthens the sovereignty and democratic regime established in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (LGAMVLV 2007, my translation).[19]

This national law and norms have been crucial in facilitating the collaboration between the health sector and the various agencies in charge of preventing, sanctioning, and eradicating gender violence. Following this law, the state of Nuevo León and Hidalgo passed their own LGAMVLV in September and December of 2007, respectively.

The distinctions among the different government entities with a role in preventing, sanctioning, and eradicating violence against women continue to be vast. In Chapter Three, I will discuss two cases that illustrate how municipal prosecutor's offices continue to systematically dismiss rape victims. Criticisms against the state and federal attorney general's offices and their lower tier municipal prosecutor's offices have been leveled by numerous reputable human

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[19]Text in Spanish reads: *La presente ley tiene por objeto establecer la coordinación entre la Federación, las entidades federativas y los municipios para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres, así como los principios y modalidades para garantizar su acceso a una vida libre de violencia que favorezca su desarrollo y bienestar conforme a los principios de igualdad y de no discriminación, así como para garantizar la democracia, el desarrollo integral y sustentable que fortalezca la soberanía y el régimen democrático establecidos en la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (LGAMVLV 2007).

rights organizations. In 2009 and 2010, the Inter-American Human Rights Court emitted three sentences in which it rebuked the Mexican state for failing to investigate violence against women. The sentences concerned the *Campo Algodonero* case, in which a group of women were murdered and disappeared in Ciudad Juárez, and those of Fernández Ortega and Rosendo Cantú, in which an indigenous woman and seventeen-year-old girl were raped and tortured by Mexican soldiers in the state of Guerrero.

The Inter-American Court is also considering the case of San Salvador Atenco in the Estado de México, in which forty-seven women involved in a social movement were detained by federal and state police and subject to rape and other forms of sexual violence in 2006 when Enrique Peña Nieto, the current president, served as governor of the state. The survivors' experience denouncing their rapes suggest that Mexico's gender progressive rape reforms are an empty shell. The survivors first filed their reports in the *Fiscalía Especial para la Atención de Delitos Relacionados con Actos de Violencia Contra las Mujeres* (Special Prosecution's Office for Crimes Related to Acts of Violence Against Women-FEVIM), established in 2006. Reconstituted as Fevimtra in 2008, the agency declined to proceed with the case and sent it back to the Estado de México's Attorney General's Office.[20] In charge of Fevimtra was Eduardo Medina Mora who had served as the head of the Secretary of Federal Public Security

[20] The Fevimtra added human trafficking to its responsibilities.

during the Atenco uprising and had thus commanded the very police who had raped the Atenco women (Brea 2015, 38-45).

The Estado de México initially refused to recognize the reports of the survivors made through the *Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (National Human Rights Commission-CNDH), although the CNDH had made sure to refer the cases to Attorney General of the Estado de México (Ibid). While the Estado de México ultimately prosecuted several lower-level officers for less serious crimes, it ultimately absolved and freed them. With no other recourse at hand, human rights organizations took the Atenco case to the Interamerican Human Rights Court, which can only admonish the Mexican state. The Court admitted the case in 2011, while the ruling is still pending.

A report by the Mexican Center for Human Rights Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez along with other organizations sustain that the systematic neglect for victims of violence against women by the state and federal attorney general's offices, including their dependent municipal prosecutor's offices stems from their structural subordination to the Executive branch, that is the president and state governors. The president and state governors appoint the prosecutors that head the federal and state attorney general's offices with ratification from Congress and state legislatures. According to the report, the attorney general's structural dependency on the Executive branch reflects and reinforces Mexico's continuing centralism. This centralism is characterized by immunity to prosecution since the president and governors enjoy judicial immunity unless a trail is initiated by a

congressional majority, a procedure known as *proceso de desafuero*. In Mexico's history, this procedure has only been invoked once (Del Pino et al 2007).

As numerous feminists assert, the judicial system's failure to prosecute rape suggests that rape reforms were used to legitimize the neoliberalizing Mexican state's revamping of its public security apparatus to protect transnational capital and criminalize social protest (Lang 2003; Hernández Castillo 2013). Miriam Lang points out that the rape reforms of the 1990s were inscribed within Salinas de Gortari's efforts to gain legitimacy amidst the fraudulent elections of 1988 through a discourse on augmenting public security. The dramatization of rape has been especially persuasive in mobilizing feminists and the public in support of contemporary crime control policy, which Elena Larrauri calls "punitive populism" (2007; Hall 2004). Rachel Hall argues that society, including feminists, must resist the abstraction of the "sex offender" and "woman as victim", which draw their strength from feelings of pity and anger (2004). She warns against basing the feminist movement on such feelings since these can fuel conservative platforms, which "sanction the authority of law, the necessity of order and protection, the mythical moral clarity of an absolute distinction between good and bad men" (Ibid, 12).

While stricter rape laws are not being implemented in Mexico, the strengthening of the penal apparatus appears to be directed elsewhere. Rosalva Aida Hernández Castillo argues that the multicultural moment in Mexico of the early 2000s has given way to a penal state in which national security forces are unleashed against the war on drugs and domestic social struggles (2013). In the

current moment, the number of indigenous peoples, especially women, who have been incarcerated for their involvement in small-scale drug dealing has increased. Due to Mexico's liberalization of agricultural trade, for some indigenous peasants who have been priced out of small scale agriculture selling or transporting drugs in small quantities has become an economic alternative. Likewise, indigenous activists have been given punitive sentences that amount to life in prison for carrying out social acts of protest now considered acts of terror following recent criminal reforms (Ibid).

Similarly, Loïc Wacquant argues that the ascent of the penal state is consonant with neoliberal economic policies, which because they channel public funds away from the provision of social services they must rely on a reinforced penal apparatus to contain newly marginalized populations (2009). Thus, even while rape reforms have gone unimplemented, they have facilitated the transition to a penal state focused on criminalizing the poor and political dissidents.

2.4 "*Autoridades Solidarias*": *Instancias Municipales de La Mujer* as the Local Face of the Gender Progressive State

In Hidalgo, staff at the municipal level were aware of the uneven topography of Mexico's gender progressive framework. I was first compelled to knock on the doors of municipal government offices when my seventeen-year-old friend, Nayelli, became unexpectedly pregnant by an older man who was married. Nayelli was hoping to exact child support payments from her one-time sexual partner so we set out in search of help. In talking to one of the nurses in

Tepetzalan's clinic, the nurse informed me about the *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer* (Local Women's Agency), located caddy corner to town hall in the center of town. The *Instancia* was the local face of Mexico's gender progressive structure. In the remainder of my fieldwork, I studied the work of the *Instancias* of two municipalities, Tepetzalan and Joquicingo.

The *Instancias Municipales de la Mujer* are the municipal instantiation of government efforts to incorporate women into development and address violence against women. In collaboration with the Prospera program, the *Instancia* staff of Tepetzalan and Joquicingo work with the local clinics and schools to deliver talks about reproductive health, gender roles, and violence against women.[21] *Instancia* staff regularly attend trainings in the capital of Pachuca provided by the *Instituto Hidalguense de la Mujer* (Hidalgo Women's Agency-IHM) and impart this information to the local government personnel and indigenous villages. Some of this knowledge pertains to recent legislative changes and programs.

Instancias are generally modest one or two-room offices located within or close to the municipality's town-hall. I became acquainted with three *Instancias*, two in the Huasteca of Hidalgo and one in the Huasteca of Veracruz, but only carried out extensive interviews and participatory observation in the former. With

[21] The Prospera program is a conditional cash transfer program begun in 1997 by the administration of Salinas de Gortari under the name of "Solidaridad" (Molyneux 2006, 433). In 2002, President Fox Quesada renamed the program Progresa/Oportunidades and amplified its coverage. The program involves giving poor mothers small cash transfers to ensure that they send their kids to school and attend routine medical check-ups. It also requires that mothers attend talks in which they are instructed on how best to spend their money and how to be good parents. According to Maxine Molyneux, the program is "based on the assumption that poor households do not invest sufficiently in their human capital and are thus caught in a vicious cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty" (Ibid).

about 20,000 inhabitants, Tepetzalan's two-room *Instancia* was the most spacious. During my fieldwork in 2015 and the summer of 2016, this *Instancia* was staffed by a friendly and dedicated psychologist, Lic. Diana and a standoffish lawyer, Lic. Susana, both in their early thirties.[22] This *Instancia* also had a small pharmacy offering discount medication dispensed by an intern.

The neighboring municipality of Joquicingo had an *Instancia* half the size of Tepetzalan's even though its population of over 21,000 made it slightly bigger. Located on the second floor of its two-story town hall, Joquicingo's one-room *Instancia* had been creatively partitioned by staff into three rooms. This *Instancia* operated through joint funding by the municipality and the *Instituto Hidalguense de la Mujer* (Hidalgo State Institute of Women-IHM). While the *Instancia* director was funded by the municipality, the lawyer, psychologist, and social worker were paid by the IHM. The *Instancia* of Amatepec in Veracruz was by far the humblest. This *Instancia* was lodged within the municipality's public library and consisted solely of a desk. This *Instancia* was surprisingly small given that Amatepec's population is over twice the size of Joquicingo's. It was staffed by a psychologist and a lawyer who operated on a reduced schedule rather than the regular business hours followed by the other two.

Instancias have proliferated since their inception. In 2009, thirty-three percent of municipalities in the state of Hidalgo had an *Instancia* (Ibid, 111). By

[22] Out of respect for a person's educational levels, those with a bachelor's degree are referred to as "*Lic*", short for *licenciada* or *licenciado*.

2017, all 84 of Hidalgo's municipalities had one.[23] *Instancias* derive their support from the municipal governments and state women's agencies, which since 2007 have existed in all thirty-one states. State women's agencies were established through the *Programa Nacional de la Mujer* (National Program for Women-PRONAM), implemented between 1995 and 2000 during President Zedillo's administration. The PRONAM was intended to ensure that women were included in the country's modernization. In 1998, the PRONAM became an independent organism under the Secretary of Governance known as the *Comisión Nacional de la Mujer* (National Women's Commission), which, in turn became the *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* (National Women's Institute-INMUJERES) in 2001. The INMUJERES is a federal autonomous decentralized agency tasked with pursuing gender equality and eliminating discrimination. The INMUJERES is structurally subordinate to the executive, as the president chooses the president of the INMUJERES from a short list of three candidates provided by the INMUJERES board of directors (Bojórquez y Sherer 2009, 88-89; Frías Martínez 2008, 159).

The *Instancias Municipales de la Mujer* were designed to comply with the *Ley General para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres* (General Law for the Equality between Men and Women) of 2004, which tasked municipal governments to design local policies to guarantee equality between men and women (Arzaluz Solano 2009, 11). The *Instancias* were also intended to fulfil the new role assigned to municipalities in delivering economic and social

[23] Directorio 2017 de Instancias Municipales para el Desarrollo de las Mujeres. http://mujeres.hidalgo.gob.mx/?p=1710

development programs rather than simply dispensing public services. This so-called "new agenda" for local governments was mandated by the 2006 *Ley General de Desarrollo Social* (Ibid. 12). As such, *Instancias* are a result of the decentralization that has been underway in Mexico since the 1980s (Bojórquez y Sherer 2009, 79-80).

According to the *Instituto Nacional de la Mujer* (National Women's Institute-INMUJERES), *Instancias* are to work towards expanding women's participation in the local government so that "women may be considered for elected positions, public posts that imply decision-making power, acquire properties, access credit, and be considered […] in the provision of services and resource distribution" (2005, 18; *my translation*).[24] While the INMUJERES recommends that municipalities work to make the *Instancia* an autonomous entity under the legal personality of an *Instituto Municipal de la Mujer* with its own budget and staff, it recognizes that those municipalities with insufficient resources may have to settle for a "Coordination" or "Center" (2005, 21).

Tepetzalan's *Instancia* is not autonomous and operates as a program of the *Instituto Hidalguense de la Mujer*. Its staff considered it a great achievement that the municipal president formally incorporated the *Instancia* into the local government's structure in 2012, three years after its creation in 2009. In its municipal plan of 2012-2016, the municipality of Tepetzalan recognized the

[24] In Spanish, text reads: "[…] *que las mujeres puedan ser candidatas a puestos de elección, tener cargos públicos que impliquen poder de decisión, adquirir propiedades, ser sujetas de créditos, ser tomadas en cuenta —con sus problemáticas diferenciadas— cuando se diseñe la provisión de servicios y la distribución de recursos*."

achievements of the *Instancia Municipal de la Mujer* (IMM) in the following manner, "[…] That equality so desired by society, has been sought by this government in different occasions such as through the provision of workshops in schools, institutions, and neighborhoods in which 1700 inhabitants participated, in the same manner, 1,980 women have been assisted in different forms by the IMM. Likewise, $222,000.00 have been attained for the benefit of the women of Tepetzalan" (source omitted, 2015; *my translation*).[25] The municipal plan included the pursuit of equality between men and women as one of its social development goals for the remainder of the administrative term. Likewise, Joquicingo's *Instancia* was formally incorporated into the local government's structure, but its former director, Ivonne, is unsure whether the incoming administration of 2016-2020 honored and extended this agreement.

In practice, *Instancia* staff characterize their relationship with the municipal government and indigenous villages as a thorny one. They claim that the municipal government limits their work to the provision of talks and workshops while they resist any efforts of *Instancia* staff to make more systematic changes to local policies. Part of the problem is that the Tepetzalan *Instancia* is not autonomous and its staff is vulnerable to each incoming municipal president's decision to reappoint them. This has led to turnover between administrations and dubious appointments that are corrupted by partisan and clientelist interests—a

[25] Source and original text in Spanish is omitted to safeguard the anonymity of the town's name.

pattern that affects the state women's agencies and the INMUJERES as well (see Frías Martínez 2008, 159).

The *Instancia* staff I interviewed were critical about the *Instancia* appointments made by municipal presidents. This staff had learned to distinguish women who have or aspire to have a "gender perspective" from those who do not. Gender experts such as Ivonne and Lic. Diana had learned that women were not naturally cognizant of gender equality, rather they had to undergo extensive training and "*sensibilización*" or "sensitizing". Lic. Diana and Ivonne made sure to list their extensive credentials, the numerous trainings they had attended at the IHM in the state capital of Pachuca or the INMUJERES in Mexico City.

Ivonne was perhaps the most highly trained gender expert of all. A dark-skinned mestiza in her early forties who has a technical degree in accounting, Ivonne had been active in the region as a promotor since 2002 when she and two other doctors in the area were trained by the Mexico City-based *Colectivo de Hombres por Relaciones Igualitarias* (Men's Collective for Egalitarian Relations-CORIAC). On a volunteer basis, Ivonne and the physicians had imparted trainings in different municipalities of the Huasteca of Hidalgo on masculinities, gender violence, and gender roles. Ivonne had fond memories of president Vicente Fox Quesada's administration (2000-2006), which, according to her, provided more funding to women's issues than any other administration. She describes these trainings as fancy and cosmopolitan affairs, which included stays in luxury hotels and the opportunity to rub shoulders with renowned national and international gender professionals.

Lic. Diana pointed to a concrete example of clientelist dynamics playing a part in Tepetzalan's *Instancia* appointment. Lic. Diana is part of the first cohort of *Instancia* staff in Tepetzalan (2009-2012), which included Maestra Olivia, an elementary school teacher, and a lawyer. Lic. Diana and Maestra Olivia considered themselves gender warriors with numerous trainings under their belts and a fierce record facing off noteworthy local public servants on behalf of women. In 2012, the incoming president only reappointed Lic. Diana. What's more, the municipal president hired a lawyer, Lic. Susana, whom Lic. Diana considered wholly unfit to serve. She claimed Lic. Susana was hired out of the president's loyalty for her husband whom he also appointed as the *juez conciliador* or local judge. Three years into her term, Lic. Diana pointed to Lic. Susana's paltry record in attending gender trainings in Pachuca as evidence of her disinterest in acquiring a "gender perspective".

In May 2015, Nayelli and I experienced the services of Tepetzalan's *Instancia*. Nayelli and I asked if the Tepetzalan *Instancia* could help Nayelli go about exacting child support from the father of her baby. A few months had passed since seventeen-year-old Nayelli had found out the news of her pregnancy. Nayelli was from Acopilco, a tiny Nahua community of less than a hundred inhabitants about forty-five minutes by car from Tepetzalan on a mostly unpaved road. With her parents' permission, Nayelli had been staying with me in my one-room rental in Tepetzalan since February of 2015. Nayelli had preferred to live with me to escape her village life and to be closer to her middle school, which was only a thirty-minute walk from Tepetzalan on the highway to Huejutla.

After a few weeks in Tepetzalan, Nayelli found out she was pregnant. She was devastated by the news since the pregnancy had been the result of a one-night stand with a married man from Tepetzalan in his mid-twenties. Nayelli confided in me that she had not explicitly asked him to use any protection at all. She recounted that when he asked her whether she wanted sex with or without protection, Nayelli had replied, "*tú sabes*" or "you know". Nayelli explained that she had answered this way because she assumed a married man would logically want to avoid having a child out of wedlock. What's more, Nayelli had avoided buying the morning-after pill because the day after the man had informed her he had withdrawn in time. When Nayelli asked the man to take responsibility for the baby, the man clarified he had no intent on doing so.

Soon enough the word got out. One of Nayelli's neighbors from Acopilco had been present in the Tepetzalan clinic when she received the news. Intense shaming by her parents, friends, and community in Acopilco followed. Nayelli was so terrified by the prospect of raising a child that she considered aborting. Nayelli soon gave up on the idea after a few of her friends acutely reprimanded her for considering this option. Nayelli would have to pursue an abortion illegally since the state of Hidalgo prohibits abortion.

While Nayelli's social circle had judged her as immoral, the staff at the *Instancia* combed through her story for evidence of victimization. In interacting with Nayelli, Lic. Susana noticed she would only speak if I prodded her. Lic. Susana cautioned Nayelli against such shy behavior, adding that if she was to file any kind of report she would have to face government offices that "were not a

solidary authority, but an imposing authority".[26] Lic. Susana was referring to the municipal prosecutor's office and the CAVI, which were in the city of Huejutla. Given that the CAVI was intended to facilitate women's access to the municipal prosecutor's office, it was ironic that Lic. Susana described it equally as hostile as the municipal prosecutor's office.

Slowly, Lic. Susana managed to fish the details of Nayelli's pregnancy. In the end, Lic. Susana was perplexed that Nayelli had had sex with a married without being made any promises. She insisted Nayelli try to recollect if he had made any promises or lied to her in any way. Nayelli insisted she had had sex consensually. She mentioned that while the man had declared to be single over Facebook, Nayelli's schoolmates had told her he was married, and she had had sex with him with that in mind. A small town of about 2500 people, residents of Tepetzalan could easily find out such details about a person.

Lic. Susana explained that there was no recourse available to force the man to recognize his paternity or to submit to a paternity test. The only avenue left for Nayelli was to allege she had been a victim of *estupro*. Lic. Susana did not explain what *estupro* meant to Nayelli. However, Lic. Susana explained that based on her experience with the municipal prosecutor's office, Nayelli would have a hard time convincing the agent to open an investigation on *estupro* based on her story. To my astonishment, Lic. Susana then advised Nayelli to change her story. She would maintain the man had invited her to an empty apartment

[26] In Spanish, "*no son una autoridad solidaria, son una autoridad imponente*".

through promises of marrying her, and that once they were in the room he had locked the door from the inside, and eventually raped her. Nayelli would add that she had avoided screaming out of shame that the neighbors might hear her. According to Lic. Susana, this was a ploy to get the man to recognize the child and settle a civil case for child support in exchange that Nayelli drop the case on *estupro*. When Lic. Susana asked Nayelli if she would be willing to do go forward with this plan, to my surprise, Nayelli nodded resoundingly.

Lic. Susana then instructed Nayelli to practice reciting her new narrative while the psychologist, Lic. Diana, arrived to talk to her. About half an hour later, Lic. Susana came back into the room to inform us that she had confirmed with other lawyers that Nayelli's case met the requirements for *estupro*. She explained to Nayelli that she would have to bring her parents in so that they could walk them through the procedure of initiating this case in Huejutla. Lic. Susana explained that while she and Lic. Diana would be able to coach her in Tepetzalan, they would not be able to accompany her to the CAVI for her declaration since the CAVI staff claimed the *Instancia* staff routiely interfered with the cases.[27]

Lic. Susana's ploy reflected her knowledge of the negligence of municipal prosecutor agents to open cases on *estupro*. This despite that Nayelli's case fit the current stipulations on estupro. According to Article 185 of the Penal Code of Hidalgo, last modified in 2013, *estupro* involves sex with a minor who is above

[27] In Spanish, Lic. Susana's words were: "*dicen que las preparamos*" or "they saw we prepare them".

the minimum age of consent, fifteen, and below eighteen, which is obtained through seduction or deceit. The same article penalizes *estupro* with a prison sentence of three to eight years. This law was reformed to raise the minimum prison sentence and the age of consent from twelve to fifteen in 2013. Article 186 further specifies that seduction and deceit are presumed in cases of *estupro* unless proven otherwise. This means that the burden of proving Nayelli's sexual partner had not seduced or deceived her would be incumbent on the defense. Furthermore, Article 190 also stipulates that for any children born of *estupro*, child support payments are to be mandated without a declaration of paternity.

While Hidalgo's *estupro* law seems to apply to Nayelli and might have helped her gain child support payments, Lic. Susana doubted the agent of the municipal prosecutor's office would enforce it without an element of rape. According to the reports cited above on the dismal prosecution of rape, even the element of coercion is insufficient to guarantee that municipal prosecutors open a case. Thus, it is doubtful that Nayelli's sexual partner would have had anything to fear by her initiating a case of *estupro* or rape. According to Mexican lawyer, Lic. Pineda, civil laws on paternity, on the other hand, are poorly equipped to protect women who have an informal and short-term relationship with the father of their child and who are interested in obtaining child support payments (Pineda, Isaura. 2017. Telephone call to author, October 25.). Unless women can provide evidence of a relationship of concubinage with the father of the child, the courts are reticent to order an investigation of paternity (Ibid). Again, the moral standard

to which women are held by the courts remains moored to gendered expectations of women's sexual chastity.

In the end, Nayelli did not become embroiled in the legal intricacies of an *estupro* case. Her parents first tried to negotiate with the father of the child who seemed open to recognize his paternity on paper. When they consulted with Lic. Susana about this option, she advised them against it, claiming that such a document would have no legal validity. At that point, Nayelli's parents decided not to pursue a legal case of *estupro* because it was simply too costly and time-consuming to travel to Huejutla for the duration of the legal process. Nayelli's five-member household is sustained by her father's meager salary as an elementary school teacher. A return trip from Acopilco to Huejutla costs $4 per person and takes an estimated four hours. This is due to the state's neglect in paving the road that leads from Tepetzalan to Acopilco. The resulting four-hour commute was taxing for Nayelli's parents who are in their fifties. Her father who is the most comfortable maneuvering in the city of Huejutla was also suffering from a disabling case of arthritis.

Nayelli's interaction with the *Instancia* of Tepetzalan shows that while the *Instancia* may offer poor rural women valuable legal advice and elaborate solutions to the negligence of the "imposing authorities" of Huejutla such as the municipal prosecutor's office, the interactions that Nahua women have with the *Instancia* are hardly empowering. The low-status of Nahua women in their communities, municipalities, and the nation at large is responsible for their generally deferential attitude when they reach these agencies. Like Nayelli, I

witnessed many women approach the *Instancia* looking for legal advice and services, yet reticent to speak. The *Instancia* staff were also used to this deference and reinforced it by speaking to the *usuarias* or users of the service in a maternalist style and omitting important and basic legal explanations, in this case the definition of *estupro*.

This distance between *Instancia* staff and Nahua women sometimes led to interactions in which no meaning was conveyed other than a relationship of authority. In one case, Lic. Diana called in a forty-year old woman, Denise, at my request to discourage her from physically disciplining her daughter who was having sex as a twelve-year-old and feared she was pregnant. Her daughter had confided in me her fear of being pregnant and accepted my offer to bring her mother in for a meeting with the psychologist to see what advice she would give her. I had been present throughout the half-an-hour meeting and watched Denise sit quietly nodding. After Denise left the *Instancia*, I followed her out to see what she thought of it. Denise, who was hard of hearing, had not understood a thing Lic. Diana had said since the fan had been running. This interaction suggests that *Instancia* staff are used to talking down at Nahua women rather than engaging in meaningful conversations with them.

Nayelli's case also shows that the structural poverty of Nahua families is a more powerful detriment to poor families' access to the justice system. Municipal prosecutor's offices and specialized agencies are centralized in cities whose distance from Nahua villages is augmented by structural poverty and marginalization. Engaging in a criminal case also remains a foreboding option for

many women and their families who prefer alternative solutions. Nayelli's experience also points to remaining gaps in civil law that discriminate against single-mothers whose pregnancy is the result of a short-term relationship. All these factors combined to reinforce Nayelli's unsupported single parenting and the complete unaccountability of the father.

2.5 Sensitizing the Nahuas: The Gender Labor of Government Officials

Nayelli's pregnancy also led me to learn about the role of school officials in promoting gender progress in the Huasteca region. Some school officials see themselves as playing a role as confidents and counselors who have the obligation to steer the Nahua communities towards gender progress. One of these officials was Don Eusebio, Nayelli's middle school principal. Well into his fifties, Don Eusebio had worked as a teacher and principal in the Huasteca region for twenty-five years. Hailing from the state of Aguascalientes, he maintained an outsider's perspective on the Huasteca region. That Nayelli had confided news of her pregnancy to Don Eusebio even before she told her parents suggests that he is trusted by his students. Don Eusebio was curious about what kind of influence a *gringuita* from the US was having over Nayelli, so he called me in to a private meeting.[28]

When I met Don Eusebio at school, he explained he was willing to give Nayelli a free pass on the rest of the school year so that she would avoid the

[28] Term used to refer to women from the US. While gringo/a usually connotes white race, I was sometimes referred to as a gringa.

risks implicated in her daily commute via pick up truck from Acopilco. Nayelli had had a hard time in school, flunking two school grades. Thus, Nayelli and her school teachers were interested in seeing her finish. Don Eusebio explained he had broken the news to Nayelli's parents the day before and had chided them for not providing Nayelli the emotional support she had needed to become a confident young woman. In his eyes, her parents were to blame for Nayelli's pregnancy since he believed it was out of low self-esteem that Nayelli had gotten involved with a married man.

In the remainder of my fieldwork, this kind of appraisal of Indian parents would become commonplace. Mestizo families and government officials who were both mestizo and of Nahua descent, but were educated and lived in cities or municipal headships, judged Nahua parents as bad parents because they simply had too many children for which to provide, both materially and emotionally. Nayelli's parents who had seven children, three girls and four boys, epitomized the quintessentially large Nahua family. Nahua parents were aware of these ideas for they were being communicated through talks at school and in the clinics through the PROSPERA program mentioned earlier. One of the parents of the families I stayed with in Tepetzalan relayed this widespread sentiment to me. Don Timoteo Guzman said that the government did not want Indians to have a lot of children anymore because they reproduced "like animals". Instead the government wanted them to have fewer children so they could give them "more".

Don Eusebio had much more to say about the Huasteca region after I asked him what changes he had observed in the relations between men and

women since he arrived in the region. He described two of the most fascinating Nahua practices in the eyes of mestizos--the dowry and parentally arranged marriages. He recounted that when he arrived in the area, young men and their fathers would bring gifts such as beer and turkeys to the family of the girl whom the son wanted to marry. Don Eusebio found such wife “buying” morally reprehensible for he thought it offensive that women could be exchanged for a carton of beer.

Don Eusebio also found the idea of parentally-arranged marriages “wrong”. He recounted stories of his female students who had faced such situations and had been resistant to the idea of marrying someone whom they did not love. Some of these young women had opted to leave for Mexico City or Monterrey to “liberate” themselves from this fate, while the more “passive” ones had stayed. Don Eusebio described the ones who questioned the tradition as being “in transition”. As he said, "…because when the student begins to talk to one about those things, she is already in transition away from that stage. She already wants to leave behind when they used to buy.”[29] For Don Eusebio, questioning the tradition was the first step towards change. Don Eusebio expressed with dismay that such situations “still” happened even today. As he noted, “sincerely, well, sometimes it’s truly sad, no? Nowadays you sometimes still see such things”. [30]

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[29] *[…] porque ya cuando la alumna le empieza a platicar a uno de esas cosas ya está en transición de esa etapa. Ya quiere quedar atrás de que se compraba.*

[30] *[…] la mera verdad pues da a veces tristeza, ¿no? Ahorita a veces en estos tiempos todavía se ven estas cosas.*

Don Eusebio also noted that it was common for young girls to be sexually abused by their fathers or male siblings. He blamed such abuse on the fact that Nahua families sleep in the same room because they cannot afford proper housing. Don Eusebio blamed the government, who he claimed, "sometimes does not to look behind or below".[31] While he had heard the government was now discussing offering housing to the poor, he doubted it could accommodate the entire population. In a region officially characterized by a "high" grade of marginality, Nahua homes generally consist of one or two rooms.[32] Don Eusebio recollected one of his female students shamefully confiding in him about witnessing her father "make love" to her mother while they all slept in the same room. Don Eusebio had counseled her to speak with her parents and ask them to build a dividing wall at least. Don Eusebio noted that this student lived in Atlixco, one of the communities commonly regarded as the most remote. Don Eusebio felt that these practices were simply wrong and that it was his job to counsel his students. As he said, "…it's not a matter of being astonished, but rather that these things should not be. They should not be."[33]

Intra-family sexual abuse of girls was very much a concern of government officials. Like Don Eusebio, the director of Joquicingo's *Instancia*, Ivonne, blamed such abuse on overcrowded housing or *hacinamiento*. She hypothesized that children in the region grow up viewing their parents have sex and sometimes

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[31] *[…] el gobierno a veces no ve p' atrás o no ve hacia abajo.*

[32] The Mexican government uses the metric of "marginality" as indicator of the population's educational levels, housing quality, and availability of goods. Marginality is classified into five types: very low, low, medium, high, and very high.

[33] *[…] no es que nos admiremos, sino que no debe ser. No debe de ser.*

mimic such behavior with their siblings. While this explanation might make sense for sibling-on-sibling sexual abuse, it did not explain fatherly sexual abuse of daughters. Nevertheless, the technical explanation for the intra-familial sexual abuse of girls undergirds a federal program known as "*Cuartos Rosas*" or "Pink Rooms" being implemented in rural areas. This program entailed building an additional room within existing homes that was to be used by women. This program expected to curb sexual and domestic violence in the home by providing women their own room. Since these rooms are painted pink on the outside, they are a visible proof that the government is working for the population. This program was being implemented in a few Nahua communities near Huejutla.

While Don Eusebio felt that the region was undergoing a "transition" thanks to the proliferation of schools, in the most remote communities things were not changing fast enough. In these communities, he lamented, "…what I have observed is that for parents, the man is whom has value. The woman [is] the one who doesn't have value. And it is obvious. It is something that they have ingrained. The male has value. The woman has no value. The woman lies. The woman leaves later. The woman this or that. That still exists. Still."[34]

In these communities, Don Eusebio claimed parents did not want to send their daughters to school because they claimed their daughters would soon get married and join their husbands' families. Don Eusebio was a passionate believer

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[34] *…lo que yo me he dado cuenta es que, los padres para ellos el varón es el que tiene valor. La mujer la que no tiene valor. Y te das cuenta. Es algo que también ellos traen arraigado eso. El varón tiene valor. La mujer no tiene valor. La mujer dice pura mentira. La mujer al rato se va. La mujer al rato esto. Hay eso todavía. Todavía.*

in girls' education since, among other reasons, he argued women who had access to a job would be less inclined to tolerate spousal abuse. Such was his dedication to women's education that he had organize meetings at school in which he encouraged mothers to embrace its value for the good of their daughters. As he recounted,

> Sometimes I convene meetings with mothers and I tell them: Pay close attention. How many of you are beat, mistreated, and you must put up with it? Why? Because you can't say, I studied, I'm a nurse. I'm such and such, and you know what? I won't stand him. I'm going to look for work and leave my husband who is beating me daily. He is mistreating me. You can't do that. And so, you want your daughters to do the same? And that's when they start reflecting a little. They say: no, well you are right. We have put up with that all our lives. Well, that is the reason why, one of the reasons why, a girl must go to school. She must get ahead, she must study so that tomorrow, if she ends up with a bad husband, well she won't hold back in saying, well, I'll look for a job and will spare myself of that suffering.[35]

Don Eusebio is an example of a government official who is genuinely interested in helping Nahua women. In the months ahead, it would become evident that Don Eusebio's viewpoints were shared by nurses, psychologists, lawyers, judges, and staff. These government agents received trainings on gender violence and intervened on this issue through their positions in schools, clinics, and municipal governments. They routinely pointed to the dowry or so-

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[35] In Spanish, text reads: "*Entonces este a veces hago reuniones con las madres de familia y les digo: fíjense bien. ¿Cuántas de ustedes no son golpeadas, maltratadas, y ustedes tienen que aguantarse? ¿Por qué? Porque no pueden decir, yo estudie, soy enfermera. Yo soy esto y ¿sabe qué? Que no lo aguanto. Yo voy y pido trabajo y dejo a mi esposo que me está golpeando diario. Me está maltratando. No lo pueden hacer. ¿Y entonces sus hijas quieren que hagan lo mismo que ustedes? Y ahí empiezan un poco a reflexionar. Dicen, no, pues tienes razón. Nosotras toda la vida ya aguantamos. Bueno ese el motivo por el cual, uno de los motivos por el cual, la niña debe estudiar. Debe superarse, debe de prepararse, para el día de mañana, le toca un mal marido, pues no se va a detener en decir, pues, voy a buscar trabajo y voy a quitarme de ese sufrimiento.*"

called “wife-buying”, parentally-arranged marriages, intrafamilial sexual abuse, and parental disregard for girls’ education as the most regressive elements of Nahua communities.

Some Nahua women, young and old, also decried the same practices. These women lamented not having been allowed by their parents to attend school or having been forced to marry men whom they did not love. One of the most heart-wrenching expressions of these limitations placed on women’s lives was that of Emilia, an eighteen-year old woman from a Nahua community in the adjacent municipality of Zacualco. She had been pulled out of high-school by her father after rumors spread she was seeing a married man on school breaks. In retaliation, she had run away from her parents’ house with another young man. When I met her, she was still hoping to be able to leave her parents’ home to go to Mexico City where she planned to put herself through school. This is how she describes her parents’ rationale for not supporting her schooling,

> I so much looked forward to studying. Mi dream was to get ahead, be a great doctor, like I’ve always dreamed of. My parents stopped putting me through school. When I ran away from my house, they promised to put me through school, they even offered me university studies and they did not follow through. They asked me why I wanted schooling if I’m going to get married. My schooling will be to support my kids. My schooling will be that I be my kids’ servant. That is what they have told me.[36]

[36] In Spanish, Emilia’s words were, “*Yo tenía tantas ganas de estudiar. Mi sueño es salir adelante, es ser una gran doctora como siempre he soñado. Mis papas ya no me dieron estudios. Cuando me escape de mi casa, me prometieron mis estudios, me ofrecieron hasta la universidad y no lo cumplieron. Me dijeron que para que quiero la escuela si yo me voy a casar. Mi estudio va a ser mantener a mis hijos. Mi estudio va a ser que yo sea la sirvienta de mis hijos. Es lo que me han dicho*.”

Nahua women were not the only ones to express such laments. Doña Fabiola, a well-off mestiza matriarch in her sixties who was my land lord, also remembered being denied the opportunity to go to college by her father who chose to solely support her male siblings' educational careers. While these practices were recognized to have been widespread in the past, now they were believed to be a trait of Indian communities.

Government representatives both mestizo and of Nahua descent traced patriarchal values to Nahua culture and identified certain state institutions such as schools as a modernizing force in the region, one that was helping men and women become more equal. Ivonne, the director of Joquicingo's *Instancia*, for instance, was fond of describing what seemed to her as the arbitrary and senseless force of local tradition through the story of a woman who always chopped the head of the fish before cooking it. When this woman's daughter questioned her about it, she answered that she didn't know why, but she had seen her mother do it. When the daughter asked her grandmother the same question, the grandmother explained she had been following her mother's example. When the child finally asked her great grandmother, the great grandmother explained she owned one small frying pan that did not fit a whole fish. The moral of the story, according to Ivonne, was that "sometimes we do things by tradition while we don't know the true objective".[37]

[37] In Spanish, the text reads "*a veces hacemos las cosas por costumbre mas no sabemos el verdadero objetivo*".

For government officials, the mechanism for change was to trigger a process of reflection by which they hoped Nahuas would become aware and sensitive about gender norms, expectations, and inequality. Government officials referred to their labor as "*hacer reflexionar*" (to cause to reflect) or "*sensibilizar*" (sensitize). These transitive verbs implied a relationship between one party that helps another party become aware of gender issues and enact behavior that is morally superior and progressive. Tania Li refers to this as "the will to improve" (2007). She characterizes the relationship between those who "claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need" as a relationship of trusteeship (Ibid, 4). According to Cowen and Shenton, trustees are those who aim to "develop the capacities of another" (Ibid, 5).

This desire to develop new Mexican subjects who embrace gender equality in their own relationships, which I referred to in Chapter One as the basis of Mexico's biopolitical citizenship, requires the gaze of government officials and their sympathetic ears. As Danylin Vanesaerford reminds us, the Foucauldian notion of discipline "presumes an exchange of gazes between a subject and a surveilling other imagined as watching from on high" (2009, 4). The racial make-up of *Instancia* staff suggests that the trustee gaze which originates in colonialism has become less noticeably racialized as individuals of Nahua descent are called on to play a role as local observers of gender progress. The process of becoming a trustee turns those of Nahua descent into external agents who are entrusted to peer over their Nahua friends, family, and communities. Nurses and psychologists who were of Nahua descent routinely characterized

their friends and family as unable to escape “tradition”. When gender behavior was seen as coming from outside the region, for example T.V., the local Nahua population was seen as a victim of such seductive influences. This was the assessment that was made of promiscuity and cheating, for example, which was considered to be a recent phenomenon.

While *Instancia* staff recognized that gender inequality was widespread in Mexico, they considered the Nahua population to be especially obstinate to change. These perceptions are rooted in colonial attitudes in which Indian non-compliance is interpreted as disobedience, irrationality, and ultimately racial inferiority (see Smith-Oka 2013, 15). In the Huasteca region, Indians were referred to as “*gente sin razón*” or “people without reason” well into the 1980s (Pacheco 2008, 94). In the time I spent with government officials, I could still hear a measure of doubt as to the capacity of the Indian population to reflect and arrive at these supposedly more gender enlightened positions.

Government officials had a thorny relationship with local communities, serving variably as confidents and interventionists. Officials disparaged the cultural rights Nahua communities had gained due to multicultural reforms passed in the early 2000s which authorized them to practice their traditions typically referred to as “*usos y costumbres*”. These were identified as contradictory to the spirit of gender progress. Lic. Diana, who is of local Nahua descent, and who lives in the city of Huejutla along with her husband and kids, claimed that Nahua authorities often shrouded gender violence and discrimination in their communities under the pretext of protecting their

indigenous traditions. She even reasoned that the regulations of indigenous communities could hardly be taken seriously because they were oral.

Lic. Diana also recalled that when clinics began to offer talks to the women in conjunction with the *Instancia*, some communities wrote impolite letters to the clinic staff in which they reproached them for "filling the women's heads with nonsense since marriages were being destroyed".[38] Lic. Diana added that some communities prefer to keep incidents related to gender violence within their communities unless the situation was especially critical. Even now, she said some communities imposed fines on women who sought the help of the *Instancia* first rather than ventilating their issues before community authorities.

The conflictive relationship between the *Instancia* and indigenous communities was made palpable in a workshop titled, "Harmonious Paternities" or "*Paternidades Armoniosas*", which I observed in late July of 2015. Ivonne teamed up with the director of the CAMI, Doña Antonia, a Nahua woman in her fifties, to deliver this workshop to the community authorities of a Nahua community called Los Otates. Los Otates is about a ten-minute car ride from the municipal head of Joquicingo. The CAMI is short for the *Casa de la Mujer Indígena* "*Yankuiksitlalkali"* (Indigenous Women's House-CAMI), which is located in Huejutla.[39] The CAMI is a national project of the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development

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[38] In Spanish, fuller text reads, "*…en algunas comunidades que a inicio hasta hacían llegar escritos a la enfermera en donde decían su enojo con majaderías este en decir que uno le iba a llenar la cabeza de tonterías a las señoras que porque se estaban destruyendo los matrimonios".*

[39] *Yankuiksitlalkali* is Nahuatl for Home of the New Star.

of Indigenous Peoples-CDI), which seeks to train local indigenous women on gender issues so that they can, in turn, offer workshops among the local indigenous population and information on government services for gender issues in indigenous languages.[40]

It was through Doña Antonia's invitation to this workshop that I met Ivonne and the *Instancia* of Joquicingo. Doña Antonia and Ivonne knew each other well since Ivonne had volunteered at *Yankuiksitlalkali* while she recovered from domestic violence at the hands of her husband. On the day of the training, Doña Antonia and I arrived at the Joquicingo *Instancia* at around 8am, and I had the chance to meet Ivonne, one of her staff, and another "Promoter" or "*Promotora*" of *Yankuiksitlalkali* all of whom would facilitate the workshop. Los Otates' community pick-up truck drove us to the community.

On the ride over to Los Otates, Ivonne had an uncomfortable exchange with the driver who was one of Los Otates' authorities. She asked him how many authorities Los Otates had, to which the man replied twenty-five. Then Ivonne asked how many of these were women. Thfe man replied, "Oh, those are separate". Ivonne replied with disapproval noting that women were overlooked for positions of leadership and instead were charged with responsibilities that were an extension of their housekeeping duties. These included cleaning the community corn grinder or *molino*, sweeping the streets, and serving on the *Prospera* committee, which involved cleaning the community clinic. She

[40] The end goal of the CDI is that each of the twenty-four CAMI's in the country become self-sustaining by garnering their own lines of funding.

complained that there were no *comisariadas* or *delegadas* (female authorities) in Los Otates, and informed the driver that in the municipal township of Joquicingo there were *delegadas*. [41, 42] The driver responded with surprise, but avoided further commentary.

When we arrived at Los Otates, people were already gathered in the community auditorium. Nine male authorities sat separately from a group of about twenty women with their children. Ivonne introduced the team of facilitators and explained the workshop would include a group activity and a short video. With that she got started. Ivonne began by explaining what gender roles implied. She involved the audience by asking the name of a female audience member, Celestina, whom everyone would pretend was pregnant with a baby girl. She then humorously acted out the comments family and friends might make to Celestina. Ivonne dramatized, "If it's a girl, they tell Celestina, 'oh, you already have someone to wash your clothes'. [pause] The child hasn't even been born and I'm already assigning what she will do and how she will be". Ivonne then attempted to draw the difference between sex and gender by asking the audience how they would go about identifying Celestina's baby girl in the hospital room if there were only two babies, one boy and one girl. While there was some confusion about the question, one audience member finally answered that he

[41] The *Comisariado Ejidal* is the maximum authority of an *ejido*, which is elected by the *ejido* assembly while *delegados* are authorities which are appointed to represent the community before the municipality.
[42] In a report compiled by the Joquicingo *Instancia* in 2010 titled "Participatory Diagnostic with a Gender Perspective on Women's Situation in the Municipality", only two communities in the municipality had *delegadas*. While it went unrecognized by the report, both communities were part of the region's socialist peasant organization, which has its own leftist gender perspective (see Pacheco 2008).

would do so by looking at the babies' private parts. Ivonne applauded his answer, noting that men and women were the same at birth except for their sex. Ivonne explained it was people who attributed all sorts of colors, traits, and futures to the child. Then Ivonne proceeded to describe critically, yet humorously the sets of gender roles people in the region attributed to men and women through childhood, adolescence, and finally adulthood.

Five minutes into the workshop, I realized Ivonne was a masterful workshop facilitator. Not only did she use humor, but she involved the audience by asking them short questions or proving them an opportunity to verify her statements by punctuating her descriptions with a final "*¿no*?" or "am I right?" to which the audience would respond in agreement. For example, Ivonne asked the audience, "if the child is a girl, what color do we dress her?" And the audience quickly responded, "pink". Then Ivonne would underline how everyone contributed to "assigning ways of being" to this child. Every now and then Ivonne explained that her aim was to "*hacerlos pensar*" or "make them think". Humor was Ivonne's principal tool for it kept the audience attentive and lighthearted. For example, Ivonne noted that when a boy is expected to be born, the family will say, "My rooster is here. Go fetch and tie up your chickens", to which the audience laughed heartily.[43]

Ivonne's narration of gender roles then hit on the role of culture. She asked the audience to reflect, "…but we are assigning forms of life, of how we

[43] In Spanish: "*Ya llegó mi gallo. Agarren, amarren a sus gallinas*."

are, and who said all this? Let's see." The audience replied in unison, "the father". Ivonne went on, "And who told the father?" Some answered, "the mother" and others "the father" again. "Who began leaving these ideas?" Ivonne asked. Amidst a less unified response, Ivonne replied, "My grandparents, my great-grandparents, my great-great-grandparents. That is called a culture. Just as we dance *huapangos*, put flowers in the altars, and do traditional things, we also have traditional behaviors and conducts..."[44] While she noted that different communities may have different practices, the entire region of the Huasteca shared the same "pattern" of gender roles in which women were entrusted to be submissive and the husband authoritative. She noted that a man might be illiterate but would still be considered more valuable than a woman with a master's degree. Ivonne emphasized throughout her examples that women were complicit in the reproduction of these gender roles as mothers and grandmothers. She noted men also had an interest in changing such gender roles because they had daughters and grand-daughters. She warned men, "sometimes we throw the noose on our own necks because it can happen to our daughter or granddaughters".[45]

Ivonne touched on the issue of change when she reached the stage of marriage in her hypothetical examples. She asked the audience if they thought a newly married husband would change? "No", replied the audience. "Why?", asked Ivonne. The audience replied that it was because that is how the husband

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[44] Huapango is a music style that originated in the Huasteca region.
[45] In Spanish: "*A veces nos echamos la misma soguita, porque le puede pasar a nuestras hijas o nietas*."

had been taught since childhood. Ivonne corrected the audience by noting that the assigning of his behavior had preceded even his birth. She then provided the audience an opportunity to reflect, “You already saw that it isn’t easy to take these ideas away, for men as well as women. Then what do we have to do?” A community authority replied sheepishly, “Work, talk together”. Addressing this man, Ivonne continued, “What will you say if I enter your house? What’s your name?” “José”, the man answered. Ivonne went on, “Can I enter a house [and say], Señor José, you have to make tortillas? What will you say to me? You’re going to get offended. You’re going to feel trampled. You see why it isn’t easy? This is why we have these sensitizing workshops so that bit by bit we come to understand what we’re doing. Because you also have a partner and you’ll have children and grandchildren”.

While the part of the workshop on gender roles was participatory, the rest of the workshop was more informative, one-sided, and slightly more rigid. Progressively, it became evident that the workshop entailed more than persuading the community about the righteousness of pursuing gender equality out of a sense of justice and concern for the well-being of future generations—the biopolitical carrot of gender progress. It also entailed informing the community of the stick or the sanctions that possibly followed when disregarding this new national consensus. Ivonne explained that the state of Hidalgo had recently passed a law by which it declared men and women to have equal rights, including the right to be elected to positions of authority within the community. If a woman wanted to be *comisariada* or *delegada*, the ejido authorities needed to

"place" her in that position, Ivonne noted. In response, one of the authorities asked somewhat belatedly if there were any indigenous communities with *delegadas*. Ivonne informed him that Joquicingo had two, to which the audience responded with surprise by engaging in chatter.

Ivonne then explained the different types of gender violence, including institutional gender violence which referred to the failure of government institutions to respond to a woman who has been a victim of gender violence. Ivonne started with the *Instancia*, asking the audience to name the type of grievance that would be committed in the case that the *Instancia* failed to provide services to a woman who reported an incident of violence. One of the authorities answered, "discrimination". Then Ivonne asked the audience what they would do in response. To which the men answered correctly they would report such violence to the human rights office in Huejutla. Ivonne then made sure to point the finger back at them. They, too, could be charged with committing "community violence", Ivonne explained, if they did not respond to gender violence in their communities. Ivonne warned them, "If I as a *delegada* or *delegado* fail to channel a case of violence to the municipal judge and nobody finds out and I try to hide the incident, what is happening? If a woman ends up dying, what will happen? There will be an investigation. It's a crime, too. What will happen? …Where will it end? You already saw where it will lead. We started with a little and from there it begins to escalate. I will end up in a [pause] government office".[46]

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[46] In Spanish, Ivonne says, *"¿Si yo como delegada o delegado no paso el caso de violencia allá al juez y nadie se entera y lo trato de ocultar? ¿Qué está pasando? Si llega a morir una mujer, ¿qué va a pasar? Va*

Ivonne continued to explain that women who report to the municipal judge's office with bruises are by default relayed to the CAVI in Huejutla. She explained that once a report is made at the municipal prosecutor's office, the office pursues a criminal investigation regardless if the victim drops the case. Ivonne explained that this was the case because the laws now stipulated that domestic violence be investigated "*por oficio*" or ex-officio.[47] She added that a day at the local jail was awful since a prisoner faced regular beatings. She noted, however, how much she disliked "sending" men to the jail in Huejutla. Ivonne added, "Whenever possible we avoid it, but what can I do with a woman whose ribs were already broken? It's a crime that is pursued ex officio. Between three and thirty years in jail, and I'm not sure if there's life sentencing".[48]

One of the most heated topics was that of child support. Yvonne asked Doña Antonia to explain whether the court could exact child support payments from peasant fathers who didn't have a steady source of income. Doña Antonia corroborated that it was possible to exact child support payments from peasant fathers and explained the logistics of separation and child support at length. The men in the audience were surprised to learn that for two kids, the courts could require the father to hand fifty percent of his salary to the mother. Doña Antonia

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a ver una investigación. Es un delito también. ¿Qué va a pasar? Yo lo que quiero llegar es, ¿hasta dónde vamos? ¿Hasta dónde va a parar? Ya vieron hasta donde va a parar. Empezamos con poquito. Y de ahí se va avanzando en llegar a más. Yo voy a parar a una… este… dependencia."

[47] Ivonne later explained to me that these changes were made to prevent the deaths of women who drop a case of domestic violence and then end up dying due to a more serious future incident of violence.

[48] In Spanish: "*Quiero decirles, no me gusta mandarlos a la Lima. Cuando podemos lo evitamos, pero ¿yo qué voy hacer con una mujer que ya le rompieron las costillas? Es un delito que se sigue de oficio. De tres años hasta treinta años. Y no sé si existe cadena perpetua*."

tried to appease the unsettled crowd by noting that it wasn't the CAMI's mission to destroy marriages. In fact, she warned, divorces were not good for children because children needed both their parents to grow up healthy. Children whose parents are separated, she indicated, stopped eating and did poorly in school. She noted, "What we want more than anything is to raise awareness, sensitize so that you may live well, so that you are not fighting."[49]

Ivonne closed the workshop by encouraging the men in the room to look favorably upon their wives working outside the home. Myopically, Ivonne highlighted only the benefits of a dual earning household:

> If you see that your wife goes out to work, 'Hey old man, I'm giving you money for the light bill' See? 'I now have money for beer', some might say, no? [audience chuckles] Or, 'I have some money left for shoes now'. It feels good, right? To share. It's like we end up valuing [our wife] more. And the woman feels surer of herself, in the same way. And don't feel slighted when the woman has to contribute. Get used to it. 'I have my wife, too, and together we will create a harmonious family'. This is what the Indigenous Women's House' project is about so that we may live in harmony as fathers and mothers, calmly so that we may live in peace, in harmony.[50]

In the participatory section, the audience was placed in groups and asked to express their thoughts about a hypothetical father figure whose description was glued to a poster board provided to the groups by the facilitators. In the

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[49] In Spanish, text reads, "*Lo que nosotros queremos más que nada es concientizar, sensibilizar para que vivan bien, para que no se estén peleando*."

[50] In Spanish, Ivonne says, "*Si ven que su esposa sale a trabajar, oye viejito ya te doy para la luz. ¿A verdad? Ya me quedó para la cerveza, dicen por ahí, ¿no? O ya me quedo para los zapatos. Se siente bonito, ¿verdad? Compartir, como que valoramos más. Y la mujer se siente segura, igual. Y no se sientan menospreciados cuando la mujer tenga que aportar. Acostúmbrense. Tengo mi esposa y me da también para que los dos juntos hagamos una familia harmoniosa. Que era lo que la Casa de la Mujer tiene un proyecto para que vivamos en armonía como papás y mamás, tranquilos, para vivir en paz, en armonía*."

group in which I participated, the figure was “Raúl, the taxi driver”. His description went like this:

> I’m Raúl I work as a taxi driver, I am thirty-eight years old, my wife works in a house, I have two children, one son and one daughter. I like to be served because my work is very strenuous, I don’t think I treat my daughters badly, I’m very good to them, but with my son I’m very harsh because he needs to learn to be a man, if not he would grow up weak. I’ve never hit my wife, only that sometimes we have problems because she doesn’t like that I drink, but I think I deserve some beer every now and then after so much work. She tells me I spend too much on beer but that is why I let her work so that she can also contribute to our house expenses, I don’t mind her working but that is certain she should not neglect the house because she has the obligation to serve us because we are her family.[51]

The men and women in my group identified Raúl as “macho” and were critical of his behavior. While we were discussing the poster board, the men in another group interrupted Ivonne in the middle of the activity to say impatiently that while they weren’t machos, other men in the community were. They thought Ivonne needed to provide the workshop to the larger community. Ivonne explained that while this was a good idea, this workshop was addressed to authorities to ensure they did not tolerate gender violence in the community.

After this activity, Ivonne drew the workshop to a close in a somewhat new agey way. She asked the audience to close their eyes and gave them a couple

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[51] In Spanish: *Soy Raúl trabajo como chofer de taxi, tengo treinta y ocho años, mi esposa trabaja en una casa, tengo dos hijos, un hijo y una hija. A mí me gusta que me atiendan porque mi trabajo es muy pesado, yo no creo que trate mal a mis hijas, soy muy bueno con ellas, pero con mi hijo soy muy duro porque debe aprender a ser hombre, sino crecería muy débil. A mi esposa nunca la he golpeado, solo que a veces tenemos problemas porque a ella no le gusta que tome, pero yo siento que me merezco unas cervezas de vez en cuando después de tanto trabajar. Ella me dice que gasto mucho en la cerveza pero por eso yo la dejo trabajar a ella para que también aporte al gasto de la casa, a mí no me molesta que ella trabaje pero eso si nomas que no descuide la casa porque ella tiene la obligación de atendernos porque somos su familia*.

minutes to think of their best childhood memories. She then asked them to open their eyes and asked the audience if anybody wanted to share their memories. When nobody did, Ivonne explained the point of the activity. She said that the exercise was meant to make them reflect about their own childhood. She encouraged them to see their roles as parents as striving to fill their children's lives with good memories, even if they might have had a bad childhood themselves.

The workshop seemed to end on a good note, and I turned off my recorder. Then Ivonne noted that she had a request from the audience. She explained that the CAMI was looking for women volunteers to form part of their expanding network of "*promotoras*"- community liaisons who would pledge to work with the CAMI and attend trainings in Huejutla to then impart in Los Otates. The women began talking amongst themselves, and a few women raised their hands. One of the authorities interrupted the process by noting that the women could not formally assume this responsibility without first consulting with their husbands.

I saw the faces of Ivonne and Doña Antonia turn pale. Trying to stay calm, Ivonne asked this man what he had learned from the workshop if it had not been that women were autonomous agents who could decide such things on their own. She then asked him if he had asked his wife for permission before accepting his position to which the audience laughed coyly in complicity. The man answered no. Ivonne said a few more parting lines, noting that this was the third time she had given a similar workshop in Los Otates to seemingly no avail.

With that, Doña Antonia agreed to follow up with the community to see what they would decide.

On our way back to Joquicingo, the *Instancia* and CAMI staff vented out their frustration with Los Otates' intransigent authorities. They professed that there were many communities whose authorities held similar attitudes and were not willing to change their relationships with women. Days after, Ivonne expanded more on this seeming impasse. Ivonne, who had faced domestic violence by her own Nahua husband in the past, concluded that men simply did not want to change out of "comfort" or "*comodidad*" with the status quo. While she wished for the day when men would declare their own revolution and say, "tomorrow we will not beat our wives, we will cook for our wives", she admitted that this was far from reality. With an aura of wisdom, Ivonne warned, "Violence will not be eradicated, it will be transformed. It's a process".[52] With these words, Ivonne underscored the naivete of the prevailing gender discourse, which mandates the "eradication" of gender violence.

Ivonne critiqued the existing solutions of placing men in prisons since violent men were themselves likely prior victims of domestic violence or child abuse. She also disparaged the stance of the various Women's Institutes, both national and state, which, she claimed, "could care less about men" and thus do not provide services for perpetrators of violence. As the director of the *Instancia*, she was interested in alternative solutions to partner violence. For example, she

[52] In Spanish, the text reads "*No se va a erradicar la violencia, la vas a transformar. Es un proceso*."

disobeyed the instructions of the Hidalgo Institute of Women by directing her staff to make psychological counseling available to violent men who requested it. Ivonne also valued the role of conciliation, which the municipal judges used to perform. Now, the municipal judge or *juez conciliador* is barred from “conciliating” physical violence and is obligated to send women with visible signs of violence directly to the CAVI. As Ivonne mentioned in the workshop in Los Otates, she tried to avoid sending men to jail and tried to resolve issues within the municipality. When I asked about shelters, Ivonne claimed that the Mexican government was not interested in providing any funding for shelters. Instead, *Instancia* staff were instructed to draw up a safety plan with those women who had suffered violence. Staff helped these women identify safe places to go to and a support network.

2.6 The Gender-progressive Nahua Family: The Responsibilization of the Poor

The work of local gender trustees in the Huasteca is mired in colonial templates that suggest that the Nahuas are less capable of transcending patriarchal and misogynist traditions. In Chapter One, I drew upon Elizabeth Povinelli who maintains that settler creole subjects placed native peoples in an anterior time frame to claim a relationship of power over them (2011). Povinelli argues that the value of the prior stemmed from the European notion of "governance of the prior" in which a group's prior settlement of a territory justified their rights to that territory. Povinelli claims that settler colonialists invoked this principle to wrest control over the colonies from the metropole (Ibid, 19).

Faced with native people's even prior inhabitance, settlers resorted to creating "differential narrative structures of belonging" to distinguish the "governing-prior" from the "governed-prior" (Ibid, 23-24). Settler colonialists assigned themselves what Povinelli calls the "autologic" tense of social belonging characterized by the present or future that is constitutive of self-authorship and freedom. In contrast, native peoples were ascribed a "genealogical" narrative tense that was bound to the past and to the unrelenting constraint of custom. As Povinelli notes, "[…] in the general governance of the prior, one prior—the governed prior—would be the customary. The other prior—the governing prior—would be free. This division would seep into and reshape every aspect of social life […]" (Ibid, 24).

For local *Instancia* staff, Nahua men and women continue to represent the obstinate prior who are “still” unable to overcome their traditions. Even when Nahuas occupy the role of gender progressive trustee and some Nahua men and women appear to acquire a gender progressive sensibility, the distinction is redevised into one of resistant and traditional Nahuas versus progressive and adapting Nahuas. In this way, biopolitical citizenship in Mexico extends the promise of normativity to indigenous persons who manage to revise their relationship to culture. The state expects Indians to be capable of objectifying and reflecting on their traditions and keeping only those which are good for their own well-being, that of their families, and ultimately the nation.

The ideal of gender normative Nahua man or woman is not only about promoting a modern orientation that is unmoored from a so-called fundamentalist attachment to tradition. It is also about adopting habits at the level of the family that are considered good for the nation. For poor Nahua families, these include parents assuming responsibility for the psychological well-being of their children and their children’s outcomes. Parents are expected to live in harmony, accepting a breadwinning role for women, and equally distributing housekeeping responsibilities among the members of the household. Materially, it includes ensuring that their children have their own rooms to sleep in and that they send their daughters to school.

This self-responsibilization of the Nahua poor elides the structural factors that contribute to their children’s psychological and material well-being. If Don Eusebio is right that it was Nayelli’s low self-esteem which drove her to sleep

with a married man, it was not only her parents who contributed to that low self-esteem. Surely, her status as a poor, Indian woman had something to do with it. What's more, the predatory sexualization of poor Indian girls that played a factor in Nayelli's pregnancy and which appears to be facilitated by the proliferation of Facebook goes undetected by Don Eusebio. Such eroticization of power relations is traceable to colonial times. The criminalization of abortion also left Nayelli with no choice but to carry the pregnancy to term.

The gender progressive reflections being emphasized by state agents in the Huasteca also fail to address structural violence in which partner violence is necessarily imbricated. The workshop presented to Los Otates is based on the "perpetrator" model of inter-personal violence. Charles R. Hale deploys this concept to describe the idea that "racism only exists when we can identify an individual agent who espouses and acts on the assertion that people who belong to a given social category are inherently inferior" (2006, 210). Similarly, partner violence and even "institutional gender violence", a potentially useful tool to identify the role of states in contributing to gender violence, is reduced to isolated instances of individuals who act upon the idea that women are inferior (see Figure 2). While the "perpetrator" model leads to making individual persons responsible and punishable for gender violence, it does not allow for a more expansive notion of the structures in which women are made subaltern. The only more expansive agent in this model is "culture" understood as a racialized and isolated amalgam of senseless practices.

Figure 1: The "perpetrator" model of Violence. Physical, Economic, Institutional, and Sexual Violence. Excerpt from a booklet called "Ley de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia, Nuevo León."

The perpetrator and cultural models are not equipped to identify or question the gendered patterns of labor that are available to poor Nahuas. For example, in the group exercise facilitated in Los Otates, the wife of Raúl, the fictitious taxi driver, works as a maid. The text is centered on "*Raúl, el taxista*" and his problematic refusal to carry out housework while his wife works outside the home. Yet, the text does not invite the reader to question why the transformation being asked of Raúl is also not underway in the home where his wife works. In this way, the text implies that only poor people who cannot afford to hire a maid need to redistribute housework in a gender-equal manner. What's

more, the lesson is that poor women need to only question their gender roles at home, but not in the private sphere of labor. In sum, while poor, indigenous families are the targets of the state's gender progressive discourse, middle and upper-class families who avoid renegotiating housework by relying on maids do not factor into the state's definition of Mexico's gender problematic.

The *Instancias*, the CAMI, and school officials in the Huasteca are positioned in such a way as to sensitize the indigenous poor. While they provide valuable services to women who are marginalized from the justice system, they in fact reproduce the power relations by which the indigenous poor are singled out as especially gender regressive. Under the guise of gender equality, well-meaning men and women take on the position of local trustees with an activist ethos who impart a disciplinary regime of self-responsible Nahua families.

In light of a justice system that remains inaccessible to the poor and is rarely mobilized to investigate gender violence, the self-responsibilization of poor families appears to be one of the most significant aims of the gender labor of local government officials. These municipal gender interventions are also solidifying the boundary between the gender progressive and gender regressive Indian, a new twist on the old trope of the illiberal Indian versus the reasonable mestizo or mestiza.

Appendix 1: Notification form to Municipal Prosecutor's Office

AVISO AL MINISTERIO PUBLICO

(VIOLENCIA FAMILIAR, APENDICE INFORMATIVO 1)

Folio: _____

Nombre, razón o denominación social del establecimiento _____

Institución _____ Localidad _____ Municipio _____

C.P. _____ Entidad Federativa _____

Servicio _____ Cama _____ Fecha de elaboración ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ (día mes año)

USUARIO (A)	AFECTADO (A)	VIF			
			Nombre _____ Apellido paterno Apellido materno Nombre (s)	Edad _____ Años	Sexo ☐ 1. Masculino 2. Femenino
			Domicilio _____ Calle Número exterior Número interior _____ Barrio o colonia _____ Código postal		
			_____ Localidad _____ Municipio _____ Entidad Federativa		

Fecha de atención médica ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ (día mes año) Hora de recepción del usuario(a) afectado(a) ☐☐ ☐☐ (horas minutos)

Motivo de atención médica _____

Diagnóstico(s) _____

Evolución, acto notificado, reporte de lesiones, en su caso, reporte de probable causa de muerte: _____

Plan:

a) Farmacoterapia _____

b) Exámenes de laboratorio y gabinete _____

c) Canalización _____ Referencia _____

Seguimiento del caso:

Area de trabajo social _____

Area de psicología _____

Area de medicina preventiva _____

Area de asistencia social _____

Pronóstico _____

Notificación

Fecha ☐☐☐☐☐☐ (día mes año)

Agencia del Ministerio Público ☐ Nombre _____ y cargo del receptor _____

Presidencia Municipal ☐

Jurisdicción Sanitaria ☐ No. y nombre de Agencia del Ministerio Público.

_____ Especificar _____

Otra Instancia _____ ☐ _____ Especificar

Médico Notificante: Nombre _____ Firma _____

CHAPTER THREE: Indian Women and Bare Life

Since the 1970s, Mexican biopolitical citizenship has sought to reduce the number of poor people through population control, improving maternal and infant health, steering women to paid employment, and encouraging the formation of agentive women and egalitarian husbands. Mexico translated this biopolitical citizenship into law through various constitutional and legal reforms. Within these efforts, the state depicted indigenous peoples as irresponsible citizens—the past which modern Mexicans had to overcome.

While Mexico became internationally recognized for its successful population control efforts, it has obtained an equally global reputation as ground zero for heinous femicides that have gone unpunished. Since the 1990s, hundreds of young, working women have been raped, mutilated, and killed in the border city of Ciudad Juárez within a total climate of impunity. Femicides have become daily occurrences in places such as Estado de México in central Mexico. Scholars have claimed that these femicides and the sexual torture that often precede them are the results of Mexico's shift to a neoliberal economy by which the country has sought to attract foreign direct investment by offering a cheap, feminized labor supply (Wright 2007; Schmidt Camacho 2005).

The stories of Patricia and Federica, two young indigenous women I met in Monterrey, Nuevo León, and Tepetzalan, Hidalgo, respectively, likewise impel us to consider the link between feminized labor and racialized rape in Mexico. Patricia and Federica were sexually violated while performing unpaid housework

for their extended families or godparents. These young women's labor trajectories illustrate how Indian women from the largely peasant region of the Huasteca of Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí are integrated into Mexico's neoliberalized economy within the informal sectors of this economy, namely as unpaid domestic labor.

As women have increasingly entered the job market without childcare protections or relief from housework since the 1970s, they have "transferred" this labor to poorer women, many of them indigenous. While indigenous women have been strapped with such labor since colonial times, the global thrust to integrate women into paid labor has led to a surge in the demand for their labor, especially in areas such as the metropolitan area of Monterrey, which has witnessed an economic boom since the 1990s.

Due to the state's negligence in improving regulations for social reproductive labor, indigenous women and girls have been made vulnerable to the exploitation and sexual violation that are implicated in this work. I argue that Indian women and girls who work in paid or unpaid social reproductive labor are bare life. However, as opposed to, Giorgio Agamben, who defines bare life as that which is exposed to being killed, I follow Ewa P. Ziarek, who argues that bare life can also be exposed to rape and exploitation. The condition of indigenous women as bare life has resonance in Mexico where the raping of Indian women by Spaniards has long been glorified as the key to *mestizaje*.

3.1 A *"Simple"* Rape Victim at a Specialized Agency in Sex Crimes in the Metropolitan Area of Monterrey

In the peak of Summer of 2016, my friend Guillermo and I sat chatting in the courtyard of the State Judiciary of Nuevo León in Monterrey. Guillermo is a young Teenek man hailing from the Huasteca of San Luis Potosí and who now lives and studies law in the city of Monterrey. The Huasteca region is home to several indigenous groups, including the Teenek who are mostly settled in San Luis Potosí, but also Veracruz. Since Guillermo is an advanced law student, I had asked him to accompany me to the State Judiciary to help me understand the daily public hearings on family violence. These public hearings are a new facet of Nuevo León's transition to an adversarial penal system earlier that year. While we were enjoying a break from the hearings, I received a call from a mutual friend of ours, Nadia, a promoter from *Zihuakali-Casa de la Mujer Indígena* (Indigenous Women's House-CAMI), who was trying to locate Guillermo.[53] The CAMI is a project of the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples-CDI), which seeks to organize indigenous women who can run projects of benefit to indigenous women. Nadia was hoping Guillermo would offer his services as a Spanish-Teenek translator for a young Teenek woman who had reported being raped. Once Guillermo spoke with Nadia, he agreed to volunteer and invited me to tag along.

[53] Zihuakali is Nahuatl for woman's house. It is derived from cihuatl for woman and cali, which means home.

The following morning, we arrived at the “Investigation Unit Specialized in Family Violence and Sex Crimes” of San Nicolás de los Garza, a municipality to the north east of Monterrey. Within a few minutes we were summoned by the prosecutor in charge of the case, a blonde, light skinned woman in her thirties. The prosecutor’s phenotype was commonly represented as characteristic of Mexico’s north, regarded as whiter and taller than the center and south. In justifying my presence, I stated my research was about indigenous women’s experience denouncing violence in the greater metropolitan area of Monterrey and followed by requesting permission to observe the case. After agreeing to my research, the prosecutor took the opportunity to share her experience assisting indigenous people. Prior to her role as public prosecutor, the prosecutor had worked for Nuevo León’s Human Rights Commission through which she had also assisted other indigenous crime victims. Still, she felt mystified by indigenous peoples: “I don’t know how they move. Here in Monterrey we need more information about indigenous people.” [54]

The prosecutor had especially accrued experience assisting indigenous women. She explained that last year she had overseen a rape case made by an indigenous woman which was very similar to the case that occupied us today. She explained, “It’s that the young women say yes to everything, but I don’t know if they understand everything I say. Maybe some words they do, but not everything. They only say yes. It’s just that sometimes out of shame they don’t

[54] The Spanish quote is: *No se cómo se mueven. Aquí en Monterrey necesitamos más información sobre los indígenas*.

want to admit that they don't understand me."[55] These communication issues led the prosecutor to seek a translator through the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*. While the prosecutor made no mention of this, indigenous peoples' right to translators is protected and mandated by a slew of constitutional and legal provisions originating in 1992.[56] Nonetheless, the prosecutor had shown to be proactive in securing a translator considering that the certification of indigenous translators has not been a priority for state agencies and remains largely an informal practice throughout the country (Kleinert & Stallaert 2015).[57]

The informality of translation showed in this case as well. Just as she had done in the prior case, the prosecutor once again started her search for a translator through the CDI office in Monterrey. Run by a mestizo anthropologist and a few mestiza staff persons, the CDI referred her to the *Casa de la Mujer Indígena* in Monterrey. From there, a CAMI "promoter" had taken it upon herself to find a translator for the prosecutor. Guillermo and I knew the rest of the story. The promoter, one of our friends, had tried reaching Guillermo who occasionally volunteered as a translator for the CAMI and the CDI. Unable to reach him through the cell phone numbers listed for him, the promoter had called me knowing Guillermo and I were good friends.

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[55] *Es que las muchachas dicen sí a todo, pero no sé si me entienden todo lo que digo. Tal vez unas palabras sí, pero no todo. Solo me dicen que sí. Es que luego por pena no quieren admitir que no me entienden.*

[56] See Article 2 of the Constitution, reformed in 1992; Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas, passed in 2003; and the Ley de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia, passed in 2007.

[57] A Nahua CAMI promoter claims she was the first to obtain certification as an indigenous language translator in Nuevo León through the state's Superior Justice Tribunal in February of 2017.

The prosecutor continued narrating the case, noting that securing a translator was critical for indigenous people's access to justice. In a maternalistic tone, she lamented, "Indigenous people are noble, innocent. They lack the malice of this place. They are not prepared to face the world." The prosecutor's statement was both a general statement and yet specific to the legal challenges presented by Patricia's case. She explained that if the case reached a trial, the public defendant might claim that what Patricia alleged was rape was in fact a Teenek custom, and as such would need to be respected by the courts. The prosecutor hoped Guillermo could provide expert testimony to challenge this argument, to which Guillermo assented heartily.

The prosecutor proceeded to the full details of the case. "La muchacha", as she referred to Patricia, had reportedly reached Nuevo León two weeks before from San Luis Potosí to live with her aunt in the municipality of Zuazua. The young woman was nineteen. She declared her aunt's husband had raped her in their home while her aunt had been away working. The prosecutor found some details in her declaration untenable and even suspicious. On the one hand, Patricia had stated she had locked herself up in the upstairs bathroom after she received some text messages from her uncle asking her to come downstairs to lay in bed with him. On the other, she had manifested that her uncle had opened the door to the bathroom before dragging her downstairs where he had allegedly raped her.

The prosecutor was also troubled by the fact that Patricia hadn't mentioned any attempts to resist her uncle. Most rape victims, the prosecutor

claimed, report having tried to escape or wound the aggressor. Frustrated by the prosecutor's unreasonable expectations, I interrupted, "but many of us simply freeze, not knowing what to--" "--you become paralyzed", the prosecutor said, punctuating my sentence. "Yes", I asserted sheepishly, resuming a passive role. While the prosecutor seemed to recognize this tendency in rape survivors, she still felt the need to ask Guillermo to clarify these issues when speaking with Patricia. With that, the prosecutor handed Guillermo the case file and told us to wait for Patricia in the waiting room.

Once out of the prosecutor's office, Guillermo had a chance to look over the case file. His brow furrowed as he read through it. He wondered out loud whether all the confusion stemmed from the clerk having used a "machote" -- a common practice used in the municipal prosecutor offices in Mexico that involves using a standard declaration on file and then filling it in with the details of the specific case. Guillermo pointed at the phrase "then he ejaculated" from Patricia's declaration. The phrase, he argued, was too dry and scientific to have been used by the victim. Guillermo explained that one of the typical questions asked in rape cases is whether the aggressor ejaculated. He added that often victims answer yes without understanding the question. Much like the prosecutor, Guillermo thought the problem was one of miscommunication between ignorant victims and the justice system. Interestingly, both Guillermo and the prosecutor seemed to blame the justice system to some extent; the prosecutor complained the justice system lacked knowledge of indigenous people while Guillermo disparaged its

tendency to speak over victims' heads and of its chaotic practices such as the *machote*.

While we pondered the imprecisions of the case file, the prosecutor's secretary called us over to inform us that Patricia appeared to be a no show. The secretary had been attempting to reach her by phone without success. She tried once more before our eyes. Curiously, this time a female voice picked up only to hang up after the secretary said hello. Guillermo then dialed from his cell phone. When a woman answered, Guillermo introduced himself in Teenek. After a short minute, he put the phone down to notify the secretary that Patricia hadn't been able to afford public transport. To our surprise, the secretary replied that the office would be able to pick them up. Once Guillermo communicated this to Patricia and her aunt, Patricia's aunt replied that they would be waiting for us.

While I imagined the house pick-up would be done by a police car, we soon came to find out it was the secretary who picked up victims and informants. Recognizing Guillermo's rapport with the victim, the secretary asked us to come along with her. While we waited for her to finish up some business, the secretary chatted with us informally. She asked Guillermo what language he spoke. Once he answered Teenek, the secretary replied in a half inquisitive-half matter-of-fact tone, "I've heard that when you speak, you say lots of words to say one thing." The secretary had implied that not only all indigenous languages were the same, but all equally deficient compared to Spanish. This comment, which I found offensive, did not seem to bother Guillermo, who simply chuckled. In previous conversations, Guillermo had shared with me just how used he was to *regios*

expressing either awe or contempt of his ability to speak an indigenous language.[58]

Once we got on the road, the secretary explained a little bit more about her job and the specialized nature of the office in which she worked. She explained that it was routine practice for the prosecutor's office to offer to pick up victims or informants at their homes. In fact, she noted she had driven to the municipality of Zuazua before to pick up another rape victim who in the end stopped following up with her case. When I asked the secretary why Patricia had made her report at the prosecutor's office in San Nicolás de los Garza rather than at the prosecutor's office in the municipality of Zuazua, the secretary explained that since the Zuazua public prosecutor's office did not have a specialized agency in sex crimes they usually referred rape victims to her office in San Nicolás de los Garza.

Once we exited the highway and continued to drive east, it started to become apparent just how far Patricia lived from the specialized prosecutor's office in sex crimes in San Nicolás de los Garza. The office sits in the northwestern corner of the metropolitan area of Monterrey, at the northern end of one of Monterrey's two subway lines. Heavy traffic continues north for another couple miles, much of it headed to and from the airport in the municipality of Apodaca. Then the highway exits start to become more sparring and burnt grass begins to dominate the landscape.

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[58] *Regios*, short for *regiomontanos*, is a term used to refer to residents of Nuevo León.

It puzzled me how so many recent indigenous migrants lived in isolated housing developments scattered across the rural municipalities north of the metropolitan area of Monterrey. Zuazua's grassy fields were interrupted by the occasional housing complex, most of which had something innovative and flashy if seen from afar, but upon closer look showed the telltale signs of shoddiness. Guillermo explained to me that these housing developments were cheaper and that many migrants who had access to housing credits through their jobs found them appealing. His cousin, for instance, whom we had visited the day before had been lured to the municipality adjacent to Zuazua, Ciénega de Flores, by cheap housing.

After about a forty-minute drive, which included an intermediate stop at the prosecutor's office in Zuazua, we arrived at Patricia's housing complex. More expansive than others we had passed by, this complex extended for several kilometers. The dusty patches of dirt surrounding each two-story unit gave the entire complex the look of an apocalyptic outpost. Signs of informality and an uncertain future were strewn about the landscape: a bunker elementary school teeming with children and strip malls with vacant spaces lining the main road. The gust of capitalist development which had sowed the seeds of hope of the young families settled here seemed long gone.

Once we reached the unit, Patricia's aunt greeted us at the door. The unit was tiny, a mere 90 square meters, as homes destined for the Infonavit mortgage

market tend to be.[59] A young woman, whom we assumed was Patricia, sat quietly on the bed, avoiding eye contact with us. Guillermo introduced himself to Patricia and her aunt in Teenek with the warmth of a *paisano* and explained the lineup for the day again. While the aunt smiled every now and then at Guillermo and seemed comfortable, Patricia was distant and quiet. The aunt's main concern was that Patricia be back in time to care for her children after they returned home from school since she would leave for work in a few hours. Guillermo tried to assure her that Patricia would be back in time, and Patricia's aunt finally gave her permission to go.

On the long ride back, Guillermo sat in the back seat with Patricia hoping to ask her some of the questions he had been delegated by the prosecutor, this time in Teenek. It soon became clear that Patricia was not warming up to Guillermo. She merely nodded or gave one-word answers. When we finally made it back to the prosecutor's office, Guillermo complained to me that Patricia hadn't clarified any of the lingering questions. In his view, Patricia didn't speak enough Teenek most likely because the language wasn't spoken much in her home town.

Once at the public prosecutor's office, Patricia had her first meeting with the staff psychologists who were tasked to identify Patricia's psychological state. The psychologists allowed Guillermo to be a part of the interview, but threw him out within five minutes because, according to him, they thought Patricia knew enough Spanish. Guillermo disagreed. He thought Patricia didn't speak enough

[59] Once a direct housing provider, the state-sponsored Infonavit became a mortgage lender during President Salinas' term (1988-1994).

Spanish and pointed to a word in Spanish she used incorrectly. For me it was clear that the issue wasn't one of language capability. Patricia was simply refusing to speak.

In the meantime, the prosecutor in charge of the case summoned Guillermo to her office. She informed him that the analysis of Patricia's cell phone suggested that Patricia and her uncle had sustained a romantic relationship. In these messages, they referred to each other affectionately as do romantic partners. The prosecutor asked Guillermo to warn Patricia that she needed to disclose the tVanesa about their relationship because if she did not, Patricia's uncle could sue her for slander and she could be the one who would end up behind bars.

By the time Patricia came out of the interview with the psychologists, it was around 5pm. While I tried to interview the psychologists, they declined, saying I would not only have to get permission from the prosecutor, but also from the Director of the prosecutor's office, neither of whom was at the office at the time. While Patricia waited for the prosecutor to come back from a hearing, Guillermo relayed the prosecutor's warnings to Patricia and tried to get her to explain her relationship with her uncle. Patricia explained that those messages had been written by her aunt who was pretending to be her to extract information from her uncle.

While we waited until six for the prosecutor to come back before Guillermo and I started to pack up since we had a prior commitment to attend in downtown Monterrey. The secretary popped in to inform us that given the prosecutor's

delay it looked like Patricia would have to come back tomorrow to finish up. She informed us she would take Patricia home as soon as she finished up some business. Before we left the office, we made sure to get Patricia some tacos since we couldn't be sure how long she would have to wait to get home.

Due to a trip to Texas I had scheduled on the following day, I had to rely on Guillermo to update me on the case. Guillermo showed up the next day only to see Patricia miss her appointment again. When she didn't answer any calls, including his own, he took the liberty to go look for her at their house on public transport. Once at their house, no one opened the door. Within the next few days the public prosecutor sent two police cars to collect evidence from the house yet no one had answered the door.

When I asked Guillermo what he made of the case, he concluded that Patricia hadn't been raped. She didn't seem traumatized, he said. According to Guillermo, the prosecutor did not believe Patricia had been raped either. The prosecutor had gotten a sense that the decision to report had come from Patricia's aunt in the first place. Both Guillermo and the prosecutor surmised that Patricia had sustained a consensual relationship with her uncle and that she had feigned being raped when a fear of being pregnant kicked in. Guillermo imagined Patricia's aunt had forced her to report the crime so as to test her tVanesafulness, at which point Patricia had had no choice but to go along.

For me, none of this squared. If Patricia had had consensual sex, why had her uncle run away from the house as Guillermo was told by the prosecutor he had done? Why hadn't Patricia run away with him? Couldn't it be that Patricia's

aunt had demonstrated her support for her by insisting that they report the case? Might Patricia's uncle have done something like this before such that Patricia's aunt was more inclined to believe her? While these are simple conjectures, it seems that the prosecutor had scared Patricia away by having Guillermo warn her that she could potentially end up in jail for lying.

By discontinuing her case, Patricia contributed to the pattern of sex crime statistics in Mexico in which most rape crimes end up trapped in the investigation phase without being taken to trial. When I repeatedly tried calling the prosecutor, I was unable to reach her. Her secretary always said she was out of the office. Guillermo who had looked at her case file informed me that Patricia's medical test had confirmed she had suffered a lesion (*desgarre*). On the other hand, she had not returned for the subsequent interviews with the psychologists that were required.

Patricia's treatment in the Investigative Unit Specialized in Family Violence and Sex Crimes reflects the delicate continuum between passivity and furtiveness through which indigenous women are refracted. Her supposed lack of initiative in resisting her rape and even in denouncing was enough to qualify her as so passive as to turn her suspicious. Likewise, the prosecutor's perception of indigenous women as so passive, naïve, and embarrassed that they preferred to answer nonsensically to her questions changed suddenly when evidence of a potential romantic connection between Patricia and her assailant surfaced in the form of cell phone text messages.

What is peculiar about the handling of Patricia's case is that the prosecutor and Guillermo interpreted Patricia's silence, at first, as signs of her lack of mastery of both Spanish and Teenek and, later, as suggestive of her culpability. For me, it was not surprising that Patricia showed herself withdrawn. After all, she was a young nineteen-year-old who had been raped by a family member within two weeks of arriving in Nuevo León. It was also understandably intimidating for a young Teenek woman to have to confront a municipal prosecutor's office, a mestiza prosecutor, and a Teenek man. In the Huasteca, indigenous people approach mestizos and mestizas and government institutions dominated by the former with caution and even trepidation. When I spoke about Patricia's case with a twenty-six-year-old Teenek woman from San Luis Potosí by the name of Vanesa, she confirmed that Teenek women are deferential with respect to men who are strangers. Avoiding eye contact and being silent are typical ways of doing so.

While some of the difficulties that Patricia encountered in getting her case to be heard reflect the racial hierarchy between mestizos and mestizas and indigenous peoples in Mexico, others stem from the complications that a "simple rape" presents for rape survivors. Studies from around the world show that there is a stark division in the prosecution and conviction of what Susan Estrich distinguishes as "simple" versus "real" rape (Estrich 1988; Pether 2009). "Simple" rapes refer to those cases in which the victim knows their assailant while "real" rapes refer to those in which the assailant is a stranger. While most rapes are "simple" rapes they are the least prosecuted and convicted (Pether 2009).

For many rape scholars, the issue lies in that simple rape victims are more easily depicted as having consented to the rape by virtue of their familiarity with the assailant. The social perception of the victim and assailant influences the verdict on whether the victim was raped and the assailant guilty. Race and sexual chastity are two factors that also influence which women are considered "rapable" and deserving of justice (Davis 1985; Hall 2004). As Jeffner writes, "Only a sober young woman, who does not have a bad reputation, who has not behaved sexually provocatively and who has said no in the right way can be raped, and only by a young man who is sober and 'deviant' and with whom she is not in love" (Pether 2009, 256). To be complete, this description would have to note that rapable victim is by necessity racially unmarked and the punishable assailant racially marked.

Likewise, in Patricia's case, the text messages that sullied her chastity spoke louder than her declaration, compromising her credibility and rapability. If we consider that the prosecutor expected rape victims to physically resist their aggressors, it is evident that women must tread carefully between passivity and agency to be considered deserving of justice.

3.2 A "Simple" Rape Victim Reports at the CAVI in Huejutla, Hidalgo

Federica is a sixteen-year-old spunky girl I met in the Summer of 2016 after returning to Hidalgo in the mestizo municipal headship I will call Tepetzalan located in the Huasteca of Hidalgo. Federica was working as a maid for the house in which I was renting. I immediately bonded with Federica in part due to

our mutual backgrounds as *chilangas*, a term used to refer to people from Mexico City. Since we shared the same room, I got to know Federica well over the course of my month and half stay in Tepetzalan that summer. Federica's employer and my landlord was Doña Fabiola Peralta, a harsh and foul-mouthed widow in her sixties. Federica worked as a live-in maid, what is called "*puertas adentro*" in Spanish—literally meaning "behind doors", to earn a little extra cash and save on the daily transportation costs from her town, Teotlalco, to Tepetzalan. In 2015, I had stayed with Doña Fabiola for half a year. When I returned to Tepetzalan that summer, I was surprised to see that Doña Fabiola was oddly charmed by Federica. The year before, I had witnessed her disparage the three maids she went through over the course of my stay.

In Mexico, as in much of Latin America, Indian women disproportionately work as domestic workers, especially those who work as live-in maids (Durin 2009; Radcliffe 1999). In the mestizo headship of Tepetzalan, domestic work in mestizo households is performed by women and girls from the surrounding Nahua towns, reproducing the hierarchy between town headship and subject towns that dates to the colonial period. In her old age, Doña Fabiola has had to recur to a "*muchacha*", a term which literally means young woman, but is also another word for maid used throughout Mexico. While Doña Fabiola usually reminisced about her late husband fondly, in one instance she reproached him for not having paid her for cooking and cleaning for him and their five daughters. She noted, "He would owe me a fortune, don't you think? $120 per day is what maids make nowadays". As Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez notes, even

women who hire more disadvantaged women to help with housekeeping cannot avoid their implication in relation to housework's feminization (2010, 105).

Doña Fabiola prided herself in her fair skin and blue-eyes, signs which she pointed to as proof of her French ancestry. Doña Fabiola occupies an honorable role in town since her father was one of the founders of Tepetzalan. Doña Fabiola's husband was also well-known in Tepetzalan for founding the first and only elementary school. While by no means wealthy, Doña Fabiola owns two homes. The one in which she lives conveniently faces the market plaza, the site of the most prominent weekly market in the surrounding area, which puts up only on Fridays. Doña Fabiola operates a small convenient store from her home and opens six toilets daily to the public for profit. Her oldest daughter runs a tavern next to her mother's store. Due to their prime location, both do well on Fridays. Doña Fabiola rents the other home to students who come from the surrounding Nahua villages to study middle school and high school in Tepetzalan.

While Doña Fabiola's hot-temper is well-known by the townspeople, it is the maids who have suffered it the most. She routinely scolded and mocked the maids, treating them as she would foolish children. During my first term renting from Doña Fabiola, I witnessed her consistently harass and ultimately fire the first maid for allegedly wasting the washing detergent. The second maid quit after about a month when Doña Fabiola raised her hand as if about to strike her. The last maid worked while she was on summer break from high school and had previously worked for Doña Fabiola. She seemed to have built a mutually respectful relationship with Doña Fabiola over time. One of the factors that

seemed to soften Doña Fabiola's treatment of the last maid was her educational level, which Doña Fabiola respected as a former teacher. In contrast, the first two maids only had a middle school or primary education. The last maid spoke Spanish more fluently, was chattier, and less intimidated by Doña Fabiola.

While at best, Doña Fabiola could be respectful towards the more educated maid, she showed an uncharacteristic esteem for Federica. Several times, Doña Fabiola corrected those who would refer to Federica as her "muchacha" by stating she was her "*dama de compañía*" or "lady-in-waiting". Doña Fabiola allowed Federica to stay in the bedroom upstairs, which she also rented to me. In contrast, Doña Fabiola would offer the other maids the living room floor and a *petate* to sleep on whenever they had to sleep over.[60] Doña Fabiola would also take Federica on her daily evening rounds to the homes of friends and relatives around the town, showing Federica off as some sort of trophy maid. From what I gathered the one day I joined them, none of Doña Fabiola's friends and relatives talked to Federica. Federica complained about this part of her job, saying she was bored out of her mind. Federica was also generally regarded as physically beautiful, which brought her unsolicited attention from Doña Fabiola's male relatives and the male customers who shopped at her store. These men would fawn over Federica whenever Doña Fabiola was away.

Federica also had an urban social capital that upset the traditional hierarchy between indigenous peoples and local mestizos. Federica had been

[60] A petate is a large reed-weaved mat indigenous peoples of the area use to sleep. Now, some of the more well-off use beds.

born and raised in Mexico City by her *chilanga* and mestiza mother and Nahua father who was from Teotlalco, but moved to Mexico City for work. Unlike the children of the Nahua towns surrounding Tepetzalan who are raised speaking Nahuatl, Federica was monolingual in Spanish. Due to her Spanish language skills and fairer-skin Federica was often identified as mestiza.

Federica was also aberrantly talkative for local standards. While Indian women in the Huasteca may be talkative in the company of their close friends and relatives, they are typically quiet and demure with mestizos. Federica's *chilango* way of expressing herself was similarly foreign yet charming to the locals, even for grumpy Doña Fabiola. Transgressing the hierarchical working conditions of domestic labor, Federica regularly chatted with Doña Fabiola in a chummy style characteristic of *chilangos*. This contrasted with the other maids who never openly conversed with Doña Fabiola. Federica also consistently made eye contact with those around her, flaunting the local gendered tendency exhibited by Nahua women to show deference through an avoidance of eye contact with strangers.

In other respects, Federica was just as disadvantaged as the other maids. Her family had moved to Hidalgo about four years ago when Federica turned twelve and her family lost their housing in Mexico City. Her family hit rock bottom when her father was injured on the job and became unemployed. Given these circumstances, her mother begrudgingly agreed to move to her husband's hometown in Hidalgo, Teotlaco, a place totally foreign to her and her children. Her father raised pigs for sale and grew beans and corn. Her mother took care of

the household and raised Federica and her younger brother of ten years. Their family's continued financial struggle had impelled her parents to send Federica to work as a maid for several families, one in Teotlaco, a second in Macuilcán, and now for Doña Fabiola.

When I finally had a chance to visit Federica at her home, her contribution to her family's income became more palpable. Federica earned MXN $120 per day from Tuesday through Friday. Even though she worked until midday on Saturday, she was not paid for those four to five hours of work. The USD $25 Federica made per week were crucial to her family's income. Federica would keep $8 to pay off her cell phone or buy herself a trinket at the market and hand the rest to her mom. On Sundays, Federica's day off, she and her mother would shop for groceries in the nearby city of Huejutla, which offers cheaper goods.

Federica's privileged treatment as a trophy maid by Doña Fabiola coincided with deeply degrading treatment and exploitation. As is the case with most domestic work, the hours and tasks are both irregular and unlimited since employers usually think they pay for an unlimited access to the maid's labor (Ríos Estavillo 2001, 22). Except for Tuesdays when she was expected to arrive at 8am from Teotlaco, Federica was up by 6am to start working. Federica's more mundane tasks included cooking and cleaning the six public toilets Doña Fabiola ran daily for profit. In my opinion, cooking was the tensest of Federica's tasks. It was common for Doña Fabiola to chide the maids for under-cooking the tortillas, a texture she thought only appealed to Indians. While she generally liked

Federica's cooking, she often chided her for not following her instructions or being wasteful.

Federica would work late into the evenings, even after returning from the social rounds with Doña Fabiola. Once Doña Fabiola would tell her she was done for the day, typically at around 7 or 8, Federica would retreat to our room and chat with me or go on her cell phone for about an hour before going to sleep. Once, Doña Fabiola called Federica at around 9 at night to go downstairs to prepare some beans for cooking the following day. Federica, who was nearly asleep, got up in a rage. She came back livid, protesting Doña Fabiola's blatant lack of respect for her time off.

Doña Fabiola would also make Federica perform back-breaking work. Once or twice a week, Federica would wash heaps of linens and clothes by hand-- a task that entailed careful attention and arduous scrubbing. Every so often, she would order Federica to pack the heavy and critter-infested foliage piled in the backyard into sacks and carry these to the curb to have ready for trash pickup the following morning. I would help Federica with this task and we would both rely on using a creaky wheel barrow to avoid straining our backs. In addition to her work for Doña Fabiola, Federica was expected to clean her house and help her mother wash clothes by the creek on her half rest day on Saturday and then Sunday.

During the time I met Federica, she was not enrolled in school. She explained she had started high school in Tepetzalan, but had then transferred to a private high school in Macuilcán, a large town about 90 kilometers away from

Tepetzalan in the highlands of Hidalgo, which is known as a bastion of light-skinned and light-eyed mestizos. Federica said she lived there with her godfather and his family, all of whom are mestizos, in exchange for cleaning their house and helping with the cooking. Federica explained she had been forced to return to her parents' home when her godmother became verbally abusive and heavy-handed with the housework. Federica would often talk proudly of her godfather or "*padrino*", whom she says was a respected educator and highly influential person in Macuilcán.

One day in Doña Fabiola's house, USD $25 went missing from the store. Doña Fabiola's eldest daughter who often spent time at the house accused Federica of stealing the money. Federica went into a panic, swearing she was innocent. In the evening, we sat in our room trying to make sense of who the culprit could be. Federica was in tears, saying she felt impotent and insulted. Doña Fabiola came in to our room to explain with tears in her eyes that she didn't believe her daughter's accusation and that she was ready to forget the matter. Her only condition was that Federica stay away from the store. Federica agreed even though the offer failed to vindicate her.

Once Doña Fabiola left the room, Federica began describing how powerless and wretched she felt working as a maid. She said it had been the same at her godparents' household in Macuilcán. To my surprise, Federica recounted that she had run away from their home to escape the habitual raping to which her godfather would submit her. Federica explained her ordeal and how her godfather came to have such a grip over her life. She explained how her

godfather, an old friend of her father, came into her life and was able to gain her trust and that of her family. It was in the context of her family's deprivation that she and her parents had come to accept his gradually ascending offers. Days after this outpouring of emotions, I was able to interview Federica. The following are my notes of her interview since Federica did not feel comfortable with me recording her:

> My father doesn't want to tell me how he came to know my godfather. My father introduced him to my mom. My father is very trusting. My godfather came here to my house and my father introduced him to me. That was the first time he saw me. He wanted to be my godfather for my middle-school graduation. It was three months from my graduation and the three of us decided that he would be. July of 2015 was my graduation. He went to my graduation with my godmother. He gave me a cellphone, chip card, he gave me a small bag from Chiapas for the cellphone. It was a craft bag. My godmother gave me a liquid body wash and that was it.
> About a month later, in September, we had already started classes in the CECYT.[61] I already had all my supplies. In September, my godfather offered that I go live with them, saying "You're already my goddaughter. You will come study as our daughter and we will educate you." My father was about to take me out of school. My mother told me so, "We were about to take you out of school. Your godfather must have guessed." He was a godsend. In September, I go there [to Macuilcán]. Heck, if they were going to take me out of school my dreams were going to end up in the trash. I would be a nobody. My godfather had been a middle school Spanish teacher and my godmother had been a teacher, too, of Spanish. I dreamed big. I thought, they will be my second parents.

Federica continued to recount her life in Macuilcán. Her godfather enrolled her in a private high school and splurged on her school supplies, including books, uniform, and shoes. When her godmother asked her to clean, tidy the house, and

[61] Local high school offering technical trades.

help in the kitchen after school, Federica thought it was a fair deal. Yet, the work load became heavier and heavier. Federica would regularly go to bed past midnight after finishing her chores and homework. While her godmother grew harsher with her, her godfather became more indulging. He started to buy frilly clothes and heels for her to wear on their family outings and gradually came to demand that she wear makeup and style her hair in a particular way. At the beginning, Federica thought he was simply spoiling her as a father would. When she increasingly felt “controlled” by him, she thought it was a small price to pay for the private schooling she was getting, a far cry from the public trade school she had left in Tepetzalan.

About two months into Federica's stay, her godfather began to openly woo her and sexually assault her. As she explains,

> He would pick me up from school. He would fake loving me as a goddaughter but when we were alone he would tell me he loved me, that we should go somewhere else where nobody knew us. He went to my room and slapped my face. I was asleep, and he wasn’t able to do anything because I was about to go to school. In November, the abuse starts. He hit me and threatened that if I accused him, he would accuse me of stealing from him, that he would place some of my godmother’s jewelry in my room, or claim that I had slept with a guy and that he had seen me drunk and drugged and that my parents would believe him. That’s why I stayed quiet.

Federica recounts that after he began raping her, her menstrual periods would last for several months. Her godfather even took her to see a doctor, but neither her godfather nor the doctor told her what was wrong with her. The doctor merely gave her an injection.

Federica eventually shared her sexual torment to a fellow housekeeper who would work at the house every now and then. This friend helped her plan her escape back to Tepetzalan. On a weekend in May of 2016 when her godparents left town, she mustered the courage to get on a five-hour bus despite her fears that her godfather would slander her for leaving. She arrived in Teotlaco by nightfall. Federica initially hid the conditions of her escape to her parents, merely blaming her decision to leave on her godmother's ill treatment. Her parents continued to have a cordial relationship with her godparents while her godfather continued to ask her to return via text messages.

However, Federica soon started to suffer from hemorrhaging. When her father took her to the health clinic in Tepetzalan, the health practitioners channeled her to the clinic psychologist, which is located within the same clinic. The clinic psychologist encouraged Federica to tell him if anybody had hurt her. Federica found him to be trustworthy and finally revealed everything to him. The psychologist encouraged her to report the rape. While the psychologist left it up to Federica to tell her father, the psychologist did tell him she had suffered a great harm and that if he was interested in following up with the authorities they should go to the *Centro de Atención a la Violencia Intrafamiliar* (Center for the Attention for Intra-family Violence) in Huejutla, about forty-five minutes away by car. On the way back to their town, Federica confessed her ordeal to her father. Incensed, her father decided to head over to the CAVI at that very moment.

Federica and her family endured the difficult process of reporting the rape, including the repeated visits to and the long stays at the CAVI. At the CAVI,

Federica endured the painful and triggering effects of recounting the rape, the medical exams, and the seemingly inane and tiresome psychological tests. She also had to keep up with the visits to the hospital in Huejutla to get tested for STDs and pregnancy. Thanks to Federica and her family's persistence, the CAVI in Huejutla managed to put together a file, which they sent to the prosecutor's office of Macuilcán.

Next, the prosecutor's office in Macuilcán summoned Federica and her father to be interviewed by a prosecutor. Federica says that the prosecutor in Macuilcán doubted her story and pointed to her psychological exams, claiming these hadn't shown any symptoms of psychological trauma. He also highlighted the fact that she hadn't cried while making her declaration at the CAVI. Furious, Federica responded that she had done her crying at home, and that she still felt impacted by the abuse. She was even more incensed when he asked her what she wanted from the case, hinting that Federica might have a monetary interest in making such allegations against her godfather. Federica responded, "Obviously, I want him to be put in jail and for him to rot in there". Most baffling is that the prosecutor offered Federica to stay in Macuilcán and serve as his housekeeper, which Federica understood as having sexual undertones. Before returning to Teotlaco, the office in Macuilcán retained Federica's cell phone to extract text messages sent to her by her godfather.

Once the case was in the hands of the Macuilcán prosecutor's office, Federica's family lost a degree of oversight. While they were given a direct number for the prosecutor in charge of their case, they could hardly keep up with

the legal intricacies of the case. To this day, staff call them with news. Around February of 2017, staff informed Federica's family that the police could not serve her godfather with an arrest order because he had moved. Federica and her parents believe someone within the prosecutor's office tipped off her godfather in exchange for a reward.

Federica feels defeated and is most concerned about the possibility that her godfather may be abusing other young girls he employs. Back in July 2016, Federica knew of at least one girl who was working for him who was from the municipality adjacent to Tepetzalan. She obtained the girl's cell phone number from her confident in Macuilcán, and both of us considered paying a visit to her house to warn her. We failed to reach her through her cell number and couldn't venture to look for her since we didn't know exactly in which town she lived.

After the news on her godfather's move, Federica has lost hope that her godfather will serve prison time. Nevertheless, the effects of her violation linger. She says she fears going out on the streets and especially cringes when men look at her. She says she feels like a "piece of paper that was crumbled and trampled on" and condemns her godparents for having "mocked her dreams".

3.3 The Bare Life of Rape and Social Reproductive Work

Patricia and Federica's life experiences illustrate how young indigenous women and girls of the Huasteca come to learn the associations between their indigeneity, poverty, subservience, and rape through social reproductive labor. Their experiences in prosecutor's offices where they are treated with suspicion,

contempt, and disbelief also reinforces their subordinated condition. On the other hand, their cases also suggest that social reproductive labor continues to be one of the few strategies available to young rural indigenous women to get ahead. In the following, I argue that biopolitical citizenship has made Indian women's sexual violation productive for the nation through the definition of rape as *mestizaje* and *mestizaje* as rape. Further, the impunity surrounding rape and the unregulated status of social reproductive labor points to a de facto state of exception in which rape and exploitation are forms of feminized and racialized bare life tolerated by the state.

As we mentioned in Chapter One, Agamben claims that in Roman times the sovereign ban or state of exception entailed the designation of the *homo sacer* as existing outside the state's protections and thereby "exposed" to being killed. Ewa P. Ziarek maintains that rape and slavery are other ways in which political life (*bios*) can be rendered bare (*zoē*) (2012). She claims that even when Agamben broached the question of ethnic rape camps in the former Yugoslavia as a form of bare life, he failed to explore rape as a "sexual political violence" markedly different from killing (Ibid, 198).

Ziarek herself does not stop to analyze rape any further. Instead, she proceeds to the question of slavery and how it may constitute an important form of bare life also omitted by Agamben. Following Orlando Patterson, who likened slavery to social death, Ziarek maintains that both slavery and the sovereign ban imply an extreme form of "deracination" whereby certain humans are deprived of their original symbolic, political, and cultural signification—that is they are

transformed from political life or *bios* to biological life or *zoē*. Yet, unlike Agamben's formulation in which bare life is defined by its exposure to biological death, the slave inhabits a liminal space between life and death (Ibid, 202).

Patterson called this a form of "liminal incorporation", which Ziarek describes as a "socially dead but biologically alive and economically exploited being" (Ibid, 200). Ziarek notes that slaves do not only generate profit, but also a sensuous pleasure for their masters. Patterson identified this element as "human parasitism" through which the slave master feeds on "the very direct satisfactions of power over another" (Ibid, 202, 203). For Ziarek, the institution of slavery suggests that the sovereign ban analyzed by Agamben in Roman times shifted to forms of "ownership and exchange" (Ibid, 201). Further still, with the end of slavery, sovereign violence further transmuted into other forms of "suffering and dispossession" to which the black subject has been exposed (Ibid, 201).

In the same vein, rape and social reproductive labor can be conceptualized as racially and gender specific forms of violence to which slave and Indian women have been subject through a state of exception. This state of exception is created through the ways in which Indian women's lives, bodies, and labor are devalued and exposed to exploitation, rape, and even femicide. Biopolitical discourses have historically identified Mexican women's national value as inhering in their reproductive capacities and Indian women, specifically, as vessels for Mexico's transformation into a *mestizo* nation. Colonial and mid-twentieth century *indigenista* discourses depicted *mestizaje* as forged through the raping of Indian women by white men. According to these discourses, Indian

women's rape is reducible to *mestizaje* and *mestizaje* is the equivalent of Indian women's rape.

Yet, can Indian women who are citizens also be bare life? Agamben maintains that the convergence between these two statuses is in fact a factor of modernity. He argues that the shift from sovereignty to biopower in modernity meant that bare life would no longer be excluded but conditionally included as both a subject of rights and a target of sovereign violence (2000, 32). While in Roman and medieval times, the distinction between *populus* and *plebs* on the one hand and artisans and merchants on the other were enforced through law, since the French Revolution, the transfer of sovereignty to "the people" has meant that the formally excluded are now included (Ibid, 32). The split evolves into other divisions, however. Agamben notes that the concept of "people" in Western politics, "…always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture. It is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part as well as what cannot belong to the whole in which it is always already included" (Ibid, 31).

Agamben claims that the thrust of modernity is to eliminate and purify the body politic of that which cannot be included through development, eugenics, ethnic cleansing, and most recently population control (Ibid, 33-34). Agamben concludes, however, that this is futile for "where there is a people, there shall be naked life" (Ibid, 33, 30). Yet, for Ziarek, elimination and purification are not the aim since profit can be extracted from them as well as a sensuous pleasure. For

Scott Morgensen, any harnessing of Native peoples' labor and land for the settler colonial project is tantamount to elimination.

Indian women's "liminal incorporation" into the Mexican nation has been premised on the glorification of their sexual victimization and social reproductive roles. Not only have Indian women been rendered economically profitable bare life, but they also been emblemized as the archetypal raped mothers of the Mexican nation. In this way, the raping of Indian women has functioned as an anatomo- and biopolitical technique used to discipline individual Indian women's bodies, control and subdue indigenous peoples at large, and engender a lighter mestizo nation. Indigenous women's rape is thus a form of sovereign violence that produces profit, eroticizes racial hierarchy, and serves to amalgamate and therefore eliminate indigenous peoples from the Mexican settler colonial project.

Similarly, for Andrea Smith, the widespread raping of Native women by white men is an act of defilement that is disconnected from reproduction and aimed at indigenous peoples' eradication. Smith maintains that Native American women are raped because their mere existence is a "reminder of the initially precarious grounding of the American nation-state itself" (2005, 9). In this way, settler colonialism transforms Native bodies into a "pollution of which the colonial body must constantly purify itself" (Ibid, 10). As "dirty", Native bodies are rendered "sexually violable and 'rapable' and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count" (Ibid). Smith interprets the raping of Native woman by Native men as the internalization of this loathing by Native peoples' themselves.

Angela Davis emphasizes the connection between economic power and rape (1983, 1985). She argues that the sexual violation of slave women's bodies was an extension of white slave owners' control over the bodies of slaves. She notes that after emancipation slave ownership was transformed into racist vigilante and capitalist violence. White men continued to rape black women through the Ku Klux Klan and through the employment of black women who found jobs primarily as washerwomen and maids up until the 1950s (1985, 8-9). Davis argues the situation only got worse for women after the 1970s when women became poorer and had to work more shifts. Davis estimates that a significant proportion of unreported rapes are committed by economically powerful men who "commit their sexual assaults with the same unchallenged authority that legitimizes their daily assaults on the labor and dignity of working people" (1983, 199-200). While laws now protect women from sexual violence, Davis argues that the judicial system largely ensures that white, economically privileged men are never prosecuted (Ibid). Meanwhile, the myth of the black rapist unjustly typecasts black men as prototypical rapists.

In Mexico, the project of whitening the nation inspired discourses of *mestizaje* as rape in which Indian women's bodies were depicted as vessels for the taking. In the colonial period in Latin America, it was a considered a civic duty for white men to impregnate Indian women (Athey & Cooper Alarcón 1993; Stephenson 1999; Nelson 1999). Not only would this whiten the population, but it would do so by ensuring the purity of Spanish blood through the limitation of Spanish women's sexual partnerships to white men. The absence of a discourse

on non-reproductive rape may point to the weight of reproductive sex in Catholic New Spain.

Mid-twentieth century *indigenismo* built its hope for a unified and homogenous mestizo nation on the violation of Indian women by Spanish men. Through textbooks, mid-twentieth century *indigenismo* popularized the myth of *La Malinche* as the mother of Mexico (Taylor 2009). La Malinche was an Indian woman who upon being gifted to Hernán Cortés by a defeated Indian chief served as Cortés' mistress and translator. Analisa Taylor argues that through this narrative *indigenismo* depicted the conquest as a gendered and eroticized process in which Spaniards were rendered masculine and Indians feminine (Ibid). Moreover, Taylor argues that the *mestizo* product of this union reflected *indigenismo*'s hope in the *mestizo* future of the Mexican nation.

This narrative is central to the writings of the influential mid-twentieth century writer, Octavio Paz. Paz claimed that when Mexicans popularly referred to themselves as "sons of *la Chingada*", with *la Chingada* meaning "raped mother", they were referring to La Malinche (1972, 77).[62] Here, Paz performs the same *indigenista* maneuver of feminizing Indians and masculinizing the Spanish. For Paz, the gendered and sexualized nature of the conquest had left its imprint in Mexican gender relations as well as on the national character. He argued that Mexicans misogynistically shunned their symbolic Indian mothers for allowing themselves to be seduced by the Spanish and ultimately losing their identity. At

[62] The complete saying is, "Viva México, hijos de la Chingada" (Long live Mexico, sons of the raped mother).

the same time, Mexicans had come to celebrate the “closed” and “aggressive” nature of their symbolic Spanish fathers. In the end, however, Paz argued that Mexicans ultimately rejected their Indian and Spanish heritages, which led them to a labyrinth of solitude. In this way, Paz’s formulation cemented the idea of the Indian as Mexico’s feminized and vanquished past, whose immemorial violation could only be transcended by the soul searching of mestizos.

For Paz, Indian women emblemized the general feminine condition. Paz writes, “The Chingada is even more passive. Her passivity is abject: it does not offer resistence to violence... This passivity open to the exterior leads her to lose her identity. She is the Chingada. She loses her name…she is Nothingness and yet, she is the atrocious incarnation of the feminine condicition” (Ibid, 77). Female anatomy made women naturally “open” and vulnerable to rape (Ibid, 34). Paz writes, “[a woman’s] inferiority is constitutional and resides in her sex, in her slit, wound that never heals” (Ibid, 27, my translation). As he writes, “In effect, any women, even one who gives herself willingly, is torn open, raped by the man” (Ibid, 72, my translation). The complex metaphor of the slit as a wound that never heals consolidates Paz’s understanding of women, and Indian women specifically, as by default powerless and unrapable. As powerless and unrapable, women’s consent is irrelevant and their sexual pleasure impossible. The raping of indigenous women is part of the human parasitism that produces pleasure for white men, but which may also result in the reproduction of whiter Mexicans who can improve the race and contribute to the nation’s supply of cheap labor. We

can say Indian women's "liminal incorporation" in the Mexican nation is as objects of "rape as *mestizaje*" and "*mestizaje* as rape".

One of the spaces through which white men gained access to Indian women's bodies was through their social reproductive labor. Feminists have long claimed that social reproductive labor is among the least protected and regulated precisely because it has typically been performed by women (Federici 1975). Feminists sustain that the productive/reproductive binary is sexed and gendered, an arbitrary distinction that excludes "feminine" social reproduction from the protections awarded to masculine "productive" labor. This binary has occluded the fact that social reproductive labor reproduces the labor power of those who are waged and is therefore intrinsic to capitalist production and the productivity of the nation (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010, 71-76). Yet, as unregulated labor, those who perform social reproductive labor have been left out of the social contract that guarantees workers the right to negotiate over their wages and labor conditions (Ibid).

Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez claims that feminist analyses have failed to account for the racialization of social reproductive labor. She sustains that the low prestige of social reproductive labor stems from the fact that it was originally carried out by feminized and racialized slaves and servants during colonization (2010, 43). This labor brought racialized slaves and servants into harm's way. Catherine Komisaruk's study of rape trials in colonial Guatemala City shows that working as domestic servants and wet nurses made poor women at risk of being raped (2008). She also claims that the social position of the rape

victim and the aggressor influenced the decision of victims and their families to report the rape, the court's willingness to bring the case to trial, and the jurists' final decisions (Ibid, 371).

A combination of laws and attitudes which discriminated against the poor and servant class contributed to a state of exception in which the "deflowering" of poor women did not merit punishment. For one, the *Siete Partidas* or medieval Spanish law code only recommended the punishment of men who had raped women of "good reputation" and who were not "vile" (Ibid, 387). Good reputation entailed virginity while vileness referred to low socioeconomic status. Likewise, while the code assigned the penalty of death for rapists who were slaves and servants, it stipulated lesser penalties for those who owned property (Ibid, 380).

The few examples Komisaruk found of domestic servants and wet nurses who brought cases of rape against elite men did not win their cases. The courts depicted these women and girls as unchaste and as having no honor to grieve. Komisaruk observes that wet nursing was an undesirable form of employment and that only Indians, blacks, and *mulatas* took these jobs. She concludes that it was the least protected in "daily life" who were also "less protected by the law" (Ibid, 387). Komisaruk notes that, "the legal system in effect undercut rape survivors' narratives" as evidence of chasteness and socioeconomic status spoke louder than their declarations (Ibid, 388).

As Komisaruk shows, the undesirable task of wet nursing was practiced only by Indians, blacks, and *mulatas* in colonial Guatemala. A historical account of colonial Yahualica, a municipality of what is now the Huasteca region of

Hidalgo, shows a similar pattern of gendered labor, although no mention of sexual violation is made. Ludka de Gortari Kraus illustrates how Spanish officials, clergy, and hacienda owners depended on a gendered division of forced Indian labor in which social reproductive labor was carried out by Indian women (1986, 134-145). *Cabildos* or municipal administrative units required each Indian settlement to send married men and women to work a week at a time, which earned them the name of *semaneros* from the Spanish word for week or *semana*. Sometimes couples were called on to serve. Married women served as grinders (*molenderas*), domestic servants, and tortilla makers in Spanish homes, often taking their children with them to work. Indian women also produced cotton fabric (*manta*) from their homes for tribute. Married men, on the other hand, were expected to chop wood, cut hay, build structures, clear land, farm, and tend to the horses of the Spanish. Men also served as human carriers (*tamemes*), mule drivers, and messengers (Ibid, 134-145).

In the Huasteca, similar patterns of forced Indian labor continued after independence although the historiography of this period does not trace its gendered characteristics. After independence, it was the *cabecera municipal* or municipal township, usually dominated by mestizo politicians, and the growing number of hacienda owners and ranchers who benefitted from Indian *semaneros*. Indian men and women were expected to provide forced labor for two days to a full week on a rotational basis. Compulsory labor for the municipal seat did not end until 1955 when municipal governments were provided with funds collected through state taxes for the first time (Falcón 1984, 51; Schryer

1990, 86-148). In my previous research, many of my Nahua interlocutors spoke about the exploitation of *semaneras* who worked in the haciendas of the mestizo ranchers up until the 1980s (Pacheco 2008, 122). Some remembered caciques or land owning political bosses who claimed "*derecho de pernada*"—the right to rape an Indian woman on the night of her wedding (Ibid).

Given its persistently unregulated and flexible conditions, Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez argues that social reproductive labor represents the "coloniality of labor" that is intrinsic to capitalism, undercutting its progressive narratives (2010, 42). In the twentieth century, social reproductive labor is characterized by "oral contracts, unregulated working hours, unsafe and vulnerable working conditions, and a high dependency on the employer" (Ibid, 44). Social reproductive work continues to be feminized despite that women have entered other forms of paid labor in vast numbers since the 1970s (Salazar Parreñas 2001; Hondagneu Sotelo 2001). Despite feminists' demands for the redistribution of reproductive labor since the 1970s, neither states or men in Europe and North American have been willing to absorb social reproductive labor in a large scale (Ibid). States have also been reluctant to strengthen protections for domestic work (Ibid). For Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, the privatization of social reproductive labor is a form of governmentality through which families are taught to be responsible for their family's own well-being, even though this might require hiring other women to help (2010, 71-76).

As more women have entered the paid labor force since the 1960s, reproductive labor has been "transferred" to tiers of disadvantaged women,

creating a “racial” (Glenn 1992) and “international division of reproductive labor” (Salazar Parreñas 2001). In Latin America, Sarah Radcliffe notes that the ongoing infantilization of Indians supports the idea that Indian women are naturally fit to be maids (1999, 85). Evelyn N. Glenn has outlined how a “racial division of reproductive labor” has persisted in the US since slavery (1992). Since white women have been privy to the economic benefits accrued by white men, they have been able to “transfer” social reproductive labor to women of color. As such, women of color and immigrants have subsidized the ability of white women to fulfill normative family models and to pursue more lucrative careers. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas has noted that female immigrants who are employed in social reproductive labor in Europe and North America often “transfer” their own households’ social reproductive labor to even more disadvantaged women in their countries of origin (2001, 72). These transfers of reproductive labor create multiple tiers of women striated by class, race, and national borders.

In Mexico, social reproductive labor is exempt from regulations that are accorded to other forms of labor. The Mexican Federal Labor Law of 1970 classifies domestic work as a “special” form of labor (Ríos Estavillo 2001). This designation formally recognizes domestic work as irregular and informal, offering it weak protections. For example, Article 334 of the Federal Labor Law stipulates that employers can count room and board as in-kind payments totaling 50% of the domestic worker’s wages. However, the law does not provide detailed specifications on the quality of such in-kind payments. Article 337 merely stipulates that the room or “*local*” offered to the worker must be “comfortable and

hygienic" and the food "healthy and satisfactory", and that, in general, working conditions must guarantee the worker's "life and health".

The 1970 Federal Labor Law does not require employers to enroll domestic workers in the *Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social* (Mexican Institute of Social Security-IMSS), at their own cost (Ríos Estavillo 2001). This makes workers ineligible for the IMSS's health and childcare benefits, which, due to Mexico's recent social welfare cuts, have been understaffed and underfunded (Cravey 2005, 116). To compensate for this exemption, the Law stipulates that in the case of the worker's sickness, employers must provide minimum compensation for the salaries lost by the worker and to cover treatment for a limited period. The law also exempts the employer from any responsibility in providing for the worker's childcare needs.

Mexican labor law has also been ineffective in improving the low-waged condition of domestic work. While the 1970 Law reversed the 1931 Federal Labor Law's exclusion of domestic work from minimum wage considerations, it has proven unsuccessful in setting a minimum wage for domestic work. The 1970 Law required the "National Commission for Minimum Wage" to set the minimum wage for domestic work, but the Commission has never done so (Ríos Estavillo 2001, 22). The 1970 Law also formally recognizes that domestic work is subject to a flexible working day that is responsive to the needs of the employer. Article 333 merely requires employers to give their workers "enough rest to eat and to sleep at night" (Ibid).

Miriam Lang blames the Mexican feminist movement for failing to prioritize reforms to domestic work legislation (2003). According to Lang, the few groups that have focused on women's labor issues are the Women in Labor Action and the Network of Unionized Women. Unfortunately, their proposed reforms for Mexico's Labor Law have not prospered (Ibid). As I showed in the last chapter, only early second-wave feminists challenged the feminization of social reproductive labor.

Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui also faults the Bolivian indigenous movement for not addressing the urban exploitation of Indian domestic workers. For Rivera Cusicanqui, Indian men have internalized European patriarchy and notions of rights which have presumed the subordination of women. By this logic, "shame and self-loathing are … transferred onto [Indian] women, who represent rural backwardness, a pre-mercantile economy, and the family's barbarity of the past" (2010, 49). In the same manner, Aymara communitarian feminist Julieta Paredes argues that even though the Aymara principle of *chachawarmi* posits that men and women are discrete yet complementary, women have been made typically subordinate to men (2008). Not only do they perform labor considered to be of lesser value, but they also get excluded from education and leadership positions. Paredes maintains that such inequalities reflect the fusing of precolonial and colonial forms of patriarchy in an "*entronque patriarcal*" or patriarchal conjuncture that dealt a severe blow to the lives of Indian women (Ibid, 6).

Marisol de la Cadena also found the Peruvian Quechua peasants of Chitapampa to be striated internally by gender hierarchies (1995). In the late

1980s, men and women clearly distinguished male and female labor and considered both equally necessary, but in practice valued male over female labor. These gendered assessments were applied equally to the kinds of work Chitapampinos adopted in response to peasant agriculture's declining value. While most men left to the cities to pursue more profitable urban work, women stayed behind to sustain their families and their agricultural plots in the countryside. Both men and women considered women's agriculture and reproductive work in the countryside less valuable. Even those women who did migrate to the cities to work as maids and merchants were considered to occupy positions of low prestige. In contrast, men's urban craft trades were highly esteemed for the negotiating skills they were thought to involve.

These gendered categories of peasant Indian labor had implications for Chitapampinos' ethnic mobility. Chitapampinos used the ethnic categories of "Indian", "mestizo", and "in process" relationally as part of a larger system of value through which they endowed prestige to males over females, urban over rural. The prized category of "mestizo" applied to those who had acquired social mobility and proficiency in urban work. The stigmatized category of "Indian", on the other hand, was used in reference to a person's who only performed rural work. Persons who were deemed to be in between these two categories were referred to as "in process". De la Cadena found that men primarily classified themselves as "mestizos" or "in process" while most women classified themselves as "Indian". She concluded that within these labor-dependent "ethnic" classifications, men's ethnicity was more elastic and included the possibility of

mestizaje. Women, on the other hand, were “the least ethnically or socially mobile, and their Indian identity approaches closure” (Ibid, 333). It is important to note how agriculture labor was transferred to women when it became devalued and that urban domestic labor served to further Indianize indigenous women.

Like their Andean and Mayan counterparts, the Nahuas and Teenek of the Huasteca region assign different, yet hierarchically valued labor to men and women. As I discuss in chapter four, women are held responsible for housework and childcare in addition to raising farm animals, helping with agricultural work, and selling the harvest at the market. The social reproductive labor of Nahua and Teenek women often implies a heavier workload and a relationship of servility to men. Women are often the last to sleep and the first to rise due to their heavy workloads. Women are typically the last to eat as they are tasked with making fresh tortillas for their families at every meal. It is not uncommon for women to eat alone after the rest of the family members have finished. Women also face physical violence and lack land rights due to the national agrarian system’s male bias, which I discuss in Chapters one and four.

3.4 Peasants No More: Migrating for Maid Work in Mexico’s North

Several scholars have sustained that Mexico’s opening of its borders to foreign direct investment and global trade in the 1980s and its concomitant reduction of social welfare is responsible for the explosion of gendered violence in Mexico. Melissa Wright has noted that to ensure cheap labor for capital in the 1990s, the state marketed the Mexican working woman as a laborer “whose

value can be extracted from her, whether it be in the form of her virtue, her organs, or her efficiency on the production floor" (2007, 199). In this way, the Mexican state's pact with global capital required producing what Jean Franco has called "disposable non-citizens" (Schmidt Camacho 2005, 258). Alicia Schmidt Camacho argues the state suspended its national sovereignty to guarantee transnational capital access to unprotected, cheap labor, much of it in the form of migrant women. This suspension of national sovereignty has given free rein to "new forms of social control that render racialized migrant women vulnerable to torture, sexual abuse, murder, and disappearance" (Ibid, 259).

Much like Ziarek, these scholars are pointing to a permutation of Agamben's sovereign ban under neoliberal times. Trade liberalization generalized the state of exception by abandoning a wide sector of the population to exploitation as well as to a form of citizenship stripped of its previous social security protections. For indigenous people of the Huasteca, it was the state's rolling back of the tariffs and subsidies the buoyed small-scale agriculture which hit them the hardest. Since then, Indian women have become more vulnerable to unwaged and waged social reproductive labor and, relatedly, rape. Indian women face this risk of violence in their youth as they lend financial support to their families or assume self-responsibility for their own upward social mobility by working. While we don't know as much about Patricia, Federica was about to be pulled out of high school by her parents due to financial hardship when they decided to let her go live with her godparents. Even after Federica's parents

knew about her rape, they still relied on her wages derived from maid work to supplement their income.

As in other parts of Latin America, the restructuring of agriculture in the mid to late twentieth century has drawn many rural women to work in cities as maids (Radcliffe 1999, 84). In the 1960s, indigenous women of the Huasteca were the first to migrate to cities in the region to work as maids and then as service workers (Esquivel et al 2012). At the time, rural populations faced a crisis of peasant subsistence agriculture caused by critical land shortages, depleted soils, and heightened monetarization (Ibid). Indian men were the next to migrate to the cities to work in construction, manufacturing, and commerce. In the 1980s, Huastecan migrants headed to Mexico City to work in the same low-wage and gendered jobs as they had in Huastecan cities. The 1990s brought similar opportunities for Huastecan migrants along Mexico's northern border, which was restructured under NAFTA.

Since the 1990s, Huastecan youth have been migrating *en masse* (Esquivel et al 2012). In many communities of the Huasteca, those between 17 and 30 are absent from their communities (Ibid). Completing middle school appears to be a rite of passage by which indigenous youth transition into low-wage laborers. The emphasis on middle school completion is likely associated with the fact that maquiladoras and other types of employers, including mestizo families looking for domestic workers, tend to require a certificate of middle school completion. This trend is reflected in national statistics which reveal that 40% of male and 35.6 % of female domestic workers had completed middle

school as their highest schooling (INEGI 2015b). In contrasts, agriculture work in Mexico's agribusiness zones in the north has no educational requirements and is therefore the most common option for the young and old who lack a middle school education.

Since the 1990s, the metropolitan area of Monterrey (MAM) in the state of Nuevo León has become a top destination for Huastecan migrants. Since Mexico's ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986, the Monterrey region has developed into a Latin American "tiger"[63]-- the "most dynamic and internationalized industrial region" in Mexico (Vellinga 2000). Monterrey entrepreneurs own almost half of Mexico's banking assets (Ibid). The region has been able to attract foreign direct investment to develop an export-oriented manufacturing and export-processing zone that takes advantage of Monterrey's proximity to the US border (Ibid). As other scholars have noted, export-oriented economies generate a demand for cheap, feminine labor, while the concentration of highly specialized professionals in globalized cities further intensifies the demand for low-wage service labor, much of it migrant (Frobel et. al. 1980; Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Sassen 1994). Likewise, Monterrey's specialized professional class increasingly depends on "unskilled" labor (Vellinga 2000, 304).

Nuevo León has a reputation as being free of Indians and substantially whiter than the rest of Mexico. The state's history stems back to its position as a

[63] 'It's happening in Monterrey', *The Economist*, 27 June 1992, pg. 53.

northern settlement at war with nomadic and seminomadic Indian populations of Northern Mexico, which were subdued by European descendants in the nineteenth century. While *mestizaje*, or the blending of the indigenous population with Spanish settlers, is a dominant national narrative, it has a tenuous hold in Nuevo León. Many attribute the weak influence of Indians in Nuevo León to the local Indian populations' sparseness and supposed civilizational inferiority relative to that of Indian groups of central and southern Mexico. Nuevoleoneses pride themselves on their fair skin, light colored eyes, and tallness compared to Mexicans of the center and south whom they consider to be darker and shorter.

Nuevo León is more developmentally comparable to the US than other regions in Mexico. In November 2016, the Observatorio Económico of Mexico ranked Nuevo León as fourth largest contributor to the nation's development.[64] According to the same source, Nuevo León "generated 65% more than the jobs necessary for young people who incorporate themselves into the economically active population and is the second state with the least informal employment (36%), well below the national [average] (52.7%)" (my translation). Such is Nuevo León's resemblance to the US that it is said that *polleros* or migrant smugglers routinely dupe migrants into thinking they have reached the US when in fact they have only made it to Monterrey, a three hour stretch from the US-Mexico border. Certainly, the H-E-Bs that dot Monterrey, which are straight out of Texas, and are by no means a cheap grocery option, indicate that *regios* have a

[64] Villafranco, Gerardo. "Los estados con mayor crecimiento económico en México." *Forbes México*, February 11, 2015.

purchasing capacity similar to that of Americans.[65] Not only do *regios* consume more like Americans, but they can also speak English to a degree unparalleled by any other city in Mexico. According to the 2015 edition of English First's global English Proficiency Index, Monterrey is the city with the highest English proficiency in Mexico, outperforming Mexico City and Tijuana. Young well-off *regios* sprinkle English words such as "cool" and "cute" over their Spanish to mark themselves as trendy.

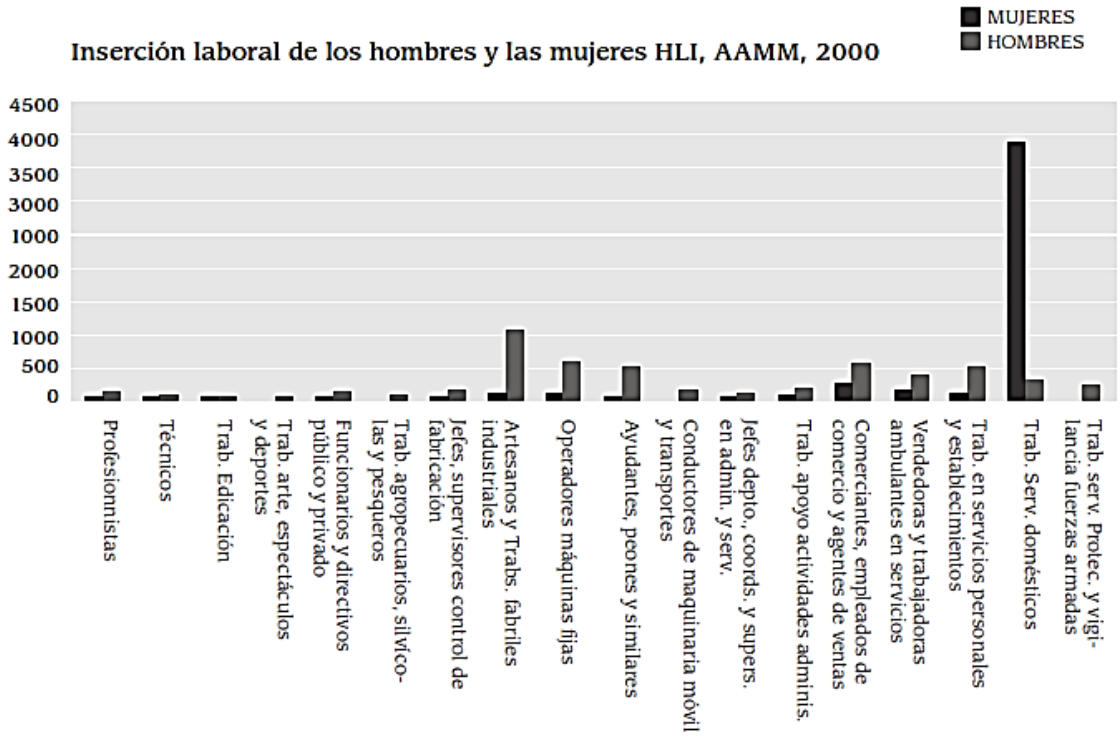
Nuevo León's historical self-understanding as devoid of Indians and its more recent affinity with the US have been the primary obstacles to the recognition of a growing indigenous population. Since the 2000s, indigenous activists have been striving to get the state of Nuevo León to recognize indigenous peoples. They have mobilized the official census and its evolving formulas for measuring indigeneity to abet their efforts. Measured by the ability to speak an indigenous language, the 1990 census registered less than 5000 indigenous people in Nuevo León. By the same criteria, that number jumped to a little over 40,000 in 2010. Yet, in 2015, a shift to self-ascription, revealed that over 350,000 residents of Nuevo León considered themselves indigenous in whole or "in part" (INEGI 2015a, 73). By 2016, both indigenous activists and government officials were extensively quoting this number in their discussions on the Indian question in Nuevo León.

[65] *Regios* refers to people of Monterrey.

That so many people identified as indigenous in Nuevo León compared to those who reported speaking an indigenous language is perplexing, especially given the rampant racism in the state. According to the National Discrimination Survey of 2016, the state of Nuevo León and its metropolitan area of Monterrey scored as the most discriminatory against indigenous peoples of all states and urban areas in the country, respectively. There are many indications that indigenous peoples are hypervisible in Nuevo León. *Regios* commonly perceive indigenous peoples as rural folk who come to Nuevo León driven by their destitution. They are associated with a darker skin color and lowly niche labor occupations.

Anthropologist Severine Durin has shown that indigenous women in the metropolitan area of Monterrey work disproportionately as maids (2009). While 4% of the economically active population which does not speak an indigenous language works in domestic services in the MAM, 42.2% of their counterparts who speak an indigenous language do so (Ibid, 34). Compared to indigenous men who work in a variety of sectors in the MAM, 79.4% of indigenous women are employed as domestic workers (Ibid, 36) (See Graph 2). While indigenous men are not concentrated in any occupation to the same degree, popularly they are associated with construction work and gardening. For Nahua and Teenek women in the MAM, the percentage is higher, with 88.5% and 83.2% working in domestic services, respectively (Ibid, 130). Indigenous domestic workers are also largely young: 58% are between 12 and 20 years old and 30% are between 21 and 30 years old (Ibid, 42).

Graph 2: Occupational insertion of indigenous language speakers by sex (women in black and men in grey), Metropolitan area of Monterrey, 2000 (Durin 2009, 37)



Fuente. Elaborado por Séverine Durin con datos de INEGI (2000)

The high demand for rural women in domestic work reflects the assumption that they are submissive. Since migrant women are thought to lack local family and friendship networks, *regio* employers assume they will be more willing to tolerate the isolation of live-in domestic work (*de quedada*). Newspaper ads specifically request "*muchachas de rancho*" (rural girls) where "rancho" is a code word for "Indian". The typical salary for a "*muchacha de quedada*" in Monterrey is MXN $1500-$1800/USD $90-$100 per week, working 10-12-hour shifts between five to six days a week. For newly arrived migrant Indian women

and girls, live-in domestic work is appealing since it does not require an initial investment in housing or living expenses. Durin found that indigenous women work as live-in domestic workers while they are single (2009). After they bear children, indigenous women either stop working or return to work by “transferring” their children’s care to other female family members in the Huasteca or the MAM, typically their own mothers, or other female kin. Those who return to work often do so “*de entrada por salida*”—that is they go home after their shift ends.

Huastecan women’s employment in the MAM opens opportunities for younger girls to move in with their migrant relatives or fictive kin who need help with childcare and housework. This is because many women in Mexico lack access to social security benefits, including childcare. The 2011 National Employment Survey, for example, revealed that only 36% of employed women had access to social security, including childcare facilities (INEGI 2011). The young female kin who absorb this work often do so without pay in exchange for room and board and an opportunity to enroll in school, land a job, or acquire a trade. These young women or girls represent the tier of unwaged social reproductive laborers.

This was the case for Patricia and Federica who both labored for family or fictive kin without pay. We know Patricia had migrated from San Luis Potosí to the MAM two weeks prior to her rape and that she was responsible for her nephews. The isolated conditions in which she lived in Zuazua without access to affordable public transportation and far from the metropolitan center reveal how difficult it is for young migrant women to fulfill their hopes of getting ahead.

Similarly, while Federica was initially promised a free private education in a larger town, her godparents eventually expected her to pay for this education through domestic work. For many poor and indigenous young women, paid or unpaid care and domestic labor is one of the few opportunities to get ahead.

The association between Indian women and maid work has permeated the public culture in the metropolitan area of Monterrey. One example is the popular cartoon titled, *Cindy la Regia*, or Cindy the *Regia*. The creation of long-time Monterrey resident, Ricardo Cucamonga, *Cindy la Regia* runs in the Sunday edition of the newspaper *El Milenio*, but residents of Nuevo León can also access this cartoon figure through Ricardo Cucamonga's Facebook and Twitter pages, each with over 400,000 followers. *Cindy la Regia* is a blonde and snobby twenty-three-year-old resident of San Pedro, one of the wealthiest municipalities in Latin America. While intended as a sardonic commentary on the superficiality, classism, and racism of Monterrey's elite class, many *regios* who interact with the cartoon via social networks take it at face value.

One of the characters that accompanies Cindy la Regia is Mary, her dark-skinned maid. While Mary figures mostly as a dark-skinned woman whom Cindy routinely puts down, in some comic strips she is marked as indigenous through the word "*jijitl*"—a word comprised of "*jiji*" for giggles and the Nahuatl suffix "*tl*". Since most indigenous migrants to Nuevo León are Nahuatl-speaking, "*jijitl*" is a clear reference to them. As an instance of mock Nahuatl, "*Jijitl*" shows the popularity of racism against indigenous peoples within Mexican meme culture today (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Cartoon reads, “Dude! I’m dead tired from going to the grocery! I brought back the whole store!”

The association with domestic work and indigenous migrants is also evident in the popular use of the word “*gata*” or “cat” as a metonym for migrants from the state of San Luis Potosí, regarded as the state with the highest proportion of migrants in Nuevo León. While literally meaning “cat”, “*gata*” is used to refer to domestic servants or house workers. The most academic online reference claims that such usage stems from the fact that long ago domestic servants were prohibited from accessing the shower by their employers except on the weekends. In contemporary Monterrey, migrants are referred to as “*gatas*” and “*gatos*” to signify not only their association with domestic work but also to their growing proliferation at the margins of *regio* society. For example, one of the notable spaces of congregation for indigenous migrants, the Alameda Mariano Escobedo, is derogatorily referred to as “*Ciudad Gótica*” or “Gotham City” in allusion to the fictional city’s association with “Catwoman” and her accompanying

feral alley cats.[66] In the Alameda, not only do Huastecan migrants spend their leisure time, but they also find work. Employers routinely park their cars with signs advertising their need for maids or gardeners (see Figure 3). Radio programs are an everyday reminder of such associations between the word "gata" and Huastecan migrants. Several radio programs with a call-in component routinely play a prerecording of a cat meowing whenever a caller admits to being from San Luis Potosí, the top Huastecan migrant sending state.

Photo by author

Figure 3: "Muchacha para casa" (Maid for house); "Trabajador urgente para quinta" (Gardener for *quinta* or country rest house). Recruiting maids and gardeners at La Alameda Mariano Escobedo, Monterrey, Nuevo León.

[66] See Adela Díaz Meléndez (2009) for a thorough exposé on the reclaiming of the Alameda park by indigenous migrants.

While indigenous people's bodies, habits, and languages are the object of the mestizo gaze, it is indigenous women's bodies which are most often represented. The virtual absence of visual representations of indigenous men may suggest that their "domestication" is incomplete or that their bodies are perceived as more threatening. One of the few exceptions is the popular notion of the desirable muscular indigenous male body, most often associated with the bodies of construction workers on display in the streets. While acknowledged as desirable, the indigenous male body is nonetheless imbued with a foreboding quality.

Mexico City writer Carlos Monsivais addressed this paradox in his text, *La Noche Popular* (1998). In this candid exposé on the gay culture of Mexico City of the 90s, Monsivais addressed the figure of "*el chacal*" or "jackal" (see Figure 4). He described the *chacal* as "the proletarian young man of indigenous appearance or newly mestizo… the chacal is proletarian sensuality, the body that originates from the gym of life, of hard labor" (Ibid, 60). For Mosivais, the desirability of *el chacal* had something to do with the "aristocratic obsession with the noble savage" and "the eroticism of *slumming*" (Ibid). Monsivais characterized the desire for *el chacal* as risky and foreboding, an experience reserved for only those who audaciously enter "the mixing of social classes at their own risk" (Ibid).

Figure 4: El Chacal: "…He is one the purest chacales that I have seen and run into…"

While for Monsivais the *chacal* is whole, in contemporary meme culture the indigenous male body is fragmented into desirable and undesirable parts. The splitting of the working-class male body is evident in the following tweet by *Cindy la Regia* posted in 2015: "A six pack is useless when you have the face of a street-sweeper" (see Figure 5). With more than 500 retweets, this tweet suggests that while hard labor can improve the working male body, no amount of beauty work can transform the racialized facial features associated with those who perform the lowliest occupations. Additionally, *Cindy la Regia*'s tweet also gets at the class immobility of working class males. In response, one follower tweeted a meme depicting the incongruity between a light-skinned built body and an Indian face which read, "The gym won't take away your face of a 'prehispanic relic'" (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: "A six pack is useless when you have the face of a street-sweeper"

Figure 6: "The gym won't take away your face of a 'prehispanic relic'"

3.5 Living the *Regio* Dream?

For some, social work serves as a platform for whitening and empowerment. Some of the young women I met in Monterrey who worked as domestic workers used part of their meager salaries to refashion themselves.

Natalia Guzman is one such example. She is the fourth eldest child of the Guzman family from Tepetzalan. Her brother, Jacinto, is the subject of chapter four. Natalia joined her two older male siblings in the MAM when she was eighteen. She immediately found work as a maid for a *regio* family. She eventually found a better offer with another *regio* family who was supportive of her plans to get a high school education. Natalia was able to put herself through private high school soon after she arrived. Now she is currently enrolled in a Computer Graphics program in a private university.

Natalia's migrant siblings often praise her for her ability to pass as a *regia*, albeit a dark-skinned one. Her siblings and extended family back in Hidalgo remark that Natalia no longer looks like a "*muchacha de rancho*" or rural girl. At twenty, Natalia wears goth make-up, edgy hair-cuts, and a punk dress style that is considered fringe in Monterrey. Natalia's friends consist of low-income *regios* whom she has met through school and domestic work. She typically spends her Sundays off with them in their inner-city neighborhoods. By choosing an outlying style, Natalia seems to de-Indianize while at the same time play herself up as resisting locally dominant feminine styles, which she associates with the *fresas* and the *cholas*.[67]

Even while she was paying for her own schooling, Natalia was able to team up with her sister to help their parents buy a parcel of land in Tepetzalan. For two years, they each sent their parents around USD$100 every month until

[67] "Fresas" refer to the upper-class women in Mexico who are considered elitist. "Cholas" refers to the dark-skinned mestizas who dress in baggy clothes and wear dark make-up and live in the inner-city barrios of Monterrey.

they paid off the plot. This earned Natalia and her sister much respect from their family in Hidalgo. Their parents chose to put the property title under Natalia's sister's name since she contributed the most. Natalia was glad she could help her parents and plans to buy them another plot of land under their own name. Unlike their sisters, Jacinto and his brother did not contribute to their parents' land purchase. According to Jacinto, who worked as a gardener at the time, his sisters had more money to spare because they worked as live-in maids. While he did so as well, his employers did not cover his food expenses since they only visited the home irregularly on weekends. Their oldest brother, Raymundo, works as a store attendant for a trendy bridal shop in Monterrey and is also married. Natalia and Jacinto say that Raymundo has never sent money home since moving to Monterrey. The family regards him as selfish and callous.

At times, domestic work also provides Indian women with valuable skills such as Spanish fluency and middle-class *regio* etiquette that facilitate their upward social mobility. Vanesa, a twenty-seven-year-old Teenek woman from San Luis Potosí, stands out for her polished manner and erudite vocabulary. Vanesa arrived in Monterrey at fifteen without knowing Spanish. She worked as a maid for ten years for a wealthy *regio* family whose home had seven floors. Vanesa's boss, the lady of the house, is a successful biological entrepreneur. Since the lady limited Vanesa's interactions with the rest of the family, most of her ten years laboring for their household were spent under her close supervision and tutelage. At her boss's encouragement, Vanesa paid her way through private high school and university. It was not until she began a master's program in

Communications that she quit her domestic work to teach undergraduates in the same university. Vanesa credits her boss, with whom she still maintains contact, for teaching her Spanish, polite manners, and encouraging her to get an education.

Nevertheless, many Indian women who work as domestic workers routinely undergo forms of abuse and denigration. Since domestic workers are typically employed by mestizos, these abuses carry a colonial weight. Domestic workers are routinely denied adequate room and board. Jacinto, who worked as a live-in gardener for a *regio* family in a rural municipality near Monterrey, was given a bathroom to sleep in and keep his belongings. One of his employers also rationed his tortilla intake, giving him exactly three tortillas at every meal.

3.6 Rancierean politics

For women such as Patricia and Federica, domestic work represents a modern/colonial space in which they are reduced to bare life, exposed to unregulated working conditions and at risk of being raped. For other women such as Natalia and Vanesa, domestic work approaches liberal tones characterized by the fulfillment of the democratic promise of social mobility. For these women, domestic work represents the rare and prickly openings within Mexican society that allow the racially destitute a measure of social mobility. Yet, are these spaces of bare life and rape devoid of agency?

In concluding, I contend that Mexico's gender progressive turn produces moments and spaces rife with the potential for Rancierean *politics*. There is a symmetry between what Agamben refers to as the "biopolitical fracture" in Western politics in which "the people" always already contains naked life and Jacques Rancière's concept of "the part without a part". For Rancière, the creation of political communities is based on a "false count, a double count, or a miscount" of "speaking bodies doomed to the anonymity of work and reproduction" who are nevertheless represented as "taking part in community affairs" and "transformed into the appearance of freedom" (1999, 7). In Rancière's terms, La Malinche, which represents feminized and racialized naked life, is considered part of Mexican society at the same time she is considered as having no part.

What is different in Rancière's framework is that unlike Agamben, he recognizes that the logic of integrating the part that has no part into the political community perpetually interacts with a parallel logic of separating this part from the community. Rancière calls the second mode of being-together the *police*. As he states, "There is the mode of being-together that puts bodies in their place and their role according to their "properties," according to their name or their lack of a name, the "logical" or "phonic" nature of the sounds that come out of their mouths" (Ibid, 27). The *police* order merges both (falsely) unifying and separating logics. The *police* is the: "set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of power, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution" (Ibid, 28).

For Rancière, the basic miscount of the part that has no part produces a vivid potentiality for *politics*. *Politics* is the process by which the disingenuous commensurability of the part that has no part within the political community is made apparent. For Rancière, political subjects are those who can make these dissonant logics visible by way of occupying places and roles that are disconnected in the police order. Political subjects have “an ability to produce these polemical scenes, these paradoxical scenes, that bring out the contradiction between two logics, by positing existences that are at the same time nonexistences-or nonexistences that are at the same time existences” (Ibid, 41).

3.7 Conclusion

Biopolitical citizenship carries out a police function by garnering consent, organizing power, and legitimately distributing places and roles. In Mexico, this has entailed rendering indigenous women’s bodies violable, disposable, and exploitable. As I showed in Chapter One, Mexican biopolitical citizenship has come to embrace gender equality and the elimination of violence against women as national necessities. As such, specialized agencies in sex crimes are spaces through which women, including indigenous women, are supposed to access the state’s revamped protections for women. Nevertheless, this inclusion is wrought by the police logic that tries to distinguish rightful claims from what Rancière describes as animal noises that are reducible to expressions of pain or pleasure.

Yet, in denouncing their rapes these two women engaged in Rancièrean politics. By reporting their crimes as poor indigenous women, these women demonstrated their subversion of their subaltern place within the social hierarchy and an attempt to “unstick” the “exclusive consensus” whereby women, but especially subaltern women, are expected to tolerate violence against their bodies (Rancière 1999, 60). Both Patricia and Federica enacted politics by presenting themselves as poor and racialized women in the position of rights-bearing subjects who merit state protection in the spaces provided by Mexico’s gender reforms.

Yet, by playing a part in the spaces of gender democracy and justice, these women also made themselves vulnerable to the police logic which permeates these spaces and was visible in the discounting of their claims. While Patricia was labeled as incommunicable and yet agentively promiscuous and deceptive, Federica was regarded as victimized, yet nonetheless still awaits the promise of justice offered by gender reforms. What Patricia, Federica, and all other rape survivors who speak out in these spaces shows is that there is a degree of sacrifice and risk implied in making politics that goes unrecognized by Rancière.

CHAPTER FOUR: Mobile Indigenous Youth and a Dynamic Countryside: Lessons in the Value of Rural Indigenous Masculinities

Peasant agriculture has become a risky career for young Nahuas. Fernando Díaz and Jacinto Guzman are two cousins who imagined living out their lives as peasant patriarchs in their rural communities of Hidalgo. As adolescents, however, they followed in their older siblings' footsteps by migrating to Mexico City and Nuevo León, respectively, to test out their luck in urban wage labor. Their decision to migrate despite both having access to land points to the neglected state of the Mexican countryside and its indigenous populations. Their experiences in Mexico City and rural Nuevo León demonstrate just how racializing incurring in urban space can be for indigenous migrants.

Since the 1980s, Mexico has transitioned to a liberalized economy by which it has opted to pursue a competitive edge in key sectors rather than national economic self-sufficiency. To this end, Mexico has rescinded its agrarian pact, once etched into its constitution and a symbol of Mexico's post-revolutionary nationalism and economic self-sufficiency. If peasant families were once a recognized component of Mexico's national development, after the 1980s they feature in national development schemes as migrants, both domestic and foreign, or as rural subjects in need of poverty alleviation schemes.

Amidst the state's divestment from small-scale agriculture, how do young indigenous peasants construct their livelihoods and futures? I argue that young indigenous peasants' increasing reliance on migration opens new models of

masculinity, one of which is to experience inter-racial or inter-ethnic relationships with mestizas. I distinguish race and ethnicity here because some of the mestizas that indigenous migrants date are working class and of rural indigenous backgrounds and are therefore not perceived by my informants as of a different race. I reserve the optic of race to distinguish the drastically different structural positions of middle-class girls in Nuevo León whom Jacinto refers to as *blanquitas* or white women. I argue that inter-racial or inter-ethnic relationships with mestizas are a racializing yet also whitening experience for young indigenous men, one that teaches them what their place is in the gendered, racial, sexual, and geographic hierarchy of Mexico. By looking at migrant love stories, it is evident that in the face of the racialization of indigenous peasants and the countryside, indigenous youth come to view the Mexican countryside as a dynamic place in which they can enact modern subjectivities. These subjectivities include elements of gender progress that are part and parcel of biopolitical citizenship.

4.1 A Desolate Countryside?

Fernando and Jacinto are maternal cousins 24 and 23 years old, respectively, who due to their closeness in age have long considered each other more like brothers. Both grew up in Ocotlán and Acopilco, adjoining Nahua towns which stand at the far end of a rocky road branching off the highway connecting the city of Huejutla to Tepetzalan in the Huasteca of Hidalgo.

I met Fernando in 2010, when he was eighteen and still firmly invested in wooing as many girls as possible. At the time, Fernando was working intermittently in Tampico and Mexico City in several entry-level service jobs. I first met Jacinto's family in 2010 when he had already migrated to the northern state of Nuevo León following in his older brother's footsteps. Jacinto was part of the oldest batch of siblings who had dispersed far south and north in search of work. These three siblings significantly elevated their family's status in Acopilco, even though migrants were a fraught category for this community, as I will explain shortly. In Jacinto's household, their names were a source of pride, fascination, and melancholy, especially in the eyes of their younger siblings who seemed expectant of similar fates.

It was the combined omnipresence of migrants as well as their material absence that first piqued my interest in studying migration. The Huasteca of Hidalgo was the site of a successful peasant land movement from the 1960s to 80s. By the time I arrived in 2007 to study the last remaining independent peasant organization of that movement, it was apparent that there was more land than people interested in farming it. Over the years, I got the sense that migrants were a living testimony that the future was elsewhere. For the leadership of the peasant organization I studied, migrants represented the epitome of false consciousness: they were traitors to an agrarian vision who had tragically succumbed to the false promises of urban wage labor.

Fernando's Facebook posts of his working life in Mexico City were not quite as tragic. In one instance, Fernando posted several photos of himself in full

chef uniform proudly making elaborate sushi carvings. Clearly gratified, Fernando tagged his hometown friends, relatives, and I in the post. This series of photos also included some of Fernando in undeniably Huastecan landscapes. In one photo, Fernando was happily mounted on a motorbike by Ocotlán's riverbank, wearing the tattered working clothes reserved for *milpa* work.[68] It was the emergent quality of Fernando's life, its seemingly suspended quality between Mexico City and Ocotlán, which led me to study the contemporary relevance of peasanthood for Nahua youth. How did youth choose between a peasant life and urban wage labor? How permanent was this decision anyways?

In late 2014, Fernando seemed to put an end to that effervescence. At the weekly market in Tepetzalan where his family sells their crops, Fernando introduced me to his fiancé, Talía, who accompanied him that day. He announced they were getting married in March and invited me to the wedding. When I asked if Mexico City was now in the past, Fernando nodded affirmatively. He informed me he intended to dedicate full time to his future wife and *milpa* in Hidalgo. Altogether Fernando's rural re-rooting and announced marriage to a local Nahua woman deeply unsettled me. Why had Fernando, whom everyone knew as a womanizer, decide to marry? Had working in Tampico and Mexico City had any impact on his romantic and livelihood aspirations?

[68] Family agricultural plots.

4.2 The Moral Career of the Peasant

Julie Chu has argued that peasanthood can function as a “moral career”, a kind of blue print that gives peasants a sense of shared destiny, but that is at the same time felt as a personal identity (2010). Chu draws from Erving Goffman who coined the term “moral career” to underscore the way professional and lay agents attributed a certain fate to the mental health patient, which the patient then internalized, and which contributed to the naturalization of social difference. For Chu, the Chinese household registration system set up in the late 1950s similarly generated “legalized claims to personhood”, which “entitled” different classes of residents to specific “moral careers” (Ibid, 62). Each moral career unfolded as a “possible sequence of changes and transitions over a life course” by which a person could imagine themselves as well as judge others. Originally a labor category, after the end of the rural commune system and the decollectivization of agricultural land in the early 1980s “peasant” became a cultural category that marked backwardness and territorial fixity within the Chinese hinterland (Ibid, 62, 68).

In Mexico, the peasant is a more informal category, but one that nevertheless derives legal backing from the post-revolutionary state’s corporatist regime. Due to the tenacious performance of the agrarian factions of the Revolution who fought for “land and liberty” under General Emiliano Zapata, peasants became a recognized sector through the post-revolutionary Constitution of 1917. Article 27 of the Constitution obliged the state to redistribute land to the landless in the form of *ejidos* and *comunidades*, two kinds of social

property recognized by the Constitution.[69] *Ejidos*, the most common form of social property, are corporate land tracts awarded to groups of *ejidatarios* or individual land holders in usufruct. Agrarian reform epitomized Mexico's post-revolutionary corporatist citizenship regime by which it favored collective units, namely workers and peasants, in meting out resources and representation (Yashar 2005).

Initially a dead letter, it was the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) which breathed life into the agrarian pact contained in Article 27. Cárdenas envisioned a stalwart *ejido* sector which would buttress the nation's industrialization (Appendini 2010, 67). To this end, Cárdenas re-distributed more land than any other president in the whole of Mexican history. He also set up price controls that protected key grains as well as agencies that provided subsidized credit and production inputs (Arias 1994). Politically, Cárdenas made the *ejido* sector directly subservient to the state Institutional Revolutionary Party by creating the National Confederation of Peasants (CNC) in 1938 (Nugent & Alonso 1994). Such was the impetus of Cárdenas' agrarian reform that during the country's steepest period of urbanization between 1940 and 1960, small-scale agricultural producers provided affordable food for the burgeoning urban population (Warman 1980; Hewitt de Alcántara 1978).

At its core, agrarian reform also made rural domesticity an integral part of the moral career of the peasant as well as of national development. Rural

[69] *Comunidades*, or communal lands, were issued to corporations of indigenous peoples who could muster land titles originally granted by the Spanish crown. This form of tenure is absent from the ethnographic cases discussed in this article.

development policy envisioned the *ejido* as a state-linked corporation of nuclear family farms that were to be managed by male providers and female "domestic helpmates" (Hamilton 2002, 121; Baitenmann 2007, 186; Olcott 2002). The 1920 *ejido* law made "heads of household" the subjects of *ejido* rights, thereafter known as *ejidatarios*. As heads of household, *ejidatarios* were entitled to a parcel of agricultural land calculated to meet the minimum needs of a nuclear family (Baitenmann 2007, 185). The architects of agrarian reform also envisioned *ejidos* as family patrimony that was to be passed on to the *ejidatario's* self-chosen heir. To this end, agrarian law classified *ejidos* as inalienable and non-garnishable, thereby hindering the possibility of *ejidatarios* from losing rights to their land or being tempted to sell them. While the language of the 1920 law was gender-ambiguous in its use of "*jefes de hogar*", the 1922 agrarian law explicitly discriminated against women. While the law stipulated that men over 18 years of age could access *ejidatario* status regardless of headship, it extended this right only to women who lacked a male provider—that is widows and single mothers (Baitenmann 2007, 186-187).

Agrarian reform reinforced older patriarchal institutions. As Mary K. Vaughan has argued, the post-revolutionary state did not seek to undermine rural patriarchy but rather to modernize it (2000). Agrarian reform bolstered patrilineal inheritance rights and patrilocal postmarital residence, two of the primary institutions David Robichaux identifies as essential traits of the "Mesoamerican family system" (1997). For indigenous societies of Mesoamerica, it is customary for newly married couples to move in with the husband's parents until the couple

builds their own house on a loaned plot nearby. From the perspective of the newly wedded wife, patrilocality makes them vulnerable to abuse at the hands of their in-laws (Pauli 2008; Sandstrom 2010).[70] Structurally, patrilocality also justifies women's discrimination from their families' investment in their education and welfare (Vaughan 2000, 201). Patrilocality has also justified patrilineal inheritance since women's land needs are expected to be met through their husbands.

During the heyday of "*campesino* protagonism", men's privileged access to agrarian rights translated into political influence at the local, regional, and national level (Richard 2009). *Ejidatario* status gave men the right to vote and take office in the *ejido* assembly. This was no small matter considering that the post-revolutionary order strengthened *ejidos* over municipalities, for example by prioritizing their demands for federal resources (Aboites 2003). *Campesinos* also had the prerogative to mobilize through local, regional, and national peasant and labor organizations, some of which enjoyed recognition by the state. These channels empowered peasant men as well as fostered a sense of gender solidarity (Vaughan 2000, 206).

The patriarchal principles of agrarian law and the Mesoamerican family system have endured for nearly a century. While in 1971, agrarian law awarded single women the right to *ejidataria* status, the law's non-retroactive character in combination with the paucity of land redistribution after 1970 watered-down the

[70] Pauli documents the avid desire among newly married Nahua women of Central Mexico for a house of their own to avoid this subservient stage of traditional marriages.

law's impact (Baitenmann 2007, 186). Most *ejidos* continued to award *ejidatario* status to heads of household presumed to be male (Deere & León 2001, 54). By the mid-1990s, women constituted only 15-30% of *ejidatarios*, roughly equivalent to the number of widows and single mothers (Stephen 1997; Deere & León 2001, 73). *Ejido* inheritance practices have also continued to privilege sons over spouses and daughters (Baitenman 1998).

While Mexico abandoned its corporatist regime, by which it recognized the peasant sector, in the 1980s, the moral career of the peasant continues to hold sway over contemporary peasant youths. Their imaginaries are colored by the state's affirmation of a gender-binary peasant life cycle that is perceived to culminate in the consolidation of the nuclear peasant family. Yet, as I will soon clarify, the nuclear peasant family is taking on a modern hue as it competes with alternate models of family life deeply imbricated with the imperative of migration.

4.3 Striving for Peasanthood

More often than not, the promise of agrarian rights in Mexico has been seized rather than conceded. This is the case of the indigenous Nahua, Teenek, Tepehua, and mestizo peasants which participated in a massive land movement in the Huasteca of Hidalgo. The concentration of land in the eight municipalities that constitute the Huasteca of Hidalgo was such that in 1952, 93.5% of land of agricultural use was held as private property with only 6.5% held either as *ejidos* or *comunidades*, otherwise referred to as social property in the Mexican Constitution (Martínez García 2013). In the 1970s, the Secretary of Agrarian

Reform reported that 756 private estates in the Huasteca of Hidalgo were settled within *ejido* land belonging to peasants (Vargas 2005, 110). Between 1960 and 1980, landless peasants of the Huasteca region of Hidalgo organized to seize land from both mestizo and indigenous land owners who had either usurped or amassed *ejido* land (Ávila 1986; Martínez García 2013). At its peak, 80,000 peasants took part in the land movement (Ibid). This formidable force elicited a counter insurgency campaign by the Mexican army and paramilitary groups, both of which committed human rights violations (Vargas 2005). By some estimates, up to 200 peasants were killed between 1974 and 1980 (Martínez García 2013, 32). In the end, President José López Portillo quelled the movement by legalizing 56,298 acres in *ejido* land that had been seized by peasants (Matías Alonso 1986, 108).

The land movement improved the living conditions of the peasants in Hidalgo as well as bred a sense of pride in land ownership and peasanthood. Fernando and Jacinto's communities see their trajectory as having overcome a life of subjection in which they toiled under the shadow of wealthy land owners to arrive at the more dignified status of peasants. In their collective memory, there is a clear advantage to having sufficient land. The adults that experienced landlessness remind each other and all those interested in the region's land movement of their insufferable experience of landlessness, the famines that forced them to make tortillas out of banana tree roots rather than the traditional maize and to even bury some of their children.

While the newer generations of Huastecan peasants have been spared famines, to be a peasant in the contemporary moment is to resist the orchestration of the obsolescence of the sector (Richard 2008). Since the 1980s, the Mexican state has opted to dismantle key tenets of its agrarian pact, citing the sector's backwardness. In the upheaval of the Mexican Debt Crisis of the 1980s, the new generation of Mexican technocrats which took control of the Mexican economy declared the sector expendable in line with a new global regime premised on a limited role for the state, fiscal conservatism, and free markets (Harvey 2005). Mexico implemented structural adjustment policies following the stipulations of the IMF and World Bank, drastically reducing agricultural subsidies and tariffs in exchange for debt relief. In 1986, Mexico signed unto the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and thereby pledged to trade liberalization and comparative advantage over a protected economy.

In 1992, the Salinas administration directly targeted the *ejido* sector by modifying Article 27 to rescind the state's obligation to redistribute land. The Salinas administration also modified Article 27 to enable *ejidos* and later *comunidades* to be sold, rented, or mortgaged amongst members of the *ejido* (Appendini 2010, 78). *Ejido* assemblies could also vote by a two-thirds majority to transform parcels into full private property (*dominio pleno*), which could then be sold to individuals outside the *ejido* (Ibid). The reforms also eliminated cultivation as a requirement for retaining *ejido* rights, thereby uncoupling *ejido* land from agricultural production. Critics also signal that in comparison to agrarian legislation in Latin America of the 1990s geared towards catalyzing land markets,

the 1992 Mexican reforms were the only legislation that did not favor gender equity (Deere and Leon 2001).[71]

Mexico's passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 further jeopardized the sustainability of small-scale agriculture. Through NAFTA, Mexico agreed to cede its role as agricultural producer of several essential commodities, including maize, to the US, citing the latter's comparative advantage (González Ríos 2012, 102). By 2006, Mexico was the largest importer of maize, a virtual dumping ground for the US' highly subsidized grain (De la Tejera et al. 2007, 3). Over the course of two decades, Mexico phased out the remaining subsidies, tariffs, price guarantees, and rural credit that had buttressed small and medium scale agriculture since the 1930s.

Within Mexico's economic restructuring, the *ejido* sector has lost the weight, both symbolic and political, it once held. Grammont and Mackinlay argue that Mexico is pursuing a policy of "demographic emptying" (*vaciamiento demográfico*) by which it seeks to redirect the rural sector to activities that are more critical for the country's GDP (2006). In this tenor, critics signal that the 1992 agrarian counter reforms were geared towards transferring *ejido* land to more efficient producers who would be able to consolidate and make more effective use of the land (Hamilton 2002, 121). Others signal that the agrarian counter-reforms were integral to Mexico's larger investment in making individuals

[71] These scholars point to the counterreforms' failure to institute joint titling of both heads of households and to prioritize single female-headed households.

responsible for their own welfare rather than relying on the state (Richard 2009, 400).

4.4 The Revolving Door between City and Countryside

Cast off from their recognized role within national development and corporate political representation, peasants have been left to fend for themselves. They face the increased risks of farming in the context of climate change, with its volatile cycle of droughts and floods, in addition to costly inputs, reduced land plots, and waning soil fertility (Richard 2009; Appendini 2010; Aquino 2012; González Ríos 2012). More than ever, peasants are having to rely on additional economic activities to survive, among these migratory wage-labor and informal commerce (Grammont 1995; Hamilton 2002; D'Aubeterre Buznego 2011).

Compounding the difficulties for the rural sector is the feminization of wage-labor since the 1970s. Urban wage-labor markets in Mexico have become deregulated, flexible, and servile, resembling the types of occupations historically reserved for women (D'Aubeterre Buznego 2011). Vis-à-vis the greater precarity of wage-labor, rural-urban migration has become less permanent or unidirectional. Rural migrants, for example, are depending on a dual relationship with the city and countryside: migrants who cannot support themselves

continuously in cities must often return to farm their plots in the countryside (Castellanos 2010; Valle Esquivel et al 2011).[72]

The growing insecurity of urban wage labor explains the widespread refusal of *ejidatarios* to sell their *ejidos* in the face of the 1992 reforms.[73] While 90% of *ejidos* and *comunidades* engaged the 1992 reforms to measure, internally reallocate, and title their land, only 7% of the land processed through the reforms was transformed into private property (*dominio pleno*) by 2007 (Appendini 2010, 79, 83).[74] *Ejidatarios* appear to continue to value cultivating and conserving *ejido* land as economic security (Hamilton 2002; Appendini 2010, 86).

4.5 Fernando: At the Crossroads of Urban Conjugal Intimacy and the Peasant Family

What does this economic transformation mean for indigenous youth? Fernando had expected he would inherit land in the legally established *ejido* of Ocotlán. He planned to become an adult in the eyes of his Nahua community, by marrying and transitioning into family life in the *ejido*. As the youngest son, Fernando was poised to inherit his father's *milpa* and house as a reward for taking care of his parents in old age. In this part of the Huasteca, Nahuas practice ultimogeniture, or inheritance by the youngest son, a common form of

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[72] This pattern of migration contrasts with earlier waves of migration, namely the period 1940-1960, when rural migrants found secure jobs and benefits in the industrial sectors of Mexico's largest cities.
[73] Kristen Appendini also notes that the Mexican economy did not grow enough to foment the partnerships between the private and *ejido* sectors which had been anticipated by architects of the reforms (2010).
[74] The exceptions are Estado de Mexico, Sonora, Chiapas, and Oaxaca, where the greatest privatization of *ejidos* has occurred. These states have expanded their commercial agriculture, tourism development, and industry (Appendini 2010, 85-86).

inheritance among Mesoamerican indigenous groups (Rodríguez López & Valderrama Ruoy 2005). The realities of peasant life, however, persuaded Fernando to try out his luck in urban wage labor where he hoped to find a steady source of income.

In this region, finishing middle school has become a gateway to urban migration. Whereas starting a family had long been seen as a clear marker of the transition from childhood to adulthood, now teens are delaying marriage and thereby expanding the intermediate stage of youth. Migration and urban wage-labor is underwriting this new stage for indigenous youth. Many young Nahuas visualize migratory wage-labor as a temporary and exceptional period in their lives. For young men, it is also a venue to prove their masculinity. Fernando, for example, approached migration as an adventure in which he could prove savvier than his older brothers, Jonatán and Anselmo. Each had spent varying amounts of time working in Pachuca and Mexico City as construction worker and independent gardener. While both had settled back in Ocotlán and were fully dedicated to *milpa* agriculture, Fernando's second oldest brother, Anselmo, was considered the most urban savvy for he had returned with a pick-up truck. Yet, the moral career Fernando's oldest brother, Jonatán, had chosen showed that agrarian pathways still could still afford a man respect. This brother was held in high regard. He was a successful farmer, Ocotlán's sacristan, a knowledgeable

builder, and a self-taught *huapango* musician.[75] As the youngest son, Fernando, had some big shoes to fill.

In approaching his migration career in Tampico and Mexico City, Fernando relied on local expectations of gender roles, which dismissed city women or *xinolame* as bad women. *Xinola*, a Nahuatl loan word from the Spanish "*señora"*, is used by Huastecan Nahuas to refer to the mestiza or urbanized indigenous woman, the foil of the hardworking *campesina* or peasant woman. For the Nahuas of the Huasteca, men and women perform different yet interlocking sets of labor closely related to peasant agriculture such that marriage is often considered a pathway for adulthood and survival. Scholars have referred to it as binary gender complementarity and claim it is practiced by the Nahuas of central Mexico (Wolf 1959; González Montes 1987). In Nahua cosmology, female and male complementarity was considered essential for the regeneration of the cosmos (León Portilla 1963). Such was the importance of gender complementarity for cosmic renewal that marriage, the setting up of a household, and habitual conjugal sexual activity was considered the only pathway to full adulthood.

For the Nahuas, a *campesino* is not complete without a *campesina* by his side. *Campesinas* cook and make fresh tortillas, and deliver meals to their husbands in the oft distant *milpas* and to their children at school. *Campesinas* care for their children, forage for wood, wash clothes by hand, and also help in

[75] *Huapango* is a musical genre native to the Huasteca region that is experiencing a recent revival.

the labors of the *milpa*. In the absence of piped water, *campesinas* haul buckets of water from the well or river through varying distances and slopes. Their labor is enormously time consuming and difficult. One United Nations report, for example, calculated that rural women in Mexico work an average of 89 hours per week, 31 more hours than their male counterparts (Gutiérrez 2012).

Expecting to return to *milpa* farming, Fernando thought it incongruent to marry a *xinola* who would likely refuse to perform this labor. He perceived city women or *chicas*, as he calls them, as spoiled and averse to domestic labors. As Fernando noted, "…Over there, there are many girls (*chicas*)…from Mexico (Mexico City) who don't even come close to the stove. The ones I met don't... And it's like you have to hand them whatever it is they want. And they all tell you, no, well, that is why I started working, because whatever I want, I want it here. I don't want to make it." This predisposition against urban women, however, belied the racial and ethnic insecurities that haunted Fernando as a *campesino*.

> Raquel: When you would go to the cities, I don't know if you tried to have girlfriends from there, with persons who were from there? Did you try?
> Fernando: Actually, yes. What happened is that I always wanted to try it, but never did.
> Raquel: You didn't even try?
> Fernando: Well, in the first years that I went, ehh, I always wanted to try, but I didn't.
> Raquel: Why not?
> Fernando: The fear of rejection for being a peasant. That's what it was. I felt less than…there is a lot of difference between when you know how to speak and when you don't…and are handsome or not handsome…

Fernando cited a popular maxim translated here as "money trumps good looks and gallantry" (*dinero mata carita y política*)—and explained it in the following

way, "… Even if you are good looking…if an ugly guy shows up who knows how to smooth talk, he will win over the girl. Now, set that aside. If a guy with lots of bills shows up…any woman will follow him [laughs]. They [women] don't notice the interior. When it comes to us peasants, they [women] always have to notice what we have inside."

Fernando soon came to recognize mestizo beauty standards, class status, and Spanish competency as valuable external traits that trumped what he saw as the hidden and subaltern assets of the *campesino*. Fernando realizes that he is disadvantaged in the city for he claims he was as a victim of "discrimination" and "bullying". The following dialogue clarifies the racializing experience of peasant indigenous youth in Mexico City:

> Raquel: What perception do folks from Mexico City have of *pueblos*?
> Fernando: Ah. Well, that over there [pueblos] they are very indigenous. That's what they think…It's like me, if I go to Huejutla or Mexico, I don't speak Spanish and they will be calling me a bunch of things. That's what nobody likes, that they bully a person going from here to there…if you, being from a pueblo, go to Mexico, they bully you. Only because you are wearing some boots or a plaid shirt or wear your shirt tucked in and a sombrero, they call you fucking peasant.

Here, Fernando points to the way urbanites bullied him for being shy, unable to speak Spanish, and dressing as a cowboy, all of which he says are associated with what urbanites identify as a rural person (*de pueblito*).

Fernando's upbringing in the Huasteca had already taught him his place vis-à-vis the mestizos who occupy dominant positions. In the Huasteca, dispersed Indian communities are ranked according to their distance from

mestizo towns. The farther an Indian community is from mestizo centers, the poorer, more Indian, and uncouth it is perceived to be. Fernando and Jacinto's families experience this racialization vis-à-vis mestizos when they travel to Tepetzalan, the nearest mestizo center, to sell their produce every week at the Friday market. Having resided in Tepetzalan with a prominent mestizo family for nearly the entire extent of my fieldwork, I became familiar with mestizos' racist distinctions. I heard many mestizos, including teachers and merchants, refer to Fernando and Jacinto's communities as so remote they were "autochthonous", a term used to imply Indian cultural purity and alterity.

More recently, middle schools and technical high schools concentrated in the municipal seats and largest Indian communities are providing opportunities for racial mixing among youth. Few families, however, can afford to extend their children's education beyond middle school. At the high school and university levels, fewer mestizo children attend schooling in the Huasteca, as it is common for their parents to send them to study in larger cities. More recently, Huejutla, the largest city in the Huasteca Hidalguense, has become a regional hub for post-secondary education that is attracting a sizeable population of Indian youth. Nevertheless, Indians continue to be underrepresented in universities nationally. In 2005, for example only 4.3% of indigenous peoples had successfully completed one year of higher education (PNUD 2010, 54).

In this climate of racial segregation and hierarchy, interracial intimacy continues to be patterned according to colonial tropes and structures. In the Huasteca, Indian women's bodies are assumed to be accessible to *mestizos*, but

mestizas rarely date or marry Indian men. Examples of mestizos cohabiting with Indian women, taking them up as mistresses, or paying them for sex are common. Mestizos are also infamous for sexually harassing and violating Indian women and girls who work for them as domestic workers in the municipal seats. Indian men, in contrast, seldom perform work within mestizo households.

These patterns are colonial in nature. In the colonial period, the Iberian concern for 'purity of blood' was redeployed in the colonies to prohibit miscegenation among Indians, African slaves, and Spaniards (Johnson & Lipsett-Rivera 1998). Yet, the ideal of *blanqueamiento* or whitening of the colonized population was used to justify white men's access to Indian and slave women's bodies (Nelson 1999). In contrast, white women were expected to be chaste by committing to monogamous marriage with Spanish men (Ibid). While initially the number of mixed individuals was small enough to be assimilated into either the Spanish or Indian republics, as they were called, beginning in the seventeenth century the size of the mixed population gained ground (Swarthout 2004). The crown regulated the mestizo population by awarding power, status, and rights based on an individual's skin color (Ibid).

In contrast, the postrevolutionary state celebrated the *mestizo* as the basis of Mexico's distinctive identity (Knight 1994). The postrevolutionary state portrayed miscegenation as the sexual conquest of Spanish men over Indian women, a national challenge out of which the mestizo was to emerge stronger as a fusion of both "races" (Vasconcelos 1925, Taylor 2009). The notable absence of Indian men from the postrevolutionary state's *mestizaje* narrative reflects their

historic feminization and de-sexualization vis-à-vis Spanish men and mestizos (Canessa 2012).

While Fernando's sense of sexual worthlessness as a *campesino* was entrenched in his own experience in the Huasteca and Mexico City, the city presented the possibility of whitening or passing as mestizo as well as become more masculine. Unlike in the Huasteca, in Mexico City, Fernando could more easily slough off the ethnic traits of rural persons and pass of as an urban mestizo. In the Huasteca, anyone could easily enquire about his background and quickly come to find out who his parents are and what Indian town he was from. In Mexico City, Fernando also entered work spaces that were more racially and ethnically mixed than in the Huasteca. Within two years of his first migration trip, Fernando says he improved his Spanish and became 'sharp' (*despierto,* literally awake) enough to be able to talk to anyone at their level. For Fernando, these improvements were empowering for as he says in his non-native Spanish, "he who is silent, things are done to him". In a way, given that mestizos consider coyness emblematic of Indians, and more specifically Indian women, dominating Spanish and appropriating communicativeness both masculinized and whitened Fernando.[76]

These new skills enabled Fernando to begin dating city women. About three years into his migratory experience, Fernando began to date Cecilia, an urban mestiza five years his senior. They both worked at a restaurant in Mexico

[76] Canessa (2009) also makes a similar argument of Andean men from Bolivia who are masculinized by enrolling in the military and thus learning Spanish.

City's Roma neighborhood that caters to middle-class residents. When I asked what he liked about Cecilia, Fernando replied, "the way she carried herself, talked, it moved me…She was a simple girl, normal, dark-skinned (morenita). She wasn't tall. She was small (chiquita)". He added that Cecilia's parents were from a *pueblito* or small town, yet she had been born in Mexico City.

Fernando's descriptions of Cecilia mark her as somewhat of an equal or at the very least non-threatening. From the perspective of Nahua men who are often described as short and dark-skinned, a tall and light-skinned woman might be tantalizing but also threatening. Yet, Fernando found other aspects of Cecilia worrisome. He added, "The difference is that I didn't like her. She was too incorporated with people…hmmm men more than anything". Cecilia's cross-gender sociability seemed to play into the stereotype of the *xinola*.

As Fernando was habituating himself to the pleasures and tensions of dating a city woman, his parents back in Hidalgo reminded him of his family rights and obligations. As Don Erasmo, Fernando's father, shared with me in Hidalgo, he and his wife, Doña Olivia, worried constantly about Fernando since they would periodically hear stories of Huastecan migrants falling victim to crimes in Mexico City. Don Erasmo considered Fernando's migration to Mexico City pointless for he complained Fernando would not even send money home. For Fernando, it was his mother's diabetic condition that most seemed to warrant his return. He vividly remembers his mother agonizing over the phone, pleading him to return. As the youngest son, Fernando was expected to care for his parents, but also to enlist his future wife in the caring. Fernando's parents especially

looked forward to having a new daughter-in-law move in since Fernando's older brothers had set up their own households and their wives were no longer obligated to help them as much.

Besides considering his obligations to his parents, Fernando also contemplated other advantages to his peasant life. As the youngest son within Nahua ultimogeniture, Fernando was to inherit his father's fertile *milpa*. His parents were also to bequeath Fernando four additional plots of land and the parts of the extended household which belonged to them. Fernando found added security in that these residential properties in Ocotlán were individually titled. While Ocotlán's *ejidatarios* did not decide to have their agricultural land parceled individually through the 1992 reforms, they did have their residential plots titled.

The dilemma presented by Fernando's relationship with Cecilia obliged Fernando to re-evaluate his decision to return. Fernando tried to resolve this by having his cake and eating it too, proposing that Cecilia marry him and move with him to Ocotlán. He tried to convince her that life in Ocotlán was better for them. While Cecilia entertained the idea, in the end she refused. According to Fernando, these were Cecilia's final words:

> She came to mention the cell phone, that there was no signal. That there isn't this or the other thing. That blah-blah... It's that I cannot live without my cell phone. I tell her, it's that once you're over there you're going to do this and the other thing, go to the *milpa*. Me go to the *milpa*?! I tell her, yes, you are going to incorporate yourself. It's cool. No? You're going to like it. I tell her, it's nothing special. No, she says, simply no.
> She tells me, it's that I thought that we were going to work here, save some money, build a house or rent somewhere and, I don't know, buy something, no? For ourselves. I tell her, yes, it would be

> great, but since I am the youngest in my family I have to keep the whole house that is there plus its surroundings. No?

While Fernando attempted to convince Cecilia of the unexceptional and good (*chido*) quality of rural life in Ocotlán and *campesina* work, Cecilia responded with contempt. According to Fernando's account, it appears Cecilia viewed rural-Indian life as a negative image of the city.[77] This view of Indian pueblos as wastelands was in fact shared by other urban acquaintances of Fernando who expressed disinterest in visiting Ocotlán when he invited them, saying they had no business going to a muddy place without a cell phone signal. What's more, narratives of mestizaje prescribe miscegenation in the direction of cultural whitening and urbanization. By this logic, to assimilate to rural Indian life is to sentence one's self and progeny to those segments of the population which the state marks off to 'let die' (Povinelli 2011).

In addition, Cecilia revealed that her expectations pivoted on a life based on conjugal privacy in Mexico City, ideals which clashed with Fernando's desire to form a family in Ocotlán. According to Fernando, Cecilia explained that she had always envisioned building a life together in Mexico City, one in which they would work for themselves. According to Elizabeth Povinelli (2006), liberal discourses of love emphasize the conjugal pair's centrality to self-understanding over and above a thicker emplacement within kinship networks. This form of love was thought to construct the ideal deracinated subject by allowing two people

[77] This echoes Judith Friedlander's conclusions in the 1970s that 'Indian-ness is more a measure of what the villagers are not or do not have vis-a-vis the hispanic elite than it is of what they are or have' (1975: 71).

who love one another irrespective of the other's race and status to reach a feeling of a 'purer, truer form of self' (Ibid, 190).

For Povinelli and Jürgen Habermas, this form of intimate recognition 'glues' or 'locks the intimate couple into 'still higher orders of abstract collectivity such as the democratic state' and thus turns 'socially thick people into purely human subjects' (Ibid, 189). All in all, liberal love was one way individuals could overcome their 'placement before birth in a genealogical, or any other socially defined, grid' (Ibid, 185). It was also part of the larger construction of the liberal democratic state. Liberal humanism ties liberal love to political economy by positing that, "what makes us most human is our capacity to base our most intimate relations, our most robust governmental institutions, and our economic relations on mutual and free recognition of the worth and value of another person, rather than basing these connections on, for example, social status or the bare facts of the body'" (Ibid, 5).

Mexico's modernization was to be driven partly through liberal discourses of love or the idea of love as race and class-blind (2006). The tragic 1960s classic movie *Tizoc* is one instantiation of this ideal. In this movie set in the state of Oaxaca, love develops between a disaffected urban mestiza, María, and an Indian man by the name of Tizoc. Their budding love ends tragically when belligerent Indians who have a longstanding feud with Tizoc kill her. In other movies likewise sponsored by the postrevolutionary state, Indians opposed to interracial love were depicted as belligerent and hermetic. They were viewed as

obstacles par-excellence to a modernizing nation waiting to prove itself in the world (de la Peña Martínez 2014).

Thus, by foregrounding a life that revolves principally around them as an independent couple, Cecilia is aligning with the ideal of the conjugal pair as a (modern and urban) deracinated unit. While in any family structure, conjugal intimacy is negotiated in relation to competing demands, Cecilia's vision could hardly be embracing of Fernando's patrilocal extended family in Ocotlán. Fernando's two older brothers first moved in with their wives into their parents' household and gradually built separate household units a few yards away from that of their parents. All three nuclear families form a non-residential extended patrilineal family characterized by strong bonds of solidarity (Sandstrom 2010, 235-246).

In these extended Nahua household units, members pool their labor and financial resources together as well as manage affairs jointly (Ibid). The bond between brothers is one of the strongest bonds in these households. Brothers help one another with their *milpas*, a form of cooperation they learn early on as they are instructed on *milpa* agriculture by their fathers and uncles as early as eight years old (Ibid, 239, 250). It is also common for brothers to form an alliance to protect their families or advance their interests in the community (Ibid, 239). On the downside, limitations on land that have resulted in favoring inheritance to one son, either the oldest or youngest, often lead to rivalry among brothers (Ibid, 243).

The Mexican state has singled out Indians for their extended family households, viewing these as a public concern from a developmentalist and, more recently, gender perspective. Government housing programs understand overcrowding (*hacinamiento*) in rural housing as the result of extended family units (INEGI 2002, 20). To correct this, rural government housing programs typically construct public housing in line with the ideal of the small nuclear family with two bedrooms (see Figure 7).

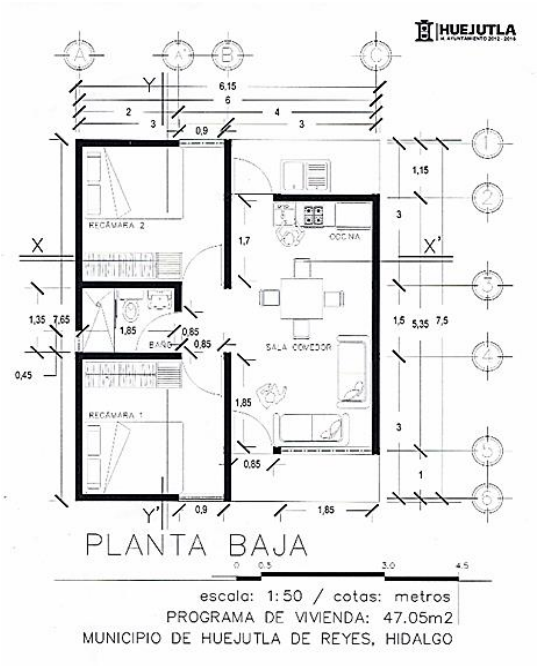

Figure 7: Drawing plan of public housing model, Municipality of Huejutla, Hidalgo. 2012-2016.

In evaluating whether to return to Ocotlán, Fernando takes into account the sense of support he derives from this extended family. The following excerpt from one of our interviews shows that Fernando carefully weighed the benefits and disadvantages of peasant and city life for his own future, rather than

returning solely out of a sense of self-abnegation for his mother's ailing health or a sense of duty to his parents.

> Raquel: To obey your parents and take your place here [Ocotlán], you couldn't be with someone over there (Mexico City)?
> Fernando: Among other things, no. Because here is the best. Here you won't need anything, nor will anyone tell you what to do. It's that being in Mexico City you're like a simple hmmm…mule driver, a simple loader. That's what they're always going to call you, always hmmm… peon. And here, no. Here you are the peon and the boss. You say at what hours you work and at what hours you don't work, what days you rest, and what days you don't. And over there, no. From seven in the morning until four, five, or six in the evening, depending on the work day. And here no. Here you do what will return you a profit.
> Raquel: So, you weren't only thinking of your parents but also of yourself?
> Fernando: Of myself…because here I don't need anything. I have my brothers, my parents, the people that surround me, the people that do know me, and I feel much better here.
> Raquel: Did you feel lonely over there (Mexico City)?
> Fernando: Alone...without anybody to talk to. Because the friends you have there last, what could it be? Six months, three months. Because the routine there was that they would change personnel all the time and later you don't even see where your friends are.
> Raquel: Would they fire them?
> Fernando: Ah [assenting]. They would quit, I don't know, they would fire them. And then if you cross paths with them… Oh hey, what's up? And like they ignore you. Was he my friend or what?

In this fragment, Fernando emphasizes the demanding rhythms of low-wage employment. He expresses a sense of fatalism with regards to overcoming his subservient status in the low- skilled, low-wage urban service sector. While in Ocotlán Fernando is a peasant, he views his positions in the urban service industry as equivalent to the lowliest labor categories in rural production, mule driver or peon, both of which index a condition of landlessness. Moreover, Fernando describes friendships in the city as cold and fickle, tied to the erratic

employee turn-over that characterizes low-wage employment. In contrast, Fernando describes el rancho as a time-space where he is in control over his labor even while it is of lowly status (*peón*), and where personal ambition determines a peasant's effort. It is also a time-space in which he can enjoy a wider support network, especially his brothers.

Furthermore, Fernando seems to endorse and derive tranquility from rural Nahua moral codes, which are critical of women's sociability and movement outside the home. The ideal Nahua woman is expected to be 'demure' (*recatada*), which implies a refrain from sociability, extroversion, and wanton exits from the home, lest they raise suspicions of being sexually loose. After marrying Talia in March 2015, Fernando seemed blissfully relieved. He praised Talia for her demure nature. Fernando also mentioned he no longer had to worry about Talia cheating on him since his mother and sisters-in-law constantly watch over her. This was one of the benefits of being married, he said, for he no longer had to stress over his partner's whereabouts as he did when he was single. In this way, non-residential extended households serve as control mechanisms over women's sexuality and movement.

While in this exchange, Fernando endorses rural Nahua gender codes, in other ways he challenges them. One market day in Tepetzalan, Fernando took the opportunity to boast about how different he was from other rural men. We were sitting enjoying *pulque* along with Fernando's godfather,

Ignacio, and two other male relatives.[78] Already with a slight *pulque* buzz, Fernando declared himself 'alert' beyond his years. He said he was not like the "*macho*" men around him because he and his wife commanded and obeyed one other equally. What's more, Fernando acknowledged his wife had a right to sexual pleasure, even saying he preferred to let her reach orgasms first. Also, he bragged about how enlightened he was in his position to delay having children until reaching a more financially secure position. In this, Fernando was antagonizing his wife who insisted she was ready to become pregnant. Fernando boasted he had reached these insights not through his father, but through his own life experiences.

In 2014, Fernando concluded that he was better positioned to marry Talia and farm in Ocotlán, seemingly following the moral career of the peasant.[79] While Fernando was unwilling to re-orient his life primarily around urban conjugal privacy with a mestiza over and above his androcentric rural Indian community, in Ocotlán he lays hold of forms of intimacy that give him the cachet of modern subjectivity. Fernando's self-aggrandizement as being gender progressive suggests that even as rural peasants, young Nahua men can inflect their rural embeddedness with the twists of modern subjectivity. Not only can Fernando claim self-determination through his gender progressive stance but also through his city-enabled sociability.

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[78] Pre-colombian fermented drink made out of agave originating in central Mexico.

[79] Fernando goes so far as insisting I marry a peasant from Ocotlán for he says I would have all my needs met there.

4.6 Jacinto: The Desire for a White Professional Wife

It is a mid-summer evening just as the sun's rays are turning soft. Styrofoam plates with mole and white rice are being passed around in honor of Jacinto, who is visiting his extended family in Ocotlán from Nuevo León, where like so many other relatives, he has gone to work. Jacinto passes around his cell phone with pictures of the wood-clearing trip he and his male cousins made just before dinner. The pictures show him nervously maneuvering a chainsaw, while his cousins in the background look on, amused. The sight of Jacinto dressed in black slacks and a button-up bright blue dress shirt in 100-degree weather working side by side his cousins who sport tattered work clothes is jarringly comical. Nevertheless, partaking in a stint of male manual labor seems to bring Jacinto out of his liminal state as a migrant and into his state as a member of his rural extended family.

Later on in the night, as everyone settles down in the courtyard, the men take their cue to break out their *caguamas* or large beers for a promising night of banter and play centered on Jacinto.[80] Fernando turns to me and says, "My cousin is a badass (*chingón*). He doesn't chicken out. He has my respects". He goes on to describe how Jacinto would never refuse to help him in his *milpa* when growing up and how much he wishes he could count on him today. Yet, quickly, Fernando's warmth turns biting, "growing up they said we were like brothers because we would do everything together, but I am the real thing

[80] *Caguama* is a 32-ounce beer popularly considered to be the cheapest way to get drunk.

because I still work the land". Jacinto and I laugh uncomfortably at the accusation that he has lost his roots. Trying to break the ice, Fernando pats Jacinto on the back, "cousin, why don't you just come back?"

Months later in Nuevo León, sitting in my apartment, Jacinto and I discuss Fernando's seemingly perplexing decision to marry. I interrupt Jacinto who is doing his homework for his degree in business administration in the public University of Nuevo León. I share my bewilderment at Fernando's decision to return to Hidalgo after working in Mexico City and marrying a woman from the neighboring village when he seemed to be so mesmerized by city life. Jacinto adds with icy disdain, "My cousin is only living like his parents did before him*".* According to Jacinto, even Fernando's father, Don Erasmo, was disappointed in Fernando and the rest of his male sons. Jacinto shared that when he had visited Ocotlán Don Erasmo had congratulated him on continuing his studies. He had said that while he wished his sons had become professionals, there was not much he could do since they had "liked" being farmers.

If Jacinto sees Fernando's return as evidence of conformity, his own aspirations are modeled on those of the middle-class *regios* with whom he has been socializing since arriving in rural Nuevo León.[81] In migrating to Nuevo León, Jacinto went from one of the states with the largest indigenous populations in Mexico and one of the least developed regions of the country, to the whitest, most affluent, and most industrialized state. Compared to Fernando, whose labor

[81] *Regios* refers to residents of Nuevo León.

trajectory led him to socialize primarily with working-class urbanites, Jacinto's trajectory as a domestic gardener in rural Nuevo León brought him within intimate proximity of white, middle class families.

Jacinto's father, Don Timoteo Díaz, had fought alcoholism for ten years, driving his family into penury and his children to migrate. One by one, Jacinto's older siblings had left the rural community of Acopilco in search of work. His older brother was the first to migrate to Monterrey where he became employed as a security guard. Two years later Jacinto followed him to Monterrey. A year after, his second oldest sister migrated to Cancún to work as a live-in maid and caretaker. Jacinto's younger sister, Natalia, introduced in Chapter three, followed suit, migrating to Monterrey to work as a live-in maid. Only his two youngest siblings, now fourteen and twelve years old, remain with their parents in Hidalgo.

While Jacinto initially wanted only to save enough money to build a house in Hidalgo, his interactions with employers of middle class and professional backgrounds persuaded him to get an education. Upon arriving in Monterrey, Jacinto's brother found him a job through his boss, whom I will refer to as Don Aldo Ruelas, the owner of a security guard company. Don Aldo offered Jacinto a job as a live-in gardener for his country rest home or *quinta* located in rural Las Cañadas, a municipality of Nuevo León, a little over an hour away from Monterrey.[82] For $750 MXN (~ $58 USD) a week, Jacinto performed gardening

[82] According to the land investor, Don Ignacio, the periphery of the metropolitan area of Monterrey became trendy for middle class *regios* in the early 2000s who aspired to have rest homes with pools and grassy areas that were out of their reach in Monterrey. These lands were former ejidos whose ejidatarios had privatized and sold. Don Ignacio made a sizeable profit from buying and selling these lots to middle-class families such as the Ruelas.

and general maintenance work on a property a little under 50,000 square feet. In time, Jacinto found work with the next-door neighbors, referred to here as the Zentenos, a group of brothers who own two adjacent *quintas*. He also assisted an older Huastecan migrant in maintaining several *quintas* for extra income.

Within a short time of cohabiting with the Ruelas, Jacinto developed a close relationship with Don Aldo, whom he looked up to as a father. He found inspiration in his life story since Don Aldo had apparently overcome his rural origins by working his way through university all the way to becoming a business owner. When the Ruelas' oldest son, three years older than Jacinto, suggested he get a high school degree in the area, Jacinto took the opportunity, considering it a chance to aim for something bigger. Attending high school in Nuevo León was intimidating for Jacinto as he felt conspicuously darker and self-conscious of his Hidalgo accent and lack of Spanish fluency.

Yet, attending high school, a rare achievement in the Huasteca region, boosted Jacinto's self-esteem. As he says. "When I would go to high school in Atongo and meet girls there, I would feel like a gardener, but I would also feel like a student. You could relate to them. You already knew what to talk to them about". Once in high school, the next step became obtaining a profession. His employers and many of his high school friends' relatives reinforced this idea as they would habitually ask Jacinto what profession he would want to study after high school.

Upon finishing high school, Jacinto took the audacious step of enrolling in the state university of Nuevo León's campus in the city of Cadereyta. He chose

business administration because it was relatively cheap and had proven an effective track for at least one of his bosses. Being a university student was significant for Jacinto for even many of his high school *regio* friends were not able to attend. As he says, “Well, I no longer feel like any old servant (gato), any old employee. I feel different since university”.

Jacinto says that after finishing his university degree he wants to start a business either in Huejutla or Nuevo León. Unlike Fernando, Jacinto derides *milpa* work as something that only leads to suffering (*sufrido*) due to it being hard manual labor and not immediately profitable. He says he experienced this suffering as a child when his family often did not have enough to eat and does not want the same for his children. He says that it is difficult to find sustenance while the harvests grow.

Unlike Fernando, who married a peasant woman, Jacinto hopes to find a light-skinned woman or *blanquita* with a profession. When I ask Jacinto why he prefers *blanquitas*, he replies that it is to change things up, to bear a progeny that is different from him, his parents, grandparents and everyone before him whom he says married persons very similar to themselves in skin color and begat generation after generation of “*morenitos*” or dark-skinned children. Jacinto’s taste for *blanquitas* appears to index a larger penchant for going against the grain, a building up of his uniqueness as a young Nahua man in the contemporary moment. Compared to Fernando, whose labor trajectory led him to relate romantically to a working-class, dark, and short mestiza, Jacinto’s dating possibilities include light-skinned, middle class *regias*.

Being a student in Nuevo León changed Jacinto's dating pool in no simple terms. He became self-conscious of his dark skin the hard way. A few of Jacinto's female classmates leveled racial slurs against him. Very significant for Jacinto was the time when, as a freshman in high school, the prettiest girl in the class called him "fucking negro" (*pinche negro*) to his face. This girl did not represent the opinions of all the middle class *blanquitas* in the school, however. Jacinto's sophomore year proved to him that the world could turn upside down. That year a sixteen-year-old light-skinned girl from a middle-class family in Atongo whom I will call Sulema developed a crush on Jacinto. According to Jacinto, Sulema was, "a Daddy's girl. She had, well, has money. And she would always go to school with her lunch box…she had preppy friends". For Jacinto, having a white, beautiful girl by his side was unimaginable. As he says, "I never thought…that she would like me, because for starters, I've always liked *blanquitas*…but for me she was very pretty…like…to have her by my side, she was too pretty".

Until then, Jacinto had only had girlfriends from Indian communities in Hidalgo and a short-term girlfriend in Las Cañadas. All of them had been lower-class and of dark or light-brown skin. Sulema, however, was not only much lighter in skin color but also middle class. Her father was the owner of a hardware store in Atongo. Dating Sulema brought conflicting emotions for Jacinto. On the one hand, it boosted his sense of masculinity because his employers, friends, and family all congratulated him on having such a white and beautiful girlfriend, a *xinola,* in the words of his mother.

Yet, their racial and class differences also made Jacinto uneasy. Sulema's friends, for example, considered him too lowly and dark for her. Similarly, Jacinto's female friends joked about how he would be set for life if he settled with Sulema. Jacinto found these comments unnerving because they suggested others took him to be interested in Sulema's money. Jacinto says he and Sulema responded by emphasizing their love for each other despite their racial and class differences.

Jacinto's world flipped once again when the twelve-year-old daughter of the Zenteno-Guajardos whom I will refer to as Mayra confessed she liked Jacinto. Jacinto had moved in with the Zenteno-Guajardos for whom he had been working for already after he quit working for Ruelas when the latter raised his workload without offering him a raise. Jacinto and Mayra's proximity within the domestic space of the *quinta* seems to have propelled her feelings for him. Jacinto was entrusted to help Mayra with her homework and play with her during the weekends. While this care labor went beyond his job description, it was essential in establishing the fictive kinship that seems critical to employer-domestic employee relations characterized by both hierarchies and intimacy. Jacinto, for one, says he saw Mayra as a sister.

In time, Jacinto began to develop feelings for Mayra with whom he interacted over the weekends in the *quinta*. Jacinto's growing diffidence alerted Sulema, who in time came to find out about his budding relationship with Mayra. When Sulema demanded to know if he had feelings for Mayra, Jacinto says he denied his feelings, protesting that such a relationship was impossible given their

class differences and his subordinate position as her father's employee. According to Jacinto, Sulema responded that class differences did not matter because she had overcome them herself in loving him for who he was—namely for his intellect and good looks. While Jacinto convinced Sulema to stay with him, the relationship turned sour. Sulema began to grow distant, spending more time with her middle-class friends. Their relationship reached a nadir when rumors reached Jacinto that she was going out with other guys. Just as Jacinto mustered the courage to leave her, Sulema beat him to it.

At the same time, Jacinto's relationship with Mayra came apart when her parents finally caught on to their feelings. The Zenteno-Guajardos took measures to distance them without ever confronting Jacinto. They stopped visiting the *quinta* for two months and on the third month returned without Mayra. Furthermore, work-related tensions drove them further apart. Jacinto moved back to the Ruelas' *quinta* when they offered him a raise for a reduced work load. For some time, Jacinto worked for both the Ruelas and the Zentenos. During this time, Mayra continued to express her feelings for Jacinto through cell phone and Facebook. Eventually, Jacinto decided to stop talking to Mayra altogether to ensure good working relations with the Zentenos.

Jacinto interprets the gradual distancing between him and Mayra as the result of a process of maturation undergone by both – a process that entails guarding his sexuality as a vulnerable male migrant and domestic employee. As he says:

> And from then on, I began to concentrate more on my work. She [Mayra] was older. The girl seldom says hi to me. She doesn't talk to me, just looks at me. And now even less. The girl has other ideas now. [Jacinto mimics a dialogue between him and Mayra] Do you remember when you were twelve? Yes, because I was a girl, and now I'm not anymore. I'm already in high school.
> Raquel: And what did you learn from all of this? How did it change you?
> Jacinto: Well, in maturity. Like you mature more. You think of what will happen if you make a mistake…what type of consequence it will have. I cannot do it. I don't have anyone here if I make a serious mistake.
> Raquel: Do you feel you are a different person?
> Jacinto: Yes, before I was 18. Like, I was only beginning to mature and now well if she would ask me to go out with her, well I would definitely think it over. I would think about it very, very hard, but I feel it is impossible.

Jacinto's love triangle with two middle class light-skinned *regias* was an important lesson on the desire for middle-class mestizas. For while Mayra, Sulema, and Jacinto invoked the discourse of liberal love (Povinelli 2006), by which love is thought to be blind to class and racial differences, in defending their attempts to relate romantically against social conventions, their larger social circles exerted discipline on their romantic aspirations. These forms of discipline were successful in reminding each of them of their place in the social hierarchy of Nuevo León and Mexico at large.

On the other hand, the maturation Jacinto alleges he acquired through his experiences with Mayra does not refute the possibility of securing love across class and racial differences. This is evident in Jacinto's response to the question he poses for himself about whether a relationship is possible were Mayra to reiterate her love for him now. Jacinto does not say, 'it's impossible', but rather, '*I feel it is impossible*'. This phrase points to an opening, a hope in the possibility of

consolidating love cross social classes that mirrors Jacinto's hope in his own upward social mobility through migration, hard work, and a university degree.

Jacinto believes he can live out his ideal future—to marry a professional woman and own a business—either in the Huasteca or Nuevo León, yet slightly leans towards the Huasteca. Jacinto is often nostalgic for what he identifies as the traditions of the Huasteca: fiestas, dances, and food. In Nuevo León, he listens to Huastecan music called *banda de viento*. His favorite time of the year is Christmas school break when he has a chance to visit Hidalgo. Jacinto is also proud of his Nahua identity and language. He posts statuses on the cell phone application WhatsApp, which are short statements that are visible when users click on that user's profile picture, in Nahuatl and has divulged his Nahua origins and language ability to his friends and teachers in Nuevo León. He also often reminds his migrant siblings to speak Nahuatl with one another over the phone and insists they not forget their rural origins.

Yet, unlike Fernando, Jacinto does not anchor his roots in Acopilco, his Nahua community of origin. Instead he and his migrant siblings have reformulated their sense of rural embeddedness away from small Indian communities towards larger mestizo dominated towns and cities such as Tepetzalan and Huejutla that provide anonymity, individuality, and private property. For Jacinto, his roots now lie in the concept of '*el rancho*', by which he refers to Tepetzalan, and small communities such as Ocotlán, where his cousins live. For Jacinto, 'el rancho' contrast with the north's mestizo culture, insipidness, and general foreignness.

Jacinto and his siblings began to reconsider their membership to Acopilco in light of their frictions with the community. Jacinto's distancing from small Indian communities developed as a teen and intensified with his newfound desires as a migrant. As a teen, Acopilco's morality and socialist peasant morality, centered on deference to authority, equality, and *milpa* work, was stifling to Jacinto. He says that in Acopilco "there were always complaints about [him]" due to his neglect for *milpa* work and otherwise boisterous socializing. The townspeople habitually called him a 'rascal' (*arrastrado*) and 'lazy one' (*flojo*) because he did not help his grandfather and mother in the *milpa*. Community authorities would also routinely chide him and his male friends for socializing late at night.

As Jacinto and his migrant siblings began to send money home, they increasingly felt Acopilco's egalitarian ideals hampered their thrust to 'get ahead' (*progresar*). Acopilco and Ocotlán are part of a socialist peasant organization in the region that participated in land takeovers in the 1970s and 80s, by which thousands of peasants seized lands from mestizo and Indian land owners. This organization is involved with grass-roots organizing around a national platform for socialism and therefore champions ideas of equality amongst its members. Jacinto claims that as he and his siblings began to afford consumer goods for their family, the townspeople in Acopilco began to signal them out as the 'rich ones' (*los ricos)* and even practiced witchcraft against them.

In time, Jacinto and his migrant siblings began to contemplate building a house for their parents and entertaining the idea of owning property. They decided it was unwise to construct a house in Acopilco's collective land. Jacinto's

family also came to deride their community obligations including two days of *faenas*, or community labor, and financial contributions agreed upon by the assembly. Unlike Ocotlán, which as a formal *ejido* was able to title its land through the 1992 reforms, Acopilco is not an independent *ejido*. It is a community that belongs to one of the largest *ejidos* in the municipality of Tepetzalan. Its residents settled the area through the land takeovers in the 1970s and 80s, but due to their loyalty to the peasant socialist organization mentioned above, have since retained the stigma of being anti-government in the eyes of the local elite and municipal governments. For this reason, Acopilco residents have always had a tenuous hold over the lands on which they live and cultivate. Nevertheless, they operate just as any other *ejido* through their own assembly and *faenas*.

At this juncture, Jacinto's family concluded that Acopilco's small-town morality, socialist ideals, and land tenure could not ensure them a good life. Instead, they decided to buy a lot in Tepetzalan, the nearest municipal seat. Jacinto's sisters, who as live-in maids in Monterrey and Cancún managed to save the most, made the down payment for a plot in *ejido* lands belonging to the town of Xicotitlan, but which have been annexed to Tepetzalan. Jacinto's parents and little siblings moved to Tepetzalan in the summer of 2014. By 2015, Jacinto's sisters finished paying $80,000 MXN for a plot of land 8x5 meters. The family considers their title, a sale agreement signed by Xicotitlan's *ejido* authorities, secure enough. While Xicotitlan has not turned their *ejido* into private property through the 1992 reforms, land sale agreements signed by *ejido* authorities carry the weight of formal sales in the eyes of the *ejido*. Jacinto's parents and youngest

siblings who live there say they are satisfied with their move. Jacinto's father, now a recovered alcoholic, remarked that not having to work two days of *faenas* has freed up his time to make money for his family. He works five days a week maintaining a pasture for a mestizo landowner from Tepetzalan for $150 MXN a day.

While Jacinto has chosen to remain in Nuevo León at least until he finishes his degree in business administration, he considers municipal seats such as Tepetzalan and Huejutla not only accommodating but also capable of potentializing his intimate and professional aspirations that mark him as unique vis-à-vis what he considers to be ordinary peasants such as Fernando. In his family's case, we see how mestizo-dominated towns such as Tepetzalan and Huejutla are accommodating of and potentializing the desire for private property, anonymity, and disentailed, nuclear families.

4.7 Conclusion

Jacinto and Fernando's migration-enabled romantic stories with mestizas show that racialized sexual articulations within the body politic of the nation are one of the primaries ways in which marginalized subjects both learn their place in the racial and class hierarchies of the nation. Political theorist Uday S. Mehta argues that behind the "transcultural, transhistorical, and most certainly transracial" character of liberal notions of equality, there have always existed densely cultural processes that have given these abstract notions content and

thereby utility in advancing the exclusion of certain types and groups of people (1997, 63)."

The experience of Fernando and Jacinto demonstrate that the abstract notion of liberal love, an important notion animating Mexican nationalism and *mestizaje*, manages to inspire, but not to seal long-standing inter-ethnic/racial relations between Indian men and mestizas. These young Indian men's partings from their mestiza girlfriends and crushes point to the robustness of colonial divides in Mexico along the lines of race and urban/rural distinctions. Yet, the fact that these young indigenous men have returned or aspire to return to the countryside also reveals that rural Indian communities are acquiring new potentialities including that of permitting the enactment of gender-progressive subjectivities through notions of modern marriages, nuclear families, and new Indian masculinities some of which are expressed in relation to private land ownership. These new potentialities reflect the weight of Mexico's economic liberalization since the 1980's, which by implementing the privatization of *ejidos* in tandem with a divestment of the state from supporting small-scale agriculture, has made for a more fractious and uneven countryside.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation argued that the biopolitical norms associated with gender progress are gaining salience as metrics by which indigenous persons are expected to contribute to and gain recognition from the Mexican nation-state. Gender and sexuality are central to citizenship conceived “not as an actual status but as a legitimating political and cultural field” (Krupa and Nugent 2015, 6). I argued that this “legitimating political and cultural field” is wrapped up with the paradigm of development. Development discourses and their interventions shape “permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible” (Escobar 1995, 5).

In this direction, I proposed the concept of biopolitical citizenship in Chapter One. Biopolitical citizenship makes citizenly recognition contingent upon the embodiment of behaviors deemed beneficial for the growth, development, and health of the nation. I showed how these behaviors are increasingly about reproduction, reproductive health, parenting, and gender roles. Through the concept of gender progress, I underlined the ideals of gender egalitarianism, non-violent masculinities, women’s entry into paid labor, self-choice in dating and marriage decisions, emotionally supportive parenting; and the superiority of small families, as the main foundations of biopolitical citizenship.

I claimed that while all Mexicans are interpellated by development efforts through their labeling as underdeveloped, indigenous peoples are considered the least developed. In the 1970s, state propaganda promoting the small Mexican family identified indigenous person as the prototypically irresponsible parents

who had more children than they could afford. In the 2000s, indigenous men and communities were depicted as inherently antagonistic to the rights of indigenous women. Political elites refused to grant indigenous peoples the autonomy they were calling for under the pretext that such rights would lead to the abuse of Indian women.

In Chapter Two, I tackled the trajectory of the Mexican state and feminists as they collaborated in the penalization of violence against women, which for the state was directed at integrating women into development. I illustrated, however, that the Mexican state's reforms in the realm of rape have gone largely unimplemented by the municipal prosecutor's offices. These offices routinely doubt the words of rape survivors, especially in cases of so-called simple rape in which the survivor knows her assailant, thereby withholding reports of rape from passing into the trial and conviction phases. Furthermore, I pointed to prominent cases in which the Mexican state failed to investigate femicides in Ciudad Juárez or was the perpetrator of rape and torture of women through its public security forces. These cases seriously call into question the Mexican state's commitment to gender progress. I echo feminists which argue that the Mexican state's efforts to adopt more stringent laws against gender violence were directed at strengthening the "penal state", one which in the second decade of the twenty-first century has been actively criminalizing the indigenous poor through its war on drugs and incarceration of indigenous social activists.

In Chapter Two, I delved into the work of local state agents in promoting gender progress in the Huasteca of Hidalgo. These agents endorse a concept of

harmonious paternity by which indigenous peoples can become a conflict-free and self-responsible population that depends less on the state for its well-being. These policies are aimed at improving the lives of the rural poor even when the livelihoods that are available to them are low-wage and, in the case of women, mired in the gendered subservience implicated in domestic work.

I also showed how these state agents project a concept of gender progress in which progress is an outside influence and Nahua culture is the source of patriarchal views and practices. In the eyes of these state agents, the most remote Nahua communities in the municipalities of Tepetzalan and Joquicingo are the most gender backwards. These agents repeatedly depict the local population as unable to adopt gender progressive practices due to their supposedly stubborn attachment to tradition.

I claimed that this vision has its roots in the liberal distinction between the autological and genealogical societies drawn by Elizabeth Povinelli (2011). In creole settler states, marking natives as prior to creoles created “differential narrative structures of belonging” within the nation-state by which the former were considered to be weighed down by inexorable social constraint and the latter in charge of self-authorship and futurity (Ibid, 23-24). Being defined as bound to social constraint has served to exclude indigenous peoples from the “anthropological minimum” (Mehta 1997) of liberalism—the minimum qualifications that enable a person to mobilize the supposedly universal freedoms all humans are endowed with at birth.

I emphasized that the work of sensitizing the Nahua population to embody gender progress reinforces colonial relationships of tutelage or trusteeship in which Indians are infantilized as targets of instruction. This echoes previous scholarship which warns that the effort to improve the welfare of subject populations that undergirds development interventions replicates longstanding inequalities and power relationships (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995; Li 2007).

In Chapter Three, I analyzed how the biopolitical goal of whitening the nation entailed the glorification of the rape of Indian women at the hands of Spanish or light-skinned men. More broadly, I examined how Indian women's position at the intersection of femininity and indigeneity has devalued women vis-à-vis mestizos and mestizas, but also Indian men. As I showed in Chapter Four, while Indian men were recognized as peasants by the post-revolutionary corporatist state, women were acknowledged as their female helpmates and underlings. These structures limit Indian women's opportunities for upward mobility. As migrants, their main occupation tends to be paid or unpaid social reproductive work. Probably due to its racialization and feminization, domestic work has undergone few reforms in Mexico even by the post-revolutionary state which enacted progressive labor laws.

For these reasons, I argued that Indian women such as Patricia and Federica occupied a position of bare life. In this way, I followed the lead of Ewa P. Ziarek who argues that bare life can be subject to forms of violence other than killing. Rape, slavery, and exploitation are also forms of sovereign violence. Indian women live in a de facto state of exception in which their sexual violation

and domestication is not only tolerated but even glorified by the state. Their sexual violation and domestication both whitens the nation and contributes to its social reproduction.

In Chapter Four I illustrated how young indigenous men experiment with new forms of masculinities in the process of migration. While the ideal peasant family projected by post-revolutionary agrarian reform was made up of the nuclear family presided by a tiller husband with his subordinate domestic helpmate, young male peasants today profess doubts about the viability of this ideal. In a region in which peasants never benefitted from state supports such as irrigation infrastructure, increased flooding and droughts make peasant agriculture a risky business. What's more the monetization of the local economy makes cash ever more critical to the household economy.

In the process of migrating for wage-labor, the young indigenous men who are the subjects of Chapter Four come to date mestizas whose urban background, social status, or lighter skin color make them higher than them in the social and racial hierarchy. These relationships as well as the low-wage and dead-end jobs they perform as migrants reinforce these young men's disadvantaged status as rural and Indian. Fernando who enjoys a more privileged status than Jacinto in Hidalgo decides the countryside is a better option for him. He returns to marry a young peasant woman. Jacinto, on the other hand, remains in Nuevo León, enrolled in college. Both, however, make claims to gender progressive stances. Fernando by striving to be a more egalitarian and calculating husband and procreator, and Jacinto by dating

exogamously and hypergamously, that is non-Indian woman of a higher socioeconomic class who he calls *blanquitas*. While the first stance is being promoted currently, the other is a classic element of liberalism.

Fernando and Jacinto's experiences show that globalized notions of gender progress imply a "promise of universality and even ultimate equality" that exert a seductive force on vastly diverse populations who aim to eventually live up to its promise (Ferguson 1999, 244-45). Yet, as Fernando and Jacinto come to find out, racial and class barriers get in the way of their fulfillment of gender progress and its promise of equality. The link between indigeneity and a vanquished countryside in Mexico meant that they were nothing more than "Indians", "fucking negros", and "peasants". This vision of rural Indians is the product of the historical articulation of coloniality in Mexico in which Indians are associated with "folkloric poverty" (Overmyer-Velásquez 2010). It also reflects the actual marginalization of rural inhabitants by the Mexican state who has chosen to invest in agribusiness in the North.

At the Crossroads of Gender Progress and Marginality

The promise of gender progress is seductive for Nahuas and Teenek women and men who are desirous of equality and recognition. For many Nahuas and Teenek of this region, to be Indian remains a source of shame. This shame derives from Indians socioeconomic standing. In the Huasteca of Hidalgo, for example, everyone habitually refers to indigenous languages as "dialects". The multicultural reforms which rejected previous assimilationist and racist paradigms recognizing indigenous linguistic codes as languages showed no signs of making

an impact in the region. When I told Jacinto that Náhuatl was a language, for example, he was incredulous, insisting Náhuatl was not like English or Spanish, but rather a dialect. When he confirmed this over the Internet, he was so proud that he shared the news over his "status" on WhatsApp.[83]

For the same reason that Nahuas feel ashamed of their language, younger Nahua women prefer to wear the cheap and brightly-colored Chinese made tops, skirts, and blue jeans that have flooded the local markets over the embroidered cotton blouses and skirts. Nowadays only older women or *abuelas* wear the embroidered clothing. Nahua men have also rejected the white cotton shirts and trousers for knock-off blue jeans, khakis, and shirts. These trends demonstrate that looking Indian is costly for those whose skin color and origins already mark them as rural and possibly Indian. In contrast, traditional clothing has been folklorized by local mestizos and mestizas. Embroidered cotton blouses and more recently embroidered cotton guayaberas have become obligatory garments for mestizos and mestizas and public servants on festive days such as Xantolo (All Saints Day), patron saint's festivities, and huapango festivals.

For young Nahua and Teenek men and women, to be agentive in the contemporary moment entails selling their labor for a chance to work as maids, construction workers, or gardeners in places such as Monterrey, Mexico City, or Cancún. For women and men such as Natalia, Vanesa, and Jacinto, maid and gardening work has served as a bridge to an advanced education. They are

[83] Whatsapp is a mobile messenger application. Users can share short remarks as their status, which are accessible to their contacts.

close to finishing their bachelor's and master's degrees in Computer Graphics, Communications, and Business Administration, respectively. However, getting an education is now not so clearly dependent on migration. Such educational opportunities are now increasingly available in the Huasteca of Hidalgo through the various universities that are opening in Huejutla. One of Jacinto's cousins, for example, put himself through a bachelor's degree in business administration by working as a peasant. This young man's success made Jacinto wonder now whether he could have done the same by staying in Acopilco.

Monterrey, however, seems to provide indigenous peoples more opportunities to become politically active. In Monterrey, there are several organizations in which indigenous migrants, several of them young are finding an activist platform. The most prominent example was *Procuración de Justicia Étnica*, now called *Árbol de Todas Raíces*, which in collaboration with other groups, pressured the government of Nuevo León to recognize its indigenous population. In 2012, they succeeded in getting the Law of Indigenous Peoples passed by the state congress. This law recognizes indigenous people in Nuevo León and extends specific rights to them. Given Nuevo León's reputation as free of Indians, this law's passage was momentous. Organizations led by indigenous peoples and their allies also organize the annual Soles de la Silla Festival to commemorate the International Indigenous Peoples Day every August 9.

The *Casa de la Mujer Indígena* in Monterrey provides a space for indigenous women and men to become active in their communities. Vanesa is one of women who has become most transformed by her activism in Zihuakali. At

twenty-seven she was elected its president by a mostly new board of indigenous women activists. Together they hope to make the CAMI a more relevant active organization in Monterrey. Vanesa, however, sees her CAMI work as an opportunity to help indigenous women in the metropolitan area of Monterrey. She routinely attends informative trainings and events in Mexico City and Monterrey that empower her. One event on trafficking of indigenous women was particularly striking for Vanesa. She learned that indigenous women and girls are disproportionate victims of sex trafficking and that the Alameda Mariano Escobedo in Monterrey, where indigenous migrants are known to congregate, is a key site where women and girls are picked up thinking they are on their way to a house to work as maids. Based on this event, Vanesa planned on running a campaign to inform indigenous women about the dangers of trafficking through the CAMI, which conveniently faces the Alameda.

While an important space that can nurture indigenous peoples' leadership and perform important work such as this, the CAMI is enlisting indigenous women in support of the prevailing vision of indigenous cultures as isolated enclaves who are the sole authors of "their" patriarchal "*usos y costumbres*". The CAMI is after all a project of the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples-CDI). The trainings CAMI activists attend are sponsored by the *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* (National Women's Institute-INMUJERES).

The prevailing discourse of gender progress fails to identify and contest the structural determinants of women's inequality including Mexico's neoliberal

economic and politic project and its denial of indigenous peoples' self-determination. State agents of gender progress generally addressed poverty as a factor of missed opportunities. For example, Don Eusebio blamed Nahua women's economic dependency on their husbands on their parents' unwillingness to send them to school. Even though Don Eusebio blamed the government for "not looking down or behind", he still felt he could assign blame to Nahua parents for failing to give their daughters a chance. Little thought went into the hardships parents encounter in paying for school supplies or the lack of well remunerated jobs that such children will likely encounter even if they pursue the limited educational opportunities in the area.

The *Instancia de la Mujer* in Tepetzalan and the CAMIs of Huejutla and Monterrey address women's poverty by offering trainings based on petty entrepreneurialism. They offer trainings on embroidery, raising chickens, growing mushrooms, and jewelry making. In the absence of shelters, can women become self-sufficient enough to leave their husbands and buy a plot of land or rent a home by selling embroidered napkins in the local market? Similarly myopic was the CAMI's jewelry-making workshop I attended along with a family of three women and their neighbor in a municipality outside Monterrey. Hardly instructive, this basic workshop taught us how to thread beads and how to press the hooks that seal jewelry pieces. At best, women may be able to supplement their incomes through these entrepreneurial projects.

As government-funded programs, the *Instancia de la Mujer* and the CAMIs also serve to legitimate the Mexican state. At the meetings convened by the

Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, participants have a chance to meet high level government officials some of whom are under scrutiny for human rights abuses. Participants often take selfies with such officials. Doña Antonia, for example, had amassed several photos with President Enrique Peña Nieto, whom served as governor of the Estado de México and as such commanded the public security forces who perpetrated the Atenco rapes. Routinely, the CAMI staff would post photos of themselves with these human rights violators at the CAMI offices and their personal WhatsApp or Facebook profiles. These are the ways in which the state and political parties embed themselves in the local work of gender progress.

These allegiances were reflected in my conversation with CAMI activists who seldom took a critical stance of the Mexican government. Indeed, when a young Nahua activist organized a campaign questioning the fact that the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples-CDI) in Monterrey was run by a mestizo, some of the CAMI staff in Monterrey defended the mestizo. Since the CAMI is a project of the CDI and its staff routinely collaborates with the CDI director, the CAMI staff was not in a position to critique the CDI, an institution that has historically reinforced the trustee relationship between the state and indigenous peoples. In these ways, the CAMI and the *Instancias* work as “anti-political machines”, abstracting gender violence from the larger structural relationships of power. Their work reduces gender violence to a “perpetrator” or

interpersonal model of gender violence in which there are only individual perpetrators.

From Bare Life to Presidential Candidate

2017 is a momentous year for indigenous women. The first ever indigenous woman is running independently for the presidential elections of 2018. Elected by the *Congreso Nacional Indígena*, María de Jesús Patricio Martínez or Marichuy as she is called is a Nahua traditional healer from Tuxpan, Jalisco who has been an active denouncer of capitalism since the Zapatatista rebellion in 1994. To qualify as an independent candidate, Marichuy will have to gather 866,593 signatures or 1 percent of the electorate in four months from among at least 17 regions of Mexico. If Marichuy gains the required signatures she will be among the first batch of independent candidates in Mexico's history to run for presidential elections. If Marichuy succeeds she will face Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a leftist with ample support across Mexico. Regardless of the outcome, her candidacy spells a new role for indigenous women in Mexico, one that is based on national political leadership and that is independent of the political parties that have made gender equality into a child of modernity-- one in which indigenous peoples are denied self-determination and are considered antithetical to gender progress.

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