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Female Entrepreneurs in the Long Nineteenth Century

A Global Perspective

Edited by
Jennifer Aston
Catherine Bishop



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Jennifer Aston • Catherine Bishop
Editors

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Editors

Jennifer Aston
Northumbria University
Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

Catherine Bishop
Macquarie University
Sydney, NSW, Australia

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For Richard White and Felicity Joyce Aston

FOREWORD

Before women became subjects of their own histories in the late twentieth century, business was viewed as a man's world, created by and for men whose big ideas, big innovations and big businesses drove modern economic growth. Growth was a productivity-boosting elixir associated with those splendid mythical creatures, *Homo economicus* and *Testosterone Rex*, whose promiscuity, risk-taking and competitive streaks enabled them to accrue the material and social resources that crowned man King of the Business World.

The ground under that manly world has shifted. Global processes of structural and cultural change have disrupted taken-for-granted assumptions about how economies grow and change. MeToo movements have galvanised global activists in ways that challenge academic insiders to re-examine their own disciplinary and historiographical traditions. Entrepreneurship has moved from the shadows of business and economic history into the centre of debates about innovation and globalisation. The heroic male entrepreneur has been dethroned to make room for the 'unconventional'. Entrepreneurial typologies have multiplied. Along with the earliest 'rule-of-thumb, informed, sophisticated, mathematically advised entrepreneurs', business historians and entrepreneurship scholars have added male and female green entrepreneurs whose entrepreneurship unfolds as part of the enterprising actions of larger social communities.

Scholars of women and gender have expanded their reach beyond cultures into economies, using knowledge gained from a focus on politics, family, home and factory to explore how they acquired entrepreneurial

agency. The paradigm of separate spheres that once confined middle-class women to the home and empowered men in the market has given way, in Beatrice Craig's understanding, to multiple, interconnected spheres and 'webs of contingencies'.

Converging streams of research have not only expanded the search for women in business from the local and national to the global, but they have also sharpened gender differences and confirmed the problematic relationship between processes of economic growth and changing patterns of social and economic inequalities.

No longer is the male universal regarded as synonymous with gender neutrality. 'Gender blindness', once identified as an untreatable condition, has proved to be eminently curable. Large, multiple dosages of historical perspective, derived from quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence, leave little doubt that social and economic inequalities have disadvantaged women more than men and some women more than others. History has never been gender-neutral nor blind to gender inequalities.

Women have had to declare war just to get an education. They have been disadvantaged by custom, social norms and stereotypes, laws, policies and institutions. They have had to fight for suffrage, for title to their earnings and inheritance and for the right to be heard. They have been denied access to resources and the professions. Their names have been covered up by those of the men they have married. Their individual and collective status in society has been subordinated and devalued. They have been subjected to violence and sexual abuse. Their choices have been constrained and their sexual, economic, social and political behaviour prescribed and managed far more so than has been the case for men. Sex matters, especially at times when women's access to birth control is limited. The freedom to choose is a kind of freedom that no man has ever had to exercise.

A focus on female entrepreneurs begs an important question: does entrepreneurship get women closer to equality? Some governmental and non-governmental organisations certainly hope so. They have created financial and institutional support for programmes to teach entrepreneurship and to assist female entrepreneurs in the practice of business. But history does not give up its gendered gems of wisdom easily.

This volume is the first and only collection of historical narratives to use business and entrepreneurship as a way to recover, reinterpret and reaffirm the economically active and creative lives of women situated in different locales, times and contexts across the long nineteenth century.

The female entrepreneurs showcased in these historical narratives reveal a business world continuously changing, often imperceptibly, according to the rhythms of women's lives, where sexual differences and similarities were far more important and varied than have been acknowledged. The women are as different from each other as they are similar to other non-entrepreneurial women. Demographically, they vary. Some are single, some married, some divorced or widowed. Some have children and husbands whose presence or absence narrows or widens the possibility of entrepreneurial success. They hail from a variety of unevenly developing regions and nations with different political and economic structures. They are numerous enough and different enough from each other to diminish the significance of the men who move into and out of their lives. Instead of being constrained by families, markets and states, they continually transgress, expand and reshape economic boundaries. They create, own, sustain and exit a wide variety of businesses which illuminate a colourful and underappreciated aspect of nineteenth-century business: that one of the key tasks facing female entrepreneurs is to remove the obstacles to entrepreneurship.

Some obstacles prove harder to change than others. Ideas about the relationship between entrepreneurship and industrialisation have rarely emphasised female economic agency. Women more often appear in narratives about the industrial and industrious revolutions as growth-oriented baby machines, shoppers rather than shop owners, or as part of a low-wage factory proletariat.

The female entrepreneurs in this volume make business history. They find, create and fiercely pursue opportunities whenever and wherever they can. They marshal economic resources they frequently do not control. They both conform to and undermine cultural stereotypes that advantage them and manipulate those that stand in their way, sometimes at great personal cost. If and when they are disadvantaged by laws, policies, needy children or ne'er-do-well husbands, they do not hesitate to use business, often in innovative ways, to retain some degree of independence, respectability and dignity.

In their hands and in their own names, business institutions not only add and destroy value and make and lose money, but they also become a feminist project, diffusing knowledge about how to do business and make change happen, sometimes simultaneously and unevenly across multiple, interconnected institutional realms, including marriage, the family, households and the state.

Entrepreneurship as practised by these nineteenth-century women reveals business to be both a generator of and solution to problems of inequality. This volume challenges those who see gender inequalities invariably defining and constraining the lives of women. But it also broadens the conversation about the degree to which business is a gender-blind institution, owned and managed by entrepreneurs whose gender identities shape and reflect economic and cultural change.

Los Angeles, CA, USA
August 2019

Mary A. Yeager

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We would like to thank those non-contributors who attended the workshop, read chapters and provided valuable feedback—Richard White, Markian Prokopovych, Amy Rommelspacher, Charlotte Nisbet, Clare Hoare, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau. We are also appreciative of all those scholars and others around the world who responded so generously to our unsolicited emails, as we embarked upon our search for academics working in this area. We thank Professor Kent Deng, Ruth Noble, Laura Pacey and Sophia Siegler at Palgrave Macmillan for reacting so enthusiastically to the idea of this project and for their support through to its completion.

Finally, we would like to thank Professor Mary A. Yeager for her generous encouragement, sage advice and insightful foreword.

Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK
Sydney, NSW, Australia
October 2019

Jennifer Aston
Catherine Bishop

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Seven Ağır is an associate professor in the Economics Department at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Her research interests lie in the historical development of economic institutions in the Middle East, with special focus on the late Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Several of her articles were published in journals such as *Economic History Review* and *Journal of Economic History*.

Jennifer Aston is Senior Lecturer in Modern British History at Northumbria University at Newcastle, UK. Her research interests focus on the relationships between gender and business ownership, bankruptcy and law in the long nineteenth century. Her first monograph, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. She is currently examining divorce petitions heard before the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes between 1858 and 1923.

Robert J. Bennett is Professor Emeritus and Research Director of Geography at the University of Cambridge, UK. His research interests cover the history of entrepreneurship, SME policy, economic development, chambers of commerce, and business associations. His recent publications include *The Age of Entrepreneurship* (2019) and papers in *Economic History Review* and *Business History*.

Catherine Bishop is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Business School at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She is the author of *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney*, which won the 2016 Ashurst Business Literature Prize, and *Women Mean Business: Colonial Businesswomen in New Zealand*. She is currently researching the history of Australian businesswomen since 1880, writing a biography on Australian missionary Annie Lock and researching a series of post-World War II world youth forums.

Melanie Buddle is College Principal and a part-time instructor in Canadian History at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. She is the author of *The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901–51*.

Alisha M. Cromwell is Assistant Professor of Atlantic World History at Coastal Carolina University, South Carolina, USA. Her research and teaching focus on gender, slavery and capitalism in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World.

Béatrice Craig (RSC) is professor emerita at the University of Ottawa, Canada, where she teaches women's and Canadian history. She is the author and co-editor of several books on women in business, including *Women and Business Since 1500: Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* (Palgrave, 2016) and *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Nineteenth-century Northern France* (Palgrave, 2017).

Marie Francois is Professor of History at California State University Channel Islands in Camarillo, California, USA. She is the author of *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City 1750–1920* and numerous articles and chapters on the history of daily life in Mexico City.

Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás holds a PhD in Business Administration and is Adjunct Professor of Corporate Finance at the University of Murcia, Spain. Her main research topics are related to corporate finance and corporate governance. Her work has been published in international journals such as *Feminist Economics* and *E&M Economics and Management Journal*.

C. Nathan Kwan is in the final stages of a joint PhD from the University of Hong Kong, China (Department of History) and King's College London, UK (Department of War Studies). His research focuses on interactions between the British and Qing empires in suppressing Chinese piracy.

Susan Ingalls Lewis is Professor Emerita of History at the State University of New York at New Paltz, USA. She is the author of *Unexceptional Women: Female Entrepreneurs in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York, 1830–1885*, winner of the 2011 Hagley Prize in business history.

Susana Martínez-Rodríguez is Professor of Economic History and Institutions at University of Murcia, Spain. She directs the project “Women and Firms in Spain (1850–2015)” funded by the Ministry of Science (RTI2018-093884-B-I00). Her most recent publications includes “Mistresses of Company Capital: Female Partners in Multiowner Firms, Spain 1886–1936” (*Business History*, 2019).

Mary Louise Nagata is Professor of History at Francis Marion University, Florence, USA. She is *Member Associés* at EHESS/CRH (L'École des hautes études en sciences sociales/le Centre de Recherches Historique), Paris, is co-editor of *Continuity and Change* for Cambridge University Press and serves on the board of the International Commission for Historical Demography.

Vanessa S. Oliveira is Assistant Professor of African History at the Royal Military College of Canada. She has authored several articles and book chapters on women merchants, interracial marriage and slavery in Luanda. Her book *Abolition and Slavery at Luanda* is under contract.

Sean Redding is Zephaniah Swift Moore Professor of History at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA. She researches and writes on South African rural history and is working on a book-length manuscript entitled *Violence, Gender and the Reconstruction of Tradition in Rural South Africa, 1880–1965*.

Blake Singley is Senior Curator of Photographs, Film and Sound at the Australian War Memorial and a visitor in the School of History at the Australian National University. His research interests include the history of cookbooks, digital humanities and the history of conflict photography.

Harry Smith is a research associate at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, UK. He is a historian with interests in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social and economic history. Recent publications include *The Age of Entrepreneurship* (2019) and papers in *Business History*, *Urban History* and *Continuity and Change*.

Galina Ulianova is a senior researcher at the Institute of Russian History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia. She is the author of *Female Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Russia* and *Philanthropy in the Russian Empire, 19th and early 20th Centuries*.

Carry van Lieshout is Lecturer in Geography at the Open University, UK. Formerly a research associate at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, UK, she is a historical geographer with interests in gender, entrepreneurship, and natural resources. Her recent publications include *The Age of Entrepreneurship* (2019) and papers in *Economic History Review*, *Business History*, and *Geopolitics*.

Grietjie Verhoef is Professor of Accounting, Economic and Business History in the Department of Accountancy at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Her published work focuses widely on insurance and banking history, as well as on the history of South African conglomerates, including most recently *The Power of Your Life. The Sanlam Century of Insurance Empowerment, 1918–2018*.

Kari Zimmerman is Associate Professor of History at the University of St. Thomas, USA. Her scholarship focuses on gender and economy in nineteenth-century Brazil. Her work has been published in *Hispanic American Historical Review* and she is currently revising her book manuscript *Women of Independent Means: Female Entrepreneurs and Property Owners in Rio de Janeiro, 1869–1904*.

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CHAPTER 1

Discovering a Global Perspective

Jennifer Aston and Catherine Bishop

IN THE BEGINNING

Never underestimate the power of a serendipitous ‘Google’ search. One such query for ‘female business ownership’ led an Australasian historian (Catherine Bishop) to email a British one (Jennifer Aston) having discovered a common passion for nineteenth-century businesswomen. We realised that we had been following similar paths 12,000 miles apart, uncovering the presence of entrepreneurial women in nineteenth-century Australasia and England.¹ Yet, even in this, the age of the internet and

We would like to thank Béatrice Craig, Susan Ingalls Lewis, Richard White and Mary A. Yeager for their perceptive and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

¹Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney*, (Sydney: NewSouth, 2015), Catherine Bishop, *Women Mean Business: Colonial Businesswomen*

J. Aston (✉)

Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK
e-mail: jennifer.aston@northumbria.ac.uk

C. Bishop

Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: catherine.bishop@mq.edu.au

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transnational history, we had been unaware of each other's existence. We had each operated within historiographical traditions that for the most part denied the existence of respectable businesswomen in this era; a critical century which saw rapid economic change and increasing regulation of business. We were excited, firstly to discover our 'own' entrepreneurial women, and then to discover that they also existed on the other side of the world. Even more important than our discovery of a historiographical soul mate, however, was that it immediately meant that the presence of businesswomen could not be simply explained by England's industrialisation or by Australasia's settler colonial status. These two locations and that email were just the beginning. We began to reach out and make further connections, initially with North American scholars.² We organised a conference panel with Susan Ingalls Lewis, one of the pioneers in US feminist business history, on 'Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in the Anglophone World'. Our ensuing discussions highlighted the commonalities in laws and customs among Australia, the UK and the United States, and sparked the obvious questions: 'what about the rest of the world?' and 'who else is working on this that we don't know about?'

This led us to reconsider the geographical frames of reference in which our own historical research was undertaken. We knew of North American scholarship, and European studies in the area, but all of these existed within national contexts.³ Comparative work was situated within European or, most recently and notably by Béatrice Craig, trans-Atlantic frameworks.

in New Zealand, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2019), Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²Catherine organised a panel at the Canadian Historical Association's annual conference featuring Canadian scholars of English and French-speaking Canada, Peter Baskerville, Bettina Bradbury and Melanie Buddle, as well as Catherine herself. Jennifer, Catherine and Susan Ingalls Lewis presented a panel, 'Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in the Anglophone World', chaired by Mary Yeager at the Association of Business Historians' Annual Conference in Glasgow in 2017. Catherine was part of two international panels at the 2018 World Economic History Conference in Boston, one on businesswomen spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Galina Ulianova, Susanna Martinez Rodriguez, Amada Gregg, Erica Salvaj, Andrea Lluch and chaired by Béatrice Craig.

³Susan Ingalls Lewis, *Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in mid-19th Century Albany New York 1830–1885*, (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2009); Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

The rest of the globe has not generally featured in the discussion.⁴ Our ambition in this volume is to start the global conversation, to unite historians of businesswomen working on diverse parts of the world, incorporating areas south of the equator and east of the Urals. We want to explore, compare and contrast women's experiences of business, and examine how differing economies, cultures and legal structures affected their approaches, or perhaps excluded them altogether. We also want to investigate how the available sources and historiographical traditions of each place have determined the way that the stories of female entrepreneurs have been told or not told. Naturally, much of the scholarship is found in countries with stronger, longer historiographical traditions, where the history of business, entrepreneurship and gender has entered the accepted historical canon. Nevertheless, this volume breaks new ground in its geographical coverage, including chapters from Western Europe (France, Spain, and UK), Eastern Europe (Russia, Turkey), North America (Canada, the United States), Central and South America (Mexico, Brazil), Asia (China, Japan), Africa (Angola, South Africa) and Australasia (Australia, New Zealand). Of course, this mapping is far from complete and we eagerly anticipate the continuation of the project as the conversation widens. This is not a book about global entrepreneurs, although many of the businesswomen in the following pages were transnational migrants.⁵ Their businesses, however, were predominantly conducted locally and therefore national history remains the dominant framework. Most chapters address separate national contexts but what they do not do is assume national exceptionalism. Instead, our global perspective highlights similarities, illuminates differences and encourages economic, social, business and gender historians to ask new questions.

⁴ Béatrice Craig, *Women and Business since 1500: Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Two collections, while primarily focused on Britain, Europe and North America did spread the net slightly wider. David Green, Alistair Owens, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford (eds), *Men, Women and Money, Perspectives on Gender, Wealth and Investment 1850–1930*, (Oxford: OUP, 2011), included a chapter on South Australia; Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford (eds), *Women and their Money 1700–1950: Essays on Women and Finance*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), included a chapter on Japan.

⁵ For a discussion of business, gender and mobility see Catherine Bishop, 'Women on the Move: Gender, Money-making and Mobility in Mid-Nineteenth Century Australasia', *History Australia* 11, no. 2 (2014): pp. 38–59.

The female entrepreneurs who populate the following pages existed in multiple geographical areas with uneven economic development. Some economies were highly industrialised, others less so. Some national and local economies were hostage to the priorities of distant imperial governments, while for others, industrialisation was not yet (and in a few cases is still not) an inevitable conclusion. The focus of much existing scholarship on nineteenth-century female entrepreneurship is on women in towns and cities, indicative perhaps of the sources available though perhaps too on the false assumption that farmers were not entrepreneurial.⁶ Therefore, in addition to extending the geographical scope of the field, we also seek to include rural literatures and consider women's independent money-making activities across economies and industries, as well as borders, for the first time. Frontier societies, long-established European cities and new company towns all appear in these chapters and, while many of the businesswomen examined were urban-based, others were not. The laundresses of Mexico City, the merchants of Paris and the retailers of central and suburban Moscow sit alongside African farmers of the Eastern Cape, agricultural producers in England, the first Western settlers in British Columbia and New Zealand, and the pirates of the South China Sea.

DEFINITIONS

Business exists within local, national and international frameworks of religion, custom, government and personal relationships. We have deliberately employed very broad definitions of business and entrepreneurship to capture as many manifestations of female entrepreneurship as possible. The following chapters define businesswomen as women who were making money and business decisions on their own account, either as sole traders, employers, artisans, or by dealing in property or making financial investments. They were not waged workers or salaried employees following orders. They could be running their enterprises on a micro scale, as owners of international companies, or in the liminal space of the 'grey market' between legal enterprise and illegal activity. Their businesses could be full-time, part-time or seasonal and they may have had multiple enterprises at any one time or sequentially. Their businesses could last just a few

⁶Adam Ward Rome argued for farmers to be considered business people in 'American Farmers as Entrepreneurs, 1870–1900', *Agricultural History* 56, no. 1 (1982): pp. 37–49, and articulates the debate.

months or several decades, or survive over multiple generations. We include women who were in partnership, formally or informally, with husbands or others. In particular, we acknowledge that many wives usually described in the records as ‘assisting in their husbands’ businesses’ (or not described in the records at all) were frequently essential business partners and considered as such by their spouses, customers and themselves; they deserve this acknowledgement by historians.

Some definitions of—or assumptions about—entrepreneurship privilege expansion and innovation.⁷ We prefer a more expansive definition of entrepreneur: someone who identifies opportunities for business, takes risks (however small they might seem), assumes responsibility for decisions and seeks to make money. Thus, a laundress who recognises a market for clean laundry, takes the risk of establishing herself in business, negotiates credit, is responsible if she fails to deliver clean laundry on time and who wants to make enough money to support herself and any dependants, is as entitled to the epithet ‘entrepreneur’ as Henry Ford or Andrew Carnegie: she perhaps has more at stake. Entrepreneurship can take many forms, from a desire for almost limitless expansion to piecemeal work that provides sufficiency, and everything in-between. High-risk ventures with significant financial investments and potentially colossal returns have tended to dominate the literature surrounding entrepreneurship and business ownership and in the popular imagination, but they are hardly representative. More typical are the thousands of enterprises formed at kitchen tables that provided varying levels of income and security to their owners and then faded away, almost—but not quite—into obscurity.

The question of how we define success is equally important. Business success is often evaluated solely in terms of growth and maximising profit. Such a definition devalues those businesspeople—men and women—who did not expand their enterprises to become international conglomerates, but instead persevered in building their businesses sufficiently to create a living for their families and then were satisfied. While some businesspeople may have wanted to expand, others had no such intentions. Another

⁷Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976); Joe Carlin, *A Brief History of Entrepreneurship: The Pioneers, Profiteers and Racketeers Who Shaped Our World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Frank H. Knight, *Risk Uncertainty and Profit*, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1921); Mark Casson, ‘Entrepreneurship’: www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/Entrepreneurship.html; Ian Hunter, *Age of Enterprise: Rediscovering the New Zealand Entrepreneur 1880–1910*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2007), p. 18.

equally flawed measure of success is longevity. A business that closes its doors after two years because it has fulfilled its owner's modest aims must be counted a success, though some would count it a failure. Rather than judging business success by externally applied, value-laden judgments which assume that bigger is always better or a short-lived business must be a failure, we have sought to evaluate a business's success and/or failure by assessing whether or not it fulfilled its owner's aims. Finding direct evidence for the motivations of business owners is, of course, very difficult, which helps explain why many observers fall back on the easily quantifiable metrics of growth and longevity. Examining female entrepreneurship across the long nineteenth century with these broader and more appropriate definitions allows us to understand the historic importance of these women's activities and make valuable comparisons between different economic and political structures. Traditional economic histories that defined business entities as abstractions unconnected to the lived experience of the people involved have tended to ignore, downplay or overlook the contribution of many ordinary people to economic life. In particular, from our perspective, they have overlooked the contribution of women to both the family and to regional, national and international economies.⁸

The idea of a 'long' nineteenth century—from roughly the 1750s to the 1920s—has its roots in the study of the 'big' themes of industrialisation, globalisation and modernisation in Anglophone historiography. This long-term approach allows the origins of these developments to be traced and their impact considered. With research spanning from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, the chapters in this volume encompass the long nineteenth century in its fullest form. This book connects some of the multiple streams of research now being carried out, unevenly, piece by piece, area by area, century by century, drawing out commonalities and highlighting differences. Western studies of nineteenth-century women's histories tend to focus on the tensions between gender and industrialisation in the first half of the century, or on the political and professional awakening of women in the closing decades, with experiences often viewed and analysed through the lens of social class.⁹ We are,

⁸ Mary A. Yeager, 'Reframing Business Realities: A Look back into the Future of American Business History', *Travail, Genre et Sociétés* 1, no. 3 (2005): pp. 95–113.

⁹ Jane Rendall, *Women in an Industrializing Society: England 1750–1880*, (Blackwell: Oxford, 1990); Jane Purvis (ed.), *Women's History: Britain 1850–1945, An Introduction*, (Routledge: London, 2002 edn); Susie Steinbach, *Women in England 1760–1914: A Social History*, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, 2004).

however, acutely aware that women's experiences were not homogenous. Ethnicity, religion, race, marital status and economic position all shaped the privileges and disadvantages that women experienced. Gender inequalities were particularly exacerbated for Indigenous women within colonial societies, and the many women who were enslaved for a large portion of the nineteenth century and continued to experience significant social prejudice and economic disadvantage even after abolition had supposedly been enacted. Our cover image shows Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's *Fontaine de l'Observatoire* (1872), which depicts four women, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Asia, holding up the earth. The broken chain encircling the ankle of 'Africa' was a contemporary anti-slavery comment by the artist but can also, perhaps, be viewed as a representation of how women around the world found ways to break free of the various shackles that limited their activities. The chapters in this volume therefore represent a rare opportunity to examine women from diverse backgrounds with a shared experience of business across a century that saw dramatic social, political and economic change.

LITERATURE

In seeking a global perspective, this volume engages with numerous national and regional historiographies, which are explored in detail by authors in their individual chapters. Nevertheless, we have discovered some general trends worth noting here.

In the past 50 years, feminist, social and post-colonial historians have widened our understanding of the past, moving far beyond histories written by and about white men in privileged positions. By adding the experiences of women, working-class and non-white, non-European peoples to the narrative, scholars have not only enlarged the scope of history, but also changed its focus. Initially feminist historians were pointing out that women 'were there too', participating in politics and in the economy despite the obstacles, but it soon became clear that a broader approach was necessary. Historians wanted to explain the inequalities that women throughout the world faced, including (but not limited to) persisting legal, cultural and economic discrimination, limited access to education, gender pay gaps, a lack of women on company boards and in corporate management, and, at worst, endemic physical and psychological abuse. This, along with the historiographical turn towards history-from-below,

made workers more attractive than employers as historical subjects. Feminist historians also tackled head-on the idea that women's lives were less important than men's in shaping local, national and international histories. While many uncovered and celebrated women's contribution to traditionally male-dominated fields, others, particularly after Joan Scott's 1986 intervention, recognising gender as 'a useful category of historical analysis', emphasised the economic and social importance of women's roles as wives and mothers, as household managers and in charitable and community works.¹⁰ As Australian historian, Marilyn Lake wrote in 1996:

In the old days men used to say that women weren't in history books because we hadn't done anything. In response to this, the standard feminist riposte was to insist that 'we were there too'. But, I want to suggest, given half a chance, women in the past would retort, 'No, we were somewhere else' – we were in our families, in our bodies, in our self-sacrifice, in our emotions, in our communities, in our women's friendships, in our relationships with the country and with people.¹¹

This strand of feminist history demonstrated that women's experiences were just as important in national histories as men's. However, the focus on history from below and on women being 'somewhere else' unintentionally obscured the sorts of female business activities with which this book is concerned. It entrenched the idea, so persuasively argued by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, that women and men operated in 'separate spheres', particularly in the nineteenth century.¹² Men had

¹⁰Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (Dec. 1986): pp. 1053–75; See also Jill Julius Matthews, 'Feminist History', *Labour History* 50, (May 1986): pp. 147–53.

¹¹Marilyn Lake, 'Rewriting Australia: Rewriting Women', *Island*, 68: pp. 96–104, p. 96.

¹²In the British context the culture of domesticity was most famously described by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, Rev. ed. (London: New York: Routledge, 2002); In Australia, Beverley Kingston (*A History of New South Wales*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 59, and *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia*, (Melbourne, Thomas Nelson, 1975)) epitomised the approach of many other historians such as Katrina Alford (*Production or Reproduction?: An Economic History of Women in Australia, 1788–1850*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984)) and Rita Farrell ('Women and Citizenship in Colonial Australia', in Patricia Crawford and Philippa Maddern (eds), *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001): Ch. 5) and Penny Russell, *A Wish of Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity*, (Melbourne,

responsibility for the public sphere of politics and business, while women belonged in—or were relegated to—the private sphere of the home, bearing and raising children. Men were entrepreneurial, women self-sacrificing. In recent years, historians of women have comprehensively challenged the idea that the nineteenth-century world was rigidly divided into separate spheres. While there were legal and educational restrictions on women’s participation in many activities, as well as much public rhetoric, women could move outside purely domestic roles. As early as 1984, Jill Julius Matthews reminded us that

analysts of working women tend to look in the wrong place ... we have sought to find women where we have already found men ... we have accepted the gender division of labour, but only after we have accepted the masculine perception of the world divided easily into work and home.¹³

In 1993, British historian Amanda Vickery drew attention to the chronological inconsistencies of the separate spheres theory more broadly, but it continues to pervade not just historiographies of the nineteenth century, but also the more general understanding of what it meant to be female before the late twentieth century.¹⁴ The result of this persistence has been that, as Béatrice Craig argued in 2015, scholars have been ‘disinclined to look for [businesswomen]: one does not search for what one believes does not exist’.¹⁵

Melbourne University Press, 1994). In New Zealand Raewyn Dalziel’s work was foundational in establishing the idea of the ‘colonial helpmeet’, useful but contained, in ‘The Colonial Helpmeet: Women’s Role and the Vote in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of History* 11, (1977): pp. 112–23; In North America, Nancy Cott’s *The Bonds of Womanhood: Women’s Sphere in New England, 1780–1835*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) was significant and in France, Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class, The Bourgeoisie of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) remains influential.

¹³Jill Julius Matthews, ‘Deconstructing the Masculine Universe: The Case of Women’s Work’, in Women and Labour Publications Collective (ed.), *All Her Labours One: Working It Out*, (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984): pp. 11–23, p. 15. Similarly, Paula J. Byrne, ‘Economy and Free Women in Colonial New South Wales’, *Australian Feminist Studies* 11, no. 23 (1996): pp. 89–97.

¹⁴Amanda Vickery, ‘Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women in History’, *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2, (June 1993): pp. 383–414.

¹⁵Craig, *Women and Business*, p. 4.

We must also remember that early ground-breaking works in the field of women's history were writing from a markedly different perspective. Writing in the 1930s, historian Ivy Pinchbeck concluded that the industrial revolution fundamentally changed women's lives with the genesis of what she called the 'modern' idea that married women made an adequate and valuable contribution to society through caring for the home and children.¹⁶ Similarly, female historians writing in the 1970s and 1980s were battling such ideas on multiple fronts, fighting for equality in their own personal and professional lives while simultaneously trying to restore the female experience to the broader historical narrative. Historians are as much a product of their times as their subjects.

Therefore, when feminist historians began to turn their attention to business history in the 1990s, they too had to challenge what had become conventional wisdom. Historians in North America were among the first, including Peter Baskerville and Sylvia Van Kirk in Canada and Wendy Gamber, Angel Kwolek-Folland, Susan Ingalls Lewis, Edith Sparks and Mary A. Yeager in the United States.¹⁷ In Britain, it was not until Hannah Barker, Nicola Phillips and Alison Kay published their research in 2006 and 2009 that the reinterpretation of women's engagement in business there began in earnest. Simultaneously, economic and business historians including Robert Beachy, David R. Green, Pat Hudson, Jane Humphries, Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby, Alistair Owens and Janette Rutterford were reassessing the role of women in both industrialisation and finance.¹⁸

¹⁶Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850*, 3rd ed. (London: Virago, 1981).

¹⁷Peter Baskerville, "'She Has Already Hinted at Board": Enterprising Urban Women in British Columbia 1863–1896', *Histoire sociale- Social History* 26, No. 52 (1993): pp. 205–227; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1983); Wendy Gamber, 'A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History', *Business History Review* 72, (Summer 1998): pp. 188–217; Susan Ingalls Lewis, 'Female Entrepreneurs in Albany, 1840–1885', *Business and Economic History* 21, (1992): pp. 65–73; Edith Sparks, 'Married Women and Economic Choice: Explaining Why Women Started Businesses in San Francisco between 1890 and 1930', *Business and Economic History* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1999): pp. 287–300; Mary A. Yeager (ed.) *Women in Business*, 3 vols, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing; 1999).

¹⁸Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760–1830*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700–1850*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006); Alison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c. 1800–1870*, (London: Routledge, 2009); Robert Beachy, Béatrice Craig and Alastair Owens

Historians writing in English on nineteenth-century female business ownership in other European countries include Tom Ericsson for Sweden, Irene Bandauer-Schöffmann for Austria, Barbara Curli and Maura Palazzi for Italy. However, there are also several non-English-language articles and monographs that have shaped national historiographies, although they have had a more limited influence on the international conversation, which is still conducted primarily in English. With some notable exceptions, such as South American historian Muriel Nazzari in 1995, historians of other parts of the world have been slower to contribute to this strand of revisionist historiography, from either a business or feminist history perspective.¹⁹ It was not until 15 years after the publication of Angel Kwolek-Folland's *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States*, that Catherine Bishop undertook the first full-length studies of businesswomen in nineteenth-century Australia and New Zealand. In Africa, Douglas Wheeler's 1996 examination of a mid-nineteenth-century female Luso-African merchant in Angola was a precursor to more sustained investigations by Mariana Candido, Selma Pantoja and Vanessa Oliveira a decade later.²⁰ South African historians

(eds), *Women, Business, and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres*, (Oxford: Berg 2006) Green et al. (eds) *Men, Women and Money*; Jane Humphries, "Lurking in the Wings...": Women in the Historiography of the Industrial Revolution', *Business and Economic History* 20, (1991): pp. 32–44; Laurence et al. (eds), *Women and Their Money*.

¹⁹ Barbara Curli, 'Women Entrepreneurs and Italian Industrialization: Conjectures and Avenues for Research', *Enterprise and Society* (2002), 3, pp. 634–656; Irene Bandauer-Schöffmann, 'Businesswomen in Austria', in Beachy, Craig and Owens (eds), *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth Century Europe, Rethinking Separate Spheres* (London: Berg, 2006): pp. 110–124; Tom Ericsson, 'Women, family, and small business in late nineteenth century Sweden', *The History of the Family* (2001), 6:2, pp. 225–239; Nicola Foote, 'Rethinking Race, Gender and Citizenship: Black West Indian Women on the Atlantic Coast of Costa Rica, c.1920–1940', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23, no. 2 (April 2004), pp. 198–21; Muriel Nazzari, 'Widows as Obstacles to Business: British Objections to Brazilian Marriage and Inheritance Laws', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4, (1995): pp. 781–802; Maura Palazzi, 'Economic autonomy and male authority: Female merchants in modern Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* (2002) 7, pp. 17–36.

²⁰ Douglas L. Wheeler, 'An Angolan Woman of Means: D. Ana Joaquina dos Santos e Silva, Mid-Nineteenth Century Luso-African Merchant-Capitalist of Luanda', *Santa Bárbara Portuguese Studies* 3, (1996): pp. 284–97; Mariana Candido, 'Águida Gonçalves da Silva, une dona à Benguela à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', *Brésil(s): Sciences humaines et sociales* 1, (2012): pp. 33–54; Mariana Candido, 'Strategies for Social Mobility: Liaisons between Foreign Men and Slave Women in Benguela, c. 1770–1850', in Gwyn Campbell and Elizabeth Elbourne (eds), *Sex, Power and Slavery: The Dynamics of Carnal Relations under Enslavement*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014): pp. 272–288; Selma Pantoja, 'Women's

have not previously approached the topic of nineteenth-century women in business, with the chapters in this volume by Sean Redding and Grietje Verhoef representing the first forays into the field. As Verhoef points out, this perhaps results from different historiographical priorities in Africa, where race, slavery and colonialism have rightly loomed larger.²¹ Similarly, as Seven Ağır acknowledges, the study of female business owners is a relatively underexplored area of the Turkish historiography.²² With the exception of women as brothel keepers, there are only tantalising glimpses of female entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century China, although it must be noted that the Chinese diaspora has received greater attention.²³ It might be that ‘legitimate’ Chinese female business owners were not there to find, but this then raises important questions of what caused them to leave—or not enter—the marketplace, and what they were doing instead. In her examination of Chinese female brothel keepers in Hong Kong for example, Elizabeth Sinn noted that ‘since few women in nineteenth-century Chinese society had the opportunity to operate businesses, brothel keeping in Hong Kong was one of the first arenas where they could realize and develop their entrepreneurial skills’.²⁴ Alternatively, it could be that cultural forces meant that they became less visible participants within family businesses—still there, but not in plain sight. Business historian Chi Cheung Choi has explored the significance of maternal kinship ties in Chinese business in the period, in similar fashion to Mary Louise Nagata’s examination of family firms in nineteenth-century Kyoto in this volume,

Work in the Fairs and Markets of Luanda’, in Clara Sarmiento (ed.), *Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): pp. 81–94; Vanessa S. Oliveira, ‘The Gendered Dimension of Trade: Female Traders in Nineteenth Century Luanda’, *Portuguese Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2015): pp. 93–121.

²¹ Verhoef, Chap. 3 in this volume. We are grateful to Amy Rommerspacher for her assistance in investigating South African historiography.

²² Ağır, Chap. 17 in this volume.

²³ Gregor Benton, Hong Liu and Huimei Zhang (eds), *Qiaopi Trade and Transnational Networks in the Chinese Diaspora*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Natalie Fong, ‘“Chinese Capitalists” and the Cultivation of Trade: Australian-Chinese Transnational Businesses and Practices, 1880s–1940s’, conference paper, Australian Historical Association conference 2019.

²⁴ Elizabeth Sinn, ‘Women at Work: Chinese Brothel Keepers in 19th Century Hong Kong’, *The Journal of Women’s History* 19, no. 3 (2007): pp. 87–111.

and has likewise stressed the importance of both maternal *and* paternal kinship ties to the success and longevity of family firms.²⁵

There was a high level of prescriptive and proscriptive rhetoric about women and domesticity circulating the nineteenth-century globe, but this should not be read as reflecting how women behaved. We argue it could well suggest women were *not* behaving as they should. Why else would it have been necessary to reinforce the idea so insistently that women should be contained? We certainly do not deny that the rhetoric of female domesticity was found all over the world, particularly in places colonised by Europeans. Some late-nineteenth-century women even espoused ‘professionalised domesticity’, arguing that middle-class domesticity required a professional approach, which took just as much effort as employment or business ownership.²⁶ However, as the following chapters show, the embodiment of the ideal domestic helpmeet wife differed from place to place, between classes and across time. The ideal of domesticity was predominantly aimed at white middle-class women, but the leisured lives of these women relied upon the visible (and invisible) hard work of an army of working-class and non-white women. Catherine Bishop identifies variations in New Zealand where the mid-century role of a ‘useful wife’ or ‘colonial helpmeet’ could respectably encompass business activity for middle-class women of both white European and Māori descent.²⁷ Jennifer Aston’s work on women in late-nineteenth-century Britain shows that successful middle-class businesswomen engaged in what prevailing rhetoric would have termed genteel and respectable middle-class female practices as well as the public civic roles that characterised successful middle-class businessmen. This indicates female business owners were included in polite society rather than being excluded from it merely because they engaged in trade.²⁸ On the other hand, chapters by Kari Zimmerman on Brazil, and Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez on Spain, point to the ideology of domesticity being stronger in particular societies, notably those in which the Catholic church dominated, requiring some adept manipulation by some women on the one hand, although providing opportunities in family businesses on the other.

²⁵ Chi Cheung Choi, ‘Kinship and Business: paternal and maternal kin in the Chaozhou Chinese family firms’, *Business History* 40, (1998): pp. 26–49.

²⁶ See the lives of Catharine Beecher and Ellen Swallow Richards in North America, Harriet Wicken and Amy Schauer in Australia, and Isabella Beeton in Great Britain.

²⁷ See Bishop, Chap. 7 in this volume.

²⁸ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, Chaps. 5 and 6.

Business historians are increasingly challenging the stereotype of heroic, alpha-male, Schumpeterian entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century, painting them instead as more carefully calculating and imaginative risk takers and inadvertently becoming more gender inclusive. This is occurring alongside the growing number of feminist historians who have, as noted above, unequivocally positioned women as central figures in almost all aspects of nineteenth-century economic life, working both independently and in partnerships with family and others, in small and large scale manufacturing processes, retailing operations, farming and elite estate management.²⁹ Although sporadic and uneven, this revisionist

²⁹ Barker, *The Business of Women*; Peter Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution?: Gender and Wealth in English Canada, 1860–1930*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008); Bettina Bradbury, *From Wife to Widow: Lives, Laws and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Montreal*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011); Melanie Buddle *The Business Of Women: Marriage, Family and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia 1901–51* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011); Wendy Gamber, *The Boarding House in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860–1930*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, ‘The Economic Role of Middle-Class Women in Victorian Glasgow’, *Women’s History Review* 9, no. 4 (2000): pp. 791–814; David Green and Alistair Owens, ‘Gentlewomanly Capitalism? Spinsters, Widows, and Wealth Holding in England and Wales C. 1800–1860’, *Economic History Review* 3 (2003): pp. 510–36; Beth Harris (ed.), *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century*, (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); Kay, *Foundations*; Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office 1870–1930*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994); Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Lewis, *Unexceptional Women*; Laurence et al. (eds), *Women and Their Money 1700–1950*; Briony McDonagh, *Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape, 1700–1830*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); Lucy E. Murphy, ‘Business Ladies: Midwestern Women and Enterprise, 1850–1880’, *Journal of Women’s History* 3, no. 1 (1991): pp. 65–89; Oliveira, ‘The Gendered Dimension of Trade; Phillips, *Women in Business*; Evan Roberts, ‘Her Real Sphere? Married Women’s Labor Force Participation in the United States, 1860–1940’, (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 2007); Pamela Sharpe, *The Nineteenth Century Businesswoman in the British Isles: Work Culture, Adaptation and the Lace Trade*, (Nedlands, W.A.: Centre for Women and Business, Graduate School of Management, University of Western Australia, 2003); Sparks, *Capital Intentions*; Glenda Strachan and Lindy Henderson, ‘Assumed but Rarely Documented: Women’s Entrepreneurial Activities in Late Nineteenth Century Australia’, Paper presented at the ‘The Past is Before Us’ conference, Sydney 2005; Glenda Strachan and Lindy Henderson, ‘Surviving Widowhood: Life Alone in Rural Australia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century’, *Continuity and Change* 23, no. 3 (2008): pp. 487–508; Galina Ulianova, *Female Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2009); Claire Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia’s Female Publicans*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003);

literature demonstrates that businesswomen were consistently and persistently present in almost every marketplace and dominant in a few. These findings for the nineteenth century continue the story of the eighteenth century, where women's presence in business has been much more readily accepted, in part due to its long-established portrayal as a 'golden age' for women, and foreshadow women's involvement in twentieth-century finance and business corporations.³⁰

SOURCES: OLD AND NEW

The feminist revolution in historical interpretations of nineteenth-century business owes a great debt to the advent of digital archives, which have made new material available and manipulable to scholars all over the world. Finding women's stories in historical sources is not—and never has been—straightforward, but has become easier with searchable digitised archives and catalogues, along with the corresponding technological advancements in the use of big data.³¹ Historians have been inspired to go back to the archives, either making new discoveries and questioning conventional wisdom, or re-analysing sources to make new comparisons and draw fresh conclusions. The contributors to this volume have taken up the challenge of ignoring the white noise of domesticity and looking for women of enterprise rather than assuming their absence.

Yeager (ed.), *Women in Business*; Brian Young, 'Getting around Legal Incapacity: The Legal Status of Married Women in Trade in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Lower Canada' in Peter Baskerville (ed.), *Canadian Papers in Business History*, (Victoria, British Columbia: Public History Group University of Victoria, 1989), pp. 1–16; Kari Zimmerman "'As Pertaining to the Female Sex": The Legal and Social Norms of Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro, Brazil', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (2016): pp. 39–72.

³⁰Vickery, 'From Golden Age to Separate Spheres'; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680–1780*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach (eds), *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830*, (New York: Routledge, 2013); Maria Ågren, 'Making Her Turn Around: the Verb-Oriented Method, the Two-Supporter Model, and the Focus on Practice', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2018): pp. 144–152; Jane Whittle, 'Enterprising Widows and Active Wives: Women's Unpaid Work in the Household Economy of Early Modern England', *History of the Family* 19, no. 3 (2014): pp. 283–300.

³¹Catherine Bishop, 'The Serendipity of Connectivity: Piecing Together Women's Lives in the Digital Archive', *Women's History Review* 26, no. 5 (2017): pp. 766–780.

Nevertheless, we are often still ‘reading against the grain’ to capture the surviving fragments of women’s lives and to understand their significance to the bigger narrative of economic history. Sometimes this has involved focusing on a single case study, such as in Alisha M. Cromwell’s investigation of the complex relationship between elite and enslaved women in the southern US marketplace. Others have compared and contrasted several case studies, such as in Blake Singley’s chapter on Australian cookbook writers, Vanessa Oliveira’s study of Luso women in Angola and C. Nathan Kwan’s discussion of women’s roles in the grey economies of Chinese piracy. Catherine Bishop, Melanie Buddle, Béatrice Craig and Susan Ingalls Lewis have knitted together strands from multiple sources to shed light on businesswomen in Australasia, Canada, Paris and the United States, respectively. Combining sources such as official records, account books and contemporary fictional accounts can, as Marie Francois shows in her chapter on Mexican laundresses, paint an evocative picture of the reality of their daily lives. Kari Zimmerman has used Brazilian patent records to understand one expression of female entrepreneurship and more unusually, Sean Redding uses Cape Colony witchcraft cases to provide insight into attitudes toward African women farmers.

With the development of the digital archive has come the possibility of using bigger datasets, enabling these rich micro-histories to be understood within a broader context. One of the most exciting new datasets is the Integrated Census Microdata (I-CeM), utilised here by Carry van Lieshout, Harry Smith and Robert J. Bennett to track female entrepreneurship in England across time, providing both new findings and confirming trends of female business ownership that historians had observed in other sources. Other chapters in this volume also use larger datasets, including the annual population surveys of thirty urban districts in Kyoto, (Mary Louise Nagata), R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Reports in the United States, (Susan Ingalls Lewis) and the Book of Firms (*Libro de Sociedades*) in Spain (Carmen Hernandez-Nicolas and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez). Grietje Verhoef and Seven Ağır have both used similar company records to investigate patterns of female shareholding and company directorship in the Cape Colony and Turkey, respectively. This volume’s combination of big history and micro-history shows that there are multiple and imaginative ways to uncover evidence about female enterprise. Significantly, each of these approaches reveals more information about women’s activities as business owners, showing the strength of utilising broad definitions and methodologies.

SEX MATTERS

Having found that businesswomen ‘were there too’, we need to understand what that meant and why it is important. Adding female entrepreneurs changes the narrative of economic history and bringing multiple studies together allows us to identify common themes as well as important differences. The recent scholarship is by no means homogenous, and neither are the chapters in this volume. A number of important questions emerge in the following chapters: did women do business differently from men? Did different types of economies and societies create different opportunities (or make it more or less essential) for women to enter and succeed in business? What were the gendered experiences of women in business? Did they cluster in certain trades and, if so, how do we interpret that?

In this volume, we turn our attention more fully to how women *did* business. Board of Trade records from late-nineteenth-century England and Wales, for example, show that men and women operated firms of similar size, engaged in similar levels of risk-taking and enjoyed similar levels of success. Indeed, if we take into account the extra responsibilities many women had as wives and mothers, then there is a good case to argue that female business owners in late-nineteenth-century Britain were actually more successful than their male counterparts.³² Contributors to this volume show that businesswomen in Australasia, Paris and the United States shared similar experiences. English trade directory data also suggest that in multigenerational firms, women were in charge for longer than the male family members from whom they inherited the firm.³³ The importance of women in the transfer of multigenerational firms is also apparent beyond the UK, albeit with variations, as far afield as Spain, Japan and New Zealand, as chapters in this volume demonstrate.

The motivations of individual business owners are difficult to ascertain, and this is true regardless of whether the owner is male or female, but there is little evidence that women were innately less entrepreneurial than men or that they conducted their businesses in any less ‘business-like’ a manner. The fundamental difference between male and female business owners seems to be not so much in their entrepreneurial ambition, or in

³² Jennifer Aston and Paolo Di Martino, ‘Risk, success, and failure: female entrepreneurship in late Victorian and Edwardian England’, *Economic History Review* 70, no. 3 (August 2013): pp. 837–58.

³³ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, p. 111.

their business abilities, but in the gendered external forces affecting their personal and professional lives. It seems to us that the cult of domesticity and the notion of separate spheres have had a far greater impact on the minds of later historians than they ever did on the lived experience of most nineteenth-century women. Nevertheless, there *were* many constraints placed on women that were not placed on men, particularly in law. Some of the most striking geographical differences revealed by this volume are in the legal structures that restricted or promoted women's business activities, particularly in laws regarding married women's property rights and inheritance practices. The influence of individual colonial regimes is starkly apparent, with continental European laws markedly different from those of the British Empire. Married women in a variety of jurisdictions were subject to specific legal constraints in property and business ownership, though they often found creative ways around the practicalities of trading, including securing credit and bankruptcy.³⁴ Russian wives were a notable exception, retaining property rights through marriage, although interestingly their business participation levels were not correspondingly higher. This is perhaps because wider business communities the world over tacitly accepted the creative solutions that by-passed the official letter of the law—with married women able to trade and secure credit for example—and businesswomen therefore remained ubiquitous. Melanie Buddle's chapter highlights the way in which marriage and business were by no means mutually exclusive in British Columbia, with that society offering particular opportunities for female entrepreneurship, while Vanessa Oliveira describes the strategies used by Luso-Angolan women to protect their hard-earned profits from new husbands. It is important to remember that a single-income family was (and remains) economically impossible for the majority of the population; women had to work and business ownership could offer more flexibility than employment. It was therefore arguably in the best interests of the community to ignore activities that did not meet the exact letter of the law.

Our contributors also show that business was something in which respectable women might engage, particularly when it was framed as necessary or as a means to further the family's fortunes. Class mattered in many places, influencing the types of businesses and level of engagement, but a successful businesswoman was generally respected, except, perhaps, by a narrow elite. Having moved beyond the separate spheres theory,

³⁴ Aston and Di Martino, 'Risk, Success, and Failure'.

historians have become more interested in intersections and liminal spaces, such as what sociologist Lyn Loflund called the ‘parochial realm’, arenas in which women were able to act relatively unhindered. As historian Clare Hoare has shown in the case of turn-of-the-century British shop-keeping women, many conducted their businesses among friends and neighbours, reaching beyond the domestic but still not far from home.³⁵

Men did not (and often still do not) have the ‘double bind’ of reproductive, caring and domestic responsibilities faced by their female counterparts, for whom running a business from home was often one of the few money-making options available. This is, however, where region, class and economic conditions become so important. Some historians argue that industrialisation and the subsequent separation of workplace and home exacerbated women’s withdrawal from the public sphere because the separate premises meant that they were no longer able to combine motherhood with working in the family firm.³⁶ Elsewhere, it is suggested that small home-based businesses persisted through the nineteenth century, something that would enable childcare and business to exist side by side.³⁷ While for many home and business premises were one and the same, their attention still had to be divided between commercial and domestic, ultimately limiting the size of the business itself. The co-location of work and home, too, was not universal, and Ulianova and Craig argue that many businesswomen were able to outsource their domestic duties to other women in much the same way as unmarried or wealthier businessmen would have done.³⁸ Similarly, Alison C. Kay has argued that by assigning childcare and domestic duties to residential servants, businesswomen in London could maximise their earning potential.³⁹

Like men, women could enter the business world through an informal apprenticeship in a family firm, a formal trade apprenticeship, the

³⁵Lyn Loflund, *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory*, (Hawthorne, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 10–14; Clare Hoare, ‘Making Provision: Female Grocery-Shop Proprietors in late-Victorian/Edwardian London’, seminar paper, Women’s History Network, Institute of Historical Research, King’s College, London, 15 March 2019.

³⁶Pinchbeck, *Women Workers*.

³⁷Aston and Di Martino, ‘Risk, success, and failure’; Kay, *Foundations*; Lewis, *Unexceptional Women*.

³⁸Ulianova, Chap. 4 in this volume; Béatrice Craig, Global Female Entrepreneurs Workshop, Northumbria University, 16 April 2019.

³⁹Kay, *Foundations*, pp. 96–7.

development of self-taught domestic skills or by purchasing an enterprise. Other options for making money, particularly enough money to support a family, were limited. Female employees were habitually paid less than men, and girls were often not educated to a level where they could enter the professions, which were in any case closed to them for much of the nineteenth century across much of the globe. Middle-class men and women had different opportunities and expectations: men of the middling sort were encouraged to think of a career whereas women were not. Most working-class women were always expected to work, but, like working-class men, they lacked the financial wherewithal to access higher education. Business was therefore an attractive option. The case studies in the following pages demonstrate how women across the nineteenth century and across the world used their businesses to provide for themselves and their families, overcoming a lack of education and juggling the additional ball of domestic responsibilities, with varying degrees of financial success.

Debates continue, not least over the meaning of women's participation in business and the types of businesses they ran.⁴⁰ Women across the world were active in an enormous variety of trades, including those we might traditionally think of as masculine or, at the very least, 'unfeminine'. Female dentists, bankers, butchers and pirates all appear in these pages. Nevertheless, a common theme throughout, almost regardless of geographical location, local economy or political structure, is the predominance of so-called feminine trades among businesswomen. Female business owners are most commonly found trading in the textile, retailing and service industries, but it would be an oversimplification to assume that this was a sign of their marginalisation and restriction to 'women's work'. We must ask questions about women's access to capital and whether a struggle

⁴⁰Sometimes these debates are the result of variations across time and space. For instance, in this volume it is noticeable that Bishop (Chap. 7) finds widows playing active roles in mid-century Australasian businesses, in much the same way as Aston found in the UK and Craig (Chap. 5) in France, suggesting agency and entrepreneurship. The chapters by Susana Martínez-Rodríguez and Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás (Chap. 14) on Spain and Mary Louise Nagata (Chap. 11) on Japan, however, suggest that widows there were more likely to be playing more passive roles in larger family businesses. While Alison Kay suggested within the context of her work on nineteenth-century London businesswomen that the goals of entrepreneurship can be seen as different for men and women, partly due to the cultural, economic and legal barriers faced by women in business, Susan Ingalls Lewis (Chap. 10) in her work on Albany in New York State, along with Catherine Bishop and others, have reminded us that most men's businesses were of a similar size during this period. Similarly, work by Aston and Di Martino on the later period in the UK argues for fewer gendered differences in business sizes, motives, practices and success.

to secure it meant women entered trades with low start-up costs and overheads/that could be fitted around childcare.⁴¹ We must also ask how many businesswomen were simply desperate and lacking in the skills, education and opportunity to run anything more lucrative or high status. On the other hand, the predominance of women in certain trades could be evidence of women recognising a comparative advantage and exploiting their femininity to cater for a predominantly female market, or cornering niche businesses where they had expertise. For example, Edith Sparks argues that women running hostelries in the gold rush towns were quick to sense an opportunity to market ‘a meal cooked by a woman’ to hungry men living away from their families.⁴² Similarly, Stana Nenadic argues that women in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Scotland were uniquely placed to capture the dressmaking market as female customers preferred to buy from women.⁴³

There is sometimes a temptation to apologise for women who used ‘feminine’ skills or catered to female customers, as if their achievements in lowly service industries are somehow both predictable and less important than activity in more ‘masculine’ enterprises. Why do historians and the general public alike get so excited finding a female butcher or undertaker but less so by a milliner or midwife? Equally, why is there an enduring sense that somehow a male carpenter, butcher or factory owner is more productive, important and skilled than a female corset maker, fancy goods shop proprietor or boarding housekeeper? All of these businesses contribute in different but equally important ways to the economic prosperity and broader society. Jennifer Aston and Wendy Gamber have argued that many of these ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ trades both required the same business skill sets, for instance securing a business premises and capital, learning how to make a product and completing business accounts.⁴⁴ We

⁴¹ Some early exploratory work on this topic in nineteenth-century Britain suggests that, unlike bankruptcy law where male and female traders were (mostly) treated equally, women seeking capital from formal lending institutions such as banks were heavily biased against female lenders. See Jennifer Aston, ‘Financing Female Enterprise: Businesswomen and Finance in London, 1880–1910’, conference paper, Economic History Society Annual Conference, Royal Holloway, April 2017. In contrast, in mid-nineteenth-century New Zealand, where lending was in the hands of private individuals, anecdotal evidence suggests that at least women participated equally. See Catherine Bishop, *Women Mean Business*, p. 28.

⁴² Sparks, *Capital Intentions*.

⁴³ Stana Nenadic, ‘The Social Shaping of Business Behaviour in the Nineteenth-century Women’s Garment Trades’, *Journal of Social History* 31, no. 3 (Spring, 1998): pp. 625–645.

⁴⁴ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*; Gamber, *The Female Economy*.

might say, therefore, that those women who identified the business opportunities in which they had a competitive advantage over men, for instance in dressmaking, midwifery and boarding housekeeping, were exemplifying entrepreneurship at its best. Examples of such women can be seen in Blake Singley's turn-of-the-century Australian cookbook writers and Melanie Buddle's frontier society hoteliers and boarding housekeepers in British Columbia. Similarly, while some historians point to women's work tending to be underpaid, others, such as Jennifer Aston and Béatrice Craig, highlight the potential for both economic success and the potential for women to corner high-end markets.⁴⁵ Susan Ingalls Lewis's chapter also shows that many women in business in American towns operated at a level beyond that of mere 'penny capitalists'.

TOWARDS A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

No edited collection is ever complete. Not all European countries are represented here, primarily because our aim is to move beyond that area, which already has a rich literature. This is not true for many other continents. Despite our best efforts, we have no chapters from North Africa, none covering South East Asia and, perhaps particularly surprisingly, none from India. A simple reason for our failure to locate potential contributors in other countries may be language. As lamentably monolingual native English speakers, we participate in scholarly networks and conversations conducted primarily in English. It is a powerful commentary on the state of the discipline more broadly that the contributors in this volume, while researching disparate areas of the globe, are predominantly based in academic institutions in Europe, North America, or in former British settler colonies. There may be parallel literatures discussing female entrepreneurship in Mandarin, Thai or Arabic, but these scholars and their work are not participating in the current discussions taking place at the World Economic History Conference or American and Europe-based Business History symposiums. Finding a way of communicating across this linguistic divide is another sort of challenge facing any transnational history.

There may also be other reasons for the lack of immediately obvious scholarship. Is it that women in these areas were not participating in

⁴⁵ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*; Béatrice Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Nineteenth-Century Northern France*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

business in the nineteenth century? If this was the case, then we need to ask why. Do we need to extend our definitions of business activity even further to account for different types of economies and societies and to include a greater variety of economic activities? Within this volume itself, it is clear that individual political, cultural and religious regimes produced different priorities and economic and social structures. Familial enterprise rather than individual entrepreneurship, for instance, was particularly important in Japan. In Turkey, it was social entrepreneurship that came to the fore, while the contrast between Dutch and English legal, social and economic frameworks is clear in the Cape Colony.

It is impossible to ignore Europe in any discussion of the nineteenth-century world—competing empires shaped much of the globe both economically and legally, intersecting with local geographies and Indigenous peoples in myriad ways. Scholarship by historians such as Antoinette Burton illustrates that non-white women from colonised societies engaged with the ‘motherland’ and created agency in sometimes surprising ways.⁴⁶ Similarly, Sylvia Van Kirk’s exploration of the role of women in the Canadian fur trade, not only uncovered the ‘many tender ties’ that connected Indigenous women and foreign men, but also their engagement in the business of fur trading.⁴⁷ As is apparent in several chapters, women, particularly women of minority or Indigenous groups, were sometimes able to exploit the fractures in imperial societies and economies, operating in the liminal spaces or ‘borderlands’ between authorities. This is particularly apparent in Alisha M. Cromwell’s discussion of enslaved and elite women in the American South, in C. Nathan Kwan’s examination of Chinese women engaged in piracy and in Marie Francois’ exploration of Mexican laundresses who benefited from the absence of regulation. Similarly, the business activities of Māori women in New Zealand and African female farmers in the Eastern Cape straddled two cultures, drawing upon personal relationships to establish trade with both communities.

We should not forget too, that despite any legal or cultural restrictions, European settler women occupied particular and privileged positions in colonial societies. There is an argument that women were hidebound by

⁴⁶ See, for example, Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire; Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), Chapter 7; Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁴⁷ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*.

the constraints of their whiteness, having to perform the ideals of European femininity in a foreign context more vigorously than they might have in Europe.⁴⁸ Yet it is also true that their relative power and status could give them more confidence in business, and the ‘newness’ of the colonial settlements may have provided economic opportunities they might not have had back ‘home’. The privilege that could be enjoyed by white women is particularly pronounced in areas like the southern United States where, as Alisha M. Cromwell illustrates, the enslavement of people, even on a relatively small scale, could provide a highly profitable source of income. Equally, it should be noted that many ‘independent’ women in Britain owed their financial security and success to investments in slave plantations.⁴⁹

This volume’s omissions highlight specific places, times and communities for future research, pose questions about reasons for the gaps and challenge historians of both gender and business to think more broadly about their research. The research presented here continues to challenge the historiographic concept that domesticity dominated the lives of nineteenth-century women and that they had to balance social propriety with limited, feminine business opportunities. Much more importantly, however, the chapters in this volume identify areas of international common interest, moving beyond established geographical and periodisation frameworks by highlighting multiple interpretations of female entrepreneurship, considering everything from the daily minutiae of individual enterprises to the larger picture of national involvement over 60 years. Archives and sources better serve some countries than others, and each archive lends itself to different types of questions being asked. Thus, the chapters in this book take in not only broad timespans and widely varying geographies, but also use a multitude of methodological approaches and

⁴⁸White women were expected to model appropriate female behaviour as exemplars of imperial womanhood. See Philippa Levine (ed.) *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), especially Barbara Bush, ‘Gender and Empire: The Twentieth Century’, p. 90.

⁴⁹Hannah Young, ‘Forgotten Women: Anna Eliza Elletson and Absentee Slave Ownership’, in Katie Donnington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody (eds), *Britain’s History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery: Local Nuances of a ‘National Sin’*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016): pp. 83–101; Jennifer Aston, ‘More than just a Caretaker: Women’s Role in the Intergenerational Transfer of Real and Personal Property in Nineteenth-Century Urban England, 1840–1900’, in Amanda Capern, Briony McDonagh and Jennifer Aston (eds), *Women and the Land, 1500–1900*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2019): pp. 244–66.

source material. This demonstrates the richness of this field of enquiry and the variety of both experiences and interpretations.

Chapters range across the long nineteenth century and include micro-histories, big data analysis and everything in-between. Some investigate small businesses, while others analyse larger companies; some focus on widows and unmarried women, others on wives. The chapters are organised chronologically, although there is considerable overlap, highlighting the comparisons and contrasts between countries and continents. The volume represents an important opportunity to weave together the threads of several fields of research and expand our historic understanding of female entrepreneurship, not just in urban Western societies, but globally, taking in differing legal, economic and political structures. The historians who have contributed to this volume range from Emeritus Professors to PhD students, and come from different academic backgrounds, in business as well as history. All are border-crossers, seeking to work collaboratively, imaginatively and, through the lens of female entrepreneurship in the long nineteenth century, to contribute towards a global history that includes all people and multiple perspectives.

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CHAPTER 2

‘Se Mantiene de Lavar’: The Laundry Business in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Mexico City

Marie Francois

‘Verónica’ the laundress is featured in daily correspondence, or *schelas*, moving along with clothing and linens between two houses of an aristocratic merchant family identified as ‘Los Regentes’ in the summer of 1769 in Mexico City, capital of New Spain, the richest Spanish colony in the Americas.¹ It was a several-hour trip by carriage along the Calzada de Tlalpan for the messengers at the service of the household travelling daily from the mansion in the city on Calle de Capuchinas to the country house.² Reports of the merchant’s imported goods, goods commissioned from artisans, food moving from one house to another and the laundering

¹ Archivo General de la Nacional (AGN), Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferentes Virreinal, Caja 5748, exp. 100, 17.

² Around the time of this correspondence, the merchant guild financed the construction of a road between the capital and San Agustín de las Cuevas, the location of the country house. Christiana Renate Borchart de Moreno, *Los Mercaderes y el capitalismo en la ciudad de México, 1759–1788* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984), p. 32; Regina Hernández

M. Francois (✉)

California State University Channel Islands, Camarillo, CA, USA

e-mail: marie.francois@csuci.edu

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J. Aston, C. Bishop (eds.), *Female Entrepreneurs in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Palgrave Studies in Economic History, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33412-3_2

of clothing, bedding and table service are intertwined in the letters, belying any easy separation of life into public or private spheres. A century later in 1868, the magazine *La Orquesta* features a fictional washerwoman, part of a genre of *custombrista* literature by middle-class and elite writers depicting ‘typical’ occupations. The chapter highlights the intimacy between ‘La Lavandera’ and her clients, her skill in customer service and in running her business and the difficulty of the physical labour, blurring lines between labour and entrepreneurship.³ Other real-life laundresses appear in notarised documents, municipal papers, newspapers and census records. Drawing on these archival and literary sources, this chapter examines the small business sector of the washing of clothing and linens over the last century of colonial rule and into the first century of the national period.⁴ Laundresses in Mexico City were ‘female entrepreneurs, self-employed women who ran their own concerns, however miniscule or ephemeral ... that involved economic risk’, their enterprise embedded in the fabric of everyday life.⁵

Laundry was, and still is, done in unpaid and paid contexts. In the former case, washing clothing and household linens is included among other tasks and activities bundled into categories of ‘housekeeping’ and domestic service.⁶ In the latter, laundresses, many household heads, made a living washing for individuals, families and institutions in an economic sector not formally organised or regulated in the guild system governing other sectors of the economy. Meeting a demand for everyday labour, washing enterprises involved business acumen necessary to manage investments, clientele and risk, and considerable skills required to achieve cleanliness in a pre-industrial setting.⁷ The laundry business operated within a larger

Franyuti, ‘La historia institucional como fuente para el estudio de las obras públicas’, *América Latina en la Historia Económica* 7, no. 13/14 (2014): pp. 157–169.

³ Hilarión Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera* (México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1993).

⁴ The Independence movement in New Spain started in 1810 and culminated in 1821.

⁵ Wendy Gamber, ‘A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Business Women in History’, *Business History Review* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1998): pp. 188–217.

⁶ Marie Francois, ‘Products of Consumption: Housework in Latin American Political Economies and Cultures’, *History Compass* 6, no. 1 (2008): pp. 207–242.

⁷ On the skill involved in the many-stage laundry process in nineteenth-century Mexico, see Pepe Monteserín, *La Lavandera* (Madrid: Ediciones Lengua del Trapo, 2007), pp. 69–73. See also Marie Francois, ‘La *lavandería*, la producción cultural y la economía política en la ciudad de México’, in Susie S. Porter y María Teresa Fernández Aceves (eds), *Género en la encrucijada de la historia social y cultural de México* (México: El Colegio de Michoacán CIESAS, 2015), pp. 33–66. For laundresses in other settings, see Patricia

cloth economy encompassing commercial production, retail and service sectors.⁸ The cloth economy included gendered sectors—female milliners and seamstresses producing goods such as the small businesswomen studied by Wendy Gamber—within and beyond the guild system. Edith Sparks identifies a ‘commerce of domesticity’ handled by laundry and boarding house businesses in San Francisco in the nineteenth century.⁹

THE BUSINESS CONTEXT: WITHIN AND OUTSIDE GUILDS

Business in the eighteenth-century colonial capital was structured in everyday market contexts of supply and demand, and through regulatory and ideological structures such as the guild system and patriarchal norms. The small business world was rooted in guilds, which were both production workshops and places of business. Master artisans were business owners, securing the production workforce of journeymen and apprentices, supplying the stock of raw materials and tools needed to produce goods (cloth, furniture, pottery, candles, metals, jewellery, etc.), and marketing the goods produced in their workshops to clientele. In his 1954 study of guilds, Manuel Carrera Stampa characterised the artisan as an ‘independent *empresario*, a small capitalist. His capital included: house or workshop, his own or rented; machinery and tools indispensable to his profession; and primary materials’.¹⁰ There were no fewer than three dozen guilds in operation in Mexico City in the 1780s. Large-scale commerce, such as import-export trading, as well as small-scale retail, was

E. Malcolmson, *English Laundresses: A Social History 1850–1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Carole Rawcliffe, ‘A Marginal Occupation? The Medieval Laundress and Her Work’, *Gender and History* 21, no. 1 (2009): pp. 147–169; Carmen Sarasúa, ‘El oficio más molesto, más duro: el trabajo de las lavanderas en la España de los siglos XVIII al XX’, *Historia Social*, no. 45, Oficios (2003): pp. 53–77; Tera W. Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁸ Rebecca Haidt, *Women, Work and Clothing in Eighteenth-Century Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*, Trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Gamber, ‘A Gendered Enterprise’.

⁹ Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

¹⁰ Manuel Carrera Stampa, *Los gremios mexicanos. La organización gremial en Nueva España 1521–1861* (México: Edición y Distribución Ibero Americana de Publicaciones, 1954), p. 11.

organised through a merchant guild, or *Consulado*, dominated by peninsular Spaniards and regulated by iterations of the *Ordenanzas de Consulado de Méjico* (1636, 1772 and 1816).¹¹ The Consulado dissolved soon after independence in 1824; artisan guilds held on until 1853.¹²

Women worked throughout the economy of the capital of New Spain, as they had done in Mexican times.¹³ The Bourbon Reforms in the late eighteenth century included efforts to formally open to women sectors of the artisanal economy that had been officially closed to them, though that is not to say that women were not already active in those *oficios*, as discussed for the Turkish case by Seven Ağır (Chap. 17) in this volume. Some widows of guild masters in Mexico City were permitted to maintain a workshop, or to share proprietorship with an apprentice once he passed guild examination. Women also worked alongside men in guilds in the tobacco, embroidery, shoes, ceramics and printing industries. There were a few exclusively female guilds, including silk spinners; weavers of wool, silk and cotton; and candy makers.¹⁴ In 1788, there were more than 200 female silk spinners: 23 were masters of workshops; 200 were *oficiales* or journeywomen, and 21 were apprentices. There were more female master artisans and *oficiales* in the art of silk spinning than male. One master spinner, María Gertrudis Gutiérrez Estrada, defended in court her right to continue her business after her husband's death 'because if I am deprived of industry and work, I will be brought to a state of mendacity; the sizable family that I maintain with my toil will be ruined; I would lose my tools, in which I

¹¹ Juan N. Rodríguez de San Miguel, *Pandectas hispano-americanas, Tomo II* (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 1980), pp. 253–60. On retail businesses, see Marie Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Pawnbroking, Housekeeping, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

¹² Sonia Pérez Toledo, *Los Hijos del Trabajo: Los artesanos de la ciudad de México, 1780–185, 3* (México: El Colegio de México, 1996).

¹³ Elizabeth Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman (eds), *The Aztec World* (New York: Abrams, 2008); John E. Kicza, 'La mujer y la vida comercial en la ciudad de México a finales de la colonia', *Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 2, no. 4 (1981): pp. 39–59; Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790–1857* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press 1985); Sonia Pérez Toledo, 'El trabajo Femenino En La Ciudad De México A Mediados Del Siglo XIX', *Signos Históricos*, 10 (julio-diciembre 2003): pp. 80–114.

¹⁴ Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Las mujeres en la Nueva España: educación y vida cotidiana* (México: El Colegio de México, 1987), p. 120; Carrera Stampa, *Los gremios*, pp. 76–77.

have invested a considerable quantity and I would be left without the ability to pay what I owe'.¹⁵

The textile sector that Maestra Gutiérrez Castro contributed to made up by far the largest percentage of the guild system. There were multiple guilds related to different cloth trades: thread-making, weaving, finishing, confection, tanning and selling. The confection sector included tailors, who had a guild, and the seamstress trade, a major source of employment for women, although they were without a guild in Mexico.¹⁶ Dyers, or *tintoreros*, were in the finishing sector. They also served as dry cleaners of heavy-fabric clothing such as suits and overcoats and had a guild. At the intersection of small businesses providing services and skilled (yet marginalised) labour producing people and maintaining scarce resources, laundering was akin to sectors that were represented in the guild structure where lines of business and labour, provision and production, were blurred.¹⁷

Laundresses, however, like seamstresses, did not have a guild, and do not make it onto a chart breaking down the extensive textile sector in Jorge González Angulo Aguirre's study of the artisan trades.¹⁸ While guilds had apprenticeships for training in a trade, the laundry business apparently did not have formal training or examination. Yet, institutions housing young women established in the eighteenth century—the convent school at Nuestra Señora del Pilar (1753), the Viscaínas school for Basque girls (1757), La Enseñanza Nueva school to instruct Indian girls (1758) and the Hospicio de Pobres (1774)—all trained girls in the arts of washing and ironing.¹⁹ Without guilds to regulate practice and pricing, and without competition from men, the laundry trade was freer than those bound by guilds.

¹⁵ Rebeca Vanesa García Corso, 'La industria de la seda y el labor femenina a fines del siglo xviii in Nueva España: María Gertrudis Gutiérrez Estrada', *Historia Social* 35 (julio-diciembre de 2018): pp. 199–220, p. 210.

¹⁶ Marie Francois, 'Stitching Identities: Clothing Production and Consumption in Mexico City', in Anna Cristina Pertierra and John Sinclair (eds), *Consumer Culture in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 107–120.

¹⁷ Gamber, 'A Gendered Enterprise', p. 193; Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998).

¹⁸ Jorge González Angulo Aguirre, *Artesanado y ciudad a finales del siglo xviii* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1983), p. 30.

¹⁹ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, pp. 16–17. On apprentices, see Carrera Stampa, *Los gremios*, pp. 10–13, 25–37.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY

The everyday demand for laundry specialists was fuelled by an emphasis on ‘ropa blanca’ (white linen). Daniel Roche and Woodruff D. Smith describe a ‘revolution in linen’ in eighteenth-century Europe. Dress shirts, underwear and stocked linen closets became crucial for establishing and maintaining social status, increasingly pegged to cleanliness.²⁰ Copious amounts of household linen, the luxurious clothes of the well-to-do and the fancy uniforms worn by some servants needed constant care in Mexico. A letter from mill owner Antonio Manuela Herrera in 1758 to his wife in Spain alerted her to local fashions and admonished her to not skimp on the amount of white linen that she brought when she joined him in Mexico City.²¹ A hundred years later, the 1855 book *Mexicanos pintados por si mismos* depicted Mexicans—male and female—in typical attire centred on key white articles. For working-class occupations—water carriers, *chieras* (women selling fruit water), carriage drivers—white shirts were essential. A few businesswomen featured—seamstresses, *estanquilleras* (tobacco stall vendors)—wore long dresses with white petticoats peeking out from the bottom. Some men were depicted in a variety of three-piece attire—some with short coats (carriage driver, barber and clerk), another with a long formal coat (lawyer)—all with long-sleeved white shirts with high collars and some kind of tie.²² The expense of hand-made clothing in the pre-industrial cloth economy also shaped demand for cleaning specialists. Even those relatively well-off might have a limited wardrobe. For the case of Verónica’s Regente clients, their stock was deep enough to be able to wait a few days for delivery of clean clothing and bedding. Yet, the daily shipping of laundry across the town suggests that their wardrobes had

²⁰ Francois, ‘La Lavandería;’ Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 384–90. In the seventeenth century, outer clothing in Europe was altered so that more of the underclothing was visible, ‘usually at the collar, sleeves, or hem’. This heightened the image of those who could afford elaborate underclothes and to keep it in pristine condition. Smith notes ‘the fashion stuck—not only in the 18th century, but down to the present’. Woodruff Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600–1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 60.

²¹ Antonio Manuel Herrera to Doña Josefa de la Oliva y Ruiz, México, 24 de abril 1758, in Isabelo Macías y Francisco Morales Padrón (eds), *Cartas desde America, 1700–1800* (Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura y Medio Ambiente, 1991), p. 97. For more examples, see Francois, ‘La Lavandería’.

²² Juan de Dios Ariás, *Los mexicanos pintados por si mismos. Tipos y costumbres nacionales por various autore,s* (México: Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, Condumex, 1989), pp. 28, 48, 98, 140, 176.

their limits. The family might request the laundress to act quickly for some items for which there were few at hand or a favourite preferred. For example, on 24 May 1769: 'Toribio delivered the dirty clothes with its list, and told the Verónicas to quickly wash the cushion, and the master's belt'.²³ Demand for laundering on the market also came from those with fewer clothes, which required more regular attention than the wardrobes of the wealthier with dozens of shirts or undershirts.²⁴

WHO WERE THE 'VERÓNICAS'?

We do not know if 'Verónica', featured in the 1769 correspondence, was a white woman, a mestiza, a mulata or even a slave; likely, she was Creole, or a Spaniard born in Mexico. My study of census samples from 1753, 1811 and 1842 found laundresses to be a diverse workforce, with a surprising number of white women compared to other settings in colonial America. Slavery was not as important economically in late colonial Mexico City as in other settings, such as Portugal's colony Brazil and Bourbon Buenos Aires, where laundresses were African or mulata, both slave and free.²⁵ Mexico City's population in the mid-eighteenth century was also whiter than the rest of New Spain, so more numbers of white working women are perhaps to be expected. Yet, laundering often took women into the street and to public fountains and into other people's homes to fetch and deliver clothes, contexts honour-conscious women might avoid. Washing as an entrepreneurial activity was in line with other employment undertaken by white women, including running small stores and boarding houses.²⁶ The census takers of independent Mexico did not list race, so it

²³ AGN, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferentes Virreinal, Caja 5748, exp. 100, 24 de mayo, fs. 63–64.

²⁴ Roche, *Culture of Clothing*, pp. 382–84.

²⁵ Francois, 'La Lavandería,' Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), p. 14; Italian immigrant women displaced Afro-Brazilians by the end of the nineteenth century. George Reid Andrews, 'Race versus Class Association: The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1850–1900', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 11, no. 1 (1979): pp. 19–39.

²⁶ Gamber includes laundresses among entrepreneurs such as saloon keepers, boarding housekeepers, owners of private schools, organisers of charities and streetwalkers 'whose "businesses" lay at the murky boundaries of public and private, profit-seeking and philanthropic, wage labour and entrepreneurship, legitimate and illegitimate enterprise'. Gamber, 'A Gendered Enterprise', p. 193.

is hard to know if the prevalence of white laundresses continued. In his 1868 essay in *La Orquesta*, Frías y Soto depicted the ‘typical’ washer-woman as ‘morena’, or brown, with ‘Mexican eyes’.²⁷

PLACES OF BUSINESS

Laundry differed from other small businesses in the service economy, such as food and lodging, in that the place of business was diffuse. The exchange of dirty and clean laundry, with the listing and checking of items and the settling of price, occurred at multiple clients’ homes. Labour performed during cleaning, drying and ironing clothing and linens was done at *lavaderos*,²⁸ at plaza fountains, in patios, in interior rooms and on rooftops. The relatively mild climate in Mexico meant that laundry could generally be done outside, though afternoon rain could hinder the drying cycle. The skilled labour of washing, drying and ironing of clothes—producing the cultural standing of urban residents—could be done behind domestic walls and in public spaces and in places of business that doubled as domestic spaces.²⁹ Laundresses might work where they lived, at least for part of the washing cycle, washing on the terrace (*azotehueta*), drying on the roof or ironing in their room. Extrapolating from 21 laundresses identified in a sample of 2441 residents, perhaps a thousand laundresses worked in Mexico City in 1753 to meet the demand for clean white shirts and underskirts and household linens of a population of over 125,000.³⁰ Women listed as ‘making a living by washing’ have their residence noted as an ‘asesoria’ (loosely office) rather than ‘cuarto’ or ‘vivienda’ (the latter indicated a multi-room unit). Is this recognition of the residence as a place of business? Other working women in this category, that is, living in an

²⁷ Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, p. 20.

²⁸ The same word indicates both wash stations within a dwelling, also called *lavaderitas*, and wash houses run as businesses where laundresses paid for access to water and wash stations.

²⁹ On laundering and reproductive housekeeping work, paid and unpaid, as productive work, see Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit*; and Marie Francois, ‘Products of Consumption: Housework in Latin American Political Economies and Cultures’, *History Compass* 6, no. 1 (January 2008): pp. 207–242.

³⁰ The 1753 sample includes 286 addresses; and 564 separate households. AGN, Padrones, vol. 52, 1753.

asesoria, include those running very small retail establishments known as *tendajones*, which traded in consumable staples.³¹

In her study of laundry in nineteenth-century Spain, Carmen Sarasúa identifies bigger laundry businesses as family enterprises, with women drawing on kin to assist with hauling water and doing pickups and deliveries. Delivery, whoever did it, could interrupt the laundry cycle, with the loss of goods in the laundress' care, either left behind or dropped along the way. The loss of sacks of clothing appears in announcements in the city government's daily publication in the 1830s.³² 'La Lavandera' depicted in *La Orquesta* makes her own deliveries. The Regente staff takes care of the long-distance delivery of clean and dirty laundry in Verónica's case, though she does deliver to the city house. The daily correspondence between the two houses gives a sense of the rhythm and scale of Verónica's business volume, at least regarding this one wealthy client. Dirty or clean, laundry arrived by messenger along with the proverbial laundry list ('en el correo con su nota') mentioned in virtually every daily missive. The dirty clothing and linens moved on a schedule from San Agustín de la Cuevas in Tlalpan in a 'talega', or laundry sack, to the city residence and then to Verónica. The laundry generally moves in two batches—that of the 'Señores' and that of 'las muchachas', two young daughters. From time to time, the batches mix, as one item lagged behind after taking longer to dry, or being missed, or being repaired. The other categories that move less frequently are *ropa de mesa* (tablecloths and napkins) and *ropa de cama* (sheets, pillowcases and comforters). The heavier clothing (coats, pants and winter

³¹ Analyses of changes in use of space in downtown Mexico City in the eighteenth century highlight increased use of *asesorias* for workshops and sites for sale of artisan goods nearby to but separate from households where artisan families lived. Guadalupe de la Torre Villalpando and Sonia Lombardo de Ruiz, 'La vivienda de la ciudad de México desde la perspectiva de los padrones (1753–1790)', *Scripta Nova, Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales* 7, no. 146 (2003), <http://www.red-redial.net/revista-scripta,nova,revista,electronica,de,geografia,y,ciencias,sociales-211-2003-7-146.html>; Guadalupe de la Torre V., Sonia Lombardo de Ruiz, Jorge González Angulo A, 'La vivienda en una zona al suroeste de la Plaza Mayor de la Ciudad de México (1753–1811)', in Rosalva Loreto López (ed.), *Casas, viviendas y hogares en la historia de México* (México: El Colegio de México, 2001), pp. 109–146.

³² For examples of lost bundle announcements, see *Gazeta del Gobierno de México (GGM)* 16 octubre 1821 p. 8; *Diario del Gobierno de la República Mexicana (DGRM)* 19 marzo 1838 p. 4.

dresses) and fine fabrics (silk) might not go to Verónica, but instead to a *tintorero*.³³

Most laundresses found in census sources did not live with an employer as dependent servants.³⁴ Numerous notations suggest that Verónica was not living-in. The household manager noted that clean laundry was not sent on because it had not been delivered by Verónica, and other references noted that dirty laundry had arrived and will be taken to her.³⁵ Laundresses in Mexico City often lived together and washed together at communal *lavaderos*, at smaller wash stations in patios of *casas de vecindades* (large two-story structures, in which wealthier residents lived upstairs in multi-room units, and working people lived downstairs and between floors in single rooms), or even at public fountains. The references to a singular ‘Verónica’, but just as often to ‘Las Verónicas’, suggest washerwomen living together and/or in the washing business together. The 1753 census has several cases of multiple laundresses living together in the neighbourhood of the city house where Verónica’s aristocratic customers later lived: Spanish widow Maria Valle and her 28-year-old daughter Antonia (married to an absent travelling salesman) supported four grandchildren and children with washing on Calle de Donceles.³⁶ Maria Herrera, another 30-year-old Spanish widow, had living ‘in her company’ a free single *mulata* named Maria, both of them making a living washing clothes. Next door to the two Marias in the same *casa de vecindad* in the second block of Calle Tacuba lived Anna de Ortega and her sister Juana, both of them Spanish widows in their 30s, who along with Anna’s three grown single daughters (Rita, 20, Maria, 18, and Lugarda, 16) all

³³AGN, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferente Virreinal, Caja 5822, exp. 002, 1742. In 1839, the business at 13 La Palma Street advertised that they ‘unstain and clean all class of clothing, without washing. Capes 3 pesos, *casacas* 2 pesos, *dormanes* and pants 1 peso, vests 4 reales, maintaining the primitive color and shine’. *DGRM* 15 diciembre 1839 p. 4. See *DGRM* 12 octubre 1840 p. 4 f or a ‘tintorería francesa’ located at Alconedo No. 1 downtown, just reopening since the expulsion of the French, ‘with the latest improvements from France and Germany’.

³⁴Some advertisements in the daily papers suggest laundresses that might live-in. For example, when the ad mentions ‘maid and laundress’ or when the worker is identified as enslaved. An example of the latter, *Gazeta de México (GM)* 11 enero 1799 p. 8. For examples of live-in seamstresses in large elite homes, see Francois, ‘La Lavandería’.

³⁵For example, AGN, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferentes Virreinal, Caja 5748, exp. 100, 12 de mayo de 1769, fs. 21–23.

³⁶AGN, Padrones, vol. 52, 1753, f. 165v.

'expressed that they maintained themselves by washing'.³⁷ With so many laundresses doing business in this neighbourhood, there would have been competition to secure and keep customers among the mix of neighbours and institutions such as boarding schools and hospitals.³⁸

WATER: THE KEY INGREDIENT

Did Verónica live in this part of town near this particular client household? Where did she secure access to water, a key expense for the business enterprise? One option was to pay for delivery of water to where laundresses washed, perhaps the patio of their *casa de vecindad*. In 1790 during a water shortage in the dry season (February to June), reportedly the 'very large population had not a drop of water ... from the *acequías* that serve for cleaning and other purposes' in poor barrios. *Aguadores*, or water carriers/vendors, raised prices for the increasingly poor-quality water they were able to get from the aqueduct, wells and fountains.³⁹ Other options included purchasing access to water in houses with *mercedes de agua* (state-granted access through a *pila*, or faucet tapping into the city water system) and *lavaderitas*. Verónica might have paid a convent or other institution (such as the Colegio de San Juan del Letrán or the Casa de Moneda) for access to water and a *placer* (wash station) at their *lavaderos*.⁴⁰ The administrator of the Convent of San Lorenzo claimed that their washhouse located in a *casa de vecindad* at No. 5 Callejon Cerrado de Dolores 'served to provide that neighborhood with the benefit of water'.⁴¹ There is no evidence that the city house of Verónica's clients had a *merced de agua* or *lavadero*. The Calle de Capuchinas does not appear in documents listing the *mercedes* downtown in the eighteenth century. Houses on nearby Calle Tacuba and a block over on Santa Clara did have water grants, and the convent had one, four blocks north of Calle de Capuchinas, where Verónica's clients lived. Other streets with buildings with *mercedes de agua*

³⁷ AGN Padrones, vol. 52, 1753, fs. 67v and 24.

³⁸ Angel Kwolek-Folland, 'Customers and Neighbors: Women in the Economy of Lawrence Kansas, 1870-1885', *Business and Economic History* 27, no. 1 (Fall 1998): pp. 129-139.

³⁹ Again in 1791 and 1815, lack of water in the public fountains led to 'exorbitant' prices as water carriers are forced into distant barrios looking for water. Archivo Histórico del Distrito Federal (AHDF), Grupo documental: Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, Sección Aguas, v. 19, exp. 52; vol. 21, exp. 107, fs. 11-18.

⁴⁰ AGN, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferente Virreinal, Caja 4328, exp. 026, 1816; Indiferente Virreinal, Caja 0568, 5647, exp. 001 (Casa de Moneda Caja), 1811.

⁴¹ AHDF, Ayuntamiento, Baños y Lavaderos, vol. 3621, exp. 11, f. 2.

include Ortega, one block south and two blocks west of Capuchinas. Capuchinas did not appear in a list of 18 *lavaderos* with addresses identified between 1794 and 1824 culled from the municipal archive, and none were near the house.⁴²

THE BUSINESS OF LAUNDRY

The laundress depicted in *La Orquesta* in 1868 sets off on Saturday morning to finish a business cycle that coincided with the end of a laundry cycle:

... half covered by the ever-so-white pressed skirts enveloped in a cloud of swishing and pleats, carrying in a basket the small pieces, rising at dawn with the force of starch and the iron, off to make her deliveries.

And at the house where she is headed, she is awaited with longing, because she brings a program of luxury, a promise of happiness. She returns clean and ‘by list’ the clothing that she received ‘by list’ and dirty. And the lady of the house separates into sections the closing, divvying out the pieces among the members of the family, always after some light debate, because to the girls the underskirts are never crisp enough, nor to the man of the house the breast of his shirt sufficiently white.

Finally, she leaves the house content, because tucked into her girdle is the modest honorariums with which she will feed her children and even her husband, as this is the dowry of the women of our people: to maintain her man; this will bring only a little income into the budget.⁴³

This snapshot indicates business aspects of her work—the making and checking of the list to keep track of all the items she is entrusted to cleanse, with the list also useful in setting her price; the making of deliveries; and the settling of accounts. *La Gazeta del Gobierno de México* noted in 1834 that ‘lists for washerwomen, appropriate for [the laundry of] a single man, that should last for the space of a year’ were available for sale for four *reales* at no. 15 Capuchinas Street.⁴⁴ How big was this book of lists to last a full year? What details were on the pre-printed list? Was the commercialisation of a pre-printed list a new phenomenon?⁴⁵

⁴² Francois, ‘*La lavandería*’.

⁴³ Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, pp. 26–27.

⁴⁴ ‘Avisos’, *GGM* 3 Julio 1834 p. 4.

⁴⁵ For an Italian example of a book of laundry lists with multiple copies of two pages of common clothing articles, see Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, *Memoria della lingerie rimessa all’lavandaia: coll’almanacco, ed un vocabulario dei nomi della lingerie piemontese, italiano, e francese*, Torino [1860?].

The description of clean clothing that La Lavandera is carrying also indicates the skilled work done with tools of the trade that she would invest in: soap, bleach, starch and irons. The soap was purchased in local stores, which also stocked charcoal for fires to heat irons, as well as starch.⁴⁶ An 1841 article on bleaching silk, linen, wool and cotton identifies tricks of the trade performed by 'los artesanos' to whiten clothing, such as using chlorine in vapour.⁴⁷ Towards the end of the laundry cycle came ironing. In the late eighteenth century, transparent silk bags imported from Cadiz were available to store damp cloth for ironing, suggesting that laundresses pulled some items off the line still damp to facilitate the pressing process. Local hardware stores, such as Ferreteria Tosca, sold 'irons for laundresses, hat makers, and tailors' in 1845.⁴⁸ In a posed photograph taken by Antíoco Cruces y Luis Campa ca. 1860, 'La Planchadora' is in a humble room pressing a table cloth with a flat iron on a small work table, with a basket of clothing and linens no doubt fresh from the clothesline to one side. While the work in this photograph does not look onerous, Frías y Soto characterises the ironing work as so tough that 'it would kill even the most robust man'.⁴⁹

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LAUNDRESS: A KEEPER OF SECRETS

A good laundress might keep customers precisely because of the care and skill with which she did her business. An independent laundress required discretion. According to *Mexicanos pintados por si mismos*, confessors, laundresses and *aguadores*, in that order, were the guardians of secrets and guarantors of discretion.⁵⁰ A *costumbrista* spin on laundresses from 1851 Spain suggests long-term relationships that were professional yet intimate between commercial laundresses, sometimes generations of them, and client families. Indeed, it was said to be hard to fire a laundress, with all she

⁴⁶In addition to soap, a plant named *bayna* (grown in Valladolid, Yucatán, with 'a chocolate color on the outside and considerably white on the inside and somewhat greasy') could tackle tough stains. *GM*, 30 mayo 1786 p. 1.

⁴⁷*DGRM* 25 marzo 1841 p. 2.

⁴⁸'Hules transparentes de seda', *GM* 17 septiembre 1796 pp. 146–148; *DGRM* 23 doctubre 1845 p. 2.

⁴⁹The Cruces y Campas collection is held in the Special Collections at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana; Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, pp. 26–28.

⁵⁰*Mexicanos pintados*, p. 2.

knew.⁵¹ Frias y Soto's 1868 satire in *La Orquesta* described discussions of laundresses around the *lavadero*, 'judging the representations, the integrities, and the scandalous histories of the family whose clothing is present, to suffer a purification that will never reach its owners'.⁵²

In his narrative Frías y Soto emphasised the importance of good customer service and 'people skill'. Laundresses needed patience, seen in the 'light debate' about meeting demanding standards, the need for discretion and the willingness to make small talk in order to keep clients.⁵³ He poked fun at the 'young women of the house' who were the clientele, presumptuous at the theatre or on their walk in the park displaying luxurious fancy dresses. The irony was that the laundress knew that under the corset is 'the undershirt that she had to wash quickly because the young woman did not have another one to change into; and with much care and prudence, so that the well-worn shirt does not evaporate with the soap bubbles'.⁵⁴ The laundress, according to this mid-century man from the professional and political class, was 'charged with policing the human race, and without her, beauty would be a myth, a paradox or a fable'. Indeed, it is impossible to 'imagine for a moment a beautiful woman without a laundress, a beauty in dirty clothes'.⁵⁵

Verónica must have been good at her job. She had high-profile clients who valued her professional laundering services to such an extent that they shipped loads of dirty and clean laundry back and forth from their country house to her downtown for months, rather than use a local laun-

⁵¹ Manuel Breton de los Herreros, 'La Lavandera', in *Los Españoles pintados por sí mismos, por varios autores* (Madrid: Gaspar y Roig, 1851): p. 93.

⁵² Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, p. 21.

⁵³ Kwolek-Folland, 'Customers and Neighbors', 134.

⁵⁴ Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, p. 20. Frías y Soto was an intellectual and congressman. Using the laundress as a vehicle for satire has a long tradition. Jefferson Rea Spell, 'The Costumbrista Movement in Mexico', *PMLA* 50, no. 1 (March 1935): pp. 290–315. In the *Museo Mexicano* column 'Memorias sobre el Matrimonio', the typical young middle-class society woman is painted as unfairly critical when her Dutch linen dress is not sufficiently washed or the silk treated with sufficient care. A letter published in the same edition satirized the cost of beauty for 'Doña Petrita', noting that the laundress has to wash, week after week, her pillowcase that looks like a painter's canvas, with rouge and lipstick. *El Museo Mexicano, o Miscelánea pintoresca de amenidades curiosas é instructivas* (1843), pp. 298, 320. For another example, see *El Museo Mexicano, o Miscelánea pintoresca de amenidades curiosas é instructivas* (1844), p. 249. An article repeats many of the same tropes in the early twentieth century. See Mariano de Jesús Torres, 'La Lavandera', *La Mujer Mexicana* 18 (1905): pp. 143–144.

dress near the country house, which would no doubt have been more convenient, but risky. Her clients already knew the quality of her work and the care taken during the washing by Verónica and her associates. A good business relationship had been established between her and the men managing the household affairs. The Regentes knew she would be discreet about what she learned about them through the process of cleansing their 'second skin' and their household linens.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

How much room did the substantial volume of laundry from this one family leave for Verónica to secure other clients? One family or institution could be enough. Perhaps it was for the laundress who had an institutional contract washing for half-a-dozen boys in a *colegio*. At mid-century, the Colegio de Minería, a boarding school for older boys, required students to bring with them new clothing, and for parents or tutors to replace it when it became unusable. The required wardrobe included eight linen dress shirts and three undershirts, eight britches, a dozen pairs of socks, two black silk ties for the uniform, and two for daily use, three white vests, *cachucha* (cap), jacket and blue pants. Students were also required to bring two jackets, three vests, three pants of cashmere or *pañño*, half-a-dozen silk or linen handkerchiefs, six linen sheets and four pillowcases, a blanket and bedspread and four towels. In December 1854, the fee charged to students for paying the laundress, seamstress and others contracted with the care of the students' clothing increased by 50 pesos.⁵⁶

How much of that 50 pesos the laundress herself realised is unclear. The laundry business was not necessarily lucrative. One *schela* between the Regente households from May 16 in 1769 gives payment information. (It also provides more details about the rhythm and method of movement of goods to and from the house and the symbiotic relationship between the household business manager and Verónica. It also suggests a place of business for Verónica, or at least a piece of business furniture where she might do her accounting):

⁵⁶ They also had to bring their own furniture—bed frame, desk, chair and mirror. 'Colegio de Minería', *El Universal* 4 enero 1855 p. 4. Some institutions had laundresses on staff in *roperías* instead of contracting with self-employed laundresses. The Hospital Amor de Dios in 1781 had 200 beds, serving up to 3000 patients in a month, and had 3 *lavanderas* on the staff. Josefina Muriel, *Hospitales de la Nueva España. Tomo I, Fundaciones del Siglo XVI* (Mexico: 1956), pp. 151–152.

Verónica says that the two pesos she sent someone to ask for from you are for the girls' clothing from last week, and that now what is coming is that of the Señores, without the list, which will arrive tomorrow as it is back on the desk, and I am sending the clothing today because tomorrow Verónica wants the sack returned so she can send along the girls' clothes.⁵⁷

At other times Verónica's daily laundry fee is noted to be seven *reales*, one *real* shy of a peso. While not much, the remuneration places the laundering labour in the realm of work that 'produced goods or services for the market' and Verónica and women like her 'as having an occupation, or *destino*'.⁵⁸ While the skilled work of laundering may have produced camaraderie among laundresses and earned them the respect of their customers, it was among Wendy Gamber's 'very small enterprises'. The widows and single mothers found in the 1753 census supporting young children through laundry work might not have produced more than a subsistence living for them. In the middle of the nineteenth century, washerwomen could earn four to 12 pesos a month.⁵⁹ These earnings need to be balanced with the costs for soap, starch, bleach, irons, charcoal and other supplies, as well as the fees paid for *lavadero* use or *aguadero* deliveries.

The laundry business, however, also produced incomes for some who did no washing at all. The owners of *lavaderos* lived on rents paid by local laundresses. Don Martín Plaza owned at least three washhouses in 1796, each with two fountains, two off the principal branch of the cañería de San Lorenzo, and one at the corner of Pila Seca.⁶⁰ Brother Don Manuel Jose Perez benefited from a Capellania funded through 'a house destined as washhouse, named Los Pescaditos; what it yields is precisely what the women who come there to wash pay, ... and from this I can maintain myself and my family'.⁶¹ Other beneficiaries of the labour and business acumen of laundresses were members of religious institutions that owned washhouses. The nuns of the San José de Gracia convent on Calle de

⁵⁷ AGN, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferentes Virreinal, Caja 5748, exp. 100, 16 de mayo de 1769, fs. 34–36.

⁵⁸ Arrom, *The Women*, p. 155.

⁵⁹ Sylvia Arrom, *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774–1871* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 213.

⁶⁰ 'Relacion del Ramo principal de Cañería de San Lorenzo', AHDF, Ayuntamiento, Aguas, vol. 21, exp. 106, f. 12–12v.

⁶¹ AHDF, Ayuntamiento, Baños y *Lavaderos*, v. 3621, exp. 11, f. 1.

Mesones rented out a 'casa de baños' that included a *lavadero*.⁶² When renovating the bathhouse owned by the Convent of Santa Catarina was too costly in 1794, that convent petitioned to just continue running the *lavadero*, 'so as to not lose totally what this property produces'.⁶³ That laundry was a business that produced value was not lost on the sisters. Feminist economist Lourdes Benería argues that laundering produced use value.⁶⁴ Rebecca Haidt also makes the point that successful laundering added value: 'The ability to don clean undergarments permitted a person to extend the life of other clothing and maintain a more decent appearance in social settings'.⁶⁵

The case of laundress Doña Gorgina Ruiz, who lived at home with her widowed father until she married Don Pablo Navarro, offers a case of successful laundry business. Her relatively high status is suggested by both reference to her in notary documents as Doña, an honorific title, and the fact that she was able to lend her father 200 pesos in 1841 to buy a small adobe house. This house might have been a business investment for Doña Gorgina, as it could offer her a solution to the problem of carrying heavy loads of wet clothing through the streets. The house was conveniently across from the Baño de los Delicias on the Callejón del Olivo, which had a *lavadero*. Doña Gorgina appears in notary documents before and after her marriage, still a laundress after marriage. Did she continue to use her father's house for the drying of her clients' clothing that she washed across the street?⁶⁶ Another successful businesswoman was Cipriana Gómez, who 'wandered from the hotels to the guests houses picking up clothes and linens to wash' with the help of a *mozo*, who carried the bundles from the hotels to the *lavadero* and back. Cipriana kept her earnings in a small box in a trunk in her room, where a thief found them, stealing a considerable sum of 200 pesos.⁶⁷

⁶² Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Familias Iberoamericanas: Historia, identidad, y conflictos* (México: El Colegio de México, 2001), pp. 89–90.

⁶³ AHDF, Ayuntamiento, Baños y *Lavaderos*, v. 3621, exp. 11, f. 3.

⁶⁴ Lourdes Benería, 'Conceptualizing the Labor Force: The Underestimation of Women's Economic Activities', *Journal of Development Studies* 17, no. 3 (1981): pp. 10–28; on use value, see pp. 12, 17, 23.

⁶⁵ Haidt, *Women, Work*, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Archivo General de Notarías del Distrito Federal, Notario José Lopez Guazo, vol. 2346, 1841, f. 50v–53 and f. 119v–120.

⁶⁷ *El Partido Liberal* 28 agosto 1885 p. 2.

A RISKY BUSINESS?

As businesswomen, laundresses had a lot to manage in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Mexico City. They faced challenges in securing water and a wash place, as well as competition for clientele. They had to invest in soap, bleach, starch, wood, charcoal, irons, baskets, sacks and accounting sheets or other paper for their laundry lists. Among the risks in Mexico City were the semi-public arenas where clotheslines were found, where goods under the care of a laundress were vulnerable. For example, in October 1852, 26-year-old widow María Fernandez was arrested ‘por ladrona’, though she denied that she walked into a house on Buena Muerte street and stole a sheet that was hanging on the common patio clothesline. The sheet belonged to Tiburina Velasquez, who lived in a boarding house on San Antonio Abad. Did her laundress live in the house on Buena Muerte where the clothes were drying?⁶⁸ Another example of risk that could wipe out a profit is from June 1809, when the Arcordada investigated a robbery at Ygnacia Molina’s house on Calle de la Pulqueria. Over 40 different clothing items and linens, including a Spanish bedspread and an iron had been stolen. The thief fenced the bulk of the goods for resale with a *baratillero* (a vendor at a used goods market).⁶⁹

AN INVISIBLE BUSINESS?

Pulling the history of women in the laundry business out of sources is challenging, with this commercial sector often as invisible as the unpaid laundering done as part of housekeeping. The power of the construction of laundry work as domestic shaped the way it was counted by the state. For example, the category ‘oficios domesticos’ in the 1842 population census in Mexico City includes ‘servants and maids’ along with ‘laundresses’ and ‘ironers’, even though many of the latter would not have been employed in ‘domestic’ settings but instead in hospitals and other institutions, or self-employed.⁷⁰ As Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasúa argue: ‘Conventional histories of women’s work based on official sources are mis-

⁶⁸ AHDF Justicia, Juzgados Criminales, tomo 1, exp. 1.

⁶⁹ AGN Criminal, vol. 89, exp. 3, fs. 115–120. For other cases of clothing stolen from *vecindades*, see v. 86, exp. 10, fs. 264–285v; vol. 87, exp. 2, fs. 60–69v; and vol. 89, exp. 3, f. 99. See also AHDF Justicia, Juzgados Criminales, tomo 1, exp. 1.

⁷⁰ Sonia Pérez Toledo, ‘El trabajo femenino en la ciudad de México a mediados del siglo XIX’, *Signos Históricos* 10 (julio-diciembre 2003): pp. 80–114.

leading, and feminist economic historians must tackle the demanding but not impossible task of reconstructing alternative accounts. ... [F]eminist readings rescue the history of women's work from its marginal, "off the record" status'.⁷¹ Yet, this entrepreneurial sector is not completely invisible. Edicts governing the economic life of Mexico City in the decades after Independence identified laundering as an 'industry' alongside carpenters, potters, carbon sellers and tanners, not setting them apart as exceptional. The laundresses in 1839 ('industria' no. 15) were those that 'exert themselves washing and ironing'.⁷² As the century progressed, more formal business models emerged, competing with independent laundresses to meet the demand of individuals and institutions. An 1850 column promoting domesticity in *El Monitor Republicano* noted that housewives entrusted the washing to 'lavanderas de profesion'.⁷³ In 1869, city residents could have their laundry washed at an 'elegante *lavandería americana*' located at Plazuela de la Calendaria. The establishment picked up dirty laundry from customers, pledging to deliver clean clothes to families within 24 hours and to clients of 'hotels, bathhouses, barber shops, etc.' within 12 hours. The final line of their persuasive advertisement stated that socks and stockings would be washed free of charge ('de balde'). The Calendaria laundry business did not specify who did the washing; they may have employed skilled women or adopted modern technology.⁷⁴ South American laundry businesses in mid-century advertised for experienced laundresses looking for permanent work or advertised that they employed the best laundresses available. So-called American laundry businesses in Buenos Aires around the same time specified in their advertising that they were steam laundries. The public washhouses where laundresses took clients' laundry co-existed with these emerging industrial laundry businesses in Mexico City through to the twentieth century. In 1899, there were 58 *lavaderos públicos* reported on tax rolls, with 53 a year later. There were fewer commercial laundries reported, with 19 in 1899 and 20 in 1900. A 1901 guidebook listed 17 *lavandería* businesses (specifying that this number is 'not including many in the barrios run by Chinese

⁷¹ Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasúa, 'Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labor Force Participation in the European Past', *Feminist Economics* 18, no. 4 (October 2012): pp. 39–67, p. 40.

⁷² *DGRM* 15 diciembre 1839, p. 2.

⁷³ *El Monitor Republicano* 2 febrero 1850.

⁷⁴ *El Siglo XIX* 1869; *El Comercio* 24 julio 1843 (Lima); *The Standard* August 26, 1864 (Buenos Aires).

immigrants'), with only one clearly owned by a woman, Pilar Diaz, who had a business on Puente de Alvarado.⁷⁵ Statistics in the guidebook from the 1890 census listed 6319 'lavaderos', 98 per cent of them female.⁷⁶ How many of these were live-in laundresses, how many were akin to women 'living by washing' independently a century earlier, how many lived and worked within institutions such as hospitals and orphanages, and how many of them were working at a commercial *lavandería* is unknown.

Investment, management, accounting, customer relations and risk—women in the laundry businesses negotiated all of these aspects of entrepreneurship in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Mexico City. This economic sector had many parallels with other sectors formalised and regulated in guilds, especially with the simultaneity of business and skilled labour characteristics of the enterprise. Yet the fact that laundresses did not have guilds to formalise their trade may have allowed them a freer hand in negotiating the market economy among customers and neighbours. These small businesswomen 'maintaining themselves by washing' were vital players in the everyday cloth economy of Mexico City from the late colonial period through the nineteenth century.

In the classic drawing of 'La Lavandera' in *Mexicanos pintados por sí mismos* from 1854, the laundress is on her tiptoes to reach the clothesline to hang wet sheets. Some details from this image have not changed in a century and a half: rooftop and patio *tendederos* throughout Mexico City still rely on a brick to tether the pole holding the clothesline.⁷⁷ Today, in the early twenty-first century, women are still in business doing laundry for neighbourhood customers, as most people cannot afford a live-in maid, or a washing machine, or the cost of the local *lavandería*, but they can afford to pay a neighbour in business to do the laundry.

⁷⁵ Of *lavandería* business owners, eight list only a first initial. Adolfo Prantl y José L. Groso, *La Ciudad de México. Novísima Guía Universal de la capital de la República Mexicana. Directorio de clasificado de vecinos y prontuario de las organizacion y funciones del gobierno federal oficiales de su dependencia* (México: Juan Buxó y Compañía, editores/Librería Madriña, 1901), p. 974. There were only six dry cleaners, or *tintoreros*, in 1899, p. 329.

⁷⁶ Prantl, *La Ciudad*, p. 940. Laundress' pay is listed as between 8 and 16 pesos monthly, p. 38.

⁷⁷ Frías y Soto, *La Lavandera*, p. 15. The essay accompanying this drawing of the laundress did not appear in the 1854 book pairing such drawings with essays about 'typical' Mexican characters, but surfaced later in *La Orquesta* magazine in 1868. Only in 1954 were the drawing and the essay published together, and again in this 1993 edition.

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CHAPTER 3

Investing in Enterprise: Women Entrepreneurs in Colonial ‘South Africa’

Grietjie Verhoef

INTRODUCTION

The Cape Colony was under the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company; VOC) rule and went on to be a Dutch Batavian Republic colony between 1803 and 1806, with a brief British interval between 1795 and 1803. In 1806 Britain conquered the colony to make it part of the British Empire. Cape society subsequently made the gradual transition from a predominantly Dutch community under Roman Dutch law to a society with a growing English population. The introduction of English law was gradual. Economic life in the Dutch Cape reflected legalised gender egalitarianism, religious and

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G. Verhoef (✉)
University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
e-mail: gverhoef@uj.ac.za

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cultural cohesion and conservatism, and social networks.¹ British colonial control gradually introduced an English social character. The cultural diversity of Europeans, indigenous Khoisan, slaves and free blacks added to the dynamic social structure and commercial endeavours of the colony during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In a male dominated world of enterprise and commerce, women displayed a remarkable presence in the Cape before the onset of the twentieth century.

Our understanding of women entrepreneurs in early Cape history suffers from the gender visibility phenomenon noted in many studies on women in business worldwide.² Except for the research on eighteenth-century Dutch women's commercial activities,³ little research has investigated women in the commercial environment in the colonies prior to the unification of the British colonies into the Union of South Africa in 1910.⁴ Mention in passing is made of the business activities of Jewish women at

¹J. L. Meltzer, 'The Growth of Cape Town commerce and the role of John Fairbain's Advertiser', (MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989); Nigel Penn, *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways: Eighteenth-Century Cape Characters*, (Cape Town, New Africa Books, 1999); Hermann Giliomee, "'Allowed such a state of freedom": Women and Gender Relations in the Afrikaner Community Before Enfranchisement in 1930', *New Contree*, 61, no. 1 (2010): pp. 29–60; Gerald Groenewald, "'More comfort, better prosperity, and greater advantage": Free Burghers, Alcohol Retail and the VOC Authorities at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1680', *Historia*, 57, no. 1 (2012), pp. 10–21.

²Melanie Buddle, *The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901–51*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney*. (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2015); Beatrice Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Nineteenth-Century Northern France*. (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2017).

³Gerald Groenewald, 'Kinship, entrepreneurship and social capital. Alcohol pachtters and the making of a free-burgher society in Cape Town, 1652–1795', (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2009); Gerald Groenewald, 'An Early Modern Entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the Creation of Wealth in Dutch Colonial Cape Town, 1702–1741', *Kronos* 35, no. 1 (2009): pp. 7–31; Gerald Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building, Family Networks and Social Capital: Alcohol Pachtters and the Development of a Colonial Elite at the Cape of Good Hope, c. 1760–1790', *New Contree* 62, no. 2 (2011): pp. 23–53; Gerald Groenewald, 'More Comfort'.

⁴Liz Stanley, 'A Settler Woman and Business in the Eastern Cape 1840–1848: Whites writing whiteness Working Paper, University of Edinburgh (2016), pp. 11–13, <https://www.whiteswritingwhiteness.ed.ac.uk/files/2016/11/Stanley-2016-Settler-Woman-Business.pdf>

the Cape Colony, but only as part of the history of Jews in South Africa.⁵ As shown in Chap. 18 by Sean Redding in this volume, some nascent entrepreneurial activities were also noticeable among African women in the traditional subsistence economies. Sources nevertheless remain scarce: Archival searches deliver few diaries, letters and other written records, apart from official VOC company sources, reflecting the company's relations with women.⁶ The archives of the Master of the Orphan Chamber (MOOC series) contain the wills of women, showing the extent of their wealth.⁷ The preoccupation with race relations, racial segregation and resistance against European domination in South Africa's history is to blame for this.⁸ Much of the focus on women in Africa is on their activism in the political sphere, and especially since the 1950s.⁹ We know about the spontaneous organisation of African women in self-help groups, based on friendship, kinship and common needs, but these studies failed to pursue the *long durée* of entrepreneurial activities of women leading to the independent business operations by African business women. This chapter contextualises these omissions, but also explains the nuanced entrepreneurial and business activities of settler women in the Cape Colony prior

⁵ Louis Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa, From Earliest Times to 1895*. (Cape Town: Jewish Board of Deputies, 1935); Elizabeth Bradlow, 'The Social Role of Jewish Women in the *Grunderzeit* of the Cape Jewish Community, 1896–1930', *Historia* 43, no. 2 (1998): pp. 67–85.

⁶ Meltzer, 'The Growth of Cape Town Commerce'; Giliomee 'Allowed such a state of freedom'.

⁷ <http://databases.tanap.net/mooc/>

⁸ Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross, *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Earliest Times to 1885*, Vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Robert Ross, Anne K. Mager and Bill Nasson, *The Cambridge History of South Africa, 1885–1994*, Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Lato Frank Ntwape, 'A Historiography of South African Women's History from c. 1990: A Survey of Monographs, Anthologies and Journal Articles', (MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2016).

⁹ Cheryl S Walker, *Women and Gender in South Africa to 1945*, (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1990); Julia Wells, *We Now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993); Zengie A. Mangaliso, 'Gender and nation-building in South Africa', in Bonnie G. Smith (ed.), *Global Feminisms Since 1945*, (London: Routledge, 2000): pp. 65–77; Wilhelmina Oduol and Wanjiku Mukab Kabira, 'The Mother of Warriors and Her Daughters: The Women's Movement in Kenya', in Bonnie G. Smith (ed.), *Global Feminisms since 1945*. (London: Routledge, 2000): pp. 101–18; Catherine Cocquery-Vidrovitch, 'African Businesswomen in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa: a Comparative Survey', in Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (eds), *Black Business and economic Power*, (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2002): pp. 199–210.

to the twentieth century. It examines the eighteenth-century foundations of female entrepreneurial activities in the Cape Colony and women in business in the early nineteenth century British colonial economy. This study pioneers the illumination of women in business in South Africa by starting at the beginning. It does not claim to be the full picture, but it introduces the world of women in business in one of the British colonies during the nineteenth century.

CONTEXTUALISING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

VOC rule connected the Cape to its international commercial enterprise. The company's commercial policies were autocratic and restrictive, limiting individual freedom and causing operational tensions. In 1657, the VOC granted leave from service to nine VOC officials. With company support in the form of land, agricultural utensils and an undertaking of a captured market, these free persons constituted the nucleus of an independent settler community. The total free persons at the Cape rose from 259 in 1679 (including 55 women, 117 children) to more than 2000 (including 350 women) by 1717.¹⁰ This was predominantly a Dutch society, but in 1688 French Huguenots, Protestant French-speaking people fleeing from religious persecution in France, arrived at the Cape. During the last half of the seventeenth century, a society evolved that was consciously aware of its identity. A growing number of German youths joined the VOC and ended up in the Cape settlement.¹¹ The emerging Cape society expanded to more than 20,000 free burghers of European descent, 1700 'Free Blacks' (black persons never enslaved), 25,754 burgher slaves and around 14,447 Khoi-Khoi and *Bastaards* (person of mixed blood) by the end of the eighteenth century.¹² This was not a democratic society. The European settlers were individualistic and mobile, accustomed to more egalitarian institutions and an absence of a complex hierarchy of inherited social stratification. The Dutch Cape offered individualistic employees and settlers upward mobility.

¹⁰ Leonard Guelke, 'The Early European Settlement of South Africa', (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1974); Leonard Guelke, 'The White Settlers, 1652–1780', in Rick Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society 1652–1820*, (London: Longman, 1979): pp. 41–74.

¹¹ Roelef Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duitser in dienst van de VOC (1600–1800)*. (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997).

¹² Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee. *Shaping of South African Society*, p. 360.

The Dutch Cape society operated under Roman Dutch law. In the Netherlands, the assets of man and wife merged into a common estate upon marriage. Marriage and inheritance law was intertwined: Assets acquired after wedlock constituted part of the common estate. Most marriages at the Cape were concluded ‘in community of property’. Upon the death of one spouse, the remaining spouse owned half of the estate. The other half was distributed equally amongst the siblings, irrespective of gender.¹³ Cape Dutch women accumulated substantial landed property from their late husbands. These women from the liberal Netherlands considered marriage a ‘partnership’ with equal ownership of property. Dutch women, single, married or widowed, could sign commercial contracts and notarised documents, but could not trade or exercise a profession without the permission of their spouses.¹⁴ Women were not allowed to hold public office (*heemraden*),¹⁵ but they performed domestic and entrepreneurial activities to sustain their families. Cape Dutch women regularly worked alongside their spouses, or the daughters, with their brothers. O. F. Mentzel, a German resident at the Cape, was impressed by Dutch women in the western districts of Cape Town, regarding them as industrious, willing to perform physically hard work, intelligent in business and good mothers. Mentzel considered rural Dutch women more intelligent and alert than their husbands. They were self-confident and ‘looked everybody straight in the eye’. In contrast, he found women in ‘urban’ Cape Town ‘too glib and status conscious’.¹⁶ Historian Alan Fryer also commented on the Cape Dutch sense of freedom and assertiveness more generally, especially when subjected to the English under British colonial control, noting ‘they had further goals in sight than the English’.¹⁷

¹³ Dooling, ‘The making of a colonial elite: property, family and landed stability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1834’, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31, no 1, (2005), pp. 153–155; Dooling, *Slavery, emancipation and colonial rule*. (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2007), pp. 31–41.

¹⁴ M Dickenson Shattuck, ‘Women and Trade in New Netherlands’, *Itinerario* 18, no. 2 (1994): pp. 40–49.

¹⁵ Digby Paul Warren, ‘Merchants, Commissioners and Wardmasters: Municipal Politics in Cape Town, 1840–1854’, (MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1986).

¹⁶ Otto F. Mentzel, *The Cape of Good Hope*. (translated by H.J. Mandelbrote, G.V. Marais and J. Hoge), vol. 3 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1944).

¹⁷ A. K. Fryer, ‘The Government of the Cape of Good Hope, 1835–54: The Age of Imperial Reform’, *Archives Year Book of South African History* 27, no. 1 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1964): pp. 1–164.

The Roman Dutch inclination to greater freedom and equality of citizens favoured Dutch women in business. A stronger sense of individualism and independence aligned them to opportunities of growing material wealth. The English separate gendered spheres and female domesticity ideology hardly permeated their lives. As primarily Protestant in religion, they did not observe an authoritarian ecclesiastical authority. In this remote Cape society settlers soon shed any remaining social and occupational distinctions to give rise to an emerging homogeneous socio-cultural entity.¹⁸

English inheritance law was different. Prior to 1833 custom provided for widows to receive a third of their husband's estate if he died intestate and had not made any other legal settlements. The 1833 Fines and Settlements Act gave women some protection in so far as they had to be interviewed prior to their husband selling lands acquired through jointure or marriage settlements. The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 assigned married women the right to earn and inherit money and lands in their own right and retain earnings from such assets in her own name. If the husband failed to draw up a will and therefore died intestate, (conduct frowned upon socially by the middle and upper classes), the eldest son inherited the estate, irrespective of the survival of the wife. Despite the rule of primogeniture in English law, testamentary freedom enabled provision for widows, especially in aristocratic families and marriage settlements and trusts secured women part of the estate upon the death of her husband. After the British occupation of the Cape Colony, Dutch inheritance law persisted.¹⁹ At first, Roman Dutch inheritance law withheld testamentary freedom from the English settlers.²⁰ The British colonial administration did not enforce English law on the new colonial subjects, but allowed testamentary freedom after 1882, when women in England received the right of testamentary freedom. This allowed the deceased the freedom of allocating her/his assets according to preference.

¹⁸ Fryer, 'The Government of the Cape of Good Hope'.

¹⁹ George M. Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, vol. 22, p. 288; Sir Richard Plasket – Wilmot Horton, 20/7/25. P.P.5/2/50 (1137), p. 16; Memorandum by J Montagu; Fryer, 'The Government of the Cape of Good Hope', p. 2.

²⁰ Eric A. Walker, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 8: South Africa, Rhodesia and the High Commission Territories*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 837.

If a person died without a will (*intestate*), the common law of the people ruled.²¹

The nurturing of women's capabilities in seventeenth and eighteenth century Cape encouraged them to be entrepreneurial. Cape society did not adhere to the separate spheres ideology.²² The performance of dual egalitarian and complementary roles resembled peasant marriages in nineteenth century France.²³ However, Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall's description of different spheres of work inside and outside the home in Europe,²⁴ contrasted with Karel Schoeman²⁵ and Mentzel's observations of eighteenth century Cape society reflecting a balanced dualism. As the French immigrants integrated in the predominantly Dutch Cape, individualism, self-confidence and task-sharing came to characterise society. This does not suggest that there was no gender differentiation in the workplace and home in the Cape, but it explains how women increasingly and through different strategies entered spheres of work and enterprise opening up in the settler society.

GRASPING OPPORTUNITY: ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN IN THE DUTCH CAPE

The number of European women at the Cape during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was small. In the absence of a rigid colour consciousness, company officials, VOC soldiers and free settler men married slave

²¹ Nicolaas J Van der Merwe, John Rowland and Marius Cronjé, *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Erfreg*, Fifth edition. (Pretoria: J P van der Walt en Seun, 1990).

²² Dooling 'The Making of a Colonial Elite'; Stanley 'A Settler Woman and Business', pp. 31, 33, 37–40; See also Catherine Hall, 'The early formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in Robert Shoemaker and Mary Vincent (eds), *Gender and History in Western Europe*. (London: Arnold, 1998): pp. 177–180.

²³ Martine Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant family: Rural France in the Nineteenth Century*, [English translation by Sarah Matthews], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Craig, *Behind the Discursive Veil*.

²⁴ Beatrice Moring & Richard Wall, *Widows in European Economy and Society, 1600–1920*, (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2017).

²⁵ Karel Schoeman, *Swanesang. Die einde van die Kompanjiestyd aan die Kaap, 1771–1795*. (Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2016); *Armosyn van die Kaap. Die wêreld van 'n slavin, 1652–1733*. (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2001). Schoeman testified to the character of the Dutch settler population, especially women, and in *Armosyn van die Kaap*, a slave woman's experiences in that society.

women, who became free persons.²⁶ European women were enterprising in carving out distinct economic roles. As legal equals to men, they could act independently and accumulate substantial wealth.²⁷ When women acquired land from their deceased husbands, they retained it despite re-marrying. The substantial accumulation of landed wealth in VOC Cape, gave rise to ‘widowarchy’. This concept refers to women who have succeeded in accumulating considerable wealth, of which a substantial portion was in inherited agricultural land. Women often acted entrepreneurially by renting their land, selling it or cultivating it independently.²⁸

In the absence of primary records illustrating the full scope of women’s business activities, general studies on growing wealth at the Cape during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offer clear evidence of the emergence of a wealthy elite, a land-based ‘gentry’ and an active private credit market. Robert Ross, Leonard Guelke and Robert Shell found firm ground to claim the existence of an elite, largely connected to land.²⁹ More recently, Wayne Dooling argued that women, specifically widows, were at the core of the formation of the Cape ‘gentry’, shaping the formation of a stable and long-lasing elite and bridging the transition from Dutch to British rule, as well as the pre- and post-slavery society. Women did not dominate economic life, but through accumulated wealth, were influential in society. Dooling refers to widows as ‘conduits for the transmission of property from one generation to another’.³⁰ In this manner they earned social recognition, which they skilfully applied for their own and their

²⁶This paper will not engage with the extensive literature on miscegenation and intermarriage at the Cape during Dutch rule. For this purpose see Robert Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838*, (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1994).

²⁷Dooling, ‘The Making of a Colonial Elite’.

²⁸Dooling, ‘The Making of a Colonial Elite’; Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation, and Colonial Rule*; Groenewald, ‘Kinship, entrepreneurship’; Groenewald, ‘Dynasty building’; Giliomee, ‘Allowed Such a State of Freedom’. Liz Stanley’s working paper is exclusively based on settler correspondence testifying to a woman’s business of renting out property, ‘Woman and Business’.

²⁹See Robert Ross, ‘The Rise of the Cape Gentry’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983): pp. 193–217; Leonard Guelke and Robert Shell ‘An early colonial landed gentry: land and wealth in the Cape Colony 1682–1731’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 9, no. 3 (1993): pp. 265–86; Robert Shell, *Children of Bondage*.

³⁰Dooling, ‘The Making of a Colonial Elite’, p. 158; Wayne Dooling, ‘The Good Opinion of Others: Law, Slavery and Community in the Cape Colony c 1760–1830’, in Nigel C. Worden (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth Century Cape Colony*. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994): pp. 25–43.

families' socio-economic advancement. This network of wealthy families formed interlocking and community-based credit and debt markets.³¹ Women at the Dutch Cape accumulated savings they lent in the credit market. Women were far fewer than men as lenders and borrowers in eighteenth-century Cape credit markets, but women had a presence—3 per cent of the lenders and 5.7 per cent of the borrowers in eighteenth-century Cape were women. This credit market was primarily utilised to generate wealth and not as a last resort for poor farmers.³² Anna Retief in 1710 had borrowed money in 32 transactions³³ and Maria Elizabeth Wicht extended credit to persons at the Cape to the value of Rds 44,950. It seems as if this may have been an inheritance still owed to her.³⁴ Judik Kuijp engaged in 143 credit transactions in 1793—she had lent money to several borrowers.³⁵ Women who have inherited money as well as inheritance in kind, such as slaves and farms, engaged in credit transactions,³⁶ suggesting that a few women at least, played influential roles in the VOC economy.

In an attempt to overcome adverse climatic conditions at the Cape the VOC released some officials from its service. The free burghers conducted independent economic activities, but had to supply the VOC. This action relieved the company from having to pay wages and sustain their livelihoods. There was no free market.³⁷ The company controlled all economic activity and issued tenders for the supply of commodities at fixed prices and at set volumes to the company.³⁸ A second VOC strategy was to distribute rights to supplies of essential food and services, on lease, to free burghers. In 1655 the company delegated the management of its milk cows to employees living outside the castle. This system of delegated

³¹ Johan Fourie and Christie Schoeman, “‘Impending Ruin’ or ‘Remarkable Wealth’? The Role of Private Credit Markets in the 18th Century Cape Colony”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44, no. 1 (2018): pp. 7–25; Dooling, ‘The Making of a Colonial Elite’.

³² Fourie and Swanepoel ‘Impending Ruin’.

³³ MOOC 8/2.39 (<http://databases.tanap.net/mooc/>).

³⁴ Christie Swanepoel, ‘Credit Markets at the Cape under VOC Rule’, (PhD thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2016).

³⁵ MOOC 8/6.53 (<http://databases.tanap.net/mooc/>).

³⁶ Ibid.; Fourie and Swanepoel ‘Impending Ruin’.

³⁷ Meltzer, ‘The Growth of Cape Town Commerce’, pp. 16–21.

³⁸ Leonard Guelke, ‘White Settlers’; Guelke ‘The Early European Settlement of South Africa’, (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1974); Groenewald, ‘More Comfort’.

responsibilities was called *verpachten*—to lease.³⁹ The company issued a ‘licence’ or *pacht* to an individual to perform a certain function on behalf of the company. The owner of the *pacht* had the sole right to render the service—be that managing milk cows and delivering fresh milk to the company, or supplying fresh vegetables, and so on. The *pacht* system was doubly beneficial to the company. Ownership of assets (e.g. milk cows) remained with the mercantilist company, but the owner of the *pacht* had the responsibility to take care of the asset—herd, feed, care for the cows and calves. The benefit to the *pachter* (owner of the *pacht*) was twofold: guaranteed market for the product that is, delivering the product to the company, although at a fixed price, as well as the right to sell excess produce to willing buyers at the fixed company price. An entrepreneurial opportunity arose for the *pachter*, although it was not a free market. The company earned a fixed fee for the *pacht* (payment of the *pachtpenning*, monthly and later two months in advance), secured supply of produce at a low fixed price, and had no risk of taking responsibility for the assets.⁴⁰

In the egalitarian Cape society, the opportunity of *verpachten* accrued also to women. In ground-breaking research Gerald Groenewald has illuminated the dynamism of women in the *pachten* at the Cape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴¹ Women were active as *pachthouders* (holders of the leases), either in their own names, or in the names of their husbands. Women were particularly active in the retail alcohol trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As elsewhere in the world, their participation is obscured in statistical records because they often worked in partnership with their husbands. Between 1680 and 1795, when the first British occupation started, only 10 of the active 198 *pachters* were women. At the time of the first purchase of the *pacht*, all these women were widows. These women, except for one, continued the *pacht* after the death of their husbands. They also managed more than one *pacht*: Gerbrecht Berdenis held seven, Maria Coster held three, Cecilia Datis held two, Christina de Bruijn held three, Judith Odendaal held three, Josina van Dam held five and Aletta de Nijs 17 *pachten*.⁴² Men, especially German settlers, still dominated the *pacht* system, because a substantial

³⁹ Meltzer, ‘The Growth of Cape Town Commerce’; Groenewald ‘Kinship, Entrepreneurship’; Groenewald ‘More Comfort’.

⁴⁰ Anna Boëseken, *Resolusies van de Politieke Raad: Deel 1, 1651–1669* (1957); Groenewald ‘Kinship, Entrepreneurship’; Groenewald ‘More Comfort’.

⁴¹ Groenewald, ‘Kinship, Entrepreneurship’; Groenewald ‘More Comfort’.

⁴² Groenewald, ‘Kinship, Entrepreneurship’.

capital outlay was required. The combined investment of the ten women identified, was 20,525 guilder. This comprised only 1 per cent of the total capital of 6,737,588 guilder investment in the *pacht* trade between 1680 and 1795.⁴³ The presence of widows in the trade was not surprising as many were already familiar with the business, having worked in partnership with their husbands who were the official licencees. Women usually attended to the retail side while their husbands attended to the legal aspects of the *pacht*, acquired the actual licence, liased with the VOC and conducted the public bidding at the annual auction of *pachten*. Women sometimes represented their husbands as registered *pachtouers* at the Council of Policy (VOC ruling body at the Cape) and it was widely recognised and accepted. This practice acknowledged that they were fully informed about the business, managed it and had authority within it.⁴⁴

A significant dimension of women's involvement in the *pacht* system was that they sustained family control over generations through marriage. A *pacht* remained in the family through the transfer of ownership from the original holder to his widow. Upon remarriage it was transferred to her new husband and then onto the new family, children, in-laws and so on. The *pacht* could not be willed onto other persons, but only to the spouse or surviving children. Examples of such strategic business networks developed through the agency of women are identified in the role of widows in the *pacht* trade. Maria Coster held the malt beer *pacht*. She was married to Coenraad Feijt (1722–1727). Maria Coster remarried in 1730 to Godlieb Opperman, in whose name the *pacht* then vested. Coster thus secured three *pachten* and invested 400 guilder during her involvement. In a similar vein Judith Odendaal, married to the Stellenbosch farmer Johannes Daniel Reijndersz (1783–1786). This was the Stellenbosch-Drakenstein *pacht*, which then transferred to her second husband, Willem Geering, when she married him in 1795. The most impressive example of longevity of family control of a beer *pacht* is the extended family network revolving around Aletta de Nijs. Aletta de Nijs was widowed early in her life, left with six young children and debt. She remarried German soldier, Hans Jurgen Honk. The couple bought the farm De Papenboom, on which the brewery of the Cape was situated. They first obtained a beer *pacht* in the name of Aletta's son-in-law, Michiel Daniel Lourich. Through several

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Anna Boësen, *Resoluties van de Politieke Raad*, Deel 2 (1670–1680). (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1959).

generations of marriage, the widow De Nijs' 40-year family control of the beer *pacht* ended in 1783.⁴⁵ In a similar way as Dooling argued that women were instrumental in contributing to stability and longevity in land ownership through inheritance, women facilitated long-term family involvement in *pachten*.⁴⁶ This significant role played by women echoes that of Japanese women in family firms, described by Mary-Louise Nagata and Spanish women, described by Susana Martínez-Rodríguez and Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás, a century later, in Chaps. 11 and 14 in this volume.

The *pacht* system encouraged Cape citizens to go into enterprise. Women engaged either independently or in collaboration with their husbands and were instrumental in sustaining a 'dynasty' or family control over a specific *pacht* through generations. The value of women's investment in the *pacht* system was small, but the significance of their contribution was in their role as conduits passing *pachten* to the next generation. Women's entrepreneurial agency came through in their management of operations. This was especially notable in the alcohol *pacht*, but also in boarding house and hotel businesses. In 1655 Hendrik Boom secured the cow *pacht*. His wife Annetje Joris, experienced in farm work in the Netherlands and an excellent business partner, responded entrepreneurially. She requested permission from the Council of Policy to establish an inn or hotel to provide for the visitors to the Cape. Permission was conditional: She had to purchase all supplies for the hotel at fixed prices from the company stores.⁴⁷ Her enterprise was so successful that four months later, another woman, Jannetjen Boddijns, was granted permission to establish another hotel on similar conditions.⁴⁸ Dutch women negotiated the restrictive VOC context to develop business opportunities.

INTO THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The change of colonial authority from Dutch Batavian rule to British colonial control in 1806 signalled fundamental changes in the legal framework of the colony and also in the way business was organised. Both VOC and the new British rule reluctantly allowed liberalisation of mercantilist

⁴⁵ Groenewald 'Kinship, Entrepreneurship'; Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building'.

⁴⁶ Groenewald. 'Kinship, Entrepreneurship', pp. 19–22.

⁴⁷ Anna Boëseken, Resoluties van de Politieke Raad, Deel 2 (1959).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

policies. Commercial activities expanded under British rule. The demand for credit expanded beyond the private credit market under Dutch rule. The VOC had never sanctioned private banking institutions, giving rise to the active private credit markets.⁴⁹ The British statute authorising non-chartered joint stock banks came into effect in 1826 in the United Kingdom,⁵⁰ but it was not until 1837 that the first private bank, the Cape of Good Hope Bank, commenced business.⁵¹ Under the imperial preference or free trade policies, trade between Britain and the Cape increased significantly.⁵² From the 1860s imperial banks, incorporated in London, commenced business in the Cape Colony and later expanded to the other British Colonies in southern Africa. Financial intermediaries and commercial activity were two sides of the same coin.⁵³

The wealthy elite of the Cape was associated with specific families, but soon business opportunities opened up beyond the wealthy land-based elite. The total population of the British colony expanded from around 285,000 by 1850 to more than 2.4 million by the end of the century. Women constituted 50.3 per cent of the total population in 1850, dropping to 49 per cent through to the beginning of the twentieth century. The colony expanded geographically as the British conquered territory and incorporated parts of the indigenous population into the colony—to the north east the Griqua people, to the east the Xhosa people and to the north west the Khoi-Khoi people.⁵⁴ The white settler population moved up the northern and eastern frontiers of the colony, establishing merchant networks, small trading enterprises and infant or elementary manufacturing industries. Soon the legal framework aligned to the developments in Britain to sanction limited liability companies. In 1861 the Cape Joint

⁴⁹ Fourie and Swanepoel, 'Impending Ruin'.

⁵⁰ Charles Kindleberger, *Financial History of Western Europe*, Second Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵¹ Ernst H. D. Arndt, *Banking and Currency Development in South Africa, 1652–1927*, (Cape Town: Juta and Co, 1928); 'Money and Banking' in Francis L. Coleman (ed.), *Economic History of South Africa*, (Pretoria: HAUM, 1983): pp. 127–62.

⁵² Meltzer, 'Growth of Cape Town Commerce'.

⁵³ Grietjie Verhoef, 'Financial Intermediaries in Settler Economies: the Role of the Banking Sector Development in South Africa, 1850–2000', in Christopher Lloyd, Jacob Metzer and Richard Sutch (eds), *Settler Economies in World History*, (Koninklijk Brill NV: Utrecht, 2013): pp. 403–36.

⁵⁴ Lorraine Greyling and Grietjie Verhoef, 'Slow Growth, Supply Shocks and Structural Change: The GDP of the Cape Colony in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 30, no. 1 (2015): pp. 1–21.

Stock Companies Limited Liability Act, No. 23 of 1861, was passed, followed by the Companies Act on 1862, the Winding Up Act, No. 12 of 1868 and the Joint Stock Companies Act, No. 13 of 1888. Finally, the Cape of Good Hope Companies Act, No 25 of 1892 consolidated the statutory provision for the registration of companies, shareholding and the submission and auditing of annual financial statements.⁵⁵ In a gradually opening market, white women entered the world of work and enterprise from the VOC base.

Businesses developed in a small Jewish population who had been in the Cape Colony since the VOC period. Influential Jewish businessmen in Amsterdam were VOC shareholders. They made significant contributions to its development. They observed the developments at the Cape keenly and in 1669 two Jewish men enlisted as soldiers with the VOC at the Cape. From the eighteenth century more Jewish immigrants settled at the Cape—some were soldiers in the service of the VOC, who eventually acquired free burgher status and set up small shops, or engaged in skilled employment, such as bookkeeping. These Jewish immigrants came without families, but were VOC employees. No known independent Jewish immigrants settled in the Cape before this time. A more steady stream of Jewish immigrants came to the Cape after the British occupation, especially from St Helena, where they were engaged in commerce. When the British government decided to send British settlers to the Cape Colony in 1820, four Jewish families (18 people) were part of one of the first parties. They settled as farmers on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, but soon branched out into commercial enterprise. By the mid-nineteenth century, a sizeable Jewish community with their own synagogue had evolved at the Cape. They established trading operations and merchant activities from Cape Town along the eastern frontier of the colony to Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown.⁵⁶ Jewish women tended to marry at an early age and had large families. They worked alongside their husbands in the family enterprise. Some were also entrepreneurial. Phyllis Sloman (24) and her husband (33) arrived with three children in 1829. Their son was killed on the eastern frontier and they abandoned farming and moved into commerce in Cape Town. Morris was a watchmaker and Phyllis a ‘Linen Draper, Haberdasher and Milliner’, importing fine clothing for women and

⁵⁵ Ormond P. Pyemont, *Company Law of the Cape and Other South African Colonies*. (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906).

⁵⁶ Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa*.

children, assisted by her daughters.⁵⁷ After Morris' death in 1849 Phyllis immersed herself in her import business, with the assistance of her daughters. In the mid-1850s she and several daughters emigrated to Sydney, Australia and continued her business.⁵⁸

The case of Phyllis Sloman illustrates Jewish women's entrepreneurial activity at the Cape. Jewish women generally aspired to be self-employed. Most Jewish women assisted their husbands in their small local business, such as dairies, second-hand clothing shops or drapery and grocery stores. Women engaged in independent business by renting out rooms, managing larger boarding houses or working as self-employed dressmakers.⁵⁹ A few Jewish women worked in commerce—as shop assistants, employees in family businesses, or as typists or bookkeepers. Jewish family life rather had them aspiring to work for themselves—sometimes as tailors and cigarette makers (two of the cigarette factories at the Cape belonged to Jews). One of the leading persons of the Jewish community in Cape Town was Saul Solomon—his wife, Leah Solomon, was known as 'a first class buttonholer'.⁶⁰

NINETEENTH-CENTURY FEMALE INVESTMENT

Women's investment in equity during the nineteenth century followed the trend observed by Janette Rutterford in Britain.⁶¹ Women often invested together with other women of similar lingo-cultural backgrounds, and persons broadly living in the same geographical community context. This strategy was risk mitigating, since a sense of shared community enhanced a notion of confidence in the investment decision. Single independent or married women not only engaged in small private enterprises; they were also active business investors. The Register of Limited Liability Companies

⁵⁷ *South African Advertiser* March, June 1837.

⁵⁸ *South African Advertiser* 22 March 1837; 3 June 1837; 7 June 1937: <http://eggssa.org/newspapers/index.php/south-african-commercial-advertiser-/5-sac-1837-jan-mar.html>; Catherine Bishop, 'Women on the Move: Gender, Money-Making and Mobility in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Australasia', *History Australia* 11, no. 2 (2014): pp. 38–59, p. 49.

⁵⁹ Bradlow, 'The Social Role of Jewish Women'.

⁶⁰ Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism. The South African Experience, 1910–1967*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980); Bradlow, 'The Social Role of Jewish Women'.

⁶¹ See Janette Rutterford, 'Who comprised the nation of shareholders? Gender and investment in Great Britain, c. 1870–1935', *The Economic History Review* 64, no. 1 (2011), pp. 157–187.

captures registered companies in terms of the Joint Stock Company Limited Liability Act, No 23 of 1861, as consolidated in the Cape of Good Hope Companies Act, No 25 of 1892. Registered companies submitted articles of association and lists of shareholders. An interesting picture emerges from this Register of Companies. Women were shareholders in ten registered companies, but in none as directors of the enterprise. They were just shareholders. All shareholders had equal voting rights at annual general meetings—women included. The ten companies were the following:

- Port Elizabeth Boating Company Limited [the name changed to The Port Elizabeth Steam Laundry Company limited] (WCA: LC 10)
- Colonial Marine Assurance and Trust Company, trading as *Wellingtonsche Bank* (WCA: L53)
- Barnett and Company (WCA: L131)
- American Medicine Company (WCA: LC 225)
- The Port Elizabeth Assurance and Trust Company (WCA: 224)
- Pyott Company Limited (WCA: LC230, C 320)
- Forbes and Caulfield Limited (WCA: LC 231)
- E K Green and Company Limited (WCA: LC232).
- The Palace Building Limited (WCA: LC241)
- The Colonial Trust Corporation Limited (WCA: LC242, C 464)

The business of the companies correlates with the type of activities women engaged in, such as millinery, drapery, laundries, health care, real estate or financial intermediaries. Three of the companies in which women invested were assurance and trust companies—*Wellingtonsche Bank*, Port Elizabeth Assurance and Trust Company and Colonial Trust Corporation. These offered safe investment opportunities to widows, or persons seeking security of investment without the risks of market uncertainty. These investments also align with the existing private credit market of assurance and trust companies supplying credit. These companies offered stable and regular returns on investments and an avenue of investment to small investors. Investment in such financial intermediaries had emerged as an important avenue of investment to women since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶² The capital of

⁶²See David Green, Alistair Owens, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford, *Men, Women and Money: Perspectives on Gender, Wealth and Investment, 1850–1930*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the companies varied. The *Wellingtonsche Bank* had a capital of £50,000, divided in 5000 shares of £1000 each. No shareholder could own more than 1000 shares. All the directors of this institution were men. At no stage during the operation of this bank until the mid-1890s, did female shareholders make up more than 10 per cent of the total shareholders. One widow, D. E. Retief, owned the maximum permissible number of 100 shares. The shareholders in the *Wellingtonsche Bank* were predominantly Dutch widows investing in their local assurance and trust company. The recurring names in the shareholder registers testify to the community-based nature of the company. Women from the same district (Wellington) invested in the same enterprise—widows Cilliers, Marais, Rossouw, Retief, Le Roux, Stucki, Fick and Louw. Widow P. J. Pentz invested in only one share. Women were identified as shareholders through their titles as ‘Mrs’ or ‘Widow’. This practice was terminated in 1887, after which women could only be distinguished through the recurrence of familiar names.⁶³

The Port Elizabeth Assurance and Trust Company did not display the same closed community-based characteristics. This company had capital of £25,000, divided in 250,000 shares of £1 each. The shareholder register distinguishes between ‘Mrs’, ‘Miss’ and ‘Widow’. Shareholding varied between 8000 shares held by Mrs Anderson from Kenilworth in Cape Town, to 90 held by Mrs Hargreaves from Port Elizabeth. Women shareholders never constituted a significant number of shareholders—around 10 per cent of the total number of issued shares. The majority of the shareholders were from the Eastern Cape English-speaking settler community (towns such as Grahamstown, East London, Butterworth, Somerset East and Port Elizabeth). Women from London and Hastings in Britain, Hamburg in Germany, Bloemfontein (Orange Free State) and Germiston (Transvaal) also featured amongst the investors. Women’s investment in this trust company shows that despite them being resident in the frontier regions of the Cape Colony, they were well informed about new opportunities to make money.⁶⁴

The Colonial Trust Company, registered in Graaff Reinet, was the best capitalised of the trust companies with women shareholders. The capital of £80,000, was divided in 8000 shares of £10 each. In this company, family investments are significant: The shareholder register identifies several investments by the husband, wife and children (son/daughter). Husband,

⁶³WCA: LC 53: Colonial Marine Assurance and Trust Company.

⁶⁴WCA: LC 224: C 257: The Port Elizabeth Assurance and Trust Company.

wife and children invested in the same company. This may have been the decision of a father to register shares in the names of his wife and children, or a display of confidence in commercial equity. There is no explanation for this in the documents, but the fact that spouses often worked side by side in the small family business, could suggest a notion of shared family destiny. Most of the investors were from the Graaff Reinet region, both Dutch and English-speaking settlers, again illustrating a notion of community: Agnes Margaret de Graaf, Annie Handen, Agatha Jane Elizabeth Ingram, Harriet Murray and Jacoba Probart. The total of women shareholders in any given year never exceeded 0.1 per cent of the total shareholding in the company.⁶⁵

The other businesses in which women owned shares operated in different business sectors. The Port Elizabeth Boating Company conducted its business as the Port Elizabeth Steam Laundry Company. With a capital of £5000, divided in 2000 shares of £5 each, this was not a big concern. Its business was the washing and preparation of linen and other fabrics using a steam process. It was a chemical steam cleaning enterprise, introducing new technology on an industrial scale. Woman investors were few: Miss Jacoba Susanne Franck from Cape Town, with 10 out of a total of 950 shares (0.01 per cent), was the only woman shareholder since the beginning during the mid-1870s and 1882. The name changed to City Steam Laundry Company Limited in 1882. In the same year widow R. E. C. Roux acquired 56 shares in the company (this widow was also an investor in the *Wellingtonsche Bank*). Her investment made no significant change to the proportion of women shareholders in the company—0.056 per cent in 1882. In November 1891, the company was liquidated. ‘Miss’ Franck and Widow Roux’s showed more appetite for risk than depositing in an ordinary savings deposit at a bank or trust company.⁶⁶ Although J. S. Franck was referred to under the title ‘Miss’, she was actually a wealthy widow, who had inherited several farms and left these in precise wills to her family.⁶⁷

The action of woman investors J. S. Spione and B. de Villiers, who had invested in shares of Barnett Company Limited, a gold mining syndicate, can be considered riskier. The syndicate speculated in gold mining

⁶⁵ WCA: LC 242: C464: The Colonial Trust Corporation limited.

⁶⁶ WCA: LC10: Port Elizabeth Boating Company.

⁶⁷ WCA: MOOC 7/1/195: 113: Francke, Johanna Susanna. Wife of Jan Adriaan van Schoor. Will; MOOC 7/1/195:114: Francke, Johanna Susanna. Wife of Jan Adriaan van Schoor, Codicil; MOOC 7/1/90: 26: Francke, Johanna Susanna. Wife of Jan Adriaan van Schoor. Will.

operations and the women considered the syndicate a sound investment opportunity. The women's shareholding was small. Men dominated ownership and occupied the positions of directors.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the early speculative nature of the gold mining industry of the late nineteenth century makes this involvement of women significant. Generally, women invested in safe or risk averse investment products,⁶⁹ which shares in a gold mining syndicate was definitely not. It is apparent that a small group of women in the Cape were following developments in the emerging mining industry.

Women were more prominent in smaller family businesses. An example is the investment by women in the American Medicine Company Limited. The company was a wholesale merchant in patent medicines, registered in Port Elizabeth. Its business also included wholesale distribution of proprietary drugs, chemical and druggist sundries. The nominal capital was £10,000, divided in 100 shares of £10 each. Of the 40 shares issued, 19 were owned by women—that is around 47 per cent of the issued shares of the company. Queenie and Gladys Lloyd each owned two shares and Jessie Kettle had 15 shares, giving women a 47.5 per cent ownership of the company. The company moved its head offices to Cape Town in 1902, but went into voluntary liquidation in 1905.⁷⁰ Another family concern in which women owned shares was E. K. Green and Company Limited. This company consolidated the business of E. K. Green in Cape Town with branches in Kimberley, Pretoria and Johannesburg as wine and spirits merchants. The company also imported liquor, engaged in distilling of spirits and dealt in wholesale and the retail liquor trade. The capital of E. K. Green was £160,000, divided in 16,000 shares of £10 each. The shares were divided in 1600 preference shares and 14,000 ordinary shares. The preference shares secured the right to an annual fixed cumulative dividend of 6 per cent, while dividend payment on the ordinary shares depended on the performance of the company. The Green patriarchs held firm control. Edward Knowles Green, Abraham Frederick Green and Helperus Ritzeema Kuys Green were the directors. E. K. and A. F. Green held the preference shares. The 14,400 ordinary shares were distributed as follows: E. K. Green held 4800, which he distributed amongst his wife and children. His wife, Annie Josephine Green owned 100 shares, his daughters Hester Frederika

⁶⁸ WCA: LC 131. Barnett and Company.

⁶⁹ See Green et al., *Men, Women and Money*.

⁷⁰ WCA: LC 225: C 263: The American Medicine Company.

and Johanna Adriana Wilhelmina Green each 100 shares. Five shares each were given to Sybil Johanna Green, Gweneth Jessie Green, Helen Johanna and Grace Newman Green. He also awarded 100 shares each to his two sons, Frederick Simon and Michael Joseph. The other principal shareholder, A. F. Green allocated six shares (one share each) to six of his children, his daughters Johanna Christine Green, Muriel Maria Hester Green and Dorothy Johanna Christina Green, and his sons, J. E. K. Green, William Frederick Albrecht Green and Douglas Antonio Green. This was a family business and the women who owned shares did so because of the redistribution by the principal shareholders. The small portion of shares allocated to the women seems more symbolic than effective, although perhaps, as in examples of Spanish family businesses in another chapter in this volume, this was a broader business strategy to keep ownership within the family.⁷¹

The investment in The Pyott Company Limited aligned with women's expertise. Its business was flour and meal milling, manufacturing of biscuits, bread and cakes, confectionery, chocolates, jams and other marmalades and fruit preserves. Once again, women did not constitute a significant portion of the shareholding. The capital was £100,000, divided in 100,000 shares of £1 each. The founder, John Pyott held 80,000 shares and a number of women 650 shares in total. Christina Gilbert owned 100 shares, Elizabeth Stella Townsend 150, Violet Maud Kayser 100, Rose Craig 100 and Jessie Louisa Kettle 100.⁷² Another natural inclination for women may have been general trading enterprises. Many settler women worked with their husbands in family trading enterprises where they acquired first-hand knowledge of the industry, management, distribution and sourcing of goods. As vividly illustrated by Stanley, Harriet Townsend, widowed by the early death of her husband, Edward, who ran the Townsend general trading shop in Grahamstown, pursued the business as a going concern after Edward's death. Harriet moved the business to a neighbouring town and with a trusted supplier in Cape Town, continued the business. Although her failure to adhere to all the advice rendered by the correspondent, she nevertheless sustained the business.⁷³ This response of taking over commercial activities formally after becoming a widow is

⁷¹WCA: LC 232: C338: E. K Green and Company Limited; Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume.

⁷²WCA: LC 230: C320. The Pyott Company Limited..

⁷³See Stanley, 'A Settler Woman in Business', pp. 17–55.

also vividly discussed in this volume, by Catherine Bishop with respect to settler women in Australia and New Zealand (Chap. 7).

In Port Elizabeth, women acquired a significant portion of the shares in Forbes and Caulfield Limited, a general merchant. This business was a draper, grocer and manufacturing confectioners. Forbes and Caulfield was importing butchers, dealt in produce, but also acted as shipping forwarders and commission agents. These agency operations linked directly to the import operations of the general trading business. With capital of £5000, divided in 5000 shares of £1 each, women were in possession of 1170 of the issued shares in 1901. This gave the women shareholders a 23 per cent interest in the company operating in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. The founders William Forbes and W. F. Caulfield both held 250 shares each and three other men 250 each, plus two shareholders with 50 shares each. The number of shares held by women in 1901 totalled 1170—distributed amongst sometimes six and sometimes seven shareholders. In this business the wife of the founder, William Forbes, identified in the shareholder register as ‘Mrs William Forbes’ was a prominent shareholder. She owned 700 shares. She was the largest single shareholder. Other women held small numbers of shares. Florence Smith held 50 shares, Mrs Morrison 10, Sara Fynn 10, Mrs T Stewart 50, Mrs Earl 100, Margaret Hunter 50, Mrs Bell (from Uitenhage) 10, Virginia Lee Pride 100, Florence Smith 50 and Mrs Morrison 10 shares.⁷⁴ These women had a stake in the development of a general trading enterprise that served their needs in the remote Eastern Cape region. Several general merchant enterprises developed in the burgeoning Eastern Cape after the settlement of the 1820 British settlers. A sense of shared community interests emerged from the association of English-speaking frontier women as they negotiated the trying conditions of their new settlement. Many settlers moved out of agriculture into commerce, since they were more familiar with the world of business than with the world of African agriculture.⁷⁵ Although it cannot be ascertained with certainty, the substantial interest of Mrs Forbes may suggest that she played a leading role in the business, registered in the name of her husband and his partner.

The last company in the Limited Liability Company Register of the Cape in which women invested as shareholders, The Palace Building

⁷⁴ WCA: LC 231: C326: Forbes and Caulfield Limited.

⁷⁵ See the extensive discussion by S Daniel Neumark, *The South African Frontier: Economic Influences 1652–1836*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

Limited, was a real estate investment concern. The Palace Building Ltd acquired land and buildings for further leasing and/or development. This property development company attracted investment from a number of women who either had no occupation or was not engaged in any specific business. Two shareholders, however, are interesting. Mrs Marie Bunton was the 'proprietress' of a hotel and invested in 231 shares. Her investment clearly aligned with her established other business interests. The second shareholder was 'Miss' Virginia Lee Pride (100 shares), a teacher, who had also invested in the general trading company Forbes and Caulfield. The other women investors were Miss Margaret Anderson Fraser (200 shares), Mrs Nancy Elizabeth Kapp (20 shares), Miss Gertrude Tegwedd (25 shares), Miss Annie Richards (20 shares), Miss Sheila Margaret Shaw (25 shares), Miss Dorothy Shaw (25 shares) and Mrs Susanna Maria Dorothea van Gas (50 shares). The majority of these women investors had no specific occupation or business listed in the shareholder register. This implies that they were relatively wealthy, with investment funds available for investment in lucrative investment opportunities. Marie Bunton invested in the type of investment aligned to her other business interests, while Virginia Pride seem simply to have been a wise and thrifty teacher.⁷⁶

Women investors in the registered companies in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, shows their lingo-cultural shared heritage, as suggested by Rutterford. In three companies, women invested as part of the family enterprise. Generally, shareholding was heavily biased towards men. Women did not control any of the companies they were invested in, but they had proportional to their shareholding, an equal say in voting at annual general meetings. Virginia Lee Pride was an interesting investor. Her investment behaviour in companies discussed above shows her understanding of good investment behaviour and her interest in private enterprise as part of her personal financial conduct. She was an American school teacher from the Holyoak Schools in the USA. She was brought to the Cape Colony by the Reverend Andrew Murray, to teach at the Collegiate School for Girls in Port Elizabeth and subsequently at the Huguenot Seminary in the Paarl. Ultimately, she was the Head Mistress of the La Rochelle Seminary for Girls in the Paarl, where she had a profound

⁷⁶WCA: LC 241: C452: The Palace Building Limited. S.

influence on the education of girls in the colony.⁷⁷ Her investment conduct disseminated through the community she served.

CONCLUSION

This first investigation into women in business in the nineteenth-century Cape Colony does not yet disclose the full picture of women entrepreneurship during the nineteenth century. It shows sustained entrepreneurial activities since the VOC rule establishing female agency in business, albeit not as owners of independent businesses. Settler women succeeded skilfully in establishing 'businesses' within the scope of the *pacht* system. They were agents of economic empowerment to their families. An entrepreneurial spirit took shape and was transferred through different generations. Women's engagement in the *pacht*-related activities later gave rise to independent businesses where they perpetuated skills acquired in the domestic as well as business spheres outside the home. As formal private company registration only occurred under British rule, Dutch women engaged in business through the family enterprise system.

After the British occupation, the only firm footprint of Dutch women in business was their investment in trust and assurance companies. It was significant that the bulk of the shareholders in such registered financial enterprise were Dutch speaking, because, although that sector was no exclusive domain of Dutch women, they were clearly less attracted to investment in more risky general trading and industrial enterprise. The English-speaking settler population on the eastern frontier attracted English entrepreneurial capabilities. These manifested in the rise of merchants engaged in importing, general trading stores and small manufacturing initiatives to serve the developing communities in the frontier region. Women invested in such enterprises, although as minority shareholders. There is no trace of wealthy Dutch women, who had accumulated significant wealth through inheritance and land-based wealth, investing in the registered companies discussed. Except for the dual investments of widow, Roux in the Port Elizabeth Boating Company and in the *Wellingtonsche Bank*, and the investment by Virginia Lee Pride in the Palace Building and in Forbes and Caulfield, no cross investments could be traced. It can be assumed therefore, that the wealth of Dutch women in the South Western

⁷⁷ J. J. Redgrave, *The Collegiate School for Girls. Port Elizabeth, 1874–1974*, (Cape Town: The Collegiate School for Girls, 1975), pp. 14–17, 48, 71–80.

Cape regions did not find its way into the English-oriented enterprises of the registered Eastern Cape enterprises. This first investigation into women in business suggests that women's engagement in business was in its infancy and seemed separated along social lingo-cultural divisions. This notion is echoed by Sean Redding's work on African women entrepreneurial activities. Our work invites more extensive research into women in business in South Africa and Africa, embracing the diversity of culture, language and religion.

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CHAPTER 4

A Mosaic of Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in Moscow, 1810s–1850s

Galina Ulianova

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to explore the structure of female trade in Moscow to understand the relationship between social (estate) status and by-branch specialisation of female traders, based on the evidence contained in Registers of Traders and other prosopographic data.

It focuses on moments of consumption—selling and purchasing goods, the key commercial spaces of the city and women’s participation in distribution of goods. The last three decades have seen consumption emerge as an important historical field of investigation.¹ The subject of retail

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¹Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and John H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: Europa, 1982); Jon Stobart,

G. Ulianova (✉)

Institute of Russian History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

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enterprises in the Russian Empire from the 1860s has attracted much attention, for example, Christine Ruane's discussion of the ready-to-wear cloth distribution and clothes shopping, or Marjorie L. Hilton's debates on meaning of retail trade in the city of Moscow under the municipal authorities since 1880s.² The first half of the nineteenth century, however, has remained largely unexplored. One notable exception is scholarship by Viktoria Ivleva, which examines the fashion shop as the locus of cultural receptions of European style in Russian literary space during Catherine II's reign (1762–1796), when millinery and fashion shops became popular in St. Petersburg and Moscow.³

THE SOURCE

This investigation uses the Registers of Traders (*Vedomosti o torgovtsakh*), which I was able to locate after 20 years of searching, and which are unquestionably the most informative available source on the topic at hand; they are housed in the Central State Archive of the City of Moscow.⁴ These were produced annually from 1825 until the 1840s—after the 1824 Guild Reform, which was initiated by Yegor Kankrin (Georg von Kankrin), Minister of Finance in 1823–1844.

This chapter represents the first effort to engage with this source as an object of historical study; in the past 190 years, it has never been used as a means of evaluating commerce and trade. The manuscript is often difficult to read, and occasionally impossible to decipher. The analysis offered here required significant archeographical work and also involved appealing to outside sources in order to identify particular traders, including women. The unique value of this source is that it contains information about each and

Andrew Hann and Victoria Morgan (eds), *Spaces of Consumption: Leisure and Shopping in the English Town, c. 1680–1830*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Danielle van den Heuvel, Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Retail Development in the Consumer Revolution: The Netherlands, c. 1670–c. 1815', *Exploration in Economic History* 50, no. 1 (2013): pp. 69–87.

²Christine Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700–1917*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 67–86, 115–160; Marjorie L. Hilton, *Selling to the Masses: Retailing in Russia, 1880–1930*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

³Viktoria Ivleva, 'The Locus of the Fashion Shop in Russian Literature (1764–1806)', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 3 (2013): pp. 363–383.

⁴Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Moskvy (Central State Archive of the City of Moscow, hereafter TsGA Moskvy), f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders (*Vedomosti o torgovtsakh*).

every trader operating in Moscow—for the period at hand, 1810s–1840s, more than 8000 individuals. The Registers were so thorough because they were compiled for tax purposes: the main thrust of Kankrin’s fiscal reform was to maximise income from taxes—a necessity in order to reconstruct the economy following Napoleon’s invasion in 1812–13. (Well into the 1820s, the recently impoverished residents of Moscow had trouble paying their taxes.)

The Registers were compiled and signed by the elders of the markets or city districts. The elders, in turn, were elected by the traders themselves on the principle of self-government; they answered to the city administration and police with respect to the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. Included in the registers furnished to the Moscow trading commission (the highest organ of traders’ self-government, subject only to the Governor General) were only those traders who had duly paid their tax, during the month of December, for the following year. Trade was strictly forbidden for any who had not paid their tax, under threat of a fine. Nevertheless, the elders represented the interests of all of the traders before the municipal administration and police.

The Registers consist of printed tables with ten columns, in which was recorded, by hand, information including the trader’s name, his or her social status, type of merchandise and location of the shop and whether it was owned or rented. An annual set of Registers consisted of about 100 books, each including names of 50–400 retailers. This chapter is based on analysis of the 1827 set of Registers, which are the most complete of the annual series. An additional advantage of this particular year is that it allows us to follow the fate of the traders and their family business over a period of several earlier and later decades. Most of traders mentioned in this source were active for more than 10 years and sometimes for over 20, paying annual levies to be allowed to trade in Moscow.

Other archival and published sources have been used to identify and map retailers’ suppliers. These include the lists of merchants and directories of house owners from the 1800s to the 1840s. The latter helped clarify the locations of trading establishments in each city district, and, in some cases, the social status and prosopographies of the owners of commercial properties, and their value for the 1840s.⁵

⁵The similar approach is successfully used, and difficulties of identification and prosopographic data compilation for hundreds of persons are discussed in: Alison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c.1800–1870*, (London: Routledge, 2009); Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In contrast to the situation faced by many women, particularly married women, in the rest of Europe and in the British Empire, the legislation of the Russian Empire provided for commercial activity by women. Under a law adopted in 1753, wives were permitted to ‘sell their own property without the consent of [their] husbands’.⁶ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the right of independent ownership of property was the most important factor shaping Russian women’s gendered roles in entrepreneurship and household structures. The law of 1807 stated that certificates confirming the right to trade could be issued to ‘persons of both sexes, Russian subjects of all estates, and foreigners’, except members of clergy (Orthodox, Protestant, etc.).⁷ Married women could do business and own property independently. Provisions made in a decree of 25 May 1775 (which was then reconfirmed in 1809 and 1824) also ensured that, on the death of an owner, the management of his business could pass to his widow or daughters (both married and unmarried) if there were no male heirs.⁸ Marriage and property law has been investigated by historians such as William G. Wagner, whose study raised important questions about the issue of separate property in the basis on Russian context.⁹ The work of Michelle Lamarche Marrese, Lee Farrow and Katherine Pickering Antonova has advanced our understanding of the nature of women’s property rights still further.¹⁰

⁶ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire)*. Sobranie I, 45 vols (St. Petersburg: Tipografia II Otd. Sobstvennoi E.I.V. Kantseliarii, 1830–43, hereafter *PSZ I*), vol. XIII, No 10111.

⁷ *PSZ I*, vol. XXIX, No 22418.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. XX, No 14327, art. 3; vol. XXX, No 23503, arts 3, 6; vol. XXXIX, arts 43, 45. For a thorough analysis of legislation see William G. Wagner, *Marriage, Property, and Law in Late Imperial Russia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 2nd edn 2001); Galina Ulianova, *Female Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009).

⁹ See: Wagner, *Marriage, Property, and Law*.

¹⁰ Michelle Lamarche Marrese, *A Woman’s Kingdom: Noblewomen and the Control of Property in Russia, 1700–1861*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Lee A. Farrow, *Between Clan and Crown: The Struggle to Define Noble Property Rights in Imperial Russia*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004); Katherine Pickering Antonova, *An Ordinary Marriage: The World of a Gentry Family in Provincial Russia*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

The guilds in Russia differed from the European medieval ‘pre-capitalist’ craft guilds or shopkeepers’ guilds.¹¹ The idea of guilds was first introduced under European law by Peter the Great, who ruled from 1682 to 1725. The Statute for the Supreme Municipal Administration (*Reglament ili Ustav Glavnogo Magistrata*) of 1721 divided the upper urban unprivileged population into two guilds. The first guild included the biggest merchants, bankers, physicians, druggists, jewellers and painters, and the second guild was for retail traders and craftsmen.¹²

The division into guilds was maintained only for the merchants by a decree of 1742.¹³ A clear definition of the rights of the so-called town inhabitants (*gorodovye obyvateli*), of whom the merchants constituted the highest social stratum, was given in the Charter to the Towns of 1785.¹⁴ The Charter divided the merchants into three guilds in accordance with the amount of an individual’s declared capital and the extent of his or her commercial activity. In the highest first guild were registered persons who were ‘not only allowed, but also encouraged to conduct all sorts of trade both within and outside the Empire, to import and export goods, to sell, exchange and purchase them both wholesale and retail’. Members of the second guild conducted ‘all sorts of trade within the Empire, and [were allowed] to convey goods both by land and by water, to towns and fairs, and there to sell, exchange and purchase items necessary for their trade both wholesale and retail’. Third-guild merchants conducted ‘petty trade in towns and districts, [and were allowed] to sell small articles in the town and its surroundings, and to convey that petty trade by land and water to

¹¹ On the European guilds see: Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen and Hugo Soly (eds), *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 224–231; Sally de-Vitry Smith, ‘Women’s Admission to Guilds in Early-Modern England: The Case of the York Merchant Tailors’ Company, 1693–1776’, *Gender & History* 17 (2005): pp. 99–126; Ariadne Schmidt, ‘Women and guilds: corporations and female labour market participation in early modern Holland’, *Gender & History* 21, no. 1 (2009): pp. 170–189. On the Russian guilds see: Alexander A. Kizewetter, *Gil’diia Moskovskogo kupechestva: istoricheskii ocherk*, (Moscow: Gorodskaiia tipografia, 1915); Wayne Dowler, ‘Merchants and Politics in Russia: The Guild Reform of 1824’, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 65, no. 1 (1987): pp. 38–52.

¹² PSZ I, Vol. VI, No 3708. Chapter VII.

¹³ PSZ I, Vol. XI, No 8504.

¹⁴ PSZ I, vol. XXII, No 16188 [‘Charter on the Rights and Benefits for the Towns of the Russian Empire’, bi-lingual text in *Catherine II’s Charters of 1785 to the Nobility and the Towns*, in David Griffiths and George E. Munro (tr. and eds), *The Laws of Russia Series II*: vol. 289 (Bakersfield, CA: Schlacks Publishers, 1991), pp. 22–60.]

villages, settlements and rural trading points, and there to sell, exchange and purchase items necessary for their petty trade wholesale or separately'.¹⁵

In addition to these members of the merchant class, townspeople (members of the *meshchanstvo*, the lowest stratum of the urban population in Russia),¹⁶ and in rare cases soldier's wives and priest's wives, engaged in entrepreneurial activity, albeit on a small scale. They were enabled by the law, which stated: 'A townsman is free to set up looms and workbenches of all sorts and to produce on them all sorts of handicrafts'.¹⁷

The statute following the 1824 Guild Reform, *On the Structure of Merchant Guilds and Trade Procedures for Other Estates*, introduced new principles for acquiring merchant status and new rules of taxation applicable to merchants and other estates. Guild certificates and tickets had to be received and paid for by traders every year in accordance with the size of their trade turnover. Merchants of the first guild, who paid levies of 2200 roubles per year, were entitled to carry out wholesale and retail trade in Russian and foreign goods throughout the territory of the Empire. They could also keep an unlimited number of warehouses and shops (for each shop, the so-called ticket charge in the amount of 100 roubles was to be paid). Merchants of the second guild paid levies of 880 roubles per year and 100 roubles per shop ticket. Merchants of the third guild paid levies of 220 roubles per year and 75 roubles for each shop.¹⁸

MOSCOW: DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Moscow, situated in the centre of European Russia, was the terminus of trade routes from all the central provinces of Russia. Moscow's population grew rapidly in the nineteenth century. In 1811, it was 275,000, dropping to 167,000 in 1816 as a direct result of the French Napoleonic invasion,

¹⁵ PSZI, vol. XXII, no. 16188, arts 104, 110, 116. The criteria and capital levels governing division between guilds could vary from time to time.

¹⁶ The term *meshchanstvo* (*meshchane*) in Russia was used to describe the particular social estate (*soslovie*) designating the lower groups of the city population: the petty tradesmen, craftsmen and the like. *Meshchanki* (Pl.) and *meshchanka* (Sing.) were women from the *meshchanstvo*. See Sergei Pushkarev (comp.), *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh Century to 1917*, (edited by George Vernadsky and Ralph T. Fisher Jr), (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 60. On estate stratification in Russia see: Gregory L. Freeze, 'The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History', *American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (1986): pp. 11–36.

¹⁷ PSZI, vol. XXII, No 16188, art. 90.

¹⁸ PSZI, vol. XXXIX, No 30115.

Table 4.1 The social structure of the Moscow population, 1825

<i>Social estate</i>	<i>Number of persons</i>	<i>As percentage of the entire Moscow population</i>
Nobility	15,876	6.2
Merchants	10,329	4.0
Peasants	79,093	30.7
<i>Dvorovye</i> (landless serfs who lived in their noble landowner's homestead and performed housework)	66,281	25.7
<i>Meshchane</i> (the lower groups of the city population)	33,417	12.95
<i>Tsekhovye</i> (craftsmen and women, inscribed into special corporation)	6380	2.5
Clergy	4991	1.9
Military personnel	20,665	8.0
Foreigners	2461	0.95
Coachmen	2003	0.8
Others	16,198	6.3
Total	257,694	100 per cent

Source: *Istoriia Moskvy*, vol. 3, p. 168

but it swiftly recovered, reaching 258,000 in 1825 and 347,000 in 1840.¹⁹ The provisioning of the population of this metropolis required extensive infrastructure, and a well-developed trade in consumption goods—bread, meat, vegetables, textiles, timber, logs and building materials.

Although the Russian landed nobility, who spent winter months in the city and summers in their country houses, were well-provided by food-stuffs produced within their own lands, a large daily turnover of goods was necessary in the city to feed and clothe the general population, and to make it possible to maintain their dwellings in good order. In 1825, only 10.2 per cent of Moscow's population were nobility (6.2 per cent) or merchants (4 per cent). Petty tradesmen and artisans (*meshchane*²⁰) constituted a further 13 per cent, while peasants made up 30.7 per cent of the population. The remaining 32.1 per cent were made up of craftsmen and craftswomen, clergy, military, foreigners and others. The majority of businesswomen came from the merchant and *meshchane* classes (see Table 4.1).

¹⁹ *Istoriia Moskvy* [History of Moscow], 6 vols (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1954), vol. 3, pp. 162, 164.

²⁰ For the term *meshchanstvo* (*meshchane*) see note 17.

Alexander M. Martin, noted that, in the late eighteenth century ‘Moscow’s social structure also became similar to the West but then diverged again. All Russians belonged by law to a social estate (*soslovie* or *sostoianie*) that determines their legal rights and duties’.²¹ Martin argued that ‘farther down’ from ‘the middling sort’, which included ‘a privileged elite’ such as priests, merchants and a part of nobles, plus a ‘lower tier’ as sacristans, townspeople or *meshchanstvo*, artisans and clerks, were ‘the state peasants and serfs who lived in the city on temporary work permits and formed the bulk of the laboring class’.²² This proportion remained high until the end of the nineteenth century. Even after the Emancipation Reform of 1861, when the system which tied the Russian peasants irrevocably to their landlords was abolished, many people born and continually resident in the city continued to be registered as peasants.²³

The city as a whole was divided into 20 districts. From the late eighteenth century, Moscow’s retail topography was essentially divided in two parts, a core commercial area in Kitai-gorod, and peripheral areas in the 19 other districts.²⁴ This survived for more than a century. Kitai-gorod was the central district of Moscow, to the east of Kremlin, next to Red Square. By the Middle Ages, this was where craftsmen and traders lived, and where local and imported products were sold. Analysis of the city distribution of shops has demonstrated the significant role of Kitai-gorod: In 1795, 1246 (or 46 per cent) merchants or shopkeepers traded there, although Kitai-gorod occupied only 1.37 per cent of the city’s territory.²⁵

Beyond Kitai-gorod, retail was spread throughout the city. Each part had large markets open all year in certain squares with permanent brick shopping arcades (trading rows) for year-round trade and a space to which peasants of the Moscow province and hawkers came to trade on market days (Wednesday, Friday, Sunday).

²¹ Alexander M. Martin, *Enlightened Metropolis: Constructing Imperial Moscow, 1762–1855*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 6.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²³ See: Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

²⁴ *Istoricheskoe i topograficheskoe opisanie pervoprestol'nogo goroda Moskvy s priobshcheniem general'nogo i chastnogo ee planov* [The Historical and Topographical Description of the Capital City of Moscow], (Moscow: Tipografia Selivanovskogo, 1796), p. 30.

²⁵ My estimates are based on the data of merchants’ poll-tax registers (soul revisions) of the fifth revision (1795). See: *Materialy dlia istorii moskovskogo kupechestva. Revizskie skazki* [Materials for the History of the Moscow Merchantry. Poll-tax registers], 9 vols (Moscow: Tipolitografii I. N. Kushnereva, 1883–89, hereafter *MDIMK Skazki*), IV (1886), pp. 1–868.

The statistical information about Moscow retailing is as follows. In 1796, Kitai-gorod had 66 trading rows (65 brick rows and a wooden one) with 3565 brick and 320 timber shops.²⁶ There were 35 ‘trading places called markets’ in each of the 19 districts of Moscow. ‘The Statistical Table of the Condition of Moscow, 20 January 1812’ reported that there were 192 rows with 6324 brick shops, 2197 timber ones, and 8521 shops altogether. There were also 352 restaurants and taverns, 14 coffeehouses, 325 bakeries, 200 pubs, 213 crêperies (*blinni*), 277 wine bars that traded in German, French and Italian wines, 118 beer halls that sold light beer, 586 inns and 41 public baths.²⁷ According to the report made by the head of the Moscow police, in January 1840, retail establishments in the city included: 42 district marketplaces with 395 shops; 93 trading rows with 4587 shops. There were 1839 shops in private houses, and 589 groceries in various places. Moscow also had 262 bakeries.²⁸

FEMALE TRADERS: BY-BRANCH SPECIALISATION AND SOCIAL STATUS

The 1832 *Code of Institutes and Trade Orders* defined trade and described its structure. It stated: ‘Trade is divided: 1) according to its space, into domestic and international; 2) according to the amount of goods, into wholesale, and retail; 3) according to the place of production, into urban and village trade’.²⁹ The trade order listed six categories of ‘trading activities’ such as merchant shipping, brokerage, money transfers and banking, government contracts, commerce and money changing. The fifth category, ‘commerce’, included the main types of commercial and industrial activities: ‘ownership of warehouses, shops and cellars to keep and sell products; of various plants and factories (except distilleries); ownership of inns, hotels, restaurants and taverns, coffee houses, wine bars, pubs, porter halls, takeaways, fish shops, commercial baths and other trading establishments’.

²⁶ *Istoricheskoe i topograficheskoe opisanie*, p. 30.

²⁷ See: *Bumagi, odnosyashchiesya do Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda, sobrannye i izdannye P. I. Shchukinym* [The papers relating to the Patriotic War of 1812, collected and published by Petr I. Shchukin], 10 vols (Moscow: Tipografiia A. I. Mamontova, 1896–1902, hereafter *Bumagi Shchukina*), vol. IV (1899), pp. 230–231.

²⁸ *Moskovskie vedomosti* [The Moscow newspaper] 1840, p. 501.

²⁹ *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* [Law Digest of the Russian Empire] (St. Petersburg, 1833), vol. XI, 2.

Table 4.2 Female shopkeepers in central city district (Kitai-gorod) and other 19 Moscow districts, 1827

<i>Social estate of owner (no. of persons/ per cent)</i>	<i>Number of female shopkeepers in central city district (Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>As percentage of total number of female shopkeepers (Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>Number of female shopkeepers in 19 Moscow districts (instead of Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>As percentage of total number of female shopkeepers in 19 Moscow districts (instead of Kitai-gorod)</i>
Noblewomen	1	0.4	–	–
Merchants	125	51.0	90	41.7
<i>Meshchanki</i>	95	38.8	95	44.0
Soldiers' wives	18	7.3	19	8.8
Others	6	2.5	12	5.5
Total	245 with 272 shops	100 per cent	216 with 231 shops	100 per cent

Source: TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

The 1827 Registers of Traders listed 245 female shopkeepers trading in Kitai-gorod in 272 shops, and 216 female shopkeepers in 231 shops in other city districts.³⁰ At that time, the city had more than 8000 shops, including 4059 in Kitai-gorod, and 4216 in other 19 districts. Women traded in 503 of these (or 6.1 per cent).

The question of the social status of the shopkeepers is of particular interest here. (See Table 4.2). In 1827 merchant women were most numerous (215 persons, or 46.6 per cent), followed by *meshchanki* (190 persons, or 41.2 per cent). There were more female merchants in Kitai-gorod, than in the other 19 districts combined and the few women in the top two guilds were mainly in Kitai-gorod. Of the 125 female merchants in Kitai-gorod, one was from the topmost first guild, nine were inscribed in the second guild, and 115 were in the third guild. Of the 90 female merchants in other city areas, 3 were from the Second Guild and 87 were inscribed in the Third Guild. *Meshchanki* were predominantly in the small-business segment.

The estimates also indicate that 58 per cent of female traders were widows, 29 per cent were married, and 13 per cent were spinsters. Of the widows, only 6 per cent were childless; they personally managed their

³⁰The estimates are based on the archival data from: TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders.

businesses without any participation of their relatives. The remaining 94 per cent of widows had one to six sons each.

Women played an important part in the food trade, especially in groceries (from 15 to 30 per cent in different city districts) and textile and ready-to-wear goods (approx. to 12 per cent). They were followed by the services sector, in which women run to 10 per cent of restaurants, coffeehouses, inns and bathhouses. Nevertheless, there were significant variations in the types of businesses between Kitai-gorod and the 19 peripheral city districts. Women's shops in the central district were more likely to sell fancier goods or commodities one did not purchase frequently. The most numerous of the 272 commercial enterprises in Kitai-gorod were shops trading in textiles (113 or 41.6 per cent), and ready-to-wear clothes, footwear, headgear (66 or 24.3 per cent). They were followed by the foodstuffs (33 or 12.1 per cent), and by trade in metals (12 or 4.4 per cent).

Those outside the central district sold basic necessities of life (half sold food). Foodstuffs were in highest demand; these were sold in 105 shops (45.45 per cent) owned by women. Next were businesses in the services sector (restaurants, hotels, inns, bathhouses, coffeehouses, etc.), with 51 enterprises (or 22.05 per cent). Women also traded in tobacco (14 shops), ready-to-wear clothing, footwear and headgear (another 14 shops). Shops in these outer districts tended to offer products, which modern economics call *fast moving consumer goods*, that is, ones bought and consumed often or daily. (See Table 4.3) The trade in groceries and baked goods was less profitable than distribution of cloth and thread in the prestigious shops in Kitai-gorod. Overall, women shopkeepers traded in foodstuffs (138 enterprises, or 27.4 per cent), textiles (115 shops, or 22.9 per cent), ready-to-wear clothes, footwear and headgear (80 shops, or 15.9 per cent), or offered hospitality (53 enterprises, or 10.5 per cent).

FEMALE RETAILERS OF TEXTILE GOODS

The textiles and clothing retail was a sector with high female participation in many countries. Béatrice Craig has noted a similar situation in Lille retail in France, describing how 'women rapidly increased their market share in textile and clothing'.³¹ Similarly, Catherine Bishop has emphasised

³¹ Béatrice Craig, *Women and Business Since 1500: Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 117.

Table 4.3 The by-branch composition of Kitai-gorod and Moscow city districts' commercial establishments belonging to female entrepreneurs, 1827

<i>Type of trade</i>	<i>Number of commercial enterprises in central city district (Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>As percentage of total number (Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>Number of commercial enterprises in 19 Moscow districts</i>	<i>As percentage of total number (19 Moscow districts)</i>
Foodstuffs	33	12.1	105	45.45
Tobacco	2	0.7	14	6.05
Textiles	113	41.6	2	0.9
Services sector (restaurants, hotels, inns, bathhouses)	2	0.7	51	22.05
Ready-to-wear clothes, footwear, headgear	66	24.3	14	6.1
Metals and metal articles	12	4.4	4	1.7
Haberdashery	10	3.7	4	1.7
Building materials	–	–	6	2.6
Chemicals and cosmetics	8	2.9	2	0.9
Leather and leather goods	6	2.2	–	–
Tableware	1	0.4	6	2.6
Horse harnesses, carts and equipages, wheels, etc.	1	0.4	8	3.45
Woollen and fur rags	8	2.9	3	1.4
Wax and tallow candles	5	1.9	5	2.1
Money exchange	2	0.7	–	–
Other	3 (featherbeds 2, writing paper 1)	1.1	7 (optical instruments 2, rarities 2, soap 1, lamps 1, coffins 1)	3.0
Total	272	100 per cent	231	100 per cent

Source: TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

the high level of activity of female entrepreneurs in these sectors in Sydney in Australia.³²

In 1827, women kept 115 textile shops in Moscow. All but two were at Kitai-gorod. They had a wide variety of stock. This included, first of all, cotton products (textiles, yarn, thread, lace, cotton wool) found in 72 (63 per cent) of female-run shops. The second most common type of goods was silk textiles, sold in 38 shops (33 per cent). Three shops sold woollen items (2.5 per cent), and two shops sold linen products (1.5 per cent).

Moscow markets mostly dealt in textiles made locally—in the city, or in the Moscow province. During the first half of the nineteenth century, changes in production of various kinds of fabrics and the supply of goods shaped the retail practices and spaces of Moscow trade. According to the data from trade registers and industrial statistics the number of textile factories in Moscow and the Moscow province was 132 in 1805 and 299 in 1832.³³

A study of women's trade in textiles demonstrates that customers were offered more than ten different types of cotton cloth. Although shops were often placed close to each other, and one would have expected neighbouring shopkeepers to compete, there appear to have been few, if any, conflicts. Analysis of the registers reveals why: shops were narrowly specialised according to the type of goods. For example, 20 female sellers traded in printed cotton and headscarves. One popular product was *kitaiika*—a cheap thick cotton fabric, usually blue, suitable for outer garments—men's *kaftans* (overcoats) or women's *sarafans* (pinafore dresses)—for the poorer sections of society. *Kitaiika* was sold by third-guild merchants. Avdotia Glinskaya had two shops, which were managed by her sons, Andrei and Boris, Aksinia Prokofieva employed two managers—both Moscow townsmen—in her two shops and Agrafena Sheternikova had three shops. Other kinds of cotton products sold by women included cotton yarn (sold in 9 shops), thread (7 shops), Russian

³² Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2015), pp. 37–53, 238–93.

³³ The estimates are based on the data from: TsGA Moskvyy, f. 105, op. 7, d. 4588, ll.1–14 *Vedomost' uchinennaya iz podannykh ot chastnykh pristavov svedeniï o chisle sostoyashchikh v zdeshnei stolitse fabrikakh i zavodakh* [The Register Compiled from District Police Officers Reports on the Number of Factories located in Moscow, for the Year 1805]; *Spisok fabrikan-tam i zavodchikam Rossiiskoi imperii 1832 goda* [The List of Factory-Owners and Manufacturers of the Russian Empire for the Year 1832] (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Departamenta vneshnei torgovli, 1833), pp. 306–344, 370–414, 416–430.

thread lace (5 shops), local motley, the warp and the weft of which were variegated in colour (2 shops), cotton wool (1 shop), and other goods (18 shops). We can also see a correlation between social status and the type of goods sold reveals itself. For example, third-guild merchants traded only in calicoes, while *meshchanki* (townswomen) tended to choose headscarves.

The Mirrors Row was the most prestigious place to sell textile goods; the members of the richest merchant families of Moscow occupied this space. Genealogies and trade contracts show that an established social network existed, interwoven by trading contracts, friendships and marriages. This network included 153 shops where the cotton fabrics of the highest quality were sold (often made at the sellers' own factories), and showed the highest concentration of elite traders in textiles—first- and second-guild merchants. Out of the nine women who sold their goods on Mirrors Row, six were second-guild merchants and only three were third-guild merchants. Eight women traded in factory-made textiles and one sold grocery goods. At least three female merchants owned factories (Katerina Prokhorova, Varvara Shelepova, Irina Zalogina). In a sense, one can see Mirrors Row as having a cluster of female textile wholesalers.

Let us turn to the history of Prokhorova's business. According to the 1827 data, 47-year-old Katerina Prokhorova (1779–1851) had a rented shop in the Mirrors Row, where she traded in high-quality cotton and cashmere fabrics from her three mills—a cotton-weaving, a cotton, and a cashmere, employing a total number of 900 workers.³⁴ She was a daughter of the Moscow merchant Mokeev and assumed proprietorship of the family business at the age of 35 after the death of her husband, a merchant of the Second Guild Vasilii Prokhorov, 27 years her senior. They had four sons. Prokhorova owned the shop and mills jointly with her son Timofei in the 1820s, and her youngest son Yakov joining the business in the 1830s. At this time, she also acquired three shops in Kitai-gorod. Renting out two of the three commercial premises became an important additional source of the Prokhorov family's income (one shop was used by them for their own trade). In 1842, 74 per cent of the family's real estate, valued at 44,729 silver roubles, belonged to Prokhorova, while the remaining 26 per cent (15,978 silver roubles) belonged to her son Yakov. Until the 1840s, Katerina Prokhorova was the official owner of the business, as determined by her husband's will, which stipulated that all factory assets and the working capital should constitute family property and should be

³⁴TsGA Mosky, f. 14, op. 9, d. 475, l.2.

legally ascribed to Katerina. Such a will was an attempt to avoid the risk of dispersal of capital, and echoes similar strategies used later in the century in Spain (see Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume). In the 1830s, the Prokhorovs' factory business became the largest in the cotton industry. The annual turnover of their shop in the Mirrors Row rose to 1.5 million silver roubles, and, in the early 1840s, to 2.25 million. In 1838, Prokhorova responded to the Moscow Commercial Deputation questionnaire that she was managing the shop 'herself with [her] children', while the factories were being managed by her sons, Yakov and Ivan.³⁵ This case demonstrates that in many instances women continued to head and control family businesses until they died, even if they had adult (sometimes aged over 40) sons, who were mentioned in official documents as being 'attached to the mother'. Here we can see similarities with some entrepreneurial women in England, New Zealand and Australia (see Chap. 7 by Bishop in this volume).³⁶

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Moscow was the national centre of silk production. Moscow's silk retail trade had 38 shops, 32 of which were owned by women. Seven sold ribbons, 13 sold silk and 18 stocked silk patches, threads, cords and tapes. One such business in the Icons Row of Kitai-gorod was where third-guild merchant Ustinia Yakovleva sold taffeta and gros de Tours in a shop rented from merchant's wife Akulina Kozlova.³⁷ These examples suggest that social distinctions were linked to the quality and prices of the sold cloth. The type of textiles sold (e.g. an expensive silk fabric), or size of the business (e.g. large-scale trading in cheaper cotton fabrics) correlated with the place of a woman-seller in social hierarchy and in the local merchant corporation. Traders who made the highest profits from sales were recruited into the highest first and second guilds.

The Mirrors Row was not the only cluster of female retail activity based around the types of goods being sold in the Kitai-gorod. The district had about 40 trading rows. The highest number of female sellers was in the Icons Row, where 20 of the 51 stalls (39 per cent) were owned by women. They sold mainly silk motley, ribbons and tapes, that is, small wares for

³⁵ *Materialy k istorii Prokhorovskoi Trekhgornoi manufactory i torgovo-promyshlennoi deiate'nosti sem'i Prokhorovykh. Gody 1799–1915* [Materials for the history of Prokhorovskaya Trekhgornaya manufactory. 1799–1915] (Moscow, 1915), pp. 5–6, 72, 137; TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, d. 6675, ll. 93–94.

³⁶ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, pp. 22–24, 103–37.

³⁷ TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, d. 299, l. 26.

fashionable women. Fifteen of these sellers were *meshchanki*, three were third-guild merchants, and two soldier's wives. Another female 'domain' was the Thread Row, where ten women traded in thread and yarn, occupying 18 per cent of the 57 shops in that row. Another cluster was located in the Haberdashery Row, where ten women owned a total of 15 shops out of the 107 in the row.³⁸ All women-sellers were merchants and their businesses had high turnovers. Among ribbon-sellers, Avdotia Ivanova, a third-guild merchant, stood out. She kept three shops and worked in one of these. Among the six female greengrocers, a third-guild merchant Daria Serikova employed male managers (including her two sons) in three shops, and Vera Alekseeva, the only first-guild merchant found in our list of 461 names of sellers in 503 shops, engaged in wholesale trade in vegetables, tea, sugar and coffee.

The widow Vera Alekseeva (1774–1849), owner of a gold-cloth factory for 26 years (1823–1849) and 64 shops in Kitai-Gorod, was one of the Moscow realty magnates. She inherited (together with her sons, Vladimir and Peter Alekseev) a factory and 110 shops after the death of the husband, Semen Alekseev in 1823.³⁹ Vera was the great-grandmother of Constantine Stanislavsky, theatre innovator and creator of the Stanislavsky system of acting (later Method acting). Significantly, the case of Vera Alekseeva emphasises the importance of diversity of businesses among the highest levels of female merchants. Vera diversified her trade considerably after her widowhood. In addition to gold-cloth production, she began to trade in vegetables, tea, sugar and coffee and invested the acquired income in real estate in Kitai-gorod and beyond. As a result, she was successful in accumulating family wealth and consolidating her position in the first guild.

THE READY-TO-WEAR SECTOR OF FEMALE TRADE

A considerable number of women were engaged in the sales of ready-to-wear clothing, foot- and headgear. Although the established opinion had it that the market for ready-to-wear clothing only emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, recent studies have demonstrated the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, d. 271.

³⁹ The estimates are based on the data from Michael Rudolf, *Ukazatel' mestnosti v Kremle i Kitai-gorode stolichnogo goroda Moskvy* [Topographical Guide to the Kremlin and Kitai-gorod of the Capital City of Moscow] (Moscow: Tipografia A. Semena, 1846) vol. 1, pp. 47–104.

existence of this segment of European retail in much earlier periods.⁴⁰ This conclusion is supported by the ‘Registers of Traders’ (1827), which recorded sales of ready-to-wear clothes in approximately 400 Moscow shops, of which 88 were kept by women (66 in Kitai-gorod, 14 in two other central and prestigious districts, and 8 in the 17 peripheral districts).

At New Square market in Kitai-gorod, the largest and the most important market for the goods of this kind, 35 women owned shops selling new cotton and linen clothes for lower-income groups of population. Analysis of the records illustrates that these 35 women were also from the lower social groups—townswomen (*meshchanki*), soldier’s wives and a coachman’s wife. Women also traded in hats and peaked caps worn by workers and other men from the lower strata (3 sellers), shoes (3 sellers), bast shoes (1 seller) and furs (1 seller). Less typical were two shops owned by a merchant Vorobyeva and *meshchanka* Loginova. They sold ‘Russian *kushaks*’. These were the ornamented sashes, woven from silk or, more rarely, wool or cotton, 3–5 m long and 40 cm wide, worn over peasant and *meshchane* men’s outer garments, and were rather expensive.

Ready-to-wear clothes were made by small Moscow workshops that employed between 4 and 12 people. According to the documents submitted to the Governor General of Moscow, in 1840 there were 2989 small artisan businesses with 29,720 employees in Moscow. Of these, 406 were dressmakers and tailors, 411 were cobblers, 158 were shoemakers, 28 were makers of kid, suede and silk gloves and mittens and 85 were makers of hats, caps and bonnets.⁴¹ Some of these artisans took private orders and some made ready-to-wear clothes for sale.

At Kitai-gorod, *kokoshniks*—a rare type of Russian traditional head-dress—were sold. Previously, scholars had assumed that this kind of head-dress was only tailor-made, however, the Records of Traders lists shops specialising in the sale (but not the manufacture) of *kokoshniks*.⁴² A *kokoshnik* consisted of an intricately shaped cardboard (placed above forehead)

⁴⁰ See, for example, Jutta Zander Seidel, ‘Ready-to-Wear Clothing in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: New Ready-Made Garments and Second-Hand Clothes Trade’, in *Per una Storia della Moda Pronta, Problemi e Ricerche*, Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of CISST, Milano, 1990 (Firenze: EDIFIR, 1991): pp. 9–16; Ruane, *The Empire’s New Clothes*, pp. 67–74; Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme (eds), *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700–1900*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Alison Toplis, *The Clothing Trade in Provincial England, 1800–1850*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

⁴¹ *Moskovskie vedomosti* 1840, p. 502.

⁴² TsGA Moskyv, f. 14, op. 9, d. 273.

covered with an expensive silk fabric, embroidered with gold-thread and decorated with pearls and precious stones, laces and ribbons. This head-dress was worn by married women, mostly peasants and merchants. The sales of *kokoshniks* were localised in six shops run by women in the Boots and Swords Row.⁴³

Outside Kitai-gorod women traded in 14 shops specialising in ‘fashion wear’ (nine shops), footwear (three shops) and gloves and stockings (one shop each). Footwear was made by cobblers who produced boots (considered menswear) and shoemakers who made women’s shoes. Ready-to-wear shoes were also brought from neighbouring Tver province, (i.e. from the areas situated 130–150 kilometres from the capital), which had specialised in the making of leather boots and shoes since the seventeenth century.

THE LUXURY TRADE

Apart from the Kitai-gorod shops, which sold mostly clothing in traditional Russian style, there were other shops that specialised in imported European clothes, and 70 per cent of these were businesses owned by foreigners. In nineteenth-century Moscow, only nobility and gentry wore European style-clothes. The best-known location of luxury goods retail was the Moscow’s most elegant shopping street of Kuznetsky Most (Smith’s Bridge, or, as it is often called in literature, Kuznetsky Bridge). Here, 40 shops offered French wines, books in English, optical instruments, paintings and marbles from Germany and Italy, men’s and women’s clothing and headgear, furniture, beauty and haberdashery products. One could also visit a ‘French restaurant’, or have coffee and cake at one of the two cake shops (one belonged to a French woman Barbara Duplay and the other to a Swiss Johann Pedotti).⁴⁴

A well-known diplomat and poet, Alexander Griboyedov wrote about the Kuznetsky Bridge in his comedy on verse ‘Woe from Wit’:

The French! With all their fashion shops and streets,
Their books and writers and artists,
They break our hearts, they make our money fly,
I wonder why

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., d. 305.

God will not save us from their needles, pins,
Their bonnets, hats and all the other things.⁴⁵

According to the ‘Registers of Traders’, there were 15 fashion shops, and 5 of these were run by women as the third-guild merchants—Frenchwomen Victoire Lebourg, Marie Armand, Clemance Gambelle, Ursule Boissel and Anna Della-Vos. Foreign proprietresses were highly appreciated for their ‘first-hand knowledge of Paris fashions’. Prosopographic information makes it possible to reconstruct the biography of Victoria Lebourg, née Eloy (1774–1854). She was born in Elbeuf, Normandie, and arrived in Moscow in 1808, together with her husband Constan and their five children. Victoria stayed in Russia for 46 years until her death. She successfully traded in ‘fashionable goods’ in a shop on Kuznetsky Bridge rented from Moscow German merchant Andreas Beckers. Victoria lost her husband in 1820 and continued the family business together with her unmarried daughter Louise and sons Gabriel, Nicolas, Charles and Constan Jr. The success of her business career was confirmed by her ascent from the low third to the higher second guild between 1820 and 1838.⁴⁶

Clothes marked various social groups and fashion varied according to one’s social class. The most notable contribution to this discourse was made by Christine Ruane, who described the ‘sartorial revolution’, when western fashions were introduced in Russia by law on 4 January 1700. After this Decree ‘German dress’ of nobility or ‘Russian dress’ of peasants and *meshchane* became ‘a vital but complex marker of ethnic, social, political, and gender identities’.⁴⁷

Merchant women and townswomen wore clothes different from those of noblewomen and followed fashion to a lesser extent. Townswomen could buy ready-to-wear clothes, while merchants were usually customers of the shops that sold textiles. A dress made of expensive fabric demonstrated one’s high social standing, and this is the reason why shops offered both cheaper and very expensive silk fabrics made by Moscow textile factories using raw materials that were imported from Italy, Turkey and Persia. Factory-made textiles created popular fashions, but these factories

⁴⁵ Translated by Alec Vagapov.

⁴⁶ *MDIMK Skazki*, VII, p. 157; *Moskovskii Nekropol’*, 3 vols (St. Petersburg: tipografia Stasiulevicha, 1907–1908), vol. II (1907), p. 156.

⁴⁷ Ruane, *The Empire’s New Clothes*, p. 2.

also had to respond to the changing tastes of their customers, altering their styles according to consumers' demand.

THE FOOD TRADE

In the 'Foodstuffs' category there were 22 flour and seven bread shops, 86 grocers, seven wine-shops, four butcher shops, two fish shops, two shops trading in vegetable oil and three each in eggs and in honey. This information is very valuable for our understanding of the urban population's structure of consumption in the period under consideration. The majority of foodstuffs shops were situated in the residential area of 19 city districts only. These included flour shops, butcher shops, egg shops and shops selling traditional soft beverages as *kvass* (commonly made from rye bread) and hot winter drink *sbiten'* (based on honey mixed with water and spices) (see Table 4.4).

Grocery shops account for 62.3 per cent of all shops that sold foodstuffs and 10 per cent of all Moscow shops in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. In 1827 there were 64 of these in city districts and 22 in Kitai-gorod. Most stores outside the central area sold food because this was what local residents needed the most frequently. The

Table 4.4 The shops belonging to female traders in distribution of foodstuffs in Kitai-gorod and Moscow city districts, 1827

<i>Type of trade</i>	<i>Number of shops in central city district (Kitai-gorod)</i>	<i>Number of shops in 19 Moscow districts</i>
Flour	0	22
Bread	3	4
Groceries	22	64
Butcher shops	0	4
Wine	2	5
Soft drinks as <i>kvass</i> and <i>sbiten'</i>	0	2
Eggs	0	2
Dairy products	0	1
Vegetable oil	1	1
Honey	3	0
Fish	2	0
Total	33	105

Source: TsGA Moskv, op. 9, dd. 181-571, Registers of Traders

majority of food shops run by women were grocery stores, whose stock included staples (bread, flour, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, herring and salted and dried fish, gingerbread, etc.), but could include fancier stuff (spices, olives, capers, olive oil, mustard, citrus fruit from Greece and Italy), depending on their exact location.

Grocery shops also stocked baked bread of different types, bread rolls, fruits, berries, vegetables, greens grown locally (i.e. freshly gathered from market gardens in Moscow and the suburbs), sauerkraut, pickled cucumbers, groat (cereal kernels) and dairy products. In densely populated areas, grocers could sell all or some of these products. Townswomen (*meshchanki*), or soldier's wives—that is, the lowest city strata—usually sold groceries. Shopkeepers traded mainly with Moscow wholesalers to procure native or imported foodstuffs such as tea (black, called 'ordinary', green, and floral from China), lemons, refined sugar, granulated sugar, coffee and spices—cinnamon, cloves, pepper, cardamom, nutmeg and almonds.⁴⁸

In the Yakimanka district eight of the 24 local groceries were run by women. Many of these women did not have a brick and mortar store but a market stall, which suggest a very modest business with low overheads. They included four soldier's wives (Natalia Vassilieva, Matryona Sergeeva, Ekaterina Petrova, Avdotia Yakovleva); three townswomen, that is, *meshchanki* (Pelageia Vassilieva, Ekaterina Nikolaeva, Anna Vassilieva); and, an extremely rare case, one 'deacon's widow', Agrafena Gavrilo. ⁴⁹ All except the last traded in leased stalls at a district market, which belonged to the Brodnikov merchant family. This was a multi-purpose market with 22 shops that catered for the local urban population and sold meat, fish, groceries and kitchenware; there was also a restaurant and a *kvass*-shop. Women comprised 33 per cent of local vendors and took up eight stalls.

Analysis of female traders in flour and bread reveals correlations between traders' social status and their trading specialisation. The second most common food trade that women engaged in was the flour trade. Some of the women were wholesalers and even belonged to the second guild. The second- and third-guild merchant women owned 16 shops out of 22. For example, in the Yauza district, second-guild merchant Natalia Kulakova had a flour shop in her house. The directories of house owners in 1818 and 1842 confirmed that Kulakova owned a house, and the latter document

⁴⁸ *Bumagi Shchukina*, vol. III, pp. 70–75.

⁴⁹ TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, d. 414.

valued it at a large sum of 14,285 silver roubles. Kulakova was the wife of Mikhail Kulakov, a rich wholesale trader in flour and grain, but traded under her own name.⁵⁰ Two more second-guild merchants—Alexandra Porygina and a widow Marfa Averina—were wholesale traders in flour at the largest city’s flour market ‘at Boloto’. This was a huge marketplace known locally as ‘the Marsh’, located on the island in the middle of the Moskva-river, which had been a swamp until the seventeenth century. In both cases, their sons—Vassily Porygin and Semen Averin, managed the shops. The flour trade brought considerable profits, making it possible for merchants involved in it to pay a substantial fee for a second- or a third-guild certificate. This certificate gave them permission to organise warehouses and to offload flour at the river quays. Flour was packed in nine-*poud* (144 kg) gunny sacks and brought to Moscow from the Russian eastern and southern provinces by river barges.

It should be noted that flour was in high demand in the first half of the nineteenth century because it was not only used to make bread and pancakes, but also to produce non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages as *kvass* and beer, and had other household uses. For example, in December 1812, the household of Princess Anna Golitsyna reportedly used several different types of flour. Rye flour was used ‘to make *kvasses*’, ‘to add to hay for cows’ and to make paste for strips of paper used to insulate windows during the winter, whole-wheat flour was sent ‘to the kitchen to make cakes’ and wheat and rye flour was sent ‘to kitchen to make bread’.⁵¹

Few women traded in bread. The Registers of Traders suggest that ownership of bakeries and trading in baked bread was male-dominated. Since bread was an essential item, prices were fixed and stayed the same in all city districts. This is shown by weekly reports submitted by the elders of trading rows and city districts to the Chancellery of the Governor General. Sellers were banned from setting their own prices. There were also strict rules about the weight of breads (usually set at one pound).⁵² Only seven women in Moscow owned bakeries. Five were Russian and two were foreigners. Trading establishments that sold bread were narrowly specialised according to the types and prices of their products. In Kitai-gorod, two third-guild female merchants owned three ‘cakeries’, which made the most expensive ‘French bread’—a baguette made of the finest

⁵⁰ Ibid., d. 281, l.12.

⁵¹ *Bumagi Shchukina*, vol. V, pp. 84–86.

⁵² PSZ I, vol. XXII, No. 16143; vol. XXXVIII, No 29025.

wheat flour, which weighted a pound and was priced at 16 kopecks (for comparison—the cheapest and the most accessible rye bread cost 2.5 kopecks).⁵³ Varvara Stepanova had two bakeries in her own properties (at the Seed and Fresh Fish Rows), managed by her two sons, Vassily and Mikhail. Agafia Komova leased a property from a noble woman Vinogradova and traded herself, running her business and acting as shopkeeper. Outside Kitai-gorod, Anna Ständler, who came to Moscow from Hamburg in Germany, owned a bakery in the Yakimanka district. Another foreigner, a third-guild merchant Barbara Duplay (of French origin), owned a cake-shop in a respectable street Kuznetsky Bridge where numerous luxury shops were situated.

Vegetable and fruit shops were scattered through all districts. There were 33 female greengrocers. Greengrocers also sold spices, tea, coffee and sugar, and also functioned as groceries. Wholesale trade in groceries and vegetables was the basis of the fortunes of a number of Moscow merchant dynasties. For example, second-guild merchant Praskovia Zhiltsova engaged in the wholesale trade in vegetables and used a large space within the *Gostinyi Dvor*, an indoor wholesale market located in a neoclassical, multi-storey building near Red Square, for her office and warehouse. She rented this from her husband, first-guild merchant Mikhail Zhiltsov who traded in dry chemicals and dyes. Praskovia's business was managed by her agent Pavel Tolchenov, a first-guild merchant from Bogorodsk (a town in the Moscow province), and the shop had three more managers, which implies a large volume of trade.⁵⁴

CLUSTERING

The Registers of Traders reveals some evidence of female retail clustering. This phenomenon could be observed at two large city markets. Both were placed at large squares and provided essential products and ready-made clothes for the middle and lower classes. In 1827 women owned 81 (26 per cent) of the 311 stalls at the large New Square bordering Kitai-gorod. About 1.5 miles north of this market was another at the Sukharevskaya Square in the Sretenka district. Women owned 40 (11 per cent) of the 361 stalls here. Of the women's stalls, 26 were concentrated within a small area. Groceries and small wares were sold by 21 women at the properties

⁵³ Russian pound is equal to 409,5 grams.

⁵⁴ TsGA Moskvyy, f. 14, op. 1, d. 143, l. 2–4. Register of *Gostinyi Dvor* traders.

Table 4.5 The specialisation of women in garment trades at the New Square trading stalls, 1827

<i>Kind of goods</i>	<i>Number of stalls</i>
Tunics and chemises	34
Women's clothes	14 (13—second-hand clothes, 1—new clothes)
Footwear and men's headgear	5 (1—headgear, 2—leather shoes, 2—sashes)
Total	53

Source: TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, dd. 181–571, Registers of Traders

owned by the Church of Trinity at Listy situated at the Sukharevskaya Square, and another five female grocers rented stalls from a merchant Pogodin, who owned a large commercial property in a neighbouring Sretenka street. The remaining 14 women who traded in the Sretenka district had their establishments on the ground floors of local buildings, and their shops were scattered throughout the district.

The New Square trading stalls were set in two rows along the sixteenth-century built wall of Kitai-gorod, which encircled the ancient centre of Moscow and was used as a fortification. One row was placed next to the wall, and the other at the distance of about 10–12 metres from it. Ivan Gurianov described its popularity in 1827: 'Everyday, huge crowds of people congregate there; it is extremely difficult to go through crowds of sellers and buyers'.⁵⁵ This market sold a large variety of goods including new and second-hand books, earthenware from Gzhel, calico textiles and headscarves, but it specialised in the garment trade.⁵⁶ It was the largest market of ready-to-wear clothing, footwear and headgear in the city, with more than 100 stalls.⁵⁷ Women were involved in several different garment trades (see Table 4.5). In addition, 18 women sold fabrics; of these ten sold calico textiles and headscarves, six sold only calicoes, one sold canvas and one sold pieces of fabric. There was also a woman selling Gzhel

⁵⁵ Ivan G. Gurianov, *Moskva, ili Istoricheskii putevoditel' po znamenitoi stolitse* [Moscow, or a Historical Guidebook of the Famous Capital] (Moscow: Tipografia Selivanovskogo i tovarishcha, 1827), vol. 2, p. 260.

⁵⁶ The Gzhel blue-and-white earthenware was made in the town of Gzhel, 70 kilometres from Moscow, and was among the best-selling products.

⁵⁷ TsGA Moskv, f. 14, op. 9, d. 292.

earthenware, a tobacconist, a used-metal trader and even a moneychanger.

So what was the social status of women who traded at the New Square? Of the 81 women traders, there were 11 third-guild merchants (10 widows and one daughter of a merchant), 50 *meshchanki*, 14 soldier's wives, two artisans, and a wife of a coachman. Women traders also included members of rare urban social groups marked according to their husbands' occupations. Anna Maltseva, the 'wife of a printer', and Maria Zhukova, the 'wife of a feuerwerker' (i.e. a non-commissioned officer in the artillery forces of the Russian Imperial Army), sold 'second-hand women's clothes'. Daria Andreeva, the wife of a 'type-setter at the seminary's printing house', sold 'blue-and-white tunics', which were clothes for peasants and others of low middle classes.

In the Sretenka district, women traders were also from non-privileged groups. *Meshchanki* (19) dominated, followed by soldier's wives (10), third-guild merchants (7) and artisans (4). Merchants were involved in large-scale trading. For example, Avdotia Dubrovina, a third-guild merchant, had a restaurant in a house owned by another female merchant, Petrova; the restaurant was managed by peasant Abram Stepanov. The employment of a manager suggests that the business in question was profitable. Other female merchants also had managers, often their sons. A merchant Bushueva owned a wine shop that sold Rhein wines and was managed by her son Ivan. A third-guild merchant Tikhomirova and her son Ivan sold coffins. Matryona Gavrilova sold carts; no manager is mentioned, which probably means she kept the shop herself.

Information about the trade at the Sretenka district also supports the correlation between a trader's social status and her specialisation. Merchants engaged in large-scale trade in expensive goods, or traded wholesale. Members of lower urban strata such as *meshchanki*, soldier's wives and artisans owned groceries and bakeries, or sold tobacco and kitchenware (woodware and cast-iron pots). This mosaic picture reveals a considerable number of women who daily engaged in trade in the areas of the Sretenka district. This trade probably provided a small income necessary to support themselves. Only one of 40 women in this area traded from her own house (a *meshchanka* Fedosia Myagkova, who established a grocery; the house was owned by her husband, as of 1818). The rest

rented properties for trade. This contrasts sharply with findings in other countries, where home-based businesses were the norm.⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

The ‘Registers of Traders’ allow us to form a clearer picture of what Muscovites were selling and buying. The set of registers of each city district and each trading row in Kitai-gorod submitted to the Chancellery of the Governor General in 1827 holds information about 8000 shops, including 4059 in central business area (Kitai-gorod), and 4216 in 19 districts. Extracting the female traders produces a dataset of 461 individuals, who held permits to sell a wide range of goods. There were 245 female shopkeepers who traded in Kitai-gorod in 272 shops, and 216 female shopkeepers in 231 shops in the other 19 city districts. Altogether, female shopkeepers traded in 503 shops. This represented about 6.1 per cent of the total number of Moscow traders.

Statistics confirm that female entrepreneurship in retail was widespread and that the role played by businesswomen was modest but stable. An examination of the ‘Registers of Traders’ revealed that the female owners of commercial facilities came from various social strata, the majority of whom were merchant women (215, or 46.6 per cent of all female shopkeepers) and *meshchanki* (190, or 41.2 per cent). This challenges the notion that female traders were drawn from the lower echelons of society.

There were significant variations in specialisation of trade between Kitai-gorod and 19 peripheral city districts. The number of female merchants was higher in Kitai-gorod than in other peripheral 19 districts. This was because the more profitable businesses in new high-quality cloth, dominated by the merchant class, were concentrated in Kitai-gorod. Less profitable businesses such as groceries and bakeries proliferated in the 19 city districts, where foodstuffs were in highest demand and distributed through 105 shops owned by women.

Moscow had a merchant core, which comprised several scores of merchant dynasties spanning three or four generations and successfully

⁵⁸ See Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, Catherine Bishop, *Women Mean Business: Colonial Businesswomen in New Zealand* (Dunedin, Otago University Press, 2019), Susan Ingalls Lewis, *Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in Mid-Nineteenth Century Albany, New York 1830–1855* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2009), and Chap. 13 by Melanie Buddle in this volume.

operating primarily in the textile or vegetable wholesale trade. The female representatives of low strata, as *meshchanki*, soldier's wives and others, owned, as a rule, small and medium-sized businesses, often short-lived, which was indicative of the absence of protective mechanisms in the form of family capital and those women's involvement in the public and commercial networks.

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A Constant Presence: The Businesswomen of Paris, 1810–1880

Béatrice Craig

In March 1869, the Parisian Eugénie Bayoud, the widow of Adrien Commun, set up a general partnership with Pierre Manceau to manufacture and sell bronze items. Both reported being *négociants* (general wholesale traders). Mme Commun brought into the firm an ongoing bronze manufactory worth 154,750 Fr that she had acquired at auction the previous August. M. Manceau pledged to contribute the same amount in cash. Both partners had signing authority for the business and were entitled to a 3000 Fr a year salary, half the profits and 5 per cent interest on their contribution to the firm's assets; Mme Commun could continue living on the premises at no cost.¹

Mme Commun was very solidly middle-class and did not need to work. The more than 7000 Fr a year her money would have yielded had she invested it in treasury bonds rather than in a manufactory would have allowed her to live in very comfortable idleness. She either did not like being

¹ Archives de la ville de Paris, Actes de société, D31 U3 281 # 505.

B. Craig (✉)
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, Canada
e-mail: beatrice.craig@uottawa.ca

idle or wanted more money—or both—and went into business, taking a partner presumably to expand its operations. According to most historians of French women, Mme Commun should instead have opted for comfortable idleness. French women had been involved in various forms of business (craft, retail, manufacture or international trade) in the early modern period, but according to Bonnie Smith, middle-class French women, repulsed by capitalism, had retreated into the parlour by the middle of the nineteenth century, not to re-emerge until the middle of the twentieth century.² The separate spheres ideology that prescribed this withdrawal supposedly went unquestioned until the end of the nineteenth century when the ‘New Woman’ appeared, and long after Mme Commun went into business.³

The separate spheres ideology was not a uniquely French phenomenon, and various European and North American historians have challenged the extent to which it constrained women’s lives. In France, on the other hand, the separate sphere paradigm remains largely unquestioned among not only historians of women, but also of business.⁴ Consequently, there are almost no academic studies of nineteenth-century French middle-class women’s economic activities (with the exception of works on the petty middle classes that note the existence of shops kept by women or couples).⁵ Only Eliane Richard’s two articles on Marseilles and my work

² Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Lille in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). Michelle Perrot has described Smith’s bourgeois du Nord as the provincial counterparts of Parisian ones: Michele Perrot, ‘Caroline, une jeune fille du faubourg Saint-Germain sous le Second Empire...’, in Michelle Perrot (ed.), *Les femmes ou les silences de l’histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998): pp. 57–106, fn. 19 (p. 433). The following explicitly refer to it as a classic on the subject: Leora Auslander, ‘The Gendering of Consumer practices’, in Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough (eds), *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994): p. 79; Rebecca Rogers, *From the Salon to the School Room, Educating Bourgeois Girls in Nineteenth Century France* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005): p. 9.

³ Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): p. 4.

⁴ Patrick Verley, *Entreprises et entrepreneurs du XVIIIe au début du XXe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1994): p. 78. Serge Chassagne, *Le coton et ses patrons, France 1760–1840* (Paris: EHESS, 1991): p. 583; Jean-Claude Daumas, *Les Territoires de la laine: Histoire de l’industrie lainière en France au XIXe siècle* (Lille: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2004): pp. 239–40.

⁵ Zorina B. Khan, ‘Invisible women: Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Family Firms in 19th Century France’, *Journal of Economic History* 76 (2016): pp. 163–195; Kolleen Guy, ‘Drowning Her Sorrows: Widowhood and Entrepreneurship in the Champagne Industry’,

on the Lille area (the very region Smith had investigated) directly contradict the paradigm.⁶ In both places, we found that women remained in business throughout the nineteenth century.

What should we then do with Mme Commun? Was she an exception that confirmed the rule? A deliberate transgressor? Or were Parisian women behaving like their counterparts in Marseilles or Lille? One will not be surprised to learn she was far from unique. Parisian women ignored the diktats of the (very real) separate spheres ideology when it did not fit their needs or aspirations—and their contemporaries were apparently quite sanguine about it.

THE CITY

Paris was never a city of smokestacks, as was, for instance, Lille.⁷ Instead, it was dominated through the century by small, and even very small, complementary workshops producing or finishing mostly consumer goods, especially for high-end markets. Some sold their products in the rest of the country, and even abroad: expensive locally produced trinkets were known as ‘articles de Paris’. As befit a capital city, Paris also attracted the headquarters of national firms, such as banks and insurance, railway or shipping companies. Large, non-Parisian firms may also have had agents in the city

Business and Economic History 26 (1997): pp. 505–514; Hubert Bonin, ‘Les femmes d’affaires dans l’entreprise girondine Marie Brizard: mythes et réalités’, *Annales du Midi* 118 (2006): pp. 103–120; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, ‘The Petite Bourgeoisie in France, 1850–1914’, in Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds), *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth Century Europe* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984): pp. 95–119; Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe, Enterprise, Family and Independence* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995): pp. 93–99; Jean-Paul Burdy, Mathilde Dubeset and Michelle Zancarini-Furnel, ‘Rôles, travaux et métiers de femmes dans une ville industrielle, St. Etienne, 1900–1950’, *Le Mouvement Social* 140 (1987): pp. 27–54.

⁶Eliane Richard, ‘Des Marseillaises en affaires’, *Annales du Midi* 118 (2006): pp. 85–102; E. Richard, ‘Femmes chefs d’entreprises à Marseille, une question de visibilité’, *Sextant* 5 (1996): pp. 47–58; Béatrice Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Nineteenth-Century Northern France* (London: Palgrave, 2017).

⁷A survey conducted in 1848 by the Paris Chamber of commerce counted 64,816 manufacturers, craft persons and other individuals transforming material for resale. Half of them worked alone or with one worker, and only 11 per cent employed more than ten workers. Chambre de commerce de Paris, *Statistiques de l’industrie à Paris résultat de l’enquête faite par la chambre de commerce en 1847 et 1848* (Paris: chez Guillemin et Cie, libraire-éditeur, 1851), pp. 11 and 33.

to more easily tap the national market. Population growth provided an expanding market for these small-scale industries. The city grew significantly through the nineteenth century, as a result of natural increase and in-migration, as well as the annexation of whole or parts of suburban municipalities in 1860.⁸

THE SOURCES : TRADE DIRECTORIES AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

One major obstacle for a study of nineteenth-century Parisian businesswomen—and even of the history of Paris itself—is the lack of sources. The city archives and the courthouse were burned during the Commune of 1871. Business tax rolls have been preserved only since 1885. No nominal census of the city was taken before 1926. On the other hand, the registers of articles of association are intact—but partnerships were only a tiny fraction of all businesses (e.g. only 868 were registered in 1850). There are therefore serious gaps in the sources for the city's pre-1870 history.⁹

On the other hand, there are trade directories, which listed businesses (factories, workshops, wholesalers, retailers, tradespersons and service providers) located or represented in the city. First, there was the *Almanach du Commerce* (1797–1857) published by Jean de la Tynna, and after his death by Sebastien Bottin. In 1857 Bottin's heirs sold it to a competitor, Firmin Didot, who had been publishing an *Annuaire général du commerce et de l'industrie* since 1840.¹⁰ The directories were published in January and reflected the commercial landscape at the end of the previous year.¹¹ Neither

⁸ 622,636 in 1811; 1,053,262 in 1851 and 2,269,023 in 1881. Stephane Kirkland, *Paris Reborn: Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann and the Quest to Build a Modern City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013); Sandra Brée, *La population de la région parisienne au XIXe siècle* (2015), <http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/170167>

⁹ The city was exempted from taking a nominal census, which was deemed too burdensome on account of its size. (Archives de Paris, Finding aid I-4.1 Dénombrement de la population). Business tax records (*Matrices de patentes*) are available only for years ending in five or zero starting in 1885.

¹⁰ Alfred-B. Bénard, *Les annuaires parisiens, de Montaigne à Didot, 1500–1900* (Le Havre: Lemalle, 1897).

¹¹ The French National Library possesses an almost complete collection of the *Almanachs*, *Annuaires* and *Almanachs-annuaire*s and they are available online. De La Tynna/Bottin, *Almanach du commerce de Paris*, 1798–1838, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32688404r/date>; Firmin Didot. *Annuaire général du commerce, de l'industrie, de la magistrature et de l'administration*, 1838–1856: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/>

publisher charged for inclusion in their directories; they relied on paid canvassers to create their lists. One could, however, pay to be more visible, and some entries include descriptions of variable length of the person's activities. The earlier directories contained a list by trade and an alphabetical list of the people included. From 1850 onwards, a list by street was added.

Directories unfortunately undercount women, who can only be identified when their name is followed by a first name or courtesy title (*Melle*, *Mme* or *Vve*). Genderless individuals are nonetheless not necessarily males. An unknown proportion of women are listed only under their last name or under their business's commercial name or under their husband's name: for example, it was the deceased M. Commun who was listed in the 1870 directory. The proportion of businesses run by women one can calculate from the directories is therefore almost certainly an underestimation.

In addition, the numbers of women are not the only figures to handle with caution. In some years, directories only enumerate the 'most important' businesses in some categories, such as *limonadiers/cafés* or hotels. On the other hand, not all businesses listed were physically located in the city, but were represented by an agent, like Krupp, for example, the German steel and artillery manufacturer listed in the 1859 directory. Finally, individuals who engaged in more than one activity might be listed more than once, and unless one was to transcribe the entirety of the directories, one cannot identify—or count—them. The directories therefore provide us only with broad-brush sketches of the local business world. One should not expect fine-grained pictures of any activity—and it is pointless to do more than calculate very basic statistics.

The registry of articles of associations can provide corroborative evidence. Partnerships and commercial societies of any kind did not legally exist until they were registered with the Tribunal de commerce of the district in which they carried their activities and published a summation of their articles of association in a newspaper of public record. The articles were supposed to provide the names of the partners (and in the case of women, their marital status), their address and occupation, the name of the firm, its purpose and duration, to identify who had signing authority and to give information about the firm's capital and the distribution of profits. Some documents also provided information about intra-firm relationships and dynamics.

METHODOLOGY

I tallied the number of people listed in the trades sections of the directories, broken down by reported sex and marital status, for every ten years, beginning with 1810. These were compiled into spreadsheets, available online.¹² The 1829 directory was substituted for the 1830 one, missing on Gallica, and the 1859 directory for the 1860 issue to sidestep the consequences of the annexation of the suburbs. A comparison between 1850 and 1859 on the one hand and 1870 and 1880 on the other, however, suggests that the enlargement of Paris had little impact on the overall distribution of occupations; large suburban businesses were already listed—and small ones were too few to have a noticeable impact on the overall numbers. Neither do the destructions caused by the Commune—the uprising of 1871—appear to have had a lasting impact.

Professions libérales, only some of which could be regarded as businesses, were not included. For most of the century, women could not get the required credentials or licences to practise them (e.g. physician, architect, sworn expert or stockbroker). Midwives were counted separately, as were people in the education field. Their numbers were erratic, and in the case of educators, the categories were inconsistent. Listed occupations were then regrouped into a small number of broad categories, based primarily on the labels in the directories, and secondarily on the descriptions the people listed gave of their activities as well as what is known of their trades at that time. Occupations listed as ‘*marchands de*’ were classified as retailers, ‘*fabricants de*’ and ‘*manufacturiers*’ as manufacturers and ‘*marchands et fabricants*’ as retailers/manufacturers. *Marchands en gros* and traders who obviously sold to other traders, craftspersons or manufacturers were classified as wholesalers. Those who sold alcoholic beverages were given their own category, as were hotel and restaurant keepers. Tradespeople such as plumbers, roofers and painters were placed in a ‘crafts and trades’ category, alongside craftspeople such as dressmakers, bookbinders and jewellers. So were artists and dentists, who almost all promised the best prosthesis in town (and there were occasional women

¹²The section of the directory used was ‘Professions des commerçants et industriels de la ville de Paris’. The spreadsheets containing the compilations from the eight directories, their code book, a more detailed source criticism and description of the methodology, and large tables that could not fit in this publication are available online; Béatrice Craig, ‘Nineteenth century Parisian women in Business’ (2019), <https://dataverse.scholarsportal.info/citation?persistentId=doi:10.5683/SP2/F5JO0U>, Scholars Portal Dataverse.

listed among the dentists). People who made musical instruments or worked precious metals and stones were all treated as craftspeople. Businesses that could not be categorised, including service providers, constituted the residual ‘others’. The distinctions are not as clear-cut as one would wish. Crafts and trades overlapped; for instance, some of the copersmiths who installed and serviced bathtubs and water heaters might also manufacture them. *Mécaniciens* could be metal lath-operators or running machine shops, but locksmiths are under this heading as well.

The articles of associations on the other hand presented no such methodological challenges but, based on the firms’ reported capital, partnerships were clearly skewed towards mid-sized businesses. People did not register a partnership unless some real money was at stake. I collected the data for the years 1810, 1830, 1850 and 1869 (instead of 1870 because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in the summer and the siege of Paris in the autumn).

LONG-TERM TRENDS

Parisian Businesses: An Overview of Male- and Female-Owned Firms (See Table 5.1)

Both sources confirm the assessment of the Chamber of Commerce: the bulk of listed businesses were small, consumer-oriented craft shops and manufactories. Year in, year out, one-third fell in the craft and trade categories, and a large proportion of listed manufacturers were merely commercial offices of

Table 5.1 Distribution of businesses listed by categories in directories—1810–1880 (% of all entries)

	<i>La Tynna or Bottin</i> Almanachs				<i>Didot</i> Annaires			
	1810	1820	1829	1840	1850	1859	1870	1880
Crafts and trades	29	33.4	32.3	39.9	37.2	35.4	31.4	27.4
Wholesalers	4.7	7.6	6	6.4	4.4	5	5.2	5
Hotels & restaurants	2.7	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	3.2
Alcohol trades	9.3	8.9	7.2	9.1	8.1	8.1	9.6	10.6
Manufacturers	6.5	6.2	13.4	6.9	8.4	11.0	10.3	11.7
Retailers	37.2	25.5	27.8	21.6	21.2	21.1	21.8	23.4
Retail and/or manufacture	5.1	8.8	2.3	8.5	9.8	7.2	6.8	6.2
Others	5.4	6.5	8.1	4.9	8.3	9.4	12.1	12.4
Total	99.9	100.1	100	99.9	100.1	99.9	100	99.9

Source: See footnote 11.

firms whose factories were located elsewhere.¹³ As the years went by, business-, commission- or advertising agencies, brokerage firms, financial services (even banking) and other such services became more numerous. General and silent partnerships convey the same image: they were normally created to start, or continue, an existing small business, and they engaged in one of the city's typical activities—small-scale production and trade in consumer goods, hotel and restaurant keeping and various trades. Partnerships were very rarely set up to operate a factory and rarely involved more than two partners, unless one of the parties was a couple. Shareholding societies were almost exclusively set up to build and operate railway companies or canals, open banks or insurance companies, publish newspapers or, in 1850, to mine gold in California. Although headquartered in Paris, the scope of their activities stretched beyond the local.

Long-Term Trends: Women in Parisian Businesses 1810–1880

No Separate Spheres

Neither source supports the notion of a significant permanent female retreat from the world of business in the nineteenth century. Past the end of the Napoleonic period, the secular trend line was almost flat (see Table 5.2). By 1880, the percentage of businesses listed under a woman's name was back to 1820s levels.

A similar trend emerges from the articles of association (see Table 5.3). There were almost no women managing shareholding societies, and therefore we can leave them aside. A few were managing partners in *sociétés en commandites*. The proportion of general partnerships including at least one independent woman (i.e. a woman whose husband was not a member of the same partnership as well) dropped in 1830, regaining lost ground later in the period. If we add general partnerships including a husband and his

Table 5.2 Proportion of known women among listed firms in directories

	<i>La Tynna or Bottin</i> Almanachs			<i>Didot</i> Annales				
	1810	1820	1829	1840	1850	1859	1870	1880
N all listed firms	14,769	19,250	30,715	47,883	56,138	71,796	111,493	131,630
N heads identified as female	1061	1332	2000	2628	3235	4805	7668	9056
% identified as female	7.2	6.9	6.5	5.5	5.8	6.7	6.9	6.9

Source: See Table 5.1

¹³For instance, 11 of the 27 cotton spinners listed in the 1870 directory mentioned that their factories were in the regions.

Table 5.3 Women in articles of association

<i>Year</i>	<i>Shareholding societies: Sociétés anonymes and sociétés en commandite par actions</i>	<i>Sociétés en commandite or silent partnerships (SC)</i>	<i>SC with female managing partners (without husbands as partners)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Sociétés en nom collectif or unlimited liability general partnerships (SNC)</i>	<i>SNC with women (without husbands as partners)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SNC with couples (husbands and wives both listed)</i>	<i>%</i>
1810	0	13	3	23.1	125	19	15.2	12	9.6
1830	6	55	0	0	297	35	11.8	14	4.7
1850	168	197	12	6.1	534	85	15.9	28	5.2
1869	116	305	15	4.9	1078	159	14.7	26	2.4

Source: Archives de la ville de Paris, Tribunal de commerce, Actes de société, Registres, D32 U3/5 (1810); U3–12/13 (1830); U3–30/31 (1850); U3–50/51 (1869)

wife (with or without a third party), the proportion of businesses with at least one female partner follows the same trend as the figures derived from the directories: a dip followed by a return to earlier percentage. The drop in the proportion of partnerships involving a married couple at the end of the period is likely due to court decisions which, in 1851 and 1856, stated that women married in community of property (the default arrangement for people without a marriage contract) could not be partners with their husbands in a *société en nom collectif*, ‘as such an association creates between the partners an equality incompatible with the right the law gives the husband’.¹⁴ After mid-century, only women married in separation of property or under the dowry system could legally join their husbands in a partnership (on the other hand, they could have any other man they chose as a business partner, as long as their husband did not object to their being in business).

A greater proportion of people in the registers of partnerships were women compared to the directories. In part, this may be because the registers reported sex and marital status accurately. However, the registers may also include a greater proportion of better-off businesses than the directories, as general partnerships were usually mid-size businesses. This may indicate a similarity with the situation in England. In mid-nineteenth-century Manchester, Birmingham and Derby, women were more likely to run a business requiring a medium level of start-up capital than a high or low one.¹⁵ And two-thirds of the women who insured a London business against fire in 1851 and 1861 were also in the middle range.¹⁶ English businesswomen were not concentrated in undercapitalised, low-profit ventures but in medium-low ones, and the same may have been true of Paris—hence a stronger presence in partnerships, which are more biased towards that group—than in directory listings.

Who Were the Women in Business? Businesswomen by Marital Status

Widows were always fewer than half the total number of businesswomen (see Table 5.4). Their proportion dropped spectacularly after 1820. By 1859, two-thirds of the women listed in the directories were identified as

¹⁴ Article 1388 (puissance maritale) in the 1873 version. No such restriction can be found in the original version of the Code. J. Baudry-Lacantinière, J. Le Courtois et F. Surville, *Traité théorique et pratique de droit civil* (Paris: Larose et Forcel, 1887): pp. 96–97.

¹⁵ Joyce Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): p. 287.

¹⁶ Alison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London c. 1800–1870* (London: Routledge, 2009): p. 41.

Table 5.4 Distribution of women listed in the directories, by marital status

	<i>La Tynna or Bottin</i> Almanachs			<i>Didot</i> Annaaires				
	1810	1820	1829	1840	1850	1859	1870	1880
% married women	40.3	40.5	48.2	59.3	58.4	59.8	53.8	48.7
% single women	13.6	15.9	21.3	18.2	16.3	14.5	15	14.6
% widows	46.1	42.6	28.7	19.7	23.4	22.9	27.6	35.1
% sisters/groups of women	0	0.9	1.4	2.8	1.2	2.8	3.5	1.7

Source: See Table 5.1

Table 5.5 Distribution of women in partnerships

	<i>N Women</i>	<i>% single</i>	<i>% married</i>	<i>% widowed</i>
1810	20	65.0	5.0	30.0
1830	47	44.7	23.4	31.9
1850	103	49.5	30.1	20.4
1869	192	36.7	31.2	32.2

Source: Archives de la ville de Paris, Tribunal de commerce, Actes de société, Registres, D32 U3/5 (1810); U3–12/13 (1830); U3–30/31 (1850); U3–50/51 (1869)

‘Mme’, and although widows’ proportions rose again, they were just a third of the listed women at the end of the period.

The widows’ mid-century figures are peculiar—because, at some point in their lives, a fair proportion of married businesswomen must have become widows—and presumably did not stop working as a consequence. Two factors may explain this decline. There may have been more widows, especially younger widows, among the Parisian population, in the early years of the century on account of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. They would have been in business for a longer time period than older widows. In addition, women who started running a business when married may not have wanted to modify the name over their door to avoid confusing customers, whereas those who had run a business with their husbands under his name emphasised continuity by calling themselves ‘Widow X’.

The articles of association, which more accurately identify women’s marital status, show a decline in the proportion of widows among partners only in 1850. The more balanced distribution between the three categories of women is more credible. The trend is also clearly different—steadily fewer unmarried women, and after a dip at mid-century, more widows again (Table 5.5).

Partnerships between relatives—or at least people with the same last name—were not very common. Occasionally, one finds partnerships between sisters, or sisters-in-law, or brothers and sisters, or men and sisters-in-law as well as between brothers.¹⁷ In most cases, however, nothing suggests a family relationship between the partners.

What Kinds of Business Did Women Run?

Most businesswomen listed in the directories were concentrated in a small number of sectors, although few of those were feminised (50 per cent or more of listed people being female), and the rest of the women were scattered across a wide spectrum of enterprises. Year in, year out, 10–12 business categories included about 50 per cent of the listed businesswomen. The lists varied little from one target year to the next.¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, the textile, fashion, culture and hospitality sectors were the ones attracting the largest number of women. Linen drapers, *marchandes de mode*, haberdashers, hotel/inn keepers and booksellers/reading room keepers appear almost every year in the lists of leading female businesses, as well as dressmakers from 1820 onwards. Selling food, on the other hand, quickly ceased to be among the women's most common business categories. In 1810, butchers, bakers and grocers were among those; in 1820, only grocers; subsequently, no food trade was in the list, until 1870 and 1880 when selling groceries was the ninth and then eighth leading female business (but attracting less than 3 per cent of the women in business).

However, the fact that a sector attracted a fair number of women did not necessarily lead to it being feminised. Many women were haberdashers for instance, but only one-quarter to one-third of the haberdashers were women. Many women also retailed wine, but they were always less than 5 per cent of all wine merchants. Few occupations had a majority of women: 2 in 1810 (dressmakers and *marchandes de mode* or milliners), 3 in 1820 (the same and linen drapers), 8 in 1829 and 1850, 14 in 1859, 13 in 1870 and 11 in 1880, and most were not among the leading female enterprises.¹⁹ After the middle of the century, the feminised business categories

¹⁷ Partnerships between sisters or brother and sister were even rarer (8 out of 159 partnerships in 1869).

¹⁸ See tables on Dataverse: BCraig_Occupations_with_highest_number_of_women_2019-04-05.

¹⁹ Trades represented by less than ten people are excluded to avoid the distortions caused by small numbers.

Table 5.6 Business categories in the directories including at least one female listing

	1810	1820	1829	1840	1850	1859	1870	1880
Total number of business categories listed	213	216	493	571	831	968	1426	2036
N including women	150	168	266	307	371	478	631	814
% with women	70.1	77.8	53.7	53.8	44.6	49.4	44.2	40.0

Source: See Table 5.1

accounted for a minority of listed women (33 per cent in 1870 and 25 per cent in 1880) and all but five were carried out by fewer than 50 people.²⁰ By mid-century, feminised sectors included, as expected, many in the needle and textile trades, but also jewellery trades and some odd areas like hypnotism. Women selling food were also scarce in the articles of association. In 1869, 9 of the 173 female partners sold food (3 sold tea and coffee, 3 cheese, butter and eggs, and one each fowl and game, bread and pastries and groceries and fruit); 8 sold wines and 6 were *traiteurs* (caterers). On the other hand, 32 sold textiles, clothing, lace and haberdashery.

The rest of the businesswomen were dispersed through a large number of sectors; in 1810, 70 per cent of the occupations listed in the directories (150 out of 213) included at least one woman (see Table 5.6). The proportion subsequently steadily declined—to 40 per cent of occupations (812 out of 2012) in 1880—but the decline may be in part a source artefact: as the years went on, the directories divided more and more activities into subgroups, and women were not necessarily spread evenly across these. Moreover, the number of occupations in which one finds women grew: women’s territory did not shrink, but men’s grew faster.

The distribution of women in the articles of association resembles that of the women listed in the directory: lots of textile, small-scale production and sales of consumer goods, little food trade, and many women scattered through the remaining sectors, including renting cars (*loueurs de voitures*), restoring mirrors (*étameurs de glaces*), manufacturing toys, umbrellas or electrical wires and trading in mustard seeds.

²⁰ See tables on Dataverse: BCraig_Feminized_occupations_2019-04-05.

A wide range of businesses was, then, accessible to women, even though very few engaged in each of them. The directories list women engaged in businesses that were definitively not 'feminine'. There were, for instance, female dentists. In 1870, Mademoiselle Larivee was listed as a women and children's dentist, 'who particularly cared for the first teeth, the straightening of teeth and gum treatment'. She made rubber (!), platinum and gold false teeth. There were still 18 female dentists in 1880 (4.7 per cent of the dentists listed). Women were also present in finance: nine women (all widows) were bankers in 1840, including the widow Thomas Delisle and Cie, who was listed for the first time in 1833 (her husband was listed in the previous years) at a good address (26 rue de la Chaussée d'Antin). The widow Delisle was mentioned for the last time in 1864 (there are no available directories for the year 1865–1869). She was in banking for at least 31 years. There were still four female bankers in 1859, although none in 1870 and 1880, unless they were hidden behind the name of their bank.

A lack of technical knowledge was no obstacle to being in business either. In 1810, the widow Lauriau was listed in the directory as a 'cordier de théâtre'; she supplied and installed the ropes used to hold and move background sceneries in theatres. In 1850, the widow Constant Decoudun was listed as a manufacturer of high- and low-pressure steam engines, locomotives and commercial laundry equipment; she also installed steam baths and steam heating and drying systems, manufactured all the necessary copper tubing, did repairs and shipped goods abroad. She had won a silver medal at an exhibition the previous year. Decoudun appeared as an ironmonger in the 1859 directory as 'Decoudun, Vve et Cie.', described as a provider of ordinary and special irons, cast irons and iron sheets of all sizes; she was also listed among the machine builders (*Chaudronniers mécaniques*) and heating engineers (*fumistes*). Her (presumably) son was listed instead of her in 1870; he was an engineer. Moreover, in 1880, we find Mme Bonis, manufacturer of high conductivity copper wires and winner of medals at various exhibitions in 1867 and 1873, among the 63 providers of equipment and supplies for telegraph.

The widow Saget's activities were so extensive that she was listed under three separate categories in 1859 (sheet metal, oil lights and gas light). She was described as the successor of Argand and Bordier-Marcet, successful tenderer of the contract to service the streetlights of Paris, maker of gas appliances, lamps, chandeliers, girandoles, lanterns as well as provider and installer of meters. She had won medals at various exhibitions and Argand oil lamps were the lamp of choice until the 1850s. Mme Saget tried not to

let technological shifts sideline her and positioned herself to cater to people preferring gaslights. She was still in business in 1870, but seemed to have given up on gas, turning to another source of energy. She was described as providing streetlights with equipment of her own manufacture, ‘patented petroleum oil lamps for street lighting’, and as the contractor for street oil light in the city of Paris. There was no listing for Saget in the 1880 directory.

Women adapted to new markets and could contribute to technological progress and they did not hesitate to advertise their innovations in the directories. In 1810, Mme Cosseron was listed as the inventor of ‘*peinture lucidonique*’—an odourless, semi-transparent and water repellent paint she had patented in 1802. In 1870, the widow Audoin, one of 40 electroplaters, informed the public that she was supplying the public works administration with improved marine glue, which could be applied cold onto all kinds of support, just like paint, to protect them from moisture. She had won medals at the 1855 Paris Exposition Universelle and again at other exhibitions in 1867 and 1868. Like men, these women listed the medals they had obtained at various exhibitions—any false/possible idea of feminine modesty gave way to business marketing nous.

The cases of the widows Saget and Audoin show that they were considered appropriate partners by various public administrations. They were not alone. In 1870, the widow Charroy was supplying the Paris public schools with writing slates; the widow Collin and her son (tailors) provided Paris policemen, postmen and the telegraphists of the Orleans Railway line with uniforms, and the widow Sompert (also a tailor) clothed firemen and the National Guard. So long as businesswomen were reliable suppliers, their sex was no barrier to finding customers.

Women nonetheless had difficulties finding places in the new industries that emerged in the second half of the century. In 1880, 15.6 per cent of the types of businesses in the directories were new. These new types included the production, distribution or use of new forms of energy like gas and electricity, new technology and their applications such as photography, new machines, big and small, like sewing, knitting or duplicating machines and elevators, new products like rubber and waterproof material, glycerine, guano, celluloid, dynamite, Liebig and other brands of meat extracts, *water closets* and toilet paper and paper clothing patterns. Only 3.5 per cent of all businesses were in these sectors, and women were only a tiny proportion of even these. Although women accounted for 6.9 per cent of all listed businesses, they made up only 2.7 per cent of those in

the new sectors. The new emerging industries or sectors were not particularly open to women, whose more limited life experience did not expose them to innovations in the same way as men and whose upbringing and education did not particularly equip them to grasp their technical aspects or to get a good feel for their markets.

The Businesses of Widows

Widowhood appears to have had an impact on the sector of activity in which a woman engaged. Women who identified as widows were more dispersed than married or single women. Their ten leading business types never included more than 44 per cent of all of them, dropping to about 37 per cent in 1820, to 22–23 per cent at mid-century, and rising again to 28 per cent in 1880 (see tables online).²¹ Until 1859, those businesses were also different from the leading ones of single or married women, and included food trades, wholesale, manufacture and goldsmithing. In 1870 and 1880, however, the two most common enterprises of widows were retailing wines and groceries.

Widows in retail did not sell the same commodities as other women either. In 1880, just over 6 per cent of married and single women sold food or drink, compared with 18.5 per cent of widows, whereas 29 per cent of single and married women and 7.3 per cent of widows sold textile, clothing and haberdashery. Looking at it from a different angle, 55 per cent of the women in food and drink were widows and 33 per cent were married or single, whereas 85 per cent of the women in textile, clothing and haberdashery were married or single and 12 per cent were widows.

Moreover, widows were much less likely to be retailers than the married and single women, and more likely than them to be found in manufacturing and wholesale (see Fig. 5.1). In 1880, 45 per cent of single and married women were retailers and 4.5 per cent were manufacturers or wholesalers, compared with 30.2 per cent and 15.1 per cent respectively of widows. Widows were also more likely to be found in the new sectors than the rest of the women (2.8 per cent of the listed widows as opposed to 0.5 per cent of non-widows), and 73.8 per cent of the women in new industries were widows, who may have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills assisting their husbands.

²¹ See tables on Dataverse: BCraig_Feminized_occupations_2019-04-05.

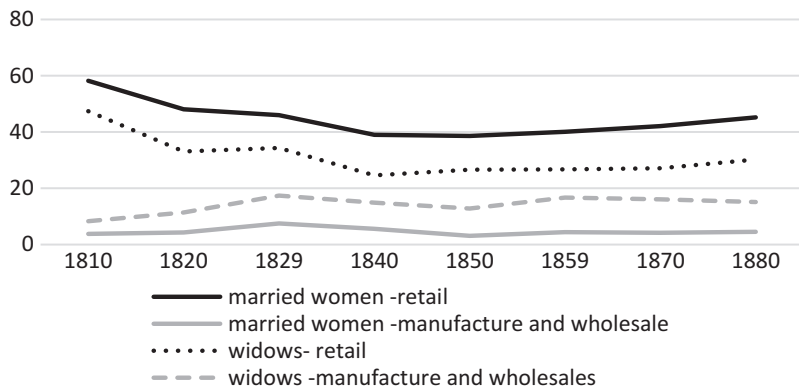


Fig. 5.1 Distribution of women by selected sectors and marital status. (Source: See Table 5.1)

The proportion of widows in manufacturing and wholesale was usually very close to the proportion of male/genderless listings in those two sectors. This could indicate that widows in business often took over from their late husbands, as we see elsewhere. The evidence from the articles of association, however, suggests caution. Sixty-four widows entered into a simple partnership in 1869, and only 11 of them did so with a daughter, son or son-in-law (17 per cent). Only 30 brought an ongoing business to the partnership, and it was not necessarily one they had taken over from their late husband. The other widows brought cash, technical skills or simply their labour into the partnerships. In addition, an unknown proportion of the businesses contributed by women to a partnership were the ones they were running on their own before becoming widows. When they did bring a family business, they sometimes had to purchase it from the estate, as did the widow Barden. Distiller and wine trader Jean-Baptiste Barden died in the autumn of 1868 leaving two children who were still minors. The business was sold at auction to settle the estate, and the widow bought and continued it. She remarried a few months later, this time in *separation de biens* (separate estates) and entered into a general partnership called ‘Ancienne maison Barden, Vaidis and Cie’ with her new husband, Désiré Vaidis.²²

²² Archives de la ville de Paris, Tribunal de commerce, Actes de société, Files, D31 U3 291 # 1771, Dec. 1869.

Behind the Front Door: Shop and Family Dynamics

Articles of association occasionally allow a glimpse into the internal arrangements of a firm. There was no rigid model determining the structure of the mid-sized businesses that made up the bulk of the general partnerships, or the responsibilities of the partners, or the ways they were compensated. The most common arrangement, in the case of a woman independently pairing with a man (i.e. not being part of a partnering couple) involved a woman who brought an existing business into the partnership. The man contributed his industry, knowledge and sometimes clientele and money. Both partners had signing authority and shared the profits and losses equally. By 1869, most partnerships paid the partners a salary (called *appointements* ou *prélèvements*) before distributing the profits, and those were almost always the same for men and women. Those payments were not negligible; the great majority fell in the 1200–3000 Fr per annum range. Partners were also usually provided with accommodation above the shop and may even have received their board as well. Capital put at the disposal of the firm not infrequently generated 5 per cent interest, whether contributed by the man or the woman. In the second most common type of partnership, it was the man who contributed an existing business, equipment or patent and the female partner contributed money (this was a more common arrangement when the woman was single). Those women were slightly less likely to have signing authority.

Occasionally existing or potential spouses are mentioned. As in Spain (see Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume), husbands or future husbands of female partners were usually categorically forbidden to meddle in the business in any way, shape or form. Wives of male partners might be excluded as well, even when the couple was listed as a partner, which is rather peculiar. On the other hand, partnership could provide—or even require—the involvement of the spouse, and women without signing authority may even have been given a salary. In 1869, Alfred Bloc, general trader, Celine Bloc, his wife, and Victor Lausier, sales representative, set up a general partnership to trade wholesale in fabric. Only the men had signing authority, but the next section of the document stipulated that Mme Lausier would have a power of attorney to sign for day-to-day matters, and that ‘as a reward for her contribution to the affairs of the association, she was granted a sum of 1,000 Fr a year, payable in monthly instalments’.²³ In the same year,

²³D31U3 279 #172, 28-1-1869.

Louise Horvet, wife Biscomte, corset and petticoat maker, took sales representative Emile Huvet as a partner. She provided the business and he, some cash. She would be in charge of fabrication and sales, and he would keep the books and cash box. He also pledged that his wife would actively collaborate with Mme Biscombe in the manufacturing and sale of the goods. Mme Biscombe was entitled to a 2000 Fr a year salary and Huvet, to 1200 Fr. They shared the profits equally. There was no mention of compensation for Mme Huvet.²⁴ Unlike Celine Bloc, she was neither a formal partner nor 'rewarded', although she clearly participated in the business.

Partners often downloaded their work onto their spouses. The widow Boisacq and Jean Gerard, both traders in lace, partnered in 1810. They both had signing authority, but Dame Alexandrine Michaud, M. Gerard's wife, who would be given the signature, could represent him in the association.²⁵ Sauce for the gander is however also sauce for the goose. In 1850, Marie Madeleine Legoix took two male partners to operate a manufacture of steel supplies for umbrella makers. She contributed half the machinery. One of the men was to take care of the books, purchases and sales, and the other would supervise the shop floor. In 1848, Mme Legoix had successfully petitioned the court to separate her estate from that of her husband's. Women married in community of property could do this when their husbands' bad management or bad luck threatened the assets they had brought into marriage. Her assets safe, she did not intend to work in the firm. The articles stipulated that 'Mme Legoix not being able to take care of the business, her husband, M. George Legoix will replace her and will take care of the fabrication of the tools'.²⁶

In other words, there were no culturally inescapable rules. Partners struck the arrangements that suited them, and the commonest was a partnership of equals in terms of responsibilities, powers, benefits, profits and risks. Concrete tasks within the firm however could be gendered. When articles of association spelled out who would do what, they usually put women in charge of the administrative work: correspondence, bookkeeping and control of the cash box. This last mattered: one set of articles of association granting the female partner control of the cash box stipulated that her male partner would get a duplicate of the key. Apparently, this was

²⁴ D31U3 281 #471, 18-3-1869.

²⁵ D31U3 6 #163, 25-08-1810.

²⁶ D31U3 169, #1707, 5-10-1850.

not a given. Generally speaking, women were in charge of ‘*les affaires de l’intérieur*’ (internal matters).²⁷ The men were in charge of relations with the outside world (*les affaires du dehors*) and were the ones who travelled. On the other hand, supervising the workers or the shop floor does not seem to have been gendered. These tasks appear to have been given to the partner(s) most able to do them based on their technical knowledge and experience—even if the trade was a typical male one.

CONCLUSION

Businesswomen were a constant fixture of nineteenth-century Parisian life. They were never numerous, even taking onto the account the fact they were undercounted in the directories. However, the proportion of businesses listed under women’s names barely declined after 1820. The long-term trend line is almost flat, sagging at mid-century to quickly recover. Together, directories and articles of association give us a range of 6–15 per cent of Parisian businesses operated by women throughout the century. Mme Commun was neither an exception nor a defiant transgressor of the separate sphere ideology, which she ignored, as did the other 7700 women listed in the 1870 directory. In her small street of 16 houses alone, 3 of the 52 other businesses were under a woman’s name: a jeweller, a hosier and a metal gilder.

Women in business were neither ghettoised in ‘feminine’ activities nor impoverished. Very few businesses were feminised, and those that were accounted only for a minority of all women’s businesses listed. Most women listed in the directories tended to be concentrated in the textile or fashion sectors but were far from being confined to them, and they did not monopolise them. A dozen occupations may have included half the listed women, but the remainder was spread very thinly over a wide range of occupations. Widows, in particular, were the most likely to be found in non-conventionally feminine sectors, and, although few women were in new sectors of activity at the end of the period, those who were tended to be widows. Neither were women’s businesses necessarily small. Widows were as likely as men to run larger firms (manufactories or wholesale trading houses). The articles of association also provide evidence that women

²⁷ Training was available—in 1880 the Paris Chamber of Commerce was offering free evening bookkeeping courses for ‘dames et demoiselles adultes’ *Annuaire-Almanach*, 1880, p. 856.

were not limited to very small, poorly capitalised and barely profitable businesses.

The Parisian business world seems to have been comfortable with those women's activities. Although there were likely a lot of Parisian women 'assisting their husbands' in their businesses, the largest numbers of women in the directories were married ones, and the articles of associations show clearly that they were independent individuals running their own businesses. Evidence from the articles of association also suggests women's competence was not questioned by their business partners, who were often male and unrelated to them, nor, therefore by society more broadly. The typical mixed-sex partnership was a relationship of equals: each had the same powers, the same rights to the profits and the same salary. For their part, unequal partnerships (in terms of power or share in the profits) did not necessarily reflect patriarchal attitudes, but unequal contributions of the partners to the firm's assets. Women who contributed mostly their skills and labour were less likely to have signing authority than the ones who contributed tangible assets (although the same was not true of men). Moreover, women were not always the weaker partners in an unequal partnership; some kept the signature for themselves. Women seem to have been free to conduct businesses in sectors we might consider masculine, but this did not prevent a gendered distribution of tasks within partnerships. Women appear to have been viewed as particularly suited to administrative and bureaucratic tasks, and to keeping accounts and tracking the cash (*tenir la caisse*), perhaps because this echoed what mistresses of middle-class households were expected (and trained) to do at home.

Was Paris unique? Parisian businesswomen shared many characteristics with their counterparts in Lille and Marseilles, as well as in north-western Europe: consistently present, and definitively not withdrawing into 'their sphere'. The proportion of businesses run by women in Paris was lower than in the Lille trade directories (around 10 per cent from 1830 to 1880), or in Vienna (6.5 per cent in 1837 and 18 per cent in 1869), or in Australia and New Zealand. It was similar, however, to estimates for various English towns in the same period from the same type of source (a low of 6 per cent in Leeds and Manchester in 1804–1806 to a high of 14 per cent in Coventry in 1892).²⁸ Most of those figures are not truly comparable as

²⁸ Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil*, pp. 266–67; Craig, *Women and Business since 1500*, p. 100; Irene Bandauer-Schöffmann, 'Businesswomen in Austria', in Robert Beachy, Béatrice Craig and Alastair Owens (eds), *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth Century Europe, Rethinking Separate Spheres* (London: Berg, 2006): pp. 110–124.

they have been calculated from different types of sources (censuses, insurance policies, etc.), but suggest an overall range of 5–20 per cent of businesses being run by women. Paris is in this range, albeit at its lower end. As in Lille and Marseilles, Parisian female-owned firms were clustered, but not ghettoised, in a small number of occupations (a large proportion of women were outside those sectors), although they distributed differently across different sectors. This contrasts with the United States, where the majority of women were confined to feminised occupations.²⁹

Parisian women running manufactures or wholesale trading houses were more likely to be widows, but this does not mean that widows in business were mere placeholders for underage male heirs. Unlike Susana Martínez-Rodríguez and Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás' findings for late-nineteenth-century Spain (see Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume), the majority of the people in the Paris articles of associations do not seem to have been particularly interested in creating *family* businesses: intergenerational partnerships were rare, and widows partnered with men whose last name was different from theirs or that of their late husband. Parisian partnerships were strikingly un-dynastic, compared with Tourcoing, a textile town neighbouring Lille. There, the bulk of simple partnerships brought together textile producers. Partnership was often a form of estate planning, ensuring that the factory did not have to be sold to settle the claims of the various heirs. Lille, however, resembled Paris more than Tourcoing after 1870. Besides being a major textile-manufacturing centre too, it could boast a well-developed retail and craft sector, and it was a major regional distribution centre of consumer goods. Increasingly, Lille simple partnerships brought together skilled and experienced individuals who pooled their efforts to manufacture, buy, sell, distribute or instal new or higher-end consumer products or provide new types of services, as in Paris. Moreover, as in Paris, the partners were usually not visibly related.

²⁹ Craig, *Women in Business since 1500*, pp. 114–140; Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil*; Richard, 'Femmes chefs d'entreprises à Marseilles'; Richard, 'Des Marseillaises en affaires'; Valérie Piette, 'Trajectoires féminines. Les commerçantes à Bruxelles vers 1850', *Sextant* 5 (1996): pp. 9–46; Marlou Schrover, 'De affaire wordt gecontinueerd door de veduwe, Handelende vrouwen in de negentiende eeuw', *Geld and Goed: Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* 17 (1997): pp. 55–74; Else Hlawatschek, 'Die Unternehmerin (1800–1945)' in Hans Pohl (ed.), *Die Frau in der deutschen Wirtschaft (Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte)* (Beiheft 35) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985): pp. 127–146; Jennifer Aston, 'Female Business Ownership in Birmingham 1849–1901', *Midland History* 37 (Autumn 2012): pp. 187–206; Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship*.

The pattern uncovered in Paris was consequently not a particularly French one, but linked with a specific type of local economy.

French women from the industrial middle-class may have gone in business to preserve the integrity of the firm and keep it in the family. Most of the Parisian businesswomen encountered here, however, like a growing number in Lille, operated in a more fluid, individualistic environment. A lesser proportion of their assets was immobilised in machinery and buildings (almost all the businesses in the Paris articles of association rented their premises). Interestingly, the consumer-oriented, individualistic businesses of Paris (and late century Lille) were as open to women in business as multi-generational, production-oriented family businesses, in all cases with the tacit approval of those with whom they had to interact. Moralists may have disapproved, but they were talking to the wind.

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The Gendered Nature of Atlantic World Marketplaces: Female Entrepreneurs in the Nineteenth-Century American Lowcountry

Alisha M. Cromwell

During the nineteenth century, entrepreneurial women were active in the trade of local foodstuffs in port cities throughout the Atlantic World.¹ Borrowing from African traditions, elite and enslaved women in the

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¹ Bessie House-Midamba and Felix K. Ekechi (eds), *African Market Women and Economic Power: The Role of Women in African Economic Development* (London: Greenwood Press, 1995); Hilary McDonald Beckles, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society*. (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), pp. 140–55; Betty Wood, *Women's Work*,

A. M. Cromwell (✉)
Coastal Carolina University, Conway, SC, USA
e-mail: acromwell@coastal.edu

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American Lowcountry profited from the gendered nature of the provincial food trade.² Flora, Elsey and Mary Ann Cowper were three businesswomen whose experiences illustrate how economic relationships among women of different social statuses allowed them all to benefit from local commerce in the southern United States. Flora and Elsey participated in small-scale food trade in and around the urban centre of Savannah, Georgia, with the support of their elite mistress, Mary Ann Cowper. Although Flora and Elsey were legally enslaved, they made enough profit from their business ventures in food production and butter making to maintain some independence from their mistress. Similar to their counterparts in West Africa, enslaved women throughout the American South engaged in business partnerships with their female owners, which enabled these bondswomen to exercise customary rights to buy and sell goods on their own behalf.³ With the support of their mistresses, entrepreneurial enslaved women in the American Lowcountry developed relatively privileged positions, acculturated from African economic practices, that enabled them to benefit from their own labour in local marketplaces.

The business relationships among Flora, Elsey and Mary Ann provide historians with a case study to examine how both enslaved and elite entrepreneurial women accumulated wealth and maintained financial independence within the slave societies of the Atlantic World. As debates rage between historians, some of whom contend that capitalism ushered in a loss of female economic power, and others who emphasise the continuation of patriarchal control over women in business, this case study offers a new analysis that outlines how enslaved and elite businesswomen in the

Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

² For this chapter, the American Lowcountry refers to the coastal areas of both South Carolina and Georgia, including the city of Savannah; Philip Morgan (ed.), *African American Life in the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah Geechee* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

³ Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, 'Women's Importance in the African Slave Systems', in Robertson and Klein (eds), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983): pp. 2–28; David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 92; Robert Olwell, "'Loose, Idle and Disorderly": Slave Women in the Eighteenth-Century Charleston Marketplace', in David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clarke Hine (eds), *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996): pp. 97–110, pp. 99–103; Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work*, p. 101.

American South were culturally oppressed yet economically successful.⁴ A cultural dialectic played out in this region that allowed women to use their specific gender roles to conform to the expectations of slave society, while also challenging its very foundations through their participation in commercial ventures. A more nuanced understanding of slavery that connects the American Lowcountry to the Atlantic World can be reached by exploring how urban women used traditional African ideas of women's work to profit from their specific societal positions.

To establish a new interpretation of the economic lives of enslaved women, historians need to include the urban American South as an integral part of the Atlantic World. Scholars of the American South have long emphasised the rural plantation as the locus of interactions between free and enslaved individuals.⁵ The scholarly discussion of female relationships between these two groups has recently shifted from focusing on mutual trust based on common oppression as women to emphasising the violence perpetuated by mistresses on their female workers.⁶ While such brutality undoubtedly occurred on rural plantations, different economic relationships were prevalent between elite and enslaved individuals in the urban environment due to gendered expectations of women's work. Scholars have also shown little interest in how enslaved African and African American women influenced the economic culture of the American South. This chapter addresses this deficiency through the case studies of Flora and

⁴Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700–1850* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 9; Pamela Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700–1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 17–18; Bridget Hill, 'Women's History: A Study in Change, Continuity or Standing Still', *Women's History Review* 1 (1993): pp. 5–19; Judith Bennett, 'Women's History: A Study in Continuity and Change', *Women's History Review* 2 (1993): pp. 173–84; Linda J. Nicholson, *Gender and History: The Limits of Social Theory in the Age of Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 17–42.

⁵Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South, Revised Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

⁶Stephanie Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery: White Women, the Slave Market, and Enslaved People's Sexualized Bodies in the Nineteenth Century South', in Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris (eds), *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018): pp. 109–23.

Else. By exploring their relationships with Mary Ann, this analysis offers a more nuanced history than that of recent scholarship, which primarily emphasises violence and resistance. This chapter investigates how women used their differing social statuses to maintain a continuity of women's labour from previous generations, while also challenging the patriarchal structure of southern slave society.

Historians are still grappling with the reality that enslaved people, especially women, were economic participants in urban southern markets. This hesitation comes from precedents established in American historiography of slavery during the early twentieth century. Some scholars suggested that enslaved Africans did not have business traditions to draw upon or replicate in their new environments and asserted that this deficiency caused modern African American businesses to be less successful than their Euro American counterparts.⁷ This idea, initially espoused by E. Franklin Frazier in 1957, endured until challenged by Juliet Walker in her 2009 study, *The History of Black Business in America*.⁸ Walker outlined the rich cultural heritage of Africans in business, contending that the racist economic policies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, combined with skewed methodologies, prevented a complex understanding of contemporary African American businesses.⁹ Walker argued that selling 'produce enabled African American slave women not only to participate in the economy, but also to pass their valuable marketing skills from one generation to the next'.¹⁰ Walker's evidence from newspapers, court cases and travellers' accounts suggests that enslaved and free women of African descent actively participated in American commerce, transferring knowledge about how to conduct business from female-oriented marketplaces in West Africa.

Many women and girls caught in the slave trade could not bring material objects with them across the Atlantic, but the way that enslaved women created economic relationships with their elite mistresses survived the Middle Passage.¹¹ In 1840, 5158 of Savannah's residents were of African

⁷E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 17, 129–39.

⁸Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963), pp. 30–33.

⁹Juliet E.K. Walker, *The History of Black Businesses in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), p. xxiv.

¹⁰Walker, *The History of Black Businesses in America*, p. 90.

¹¹Walker, *The History of Black Businesses in America*, p. 89.

descent, and 3370 of them were women.¹² African and African American women constituted 30 per cent of Savannah's population, and the domestic work they performed, like cooking and meal preparation, undoubtedly enabled them to influence the culture of the city marketplaces to reflect their African heritage.¹³ The movement of women from specific regions in West Africa to the American Lowcountry can be visualised through digital mapping. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade database lists sixteen voyages to Charleston and Savannah between 1753 and 1807. More than 20 per cent of the captives were female (Fig. 6.1). Market forces in the principal ports of landing might have influenced the decisions of vessel captains, who were bringing cargoes that would yield premium prices. Due to the gendered nature of domestic work, enslaved women were essential in daily food commerce, which allowed them to establish commercial relationships based on African ideals with elite women, merchants and other enslaved individuals.

The labour organisation Mary Ann Cowper instituted for her market women Flora and Elsey was similar to the economic associations between elite and enslaved women in West and West-Central Africa. For example, nineteenth-century Hausa peoples, who resided in what is currently northern Nigeria, kept enslaved people to work as domestics and farm labourers in a similar vein as Lowcountry planters.¹⁴ Slave-owning Hausa women were akin to their slave-owning American counterparts in the ways they organised enslaved labour to remain financially independent from their male kin. The religious practice of *Purdah*, or *Kulle*, kept married women tied to the home and secluded from the public sphere; thus, women in West Africa were thought by early British anthropologists to have little

¹² Joseph Bancroft, *Census of the City of Savannah* (Savannah: Edward J. Purse, Printer, 1848), p. 7.

¹³ Timothy Lockley, 'Slaveholders and Slaves in Savannah's 1860 Census', *Urban History* 41, no. 4 (2014): pp. 647–63, pp. 653–55; Jacqueline Jones, "'My Mother Was Much of a Woman": Black Women, Work, and the Family Under Slavery', *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 2 (1982): pp. 235–69, pp. 236–37.

¹⁴ Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate', *American Historical Review* 84, no. 5 (1979): pp. 1267–92; Polly Hill, 'From Slavery to Freedom: The Case of Farm-Slavery in Nigerian Hausaland', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no. 3 (1976): pp. 395–426, p. 420; Ahmed Beita Yusuf, 'Capital Formation and Management among the Muslim Hausa Traders of Kano, Nigeria', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 45, no. 2 (1975): pp. 167–82.



Fig. 6.1 Map showing + 20 per cent female captives West Africa to American Lowcountry, 1753–1807. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

power in their households. Recent studies have challenged that analysis.¹⁵ Scholars have found that households in modern Hausaland have ‘evolved through centuries of complex interaction between Islam and African models’ and that women in precolonial Africa might not have been marginalised to the extent reported by colonial British observers.¹⁶ Through enslaved surrogates, Hausa women in *Kulle* conducted business transactions and trade that provided economic autonomy. By developing economic relationships with their enslaved domestics, Hausa women had bought, sold and controlled agricultural surpluses from the rural areas to the city markets for generations. Elite southern women in the United States, who also did not travel to food markets due to social restrictions, conducted business in a similar fashion through enslaved surrogates.¹⁷

Along with the Muslim Hausa, several other African cultural groups had strong female participation in commerce. European travellers referred to African businesswomen such as ‘*nharas* in the Guinea-Bissau region, *signares* in Senegal and *senoras* along the Gambia River’.¹⁸ The most successful women in the Angolan city of Luanda owned slaves, ships and land.¹⁹ Known as *donas*, these women had considerable wealth and power as they conducted the trans-Atlantic trade for slaves, salt, gold and metals with European powers like the Portuguese and British.²⁰ Much like Mary Ann Cowper, women in West and West-Central Africa worked within the existing slave trade, which was largely based on male merchants engaging in trans-Atlantic trade. However, women subverted this patriarchal system

¹⁵ Britta Frede and Joseph Hill, ‘Introduction: En-gendering Islamic Authority in West Africa’, *Islamic Africa* 5, no. 2 (2014): pp. 131–65; Barbara J. Callaway, ‘Ambiguous Consequences of the Socialisation and Seclusion of Hausa Women’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 3 (1984): pp. 429–50, p. 431.

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Culture, Vol. II: Family, Law and Politics* (Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 258.

¹⁷ Kelley Fanto Deetz, *Bound to the Fire: How Virginia’s Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent America’s Cuisine* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017), pp. 101–03; Kirsten E. Wood, *Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution Through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 84–85; Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 47–48.

¹⁸ George E. Brooks, ‘A Nhara of Guinea-Bissau: Mae Aurelia Correia’, in Claire Robertson and Martin A. Klein (eds), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983): pp. 295–319, p. 295.

¹⁹ Vanessa S. Oliveira, ‘Gender, Foodstuff Production and Trade in Late Eighteenth-Century Luanda’, *African Economic History* 43 (2015): pp. 51–81, p. 59.

²⁰ See Chap. 9 by Oliveira in this volume.

by making independent economic decisions about how they organised their enslaved agricultural workers, their skilled labourers and their long-distance trade operations. Although they lived an ocean apart, nineteenth-century West African and southern American slaveholding women maintained their economic sovereignty by manoeuvring around patriarchal restrictions in business. Enslaved women also benefited from these relationships as they were integrated into commercial economies.

Mary Ann Cowper was a savvy businesswoman who, like many Muslim women in Africa, initially gained her wealth through inheritances from several family members.²¹ She was raised by plantation owners and merchants who had connections to businessmen and women throughout the Atlantic World. Mary Ann owned people, property and stock in England, Jamaica, New York, South Carolina and Georgia²² (Fig. 6.2). She also travelled extensively to each of these places²³ (Fig. 6.3). In 1818, at the age of 42, Mary Ann made her permanent home in Savannah, where her familial roots had been planted. By 1819, she was managing her global affairs from her house on the corner of Abercorn and W. Bay streets²⁴ (Fig. 6.4). By the time of her death in 1856, she was living with a widowed cousin and had amassed a fortune of about US\$85,000, which amounts to over US\$2,000,000 in modern currency.²⁵ These connections to both people and places permitted her access to an emerging capitalist economy

²¹ Hafiz Nazeem Goolam, 'Gender Equality in Islamic Family Law', in Hisham M. Ramadan (ed.), *Understanding Islamic Law: From Classical to Contemporary* (AltaMira Press, 2006): pp. 117–34, p. 129; Richard Kimber, 'The Qur'anic Law of Inheritance', *Islamic Law and Society* 5, no. 3 (1998): pp. 291–325, p. 291.

²² Mary Ann Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850', Mackay-Stiles Papers, #00470, Vol. 44, Series E.6, Folder 118 (Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; hereinafter cited as SHC).

²³ Walter Charlton Hartridge (ed.), *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen to His Family* (Savannah: Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1943), p. 27. Walter Charlton Hartridge (ed.), *The Letters of Robert Mackay to His Wife* (Savannah: Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1949), pp. 254–55, 274.

²⁴ Mary Ann Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (SHC).

²⁵ Georgia Court of Ordinary, Chatham County, GA., *Wills Vol 1, 1852–1862*, Last Will & Testament of Mary Anna Cowper, 23 April 1856, 201–206. Ancestry.com. *Georgia, Wills and Probate Records, 1742–1992*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015; Cowper listed a total of US\$8000 in cash as gifts and named a total of sixty-seven individuals, who were worth at least US\$57,000 <https://www.measuringworth.com/slavery.php>, as well as her properties in Georgia, South Carolina and New York. A currency calculator was used to convert currency from 1856 into 2015 money <https://www.historicalstatistics.org/Currencyconverter.html>



Fig. 6.2 Map showing Mary Ann Cowper's properties, 1800–1856. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)



Fig. 6.3 Map showing Mary Ann Cowper's Atlantic World Movements, 1796–1856. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)



Fig. 6.4 Map showing Mary Ann Cowper's Savannah properties, 1800-1856. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

as she exploited the labour of all of her enslaved workers, including her urban workforce in Savannah.

In the American South, widowed and single women like Mary Ann hired out enslaved workers to city governments and/or private industries for cash wages. Usually at the beginning of each year, enslaved carpenters, mechanics, longshoremen and domestics would enter into contracts or agreements with third parties to work for a specific amount of time in return for wages.²⁶ Some money was given to their owners, and enslaved people used their remaining cash for living expenses like rent, clothing and food. One advantage for owners was that they no longer had to house, clothe and feed their enslaved workers. However, this form of labour organisation contradicted a basic tenet of slavery because hiring out enslaved people allowed them to participate in elements of free-wage labour. Eugene Genovese estimated that between '5 and 10 percent of the slaves of the South could expect to be hired out during any given year in the late antebellum period'.²⁷ This created a class of workers who did not fit into the plantation system as they participated in the labour market independently from their masters, acquired their own capital and made their own decisions, at least to some extent, in the marketplace.²⁸ This quasi-free labour system allowed elite women like Mary Ann to earn an income, while also permitting women like Flora and Elsey a modicum of freedom in a slave society. Monetary transactions between mistresses and enslaved workers fuelled an internal economy that functioned alongside the emerging global capitalist market of the nineteenth century.²⁹

Enslaved men and women who worked for wages were a necessary part of the urban labour force, and they could not be as easily restricted in their decisions and movements as their counterparts on plantations. By 1800,

²⁶ Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820–1860*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Claudia Dale Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820–1860: A Quantitative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

²⁷ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 390.

²⁸ Loren Schweninger, 'Slave Independence and Enterprise in South Carolina, 1780–1865', *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (1992): pp. 101–25.

²⁹ Inge Dornan, 'Masterful Women: Colonial Women Slaveholders in the Urban Low Country', *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): pp. 383–402; Jeff Forret, 'Slaves, Poor Whites, and the Underground Economy of the Rural Carolinas', *The Journal Of Southern History* LXX, no. 4 (2004): pp. 783–824; Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, 2nd ed. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), pp. 159–67.

city governments had created slave badges, which were a type of physical ornament, to control urban enslaved labourers throughout the American South. These badges, however, also gave the wearer a certain freedom to move about unmolested in a slave society.³⁰ Bondsmen who were hired out became ‘both labour and capital’, which enabled them to manipulate the dualism of being both people and property.³¹ For example, South Carolina mechanics petitioned the State Assembly in 1858 to pass laws preventing ‘slaves from hiring their own time’, but they did not get the outcome they desired.³² The Committee on Colored Populations responded that to ‘carry out the provisions of the Acts of 1822 & 1849 to the full, would be to drive away all slave labor from any employment in the towns & villages of the state--there must be inevitably an exception to the Rule which prohibits the slave from working out’.³³ Slave badges became the catalyst for enslaved peoples’ dualism by allowing them to conduct financial transactions, to purchase goods and to determine the cost of their labour. Through the need for contributions to the market and a strong labour force, a specific type of urban economy developed in the Lowcountry among female slave owners, the municipality, merchants and enslaved people that allowed for hired-out slaves to become direct participants in the market through the buying and selling of both labour power and market goods.³⁴

³⁰ Harlan Greene, Harry S. Hutchins Jr. and Brian E. Hutchins, *Slave Badges and the Slave-Hire System in Charleston, South Carolina, 1783–1865*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004), p. 6; Bruce Smith, ‘Badges Give a Glimpse into Slavery’, *Charleston Post & Courier*, 24 February 2003; ‘A Special Note About Slave Tags’, Price Guide, 8th Edition, *North-South Trader* (1999), p. 151.

³¹ Jonathan Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 30.

³² South Carolina General Assembly Petitions, *The Committee on Colored Populations to the House of Representatives, December 7th, 1858* (South Carolina Archives and History, to be further abbreviated as SCDAH).

³³ South Carolina General Assembly Petitions, *The Committee on Colored Populations to the House of Representatives, December 7th, 1858* (SCDAH).

³⁴ For further analysis of enslaved Southerners’ willingness to contribute to a larger market economy, see Philip D. Morgan, ‘The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Low Country’, *Journal of Southern History* 49 (1983): pp. 399–420; Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (eds), *The Slave’s Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass & Co. LTD, 1991); Dylan Penningroth, *Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Kathleen M. Hilliard, *Masters, Slaves, and*

Due to their sheer numbers, their shifting positions from domestic to market seller and the important service that they provided for the local food market, enslaved businesswomen were much harder for municipalities to manage. Hired-out enslaved male workers were regulated through slave badges more often than their female counterparts. Mary Ann made sure that she followed the city laws and that her workers were always employed under legal conditions by purchasing badges for her skilled workers like Mulatto George, Young Jack and Maurice.³⁵ She was not required to purchase a Fruiter, Huckster or even Servant badge for her enslaved domestics like Flora and Elsey because they were not viewed as moving outside of their allotted positions.³⁶ The fact that city governments fined owners for men working without a badge more frequently than women highlights enslaved women's importance to the local food economy.³⁷

Nonetheless, the presence of enslaved women peddling their wares at the marketplace was not universally approved. Southern newspapers described the chaos of early American marketplaces. Mobile enslaved women like Flora and Elsey were often labelled 'loose, idle and disorderly' as they became increasingly more dominant in the sales and distribution of foodstuffs; by contrast, enslaved men were very rarely referred to in these terms.³⁸ A Presentment of the Grand Jury of the Charleston District in 1768 protested that the 'many idle Negro Wenches, selling dry goods, cakes, rice, etc. in the markets' were becoming a nuisance. One Charleston resident noted that 'I have known those black women to be so insolent as even to wrest things out of the hands of white people, pretending they had been bought before, for their masters or mistresses, yet expose *the same* for sale again within an hour after, for their own benefit'.³⁹ Wealthier Charlestonians soon abandoned going to the market altogether to avoid dealing with enslaved women during financial transactions, preferring,

Exchange: Power's Purchase in the Old South (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁵ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (GHS), p. 79.

³⁶ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (SHC), pp. 82, 89.

³⁷ City of Savannah, 'Fine Docket Book', 5600CM-10, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

³⁸ Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740–1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 97–110.

³⁹ *South Carolina Gazette*, 24 September, p. 1772.

instead, to send their own enslaved people to handle these matters.⁴⁰ As a result, the marketplace was largely controlled by both free and enslaved African and African Americans. 'The Laws of Market' were colour-blind, so 'property and price' rather than 'deference and duty' determined the relationships between people of many different social statuses.⁴¹ These attitudes reflected a class structure that put enslaved women working for their mistresses in a special category that poorer people had to accept, regardless of the colour codes in southern slave society.

Through the gendered labour organisation of her male workers participating in trades and her female workers participating in domestic work and at the market, Mary Ann was able to use her enslaved workers in ways that made them extremely productive for her. Mary Ann Cowper was living with her widowed cousin Eliza McQueen Mackay on Broughton Street in Savannah from at least as early as 1848.⁴² The two women had been incredibly close, frequently writing letters to each other in previous years. Mary Ann probably lived with her cousin to maintain some form of companionship with her kin as she had no other close relatives other than Eliza's family by this time. Mary Ann contributed things like coffee, molasses and butter to her cousin's household for daily use.⁴³ Like many others of her class, she depended on a network of enslaved workers to obtain these things from the market. Flora and Elsey also brought Mary Ann cash and items for the household. Although Mary Ann retained mastery over her urban enslaved workforce by law, she could not influence how they spent their money once the coins shifted hands. Through her use of hired-out enslaved workers, she helped to legitimise elements of free-wage labour for her male workers and encouraged her entrepreneurial women to participate in marketplace commerce.

By 1830, Flora and Elsey resided on Mary Ann Cowper's small plantation, Oatlands Island, about four miles south of the city centre on the Savannah River⁴⁴ (Fig. 6.5). Prior to the Revolutionary War, this plantation had been owned by Mary Ann's uncle, Don Juan McQueen. His wife, Anne McQueen, gifted Oatlands Island to her son, John McQueen Jr.,

⁴⁰ Olwell, *Masters, Slaves and Subjects*, pp. 166–78.

⁴¹ Olwell, 'Loose, Idle and Disorderly', pp. 178–81.

⁴² 1850 US Census, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia, M-19, Roll 16 (Savannah: Bull Street Library), p. 55.

⁴³ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (SHC), pp. 12–17.

⁴⁴ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (SHC), p. 79.



Fig. 6.5 Map showing Oatlands Plantation, 1822–1856. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

when she died in 1809.⁴⁵ When John Jr. died in 1822, he bequeathed the property to his wife, Margaret Cowper McQueen, who was Mary Ann's younger sister.⁴⁶ After John's death, Margaret lived in England until she died in 1841.⁴⁷ Although she owned many enslaved people in Savannah, Margaret preferred to be an absentee slaveholder. Mary Ann probably ran Oatlands Island while her sister was living in England and officially took over management when Margaret died.

John Jr. first tried his hand at planting Sea Island cotton at Oatlands Island in 1810, and he was not very successful. Oatlands Island then became an agricultural centre for growing staple crops, like corn and cabbages, to supply the family's surrounding plantations, including The Grange (Fig. 6.6). According to family history, 'the McQueen and Smith families spent much time in the comfortable dwelling on Oatlands, and took pride in their extensive Kitchen garden'.⁴⁸ The fresh vegetables and livestock at Oatlands supplied the families with food, but its importance diminished as family members died and plantations were sold. By the 1840s, the surpluses that once went to places like The Grange were now left to the discretion of the enslaved workers who still resided on Oatlands Island.

Mary Ann kept careful records about her household expenses, but she very rarely mentioned what was happening at Oatlands Island. She would occasionally request Flora bring her some cabbages from the garden; however, she did not record further directives about what to plant, when to harvest or which market to sell in.⁴⁹ Since there was no overseer and Oatlands Island plantation was very small, Mary Ann seems to have given control of the day-to-day operations directly to her enslaved labourers who had worked the land for over a decade. As Philip Morgan pointed out, the task system left enslaved workers with free time to cultivate their own crops to dispose of as they wished, and this appears to have been the case at

⁴⁵ *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen*, p. xxxi.

⁴⁷ Commissioner of Records, Surrogates' Court, County of New York, 'Administration Bonds, 1753–1866', Box 8-28,975, Vol 0042–0044, 1842–1844. Ancestry.com. *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁴⁸ *The Letters of Robert Mackay*, p. 268.

⁴⁹ Cowper 'Estate Records, 1816–1850' (SHC), 19.

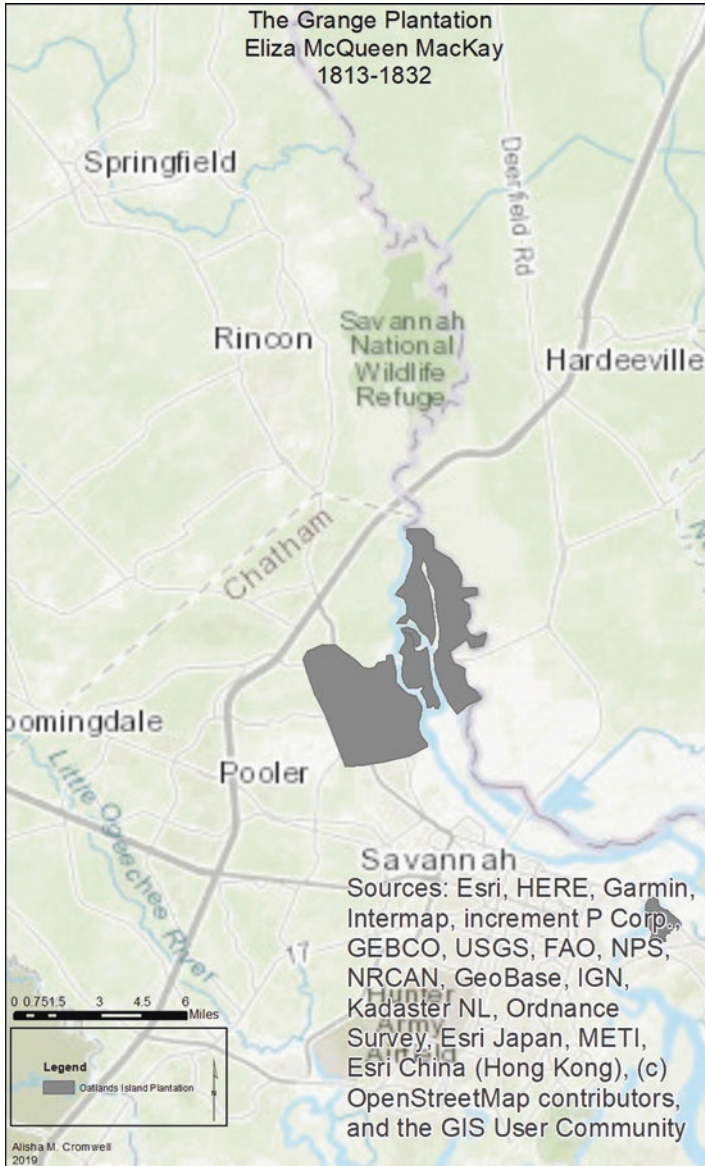


Fig. 6.6 Map showing the Grange Plantation, Eliza McQueen MacKay, 1813–1832. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

Oatlands Island when the need for large food crops ceased.⁵⁰ Flora and Elsey probably used the resources at Oatlands Island to maintain financial independence through selling crops and butter in the local provision economy.

By 1847, Oatlands Island had become a summer retreat for Mary Ann and her nieces. As she aged further, Mary Ann visited less frequently until she stopped going altogether. When she died in 1857, her will stated that ‘These four I desire shall be permitted to remain at Oatlands and have comfortable homes there as long as they live. Flora, Stephan, Elsey and Lucinda, ... I desire earnestly they shall be permitted all such privileges and indulgences and freedom as use not inconsistent with the laws of the state of Georgia’.⁵¹ While some sentiment might have guided her decision, Mary Ann also strategically passed her revenue stream to her nieces, Catherine and Sarah McQueen, who inherited both Oatlands Island and its enslaved people. The enslaved people on this plantation had been growing their own crops, tending their own cattle and living in their own houses for over twenty years when Mary Ann died. They would have hoped that Catherine and Sarah would follow the same cultural customs as both Margaret and Mary Ann to retain their economic independence.⁵² The records go quiet after Mary Ann’s death, and there is no guarantee that Catherine and Sarah allowed Flora and Elsey to remain on Oatlands Island. However, the skills and knowledge that these entrepreneurial women had acquired over their lifetimes defined a specific type of marketing system based on the gendered nature of domestic work that emerged in the American Lowcountry.

Due to her association with Mary Ann and her own knowledge of marketing culture, Flora was able to participate as an independent actor in the local marketplaces of Savannah. On 8 October 1848, Mary Ann gave Flora US\$1.50 for ‘marketing till Saty 16th’, and by 18 October, Flora had paid her back with ‘1 Doll’r worth br. Sugar’.⁵³ Mary Ann never logged where the 50 cents went. The records do not tell the whole story, but they do show Mary Ann paid her enslaved workers for their goods, which they spent in the local marketplaces and thereby stimulated the

⁵⁰ Philip D. Morgan, ‘Work and Culture: The Task System and the Word of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700–1880’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (October 1982), pp. 563–99.

⁵¹ ‘Last Will and Testament of Mary Anna Cowper, 1856’.

⁵² *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen to His Family*, p. 27.

⁵³ Cowper, ‘Estate Records, 1816–1850’, p. 22.

economy. Patriarchal concepts of who was to perform domestic tasks like marketing became the mechanism from which both Mary Ann and Flora constructed an economic arrangement that could remain viable in a slave society. Merchants, poor people, some urban female slave owners and their enslaved property all contributed to the establishment of a common-law system in which they depended on one another.⁵⁴

Flora provided Mary Ann with a portion of her proceeds; in return, she was granted a type of autonomy that existed specifically for skilled enslaved workers who made their own money. Mary Ann frequently recorded her economic interactions with Flora in her Common Place Book. From 1846 to 1847, Mary Ann kept records of the amount of money that she paid to Flora for food items that she brought into the household. On 16 February 1847, Mary Ann subtracted a dollar from her Common Place Book for 'Marketing- Seasoning & Onions pd by Flora while in town'.⁵⁵ Similar transactions occurred frequently, and Mary Ann's Common Place Book features careful notes about Flora's purchases. Flora was an adept market woman, entering shops and participating in the food trade. Flora clearly understood math and could competently participate in a monetary exchange. Mary Ann was confident in Flora's ability to purchase different items, including red flannel cloth, fruits, sugar and bread because Flora could make her own decisions in the marketplace and was not just following instructions. Rather than being given cash by Mary Ann to buy goods, Flora had enough money already in her possession to purchase them and expected to be reimbursed.⁵⁶ The relationship that developed between these two women was based on a mutual economic understanding that required Flora to participate in the market in order to live independently from Mary Ann. This link provided Flora with a degree of freedom and mobility.

Alongside her connection with Mary Ann, Flora was also enmeshed in the networks of enslaved people at the family's many properties around Savannah. Flora was born on the Cowper's Jamaican pimento plantation, Barron Hill, in 1814⁵⁷ (Fig. 6.7). Due to the instability of plantation life,

⁵⁴ Timothy J. Lockley, 'Trading Encounters Between Non-Elite Whites and African Americans in Savannah, 1790-1860', *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 1 (2000): pp. 25-48; Jeff Forret, 'Slaves, Poor Whites, and the Underground Economy of the Rural Carolinas', *The Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 4 (2004): pp. 783-824.

⁵⁵ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816-1850', p. 13.

⁵⁶ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816-1850', pp. 12-17.

⁵⁷ Probate Records, Trelawney Parish, Anno 1804, 'Basil Cowper Inventory' No. 101 (Jamaican National Archives, Spanish Town hereinafter cited as JNA), pp. 22-25.



Fig. 6.7 Map showing Baron Hill Plantation, 1798–1818. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

enslaved people developed communities through ‘Fictive Kin’ or familial relationships that were not predicated on blood connections.⁵⁸ By designating non-related people into kinship groups, enslaved Africans established ‘friendships which are regarded in kinship terms’ that ‘undergo an intensification of the bonds of mutual obligation’.⁵⁹ Creating a fictive kinship network allowed enslaved individuals to recreate their lost communities.⁶⁰ Flora was born into a place that had developed a fictive kinship network through naming practices, and she was instantly connected to it through her first name. In the 1804 inventory of Barron Hill, two women named Flora appeared, one worth US\$60 and the other worth US\$40.⁶¹ The next mention of Flora occurred when Parliament required the Jamaican colony to carry out a census of enslaved people. J.P. Utten took the Return of Slaves at Barron Hill on 28 June 1817.⁶² The Return segregated enslaved people by sex and registered their ‘colour, age, African or Creole’ status. Utten also listed their mother’s name in a familial order.⁶³ Three different Floras were now present: a sixty-nine-year-old woman, a twenty-one-year-old mother and a three-year-old child. These Floras became part of a barely visible fictive kinship network that gave enslaved people familial roots even though they were not related by blood.

Naming children after people they respected or, alternatively, keeping traditional naming practices from Africa alive were ways that enslaved people created community relationships at Barron Hill.⁶⁴ The first genera-

⁵⁸Daina Remy Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 53; Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

⁵⁹Linda M. Chatters, Robert Joseph Taylor and Rumalie Jayakody, ‘Fictive Kinship Relations in Black Extended Families’, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 25, no. 3 (1994): pp. 297–312.

⁶⁰James Sweet, ‘Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): pp. 251–72; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1982).

⁶¹*Journals of the Council*, October 1792–December 1793, Vol. 1B, Folder 5/4/18 (JNA).

⁶²Office of the Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission, Records Class 771, ‘1817 Return of Slaves for Mary Cowper in the Parish of Trelawney, Jamaica’ (The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey, England hereinafter cited as NAUK), 227; Ancestry.com. *Slave Registers of former British Colonial Dependencies, 1813–1834*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2007.

⁶³‘A Return of Slaves, 1817’ (NAUK), 227–31.

⁶⁴Michael Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (United Kingdom: James Currey Publishers, 1997), p. 243.

tion of African men and women who arrived at the plantation had names that were either taken from antiquity or popularised in England. These new names were forced upon them somewhere along the way, perhaps on the African coast, in a slave ship, at a port in the New World or on a plantation. The types of names were picked by slavers from ‘a desire to identify slaves uniquely’ so that they could conduct business on the plantation without confusion, yet monikers like Caesar, Cato, Belle and Flora were passed down to a younger generation at Barron Hill.⁶⁵ This pattern suggests that a group of people established relationships with one another, developed a community and perpetuated it by naming their children for other community members. Not all enslaved workers chose to perpetuate names given by their captors. Some of these people gave their children traditional West African day names, such as Quasheba, Mimba, Cudjoe and Quaco. These names were direct references back to West African Akon cultures like the Ashanti and Fanti peoples, who resided on the coast of present-day Ghana.⁶⁶ Names not only reflected how enslaved women connected their children to Africa but also how they linked their offspring to other enslaved individuals to maintain some familial stability.

Flora learned just how precarious enslavement was when she was taken from her home at Barron Hill and sent to The Grange Plantation in Georgia (Fig. 6.6). Just prior to the global financial panic of 1819, Mary Ann and her widowed mother had to liquidate some of their plantation holdings. In October 1818, they left England, where they had lived since 1806 as absentee plantation owners, and returned to Savannah, the place of their birth.⁶⁷ Polly and Mary Ann sold a majority of their workforce to nearby planters. Joseph Travers, an absentee British planter who owned land in Trelawney Parish, purchased the first- and second-generation Floras and their family units.⁶⁸ While some family units were saved, others were ripped apart as Mary Ann and her mother sold off their human investments, which suggested that their sale to neighbours was a result of the need for ready cash rather than an acknowledgement of the deep kin

⁶⁵ Cheryll Ann Cody, ‘There Was No “Absalom” on the Ball Plantations: Slave-Naming Practices in the South Carolina Low Country, 1720–1865’, *The American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (1987): pp. 563–96.

⁶⁶ Philip F.W. Bartle, ‘Forty Days: The Akon Calendar’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 49, no. 1 (1978): pp. 80–4.

⁶⁷ Cowper ‘Estate Records, 1816–1850’, pp. 69–75.

⁶⁸ Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission, Records Class 771, ‘1820 Return of Slaves for Joseph Travers’ (NAUK), p. 230.

ties of their slaves. These transactions made the development of relationships through naming practices important for African people to maintain some connection to their homelands and to each other. Flora was part of a kinship network that was based on her mother's relationship to an elder Flora, and the gift of that name would continue to benefit her by connecting her to other women of the same name, even as she was forced to travel the Atlantic World. As John Inscoc stated, enslaved people 'were able to create a distinct identity through their names', and through an older woman named Flora, the younger Flora was able to develop kinship networks around Savannah based on her name.⁶⁹ Through such fictive kinship networks, enslaved people established systems of communication from rural areas to urban spaces.⁷⁰ These links also facilitated an informal trade network, which allowed cash money to move through the hands of both free and enslaved individuals as they made decisions about buying and selling.⁷¹

The Cowper women took four-year-old Flora with them from Jamaica to Savannah in 1819, probably to train her in domestic service.⁷² Flora, the Latin name for the Roman goddess of flowers, was a common name for enslaved females in the American South: there were sixteen Floras on the Ball plantations in South Carolina between 1820 and 1839.⁷³ Probably because of their names, Flora from Jamaica was sent to live with 'Old Flora' at the Cowpers' cousin Eliza's plantation, The Grange, in 1820⁷⁴ (Fig. 6.6). In that year, a nameless child is listed in the same household as Old Flora and her partner Forrest. A few months prior, Margaret McQueen had written a letter to her cousin Eliza to inquire about Old Flora purchasing cloth for Little Flora to make her two new suits of clothes, one for

⁶⁹ John C. Inscoc, 'Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation', *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 4 (1983): pp. 527–54.

⁷⁰ Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 12–34.

⁷¹ Dylan Penningroth, 'The Claims of Slaves and Ex-Slaves to Family and Property: A Transatlantic Comparison', *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007): pp. 1039–69; Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

⁷² Georgia Court of the Ordinary, Last Will and Testament of Mary Cowper, 1821, Georgia Wills & Probate Records, 1742–1992; *Wills Vol. E-F, 1807–1827*, pp. 135–39. Ancestry.com. *Georgia, Wills and Probate Records, 1742–1992*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁷³ Cody 'There Was No "Absalom" on the Ball Plantations', p. 587.

⁷⁴ Cowper 'Estate Records, 1816–1850', p. 12.

winter and one for summer. While it is unclear if Eliza provided her with the cash or whether she already had it, Old Flora must have had access to the marketplace in order to purchase the cloth for the dresses.⁷⁵ After 'Old Flora' died in April 1826, 'little' was no longer used to label the Flora from Jamaica in Mary Ann's accounting records.⁷⁶ Flora had successfully been integrated into a kinship system.

Like Flora and the many other enslaved women before her, Elsey's life story can also be found in bits and pieces throughout the letters, diaries and account books of the Cowper, McQueen and MacKay families. Elsey was much younger than Flora and also lived at Oatlands Island plantation, where she produced and sold butter in the Savannah area. Oatlands Island plantation had a few cattle, and Mary Ann's account book lists receipts for US\$3 in 'rice flour for the cattle at Otlnds'.⁷⁷ Rice flour, which consists of the byproducts from rice cultivation, was often used as a cheap feed substitute for cows.⁷⁸ Unlike her accounting for the cash she received from Flora's marketing business, Mary Ann recorded in-kind payments of butter from Elsey to pay for the cattle's upkeep. With the knowledge of her absentee mistresses, Margaret McQueen and then Mary Ann Cowper, Elsey had been making and selling butter from the milk cows on Oatlands Island since she was eight years old. This skill was needed throughout the community, and she used her knowledge to provide enough income for her own necessities and to satisfy Mary Ann.

A kinship network for Elsey can also be found in the records of the Cowper, McQueen and MacKay families. Two people named Elsey were listed on the slave rolls of the McQueen family between 1810 and 1822, which suggests that butter making was a skill handed down from one generation to the next.⁷⁹ An 'Old Elsey' and an eight-year-old Elsey were listed in a property agreement between Mary Ann and her sister Margaret

⁷⁵ Robert and Eliza Mackay, 'The Grange Plantation Journal', *The Records of the Antebellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution to the Civil War* ed. Kenneth Stamp, microfilm: F213.R43 1985 Series J, pt. 4, r 1-7 (University of Georgia Main Library, Athens), p. 25.

⁷⁶ Eliza MacKay, 'The Grange Plantation Journal', p. 36.

⁷⁷ Cowper, 'Estate Records, 1816-1850', p. 79.

⁷⁸ Shane Gadberry, 'Alternative Feeds for Beef Cattle', *Agriculture and Natural Resources* (Division of Agriculture, University of Arkansas), <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-3047.pdf>

⁷⁹ Family Archive of the Andrew Low House, MS #1624 'The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers', Folders 57-65 (Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA; hereafter cited as GHS).

in 1837.⁸⁰ Old Elsey had belonged to Don Juan McQueen, and she was sent up from Spanish Florida when he died in 1807.⁸¹ Old Elsey became answerable to Margaret when Margaret married John McQueen, Jr., in 1810. While on a trip to Asheville, North Carolina, in 1812, Margaret wrote to Eliza to ‘Please tell Elsie (sic) to make & Save all the butter she can’ in order to make sure they had a supply when they returned.⁸² In the winter of 1816, Mary Ann wrote to Eliza that ‘Margaret desires me to say she thinks Elsey must have earned some money by disposing of fresh butter thro the summer’.⁸³ She also advised Eliza to have Elsey ‘put some up for winter now’ so that the revenue stream would continue through the next year.⁸⁴ During a majority of that time, Eliza MacKay took responsibility for the daily management of her brother’s enslaved workers until Mary Ann took over after John’s death in 1822. By this point, Old Elsey had gone through several owners, and she undoubtedly taught her butter-making skills to the younger Elsey to make sure that she also had a way to take care of herself. While it is unclear if the two were biologically related, their shared name, residence as Oatlands Island and profession illustrate how kinship ties among the enslaved workers in the Cowper/McQueen/MacKay households created a sense of identity for these entrepreneurial enslaved women.

In their more than twenty years of walking the Savannah countryside, Flora and Elsey probably developed economic relationships among many groups of people, including elite women, Savannah merchants and other enslaved or free individuals. Both were tasked with delivering letters, produce, butter and other items from Thunderbolt Cliffs, to Oatlands Island, to the Grange and to Broughton Street (Fig. 6.8). Their names show up repeatedly in quick notes and letters between Eliza and Mary

⁸⁰ Commissioner of Records, Surrogates’ Court, County of New York, ‘Administration Bonds, 1753–1866’, Box 8-28,975, Vol 0042–0044, 1842–1844. Ancestry.com. *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁸¹ Inventory of the Estate of J. McQueen in Florida, ‘The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers’, Box 7, Folder 60-16, (GHS).

⁸² Margaret McQueen to Eliza MacKay, 27 March 1812, ‘The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers’, Box 7, Folder 63-45B, (GHS).

⁸³ Mary Ann to Eliza MacKay, 16 Dec 1816, Barron Hill, ‘The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers’, Box 7, Folder 63-49 (GHS).

⁸⁴ Mary Ann to Eliza MacKay, 16 Dec 1816, Barron Hill, ‘The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers’, Box 7, Folder 63-49 (GHS).

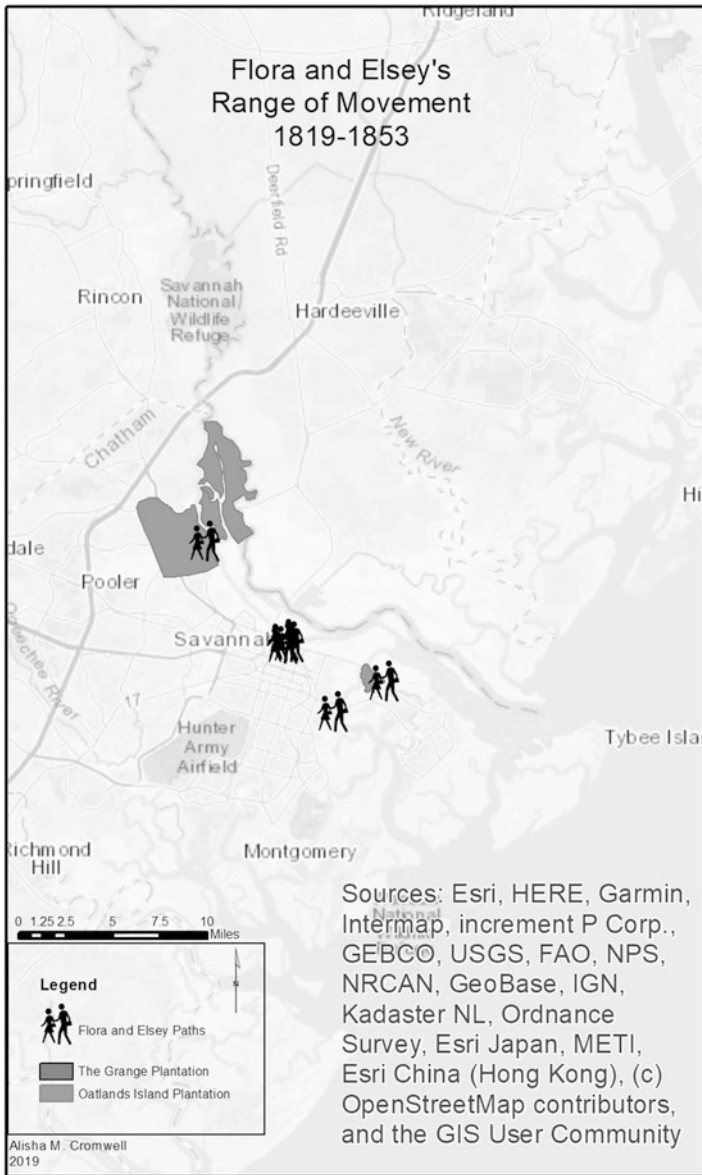


Fig. 6.8 Map showing Flora and Elsey's range of movement, 1819-1853. (Source: Alisha M. Cromwell)

Ann. Enslaved domestics became elite surrogates in the street.⁸⁵ Flora and Elsey moved all over the city of Savannah but were ‘hidden’ in the records because their movements did not seem out of the ordinary for enslaved female marketers. Their gendered position in the domestic sphere allowed them this unique freedom.

Women’s work was an important factor in the economic development of the Atlantic World, yet there is a historiographical silence surrounding the business relationships between elite and enslaved entrepreneurial women in the nineteenth century. In order to uncover their commercial enterprises, historians must look beyond the ‘silences’ that have obscured the voices of these women.⁸⁶ Through Mary Ann’s economic relationship with Flora and Elsey, scholars can perceive the influence of enslaved domestic workers on the commercial culture of Savannah. These three businesswomen exemplify how gendered domestic work created a type of labour organisation used by elite and enslaved women to remain independent from the patriarchy throughout the Atlantic World. Through female entrepreneurs, historians can view of the Atlantic World as a closely connected space, not one that is an ocean apart.

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⁸⁵ Mary Ann Cowper to Eliza Mackay, Reynolds Square 3 March 1833; Thunderbolt Cliffs 6 April 1833; Reynolds Square 23 July 1833; Thunderbolt Cliffs 26 July 1833; Broughton Street, 4 August 1833, ‘The Mackay-McQueen Family Papers’ (GHS).

⁸⁶ Jessica B. Harris, ‘Keynote Address- Sea Changes: Culinary Connections in the African Atlantic World’, *Atlantic World Foodways Conference*, 30 January 2014.

- Brooks, George E., 'A Nhara of Guinea-Bissau: Mae Aurelia Correia', in Claire Robertson and Martin A. Klein (eds) *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983): pp. 295–319
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On Their Own in a ‘Man’s World’: Widows in Business in Colonial Australia and New Zealand

Catherine Bishop

The perfect family, according to nineteenth-century Australian and New Zealand colonial rhetoric, consisted of a male breadwinner head with a useful, domesticated wife, bearing and caring for a bevy of children. Much of New Zealand, like South Australia, was settled under emigration schemes focused on the family.¹ As colonial propagandist Charles Terry enthused in 1842:

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¹For example, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the New Zealand Association, see Miles Fairburn, ‘Wakefield, Edward Gibbon’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1w4/wakedfield-edward-gibbon>

C. Bishop (✉)
Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: catherine.bishop@mq.edu.au

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If a settler occupies a small farm—and he and his sons cultivate the land, while his wife and daughters rear poultry, attend the dairy, &c. without any expense of other assistance—they are creating an active capital, and increasing property, not only for themselves, but for the Colony at large.²

This ideal of domesticated women, however, was a fiction. As in Terry's vision, a family's prosperity, in fact, relied on the labour of the whole family. In addition, husbands died or deserted, and some women never married, meaning that women had to financially support themselves and their children.

This chapter takes one group of women affected by the absence of a male breadwinner—widows—and considers their strategies for survival in the towns and cities of New Zealand and New South Wales in the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1840, New South Wales was emerging from its status as a penal colony and encouraging free settlers. Across the Tasman Sea in New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi was signed with some local Māori in 1840, and Pākehā (white) settlement began in earnest. There were no widows' pensions, no state safety net, and economic prosperity was structured around the two-parent family unit, in which responsibilities were divided by sex. Many first-generation settler widows did not have the extended social support networks that they might have had before emigrating. Surviving as a widow, then, could be financially precarious, particularly if retaining one's social position and remaining 'respectable' were considerations.

Respectability in the colonies, as Heidi Whiteside has pointed out, was tied up with self-reliance. In spite of the idealised domestic 'colonial helpmeet', women were expected to step up and take responsibility in the absence of men. Within the context of eighteenth-century New England, Laurel Ulrich has attributed this notion of women as 'deputy husbands', taking on 'male' responsibilities when necessary, to the demands of a colonial settler society; however, recent research suggests that economically active wives (and widows) were widespread in Europe as well.³ I have written elsewhere about the ways deserted wives

² Charles Terry, *New Zealand Its Advantages and Prospects as a British Colony* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1842), p. 259, Early New Zealand Books (ENZB), www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz

³ Laurel Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650–1750*, (New York: Knopf, 1982); on widows elsewhere, see Béatrice Craig *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Nineteenth-Century Northern France*

negotiated their legal disabilities to run small enterprises to support children with the collaboration of society and the state.⁴ The remaining two 'manless' groups, spinsters and widows, were both legally *femes sole*, entitled to their own earnings and able to own property. Of the two groups, widows were more numerous, and while spinsterhood might have been a choice, widowhood was not. The range of options available to widows varied, depending upon their circumstances. A few might have been left well provided for, but for others, the main solutions were remarriage, relying on family, repatriation, employment and enterprise. This chapter focuses on enterprise, discussing the wide variety of businesses run by widows, after a brief discussion of widowhood in the colonies and the alternative options. It argues that engaging in business was an entirely acceptable and respectable activity for widows and could be the best of the available choices.⁵ Not only that, widows in New Zealand and Australia were often not just caretakers of family businesses, or conduits for the generational transfer of businesses, some took the reins of the family business and held on to them, others continued or restarted their own existing businesses, and some started completely new businesses. This was not unique to the colonies, as Béatrice Craig's chapter on French businesswomen shows, but it does differ from the experiences of some Spanish and Japanese widows, as indicated in other chapters in this volume.⁶ This suggests that cultural and religious factors, as well as differing constructions of family businesses and formal company structures at various times, may have influenced the nature of widows' participation in business more broadly.

The majority of women in this chapter, and in my broader research, are white settler women. Indigenous Australian women are almost impossible to discover as businesswomen in the nineteenth century, although there

(London: Palgrave, 2017); Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall, *Widows in European Economy and Society 1600–1920* (London: Boydell, 2017).

⁴ Catherine Bishop, 'When Your Money Is Not Your Own: Coverture and Married Women in Business in Colonial New South Wales', *Law and History Review* 33, no. 1 (2015): pp. 181–200.

⁵ It may also have been the most common choice: in Albany, New York, Susan Ingalls Lewis found evidence to suggest this. See Susan Ingalls Lewis *Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York, 1830–1885* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009).

⁶ See Craig, (chap 5, France), Nagata (chap 11, Japan) and Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez (chap 14, Spain), this volume.

were certainly some.⁷ Māori women in New Zealand are more visible in the records, both in business and more generally. Many Māori women married Pākehā men and participated in the European economy as business partners, more visibly than Indigenous women in Australia, where the population was smaller and more scattered. In widowhood, Māori women were usually surrounded by kin, but this did not ensure financial security, particularly if they and their children wished to maintain a lifestyle that crossed between Māori and Pākehā worlds. There were also those who, like Pākehā women, moved away from their place of birth. Catherine Carran, of Waikato and Ngāti Pūkeko descent from New Zealand's North Island, moved with her first husband to Invercargill in the far south of the South Island, where they ran an accommodation house. After his death, she remarried but also expanded her businesses, running a farm and offering midwifery services. She remained in the south, far from her own family connections even after her second husband deserted her, using her business nous to support herself.⁸

WIDOWS IN THE COLONIES

Despite the popular image of a widow as a stooped elderly woman cloaked in black, scurrying about struggling to support herself on her widow's mite for a few short years before death, widowhood was not confined to the elderly.⁹ Mary Ann Coster was widowed in 1843 at the age of 22 and left alone in a new colony with a baby. 'I just wanted to die', she later told her grandchildren. Nelson, New Zealand, was many thousands of miles away from her family, but there was 'little time for self-pity', she remembered. Friends helped her start a straw bonnet shop and within a year she

⁷ See, for example, Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2015); Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow, *Rivers and Resilience, Aboriginal People on Sydney's Georges River* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009); Paul Irish, *Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2017).

⁸ Catherine Bishop, *Women Mean Business: Colonial Businesswomen in New Zealand* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2019), p. 206; similar situations can also be found in North America: see Lewis, *Unexceptional Women*.

⁹ For example, one imagines Charles Dickens' Mrs Gummidge, 'a lone lorn creature', in *David Copperfield*, as elderly, although she is in fact never given an age. Karen Chase, 'Betwixt and Between: Mrs. Gummidge's "Homely Rapture"', *Victorian Review* 39, no. 2 (2013): pp. 68–71.

remarried, to Richard Wallis. Together, they ran a school and post office before opening an orphanage in Motueka that lasted past Richard's death in 1882 until 1887. Mary Ann survived her early widowhood with a combination of business and remarriage, her business life lasting through her second marriage and beyond her second widowhood.¹⁰

Not many widows were as young as Mary Ann Coster, but they were by no means all in their dotage. Nearly 20 per cent of women aged between 40 and 50 were widows in Sydney in 1871, for example, and they were often left with not just one but a whole brood of dependent children.¹¹ Husbands dropped dead at all ages, unexpectedly, inconveniently and occasionally, perhaps, to their spouses' great relief. Losing a husband or a wife was not unusual, although exact figures are difficult before the 1860s, when census figures did not distinguish between women who had never married and those who had been widowed. It is also true that those who declared themselves to be widows to census takers (and to their neighbours and in their businesses) may well have been nothing of the sort. Deserted wives or unmarried mothers or spinsters, especially those who moved to a new town or colony, could claim the more respectable status of widowhood. Nevertheless, the official figures offer an indication of their presence. In Sydney, in 1861, there were 1795 widows and, by 1871, over 2000. They represented 10 per cent of the adult female population.¹² Figures were slightly lower in New Zealand's smaller towns, with about 5–6 per cent of adult females listed as widows in the 1871 census. Larger cities had higher proportions, with Auckland reaching 10 per cent. Whether this reflects a greater number of options other than remarriage for widows in larger cities, or an older population, or a tendency for widows to move to larger cities, or something else is unclear. Percentages for widowers were similarly distributed between smaller and larger towns in New Zealand, although they were under 7.5 per cent of the adult population, possibly reflecting women's tendency to marry older men, longer female life expectancy and, as we shall see, men's greater propensity for remarriage.¹³

¹⁰ Elspeth Mairs, *The Wallis Family Children's Home, Motueka 1867–1887* (Westport: E. Mairs, 1989).

¹¹ Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, www.hccda.anu.edu

¹² Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, www.hccda.anu.edu

¹³ New Zealand Census 1871–1916, http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/snapshots-of-nz/digitised-collections/census-collection.aspx

Widowhood was not easy. Alongside the emotional trauma was the pressing concern of economic survival. One might imagine that, like Mary Ann Coster, many widows remarried, although, as her later life illustrates, remarriage did not necessarily mean an end to a business life.

Women usually enjoyed greater financial security when married or as part of a family unit. Research suggests, however, that remarriage was not necessarily the most sought after, nor the most satisfactory option for widows.¹⁴ Lynne Bowd's study of women who headed households in New South Wales in the 1828 census indicated that 'the majority of [widows] were content to manage their own lives for a prolonged period'.¹⁵ How 'content' they were we can never really know, but it seems from the numbers of women who did not remarry immediately that many widows who could have married chose to remain single. New Zealand divorcée Mary Ann Griffiths, whose view of matrimony was possibly more jaded than most, expressed pleasure in her new-found independence: 'As I have no husband to please I can suit my own convenience', she confided to fellow resident Martha Adams.¹⁶ Even if widows were keen to remarry, it may not have been possible. Although men outnumbered women initially in both New Zealand and Australia, and both countries actively encouraged single young women to immigrate to provide conjugal options, the apparent plethora of marriageable men was predominantly in rural and outback areas. Sydney, by 1850, for example, had a slight majority of females, and available colonial men were not always desirable. Teacher Isabella Cary, resigned to spinsterhood at 27, wrote from New Zealand in 1867 that the pool of eligible men in that colony had dried up. Those remaining were 'younger sons of poor families, many are very much addicted to drink, just such men as no girl would marry'.¹⁷ Widowers were more likely

¹⁴ Katrina Alford, *Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia, 1788–1850* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984); Susan Hart, 'Widowhood and Remarriage in Colonial Australia' (PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, 2009).

¹⁵ Lynne Bowd, 'On Her Own: Women as Heads of Family Groups in the 1828 Census', *Australian Historical Studies* 27, no. 107 (1996): pp. 303–22, p. 316; Erik Olssen, 'Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand in the Colonial Period, 1840–80', in Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie (eds), *The Gendered Kivi* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999): pp. 37–62, p. 53.

¹⁶ Martha Adams, 'Journal, transcription', 1850–52, pp. 162–24, MS 0006, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (ATL). Raewyn Dalziel's recent research suggests she may not have been divorced and was perhaps in fact a bigamist. (Dalziel, talk, Blenheim, 13 October 2019).

¹⁷ Isabella Cary, 2 October 1867, Female Middle Class Emigration Society Letterbooks, 1862–1882, Fawcett Library Collections M2291–2314, State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW); Bishop, *Women Mean Business*, pp. 71–75.

than widows to remarry, perhaps seeking replacement household managers and live-in childcare. Marriageable men generally preferred young single women without encumbrances to widows with children, unless those widows were the custodians of viable businesses or some wealth.¹⁸

Some widows could turn to family for support. Women widowed later in life often had grown children, while others were fortunate enough to be financially independent under the terms of their husbands' wills. However, changes in dower rights in the nineteenth century across the Anglophone world undermined widows' financial security.¹⁹ They were no longer entitled to a proportion of their late husbands' estate by right. Family property was often tied up in trust for children or passed directly to them, leaving a widow with a lifetime interest, unable to sell property or dependent upon the goodwill of her offspring or of her husband's fellow trustees or executors. Some more fortunate women managed to retain control, perhaps through the terms of their husband's will. Sydney's Ann Ritchie left an estate of £6000 when she died in 1865, having actively managed and expanded for 16 years the property she inherited from her ex-convict husband.²⁰ Others did so perhaps through sheer force of personality. Mary Ann Burdekin was widowed in 1844 at 43 with five children under 10 and successfully managed extensive family property in Sydney. Although there were trustees, much of the business correspondence was in her own hand.²¹ Even before her husband's death, her business abilities had

¹⁸ Glenda Strachan and Lindy Henderson, 'Surviving Widowhood: Life Alone in Rural Australia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Continuity and Change* 23, no. 3 (2008): pp. 487–508; Alain Bideau, 'A Demographic and Social Analysis of Widowhood and Remarriage: The Example of the Castellany of Thoissey-En-Dombes, 1670–1840', *Journal of Family History* 5, no. 1 (1980): pp. 28–43; Bettina Bradbury, 'Surviving as a Widow in 19th-Century Montreal', *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* 17, no. 3 (1989): pp. 48–60; Katie Pickles, 'Locating Widows in Mid-Nineteenth Century Pictou County, Nova Scotia', *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, no. 1 (2004): pp. 70–86. See also, for British Columbia, Melanie Buddle, Chap. 13 in this volume.

¹⁹ Nancy E. Wright and A.R. Buck, 'The Transformation of Colonial Property: A Study of the Law of Dower in New South Wales, 1836 to 1863', *University of Tasmania Law Review* 23, no. 1 (2004): pp. 97–127; Charlotte Macdonald, 'Land, Death and Dower in the Settler Empire: The Lost Cause of "the Widow's Third" in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 41, no. 3 (2010): pp. 493–518; Bettina Bradbury, *Caroline's Dilemma: A Colonial Inheritance Saga* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2019).

²⁰ Ann Ritchie Probate 1865, 13,660, 1-6275 State Records of New South Wales, Sydney (RNSW).

²¹ Correspondence, 'Burdekin Family Papers', MLMSS 147, State Library of New South Wales SLNSW.

been acknowledged, her brother noting a little condescendingly that he was ‘well aware that you know a little of business’.²²

Repatriation was an option for some, especially for those who had emigrated without extended family. There were numerous public appeals specifically to enable a widow and children to return to the support of family and friends in Britain, reflecting a concern that if they remained, they would become a burden on colonial society. These appeals were so common that conman Edward Bathurst saw an opportunity for easy money, launching an appeal for a fictitious impoverished widow with seven hungry children who wished to return to England from Sydney in 1859. He was prosecuted for fraud.²³ Some genuine widows embraced the opportunity to escape colonial life, moving back to the relative safety of family and friends, although others objected to deportation. When Alexander Still of the Commissariat in Sydney died in debtors’ prison in 1830 leaving his wife with five young children, government officials apparently promised assistance only if she removed to England. A disgruntled correspondent wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, suggesting that Mrs Still ‘possesses sufficient firmness of mind and judgment to choose which country she and her offspring may retire to’, and sought public assistance so that she could remain. Importantly the writer emphasised that such assistance,

coupled with the exertions of the widow herself, which she may be capable of making, would secure Mrs S. and family from...less distress...than to be dependent...on the charity of “friends”.

Frances Still repaid her supporter’s faith in her capabilities, establishing a boarding house, which continued for at least six years.²⁴

WIDOWS IN BUSINESS

Employment as a wage earner was difficult for widows. Female wage rates in any case were often insufficient to support a family. Many better-paid occupations, such as the professions or many ‘white-collar’ jobs, were

²² ‘Letter from John Bossley to Mary Ann Burdekin 7 August 1843’, Burdekin Family Papers, MLMSS 147 90/1, SLNSW.

²³ *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* 23 June 1859 p. 3.

²⁴ *The Australian* 31 March 1830, p. 2; *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser* 19 October 1831, p. 4.

unavailable. Skilled trades required apprenticeships from a young age, and white-collar occupations were closed to women for most of the century on both sides of the Tasman, with the exception of teaching, which became increasingly feminised. Widows with young children were also tied to the home, limiting their employment options.

Thus, many widows turned to running a business. Unless a widow took up brothel keeping or sold sly grog or some other illegal activity, becoming a businesswoman was not only a respectable course of action but was expected. Public rhetoric might have valorised the domestic goddess wife of home and hearth, but nowhere did they criticise the self-sufficient widow supporting her family through her own enterprise. Quite the reverse. The appeal on behalf of Frances Still in Sydney in 1830 was not unusual. Many public appeals for widows on both sides of the Tasman were made specifically so that they could start businesses to support their families. The prevalence of such appeals underscored the expectation that, in the absence of a father, a mother would take responsibility for family breadwinning, ideally in a respectable manner.

Widows in business fell into three main categories. First, there were those who inherited businesses from their husbands. Of these, some may have been strangers to the world of business and had to learn quickly or rely on skilled tradesmen and partners, while others were already familiar with the business, having been involved before their husband's death. Second, there were widows who continued or returned to businesses they had already been running. Third, there were widows whose husbands had been employees rather than in business on their own account. Whether they had been lawyers or labourers, their wives could not inherit their jobs, but had to reinvent themselves, finding an acceptable business that suited their talents and circumstances. Among these three groups were women with business experience and those without, although it is not always clear, particularly in the case of those who inherited a business, whether or not they had been involved before. While there is often no evidence that wives were doing the books or participating in a family business before their husbands died, neither is there any evidence that they were not.

INHERITING A BUSINESS

One of the most pervasive images of a widow in business is the 'caretaker' widow; a woman who inherited her husband's enterprise but only until a son was old enough to assume control. Some women did this, but there

were others, who, while appreciating the contribution of their grown and growing sons, did not relinquish control.²⁵ Reuben Bird died in 1850 in Nelson, New Zealand, leaving wife Ann with an established butcher's business, along with several sons. Ann remained at the helm of the business for the next 40 years, assisted by her offspring but always in control.²⁶ Sophia Paris James in Auckland also stepped neatly into her dead husband's shoes in 1860. The family business, the 'Q.C.E.' luncheon larder (promising 'Quality, Economy and Cleanliness') rebranded and expanded, becoming S.P. James and Son and including a billiard room and wine and spirit merchant business.²⁷ Sydney ironmonger William left his tools to his sons in 1861 but the business to his wife of 30 years, Sarah. She continued the business for at least a decade, before passing it on.²⁸ Theresa Norris, also in Sydney, went one step further, advertising firmly in 1869 that her two sons 'were no longer in her employ' at her Sydney ginger-beer manufactory that she had inherited from their stepfather several years earlier. Sadly, there is no indication in the records of the nature of their falling out. She was no stranger to business, having held a confectioner's licence in her own right and run successful enterprises before her second marriage to Isaac Norris.²⁹

Those widows who inherited specialist businesses were usually managers rather than practitioners. For those without willing sons already trained or in training, their success relied on them gaining the confidence and cooperation of skilled employees or taking on a partner. Elizabeth Gold took over husband Clement's plumbing and glazing business in Sydney after he died in 1841 aged 37. She probably did not lay pipes herself, but she managed her employees successfully enough to win contracts from the City of Sydney Council before relinquishing the business

²⁵For similar conclusions elsewhere, see Béatrice Craig, *Female Enterprise Behind the Discursive Veil in Northern France* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and Jennifer Aston *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²⁶*Nelson Examiner (NEx)* 9 December 1854 p. 3, 28 August 1868, p. 1; *Colonist* 26 June 1891, p. 3.

²⁷*Daily Southern Cross (DSX)* 16 March 1863 p. 4.

²⁸*SMH* 8 February 1864 p. 8; John Sands, *Sands' Sydney Directory* (Sydney: John Sands, 1858–1900) (Sands Directory), 1869 <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/search-our-collections/sands-directory>; William Adnum Probate 1861 1-5244 SRNSW.

²⁹*SMH* 17 December 1857, p. 8, 24 July 1863, p. 1, 2 February 1869, p. 1.

upon her remarriage to a law clerk in 1845.³⁰ Sidney Thompson inherited a Sydney type foundry (producing the metal type used in printing) from her husband, Alexander, in 1856 and continued it for nine years before selling up, making her one of the first female type founders in Australia. She may have participated in the management of the business before her husband's death—we have no evidence either way. Like Elizabeth Gold, she too relied on skilled craftsmen, as her husband also may have done. Archibald Wright, who bought the business in the 1860s was awarded a medal at an intercolonial exhibition for his 'successful establishment of type founding in the colony', suggesting he may have been involved before taking ownership.³¹ Long before the late-twentieth-century feminisation of the funeral home business, Sydney's Eliza Hanslow continued an undertaking business in 1861, 'having secured the services of her late husband's foreman'.³² The presence of a foreman suggests that Eliza's husband had also been one step removed from the daily activities of the business. It is important to remember that men too, as they aged, could hand the reins of management to sons or foremen, retiring from active participation.³³

Widows could form partnerships with their husbands' erstwhile partners or employees. These could be formal or informal arrangements, and few records survive from the middle of the century. Nevertheless, some were more successful than others. The best were usually those structured within the family—if not with sons, then with other family members. While kinship ties did not necessarily guarantee harmonious business relations, as the experience of ginger-beer maker Theresa Norris suggests, affective ties could be persuasive in ways that purely commercial ones were not, with all family members invested in the success of an enterprise. Margaret Bailey continued her late husband Edmund's butchery business after his death in 1862, continuing his business partnership with Thomas

³⁰ *Sydney Herald (SH)* 27 February 1841, p. 3, 'Report of the Finance Committee: Accounts Recommended for Payment...', Committee Reports, 1844, 21/002/358–359, City of Sydney Archives, *SMH* 18 November 1845, p. 3.

³¹ Dennis Bryans, 'The Beginnings of Type Founding in Sydney: Alexander Thompson's Type, His Foundry and His Exports to Inter-Colonial Printers' *Journal of Design History* 9, no. 2 (1996): pp. 75–86, p. 77; *Empire* 21 August 1867, p. 4.

³² *SMH* 2 November 1861, p. 4.

³³ On life-cycle changes in business participation and management, see R.J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Playfair. It was an enduring and apparently successful partnership, perhaps because Playfair was married first to Margaret Bailey's sister and then to her stepsister, ensuring a continuing family connection.³⁴ Without the added glue of affective familial relationships, not all partnerships were so positive. When Lyttelton hairdresser Jacob Dash died in 1864, his wife Mary relied on Thomas McDonald, who had worked with Jacob, to manage the business. Within a year, however, she was advertising for a replacement and Thomas was in business on his own account.³⁵

The wrong partner could be disastrous, particularly if combined with external economic factors, such as a trade depression like the one experienced by Sydney residents in the 1840s. After her husband, jeweller Samuel, died in 1837, Mary Ann Street took over the business. In 1840, she moved the enterprise up market, and it became 'a first rate emporium of costly and elegant jewellery – with a dashing exterior to correspond'.³⁶ She also took on a business partner, William Henry Beaumont, with whom she also appears to have shared a house. The newly named firm of Street and Beaumont became insolvent in October 1842 as depression hit. The insolvency papers showed they were owed nearly £6000, much of it in promissory notes as was the custom of the time. With a shortfall of £500 once their assets were sold, Beaumont was given time to repay the debt. He kept the premises and advertised independently but then absconded on a ship to Calcutta in June 1844, apparently with some customers' time-pieces in his possession.³⁷ Meanwhile, Mary Ann Street disappeared from the records. She may have been the Mrs Street who kept lodgings in Macquarie Street in 1845, or the Mrs Street on a ship bound for England with three children in March 1846 or possibly (more happily) the widow, Mary Ann Street, who married Thomas Hinton in about 1853.³⁸

³⁴ *SMH* 25 June 1862, p. 8; Sands Directory, 1863, 1868; Belinda Cohen, 'Matheson Family History', <http://belindacohen.tripod.com/mathesonfamilyhistory/>, Belinda Cohen, 'Thomas Playfair in Australia', <http://belindacohen.tripod.com/playfairfamilyhistory/id7.html>; Ross Duncan, 'Playfair, John Thomas (1832–1893)', National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/playfair-john-thomas-4405/text7185>

³⁵ *Lyttelton Times (LT)* 8 March 1864, p. 6, 9 January 1868, p. 3.

³⁶ *The Australian*, 27 June 1840, p. 2.

³⁷ *Sydney Herald* 21 April 1842 p. 2; *SMH* 11 January 1843 p. 1, 24 June 1844, p. 3.

³⁸ Francis Low, *The City of Sydney Directory for 1844–5* (Sydney: Francis Low, 1844); *SMH* 20 March 1846, p. 2; New South Wales Births, Deaths and Marriages Index, <https://familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au>

A LIFE IN BUSINESS

Widows who had been actively engaged in the family businesses before their husbands' death, whether as junior, equal or even dominant partners, had more chance of success once their husbands died than those who had been purely domestic wives and mothers. It is reasonable to suggest that wives participated in some way, particularly in retail or hospitality businesses, which required no specialist trade apprenticeships or used what might be considered 'feminine' skills. When Thomas Richardson Coates died in Sydney in 1855 aged 49, his widow, Elizabeth, continued their thriving china, glass and earthenware business for another 16 years before her retirement in 1871.³⁹ Although we have no direct evidence of her prior involvement, she came from a shopkeeping family and had significant family support—her brother Samuel Hebblewhite was a well-known Sydney businessman.⁴⁰ Eliza Muspratt ran the family bookselling and stationery business in Sydney's William Street for more than 20 years after her husband's 'awfully sudden' death in 1854, and Eliza Hudson assumed control of the family music business in Pitt Street after her husband George died in 1854, although his name continued to appear in trade directories for another two years.⁴¹ We know that Eliza Hudson had always been involved in the business, indicated by the presence of her name on a dissolution of partnership agreement in 1851.⁴² Charlotte Dick managed husband Alexander's Sydney jewellery and silversmith business while he was convicted of fencing stolen goods and imprisoned in 1829. It was unsurprising, therefore, that he authorised her in his will 'to manage my personal estate generally in such manner as shall appear to her to be advantageous to herself and my family'. She lived up to his expectations, running the business for several years after his death in 1843 before remarrying.⁴³

³⁹ *SMH* 11 March 1871, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Peter Procter, *Second Thoughts: Walker, Hassall, and Hebblewhite* (Canberra, Peter Procter, 1998).

⁴¹ *SMH* 29 July 1854, p. 5, 10 October 1854, p. 5, 19 September 1876, p. 10, 6 June 1879, p. 9; *Waugh and Cox's Directory of Sydney and Its Suburbs*, 1855 (Sydney, Waugh & Cox, 1855), Sands Directory 1858.

⁴² *SMH* 11 April 1851, p. 3, 6 May 1857, p. 1.

⁴³ Alexander Dick Probate 1843, 13,660, 1-1462, SRNSW; *SMH* 14 December 1846, p. 3.

Publicans' widows were granted their dead husbands' licences almost automatically on both sides of the Tasman Sea for much of the century, recognising that they had usually played a role in the business before losing their husbands. If they remarried, the licence passed to their new husbands, but there were numerous examples of women running hotels through and between marriages, clearly the main force in the business regardless of the name on the licence. Mary Ann Ames was the daughter of a Sydney publican and ran hotels in Wellington through two marriages and widowhoods, retaining ownership of the 'Ames Hotel' in Johnsonville even after she retired from being the active publican in 1860. Similarly, when Ann Macready died in Auckland, she was recognised publicly as the long-standing publican (c.1849–1872) of the *Duke of Marlborough* and then the *Star*, although she had officially held the licence only between 1856, when first husband William Dennett died, and 1859, when she remarried to watchmaker Thomas Macready.⁴⁴

Ann Macready was typical of many women who ran businesses throughout their lives, either, as in her case, in partnership with husbands, or independently. For this, the second group of widows, widowhood was—the emotional effects notwithstanding—business as usual. They continued their businesses or returned to a business they had run earlier in their lives. Sophia Tate in Timaru in New Zealand opened Baltrasna School for Girls in 1883 after her second husband Edward died. She was no stranger to the education business. Just one week after arriving in New Zealand in 1857 aged 23, she was widowed for the first time and left with a small child and stepdaughter to support. She opened a school in Wellington, entrepreneurially advertising for boarding pupils as far afield as Hawke's Bay and Nelson. Sophia probably continued to give music lessons through her second marriage and move to Timaru, so she had a ready-made strategy for her second widowhood.⁴⁵ After her husband's death in Cape Town in 1849, Phyllis Sloman continued the millinery and dressmaking business she had run through her married life, although she moved it to Sydney.⁴⁶ Josephine Venables (later Macdonald) was also mobile and always in business, although her enterprises varied,

⁴⁴ Bishop, *Women Mean Business*, pp. 178–79.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 101–02.

⁴⁶ *Eastern Province Herald*, Cape Town 22 March 1837; *SMH* 19 May 1853 p. 2; Bishop, 'Women on the Move: Gender, Money-Making and Mobility in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Australasia', *History Australia* 11, no. 2 (2014): pp. 38–59, p. 49.

including dressmaking, a servants' registry office and surgical corset making. She survived the incarceration of her first husband in a mental asylum, her first widowhood and then a marriage to a possibly unbusinesslike second husband, who was notably listed as 'settler' in the directory while his wife had a business. Josephine Venables travelled between China, Australia and New Zealand from the 1850s. Even after her second widowhood and retirement aged 70 in 1901, she was active, organising charitable fund-raising sales in her 80s and 90s.⁴⁷ The lives of these women, in which business featured at all stages, draw attention to the necessity of women's economic contributions to family survival and prosperity, in spite of rhetoric of female domesticity and financial dependence upon men.

REINVENTION AS A BUSINESSWOMAN

The third group of widows reinvented themselves entirely, often running businesses that were home-based and 'domestic', using their existing skills and fitting in with children and home responsibilities. These were often the widows of men who had not been in business; they seldom inherited their husbands' jobs. One unique exception to this general rule was Mary Jane Bennett, who was the first and still the only female lighthouse keeper in Australasia, taking over from her husband at Pencarrow Lighthouse near Wellington, New Zealand, in 1855.⁴⁸ Widows of lawyers and government officials, who had previously enjoyed a comfortable domesticated life in a lovely home with servants and tea parties, could get a rude shock. Jane Takotowi Clendon, daughter of Northland merchant Dennis Cochrane and Ngāti Kuri woman Takotowi Te Whata, was the young widow of Resident Magistrate James Clendon, 28 years her senior. He left her with numerous children and stepchildren as well as crippling debts. Unlike many immigrant widows, Jane had strong connections with local iwi (Māori kinship group) and could rely on this extended family for some assistance. Nevertheless, to maintain the social position and home for her children, she cobbled together various business activities—trading kauri gum (a natural resin and Auckland's biggest export in the second half of the nineteenth century), garden produce and firewood—and wrote impassioned letters to influential friends begging assistance.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Bishop, *Women Mean Business*, pp. 279–82.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 239–40.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 238–39.

Jane Clendon's position both as a Māori woman and as a middle-class woman gave her some advantages, such as family connections, but also meant that she was under pressure to maintain a semblance of gentility in her and her children's lifestyle. This, along with her location in a rural area, dictated the sorts of businesses she might undertake to support herself. Interestingly, she did not try to establish a school, which, given her education, she might have done. Her own children shared a Pākehā governess, Alice Bennett, with a neighbouring family, the von Sturmers. Like Jane Clendon, Mrs Sarah von Sturmer had a Pākehā father and Māori mother.

A common business for middle-class widows was running a ladies' academy. Alongside numerous single women and wives, middle-class widows exploited their own education and cultural capital in institutions of varying sizes, quality and longevity. Gentility and respectability along with a 'sound English education' were offered, sometimes with visiting 'masters' or 'professors' teaching music, French or dancing. Others had such delights as lessons in 'wax flower, fruit and leather modelling, Paper Flowers, [and] Raised Wool Work'.⁵⁰ Charlotte Steadman Christie felt that her school's 'immediate proximity to the Race Course render[ed] the situation particularly desirable', presumably for the surrounding open-air and green aspect rather than any interest in on-course activities.⁵¹ Some widows traded on their late husband's status. Constantia Davison advertised as 'the widow of a gentleman, who for several years held a responsible situation in the government', to attract pupils to her 'respectable day school for little girls' in Wellington in 1843.⁵² Margaret Fleetwood clearly thought her husband's talents had rubbed off, advertising in Napier, New Zealand, in 1867 as 'the Widow of the late Mr Fleetwood, Professor of Music'.⁵³

Widows in town, without a family farm, and those from lower down the social scale faced different issues in their widowhood, and their choice of business reflected those. The most common businesses of widows who did not inherit going concerns were boarding houses, hotels and needle-work businesses.

⁵⁰ *SMH* 10 March 1866, p. 8.

⁵¹ *SMH* 2 January 1849, p. 1.

⁵² *NZG* 4 October 1843, p. 1.

⁵³ *Hawkes Bay Herald* 17 December 1867, p. 2, 11 January 1868 p. 2.

Boarding housekeeping was a common option for widows. It required secure accommodation with one or more extra rooms, but the property could be rented or owned. It suited those who were tied to their homes because of young families and those without other marketable skills and/or capital to stock a shop. In 1846, just four years after arriving in Sydney, Maria Carew was widowed aged 37, with a five-year-old son. She opened a boarding house and was still in business 25 years later.⁵⁴ Edith Sparks has described boarding housekeeping as a deliberate exploitation of their femininity by women on the San Francisco goldfields with 'Capital Intentions'.⁵⁵ In testosterone-fuelled environments, a meal cooked by a woman was highly valued. Boarding housekeeping could also be seen as a 'natural' female occupation—calling upon supposedly 'feminine' domestic skills and hence giving women a comparative advantage. Boarding house marketing emphasised 'home-comforts' and made much of female proprietors. Nevertheless, while those in smaller establishments probably did the cooking and cleaning themselves, those with larger boarding houses, like their male counterparts, employed staff, merely performing as host/hostess. They, nevertheless, exploited the *idea* of feminine domestic care and management in their advertisements. Bridget Nixon in Auckland did it in verse:

Those who wish a HOME to find
With everything to please the mind
A Snug and Quiet Safe RETREAT
They'll find that HOME in Princes-street.⁵⁶

Like boarding housekeeping, hotel keeping could be framed as a natural extension of women's domestic role. Hotels in New Zealand and Australia were both drinking establishments and offered accommodation. Nevertheless, hotels were also problematic—spaces of male bad behaviour in which no 'respectable' woman would be seen, except, of course, behind the bar as barmaid or landlady. Licensing practices across both colonies reflected conflicting attitudes about women in hotels, with the law leaving considerable latitude to the whims of individual licensing boards, who did not always follow it to the letter of the law. A more *laissez-faire* attitude

⁵⁴ Familysearch.com; *Sydney Chronicle* 13 March 1847, p. 1; *SMH* 19 January 1870, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

⁵⁶ *DSX* 30 October 1855, p. 2.

prevailed during the early years of colonial New South Wales, and in small towns and on the goldfields in New Zealand in the middle of the century. Women of all marital statuses were licensees, but in larger cities and as the century progressed, accompanied by the growing influence of the temperance movement, female licensing became more restricted, with married women and spinsters seldom granted licences.

Widows were generally favoured as licensees of hotels, even when not the widows of publicans.⁵⁷ Having been married gave widows an air of matronly gravitas and experience lacked by spinsters, who were presumed by commentators to be more naive in the ways of the world and more vulnerable to moral corruption.⁵⁸ The life experience of widows not only included a presumed ability to deal with drunk men but also, contrary to the usual rhetoric of domesticated femininity, experience in business. Joseph Olliffe, president of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, expressed this explicitly in Sydney in 1878. Supporting the licensing of widows but not spinsters, he declared that widows 'may be presumed to have acquired business habits previous to their widowhood'.⁵⁹ This recognised that women often engaged in business while wives and mothers, but it perhaps also acknowledged that running a household itself required business skills. Moreover, like boarding housekeeping, running a hotel involved many of those household business skills.

Widows might generally be seen to have a moderating influence in hotels as publicans, but their licences were not guaranteed, especially as the temperance lobby gained influence. Widow Eliza Concord, previously

⁵⁷ J.M. Freeland, *The Australian Pub* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966); Diane Kirkby, Tanya Luckins and Chris McConville, *The Australian Pub* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010); Alan Atkinson, 'Women Publicans', *Push From the Bush* 8 (1980): pp. 88–106; Clare Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia's Female Publicans* (Melbourne: MUP, 2003); Sandra Quick, "'The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram': Women Participants in the Central Otago Goldfields Liquor Industry, 1861–1901' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1998); Sandra Quick, "'A Magnificent Stamp of a Woman": Female sly grog sellers and hotelkeepers on the Central Otago goldfields 1861–1901', in Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser (eds), *Rushing for Gold: Life and Commerce on the Goldfields of New Zealand and Australia* (Dunedin: Otago University Press 2016), pp. 151–64; Julie Bradshaw, 'Forgetting Their Place: Women of Abandoned Character on the Otago Goldfields', in Carpenter and Fraser (eds), *Rushing for Gold*, pp. 165–75; Susan Upton, *Wanted: A Beautiful Barmaid: Women Behind the Bar in New Zealand, 1830–1976* (Wellington: VUP, 2013), Bishop, *Women Mean Business*.

⁵⁸ For debates in New Zealand, in particular, see Bishop, *Women Mean Business*, pp. 174–77.

⁵⁹ *SMH* 31 October 1878, p. 8.

licensee of the *Concord Hotel* in Greymouth, New Zealand, was refused the licence of the *Court House Hotel* in 1875, despite having experience and being of good character. 'A majority' of the three earnest gentlemen on the bench, entirely on their own cognisance, 'had decided as a rule not to grant licenses to females'. The local paper was appalled, it being 'contrary to the spirit of the law' and 'beyond the discretionary powers' of the Court.⁶⁰ Similarly, in New South Wales, three years later, Mary Ann Hurley lost her licence because she was 'a single woman', although she was, in fact, a widow with 16 years' experience in the business. A correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* pointed out the unfairness of her loss of her licence but to no avail.⁶¹ In 1880, New South Wales widows Ellen Lennox and Edith Finlay were more fortunate. They successfully appealed against the decision of one magistrate, Mr Fowler, who stated baldly that he would 'never consent to grant a license to any female, whether a widow or not'. A subsequent court reversed his decision having decided that they were 'respectable' women.⁶² This situation was repeated throughout both colonies; local worthies made independent decisions based more on their own prejudices or local conditions than on the law itself. Sometimes this benefited women applying for licences, but more often, it worked against them.

Widows proliferated as publicans because of the particular legal advantage they had over wives, who were under the law of coverture. They had an advantage over spinsters as boarding housekeepers both because of issues of respectability and because they could be better established, with access to accommodation big enough to allow them to take boarders. In the needlework trades, however, it was an even playing field. Dressmaking, millinery and other needlework businesses were popular with women, whether spinsters, wives or widows. These occupations used 'typically feminine' skills and required little start-up capital. They could be undertaken in the home or even in lodgings, much like other service occupations. They varied in size, from a poor widow sewing by candlelight into the wee small hours to those with proper shopfronts, offering merchandise—haberdashery or drapery goods—as well as dressmaking services. Several businesswomen advertised for apprentices and first hands, indicating larger concerns. Wendy Gamber has downplayed the domestic nature of

⁶⁰ *Grey River Argus* 3 March 1875, p. 2.

⁶¹ *SMH* 3 August 1878, p. 7.

⁶² *SMH* 2 June 1880, p. 3.

the skills used by milliners in nineteenth-century America, noting that many learnt their trade as apprentices rather than in the home.⁶³ Many of these were spinsters, for whom a business career may have been more of a choice. Widows, thrown suddenly upon their own resources, were less likely to have professional training, but this did not necessarily impede their success. On the one hand, they probably had learnt sewing as children. On the other hand, whether or not they personally sewed a single stitch, they could exploit the *idea* that women were natural arbiters of fashion, and the understanding that women belonged in sewing trades, as well as speaking the same cultural language as their predominantly female customers. Isabella Williams in Christchurch, New Zealand, was widowed upon landing, her baker husband collapsing on the strenuous walk across the hills from the port at Lyttelton to the new settlement in 1850. Isabella, assisted by a quick ‘whip-around’ among fellow passengers, started ‘Glasgow House’, a drapery and millinery emporium that lasted 20 years, supported her and her seven children and was sold as a going concern. Isabella left an impressive estate of £4000 when she died in 1882.⁶⁴

Isabella Williams seems to have discovered her inner entrepreneur, making a success of business although propelled into it by absolute necessity. While Isabella chose a fairly conventional type of business—a retail drapery—other widows moved beyond that, indicating enthusiastic entrepreneurialism. Esther Bigge was the widow of Governor Macquarie’s coachman, Joseph Bigge, who also owned a livery stable and the ‘first respectable lodging house’ in Sydney. Rather than merely continuing the business, Esther expanded, going to ‘considerable expense in building a Bathing Machine’ and opening the first ladies’ bathing house in Sydney in 1833. She was in business for two decades.⁶⁵ Clara Macshane lost her doctor husband in 1848 and opened a chemist shop in Nelson, New Zealand, trading off her husband’s reputation. She had probably assisted him in his dispensary before his death, but the business was her own, making her the first woman to advertise as a chemist in Australasia.⁶⁶

⁶³Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades 1860–1930* (Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), esp. pp. 30–35.

⁶⁴*Press* 1 February 1862, p. 6, 10 August 1882, p. 2; *LT* 22 October 1862, p. 1, Richard L N Greenaway, *Unsung Heroines* (Christchurch: Canterbury Public Library, 1994), <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Publications/UnsungHeroines/IsabellaWilliams/>

⁶⁵Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*, pp. 175–78.

⁶⁶*NEx* 19 January 1850, p. 183, 9 December 1854, p. 3; Ann Bickford took over husband William’s chemist business in Adelaide after his death in September 1850. *South Australian Register* 12 September 1850, p. 2, 23 November 1853, p. 1.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE: THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

For widows, as for businesspeople more generally in the colonies, family networks could be critical to success. Widowed Ann Taylor arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1850 with her two daughters, joining her brothers and sisters, who had been established there for ten years. As her daughter later remembered, Ann Taylor was recognised as 'an excellent businesswoman' by her brother-in-law, who owned an importing business. She opened a small store in central Auckland and prospered. In addition to her business skills, she also had a ready supply of stock—'silks, satins, cigars...in fact, all that [her brother-in-law's] ships brought in from the uttermost parts of the earth'.⁶⁷

Without such family support, reinventing oneself as a businesswoman upon widowhood could be a challenge and not all were successful. Harriet Spier started a small grocery shop in Sydney after the suicide of her husband in 1861, but she became insolvent three years later.⁶⁸ Elizabeth Cooper inherited her husband's 16-year-old aerated water business in Wellington in 1884. She lasted four years, characterised by numerous court disputes over (primarily Elizabeth's) misuse of trademarks on bottles. She remarried—with some relief, one imagines—in 1888 to Charles Brodie, who took over the business.⁶⁹

INDEPENDENT MIGRATING WIDOWS

Most of the widows discussed so far were widowed in the colonies. There were some widows, however, like Ann Taylor, who emigrated as such. Although emigration is generally framed as a man-led enterprise, wife and children trailing in his wake, widows headed some of the family groups who arrived in the Australian and New Zealand colonies. Most arrived with children of varying ages and their motivation for emigration probably lay in the prospects available for their children, rather than, necessarily, for themselves. Nevertheless, they may have also sought an improvement in

⁶⁷ 'Mrs John Pilkington's Story', in Edith Mary Story (ed.), 'Our Fathers Told Us' c. 1920 qMS 1898–1899, ATL.

⁶⁸ 'Harriet Spier, Grocer Insolvency', 22 September 1864, NRS 13654, 06818, 'John Hill Spier, Painter Insolvency', 9 February 1858, NRS 13654, 04026, Supreme Court Insolvency Files (SCIF), SRNSW.

⁶⁹ Bishop, *Women Mean Business*.

their own circumstances. Ann Taylor's migration can be considered as a version of the 'repatriation' solution—she was travelling towards her support networks rather than away from them. For others, this is not so clear. Phebe [sic.] Hayman was a widowed schoolteacher, who migrated to Sydney with three young daughters aged 6, 14 and 17 in the 1830s. She was perhaps encouraged by the presence of a cousin in the colony, although, unlike Ann Taylor's brother-in-law, he was not influential in the millinery business she opened. Her daughters worked with her before marrying and working with their husbands.⁷⁰ Several widows arrived with grown children. Like Elizabeth Wrigglesworth, who arrived in Christchurch, New Zealand, in the late 1850s with her adult son James, it is not clear whether these widows were leading or following their offspring. Having arrived, however, these women often ran independent businesses. Elizabeth Wrigglesworth ran a circulating library alongside James' photography business. Her influence is suggested by the fact that James did not marry until after his mother's death in 1864.⁷¹ Other widows, like Phillis [sic.] Sloman, who emigrated from Cape Town, do not appear to have had relatives in the colonies but, like so many other single women, acted on their own initiative, seeking a better future for themselves and for their children.

CONCLUSION

Widows did not have an easy life in the colonies, where the presence of a male breadwinner was assumed to be an essential feature of the ideal family. Their difficulties and opportunities were similar to widows in the UK and Europe, with the significant difference that many widows had emigrated, leaving behind extensive familial support. On the other hand, developing colonial economies and growing populations offered opportunities for entrepreneurial women to capture niche or growing markets, in ways that may not have been available in Europe, where towns and cities (and businesses) were well established.

Widowhood happened at all ages and to all classes, leaving women in varying financial circumstances, with or without numbers of dependent children. Some widows chose the option of remarrying relatively quickly,

⁷⁰ Phebe Tilney Hayman, *Diary, 1806–1847* (Sydney: Mrs Katherine Christian); Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*, pp. 13–14.

⁷¹ *Wellington Independent* 6 February 1858, p. 2, 5 July 1859, p. 4, 26 March 1864, p. 2.

while others found themselves dependent upon charity, and several fled back to Britain. Others were fortunate enough to inherit property or businesses from their husbands and continued to manage these successfully. Some were short-term links in the chain of family business generational transfer, while others remained in charge for years. Many used existing skills and established new businesses or returned to previous enterprises to support themselves and their families. Although usually running 'feminine' businesses, such as boarding houses, hotels, schools and dressmaking or other small shops, at times, widows had more unusual occupations. Success or failure could depend both on a woman's business skills—and some were decidedly entrepreneurial—and her support networks. Widows could also be mobile. In addition to those widowed in Australia or New Zealand, some women migrated independently, reinventing themselves and often going into business to support themselves and their families in the colonies. Their self-sufficiency, which was not always easy, was indicative of the independence of many widows and was a mark of respectability in the colonies, as it may well have been elsewhere. In the absence of men, women were expected to step up and take responsibility for breadwinning. Colonial widows did not necessarily hurtle headlong into remarriage but, either by choice or by necessity, used small business to survive alone in what was perhaps not quite so much a man's world as has been assumed.

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In the Business of Piracy: Entrepreneurial Women Among Chinese Pirates in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

C. Nathan Kwan

In April 1810, one of the largest pirate fleets in the world surrendered to the officials of the Qing government in China. The fleet consisted of 226 ships crewed by 17,318 pirates and armed with 1315 cannon and 2798 other weapons.¹ This massive pirate organisation dwarfed the gangs of the

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¹The Qing ruled China 1644–1912. Robert Antony, ‘State, Community, and Pirate Suppression in Guangdong Province, 1809–1810’, *Late Imperial China* 27, no. 1 (2006), p. 21.

C. N. Kwan (✉)
University of Hong Kong, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong
King’s College London, London, UK

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most notorious of the pirates of the Caribbean.² Unlike the Atlantic pirates, whose captains were invariably men, this Chinese pirate fleet was commanded by a woman, the wife of Zheng Yi (known as ‘Zheng Yi Sao’, *sao* being Chinese for ‘wife’). She played a key role in negotiations with the Qing government. Expecting Chinese officials to panic at the presence of a large, armed pirate fleet, Zheng Yi Sao went to Canton (Guangzhou in *pinyin*) with a party of women to facilitate the pirates’ surrender. Qing officials granted the pirates amnesty, feting them and giving them silver medals.³ Thus ended what Robert Antony calls the ‘golden age of Chinese piracy’, from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, when piratical activity on the China coast was unsurpassed in the world.⁴

Chinese piracy persisted after the golden age, however, and far less scholarship has discussed Chinese pirates in the mid-nineteenth century.⁵ None of this scholarship discusses women in any detail. Yet the case of Zheng Yi’s wife suggests that Chinese women participated, sometimes prominently, in piracy earlier on. As this chapter shows, women’s involvement in Chinese piracy persisted into the mid-nineteenth century. In the wake of Zheng Yi’s wife, Chinese women continued to engage with and profit from Chinese piracy after 1810; they too were in the business of piracy.

Women interacted with piracy in many ways. In a study of women and English piracy, John Appleby reveals that English women played a key role in supporting pirates. Women helped make the maritime enterprise of

²At the peak of Atlantic piracy, in 1720, there were no more than 5500 pirates active in total. Robert Antony, ‘Overview’, in idem (ed.), *Pirates in the Age of Sail* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), pp. 33–34.

³Yonglun Yuan, *Jing haifen ji* [Account of Clearing the Sea of Foam], (1830), lower *juan*, pp. 20–21, reprinted in Kwok-kin Siu and Wing Kin Puk (eds), ‘*Jing haifen ji* yuanwen biaodian jianzhu [An Annotation of the Account of Clearing the Sea of Foam]’, *Tianye yu wenxian: Huanan yanjia ziliao zhongxin tongxun* 46 (January 2007), pp. 8–20. Official sources referred to pirates as ‘sea foam’.

⁴Robert Antony, *Like Froth Floating on the Sea: The World of Pirates and Seafarers in Late Imperial South China* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2003), p. 19.

⁵The principal studies are Jonathan Chappell, ‘Maritime Raiding, International Law and Suppression of Piracy on the South China Coast, 1842–1869’, *International History Review* 40, no. 3 (2018): pp. 473–492; Yu-hsiang Chen, ‘Qingdai zhongye Guangdong haidao zhi yanjiu (1810–1885) [A Study of Guangdong Pirates in the Mid-Qing Dynasty, 1810–1885]’, *Chengda lishi xuebao* 34 (June 2008): pp. 93–130; and Ei Murakami, ‘Shijiu shiji zhongye Huanan yanhai zhixu de chongbian: Min-Yue haidao yu Yingguo haijun [Reassessing Order on the South China Coast in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Guangdong and Fujian Pirates and the Royal Navy]’, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu*, 44 (October 2006): pp. 131–148.

piracy viable.⁶ By supporting pirates and connecting them to markets, women conducted business transactions and profited from piracy. They also engaged directly in piracy, itself a form of enterprise.⁷ English women's direct participation in piracy, however, was rare. Anne Bonny and Mary Read, the most famous English pirate women, are noteworthy precisely because they are considered exceptional.⁸ Bonny and Read were rank and file pirates, however, not captains or leaders like Zheng Yi Sao.

Partly due to the cultural context of South China and the nature of seafaring there, Chinese women had more involvement in piracy than their English counterparts. Chinese piracy also produced opportunities for women to engage in entrepreneurial activity. Like Zheng Yi's wife before them, Chinese women like Mrs Bigfoot, Ng Akew and Liu Laijiao all engaged in the business of piracy, enriching and advancing themselves through entrepreneurial activity and association with pirates.

PRELUDE: ZHENG YI SAO—PIRATE, PROPRIETOR, PARAMOUNT

Zheng Yi Sao (1774–1844) is probably the most famous Chinese woman pirate, but little about her is known.⁹ Her name is recorded in various sources as Shi Xianggu and Shi Yang, but she is most commonly referred to as 'Zheng Yi Sao' or 'Zheng Yi's wife', emphasising the importance of her relationship with her pirate husband. Before her marriage, Zheng Yi Sao was allegedly a prostitute.¹⁰ In the Caribbean, prostitutes developed a symbiotic relationship with pirates, and prostitution was a means for women to share in pirate plunder.¹¹ Zheng Yi Sao, like her Caribbean counterparts, probably gained exposure to a world of swashbuckling through relations with pirates. She became a part of this world through marriage to her eponymous husband in 1801.

⁶ See John C. Appleby, *Women and English Piracy, 1540–1720: Partners and Victims of Crime* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2013).

⁷ Shannon Lee Dawdy and Joe Bonni, 'Towards a General Theory of Piracy', *Anthropological Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (2012), p. 682.

⁸ Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, pp. 207–223.

⁹ See Dian Murray, 'Cheng I Sao in Fact and Fiction' in Jo Stanley (ed.), *Bold in Her Breeches: Women Pirates Across the Ages* (London: Harper Collins, 1995): pp. 203–239.

¹⁰ Dian Murray 'One Woman's Rise to Power: Cheng Is Wife and the Pirates', *Historical Reflections* 8, no. 3 (1981), p. 149; Murray, 'Cheng I Sao', p. 210; Antony, *Like Froth*, p. 48.

¹¹ Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, pp. 92–95.

Zheng Yi Sao married into piracy during a period of upheaval in the seas off South China. The outbreak of the Tay Son rebellion in late-eighteenth-century Vietnam provided a catalyst for uniting and organising disparate Chinese pirates into a professional maritime force. Tay Son leaders hired Chinese pirates as privateers; as sailors in the Tay Son navy, many Chinese pirates developed leadership and fighting skills in addition to receiving matériel from their patrons.¹² When the rebellion collapsed, many former privateers returned to China as pirates. The year of Zheng Yi Sao's marriage, her husband took over the command of his cousin's fleet.¹³ Zheng Yi Sao helped her husband cement his leadership and expand his influence, culminating in the formation of a pirate confederation in 1805. With Zheng Yi Sao's guidance, this confederation became one of the largest assemblages of pirates in history.¹⁴ Zheng Yi's leadership ended when he drowned in a storm in 1807.

After her husband's death, Zheng Yi Sao took over the pirate confederation. She helped Zhang Bao, her and Zheng Yi's adopted son, gain command of a fleet. Zhang eventually commanded the greatest fleet in the confederation, but a Qing source suggests that he still took orders from Zheng Yi Sao. The pirates also acknowledged her authority.¹⁵ Zheng Yi Sao then married her adopted son, Zhang Bao, in order to cement their alliance and become a partner in the leadership of the confederation. Thereafter, she helped promulgate a pirate code to formalise power structures and establish a *modus operandi* for the pirates.¹⁶

Under Zheng Yi Sao and Zhang Bao's leadership, the confederation did not merely engage in predation. The articles forming the confederation included the statement 'if evil practices are not abolished, then commercial intercourse cannot take place'.¹⁷ In addition to plunder, pirates sought income through commerce. They became entrepreneurs in

¹²For a general account, see Dian Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast, 1790–1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Wensheng Wang, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 85–87.

¹³Guangnan Zheng, *Zhongguo baidao shi* [History of Chinese Piracy] (Shanghai: Huadong ligong daxue chubanshe, 1998), p. 301 and p. 306.

¹⁴Murray, 'One Woman's Rise to Power', p. 149.

¹⁵Yuan, *Jing haifen ji*, upper *juan*, pp. 3–5.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 5–6; Murray, 'Cheng I Sao', p. 210.

¹⁷Rescripted memorial collection, First Historical Archives, Beijing, 1058/2, quoted in Murray, *Pirates*, p. 58.

the business of piracy. The pirates' most steady source of income came not from robbery but through protection rackets in which they collected protection money from ships and coastal settlements in return for not raiding them. To help collect this money, the pirates set up financial offices all around the Guangdong coast, including near Canton, the provincial capital.¹⁸ They also derived significant income from the sale and ransom of captives.¹⁹

Zheng Yi Sao acted as a proprietor of this business of Chinese piracy. By helping to promulgate a code of conduct, she determined what types of piratical activity the confederation could undertake. By overseeing the sale of safe passage papers, she, in effect, collected a tax on Chinese shipping. This allowed her to exercise virtual control over the trade of Canton.²⁰ Once the income from the protection racket, plunder and ransoms was collected, Zheng Yi Sao also had a hand in its allocation. She controlled the pirates' common treasury, to which they sent four-fifths of all their plunder; any disbursement required her approval.²¹ Overseeing the provisioning of the various pirate fleets of the confederation, she ran an impressive financial operation.²² Managing her pirate confederation's finances was no small feat. At its height, this confederation had between 40,000 and 60,000 pirate participants.²³ Zheng Yi Sao thus managed finances for an organisation comparable in size to the entire Royal Navy at the time of the Opium War (1839–1842).²⁴

Zheng Yi Sao's involvement in piracy is less surprising in the context of South China than it might have been in a Western or even more mainstream Chinese environment. It was part of a broader culture of female participation in agricultural and maritime activities along the South China coast in the nineteenth century. Various distinct cultural groups, such as the Hakka (Kejia), Hoklo (Fulao) and Tanka (Danjia, hereafter Dan),

¹⁸Dian Murray, 'Living and Working Conditions in Chinese Pirate Communities, 1750–1850' in David Starkey, E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, and J.A. De Moor (eds), *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), p. 62.

¹⁹Antony, *Pirates*, p. 41.

²⁰Zheng, *Zhongguo*, p. 308.

²¹Yuan, *Jing haifen ji*, upper *juan*, p. 6.

²²Murray, 'Cheng I Sao', pp. 252–253.

²³Antony, *Pirates*, p. 42.

²⁴Rebecca Berens Matzke, *Deterrence Through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy Under Pax Britannica* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), p. 47.

inhabited the coast of southern China and engaged in practices that differed from the prescriptions of Confucianism, the Qing Empire's dominant ideology.²⁵ Confucian ideals, as interpreted in Qing times, stipulated the isolation and seclusion of women at home. A woman's principal purpose was to marry and bear descendants for her husband's family. A key component of a woman's respectability was her confinement to domestic space. Men worked outdoors in the public; a woman's place was in the home.²⁶ As marginalised peoples, the Dan and other non-mainstream cultural groups violated many of the strictures of Confucianism, including the seclusion of women. These peoples' presence in South China could even affect mainstream practice. For instance, many women in nineteenth-century South China worked outside of the home, in fields, on ships and in silk factories.²⁷

Dan women were particularly conspicuous as maritime labourers. A marginalised group, the Dan lived in boats and were forbidden from residing on land until the eighteenth century. For them, seafaring was a family enterprise. Women thus participated prominently in Dan maritime activities such as fishing and shipping, as well as piracy and smuggling.²⁸ The activities of Dan women prevented the Chinese from seeing the sea as an exclusively masculine space, and Chinese women had many opportunities to go to sea.²⁹ Many of these women took such opportunities to engage in piracy. Piracy was, notably, the only form of Chinese banditry in which

²⁵ Dian Murray, 'Guangdong de shuishang shijie: ta de shentai he jingji [The Cantonese Water World: Its Ecology and Economy]', trans. Ping-tsun Chang, in Hsi-yung Tang (ed.) *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji* (Collected Essays on the History of Chinese Maritime Development), Vol. 5 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1994), pp. 147–148; Ernst J. Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong from the Beginning to the Year 1882* (Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh, 1885), pp. 131–132.

²⁶ Susan Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 4–7, 28–30.

²⁷ Janice E. Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton Delta: Marriage Patterns and Economic Strategies in South China, 1860–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 20, 170; Kazuko Ono, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850–1950*, translations edited by Joshua Fogel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 1–4.

²⁸ Helen F. Siu and Zhiwei Liu, 'Lineage, Market, Pirate, and Dan: Ethnicity in the Pearl River Delta of South China', in Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (eds), *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 285–291, 296–298.

²⁹ Murray, 'Cheng I Sao', p. 207. Contrast this with characterisation of English piracy as 'intensely masculine' with the pirate ship as 'a haven for male security'. See Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, p. 88.

women participated in significant numbers, and some women came to occupy prominent places among Chinese pirates.³⁰ Zheng Yi Sao was not the only Chinese woman to rise through the ranks. The wife of Cai Qian, a pirate active off the Fujian coast in the early nineteenth century, ‘used her skills to help [Cai Qian] manage his ships and control the pirates’. She is recorded as being ‘a very brave and fierce fighter’ who commanded ‘several boats of female warriors’.³¹

Occupying the littoral of Chinese territory, the Dan were liminal inhabitants of the Chinese state and largely evaded its influence. They diverged culturally from their land-based compatriots. Discrimination and marginalisation helped consolidate these differences.³² As pirates, the Dan further rejected the Chinese state and its norms. Robert Antony describes Zheng Yi Sao’s piracy as a Dan uprising.³³ Joseph Mackay goes even further and describes her pirate confederation as an ‘escape society’ (adapted from James Scott), a large-scale attempt to evade the oppression of the state and establish an alternative order.³⁴ In this alternative order, women like Cai Qian’s wife and Zheng Yi Sao could transcend normal restrictions on women and attain leadership positions over thousands of pirates. Chinese piracy provided a form of escapism for such women and created a space for leadership and enterprise not possible for women in more traditional settings.

Facing internal divisions and pressure from the alienated state and local communities, Zheng Yi Sao’s escape from society proved unsustainable. Eventually, the pirates surrendered, a process in which, as described earlier, Zheng Yi Sao played a key role. While she could no longer act as a de facto paramount over the South China coast, Zheng Yi Sao’s position of leadership in the pirate confederation allowed her to retain political clout. She successfully negotiated the surrender of Zhang Bao and his fleet on favourable terms. Thanks in part to Zheng Yi Sao’s negotiations, Zhang

³⁰ Robert Antony, *Unruly People: Crime, Community, and State in Late Imperial South China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), p. 132.

³¹ Extracts from the *Pingyang xiangzhi* (Gazetteer of Pingyang County), 1925 edition and the *Maxiang tingzhi* (Gazetteer of Maxiang subprefecture), translated by Lanshin Chang. See ‘Doc. 17: Cai Qian and Matron Cai Qian, early nineteenth century’ in Robert Antony (ed.), *Pirates*, pp. 119–120.

³² Murray, ‘Guangdong’, p. 148; Siu and Liu, ‘Lineage, Market, Pirate and Dan’, p. 292.

³³ Antony, *Unruly People*, p. 26.

³⁴ Joseph Mackay, ‘Pirate Nations: Maritime Pirates as Escape Societies in Late Imperial China’, *Social Science History* 37, no. 4 (2013), pp. 565–566.

Bao received a rank in the Qing military. Zheng Yi Sao herself negotiated receiving the title of an official's wife despite laws against remarried widows taking such rank.³⁵ Her marriage to Zhang Bao transgressed the 'womanly virtue' of fidelity to a husband in life and death. Unlike some of the widows in Australia and New Zealand discussed in Chap. 7, Chinese widows could not remarry and retain respectability, and their independence was no virtue. They were expected to remain single and chaste after the death of their husbands, retaining obligations to the patriline.³⁶ Zheng Yi Sao, however, leveraged her power and influence to transcend the division between 'respectable' and 'pariah' despite her past as a prostitute, pirate and remarried widow.³⁷

In 1822, after her second husband's death, Zheng Yi Sao returned to Canton where she continued engaging in entrepreneurial activity. She ran a gambling house, likely purchased with capital accumulated from her pirate days. In 1840, she accused an official of embezzling money entrusted to him by Zhang Bao, but the case was dismissed.³⁸ That same year, Lin Zexu, the Qing imperial commissioner who helped provoke the first Opium War, requested the revocation of Zheng Yi Sao's honorary title. Zheng Yi Sao died in 1844 at the age of 69.³⁹ By the time of her death, a sea change had occurred in the Pearl River Delta. In the aftermath of the Opium War, the British established a colony on the island of Hong Kong and obtained residency rights in Canton and four other ports along the China coast, creating new opportunities for Chinese women and pirates and enabling a new generation of female entrepreneurs in South China to engage in the business of piracy.

A PIRATE'S WIDOW: THE CASE OF MRS BIGFOOT

The Opium War had profound implications for Chinese piracy in the region. British naval actions greatly weakened the force upon which the Qing relied to keep piracy in check. As a result, one early colonial official in Hong Kong noted that 'piracy... greatly increased in the Canton River, and among the neighbouring Islands, from the absence during last three

³⁵ Murray, *Pirates*, 140–145; idem, 'One Woman's Rise to Power', p. 159.

³⁶ Mann, *Gender and Sexuality*, p. 14.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

³⁸ Murray, 'Cheng I Sao', p. 212.

³⁹ Chen, 'Qingdai', 123; Murray, 'One Woman's Rise to Power', p. 159.

years, of the usual Chinese Authorities formerly employed to suppress it'.⁴⁰ Qing officials tried to offset such losses by supplementing their forces with local militias. During the War, Qing officials hired Dan seafarers as militia to supplement naval forces. The end of the Opium War and the demobilisation of naval forces saw many Dan return to marginalised, destitute positions that pressured them towards piracy.⁴¹ Dan pirates often went to sea as a family. Fanny Loviot, a Frenchwoman captured by pirates in 1854, noted: 'pirates of the Chinese seas make their junks their homes, and carry their wives and children with them on every expedition. The women assist in working the ships, and are chiefly employed in lading and unlading the merchandise. As for the children, [the women] carry them upon their backs in a kind of bag, till they are able to run alone'.⁴² Women and even children thus participated in Chinese piracy. In a military report written in the early 1850s, Guangdong naval officers captured 29 pirates along with four 'pirate wives' and four children.⁴³ Family ties were a means by which Chinese women could be implicated with pirates. Women could also use such connections to conduct the business of piracy as the case of Mrs Bigfoot (Da Jiao Sao) illustrates.

The only source on Mrs Bigfoot seems to be a report of her arrest containing a deposition. The report states that 'Mrs Bigfoot is called He San Sao [cf. Zheng Yi *Sao*]; she 'frequently travelled between Kowloon and Hong Kong', and locals in the area 'all said they have heard that she was familiar with the activities and whereabouts of pirates'.⁴⁴ In her deposition, Mrs Bigfoot claimed that she was 38 years old and had lost her husband in the twelfth year of Emperor Daoguang's reign (2 February 1832–19 February 1833). Worried about the disturbances of the Opium War, she decided to marry He Sanfa, alias He Debiao, a leader of the local militia.

⁴⁰A.R. Johnston to Earl of Aberdeen, 21 October 1842, Colonial Office Records: Hong Kong, Original Correspondence CO 129/3, The National Archives (TNA), London, p. 149.

⁴¹Frederic Wakeman, Jr. *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839–1861* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 23–25; Murakami, 'Shijiu shiji', p. 135.

⁴²Fanny Loviot, *A Lady's Captivity Among Chinese Pirates in the Chinese Seas*, trans. Amelia B. Edwards (London: George Routledge & Co., 1858), p. 78.

⁴³Report by the Commander-in-Chief of the Guangdong Water Forces, undated (early 1850s), Foreign Office Records: Kwangtung Provincial Archives, FO 931/1047, TNA.

⁴⁴Report on the Arrest of He San Sao, author unknown, undated, FO 931/1254, TNA. Kowloon, the mainland peninsula on the opposite side of Victoria Harbour from Hong Kong, was then Qing territory.

After the war, He was arrested for associating with pirates and died in captivity. Mrs Bigfoot initially tried to make a living through needlework.⁴⁵ Needlework in traditional China was considered ‘womanly work’.⁴⁶ Moreover, though Qing officialdom still adhered to the Confucian ideal of an agrarian society, discrimination against the mercantile class had subsided by the nineteenth century. In this environment, it was socially acceptable for widows under 60 to engage in commerce. In the increasingly commercialised but lightly regulated economy of the nineteenth century, however, peddlers and other small-scale merchants were highly vulnerable.⁴⁷ Peddling her needlework, Mrs Bigfoot evidently succumbed to such vulnerability and fell into poverty. She thus decided to seek financial assistance from her husband’s former associates.

After a trip to Hong Kong to ask for loans, Mrs Bigfoot was captured by Qing agents on her way to Cheung Chau (Changzhou), an island to the southwest of Hong Kong. Chinese authorities charged her with forging protection papers and recruiting pirates from among the militia through offers of rice and money. Mrs Bigfoot ‘confessed she was not a daughter-in-law of Zheng Yi’ and was eventually absolved.⁴⁸ By the mid-nineteenth century, the figure of the pirate chieftainess, Zheng Yi Sao, had entered the popular imagination, and Chinese women pirates were referred to as her descendants.

The unsubstantiated charges brought against Mrs Bigfoot by Qing officers are revealing. While Mrs Bigfoot herself may not have been found guilty, the officers’ suspicions suggest that women like her played a role in distributing protection papers and recruiting pirates through payment. Both activities were financial transactions. Protection papers, a reincarnation of the safe passage papers issued by Zheng Yi Sao, amounted to a tax on shipping and property. The rice and money used to entice others to turn pirate were akin to a signing bonus for those joining a piratical enterprise. That Mrs Bigfoot was accused of distributing protection papers and signing bonuses suggests that it was not uncommon for women to thus engage in the business of piracy. Women played an important role in mid-

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Mann, *Gender and Sexuality*, 7.

⁴⁷ Richard Lufano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), pp. 3–6, 35–38, 99.

⁴⁸ FO 931/1254.

nineteenth-century Chinese piracy by helping to generate income and finding recruits.

Though Mrs Bigfoot may not have supported Chinese piracy in the manner accused, she likely had connections to pirates and benefited financially from them. The support she received from her piratical late husband's associates may have been pirate plunder. As the authorities determined that the rice and money in Mrs Bigfoot's possession were not for recruiting pirates, it is more likely that she was selling the rice to supplement her livelihood, a perfectly respectable thing for a struggling widow to do. As with women and English piracy, however, Chinese women also played an important role in receiving and dealing in pirate plunder and introducing it into the market.⁴⁹ By receiving and selling rice, Mrs Bigfoot, inadvertently or knowingly, helped fence goods taken piratically by He Sanfa's associates.

Mrs Bigfoot acted as more than a liaison between pirates and markets. From the testimony of local inhabitants that Mrs Bigfoot was aware of the activities and whereabouts of pirates, and from her own acknowledgement that she requested support from her late husband's associates, she likely maintained communication with pirates. Mrs Bigfoot confirmed this in her deposition, in which she claimed that on hearing the announcement of a Qing amnesty, she went to Hong Kong to notify acquaintances there and suggest that they surrender.⁵⁰ Her informing pirates of an amnesty is reminiscent of Zheng Yi Sao's role in mediating the surrender of the pirate confederation. Mrs Bigfoot failed to convince any pirates to surrender, in part because many did not believe her claims about the amnesty. The situation reveals some of the difficulties that the Chinese population in Hong Kong had in receiving news from China.

Middle(women) like Mrs Bigfoot were an important source of information from Qing China for Hong Kong's Chinese population, particularly criminals fleeing the Qing state. The British, having established a colony on the island of Hong Kong, guarded their sovereignty jealously. Colonial officials denied Qing officials extraterritorial jurisdiction over Chinese in Hong Kong and rejected any notion of 'home rule for the Chinese'.⁵¹ The exclusion of Qing officials from Hong Kong meant there were few official

⁴⁹ Appleby, *Woman and English Piracy*, pp. 52–54.

⁵⁰ FO 931/1254.

⁵¹ G.B. Endacott, *Government and People in Hong Kong, 1841–1962* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1964), pp. 33–38.

channels by which the island's Chinese population could find out about announcements and policies from China. Mrs Bigfoot's intermediary role was thus significant for the Hong Kong Chinese. That women like her were necessary reveals the inability of Chinese authorities to control the population of Hong Kong, a situation producing further opportunities for the business of piracy.

‘A CLEVER WOMAN OF EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITY AS WELL
AS ENTERPRISE’: NG AKEW

Disrupting the flow of information from Qing authorities to Hong Kong was only one of many ways an increasing foreign presence affected the South China coast. The British and other foreign traders in China also created opportunities for the Dan people, who formed a core recruitment pool for Chinese pirates. The marginalised Dan people were quick to establish connections with the British and other foreigners in the region, serving as important collaborators during the Opium War. After the war, the British granted land in Hong Kong to some Dan collaborators, allowing them to transcend their positions as marginal boat people and become part of the colonial elite.⁵² Dan women also benefited from the colonial regime in Hong Kong. A group of Dan women from Macao went from living in boats to being rentiers through purchasing land in Hong Kong, a transition largely precluded by discrimination against the Dan in China. Nor did Dan women merely benefit from rule by foreigners. Marginalised by Qing society, many Dan women became ‘protected women’ of foreigners, forging romantic relationships that had financial implications.⁵³ Some, like Ng Akew (Wu Ajiao, c. 1820–1914?),⁵⁴ who married an American

⁵² John M. Carroll, ‘Colonialism and Collaboration: Chinese Subjects and the Making of British Hong Kong’, *China Information* 12, nos. 1/2 (Summer/Autumn, 1997), pp. 17–18; Carl T. Smith, ‘Abandoned into Prosperity: Women on the Fringe of Expatriate Society’, in Helen F. Siu (ed.), *Merchants’ Daughters: Women, Commerce, and Regional Culture in South China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), pp. 130–132.

⁵³ See Carl T. Smith, ‘Protected Women in 19th-Century Hong Kong’, in Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers (eds), *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1994): pp. 221–237.

⁵⁴ I have only been able to find reference to Ng Akew in English language sources. The special exhibition ‘The Dragon and the Eagle: American Traders in China, a Century of Trade from 1784 to 1900’ at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum from 14 December 2018 to 14 April 2019 featured Akew, giving her Chinese name as Wu Ajiao.

captain, continued to liaise with pirates. Her interactions with pirates and foreigners show how women in the business of piracy navigated the novelties and complexities of the foreign presence in China to become successful entrepreneurs.

An English newspaper in Hong Kong in 1849 recorded that Akew was 'purchased' by James Bridges Endicott, an American captain engaged in the opium trade. The two had several children together. The relationship may have been more egalitarian than the Confucian and middle-class Western norms of the mid-nineteenth century would suggest. The newspaper continued to describe Akew as 'a shrewd intelligent woman, without any of those feelings of degradation which Europeans attach to females in her condition'. She personally conducted trade with the western coast of the province of Guangdong, where foreigners were excluded.⁵⁵ Her relationship with Endicott, himself a merchant, may have meant that she was a means for foreigners to access markets in China beyond the treaty ports. Akew's willingness to engage in business of such questionable legality may explain why she also brazenly dealt with pirates. As a Dan woman, she had a similar background to many Chinese pirates and used this to her advantage in her negotiations with them.⁵⁶

In September 1848, Endicott sold eight chests of opium to Akew on credit. The following April, Akew sent 'a quantity of opium' to the western coast of Guangdong for sale. The opium was captured by pirates in the gang of Shap-ng-tsai (Shi Wu Zi, see below), perhaps the greatest pirate leader of the mid-nineteenth century. Akew decided to personally negotiate the restoration of her property, threatening to call on foreign friends to intervene if Shap-ng-tsai did not comply. According to Akew's deposition, Shap-ng-tsai agreed to indemnify her loss with other goods.⁵⁷ Akew, by agreeing to accept these goods as indemnity, became a fence for pirate plunder. She took her indemnity to Cumsingmoon (Jinxingmen), an anchorage for opium hulks chosen for its relative security from Qing officials. Captain Charles Jamieson of the British opium hulk *Bombay* harboured suspicions and decided to detain Akew's ships. Akew refused to answer any of Jamieson's enquires, simply retorting 'Captain Jam-mi-son,

⁵⁵ *Friend of China*, 13 October 1849. In 1849, only Hong Kong, Macao and the five treaty ports (Canton, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai) were open to foreign trade and residence.

⁵⁶ Smith, 'Abandoned into Prosperity', p. 138.

⁵⁷ *China Mail*, 27 September 1849; *Friend of China*, 13 October 1849.

my no care for you'. Upon inspection, Jamieson found bales of cotton with the marks of British companies on Akew's ship. He assumed the cotton was taken piratically and reported this to Hong Kong. As the naval commander there could not spare any ships, the governor of Hong Kong requested assistance from the American naval commander at Macao, Commodore Daniel Geisinger.⁵⁸

The Americans captured two of Akew's trading junks and brought them to Geisinger. On the pretext that the cotton on the ships belonged to British merchants, Geisinger decided to turn over the junks and their crews, a total of 26 Chinese, to the British in Hong Kong. The Admiralty Court in Hong Kong was unable to find any legal proof that the prisoners had engaged in piracy. Governor Samuel George Bonham remained suspicious, however, and had the prisoners handed over to Qing authorities in Kowloon.⁵⁹ The governor general at Canton sent an official to investigate the matter.⁶⁰

It is unclear whether Akew was among the 26 prisoners mentioned in official correspondence. Regardless, their transfer from an American naval officer at the Portuguese settlement of Macao to the British colonial authorities in Hong Kong and finally to Qing officials at Kowloon reveals the complex and competing jurisdictions various actors exerted over pirates on the China coast. Akew used her marginalised identity as well as her relations with an American captain and familiarity with pirates to avoid various countries' efforts at suppressing piracy. She leveraged her relationship with Endicott against pirates and the British. When Shap-ng-tsai's pirates plundered her ships of opium, Akew invoked her American protector and threatened foreign retribution. The threat proved effective as Shap-ng-tsai agreed to indemnify Akew's losses. When the British Captain Jamieson sought to investigate this indemnity, Akew, the mother of an American captain's children, was defiant. She placed some of her

⁵⁸ *China Mail*, 27 September 1849. On Cumsingmoon, see Robert Nield, *China's Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840–1943* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), p. 82.

⁵⁹ John W. Davis to Clayton, 26 September 1849, and Bonham to Davis, 9 October 1849, MS Despatches from the US Minister in China, Volume 5, National Archives (United States). Accessed through Nineteenth Century Collections Online: <http://tinyurl.gale-group.com/tinyurl/96wG83>

⁶⁰ Xu Guangjin to Bonham, Daoguang reign (DG) 20th year/8th month/17th day (3 October 1849), Foreign Office Records: Superintendent of Trade, China Correspondence, FO 677/26, TNA, p. 83.

indemnity on Endicott's ship, which, being under an American flag, was beyond British colonial authority in Hong Kong.⁶¹ Akew lived up to her description in the *China Mail* as 'evidently a clever woman, of extraordinary activity as well as enterprise'.⁶²

After escaping charges of piracy, Akew continued her entrepreneurial activities even after her separation from Endicott, who married a British woman in 1852. That year, Akew received a grant of land from Endicott and took custody of their eldest son and a daughter. With capital from this endowment and her own entrepreneurial activity, Akew commenced a commercial and possibly marital relation with Fung Aching. Fung was a building contractor who also engaged in the coolie trade, recruiting and transporting Chinese labourers for work in Peru. Akew greatly enhanced Fung's business.⁶³ Her capital, years of business experience and piratical connections underpinned Fung's success in the coolie trade.

Akew's new line of business was essential to the development of early colonial Hong Kong. In its early years, the colony failed to develop into the 'vast Emporium of Commerce and Wealth' envisioned by its first governor.⁶⁴ Fortunately for the fledgling colony, the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and elsewhere produced a need for labour. Hong Kong, as a British colonial port off the coast of the most populous empire in the world, was ideally situated as a base for the coolie trade and Chinese emigration. John Carroll points out that 'Chinese emigration during the 1850s was the greatest contributor to Hong Kong's commercial prosperity, and both European and Chinese merchants benefited'.⁶⁵ Elizabeth Sinn, however, notes that not all this emigration was voluntary. The working conditions in places like Cuba, British Guiana and Peru were so brutal that Chinese labourers had to be coerced into going, including through kidnapping.⁶⁶ 'Crimps', unscrupulous professional recruiters of coolie labour, often colluded with pirates, whose *modus operandi* included kid-

⁶¹ *Friend of China*, 13 October 1849.

⁶² *China Mail*, 27 September 1849.

⁶³ Smith, 'Abandoned into Prosperity', p. 138; idem, 'Protected Women', p. 231.

⁶⁴ Pottinger to Ellenborough, 3 May 1842, FO 17/56, quoted in Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), p. 33.

⁶⁵ John M. Carroll, *The Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 48.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), p. 50.

napping for ransom. Pirates themselves may have engaged in crimping.⁶⁷ It is possible that Akew called on her piratical connections to assist in finding labourers for her husband's Peruvian coolie business.

Free or coerced, the transport of coolies helped stimulate Hong Kong's shipping industry, while the coolies' remittances contributed to the development of financial systems in the colony. Wealth generated from the coolie trade and opium, in which Akew was also involved, helped produce a Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong.⁶⁸ The revenues generated from coolies and opium were essential to Hong Kong's fiscal viability in the decade after the Opium War.⁶⁹ Through involvement in the coolie and opium trades, Akew helped develop networks connecting China and the world via Hong Kong and contributed to the infrastructure and financial transactions central to the development of the colony, accumulating wealth and property in the process. Her wealth and significance to the colony of Hong Kong made her akin to the *donas* of Portuguese Angola discussed in Chap. 9.

Accumulating capital from her and Fung Aching's coolie business, Akew diversified her portfolio, buying, developing and selling land in Hong Kong. She also became involved in moneylending. Despite her investments, Akew ran into trouble, going bankrupt in 1878. The luxurious possessions auctioned as a result suggest Akew had accumulated enough wealth for an opulent lifestyle.⁷⁰ One lawyer noted that 'Ng [A]kew's Bankruptcy... is one of the most voluminous in the Court'. Indeed, she was responsible for large sums of money with 'no less than 39 proofs amounting in the whole to some \$46,000 for money lent on money loan association' involved.⁷¹ One of Akew's investments seems to have been prostitution. Henry Francis Gibbons, registrar of the Supreme Court declared that 'in the matter of Ng Akew, a bankrupt... I am declined to have anything to do with that bankruptcy because I believe it has to do

⁶⁷ Arnold J. Meagher, *The Coolie Trade: The Traffic in Chinese Laborers to Latin America, 1847-1874* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2004), pp. 77-81.

⁶⁸ Po-keung Hui, 'Comprador Politics and Middleman Capitalism', in Tak-wing Ngo (ed.), *Hong Kong's History: State and Society Under Colonial Rule* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 34.

⁶⁹ Munn, *Anglo-China*, p. 48.

⁷⁰ Smith, 'Protected Women', p. 231.

⁷¹ Edmund Sharp, Minute on CSO 1458, 3 June 1881, Edward O'Malley Papers, FOL. DS796.H757 OMA, Vol. 7, Foyle Special Collections Library, King's College London.

with the keeping of brothels'.⁷² In early colonial Hong Kong, the keeping of brothels was a uniquely female, legally recognised and protected enterprise that provided women with an opportunity to actively participate in the colony's economy.⁷³ Being herself formerly intimate with one of Hong Kong's transient foreigners, Akew likely knew of the financial gains possible in selling sex. Star prostitutes in first-class brothels could earn as much as 200–300 silver dollars a night.⁷⁴ The premises and girls Akew invested in were apparently more lacklustre, driving her to bankruptcy. Fortunately, she still had income from properties Endicott put in her trust after their separation. These properties did not revert to Endicott's estate until 1914.⁷⁵

From being a lowly Dan woman to a member of Hong Kong's landed bourgeoisie, Akew fulfilled her description as a woman of extraordinary activity and enterprise.⁷⁶ Her meteoric rise in Hong Kong society reveals the opportunities available there to enterprising women. Like Mrs Bigfoot, Akew derived financial benefits from her association with pirates. Her business dealings with Shap-ng-tsai show that some Dan women, even those who affiliated with foreigners and had comfortable livelihoods, still associated with pirates. Pirate plunder probably helped finance Akew's later entrepreneurial ventures in the opium and coolie trades and brothel-keeping. In this way, piracy indirectly contributed to the development of early colonial Hong Kong. Though she clearly profited from the business of piracy and maintained a close association with pirates, it does not seem that Akew directly participated in piracy. Such was not the case for Liu Laijiao (dates unknown, active mid-nineteenth century).

IN THE WAKE OF ZHENG YI SAO: THE PIRATE CHIEFTAINESS LIU LAIJIAO

Of the women discussed in this chapter, Liu Laijiao is the most elusive, making a single tantalising appearance in an 1850 Qing memorial about the suppression of piracy. She is listed alongside ten other pirate chiefs. Although the pirate chiefs had surrendered, the governor general sug-

⁷² James William Norton-Kyshe, *The History of the Laws and Courts of Hong Kong, Vol. II* (Hong Kong: Noronha and Company, 1898), p. 317.

⁷³ See Elizabeth Sinn, 'Women at Work: Chinese Brothel Keepers in Nineteenth-Century Hong Kong', *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 3 (2007): pp. 87–111.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷⁵ Smith, 'Abandoned into Prosperity', pp. 138–139.

⁷⁶ *Idem*, 'Protected Women', p. 232.

gested that, rather than send them home, 'it would be better the split the pirate chiefs among the forces' and use the 'reformed pirate chiefs' in a 'determined effort against pirates'.⁷⁷ Amazingly, the emperor concurred and decreed that the 11 pirate chiefs 'should be placed in military posts. They should be tasked with capturing pirates and handing them over. If they are diligent in this task, they will be rewarded'.⁷⁸ Liu Laijiao was offered a rank in the Qing military. The conferring of military rank to a woman was an extraordinary measure and may reflect the desperation of the situation. During the Taiping rebellion (1851–1864), Third Daughter Su (Su Sanniang) led a force of bandits in support of the rebel cause.⁷⁹ Though Qing observers noted the participation of women in the rebellion with amusement and disgust, the example of Liu Laijiao suggests the Qing were not above employing capable women to command the empire's forces.

Being offered a rank in the Qing military, Liu Laijiao, like Zheng Yi Sao, obtained official recognition after surrendering. As with Zheng Yi Sao, Liu's participation in piracy should not be particularly surprising. In the 1850s, women continued to serve on pirate crews, including those of pirate chiefs' junks. In 1855, when HMS *Rattler*, accompanied by boats and men from USS *Powhatan* attacked the junk of the pirate chief 'Lee Afyee', four women reportedly threw themselves overboard.⁸⁰ Unlike these four women, however, Liu Laijiao was a pirate chief, not a rank and file pirate or a pirate's wife. More interestingly, unlike Zheng Yi Sao and He San Sao/Mrs Bigfoot, Liu is not identified through her relationship with a pirate husband. Unfortunately, even less is known about Liu Laijiao than Zheng Yi Sao and Mrs Bigfoot.

Among the ten other pirate chiefs with whom Liu Laijiao is listed, however, is one of the most notorious pirates of the mid-nineteenth century, Zhang Kaiping, alias Shap-ng-tsai. Shap-ng-tsai's activities may give insight into those of Liu Laijiao. When Shap-ng-tsai was defeated in 1849, he reportedly commanded 64 vessels mounting 1224 guns and crewed by

⁷⁷ Memorial by Xu Guangjin, DG 30/4/22 (2 June 1850), FO 931/1202, TNA.

⁷⁸ Imperial Edict to the Grand Council, DG 30/5/*dingsi* day (5 July 1850) in *Qingshilu* [Veritable Histories of the Qing], Xianfeng Reign, *juan* 10.

⁷⁹ Ono, *Chinese Women*, pp. 8–10.

⁸⁰ From *China Mail*, 9 August 1855 and *Peking Gazette*, 15 August 1855, quoted in Douglas Sellick (ed.), *Pirate Outrages: True Stories of Terror on the China Seas* (Fremantle, Australia: Fremantle Press, 2010), p. 147.

3150 pirates.⁸¹ Shap-ng-tsai led an impressive force with which he could re-enact some of the activities of Zheng Yi Sao's pirate confederation. Like Zheng Yi Sao's pirates, those under Shap-ng-tsai did not limit themselves to piracy. They also participated in other entrepreneurial activities. Shap-ng-tsai's negotiations with Akew are only one example of the business transactions performed by his pirate band.

In 1848, Shap-ng-tsai allegedly 'took possession of several forts on the coast near Teenpak [Dianbai], with all the guns in them' and defied the government from there.⁸² In addition to demanding tribute from the inhabitants of Dianbai, he charged a 'blackmail' on the salt-junks.⁸³ This blackmail was similar to the charge for safe passage papers issued by Zheng Yi Sao and served as a tax on the shipping of salt, allegedly a state monopoly. Shap-ng-tsai became such a threat that British and Qing forces banded together to defeat him.⁸⁴

Shap-ng-tsai is exceptional among Chinese pirates of the mid-nineteenth century, in that his activities are particularly well documented in Chinese and English sources. Much less is known about Liu Laijiao and the nine other pirate chiefs listed in the governor general's memorial. By listing Liu Laijiao alongside Shap-ng-tsai, however, Governor General Xu Guangjin presents her as a similar threat. He concluded that if such pirate chiefs were simply pardoned and allowed to return home, Qing authorities would lack the means of controlling them. Xu cited the example of Zhang Bao, Zheng Yi Sao's consort, to justify taking the pirate chiefs into military service.⁸⁵ Liu Laijiao's association with Shap-ng-tsai and Zhang Bao suggests she commanded a formidable force capable of menacing Qing authority and wealth. While her force may not have been as impressive or audacious as such pirates', it likely had a similar *modus operandi*, conducting business through ransoms, blackmail and sale of passage papers, as well as piracy. When she surrendered, she did so on favourable terms, gaining a rank in the Qing military. Like Zheng Yi Sao before her, Liu Laijiao proved Chinese women could not only be pirates but successful chieftainesses.

⁸¹ Hay to Collier, 23 October 1849, Admiralty Records, China Station Records ADM 125/145, TNA, p. 99.

⁸² *China Mail*, 28 September 1848.

⁸³ *China Mail*, 4 October 1849.

⁸⁴ Chappell, 'Maritime Raiding', p. 481.

⁸⁵ FO 931/1202.

CONCLUSION: DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW OF ZHENG YI

The unique demographics, economics and geopolitics of South China enabled Chinese piracy to develop in a manner distinctive from its Atlantic counterpart. Activities of Dan women made seafaring in China less exclusive of women than in the West. Where Anne Bonny and Mary Read were exceptional as women pirates in the English tradition, women's participation not just as rank and file pirates but as leaders in Chinese piracy was more common. Leading large organisations of pirates required business acumen. Chinese pirates did not merely plunder but extorted ransoms, established protection rackets and sold safe passage papers, all of which were forms of enterprise. Pirate leaders like Zheng Yi Sao were as much entrepreneurs as sea rovers.

After the Opium War, many of the conditions that allowed women like Zheng Yi Sao to attain prominence among Chinese pirates persisted, while the British colonisation of Hong Kong and the opening of treaty ports to foreign trade and residence created new opportunities for Chinese women in the business of piracy. In addition to the Dan who saw Hong Kong as a means of escaping Chinese prejudice, many Chinese criminals saw the British colony as a means of fleeing justice. One Western observer lamented that 'all that there is of bad and worst in China have flocked and are flocking to Hongkong'.⁸⁶ Women like Mrs Bigfoot, who travelled between Qing China and British Hong Kong, became important sources of information for such criminals. Her example shows that many women had ties to pirates through family and used these to their financial advantage. Such women played a role in disposing of pirate plunder.

Relationships with foreigners had financial implications for Dan women like Ng Akew. Her American protector and paramour's capital allowed her to become an entrepreneur in her own right. Her business connections included dealings with the fearsome pirate Shap-ng-tsai. The overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions claimed by the various contending powers in mid-nineteenth-century South China allowed Akew to avoid prosecution for piracy. Through association with an American merchant, business with pirates and a partnership with a Chinese businessman, Akew transformed herself from a marginalised Dan woman to a member of the Hong Kong elite.

⁸⁶ *Supplement to the Canton Register*, 10 March 1842.

Nor were the effects of the changes in South China in the mid-nineteenth century limited to pirates' business partners. The opening of the treaty ports to Western shipping displaced indigenous seafarers, increasing the pool of recruitment for pirates. The illicit opium trade and foreign trade in general made piracy more lucrative.⁸⁷ Women like Liu Laijiao capitalised on these opportunities to turn pirate for profit. Liu Laijiao became a successful pirate leader and proved enough of a threat to the Qing state that she was associated with the likes of Zhang Bao and Shap-ng-tsai. When she surrendered, she received a rank in the Qing military. Like Zheng Yi Sao, Liu Laijiao succeeded in using piracy to advance in Chinese society.

Mrs Bigfoot, Akew and Liu Laijiao were all Chinese women in the business of piracy. Through associations with pirates, they enriched themselves and engaged in entrepreneurial activity. Their examples reveal the opportunities piracy created for Chinese women in South China in the mid-nineteenth century. Through financial assistance and material support from pirates, Mrs Bigfoot sustained a livelihood as a marginalised twice-widowed woman. With wealth generated from business with pirates, Akew managed to advance in Hong Kong society. Liu Laijiao used piracy to gain a military rank in China. By enriching and advancing themselves through enterprise and piratical connections, such women succeeded in the business of piracy as daughters-in-law of Zheng Yi.

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⁸⁷ Murakami, 'Shijiu shiji', p. 134.

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CHAPTER 9

The Business of Self-Endowment: Women Merchants, Wealth and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Luanda

Vanessa S. Oliveira

Foreign observers who visited or settled on the western coast of Africa during the nineteenth century commonly described women as mere ‘beasts of burden’, whose work was limited to agriculture, household chores and child-rearing and who were excluded from the ownership of

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V. S. Oliveira (✉)
Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, ON, Canada
e-mail: v.oliveira@rmc-cmr.ca

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property.¹ While many indigenous women were agricultural and domestic workers, others peddled in the markets and streets and offered their services to the urban population as cooks, washers, water carriers and seamstresses.² Moreover, some women of mixed European and African origin became large-scale merchants, operating in both local and international markets.³ African and Eurafrikan women active in commerce along the western coast of Africa have been the subjects of a number of studies since the mid-1970s. In particular, historians have explored the involvement of women merchants known as *nbaras*, *sinares* and *senhoras* in trade in West African ports.⁴ In the case of Angola, a growing body of scholarship has highlighted the role of women merchants known as *donas*, as traders and

¹E. Frances White, *Sierra Leone's Settler Women Traders: Women on the Afro-European Frontier* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), p. 1; Josephine Beoku-Betts, 'Western Perceptions of African Women in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', in Andrea Cornwall (ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005): pp. 20–25, p. 22; Emily L. Osborn, *Our New Husbands Are Here: Households, Gender and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), pp. 164–166, 169.

²Vanessa S. Oliveira, 'Trabalho escravo e ocupações urbanas em Luanda na segunda metade do século XIX', in Selma Pantoja and Estevam C. Thompson (eds), *Em torno de Angola: narrativas, identidades e as conexões atlânticas* (São Paulo: Intermeios, 2014): pp. 249–275.

³Selma Pantoja, 'Women's Work in the Fairs and Markets of Luanda', in Clara Sarmiento (ed.), *Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): pp. 81–94; Carlos Alberto Lopes Cardoso, 'Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva, industrial angolana da segunda metade do século XIX', *Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal de Luanda* 32 (1972): pp. 5–14; Philip Havik, 'Women and Trade in the Guinea Bissau Region: The role of African and Luso-African Women in Trade Networks from the Early 16th to the Mid 19th Century', *Studia* 52 (1994): pp. 83–12; Mariana P. Candido, 'Engendering West Central African History: The Role of Urban Women in Benguela in the Nineteenth Century', *History in Africa* 42 (2015): pp. 7–36; Mariana P. Candido, 'Aguida Gonçalves da Silva, une dona à Benguela à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', *Brésil(s): Sciences humaines et sociales* 1 (2012): pp. 33–54; White, *Sierra Leone's Settler Women Traders*.

⁴White, *Sierra Leone's Settler Women Traders*; George Brooks, *Eurafrikan in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth Century to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Philip Havik, *Silences and Soundbites: The Gendered Dynamics of Trade and Brokerage in the Pre-Colonial Guinea Bissau Region* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2004); Pernille Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

cultural brokers in the socio-economic fabric of the colony.⁵ In nineteenth-century Luanda, the colonial capital of Angola, Luso-African women (of mixed Portuguese and African origin) often participated in commerce and married non-native men. Women living in the Portuguese enclaves drew upon the benefits of colonial laws that allowed them to amass wealth through inheritances from parents, husbands and close friends. Some were able to increase their fortunes through their participation in local and international trade. The most successful among these women merchants became known as *donas*, a term of respect that originated in the title granted to noble and royal women in the Iberian Peninsula and was subsequently adopted in the overseas territories. This chapter explores the strategies that merchant women of Luso-African origin used to protect their wealth upon marriage. These urban, literate and often wealthy women drew upon contracts of marriage and self-endowments to protect the assets they had accumulated before marrying men who sometimes had no attachment to the land.

THE COLONIAL CAPITAL

An estimated 12.5 million Africans forcibly crossed the Atlantic Ocean to work as enslaved labourers in the Americas during more than three centuries of slave trading. About 45 per cent of these captives had their origins in West-Central Africa. The Portuguese territory of Angola was the place of departure for approximately 2,069,650 enslaved Africans between 1801 and 1867 alone, with most of those who survived the middle passage, disembarking in Brazil and Cuba. Of this total, about 732,800 departed

⁵ Júlio de Castro Lopo, 'Uma rica dona de Luanda', *Portucale* 3 (1948): pp. 129–138; Cardoso, 'Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva'; Douglas L. Wheeler, 'An Angolan Woman of Means: D. Ana Joaquina dos Santos e Silva, Mid-Nineteenth Century Luso-African Merchant-Capitalist of Luanda', *Santa Bárbara Portuguese Studies* 3 (1996): pp. 284–97; Selma Pantoja, 'Women's Work in the Fairs and Markets of Luanda'; Selma Pantoja, 'Gênero e comércio: as traficantes de escravos na região de Angola', *Travessias* 4/5 (2004): pp. 79–97; Candido, 'Aguida Gonçalves da Silva'; Mariana Candido, 'Strategies for Social Mobility: Liaisons Between Foreign Men and Slave Women in Benguela, c. 1770–1850', in Gwyn Campbell and Elizabeth Elbourne (eds), *Sex, Power and Slavery: The Dynamics of Carnal Relations under Enslavement* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014): pp. 272–288; Vanessa S. Oliveira, 'Gender, Foodstuff Production and Trade in Late-Eighteenth Century Luanda', *African Economic History* 43 (2015): pp. 57–81; Vanessa S. Oliveira, 'The Gendered Dimension of Trade: Female Traders in Nineteenth Century Luanda', *Portuguese Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2015): pp. 93–121.

from Luanda, continuing a pattern that made the city the most important African slaving port in the period of the trans-atlantic slave trade.⁶

In 1836, Portugal banned the export of slaves from its African territories, and soon thereafter Portuguese and British anti-slave patrols began policing the coast of West-Central Africa in search of ships engaged in the illegal export of captives.⁷ Thenceforth, slavers based on Luanda transferred their activities to ports north and south of the colony, where supervision was weak.⁸ From hidden locations there, traders continued to export slaves to Brazil and Cuba. In 1850, the importation of slaves became illegal in Brazil. The loss of the Brazilian market disrupted the commercial economy throughout Angola, as the former Portuguese colony in the Americas had been the main destination of captives departing from the Angolan coast. Some slave traders faced bankruptcy, while others left Luanda for Brazil, Portugal and, to a lesser extent, New York.⁹ Those who stayed engaged in illegal slave trading and at the same time invested in the extraction of ivory and beeswax, as well as in the production of palm and groundnut oils, orchil-weed (a lichen-like dyestuff), coffee, cotton and, less significantly, sugar, to supply external markets in northern Europe and the United States.¹⁰

In 1850, Luanda had a population of 12,565 individuals. Administrative authorities classified these residents into three colour groups: 1240 *brancos* (whites), 2055 *pardos* (of mixed European and African descent) and

⁶David Eltis et al., 'Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database', online database, 2008, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/>

⁷Jill Dias, 'A sociedade colonial de Angola e o liberalismo português (c. 1820–1850)', in Miriam H. Pereira, et al. (eds), *O Liberalismo na Península Ibérica na primeira metade do século XIX: comunicações ao colóquio organizado pelo Centro de Estudos de História Contemporânea Portuguesa*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 1982), p. 280.

⁸Valentim Alexandre and Jill Dias, *O Império Africano 1825–1890* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1998), pp. 371, 373.

⁹According to Alexandre and Dias, *O Império Africano*, p. 370, traders started closing their businesses in Angola in the 1820s due to the uncertainty around the continuity of the slave trade.

¹⁰Aida Freudenthal, *Arimos e Fazendas: a Transição Agrária Em Angola, 1850–1880* (Luanda: Chá de Caxinde, 2005), p. 45; José de Almeida Santos, *Vinte anos decisivos da vida de uma cidade (1845–1864)* (Luanda: Câmara Municipal de Luanda, 1970), p. 16; Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 230–231.

9270 *pretos* (blacks).¹¹ As was the case in other Atlantic ports, Luanda's population was female-dominated, with free and enslaved women together accounting for about 57 per cent of inhabitants.¹² Black Africans, free and enslaved, comprised the majority, about 74 per cent of the population. A significant proportion of *pretos* were enslaved (5900), with women accounting for 63.5 per cent of the slaves in the city.¹³ The black population was mostly of Mbundu origin, coming from the area just inland from the city, although some among the enslaved came from a multitude of more distant locations.¹⁴ Colonial authorities and African elites not only produced captives through wars and raids to export across the Atlantic Ocean, but they also made use of enslaved labour locally in public works, households and agricultural land. Elite men and women held considerable numbers of slaves in nineteenth-century Luanda as well as free dependants of both sexes. During his visit to the Angolan capital in 1845, Portuguese Joaquim José Lopes de Lima observed that 'it is common to find ten, twelve, or twenty slaves at a bachelor's house who would find it difficult to employ two or three servants'.¹⁵ Enslaved men became artisans in craft workshops, worked for the *Departamento de Obras Públicas* (Department of Public Works) or as domestic servants in households. Enslaved women, in turn, were housekeepers, seamstresses, laundresses, water carriers and *quitandeiras*, as street vendors were known in Angola.¹⁶ The city also attracted free blacks seeking better opportunities in employment in trade and urban occupations. For instance, free wage labourers often came from the African-controlled port of Cabinda, north of the Congo River, to find employment as seamen in Luanda.¹⁷ Free black Africans who spoke Portuguese, professed Catholicism and lived in the colonial enclaves could be perceived as whites or mixed race.¹⁸

¹¹ José C. Curto, 'The Anatomy of a Demographic Explosion: Luanda, 1844–1850', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 32 (1999), p. 402.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See, for example, Arquivo Nacional de Angola (ANA), Luanda, Códice 2524, Registo de Escravos.

¹⁵ José J. Lopes de Lima, *Ensaio Sobre a Estatística das Possessões Portuguezas*. vols. III (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1846), p. 203.

¹⁶ Oliveira, 'Trabalho escravo', pp. 249–275.

¹⁷ Mariana P. Candido, 'Different Slave Journeys: Enslaved African Seamen on Board of Portuguese Ships, c. 1760–1820', *Slavery and Abolition* 31, no. 4 (2010): pp. 395–409.

¹⁸ Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 138.

In 1850, the 1240 white individuals—820 men and 420 women—living in the city represented about 10 per cent of Luanda’s population.¹⁹ The white men were mainly of Portuguese origin and came to Luanda to take up positions in administration and the military. Angola was a penal colony until the mid-twentieth century, receiving criminals of Portuguese, Brazilian and Neapolitan origin.²⁰ In the Portuguese colony, they found possibilities of enrichment as farmers, administrative personnel, military officers and merchants.²¹ In 1823, for example, Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu do Carpo arrived in Angola, sentenced to a period of exile of five years. Born on the Portuguese island of Madeira, Carpo faced exile after his involvement in the political movement that aimed to re-establish the constitutional government on the island.²² In Angola, Carpo became a successful merchant and occupied several military and administrative positions, including becoming president of the Municipal Council of Luanda and military commander of the interior districts of Bié, Bailundo, Huambo and Ambaca.²³ Luanda also attracted merchants in search of quick enrichment through the trade in captives and in tropical commodities. Some were the commission agents of trading firms established in Portugal and Brazil, while others started their own trading companies in Luanda, often in partnership with local merchants. Augusto Guedes Coutinho Garrido, born in Portugal, established one of Angola’s most profitable commercial firms, dealing in slaves with locally born merchant José Maria Matoso de Andrade Câmara.²⁴ Câmara came from a Portuguese family who arrived in

¹⁹ On controversies regarding the number of whites in Luanda in 1850, see José C. Curto, ‘Whitening the “White” Population: An Analysis of the 1850 Censuses of Luanda’, in Selma Pantoja and Estevam C. Thompson (eds), *Em torno de Angola: narrativas, identidades e as conexões atlânticas* (São Paulo: Intermeios, 2014): pp. 225–247.

²⁰ Selma Pantoja, ‘Inquisição, degredo, e mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII’, *Revista Lusófona de Ciência da Religião* 3, nos. 5/6 (2004): pp. 117–136; Anabela Cunha, ‘Degredo para Angola na Segunda Metade do Século XIX’ (MA thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2004); Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 8–9. Portugal abolished the practice of exile from its penal code in 1854.

²¹ Cunha, ‘Degredo para Angola’, p. 17.

²² Manuel da Costa Lobo Cardoso, *Subsídios para a história de Luanda* (Luanda: Edição do Autor, 1967), p. 180; Carlos Pacheco, *José da Silva Maia Ferreira: O homem e sua época* (Luanda: União dos Escritores Angolanos, 1990), p. 115.

²³ João Pedro Marques, ‘Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo: um percurso negreiro no século XIX’, *Análise Social* 36, no. 160 (2001), pp. 623, 636.

²⁴ W. Gervase Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire, 1825–1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 49.

Angola in the eighteenth century and became wealthy through the traffic in captives.²⁵ Petty traders also crossed the Atlantic in search of wealth. In 1819, Desidério José Marques da Rocha left from Pernambuco, in north-eastern Brazil, with gold and money he borrowed from his mother and brother-in-law, as well as two trunks of *chitas* (textiles) advanced on credit by a certain Pascoal José Flores. Rocha travelled to Luanda, where he planned to purchase slaves to sell in southeastern Brazil. However, he was unable to withstand the diseases of the land, dying in Angola.²⁶ The west coast of Africa was known as the ‘white man’s grave’ because of the high mortality rate among European males.²⁷ Those who survived, however, could lay the foundations of prosperous careers as traders.

White women, however, rarely settled in Angola before the latter part of the nineteenth century, with the exception of a few wives and daughters who accompanied men employed in the colony and *degradadas* (female exiles).²⁸ In an attempt to promote the establishment of whites in Angola, the Portuguese crown imported white prostitutes and orphans from Portugal and gave incentives to foreign men to marry locally.²⁹ In 1772, the former governor of Angola Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho advised his successor António de Lencastre to ‘favor the [Portuguese] newly married with white or almost white women, giving them all support you can’.³⁰ Relationships between non-native males and local women gave rise to the group categorised as *pardos*, who in 1850 numbered 2055,

²⁵ Carlos Alberto Lopes Cardoso, ‘Estudo Genealógico da Família Matozo de Andrade e Câmara’, *Ocidente* 403 (1971): pp. 311–322.

²⁶ Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Feitos Findos (FF), Juízo das Justificações Ultramarinas (JJU), África, mç. 29, n. 8.

²⁷ Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), p. 284.

²⁸ Selma Pantoja, ‘Três Leituras e Duas Cidades: Luanda e Rio de Janeiro nos Setecentos’, in Selma Pantoja and José Flávio Sombra Saraiva (eds), *Angola e Brasil nas Rotas do Atlântico Sul* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1999): pp. 99–126; Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Editorial Ática, 1937), p. 45; Candido, *An Atlantic Slaving Port*, p. 131.

²⁹ Twelve orphaned women arrived in Angola in 1593. Throughout the next centuries, Portuguese women immigrants continued to arrive in only small numbers. Charles R. Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny: Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415–1815: Some Facts, Fancies and Personalities* (London: Duckworth, 1975), pp. 16–17, 23–27; Pantoja, ‘Luanda: relações sociais e de gênero’, p. 76.

³⁰ Biblioteca Nacional de Lisbon (BNL), Códice 8744, Carta de Dom Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho para Dom António de Lencastre, 26 November 1772, fl. 303v.

about 16 per cent of the population.³¹ In 1852, Portuguese Francisco Travassos Valdez, a member of the Mixed Commission for the suppression of the slave trade at Luanda, advised that, '[I]n consequence of the paucity of white women, the Portuguese formed alliances with women of color and half-castes, to whom, and to their children, the offspring of such connections, they manifest great affection'.³²

Through formal and informal unions with African and Luso-African women, non-native males accessed established households that provided accommodation, food and medical care, as well as commercial networks that increased their participation in the local trade in slaves and tropical commodities.³³ By giving their daughters away in marriage to foreigners, local families—often engaged in trade—secured access to imported goods and an export market for African commodities, also enhancing their prestige. The local women who entered into these matrimonial arrangements became cultural brokers, acting as agents and translators. Furthermore, they could market locally the imported goods their husbands and partners supplied.

WOMEN OF MEANS

Some poor white immigrant men arrived in Angola between 1820 and 1850, fleeing the civil war involving constitutionalists and absolutists in Portugal.³⁴ With little or no capital, they hoped to build better lives in the overseas territories. Although most chose Brazil as their new home, some went to Portuguese Africa. Some white men arrived in Angola as administrative and military personnel, while others became shop- and tavern-keepers.³⁵ A common element in the trajectories of these men was the fact that they often married local women a few years after settling in the colony, thereby establishing Luso-African families.

The experiences of Luso-African women and women living in Mbundu communities beyond Portuguese control were quite different. The Mbundu were matrilineal, meaning that the transmission of the family's

³¹ Curto, 'The Anatomy of a Demographic Explosion', p. 402.

³² Francisco Travassos Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, vol. 2 (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1861), p. 171.

³³ Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*, p. 126.

³⁴ Douglas Wheeler, 'The Portuguese in Angola, 1836–1891: A Study in Expansion and Administration' (PhD diss., Boston University, 1963), pp. 6–8.

³⁵ Alexandre and Dias, *O Império Africano*, p. 440.

line and goods was through the female line. They practised polygamy, allowing men to have as many wives as they could afford.³⁶ Among the Mbundu, the marriage practice was known as *lambamento* and included the payment of 'bridewealth', which by the mid-nineteenth century was comparable to the value of a slave, or about 40,000 *réis*.³⁷ The husband divided his time among his wives, who could live in the same compound or separately.³⁸ Although the colonial state did not recognise these unions, some white Portuguese men married the daughters of African families *à moda do país*, in the style of the country.³⁹ Wives had access to collective land where they grew crops for subsistence and could market any excess production.⁴⁰ An unsatisfied husband could return his wife to her parents and request back the value or goods he paid for bridewealth.⁴¹ If a woman decided to leave her husband, she was reintegrated into her kinship group.⁴²

Women born into Luso-African families in the Portuguese enclaves were often classified as *brancas* (whites) or *pardas* (of mixed origin) and as Portuguese subjects.⁴³ They adopted Portuguese names, spoke Portuguese and Kimbundu, professed Christianity, dressed in European fashion and resided in *sobrados*, or houses with attic, following Portuguese architecture. European tutors taught them to play the piano, read, write and sew, and sometimes, they were instructed in other European languages, including French and Italian.⁴⁴ Unlike Mbundu women, Luso-African women were freed from the burden of household chores by their ownership of slaves, which enhanced their prestige. Jean Baptiste Douville, a French traveller visiting Angola between 1827 and 1829, noted that retinues of slaves followed their mistresses when they attended public functions, such as the Sunday mass. Enslaved men known as *maxilas* carried their mistress in

³⁶ António Gil, *Considerações sobre alguns pontos mais importantes da moral religiosa e sistema de jurisprudência dos pretos do continente da África Occidental portuguesa além do Equador, tendentes a dar alguma idea do character peculiar das suas instituições primitivas* (Lisbon: Typografia da Academia, 1854), p. 18.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–20.

³⁸ Carlos José Caldeira, *Apontamentos D'Uma Viagem de Lisbon à China e da China a Lisbon*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Typographia de Castro & Irmão, 1853), p. 224.

³⁹ Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, pp. 88–90.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Caldeira, *Apontamentos D'Uma Viagem*, p. 224.

⁴² Linda M. Heywood, *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 16.

⁴³ Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 292.

⁴⁴ Boletim Oficial de Angola (BOA), no. 308, 23 August 1851, p. 4.

a hammock while others followed. The French observer added that the first time he saw one of these retinues, he confused it with a procession.⁴⁵

The majority of couples in Luanda, irrespective of the individuals' skin colour and social status, engaged in common-law unions.⁴⁶ Only wealthy Luso-African families married their offspring in the Catholic Church, as a sign of their respectable standing in Portuguese culture.⁴⁷ Most Luso-African women in Luanda entered Catholic marriages arranged by their parents, preferably with men of Portuguese origin.⁴⁸ Foreign men stationed on the western coast of Africa often chose mixed-race women as brides, considering them more 'civilised' than indigenous women.⁴⁹ These mixed-race women were the daughters of well-established merchants who could give foreign men access to local markets and commercial networks. The strategic arrangement of marriages was a common practice in Europe as well, where wealthy and noble families found prominent spouses for their offspring who could expand their economic and social status.⁵⁰ In the nineteenth century, Luso-African women could draw on many generations of experience with Portuguese culture and interracial marriage with deep historical roots in Luanda and in the wider Atlantic community.⁵¹

The population of Luanda was subject to Portuguese law and norms, while the African communities established in areas out of colonial control followed customary law. Unlike other systems of law in Europe, the *Ordenações Filipinas*, the legal code used in Portugal and its colonies, granted women rights to family property as daughters and wives.⁵²

⁴⁵ Jean Baptiste Douville, *Voyage au Congo et dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique équinoxiale [...]* 1828, 1829, 1830, vol. 2 (Paris: J. Renouard, 1832), p. 53.

⁴⁶ José C. Curto, "'As If from a Free Womb": Baptismal Manumissions in the Conceição Parish, Luanda, 1778–1807', *Portuguese Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2002), p. 48.

⁴⁷ See marriage petitions in Bispo de Luanda (BL), Termos de Fiança 1837–1859.

⁴⁸ Vanessa S. Oliveira, 'Spouses and Commercial Partners: Immigrant Men and Locally Born Women in Luanda 1831–1859', in Mariana C. Candido and Adam Jones (eds), *African Women in the Atlantic World: Property, Vulnerability and Mobility, 1660–1880* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019): pp. 217–32.

⁴⁹ Beoku-Betts, 'Western Perceptions of African Women'.

⁵⁰ Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Lyceum Books, 1989), pp. 4–5.

⁵¹ Selma Pantoja, 'Redes e tramas no mundo da escravidão atlântica, na África Central Ocidental, século XVIII', *História Unisinos* 14, no. 3 (2010): pp. 237–242; Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade*; Havik, 'Women and Trade in the Guinea Bissau Region'.

⁵² *Ordenações Filipinas*, livro 4, títulos XLV, XLVI, XLVIII, XCIV, XCVI. <http://www1.ci.uc.pt/ihti/proj/filipinas/ordenacoes.htm> (accessed 17 November 2018).

The code recognised that wives owned half of a couple's estate held in a marriage. As for inheritance, daughters and sons were entitled to equal shares of their parents' assets.⁵³ Children of unmarried men or women were also entitled to inherit equal shares of their parents' property, even if one or both of the parents had subsequently married another partner and had further legitimate children. The offspring of adulterous relationships and of priests, however, did not enjoy such rights.⁵⁴

Some women also inherited property from close friends and relatives who had no direct heirs. For example, in July 1855, Dona Mariana Alves Branco left in her will a single-storey house to her aunt, Dona Mariana da Costa Barros, and her cousin, Dona Luísa Rosa Viana.⁵⁵ Similarly, when Dona Ana Francisca Ubertali de Miranda, a well-known merchant and slave trader in Luanda, died in 1848, she left her palace in the Bungo neighbourhood to Dona Ana Francisca de Oliveira e Cruz.⁵⁶ Dona Ana Ubertali did not have children of her own, but she did leave behind a husband, Lieutenant Colonel Luís António de Miranda.⁵⁷ Apparently, Dona Ana Ubertali was not related to Dona Ana Francisca de Oliveira e Cruz, who was the daughter of Manoel de Araújo e Cruz and Dona Francisca Evarista de Oliveira e Cruz. The couple may have chosen Dona Ana Ubertali to be their daughter's godmother, which would explain why the young woman inherited the house.⁵⁸

Luso-African women owned slaves and agricultural properties known as *arimos* along the Bengo, Dande and Kwanza rivers in the near interior, where they produced maize, beans and manioc flour for subsistence and to supply urban markets and ships anchored off the bay.⁵⁹ Some of these women also owned shops and warehouses in the city, offering local and

⁵³ For comparison of inheritance laws and the rights of women over property in other European societies, see Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁵⁴ J. Michael Francis (ed.), *Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History: A Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), p. 473.

⁵⁵ Arquivo Nacional de Angola (ANA), Escritura de Compra e Venda, Códice 7741, fl. 6v.

⁵⁶ ANA, Códice 5613, fl. 67.

⁵⁷ BOA, no. 145, 8 July 1848, p. 3.

⁵⁸ On the importance of godparents in Portugal and its overseas territories, see Moacir Rodrigo de Castro Maia, 'Tecer redes, proteger relações: portuguesas e africanas na vivência do compadrio (Minas Gerais, 1720–1750)', *Topoi* 11, no. 20 (2010): pp. 36–54.

⁵⁹ Pantoja, 'Donas de Arimos'; Oliveira, 'Gender, Foodstuff Production and Trade'.

imported items to the urban populations.⁶⁰ Few amassed enough capital to engage in the international trade in slaves and tropical commodities independently, although many women acted as intermediaries between coastal merchants and African suppliers inland.⁶¹ Dona Ifigênia Nogueira da Rocha, for example, was the largest supplier of beans to the Terreiro Público, the Luanda public market, in the early nineteenth century.⁶² She also exported captives to Brazil. In 1817, she exported 453 slaves to Bahia, in northeastern Brazil, on her ship *Nossa Senhora da Conceição e Senhor dos Passos*.⁶³ The widow Dona Maria da Conceição Monteiro owned a *sobrado* in Luanda that she leased to Dona Antónia da Fonseca Shut.⁶⁴ On the first floor of the *sobrado* was a warehouse, where Dona Antónia ran a store.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Dona Maria advanced money on interest to petty traders. In May 1865, she loaned 500,000 *réis* to António José Coelho Vilela Júnior.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, these propertied women attracted the attention of immigrant men eager to make a better life in the colony. Military and administrative personnel, penal exiles, traders and poor immigrants improved their chances of survival and success through marriage with Luso-African women who had mastered Portuguese culture and also had knowledge of indigenous languages, moving in both worlds.

SELF-ENDOWMENT: A FEMALE STRATEGY

The majority of couples who officially married in Portugal and its overseas territories did so under a *carta de ametade* (charter of halves) and became *meeiros*, or co-owners, of the family estate.⁶⁷ This arrangement became significant when marriages went wrong. Dona Josefa da Fonseca Negrão, born in Luanda, was the wife of the Portuguese Captain Eugênio Felipe Thomaz Massi. They had one daughter, Dona Clara Clementina Massi. In

⁶⁰ Biblioteca Municipal de Luanda (BML), Códice 42–43, Registros de Arrobamento de Gado.

⁶¹ Oliveira, 'The Gendered Dimension of Trade'.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁶³ Eltis et al., 'Voyages', Voyage ID 49000.

⁶⁴ ANA, Códice 3928, fl. 55.

⁶⁵ ANA, Luanda, Avulsos, Cx. 1192, Relação das Licenças do Primeiro Semestre de 1866.

⁶⁶ ANA, Escritura de Dívida e Hipoteca, Códice 3844, fl. 55.

⁶⁷ Alida C. Metcalf, 'Women and Means: Women and Family Property in Colonial Brazil', in Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva (ed.), *Families in the Expansion of Europe, 1500–1800* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), p. 173.

1849, Dona Josefa initiated divorce proceedings. Although she did not disclose the reason, the Catholic Church recognised a few instances in which divorce was acceptable, including physical abuse and adultery.⁶⁸ The couple had married through a *carta de ametade*, making husband and wife equal co-owners of the property they had accumulated. For two years, Dona Josefa and Captain Massi fought in court over the assets, as she accused him of selling items that belonged to the couple's estate before the finalising of the divorce.⁶⁹ Their quarrel became public in August 1849, when Dona Josefa published an announcement in the local gazette, the *Boletim Oficial de Angola*, to inform residents about the dispute and prevent her husband from selling other items.⁷⁰ On 22 May 1851, Captain Eugênio Massi agreed to give up his share of the couple's estate in favour of Dona Josefa and their only daughter, Dona Clara Clementina.⁷¹ Captain Massi was probably allowed to keep what he had already stolen, while Dona Josefa agreed not to sue him for it. She clearly had some knowledge of her rights as a wife and Portuguese subject. As a wealthy woman, Dona Josefa possessed the means to hire a lawyer to help her and her daughter secure ownership of whatever was left of the couple's estate. Luso-Africans capitalised on their familiarity with Portuguese culture and law codes, as well as their ties with Portuguese merchants, lawmakers and colonial officials. The elite of the colonial capital probably followed their divorce with interest, especially those single Luso-African women who were likely to become wives of foreign men like Captain Massi.

Although most couples married through the *carta de ametade*, Portuguese law also allowed the use of marriage contracts specifying other arrangements. Wealthy individuals were likely to opt for marriage by contract to guarantee their ownership of assets they had amassed while single. In these cases, the contract established the indivisibility of assets owned separately by the bride and the groom.⁷² Wealthy families in the Portuguese enclaves of Angola often provided daughters soon to be married in the

⁶⁸ Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Sistema de casamento no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1978), pp. 210–243; Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Vida privada e quotidiano no Brasil na época de D. Maria I e D. João VI* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1999), pp. 143–156; Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *História da Família no Brasil Colonial*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1998), pp. 246–269.

⁶⁹ BOA, no. 210, 6 October 1849, p. 2.

⁷⁰ BOA, no. 201, 4 August 1849, p. 4.

⁷¹ BOA, n. 298, 14 June 1851, p. 4.

⁷² Silva, *Sistema de casamento no Brasil*.

Catholic Church with dowries, common in Portugal and other European countries and subsequently transferred to colonial territories.⁷³ Dowries could include money, land, real estate, jewellery and slaves.⁷⁴ The donors were often the bride's parents, but other relatives and sometimes even close family friends could also make provisions for young women's dowries.⁷⁵ The dowry provided to the bride represented an advance payment of the inheritance, known as *legítima*, that she was expected to receive as a daughter after the death of her parents.⁷⁶ Sometimes parents gave daughters dowries that exceeded the bride's *legítima* in the hope of attracting a suitable son-in-law, preferably a white Portuguese man.⁷⁷ In some instances, orphaned and widowed women requested posts occupied by deceased fathers and husbands in the colonial administration as dowries. After marriage, husbands were then able to access an often well-paid and prestigious job, including the posts of inspector of municipal councils, registrar and custodian among others.⁷⁸

Some parents took the precaution of registering the *escritura de dote* (register of dowry) with a notary before their daughters exchanged matrimonial vows. Dona Angélica Joaquina dos Reis Façonny was the natural daughter of Domingos Façonny, a former exile of Neapolitan origin, and a free black woman named Joaquina Francisca.⁷⁹ In spite of having arrived

⁷³Inheritance laws regulated the practice throughout the Portuguese Empire. See Código Filipino, Livro 4, título XCVII. <http://www1.ci.uc.pt/ihti/proj/filipinas/ordenacoes.htm> (accessed 18 November 2018).

⁷⁴Jan Vansina, 'Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade c. 1760–1845', *Journal of African History* 46, no. 1 (2005), p. 9.

⁷⁵Debora Cristina Alves, 'Matrimônio e Dote: alicerces sociais de uma elite de Antigo Regime', *História Unicap* 3, no. 5 (2016): pp. 153–168.

⁷⁶Isabel Cristina dos Guimarães Sanches and Sá e Maria Eugénia Matos Fernandes, 'A mulher e a estruturação do património familiar', in *Atas do Colóquio A Mulher na Sociedade Portuguesa: Visão histórica e perspectivas atuais* (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1986): pp. 91–115; Rosenilson da Silva Santos, 'Casamento e dote: costumes entrelaçados na sociedade da Vila Nova do Príncipe (1759–1795)', *Veredas da História* 3, no. 2 (2010), p. 3; Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Cultura e Sociedade no Rio de Janeiro: 1808–1821* (São Paulo: Ed. Nacional; Brasília: INL, 1977), pp. 96–103; Silva, *Vida Privada e Quotidiano no Brasil*, pp. 47–61; Silva, *Sistema de Casamento*, pp. 98–101.

⁷⁷Alves, 'Matrimônio e Dote'.

⁷⁸Arlindo Manuel Caldeira, 'Mestiçagem, Estratégias de Casamento e Propriedade Feminina no Arquipélago de São Tomé e Príncipe nos Séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII', *Arquipélago* XI–XII, série 2 (2007–2008), p. 69.

⁷⁹Carlos Pacheco, 'A Origem Napolitana de Algumas Famílias Angolanas', *Anais U.E.* 5 (1995): pp. 200–201.

in the colony as an exile in the 1820s, Façonny prospered through his participation in local trade, which included supplying cattle to the Luanda slaughterhouse.⁸⁰ In 1860, he arranged the marriage of his sixteen-year-old daughter, Dona Angélica Façonny, to the thirty-eight-year-old Portuguese António Albuquerque. The considerable age difference was not unusual—wives were often much younger than their husbands. Before the wedding, Dona Angélica received a dowry from her father that included four slaves, a furnished house in Luanda and an agricultural property with cattle as well as 1,500,000 réis. Façonny was careful to register his daughter's dowry in the local notary's office, where her contract of marriage to António Albuquerque was also registered.⁸¹ The marriage contract stipulated that Dona Angélica was the sole owner of the assets received as part of her dowry.⁸² Façonny provided his daughter with properties and money that could secure her a comfortable life even if she ended up divorced. In the same year, Dona Amélia Augusto Franco married the Portuguese José Custódio de Carvalho Bastos. Dona Amélia received 12,000,000 réis in credit as dowry from her parents, Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Augusto Franco and Dona Henriqueta Emília Franco. Like Façonny, Dona Amélia's parents also registered her dowry, preventing it from becoming part of the couple's common assets.⁸³ The register of dowry and marriage contract put Dona Angélica and Dona Amélia in a very different position from that of Dona Josefa da Fonseca Negrão, forced to sue her former husband for selling property that belonged to the couple's estate before the final division that preceded their divorce.

Orphans, widows and merchant women, who enjoyed economic security from inheritances and their engagement in trade, were attractive partners for foreign men. These women accumulated land, slaves, real estate and money that could assist in their future husband's economic advancement. Some orphaned women seemed to have been aware of how instrumental their wealth could be to future husbands; therefore, in the absence of parents but probably with assistance from tutors and lawyers, they resorted to self-endowment. In this process, they turned the wealth they had accumulated through inheritances and entrepreneurial activities into a

⁸⁰ BML, Códice 052, fl. 56–58.

⁸¹ ANA, Códice 5614, Escritura de Dote e Casamento, 26 September 1860, fl. 76v. On Domingos Façonny, see Pacheco, 'A Origem Napolitana', p. 196.

⁸² ANA, Códice 5614, Escritura de Dote e Casamento, 26 September 1860, fl. 76v.

⁸³ ANA, Códice 5613, Escritura de Casamento, 3 September 1860, fl. 83.

dowry separate from the marital estate. This step was strategic: these wealthy women registered the indivisibility of the dowries in marriage contracts, thereby preventing their assets from becoming part of the couple's joint property. Although the practice of dowries was a common one, instances of women endowing themselves seem to have been rare elsewhere in the Portuguese empire.

Dona Josefa Jacinta de Sousa e Silva, born in Luanda on 5 August 1824, received the sacrament of baptism two years later in the Church of the Remédios as the natural daughter, born from unmarried parents, of Maria Ferreira Lemos and an unknown father.⁸⁴ On 5 July 1843, Coronel Francisco José de Sousa Lopes, from the Portuguese Island of São Miguel, made an addendum to the baptism register acknowledging his paternity.⁸⁵ Coronel Sousa Lopes was a member of the local militia and a prominent cattle owner, supplying beef to the Luanda slaughterhouse.⁸⁶ Dona Josefa's mixed heritage, as well as the economic prosperity of her father, turned her into a potential bride for well-positioned men in the colony. She was married first to António José de Sousa e Silva, a merchant from the interior outpost of Bié, a trade hub located in the south of the colony. The couple celebrated their marriage according to the Catholic rituals in the Church of Nazaré at an unknown date.⁸⁷ Her father died in December 1848 as a single man, leaving Dona Josefa as his only heir.⁸⁸ Her husband died a few years later in 1852, leaving a will in which he acknowledged debts to commercial firms established in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro, indicating that he likely traded illegally in slaves. He also nominated Dona Josefa as his universal heir.⁸⁹ The assets she inherited from her deceased father and then her husband included land, cattle, urban real estate and credit that made her a wealthy woman at 28 years old. Like her father and her husband, Dona Josefa also became a merchant, multiplying her fortune through the trade in foodstuffs.⁹⁰

In 1858, Dona Josefa entered a second marriage, with José Pacheco Ozório. The Luanda-born merchant was the founder and main partner in

⁸⁴ ANA, Luanda, Cx. 2737, Pac. 4, Registro de Batismo, fls. 16–16v.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, fl. 17.

⁸⁶ BML, Códice 042–043, Registo de Termos de Arrobamento do Gado que se Serve no Açougue desta Cidade, 1819–1820, fls. 5, 33v, 34v, 158v, 162v.

⁸⁷ ANA, Luanda, Cx. 2737, Pac. 4, Testamento, fls. 17–17v.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Registro de Obito, fls. 31v–32.

⁸⁹ ANA, Luanda, Cx. 2737, Pac. 4, Testamento, fls. 17–19.

⁹⁰ ANA, Códice 5614, fl. 59.

the commercial firm José Pacheco Ozório & Cia, exporting slaves to the Americas.⁹¹ Before the marriage, Dona Josefa took precautions to protect her wealth. On 24 August 1858, she received the local notary Daniel José da Silveira in her house to write her Register of Dowry. Through this document, she endowed herself with all properties she owned, including the house where she lived in Afonso V Square, four *arimos* in the interior, three *musseques* (country estates) in the rural suburb of Luanda, numerous pieces of furniture and jewellery in gold and precious stones, silver cutlery and utensils, a brass watch, a sewing box, a chinaware dinner set and two tea sets, slaves, 400 head of cattle and two ships, as well as any property she might acquire in the future with her own capital. Dona Josefa also mentioned that she was owed money by third parties to whom her first husband had advanced loans.⁹² The couple signed the marriage contract three days later, on 27 August 1858. The marriage contract established that each partner was to maintain separate control over the wealth each accumulated independently, whether before or after their marriage. Only assets acquired jointly would become part of the couple's estate. The conditions could be amended if the couple came to have offspring; in that situation, the death of a spouse would allow the survivor to keep half of the joint assets, while the other half was to be shared among their children.⁹³ In November of the same year, Ozório declared his company's bankruptcy, indicating that he was already facing economic hardship when he married Dona Josefa.⁹⁴ As a widow and orphan, the assets that Dona Josefa brought to her second marriage were clearly of significant value. By turning them into a dowry and opting for a marriage contract as opposed to a charter of halves, she was effectively protecting her wealth from being subject to *meação* (co-ownership) and therefore susceptible to her husband's bankruptcy, as well as from theft in case of a divorce. Dona Josefa died on 8 January 1861, leaving no will and no children. Her mother inherited the assets listed in the register of dowry and anything else Dona Josefa acquired alone after marriage.⁹⁵

The orphaned Dona Ana Joaquina do Amaral and Portuguese António Félix Machado had lived together in a common-law union for some time

⁹¹ BOA, no. 687, 27 November 1858, 10; Eltis et al., 'Voyages', Voyage ID 48698.

⁹² ANA, Códice 5613, Escritura de Casamento, Dote e Arrais, 24 August 1858, fl. 24v.

⁹³ ANA, Luanda, Cx. 2737, Pac. 4, Escritura de Contrato de Casamento, Dote e Arrais, 27 August 1858, fl. 47.

⁹⁴ BOA, no. 687, 27 November 1858, p. 10.

⁹⁵ ANA, Luanda, Cx. 2737, Pac. 4, Habilitação de Herdeiro, fls. 1–40v.

when they decided to formalise their marriage in 1859. The couple declared that three children had been born from their union: Pedro, Isabel and a newly born child still unbaptised.⁹⁶ Machado had arrived in Angola in the 1840s, becoming a tavern-keeper.⁹⁷ At that time, Dona Ana Joaquina was already a landowner and successful trader, supplying maize to the public market of Luanda.⁹⁸ During the 1840s and 1850s, Machado prospered rapidly, entering the list of main merchants based in Luanda.⁹⁹ He was also part of the group of traders who illegally exported captives to the Americas after 1836.¹⁰⁰ It is unlikely that Machado would have acquired the capital to enter the slave trade and become a prominent merchant solely through his activity as a tavern-keeper. He probably built his career with the financial support and commercial networks of his Luso-African wife. Although it is unclear when he entered into a common-law union with Dona Ana Joaquina, it is likely that she was instrumental in his economic advancement. When the couple decided in 1859 to make their union official, she called a notary to have her own register of dowry written up. In the document, Dona Ana Joaquina specified that she herself was a merchant, ‘trading with her capital and in her own name’. She then endowed herself with the capital of her business, evaluated at 10,000 *réis* in credit, and two houses in Luanda, which she declared to have acquired with her own resources.¹⁰¹ The self-endowment guaranteed Dona Ana Joaquina separate ownership of the assets she brought to the marriage, as well as those she had acquired herself during the period of her common-law union with Machado. As was her wish, husband and wife were to co-own only those assets they acquired after signing the contract of marriage in 1859.

Dona Ana Luísa Mangureira was the natural daughter of the Portuguese merchant José Vicente Mangureira and Dona Joana Luíza. Her father owned real estate and land and supplied maize to the Luanda public

⁹⁶ ANA, Códice 5613, Escritura de Dote e Casamento, 25 June 1859, fl. 60.

⁹⁷ BML, Códice 042–043, Termos de Correção, 30 December 1835, fl. 22.

⁹⁸ BML, Códice 55, vol. 2, fl. 199–200.

⁹⁹ *Lista Geral dos Officiaes e Empregados da Marinha e Ultramar* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1850), p. 128.

¹⁰⁰ Roquinaldo Ferreira, ‘Dos Sertões ao Atlântico: Tráfico Ilegal de Escravos e Comércio Lícito em Angola, 1830–1860’ (MA thesis, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1996), p. 97.

¹⁰¹ ANA, Códice 5613, Escritura de Dote e Casamento, 25 June 1859, fl. 60.

market.¹⁰² Dona Ana Luísa followed her father's example, becoming a trader in the foodstuff sector.¹⁰³ In September 1864, by then an orphan, she married Luanda-born João Florêncio Ferreira Annapaz.¹⁰⁴ Her husband, a widower and the father of two children from his first marriage, was an administrative official employed in the *Câmara Eclesiástica* (Ecclesiastical Chamber), where he held the position of registrar.¹⁰⁵ Before her marriage to Annapaz, Dona Ana Luísa endowed herself with assets owned and to be owned by her, which she did not list but probably included whatever she had inherited from her parents, as well as assets she acquired with her own resources as a merchant. As the notary stated in the document, it was her wish that 'neither her husband nor his children have rights to her dowry or the properties she may acquire after the marriage'.¹⁰⁶ Like Dona Josefa, Dona Ana Luísa chose to maintain the indivisibility of assets she acquired after the marriage as well. She probably anticipated that as a successful merchant she had more possibilities of enrichment than her husband did as an administrative official.

All of these cases involved orphaned merchant women of Luso-African origin, literate and resident in urban areas under Portuguese control. They had accumulated assets through inheritance and participation in trade and were careful to secure ownership of their wealth before marriage. Their literacy and wealth gave them advantages in Luanda's commercial environment, including a better understanding of the rights offered to wives and daughters by Portuguese legal codes. Other women were not so fortunate, either because they lacked connections with colonial agents, were enslaved, illiterate, or because they were too poor to afford the assistance of a lawyer.

CONCLUSION

As the capital of the Portuguese colony of Angola, Luanda attracted a significant contingent of foreign men who arrived as military and administrative personnel, penal exiles, merchants and explorers throughout the nineteenth century. Few white women, however, settled anywhere in

¹⁰² *Lista Geral dos Officiaes e Empregados da Marinha e Ultramar*, p. 129; BML, Códice 55, vol. 2, fls. 318–319.

¹⁰³ BML, Códice 55, vol. 2, fls. 326–327.

¹⁰⁴ ANA, Códice 3844, Escritura de Esponsais, Dote e Arrais, 30 September 1864, fl. 18.

¹⁰⁵ *Lista Geral dos Officiaes e Empregados da Marinha e Ultramar*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁶ ANA, Códice 3844, Escritura de Esponsais, Dote e Arrais, 30 September 1864, fl. 18.

Angola. The gender imbalance among the new arrivals facilitated formal and informal relationships between white immigrants and local women of African and Luso-African origin. Through these unions, non-native men accessed local markets and improved their life expectancy in a land known worldwide as the ‘white men’s grave’. While many did draw their last breath in Angola, those who survived could plant the seeds of a successful career in the trade in slaves and tropical commodities. Much of their success was contingent upon the Luso-African *donas* they married. Their local wives provided accommodation, healthcare and commercial connections that were crucial in advancing the careers of their husbands.

The Luso-African *donas* of Luanda were, for the most part, literate. Some women, through dowries and inheritances they had received from parents as well as through their own entrepreneurial skills, enjoyed a comfortable life. They engaged in local and international trade on their own or as commercial partners of their husbands and partners. These young women were surely aware of how instrumental their wealth could be in advancing the careers of non-native men intent on becoming wealthy quickly in the Portuguese overseas territories. Orphaned and widowed merchant women, especially, practised self-endowment by turning the assets they had amassed into a dowry before marrying. Through this strategy, they were able to secure their assets and prevent them from becoming part of the couple’s joint estate. These women merchants of Luso-African origin exploited the legal mechanism and cultural practice of dowries just as they had managed their inheritances and enterprises, making a business of self-endowment. Through this practice, they were able to protect their wealth from husbands who could become potential predators.

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CHAPTER 10

More Than Just Penny Capitalists: The Range of Female Entrepreneurship in Mid-Nineteenth-Century US Cities

Susan Ingalls Lewis

INTRODUCTION

Business historians are well aware that numerous (perhaps tens of thousands of) female microentrepreneurs operated on the margins of the mid-nineteenth-century marketplace in US cities; the press and public celebrate *any* nineteenth-century American woman who attained national

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S. I. Lewis (✉)

State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY, USA
e-mail: lewiss@newpaltz.edu

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prominence in *any* type of business endeavour.¹ Yet, the landscape between these two poles remains relatively unexplored, and little new research on US female entrepreneurship in the long nineteenth century has been published in the last decade.² However, despite the continued prevalence of ‘zombie theories’ based on the myth that ‘separate spheres’ and the ‘cult of domesticity’ blocked respectable women from engaging in trade, a wide range of businesswomen were active in cities and towns throughout the United States between 1840 and 1885.³ City directories, the federal

¹For recognition by business historians, see Rowena Olegario, *A Culture of Credit: Embedding Trust and Transparency in American Business* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 109–12, and Philip Scranton and Patrick Fridenson, *Reimagining Business History* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), pp. 80–81. Nineteenth-century US businesswomen represented as ‘exceptional’ in the press and online include steel-magnate Rebecca Lukens (1794–1854), Margaret Haughery, the Irish immigrant ‘bread woman of New Orleans’ (1813–1882), and herbal-medicine entrepreneur Lydia Pinkham (1819–1883). See Much, Marilyn, ‘America’s First Female Industrialist Rebecca Lukens was the Original Iron Lady’, *Investor’s Business Daily*, 31 August 2018, <https://www.investors.com/news/management/leaders-and-success/americas-first-female-industrialist-rebecca-lukens-was-the-original-iron-lady/>; Flynn, Sheila, ‘Meet the First Woman Troll Victim...’, *Daily Mail*, 11 June 2018, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5830249/One-Americas-successful-businesswomen-trolled-using-image-marketing-ads.html>; Haughery’s story has recently been complicated to include her support of white supremacist groups during Reconstruction. However, this challenge to her status as a benevolent philanthropist does not negate the fact that she was both successful and famous. James Karst, ‘Margaret Haughery: Friend of Orphans ... and of White Supremacist Militia’, *The Times-Picayune*, 25 March 2018, https://www.nola.com/entertainment_life/vintage/article_091cd9f2-4743-5eb7-94b7-20bd1055ac13.html. A typical representation of the ‘great women’ coverage of nineteenth-century female entrepreneurship in the United States would be Virginia G. Drachman, *Enterprising Women, 250 Years of Female Entrepreneurship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

²Wendy Gamber’s *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press) appeared in 1997; her *The Boardinghouse in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) was published in 2007; Angel Kwolek-Folland’s *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (NY: Twayne) in 1998; Mary Yeager’s edited collection *Women in Business* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar) in 1999; Edith Sparks’ *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) in 2010; my own *Unexceptional Women: Female Proprietors in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York, 1830–1885* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press) in 2009.

³The brilliant term ‘zombie theories’ (i.e. flawed theories that will not die) was used by historian Silvia Arrom during a panel where she was chairing, and I was commenting at the 2011 meeting of the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. Literature on the cult of domesticity and separate spheres in the mid-nineteenth century abounds, but from my own years in graduate school in the 1980s, the most memorable would be Nancy Cott’s *The*

manuscript census, credit reports and newspaper advertisements all preserve records of female entrepreneurship across the nation and throughout these decades. Pulling together research on over 30 communities from all regions of the United States except the west coast, this study focuses on women who were more—at times far more—than just penny capitalists.⁴

First, a word about sources and methods. My original research on one US city, Albany, New York (the capital of New York State), from 1830 to 1885, was based on records linkage between the credit records of R.G. Dun & Co., the federal census of 1880 and yearly city directories. R.G. Dun & Co. was a mercantile agency established in the 1840s in order to assist suppliers such as wholesale houses or jobbers in assessing the creditworthiness of potential customers in locations across the United States. The Dun credit ledgers are large, thick, heavy and unwieldy volumes containing credit reports for the entire United States, arranged geographically by county, with major cities meriting their own multivolume sets complete with indexes (e.g. Albany was covered by seven volumes plus an index). These original records are available only at the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School and have never been digitised, requiring researchers to transcribe directly from the handwritten ledgers on site. The ‘correspondents’ for this information network were local men, usually attorneys but also ‘sheriffs, merchants, postmasters and bank cashiers’, who submitted reports to the central office, where they were transcribed.⁵ Even very small businesses might be evaluated once or twice a year; large

Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere’ in New England, 1780–1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). Even historians of working women, like Alice Kessler-Harris, insisted that respectable women could not have run businesses (*Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁴R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School (HBS). The cities whose ledgers I have partially sampled include the following: Atlanta, Baltimore, Buffalo, Charleston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Davenport, Detroit, Dubuque, Galveston, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Mobile, Nantucket, Nashville, New Bedford, New Orleans, Newport, Pittsburgh, Portland (Maine), Providence, Richmond, Rochester, Savannah and St. Louis. The two cities for which I have transcribed all entries on women in business (under their own names or those of male relatives) are Albany, New York, and Memphis, Tennessee. I have also sampled entries from the R.G. Dun & Co. volumes on Nevada and the West (western territories not yet states).

⁵Olegario, *A Culture of Credit*, p. 49.

enterprises, and those in trouble, were reviewed quarterly, monthly or even daily. In some cases, the reports are extremely sketchy; in others, they include detailed passages about assets and liabilities.⁶

Using these reports, it is possible to identify the most prominent and successful businesswomen in each community by focusing on female entrepreneurs whose establishments were evaluated in positive terms, as worthy of credit. Although many businesswomen were judged ‘unworthy’ of buying goods on credit, especially beyond local suppliers, a significant number of individual women described in the credit records were praised as ‘good’ risks, ‘making money’ and ‘safe’ for all they would buy. Credit records reveal the active participants in, or managers of, any business. Many enterprises listed under male names in the city directories were actually run by their female relatives, according to credit entries.⁷ For example, William Metzler’s variety store in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was reported to be run by his wife Elizabeth in 1852: ‘His wife attends principally to the bus[iness]’ and again in 1854: ‘his wife keeps the store’.⁸ In addition, credit records identify many businesswomen whom one would miss in nineteenth-century US census records, where almost all married women (including Elizabeth Metzler) were listed as ‘keeping house’, despite the fact that they might have been operating large, successful businesses for decades.

Starting with the credit records enables us to identify the most prominent businesswomen in every city and learn something about their reputations within the local business community. Linking to other records enriches the stories we can tell.

⁶For my initial research in the 1990s and early 2000s, I depended on microfilm for the census records and worked with the original city directories. This type of research would clearly be impossible for a nation-wide project. However, today one can employ ancestry.com to search for throughout the United States in all of the decennial federal censuses, and this genealogical database has recently added many city directories, newspapers and some legal records as well. Therefore, a nation-wide project has become quite feasible.

⁷Conversely, some listed in women’s names were actually managed by their male relatives.

⁸Wisconsin, 36:56, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School (HBS).

PENNY CAPITALISTS

My research examining the R.G. Dun & Co. credit ledgers for over 30 US cities certainly confirms that penny capitalists did abound among mid-nineteenth-century businesswomen.⁹ I define ‘penny capitalists’ as women whose enterprises were estimated to be worth little (say US\$50–300)¹⁰ and/or whose personal worth was estimated at ‘00’ (nothing) in either the credit records or the census.

The credit reports present a depressingly constant list of such women-owned and/or run businesses. Ledgers for every city report enterprises ranging from minuscule to modest. In Savannah, Georgia, for example, the grocery run by Mrs John Schroeder was described as ‘Worth 00 doing quite a small business scarcely making a living’ in 1874.¹¹ Thousands of such female proprietors flit in and out of the historical record without leaving much trace, reflecting what seem to have been very marginal business careers. Credit entries from 1874 to 1875 for Mrs Mary Ayer, a Cincinnati, Ohio, dealer in fancy goods and notions,¹² for example, note that the business is small, its worth about \$150–200, and that Ayer ‘barely manages to pay expenses & make a living’.¹³ By 1875, she was said to be ‘Out of bus’.¹⁴

As I have argued in previous papers, however, such businesses, where women were described as ‘barely making a living’, should not be dismissed

⁹ My method of sampling was not designed to create a scientific statistical sample but to explore credit ledgers for different communities by scanning pages from various volumes for selected locations and/or using the indexes for larger cities to attempt to identify female names and looking those up.

¹⁰ All the currencies in this chapter refer to US dollars.

¹¹ Georgia, 29:468, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

¹² Fancy goods included everything from trimmings to perfume to decorative boxes and albums; notions included sewing items like buttons and thread, but there was an overlap between these categories—indeed, there were numerous overlaps between stores advertised as millinery goods, fancy goods, notions, dry goods and ladies’ furnishing goods.

¹³ In today’s dollars, her estimated worth would equal at least \$3500–4500; every dollar amount in this chapter should be multiplied by at least 23, and as much as hundred, depending on how one calculates the difference. Using inflation calculators easily available on the Internet (www.in2013dollars.com, or <https://www.officialdata.org>), I would approximate a larger sum; in an era where women often made \$3 a week, compared to a US minimum wage of \$290 for a 40-hour week today, one could simply multiply by hundred. According to that calculation, a penny capitalist like Ayer would be worth \$15,000–20,000 in today’s dollars.

¹⁴ Ohio, 85:201, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

as unimportant.¹⁵ Whether short or long-lived, microenterprises provided support for women—and often their dependent families—for years, even decades. At the same time, they supplied poor and working-class customers with the necessities of life—food, drink, clothing and shelter. As part of the local business community, they were the final links in the chain that connected international, national and regional producers to local suppliers and finally the tiny shops or stalls where they sold to their neighbours.

Some of these tiny businesses managed to hang on for a significant number of years, especially compared to the average length of any small mid-nineteenth-century business, which has been estimated at approximately five years.¹⁶ For instance, Mrs Mary Dickerson, an African-American dressmaker (described as ‘mulatto’ in the census and ‘a respected colored lady’ in the credit records), remained in business in Newport, Rhode Island, for at least ten years, from 1874 to 1885. Married to a sexton who, according to the credit reports, ‘acts as a waiter at parties & gets up dinners’, Mary was listed as a dressmaker in the Newport Directory, while her husband Silas was listed as a caterer. The couple were said to be worth ‘maybe a few hundred dollars’.¹⁷ Their joint story illustrates how working-class couples could use small businesses much like wage work to help support their families.

Records linkage provides fuller histories for businesswomen who appear only briefly in the credit records and complicates the stories of petty proprietors like fancy goods dealer Mary Ayer of Cincinnati, described previously. Although the credit entries cover only two years, city directories listed Ayer’s business for seven years, from 1868 to 1875. According to the 1870 census, Ayer (who had been born in Ireland) was a 29-year-old single mother (probably widowed), living with a nine-year-old daughter

¹⁵ Susan Ingalls Lewis, ‘Agents, Victims, or Survivors? Female Microentrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century United States Cities’, panel on ‘New Directions in Gendering Business History’, Business History Conference Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, March 2016; Lewis, ‘“About Making a Living”: Immigrant Women in Nineteenth-Century United States Cities’, panel on ‘Immigrant Women at the Edge of the Marketplace’, American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York, New York, January 2015; ‘“Plodding Along as Usual”: Microentrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century America’, Joint Annual Meeting, Business History Conference and the European Business History Association, Milan, Italy, 2009.

¹⁶ See Mansel G. Blackford, *A History of Small Business in America* (NY: Twayne, 1991), p. 124; and ‘Small Business in America: A Historiographic Survey’, *Business History Review* 65, no. 1 (Spring 1991): pp. 1–26, p. 25.

¹⁷ Rhode Island, 3:179, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

and a teenage domestic servant; Ayer's personal worth was estimated at \$200.¹⁸ Her business was small but not particularly short-lived in comparison to other mid-nineteenth-century enterprises run by either men or women. In addition, when Ayer finally went 'out of business' she was not described as failing or going bankrupt. We cannot know why she decided to close her shop—did she move? Die? Fall sick? Marry? Find a salaried position in someone else's store? The assumption that her business closed because it was unsuccessful may be too simplistic.

Although they were most common, enterprises like groceries, confectioneries, saloons, millinery, fancy goods and notions shops were not the only businesses open to women with a very small amount of capital. When Miss Mary Walker of Mobile, Alabama, became a dealer in newspapers and books in the mid-1870s, her credit report read: 'has a sm[all] shop with a few cheap books & papers and some little stationery in it has about 1 or 200c\$'.¹⁹ Marion Perry had even fewer resources as a dyer in Buffalo, New York. The original proprietor of the business, her husband James, was listed with \$300 of personal property in the 1860 census, but he 'ran away' in 1868 'leaving his family without any means'. According to the credit reports, Marion was 'ab[ou]t making a living for herself & family'. Her lack of means is reflected in the 1870 census, which lists her as having no real or personal estate. 'Respect[able] woman but very poor worthy but too weak for cred[it]' concluded the credit entry. Indeed, the family's business profits had to be supplemented by wages from three daughters: the eldest worked in a straw hat factory, while two teenagers were clerks in stores. The 12-year-old son was listed without occupation, but since he later became a dyer himself, it seems likely that he was already working in the family business since he was no longer in school.²⁰

Finally, such examples from the credit ledgers were not the very smallest of the microenterprises in which nineteenth-century women were engaged. Simply being recognised in the credit reports probably meant

¹⁸ Federal Census 1870: *Cincinnati Ward 8, Hamilton, Ohio*, Roll M593_1211, p. 103A, Family History Library Film no. 552710, U.S. Federal Census Collection, ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com.au/search/categories/usfedcen/> (hereafter Federal Census).

¹⁹ c = 100 in R.G. Dun & Co. shorthand; Alabama 17:145, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

²⁰ Mrs James Perry was identified as Mary in the credit records, but Marion or Marianne in the census. New York 80:21, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS. Federal Census 1860: *Buffalo Ward 10, Erie, New York*, Roll M653_748, p. 837, Family History Library Film no. 803748; Federal Census 1870: *Buffalo Ward 4, Erie, New York*, Roll M593_933, p. 395A, Family History Library Film no. 552432.

that a businesswoman was slightly more than a penny capitalist. Many women listed as proprietors in city directories or the census never appeared in credit reports. A tiny shop or stand that neither requested nor required credit might not have been worth an examiner's time. In fact, all the examples provided so far exceed the resources of, say, a self-employed female peddler or laundress or woman who took in one or two boarders.

MAKING A LIVING

Variations in the descriptive phrase 'about making a living' are ubiquitous in the comments of R.G. Dun & Co. credit reporters for businesswomen in all regions of the United States from the 1840s through the 1880s. In many cases, however, this meant working with assets beyond pennies—indeed, beyond a few hundred dollars. Numerous businesses owned by women were worth between \$500 and \$5000, and numerous businesswomen were estimated to be worth approximately that much in terms of their stock, personal property and/or real estate. For example, Mrs J.W. Baldwin of Galveston, Texas, ran a small hotel or boarding house in the mid-1870s. She was said to be 'hardworking' and making a living; her total estimated worth was between \$4000 and \$5000, but as a 'slow pay' Baldwin was not recommended for 'much credit'.²¹ On Nantucket Island, in Massachusetts, proprietor Sophia Ray was reported as 'making a living only' at her fancy goods or variety business in the late 1870s; her husband George C. had been 'a long time an invalid'. Ray's worth was estimated at \$1000–2000 in the credit records, though her husband's real estate and personal property added up to only \$650 in the federal census of 1870. But Sophia Ray and her family managed to survive for decades on the income from their small business—she was over 70 when she finally sold out in 1879, having brought four children up to adulthood.²² In the 1870s in Providence, Rhode Island, Miss M.J. Gannon was reported to be making a living through her small ladies' furnishing goods shop, selling goods such as lace, ribbons, flowers and other trimmings, handkerchiefs, hosiery, hats, gloves and underwear. Gannon shared her business premises

²¹ Texas, 13:44, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

²² Massachusetts, 20:455, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS; Sophia Ray's children were born between 1834 and 1842, when she was aged 26–34. Federal Census 1850, Nantucket, Mass, Roll *M432_328*, p. 302A, Image: 24; *Federal Census 1860, Nantucket, Mass*, Roll: M653_513, p. 761, Family History Library Film no. 803513; Federal Census 1870, Nantucket, Mass, Roll *M593_634*, p. 6B, Family History Library Film no. 552133.

with her brother's boot and shoe stop and managed both while he travelled with the circus every summer.²³ City directories show her in the same trade from 1874 to 1907.²⁴

Numerous milliners and millinery dealers across the country were said to be 'making a living' or some variation thereof. In Albany, New York, businesswomen described in similar terms (i.e. able to support themselves through their enterprises) included not only milliners and dressmakers but also bakers, confectioners, grocers, saloon keepers and dealers in fancy goods, dry goods, ladies' and gentlemen's furnishing goods, notions and variety goods. Others sold wares as varied as liquor, tea, drugs, toys, cigars and tobacco, books, shoes, hair and hair goods, jewellery, crockery and pianos. One widow, Abbie Lynch, even supported herself and her family as an undertaker.²⁵

MAKING MONEY

But what of businesswomen who were more than just 'penny capitalists' or 'plodding along', women who merited positive credit ratings? Many such women also appear in the credit reports, described as 'making money'—that is, moving beyond mere survival to generating a profit. In the R.G. Dun & Co. credit reports, 'making money' was high praise not limited to male-run businesses. To create a profit, not just to survive and pay one's bills, was understood to be the ultimate purpose of any enterprise. Creating a profit meant that goods sold on credit would be paid for, and that the entrepreneur, female or male, would be likely to order more.

Credit reporters used a variety of positive terms to describe profitable businesses, and they liberally applied such terms to women as well as men. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, for example, Anna M. Whiting dealt in small wares and dry goods from 1865 to 1872, before and after her marriage to one Josiah Hunt. According to the credit reports, Anna was 'smart & doing a g[ood]d bus[iness]' in which she 'makes money out of the sailors'.²⁶ According to census records, Anna's father had been a butcher

²³ Rhode Island, 11:299, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

²⁴ US City Directories, 1822–1995, ancestry.com. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/usdirectories/>

²⁵ New York, 8:344 L, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

²⁶ Massachusetts, 17:17, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS; Federal Manuscript Census 1860; *New Bedford Ward 5, Bristol, Massachusetts*, Roll M653_490, p. 707, Family History Library Film no. 803490; Federal Manuscript Census 1870; *New*

and she a milliner in 1860, but by 1865, Anna was 30 years old and living alone with her 70-year-old widowed mother. The following year she married Hunt, a ‘mechanic’ who had previously shipped out on a whaling voyage as a sailor, and about whom the credit reporters were less than complimentary.

Having previously described Anna as ‘smart’ and ‘an attent[ive] hard working woman’, they characterised her husband as ‘not a v[er]y smart man’, though the business was ‘now done in his name’, and his name alone was listed under Fancy Goods in the 1869 city directory.²⁷ By 1871, the couple were said to be doing a ‘Sm[all] snug bus[iness] & making more than a living’; in 1872, their estimated worth was \$3000–4000. Interestingly, in the census of 1880, Josiah is listed as a ‘merchant’ but so is Anna. However, above the word merchant, the words ‘keeping house’ have been added.

In Detroit, Michigan, Mrs Sarah J. Allen built up quite a nest egg selling hair goods in the 1870s and 1880s.²⁸ At first, the credit reporters were somewhat suspicious—she was doing a good trade, but they worried that ‘her expenses are also large’, and she and her husband (who was said the ‘assist her’ rather than vice versa) were ‘expensive in their style of living’. By 1881, however, she was referred to as an ‘Hon[est] active money m[a]k[in]g bus[iness] woman’; by 1882, she was said to be worth \$20,000 and described as a ‘smart active bus[iness] woman’ who ‘has been successful’. The following year, her business worth was estimated at \$30,000. The apparently extravagant Allens, then in their late thirties, were also the parents of two children, aged 14 and 10, and shared their home with one live-in servant and one boarder who was also a clerk at their store. As late as 1900, both Richard and Sarah were listed in the census as ‘hairdressers’ who owned their own home, unmortgaged, and whose grown son worked as a clerk in their business. In the census of 1910—that is, 40 years after she appeared in the credit records—Sarah was still listed as running a hair store and as an employer.

Widows as well as wives could earn accolades from the credit reporters. From 1849, confectioner George Gregg had been praised as a ‘very clever

Bedford Ward 5, Bristol, Massachusetts, Roll M593_605, p. 205B, Family History Library Film no. 552104; Federal Manuscript Census 1880; *New Bedford, Bristol, Massachusetts*, Roll 525, p. 223B, Enumeration District 115.

²⁷ Massachusetts, 17:17, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

²⁸ Hair Goods included hairpieces and wigs, plus hair jewellery.

Scotchman', in Nashville, Tennessee, with mention of his wife beginning in the 1850s. According to the credit reports, their business was in 'high feather with the elite for Ballparties & c'. In 1858, Gregg was described as being in 'bus[iness] 8 to 12 y[ear]s char[acter] & capac[ity] g[ood] & that of his wife better, they keep a first class estab[lishment]!' His death sometime before 1865 did not affect their ratings. Dorothy Gregg continued on, advertising in city directories as 'Grieg Mrs G', and the credit reports noted the business was 'd[oin]g well. I suppose she makes more money than she ever did' dealing in 'Confectionery, teas, cheese & c.'. By 1874, the year of her death at age 57, the credit examiners concluded that she 'Has establ[ished] a splendid bus[iness]. Bus[iness] now done by her son-in-law. She stands well in the Bank worth 10 to 12m'.²⁹

In some cases, 'making money' came at the end of a long period of gradual growth. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1848, widowed Charlotte Blume carried on the music business (selling pianos and organs) previously established under the proprietorship of her husband. His enterprise had been described as 'small', hers was called 'mod' (moderate) in 1850. By 1857, she carried a stock worth \$8000–10,000, though her means were still described as 'not large'. In 1864, despite a fire, Blume was estimated to be worth \$10,000–15,000; the credit entry of 1867 (almost 20 years after she had taken over) finally stated that she 'makes money' and put her worth at \$30,000. When the credit entries ended in 1873, she was said to be worth \$30,000–40,000.³⁰

BEST IN HER LINE

In many communities, particular businesswomen would be described as 'the best' in their 'line'—usually millinery or fancy goods (since these were lines where women either dominated or represented a substantial percentage of proprietors). Even milliners, ubiquitous among penny capitalists, could be among the most successful businesswomen in a community. For example, in Portland, Maine, milliner Mary Jane Nicols was called 'one of our best bus[iness] women' in 1861. Operating for at least 15 years (credit reports span 1856–1871, when she left business at the age of 57), Nicols was called 'first rate' and had amassed property estimated at

²⁹ Tennessee, 6:93, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁰ Pennsylvania, 5:53, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

\$35,000.³¹ The final entry under her name advised ‘Sell her all she will buy’.

In Charleston, South Carolina, milliner and fancy good dealer Mrs A.G. Parker was said to be ‘doing a good bus[iness]’ beginning with a credit entry in 1846. The federal census of 1850 shows the 38-year-old German immigrant as a milliner head of household, living with *eleven* other milliners (born in Germany, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) including her daughter. In the mid-1850s, excerpts from her credit reports read as follows:

1853: On the 1st of Aug[us]t last she had 10m\$ w. of g[oo]ds in her store, all paid for, during the past year, she bo[ough]t about 20m\$ w. of goods in NY paid for them. One house here sell her 5m\$ w. on cr[edit] at a time & she always pays promptly – she does a very g[oo]d bus[iness] ... w[orth] in all 14m to 15m\$. owns R[eal] E[state]³²

...

6/19/55: Does the leading Fancy DG bus[iness] ...

1/30/56: Has a large store in King St. ... the leading bus in that line – gets high prices & d[oin]g her usual thriving bus[iness].³³

Even in the sparsely settled western territories, with few businesswomen, select milliners were identified as ‘best’ in their line, for example Mrs A.C. Moore of Cheyenne and Fort Laramie, Wyoming, (‘Does the largest bus[iness] in her line in the place’) in 1869, and Mrs C.A. Wright of Laramie City the same year (‘Has always done the first bus[iness] in town’).³⁴ Clearly, despite the reputation of millinery businesses as undercapitalised and prone to failure, many communities in the mid-nineteenth-century United States supported millinery and fancy goods dealers whose worth was estimated from the thousands to the tens of thousands of dollars.

³¹ It is difficult to determine how much of Nichols personal property and real estate (listing the 1870 federal manuscript census as \$15,000 and \$20,000, respectively) were inherited, and how much had been generated by her business, but her husband’s personal estate was estimated as only \$800 in the 1860 census. According to the credit records, she had inherited property from her mother and was known to have government bonds.

³² *m* = 1000 in R.G. Dun & Co. shorthand.

³³ South Carolina, 6:47, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁴ Moore in West, 2:16, Wright in West 2:106, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

CAPITALISTS

A few female entrepreneurs were even described as ‘capitalists’ by the credit reporters. For example, Mrs Margaret Oerl of Cleveland remained in the wallpaper business after having been widowed (and left ‘comfortably off’) in 1878. According to the credit reports of that year: ‘She now has his p[ro]p[er]ty entirely under her control & unless she should marry again will have the disposal of it. She owns RE’. (Her real estate was valued at over \$30,000, ‘encumbered’ for only \$4500.) ‘She has fair stock & will continue the bus under the old style until her son becomes of age’. Four years later, she was said to be ‘adding to her means’ and ‘entitled to credit’. Even after changing the legal name of the business, she was identified as ‘the cap[ita][i]st & respons[ible] party of this concern’.³⁵ Though she eventually sold her interest to her son and a new partner (when she had reached her late fifties, and he was a mature 26), Margaret Oerl had been the sole capitalist for more than five years. Further research linkage shows that her husband John had been worth only \$200 in 1860; however, by 1892, Margaret appeared on a map of Cleveland as the owner of a major parcel of land located near Standard Oil.³⁶

Another ‘capitalist’ was German-born Agnes Braumiller of Atlanta. She and her husband were engaged in the fancy and variety goods business before and after the Civil War, though credit records noted that ‘she attended mostly to it’. In 1868, the reports stated that ‘her husband is dead but this will make no difference to her bus[iness] or reliability’. Braumiller then married one W.H. Turner but kept the business in her own name.

By 1873, she was said to be doing ‘the leading bus in a fashionable line ... Est[imated] Wor[th] 25 to 30m\$’. By 1874, she was doing \$15,000–20,000 in sales per year. That same year she funded her son Otto’s business in sheet music and instruments. Otto Braumiller, aged 22, was reported to have ‘good character’ with ‘no personal means’, though it was noted that he was ‘the only child & heir to her p[ro]p[er]ty’. Agnes Braumiller Turner continued to merit praise as being ‘industrious, energetic & economical’ and having ‘made money’. Though at this time credit records stated that the millinery enterprise was conducted by her second

³⁵ Ohio, 40:319, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁶ Geo. F. Cram & Co., Part 26, City of Cleveland map, 1892, Collection Number G&M_29, Roll Number 29, U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860–1918, ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/landownershippatlas/>

husband, and the music business by her son: 'Neither of the men possess any means, but stand well as to char hab[it]s & c. Mrs. T owns solid RE & is the capitalist of the house. The firm is EW [estimated worth] from 30 to 40m\$'. In the 1880 census, Agnes Turner was listed, along with her husband, as a notions dealer, while her son Otto was identified as married music dealer (despite the fact that credit records had said his business had been 'closed by the sheriff' in 1878).³⁷

In her obituary of 1917, after having been fatally injured by a heavy truck, her accidental death was described as 'a source of regret to countless friends in Atlanta who have known and admired this splendid type of woman for more than 60 years. Mrs. Turner was one of the Atlanta's pioneer women, who was a constructive influence in the city's earlier days'. Her obituary concluded that her son Otto had become 'a prominent New York manufacturer'. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, 'She was possessed of a marked intellect, and though 87 years of age, she was as bright mentally as a woman of youth, and her strong character and personality were expressed in a keen insight into the dominant interests of the world of today, and in the welfare of her friends, old and new'.³⁸ Clearly, Agnes Braumiller Turner was not only a successful businesswoman but a well-known local character.

Though not necessarily identified as 'capitalists' in the credit reports, multiple female entrepreneurs like Turner not only made money for themselves but employed family members, left thriving businesses to their children or even established those children (usually sons) in their own enterprises. In Baltimore, Maryland, Ann Sisco Jamison operated a trimmings and regalia business for approximately 30 years, from about 1835 to her death in 1863, initially in conjunction with her first husband, then as a widow and finally as the remarried Mrs Thomas W. Jamison.

'Mrs Sisco', as the credit examiners continued to call her and in whose name the business continued to be carried out, was praised as a 'very Indus[trious] & worthy woman' in 1860. These terms are rather standard and were also applied to women deemed unworthy of credit or only worth a small amount. However, reading the credit reports, one sees that although Ann Sisco's first husband 'was a rather hard case', they had made \$8000–10,000. According to the credit examiners, her second husband

³⁷ Georgia, 14:176, 408, 434, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁸ 'Many Friends Regret Death of Mrs Turner, Pioneer Atlanta Woman', *Atlanta Constitution* 5 August 1917, p. 9.

Jamison was a worthless man who squandered her money on his own debts. Mrs Sisco, on the other hand, was described as a ‘Woman who would do well if she had no drawback’ (i.e. her husband). In 1859, the R.G. Dun stated: ‘She is clever Indus[trious] woman struggling along & manages to pay such debts as she has been able to make to carry on the bus. Her husband spends all the money he can get’.³⁹ However, the federal census of 1860 reported his personal estate as \$4000 and her real estate at \$25,000.⁴⁰ When Ann died at the age of 48, the business was continued as ‘Sisco Brothers’ by the sons of her first marriage—Charles, John and William.

In fact, Ann Sisco Jamison had given birth to seven children while in business—five by her first husband and two fathered by Jamison. In 1870, her eldest son Charles was listed in the census as ‘Keeps trimming store’ and in 1880 as ‘regalia store’, a business still listed in the Baltimore City Directory in 1883.⁴¹

Mothers could also lose quite a bit of capital in their sons’ businesses. Millinery and Fancy Goods dealer, Madame E. Bourlier, of Louisville, Kentucky, started her business as a married woman—but one with a weak husband. In 1851, the credit report stated he ‘Is of but little wor[th] himself but his wife is clever & keeps things straight’; in 1858, it was said that Calix ‘Drinks too much & gives but little attent[ion] to the bus[iness] but his wife conducts the bus[iness] & controls him. She is d[oin]g a g[ood] bus[iness]’. After his death in 1860, when his estate consisted of \$100 worth of real estate and \$5000 worth of stock, she carried on. Despite the intervening Civil War (where Kentucky was a border state), her business was described as ‘good’, with her worth estimated at \$8000–10,000 in 1867, and up to \$30,000 in 1871. In 1872, however, the credit report noted: ‘We hear that she has been in the habit for several yrs. of endorsing for her sons “J. Bourlier & Bro.” who do not manage well & hear this may affect her ultimately’. Her sons were running a galvanised iron works under the name of ‘Al Bourlier & Bro.’. By 1875, Bourlier had lost money

³⁹ Maryland, 7:173, 175, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

⁴⁰ Federal Census 1860: *Baltimore Ward 9, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*, Roll M653_462, p. 48; Family History Library Film no. 803462.

⁴¹ Charles Sisco in Federal Census 1870: *Baltimore Ward 11, Baltimore, Maryland*, Roll M593_576, p. 46B, Family History Library Film: 552075; Charles Sisco in Federal Census 1880: *District 9, Baltimore, Maryland*; Roll 496, p. 168B, Enumeration District 243; 1883 Baltimore City Directory, Ancestry.com. *United States City Directories, 1822–1995* [database online].

paying her sons' debts (on several occasions) and 'she now owns their Iron bus wh[ich] they run as her ag[en]ts prob[ably] worth 20m\$ [\$20,000 in R.G. Dun's code] mostly in RE [real estate]'. When the entries on her business enterprises ended in 1877, there had been a judgement against her and the R.G. Dun examiners noted again 'she has lost considerable by her sons', but was still 'good for contracts'.⁴² When she died in 1886, a newspaper as far away as Dayton, Ohio, noted her passing as 'the venerable Mrs. Elizabeth Bourlier of Louisville, mother of Al and Emile'; a few months earlier, the *New York Times* had reported that Emile Bourlier of Louisville, proprietor of the Jockey Club Pool Rooms, had recently acquired the Turf Exchange Pool Rooms as well.⁴³

Finally, a few women capitalists controlled surprisingly substantial amounts of money and property. In St. Louis, Missouri, widow Walburga Uhrig inherited a share of her husband Joseph's prosperous brewery in 1874. According to the credit reports of that year, she owned 'a row of good houses near the Camp Street Mill the val[uable] prop[erty] at Uhrig's Cave & a lar[ge] am[oun]t of other city RE'. 'Uhrig's Cave' was the local name for a popular beer garden and entertainment venue in the city, a landmark that had been rented to various tenants over the years (the actual cave was located beneath the site and used to store beer from the brewery). Walburga Uhrig formed a partnership with her son-in-law and adopted son to run the company. In 1876, the incorporated company was said to be capitalised at \$300,000 and to have a capacity of over 20,000 barrels. In January 1880, the credit report named her as 'running the business successfully' and estimated her private wealth at \$75,000. However, a complicated series of lawsuits (caused in part by the death of her adopted son, August) led to the company being sold 'by order of the court' for the benefit of creditors. Nevertheless, Uhrig gained \$75,000 (\$20,000 in cash and the rest in notes) for the real estate associated with the brewery, also retaining rights to a dower house and \$6000 a year income for life from the brewery (according to the terms of her late husband's will).⁴⁴ Still, despite the fact that she was engaged in the business for six years, and her name appears in contemporary newspaper articles, Walburga is never mentioned as proprietor of Uhrig's Cave or the Brewery

⁴² Kentucky, 74:171, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

⁴³ 'Brief Mention', *The Dayton Herald*, 15 June 1886, p. 1; 'Betting Rooms Consolidated', *The New York Times*, 22 April 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Missouri, 36:324³³, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

in any of the recent local histories published online.⁴⁵ She may have owned a block of buildings, but they were not named after her. It is only in the credit records that her role in the company becomes clear.

CELEBRITIES

Of greater and more long-lasting local fame was Mary Bacigalupo, who ran a liquor store, grocery and saloon in Memphis with her husband Vincent. From a small stock estimated at \$500–1000 in 1858, the Bacigalupos built a business and real estate empire worth over \$150,000 by the late 1870s. According to selected credit entries:

1869: Been in bus[iness] for y[ea]rs a v[er]y popular Saloon. 'B' is of little force his wife being the better kn[own] & the establishment gen[eral]ly going by the name of Madame Vincent they are close econom[ica]l Italians have made and saved money

6/76: Bus[iness] conducted by his wife who is a shrewd bus[iness] woman (est 150–200m\$)

6/77: In bus[iness] here many years and have made \$ all along. His wife known as Madam Vincent is a good bus[iness] woman & possess[es] particularly good cap[acit]y for making & saving money are worth in RE bonds & c. fully \$175m & can control a large amt of cash at any moment. Good for all wants. Cr[edit] & standing never questioned.⁴⁶

Both of the Bacigalupos died in one of Memphis' deadly yellow fever epidemics, he in September 1878, and she in January 1879. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of her story is that their establishment was called the 'Madame Vincent Crystal Palace Saloon' and the commercial property they owned was popularly known as the 'Madame Vincent Block'. Not only credit records but also their own advertisements made it clear that Mary Bacigalupo was the heart of the concern.⁴⁷

⁴⁵St. Louis Public Library, 'What on Earth was Uhrig's Cave?', <https://www.slpl.org/news/what-on-earth-was-uhrigs-cave/>; Chris Naffziger, 'Under Our Feet: Exploring The Tunnels & Caverns Upon Which St. Louis Was Built', mySTL, <https://mystlcity.com/stl-tunnels/>

⁴⁶Tennessee, 29:140, 302, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

⁴⁷Madame Vincent is the subject of a web page created by a volunteer group, Historic-Memphis, 'Madame Vincent and the Memphis Crystal Palace Saloon': <http://www.historic-memphis.com/biographies/madame-vincent/madame-vincent.html>

The R.G. Dun & Co. credit ledgers can also be used to confirm evidence about the few extraordinary US female entrepreneurs who were not only celebrated in their own time but whose names are still recognised today. One female entrepreneur of some national as well as local prominence was Margaret Haugherty (or Haughery, or Haughey), known as the ‘Bread Woman’ of New Orleans. Featured in Caroline Bird’s 1976 monograph *Enterprising Women*, the first scholarly study of American businesswomen, Haugherty was an orphaned, destitute Irish immigrant whose husband and only child died in a yellow fever epidemic in the 1830s.⁴⁸ Beginning as a domestic servant, she was soon peddling milk, then bread, from a cart. As her business expanded, Haugherty became a well-known figure in the city, devoting most of her profits to charity, particularly orphan asylums. After her death in 1882, she was so famous and beloved that a statue—still standing in New Orleans—was erected in her honour (the first publicly funded statue of a woman in the United States).⁴⁹

According to the R.G. Dun & Co. credit ledgers, Haugherty ran a steam bakery where, by 1868, she had pulled down the original plant and invested \$35,000 in machinery. In 1871, credit reporters called her business worth \$100,000 free of debt and ‘perfectly good in every respect’. By 1879, Haugherty and her partner Bernard K. (her former manager whom she had taken into the business though he contributed no capital) were doing the largest bakery business in the city and ‘all the time making money’. Up to two years before her death in her late sixties, Haugherty was described as ‘energetic and enterprising’.⁵⁰

No one can doubt that Haugherty was an unusually enterprising woman, with success and local prominence far beyond most mid-nineteenth-century female proprietors in the United States.⁵¹ Nevertheless, it is telling that Haugherty’s local reputation seems to have grown out of her benevolent work (it has been estimated that she donated approximately \$600,000 to charities in the course of her career) rather

⁴⁸ Caroline Bird, *Enterprising Women* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1976). Bird did not consult the R.G. Dun & Co. credit ledgers in her research (and I am unaware of whether she knew they existed).

⁴⁹ The statue originally stood in a park, both named for ‘Margaret’; the statue was renovated in 2015.

⁵⁰ Louisiana, 14:110, 165, 166, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

⁵¹ Though in fact Haughery did not appear in the travelling exhibit and companion book. Virginia G. Drachman, *Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

than her commercial acumen. Yet her rags-to-riches story proves that it was possible for a businesswoman to begin as an Irish immigrant domestic servant and peddler, yet amass a substantial fortune as well as fame.⁵²

CONCLUSION

Despite the wealth of unique material available in the R.G. Dun credit records, challenges arise when interpreting this evidence. Not only can it be difficult to ‘match’ the stories told by these reports to the listings provided by city directories and the census, but at times the credit entries themselves disagreed, and examiners even seemed to contradict each other. For example, a dry goods merchant praised by the credit reporters, on and off, was Mrs Mary or Maria Gifford of Rochester, New York. In 1841, the ledger entry explained that her husband John is a pensioner, but that his wife ‘is smart, makes money, popular, prompt, consid[ered] g[oo]d’, and a year later that the dry goods business was ‘doing as well or better’ as ‘most DG houses of the same caliber’. It seems that Maria was backed by a female relative, Anna Blauvelt, described as ‘an old Dutch lady her mother or aunt or the like’. Then came a series of contradictory entries in the mid-1840s.

Mrs. G. is well known as a thoro’ go ahead woman & trader is snug & close
 very Indus[trious] & attent[ive] ...
 Cannot have made anything and wonder how she keeps along
 Apparently doing a living bus

⁵² See Brister, Nancy, ‘The Bread Lady of New Orleans’, Old New Orleans, The Past Whispers, http://old-new-orleans.com/NO_Margaret.html; Villarubbia, Eleonore, ‘An Indomitable Woman: Margaret Haugbery, The Breadwoman of New Orleans’, [Catholicism.org](http://catholicism.org), <http://catholicism.org/an-indomitable-woman-margaret-haugbery-the-breadwoman-of-new-orleans-2.html>; Luck, Adrienne, ‘Margaret Haugbery: “Friend of the Orphans”’, New Orleans Historical, <http://www.neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/477>; Butler, Eoin, ‘The Girl from Leitrim Who Became the “Angel” of New Orleans’, *The Irish Times*, 21 August 2019; <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/the-girl-from-leitrim-who-became-the-angel-of-new-orleans-1.2964329>; Haugbery is also the subject of two books: Flora Strousse’s children’s book, *Margaret Haugbery: Bread Woman of New Orleans* (P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1961), recently reprinted by Bethlehem Books in Bathgate, North Dakota in 2016, and Mary Lou Widmer’s *Margaret, Friend of Orphans* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company 1996).

This section ends with ‘First rate bus[iness] talents’ in 1848. Entries later that year noted that: ‘her husb[and] is a poor stick but she is a man and no mistake If left to her own will and way she is undoubtedly safe. ... Maria Gifford is the name of John G’s wife; she is the soul of the concern’.

In 1851, the credit examiners reported that she ‘Has recently met with a serious accident from a fall from wh[ich] she cant recover’; the concern was then said to be managed by Ovid Hyde, a man about 15 years younger than Maria Gifford. According to the credit records, Hyde ‘has neither dishonesty or cunning enough to make him a rogue’, so the business was ‘entitled to mod[erate] credit’.⁵³ Almost ten years later, in the federal census of 1860, Gifford was shown living in the same household as Hyde, other family members (his mother, her daughter) and three servants. While Hyde was listed with some assets, Gifford claimed \$14,000 worth of real estate. In addition, the dry goods business continued to be listed under her name in city directories until 1868. It appears, then, that either Maria Gifford’s worth varied dramatically from year to year or that different examiners varied dramatically in their judgements. It becomes difficult to judge the relative accuracy of directories, the census and credit records when they disagree.

Entries in the credit ledgers often demonstrate similar inconsistencies. Nevertheless, credit reports tell a story that adds both depth and breadth to the study of mid-nineteenth-century businesswomen in the United States. Depth comes from indications of a woman’s reputation within the community, her creditworthiness, estimated means or monetary assets, character, race and marital status as well as (depending on the entry) national origin, religion and a range of personal and financial details. Breadth is provided by the multiplicity of stories, revealing patterns within each location, across regions and even throughout the nation. The R.G. Dun & Co. records reveal that women ran businesses on the East Coast, in the Deep South, along the Mississippi and its tributaries, in the Mid-West, on the Plains and in the cities of the Great Lakes.

Based on evidence from the credit ledgers, we can certainly trust that businesswomen in the mid-nineteenth-century United States were far more than penny capitalists. We can see the wide range of trades in which women engaged, from the expected dressmaking establishments, millinery dealers, fancy goods stores, dry good shops, boarding houses and groceries, to the less common confectioneries, bakeries, bookstores, music shops,

⁵³New York, 162:100, 243, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, HBS.

hairdressers and saloons, to the relatively rare dealers in furniture, wallpaper and hardware, to a few unique individuals (such as Albany plumber Julia Ridgway).

Finally, to discover (as in the case of Mary Bacigalupo, ‘Madame Vincent’) a block of valuable city property not only owned by, but named after, an Italian woman running a saloon in Tennessee is not something that historians of mid-nineteenth-century female proprietors expect to find in the archives. The fact that after more than 25 years of research on businesswomen in the R.G. Dun & Co. credit ledgers a researcher can still be surprised reflects the multiplicity of women’s entrepreneurial experiences and the rich vein of material on nineteenth-century businesswomen in the United States waiting to be explored.

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CHAPTER 11

Japanese Female Entrepreneurs: Women in Kyoto Businesses in Tokugawa Japan

Mary Louise Nagata

Yamatoya Kane¹ filed a suit with the Kyoto Nakai magistrate in the lunar fourth month of 1834 against Fukui Sakuzaemon, head of the Kyoto measures guild when they failed to pay for work done in her workshop. In

¹Yamatoya is the name of the workshop that belonged to Kane's father. This and other names ending in -ya represent the house or business organisation the person using the name represented and are not surnames defining an individual or kinship network. Commoners in early modern Japan were generally not allowed to use surnames in public documents without special permission. Fukui, however, was a surname given to the founder of the line by Tokugawa Ieyasu when the carpenter and joiner Sakuzaemon from Fukui village agreed to serve as head of the Kyoto measures guild tasked with standardising the measures of western Japan. All workshops manufacturing measuring cups had to sell them to the guild for certification. For information on Fukui Sakuzaemon and the measures guild, see Kyoto Shi Bunka Kankō Kyoku (ed.), *Fukui ke kyūzō Kyō masu za shiryō chōsa hōkoku sho* [Report of investigation of data for the Kyoto measures guild from an old storehouse of Fukui house] (Kyoto City, 1988), pp. 114–115; and Mary Louise Nagata, 'Mistress or Wife? Fukui Sakuzaemon vs Iwa, 1819–1833', *Continuity and Change* 18, no. 2 (2003): pp. 1–23. For more about naming practices in traditional Kyoto, see Mary Louise Nagata, 'Names and Name Changes in Early Modern Kyoto,

M. L. Nagata (✉)
Francis Marion University, Florence, SC, USA
e-mail: mnagata@fmarion.edu

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her deposition she explained that her father Yamatoya Chūbei had originally worked building doors and gates from wood, but Sakuzaemon had invited him to become a measures craftsman carving measures of various sizes to the specifications of the guild. So Chūbei changed occupations and worked as a manufacturer of measures for 21 years until he died of illness in the lunar fourth month of 1833, and his stock in the guild, which represented the licence for the workshop, was inherited by Kane's husband Heibei, Kane herself and her son (and Chūbei's grandson), Matsunosuke. Heibei had been a craftsman in Kane's father's workshop, but Heibei was ill, making his succession to management of the workshop difficult. Kane and Heibei divorced and he returned home to Shimo Kawara village in Etchū province. Kane claimed that she had helped her father manage the workshop for 17 years and had also managed the workshop for Heibei, so there had been no break in the work, and she did not see any problem continuing to manage the workshop for her son Matsunosuke.

When she delivered the measures manufactured by her workshop, the guild checked and accepted them as usual, then questioned who was managing the workshop before they paid. Kane reported the workshop now belonged to her son Matsunosuke and here was the reason for the suit. The guild responded that Matsunosuke was too young and untrained to manage the workshop, and Kane responded she was managing it for him as she had done with her father since she was a child and for her husband after marriage, citing her 17 years of experience. The guild, however, refused to pay for the measures manufactured under the oversight of a woman, claiming that they could not license a workshop controlled by a woman. According to the Tokugawa policy, the warrior government avoided involvement in civil disputes, encouraging the parties to settle out of court. Eventually Kane received her money but was unable to continue the workshop until Matsunosuke reached his majority.²

This chapter focuses on female entrepreneurs, or the position of women in the businesses of Tokugawa era Kyoto (1600–1868). Women in Japan have a long business history before the Tokugawa era. The first documented private businesses in Kyoto were owned by women, and women

Japan', in Yangwen Zheng and Charles MacDonald (eds), *Personal Names in Asia: History, Culture and Identity* (Singapore: National University of Singapore 2009): pp. 247–264.

² Plaintiff Yamatoya Matsunosuke mother Kane, Toshiyori Shinbei, Goningumi Kashichi [to Obugyō sama], 'Osore nagara on soshō', Civil suit, 23/4/1834, Masu Za Fukui Sakuzaemon Collection No. 248.

were common in food processing, textiles, banking and retail businesses from ancient times.³ Carpentry-related trades, however, were generally the purview of men. This does not mean that women could not work in carpentry trades, but their ability to do so depended on the acceptance of the craftsmen they worked with. In this case, the guild refused to accept a woman as an independent contractor responsible for overseeing a workshop. During the Tokugawa era, especially as the expansion of literacy meant Confucian ethics became more popularly known and debated, the participation of women became less public.⁴

The story of Kane illustrates several aspects of the research on female entrepreneurs discussed in the sections below. Although there may be many ways to address the role of women in business, an important inter-generational role of women in business in Tokugawa Kyoto was to oversee inheritance and the succession process. For this purpose, a widow took ‘temporary’ control of the business while her son prepared for the role or while the family searched for another appropriate and capable heir. Kane’s story shows that this could also happen after divorce, and cases of widows fulfilling this role are discussed below.

Control of the succession process was not the only role women played in business. Women were employed as skilled artisans, oversaw the young apprentices, co-signed as guarantors on loans and generally filled in where necessary. Kane’s claim of helping her father is an example of this role of overseeing apprentices and filling in as needed. Families also used heiresses to recruit capable managers into a business through marriage, and there are indications that women retained some ownership and say in the businesses of their birth families even after marriage. Kane’s marriage to Heibei is an example of this practice of recruiting a capable son-in-law, although it did not work out as Kane reports that illness prevented him from carrying out the work and ultimately resulted in divorce. From this perspective, women had a pivotal role in connecting and developing business networks. Although there is some indication of businesses that passed down the female line from mother to daughter, a better explanation is that families acted to maintain control of their business assets over generations using both sons and daughters to do so. This is similar to the findings of Susana

³Tanahashi Mitsuhide, *Taikei Nihon no rekishi 4: Ōchō no shakai*, [Compendium of Japanese history vol 4: Imperial court society], (Tokyo: Shōgakukan 1988), pp. 129–30. Shigeta Shinichi, *Shomin tachi no Heian kyō* [Commoners of the Heian capital], (Tokyo: Kadokawa Sensho 2008), pp. 48–9, 235–6.

⁴See also Chap. 8 by Nathan Kwan, this volume.

Martínez-Rodríguez and Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás in late nineteenth-century Spain (see Chap. 14 by Hernández-Nicolás and Martínez-Rodríguez in this volume), although different to newer economies of Australasia (see Chap. 7 by Bishop in this volume).

This chapter begins with discussion of women's activities within a business as the wife of the head of household; these women were often business owners but also branch managers. This discussion supplements research on the business practices of the Omi merchants by Eiichirō Ogura in 1988.⁵ The chapter then briefly discusses the quantitative data and methodology, before discussing women as heads of household, either as business owners or branch managers, using evidence from the population surveys of 30 neighbourhoods in the city of Kyoto 1786–1869.⁶ The discussion in this section adds to existing research on women as property owners by Rieko Makita in 1986 and Ryōichi Yasukuni in 1990 on the lives of common women in early modern Kyoto.⁷ It includes a discussion of property ownership and decisions about who was listed as head of household and business and leads to the final section addressing women's roles in the inheritance and succession process.

This chapter argues that women were integral for the success and long-term continuity of a family business. In Japan there was no sense that women were incapable of taking on any task to establish or manage a business in any industry. Instead, they were expected to troubleshoot and fill in with any task or role as needed to maintain a business, but publicly taking the lead was somehow inappropriate. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of what changed after the opening of Japan that has such a low level of female participation in business and upper management positions today.

⁵ Ogura Eiichirō, *Omi Shōnin no Keiei* [Management practices of the Omi merchants]; (Kyoto: Sanburaito Shuppan 1988).

⁶ For detailed analysis and discussion of female heads of household in Tokugawa era Kyoto, see Mary Louise Nagata, 'Female Headed Households in Early Modern Kyoto, Japan', *Revista de Historiografía*, 26 (2016): pp. 145–155. <https://doi.org/10.20318/revhistro/2016/3102>

⁷ Makita Rieko, 'Kinsei Kyoto ni okeru josei no kasan shoyū' [Women's ownership of family assets in early modern Kyoto], in Hayashi Reiko et al. (eds), *Ronshū Kinsei Josei Shi* [Collection of essays on the history of early modern women] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1986): pp. 217–255. Yasukuni Ryoichi, 'Kinsei Kyoto no shomin josei' [Common women in early modern Kyoto], in Kurachi Katsunao and Miyashita Michiko (eds), *Nihon Josei Seikatsu Shi* [Lifestyle history of Japanese women] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press 1990), pp. 77–8.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY: THE ANNUAL POPULATION SURVEYS OF 30 URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

Although some sources, like Yamatoya Kane's deposition discussed above, are qualitative sources, this study also uses both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the annual population surveys compiled by 30 neighbourhoods in Kyoto. From 1635 every community in Japan was required to survey the religious faith of each individual living in the community. Although the purpose of these 'individual faith surveys' (宗門人別改帳) was to ensure that there were no Christians or members of other prohibited sects living in the community,⁸ the surveys were rather like mini censuses, compiled annually. Any quantitative analysis in this study uses the surveys of Kyoto neighbourhoods compiled during a 26-year period, from 1843, when the surveys first recorded ages, to 1868. The total population of Kyoto was estimated at about 200,000 people, living in 1600 neighbourhoods, in the 1860s. Each survey listed every resident of the neighbourhood in their households of residence by their relation to the head of household, providing information on age, sex, kinship and birth province as well as whether the household owned its residence or the name and address of the landlord if they rented.⁹

Thus the surveys provide an annual snapshot of each person and every household in 30 neighbourhoods. The number of extant surveys in a neighbourhood series varies greatly by neighbourhood: only 4 neighbourhoods have 20 or more annual surveys each, 6 neighbourhoods have 10–19 surveys each, and the remaining 20 neighbourhoods each have fewer than 10 surveys each. Moreover, there is no single year with data from every neighbourhood, so it is not possible to treat this as a fixed time sample or a time series. Although a single person can be observed many times, each unique due to changes in age, employment, marital status and position in the household, she or he is only observed once per year. The unit of analysis is person-year observations, and the results are probabilities

⁸At the end of each survey is a paragraph stating that every resident was listed and no member of the Christian or other prohibited sects were found. These population surveys, often called population registers in the research literature, are the best source for individual demographic microdata in Japan. Series of surveys from numerous villages, primarily in Northeastern Japan, have been analysed by many Japanese scholars.

⁹Kyoto is the best large city to use because few Edo surveys survive, and ages were not recorded in Osaka until 1867.

that a person would have certain individual and household characteristics, not a percentage of people who had those characteristics.

Katakura Hisako's investigation of women's occupations in Edo (now Tokyo), the political centre of Japan, revealed women working as peddlers, taking in laundry, or otherwise taking on or helping out in the occupations or businesses of their families as the wife, daughter or mother of the business owner, as Kane had done. As will be seen below, it appears that there was little limit to what women could acceptably do in this capacity while the 'real' business owner was incapacitated due to illness or injury, or was simply out of town.¹⁰

Ogura Eiichirō argued that the wife of a business owner or branch manager had charge of overseeing the younger apprentices as they learned to read, write and calculate while running errands for the household and business.¹¹ One of the best examples of the participation of the wife in business affairs comes from the Hakutsuru Sake Breweries archives. When one of the top management employees was fired for embezzling in 1809, the relevant document was signed not only by the head, Kanō Jihei, and other directors and managers of the business known at that time as Zaimokuya, but also by Kanō Jihei's wife Yusa.¹²

Certainly a businessman's wife was responsible for providing the day-to-day services of food, clothing and medical care for the business employees living in the household. Maids and younger apprentices employed by the business assisted her in these activities, and these services were certainly critical for the survival of businesses that relied upon their live-in employees, as was common during the Tokugawa period. Our question, however, is whether women were involved in other aspects of the business.

Female names commonly appeared in records of two related areas of economic activity. Women were frequently guarantors for loans, and they

¹⁰ Katakura Hisako, 'Bakumatsu ishin ki no toshi kazoku to joshi rōdō' [Urban families and female labour in the late Tokugawa and Meiji Restoration periods], in Owada Michiko and Nagano Hiroko (eds), *Nihon Josei Shi Ronshū* [Collection of essays on the history of Japanese women] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1998): pp. 85–108. See also Laurel Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650–1750* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

¹¹ Ogura, *Omi Shōnin no Keiei*.

¹² Jihei et al., [In front of the Buddhist altar], 'Mi age sho,' Investigation report, 8/25/1809, *Hakutsuru Komonjo Shiryō Shū* [Hakutsuru collection of historical documents] (Kobe: Hakutsuru Shuzo Kabushiki Gaisha 1978), pp. 364–5; Mary Louise Nagata, *Labor Contracts and Labor Relations in Early Modern Central Japan* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon 2005), pp. 113–4.

were property owners and landlords. Women also borrowed and loaned money in their own right as well as co-signing for the men in their families. Moreover, when a man borrowed money, his loan was frequently guaranteed by his wife, his mother or, less often, his sister.¹³

WOMEN AS HOUSEHOLD HEADS: BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

The Tokugawa regime has such a strong patriarchal reputation that women's business ownership would seem to have been nearly impossible. Even a cursory scan of population surveys from the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) reveals very few women listed as heads of households, so most research has assumed that women's business ownership was rare and limited to textiles or service occupations. Yamatoya Kane, for example, tried to list the business in her six-year-old son's name because she knew the guild was unlikely to accept the business in her name. Although the reasons for listing a child as head of household were more complex, there was a 5.7 per cent probability that a head of household was aged 1–15. Scholars have concluded that the few female heads of households, especially of businesses, were widows of former owners and merely filling in until sons could inherit.¹⁴ While this follows the pattern found by scholars elsewhere, particularly in Europe,¹⁵ and was the case for the majority found in the Kyoto surveys, I argue that the situation was more complex.

Public authorities tended to discourage listing women as heads of household and businesses. Yasukuni suggested two reasons for this. One was the assumption by political authorities that businesses commonly owned and operated by women—bathhouses, teahouses, hostels, hair-dressers—were often places of gambling and illegal private prostitution. So the original policy of discouraging listing women as heads of households in the mid-eighteenth century was aimed at controlling these businesses and discouraging illegal gambling and prostitution.¹⁶

Yasukuni's second reason was the requirement that household heads fulfil public community responsibilities. Each neighbourhood community

¹³ Makita, 'Kinsei Kyoto ni okeru josei no kasan shoyū', pp. 217–255.

¹⁴ Yasukuni, 'Kinsei Kyoto no shomin josei', pp. 77–8.

¹⁵ Beatrice Moring, *Widows in European Economy and Society, 1600–1920* (Boydell Press 2017).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 76–7.

had its own administration, collected its own taxes and provided police, firefighting and administrative services. The city administration was comprised of an interlocking network of these self-governing units. In the early part of the Tokugawa period, these public responsibilities—administration, policing and firefighting—were performed directly by heads of household with the responsibility for organising these functions rotated among them. Women, he argued, were not considered fully capable of carrying out the police and firefighting responsibilities required, therefore households headed by women or children were considered only partial members of the community and had fewer rights. From the mid-eighteenth century, however, more neighbourhoods began hiring someone to handle day-to-day policing and peacekeeping and to organise firefighting. Business households also had management employees, who could act on the behalf of their employers when necessary, so the public responsibilities of the head could be settled monetarily or through agents, and female headship became less of a problem for the immediate community.¹⁷ The population surveys of Sujikaibashi neighbourhood included a note for every woman listed as head of household that ‘no men could be found to list’, but this was a fiction since some of those households contained adult men, as discussed below.

Investigation of the population surveys of 30 neighbourhoods in Kyoto compiled variously between 1843 and 1869 reveals most neighbourhoods listed some women as heads of households at some time and only two neighbourhoods have no record of female heads of household listed in the available surveys. The first, Sannō, only had one survey and was also unusual for a neighbourhood near the commercial centre of the city in that only 3 of its 17 households listed live-in employees. This lack of employees together with the fact that all but two of the households were renting their residences suggests that Sannō was less affluent than many of the other neighbourhoods near the commercial centre. The second, Matsu’ue, in a series of three surveys over five years (1850 and 1852–1855), listed only 24 households and only three servants, each observed only once and employed by three different households. Incidentally, none of the landlords in Sannō were women either, but one woman appeared as a landlord in Matsu’ue—one of six landlords but with a probability of 21 per cent that she was the owner of a rental property meaning she appeared as landlord slightly more often than the average for a landlord in that neighbourhood.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 78–86.

Bringing the survey listings of all 30 neighbourhoods together provides 37,013 observations for analysis from 225 flat file single year listings, 1842–1869. The probability that a head of household was female was nine per cent, as noted above. The highest probability (25 per cent) was in Ishigaki, a small neighbourhood of only 18 households employing few servants on the east side of town near Kenninji temple and with only two extant surveys. Investigating whether female-headed households were more likely in particular locations, among owners or renters or among households employing more or fewer servants revealed no particular trend that differed from the overall trend for all households. Female headship appeared for a variety of complex reasons, often connected to ownership and inheritance, but also to solitary households and to business convenience.

Approximately half (49 per cent) of the observations of female-headed households were for women living alone. Although some women may have moved out of whatever household they were living in to live alone, this process is difficult to observe in the data. Instead, many of these women became head of household upon the death of a spouse, like Katsu, who lived alone for six years after her husband Sōhachi died before she moved away. Gaps in the data can also leave much unexplained. Tsuboya Mohei was living with his daughter Yoso in 1844 when he remarried. The three of them, Mohei and his new wife with his daughter, formed a family in 1845, but the record is missing for 1846–1847. In 1848, Yoso was 20 and living alone, and seven years later she was a single parent with a nine-year-old son. There is no information to determine whether she married and was widowed or divorced, had an extra-marital child, or had adopted a son. Female heads of households in Kyoto tended to be older women with a 51 per cent probability of being over 50. Many were probably widows, although younger women may have never been married. There was also a 36.6 per cent probability that a female-headed household was a woman living with her children. Even so, there are a number of characteristics that make female-headed households in Kyoto stand out.¹⁸

The probability that female heads of household were native to the city was 91.5 per cent. Although immigrant women were most commonly found in the city centre (59 per cent probability), when they appeared as heads of households (only 64 observations) they were most commonly found in the periphery (32 observations), followed by the city centre (21

¹⁸ Nagata, 'Female Headed Households', pp. 190–4.

observations), and least often in the Nishijin silk textile district (11 observations). Female-headed households were more likely, at 34 per cent probability, than male-headed households, at 28 per cent probability, to own their residences. This could be because owner households were more stable and likely to remain in a neighbourhood for long periods of time, possibly meaning more opportunity to observe the periods that a widow or daughter took over headship and management for a while. For example, Yasaburō was head of Yoshinoya in Koromotana Minami neighbourhood until he died in 1848. Then his daughter Uta was head of household while aged 13–19 before she married and her new husband took the name Yasaburō and the position as head of household. Households with female or male heads were approximately equally likely to own their residences in Nishijin silk textile district and in the peripheral neighbourhoods. In the city commercial centre, however, households with a female head were far more likely at 41 per cent probability to own their residences than those with male heads at 28 per cent probability. Households with male heads were most likely to be owners in Nishijin, where the probability was equal to female-headed households at 31 per cent.

Households where a woman was listed as head of household even though she had a co-resident spouse were rare, but not non-existent, appearing in the surveys of three neighbourhoods. There were two such households in Nishijin (Sujikaibashi), two in the city centre (Sōrin), and one in the periphery (Nishinokyō Kaminochō). Since there are only five such women and their listing as household heads contrasts so drastically with official public policy, let us examine them individually.

Kiya Tome appears in 1843 as a widow with two daughters. Two years later, in 1845, she had remarried Ihachi, but she was still listed as the head of household, with Ihachi identified as her spouse (*otto*). In other words, the property belonged to her, and he married in.¹⁹ Omiya Tetsu is listed as head of household living with her mother Etsu in Sujikaibashi neighbourhood in 1856–1857. In 1860, Etsu is gone after a three-year gap in the data, but Tetsu is still head of household even though she has married Shōgorō, and they have a newborn daughter Shiga. Moreover, Tetsu remains head through the 1862 survey, the final survey in this series.²⁰ At

¹⁹ *Kyōto Ōmiya dōri Teranouchi Sujikaibashi chō 'Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō'* [Individual faith surveys], 1843–1845, 1848–1851, 1856–1857, 1860, 1862.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

minimum, this shows that women did not lose their property rights in marriage.

Two women lived in Sōrin Neighbourhood near the commercial centre of town. Haiya Ei appears in the two surveys for Sōrin in 1868–1869 as head of household living with her spouse Oribe, her son Toyosaburō, two teenage daughters Masu and Sei and one maid. Iseyā Kane, age 76, also appears in the two Sōrin surveys as head of Iseyā living with her spouse Chōuemon, age 70, daughter Koto, age 52, son Takejirō, age 28, and grandson Shintarō, age 7. The surveys do not identify Shintarō's parent/s or whether Koto and Takejirō were also husband and wife, but this was common in the Kyoto surveys when the husband was an in-marrying son-in-law. In other words, when the groom married into the bride's family in an uxorilocal marriage the groom was often identified as a son of his new in-laws, making him look like a brother to his new wife. This family also employed one servant in 1869.²¹

Finally, Yawataya Masa is listed as head of household in the 1867 survey for Nishinokyō Kaminochō even though she lived with her spouse Kichijirō. The couple also appears with Masa as head in the survey of 1868, the final year for this series.

This closer examination of five female-headed households reveals some interesting details. Since all of these women were married, the neighbourhood officials compiling the registers could have listed their husbands as heads of these households. In the cases of Haiya Ei and Iseyā Kane, the officials could have even listed their sons as heads of their households, even though they were children. There are, in fact, 275 observations of children under the age of 11 (515 under 16) listed as heads of household even though most were living with at least one parent. If all of these children were boys we could claim that the child was listed so as to avoid listing the mother, but some of these children listed as head of household were girls, and, as we have seen in the five examples above, women could be listed as heads of household even when married with a co-resident spouse. The public policy of avoiding listing females as head of household does not explain the situation and listing a child as head instead of the adult mother makes no sense if the reason were the duties of policing and firefighting. The listing of children as heads of household was integral to ownership,

²¹ *Kyōto Abura no koji Ane no koji sagaru Sōrin chō 'Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō'* [Individual faith surveys], 1868–1869.

inheritance and strategies of intergenerational business survival, discussed further in a later section.

Now let us consider an example of a woman as a business manager. The Endō family have owned Hiranoya, a silk textile wholesale business in Kyoto since the eighteenth century.²² The family business archives reveal that three out of more than 50 extant labour contracts were addressed to a woman called Hiranoya Nobu as the employer. The contracts addressed to Hiranoya Nobu are dated 1855–1856. Earlier contracts were addressed to Hiranoya Yasaburō until 1854, and contracts from 1857 until 1893 were addressed to Hiranoya Yasaku (both male). So Hiranoya Nobu appears to have been Hiranoya Yasaburō's widow who took over management of the business until the next head, likely her son, Yasaku, could take over. However, examining the draft population lists kept by Hiranoya for their Kyoto household/shops reveals a more complicated story.²³

Hiranoya had at least two shops or branches. The survey drafts compiled in 1840–1843 list Hiranoya Jinsaburō as head living with his wife Taki and eight employees in 1840 with another three added in 1841, and three more in 1842. In 1843 government reforms required that the birth province and age of each individual be recorded in the official surveys, so Jinsaburō appears to have decided to list the six employees that came to Kyoto from another province. Since these lists were simply notes Hiranoya compiled to prepare their report to the neighbourhood official compiling the neighbourhood surveys, they did not bother to relist Jinsaburō, his wife or any family members that may have been living in the household. The employees in these listings were three skilled or management employees of *tedai* status, one maid and two younger male employees.

The record then skips to 1853 and lists Hiranoya Yakichi, age 18, as head of household living with one other family member, whose name and other information is missing from the record, plus 15 employees. The employees include three maids, six *tedai* skilled management employees, and six male apprentices or regular employees. The next year, however, Yakichi is gone and Hiranoya Nobu, age 38, is listed as head. There is no information or explanation as to what happened to Yakichi or what Yakichi's relation was to the former Jinsaburō or to Nobu, much less to Yasaburō. This branch of the business now employed eight *tedai*, five

²²Notice that Endō is the family surname and Hiranoya is the house/business name.

²³Endō Yasaburō family collection, Kyoto Library for Historical Documents, Kyoto: ten boxes.

apprentices and two maids. This was clearly the same branch that Yakichi was in charge of since most of the employees were the same. Nobu continued as head of this branch until 1858 when Hiranoya Yasaku, now aged 20, took over. This series of lists continues with Yasaku as head until 1861 and another volume continues the record of this branch with Yasaku as head until 1866.²⁴

This is not, however, the end of the record. The lists for a second branch with Yakichi as head begin in 1857 and continue through 1867. Yasaku's branch generally employed 12–14 people, including 5–6 skilled or management *tedai* and a couple of maids. Yakichi's branch also employed a similar number and in 1859 Yakichi (age 24) changed his name to Yasaburō as head of the home or main branch. In 1867 Yasaku and his household moved in with the new Yasaburō and Yasaku is identified as Yasaburō's younger brother. Nobu does not appear in either household after 1857.²⁵

Certain details suggest Nobu's role in this business. The Endō family business was known as Hiranoya Yasaburō. Yakichi was the elder son and his branch was the main house of the business network. This means that the branch Nobu took over from Yakichi was a cadet branch (known as a *bunke*) and Yakichi was likely getting some experience there before beginning the succession process to take over headship of the main house. Moreover, since Yasaburō appears in the business documents until 1854, Yakichi likely moved to the main house when Yasaburō fell ill, or was ready to retire. Yasaku was not yet considered capable of taking over management of the cadet branch, so Nobu stepped in, whether as Yasaburō's widow and the mother of Yakichi and Yasaku or as Yasaburō's sister. In either case, Nobu was capable of taking over management until Yasaku could take over and that suggests that she already had been involved in the business behind the scenes in some capacity or other. Nevertheless, this case also highlights the topic of the next section.

²⁴ 'Shūmon okite', Draft individual faith surveys, 1841–1860, Endō Yasaburō collection No. 624 and 'Ninbetsu shūmon aratame chō', Religious and population registers, 1861–1866, Endō Yasaburō collection No. 625, Kyoto Library for Historical Documents.

²⁵ Endō, 'Shūmon ninbetsu aratame chō kari okite', Draft individual faith surveys, 1858–1867, Endō Yasaburō collection No. 470, Kyoto Library for Historical Documents.

WOMEN, INHERITANCE AND HEADSHIP SUCCESSION

As with Hiranoya Nobu above, women often filled in when the male head was unavailable. Katakura's research reveals wives, daughters and sisters filling in when the male head was incapacitated due to illness or injury, as did Yamatoya Kane, with whom this chapter began.²⁶ When the male head of household and business died before the headship succession process could be successfully completed to the satisfaction of the family, the widow, daughter or even sister took steps to oversee and complete the process. This could mean taking over management until the heir, whether eldest son or some other person, was trained and ready, and this was what Kane tried to do. Even further, this could mean overseeing the activities of the new head and acting to replace him with another candidate who could do the job better and was still acceptable to the rest of the family.

In Kyoto, wills had to be filed with the neighbourhood officials and then gain the agreement of the larger family and kin group before they would be accepted. They were filed by the new head of household upon gaining his or her position and partly had the purpose of informing the neighbourhood community who would be responsible for the property if something should happen to the head.²⁷ Even so, the kin group could contest the will, and many wills identified two or more heirs to receive and take responsibility for the property.²⁸ In a situation where there were multiple heirs, or if there was no will, women, primarily the widow of the former head, oversaw the transition process. Frequently property was transferred first to the widow or other female family member—daughter or sister—who then carried out the process of determining the most appropriate heir (usually the eldest son), overseeing his training and finding an alternative in case he did not work out.

These family disputes could be complex, and women could be both protagonists and mediators, exemplified in the case of the Fukui family, which ran the measures guild. When the head Sōuemon died, his adoptive heir, his nephew-in-law, Sakuzaemon, was already in position as head, having succeeded while Sōuemon was still alive. Sōuemon's mistress (and

²⁶ Katakura, 'Bakumatsu ishin ki no toshi kazoku to joshi rōdō', 85–108.

²⁷ Mary Louise Nagata, 'Property ownership and the neighbourhood community in early modern Kyoto', forthcoming in EHESS/CRH publications, 2019.

²⁸ Yasuoka Shigeaki, 'Kinsei Kyoto shōnin no kagyō to sōzoku' [Family business and inheritance of early modern Kyoto merchants], *Kyoto shakai shi kenkyū* [Research on the social history of Kyoto] (Kyoto: Hōritsu Bunkasha, 1971).

mother of his three daughters), however, tried to interfere, claiming to be Sōuemon's widow. At this point, another woman, Sōuemon's sister and the heir's mother-in-law, stepped in as the family representative in the dispute.²⁹ Other successions were more amicable and flexible, with women often playing significant roles. When Hoteiya Gohei died in 1819 his widow Naka took over their business selling salted fish and oil in Seidō neighbourhood for a year before passing it to her son. Her son Rihei, who also took the headship name Gohei, served as head for two years and then stepped down and left, returning headship to his mother Naka. Ten years later Hoteiya Naka adopted one of the management employees who then married one of Gohei's nieces and succeeded as head taking the headship name Gohei in 1834.³⁰

One of the difficulties in understanding wills is that the heirs named in the will often never appear in the surveys for the neighbourhood where the property was located after the testator's death. Cross-referencing the wills of Koromodana Minami neighbourhood written between 1843 and 1868, the period that the population surveys record age, however, reveals that the main purpose of the Kyoto wills was to identify who would be responsible for the property if the current resident owner suddenly died or disappeared. Many wills identified multiple heirs, often including at least one female in the group. The series of wills for Bundaiya in the Koromodana Minami neighbourhood reveals the process of headship change and property transmission and illustrates that determining who to list as heads of households could be related to who was named as heir in a will.

The Bundaiya household appears in the population surveys of the Koromodana Minami neighbourhood, 1843–1853. The head of household was Bundaiya Tahei (age 33) in 1843, his mother Kau (age 66) in 1846, her grandson Minnosuke (age 6) in 1848, his aunt Tome (age 40) in 1849 and Minnosuke (age 10) again in 1852.³¹ Kau wrote her will in

²⁹I have written about this case elsewhere. See Mary Louise Nagata, 'Mistress or Wife? Fukui Sakuzaemon vs. Iwa, 1819–1833', *Continuity and Change* 18, no. 2 (2003): pp. 1–23.

³⁰I discuss this case in more detail elsewhere. See Mary Louise Nagata, 'Headship and Succession in Early Modern Kyoto: the role of women', *Continuity and Change* 19, no. 1 (2004): pp. 1–32.

³¹*Kyōto Koromodana tōri Sanjō sagaru Koromodana Minami chō 'Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō'* [Individual faith surveys], 1786–1837, 1843, 1845–1867. Sanjō Koromodana Chō collection, Kyoto Prefectural Library for Historical Documents.

1846 ceding her ownership to her grandson Minnosuke upon her death.³² Minnosuke wrote a will in 1848 ceding ownership to his Uncle Kohei and Aunt Tome, again ‘upon his death’.³³ Tome wrote her will in 1849 ceding her rights to her nephew Minnosuke, her son Kajinosuke and daughter Take.³⁴ In 1852 Minnosuke wrote his second will now ceding his rights to his cousins Kajinosuke and Take.³⁵ The 1853 survey lists Minnosuke (age 11) as head living with his cousins Kajinosuke (age 17) and Take age (25), who are also identified as his guardians. At the same time that the survey records Tome joining the Bundaiya household with her two children in 1847 and remaining in the listing through 1851, her husband Kohei appears only in 1848 listed separately as a lodger and is absent afterwards even though he too had been listed as an heir with his wife Tome.

There are several points to highlight here. Minnosuke (age 6) was listed head of household in 1848 even though his Aunt Tome was living with him, as was his cousin Take (age 22). I argue that this was because Kau had willed the property to Minnosuke, not Tome or Take. Tome could take headship in 1849 because Minnosuke wrote a will naming her as his heir. So, one reason children were listed as head of household, despite the presence of capable adults in the household, was because the main property rights belonged to the child, not the adults. The same was likely true when a woman was listed head of household despite the presence of adult men in the household, like the currently married women discussed in the previous section above. For a different example, Omiya Tsuta (age 35) was listed as head of household despite living with her father Tōbei (age 59) in 1862. The next observation for this household is 1866 with Tsuta living alone.

Children are listed as heads of households at ages 1–15 for 515 household observations in the population surveys of 30 neighbourhood series.

³² Bundaiya Kau (to Koromodana Minami alderman Sōbei and the neighbourhood representatives), ‘Yuzurijo no koto’, Transmission will, 1846.12.8, Sanjō Koromodana Chō collection No. 8517, Kyoto Prefectural Library for Historical Documents.

³³ Bundaiya Minnosuke (to Koromodana Minami alderman Yasubei and the neighbourhood representatives), ‘Yuzurijo no koto’, Transmission will, 1848.2.14, Sanjō Koromodana Chō collection No. 8521, Kyoto Prefectural Library for Historical Documents.

³⁴ Bundaiya Tome (to Koromodana Minami alderman Kihei and the neighbourhood representatives), ‘Yuzurijo no koto’, Transmission will, 1849.4.24, Sanjō Koromodana Chō collection No. 8522, Kyoto Prefectural Library for Historical Documents.

³⁵ Bundaiya Minnosuke (to Koromodana Minami alderman Jusuke and the neighbourhood representatives), ‘Yuzurijo no koto’, Transmission will, 1852.5.14, Sanjō Koromodana Chō collection No. 8525, Kyoto Prefectural Library for Historical Documents.

They had a 79 per cent probability of living with at least one parent, and 18.6 per cent probability of living with both parents. The majority of these children were boys, so one explanation could be that the surveys listed the child as head following the policy of avoiding listing female heads of household. However, this does not explain those living with both parents or the 4 per cent probability of living with their single fathers. We have also seen in the previous section that women were sometimes listed as head of household when there were appropriate male choices to list. Moreover, there was a 4.5 per cent probability that these young heads of household were girls, often while living with at least one parent. Minoya Ritsu, for example, became head of household when her father Wasuke died at the age of 33. Ritsu was head of household between the ages of three and ten, when the record for this household ended, despite living with her mother Uno and her grandmother Naka. The examples of Hishiya Yasujirō and his cousin Mine show a boy and a girl in the same family who each became heads of two branches of a business before their tenth year.

Mine (age 2) appears in 1854, the first year of the Yoshimizu survey series, in the household of her cousin Hishiya Yasujirō (age 7). The household was a business with nine live-in employees in addition to the extended family of Yasujirō, his mother Fuji, siblings and his cousins Mine and her elder sister Yoshi (age 17). Yoshi left the household soon after, likely to enter service. The only adult family member in the household to oversee the business and employees was Yasujirō's mother Fuji (age 38). At the age of seven Yasujirō was unlikely to have been managing the business himself. Moreover, although the number of employees remained at the same level through 1861, the final year of the series, none of the senior employees remained in the household more than two years. So we can presume that Fuji was managing the business instead of relying on a senior employee to mentor her son, who nevertheless was the proprietor.

Meanwhile, Mine's father Kauemon joined the household, now a joint household comprised of two single parents and their children. Mine's younger half-sister Teru was born a year later in 1857, and in 1859 Kauemon and his children moved out, forming a second household with Fuji as Kauemon's wife. This left Yasujirō and his siblings living on their own at ages 11, 12 (Yasujirō) and 17, to run the Hishiya business with nine employees. Kauemon, Fuji and their two daughters had no live-in employees, but Kauemon died in late 1859 and Mine (age 8) inherited the

property, succeeding to headship of her branch of Hishiya, despite living with her single mother Fuji as well as her younger sister Teru.³⁶

Both Bundaiya and the Hishiya properties were owned by their residents, so wills and property ownership can explain why children came to be listed as heads of these households. Households listing children as head, however, had an 85 per cent probability of renting their residences, so why would they be listed as heads? Based on Yamatoya Kane's experience, the business licence and demands of guild, trade association or other licensing body likely played a role.

There is a second case from the measures guild documents that reveals the possibilities. Kijiya Teijirō worked for the measures guild using a lathe to carve and manufacture measures to guild specifications for many years. When he died he left his wife Uno and their young son now also called Teijirō, who was still a minor and unable to carry on the business personally. This was similar to the situation of Yamatoya Kane, whose story opened this chapter, but had a different outcome. Uno and her son moved in with Obiya Fusajirō, an artisan who had worked for Yamatoya Kane. The business licence was deposited temporarily with another guild member, Kawakamiya Rihei, who hired another artisan who was not yet established to carry out the work until Teijirō completed his training and grew up. This information comes from a letter written in 1837 by Teijirō, now an adult, who decided he did not want to work as a measures craftsman, so he retrieved the licence from Kawakamiya Rihei and sold it back to the guild for 200 *ryō* (one *ryō* had the approximate value of modern US\$1000).³⁷ Clearly the measures guild would not accept children or women as licence owners and business managers, even on a temporary basis, as noted at the beginning. At the same time, a child was not obligated to continue his family's business. In that case, the family could either find another heir or sell the licence.

The refusal to accept women or minor children as successors was not universal. Records indicating the occupation or business of households with women or children listed as head show that they participated in textile industries or in food processing. Some of these households may have

³⁶ *Kyōto Akezu tōri Matsubara sagaru Yoshimizu chō 'Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō'* [Individual faith surveys], 1854, 1856–1861.

³⁷ Kijiya Teijiro, mother Uno, witness Obiya Fusajiro, witness Itamiya Jūbei [to Fukui Sakuzaemon], 'Issatsu no koto,' Letter and agreement, 12/1837, Masu Za Fukui Sakuzaemon Collection No. 417, Kyoto City Library for Historical Documents, Kyoto.

been simply one branch of a much larger business organisation, as with the case of Hiranoya Nobu, who was manager of a cadet branch of the Hiranoya business until her son Yasaku achieved his majority. In such cases, the business licence may have remained under the name of one of the related branches or the main house.

There is still much that is unclear in the process. Even so, clearly women served as managers in family businesses or otherwise filled in when father, husband, son or brother was ill or otherwise incapacitated. Moreover, as demonstrated by Kane, they expected both to be able to do so and that society would accept them in this capacity. Kane's case also demonstrates that filling in was one thing but official recognition and licensing was another. Finally, Kane and other cases like hers also served to bring about changes in policy that allowed women to find ways to work around official policies at least to ensure the continued income and survival of the family and business as demonstrated by Uno.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter challenges the impression that women had no role whatsoever in business management in the Tokugawa period, or that their role was limited to overseeing the apprentices and otherwise providing for the daily needs of the live-in employees. By considering the role of women in the intergenerational transfers of business and using multiple sources, we find a more complex picture of the important and integral roles women played, especially for the survival and continuation of the business through the inheritance and succession process.

Occupation surveys and other data for Kyoto reveal that women owned or managed businesses in the textile industry as seamstresses and related work. They also owned or managed businesses in the food processing industry; for example, Hoteiya Naka ran a salted fish and oil business, and others appear as restaurant owners. Similar research for Edo adds hairdressers, peddling and service trades to this list. Women, however, no matter what the industry, were not employed as managers, although they took over business management as family representatives. When they managed a business, they were taking over duties temporarily in the absence of male members of their own families, either natal or marital.

On the other hand, women were clearly engaged in property ownership and investment, earning money by leasing property to others. Moreover, assets under female control played an important role in loans and other

financial activities. In this respect, although women may not have had management roles or high-status occupations, they could be important business partners. Importantly, women's marriage did not change their ownership of property or business. A spouse might take over management and operation of a business, especially if required by the trade association of that industry, but ownership often remained in the name of the woman or her children. Business documents also occasionally show the wife of the head co-signing with her spouse. The population surveys list a few women as heads of households even when they had co-resident spouses and adult sons.

The examples of Hoteiya Naka and the Fukui family also reveal that women not only stepped in to fill the gap until the heir was ready but could actually control the succession process, disinheriting or divorcing one heir and looking for another. The example of Yamatoya Kane also points to this process when she divorced her spouse Heibei. The business licence inherited from her father effectively belonged to her and her son. More importantly, the examples of Kane and Uno also show that such decisions had to take the requirements and policies of the trade association or guild for that industry into account. At the same time, women also could sue in the courts of the city magistrates. Kane did not believe that her sex would disqualify her from owning and operating the business and expected that the magistrate would support her claim.

The most important role of women in business seems to have been to ensure the survival of the business for future generations and protect the family assets, including business assets, for the next generation. The cases of Uno and Teijirō and of Hoteiya Naka show that the children in the next generation were not forced to continue the business. They could choose to sell or to leave the business in other hands and continue to gain income or benefit from it. Indeed, this is exactly what made the role of women in overseeing the inheritance process so important.

The future success of a business could depend upon having a capable manager in charge. A business could support many more than the people living in the immediate household. This made headship succession an important process and a vulnerable time for a business and for the owner family kin group. Ideally the former head would choose and train his heir, then retire to oversee the first years of management under the new head. All too often, however, the former head became ill or died before he could complete this process. Then his widow or another female relation took up the task of filling in during the illness and overseeing the succession process

upon the death of the former head who was her husband, father, or even brother or son. This made the succession process a matter of survival and affluence of the group, and the role of women in controlling or overseeing the process one of great importance.

From the 1870s the new Meiji government took action to adjust Japanese property laws and inheritance to fit Western ideas of ‘civilised’ society, using Prussia as their model for family law. Particularly after the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, women and various categories of male kin were shut out of the possibility of inheritance or participating in property, and therefore family business ownership. Women continued to substitute for male family members to keep the family business going but less in official capacities. After World War II, laws aimed at breaking up the large family concerns called *zaibatsu* limited family management and participation in the large industrial businesses. This limited the traditional ways women had become managers in larger businesses. Nevertheless, women have remained active as owners and managers in medium to small businesses in Japan in ways similar to the past.

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Female Entrepreneurship in England and Wales, 1851–1911

Carry van Lieshout, Harry Smith, and Robert J. Bennett

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C. van Lieshout (✉) • H. Smith • R. J. Bennett
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK
e-mail: carry.van-lieshout@open.ac.uk

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Catherine Leyland was a dressmaker in Bolton, Lancashire. In 1901, the Census of England and Wales recorded her as an own-account business proprietor, which afforded her a degree of independence: as a 37-year-old unmarried woman, she headed her own household, whereas ten years previously, she had lived with her married sister and her family.¹ However, Catherine's business did not last: by the time of the 1911 census, she was enumerated as a worker, a seamstress rather than a dressmaker.² The conventional image of the Victorian entrepreneur is often of an older male, in charge of a steel factory or a textile mill, employing hundreds of workers. However, the majority of business owners, both male and female, were much more likely to resemble Catherine Leyland: they ran small, local businesses, most often only employing themselves and a small number of workers, if they had any at all. Regardless of the size or long-term success of a small business, running it required entrepreneurial skills, including client acquisition and management, the ability to anticipate demand and supply and, most importantly, responsibility for the risks of the whole enterprise. This chapter provides an overview of female entrepreneurship in England and Wales based on census data between 1851 and 1911. It uses a broad definition of entrepreneurship: anyone identifiable as self-employed, regardless of the size, 'success' or longevity of their business, has been included. Census data are captured on the household level and allow a full analysis of the demographics of female business owners, including their age and marital status, in order to evaluate some of the key driving forces behind female entrepreneurship. The chapter considers entrepreneurship as a choice: whilst this was subject to constraints that were gendered as well as dependent on sector, location and the wider economy, women who were economically active could choose either to be workers or to run their own business.

The analysis is based on the 'British Business Census of Entrepreneurs 1851–1911' (BBCE), which was created as part of the Drivers of Entrepreneurship and Small Business project and is deposited at the UK Data Archive (UKDA).³ The BBCE was extracted from the individual-level electronic Integrated Census Microdata (I-CeM). The English and

¹The 1901 manuscript Census Enumerator Book (CEB), Catherine Leyland, RB13/3618, The National Archives, London (TNA); 1891 manuscript CEB, Catherine Leyland, RG12/3122, TNA.

²The 1911 manuscript CEB, Catherine Leyland, RG14/ piece 23,409, TNA.

³ESRC project grant ES/M010953. At the time of writing, only the data for England and Wales were available, but the Scottish data are included in the data deposit as well.

Welsh census was a census of the population rather than of businesses; however, the occupational information gathered can be used to extract self-reporting business proprietors. In addition to asking their occupation, the censuses in 1891, 1901 and 1911 asked respondents to indicate whether they were employers, workers or own-account proprietors. Not everyone responded to this question, however, so the data have been weighted to take account of the non-responses.⁴ The 1851–1881 censuses identified employers by asking them to report their workforce size; however, responses were lower in some sectors and the imbalance between reported employees and the self-reported workforce indicates that not all employers followed this instruction.⁵ This analysis therefore makes use of a supplemented version of the early censuses, which uses employer/worker/own account data from the later censuses to identify from the economically active their employment status based on occupation, location, sex, marital status, age and position in their household. A full discussion of the extraction, supplementation and weighting methods deployed to create the database of British business owners is available as a Working Paper, while an accompanying volume, *The Age of Entrepreneurship*, provides an overview of key trends.⁶

The chapter is structured as follows: the first section evaluates criticisms of the census as a source for studying female economic activity and sets out the limitations of the study. Next, the chapter discusses the population of female entrepreneurs identified in terms of proportion of all businesses, sectors and firm size. This is followed by a discussion on the geography of female entrepreneurship, and an overview of key demographic aspects. Finally, the chapter provides an evaluation of the interplay of sector, age and marital status, and how they influenced entrepreneurship.

⁴Robert J. Bennett, Harry Smith and Piero Monteburano, ‘The Population of Non-corporate Business Proprietors in England and Wales 1891–1911’, *Business History* (early view, 2018).

⁵This is a very imperfect comparison, and it is likely that many non-responses were from the owners of corporations who would treat their employees as employed by their company not themselves. It is believed that almost complete returns were made by non-corporate employers.

⁶Robert J. Bennett, Piero Monteburano, Harry Smith and Carry Van Lieshout, ‘Reconstructing entrepreneur and business numbers for censuses 1851–81’, Working Paper 9, Cambridge, 2018; Robert J. Bennett, Harry Smith, Carry van Lieshout, Piero Monteburano and Gill Newton, *The Age of Entrepreneurship: Business Proprietors, Self-Employment and Corporations Since 1851* (London: Routledge, 2019).

WOMEN'S WORK AND THE CENSUS

The census has often been criticised as a source for female occupations, with married women's work considered to be particularly under-enumerated.⁷ A household's information was collected via its head, with all members defined through their relationship to this head. Most heads of household were male, and married women in particular were rarely, if ever recorded as heads of household when their husband was present. In addition, the census enumerators who copied the schedules into the Census Enumerator Books (CEBs), the General Record Office (GRO) clerks who processed and tabulated the information and the officials who issued the instructions were almost exclusively male.⁸ Against a background of the gender relations in the Victorian age, it has been argued that preconceptions about a women's place in society tended to bias the instructions, the recording of responses and thus the enumeration of women in the census.⁹ More recently, this view has been challenged by the findings that in areas where many women were enumerated as working, such as in Lancashire textile factories, married women had high labour force participation rates, particularly married women who did not yet have children.¹⁰ As Higgs and Wilkinson have pointed out, many of the reservations over using census data are only relevant for the tables *published* in the Parliamentary Papers, which had been processed by the GRO, and many of the usually cited issues with women's enumeration disappear when looking at the original CEBs.¹¹ In fact, nominal record linkage of other sources on female economic activity shows that women who were known to be economically

⁷Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasúa, 'Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labor Force Participation in the European Past', *Feminist Economics* 18, no. 4 (2012): pp. 39–67.

⁸Edward Higgs and Amanda Wilkinson, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', *History Workshop Journal* 81, no. 1 (2016): pp. 17–38.

⁹Edward Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth-century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal* 23, no. 1 (1987): pp. 59–80.

¹⁰Michael Anderson, 'What Can the Mid-Victorian Censuses Tell Us About Variations in Married Women's Employment?', *Local Populations Studies* 62 (1999): pp. 9–30; John McKay, 'Married Women and Work in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire: The Evidence of the 1851 and 1861 Census Reports', in Nigel Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield: Local Population Studies, 2007): pp. 164–81; Leigh Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 Census', in Goose, *Women's Work*, pp. 29–50.

¹¹Higgs and Wilkinson, 'Women, Occupations and Work', p. 22.

active from these records were usually accurately enumerated in the census.¹²

While this offers confidence in using the BBCE data, which are derived from the original CEBs, certain limitations have to be recognised. Although CEBs are an accurate source for full-time, regular employment, seasonal or part-time work was mostly not recorded.¹³ While this holds for men as well, the implicit focus on ‘regular’ employment contained in the instructions was more likely to affect women, and married women in particular. However, there is reason to believe that female entrepreneurs were better enumerated than female workers. For instance, a self-employed lodging housekeeper who had this as her main activity, even if it involved only a couple hours a day running her business, was likely to have been enumerated as such, while a woman spending the same number of hours working in somebody else’s business was perhaps more often being considered as part-time, and thus missed. This means that entrepreneurs were likely to be well-recorded.¹⁴

Another issue pertinent to female entrepreneurship concerns their hidden contributions to businesses that were run from home, such as groceries or inns. Women were often de facto partners, even if this was not frequently recorded as such, and the wife’s work could be hidden under the occupational descriptor of ‘grocer’s wife’.¹⁵ The practice of recording women as the wife of their husband’s occupation is problematic, as it could be used as much as a social status descriptor as an occupational title. In addition, this practice varied considerably between enumerators and between census years.¹⁶ As it was impossible to adjust for this issue, women who were only described as ‘wife of [husband’s occupation]’ or ‘[husband’s occupation]’s wife’ have been excluded from this analysis. While we acknowledge that this removes some genuine female partners in the

¹² Higgs and Wilkinson, ‘Women, Occupations and Work’, p. 27; Sophie McGeevor, ‘How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women’s “Regular” Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851’, *The History of the Family* 19, no. 4 (2014): pp. 489–512.

¹³ Shaw-Taylor, ‘Diverse experiences’; McGeevor, ‘Women’s regular employment’; Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2015).

¹⁴ This is in contrast to the situation in Canada, see Chap. 13 by Buddle, this volume.

¹⁵ Robert J. Bennett, ‘Interpreting Business Partnerships in Late Victorian Britain’, *Economic History Review*, 69, no. 4 (2016): pp. 1199–227.

¹⁶ Xuesheng You, ‘Women’s employment in England and Wales, 1851–1911’ (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2014), p. 216.

family business, the irregularities of recording between and within censuses made this a necessary move to avoid distortion. It is therefore important to remember that for married women, this analysis represents the lower boundary of entrepreneurship, which in reality was almost certainly higher.¹⁷

Our understanding of women's enumeration in the census is still developing, and this should be kept in mind while interpreting the census data. However, the data derived from the CEBs are some of the better sources for female entrepreneurship that we have for the nineteenth century, and, despite its gaps, it captures a far larger number of female business proprietors than any other large-scale source available.

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: NUMBERS, SECTORS AND SIZE

Table 12.1 displays the number of business owners who were employers or own-account proprietors, identified for each census year, broken down by sex. The total represents the full population of non-corporate business owners in England and Wales between 1851 and 1911. As shown in Table 12.1, the proportion of female business owners is just under 30 per cent. These numbers are a lot higher than previous estimates of female entrepreneurship in Great Britain. While a small but thriving literature on female entrepreneurship in Britain has emerged in the past decade, most of these are based on urban case studies, and not many have tried to quantify the proportion of female entrepreneurship beyond the case-study location.¹⁸ These studies were mainly based on trade directories and found that female business ownership ranged between 3 and 12 per cent of the total.¹⁹ Trade directories are problematic for several reasons. First, as with the census, occupations of married women were under-recorded. Second,

¹⁷ See also Catherine Bishop, 'When Your Money Is Not Your Own: Coverture and Married Women in Business in Colonial New South Wales', *Law and History Review* 33, no. 1 (2015): pp. 181–200.

¹⁸ See Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Joyce Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Alison C. Kay, *Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship. Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c. 1800–1870* (London: Routledge, 2009); Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England. Engagement in the Urban Economy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁹ Béatrice Craig, *Women and Business Since 1500. Invisible Presences in Europe and North America?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 99–100.

Table 12.1 Numbers of female and male employers, own-account proprietors and total entrepreneurs x 10,000; the percentage of total business owners that is female; the percentage of female and male entrepreneurs who are employers

	<i>Employers</i>		<i>Own account</i>		<i>Total entrepreneurs</i>		<i>% Female entrepreneurs</i>	<i>% Employers</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>
1851	5.27	39.02	26.76	43.13	32.03	82.16	28	16	48
1861	5.72	39.60	29.21	41.87	34.94	81.46	30	16	49
1881	6.62	46.96	38.75	56.59	45.38	103.55	30	15	45
1891	6.73	51.33	41.46	65.15	48.19	116.48	29	14	44
1901	6.16	52.76	46.92	75.89	53.08	128.56	29	12	41
1911	10.00	64.17	40.21	73.57	50.21	137.74	27	20	47

Source: BBCE; 1851–1881 are based on the supplemented data; 1891–1911 are based on weighted data; 1871 is not available in I-CeM/BBCE

certain sectors, such as laundries and dressmaking, were underrepresented in the directories. Finally, many trade directories often only stated an owner's initial rather than a full first name, which inhibits the identification of women. Joyce Burnette's work on mid-nineteenth-century trade directories in Birmingham shows that while 11.8 per cent of business owners were female, another 8.9 per cent were of unknown sex, meaning that the potential population of listed women could be over 20 per cent. Similar figures for Manchester (9.3 per cent female; 15 per cent unknown) and Derby (12.1 per cent female; 6.6 per cent unknown) show the difference these unknowns can make.²⁰ Jennifer Aston's estimates of female entrepreneurship in Birmingham and Leeds between 1850 and 1900 based on identifiable women in trade directories range between 3.3 and 8.2 per cent, a lot lower than the census-based results for 1851–1911. These are between 26 and 35 per cent, although her findings on the comparative difference between Birmingham and Leeds, and the downward trend in female entrepreneurship in Leeds, match similar trends based on census data.²¹

Alison C. Kay's pioneering study on female entrepreneurs in London between 1800 and 1870 is based on fire insurance records and does not state explicit proportions of female business owners apart from the esti-

²⁰ Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages*, p. 32.

²¹ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, p. 67.

mate that they were not likely to account for more than 10 per cent of the total.²² Fire insurance has its own inherent bias in that businesses with higher capital needs were more likely to be insured, and businesses taking place at home, with few additional business assets required, were less visible in the policies. In addition, trades more vulnerable to fire were more likely to appear in the records. For instance, chandlers appear in Kay's top ten businesses for both men and women in 1861 (and are second popular for women in 1851) but do not even make the top 100 of entrepreneurial occupations in the census, accounting for less than 0.1 per cent of both male and female entrepreneurs in both census years.²³

International studies based on census records show a similar proportion of female entrepreneurs during this period. In Canada, when including boarding housekeepers, the 1901 census shows 30 per cent of business owners were women. In Belgium, census data between 1880 and 1910 show that 34 per cent of businesses were female-owned, while German official statistics show that women owned around 25 per cent of businesses between 1882 and 1907.²⁴ In addition, if we look at the population of shareholders in England and Wales, who effectively owned part of an incorporated business, we find similar proportions of female involvement as in the census. Female shareholdership in a range of businesses rose from 24 to 34 per cent between the 1880s and the 1910s, while similar numbers were found for shareholders in various banks.²⁵

However, the businesses owned varied considerably between men and women, in both sector and size. Table 12.2 displays the proportion of female entrepreneurs by sector. Female business participation was consistently low in construction, transport, professional and business services, mining, finance and commerce, farming and agricultural produce processing and dealing, where they never accounted for more than 10 per cent of business owners, and often far less than that. In the personal services and

²² Kay, *Foundations*, p. 52.

²³ Kay, *Foundations*, pp. 46–7. Chandlers don't appear in the top ten occupations in similar studies based on trade directories; see, for example, Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages*, pp. 36–8 for Midlands cities.

²⁴ Craig, *Women and Business*, pp. 101, 118, 122.

²⁵ Jannette Rutterford, David R. Green, Josephine Maltby and Alastair Owens, 'Who Comprised the Nation of Shareholders? Gender and Investment in Great Britain, c. 1870–1935', *Economic History Review* 64, no. 1 (2011): pp. 157–87; John Turner, 'Wider Share Ownership?: Investors in English and Welsh Bank Shares', *Economic History Review* 62, no. 51 (2009): pp. 167–92.

Table 12.2 Percentage of businesses owned by women, by sector

<i>Sector</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>1911</i>
Farming	9.3	9.0	8.5	8.7	7.7	7.3
Mining	10.1	10.0	6.9	4.5	3.2	4.8
Construction	2.4	2.9	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.4
Manufacturing	25.2	27.3	22.2	14.4	12.2	14.5
Maker-dealing	49.1	55.8	59.0	58.3	59.8	55.9
Retail	29.2	26.8	29.3	25.4	24.7	24.1
Transport	5.8	4.9	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.0
Professional & business services	6.4	6.2	5.7	2.5	2.4	4.6
Personal services	65.6	68.5	62.6	61.6	58.0	47.8
Agricultural produce processing & dealing	9.0	8.6	7.1	8.5	6.6	7.8
Food sales	22.4	23.4	21.6	24.1	26.2	21.3
Refreshment	32.7	33.2	37.7	39.3	38.9	43.5
Finance & commerce	6.6	6.4	9.0	2.5	2.7	3.6

Source: BBCE; 1851–1881 are based on the supplemented data; 1891–1911 are based on weighted data; 1871 is not available in I-CcM/BBCE

maker-dealing sectors on the other hand, women were the majority of entrepreneurs for most census years. They also formed a significant majority in refreshment, retail, food sales and manufacturing. Unlike Kay's finding that around 15 per cent of businesswomen were in the more 'masculine' non-textile manufacturing trades in mid-nineteenth-century London, the census points to these numbers being much lower, at no more than three per cent of the total.²⁶ This is related to the nature of her source: fire insurance records tended to overestimate higher-capital businesses, which were more likely to be male-headed, and under-recorded small-scale at-home businesses, which were more often owned by women.

Female entrepreneurship, therefore, as well as female work in general, was skewed towards a few occupations. Dressmaking was the most common business for women in all census years and accounted for 30 per cent of all female entrepreneurs, with the related occupations of milliner and seamstress adding another 5 per cent. Laundry proprietors were the second most common entrepreneurial occupation for women in five out of the six census years and accounted for another 13 per cent of female business owners, but in 1911, this sector declined, driving an overall decline in female entrepreneurship rates. Lodging and boarding housekeeping, food sales such as groceries and confectionery shops, and shopkeeping also

²⁶ Kay, *Foundations*, p. 43.

consistently appeared in the most common female business occupations. These were also some changes: while running a straw plaiting business was just as widespread for a woman as owning a grocery or shop in 1851 and 1861, this industry had almost completely collapsed by the end of the century. On the other hand, education started to provide entrepreneurial opportunities by the early twentieth century, with private schoolmistresses and music teachers rising to the top of the most common female business occupations. The most common business for men was farming, but this only accounted for 15–20 per cent of all male entrepreneurs, while the next most common male businesses, shoemakers and grocers, only accounting for a few per cent.

In addition to sector, the types of businesses male and female entrepreneurs owned were quite different. Table 12.1 also displays the proportion of entrepreneurs who were employers. While between 40 and 50 per cent of male entrepreneurs employed others in their business, this number was much lower for women, at between 12 and 20 per cent. This was mainly driven by the sectors in which female business owners were most frequent: dressmaking and running a laundry mainly lent themselves to own-account work. The early censuses 1851–1881 asked employers to state the numbers in their workforce.²⁷ These data have a few issues, including respondents rounding their business sizes resulting in ‘bunching’ around the 10s, the 5s and 12, a suspected underestimation of the smallest businesses due to a tendency not to count family members such as a wife, son or daughter as employees, and poorer quality returns from some of the smallest traders who took the census question less seriously. However, even with these undercounts, the vast majority of firms owned by both men and women were microbusinesses: over 60 per cent had fewer than five employees. Small firms (5–19 employees) accounted for another 26–33 per cent of businesses, while medium and large businesses were relatively rare: firms with over 100 employees made up only 0.6 per cent of all firms in 1851, rising to 1.5 per cent in 1881. Women who did employ workers on average had fewer employees than men, although this largely depended on sector as well: very few women were active in indus-

²⁷This is a major source of information for firm size for this period which has not been possible to access until the availability of e-records and the extraction of employer responses. The GRO published tables mainly excluded women and did not include all businesses even for men. Table XXX Employers (with number of men) in *Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population Tables, II, Vol. I, Parliamentary Papers, LXXXVIII (1852–1853)*, pp. cclxxvi–cclxxix.

tries that supported large workforces, such as mining. However, in sectors where both men and women owned similar businesses, such as food sales, the average number of employees was more equal. Moreover, the few women who owned businesses in the often male-dominated industries that were characterised by large businesses also employed large numbers of employees. For instance, in 1871, Eliza Tinsley ran a nail and chain manufacturing firm employing 4000 people in Dudley, Staffordshire.²⁸

Finally, women were disproportionately affected by a general trend towards business consolidation into larger sizes in the early twentieth century. As shown in Table 12.1, there was a rise in the proportion of businesses owned by employers with corresponding absolute drops in the own-account populations for both men and women. As small businesses were consolidated into larger ones, where one employer employed a larger workforce, occupations that had previously been dominated by own-account business opportunities increasingly moved to an employer-with-workers model. As a result, women, who, more than men, had worked on their own account, became a smaller part of the business-owning population. The overall fall in the proportion of female business owners between 1901 and 1911 was driven by drops of female proportions in the maker-dealer sector and particularly the personal services sector displayed in Table 12.2. These were due to developments in the dressmaking and laundry industries, where increasing mechanisation and a shift to tasks performed within the household interplayed with firm size consolidation.²⁹ While the current BBCE database does not track people between censuses, Catherine Leyland's shift from being an own-account dressmaking business owner in 1901 to working as an employed seamstress in 1911 can be seen in the light of this more widespread trend in this sector.

GEOGRAPHY

The levels of entrepreneurship for a certain variable, such as occupation or location, can be expressed by the entrepreneurship rate: the number of entrepreneurs divided by the economically active population. While the

²⁸The 1871 manuscript CEB, Eliza Tinsley, RG10/3004, TNA.

²⁹Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy. The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860–1930* (Chicago: Chicago University Press: 1997), pp. 158–228; Stana Nenadic, 'The Social Shaping of Business Behaviour in the Nineteenth-Century Women's Garment Trades' *Journal of Social History*, 31, no. 3 (1998): pp. 625–45, p. 628.

entrepreneurship rate is generally a good measure, its main weakness is that it is heavily affected by numbers of workers in that occupation or location. For instance, an area in which many women were employed as domestic workers will look a lot less entrepreneurial than one where there was little domestic service, even if both places have similar numbers of business-owning grocers, shopkeepers and dressmakers. This relation to the number of workers in a certain location or occupation also means that levels of entrepreneurship are also a function of employment opportunities in that location or occupation. A high rate of female entrepreneurship in, for instance, lodging housekeeping, is due to the fact there was little employment to be found in that sector, meaning that to be a lodging housekeeper meant starting a business. In certain areas, low female entrepreneurship rates were due to high levels of female employment, such as in the textile regions. The entrepreneurship rate, therefore, should not be read as value-loaded. It is an expression of levels of business proprietors; hence a low female entrepreneurship rate could equate to either a low level of activity or a low level of economic opportunity for women. For these reasons, the geography of female entrepreneurship has been expressed in two ways: Fig. 12.1 shows the female entrepreneurship rate by Registration Sub District (RSD) for 1851 and 1911, while in Fig. 12.2, the geography of female entrepreneurship has been expressed by mapping the share of all female entrepreneurs present in a given RSD for these years.³⁰ While this measure is of course affected by population density combined with the entrepreneurship rate, both sets of maps give a good overview of the distribution of female entrepreneurs in England and Wales.

As the figures reveal, female entrepreneurship was heavily concentrated in a small number of areas. In 1851, the most striking concentration was in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, which was the centre of the straw plaiting industry. As noted above, straw plaiting provided many opportunities for female business proprietorship in the mid-nineteenth century. There were also clusters of high female rates in Braintree and Sudbury on the Essex-Suffolk border, which were centres of silk production, an industry in which female proprietors were also significant. Another concentration can be found around Whitby in Yorkshire, which was a resort and fishing town with extensive lodging and refreshment sectors in which women were commonly involved. In contrast, there

³⁰The RSD is a census spatial unit and represents the smallest scale at which business owners can be currently accurately mapped.

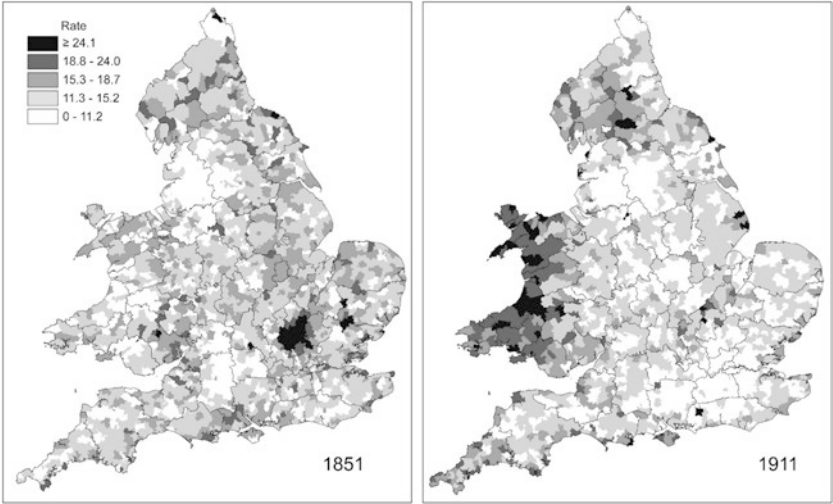


Fig. 12.1 Female entrepreneurship rates in 1851 and 1911 by RSD (entrepreneurs as percentage of economically active). (Source: BBCE; 1851 is based on the supplemented data; 1911 is based on weighted data)

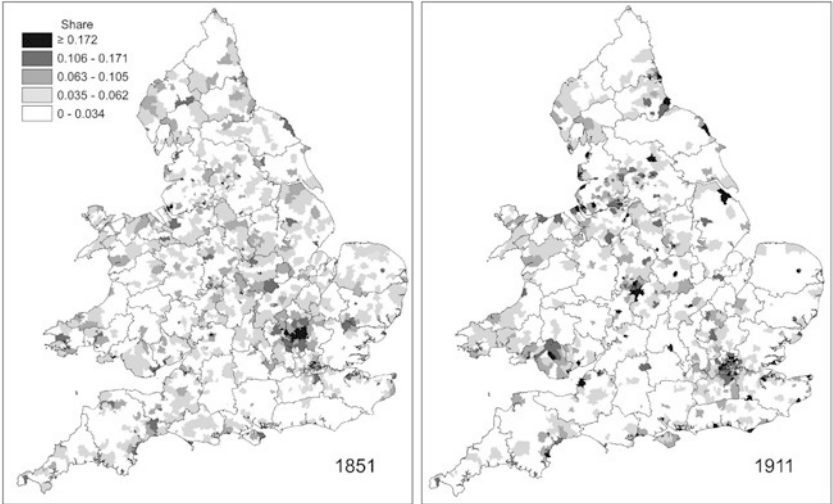


Fig. 12.2 Female entrepreneurship shares in 1851 and 1911 by RSD (entrepreneurs as percentage of all female entrepreneurs for England and Wales). (Source: BBCE; 1851 is based on the supplemented data; 1911 is based on weighted data)

were large parts of northern England and West Wales and parts of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire where female entrepreneurship was surprisingly low in 1851. These included areas with industries commonly associated with high levels of female employment in the nineteenth century: the textile mills of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, and glove and clothing production in Gloucestershire. As these areas offered women extensive opportunities for waged labour, they had less need to be entrepreneurs than elsewhere.

By 1911, the situation had changed substantially. The cluster of female business proprietorship in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire almost disappeared after the straw plaiting industry collapsed in the 1870s and 1880s, as did the smaller concentration based on the silk industry on the Essex/Suffolk border. Female entrepreneurship rates in Wales were substantially higher, however, driven by an increase in female activity in maker-dealing, refreshment and retail and a decline in female employment in agriculture. As women moved from sectors in which they tended to be workers to ones in which they were often business proprietors, the entrepreneurship rate rose. Low entrepreneurship areas still persisted in the textile centres of Northern England but had also spread through the South East, as well as the East Midlands. This was mainly driven by a rise in women workers in professional and business services, which included teaching and clerical work, in addition to already high levels of domestic service.

Figure 12.2, depicting the entrepreneurship shares, shows a different aspect of the geography of female entrepreneurship: one that became more concentrated in urban areas between 1851 and 1911. By 1911, there were important clusters of female business proprietors in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Bristol and other towns. These had been more limited in 1851. These figures also show the disappearance of straw plaiting and the consequent collapse of female entrepreneurship in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. The cluster of female entrepreneurs in Glamorgan is somewhat surprising, given the emphasis in the literature on the poor opportunities for economic activity available to women in mining and heavy industry areas; however, the range of female business activities was narrower than elsewhere and concentrated in a few occupations. For example, Glamorgan had an unusually large proportion of dressmakers, 11.4 per cent of the female economically active population compared to 6.4 per cent in England and Wales as a whole. Finally, many coastal towns stand

out as concentrations of female business owners. These include the fashionable resort towns of Eastbourne and Scarborough but also port towns such as Folkestone and Grimsby. These were characterised by a transient population in need of lodging, refreshment and laundries, businesses that were predominantly female-owned. Blackpool alone accounted for almost 7 per cent of the total number of female boarding housekeepers in 1901, for instance, while spa towns such as Bath and university towns such as Cambridge had some of the highest concentrations of laundresses.

Despite these concentrations in cities, urban areas were actually less entrepreneurial than rural areas. The spatial units have been coded on a scale running from rural to urban, with two transitional levels.³¹ For both men and women, the rural parishes showed the highest level of entrepreneurship and the urban the lowest. This was partly a reflection of the high level of entrepreneurship in farming but also a result of limited waged labour opportunities in rural areas that encouraged setting up businesses. Cities offered more opportunities for workers. Around 15 per cent of female entrepreneurs in rural areas were farmers, a sector that was negligible in cities, but still there were higher proportions of dressmakers and other clothing manufacturers, as well as laundry businesses, in rural areas compared to cities. Proportions of women running food sales businesses, such as groceries, were similar across the urban/rural divide. Cities offered women a higher diversity of opportunities both in waged work as well as in business.

AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Much more than for male entrepreneurs, literature on female entrepreneurship and women's work is couched in terms of their life cycle, through the stages of youth, early adulthood, marriage, small children, older children and old age. This section discusses how an individual's chance of being a business proprietor varied according to their life cycle stage. Bob Morris has placed the family at the centre of his discussion of the middle-class property cycle.³² This argued that young adults moved from earning

³¹ Harry Smith, Robert J. Bennett and Dragana Radicic, 'Towns in Victorian England and Wales: A New Classification' *Urban History* 45, no. 4 (2018): pp. 568–594.

³² Robert J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies Amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 142–177.

income and loan repayment to entrepreneurial capital during the early stages of family formation, increasingly accumulating assets within the family during later adulthood, to transfer to rentier forms of income to provide for old age as well as dependent family members. For women, this life cycle is particularly linked to family events.³³ Women moved through life starting as wage-earning single young adults, got married and, in great numbers, left paid employment, to return in widowhood taking over their late husband's business before passing it to adult children. Aston has suggested, however, that women could and did follow Morris' property cycle, combining business ownership with marriage and motherhood.³⁴ The census data allow us to examine the interactions of the life cycle and business proprietorship in further detail, starting with the effect of age on the chances of owning a business.

Older people were more likely to be entrepreneurs, but the effect of age lessened as people aged. In a period before the widespread existence of pensions, continuing to work was important for workers and entrepreneurs alike.³⁵ While it is likely that many middle-class business proprietors were able to make greater provision for their old age than workers, through the purchase of property and other investments, many still had to continue working in order to survive.³⁶ Business proprietors had the considerable advantage that they primarily used their own labour, and were less likely to be involved in the kind of manual labour that was less feasible later in life; both these factors may have encouraged people to continue running their business into old age.³⁷ Figure 12.3 shows the proportion of people who were ever married, the proportion who were economically active and the proportion of entrepreneurs all as a percentage of the total population, for

³³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, revised edn. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), pp. 198–228.

³⁴ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, pp. 204–5.

³⁵ Pat Thane, 'The Experience of Retirement in Britain, Past and Present', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 22, no. 3 (2011): pp. 13–32, pp. 14–17; Leslie Hannah, *Inventing Retirement: The Development of Occupational Pensions in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1986), pp. 5–14.

³⁶ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, pp. 142–178; David R. Green, Alastair Owens, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford, 'Lives in the Balance? Gender, Age and Assets in Late-Nineteenth-Century England and Wales', *Continuity and Change* 24, no. 2 (2009): pp. 307–35.

³⁷ Dudley Baines and Paul Johnson, 'Did They Jump or Were They Pushed? The Exit of Older Men from the London Labor Market, 1929–1931', *The Journal of Economic History* 59, no. 4 (1999): pp. 949–71.

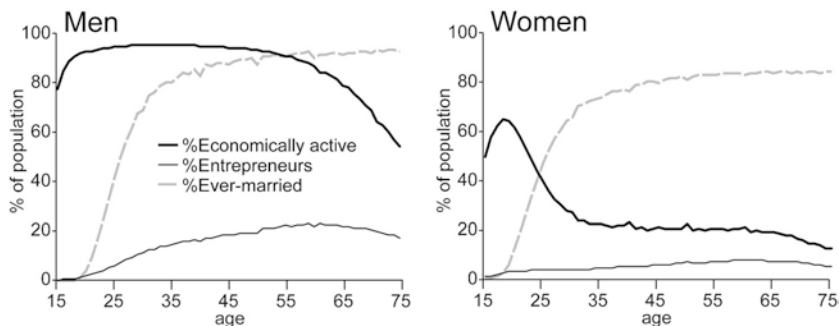


Fig. 12.3 Labour force participation rate, proportion of entrepreneurs and marriage rate for women and men by age, 1901. (Source: BBCE based on weighted data)

1901.³⁸ Well over 80 per cent of men remained economically active until their 50s, after which their labour force participation rate gently declined. Women, on the other hand, were only economically active in substantial numbers in the youngest age groups, and their labour force participation rate dropped steeply in their 20s as the marriage rate rose. After the age of 30, only around 20 per cent of women remained economically active, and this declined further in their late 60s. While the proportion of women who were economically active was thus much lower than for men, this group was remarkably entrepreneurial. Moreover, while the life events surrounding marriage and the arrival of small children evidently played an important role in removing women from the labour force (as defined by enumerated census occupations), it had less of an effect on their levels of entrepreneurship, which do not show a similar decline as the marriage rate increased.

In fact marriage had a positive effect on entrepreneurship in both men and women, and this effect was greater for women. Figure 12.4 shows entrepreneurship rates for men and women by marital status. While entrepreneurship rates for single men and women were roughly similar, entrepreneurship rates rose for ever-married men and women, but particularly

³⁸The economically active population included all people with an occupation enumerated in the census aged 15 or over; ever married included all people who were married, divorced or widowed.

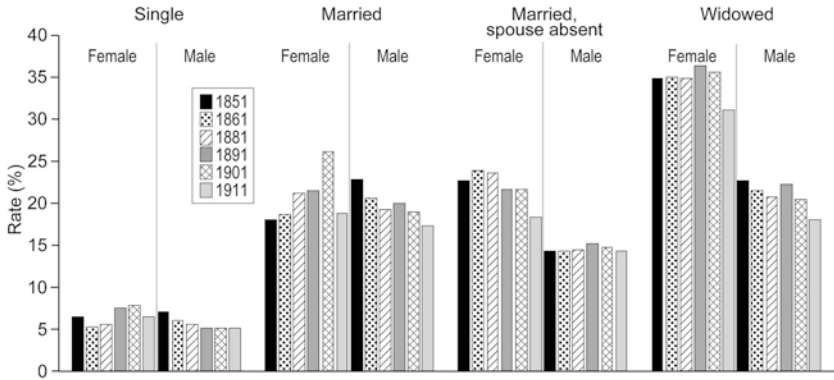


Fig. 12.4 Gender-specific entrepreneurship rates by marital status, 1851–1911. (Source: BBCE; 1851–1881 are based on the supplemented data; 1891–1911 are based on weighted data; 1871 is not available in I-CeM/BBCE)

so for widowed women and women who were married but whose husband was absent on census night.³⁹ While there is an interaction with age that has an effect—single people were on average younger and thus less likely to be entrepreneurial—the trends held up across the life cycle and in fact the marriage advantage increased with age. There were several aspects to this. Part of it could be caused by better census enumeration of female business owners over female workers, but this is likely to explain only a small part of the difference. A more important role can be found, again, in the more limited opportunities for women in terms of waged work. Women’s non-entrepreneurial work was extremely skewed, with over 30 per cent active in domestic service. This was mainly done at a young age, and opportunities for married women in this sector were not as abundant. For married women, it is evident that from 1851 to 1901, entrepreneurship increased steadily even though their labour force participation rate declined over the same period, suggesting that restricted opportunities led to entrepreneurial activity. The 1901–1911 decline in entrepreneurship is visible here for both sexes, but particularly so for women.

³⁹This is an ambiguous category: while many of these women were indeed married and their husband was away on business, family visits or served in the navy, there were also women who claimed married status for purposes of respectability. In addition, it is not known how many of these spouses were away just for the night or absent for a longer term.

However, restricted opportunities do not offer the full explanation, since marriage made men more entrepreneurial as well, and they were less affected by restrictions in waged work after marriage. Marriage brought with it added resources, it could provide access to new social networks, capital or potential labour, all with the potential to facilitate starting a business. On the other hand, additional costs incurred after marriage could provide an incentive for one or both of the couple to start their own business. Finally, as marriage and starting a business both required certain levels of capital, an individual might have delayed marriage and starting a business until a later point in their life cycle. This positive effect of marriage on entrepreneurship was not unique to Britain. Indeed, as other chapters on Canada and the United States in this book show, family considerations and more limited access to waged labour provided incentives for married women to run their own business.⁴⁰

INTERACTIONS OF AGE, MARITAL STATUS AND SECTOR

The previous section has treated female entrepreneurs as a homogenous group. However, there were marked differences in the age and marital status profiles of female entrepreneurs in different sectors. Figure 12.5 shows these profiles for some of the key occupations in which women ran businesses: dressmaking, laundry, lodging housekeeping, groceries, farming and teaching. These six occupations together accounted for over 60 per cent of all female entrepreneurs in 1901, and other years were similar. The differences between the sectors are stark, in both age and marital status. Dressmaking stands out as an occupation that allowed women to run their own business from a young age, with the highest number of entrepreneurs aged 15–24. Related textile manufacturing trades, such as millinery, followed a similar pattern. Most other occupations featured a more gradual build-up, with small numbers of entrepreneurs at a younger age, peaking in middle age and then declining. The largest groups of laundry owners, lodging housekeepers and grocers were between 45 and 54, with farmers skewed towards slightly older women and teachers skewed towards younger women. Again, related occupations followed similar patterns: confectioners and other businesswomen in the food sales sector resembled the age structure of grocers, whereas innkeepers looked most like lodging housekeepers.

⁴⁰ See Chap. 10 by Lewis and Chap. 13 by Buddle, this volume.

Marital status patterns varied considerably as well. While demographic trends influence age and marital status patterns, with younger women more likely to be single and older women more likely to be widowed, Fig. 12.5 shows clear differences between the sectors. Both dressmakers and teachers stand out as least likely to marry, even at higher age. Farmers, in particular, were very often widows even at a young age. Very few lodging housekeepers were married with a husband living with them at home, with the majority either single, widowed or married with an absent husband. Only laundry owners and grocers were likely to be married women running their own businesses, with the majority of entrepreneurs between the ages of 35 and 44 married and living with their husbands. I-CeM allows us to link married couples who were at home together on census night, meaning we can analyse the occupations of entrepreneurial women's spouses. While the majority of laundresses were married to labourers or men active in various construction trades, grocers were most likely married to another grocer, with significant minorities married to coal dealers and farmers as well. This shows that the census data uncover both businesses that were run by a married woman on her own, as well as businesses that were run in partnership by a married couple, which are often hidden in historical data.

The training and assets required to run a business played an important role in the creation of these patterns. Dressmakers and milliners followed an apprenticeship to teach them the skills of the business, but, once they passed this, their trades only required a small amount of capital to start up a small business.⁴¹ On the other hand, seamstresses also performed needlework, but entrepreneurial seamstresses were more likely to be older and more likely to be married than dressmakers. At a younger age and without the benefit of an apprenticeship, the majority of seamstresses were workers. Teaching required some education as well. Both dressmaking and teaching were considered respectable ways for a young woman to earn money and allowed them a certain level of independence. In 1901, 13 per cent of single dressmaker entrepreneurs headed their own households, while worker dressmakers often depended on others, with only three per cent recorded as heads of households. A mid-nineteenth-century *Guide to Trade* mentioned the opportunity for a dressmaker to have a home of her

⁴¹ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 17 volumes 1902–3), second series, III, p. 48.

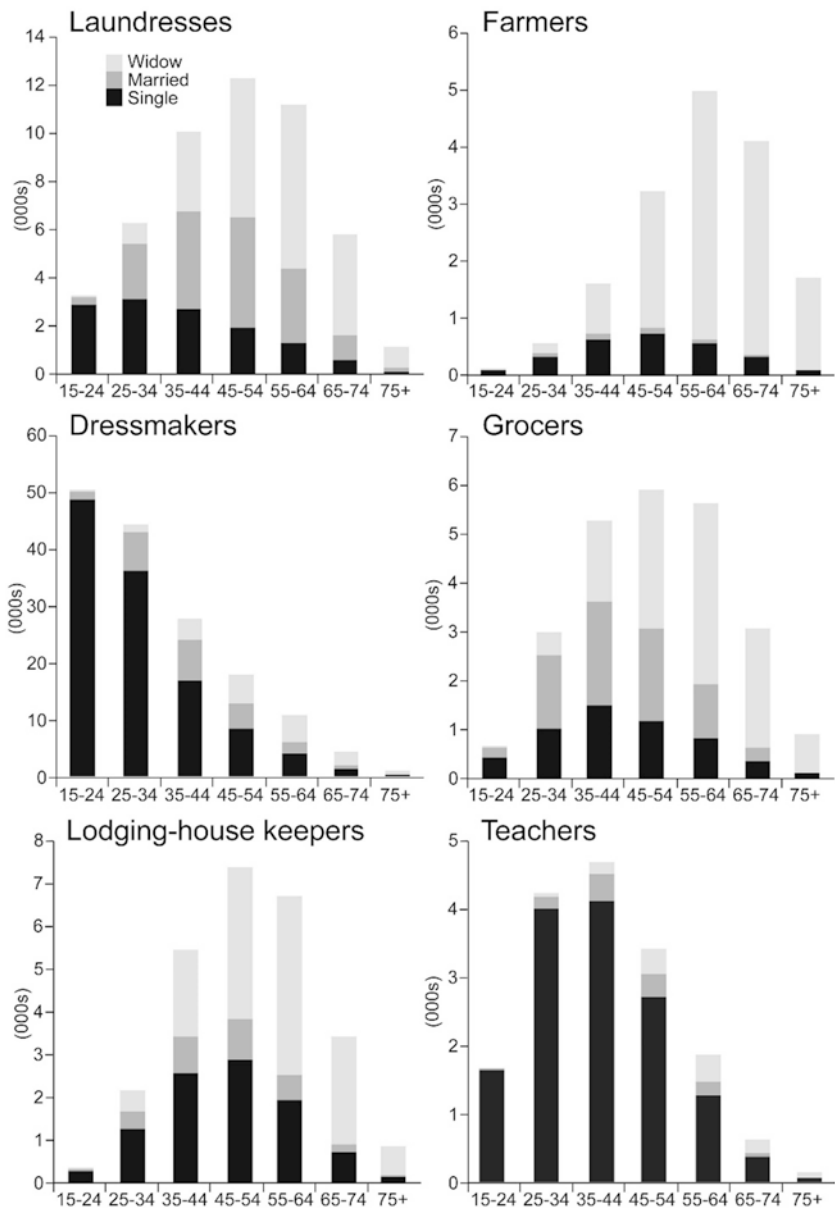


Fig. 12.5 Age and marital status for six key female sectors, 1901. (Source: BBCE; based on weighted data)

own as one of the more compelling reasons to choose a dressmaking apprenticeship over other occupational options.⁴²

Laundry work, on the other hand, was considered a lower-status occupation and often seen as one of the sweating trades.⁴³ In common with the textile trades, it had low start-up costs, requiring few additional skills and equipment beyond what was already required for the household, and laundry work was available all year around. The advantage of taking on laundry work as a self-employed business owner was that it offered a degree of flexibility. Charles Booth stated that many laundry proprietors were said to complain about the irregular hours worked by their employees, who worked around their home duties.⁴⁴ Setting up one's own laundry business therefore allowed a woman to fit the work into her domestic routine. Many of these were run as family businesses: in 1901, over 40 per cent of the married laundress employers had laundry workers living with them in their household and over half of these were daughters.⁴⁵ Grocers also relied heavily on family labour: of the 1565 female grocer employers in 1901, over half employed at least one person from their own household, in most cases their children. Widows were the most likely to do so, which probably reflected their need to replace the lost labour of their late spouse in the family partnership.

The relative lack of young farmers and lodging housekeeper entrepreneurs is probably because both occupations required more substantial capital input in the form of a house or land.⁴⁶ Farming in particular was an interesting case: unlike the other occupations in Fig. 12.5, where the vast majority of entrepreneurs were self-employed, over 50 per cent of all female farm entrepreneurs were employing other people. These employers were even more likely to be widowed than self-employed farmers, and

⁴² Anon. *The Guide to Trade, The Dress-maker, and the Milliner* (London: Charles Knight and Co., 1843), pp. 5–6.

⁴³ Patricia E. Malcolmson, *English Laundresses: A Social History, 1850–1930* (Chicago: Chicago University Press: 1986), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Booth, *Life and Labour*, second series, IV, p. 266.

⁴⁵ A further 20 per cent were other younger female relatives, and another 20 per cent were live-in servants and boarders, the remainder was made up by older female relatives and the very occasional male householder. Competition from steam laundries became significant only from the early 1900s.

⁴⁶ Although the house used need not have been owned by the lodging housekeeper themselves, many were rented given that the majority of people rented accommodation; see Martin Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City: Working-Class Housing, 1850–1914* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), p. 198.

often at a young age: almost 40 per cent of female employer farmers were widows by the age of 35. While farming consistently appeared in the top ten of female entrepreneurial occupations, and was the top occupation for female employers, farming as a whole, as shown in Table 12.2, was a very male-dominated occupation. Male entrepreneurial farmers were most likely to be married. In contrast to groceries, farms seem to have been mainly enumerated with the husband as main business owner, as evident from the small number of married farmer women. However, it seems very probable that they had been involved in the farm business throughout most of their marriage and continued to run the business after as widows. Other male-dominated occupations, such as blacksmiths, show a similar distribution of female entrepreneurs: comparatively older and often widowed. It should be emphasised that the fact that these women took over their late husband's businesses does not mean they were any less entrepreneurial in spirit than the self-made entrepreneurs such as dressmakers. As Fig. 12.5 shows, in many cases their business-owning widowhood started quite early in life, and they might have ran a particular business for a longer period than did their late husband.⁴⁷ In addition, since widows were better enumerated in the census than married women, their contribution to the business during married life, which had been hidden, was only revealed at this stage.

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, historians have started to challenge the idea that women generally disappeared from the world of business somewhere between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, before re-emerging well into the twentieth century.⁴⁸ While the nineteenth century had long been considered a time when the division of public and private spheres solidified, with women withdrawing from business to become homemakers, the new BBCE data show that women ran businesses in greater numbers than hitherto estimated. A decline took place, but this did not occur until the early twentieth century. Rather than because of social conventions or homemaker ideology, this decline was due to a general trend towards business consolidation, which meant that the self-employed business population contracted, affecting men as well.

⁴⁷ Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship*, p. 111.

⁴⁸ Craig, *Women and Business*, p. 1.

The census data show that there was no typical female entrepreneur. Female entrepreneurship, just like male entrepreneurship, was a varied experience. Enterprises ranged from self-employed sole ownership businesses, to family partnerships, to large employers of men, women and children. Entrepreneurs included women from different classes, across a range of ages and, while many were single or widowed, marriage actually provided an incentive to entrepreneurship for those who remained in the economically active population. While there were plenty of women who owned businesses in sectors that are often thought of as ‘typically masculine’, the majority concentrated in feminised occupations such as dress-making, laundry work and lodging housekeeping, as well as in emerging roles as school proprietresses. Women’s choices about the kinds of businesses they ran were constrained by a series of factors. Some of these constraints can be observed in the census data—age, marital status, sector, the choice between employing others and working on one’s own account—but others are invisible, in no small part due to the nature of the census as a source. For many, setting up a business would have been a choice thrust upon them by necessity and the increasingly gendered nature of the waged labour market, while also offering opportunities to those who had entrepreneurial capacity. Catherine Leyland exemplified some of these opportunities and restrictions.

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Skirting the Boundaries: Businesswomen in Colonial British Columbia, 1858–1914

Melanie Buddle

Marital status is an important part of the story of female entrepreneurship. This chapter uses British Columbia, Canada, to investigate how marriage, motherhood and widowhood affected the business behaviours of white settler women from the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of World War I. Looking at census records, newspaper articles, advertisements and business directories demonstrates the importance of marital status on women's work opportunities in British Columbia. The colony-turned-province provides a good case study for exploring the work worlds of women who ran their own businesses as sole supporters of families or as contributors to family incomes.

This chapter argues that the gender imbalance and resulting high rates of marriage (which also made the presence of children more likely) did not stop women from working but influenced the likelihood they would work on their own account rather than as employees. My research also confirms what other contributors to this collection suggest: any residual notion that men and women operated in separate spheres is inconsequential and need

M. Buddle (✉)
Trent University, Peterborough, ON, Canada
e-mail: melaniebuddle@trentu.ca

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not be central to the study of female entrepreneurship. Nineteenth-century women and men in British Columbia did not seem to take notice of a separation of private and public, and historians of businesswomen need not, either.¹ Just like men, self-employed women lived and worked in and out of their homes, in public trade and in domestic settings, in small and large businesses and in all kinds of work, although their businesses were occupationally segregated along gendered notions of what constituted women's work. Family and marriage are, however, important aspects of female entrepreneurship. Women running businesses were much more likely to be married or once-married (living without a husband due to death, divorce, separation or desertion) than women who were employees; they also often had children to support. Some women worked in small businesses outside the home, while others operated businesses in their houses, with children underfoot. The desire or need to earn an income motivated women with dependent family members to work. Limited wage-earning opportunities for women, the likelihood that available wage-earning roles were held by young single women and expanded commercial opportunities in a newly expanding colony with a need for services that women could provide led many married women to turn to self-employment.²

I use the terms self-employed women, entrepreneurial women and businesswomen interchangeably. Most dictionaries define an entrepreneur as someone who organises, owns or manages a business, assumes associated risks and attempts to profit from the business: someone who is self-employed is 'earning income directly from one's own business, trade, or profession rather than as a specified salary or wages from an employer'.³

¹For a longer discussion of the limited value of separate spheres ideology for businesswomen, see Chap. 1, Bishop and Aston, this volume. See also Melanie Buddle, 'The Business of Women: Gender, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901–1971' (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2003). See also Peter Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution? Gender and Wealth in English Canada, 1860–1930* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2008), pp. 8–9: he discusses the interconnectedness of public and private and suggests that a continuum may be a better term.

²The author gratefully acknowledges funding support for this chapter provided by the Symons Trust Fund at Trent University. Some of the arguments and analysis presented in this chapter were previously published in Melanie Buddle, *The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901–51* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2010).

³See, for example, common definitions: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-employed> and <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrepreneur> and <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/entrepreneur> Accessed 20 April 2019.

The women I study are both. The census term ‘on own account’ is also useful terminology to differentiate between wage-earning and self-employed women. The term businesswoman can refer much more broadly to a woman who works in a business or in a white-collar or executive role, but who may not own the business: however, for this chapter, I use the term businesswoman to indicate self-employment.

I concur with other scholars in this volume that, regardless of the size or longevity of their businesses, entrepreneurial women took risks and earned a living; their self-employment opportunities were often constrained by age, gender, location, marital status or the local economy, but they made a choice and hoped to profit.⁴ Women operated a wide variety of businesses in the province of British Columbia. In urban settings, directories show women running grocery, tobacco and confectionery stores, bakeries, tearooms, laundries, women’s clothing stores and millinery stores. These were very common businesses for women in nineteenth-century North America.⁵ In rural or more isolated areas, while directories were less useful and often non-existent due to very small populations, census data and newspaper advertisements show women running farms, boarding houses, hotels and restaurants. Census data also provides valuable information about the marital status of women, their households and their rates and types of self-employment. Marriage, motherhood and widowhood aligned well with entrepreneurial endeavours. Compared to their counterparts in the rest of Canada, women in the newly forming province had higher rates of marriage as well as higher rates of entrepreneurship.

Other scholars have noted these characteristics in similar gold rush settlement zones and eras. In the 1890s Klondike Gold Fields, where white women were also scarce, historian Charlene Porsild noted a corresponding demand for restaurants, saloons and laundries—types of services that women were ideally placed to provide.⁶ Elizabeth Herr observed similar patterns in the late 1800s in Colorado, where, she suggests, women had a

⁴ See Chap. 12 by van Lieshout, Smith and Bennett, this volume.

⁵ See Chap. 10 by Lewis, this volume: the US women in her study are in remarkably similar businesses. Carry van Lieshout et al. find similar concentrations of women in the same occupational sectors in England, 1851–1911.

⁶ Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men, and Community in the Klondike* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), pp. 63–64.

variety of enterprising opportunities.⁷ Edith Sparks found high rates of female proprietorship by women with ‘capital intentions’ in mid-nineteenth-century San Francisco, California, the site of, like British Columbia, a gold rush and a gender imbalance. In San Francisco, women opened businesses that filled an economic niche in what Sparks calls ‘cultural domesticity’ marketing skills associated with women’s work to a population of males in need of food, accommodation and clean laundry.⁸ Women pursued opportunities ‘where their skills and resources could be leveraged to meet an economic need’.⁹ Gender imbalances also inflated the market for domestic services and created ‘unusually high opportunity for women proprietors’.¹⁰

American scholars have also noted the relationship of women’s proprietorship to marriage and motherhood. Porsild found low numbers of women, but high rates of marriage and high rates of entrepreneurship among those women, in the Klondike; Sparks observed the same in San Francisco. Angel Kwolek-Folland argues that women’s involvement in business often occurred ‘in the context of their families’ needs’.¹¹ Lucy Elserveld Murphy illustrates a similar pattern in the American Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century: ‘a proprietor could set her own hours and, when necessary, locate the work most advantageously relative to her children’.¹² Women in the Canadian west had a similar experience: they married in higher-than-average numbers, opened businesses in higher-than-average numbers, and opened those businesses in areas where they could shrewdly capitalise on domestic skills and in sex-segregated trades.

The crown colony of Vancouver Island was created in 1849. In 1851, Governor James Douglas established colonial institutions in Victoria, then a small white settler society of mostly Hudson’s Bay Company men and the main centre of commerce and settlement on Vancouver Island. In 1858, gold was discovered on the Fraser River. The region, at the time

⁷ Elizabeth Herr, ‘Women, Marital Status, and Work Opportunities in 1880 Colorado’, *Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 2 (June 1995): pp. 339–366, p. 341.

⁸ Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850–1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 10.

⁹ Sparks, p. 11.

¹⁰ Sparks, p. 16.

¹¹ Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (New York: Twayne, 1998), p. 45.

¹² Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, ‘Business Ladies: Midwestern Women and Enterprise, 1850–1880’, *Journal of Women’s History* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1991): pp. 65–89, p. 71.

sparsely settled by white fur traders but with a large Indigenous population, changed quickly as thousands of excited miners headed first to Victoria and then to the mainland. The British Colonial office established the mainland as the colony of British Columbia in 1858. A second gold rush in the Cariboo region (central interior) of the colony, also on the mainland, began in 1861, peaking in 1863. In 1866, the colony of Vancouver Island united with the mainland colony of British Columbia, and in 1871, the colony became a province of Canada.¹³

In the 1860s, British Columbia was, like other nineteenth-century gold rush societies, characterised by an influx of single white males (first for gold and eventually for jobs in primary resource extraction, road and railway building), a perceived culture of rowdy and undisciplined masculinity and a perception among the white settler population that the province was on the outskirts of civilisation.¹⁴ It was also a contact zone, where white settlers met local Indigenous populations (sometimes in violence, and usually with misunderstandings and population decline for Indigenous communities). The pre-contact Indigenous population and its subsequent decline relies on ‘impressionistic guestimates’.¹⁵ Imperfect census taking and differing understandings of whether marginal laundry businesses, farming, hunting and fishing were entrepreneurial have distorted the ways women’s business stories have been told and, in particular, have hidden the experiences of Indigenous women. Sources used for this study did not yield rich examples of entrepreneurial Indigenous women.¹⁶ My work

¹³For a very brief summary of colonial British Columbia’s history (the gold rush era, and the road from colony to province), see <http://www.canadahistoryproject.ca/1871/1871-02-early-history-bc.html> and <http://www.canadahistoryproject.ca/1871/1871-03-political-evol-bc.html> Accessed 18 November 2018.

¹⁴I have dealt with the archetypal elements of British Columbian gold rush society and characteristics of rapid white settlement on culture and society elsewhere. See Melanie Buddle, ‘“All the Elements of a Permanent Community”: A History of Society, Culture and Entertainment in the Cariboo’ (master’s thesis, University of Northern British Columbia, 1997). See also Barry M. Gough, ‘The Character of the British Columbia Frontier’, *BC Studies* 32 (Winter 1976–77): pp. 28–40; and S.D. Clark, *The Developing Canadian Community*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 82.

¹⁵John Douglas Belshaw, ‘The West We Have Lost: British Columbia’s Demographic Past and an Agenda for Population History’, *Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1998): pp. 25–47, p. 40.

¹⁶For a well-researched article that nicely corrects some of this lack of data, see Mica Jorgenson, ‘Into That Country to Work’: Aboriginal Economic Activities during Barkerville’s Gold Rush, *BC Studies* 185 (Spring 2015): pp. 109–137.

focuses on white settler women, themselves barely visible in sources, as a first step in expanding our understanding of women's work in British Columbia.

In British Columbia, there were jobs for men in a resource-oriented economy initially dominated by mining but also by the lumber industry, road building and agriculture.¹⁷ The emerging middle class was composed of merchants, government officials and tradespeople. For women, wage-earning work was scarce.¹⁸ Sylvia Van Kirk's examination of women in the Cariboo region of central-interior British Columbia in the mid-nineteenth century documents entrepreneurial services that women provided: food and drink, clean clothing, sewing and accommodations. Van Kirk demonstrates that many businesswomen were also married. They did not choose work over marriage. Many were also respected members of their communities. Janet Morris ran a number of boarding houses and hotels in Barkerville, a prominent gold rush community in the Cariboo region; she arrived with one husband as Mrs Morris and after his death, she married William Allan and continued in business. Allan was a pillar of her community as her obituary in the local newspaper (1870) indicated:

Miners ... stopped work and came to Barkerville to see the last of poor Jeannie. The banks and nearly all the stores in Barkerville were closed during the funeral. Mrs. Allan came to Cariboo in 1862 and acquired the respect of everyone by the numerous acts of kindness she performed ... All the flags in Barkerville were hung at half-mast.¹⁹

¹⁷See Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), pp. 102, 142–45, and 159. For more on early British Columbia's resource-based economy and immigration, and the nature of men's work, see Hugh J.M. Johnston, 'Native People, Settlers and Sojourners 1871–1916', pp. 165–204 and Allen Seager, 'The Resource Economy, 1871–1921', pp. 205–250, in Hugh J.M. Johnston (ed.), *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996).

¹⁸Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–187* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 12–16.

¹⁹Sylvia Van Kirk, 'A Vital Presence: Women in the Cariboo Gold Rush, 1862–1875', in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag (eds), *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women* (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992): pp. 21–37, pp. 23–24. Van Kirk cites the local Barkerville newspaper, the Cariboo *Sentinel*, in detailing Janet Allan's marriages and subsequent death. See: the Cariboo *Sentinel*, 10 September 1870, p. 3.

Van Kirk argues that white women played expanded social and economic roles in gold rush society with an impact ‘out of all proportion to their numbers’.²⁰ And their numbers were small. In 1861 there were 1456 white men living on the mainland of British Columbia and only 192 white women: they made up 11.7 per cent of the white population in the mainland colony.²¹ Van Kirk identified 75 white women living in the Cariboo region during the gold rush years (approximately 1862–75).²² In 1867 the population of white women in the united colony of British Columbia (including the mainland and Vancouver Island) was 1569, or 22.5 per cent of the total white population.²³ Adele Perry quotes census officials who acknowledged that their numbers were a sketchy estimate rather than a true account; nonetheless, there was a significant gender imbalance in the white population.²⁴ And it continued: the ratio of adult men to women was 2.10 to 1 in the province of British Columbia in 1901.²⁵ Just 32 per cent of the adult population was female. In 1911, the ratio of adult men to adult women was still 2 to 1. This was not the pattern in the rest of the country in the same period: the ratio of men to women in the rest of Canada was almost even. By the time World War I began, the province was more like the rest of the country; the early settlement characteristics of long distances, very few manufacturing or urban wage-earning jobs and a

²⁰ Van Kirk, ‘A Vital Presence’, pp. 21–22.

²¹ Great Britain Colonial Office, British Columbia, ‘Blue Books of Statistics, 1861–1870’, mflm. 626A and 627A, British Columbia Archives; cited in Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 15.

²² Van Kirk, ‘A Vital Presence’, p. 22.

²³ Great Britain, Colonial office, ‘Blue Books of Statistics, British Columbia, 1861–1870’, British Columbia Archives, CO 64/1, mflm. 626A; cited in Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 15.

²⁴ British Columbia, ‘Blue Books of Statistics – 1867’, mflm. 627A, British Columbia Archives, 140–141; cited in Adele Perry, ‘Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men: Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia’, *BC Studies* 105/106 (Spring/Summer 1995): pp. 27–43, p. 36.

²⁵ Data taken from *Census of Canada*, 1901 and 1931. For full employment numbers and marital status of adult and employed adult population, BC and Canada, see also Buddle, ‘The Business of Women’, Appendices. Note that in all cases in this article, detailed 1901 data uses the Canadian Families Project database. While it reflects lower numbers, the amount of detailed data that it provided this researcher was invaluable. The database is available at <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/cfp/what/index.html>

high ratio of men to women were less apparent. By the 1921 census, the ratio of adult men to women had dropped to 1.34.²⁶

In the height of the gold rush era, single adult women had many marriage prospects, while men lamented the lack of marriageable white women to provide household comforts, companionship and virtuous domesticity to the colony.²⁷ Colonial promoters in the 1860s, like Protestant preacher, lecturer and writer Matthew Macfie, indicated that ‘virtuous unmarried’ white women were ‘urgently required on social and moral grounds’.²⁸ The Bishop of Oxford, representing the Anglican Columbia Mission Society, warned settlers that they needed white women’s ‘healing and elevating society’, to limit mixed-race marriages and to elevate the moral tone of the colony.²⁹

The first so-called bride ship arrived in 1862 with the local press eagerly describing the ‘living freight...destined for the colonial and matrimonial market’.³⁰ Whether or not they reformed the rowdy male mining culture, women did marry in high numbers in the colony.³¹ In 1901, 59.3 per cent of all adult women in the province were married, compared to 45 per cent

²⁶For data on total adult population, gainfully employed adult population and marital status of adult population, see Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1921*, vol. 2, table 24; *Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 1, table 17B; vol. 7, tables 25–29; *Census of Canada 1941*, vol. 1, tables 20 and 63; vol. 3, table 7; vol. 7, table 5; *Census of Canada 1951*, vol. 2, tables 1 and 2; vol. 4, table 11. Data for 1901 is from the Canadian Families Project database. For my figures, I have taken British Columbia data out of Canadian totals in order to compare the province to the rest of the country. Limited data is available for 1911; it is found in comparative historical statistics in 1931, 1941 and 1951 census volumes and tables listed here.

²⁷See Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, Chapter One in particular; she demonstrates that men had many responses to the lack of ‘marriageable’ women, and not all yearned for marriage, but they did seem to yearn, in varying degrees, for women to fill a number of voids.

²⁸Matthew Macfie, F.R.G.S., *Vancouver Island and British Columbia: Their History, Resources, and Prospects* (London, 1865), p. 497. Cited in Perry, ‘Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men’, p. 33.

²⁹Report of the Columbia Mission, 1860 (London, n.d.), pp. 24–26. Cited in Perry, ‘Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men’, p. 34.

³⁰*British Colonist*, September 1862. The arrival is also described in N. de Bertrand Lugin, *The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island, 1843–1866* (Victoria: Women’s Canadian Club, 1928), pp. 146–49.

³¹See Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, pp. 139, 167, 172.

in the rest of Canada. In 1931, 62.2 per cent of all adult women in British Columbia were married, compared to 57 per cent in the rest of Canada.³²

The imbalance increased women's opportunities for marriage and remarriage and also affected their work. While scholars have often suggested that in the nineteenth century marriage marked a retreat from the labour force overall, women's labour force participation in the province was similar to the rest of the country, suggesting that higher rates of marriage did not lead to lower rates of employment.³³ Instead, married, widowed and divorced women worked in British Columbia in higher rates than in the rest of the country. In 1901, 38.9 per cent of all women in the labour force were married, widowed or divorced, compared to 21.5 per cent in the rest of Canada. This evened out over the next few decades but even so, 22.8 per cent of working women were married, widowed or divorced in British Columbia in 1921, compared to 17.7 per cent in the rest of the country.³⁴ The following analysis relies heavily on published census data, but it also uses a 5 per cent Public Use Sample of the 1901 Canadian census, created by the Canadian Families Project at the University of Victoria. The sample allows us to see when and how enumerators recorded women and their occupations and to read about individual households, beyond just searching for overall totals.³⁵

³²There were correspondingly fewer single women recorded in British Columbia than in the rest of the country: in 1901, 47.1 per cent of Canadian women were single compared to just 33.9 per cent in British Columbia; in 1931 the number was still lower in British Columbia (28.7 per cent compared to 34.5 per cent in the rest of the country). Data is taken from *Census of Canada, 1911–1931* and, for 1901, from the Canadian Families Project database. For more detailed analysis of rates of marriage for women in the province compared to the rest of the country, using Canadian census data, see Buddle, 'The Business of Women', p. 46.

³³In 1901, 12.2 per cent of all adult women in British Columbia worked for pay, compared to 14.5 per cent in the rest of Canada. In ongoing years, the percentages were as follows: 1911, 15 per cent (BC) and 13.9 per cent (Canada); 1921, 14.2 per cent (BC) and 15.3 per cent (Canada); 1931, 17.2 per cent (BC) and 17 per cent (Canada); 1941, 18.2 per cent (BC) and 20.3 per cent (Canada); 1951, 23 per cent (BC) and 23.7 per cent (Canada). Note that I have removed British Columbia data from the Canadian data, in order to present British Columbia compared to the rest of Canada. Data for 1901 is from the Canadian Families Project database. For labour force characteristics, from 1911 to 1951, see Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 1, Table 82, and vol. 7, Tables 1 and 40; *Census of Canada 1941*, vol. 1, Table 58, and vol. 3, Table 1; and *Census of Canada 1951*, vol. 4, Table 1.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Researchers can access the public-use sample of the Canadian Families Project database at: <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/cfp/data/index.html>

Table 13.1 Marital status of wage-earning and self-employed adult women, British Columbia and Canada in 1901 (per cent)

	<i>Single (%)</i>	<i>Married (%)</i>	<i>Widowed/divorced (%)</i>
Wage earners, BC	72.8	18.9	8.3
Wage earners, Canada	88.1	5.6	6.3
Self-employed, BC	26.5	39.7	33.8
Self-employed, Canada	38.8	24.6	36.6

Source: Canadian Families Project public-use sample of the 1901 census. Adult women were defined as 15 years of age and older

A closer look at the differences between wage-earning and self-employed women using 1901 census data shows that marital status had a marked effect on the types of employment women entered. Table 13.1 illustrates that about three-quarters of wage-earning women were single and about three-quarters of self-employed women were married, widowed or divorced. This is evident in the country and in British Columbia: self-employment was a far more common choice for married or once-married women than wage-earning, and this was not a particular trait of British Columbia. Others in this volume also provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of this pattern: self-employed women were more likely to be married, widowed or divorced—and older—than their wage-earning counterparts.³⁶ With wage-earning jobs often the preserve of young single women, the likely chance of being older and having children kept most widowed or divorced women out of wage-earning jobs.³⁷ I have included divorced women with widows because there were very few divorced women in the province or in Canada in the period under study. In 1901, 0.2 per cent of adult women in British Columbia were divorced. In 1921, 483 reported that they were divorced—0.3 per cent of all women.³⁸ It

³⁶ See Chap. 12 by van Lieshout, Smith and Bennett, this volume and their discussion of the link between marital status and entrepreneurship in England, 1851–1911: their data shows the same pattern.

³⁷ See Canadian Families Project public-use sample of the 1901 Canadian census.

³⁸ Data for 1901 is from the Canadian Families Project database. For 1921 data, see *Census of Canada*, Volume 1, 1931, Table 17B; Volume 2, 1921, Table 24; Volume 7, 1931, Tables 26 and 27. In 1901, census enumerators listed those who stated they were separated as ‘married’, while in 1921, the legally separated were typically documented as ‘divorced’—but there were so few divorced women, it seems to have barely affected the data. In published census data from 1931 on, divorced women were listed as married. I find the choice to list them as divorced in 1921 interesting.

should be noted that age is not dealt with in detail in this chapter, but it is the case that marriage, widowhood/divorce and the presence of children are connected to later stages of the family cycle and to older average ages for self-employed women in British Columbia, when compared to wage earners.³⁹

High rates of marriage for women in British Columbia meant that more working women were married and, as Table 13.1 shows, more wage-earning women were married or once-married and more self-employed women were also married or once-married in the province compared to the rest of Canada.

Further examination of census data also illustrates that for 1901, 27.4 per cent of working women in British Columbia were self-employed compared to 19.5 per cent in the rest of Canada.⁴⁰ Higher rates of marriage corresponded to higher rates of self-employment for women in the young province. This partners nicely with the characteristics of the newly settled region noted earlier: large numbers of single men, many working in primary resource extraction, were in need of services that women could provide for a fee. In urban settings, women ran shops or provided services in areas that had traditionally been women's work (sewing, food provision, teaching, hotels), and in rural areas, women ran hotels, restaurants, laundry operations, boarding houses and family farms—enterprises that they could continue to operate when married or widowed.⁴¹

The 1901 public use sample of the census indicates that close to one-third of all women at work in 1901 British Columbia were self-employed. That figure, while high, is likely an underestimation of the true number of businesswomen, as census data and other sources do not reflect the full picture for many reasons. Prior to 1871, census data was not very accurate but qualitative sources and the characteristics of gold rush societies

³⁹ See Buddle, *The Business of Women*; Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, and in this volume, see Chap. 12 by van Lieshout, Smith and Bennet, for more detailed links between age, marital status and female self-employment.

⁴⁰ *Census of Canada 1921*, Volume 2, Table 4; 1931, Volume 7, Table 21; 1941, Volume 7, Table 5. Some of the data for 1921 is listed in the 1931 data. For more detailed census tables and analysis of marriage, self-employment and gender in census data from 1901 to 1971, see Buddle, 'The Business of Women', Appendices 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.

⁴¹ See Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, for detailed analysis and census data that also shows this connection. He finds very high rates of self-employment and, as he notes, particularly when boarding housekeepers are looked at in more detail; census takers, he suggests, did not accurately identify all boarding housekeepers as self-employed.

certainly demonstrate that there were enterprising women setting up businesses. Entrepreneurial women were under-enumerated well into the twentieth century because census instructions to enumerators indicated that women carrying on 'domestic affairs' in a household, or not working full time in 'regular' occupations, were not to be classified as having occupations. In family-run businesses, only one person was to be recorded as employed or self-employed. Peter Baskerville has argued that this meant a large number of married women running home-based businesses were not enumerated accurately in 1891, 1901 and beyond.⁴²

The 5 per cent database of the 1901 census shows how women described themselves to census takers. The database provides all household data for the selected 5 per cent of the population and allows selected households to be examined in detail. It indicates that enumerators were sometimes unwilling to see women as entrepreneurial. In 1901, census takers asked people for their occupation and whether they worked as an employee or on their own account. There were many examples in the 1901 census of women reporting occupations as hunters or trappers, lodging housekeepers and laundresses, but who were not recorded as self-employed. The census taker checked off 'employee' for many or simply did not check off the box for type of occupation, as though these jobs were not identified as work. If this continued to happen before and after 1901, when individual census returns were not available to this researcher, then statistics on female self-employment are likely to be under-representing the numbers of women who ran businesses. Did women work in someone else's lodging house? Did they not consider hunting to be a form of self-employment? Or did they have that debate on the doorstep and lose an argument with the census taker? Sex workers probably also did not declare themselves as small business owners to census takers.⁴³ Ultimately, we may not have an accurate image of the percentage of women who were self-employed, but we know from combining sources such as directories and newspaper advertisements that it was higher than the census indicated.

Women's business ownership from the 1850s to 1870s may also have been under-represented because married women were not legally able to own property before 1873. They could operate their businesses as their

⁴² Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, pp. 196–197.

⁴³ None were mentioned overtly in the public use sample for the 1901 census, and their services were not listed in official business directories. Baskerville does find women keeping bawdy houses and suggests they posed as boarding houses. See *A Silent Revolution*, p. 179.

husbands' 'agents' without owning buildings or property, but as others have demonstrated, the wave of married women's property acts that began in the 1870s in British Columbia extended property, inheritance and political rights to white women in the name of capitalism, to 'encourage the individualistic pursuit of material gain', thereby boosting the province's economy and supporting family growth.⁴⁴ Before the passage of married women's property laws, wives could not own or sell property, keep their own wages and sue or be sued: under common law, husband and wife were one entity.⁴⁵

Scholars have suggested that married women's property laws did not significantly alter wives' engagement in business: pre-and post-passage of married women's property laws, wives remained actively involved in trade.⁴⁶ In Sydney, Australia, in the mid-nineteenth century, prior to the passage of married women's property laws, Catherine Bishop estimated that 15–20 per cent of business owners may have been women.⁴⁷ Women advertised in business directories and operated successful (and unsuccessful) businesses in much the same way as men.⁴⁸ However, individual ownership of property was, according to Baskerville, strongly associated with being self-employed.⁴⁹ An expanded idea of women as owners of capital may have at least ushered in a more open-minded understanding of women's proprietorship in the late 1800s.

Women's marriages and work lives were complex then, as they are today: being married, or not, did not always correlate to living with a spouse or to a legal status. Some women lived alone or changed their stories to suit their needs. One of the advantages of being so far from the

⁴⁴ Chris Clarkson, *Domestic Reforms: Political Visions and Family Regulation in British Columbia, 1862–1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 7.

⁴⁵ Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Jennifer Aston, *Female Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century England: Engagement in the Urban Economy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 88–89.

⁴⁷ Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2015), p. 19.

⁴⁸ See Catherine Bishop, 'When Your Money Is Not Your Own: Coverture and Married Women in Business in Colonial New South Wales', *Law and History Review* 33 no. 1 (2015): 181–200.

⁴⁹ Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, p. 217. Baskerville has a much lengthier analysis of married women's property laws and their importance; rates of female entrepreneurship were high in British Columbia before the laws were passed, and women could own businesses if not the property itself, before the 1870s, but their access to capital and their overall financial situation, he compellingly argues, broadened after the series of laws passed.

metropole of London or even Toronto was that reinvention was possible; a husband could be produced or discarded as required. In Victoria, British Columbia, Fanny and Louis Bendixen opened a hotel in the 1860s. Fanny then travelled to the Cariboo region and opened a saloon in the mid-1860s, listing herself as sole proprietor in the local newspaper. Louis joined her, and in 1869, he was proprietor of the saloon. After 1869, his name did not appear, but Fanny continued to be listed in business directories and advertisements as a saloonkeeper.⁵⁰ I did not find Fanny Bendixen listed in a census, and her legal marital status is unclear. Similarly vague was the status of Eliza Ord. She came to the gold rush town of Barkerville in 1867 and opened a hotel; she first appeared as the wife of Isaac Brooks but, after some financial difficulties, severed ties with him. Ord then claimed in a notice published in the local paper that she was the ‘whole and entire owner’ of the Cariboo Exchange Hotel.⁵¹ Was she still legally married, and ran the business but did not actually own the building? Or was she single and legal owner of the building and business, and the marriage a fiction? A claim of marriage may have been useful for protection in a testosterone-fuelled town but less so for owning property and businesses.

Overall, women who ran businesses with or without husbands may have massaged the truth depending on what best suited them (with customers or creditors, business directories or census takers). This prompts historians to remember that the passage of laws is not always relevant to the lived experiences of the subjects we study. What one proclaims in an advertisement, to a census taker or in a legal document may not always be accurate.

I have suggested a link between working after marriage and a propensity for married or once-married women to choose self-employment. This link was particularly strong in jobs with almost total self-employment: in 1901, more than 80 per cent of female farmers and boarding housekeepers were married or once-married, a very different pattern from women in wage-earning jobs. The pattern held: published census data up to and beyond World War I shows 84 per cent of female farmers and 91 per cent

⁵⁰ Dictionary of Canadian Biography, BENDIXEN, FANNY—Volume XII (1891–1900), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bendixen_fanny_12E.html. Accessed 15 December 2018. See also Van Kirk, ‘A Vital Presence’, p. 25.

⁵¹ Cariboo *Sentinel*, 20 May 1867, p. 2 and 1 July 1867, pp. 2–3. Cited in Van Kirk, ‘A Vital Presence’, p. 26.

of female boarding housekeepers in the province were married, widowed or divorced. Almost 70 per cent of women who were retail store owners were also married, widowed or divorced.⁵² Mrs Koenig, listed in the 1905 British Columbia directory as ‘widow of George’ and ‘proprietress’ of the Shawnigan Lake Hotel in the small community of Koenig’s Station, was one of many who marketed lodgings, an in-demand service in British Columbia’s first few decades as a province of Canada.

Home-based businesses were the most common type of female enterprises in British Columbia. From the mid-1800s to the early 1900s the most common female-headed business was the boarding house. The next most common types of self-employment for women were farming, sewing and dressmaking, followed by other retail stores (groceries, confectionery and other retail shops).⁵³ These business types shared some common characteristics: they were home based or allowed women to capitalise on feminine-typed skill sets. Some did both. Marth Frenneth of Rosland, British Columbia, was a typical example: she was listed in the 1901 census as a 43-year-old self-employed restaurant keeper with ten children. Her husband was enumerated as head of the household and as a wage earner.⁵⁴ Frenneth combined marriage, motherhood and entrepreneurship. She contributed to her family’s income and operated a business that was not unusual for a woman: food preparation. This pattern of commercialisation of women’s work and of married or once-married women turning to enterprise is also evident in business directories. According to the 1901 British Columbia Directory, widow Jane George operated a fruit and tobacco store in Nanaimo; Mrs Frith ran a ‘select Preparatory school’ in Vancouver. Mrs David Matheson ran a ladies’ furnishings business in New Denver, and Anne Jane Birck and Alice Daniels ran ‘Birck & Daniels Ladies Furnishing’. In Victoria, Mrs F.M. Smith and Mrs W. Hewartson

⁵² Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 7, Tables 50 and 54. For lists of the selected occupations and for data on employment status and marital status of women workers in British Columbia and the rest of Canada, see Buddle, ‘The Business of Women’, Appendix 2.1–2.4, pp. 360–78.

⁵³ *Census of Canada 1931*, Vol. 7, Tables 50, 53 and 54. See Buddle, *The Business of Women*, pp. 60–61, for more detailed data on higher-than-average rates of self-employment for women in selected occupations.

⁵⁴ See Canadian Families Project database.

ran grocery and dry good stores; Mrs Vigor ran a fancy goods shop, and there were close to ten hotels listed in Victoria with 'proprietresses'.⁵⁵

These features in British Columbia were not exclusive to the region. Higher-than-average rates of business ownership amongst married women were not only the result of a demand for services; they were also a function of timing and biology. Women who were married or once-married were more likely to have families. They were responsible for their children if their spouses were absent or unreliable, and there were also times when the entrepreneurial energies of husband and wife (and children) were required to sustain the family. Often with childcare responsibilities, occupations that married or once-married women entered were home based. As Julie Matthaei has suggested, 'jobs incompatible with active homemaking were almost exclusively reserved for single women' in the early twentieth century, while occupations that could be viewed as an extension of homemaking but that also happened to be entrepreneurial—such as taking in sewing, laundry, boarders or operating other home-based businesses—were undertaken by married or widowed women.⁵⁶

Far more than for men, who if encumbered with children had wives at home to mind them, the needs of their families dictated when and where women worked and what types of work they undertook. Widowed dressmaker Maria Forester of Vancouver was supporting her eight-year-old son in 1901.⁵⁷ Mrs Kemball, a war widow, operated a Kootenay fruit ranch with her two daughters and 'whatever casual help might be available'.⁵⁸ Forester was in an urban setting and Kemball, a more rural one. Businesses in rural or remote outposts were almost exclusively farms, hotels, laundries and boarding houses. In business directories for urban locations (Vancouver and Victoria, in this period), women ran groceries, tea rooms, restaurants, clothing and milliners' shops, hotels and girls' schools. While more variety appeared in towns, gender segregation was a feature of most women's

⁵⁵ *Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory and Mining Companies with which is Consolidated the Williams' British Columbia Directory for 1900-1901* (Victoria and Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Company, 1901).

⁵⁶ Julie A. Matthaei, *An Economic History of Women in America: Women's Work, the Sexual Division of Labor, and the Development of Capitalism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), p. 224.

⁵⁷ Examples here are from individual entries found in the 5 per cent sample of the 1901 census: see Canadian Families Project database.

⁵⁸ Joan Lang, *Lost Orchards: Vanishing Fruit Farms of the West Kootenay* (Nelson, BC: Ward Creek Press, 2003), p. 35.

business. This was not a limitation, in a capitalist sense, but an awareness that it was shrewd to play to one's perceived strengths.

What did being married actually mean in the province, from the 1850s into the early twentieth century? Did a businesswoman who listed herself in city directories as 'Mrs' do so to indicate she was married or to indicate respectability or widowhood? According to a 1918 business directory, Mrs H. Couts operated the Seymour Street Auto Stand in Vancouver.⁵⁹ Mrs Couts was running a type of business that was uncommon for women, but we do not know whether her husband was present or active or whether she was a widow. If women advertised themselves as proprietors, it seems to have been deliberate, indicating an independent venture rather than one with a spouse. We might speculate that some married women listed themselves as sole proprietors in business directories because their husbands were dead, absent or not financially helpful, but census information takes some guesswork away. In 1891, 40 per cent of businesswomen in the city of Vancouver did not have a husband in the house.⁶⁰ And, the 5 per cent sample of the 1901 census revealed that 53 per cent of women in British Columbia who reported that they were married and self-employed were also listed as head of their households, meaning they also had no husband at home. For the rest of Canada, the percentage was a much lower 19 per cent. These women were not widowed or divorced. According to 1901 census instructions, men who were away temporarily were still to be listed as head of the household if they 'normally' lived there for part of the year.⁶¹ Female-headed households were described that way, we can assume, because there was no male present even for part of the year. Thus, married self-employed women in the province were legally married but, like widows and spinsters, they were self-supporting. Married mother of four, Deana Pike, ran a hotel in Cumberland, British Columbia; in 1901, her hotel housed 13 lodgers. The census listed her as head of her household and her husband was absent. Self-employed housekeeper Maggie Yates of Rossland, British Columbia, married with an eight-year-old daughter, and self-employed washer woman Minnie Mcleod of Slocan, raising two children aged four and seven, were also heading their households. With no husband present, census instructors were almost forced to be more

⁵⁹ *Wrigley's British Columbia Directory, 1918* (Vancouver: Wrigley Directories, 1918).

⁶⁰ See Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, p. 206, for this census data and for a longer discussion of businesswomen with absent spouses.

⁶¹ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1901*, volume I, xviii.

accurate about recording women as self-employed and occupied in these cases.⁶² Widowed, divorced or married but without a husband present, the effect was the same: women often ran businesses to secure an income and support children. Self-employment was a good option because their life cycles and the children in their homes limited their access to wage-earning jobs. This prompts us to remember that reasons for self-employment were contextual. Some women were actively choosing self-employment; others were living without a spouse and needed to support their families. Others may have fit both categories.

Widows also worked in significant numbers in both British Columbia and in the rest of Canada. In 1901, while overall there were more married than widowed women who declared they were self-employed, isolating only widowed and divorced women reveals a surprisingly high number were self-employed. In British Columbia, 16 per cent of all widowed/divorced women were self-employed. In comparison, 2.2 per cent of all married women in the province declared that they were self-employed.⁶³ Thus their overall numbers were low but their participation rates were high.

Joining the workforce seems to have been an alternative (through choice or chance) to remarriage. Age, the presence of dependent children and financial vulnerability may have hindered remarriage in some cases. As other scholars have noted in Canadian studies in the same period, widows who did remarry were apt to be under the age of 40 and childless.⁶⁴ Others were financially secure enough that they may have been able to attract a new spouse but did not need or want one.⁶⁵ In 1889, Alice Elizabeth Jowett left England for Vancouver as a widowed mother of four children. She was at various times a bakery owner, hotelkeeper and prospector. She ran the bakery in Vancouver while her children were young, later moving

⁶² Baskerville notes that most of the female boarding housekeepers that the 1901 census did not capture (who seemed to run boarding houses based on description and details, but who were enumerated as though they did not work) had husbands in the house, which may explain why they were not listed as employed or as self-employed. See Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution*, p. 206.

⁶³ It should be noted that their numbers are still higher than in the rest of the country: just 1.4 per cent of all married women in the rest of Canada declared they were self-employed, and just 11.6 per cent of all widowed/divorced women in the rest of Canada declared they were self-employed. This data on marital status and self-employment in 1901 is taken from the Canadian Families Project 5 per cent sample of the 1901 census.

⁶⁴ Lorna R. McLean, 'Single Again: Widow's Work in the Urban Family Economy, Ottawa, 1871', *Ontario History* 83, 2 (June 1991): pp. 127–150, p. 131.

⁶⁵ McLean, 'Single Again', p. 131.

to hotelkeeping and prospecting in Trout Lake City; she did not remarry.⁶⁶ It is possible that this was not for lack of options but, rather, a lack of interest: her motivations are not known, but financially she was clearly managing without a spouse. Annie Gordon, widowed in 1911, found she was 'kept busy with financial affairs', with her children and with an expanding role in social reform and public service. Remarriage was either not wanted or not plausible for a woman like Gordon, in her mid-40s with three children.⁶⁷ Perhaps this was the case for 46-year-old newspaper publisher Rena Whitney. In 1901, her 22-year-old son lived in Vancouver with Whitney; he was a printer, likely employed at his mother's newspaper. Whitney was listed in the British Columbia directory in 1901 as 'Mrs Rena Whitney, wid'.⁶⁸

Proprietorship, like other kinds of work, 'potentially freed women from economic dependence on men'.⁶⁹ It was also a necessity when men were not present. The same factors that might have led to a high participation rate of widows and divorcées in the labour force generally—vulnerability or a desire to remain independent—may have also influenced their high rates of self-employment. Furthermore, self-employed widows were, like married women, less likely than young single women to be wage earners. While my research suggests that married and once-married women with no men to support them were not castigated for entering the labour force, they did not enter wage-earning occupations in large numbers, suggesting at least a societal barrier. In British Columbia in 1901, widowed and divorced women represented 36.6 per cent of all self-employed women, and just 6.3 per cent of all wage-earning women. Many women and men saw wage-earning jobs as the domain of men, particularly if they had families to support. Home-based enterprise such as taking in boarders, sewing or laundry was an 'attractive alternative to public sphere employment' for some.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Rosemary Neering, *Wild West Women: Travellers, Adventurers and Rebels* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 2000), pp. 26–30.

⁶⁷ Jean Barman, *Sojourning Sisters: The Lives and Letters of Jessie and Annie McQueen* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 214–15.

⁶⁸ *Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory and Mining Companies with Which Is Consolidated the Williams' British Columbia Directory for 1900–1901* (Victoria and Vancouver: Henderson Publishing, 1901).

⁶⁹ Wendy Gamber, 'A Precarious Independence: Milliners and Dressmakers in Boston, 1860–1890', *Journal of Women's History* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1992): pp. 60–88, p. 74.

⁷⁰ Margaret Hobbs, 'Gendering Work and Welfare: Women's Relationship to Wage-Work and Social Policy in Canada during the Great Depression' (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1995), p. 41.

In the absence of a plethora of diaries, letters and other written remnants, historians must assess what we can. Census data, newspapers and business directories show us that frontier conditions in British Columbia increased women's opportunities for work and increased their likelihood of marrying and running their own businesses. The region provides a good case study for demonstrating the patterns that historians have observed elsewhere. The newly formed colony of British Columbia provided particularly fertile ground for women to commercialise their domestic skills through entrepreneurial forms of work, and marriage did not halt their participation in the labour force. Businesswomen's identities as mothers, wives and widows affected their work in meaningful ways, as did their location in British Columbia. Family and caring responsibilities, limited access to wage-earning (particularly for married or once-married women), along with expanded access to a wider range of entrepreneurial endeavours help explain why women turned to self-employment; the interconnected factors of marital status, age and family clarify the turn to self-employment here and elsewhere in the 'long nineteenth century'.

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Mirror, Bridge or Stone? Female Owners of Firms in Spain During the Second Half of the Long Nineteenth Century

*Carmen María Hernández-Nicolás
and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez*

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Authors listed in alphabetical order. Portions of this chapter draw on research conducted by Susana Martínez-Rodríguez.

C. M. Hernández-Nicolás • S. Martínez-Rodríguez (✉)
University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain
e-mail: susanamartinezr@um.es

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the roles played by female partners in Spanish firms at the end of the nineteenth century and how legal structures and business survival strategies affected the participation of women, particularly widows, in firms. After analysing the characteristics of all the women present in our primary sources, we have identified, using three metaphors, their roles and functions. The following is not a quantitative identification, but a deduction from the available information to obtain some answers about how they became owners and what were their duties and roles in the firms. The chosen metaphors evoke three objects. ‘Mirrors’ are women who joined firms following family wishes and, as images reflected in a mirror, they dutifully acted as they were instructed; ‘bridges’ are those women who were simply figureheads between two generations of male owners, for example, widows who joined firms as temporary substitutes for the previous owners to guarantee continued family control, with the purpose of passing them to their son(s). ‘Stones’ are women who were the matriarchs of family and business, even the pioneers of family enterprises. These metaphors provide a rough guide to the behaviour of women in companies, although the reality was always much richer and more complex.

The primary source for this research was the official register of companies. The Book of Firms (*Libro de Sociedades*) was established at the provincial level in 1886 (following the directions of the Mercantile Code), and it contained a description of each of the new registered businesses and summaries of their (notarised) articles of association. It was mandatory to record the full names of all founding owners, whether male or female. Therefore, this source offers a unique opportunity to analyse the characteristics of the women involved in the firms and their relationship with other business partners.

Timothy Guinnane and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez have done extensive research using this source, creating databases to reconstruct a snapshot of a large number of firms at the time of their constitution.¹ In particular, one of these databases, consisting of 1300 companies registered in the period 1886–1936, focuses on the information contained in the first entry for each selected firm. Guinnane and Martínez-Rodríguez have studied the impact of business legislation on the development and design

¹Timothy Guinnane and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez, ‘Choice of Enterprise Form: Spain, 1886–1936’, *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 34, no. 1 (2018): pp. 1–26.

of the business fabric, and its institutional focus. Using the same resources, Martínez-Rodríguez has highlighted the propensity of women to belong to limited liability companies.² This chapter brings a new dimension, using this data and a series of case studies to examine the roles of women in business survival. Multi-owner enterprises were only a small part of the business world. Individual entrepreneurs overwhelmingly dominated the Spanish business structure. It was not until the 1920s that the use of corporations and limited liability modernised the business fabric; there were few corporations and even fewer corporations listed in the stock market. Nevertheless, these multi-owner firms are important. To register a firm required two scarce goods: literacy and capital; those who registered firms, therefore, regardless of the size of the business, were a privileged and literate group. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, nearly 94 per cent of the population was illiterate, and in 1900 still 64 per cent of people were illiterate.³ Women had less money and less formal education than men; therefore a study of those women who participated in these formal business structures is significant.

In Spanish historiography, studies of women in business have focused on individual entrepreneurs, predominantly involved with the crafts.⁴

²Susana Martínez-Rodríguez, 'Mistresses of company capital: Female partners in multi-owner firms, Spain (1886–1936)', *Business History* (2019): pp. 1–27 (accepted).

³Pilar Calvo Caballero, *Política, sociedad y cultura en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Actas Editorial, 2002).

⁴Without being exhaustive, regarding the studies on women and their businesses in the urban area of Catalonia: Àngels Solà, 'Negocis i identitat laboral de les dones', *Recerques: història, economia, cultura* 56 (2007): pp. 5–18; Juanjo Romero, 'Artisan Women and Management in Nineteenth-century Barcelona', in Richard Beachy, Béatrice Craig and Alastair Owens (eds), *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth-century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2006): pp. 81–95. And regarding the business fabric in Bilbao: Arantxa Pareja, 'Las mujeres y sus negocios en la gran ciudad contemporánea. Bilbao a principios del siglo XX', *Historia contemporánea* 44 (2012): pp. 145–181. On the urban areas of Galicia: Luisa Muñoz Abeledo, 'La participación de la mujer en los negocios del mundo urbano en Galicia (1857–1900)', in Pilar Folguera (coord.), *XIII Jornadas de Historia del trabajo-Barcelona* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2015): pp. 2215–2232. The next work analyses the sales positions in the Barcelona (hall) market: Montserrat Miller, *Feeding Barcelona, 1714–1975: Public Market Halls, Social Networks, and Consumer Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015). Analysing the female side of the service sector in Vizcaya: José María Beascochea and Arantza Pareja, 'Tiendas y tenderos de Bilbao a finales del ochocientos', *Bidebarrieta* 17 (2006): pp. 249–265. On the participation of widows in trade with the Philippines and the monopoly of the Manila galleon: Inmaculada Alva, 'Redes comerciales y estrategias matrimoniales. Las mujeres en el

There are only a few studies on the roles of women within (modern) multi-owner firms, and in particular on their roles in business survival strategies. In contrast to the wealth of scholarship in Britain, for example, there has been little attention paid to female shareholders in the nineteenth century.⁵ Gary Gray McDonogh's 1988 study of Catalan elites analysed the social role of women in bourgeois families. Their marriages to men who matched the commercial interests of their families were fundamental in capturing resources and human capital to benefit the wider family. Daughters thus had an instrumental role in a society where hereditary laws favoured a single male heir. Llorenç Ferrer-Alòs also pointed out that women, like other family members, played relevant roles when it was necessary to divide the capital of the company into shared capital and register it as a modern corporation.⁶ David Martínez López, however, noted that only a few women appeared on the list of shareholders of Granada sugar companies in the last third of the nineteenth century.⁷ Looking further ahead, into the 1920s and 1930s, Martínez-Rodríguez concluded that over the longer term the diffusion of limited liability companies contributed to the incorporation of women into the fabric of the business world.⁸

comercio del Galeón de Manila (siglos XVII–XVIII)', *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 46 (2016): pp. 203–220.

⁵ Among the studies on British female shareholders and women proprietors of financial products: George Robb, 'Ladies of the Ticker: Women, Investment, and Fraud in England and America, 1850–1930', in Nancy Henry and Cannot Schmitt (eds), *Victorian Investments: New Perspectives on Finance and Culture* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009): pp. 120–140; Janette Rutterford and Josephine Maltby, 'The Widow, the Clergyman and the Reckless': Women Investors in England, 1830–1914', *Feminist Economics* 12, no. 1–2 (2006): pp. 111–138; Janette Rutterford and Josephine Maltby, 'She possessed her own fortune': Women investors from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century', *Business History* 48, no. 2 (2006): pp. 220–253; Nancy Henry, 'Ladies do it?': Victorian Women Investors in Fact and Fiction', in Francis O'Gorman, *Victorian Literature and Finance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): pp. 111–31; and Mark Freeman, Robin Pearson, and James Taylor, 'A doe in the city': Women shareholders in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain', *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 16, no. 2 (2006): pp. 265–291.

⁶ Llorenç Ferrer-Alòs, 'Segundones y actividad económica en Cataluña (siglos XVIII–XIX): reflexiones a partir de la familia Berenguer de Artés', *Revista de Demografía Histórica* 21, no. 2 (2003): pp. 93–126.

⁷ David Martínez López, 'Sobre familias, elites y herencias en el siglo XIX', *Historia contemporánea*, 31 (2005): pp. 457–480, pp. 473–474.

⁸ Martínez Rodríguez, 'Mistresses'.

There is extensive literature about all types of retail enterprises run by women.⁹ Spanish literature on the topic is rich, although scholars have usually focused on regional or local examples. For the city of Bilbao, Arantza Pareja combined information from population registers with activity and tax censuses, highlighting the relevance of women and their operational autonomy in the day-to-day operation of businesses. This did not necessarily coincide with the legal ownership of the business.¹⁰ In Barcelona and Madrid, around the mid-nineteenth century, women owned more than half of the fashion stores and small businesses selling household items; they also participated in the services sector.¹¹ Other authors analysed the presence of women lenders and the use of their family networks to create clientele in Andalucía.¹² Our analysis goes beyond these local studies to provide more general ideas for the whole of Spain, with cases from different provinces. For instance, did women have more opportunities when a generational change in a business means that it went from one to several owners or when, due to the expansion of modern firms with limited liability, it was perhaps more effective to distribute shares of the capital among first-degree relatives, previously excluded from the family business. Muriel Nazarri, comparing Brazil with Britain, noted that Brazilian widows played significant roles in the survival of businesses after the death of their husbands, precisely because the property regime gave to them rights to half the marital property.¹³

⁹ Béatrice Craig, *Women and Business since 1500: Invisible presences in Europe and North America?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁰ Pareja, 'Las mujeres'.

¹¹ For Madrid: Gloria Nielfa, 'Las mujeres en el comercio madrileño del primer tercio del siglo XIX', in María Ángeles Durán and Rosa María Capel Martínez (eds), *Mujer y sociedad en España, 1700–1975* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982). For Barcelona: Juanjo Romero, 'Artisan women'.

¹² Aurora Gámez, 'La Mujer y el Crédito Privado en Andalucía en el siglo XIX' in Ramos Palomo, Dolores and María Teresa Vera Balanza (coords), *El trabajo de las mujeres, Pasado y presente* (Málaga: Diputación de Málaga, 1996): pp. 323–336; Paloma Fernández Pérez, *El rostro familiar de la metrópoli: redes de parentesco y lazos mercantiles en Cádiz, 1700–1812* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1997).

¹³ Muriel Nazzari, 'Widows as Obstacles to Business: British Objections to Brazilian Marriage and Inheritance Laws', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4 (1995): pp. 781–802.

CONTEXT, DATA AND SAMPLE

Spanish industry in the last decades of nineteenth century accounted for a modest fraction of the national income; the main part of the workforce remained in the agriculture. Catalonia and the Basque Country allocated the few modern industries. The twentieth century began with the same trends; Spanish neutrality during the Great War boosted (partially) the economy, and in the 1920s there was increasing economic growth, although it was accompanied by considerable social unrest, inflation and low salaries. One of the winners of the war, and of the subsequent growth of the 1920s, was the business sector. The economy did grow, and there was a diversification of the economic sectors characteristic of the Second Industrial Revolution (such as the automotive industry, electricity). Enterprise lobbies and entrepreneurs requested more flexibility to invest. Women would have also a discreet role in this new economy. The modernisation of the business fabric provided opportunities to involve other family members, including women, in businesses.¹⁴

Spanish laws were, in some aspects, even better than their counterparts in other European countries. As in most of Europe, the French civil code had a strong influence in Spain. With regard to succession, the French Civil Code (1804) established the equality of inheritance law for all children, with some nuances.¹⁵ This equality among all the descendants raised several issues. First, if the inheritance was divided equally, it was impossible for the next generation to get enough means of production to reach a level of wealth similar to that of their parents.¹⁶ Such laws of equal distribution were already well known in Spain. The Castilian egalitarian system, dating

¹⁴Zorina B. Khan, *Related Investing: Corporate Ownership and Capital Mobilization During Early Industrialization*, no. w23052, National Bureau of Economic Research (2017), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23052>; Zorina B. Khan, 'Invisible Women: Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Family Firms in Nineteenth-Century France', *The Journal of Economic History* 76, no. 1 (2016): pp. 163–195.

¹⁵Article 745 of the French Civil Code: 'The children or their descendants succeed in the first degree to their parents, mothers, grandparents, without distinction of sex or primogeniture, and even if they arise from different marriages. They will be successors in equal parts and per head'.

¹⁶³The norm contained in the Laws of Toro, previously incorporated into the Reign of Castile, became the *Liber Iudiciorum* (Visigothic Law), compiled in the *Fuero Real* and also in the edicts of Alfonso X. (Enrique Gacto, 'El grupo familiar de la Edad Moderna en los territorios del Mediterráneo hispánico: una visión jurídica', in *D.D.A.A., La familia en la España Mediterránea (s. XV–XIX)* (Barcelona, Crítica, 1987): pp. 36–64.

back to the Toro Laws (1505), meant that all real estate was distributed among all the direct heirs.¹⁷

The model of equal division of the inheritance among the heirs dominated in most but not all of the Spanish territories. In the north, Navarra and the Basque Country had their own regional law, named foral law, which allowed for a single heir. There was also a preference for a single heir in the east of the country, in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Aragon. Equal distribution in the rest of Spain was regulated by the rules set out in the Civil Code (1891), although in some areas (Galicia and Asturias) customary rules privileged some children over others.¹⁸

In those regions of Spain where all children inherited, there were clear advantages for daughters, who were guaranteed part of the estate. Where there was a single heir model, however, daughters, although technically able to be appointed as single heirs, were systematically relegated. The preference for males was clear.¹⁹

Both the civil code and the *foral* law set out series of rules protecting widows and widowers. In the civil code, the articles legislated a legitimate share for the widow/widower. The *foral* law also gave the right of usufruct to the widow/widower—the surviving spouse had the right to use the assets of the deceased with the obligation to preserve them for the next generation. The general practice was to make the will in favour of the widow as lifelong usufruct (Fig. 14.1).²⁰

Except in Catalonia, where the matrimonial regime was of the separation of property, the default rule in the rest of Spain was joint property. This meant the creation of a marriage also founded a common company in which all the new wealth generated belonged equally to both spouses. Thus, when a man died leaving a widow, the executors had to calculate the property or economic benefits obtained during the marriage, separate 50 per cent for the widow and only then distribute the remainder of the inheritance to any children according to the mechanisms (egalitarian or not) described earlier. It was much easier to cut up the capital of a company (or an industry) than to divide up a farm or land.

¹⁷ Juan Manuel Bartolomé, *Vino y vicultores en El Bierzo* (León: Universidad de León, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1996), p. 161.

¹⁸ Pilar Muñoz López, *Sangre, amor e interés: la familia en la España de la Restauración* (Madrid: Marcial Pons-Historia Estudios, 2001), p. 365.

¹⁹ Ferrer-Alòs, 'Segundones y actividad económica en Cataluña (siglos XVIII–XIX): reflexiones a partir de la familia Berenguer de Artés', p. 37.

²⁰ Muñoz López, *Sangre*, pp. 148–151.

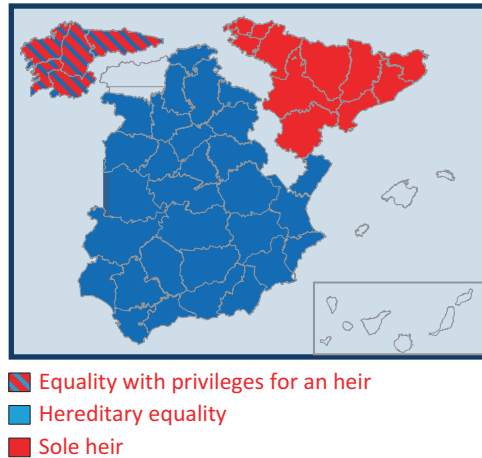


Fig. 14.1 Regions and inheritance dominant regulation. (Source: Ferrer-Alòs 2014, 35–47)

This dividing up of a business seemed to grant a crucial role to women, particularly to widows, who held that advantageous 50 per cent share, in the transfer of the family business to the next generation. The fact that women could inherit assets and real estate is key element in analysing the survival strategies of bourgeois or wealthy families. During the process of economic transformation and modernisation, the hereditary laws also changed: in Catalonia, industrialisation brought changes in the succession practices of many families; the figure of the single male heir gave way to the inclusion of other children in the inheritance. There could also be specialisations in inheritance: real estate was bequeathed to daughters, in order to guarantee their status through a fixed income, while commercial and financial assets were received by sons, previously prepared to take on commercial risk.²¹

The overwhelming power of the husband to manage the marital property, and that of his wife, was common in all European legislations.²² Women without their husband's permission were unable to establish legal relationships nor 'acquire onerous or lucrative bond, dispose of their

²¹ Muñoz López, *Sangre*, pp. 253, 378.

²² M^a Dolores Álamo Martell, 'La discriminación legal de la mujer en el siglo XIX', *Revista Aequitas, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria* 1 (2011): pp. 11–24.

property or enter into a commitment, except in the cases and with the limitations established by law'.²³ Consequently, any acts performed by the wife without the express authorisation of her husband were invalid.²⁴ In Spain, the husband was the administrator of the marital property, and he did not need to inform his wife to act on the joint property of both.²⁵ Commercial Law ratified the authority of the man over the woman. In the case of a single woman, the legal tutor was her father or another direct male relative, or even a legal guardian outside the family. Therefore, once a single or a married woman obtained her signed permission from a male authority, and she became the legal owner of the company, her place could be occupied by her husband, or even another male agent. Alternatively, some women played active roles in the business. There were companies in which most, if not all, of the partners were women, usually related to each other. And some firms with single female founders introduced specific clauses into their registration documents to avoid the unwanted interference of a potential and future husband.

Susana Martínez Rodríguez has studied the characteristics of the firms with at least a female owner in Spain for the period 1886–1936.²⁶ Her results focus, mainly, on quantitative issues: she finds that over 10 per cent of newly registered firms had at least one female owner and more than two-thirds were widows. There is a constant comparison of companies with at least one female owner with companies having only male owners. Among the conclusions, it is that businesses with female partner(s) were smaller and they were in fewer economic sectors. The explanation behind emphasises the poor social connections of women, limited to their own family. The paper focuses on aggregate results, drafting a first big picture; meanwhile, this chapter pays the most attention to a full range of

²³ Article 61 Spanish Civil Code.

²⁴ Article 62 Spanish Civil Code. Also, article 59 pointed to the husband as the 'administrator of the property of the conjugal society'; article 60 imposed the husband as the woman's representative, and she was not allowed to appear in court without him. As for inheritances, article 995 only allowed women to accept or reject them with the husband's consent; article 1263 forbade women to provide consent; article 1387 prevented women from alienating or mortgaging the 'paraphernalia' without the husband's license. Following article 62, all the actions that women carried out without marital authorisation, when it was required, would be null.

²⁵ Article 59 of the Spanish Civil Code.

²⁶ Martínez-Rodríguez, 'Mistresses'.

Table 14.1 Firms with female partners and their levels of capital

	<i>Total firms</i>	<i>(Regular) Partnerships</i>	<i>Limited partnerships</i>	<i>Corporations</i>
Sample	91	68	17	6
Without capital	1	0	0	0
Average	73,824.97	63,606.79	74,518.28	187,666.67
Median	30,000	26,203.5	60,000	168,000
Mode	5,000	5,000	125,000	30,000
Minimum	0	0	1,250	30,000
Maximum	1,000,000	1,000,000	250,000	500,000
Percentiles:				
25	8,554	8,000	8,000	45,000
50	30,000	26,203.5	60,000	168,000
75	1,000,000	71,107	125,000	282,500

Source: Firms sample, database from: Guinnane and Martínez-Rodríguez (2018, 1–26)

descriptive elements to understand the particular roles of each woman in the family and business networks.

Using the database created by Timothy Guinnane and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez, we find 91 companies founded between 1886 and 1919 with at least one female owner. Companies with little capital were the norm, with 73,824.25 pesetas on average (one company appears with 0 pesetas, not exceptional at the time). The median, that divides 50 per cent of the capital values, is 30,000 pesetas, and the mode, the most repeated value, is 5000 pesetas (Table 14.1). Eight companies had capital of up to 5000 pesetas, and 24 companies had capital of up to 10,000 pesetas.²⁷ The majority were regular partnerships, although there were also four limited partnerships. Table 14.1 summarises the main descriptive statistics of our sample.

Kinship among the owners of the firm is a fundamental point in the study. The Book of Firms data provides information about the degrees of kinship between partners, particularly female partners. Additionally, the Spanish practice of naming—paternal surname first and maternal surname second, in accordance with the 1870 Civil Registration Act—allows the identification of the female kinship line. Other information in the records assists in identifying relationships, but not always, so the criteria used is conservative in allocation of kinship, providing minimum-level estimates.

²⁷Using a cost-of-living index, in 1900, 1 peseta was worth €3.67 in 2017 (information last accessed on 25 May 2019 at www.measuringworth.com).

Generally, in firms with female partners, there was a much stronger kinship relationship among the partners, which suggests that women had a smaller network of contacts and lower levels of economic independence.²⁸

FEMALE PARTNER TYPES AND COMPANY SIZE

Much has been written about the average capital of businesswomen. The dominant idea that business run by women tend to be smaller and grow slower than those owned by men fit in the study.²⁹ (Even though recent studies show evidence to the contrary, questioning women were only in small business.³⁰ In the sample there is not a firm that can strictly be qualified as large, as a big public corporation, although there are companies up to 10 and 15 times larger than the average capital firm. Nevertheless, it is interesting to analyse whether women have different roles in firms, according to their size. Therefore, we have selected some relevant samples of the biggest and smallest firms with the aim to characterise the female archetypes.

A substantial number of the female owners of the database are widows, appearing in 43 of the 91 companies with female partners. The differences in the life expectancy in Spain (in 1910 it was 40.9 years for men and 42.6 years for women³¹) can barely explain the greater presence of widows in business rather than women with other civil status. The prominence of widows in the records shows the division and reconstruction of a firm capital after the death of its sole owner (or one of the partners). Not all the widows blossomed as businesspeople after their husbands died: some played passive roles, accompanying their offspring in the newly enrolled businesses to avoid decapitalisation, but without any management roles,

²⁸ Martínez-Rodríguez, 'Mistresses', p. 6.

²⁹ Melanie Buddle, *The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901–51* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Susan Coleman, 'The role of human and financial capital in the profitability and growth of women-owned small firms.', *Journal of Small Business Management* 45, no. 3 (2007): pp. 303–319; Alison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, 1800–1870* (London: Routledge, 2009).

³⁰ Jennifer Aston and Paolo Di Martino, 'Risk, success, and failure: female entrepreneurship in late Victorian and Edwardian England', *The Economic History Review* 70, no. 3 (2017): pp. 837–858.

³¹ Roser Nicolau, 'Población, salud y actividad', in Albert Carreras and Xavier Tafunell (coords.), *Estadísticas Históricas de España, siglo XIX y XX* (Bilbao: Fundación BBVA, 2005): pp. 77–153, p. 86.

sometimes even formally delegating all decisions to them. The Book of Firms also illustrates that some widows were sometimes managers of the firms with special rights to consult the accounts or to intervene in management decision-making. This suggests that those women had the skills to participate in business and monitor decisions personally.

In other cases, the articles of association do not show any objective information to determine if the widow was a business partner because a late partner was her husband or if it was an entirely new venture of her own. We cannot always know the kinship relationship of the widow with the other partners. Maybe she was a wealthy woman who acted as an investor, as we sometimes see reflected in contemporary fictional accounts. Due to the small amount of capital in Spanish firms, however, we did not find evidence of this in the database.

Married and single women appear less frequently in the database. Both had less freedom to take economic decisions. First, married and (young) single women were subjected to the guardianship of men. Second, social convention dictated against such anomalies. It would be understandable for a widow—to a certain point—to head a firm, as a substitute for her late husband, but for a wife to do so might suggest her husband was inadequate.

In what follows we divide women's roles in businesses according to our metaphors: as mirrors, bridge or stones. Our hypothesis is that in larger companies, in order to maintain control, the role of women would be primarily supportive of the family, being invisible and usually to keep control of the capital.³² This is supported by the fact that only a few of female leaders of large firms appeared in our database. Meanwhile, the small firms would be focused on the survival; therefore, we might expect more strong women at the head of these businesses.

Large Firms: Loyalty to the Family

The metaphor 'mirror' symbolises a female owner, in the sample always a relative of other owners, who serves the broader interests of the family business. She did not participate in the management, and sometimes even was represented by a legal agent in the firm, avoiding any direct contact with the firm, even though she was the legal owner of a share of the capital. In larger firms there are all kinds of legal forms, reinforcing the idea that the 'mirrors' were useful in any legal structure for the families.

³² Khan, *Related Investing*, p. 20.

The banking home *Olimpio Pérez e Hijos*, a regular partnership with 1,000,000 pesetas, had the largest capital in our database. The company had 12 members: a majority shareholder, Olimpio Pérez Rodríguez, and his 11 children (sons and daughters), all with the same share of the capital.³³ The father contributed 670,000 pesetas and each of the children, 30,000 pesetas. This was a long-lived family business, started by Olimpio's father, and continued through successive generations by using the female members of the family as 'mirrors' to consolidate the transition of the business from one generation to another.

When Olimpio's father died in 1880, Olimpio formed a partnership with his widowed mother and his two brothers, called *Manuel Pérez Sáenz, en liquidación* (in liquidation), a clear allusion to the fact that the firm would be liquidated, but it was essentially replaced by the new firm. His mother died in 1884 and a new firm was founded between Olimpio and one of his brothers. In 1910, Olimpio restructured the family firm again, to pass the control to a third generation. Each member-family of the third generation retained equal shares of the business. This equality was not carried through to the use of the signature, which was restricted only to Olimpio Pérez Rodríguez, two of his sons and one of his sons-in-law, Marcelino Blanco de la Peña. These were presumably the partners who were actively involved in the bank. The writing shows that the articles of the partnership were unusually simple and included an ongoing strategy for survival: when Olimpio Pérez would die, the firm would continue as *Hijos de Olimpio Pérez* (Sons of Olimpio Pérez); even though the use of sons in English means only men, in Spanish we did not have a different word for son and daughter; therefore the plural is son + s. The survival strategy implied the continuity of the full patrimony; the (legal) participation of the daughters was necessary to avoid the decapitalisation of the bank. The formation of the partnership in this way, however, also sent a strong message of family unity and stability to the firm's clients, important for a successful bank. The women of the family were acting to consolidate the business strategy, during two generations (Table 14.2).³⁴

Termas de Molinar y Caranza, a bathing establishment in Vizcaya, is the second largest firm in our sample. It was created in 1913, with a capital of 500,000 pesetas. The previous owner, Ramón Bergé y Guardamino,

³³ His oldest daughter was replaced—not represented—by her husband, Marcelino Blanco de la Peña, already a significant figure in the business (López Facal 2014, 97).

³⁴ Each example of firm is accompanied by a table, in this case, Table 14.2.

Table 14.2 Olimpio Pérez e Hijos

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Olimpio Pérez Rodríguez	Father Majority shareholder	670,000 pesetas
María, Manuel, Julián, Carmen, Santiago, Miguel, Olimpio, Ramona, Antonia, and Narcisa Pérez Estesos	Offspring (sons and daughters, except the firstborn daughter)	30,000 pesetas each ones
Marcelino Blanco de la Peña	The husband of the firstborn daughter of Olimpio Pérez Rodríguez (Celestina)	30,000 pesetas

Source: *Olimpio Pérez e Hijos*, Mercantile Registry of A Coruña, 1910, Firm n. 441

had died in 1911, leaving a widow and seven children. The founders of the new company were four women. Carmen de Salcedo y Zabalburu was the widow of the former owner, and niece of a local politician and original promoter of the spa in 1845 (Rafael Guardamino Tejera). She contributed 337,378.70 pesetas to the corporation (735 shares). Carmen Gorbeña y Ayarragaray, another widow, was represented by her son-in-law (also a lawyer and a member of the board of the firm). She contributed 66,500 pesetas (133 shares). The last two owners were daughters of the second owner. Each had 66 shares (33,500 pesetas) (Table 14.3). One daughter was married to the lawyer who acted as her mother's legal representative.

It is likely that the three related partners also received their shares as a result of simple inheritance—after the death of their husband and father. Although the four women were the legal owners of the firm, the corporation had a shareholders' meeting, a board of directors and a managing director, and the effective control of the firm was exclusively in the hands of the men of the family. The owners had no effective control over the direction or decision-making. Three of the four men on the first board of directors had confirmed familial links to the owners. The president and managing director was the son of the main shareholder; the vice president was the husband of one of the owners and the legal agent of the second shareholder, and the chairman was also a shareholder's husband. (Table 14.4).

None of these men had shares in the corporation, although they managed the firm. This characteristic reinforces the 'mirror' role of the female owners, who were the legal owners, according to the family mandate. The articles of incorporation were fairly standard and did not include provisions

Table 14.3 *Termas de Molinar y Caranza*

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Carmen de Salcedo y Zabalburu	Widow of Ramón Bergé y Guardamino	337,378.70 pesetas (735 shares)
Carmen Gorbeña y Ayarragaray	Widow, represented by the lawyer Juan de Zavala y Arellano	66,500 pesetas (133 shares)
Carmen Achúgueti y Gorbeña	Daughter of Carmen Gorbeña y Ayarragaray Sister of María Teresa Achúgueti y Gorbeña Widow	33,500 pesetas (66 shares)
María Teresa Achúgueti y Gorbeña	Daughter of Carmen Gorbeña y Ayarragaray. Sister of María Teresa Achúgueti y Gorbeña. Married to the lawyer Juan de Zavala y Arellano	33,500 pesetas (66 shares)

Source: *Termas de Molinar y Carranza*, Mercantile Registry of Bilbao, 1913, Firm n. 1850

Table 14.4 *Termas de Molinar y Caranza: First board of directors*

<i>Member</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Post</i>
Ramón de Bergé y Salcedo	Son of Carmen de Salcedo y Zabalburu (main shareholder) and of Ramón Bergé Guardamino (last owner)	President Managing director
Gabriel María Ibarra y Sevilla	Husband of Elvira de Bergé y Salcedo Son-in-law of Carmen de Salcedo y Zabalburu (main shareholder)	Vice president
Juan de Zavala y Arévalo	Husband of María Teresa Achúgueti y Gorbeña	Chairman
Luciano de Zubiria y Urizar		Secretary

Source: *Termas de Molinar y Carranza*, Mercantile Registry of Bilbao, 1913, Firm n. 1850

specifically excluding the female owners from active participation in the business, but there is no supporting information to suggest why. The notary, Celestino María del Arenal, was a well-known professional. He may have advised them not to write down any specifications in the deed to unveil the straw position of the four official owners. Perhaps there were

Table 14.5 Lacavé y Compañía

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Clementina Meyer y Winard	Widow Mother of Carlos Lacavé y Meyer	75,000 pesetas 5% profits
Carlos Lacavé y Meyer	Son of Clementina Meyer y Winard	175,000 pesetas 95% profits

Source: 'Lacavé y Compañía', Mercantile Registry of Sevilla. Book of Firms, 1889, n. 143

other reasons for keeping the men as active board members and the women as owners, forming a link to the next generation.

A characteristic bridge is the widow who became a partner of the firm, with a role of generational transmitter, with more or less prominence, but always temporary. In Seville, in 1889, a widowed mother and her son founded a regular partnership for the construction and sale of cork barrels and oil, along with other products. *Lacavé y Compañía* registered for ten years with a capital of 250,000 pesetas.³⁵ Clementina Meyer y Winard contributed 75,000 pesetas (and 5 per cent profits); Carlos Lacavé y Meyer contributed 175,000 pesetas (and 95 per cent profits) (Table 14.5). The male partner was also the manager.

The unequal distribution of the profits compared to the capital contributed suggests the widow did not have an active role. Another relevant fact was that if the manager died, the company would be dissolved; if the widow died, it would continue. Her death would release only 5 per cent of the capital to her heirs, ensuring the stability and continuity of the business.

The 1909 limited partnership *Oyarzún y Compañía Sociedad en Comandita* in Navarra is also an example of a 'bridge'. The widow (Patricia Oyarzún y Erice) was the collective partner and Juan Lastestesan y Eusa the limited partner. Each contributed 125,000³⁶ (Table 14.6). In limited partnerships, the limited partner had no management duties and had limited liability, so his contribution to the losses of the firm was only his share of capital. However, the collective partner was an owner with the rights and duties as in a regular partnership. Generally, women were the limited partners in this kind of firm, so the widow in this case was highly unusual.

³⁵ *Lacavé y Compañía*, Mercantile Registry of Sevilla. Book of Firms, 1889, n. 143.

³⁶ *Oyarzún y Compañía Compañía en Comandita*, Mercantile Registry of Navarra. Book of Firms, 1909, n. 291.

Table 14.6 Oyarzún y Compañía

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Patricia Oyarzún y Erice	Widow of Juan Miguel Oyarzún Collective partner	125,000 pesetas
Juan Lantestesan y Eusa	No relative (apparently) Limited partner	125,000 pesetas

Source: *Oyarzún y Compañía Compañía en Comandita*, Mercantile Registry of Navarra. Book of Firms, 1909, n. 291

The company came from a previous firm called *Lantesteban y Oyarzún*, and even though the registration documents did not provide full information about its owners, we can assume there was some sort of family link with the current *Oyarzún y Compañía*.

The records included a long list of management tasks, all of which fell on the widow's shoulders. In reality, the widow appointed two agents: her son, lawyer Román Oyarzún, and her son-in-law, Victoriano Oyarzún y Hualde. Patricia Oyarzún's role as sole owner, then, was to keep the capital and transfer it to the next generation. Of her two children, her daughter was excluded, like her mother, from active business. Other provisions in the records reinforce the widow's role as bridge: the company would continue even if one of the partners died, the heirs assuming responsibility. If one partner wished to dissolve the partnership, the other partner could acquire his/her shares. These articles were unusual in a limited partnership, suggesting the limited partner was more equal with his collective partner than usual.

A 'stone' symbolises power, representing a woman who developed a full economic activity by herself. In contrast to the place-holding of women at the service of the male members of their families, the widow Manuela Arregui was a stone. She founded a partnership, *Viuda de Antonio Irurzun*, in Navarra in 1892 with two sons. They registered a new multi-owner enterprise to replace her husband's firm with a capital of 400,000 pesetas (Table 14.7).

The business continued with the previous banking business. All three partners had the signature, the widow could sign and inspect accounts, and the two sons managed the business. Manuela Arregui was listed in the records as a merchant, not a housewife. The business was located in her house and she received rent. If she (or any partner) died, the company would be dissolved, so she was a key piece of the firm.

Table 14.7 Viuda de Antonio Irurzun

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Manuela Arregui y Aldaz	Widow of Antonio Irurzun	100,000 pesetas
Pedro Irurzun y Arregui	Son of Manuela Arregui y Aldaz and of Antonio Irurzun	150,000 pesetas
José Irurzun y Arregui	Son of Manuela Arregui y Aldaz and of Antonio Irurzun	150,000 pesetas

Source: *Viuda de Antonio Irurzun*, Mercantile Registry of Navarra, Book of Firms, 1892, n. 35

Table 14.8 Martínez Hermanos

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Trinidad Martínez Sánchez	Sisters	500 pesetas
Inocencia Martínez Sánchez	Sisters	500 pesetas

Source: *Martínez Hermanos*, Mercantile Registry of Murcia. Book of Firms, 1907, n. 599

Smaller Firms

Smaller businesses might be expected to be dominated by ‘stone’ partners, concentrated in ‘feminine’ businesses and demonstrating ‘survival’ rather than expansionist behaviour.³⁷ However, the evidence from our source, the Book of Firms, suggests that women could be bridges, stones and mirrors even in smaller enterprises, dictated, perhaps, by individual family circumstances.

Two sisters, Trinidad and Inocencia Martínez Sánchez formed *Martínez Hermanos* (Martínez Brothers), a small haberdashery business, in Murcia, 1907, each contributing capital of 500 pesetas. The owners delegated the management of the firm to his brother, Antonio (Table 14.8).

His responsibilities were listed in detail in the Book of Firms. Was this choice of management rather than ownership a strategy for him to avoid liability, allowing him to embark on other ventures? Although administrators of the company, engaged in what would be an expected female business, both sisters declared themselves to have ‘domestic occupations’.

³⁷ Àngels Solà, ‘Independent or in Partnerships Female Entrepreneurs in Spain, 1750–1930’, *Boletín Historia y Empresariado* 5, no. 8 (2014): pp. 27–33; Juanjo Romero, ‘Artisan women’.

Table 14.9 Pérez Hermanos

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Eugenio and Rafael Pérez Garrigós	Siblings	750 pesetas 30% of the capital each one
Marina and María Pérez Garrigós	Siblings	500 pesetas 20% of the capital both

Source: *Pérez Hermanos*. Mercantile Registry of Albacete. Book of Firms, 1917, n. 194

Perhaps to reinforce their social status in a small rural town, if either of the sisters married, she would resign from the partnership. This was also a clear precaution against interference from a new husband. Although already 25 and 29 years old, the sisters were still marriageable in Spain, where women married late in this period.³⁸ The excessive detail in the list of managerial responsibilities of their brother manager was equally a precaution against this, including many functions he could perform without permission of the owners.

Wool trading firm *Pérez Hermanos* (collective regular company) was founded in 1917 in Albacete with 2000 pesetas, to last ten years, with the management and signature in the hands of the brothers. Two brothers contributed 750 pesetas each and their two sisters 500 pesetas both.³⁹ If a partner died, the firm was not dissolved but the heirs could not inherit management roles. The explicit authorisation for one sister to be a partner by her husband was recorded not once but twice in the articles, while protections from any future husband of the second sister were built in. These sisters were ‘mirrors’, ensuring the continuity of the company, perhaps after the death of their parents, in a geographical area with testamentary equity (Table 14.9).

Viuda y Hermano de Rafael Valencia, a financial trading firm, presents an example of a ‘stone’ widow. It was founded with zero capital, in 1903, and lasted for ten years. The partners were a widow and her brother-in-law. Both were managers with signature. Preserving the name of the previous owner in the name of the firm was a clear and strategic message of continuity and stability to potential customers (Table 14.10).

The widow’s status as manager suggests she may have been involved in the business before her husband’s death. The Financial and Commercial

³⁸ Nicolau, ‘Población’, p. 84.

³⁹ *Pérez Hermanos*. Mercantile Registry of Albacete. Book of Firms, 1917, n. 194.

Table 14.10 Viuda y Hermano de Rafael Valencia

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Kinship details</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Salustiana Gutierrez y Murder	Widow of Rafael Valencia de la Roca	0 pesetas
Fernando Valencia de la Roca	Brother of Rafael Valencia de la Roca	0 pesetas

Source: *Viuda y Hermano de Rafael Valencia*. Mercantile Registry of Seville. Book of Deeds. 1903, n. 639

Companies Yearbook of 1919 showed a total of 66 private banking businesses named ‘Widow of’.⁴⁰ In private banking and financial businesses, the personal networking skills to maintain client confidence were vital and the involvement of a respectable widow with existing connections to those clients was an effective survival strategy.

CONCLUSION

The Book of Firms is a rare source providing nominal data of all founding owners of a firm, without discriminating by sex or age. It offers a unique opportunity to analyse the presence and role of women in multi-owner enterprises for the late nineteenth century in Spain. As a source has limitations because it only deals with formal partnerships, but this makes the inclusion of women as partners even more noteworthy.

A significant number of women who owned the registered firms became owners through inheritance. This reflects the protection offered by inheritance law to spouses, indicative of broader family business survival strategies.

In contrast to Béatrice Craig’s findings for Paris (see Chap. 5 in this volume), most women were in business partnerships because of generational change, with businesses being refounded after the death of one of the partners or the main partner. It is important to highlight that some of the documents do not contain enough information to evaluate if the women acted as bridges, mirrors or stones, or even had multiple roles. Nevertheless, our initial research suggests that the dominant figure was a

⁴⁰ In the Financial and Commercial Companies Yearbook of 1921, we could not find those financial companies: all of them vanished! They were other firms—less—with female names in the name of the business. How to explain this? Maybe the authors of the yearbook changed the selection criteria because it is not possible that in only two years all that private banks named ‘Widow of’ disappeared, even though assuming that the firms were provisional, and the widows acted as ‘bridges’ between two generations.

‘bridge’, illustrating the double circumstances of an inheritance and the necessity to have all the descendants of the same generation continue with the family business. In the case of single women, there may also be clauses against the interference of the future brothers-in-law to avoid potential conflicts with male family members. A characteristic case of bridge is a widow who appeared in the new business with a series of conditions that show that her presence was symbolic. In spite of being the owner, and even the manager, she often did not have effective control over the decision-making process, and sometimes did not even have access to the benefits that passed to her children. In 26 firms the widow acted formally as manager when the firm was established, but this was not a guarantee that she was, in fact, in charge: in some cases she would delegate on her son(s).

The least common is stone: active female owners; although the Book of Firms offers glimpses of women with effective power in decision-making and the control of companies, there are only few with conclusive information that reveal their leadership. Sometimes, they were matriarchs who, due to the generational change, had legal control of businesses that they previously controlled in a de facto fashion. These women continued to act as leaders even if they had sons of legal age.

This is an initial investigation into the relationship between the legal framework and the effective power of women in the development of the contemporary business fabric in Spain and needs further research. New databases, such as the one presented, show the importance of rigorous information to overcome the traditional limitations in the study of women in business during the nineteenth century.

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Gendered Innovation: Female Patent Activity and Market Development in Brazil, 1876–1906

Kari Zimmerman

In January of 1897 the Commercial Tribunal of Brazil issued Maria Clémencia Castagnone a patent for her method of sterilising and bottling carbonated water. Maria Clémencia was not new to the food industry in Rio de Janeiro. With her husband's formal permission, she co-owned and operated a business selling dry goods from 1893 to 1896.¹ It was here that she and her partner first started testing the market for carbonated water using a bottling method initially patented by her spouse. By the time

I thank my fellow panelists at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Latin American Studies Association Annual Meeting, and the members of the University of Minnesota's Workshop on the Comparative History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality for their feedback on earlier drafts of this chapter.

¹Arquivo Nacional (hereafter AN) 'MC Castagnone & Cia,' Livro 281, Registro 39084, 1893 & Livro 323, Registro 43296, 1896.

K. Zimmerman (✉)
University of St. Thomas, St Paul, MN, USA
e-mail: kezimm@stthomas.edu

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Nineteenth Century*, Palgrave Studies in Economic History,
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Maria Clémencia received her own patent specifically for water, she had shifted her industry specialisation and her business plan. According to a local newspaper, M.C. Castagnone & Company joined with another firm to become the exclusive distributors of carbonated water in the capital city.²

It is not clear how much financial success Maria Clémencia gained from her invention, but her patent activity highlights some key elements of female entrepreneurship and property rights in Brazil's developing market at the end of the nineteenth century. Historical examinations of economic growth often look to patents as a measure of how national laws and policies both advanced the technical change necessary for development and created a market that welcomed participation from multiple sectors of society.³ Thus, an important factor in female patent activity was the role of coverture. Several scholars argue that married women's property laws impeded female patent activity due to their lack of control over their own inventions.⁴ The Brazilian legal system of the Empire and Old Republic subordinated wives to their husbands, but women maintained a modicum

²AN, Privilégios Industriais (hereafter PI) 3211, Patent 3550, 1901 & *O Paiz*, 06/07/1896.

³Stanley L. Engerman & Kenneth L. Sokoloff, 'Factor Endowments, Institutions, and Different Paths of Growth Among New World Economies', in Stephen Haber (ed.), *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): pp. 260–304, pp. 284–5; B. Zorina Khan, '“Not for Ornament”: Patenting Activity by Nineteenth-Century Women Inventors', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31, no. 2 (Autumn, 2000): pp. 159–95, p. 163 and Petra Moser, 'How Do Patent Laws Influence Innovation? Evidence from Nineteenth-Century World Fairs', NBER Working Paper 9909 (2003): pp. 1–52.

⁴In both England and North America, coverture mandated that a woman's assets, as well as her labour and future earnings, became her husband's property upon marriage. Although the passage of the Married Women's Property Act (in 1882 in England and between the 1830s and 1870s in the United States) technically nullified the laws of coverture, most women did not exercise unrestricted control over their property. For a discussion of the relationship on patent activity and Married Women's Property Acts, see B. Zorina Khan, 'Married Women's Property Laws and Female Commercial Activity: Evidence from United States Patent Records, 1790–1895', *The Journal of Economic History* 56, no. 2, papers presented at the Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Economic History Association (Jun 1996): pp. 356–88 and Deborah J. Merritt, 'Hypatia in the Patent Office: Women Inventors and the Law, 1865–1900', *American Journal of Legal History* 35, no. 3 (Jul 1991): pp. 235–306. More general discussions of these laws and working women in the United States and England can be found in Norma Basch, *In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage, and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); and Suzanne Lebsack, *The Free*

of control over their personal and conjugal property.⁵ Moreover, both commercial and civil law provided a number of incentives for female market activity. Given these favourable legal conditions, it is somewhat surprising that only 105 patents were issued to women between 1880 and 1910. Certainly, Maria Clémencia's invention was an important part of her larger business plan and it led to additional patents in food packaging. Only a few other women followed suit, forcing the question of whether female patent activity was a response to market change and reinforced property law, or if it was a specific entrepreneurial strategy. This small collection of patent applications points to much larger trends in Brazil's political economy and ultimately suggests that female entrepreneurs were more focused on protecting their space in the local market than their technological invention at the global scale.

Examining the relationship between female entrepreneurship and institutional structure, this chapter argues that patent registration represents one of the many strategic ways that women used property law to facilitate their dynamic and sustained participation in the Brazilian economy at the end of the nineteenth century. Female entrepreneurs owned and operated a significant share of private businesses in Rio de Janeiro, the nation's political and economic capital, between 1875 and 1910. In addition to government policies on intellectual property that encouraged market participation, Brazil's commercial and civil laws opened several avenues for female economic activity. The Commercial Code required spousal consent for married women to enter into business arrangements, but widows and

Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784–1860 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984), especially Chapter 3.

⁵ Candido Mendes de Almeida (ed.), *Código philippino ou ordenações do reino de Portugal*, 14th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Philomatico, 1870), Livro 4, Títulos 42–46 and Título 96 (hereafter *Ordenações*). After independence in 1822, Brazilian family and inheritance law closely followed the *Ordenações Filipinas*, or Philippine Code of Portugal, until the enactment of the Civil Code of 1916. Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 13; Dain Borges, *The Family in Bahia, Brazil 1870–1945* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 155; Sandra Lauderdale Graham, 'Making the Private Public: A Brazilian Perspective', *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 1 (2003): pp. 28–42, pp. 30–31; and Muriel Nazzari, 'Widows as Obstacles to Business: British Objections to Brazilian Marriage and Inheritance Laws', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4 (Oct 1995): pp. 781–802, p. 781.

single females enjoyed the same legal rights as men.⁶ Significantly, unlike many Western nations, women did not cede absolute control of their property upon marriage under Brazil's civil legislation.⁷ These legal assurances provided means and motivation for female entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, equally influential upon women in Rio de Janeiro was the separate spheres ideology that ordered society well into the twentieth century. Prescriptive literature prioritised female domesticity while politicians and intellectual leaders linked motherhood to the sanctity and development of the nation.⁸ Even calls for education in the feminist press were often associated with the needs for women to serve as an informed spouse and appropriate teacher for her children.⁹ Forced to negotiate in ways that best represented the dichotomous demands of their business and their sex, it seems that patents were one of the many legal rights that female entrepreneurs employed to ensure their continued place in the market.

Female patent activity in Brazil calls into question traditional conclusions on the roles of both women and property rights in national economic development. Investigations of female entrepreneurship in general are conspicuously absent from the literature on business formation and capital markets in Latin America during the nineteenth century. To be certain, scholars recognise the importance of family capital and labour in commerce, including the tacit contributions of its female members. However, in light of the social pressure towards female domesticity, these women are typically relegated to auxiliary positions.¹⁰ Likewise, research

⁶ *Leis e Decretos*, Law 556, 15 June 1850 (Código Commercial do Império do Brazil), Artigo 1, note 4.

⁷ *Ordenações*, Livro 4, Títulos 42–46 and Título 96.

⁸ Maria Fernanda Baptista Bicalho, 'A imprensa feminina e a campanha sufragista no início da República', *Caderno Espaço Feminina*, Uberlândia 6, no. 6 (1999): pp. 7–19; June Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil, 1850–1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 73; and Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 214.

⁹ See *Eco da Damas* and *O Belo Sexo* and Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex*, p. 31.

¹⁰ For a larger discussion pertaining to Brazil, see Sergio de Oliveira Birchal, *Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Brazil: The Formation of a Business Environment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880–1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969); Anne G. Hanley, 'Is it Who You Know? Entrepreneurs and Bankers in São Paulo, at the Turn of the Twentieth-Century', *Enterprise and Society* 5, no. 2 (2004): pp. 187–225; Eugene Ridings, *Business Interest Groups in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Joseph Sweigart, 'Financing

on the importance of property rights in business development often explains that the civil legislation on family estates compelled a number of widows to enter the market *despite* their presumed inclination towards the domestic sphere.¹¹ The emphasis on marital status and inheritance firmly situates women within broader analyses of economic development but limits historical understandings of female entrepreneurship to exceptional wives and widows, whose market activity was the result of familial or financial obligations. Perhaps more importantly, the narrow focus on family ties overlooks the proactive ways in which women participated in commerce, such as patent registration, regardless of the motivating circumstances. It tends to establish as a foregone conclusion that, given the financial opportunity, women abstained from the market due to Brazilian social norms stressing marriage and motherhood. Recognising how female entrepreneurs utilised the law to both enter and actively participate in the economy introduces new scholarly questions about the significance of technological innovation, property rights, and gendered expectations of domesticity in market development.

This chapter relies on patent activity as a lens for better understanding the relationship between female entrepreneurship and the law in the Brazilian economy at the end of the nineteenth century. Analysing female patent applications submitted between 1880 and 1910, the first section of this chapter details the types of industries and technological inventions in which women concentrated their efforts.¹² Although limited in number and lacking detailed information on the patentee themselves, such as in the case of Maria Clémencia, when considered with other business sources, the applications offer a Brazilian case study within larger trends in female entrepreneurship across the Americas. Female patentees in Rio de Janeiro

and Marketing Brazilian Export Agriculture: The Coffee Factors of Rio de Janeiro, 1850–1888' (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1980), Chapter 3.

¹¹ June Hahner, 'Women and Work in Brazil, 1850–1920: A Preliminary Investigation', in Dauril Alden and Warren Dean (eds), *Essays Concerning the Socioeconomic History of Brazil and Portuguese India* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1977): pp. 87–117, esp. pp. 89–90; Linda Lewin, *Politics and Parentela in Paraíba: A Case Study of Family-Based Oligarchy in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 192–194; and Nazzari, 'Widows as Obstacles to Business', p. 781.

¹² The records for patent applications housed in the Brazilian National Archive span the years 1871–1910, with 1 patent filed in 1857 and 42 listed as 'without a date'. This chapter focuses on the period beginning in 1875 in order to correspond with the nation's early legislation on intellectual property, but the bulk of the analysis centres on 1880–1910, when female patentees first began filing their applications (1881). *PI*, 1857–1910.

developed their technology at similar rates and industries as their regional counterparts but their inventions reflect the specific market demands and conditions of Brazil. The second section considers the legal system that encouraged this type of deliberate female entrepreneurship and innovation. Technically, the nation's commercial and civil laws, as well as the government's commitment to international patent agreements, created multiple opportunities for women to protect their intellectual property. Yet the women mirroring the efforts of Maria Clémencia to patent their inventions demonstrates how property rights was only one of many factors in female entrepreneurship. The final section of this chapter considers patent activity as part of a larger entrepreneurial strategy for women in commerce. Given that Brazilian civil law already encouraged a large number of women to pursue business in Rio de Janeiro, female patent activity was not necessarily a response to property rights but rather a tool for market success. The shrewd use of patents by female entrepreneurs in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro indicates the contradictory ways in which the legal code and gender norms produced a limited but strategic role for women in business specifically and national economic development more generally.

FEMALE PATENT ACTIVITY IN BRAZIL

The Brazilian economy provided a number of opportunities for female entrepreneurship in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though the nation was late to industrialise, the coffee boom of 1880 increased the domestic demand for goods and services related to secondary markets, improved infrastructure and a burgeoning population in the centre-south region.¹³ Women established businesses to serve the expanding economy

¹³ Dante Mendes Aldrighi & Renato Perim Colistete, 'Industrial Growth and Structural Change: Brazil in a Long-Run Perspective', in Wim A. Naudé, Adam Szirmai, & Nobuya Haraguchi (eds), *Structural Change and Industrial Development in the BRICS* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): pp. 162–98, pp. 168–171; Anne G. Hanley, 'Financing Brazil's Industrialization', in Jeff Horn, N. Rosenbamd, & Merritt Roe Smith (eds), *Reconceptualizing the Industrial Revolution* (Boston: MIT Press, 2010): pp. 251–70, p. 254 and Brazil, Directoria Geral de Estatística, *Recenseamento da população do Imperio do Brasil a que se procedeu no dia 1º de agosto de 1872* (Rio de Janeiro: Leuzinger, 1873–1876); *Recenseamento geral da Republica dos Estados Unidos do Brasil em 31 de dezembro de 1890. Districto Federal (Cidade do Rio de Janeiro) Capital da Republica dos Estados Unidos do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Leuzinger, 1895); and *Recenseamento do Rio de Janeiro (Districto Federal) realizado em 20 de setembro de 1906* (Rio de Janeiro: Oficina de Estatística, 1907).

with the support of Brazil's commercial and civil laws. Along with the guarantees provided by the Commercial Code for most female entrepreneurs to engage in the market without restriction, the nation's civil legislation on property rights provided women with considerable control over the capital necessary for new entrepreneurial pursuits.¹⁴

Intellectual property rights supported by both the imperial and Republican governments offered further motivation.¹⁵ Tempering market demands and legal prescription, however, were the strong social expectation for women to privilege their domestic responsibilities over any commercial obligation or interest. Journalists, intellectuals and politicians all wrote frequently of the crucial link between women and the home.¹⁶ These opposing circumstances ensured that women played a small but significant role in Brazil's developing economy. Female entrepreneurs were involved in roughly 10 per cent of all commercial establishments, with at least 1000 women in formal partnerships, 400 operating sole proprietorships and 325 licensed for market vending.¹⁷

Like Maria Clémencia's business plan, patent registration was a logical extension of commercial activity for many female entrepreneurs, but it was certainly one of the less dynamic sectors of the market. Approximately 1

See also Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850–1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968) and William R. Summerhill, 'Transport Improvements and Economic Growth in Brazil and Mexico', in Stephen Haber (ed.), *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): pp. 93–117.

¹⁴ *Leis e Decretos*, Law 556, 15 June 1850 (Código Commercial do Império do Brazil), Artigos 1 & 27–29 and *Ordenações*, Livro 4, Títulos 42–46 and Título 96.

¹⁵ *Leis e Decretos*, Decree 2,682, 23 October 1875; Decree 3,346, 14 October 1887 and Decree 1,236, 24 September 1904.

¹⁶ Bicalho, 'A imprensa feminina e a campanha suffragista no início da República', pp. 7–19; Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex*, p. 73; and Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque*, p. 214.

¹⁷ There is no way to determine the precise percentage of the female population engaged in commerce in the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to inconsistent census records and a lack of a directory of the Commercial Tribunal (housed at the AN). My estimates are based on thorough reviews of formal business partnership contracts, requests for business licences in Rio de Janeiro and the *Almanak Laemmert*, the annual city business directory. Evidence from Rio de Janeiro is corroborated at the national level by Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*; Birchall, *Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*; and Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex. Almanak Administrativo, Mercantil e Industrial do Rio de Janeiro* [Almanak Laemmert]; Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Licenças para Commercio e Industria and AL, 1870 and 1880 and AN, Junta Commercial, *Livro de Registros*, 1869–1904.

per cent of registered female entrepreneurs in formal partnerships applied for patents compared to 4.5 per cent of their male colleagues. Likewise, women received 1 per cent of the 9088 patents issued by the Commercial Tribunal between 1880 and 1910.¹⁸ Of course, trademark registration was not relevant to all commercial pursuits nor was every entrepreneur equipped with the vocational and financial resources to catalogue the components of their invention and file their paperwork. Regardless of an entrepreneur's request for a preliminary patent for 3 years or the standard 15-year patent, applications required a comprehensive description and illustration of the invention.¹⁹ Without complete biographical sketches of each patentee, it is impossible to gauge the feasibility of patenting, especially because demographic information was not included on the applications. These rates of registration seem reasonable, however, when considering that women in the United States similarly represented 1 per cent of all patent activity and comprised 4 per cent in nearby Chile.²⁰ It appears that, regardless of national rates of industrialisation, technological innovation at the hands of women remained on the margins.

Women in Brazil were typical of other female patentees across the Americas in terms of rates and popular categories of inventions. Table 15.1 presents the industrial distribution of female patents between 1880 and 1910. The two most common types of invention were related to food processing and clothing, just as in Chile and the United States.²¹ Maria Clémencia's invention for carbonated water was matched by methods for canning meat and preserving bread, while patents related to apparel included corsets and a method for attaching pins to brooches. But even these most popular options each only accounted for less than 20 per cent of female patent activity. Women patented a range of inventions, ranging from industrial machinery to health remedies. Down the street from Maria Clémencia's firm, Georgina Figueredo Reid co-owned a pharmacy where she sold 'London Pectoralis', her patented medicine for respiratory

¹⁸ AN, Junta Commercial, *Livros de Registros*, 1869–1904 & PI, 1880–1910.

¹⁹ Applications did not always include the design and a few illustrations were submitted without the complete written description of the invention. AN, Junta Commercial, PI, 1880–1910.

²⁰ Bernardita Escobar Andrae, 'Female Entrepreneurship and Participation Rates in Nineteenth-Century Chile', *Estudios de Economía* 42, no. 2 (December, 2015): pp. 67–91, p. 81 and Merritt, 'Hypatia in the Patent Office', p. 289.

²¹ Escobar Andrae, 'Female Entrepreneurship and Participation Rates in Nineteenth-Century Chile', p. 82 and Merritt, 'Hypatia in the Patent Office', p. 254.

Table 15.1 Industrial distribution of patent applications filed by women in Brazil between 1880 and 1910

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Food preservation	20	19
Clothing and accessories ^a	18	17
Industrial ^b	17	16
Tools for transportation	8	7
Chemical	7	6
Metallurgy	6	6
Health/Medical	6	6
Soap manufacturing	6	6
Signage ^c	5	5
Music and games	5	5
Kitchen utensils	1	1
Misc	6	6
N Obs	105	100

Source: Arquivo Nacional, Privilégios Industriais, 1880–1910

^aRetail and manufacture of clothing and accessories, including corsets

^bSmall machinery and/or components for industrial machines

^cSigns for residential and commercial use

disease.²² The variety of industrial pursuits prevented concentration in any one activity but in combination, innovation related to the domestic sphere comprised nearly half of all patents.

While most of the female inventions were associated with commercial domesticity, Table 15.1 also highlights some unique attributes of the Rio de Janeiro economy. Primarily, it seems that the two most common patent categories were more a function of industry knowledge than household necessity. For example, approximately two-thirds of the applications related to clothing were for corsets. This is hardly surprising given the global popularity of corsets at the end of the nineteenth century. Women's involvement in corset manufacturing led to inventions that were trademarked at disproportionate rates to their overall patent activity, ranging from 10 to 35 per cent of all corset patents issued in England, France and the United States.²³ Several female entrepreneurs in Brazil developed

²² AN, 'Guimarães & Fairbairn,' Livro 429, Registro 53859, 1904 & PI 3211, Patent 3550, 1901.

²³ B. Zorina Khan, 'Invisible Women: Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Family Firms in France During Early Industrialization', NBER Working Paper 20854 (2015): pp. 1–41,

original corsets as an extension of their current commercial endeavours. The patent issued to Anna Maria Torres for her corset design was consistent with her business selling clothing, hats and costumes.²⁴ At least two other women attributed their unique models to their experiences as seamstresses. Rafaela Carbó described her process of expertly sewing together 14 pieces of fabric that extended the corset across the hips, thereby reducing compression on the stomach, whereas Alice Jacobsen submitted three improvements to her design over the course of two years that ‘suppressed one panel (*through creative stitching*), making it easier, less time consuming, and costly to produce the corset’.²⁵

Paid labour associated with clothing was clearly an important factor for several female entrepreneurs, but missing among the different types of patents were large numbers of inventions related to the care and production of apparel as well as general improvements to domestic work. Beyond soap manufacturing, there were very few applications by women for the type of household products that dominated patent activity in other markets.²⁶ Nearly 10 per cent of patents filed by women in the United States during the nineteenth century were for kitchen utensils; yet in Brazil, only one woman submitted an application for a machine-operated grater specifically for manioc.²⁷ Inventions connected to the domestic sphere were still the purview of female patentees but it seems they were more a result of the work they performed outside of the home, not inside.

One important consideration in understanding the different types of female innovation was the predominance of slave labour in Brazil. Several historians of patent activity in the United States link the bulk of female patents to the demands of household chores like cleaning, cooking and sewing. In nineteenth-century Brazil, domestic slaves and servants most commonly performed these chores.²⁸ Of course, this is not to say that

p. 10; Kara W Swanson, ‘Getting a Grip on the Corset, Gender, Sexuality, and Patent Law’, *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 23, no. 1 (2011): pp. 57–115; and Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2001), pp. 23–29.

²⁴ AN, PI 1800, Patent 2188, 1897 and *Jornal do Commercio*, 28/09/1897.

²⁵ AN, PI 3.132, 1901 and 3 patents for Alice Jacobsen: PI 4601, Patent 4926, 1907; PI 5344, Patent 5647, 1908 and PI 7886, Patent 8688, 1909.

²⁶ Khan, ‘Not for Ornament,’ p. 161; Merritt, ‘Hypatia in the Patent Office’, pp. 254 & 276; and Autumn Stanley, *Mothers and Daughters of Invention: Notes for a Revised History of Technology* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

²⁷ AN, PI 3211, Patent 1252, 1893 and Khan, ‘Not for Ornament’, p. 177.

²⁸ Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 49–50, 185; Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic*

Brazilian women were completely free of domestic responsibilities or concerns but, rather, it deeply influenced patterns of female invention.²⁹ Only two women applied for patents associated with laundry, one was a new approach to ironing and the other included a design for a large-scale machine for treating clothing and fabric.³⁰ In contrast, women in the United States patented over 50 machines for washing or drying clothes between 1865 and 1900.³¹

Female patent applications in Brazil reflect regional differences in labour as well as economic growth. A final conclusion from Table 15.1 is the number of technological pursuits indirectly associated with the coffee industry. Brazil became the world's largest supplier of coffee in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, leading to innovation in domestic manufacturing that linked to the nation's key export. Women who applied for patents for machinery, transport equipment, chemical products and metal trades, those industries comprising the second third of Table 15.1, often met the demands of Brazil's expanding market. Maria Rita Nunes Pimentel developed a process for preventing metal oxidation in small engines. Advances in machinery were key to the industries that burgeoned in part due to coffee transport and accounted for 25–30 per cent of all inventions at the turn of the twentieth century.³² Likewise, the widow Claussen received a patent for 15 years for her chemical coagulant used for 'superior fertiliser' for industrial agriculture, such as in coffee production.³³ The number of female patentees in each industry related to coffee was certainly smaller than that in innovations for food and clothing, but their proportion mirrors general trends with all patents filed between 1880 and 1910, demonstrating the dynamic contribution of women in national economic development.

World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 12–15, 19; and Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995).

²⁹ Graham, *House and Street*, 12–15 and Khan, 'Married Women's Property Laws and Female Commercial Activity', p. 372.

³⁰ AN, PI 4.39, Patent 4714, 1907 and PI, 1.788, Patent 2190, 1897.

³¹ Merritt, 'Hypatia in the Patent Office', p. 276.

³² AN, PI 4768, 1907. Aldrighi & Colistete, 'Industrial Growth and Structural Change', p. 171 & Teresa Cribelli, *Industrial Forests and Mechanical Marvels: Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 134.

³³ AN, PI 8.859, Patent 171, 1884.

The variety of industries represented by female patentees in Brazil questions traditional interpretations of the role of women in advancing technology across the Americas at the end of the nineteenth century. While inventions for commercial domesticity were the most popular, these industries did not predominate as they did in neighbouring countries. Widespread availability of domestic service in Brazil, whether slave or free, undoubtedly diminished the need for household innovation. At the same time, the diverse collection of female patents linked to the flourishing coffee market highlights how women fostered the technological change necessary for economic growth. It also directly connects female entrepreneurship to larger initiatives of the state. This next section further considers the motivations of female patentees by examining legal and fiscal policies designed to bolster the Brazilian economy.

PATENT LAW UNDER THE EMPIRE AND REPUBLIC, 1875–1910

The development of Brazil's intellectual property law was somewhat incongruous with the nation's export agriculture economy. Brazil was one of the first countries in Latin America to enact a law on patents in 1875, but few of the imperial government's policies encouraged industrialisation or technological innovation not related to exports. In addition to a potential loss in profits from a shift away from agriculture, taxes on manufactured imports provided the bulk of the government's revenue. At the same time, government restrictions on forming joint-stock corporations prevented entrepreneurs from mobilising the capital necessary to fund large industrial firms. Finally, the persistence of slavery in Brazil until 1888 proved an obstacle to large-scale manufacturing on multiple fronts, including its constriction of a consumer base for purchasing manufactured goods.³⁴ These factors associated with the imperial government account for the slow rates of industrialisation and patent activity throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

³⁴ Hanley, 'Financing Brazil's Industrialization', p. 253; Nathaniel Leff, 'Economic Development in Brazil, 1822–1913', in Stephen Haber (ed.), *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): pp. 34–64, pp. 42–46; and Wilson Suzigan, *Indústria brasileira: origem e desenvolvimento* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986), especially Chapter 1.

The Republican government that assumed power in 1889 viewed technological development as a crucial priority for expanding an economy perceived as hobbled by slavery and backward imperial policies. To stimulate industrialisation, the new regime immediately initiated financial and legal reforms that ironically built upon changes enacted in the final years of the Empire. In 1882, the government eased the requirements for incorporation and thereby opened the possibility for large-scale investment into industrial ventures.³⁵ One year later, Brazil was a signatory country of the Paris Convention, which established an international agreement to ensure equal treatment of patents and protection of intellectual property.³⁶ The Republic expanded these two policy shifts to mixed degrees of success. The 1890 finance laws essentially made it easier to invest in corporations by increasing the availability of credit while it reduced the liability associated with stock options. By extending the 1882 allowance for joint-stock formation, the government facilitated an immediate rush to invest in new companies. Ultimately the introduction of limited liability enabled the Republic to realise their goal of sustained industrialisation, but in the immediacy, it created a speculative bubble that caused great financial instability.³⁷ In contrast, the legal improvements to the patent process led to consistent growth of innovation. The Republican government passed a series of intellectual property laws beginning in 1890 in order to ensure legal compliance with the Paris Convention and the federalist model of the new Constitution, promulgated in 1891. These laws strengthened the administration of patents and issued the first clear set of consequences for

³⁵ Hanley, 'Financing Brazil's Industrialization', p. 257 and William R. Summerhill, *Inglorious Revolution: Political Institutions, Sovereign Debt and Financial Underdevelopment in Imperial Brazil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 282–6.

³⁶ Josh Lerner, '150 Years of Patent Protection.' NBER 7478, 2000: pp. 1–58 and Teresa da Silva Lopes, Carlos Gabriel Guimarães, Alexandre Saes and Luiz Fernando, 'The "Disguised" Foreign Investor: Brands, Trademarks and the British Expatriate Entrepreneur in Brazil,' *Business History*, : pp. 1–25, p. 6

³⁷ *Leis e Decretos* Decree 164, 17 January 1890 and Stephen Haber, 'The Efficiency Consequences of Institutional Change: Financial Market Regulation and Industrial Productivity Growth in Brazil, 1866–1934', in John H. Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor (eds), *Latin America and the World Economy since 1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): pp. 275–322, pp. 277–278; Hanley, 'Financing Brazil's Industrialization', pp. 257–8; and Gail D. Triner, *Banking and Economic Development: Brazil, 1889–1930* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), Chapter 2.

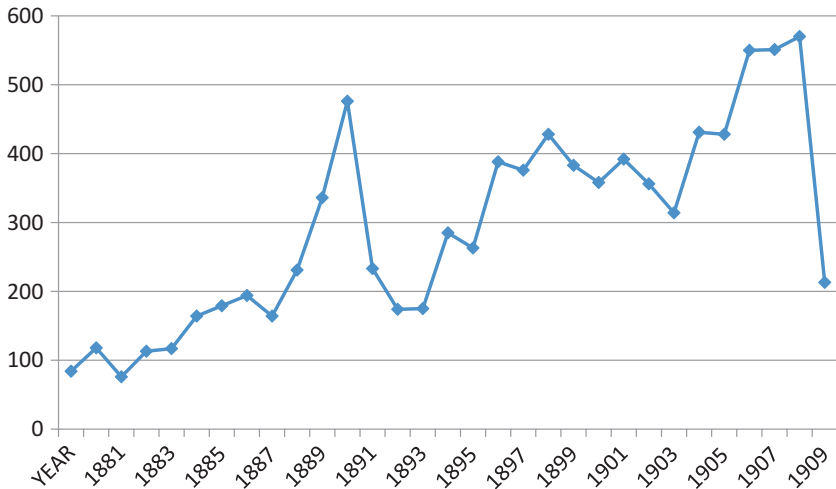


Fig. 15.1 Total number of patent applications, by women and men, filed in Brazil between 1880 and 1910. (Source: Arquivo Nacional, Privilégios Industriais, 1880–1910)

imitation with the Law of 1904.³⁸ Figure 15.1 shows the rise in patent applications from 1880 to 1910, including the adjustments corresponding to the speculative bubble of the early 1890s and patent law of 1904.

Within the first few years of the twentieth century, Brazil's developing market proved attractive to local and foreign entrepreneurs alike. The international recognition of patents and national enforcement of intellectual property rights served to stimulate industrialisation and economic growth but also helped create a population of foreign nationals. At least one-third of all patentees listed their permanent residence outside of Brazil, with the percentage increasing over time. Foreign nationals represented 36 per cent of the patentees in 1884, one year after the Paris Convention, and accounted for nearly one-half by 1906.³⁹ With the

³⁸ Lerner, '150 Years of Patent Protection', p. 25 and Da Silva, et. al., 'The 'Disguised Foreign Investor'', p. 6.

³⁹ Out of the 9088 registered patents between 1880 and 1910, 7400 applicants listed their permanent residence, with 61 per cent local to Brazil. A total of 46 different countries were listed in the patent registry, with the top 5 nations represented being the United States (10%), England (8%), France (7%), Germany (4%) and Argentina (2%). PI, 1880–1910.

majority hailing from highly industrialised nations like the United States and England, their patents likely increased levels of innovation in Brazil. A recent investigation of British patentees found that they were instrumental in the transfer of technological and entrepreneurial knowledge in the development of the textile industry.⁴⁰ Although patent applications alone do not speak to knowledge transfer or technological advance, the increasing number of foreign entrepreneurs seems to validate the efforts of Republican government leaders to stimulate economic growth.

A closer examination of the role of foreign nationals among the female patentees presents an alternative conclusion on the influence of property rights on female entrepreneurial activity in Brazil. Roughly 45 per cent of the women who received patents in Brazil lived abroad. Of course, Maria Clémencia originally hailed from France, and at least one-third of women involved in business partnerships like herself were foreign born but considered Brazil their home.⁴¹ It is not clear whether the other foreign women who received patents at the turn of the twentieth century ever stepped foot in Brazil, let alone weighed investments into local industries. Women like Harriet Ruth Tracy, a well-known inventor in the United States, relied on a local firm to file her patent application for a sewing machine part in 1889.⁴² In other words, intellectual property law was a secondary concern for this particular device. Brazil's efforts to strengthen their patent law did not spur Tracy's invention and probably had little to do with the products patented by the other foreign nationals. This is not to say that Brazil's patent laws did not matter, but rather it was the way female entrepreneurs incorporated them into their larger business plans that mattered. Relying on the guarantees of the Paris Convention, Tracy's patent provided equal protection for her product and her place in Brazil's market. A similar approach is evident in the patent activity of Brazilian female entrepreneurs. My final analysis offers a nascent hypothesis on the significance of patents within the context of female property rights in Brazil.

⁴⁰ Da Silva, et. al. 'The 'Disguised Foreign Investor', p. 14. Others have studied the role of the British in industrialisation, but this examination is the first to focus on British patent holders in Brazil in particular. See Birchal, *Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*; Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil*; Ridings, *Business Interest Groups in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*; and Suzigan, *Industria Brasileira*.

⁴¹ Approximately 61 per cent of female partners were native-born, while 39 per cent immigrated from Western Europe and the Americas, AN, Junta Commercial, 1869–1904.

⁴² PI 9.203 & Patent 799, 1889. Merritt, 'Hypatia in the Patent Office', p. 255; and Stanley, *Mothers & Daughters of Invention*, pp. 298, 344.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE

While the political transition from Empire to Republic created new commercial laws designed to stimulate innovation, civil law on female property rights remained constant. Differing from Anglo-rule, Brazil's civil legislation largely classified property brought to or acquired under marriage as communal.⁴³ This legal arrangement is one of the main reasons why Maria Clémencia required her husband's permission to form her business partnership: to confirm his approval of their shared property invested into the firm. The practice was not reciprocal, as no wives were compelled by the Commercial Code to authorise their husband's business activity. Nevertheless, the law on communal property is also why Maria Clémencia could receive a patent for an invention originally registered by her husband. Under the marital property regime, both spouses legally laid claim to the bottling method. Her circumstances question if patents reflected the technological advance typically associated with market expansion or an effort to protect female rights to negotiate.

A key factor in female entrepreneurship in Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century was the protection of property rights granted by civil law. The same civil legislation governing property under marriage also determined its division upon death. Also unique from the legal customs prevalent in England and the United States, individuals had little say over the control of their estates. Brazil followed the civil law tradition of forced heirship, which divided family assets evenly among male and female relatives and largely omitted the possibility of testamentary freedom.⁴⁴ This

⁴³ *Ordenações* Livro 4, Título 46 and 47. With few exceptions, marital property was legally classified as communal. A prenuptial agreement allowed couples to maintain separate property in marriage. Similarly, with a *contrato de dote e arras*, a husband reserved the right to administer the property his wife brought to their marriage (the *dote* or dowry) but he could not claim ownership over her dowry. See Lauderdale Graham, 'Making the Private Public', p. 31 and Muriel Nazzari, *Disappearance of the Dowry: Women, Families, and Social Change in São Paulo, Brazil, 1600–1900* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 188, n. 14.

⁴⁴ In terms of its legal division, the family estate equalled three parts: two parts forcibly dedicated to their heirs and one part for the married couple to share evenly. Referred to as the *terça*, or the 'third', this latter portion enabled each spouse to freely distribute one-sixth of their conjugal property at the time of their death. *Ordenações*- Livro 4, Título 48; Borges, *The Family in Bahia, Brazil 1870–1945*, p. 115; Graham, 'Making the Private Public', pp. 30–31; Linda Lewin, *Surprise Heirs v. 1: Illegitimacy, Patrimonial Rights and Legal Nationalism in Luso-Brazilian Inheritance, 1750–1821* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 4 and Nazzari, 'Widows as Obstacles to Business', p. 781.

same legal emphasis on the family, over individual interests or bequests, is what entitled wives to certain rights during their marriage and into widowhood. Although communal property fell under the domain of the family patriarch, he was not the sole authority over the family estate.⁴⁵ The couple shared claims of all assets and neither spouse could mortgage or sell their holdings without consent of the other.⁴⁶ As a widow, Georgina Figueredo Reid joined her pharmacy in 1900 because she co-owned the capital her husband initially invested into the business. The civil law on family property guaranteed that her husband could neither control the pharmacy independently during their marriage nor freely will his share of the business upon his death. Although it is impossible to measure the percentage of female entrepreneurs who followed a similar path into the Brazilian market, at least one-third of businesswomen in Rio de Janeiro were widows.⁴⁷ Brazilian civil law firmly entrenched women in commerce and enabled them to strategically plot their business future.

Female entrepreneurship was not contingent on the strength of intellectual property laws by the Republican regime because women had long exercised substantial control of their property through the nation's civil laws. It is telling that Maria Clémencia was only one of eight female entrepreneurs who patented multiple inventions.⁴⁸ Instead, female entrepreneurs often used patent registration as a way to extend their space in a highly patriarchal market. Georgina Figueredo Reid's patent for 'London Pectoralis' coincided with the formation of a new partnership, forged with a male colleague, to run the pharmacy. This detail could be inconsequential, but, given the guarantees of property already inherit to civil law,

⁴⁵ *Ordenações*- Livro 4, Títulos 46–48 and Título 96; Lauderdale Graham, 'Making the Private Public', pp. 30–31; and Nazzari, *Disappearance of the Dowry*, p. 25. Several practices in nineteenth-century family law in Spanish Latin America also deferred control of communal property to the husband but the *patria potestad* was not legally sanctioned, as was the case for Brazil. See Carmen Diana Deere and Magdalena León, 'Liberalism and Married Women's Property Rights in Nineteenth-Century Latin America', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (2005): pp. 627–678, p. 647.

⁴⁶ *Ordenações*- Livro 4, Título 48.

⁴⁷ In addition to business women who self-identified as widows, either in their business partnership contracts or the name of their company, notarial and judicial records housed at the AN confirm that approximately 35 per cent of female partners and sole proprietors were widowed at the time they registered their businesses. AN, Junta Commercial, 1869–1904; *Habilitações para o casamento, 1880–1910* and *Inventários, 1870–1910*.

⁴⁸ Out of these eight women, one half patented distinct inventions whereas the other half represented versions of the original invention or technology. PI, 1880–1910.

patent activity presents an interesting lens of analysis for understanding female entrepreneurial strategy more broadly versus a technological contribution to market development.

CONCLUSION

Recognising patent applications as one of the many ways that women protected their space in the market in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro augments traditional conclusions on the role of female entrepreneurs and property rights in Brazilian economic development. Although a small collection of patent cases cannot offer definitive conclusions on the importance of female innovation for economic growth, they certainly highlight the multiple ways that women contributed to the expansion of technology in the market as envisioned by the imperial and Republican governments. Women are frequently viewed as rare but crucial capitalists, making contributions to family firms but not on their own account. Yet the research presented in this chapter of female entrepreneurs and their patent activity demonstrates how women often utilised their business acumen and legal savvy in pursuit of their own market endeavours.

Considered with the larger context of economic development, the business activity of patentees like Maria Clémencia also presents new conclusions on the significance of property rights, technology and gender. Buttressed by the commercial and civil legislation that provided women with a great degree of control over their market activity and personal property, there were few legal reasons for women to abstain from pursuing business or technological opportunities. The small numbers of patent applications, matching patterns in those nations with coverture, suggest that property rights were not the sole obstacle for female invention in the nineteenth century. Despite the legal protection of property for women in Brazil, they still operated in a patriarchal market in which female decorum was equally weighed with business strategy. The modest population of female patentees like Maria Clémencia emphasises the great efforts required for women to maintain their space in Brazil's gendered economy.

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Not Such a ‘Bad Speculation’: Women, Cookbooks and Entrepreneurship in Late-Nineteenth-Century Australia

Blake Singley

In September 1878, a new cookery book appeared on the shelves of John Horsburgh Booksellers in the small regional Queensland town of Maryborough. The local newspaper noted its appearance in passing, describing it as ‘well printed’ and ‘well indexed’, adding that it contained a ‘genuine Australian flavour’.¹ Indeed, the book contained recipes for native Australian ingredients, such as kangaroo, wallaby and bandicoot. What the newspaper did not note, however, was that *Mrs Lance Rawson’s Cookery Book* was one of a mere handful of cookbooks to have been written and published in Australia at that time. Furthermore, the *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* also failed to note that the author, Wilhelmina Rawson, was a local businesswoman and entrepreneur and that her cookbook was the first to be written by a woman in Australia.

¹ *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 14 September 1878, p. 2.

B. Singley (✉)
Australian War Memorial, Campbell, ACT, Australia
e-mail: Blake.Singley@awm.gov.au

The publication of locally produced cookbooks was slow to get started in the Australian colonies. Most home-cooks made do with a copy of a British cookbook or relied on their own handwritten and compiled manuscript books.² It was not until the mid-1860s that the first Australian cookbook was published in Tasmania by Edward Abbott. *The English and Australian Cookery Book* was a combination of original and plagiarised recipes. Abbot saw the publication of this book as one way through which he could escape the financial travails that had been plaguing him for years. The idea of publishing cookbooks as an entrepreneurial activity would continue to resonate with those who would become the mainstay of the industry: women.

This chapter explores the role of women in the cookery book industry in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The overwhelmingly gendered nature of cookbook writing in this period placed women writers at the centre of this form of publishing. While many cookbook authors were amateurs who only published one book, some women were able to pursue a career from their cookbook writing and other food-related enterprises. Wilhelmina Rawson and Hannah Maclurcan were two such women. Born only nine years apart, they were able to parlay their initial success as cookbook writers into very different careers. They were visible women with high profiles in the public sphere. For others, including Harriet Wicken and Amy Schauer, cookbook writing was a natural extension of their careers as cookery educators and promoters of domestic science. Authors such as Rita Vaile, Zara Aronson and Henrietta McGowan combined cookbook writing with careers as journalists and advice columnists in newspapers. These authors, whilst pursuing a specific entrepreneurial activity in the publishing industry, were also part of a wider world of female entrepreneurship. As Catherine Bishop's work on businesswomen in nineteenth-century Sydney highlights, women were an integral part of the business fabric of the city and of the colonies as a whole.³ While cookbook writing might not fit within traditional business activities, these cookery writers were some of the diverse range of women who owned or controlled business enterprises that have often gone unnoticed in histories of nineteenth-century Australian society.

²Blake Singley, 'A Cookbook of Her Own', *M/C Journal* 16, no. 3 (22 June 2013), <http://www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/639>

³Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2015).

For almost seven decades after their first appearance, Australian cookbooks mirrored within their pages many of the existing cultural attitudes and social practices on which ideologies of domesticity in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Australia were predicated. These cookbooks not only provided recipes, they also played an important part in delineating the domestic and social responsibilities that women, particularly White, middle-class women, were expected to undertake. These texts formed part of a range of mass-produced materials such as marriage guides and house-keeping texts that, together with newspapers and magazines, reinforced and perpetuated gendered social norms and gave detailed accounts of the correct manner in which to carry out gender-specific activities such as cooking.⁴

Because women generally had the primary role in the preparation of meals in the domestic sphere, they were clearly identified as the main consumers of these culinary texts and the vast majority of these cookbooks reinforced a domestic ideology that emphasised the role of women within the home. However, cookbooks not only helped to demarcate the boundaries of the feminine but also often allowed for an expansion of those boundaries into the public realm.

While most cookbooks were undoubtedly intended to be used by women in the domestic realm, there was an implicit understanding that these texts would also, at times, be used by men. It is important to note that outside the home, men were often the visible face of cooking. In pastoral stations across Australia, the role of camp cook was typically taken up by men. Professional chefs working in restaurants and large hotels were often also men. The author of one of Australia's earliest cookbooks, *The Australian Cook* (1876), Alfred Wilkinson, was the Chef de Cuisine at Melbourne's Athenaeum Club.

Assumptions regarding the proper roles of men and women were 'imported wholesale into Australia' in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁵ This 'cult of domesticity', as Gillian Whitlock argues, was central to British imperial identity and played an important role in social and

⁴This includes books such as *The Australian Housewives' Manual: A Book for Beginners and People with Small Incomes* (Melbourne: A.H. Massina, 1885) written under the pseudonym 'Old Housewife' and the government-published *Housewifery* (Brisbane: A.H. Tucker, 19--).

⁵Margaret Anderson, 'Good Strong Girls: Colonial Women and Work', in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1992): p. 228.

cultural reproduction as well as in the various constructions of femininity and motherhood in settler colonies.⁶ However, as Sue Rowley has pointed out, by the 1890s in Australia, the ideological construct that underpinned the rhetoric of separate spheres was beginning to fracture.⁷ The strident nature with which this rhetoric was articulated in society, including in cookbooks, belied the ‘uncertainty, anxiety and change’ which were the characteristics of the relations between women and men in Australia.⁸

The idea of separate spheres for men and women did not fit with the daily reality encountered by many Australian women. Financial necessity dictated that many women find some form of employment, either inside or outside the home. Married women’s participation in the workforce, however, was constrained by a number of factors, including societal expectations and the arduous tasks involved in domestic duties. As Susan Nugent Wood noted in *Woman’s Work in Australia*, “‘Woman’s Work’ must begin at home, and very often she never need move from the common round of an uneventful life to fulfil her noiseless part’.⁹ Paid labour outside the home was deemed by some as anathema to the prescribed and idealised role expected of a middle-class married woman. Her role was to be a mother and to render the man’s home (for inevitably it was considered HIS home) happy and comfortable.¹⁰ In her 1891 book entitled *The Australian Home*, Harriet Wicken made her views on this matter explicit:

There is a great deal of talk now-a-days about “women’s rights” and some seem to think she can only obtain her rights by rushing into the world of business and politics, but surely this is a mistaken notion....There may be cases where a woman of exceptional ability, and without home occupations, can take part in public business without detriment to her womanhood, but these cases are rare and merely prove the rule that women’s best and highest rights lie within the four walls of her home.¹¹

⁶ Gillian Whitlock, ‘The Intimate Empire’, in Leigh Dale and Simon Ryan (eds), *The Body in the Library*, Cross/Cultures; 33 (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998): p. 201.

⁷ Sue Rowley, ‘Things a Bushwoman Cannot Do’, in Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan (eds), *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993): p. 185.

⁸ Rowley, p. 186.

⁹ Susan Nugent Wood, *Woman’s Work in Australia* (Melbourne: Samuel Mullen, 1862), p. 35.

¹⁰ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 6 August 1870, p. 21.

¹¹ Harriet Wicken, *The Australian Home: A Handbook of Domestic Economy* (Sydney: Edwards, Dunlop, 1891), pp. 243–44.

Ironically, as will be discussed later in this chapter, Harriet Wicken would carve out a career as a successful domestic science instructor and cookbook writer. As Bishop notes, social respectability did not preclude women from working for a living or being involved in business.¹²

The vast majority of cookbooks published in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries document the dishes consumed by the significant proportion of the population that belonged to the 'upper middle class' and the 'lower middle class'.¹³ According to Richard Twopenny, in 1880s Australia, these two groups were less distinct than in Britain and were continually in contact with each other.¹⁴ This broad definition of 'middle class' also included those who belonged to the 'respectable' working classes, such as tradesmen.¹⁵ In his extensive analysis of representations of culinary culture in Australian print media between 1850 and 1920, Colin Bannerman argued that cookbooks during this period overwhelmingly contained recipes which reflected middle-class tastes.¹⁶ In the preface to the second edition of her *Cookery Book*, Wilhelmina Rawson explicitly stated that the book was intended for the middle classes of the colony: for 'those who cannot afford to buy a Mrs Beeton or a Warne, but can afford the three shillings for this [book]'.¹⁷ Many of the recipes contained within the cookbooks aimed at the middle classes reflected the predominantly 'plain' cuisine that was found in most homes, 'the soups and savouries, pudding and pies that must be provided 365 days a year'.¹⁸

A NASCENT INDUSTRY

Australian cookbook writers faced a number of challenges when attempting to publish their books. Their local cookbooks competed with British imports, which remained steadfastly popular with the Australian reading

¹² Catherine Bishop, 'Commerce Was a Woman: Women in Business in Colonial Sydney and Wellington' (PhD thesis, Australian National University 2012), p. 127.

¹³ Barbara Santich, 'The High and the Low: Australian Cuisine in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of Australian Studies* 87 (2006): p. 41.

¹⁴ Richard E. N. Twopenny, *Town Life in Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1973), p. 90.

¹⁵ Twopenny, p. 90.

¹⁶ Colin Bannerman, 'Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating c. 1850 to c. 1920: The Evidence from Newspapers, Periodical Journals and Cookery Literature' (PhD thesis, University of Canberra, 2001), p. 45.

¹⁷ Wilhelmina Rawson, *Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book and Household Hints* (Rockhampton, QLD: William Hopkins, 1886), p. viii.

¹⁸ Wattle Blossom, *Off the Beaten Track*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: D. Mitchell, 1917), Introduction.

public. The Australian book market was inundated with British publications and it accounted for 25 per cent of all British book exports.¹⁹ For example, only two of the fifty or more cookbooks listed in the 1890 catalogue for Watson, Ferguson and Co. booksellers in Brisbane were Australian.²⁰

A number of different versions of *Mrs Beeton's Cookery Book and Household Guide*, one of Britain's most successful cookbooks, were readily available in many bookstores. Most of these bore the imprint of the British publisher Ward, Lock and Co., which had an office in Melbourne. Some editions of Beeton's work were published on behalf of Australian firms, such as E. W. Cole booksellers and Foy and Gibson's department store.²¹ It is worth noting that it was only after 1888 that Beeton's work carried a small section devoted to Australian cookery. Even books explicitly advertised as Australian, such as *Dymock's Australian Cookery Book*, were reissues of British cookbooks that did little to cater for local conditions save including the word Australian in the title. Yet, despite the onslaught of British cookbooks, locally written and published books were still able to make some inroads and maintain a presence in the Australian market.

THE FIRST OF HER KIND

Though born into a genteel middle-class family in Sydney, Wilhelmina Rawson spent much of her adult life on the colonial frontier of Queensland. She often found herself needing to supplement the family income through a series of entrepreneurial ventures. She manufactured mattresses stuffed with seaweed and sold them to the local hospital, a contract she had won through a tender process.²² She also made fashionable muffs made from pelican feathers and sold them locally. Rawson even became involved in global trade in the early 1880s when she began exporting salted mullet to

¹⁹ Martyn Lyons, 'Britain's Largest Export Market', in John Arnold and Martyn Lyons (eds), *A History of the Book in Australia 1891-1945: A National Culture in a Colonised Market* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2001): p. 19.

²⁰ *A Catalogue of Books, Being a Selection of Works in the Various Departments of Literature on Sale* (Brisbane: Watson, Ferguson & Co., 1890).

²¹ Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Cookery Book and Household Guide Containing Recipes for Every Kind of Cookery: Hints and Advice in Household Management*, New and greatly enl. ed. (Melbourne: E. W. Cole, 1891).

²² Wilhelmina Rawson, 'Making the Best of It', *Queenslander*, 6 December 1919, p. 41.

Chinese communities in the Straits Settlements.²³ Amongst all this activity, Rawson found the time to write and publish her first cookbook.

Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book found a ready-made market of women seeking advice for cooking and keeping house in regional and remote areas. It was aimed at the 'young and inexperienced housewife living in the bush'.²⁴ Rawson highlighted the fact that she used readily available ingredients, something that was commented upon in almost every single review of her book. She clearly distinguished her book from the British ones, such as Mrs Beeton's, in a market that had a dearth of Australian content. The book not only encompassed an extensive recipe section but also provided 'lifestyle' advice dealing with issues such as servants and the laundry. The book even included a section on raising poultry for profit. This was later published as a stand-alone book and reached four editions. In many ways, Rawson's cookbook was far more useful than the scant few previous Australian publications already available. Her personal experiences, her clear identification of an audience and, indeed, her sex, made her publication, *Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book*, a valuable addition to the market. It became a template other Australian women cookbook authors would follow.

Like the industry as a whole, Rawson's cookbook writing career was slow to get moving. In the preface to the second edition of the book, which appeared in 1886, she noted that 'owing to the want of means to advertise it properly', the book did not sell as well as it could have.²⁵ She was able to remedy this situation by taking charge of the distribution of the book herself. This led to two further editions of the book being printed and published. Over the next decade, Rawson wrote and published three more cookbooks, including *The Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information* in 1894 and *The Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion* in 1895, a book that remained in print into the last decade of the twentieth century. These later books were published by large publishing companies, such as George Robertson in Melbourne, and attained broader distribution than her first effort.

Her reputation as a well-known cookbook author allowed her to expand into other mediums. She was a paid contributor to the women's pages of *The Queenslander* and *The Courier-Mail*, where she utilised her

²³ Rawson, p. 43.

²⁴ Rawson, *Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book*, p. v.

²⁵ Rawson, p. vii.

expertise to advise readers on all matters culinary. Here, she also wrote on one of her favourite topics, the raising of poultry in Australian conditions. Her literary aspirations extended beyond cookery books and were recognised in 1890 when one of her short stories appeared in an edited collection, *Coo-ee: Tales of Australian Life by Australian Ladies*. Her fairy stories also appeared in the *Wide Bay News*. In 1901, Rawson briefly served as the editor of the Australian Labor Party-leaning *People's Newspaper* in Rockhampton, where, it was suggested by *The Morning Bulletin* looking back many years later, 'she broke a number of conventions that hedged round about a woman of 30 or so years ago'.²⁶ In this role, she was a strong advocate for the retention on Melanesian indentured labour in Queensland. In 1919, as a well-established figure and a 'Queensland Pioneer', she was asked to serialise her memoirs and reminiscences in *The Queenslander*. Throughout her life, Wilhelmina Rawson was involved in a wide range of business ventures characterised by Richard Robinson and Charles Arcodia as 'risk-taking in the mold of the modern entrepreneur'.²⁷ However, while never achieving the status of an 'antipodean Mrs Beeton', she remains best known to this day for her cookbooks.

DOMESTIC (SCIENCE) GODDESSES

Another successful group of professional cookbook authors were those involved in domestic science education. Domestic science was seen as a perfect vehicle to promote rational and scientifically grounded methods in what was considered an integral part of domestic duties. This new approach prioritised the health and nutritional aspects of cookery but also included an emphasis on economy and thrift. This particular rhetoric of domesticity saw the appropriation of a scientific methodology and terminology that was primarily the domain of men. While women may have been partly excluded from the professional sciences, they were urged to share similar values in the kitchen.²⁸ The domestic science movement attempted to reconcile this modern rational approach with what had always been regarded

²⁶ *The Morning Bulletin*, 9 July 1936, p. 6.

²⁷ Richard N. S. Robinson and Charles Arcodia, 'Reading Australian Colonial Hospitality: A Simple Recipe', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 2. No. 4 (2008): p. 385.

²⁸ Caroline Lieffers, "'The Present Time Is Eminently Scientific": The Science of Cookery in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 4 (2012): p. 943.

as an intrinsically feminine pursuit.²⁹ In 1890, feminist and social reformer Cara Edgeworth David left no doubt as to the value of domestic science education and to its gendered nature when she noted that it was 'an intellectual subject, a downright practical subject, and distinctly a woman's subject!'³⁰ Almost fifteen years later, a New South Wales government report noted that the 'traditional usage in the management of home affairs has ruled in the past; the aim now is to bring intelligence to the task'.³¹ The report continued by calling for the kitchen to become 'an experimental laboratory', which could raise 'intense interest' in the subject of cookery.³² Cookbooks that emerged to be used as textbooks in cookery classes during the early decades of the domestic science movement in Australia were imbued with this spirit of rationalism and scientific certainty, while at the same time reinforcing ideas of female domesticity. These authors took their cues and inspiration from models of domestic science instruction and ideologies that were being developed in Great Britain.³³

The authors of domestic science textbooks used their professional experience and training to produce cookbooks to be used in classrooms across the country. The publication of these books also aided in the development of their professional careers. Some of the more prominent authors in this field included Flora Pell, whose 1916 *Our Cookery Book* remained in print until the 1950s and had at least twenty-four editions, and Amy Schauer, who published four books on the topic and whose career spanned four decades.³⁴

The most enterprising of these authors was Harriet Wicken, who had trained at the National Training School of Cookery in Kensington, England. The Kensington School, as it was known, was the epicentre of domestic science education in Britain, and its graduates were highly sought after by teaching institutions throughout the Empire. They brought with

²⁹ Alison Bashford, 'Domestic Scientists: Modernity, Gender, and the Negotiation of Science in Australian Nursing, 1880–1910', *Journal of Women's History* 12, no. 2 (2000): p. 138.

³⁰ Edgeworth David in Wicken, *The Australian Home*, p. 3.

³¹ *Joint Volumes of Papers Presented to the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly and Ordered to Be Printed*, vol. 4 (Sydney: Govt. Pr, 1906), p. 53.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³³ Blake Singley, 'Everything Pertaining to the House: Cookbooks, Domestic Science and Ideology in Australia', in *Eat History: Food and Drink in Australia and Beyond* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

³⁴ Singley, 'Everything Pertaining to the House'.

them the latest developments in domestic science education and were highly regarded as professionals. During her time in Australia, Wicken established herself as a central player in the training of professional domestic economy instructors, particularly at the Sydney Technical College, and went on to publish nearly a dozen cookbooks and domestic economy texts.³⁵

When Wicken landed on Australian shores in late September of 1886, her arrival in the colonies was noted by the gossipy newspaper *Table Talk*. The paper noted her credentials from the Kensington School and highlighted her reputation as a cookery instructor in London.³⁶ Her success as an instructor, it added, was because she ‘combined practical illustrations with theoretical teaching’.³⁷ The newspaper also noted that Wicken had already published a cookbook in England entitled *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, that the book was available in the colonies and that it was decidedly more practical than other cookbooks. Finally, the *Table Talk* correspondent drew the reader’s attention to the fact that Wicken intended to commence teaching cookery classes in Sydney and Melbourne in the near future.³⁸

It is unlikely that *Table Talk* gleaned this information from anybody except Wicken herself. She clearly used the piece in *Table Talk* as an opportunity to start a marketing campaign for her cooking classes and to promote sales of her cookbook. Shortly after her arrival, advertisements promoting her cooking classes appeared in Sydney newspapers. This type of professional self-promotion was, as Anne Clendinning has noted, emblematic of both the domestic science movement and Victorian-era capitalism.³⁹

Wicken’s first cookery classes were held within weeks of her arrival in Sydney. A series of ‘six demonstrative lessons’ were held at the Temperance Hall in downtown Sydney.⁴⁰ The course, covering breakfast, lunch and dinner dishes, cost ten shillings and sixpence, with single classes priced at

³⁵ Bette R. Austin, *A Bibliography of Australian Cookery Books Published Prior to 1941* (Melbourne: RMIT, 1987).

³⁶ *Table Talk*, 8 October 1886, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Anne Clendinning, ‘“Deft Fingers” and “Persuasive Eloquence”: The “Lady Demons” of the English Gas Industry, 1888–1918’, *Women’s History Review* 9, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): p. 528, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612020000200254>

⁴⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 1886, p. 2.

two shillings. Between December 1889 and January 1890, Wicken conducted a series of cookery lessons under the auspices of the Hobart Technical Board. These events were also sponsored by the Hobart Gas Company, which not only supplied the gas free of charge but also provided the state-of-the-art stoves on which Wicken carried out her lessons.⁴¹ The year 1891 saw the publication of two books by Wicken, a new edition of the *Kingswood Cookery Book*, to be used as a textbook for her cooking classes at the Technical College, and a volume on domestic economy entitled *The Australian Home*, to be used as a companion text.

The relationship between Harriet Wicken and her publisher Angus & Robertson, although by no means typical, casts some light on the dealings cookbook authors had with large publishing firms. By 1896, when she began negotiations with Angus & Robertson, Wicken had an established track record in the industry and was well placed to negotiate a favourable contract with her publisher for the fourth edition of her best-known work *The Kingswood Cookery Book*. She was also a known quantity to the company as she had produced the recipe section of a previous publication, *The Art of Living in Australia*, written by Sydney doctor Philip Muskett.

Authors under contract to Angus & Robertson could provide their books to be sold on commission; they could receive royalties, agree to a profit share or sell the work outright to the publisher.⁴² One of Wicken's other books under the banner of Angus & Robertson, the 1896 *Recipes for Lenten Dishes*, had been published on commission.⁴³ While *Lenten Dishes* was not very successful and did not see a second edition, Angus & Robertson were still willing to negotiate with Wicken for the publication of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*.

In a letter to Wicken in 1896, George Robertson expressed a keen interest in publishing her work. Here, Wicken's reputation was a key factor. 'We intend to do a Cookery Book of some sort', Robertson told Wicken, 'and would very much prefer to have yours to running the risk of a new one'.⁴⁴ Robertson was willing to provide very generous terms for the rights to publish the book. He offered to undertake the book's printing

⁴¹ *The Mercury*, 12 December 1889, p. 2.

⁴² Jennifer Alison, *Doing Something for Australia: George Robertson and the Early Years of Angus and Robertson, Publishers: 1888–1900* (Melbourne: Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, 2009), pp. 111–12.

⁴³ Alison, *Doing Something for Australia*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ 'Letter from George Robertson to Harriet Wicken', 30 March 1896, ML MSS 3269 71/4, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

and publishing at the company's expense and proposed a royalty of fourpence a copy for the first 3000 copies sold and an additional penny for any subsequent copies.⁴⁵ In the first three months after publication in 1898, *The Kingswood Cookery Book* sold 1189 copies, earning Wicken £19 16s 6d in the process, with a further 537 copies sold by the end of the year.⁴⁶ The book proved to be successful enough for Angus & Robertson to offer Wicken £25 for five years in exchange for the rights to the book.⁴⁷ In an attempt to increase sales, the company lowered the price of the book and the fifth edition sold for 1s, which was considerably cheaper than the price of 3s 6d that Wicken's Melbourne publisher George Robertson had put on the book in 1891. This lower price was facilitated by changes occurring in the Australian printing industry. The 1900 edition of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, unlike earlier ones, was printed, folded, sewn and bound wholly by machine.⁴⁸

One of the advantages of a large publisher like Angus & Robertson was that they could actively promote the works in their catalogues. They also sent out over 200 copies of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, copies for which Wicken received no royalties, to newspapers and magazines throughout Australia. Company documents note that 136 reviews appeared for Wicken's book.⁴⁹ These reviews varied from those merely offering a brief description and price of the book to longer ones that praised its 'many merits'. A large company also facilitated the widespread distribution of a book like *The Kingswood Cookery Book*. Angus & Robertson supplied Cole's Book Arcade, a large Melbourne bookstore, with 500 copies of Wicken's book which were labelled under Cole's own imprint. Angus & Robertson also offered Cole's very generous credit terms.

The fourth edition of *The Kingswood Cookery Book* was deemed sufficiently profitable by its publishers to warrant the production of a further edition the following year. After the five-year agreement with Wicken had elapsed, the company sold the rights to the book to another publisher. *The Kingswood Cookery Book* was a financial success for Wicken, who, as Jennifer Alison argues, probably benefited more than the company from the work.⁵⁰ Wicken's success, however, did not guarantee any further

⁴⁵ 'Letter from George Robertson to Harriet Wicken'.

⁴⁶ Alison, *Doing Something for Australia*, p. 140.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴⁸ *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 28 September 1900, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Alison, *Doing Something for Australia*, p. 71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

contracts with the company, which declined her manuscript on 'Breakfast and Tea Dishes'.⁵¹ By this time, Angus & Robertson had commenced selling another cookbook that became one of the mainstays of its business, *The Presbyterian Women's Cookery Book*.

Wicken's expertise and reputation as a cookbook author also proved useful in a more commercial sphere. Retailing and wholesaling concerns, both large and small, issued cookbooks to promote their services. These books had copious amounts of advertising in their pages, presumably featuring products for sale at the premises of the individual grocer who issued the book. Once again, cookbooks proved to be an excellent medium through which to advertise products directly to those most likely to use them. This practice continued well into the second decade of the twentieth century. Two promotional cookbooks appeared bearing Wicken's name as the author. *The Cook's Compass*, in 1890, promoted the services of J. G. Hanks & Co., a Sydney-based grocer and tea merchant, and noted Wicken's position as a lecturer in domestic economy as well as the fact that she had previously published a cookbook.⁵² In 1892, Melbourne's Mutual Provedoring Company issued *Fish Dainties*. In the preface of this book, Wicken stated that it had been written explicitly at the request of the company.⁵³ That the Mutual Provedoring Company sought out Wicken to write their cookbook demonstrates there was some desire to cash in on her reputation to elevate the profile of their products.

WRITING HOSPITALITY

Hannah Maclurcan came from a family of hotelkeepers and by the age of seventeen was already managing one of her father's establishments in Toowoomba.⁵⁴ After marriage and a move to Townsville to manage the Queen's Hotel, Maclurcan embarked on writing a cookbook, *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book: A Collection of Practical Recipes Specially Suitable for Australia*. The initial print run of 2000 volumes, which appeared in April 1889, was exhausted in a matter of weeks. The book became ubiquitous on Australian kitchen shelves with at least twenty

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 197.

⁵² Harriet Wicken, *The Cook's Compass* (Sydney: J.G. Hanks, 1890).

⁵³ Harriet Wicken, *Fish Dainties* (Melbourne: Mutual Provedoring Co. Ltd., 1892).

⁵⁴ Charles D Maclurcan, *The Story of the Wentworth Hotel: And the Historic Site on Which It Is Built* (Sydney: John Sands, 1946), p. 24.

editions being published, the last in 1930. The book received high praise in the press with one reviewer going as far as calling Maclurcan ‘one of the best cooks in Australia’ and another describing her as ‘one thoroughly skilled in the culinary art’.⁵⁵ The second edition of her book contained a viceregal seal of approval in the shape of a letter of praise from Lady May Lamington, the wife of the governor of Queensland.

Hannah Maclurcan self-published the first two editions of her *Cookery Book* after it had been rejected by several publishers. In a letter to A. G. Stephens, the editor of *The Bulletin*, Maclurcan wrote: ‘I took the first one to Melbourne to try and get one of the publishers to take it up but they were very discouraging and told me that “Cookery Books” were a very bad speculation’.⁵⁶ Like many other self-published authors of the period, Maclurcan used the services of a local printer and bookseller to produce her book. Ever the enterprising businesswoman, Maclurcan helped the printer set the type, for which she had paid out of her own pocket.⁵⁷ She was also probably responsible for soliciting the numerous advertisements that featured in the cookbook; the income from these would have helped to offset some of the production costs. Maclurcan also sent out review copies to numerous city and regional newspapers throughout Queensland. Almost immediately after publication, excerpts of the book appeared in the pages of these same newspapers. The book garnered positive reviews, with many highlighting the practicality of the work for Australian conditions. After the initial run sold out within a matter of weeks, Maclurcan published a second edition of her book. It was only after this success that a large publisher, George Robertson of Melbourne, took interest in her work and published it in 1899, giving it nationwide distribution.

Although Maclurcan only published one more cookbook, *The 20th Century Cookery Book: A Thousand Practical Recipes for Everyday Use*, she continued to be a prominent figure in the hospitality industry. In 1901, together with her husband Donald, Maclurcan took over the lease of the Wentworth Hotel in central Sydney. Under her directorship, the hotel grew from thirty-two rooms to become a grand establishment of over one

⁵⁵ Opinions of the press in Hannah Maclurcan, *Cookery Book: A Collection of Practical Recipes Specially Suitable for Australia* (Townsville: Wilmetts, 1898).

⁵⁶ Hannah Maclurcan, ‘Letter to A.G. Stephens’, 1899, 1, UQFL2 2/1674, Fryer Library, Queensland State Library, Brisbane.

⁵⁷ Beverley Kingston, ‘Maclurcan, Hannah (1860–1936)’, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 23 October 2013, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/maclurcan-hannah-13070>

hundred rooms in 1925.⁵⁸ The hotel became highly regarded for its fine food and its restaurant was known as Sydney's Premier Café. The hotel published its own glossy in-house *Wentworth Magazine*, which showed off the glamorous lifestyles of the hotel's guests. It carried writing by well-known Australian authors, such as Mary Gilmore and Nettie Palmer, and included sections on poetry, art and fashion. The magazine also included a recipe and cookery section that was, of course, under Maclurcan's direction. Ever the shameless self-promoter, Maclurcan's role as a hostess was lauded by her own magazine, which called her 'a wonderful compiler of fascinating dishes' and praised her for turning the hotel into the 'centre of Sydney's social life'.⁵⁹ Maclurcan's fame reached beyond that of a cookbook author and she became the doyenne of the hotel industry in Sydney. Australian historian Beverley Kingston has gone as far as describing her as the nation's first celebrity chef.⁶⁰

SELLING MODERNITY

Australian cookbook authors played an important part in instructing and educating readers in the practical uses of new domestic technologies becoming available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The marketing strategies of the companies that manufactured and provided these products were explicitly aimed at a female audience who were their primary users. New energy sources like gas and electricity became widespread in the home and were promoted in the pages of cookbooks written by women. Many cookbook authors in this period found themselves at the nexus between production and consumption. An analysis of Australian cookbooks demonstrates the complexity surrounding the adoption of new domestic technologies in the Australian home. These adoptions were not linear, involving the replacement of one form of technology with a new one, but often involved periods when one form of technology overlapped and competed with another one. Even as late as 1932, *The New Way: A Guide to Modern Housewifery* cookbook provided its readers with detailed and separate instructions for cooking on coal, oil, gas and electrical stoves.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Maclurcan, *The Story of the Wentworth Hotel*, p. 12.

⁵⁹ *The Wentworth Magazine*, November 1930, p. 37.

⁶⁰ Kingston, 'Maclurcan, Hannah (1860–1936)'.

⁶¹ *The New Way: A Guide to Modern Housewifery* (Brisbane: Book-Form Publicity Co, 1932).

The very act of cooking is a complex technological activity. First, it involves the use of tools in the form of the various kitchen utensils necessary for the preparation of meals. Second, it involves the use of all manner of machines, ranging from small kitchen appliances to large ovens and stoves. And, finally, it often involves the use of a technical manual in the shape of a cookbook.

In her work on the history of housework and domestic technology in the United States, Ruth Schwartz Cowan notes two distinct organising concepts that are involved in domestic work which she terms ‘work processes’ and ‘technological systems’.⁶² The concept of work process implies that housework is not merely a series of definable tasks but that these are linked to one another.⁶³ The process of cooking a meal on a stove involves a whole series of distinct tasks that need to be linked together to arrive at a final product. These tasks range from the procurement of the ingredients, their initial preparation (cleaning, peeling, trimming, etc.) and the cooking of these ingredients through a variety of methods. Moreover, depending on the nature of the stove used, there are a number of different tasks that may need to be carried out, from the labour-intensive chopping of wood to fuel a colonial stove to merely flicking a switch on an electric range. Utensils also need to be prepared and maintained—knives sharpened and pots scrubbed—as part of this process. As a form of prescriptive literature, playing a role analogous to any other technical manual, Australian cookbooks delineated and clarified many of the elaborate processes involved in the preparation of meals. The second of Cowan’s organising concepts is that of the technological system. In this system, each implement utilised in the home is, in some way, intrinsically linked to another in order to work and function properly.⁶⁴ The prime example of this technological system is the necessity for gas or electric stoves to be connected to some form of supply grid. Without the adequate provision of gas or electricity to fuel them, these stoves would be rendered useless. Cowan argues that the industrialisation of the home was partly determined by the decisions of homemakers and partly by larger social processes over which they had little control.⁶⁵ The decision to buy a new gas or electric stove was contingent on the availability of the energy sources to fuel it.

⁶²Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 11.

⁶³Ibid., p. 12.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 13.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 14.

Once again, cookbooks aided in the introduction and promotion of such a technological system into Australian kitchens.

It is estimated that by the late nineteenth century, one in four of Melbourne's homes was using gas to fuel their stoves.⁶⁶ Furthermore, at a time when gas was used primarily for lighting purposes, daytime consumption of gas had increased considerably, accounting for one-third of the overall usage.⁶⁷ In 1892, one leading Melbourne gas supplier estimated that over 25,000 people were using gas stoves on a daily basis. Sydney's take-up of this new technology was a little slower. The Australian Gas and Light Company, the city's largest gas supplier, had installed a mere 156 gas stoves throughout the city by 1878, with this number increasing to 4000 a decade later.⁶⁸ With electricity becoming a more affordable alternative for lighting throughout urban centres by the 1880s, many gas suppliers felt the need to actively promote gas for cooking and heating in order to maintain profits.

Isabel Ross travelled throughout Australia and New Zealand providing her services as a cookery instructor for various gas companies. Ross, like many other early domestic science instructors who plied their trade in Australia, was also a Kensington graduate. This made her an ideal candidate as a public demonstrator for the Melbourne, Hobart and Auckland Gas Companies. By 1894, she was conducting regular classes at the Metropolitan Gas Company's kitchens in Melbourne and surrounding areas. Many of the advertisements promoting her classes not only highlighted her expertise and her credentials but also informed readers of the services and equipment provided by the Metropolitan Gas Company. These classes were conducted without charge at the company's premises and Ross devoted particular attention to instructing those who had no previous experience in using gas stoves.⁶⁹ Ross penned three cookbooks, including *Original and Well-Certified Recipes in Economic Cookery* in 1894 and *Cookery Class Recipes* in 1900, all published under the auspices of the Metropolitan Gas Company.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Graeme Davison, 'The Australian Energy System in 1888', *Australia 1888 Bulletin* 10 (September 1982): pp. 3–17, 26.

⁶⁷ *The Argus (Exhibition Supplement)*, 9 October 1888, pp. 51–52.

⁶⁸ Rosemary Broomham, *First Light: 150 Years of Gas* (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1987), pp. 69, 76.

⁶⁹ *Fitzroy City Press*, 20 November 1903, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Isabel Ross, *Cookery Class Recipes: As Taught in the Kitchens of the Metropolitan Gas Company, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Echo Publishing Company, 1900); Isabel Ross and

The use of electricity in the home kitchen began to be mooted in the last decades of the nineteenth century. An article appearing in the *Hobart Mercury* in 1894 boldly predicted that the time was approaching when 'electricity will be the universal heating agent' for cooking.⁷¹ Despite the growing availability of electricity in public spaces, its private use was primarily confined to lighting the homes of the wealthy, and it was not until the turn of the century that it began to be used for other domestic purposes, such as cooking.⁷² Even by the early 1920s, only a minuscule proportion, 0.1 per cent, of homes that were electrified used an electric stove.⁷³

It was in one of the country's remote regional areas that one of the earliest and most concerted experiments to supply electricity for cooking purposes was carried out. The electrification of Kalgoorlie began in 1896 when the Kalgoorlie Power Corporation began to supply power for the mines.⁷⁴ As in other parts of Western Australia where power was supplied for industrial purposes, domestic premises also benefited from the availability caused by excess supply.⁷⁵ In November 1905, David Curle Smith lodged an application for an 'Improved electric cooking stove' with the Commonwealth Department of Patents. Curle Smith's model was the first electric stove to be designed and patented in Australia and appeared almost contemporaneously with the earliest imported stoves.

A number of homes in Kalgoorlie installed these new electric stoves in their kitchen. But the complex nature of Curle Smith's stove required careful instructions, and this need was met with the publication of the *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* cookbook in 1907. This book was penned by none other than the inventor's wife, Nora Curle Smith. Curle Smith was not only a cookbook author, but she was an artist and had gained prominence as the secretary of the Kalgoorlie branch of the Red Cross during the First World War. In 1920, Curle Smith was recognised for her contributions to Western Australian society when she was awarded

Metropolitan Gas Company, *Original and Well-Certified Recipes in Economic Cookery* (Melbourne: Ferguson & Mitchell, printers, 1894).

⁷¹ *The Mercury*, 28 November 1894, p. 4.

⁷² Michael Cannon, *Life in the Cities*, vol. 3 (Melbourne: Nelson, 1975), p. 118.

⁷³ Tony Dingle, 'Electrifying the Kitchen in Interwar Victoria', *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no. 57 (1998): p. 124.

⁷⁴ Gavin Casey and Ted Mayman, *The Mile That Midas Touched* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1964), p. 75.

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Curgenvon Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia since 1826* (Crawley, WA: UWA Press, 2008), p. 61.

a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in that year's Honours List.⁷⁶ Curle Smith was also the sister of the noted Australian academic Sir Walter Murdoch and a great-aunt to Rupert Murdoch.

In January 1907, the Council agreed 'that 1000 copies of the Electric Stove Cookery Book, compiled by Mrs D.C. Smith, be printed for selling to consumers'.⁷⁷ In late March, the books went on sale at the price of one shilling and were promoted as 'giving full instructions how to manage Electric Cooking Stoves, with proven recipes for same'.⁷⁸ The following month, Curle Smith conducted a series of cookery demonstrations for the public on the uses of the new stove.⁷⁹ These classes appear to have been well received. One anonymous attendee provided a valuable comment published in the cookery book itself, that 'the tasty pastry and succulent dishes cooked while the crowd waited proved the best and most practical forms of advertisement that the apparatus...could receive'.⁸⁰

The promotional nature of *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* was evident in the book's subtitle, 'Proved recipes for guidance in the use of the "Rational Electric Cooking Stove"'.⁸¹ Curle Smith recognised that the expense of electrical cooking stoves and the price of electricity had previously put cooking with electricity beyond the reach of those with modest incomes.⁸² She claimed, however, that due to 'the farsighted policy of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, and the fortunate invention of the "Rational" Electric Stove, cooking by electricity comes within the reach of anyone'.⁸³

Curle Smith provided her readers with the required information for operating a stove that was, at the time, cutting-edge technology. The use of the words 'thermo-electrical' in the title of her book and the name of the appliance itself, 'the rational electrical stove', implied modernity, a much-valued attribute at the time. But it was also specifically written for

⁷⁶ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 1920, p. 13.

⁷⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 15 January 1907, p. 8.

⁷⁸ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21 March 1907, p. 7.

⁷⁹ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 April 1907, p. 7.

⁸⁰ H. Nora Curle Smith and H. A. Willis, *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy: Proved Recipes for Guidance in the Use of the Rational Electric Cooking Stove* (Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 2011), p. 6.

⁸¹ Nora Curle Smith, *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* (Kalgoorlie: Bird & Annear, 1907).

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

use with one particular model of stove. It is estimated that no more than fifty of the 'rational' stoves were ever built, thereby minimising the impact and reach of her book. The 1907 annual account for the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council showed that only 27 copies of the cookbook had been sold and that the bulk of the 1000 copies printed remained undistributed.⁸⁴ The lack of success of Curle Smith's cookbook does not undermine the entrepreneurial spirit with which its writing and publication was undertaken. Furthermore, the importance of her book extends beyond its commercial reach and practicality in the kitchen; it is most notable as being the world's first book solely dedicated to cooking on an electric stove.

NOT SUCH A BAD SPECULATION

Women took to writing cookbooks for a wide variety of reasons. For many, it was an outlet for creative expression; their skills and creativity in the kitchen could be demonstrated for posterity in the pages of a book. A significant number of women authors, however, wrote cookbooks with the assumption, or at least the hope, that it would be a profitable proposition. For Wilhelmina Rawson, the publication of her first cookbook was a way to supplement her income during a time of financial insecurity but also became the first step in a long career in the cookbook industry. For Harriet Wicken, it was a logical extension of her professional careers, the written manifestation of her expertise as domestic science instructor.

After a sluggish start in the wake of the publication of *The English and Australian Cookery Book*, cookbooks eventually became one of the mainstays of the Australian publishing industry. Cookbooks of one form or another found their way into almost every Australian home, often given as a wedding present to a new bride or passed down from mother to daughter. Women wrote the overwhelming majority of these cookbooks. They demonstrated entrepreneurship and business acumen in negotiating profitable contracts with publishers or, as they often did, in self-publishing and promoting their books. Publishing firms across Australia, if the number of different cookbooks published is anything to go by, saw cookbooks written by women as a viable investment and not such a bad speculation.

⁸⁴ Curle Smith and Willis, *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy*, p. 17.

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Nineteenth-Century Female Entrepreneurship in Turkey

Seven Ağır

INTRODUCTION

While there are many historical studies on women's economic activity as property holders and workers in the Middle East,¹ there are only a few on women's role in starting, financing and managing businesses.² There are a

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¹For recent studies on female workers in the Ottoman Empire, see Part I in Duygu Köksal and Anastasia Falierou (eds), *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): pp. 31–83.

²One study that explicitly focuses on the role of Ottoman women as entrepreneurs is by Svetla Ianeva, 'Female Actors, Producers and Money Makers in Ottoman Public Space: The Case of the Late Ottoman Balkans', in Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (eds), *Ottoman Women in Public Space* (Leiden: Brill, 2016): pp. 48–90.

S. Ağır (✉)
Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: sevenag@metu.edu.tr

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few reasons, obvious to the scholars of Ottoman economic and social history, underlying this absence. First, business history as a proper field has only very recently emerged in the Middle East.³ The delayed emergence of business history has its roots in the region's social and economic history itself. By the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was still predominantly agrarian and manufacturing was largely based on traditional artisanal forms. While there were prominent Muslim families engaged in trade and finance, they were not comparable in size or in political power to the mercantile classes of Western European countries. As a result, the forms of business organisation associated with the rise of capitalism such as joint-stock companies and corporations emerged mostly through foreign activity. Furthermore, as in many other developing countries striving to achieve industrialisation, the state played a prominent role as an economic actor and fostered private businesses that depended heavily upon state support. The realm of private entrepreneurship remained relatively small and weak at least until the second half of the twentieth century. These factors limited the realm on which business history typically has focused. There were few innovative businesses and formal business organisations that were characteristically associated with the rise of capitalism. As such, most studies that can be considered as related to the business history—in its traditional form—dealt with the activities of multinational companies or state-owned enterprises in the region.⁴

Second, Middle East studies seem to be at a disadvantage in terms of sources available for the historical research on businesses. There are no private archives that come close to what is available in many developed

³In 2014, for the first time, various scholars came together in a workshop and panel on 'Ottoman/Turkish business history' in Yalova University. In the leading journals of business history, there have been almost no studies on the indigenous businesses of the Middle East. See Seven Ağır, 'İşletmecilik Tarihi Açısından Osmanlı İktisat Tarihi Birikimine Bakış', *Istanbul University Journal of the School of Business* 45 (2016): pp. 26–39.

⁴For the last 20 years, many scholars advocated and led expansion of the field both in terms of the geographical coverage and also in terms of the issues that it deals with, covering also social, cultural and political institutions that shape businesses. See Louis Galambos, 'Identity and the Boundaries of Business History: An Essay on Consensus and Creativity', in Franco Amatori and Geoffrey Jones (eds), *Business History Around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): pp. 11–30; Kenneth Lipartito, 'Culture and the Practice of Business History', *Business and Economic History* 24, No. 2 (1995): pp. 1–41. This more inclusive approach to business history has been probably more conducive to the emergence of more studies on the 'less developed' country cases.

countries.⁵ While the Ottoman state produced massive numbers of documents, most of the sources concerning business formation in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century—primarily the records of the trade courts and registrations of the trade chambers—are not easily accessible to researchers.⁶ This made the study of business enterprise, regardless of gender issues, an arduous task in the region.

The late development of business history and the challenges in locating archival sources might explain to some extent why ‘women in business history’ has been an almost non-existent theme in the region. But another and probably more important reason for invisibility of women’s business activities is linked to the more general problem of finding sources for women’s history. As scholars calling for a feminist historiography have rightly emphasised, the nature of archives and archival practices have been shaped by the interests of ruling classes.⁷ Given patriarchal hierarchies and privileges in most societies, finding archival sources for women’s history has been, in general, difficult. The available documents, with their biased and fragmentary nature, furthermore, have presented specific challenges for historians dealing with women’s agency.⁸ In the Ottoman-Turkish

⁵In Turkey, there is no legal regulation or legislation concerning individual and family archives; private collections, when they exist, are shared with the public without state supervision and support. Those archives are mostly discovered by chance and reached through personal connections. For the differences in terms of governance of private archives in Turkey and Western European countries, see Fatih Rukanç, Hakan Anameric and Yusuf Yalçın, ‘Türkiye’de Özel Arşivler’, *Bilgi Dünyası* 17, no. 1 (2016): pp. 22–38. This is not only a matter of neglect, but it probably reflects the traditional stance of the state towards archival research: the access to the public archives was highly restricted for many years, and even today the access is considered a ‘privilege’ to be granted in line with the will of the state authorities. The studies on trade networks and family businesses that depend on private archives are few and generally depend on the researcher’s personal connections to the family.

⁶The records of the commercial courts are found sporadically in the local archives of some cities such as Damascus, Tripoli, Sofia and Salonica. There is no separate catalogue for commercial courts in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul. Istanbul Chamber of Commerce has recently moved its documents from a storage facility to an official archive, yet access (at least for this researcher) has been highly difficult.

⁷Janaki Nair, ‘On the Question of Agency in Indian Feminist Historiography’, *Gender & History* 6, no. 1 (1994): pp. 82–100, p. 84.

⁸For a discussion of the role of archives in shaping the conceptual frameworks of women’s and gender history, see Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz and Mary Elizabeth Perry (eds), *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

case, Serpil Çakır provides another explanation for women's invisibility embedded in the historiographical practice: The mainstream historiography denied women's agency and used them symbolically to create myths and images about modernisation and development.⁹ Recent studies on Ottoman and Turkish women have challenged these biases and exposed the early roots of women's organised struggles for emancipation.¹⁰ These studies have also paved the way for researchers interested in women's roles as economic actors by not only showing that participation in economic life was one of the goals of women's organised struggle but also providing a critique of the conceptual framework of the mainstream historiography.

Lastly, the relative invisibility of women might have roots in the region's peculiar characteristics in terms of the gendered structure of economy. If Muslim or Middle Eastern women were actually less likely to be involved in business relative to the women in other 'less developed' cases, then we would expect to find fewer resources to study them. In fact, recent research has shown that the gender gap in contemporary entrepreneurship (i.e., both the venture creation and ownership activity) varies significantly across countries with similar (low-middle) income levels.¹¹ This brings us to the well-known debate on the role of culture and, more specifically, the role of religion on women's participation in social and economic life. For many years, Middle Eastern women were presented as 'more passive' and 'less visible' than their European counterparts due to the cultural factors, in particular the peculiar form of patriarchal practices, which were generally associated with the Islamic culture or law.¹² Anthropological and ethnographic writings about the Middle East in particular have associated

⁹Serpil Çakır, 'Feminism and Feminist History-writing in Turkey: The Discovery of Ottoman Feminism', *Aspasia* 1, no. 1 (2007), pp. 61–83. See also Serpil Çakır and Necla Akgökçe, 'Tarih İçinde Görünürlükten Kadınların Tarihine: Türkiye'de Kadın Tarihi Yazmak', in Serpil Çakır and Necla Akgökçe (eds), *Farklı Feminizmler Açısından Kadın Araştırmalarında Yöntem* (Istanbul: Sel, 1995), pp. 222–229.

¹⁰Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis, 1994). For a broad survey of the feminist historiography in Turkey, see Serpil Çakır, 'Feminist Tarih Yazımı: Tarihin Kadınlar İçin, Kadınlar Tarafından Yeniden İnşası', in Serpil Sancar (ed.), *21. Yüzyıla Giverken Türkiye'de Feminist Çalışmalar*, Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan Unat'a Armağan (Istanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011): pp. 505–533.

¹¹I. Elaine Allen, Amanda Elam, Nan Langowitz and Maria Minniti, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2007 Report on Women and Entrepreneurship* (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2008).

¹²For a general survey of the historiography on women in the Ottoman Empire, see Jennie R. Ebeling, Lynda Garland, Guity Nashat and Eric R. Dursteler, 'West Asia', in Bonnie

practices such as veil and harem with oppression and have linked them to women's seclusion from public life. More recent revisionist literature, on the other hand, has underlined that the public-private dichotomy conceptualised in Western terms has obscured the roles women played through their networks of communication.¹³ Many studies, furthermore, have demonstrated that a wide field of action was indeed available to women despite gendered societal and legal rules that ensured women's subordination to men.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even among these studies, few deal with women's role in business; perhaps because business as a modern concept is strongly associated with the public sphere. Yet, going beyond the narrow understanding of business and public-private dichotomy might help us unearth the unusual ways in which women engaged in and influenced profit-making activities. In particular, exploring the ways in which historians can shed light on income-generating activities that took place in the home might be a fruitful venue.¹⁵ As a starting point, however, this chapter first addresses two questions: What are the signs of women's power and agency in business activities? In what way was women's involvement in business obstructed?

This chapter begins with an overview of the scant evidence—as presented in the secondary literature and primary archival research—concerning women's involvement in business prior to the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. It then considers the findings of secondary literature on women's engagement in *waqfs* and argues that these 'charitable activities' can in fact be considered a form of 'social entrepreneurship', providing an unusual venue for women to assert influence in economic life. Finally, this chapter investigates the political and economic changes and women's involvement in modern forms of business organisation in the long nineteenth century. This survey also discusses how the available evidence might be linked to arguments concerning cultural and social factors that might

G. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): pp. 364–377.

¹³Cynthia Nelson, 'Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World', *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 3 (1974): pp. 551–563.

¹⁴For an up-to-date review of the literature, see Margaret L. Meriwether, *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East* (Routledge: 2018).

¹⁵In this sense, a feminist methodology exploring how the gendered methodological presumptions shape the field of entrepreneurship studies might be useful. See Scott Taylor and Susan Marlow, 'Engendering Entrepreneurship: Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man?', paper to the 9th EURAM Conference, Liverpool, UK. May 2009.

have shaped Muslim women's access to economic resources. It argues that the relative invisibility of Muslim women vis-à-vis non-Muslim women in business might owe more to gender-neutral factors underlying the economic division of labour in the Empire than to gendered variation in access to resources due to supposedly peculiar characteristics of Islamic law and Middle Eastern society. For example, non-Muslim women had access to diaspora networks that allowed them to play more active roles in the broader European economy. On the other hand, at least for Istanbul, evidence also indicates a gender gap that is higher for Muslim communities in the early years of the Republic. This suggests both that the reality is more nuanced and requires further research.

MUSLIM WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS: INVISIBLE OR NON-EXISTENT?

Entrepreneurship is broadly defined as 'the act and process by which societies, regions, organizations, or individuals identify and pursue business opportunities to create wealth'.¹⁶ Described as such, historical research has unearthed that Muslim women were involved in many entrepreneurial activities in the Ottoman Empire during the long nineteenth century. Yet, most of these activities seem not to have been in the 'traditional' realm of business history (i.e., joint-stock companies and corporations). A brief examination of the literature on Ottoman women's business activities will put women's businesses in the nineteenth century into a longue durée perspective.

For the period before the nineteenth century, studies concerning business activity in the Ottoman Empire have broadly focused on three different realms: Family business networks, rural enterprises and urban guilds. Unfortunately, there are only a few studies that explore Muslim family businesses and business networks in the Ottoman Empire because of the difficulties of accessing private archives, and in those studies, there are almost no references to women.¹⁷ The scantiness of resources, nevertheless,

¹⁶ Gerard George and Shaker A. Zahra, 'Culture and Its Consequences for Entrepreneurship', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 26, no. 4 (2002): pp. 5–9.

¹⁷ Gad G. Gilbar, 'Muslim Tujjār of the Middle East and Their Commercial Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Studia Islamica* 100/101 (2005): pp. 183–202; Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Isma'il Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998). I thank Aliye Mataracı and Dilek

does not prevent us from drawing general tentative conclusions. Accounts by foreign travellers present anecdotal evidence of women selling agricultural and home-made products in local markets.¹⁸ We also know that women were engaged in the rural economy as landowners, co-owners of private farms (*çiftlik*s) and tax farmers.¹⁹ Women appear much more frequently in the realm of small- or mid-scale urban activity, perhaps primarily because the sources concerning this type of activity (the Islamic court registers, which record sales and other types of transaction) are better organised and readily accessible.

Several studies based on the court records have demonstrated that the basic normative regulations of Islamic law on property such as dower, allowance and inheritance were effective and constituted the basis of Muslim women's claims to exclusive (i.e., not common) property ownership.²⁰ Ottoman women appeared freely before the court and sued

Akyağın for responding to my inquiries about any remarks of female involvement in their own research.

¹⁸ Ianeva, 'Female Actors', pp. 48–9.

¹⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Land Transfer, Land Disputes and Askerî Holdings in Ankara', in Robert Mantran (ed.), *Mémorial Ömer Lütfi Barkan* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1980): pp. 87–99, pp. 96–97; James A. Reilly, 'Women in the Economic Life of late-Ottoman Damascus', *Arabica* 42, no.1 (1995): pp. 79–106, pp. 88–89; Abdul Rahim Abdulrahman and Yuzo Nagata, 'The Iltizam System in Egypt and Turkey: A Comparative Study', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 14 (1977): pp. 169–194, p. 17; Martha M. Mundy and Smith, Richard S. Smith, *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria* (IB Tauris, 2007).

²⁰ Ronald Jennings, 'Women in the Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Shari'a Court of Anatolian Kayseri', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 18, no. 1 (1975): pp. 53–111; Haim Gerber, 'Social and Economic Position of Women in an Ottoman City, Bursa, 1600–1700', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 3 (1980): pp. 231–244; Abraham Marcus, 'Men, Women and Property: Dealers in Real Estate in 18th Century Aleppo', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, no. 2 (1983): pp. 137–163; Reilly, 'Women in the Economic Life'; Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik, 'Negotiating Matrimony: Marriage, Divorce, and Property Allocation Practices in Istanbul, 1755–1840' (PhD dissertation, Harvard University 2013); Madeline Zilfi, *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era* (Leiden, Brill, 1997); Fariba Zarinebaf, 'From Mahalle (Neighborhood) to the Market and the Courts: Women, Credit, and Property in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul', in Jutta G. Sperling and Shona K. Wray (eds), *Across the Religious Divide: Women, Property, and Law in the Wider Mediterranean (ca. 1300–1800)* (Routledge, 2010): pp. 224–237. Also, for an insightful discussion of local variations, mutual influences and common trends in the development of women's property rights and negotiating powers across the Mediterranean, see Sperling and Wray (eds), *Across the Religious Divide*.

people—sometimes male members of their own families such as husbands and brothers—in order to defend these legal rights. These studies have also showed the active involvement of Muslim women as economic actors—actors that engage in activities in an attempt to create income: They owned and traded in agricultural land, owned and rented shops and engaged in credit transactions.²¹ In fact, in her monograph on family life in Istanbul, Leyla Kayhan compellingly argues that the extensive visibility of women in courts and the acceptance of separate economies within marriage put ‘women living in the late-eighteenth century Ottoman Empire in a better position than their European counterparts’.²²

There is also an abundance of material on women’s role in artisanal production as self-employed actors within or outside the confines of guilds prior to the nineteenth century. While many guilds did not admit women, there were some sectors in which women were officially allowed to register in guilds.²³ Furthermore, even when the male-only guilds tried to prevent their entry, women could find their way into working life. In textiles, for instance, women were extensively engaged in production outside the

²¹ There were probably regional and temporal differences in terms of women’s involvement in the economic life. In the seventeenth-century Kayseri, for instance, Jennings argues that women were only marginally involved in the artisanal and mercantile life of the city. In Bursa, the foremost commercial centre of Anatolia, however, Gerber shows that women were involved extensively in economic transactions. Rural inheritance practices were probably not as favourable as urban practices. Women’s inheritance practices also may well have depended on the nature of the property involved. Both Gerber, ‘Women in an Ottoman City’, p. 233 and Marcus, ‘Men, Women and Property’, p. 144 argue that women were more active in the trade in residential housing than in commercial real estate. Also, Reilly, ‘Women in the Economic Life’, pp. 81–82 argues that the fact that women usually sold their inheritance shares to their male relatives indicates that control of inherited family property tended to remain in male hands.

²² See Kayhan Elbirlik, *Negotiating Matrimony*, pp. 263–264. In her comparative research on women’s property rights under North European (England and France) and Islamic law in the eighteenth century, Mary Ann Fay also argues that Islam provided women more security and that adult Muslim women could own and manage property regardless of whether they were unmarried, married or widowed. See Mary Ann Fay, ‘Counting on Kin: Women and Property in Eighteenth-Century Cairo’, in Sperling and Wray (eds), *Across the Religious Divide*: pp. 208–223.

²³ Fariba Zarinebaf notes that women were listed in certain guilds such as slave dealers, flower planters and rose water producers. Zarinebaf, ‘The Role of Women in the Urban Economy of Istanbul, 1700–1850’, *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): pp. 141–152, p. 142.

guilds.²⁴ Haim Gerber's research on Bursa, a major textile centre, revealed that there was a widespread system of outwork: 150 of 300 well-known workshops were run or owned by women and 20 of 123 women known from court registers were engaged in crafts, most frequently weaving. The authorities, furthermore, supported the women's involvement. The Sultan granted them the privilege of selling silk thread made at home in any place in town and exempted them from tax.²⁵ In Ankara, women were also engaged in proto-industrial networks, dyeing and weaving goat wool at home.²⁶ Various studies on Balkans and Arab lands also demonstrated women's presence in home-based textile production.²⁷ Nelly Hanna wrote that in Egypt, women were very often involved in textile production, making the yarn for weavers. They also provided their husbands and other family members with funding for these trades.²⁸ In the late eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century, women continued to be visible economic actors in proto-industrial manufacturing, especially in textile, throughout the Empire.²⁹ Through these activities, women contributed substantially to their families' incomes, although we have little information regarding whether and how women were involved in decision-making processes concerning the economic resources at their disposal in these activities. But there is some evidence in the late nineteenth century indicating that the state agents and tax collectors attempted to levy commercial taxes on products women produced and took to the local markets.³⁰

Most significantly, however, women stand out also as investors and financiers in the evolving context of guild activity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Here, a particular case of interest is the markets for *gediks*.³¹ *Gediks* were non-transferable entitlements to rents

²⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Women's Work, Poverty and the Privileges of Guildsmen', *Archiv Orientalní* 69, no. 2 (2001): pp. 155–164.

²⁵ Gerber, 'Women in an Ottoman City', p. 238.

²⁶ Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters*, p. 21 cited in Ianeva, 'Female Actors', p. 54.

²⁷ For a survey on women's role in textile manufacturing, see Ianeva, 'Female Actors', 54–56.

²⁸ Nelly Hanna, *Artisan Entrepreneurs: In Cairo and Early-modern Capitalism (1600–1800)* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), pp. 62–64.

²⁹ Ianeva, 'Female Actors', pp. 56–8.

³⁰ Ianeva, 'Female Actors', p. 59.

³¹ This paragraph is based on the research in my paper 'The Rise and Demise of Gedik Markets in Istanbul, 1750–1860', *Economic History Review* 71, no. 1 (2018): pp. 133–156. Engin Akarlı's research had shed light on the dynamics of urban economy underlying the emergence of *gediks* and *gedik* transactions. But there is little on women's involvement in

generated by the guilds, but they gradually transformed into tradable assets in a wide variety of sectors during the late eighteenth century. In the registers from 1802, there were 299 *gedik* transactions, and in these 299 transactions, 71 women were involved as buyers, sellers or creditors. The second set of registers from 1816–1818 contained 596 *gedik* transactions. One hundred and sixty women were involved as buyers, sellers or creditors in retail *gedik* transactions.³² In earlier registers examined, there is also sufficient evidence indicating that people without guild affiliation could own retail *gediks* in shares or in whole. Women who were not affiliated with the guild could own, sell and pawn *gedik* shares in many sectors such as food retail and textile manufacturing.³³ They were involved as not only invisible lenders or offering financial support to close kin; they were also involved in the *gedik* transactions with the purpose of generating a profit. The highly fluctuating price of *gediks* in an uncertain environment meant that the speculation of these women carried with it a high level of risk: Financial behaviour that is not always associated with female investment.³⁴ A female Muslim resident of Istanbul, Hafize, for instance, purchased half a share of a wheat-cracking shop on credit, only to sell it in less than a month for a price 38 per cent higher than the initial purchase price.³⁵

Another novel financial instrument that women seem to have involved in was *esame* deeds. An *esame* deed was an entitlement to payroll in the cavalry and infantry regiments. In the second half of the eighteenth century, *esame* deeds were freely exchanged, allowing non-military persons to

gedik markets in these earlier studies. See Engin Akarlı, ‘Gedik: A Bundle of Rights and Obligations for Istanbul Artisans and Traders, 1750–1840’, in Aliain Pottage (ed.), *Law, Anthropology, and the Constitution of the Social: Making Persons and Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): pp. 166–301.

³² See also Reilly, ‘Women in the Economic Life’, pp. 85–86 and Kayhan Elbirlik, *Negotiating Matrimony*, p. 285 for other examples of women’s *gedik* transactions registered in court records.

³³ *Istanbul Court Records, Istanbul Mahkemesi* (IM) located in Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi, Istanbul. IM 60/31; IM 60/34, IM 60/67, IM 60/107, IM 60/117, IM 60/161.

³⁴ For a similar discussion, see Chap. 3 by Verhoef on female investment behaviour in South Africa in this volume. Also for women’s involvement in British financial markets, see David R. Green, Alastair Owens, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford (eds), *Men, Women, and Money: Perspectives on Gender, Wealth, and Investment 1850–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁵ IM 60/31, 60/34, 60/35.

own them.³⁶ Kayhan's study reveals that women at least could act on behalf of their husbands to trade in *esames*.³⁷ Further studies might show that women's involvement in *esame* markets were more common than we would have predicted.

Pre-nineteenth-century studies have also indicated a realm of activity in which economic interests overlapped with social concerns, in the endowment of charitable institutions (*waqfs*), where women emerged as important actors. The involvement of the Ottoman women in these charitable endowments has been studied from various perspectives. The next section considers how this avenue of research might be expanded to focus on the 'business' aspects of women-founded and women-managed *waqfs*.

WOMEN AS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS: THE ROLE AS FOUNDERS OF *WAQF*

A *waqf* was an inalienable and perpetual endowment by a person for the provision of a designated service under Islamic law. By endowment, commercial and residential real estate owned by a person could be specified as revenue-generating assets for a charitable purpose. Other revenue-generating property such as agricultural lands could be endowed as a perpetual and irrevocable asset. A specific form of endowment (cash *waqf*) enabled even cash funds to be used as a perpetual asset. *Waqfs* were ubiquitous until the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, most businesses in Ottoman cities operated in shops rented from *waqfs*.

Scholars studying Ottoman *waqfs* have explored various motives for their foundation. *Waqfs* served as a protective shield against confiscation. Upon the legal creation of the *waqf*, the property became unalienable and its aim was 'regularly and continuously to produce revenue for the *waqf*'s beneficiaries'.³⁸ *Waqfs* also allowed property owners to exert more control over the long-term transfer of the property by specifying rights concerning management in the initial document (thereby bypassing inheritance laws). They also allowed the founders to engage in large-scale public projects

³⁶ For the practice of buying and selling of *esames* in the context of evolution of corps, see Cemal Kafadar, 'Yeniçeriler', in *Diyanet Başkanlığı İslam Ansiklopedisi* VII (Istanbul: Tarîh Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995): pp. 471–76.

³⁷ Kayhan Elbirlik, *Negotiating Matrimony*, pp. 276–77.

³⁸ Randi Deguilhem, 'The Waqf in the City', in Salma K. Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and Andre Raymond (eds), *The City in the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2008): pp. 923–334.

(e.g., the construction of a mosque, soup kitchen or madrasa) and thereby attain prestige, legitimacy and patronage. These individual benefits associated with the *waqfs* were tied to the explicit benefit it was expected to serve as defined very specifically in the endowment document. Through this merging of individual initiative and social responsibility, *waqfs* fulfilled significant social and economic functions such as supplying public goods in a decentralised manner and (especially in the case of cash *waqf*) transferring the savings of the well-to-do to those who needed cash for financing various socio-economic activities. In these ways, *waqfs* resemble the modern concept of social entrepreneurship.³⁹

In Ottoman studies, the presence of women as founders of *waqfs* is well established. In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Edirne, women made up 20 per cent of the new *waqfs*.⁴⁰ In mid-sixteenth century Istanbul, more than one-third of the founders of *waqfs* (36.8 per cent) were women.⁴¹ Similarly, according to G. Baer, in eighteenth-century Aleppo, 36.3 per cent of *waqfs* were established by women. According to the records analysed by M. A. Fay, 25 per cent of *waqfs* in eighteenth-century Cairo were established by women. In Jerusalem, in the beginning of nineteenth century, one quarter of *waqf* founders were women.⁴² Moreover, women who established *waqfs* came from all walks of life—rich and poor, of notable families and of simple origin.

Various studies have explored factors that might have contributed to women's interest in converting their property into *waqfs*. As mentioned above, for both men and women—especially those with elite status or imperial titles—*waqf* was a means to increase prestige, legitimacy and patronage.⁴³ Also like men, women viewed *waqf* as a tool for benefiting

³⁹ Here, we are referring to the broadest understanding of social entrepreneurship as recognising and taking advantage of opportunities with an explicit aim to create social value. The concept of social entrepreneurship, albeit popular in business, is still highly debated though. For a brief overview, see Ana Maria Peredo and Murdith McLean, 'Social Entrepreneurship: A Critical Review of the Concept', *Journal of World Business* 41, no. 1 (2006): pp. 56–65.

⁴⁰ Mary Ann Fay, 'Women and Waqf: Toward a Reconsideration of Women's Place in the Mamluk Household', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 1 (1997): pp. 33–51.

⁴¹ Gabriel Baer, 'Women and Waqf: An analysis of the Istanbul Tahrir of 1546', in *Asian and African Studies* 17 (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1983): pp. 9–27, p. 10.

⁴² Baer, 'Women and Waqf', p. 10.

⁴³ Amy Singer, 'Charity's Legacies, A Reconsideration of Ottoman Imperial Endowment-Making', in Michael Bonner, Mine Ener and Amy Singer (eds), *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003): pp. 295–313.

their families, as a protective shield against confiscation and a way to avoid taxes. Additionally, women were motivated to found *waqfs* to safeguard their property and its income from interference from and control by husbands and guardians, or by their husbands' families.⁴⁴ This is similar to the strategies of self-endowment uncovered by Vanessa Oliveira in Angola (see Oliveira, Chap. 9 in this volume). Through *waqfs*, women could ensure their right to manage their property and pass it on to their designated heirs.

Establishing *waqfs* enabled women to exert significant influence in the economic realm. This went beyond mere property ownership. Founding a *waqf*, first and foremost, required identifying a 'charitable' purpose. As *waqfs* were to serve social needs, with decisions about which facilities to support through the endowment (i.e., mosque, school, fountain, library, hospital, soup kitchen, hostel, shops and public baths), women shaped both the urban architecture and the socio-economic landscape.⁴⁵ They helped develop new neighbourhoods, establish institutions that provided public health, education and security, and provide 'an infrastructure of social interaction'. More importantly, while there were many *waqfs* established by elite women, there were also many established with smaller funds, by women with ordinary social status.⁴⁶

Second, as the founders of the *waqfs*, women had the potential to organise their management and administration. Through endowment, the property was understood as an asset whose management was designed by the person who endowed it. The endower assigned the administrator and specified the conditions and limits of the term of management. The administrator, for instance, would have authority or bargaining power over the rent contracts and thereby a direct effect on the economic activities on the commercial property. Baer's study on sixteenth-century *waqfs*, for instance, illustrates that many *waqfs* were small and the founders themselves would administer them in the first place and only later would men be involved.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Fay, 'Women and Waqf', p. 36.

⁴⁵ According to Işın and Üstündağ, women's role in founding and maintaining endowments also helped them cultivate 'civic identities' as citizens of their cities. See Engin F. Işın and Ebru Üstündağ, 'Wills, Deeds, Acts: Women's Civic Gift-Giving in Ottoman Istanbul', *Gender, Place and Culture* 15, no. 5 (2008): pp. 519–532.

⁴⁶ Işın and Üstündağ, 'Wills, Deeds, Acts'.

⁴⁷ Baer, 'Women and Waqf'.

Even in the case of a small *waqf*, managing foundation assets implied the ‘exercise of real economic power which was often passed from the administrator to his progeny or other family members as a sort of inheritance’.⁴⁸ The founder could specify in the foundation deed that a managing position was hereditary, which was often the case when a founder’s family member was appointed administrator. Women often appointed themselves managers as well as beneficiaries of their foundations. How much real power did they exercise? Deguilhem suggests that it is ‘difficult to know the real extent and limits of a woman’s decisional powers as *waqf* manager especially when she had a legal representative (*wakil*) who appeared in court alongside her or on her behalf’.⁴⁹ We should not assume, however, that women were commonly represented by males and therefore did not have real power, but assess the matter empirically. Court documents concerning rent conflicts on *waqf* property reveal some cases of women being actively involved in the legal conflict.⁵⁰ The studies on women’s involvement in *waqfs*, however, have not yet systematically dealt with the question of managerial power. Records of the *waqfs* could provide opportunities for future researchers to investigate more systematically their role in enabling women’s involvement in economic sphere and their decision-making power more broadly.

WOMEN AND BUSINESSES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Ottoman economy in the late nineteenth century was more or less incorporated into the world economy as a peripheral region. It was primarily an agrarian economy and foreign trade mainly consisted of the exportation of primary products and importation of manufactured goods.⁵¹ The state-led efforts to support private industry in the first half of

⁴⁸ Randi Deguilhem, ‘Gender Blindness and Societal Influence in Late Ottoman Damascus: Women as the Creators and Managers of Endowments’, *Hawwa* 1, no. 3 (2003): pp. 329–50, p. 341.

⁴⁹ Deguilhem, ‘Gender Blindness’, pp. 336, 341.

⁵⁰ In seventeenth-century court records, women, for instance, stood in both sides, both as the *waqf* trustees and proprietors to defend their rights against tenants and subtenants. See in IM 19, IM 25. See also M. N. Türkmen, *İstanbul Mahkemesi 43 Numaralı Şerhiye Sicili* (1192 Şevval 22–1193 Safer 29) (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, 1995).

⁵¹ In fact, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the situation got even worse. Rates of growth of foreign trade dropped and external terms of trade deteriorated. See Şevket Pamuk, ‘The Ottoman Empire in the “Great Depression” of 1873–1896’, *Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 1 (1984): pp. 107–118.

the nineteenth century had mostly failed. Starting in 1850s, the government relied heavily upon foreign capital to build an extensive transportation infrastructure and public utilities in the urban centres. This financial dependence, along with acute military weakness and widespread incidences of domestic upheaval, resulted in political subordination to the Western nations. This restricted the realm of Ottoman economic policy until the First World War. At the same time, however, the integration of the Ottoman economy into the world economy throughout the nineteenth century created new money-making opportunities, especially for those involved in the long-distance commercial networks and those involved in the intermediary activities for foreign companies operating the Empire. While both Muslim and non-Muslims benefited from these opportunities, non-Muslims were able to do so in a greater extent because of their relatively easier access to foreign commercial networks and the privileges they could obtain through foreign legal protection.⁵²

Until the reforms of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman population was divided into *millet*s, separate communities distinguished by religion and ethnolinguistic affiliation. The *millet* system allowed the three major non-Muslim communities—Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish—the right to use their religious institutions for civil and personal law, providing them with considerable legal autonomy and authority. In this setting, ethnic and religious identities merged and constituted one of the bases for social stratification. Non-Muslims could neither hold public office nor serve in the military, but they enjoyed higher participation rates in trade and finance. This was perhaps because of their exclusion from other sectors—they were forced to find alternative means of making a living. The expansion of foreign trade and the distribution of European legal protection to local non-Muslims deepened the economic cleavage between Muslim and non-Muslims.⁵³ As such, while Muslims lost competitiveness and largely disappeared from trade, religious minorities—Greeks, Armenians and Jews—came to enjoy a much larger share of the economy in Istanbul and other commercial centres in the Eastern Mediterranean.

⁵²Timur Kuran, 'The Economic Ascent of the Middle East's Religious Minorities: The Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism', *The Journal of Legal Studies* 33, no. 2 (2004): pp. 475–515.

⁵³Kuran, 'Economic Ascent'; Cihan Artunç, 'The Price of Legal Institutions: The *Berath* in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire', *Journal of Economic History* 75, no. 3 (2015): pp. 720–749.

In line with this ethno-religious division of labour, there seems to have been a gap among Ottoman Muslim and non-Muslim women in terms of their engagement in the economic activities: Non-Muslim women, especially Greek women in urban centres, were much more prominent in business activity in the nineteenth century. As Greek commercial networks expanded along with diaspora communities created by nationalistic movements and disintegration of the Empire, women started playing roles in the family businesses that lay at the core of emerging capitalist economy. For instance, I. Minoglou showed that the Greek women—in Greece—not only helped sustain ‘diaspora’ ties that enabled business connections across a wide geographical region but also participated as financiers in the emergent forms of business as shareholders of joint-stock companies.⁵⁴ The same kind of involvement was probably also common among Greek women in the commercial centres of the Empire such as Izmir and Salonika. We have little evidence of this type of formal involvement in business among Muslim women for the nineteenth century. In fact, joint-stock companies became available to Ottoman entrepreneurs only after the introduction of the 1850 Commercial Law, which was merely a translation of the 1807 French Code of Commerce. Nevertheless, the recourse to the novel forms of business organisation among Muslim entrepreneurs was very limited until the early twentieth century.⁵⁵ In this sense, the absence of Muslim women from the formal realm of business was no more striking than that of their male counterparts for the nineteenth century.

Evidence from the early twentieth century indicates that the Ottoman Muslim subjects started using modern organisational forms as well. One reason for the spread of new organisational forms was the active policy embraced by the late Ottoman governments to encourage large-scale economic enterprises by Muslim businessmen. The Ottoman government encouraged local notables and traditional guildsmen to establish corporations and granted them privileges that would allow them to reap handsome profits during wartime conditions. Non-profit associations supported

⁵⁴ Ioanna P. Minoglou, ‘Women and Family Capitalism in Greece, c. 1780–1940’, *Business History Review* 81, no. 3 (2007): pp. 517–538. Minoglou indicates that there were 225 women shareholders among 7000 founding shareholders of Greek joint-stock companies in mid-1850s.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of this ‘transplant effect’, see Seven Ağır, ‘Institutions and Business Organizations in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic’, in Aslı M. Çolpan and Geoffrey Jones (eds), *Business, Ethics and Institutions: The Evolution of Turkish Capitalism in Global Perspectives* (New York: Routledge), 2019.

by the government and traditional organisations such as *waqfs* and guilds played significant roles in financing these corporations.⁵⁶ As a result, corporate ownership, even when widely dispersed, reflected personal networks depending on political and social affiliations. The war, furthermore, created opportunities for profiteering and provided a means for rapid capital accumulation.

Among these wartime corporations, we have a few with female founders.⁵⁷ One particularly distinctive example was Istanbul's 'The Goods Bazaar for Ladies Ottoman Incorporated Company' (*Hanımlara Mahsus Eşya Pazarı Anonim Şirketi*), founded in 1917 by three Muslim women. These women were probably wealthy and politically well connected.⁵⁸ The aim of the company, as specified in its charter, was to produce and sell commodities specifically used by women. In particular, it was stated that the company would 'enable Ottoman military officers, who would like to put together a trousseau for their daughters, to make purchases on credit (in instalments)'.⁵⁹ In other words, the company was targeting middle-class consumers with fixed incomes and a taste for Western-style dressing. According to the charter, all employees—apart from the director, the porters, the designer and the janitor—were to be female. The shares, however, would be sold in public. The fact that men could become shareholders created a problem at the outset with respect to the organisation of the

⁵⁶ Semih Gökatalay, 'The Political Economy of Corporations in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic (1908–1929)' (PhD Dissertation, Middle East Technical University, 2015); Seven Ağır and Semih Gökatalay, 'Hukuk ve İktisat Perspektifinden Milli İktisat Mirasını Yeniden Düşünmek', in Murat Koyuncu, Hakan Mıhçı and Erinç Yeldan (eds), *Geçmişten Geleceğe Türkiye Ekonomisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017): pp. 193–223.

⁵⁷ We have surveyed the Ottoman Archives, contemporary primary and secondary sources to examine the founders of corporations established during this period (1850–1918). Data on the corporations established during 1914–1918 come from special folders in the Ottoman Archives (Dosya Usulu İrade Tasnifi, I. DUIT from now on) designed solely for keeping records of corporate charters and seem to be more comprehensive. See Ağır and Gökatalay, 'Milli İktisat Mirasını Yeniden Düşünmek'.

⁵⁸ We have little information about the identity of the founders, as it is hard to identify the names without surnames (Ottomans did not have surnames until the Republican government required them to in 1934). But it is very likely that one of the founders, Ayşe İzzet Hanım, was the wife of Prince Mehmed Ali Hasan, the grandson of the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail Paşa. The family held a wide range of valuable properties in Istanbul and had direct connection to the Sultan.

⁵⁹ Ali Akyıldız, *Anka'nın sonbaharı: Osmanlı'da iktisadi modernleşme ve uluslararası sermaye* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2005), pp. 175–84 and Cuneyd Okay, 'Meşrutiyet Döneminde Bir Kadın Şirketi: Hanımlara Mahsus Eşya Pazarı AŞ', *Tarih ve Toplum* 183 (1999).

annual meeting of shareholders and the board meeting as men and women would need to come together in those. This problem was solved by adding an article to the company charter concerning how the meetings could be organised (separate benches for women and men, under the surveillance of the municipal police force).⁶⁰

To understand the context within which this particular company was created, we should return to the peculiar legal and social context within which its charter was prepared. During this period, Ottoman subjects aiming to incorporate firms had to go through a process through which their proposed charters were examined by the concerned departments of the state before a concession was granted.⁶¹ The official correspondence between applicants and the state bureaus from the late nineteenth century indicate a very lengthy and cumbersome process that might last up to 24 months.⁶² This concession system—probably a by-product of the political ideology of ‘economic nationalism’ rising during this period—was an additional entry cost that made incorporation relatively more difficult and partly explains the relatively low rates of incorporation in the Empire.

The establishment of this company by only women and the issues in the incorporation process about mixed-sex board meetings require a consideration of the peculiar cultural and/or legal underpinnings of gender-based segregation in the public sphere and how, more generally, a culture of segregation might have affected the nature of women’s involvement in business. Early research on the implications of Islam for gendered social structures, in fact, underlined the emphasis on the practice of seclusion (in the forms of harem and veiling) in Islamic legal texts and argued that the practice of seclusion restricted women’s ability to be involved in public life

⁶⁰I. DUIT 120/43.

⁶¹Until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, in all countries recognising corporation as a legal business form, incorporation was a privilege granted only by a special act of the legislature for purposes deemed to be in the public interest. This was also true for the French commercial code of 1807 transplanted into the Ottoman legal system in 1850, in which the charters of corporations were still granted upon concession. In the second half the nineteenth century, however, the laws governing incorporation evolved rapidly, allowing general incorporation—a registration system that does not require state approval prior to the establishment of the company—to take hold and spread in Western Europe and the United States. In France, the shift from the concession to the free registration system took place in 1867. In the Ottoman Empire, however, the transplanted law of 1850 did not change for more than half a century.

⁶²For instance, it took 24 months to receive the charter for Konya Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi. For most corporations, the approval process lasted at least six months.

and engage directly in economic activity prior to the nineteenth century. However, more recent research suggests that ‘women’s physical restrictions to domestic space were only partial, and such restrictions did not foreclose activity beyond the home, through servants, intermediaries, and feminine social networks’. Moreover, ‘Elite urban women remained active in business transactions and charities, while their poorer female neighbours routinely worked at home in cottage industries or outside as peddlers, bathhouse attendants, servants, and so on’.⁶³ Some scholars, furthermore, have pointed to the creation of a female economy: Gender segregation ‘expanded more economic activities for women because only women could perform certain services for other women’.⁶⁴ For the nineteenth century, on the other hand, the discussion is more ambiguous. While the earlier traditional historiography viewed the nineteenth-century societal transformation via Westernisation or colonisation creating a positive shift in gender boundaries, more recent studies have emphasised that ‘the nineteenth century did not bring about automatic improvements’.⁶⁵ Most discussion, however, has revolved around the validity of public-private dichotomy in the Middle Eastern context and the tensions between social realities and legal discourses.⁶⁶ While the discussion concerning the period before the nineteenth century depends on (or at least refers extensively to) abundant empirical material concerning women’s social participation, in particular their economic activity, the studies that focus on the latter period rarely touch upon the economic realm. This is an interesting contrast that may be the result of historiographical peculiarities, such as the overall reluctance to study the Ottoman late nineteenth and early twentieth century in terms other than political or ideological or objective limitations on sources that are accessible to examine the economic realm.

Our examination of company charters along with secondary sources, however, indicates that although women’s involvement in formal organisations was not great, they did have a presence. ‘The Good Bazaar for Ladies’ provides evidence of women’s direct involvement in a large-scale

⁶³ Elizabeth Thompson, ‘Public and Private in Middle Eastern Women’s History’, *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no. 1 (2003): pp. 52–69.

⁶⁴ Nadere Chamlou, Leora Klapper and Silvia Muzi, *The Environment for Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa* (Washington, DC: The World Bank Publications, 2008).

⁶⁵ Guity Nashat and Judith E. Tucker, *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ For a comprehensive survey, see Thompson, ‘Public and Private’.

business enterprise that was able to successfully operate at least for a few years during the war. The company started with 30,000 Ottoman liras as initial capital. It actively used newspapers to advertise its products and started importing fashionable items from Europe. The company became successful in a relatively short time and raised its capital to 100,000 lira with special permission from the Sultan (as this increase was beyond what was pre-specified in the charter and required legislative permission). The initial number of shares was 6000; this was raised to 20,000 in accordance with the capital raise.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, we have no information about the identities of shareholders. Neither do we know how women were involved in the management of this corporation.

This was not the only female-founded company during this era. Among the corporations established during the war, there were at least four other companies where women are recorded among the founders.⁶⁸ In two of these companies, they were also recorded as members of the initial board of directors specified in the charters. While this might appear as an extremely small number, it should be noted that there were only around 150 corporations in total established by Muslim Ottomans during 1914–1923 (setting aside foreign-funded companies that operate in transportation and utilities). Since the charters demonstrate only the initial boards of directors, we are not able to trace later developments and see whether the women on the initial boards continued to be involved in the businesses, or whether women became involved later in other corporations.

While there were only a few corporations established by women, this period (1908–1923) witnessed an overall rise in women's economic participation. During this period, Ottoman (Muslim) women started to get organised in associations established by women for women and published journals explicitly advocating women's social emancipation and participation in economic life.⁶⁹ Women's participation in the labour force, which was one of the objectives of several of these associations, was also supported by the government. For example, the Islamic Association for Ottoman Women's Employment (*Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti İslamîyesi*), founded under the patronage of Naciye Sultan, wife of War

⁶⁷ Akyıldız, *Anka'nın Sonbaharı*; Okay, 'Bir Kadın Şirketi'.

⁶⁸ 'Milli Hususi Mektepler Anonim Şirketi' (1920), 'Yardım Pazarı Havayic-i Zaruriye Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi' (1920), 'Akşehir Çiftçi Bankası' (1916), 'Kazırmirciler Melbusat Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi' (1915).

⁶⁹ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, p. 109.

Minister Enver Paşa, in 1916, provided jobs for thousands of women in municipal services and departments of the government.⁷⁰

In one of the most progressive journals of the period, *Kadınlar Dünyası* (*Women's World*),⁷¹ there were various articles on the importance of trade and industry for economic development. Entrepreneurship was considered key to economic development and women were encouraged to get involved.⁷² There were also articles providing specific information about economic resources and business skills that potential female entrepreneurs could utilise.⁷³ In an attempt to encourage women's entrepreneurship, Atiye Şükran, who also initiated a fund-raising activity among the journal's readers to establish a firm, also wrote an article emphasising that 'trade was not shameful'.⁷⁴ The journal also published various articles on exemplary enterprises established by women to inspire other women. It is primarily through these articles we know that there were many enterprises established by Muslim women in the 1910s, such as the Ottoman Women's Trading House (*Osmanlı Kadın Ticarethanesi*), 'Patisserie for Ladies' (*Hanımlar Pastahânesi*), Naciye Hanım's photographer's shop and Calibe Hanım's seamstress shop in Kadıköy, which later moved to the upmarket Beyoğlu region, where she hired Turkish girls.⁷⁵ As E. M. Metinsoy puts it, 'for women willing and ready to enter into working life, war created opportunities'.⁷⁶

There are no systematic studies on business organisations for the early Republican period (1923–1950), with the exception of those that focus on specific families or government-led initiatives. However, the Istanbul

⁷⁰ Elif Mahir Metinsoy, *Ottoman Women during World War I: Everyday Experiences, Politics, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 120.

⁷¹ *Kadın Dünyası* was the official organ (published between 1913 and 1921) of *Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (The Association for the Defence of Ottoman Women's Rights).

⁷² Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, pp. 349–53.

⁷³ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, pp. 376–78.

⁷⁴ Atiye Şükran, 'Ticaret Ayıp Değildir' (Trade is not Shameful), *Kadınlar Dünyası* 68 (1913): pp. 1–2; see Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, p. 384. In this article, Şükran wrote about a Greek woman she had met on a Bosphorus ferry who ran a café in Ortaköy and was 'working with her honour'. On encounters between Muslim and non-Muslim women during this period, see Aynur Demirdirek, 'Muslim Ottoman Feminists' Perceptions of Their Non-Muslim Counterparts after Meşrutiyet', *Feminist Dergi* 6 (2013): pp. 1–17.

⁷⁵ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 384–86.

⁷⁶ Metinsoy, *Ottoman Women*, p. 120. For non-Muslim women entrepreneurs in Ottoman Balkans, see Ianeva, 'Female Actors', pp. 66–68.

Chamber of Commerce address books enable the examination of long-term trends in business formation. This is also a good starting point to determine the extent of women's role as founders in formal business enterprises. The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce published a list of all the firms established before that date (including those that shut down). It is hard to identify all the founders in all cases since the partnership must either list all partners with unlimited liability (i.e., the general partners) or have the name of one general partner followed by a phrase such as 'brothers' (*biraderler*) or 'and company' (*ve şürekası*) to indicate multi-ownership. In addition, some company types such as corporation or limited liability do not specify the founders. This source, then, obscures women involved as partners (active or silent) in those businesses. Nevertheless, it gives us an idea about engagement of women in formal types of business organisation in the early Turkish Republic. Only eight firms out of more than 7000 firms were registered in Muslim women's names. The number of firms registered in non-Muslim women's names, however, was much higher, with 65 firms founded or co-founded by non-Muslim women. Most non-Muslim women's firms were in the service or retail sectors targeting women, such as shops for women's hats, seamstress businesses, confectionery manufacturers and sellers. Muslim women's firms were also in textile production and retail, as well as food retail (i.e., groceries).

These numbers indicate that there was indeed a higher gender gap in the Muslim community than the non-Muslim communities in the early years of the Turkish Republic.⁷⁷ While it is possible that Muslim women preferred to participate in business activity in ways that were less obvious than their non-Muslim counterparts, for instance, as silent partners or as partners who did not appear in the title of the firm despite being registered in the official documents, it is highly unlikely that this totally explains the gap. The differences in non-Muslim and Muslim communities in terms of human capital and business skills, which were noted many times by political authorities during the early years of the Republic, probably reflected also the gap between Muslim and non-Muslim women's business

⁷⁷ By gender gap, I refer to the difference in enterprise per population across different communities. But since there was no census for Istanbul in 1926 and the data shows a stock of enterprises including those that shut down, I focus on the male/female ratio according to the community. For Muslim enterprises, the rate was 8/3366 (0.23 per cent of all Muslim firms were female owned), whereas, the rate was 65/4428 (1.44 per cent of all non-Muslim firms were female owned).

activities.⁷⁸ In fact, the literacy-rate difference among Muslim and non-Muslim residents in Istanbul was even higher for women according to the 1935 population census.⁷⁹ As many scholars have noted, the Republican state made women's equality in the public sphere a national policy. The new government 'radically changed laws, encouraged women to unveil, to enter the universities and professions, become air-plane pilots, and run for parliament—in many cases before other European societies did'.⁸⁰ At the same time, however, the reformers chose to preserve 'some of the most deep-seated aspects of "traditional" Turkish society', including gendered family structures.⁸¹ The reforms did not seem to have brought about the intended changes in the society as quickly or comprehensively as had been desired especially in the realm of private economic enterprise, in which there was overall much more difficulty to create a 'Turkish business class'. The fact that Muslim or Turkish women did not fare well is not very hard to come to terms with.

⁷⁸ Turkish National Assembly Meetings Transcripts (TBMM *Zabıtları*), 1. Meclis, 1920, I: 112, C: 2, p. 318; 1925, I: 79, C: 15, p. 525.

⁷⁹ In the 1935 census, the literacy rate for male Muslims, Christians and Jews were recorded as 62.27 per cent, 68.90 per cent and 68.04 per cent respectively. For female Muslims, Christians and Jews, the numbers were 42.30 per cent, 51.94 per cent and 54.58 per cent respectively. The numbers were calculated using *Genel Nüfus Sayımı* (Ankara: Devlet Basımevi, 1936), p. 40.

⁸⁰ Jenny B. White, 'State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman', *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2003), pp. 145–159. Many scholars, on the other hand, emphasised that the reforms were seen as a means for national development rather than as means that would enable the women's individual or collective agency. Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey', in Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): pp. 270–87; Ayşe Saktanber, 'Kemalist Kadın Hakları Söylemi', in Tanol. Bora and Murat Gültekin (eds), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Kemalizm*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002): pp. 323–333; Yeşim Arat, 'Turkish Women and the Republican Construction of Tradition', in Fatma Müge Gökçek and Shiva Balaghi (eds), *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity, and Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): pp. 56–78.

⁸¹ Umut Özsu writes that 'this attempt to "modernise"... gender relations and familial structures while preserving some of the most deep-seated aspects of "traditional" Turkish society (the core constituents of its "culture", so to speak) reflects the Kemalists' willingness to hedge their programmatic radicalism so as to accommodate countervailing concerns among sensitive and strategically critical groups'. See Umut Özsu, "'Receiving" the Swiss Civil Code: Translating Authority in Early Republican Turkey', *International Journal of Law in Context* 6, no. 1 (2010): pp. 63–89, pp. 74–75.

CONCLUSION

This chapter is the very first attempt to systematically explore Muslim women's business activities in the Ottoman Empire. In a field with almost no prior monographic study, the challenges are varied and many, including the historiographical attitudes and source-related problems. Yet, it is hoped that insights from this initial review will help raise interest in potential questions and sources for future in-depth research. The available resources, albeit scant, indicate that during the pre-modern era, Muslim women were extensively involved in the small- and mid-scale urban production and credit markets. They also significantly impacted their socio-economic landscape through establishing and managing charitable endowments. Although the problems with resources prevent us from making any generalisations, it is clear that the Muslim women participated in the economic life as entrepreneurs in the long nineteenth century. While their involvement in the formal realm of business (corporations and registered proprietorships and partnerships) was small, they were present; they founded companies, served on the company boards and started firms both alone and with other women. The gendered factors such as legal and cultural barriers as well as the division of labour embedded in the nineteenth-century Ottoman political economy probably played a great role in the scantiness of Muslim women's involvement in formal realm of business. Nevertheless, there seems to have been also some degree of a gap between Muslim and non-Muslim women during the long nineteenth century. There is room for further research incorporating other realms of business, for instance, in the informal sectors, and by use of more diverse sources to provide a more complete account of how Muslim or Turkish women engaged in business activity.

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African Women Farmers in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, 1875–1930: State Policies and Spiritual Vulnerabilities

Sean Redding

In 1916, an African man in the rural Eastern Cape province of South Africa wrote to the resident magistrate of his district. He complained that the land that had previously been farmed by his daughter, Angelina, had been taken away by the local headman and allocated to an unrelated African man. The father noted that his daughter was unmarried, that she had successfully raised seven children on the earnings from the crops she had cultivated over the years, and that she had paid the tax of ten shillings due on the allotment every year since the land had been allocated to her by the magistrate in 1906. When she had died in 1914, her father had continued to pay the tax in her name and wanted her children to be able

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S. Redding (✉)
Amherst College, Amherst, MA, USA
e-mail: sredding@amherst.edu

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to continue to farm the land.¹ Ultimately, the magistrate ruled against his complaint: in the state's view, his deceased daughter's children had no right to the land.²

A second court case involved a widow named Nomabola, who in 1911 was living at her father's homestead. She was accused by another relative of being a witch and of causing the relative's wife to be ill. She and her father woke up one night to find their huts had been set on fire. The father testified at the criminal case against the arsonist, stating that the relative had threatened that he would set fire to their home to drive them away.³ The daughter added detail to her father's story: 'I had met accused [the arsonist] the afternoon before the hut was burnt, he said to me 'I hate the sight of you, you witch; I will burn you this night.' She confirmed that the arsonist had repeatedly demanded that she leave the area: 'Accused tells my father to drive me away as he thinks I have bewitched him and his children. His wife is sick still.'⁴

This chapter investigates the history of African women farmers in the rural Eastern region of the Cape Province in South Africa to understand how African women came to occupy an increasingly tenuous economic position as farmers. It contends that the state implemented and enforced legal restrictions on women's ability to control property at the beginning of the twentieth century and in so doing, it elaborated on and reinforced women's positions as dependents of men and as 'subsistence' rather than market farmers. In addition, accusations of witchcraft against women, often made by in-laws or neighbours, heightened women's social and economic vulnerability and sometimes put them at risk of physical harm, a vulnerability that further eroded their status.

Although scholars do not typically discuss African women farmers as entrepreneurs, the women discussed in this chapter were taking the kinds of risks that we often associate with being entrepreneurs. Farming for the market afforded them opportunities for economic autonomy even when it came with greater risks for economic losses. Moreover, there were few

¹Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei [CMT] 3/589, File 44/24, Statement of William Ndamndum, Tsolo district, made in the Chief Magistrate's office, 17 November 1916.

²CMT 3/589, File 44/24, Letter from the Acting Resident Magistrate, Tsolo district, to the Chief Magistrate Transkei, 22 November 1916.

³Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate of Mt. Frere district [1/MFE] 1/1/1/39, R. vs. Maqashiya, 25 April 1911.

⁴Ibid.

other types of entrepreneurial activities legally open to African women: trading licences were strictly controlled by the state, and married women were considered legal minors who could not own property of any sort in their own names. Migration to one of the larger towns or cities in South Africa afforded some business opportunities, such as running an unlicensed ‘Native Eating House’ or an illegal *shebeen* (drinking establishment), but taking up such opportunities exposed women to larger legal and social risks, as they not only risked arrest but also the loss of social respectability. Thus, while farming was not the only outlet for entrepreneurial women, it was the only one that was open to many African women living in the rural areas.

The cases of Angelina and Nomabola, as well the cases of a dozen or so other women that I have found in the archives of the Cape, suggest several issues that have not been investigated fully in the historical literature.⁵ One question is that, given the patriarchal and racially stratified nature of African and white settler society in South Africa, how did at least some African women become productive market farmers even for a short time? An answer to this question involves understanding state policies that altered the economic as well as the legal landscape and made it increasingly difficult for both African women and men to engage in market agriculture. A second question asks: what cultural ideas about gender and about success or misfortune did rural Africans hold? Missionaries and whites more generally connected godliness to worldly success, but Africans had their own ideas about spiritual powers and their relationship to economic successes and disasters. In particular, many Africans, even those who had converted to Christianity, believed in witchcraft and the use of malevolent powers by others to enrich themselves and alter events. The policies of the state and African beliefs about the entanglement of economic success with supernatural powers interacted in intriguing ways that had profound consequences for African women.

When historians in the 1970s and later began to dig deeply into the history of African agriculture in South Africa, they found evidence that a

⁵The cases that exist in the archives may not be fully representative of how involved women were in agriculture; these cases only relate to individuals who had court cases or disputes of some kind that involved the magistrates’ intervention. Women who never had such disputes would not surface in these documents. In addition, records of the court cases are incomplete—when transferred to the archives, retired magistrates ‘weeded’ the cases to keep the amount of storage space needed to a minimum. The individual cases that survived usually are complete, but entire years’ worth of cases are gone.

significant number of African farmers had become producers for the market in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Some produced crops for the market, many raised sheep for their wool and a large number participated in livestock markets.⁶ Much of this historical research focused on African men as significant agricultural entrepreneurs. More recently, in the early 2000s, the historian Helen Bradford strongly criticised this historiography, at least with regard to gender. She argued that historians had become captive to the ‘imperial logic of the civilizing mission’; that they had assumed that all African farmers were men who had sloughed off the more pastoralist-oriented identities of precolonial African men and assumed the agriculturalist identities of women. If true, this meant that African society had undergone a radical shift in gender roles within the space of one or two generations.⁷ Instead, Bradford suggests, it was often women who were engaged in agricultural production after the colonial government took control of the region, and who occasionally produced a marketable surplus. Bradford argues, however, that such innovation was short-lived, and that long before the end of the nineteenth century, women and families became economically dependent on the remittances of men who had become migrant labourers.

Yet, contrary to Bradford’s conclusion, we have evidence of some women as market farmers living in the twentieth century. Going back to our opening example, the fact that Angelina was an unmarried woman who was able to raise seven children from the proceeds of her farming suggests that at least some African women were able to farm profitably into the twentieth century. The second issue that stands out in Angelina’s story is that, as an unmarried woman, she had land allocated to her by the local government official, the resident magistrate. This allocation had occurred around 1906, even though official policy disallowed the allocation of land to women on the principle that women were perpetual legal minors. Angelina’s case shows that, as late as 1906, the rule was not being strictly observed.⁸

⁶ Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); William Beinart, ‘Beyond Homelands: Some Ideas About the History of African Rural Areas in South Africa’, *South African Historical Journal* 64, no. 1 (2012): pp. 5–21.

⁷ Helen Bradford, ‘Peasants, Historians and Gender: A South African Case Study Revisited, 1850–86’, *History and Theory* 39 (2000): pp. 87–90.

⁸ The Resident Magistrate who had allocated the land to Angelina, J. Mould Young, later became the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei and then Secretary of Native Affairs for Natal

As Nomabola's case from 1911 demonstrates, however, it was not just legal hurdles raised by the white settler state that hindered women's abilities to farm on their own. African neighbours often criticised widows and single women, and—particularly if those women were prosperous—some of these criticisms took the form of allegations of witchcraft. Beliefs in witchcraft took many forms, but typically involved beliefs in the use of supernatural powers or substances, or the manipulation of supernatural actors to benefit the witch by harming a competitor or enemy.

The anthropologist Isak Niehaus, who has investigated the topic of witchcraft beliefs extensively in the Limpopo province of South Africa (near the Zimbabwe border) in the period after 1948, has contended that '[P]rocesses of agricultural decline formed the social context of witchcraft', and that accusations of witchcraft increased over the course of the mid- to late twentieth century as Africans experienced greater rural poverty.⁹ I extend this argument to suggest that witchcraft accusations linked to agricultural decline in the Eastern Cape region began earlier in the twentieth century, and that these accusations often targeted women.¹⁰ Increased fears of witchcraft can be discussed as a manifestation of the 'spiritual insecurity' that Adam Ashforth has described as being 'related to, but not reducible to, the fears, dangers and doubts that arise from poverty, disease, hunger and violence.'¹¹ The targeting of women was a function both of some women's successes as farmers as well as more generalised economic anxiety over the growing rural competition for land in the rural areas and fears of impoverishment.

and thus was important for policy creation and implementation. See also the testimony of three magistrates to the 1903–1905 Native Affairs Commission that confirmed that they allowed women to farm land in their own names: National Archives Depot, Pretoria, Records of the 1903–1905 Native Affairs Commission, C17 Vol. 3, testimony of magistrates M.W. Liefeldt (Willowvale district), William Brownlee (Butterworth district) and N.O. Thompson (Kentani district), 998.

⁹Isak Niehaus, 'Witchcraft and the South African Bantustans: Evidence from Bushbuckridge', *South African Historical Journal* 64, no. 1 (2012): p. 47.

¹⁰Peter Delius, in his historical work on the Transvaal, also argued that women became more likely targets of witchcraft accusations as South African laws became more restrictive in the pre-1948 era; Peter Delius, 'Witches and Missionaries in Nineteenth Century Transvaal', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2001): pp. 429–43, pp. 442–43.

¹¹Adam Ashforth, 'Human Security and Spiritual Insecurity: Why the Fear of Evil Forces Needs to Be Taken Seriously', *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 11, no. 1 (2010): pp. 99–106, p. 101.

This study draws upon reports from government officials and South African parliamentary committees, as well as from the transcripts of court cases, to discuss agriculture and allegations of witchcraft. African voices emerge as witnesses to committees and in court cases, and these voices provide evidence of how African lives were changing partly in response to official policies. There are obvious shortcomings in relying on government-produced documents when the government in question was a colonial one deeply invested in racial and cultural subordination, and the testimonies of witnesses in court cases present their own challenges to historians. Yet, the documents and the testimonies are rich in detail and bear vibrant witness to life in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

The region east of the Kei River, contemporaneously known as the 'Transkei', that is the focus of this chapter, was annexed by the British-ruled Cape Colony in the period between 1878 and 1894. Archaeological evidence suggests that African farmers have lived in this region for at least 1500–2000 years. European shipwreck survivors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reported the existence of prosperous coastal communities, and Cape colonial officials as well as white missionaries noted in the 1820s that the region was evenly settled by African chiefdoms and the land was used for cultivation and grazing.¹² Households lived in homesteads that could contain three generations of family members. These Xhosa-speaking societies were patrilineal and women upon marriage typically moved into their in-laws' households without losing their status as daughters within their own natal households. A newly married woman had a relatively low status within her in-laws' home, at least until she had a child, but in her own parents' home, her status was equal to that of her brothers.¹³

¹²J.M. Feely and S.M. Bell-Cross, 'The Distribution of Early Iron Age Settlement in the Eastern Cape: Some Historical and Ecological Implications', *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 66 (2011): pp. 105–12; Godfrey Callaway, *Mxamli: The Feaster* (London: Central Board of Missions, 1919), pp. 37–39.

¹³The most detailed sources on family structure and women's roles in families were not compiled until after the beginning of the colonial period; see, for example, Godfrey Callaway, *Sketches of Kafir Life* (London: Mowbray & Co., 1905) and John Henderson Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1932). The first detailed anthropological account of the people in this region was Monica Wilson's book for which she did research in the 1930s (she had grown up in the region as well); Monica Wilson, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 2nd Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

The Transkei was annexed to the Cape Colony in the 1880s. In the late 1800s, the most significant change to African agriculture in this region resulted from the impact of missionaries and, more gradually, the extension of markets. Mission stations often became destinations for itinerant traders and eventually locations for trading stations that in turn increased the penetration of colonial markets in agricultural commodities and manufactured goods. Missionaries also typically had specific ideas about the proper and, from their point of view, moral gender division of labour. In particular, missionaries wanted African men to cultivate the land and not be so invested in raising livestock; they also wanted African women to be responsible for less agricultural labour. A related impact was that missionaries and traders introduced ploughs to African agriculture to replace the digging sticks that women had historically used to prepare the ground for planting. Ploughs increased the yield, creating a marketable surplus, and they were usually pulled by teams of oxen, which brought men and older boys into cultivation as women were not ideally supposed to handle their husbands' cattle. A few officials noted that the adoption of ploughs was also speeded by the unwillingness of young women to marry into families who did not own ploughs.¹⁴

As ploughs spread beyond mission station settlements, they facilitated broader economic impacts on African agricultural production. In one district (Mthatha) in 1879, there were 3567 households (and a total population of approximately 16,000), with a total ownership of 639 ploughs.¹⁵ In this early period, increased grain production to create a marketable surplus was less significant than was the raising of merino (or merino-crossbred) sheep, whose wool could be sold to traders. The number of sheep owned in the Mthatha district in 1879 was 21,672, and that of cattle was 12,687. By 1885, in Mthatha, the human population had increased to 20,000, the numbers of sheep to 40,000 and of cattle to 30,000; African farmers produced approximately 173,000 bags of grain¹⁶

¹⁴ Edgar H. Brookes, *The History of Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the Present Day* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1924): p. 395, citing comments by Sir Henry Elliot, Chief Magistrate of the Transkei in the Cape Province's *Blue Book on Native Affairs 1893*, 44.

¹⁵ 'Census Returns for Territory of Tembuland', September 1879, in Cape of Good Hope, *Blue Book on Native Affairs 1879* (Government Printing Office, 1880). The number of ploughs owned may not reflect their full impact, because people hired out their ploughs and their trained oxen to other families.

¹⁶ Each bag of grain weighed 200 lbs. One magistrate calculated that each household needed to produce at least ten bags of grain per year for consumption purposes; Bradford,

and had access to 15 trading stores outside of the small town in the district.¹⁷ In the larger Engcobo district nearby, a total African population in 1884 of 22,300 owned approximately 60,000 sheep and 20,000 cattle, produced approximately 111,000 bags of grain, and had access to 25 trading stores.¹⁸ By 1919, the population figures for these two districts were as follows: in Mthatha district, there were 44,000 people, 34,160 cattle and 168,703 sheep; in Engcobo there were 67,000 people, 48,000 cattle and 200,000 sheep.¹⁹

The figures cited above undermine the assumption present in some of the historical literature that all African agriculture was rendered unprofitable by the 1890s, or pushed to bare subsistence levels by the onset of white rule. There was, however, a troubling development that threatened the continued vitality of African agriculture. The region had experienced little expropriation of land by white settlers, and thus African families tended to retain access into the twentieth century to land suitable for both farming and grazing. Even so, in the 1890s, Transkeian magistrates were suggesting that population increases were beginning to create land scarcity.²⁰

Landlessness among the African population worsened, especially from the 1910s as a result of population increases and policies that restricted access to land by Africans. And with landlessness came both poverty and broader economic anxiety. In that same period, from the 1880s through the 1920s, male migrant labour to the goldmines and to other industries in South Africa's cities expanded dramatically. The absence of men from their families' farms for months or years at a time meant that women had to take over the responsibility for farming. But in shouldering control of land and livestock, women had also to take on considerable risks.

¹⁷Peasants, Historians, and Gender,' p. 97.

¹⁷CMT 1/37, Letter #11/85, from the Resident Magistrate, Umtata (Mthatha) District, to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, 12 January 1885.

¹⁸CMT 1/30, Letter from the Resident Magistrate, Engcobo district, to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, enclosing 'Statistical Return for the District of Engcobo Tembuland', 23 January 1885.

¹⁹CMT 3/942, May 1919 Stock Census; the magistrate noted that the 200,000 number for the population of sheep was a combined number of sheep and goats; CMT 3/679, Returns labelled 'Agriculture', for the Cape Province's *Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1909*, from the Resident Magistrate, Mthatha district, to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei.

²⁰CMT 3/59, Report from the Resident Magistrate, Butterworth district, to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, 1 January 1897.

In the initial phase of colonial control in the region (until the mid-1890s), magistrates and other government officials in the Transkei region did little to alter the existing patterns of land use and tenancy. But they did investigate what they understood to be ‘Native Laws and Customs’ that would then go on to inform their future decisions with regard to land tenure. These guidelines emerged out of information elicited from older African men and from white policy-makers and missionaries, who presented themselves as experts on local customs. Officials often designed policies to accord with these customary practices, although, in the case of women’s status, they crafted policies to change women’s roles within African families.²¹ Over time, these government policies restricted women’s opportunities as farmers. The effects of the combination of restrictive government policies and longer-term cultural suspicions about women merged in the first several decades of colonial rule.

This commonly held idea among white policy-makers that the African family in the rural areas was just eking out a subsistence level of agricultural production underwrote land policies.²² The Transkei was set aside as a ‘Native Reserve’ in the 1880s, a legal designation that restricted the ability of whites to settle there. African-occupied land in Native Reserves was considered legally ‘Crown Land’—the state claimed ownership and allocated it to individual African families in exchange for the payment of taxes or quitrents.²³ But the amount of land available for African farmers was very much a finite resource.

Government policies regarding land tenure for Africans were based on two somewhat contradictory premises. The first was that Africans were not productive farmers so they did not need much land—just enough to grow subsistence food crops, a task that could be performed by women. The second was that limiting the amount of land available to African farmers would effectively push African men onto the labour market precisely because the small amount of land available to them would not be sufficient to fully support a family. The larger South African economy needed

²¹ Natasha Erlank, ‘Gendering Commonality: African Men and the 1883 Commission on Native Law and Custom’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29 (2003): pp. 937–53.

²² Howard Pim, *Introduction to Bantu Economics* (Fort Hare: Lovedale Press, 1930); Govan Mbeki, *The Transkei in the Making* (Verulam Press, 1939), pp. 9–11.

²³ The taxation system was too complex to be detailed in this chapter. In general, until the mid-1890s, land was allocated to married African men who paid hut tax for each wife. After the implementation of the Glen Grey Act (see below), agricultural allotments were surveyed and quitrent replaced hut tax.

Africans and particularly African men as labourers for the mining industry, after diamonds were discovered in 1867 and gold in 1886, and for white-owned farms. But white employers did not want to or could not afford to pay Africans enough to draw them out of independent agriculture as long as independent agriculture was productive enough to support most families. The policy solution was to restrict land available for African agriculture, as one influential magistrate argued in 1899:

I have long held and still hold that the labour question and the land question are indissolubly bound together...Hitherto under our communal tenure system there has been little absolute necessity for our young natives to leave their homes to work, the land supplies them with food and a few shillings will purchase a blanket...²⁴

Restricting Africans' access to land would, in this magistrate's view, achieve the aim of driving African men into the wage-labour market while simultaneously leaving wives and families in the rural areas. Once enacted as policy, the encouragement of male labour migration through land policies helped to create a resilient form of geographical segregation that foreshadowed the apartheid policies of the 1940s and later. As Glen Elder noted in his study of the 'procreational economic geography of apartheid': 'Apartheid was premised upon the spatial fracturing of the black family unit, but not its destruction.'²⁵ The policies that led to the undermining of the African agricultural sector and the fracturing of African families were begun in this earlier, pre-apartheid period.

The new system of land tenure that the magistrate above endorsed was the plan to survey all of the land in the Transkei, divide it into allotments of usually between four and ten morgen (roughly equal to four to ten hectares) and allocate each allotment to one married African man and his family.²⁶ Called the 'Glen Grey system' because it was first implemented in the Glen Grey district of the Eastern Cape Colony, each married man held

²⁴ CMT 3/60, Letter from the Resident Magistrate, Butterworth district, to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, 23 January 1899.

²⁵ Glen S. Elder, 'Malevolent Traditions: Hostel Violence and the Procreational Geography of Apartheid', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29 (2003): pp. 921–35, p. 928.

²⁶ Lindsay F. Braun, *Colonial Survey and Native Landscapes in Rural South Africa, 1850–1913* (Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 139–42; R.J. Thompson and B.M. Nicholls, 'The Glen Grey Act: Forgotten Dimensions in an Old Theme', *South African Journal of Economic History* 8 (1993): pp. 58–70.

his surveyed allotment on a quitrent title. Quitrent title did not allow him to sell the land, and when he died, the title was to pass to his eldest son; thus, the quitrent system effectively disinherited all but the eldest sons and prevented a legal market in land from developing. Legally, the man's widow could not inherit the quitrent title in her own name, although if her son was relatively young, she could control the land in the son's name until he married. If there was no legally recognised heir (i.e. no son), the land was supposed to revert to the state to be re-allocated.²⁷

After the passage of the Glen Grey Act in 1894, the new land tenure system was extended to the Transkei in a district-by-district process that took two decades to complete.²⁸ While quitrent title provided greater security of tenure for men, many Africans objected to the provision that a widow had no legal right to remain on the land unless she had a son who inherited and allowed her to stay. In an 1898 hearing on the law, the Rev. Jantyi Zachariah Tantsi stated that the widow's lack of rights was a major grievance: '...failing male issue, the mother apparently has no protection.'²⁹ One commissioner pressed Tantsi on the question of a widow's right even to lifetime tenure: 'Is it not better to leave it [the law] as it is—namely, that the eldest son would be under [social] obligation to look after his mother? The property is only valuable if cultivated; the widow cannot cultivate it...'³⁰ This question revealed one guiding assumption behind the law: that women could not or should not cultivate the land outside a male-headed household. The Chief Magistrate of the Transkei noted that while the letter of the law denied the widow any legal right to the land, he believed that it was best for the local magistrate to bring pressure to bear on the male heirs to support the widow and any other children rather than change the law.³¹

In a 1903 set of hearings on the law, an African labour agent who lived in the Transkei, Enoch Mamba, and several African (male) farmers again raised the issue of the unjustness of not allowing the widow any rights but

²⁷ Sean Redding, *Sorcery and Sovereignty: Taxation, Power, and Rebellion in South Africa, 1880–1963* (Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 2006): pp. 156–62.

²⁸ Colin Bundy, 'Mr. Rhodes and the Poisoned Goods: Popular Opposition to the Glen Grey Council System, 1894–1906', in William Beinart and Colin Bundy (eds), *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987): pp. 138–65.

²⁹ Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Select Committee on the Glen Grey Act, 1898* (Cape Town: Cape Times Ltd., 1898), p. 3.

³⁰ *Report of the Select Committee on the Glen Grey Act, 1898*, p. 7.

³¹ *Report of the Select Committee on the Glen Grey Act, 1898*, p. 30.

instead having to depend solely on the goodwill of her husband's male heir.³² And as late as 1913, the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei (A.H. Stanford) stated to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Native Custom and Marriage Laws that there was a general feeling among African men that widows should be allowed to inherit: 'It was pointed out that frequently the son might be a bad son, and would not look after his mother, and that he might make things so unpleasant that his mother could not live with him, if the law did not give her protection.'³³ Stanford noted that these opinions had led officials to allow widows to continue as quitrent title holders at least until their eldest sons were married.

What does the fact that these African men were so invested in allowing widows the legal right to take over land and farming indicate? It seems clear that the men saw a wife as having rights to property within the marriage, and that they also saw wives and women generally as capable farmers. At least into the second decade of the twentieth century, officials saw enough merit in that position to modify how they actually implemented the law, and they often allowed widows to remain on their husbands' land allotments.

Significantly though, the letter of the law itself was not changed and the prohibition against women taking over quitrent title became more commonly implemented by the mid-1910s. The harmful effects of the law were then compounded by a suite of policies that denied women's rights to own other kinds of property, as well as national, provincial and local laws that made it difficult or illegal for women to migrate to urban areas to work. While men went to the mines and industries as migrant labourers, the policies made it difficult for women to do anything other than remain in the rural areas and engage in farming at whatever level they could. Legally, however, they could claim no ownership over land or livestock.³⁴ As land allotments became scarce as a result of population increases, even vestigial rights to land and property were challenged, both by white officials and by other Africans who sought their own access to land. Some of the increasing conflict over land merged with familial tensions and became evident in the prevalence of greater suspicions of African women and their

³² Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Select Committee on the Glen Grey Act, 1903* (Cape Town: Cape Times Ltd., 1903), pp. 15, 74–5, 102.

³³ Union of South Africa, *Report of the Select Committee on Native Custom and Marriage Laws* (Cape Town: Solomon Printers, 1913), p. 74.

³⁴ Francis Wilson, 'Historical Roots of Inequality in South Africa', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 26, no. 1 (2011): pp. 1–15.

supernatural powers, as we shall see below. Thus, the changes in land tenure, combined with male labour migration, put considerable strains on women and family life in general, both in economic and social terms.³⁵

Although labour migration became an economic necessity to supplement the incomes of most rural families, at least a few households were able to continue agricultural production above subsistence levels until the 1950s. Those women in the rural areas with access to land, either through their husbands, their fathers or their brothers, could—and did—create marketable surpluses of grain or produce, or turn livestock ownership into a profitable enterprise by owning wool-producing sheep or egg-producing chickens, or by investing earnings in cattle.³⁶ Cattle could be hired out to other African farmers to pull ploughs and wagons, or could be lent to family members to solidify familial relationships. Women also occasionally rented their husbands' quitrent sites to other Africans to earn money in their husbands' absence even though such rentals were illegal.³⁷

Although most migrant workers sent remittances to rural families regularly, the daily control of the family and of agriculture frequently shifted to wives, daughters and widows. As women gained this enlarged responsibility for agriculture, some tried to turn it to their advantage. A wife, or widow who remained at her husband's homestead, could pay the yearly rent and farm the land. A few women, like Angelina, became profitable farmers on their own, and women who earned wages by becoming migrant labourers themselves frequently invested earnings in agriculture, a scenario described by the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei in 1913:

Now you have many cases where women on becoming majors [attaining age 21 while unmarried] claim their own earnings and retain them...The last case I had was one...in which the daughter had invested her earnings in

³⁵ Charles Simkins, 'Agricultural Production in the African Reserves of South Africa, 1918–1969', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 2 (1981): pp. 256–83; William Beinart, 'A Century of Migrancy from Mpondoland', in Peter Delius, Laura Phillips, and Fiona Rankin-Smith (eds), *A Long Way Home: Migrant Worker Worlds 1800–2014* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014): pp. 59–73; Debbie Budlender, Sibongile Mgweba, Kettleetso Motsepe, and Leilanie Williams, *Women, Land and Customary Law* (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2011), pp. 9–12.

³⁶ Simkins, 'Agricultural Production', 270.

³⁷ See relevant examples in various court cases: Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Mthatha district [1/UTA] 2/1/1/116, Case 408, William Mtweu vs. Richard Ntengo, 17 July 1925; 1/UTA 2/1/1/157, Case 138/43, Samente Ndabeni vs. Dumanda Ntlakwana, 7 December 1943.

cattle. She was a Native teacher. The brother tried to use that stock for himself. It was shown in evidence that she was educating her two younger sisters out of her own earnings as a teacher and from the sale of wool from her stock.³⁸

In 1928, another unmarried woman, Ethel Moses, worked as a domestic servant for whites in the Cape Province city of East London. She used her wages to buy cattle and left them at her father's homestead while she continued to work in the town. Her father's first wife had also worked in town and invested first in sheep and then in cattle for twenty years.³⁹ These women used earnings to shore up positions in the rural areas in much the same way that men often did. But their successes in investing in livestock were premised on their male relatives allowing them use of the land.⁴⁰

As segregationist laws placed restrictions on Africans' economic opportunities and access to land, the legal prohibition on women having quitrent titles began to affect how family members treated women. The laws and the courts recognised few legal rights for women, and wives and widows were often competing directly against African men in their husbands' families for scarce resources. Women who continued to farm lands that had originally been allocated to their husbands or sons found themselves vulnerable to land or livestock seizures and lawsuits brought by African men. They also found themselves open to accusations related to the use of supernatural means for malevolent ends—witchcraft.

Even before the widespread onset of male labour migration, husbands and in-laws sometimes accused wives and widows of witchcraft if children became ill or died, or if livestock died or crops withered. Witchcraft accusations were made illegal by the Witchcraft Ordinance of 1896, but suspicions remained common, and the services of ritual specialists, known as diviners, who could determine if a specific misfortune was the result of a witch's actions, remained in high demand. People accused of witchcraft could face consequences ranging from social isolation, to repeated threats and harassment, to assaults and arson attempts on their homes to drive them away. J.H. Soga, a Xhosa minister, noted in his 1932 ethnography of

³⁸ *Report of the Select Committee on Native Custom and Marriage Laws, 1913*, p. 75.

³⁹ 1/UTA 2/1/1/123, Case 130, 'Ethel Moses (spinster)' vs. James Ncangwa, 24 February 1928.

⁴⁰ For another example, see the civil case involving Sannah Temba: Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Mt. Fletcher district [1/MTF] 2/1/1/18, Case 122/13, Sannah Temba vs. Jim Ngonyama, 1913.

the Xhosa population that when a witch was ‘smelt out’ in a divining ceremony, it was expected that she would leave the vicinity. ‘If no notice is taken of this warning within a reasonable time, the sorcerer’s [witch’s] huts are burnt without further ado, during the night.’⁴¹ In the aftermath of a witchcraft accusation, diviners were often the ones who stood trial in magistrates’ courts for making the accusation, but other people, sometimes acting on their own suspicions and sometimes following up a diviner’s accusation, also potentially faced criminal charges.

Witchcraft allegations were often directly related to dire economic and emotional circumstances within families, and women frequently became targets. An 1897 criminal case from Nqeleni district involved a man being tried for the crime of alleging a woman was a witch who (he said) had killed his two children through supernatural means. The woman, named Magebane, was married to the man’s neighbour. She testified: ‘[T]hree weeks ago I was...at a beer drink. The accused was there also. There were many people there and the accused said of me “woman you are a wizard you have finished my kraal [homestead]”. This was the day the second child of his died. My husband asked him what he was saying and he said “go home with your witch (*igqwira*).”’ Other witnesses confirmed her story and even though the man himself denied that he had made the accusation, he was ultimately found guilty.⁴² This was a case in which a man was searching for the cause of the tragic death of two of his children. It is impossible to state definitively that the children died as a direct result of poverty, but it is significant that the distraught father immediately suspected his neighbour’s wife of supernatural malevolence.

A 1908 case in which a woman sued for divorce as a result of her husband’s repeated accusations of witchcraft provides a clearer example of the tensions that could result from economic hardships and the translation of those tensions into witchcraft accusations against women. The woman testified that she had left her husband three years before and refused to return to live with him. ‘My life with defendant [her husband] has been very unhappy,’ she said.

⁴¹ Soga, *The Ama-Xosa*, p. 180. In many accounts, the words ‘witch,’ ‘wizard’ and ‘sorcerer’ are used interchangeably.

⁴² The magistrate sentenced him either to pay a fine of £2 or to spend 14 days in prison. Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Nqeleni district [1/NQL] 1/1/1/3, Case 89 of 1897, R. vs. Mbali, 7 February 1897.

He accused me of being a witch and of having caused the death of his children and [live]stock. He has smacked me with his open hand, several times. He treated me cruelly and I returned home to my father's kraal [homestead]. Defendant followed me up during the first year of my absence and he was asked to pay 5 more head of cattle as dowry [if he wished the marriage to continue]. He said he would not pay more dowry for a witch.⁴³

The magistrate in this case decided that the marriage should be dissolved, but that her brother had to refund the bridewealth that the husband had paid at the time of the wedding.⁴⁴ Although witchcraft allegations in this case and the previous one were caused by the deaths of children and livestock, it is important to see these allegations not just as convenient scapegoating. They were evidence of deeply held spiritual beliefs about how the world worked and the assumption that women potentially posed spiritual dangers to their in-laws and neighbours. As such, these beliefs were part of a complex fabric of cultural understandings of economic and social outcomes and their relationship to supernatural powers.⁴⁵

The targeting of women speaks to the ways that economic insecurity surfaced as tensions between men and women and within familial relationships. The anthropologist Monica Wilson, who conducted her research in the region in the early 1930s, noted that 'The feeling that the wife is a stranger [in her husband's family] and dangerous is expressed in the accusations of witchcraft...and such accusations are lodged even against wives who have long been married.'⁴⁶

A cluster of cases in the 1920s provides additional evidence for the connective web between land shortages and worsening economic conditions in the region on the one hand and allegations of witchcraft made against women on the other. A widow in the Cofimvaba district in 1925 was accused of witchcraft by her husband's brother, and she was then driven away and her huts were burnt down. While the accusation of witchcraft probably resulted from the illness of one of her brother-in-law's children, her abandonment of the land after the arson freed it to be re-assigned

⁴³Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Cofimvaba district [1/COF] 2/1/1/51, Case 180/08, Nobetter vs. Balele, 27 April 1908.

⁴⁴This outcome suggests that the magistrate did not fully believe the woman's story.

⁴⁵Niehaus, 'Witchcraft and the South African Bantustans', pp. 57–8. Women also acted as diviners: see Sean Redding, 'Women as Diviners and as Christian Converts in Rural South Africa, c. 1880–1963', *Journal of African History* 57 (2016): pp. 367–89.

⁴⁶Wilson, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 43.

potentially to one of her in-laws.⁴⁷ Another complex arson case from Tsolo district in 1926 resulted when a widow's huts were burnt after she had been accused of being a witch. The alleged arsonist was her brother-in-law, who threatened her: 'I will bend you and kill you...your relations will report your death at the [magistrate's] office.' The woman's son heard the man say to her: '...this is your day. He meant the day for killing her.' The son, upon hearing this threat, had asked the man what the quarrel was about; the man turned on him and said, 'You come in here and make a noise because you claim this kraal as yours...I will burn down this kraal of yours of which you are boasting.' The woman testified that on the same night that these threats were made against her, 'I then left the hut and the kraal to go and sleep at another kraal. Next morning when I returned to my kraal I found two of my huts had been burnt down.' The brother-in-law was convicted of arson and sentenced to nine months in prison.⁴⁸

A final case dating from 1928 illuminates the way that economic hardships and family crises often crystallised as allegations of witchcraft against women. A widow, Maria, living in Nqamakwe district, was accused of witchcraft by her brother-in-law and the diviner he had hired; they alleged that she had killed her own husband through witchcraft. At the diviner's subsequent criminal trial, Maria testified:

My late husband was a man of some property. All my children have died. Until Monday July 2nd I have lived at my late husband's kraal [home]. My late husband's brother lives in the same kraal. His name is Keke. He will inherit the property if I die or leave my husband's kraal without the approval of his relatives...About a month after my husband's death, Keke said he was prepared to go to hell on account of the person who had killed my husband. Later he told me he had consulted a witchfinder who had pointed me out as the person who had killed my husband.

After the death of another family member, the brother-in-law once again consulted a diviner who accused Maria of killing the second family member as well. Maria described the ceremony in which the accusation was made: 'They began to chant and to clap hands for the doctress [diviner] to dance. She danced round and round the fireplace, stopping at intervals.

⁴⁷ 1/COF 1/1/2/2, Preparatory Exam 7/1926, R. vs. Nkwenteshe Atyosi, 16 April 1926.

⁴⁸ Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Tsolo district, [1/TSO] 1/1/21, Case 265 of 1925, R. vs. Mtsongwana Isaac, 1925.

She stopped and said “The people of this kraal are being killed by the *mpundulu* [a witchcraft familiar] of a woman”.⁴⁹ The diviner then identified Maria as the owner of the *mpundulu*. Later, at the diviner’s trial under the Witchcraft Ordinance, the brother-in-law denied that he had employed a diviner, and denied that he had made the witchcraft allegation against Maria. Under cross-examination, though, he acknowledged:

Maria is my brother’s widow. As such she is entitled to the use of his land as long as she remains at his kraal. If she leaves his kraal and goes to a place not approved by us [her husband’s relatives] she forfeits it. I would then enter upon that inheritance. As long as she remains there I am kept out of my inheritance.⁴⁹

The magistrate found the diviner guilty of making the accusation of witchcraft and sentenced her to pay a fine of £15 or to spend six months in prison.⁵⁰ While it is not clear whether a criminal case was ever brought against the brother-in-law as a result of this episode, the tensions within the family over the death of two family members and over the inheritance of quitrent title had reached a critical point in which they felt justified in forcing the widow out.

What we see from these cases, and there are dozens of similar cases in the archived court transcripts for the region, is a profound unease about women in the rural areas and their rights to farm and control land. Some of the accused witches were in relatively strong economic positions, for example, the widow who was doing well enough to have incited envy in her brother-in-law who burnt her huts. Other women may not have had the same success, but they still had one thing that other family members and neighbours often wanted: access to land.

In the final case from 1928 cited above, although the accusation of witchcraft was possibly motivated by the desire of the woman’s in-laws to reclaim the deceased husband’s property, there were also many layers of distrust and ill feeling towards her caused by her husband’s death and the suspicious death of another family member. Family deaths, emotional hardships caused by long absences of husbands and sons, economic misfortune and witchcraft allegations were part of the complex fabric of rural

⁴⁹ Cape Province Archives Depot, Cape Town, Records of the Resident Magistrate, Nqamakwe district [1/NKE] 1/1/1/40, Case 103 of 1928, R. vs. Putunywa Madinga, 25 July 1928.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

life by the mid-1920s. The anthropologist Monica Wilson observed the intimate nature of witchcraft accusations: 'As the proverb says, *Umbango uvuth' emlotheni* (Strife blazes up in the family ash-heap).'⁵¹

For their parts, magistrates and other white officials persisted in seeing witchcraft beliefs and accusations as superstitions that related to Africans' supposed 'backwardness'. They assumed that witchcraft beliefs were evidence of Africans' cultural inferiority, and that they would die out as Africans 'progressed' as a result of contact with Western civilisation. This assumption mirrored their assumptions about African agriculture as unproductive and 'backward'. White officials did not see the connections between the harsh, restrictive laws that the state enforced on Africans, restricting their access to agricultural land, nor did they see the connections between the difficulties faced by many African farmers and witchcraft allegations made against women.⁵²

Witchcraft allegations against women were a product of economic hardships, but they should also be read as evidence of a more generalised spiritual insecurity. The fact that many of these allegations focused on women and their alleged inherent malevolence related to the ways in which their economic position had become increasingly tenuous. They were dependent upon the goodwill and sufferance of African men and the white-controlled state but were still held responsible for economic failures and family tragedies.

Due to the nature of the larger South African economy and its reliance on male migrant labour, African families often found themselves squeezed in the rural areas. Farming, which had in the late decades of the 1800s been productive enough to support extended African families, became during the first few decades of the 1900s dramatically less productive for the majority. African women in this period usually remained in the rural areas where they continued as farmers, while a few women engaged in migrant labour themselves and invested their earnings in livestock kept on their families' land. In general, however, as the twentieth century progressed, many families became increasingly dependent on remittances from men working as labour migrants, in an early version of the 'procreational geography' of segregation. Moreover, by the late 1920s, women found themselves in ever more vulnerable positions: the laws restricted their ability to farm and control property, and Africans' general suspicions

⁵¹ Wilson, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 308.

⁵² Niehaus, 'Witchcraft and the South African Bantustans'.

about women's access to supernatural powers left women open to accusations of witchcraft that challenged their attempts to persist as farmers. In the late 1880s, African women in rural South Africa had few opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial activities outside of farming for the market. By the late 1920s, even the opportunities for successful market farming had been extinguished by decades of white settler rule, decreasing availability of land and long-standing suspicions of women's powers.

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Conclusion: Expanding the Horizon

Jennifer Aston and Catherine Bishop

CONSIDERING THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In this volume, we have started a global conversation. In coming together to discuss their individual perspectives on female business ownership in its many different forms, contributors have made the scholarly connections necessary to establish new global understandings of female entrepreneurship in the long nineteenth century. Here, we reflect on the central themes emerging from these chapters, evaluate the new historiographical landscape and identify future avenues of research.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

The businesswomen whose lives we have touched on lived in different decades, on different continents and under different political and legal systems. They belonged to different ethnic groups and social classes, spoke

J. Aston (✉)
Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK
e-mail: jennifer.aston@northumbria.ac.uk

C. Bishop
Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: catherine.bishop@mq.edu.au

different languages and followed different religions. Yet, despite all that variety, there were some remarkable similarities. Regardless of almost all external factors at play, we can observe the widespread acceptance of (even if not widespread enthusiasm for) women in business. The necessity of female (and family) survival in the nineteenth century overrode the strict observance of the tenets of female domesticity in all societies, no matter how pervasive or dogmatic the rhetoric or how rigorously it was enshrined in law. The frequency with which women engaged in business, regardless of local and national economic and political structures, indicates a continued and sustained rejection of the notion of separate spheres, both as a historiographical construct and as a lived experience.

Bringing a global perspective to female entrepreneurship across the long nineteenth century helps us understand the historical importance of businesswomen's activities and make useful comparisons between different economic and political structures. The evidence presented here also suggests that women across the world (and the decades) faced many of the same issues, despite those economic and political structures creating very different circumstances for women to navigate. They had to find ways to generate income, either as a contribution to a family pot or as their sole means of support, and in the case of business ownership, they had to gain relevant experience and secure capital.

Entrepreneurship is not innately gendered—women and men can be equally 'entrepreneurial', or not. As these chapters demonstrate, when nineteenth-century women did engage in business, they often did so with confidence. Our contributors show women engaging in business in a wide variety of ways: they owned property, they manufactured and sold goods, they farmed, they provided personal and commercial services, they invested and they speculated. They operated openly in the marketplace, whether this was facilitating the cycle of laundry between elite households and public wash houses in Mexico City, occupying shops on the most desirable streets of nineteenth-century Paris or Moscow, dominating domestic marketplaces in the southern US, or by appearing as investors in the South African Cape Colony. Nineteenth-century businesswomen were to be found wheeling and dealing in towns and cities across the world, working alongside male and female family members and fellow business owners to earn a living. As Susan Ingalls Lewis's chapter on the United States illustrates so clearly, they operated at a variety of levels, from those in very small firms that flit in and out of historical records in the turn of a page, to others who became household names and quasi-celebrities.

Women were most frequently found in activities that can be viewed as an extension of their domestic roles as homemakers and mothers. These include businesses related to dressmaking and millinery, midwifery, schooling and hospitality, for example, but whether we interpret this as gendered marginalisation in undervalued and underpaid industries or as entrepreneurial exploitation of specific gendered expertise is an ongoing conversation. The Australian cookbook writers found in this volume certainly occupied a niche in which their sex gave them a comparative advantage. Yet women were also found in a host of less ‘feminine’ enterprises. The prevalence of widows continuing often ‘unfeminine’ family businesses after the death of the nominal head also suggests that many had been long engaged as business partners. From butchers in New Zealand to pirate chiefs on the China Seas, entrepreneurial widows refused to be contained. Moreover, although necessity and a lack of other options may have been the primary motivation for some women to enter the business world (and sometimes to leave it just as quickly), for others, participation in business shaped their entire adult lives and could satisfy their entrepreneurial ambition, in just the same way as it did for men.

Businesswomen were as good as (and as bad as) businessmen in the long nineteenth century, just as they are now. They operated their businesses in many of the same ways as men. The difference between male and female entrepreneurs lies not in any innate skill connected to their sex but in the legal and economic barriers to female participation and in the domestic double bind experienced almost exclusively by women. Restrictive property and inheritance laws often required creative manoeuvring by businesswomen, although sometimes, as in the case of Spain and Japan, the law could also offer opportunities for women to exercise power. Businesswomen often recognised the various protections that (frequently patriarchal) legal systems could provide and they created endowments, used *wagfs*, registered international patents for their inventions and staked legal claims to land on the basis that they had farmed it. The ‘double bind’ of having to make money while still having the primary responsibility of rearing children and keeping house influenced women’s business practices and not men’s, just as the businesswomen of today are faced with conflicting pressures of home and work.

By examining the experiences of female business owners in relation to their familial lives, this collection challenges a fundamental assumption about business: that it is disconnected from home and family. It is clear that, certainly for businesswomen but probably also for many businessmen, rather than existing in separate spheres, business and home

interconnected and overlapped. Women the world over moved simultaneously through their personal and business lives, acting multiple roles as daughters, friends, entrepreneurs, wives, mothers, business partners, widows, moneylenders and grandmothers. Rather than marriage marking the end of any entrepreneurial activity, evidence from Canada to Angola demonstrates that marriage and a growing family could be key drivers to entering business. Analysis of census records in England and Wales offers ‘big data’ statistical analysis that marriage had a positive effect on women’s rates of entrepreneurship. Uncovering the true extent of married women’s participation in business remains problematic, however, as wives are, more than other women, often obscured in the surviving sources. That the authors in this volume have found so many in spite of this underscores the necessity to reimagine the ways we understand business. Through large-scale quantitative analysis and in case study approaches, this volume brings a new holistic approach to business history. It considers women’s (and men’s) businesses alongside their other responsibilities, allowing their motivations to be better understood. It also, importantly, raises questions about how the ‘success’ of a business should be assessed.

This volume diverges from much of the existing historiography, not just in its focus on nineteenth-century women as independent economic agents, but also in its conscious and determined effort to avoid using size as a simple measure of success. Business ‘success’ is still predominantly measured in profit margins and growth. This loses sight of the original purpose of many businesses. While some business people might seek global domination of a particular market, others do not. A successful business might be one that simply offers a way of making a sufficient living, leaving time and the economic means to pursue other interests or perform other duties. Nevertheless, the idea that ‘bigger is better’ persists and colours not just our understanding of present day business, but judgements of historic firms and owners. We would argue that the measure of a successful economy more broadly is not necessarily one in which big business is thriving, with more women and men in the workforce for more years. A situation that privileges productivity over quality of life—in which everyone is working to live and not living to work—is surely not a success.¹

¹ See Maja Gustafsson, *Mapping Millennials’ Living Standards*, Resolution Foundation, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Mapping-millennials-living-standards.pdf> [accessed 30.08.19] and Sarah O’Connor, ‘Millennials poorer than pre-

We have sought to measure the success of businesswomen's endeavours in the context of their individual circumstances. These considerations include their ability to provide for their young children and to adapt their firms to changing circumstances, expanding and contracting their firms as family members needed employment, the extent to which they protected their ingenuity through the patent courts and other means, and whether they were perceived as viable and legitimate by their contemporary business communities. It takes into consideration that many were running their businesses essentially with one hand tied behind their back because of legal and domestic restrictions. In rejecting a historiography based on the notion that success is measured primarily through profit and growth, we offer a more nuanced understanding of the way that family, business and life intersected in remarkably similar ways across the world throughout the long nineteenth century.

AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

This avenue of research also opens up exciting new questions and fresh spheres of research. We need to extend our gaze further to expand our geographical reach, reinterpret existing archives, encourage the development of technological linkages and discover new sources. This volume has broken new ground by moving beyond European and trans-atlantic frameworks, considering the rural alongside the urban, broadening our definitions of entrepreneurship and redefining the meaning of success. Nevertheless, we have also emphasised the need to do more. We need to incorporate different models of entrepreneurship into our analysis and identify source materials that are relevant and meaningful for different cultures, allowing all women who worked on their own account to be recognised. It is particularly important that the academy engage Indigenous communities in conversations that bring the ways in which Indigenous women participated in colonial, imperial and traditional economies—or the reasons they did not—into the wider historiography. In addition, while several of the contributors here also work in languages other than English, the conversation between English and non-English language scholarship is still limited. Business, gender and economic historians alike must try harder.

vious generations, data show' *Financial Times*, 23 February 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/81343d9e-187b-11e8-9e9c-25c814761640>, [accessed 30.08.19].

Expanding the horizon also means expanding the audience. The contributors to this volume have all presented research at leading international conferences (often on the same panels), including the Business History Conference, the Association of Business Historians Annual Conference, the Economic History Society Annual Conference and the World Economic History Congress, as well as more specialised women's history conferences. Frustratingly however, more often than not, we find ourselves speaking to the same people in each place. Just as we have moved beyond simply 'adding women and stirring', we also need to move beyond being 'the women's panel' at academic conferences. Businesswomen should be integrated into broader discussions of economic, business, gender and social history. This means that conference organisers need to schedule panels with broader themes that include the experiences of both women and men, but it also means that we need to stop self-ghettoising by submitting papers that are neatly transformed into 'women's panels'. We are proud to belong to a strong feminist (and largely—but importantly not exclusively—female) network, but it is time to step out from the echo chamber to challenge (and be challenged by) the bigger picture.

CONNECTING HISTORICAL RESEARCH WITH CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

As well as making geographical, linguistic and cultural connections, we need to connect temporally. The past has meaning for the present. In the twenty-first century, gender equality remains elusive, markedly more so in some places than others. Small businesses, which individually might appear insignificant, when taken together contribute hugely to a nation's GDP. Modern-day government think tanks, international aid agencies and charities recognise the important benefits of women taking active roles in business, both in their contributions to individual industries and in the wider impact on national living standards and economic achievements. The importance of small businesses (and, notably, the importance of women running those businesses) in developing economies also features regularly in the headline policies of world leaders. There has been a determined drive by governments the world over to encourage more women into business through targeted microloans, recognising that business

ownership empowers women and can help to stabilise volatile regions.² Nevertheless, in spite of much loud discussion about the advantages of diversity in business communities, and specifically of the desirability of having women in business, evidence suggests that ‘progress’ in this area is slow.³ Part of understanding why, and potentially changing this situation, is considering what went before.

The late twentieth century also witnessed the rise of the ‘mumpreneur’—a type of small business specifically marketed as a way of combining motherhood with business activity.⁴ Disappointingly, this view of women’s

²When women succeed, nations are more safe, more secure, and more prosperous’, President Barack Obama, March 8, 2013: see The Council On Women And Girls: Entrepreneurship And Innovation Accomplishments report via <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/women> [accessed 30.08.19]. In April 2018, UK Prime Minister Theresa May launched a £7 million programme called ‘SheTrades’ to support female entrepreneurs across the Commonwealth, <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/social-affairs/discrimination/news/94394/theresa-may-launches-commonwealth-female> [accessed 30.08.19]; see also <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures> for data on the importance of female economic activity in developing countries [accessed 30.08.19].

³Evidence from the World Bank shows that across the world, women are hampered by restricted access to finance, technology, knowledge and networks. Perhaps most significantly however, the law also restricts them. A report from 2017 states, ‘married women cannot perform the following functions in the same way as married men in many economies: inherit property (35 economies), travel outside the home (17 economies), obtain a national ID card (10 economies), sign a contract (1 economy), open a bank account (1 economy), and register a business (3 economies). Globally, only 47 of 189 economies have laws prohibiting discrimination in access to credit on the basis of gender’. Women’s Entrepreneurship Facility: Establishment of a Financial Intermediary Fund (June 2017), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/969911498960845681/pdf/Women-Entrepreneurship-Facility-06082017.pdf>, [accessed 02.09.19].

Similarly, an open letter from *The Telegraph*’s ‘Women Mean Business’ campaign states: ‘just 9% of funding for UK start-ups goes to women-run businesses in the UK annually... Men are 86% more likely to be funded by venture capital and 56% more likely to secure angel investment than women’, J Johnson, “Shocking lack of female entrepreneurs” as it emerges just a fifth of British businesses are run by a woman’, *The Telegraph* (21 September 2018), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/21/government-launches-review-barriers-female-entrepreneurship>, [accessed 02.09.19].

⁴Some of these businesses, many of which are in the shady world of multilevel marketing schemes, are sold as a way that women can apparently simultaneously gain the financial benefits of a high income, to be ‘successful’ while also spending ‘quality time’ with their children; in short, they can have it all. The recruitment pages of companies such as Juice Plus, Herbalife and Avon emphasise the low start-up costs and scalability of the business model, offering the new ‘owner’ the opportunity to work the hours that they want to so as to either

engagement in business still frames childcare as women's work and thus female-owned firms as something that enables *women* to work around *their* domestic duties. Women have the biological responsibility for bearing children, but, even in an age when there are greater expectations put on the roles of fathers, they are also primarily responsible for rearing them. This reproductive and domestic work continues to be undervalued and unpaid.

The themes of this volume speak directly to many of the issues in female entrepreneurship identified by the World Bank, international governments and leading think tanks. *Female Entrepreneurs in the Long Nineteenth Century: A Global Perspective* is an important start in a conversation that connects past and present. By viewing contemporary issues relating to female entrepreneurship through a historical lens, we can observe patterns of behaviour and identify key points where intervention from policy makers and stakeholders might help to support women's engagement in business. We can also understand the factors that influence that engagement to ensure that women enter business not out of desperation, as for many nineteenth-century women, but for positive reasons. Business should not be the only option for women because other avenues of generating economic security have been closed to them.

Finally, by demonstrating the presence of women in a variety of businesses across multiple jurisdictions in the long nineteenth century, this volume means that never again can 'women's place' be said to be 'in the home'. It clearly is, and always has been, as producers and sellers of goods and services, building economies across the globe.

earn 'some extra cash or to expand into creating a new career', https://www.become-a-rep.co.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkqPrBRA3EiwAKdtwk2cRIxT3bGG6l4mSUpZc5QnNQx5wvBtNfDNc9IqeZc6RQkhZHcJWkRoCNxgQAvD_BwE [accessed 30.08.19]. This is likely to appeal to women who have left the work place to have a family and who have to combine any paid work with childcare and the primary earner's working hours. The Younique recruitment page makes the link between its style of business and mothers with young children even more explicit by using an illustration of a mother 'working' on her laptop while lying back on a sofa with a small child on her knee. If only it were that easy... <https://www.youniqueproducts.com/business/presenterinfo#.XWkdgS5KjZ4> [accessed 30.08.19].

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