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## **FEMALE LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY, TECHNOLOGY AND SEX-BASED LEGISLATION IN ARGENTINA, 1895-1935**

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By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Argentina's manufacturing sector was growing rapidly. Although Argentina was a major world exporter of agricultural products by 1900, the government also regarded manufacturing as an important component of a developed economy. It especially supported the idea to develop agro industries. Generally, the government's need to raise revenue rather than its explicit concern to protect domestic industry was the reason to raise tariffs on imports of manufactured goods. At the same time, however, some protectionist sentiment appears in the tariff schedule beginning in 1906. For instance, a common practice was to raise duties on finished products, but allow duty-free industrial inputs such as raw materials, fuel and machinery.<sup>1</sup> By 1914, tariffs and growing internal markets helped the manufacturing sector become the second most important sector after agriculture. The industrial labour force also expanded rapidly to meet industry's labour needs. Since most factories were located in or near cities of the coastal regions, urbanization increased as well. Urbanization, industrialization, and an influx of immigration brought with it rapid social and economic changes. Among these changes, women working in factories became a far more common sight in the early twentieth century.

Foreign and native born women in Argentina were a vital labour source in manufacturing between 1895 and 1935. Female workers were represented in nearly all manufacturing, service, and commercial activities. They were largely working in the traditionally female-dominated sectors of textiles, matches, and tobacco. They represented between 30 and 75 percent of all workers in these three sectors between 1895 and 1935 (Table 1). Statistical evidence demonstrates that women's productive contribution was significant and helped these sectors develop in the early twentieth century.

The sexual division of labour in the factories relegated women to the lowest paying and most rudimentary tasks in the factory. Given Argentine women's productivity levels, managers could have used female labour more effectively by training women on machinery or creating incentives through higher wages. However, women often received lower wages than males and were excluded from higher paying jobs and supervisory roles. Women's exclusion from better paying positions could be blamed partly on discriminatory practices such as managers' preferences for male workers and male union exclusion of women. However, Argentina's protective laws also limited women's advancement opportunities in the factory. The intent behind Argentina's protective laws was to defend women's role as mothers and wives, and not to guard their right to work. Socialist deputy, Alfredo Palacio, for example, was a leading proponent for the protection of factory women. He called for legislation that would help

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<sup>1</sup> 'The exemption of critical capital goods and raw materials from import duties is a common practice among most protectionist underdeveloped countries,' Díaz Alejandro, 'The Argentine Tariff, 1906-40', 84.

female workers from the “exploitation, subordination, and risks of factory life.”<sup>2</sup> The female-based labour legislation of Law 5,291 of 1907 and Law 11,317 of 1924 prohibited night work for women and permitted them to take additional and longer breaks to nurse or feed children. Subsequent laws lengthened maternal leave and protected working mothers.

Although the intent of sex-based legislation was to shield women from abuses in the factory, these codes also restricted women’s roles in the workforce. Gender-based laws reinforced the patriarchal notion that women needed to be defended from the public sphere. Women were viewed as being unintentionally removed from their natural role as mothers and wives in order to work in a factory. Codes did not appreciate women as long-term factory workers worthy of being trained on machinery and competing with male workers for higher wages and supervisory roles. Quite the contrary, codes prohibiting night work for women, for instance, eliminated opportunities to become supervisor because such a position required flexibility and ability to work after 8:00PM. Moreover, single women without children did not directly benefit from these laws. The allowances for longer breaks and maternity leave were specifically directed for women with children. For the most part, protective legislation failed to address the overall problems that female labour faced in the workforce such as limited promotion, low wages, little machine training, forced industrial home work, and sexual harassment.

Although sex-based legislation was often arbitrarily enforced, these laws demonstrate the societal attitudes towards women’s work. These laws institutionalized the notion that men were the primary breadwinners and women were subsidiary earners. Women were deterred from improving their positions and managers could justifiably keep women’s wages low and limit female promotion.

Implicit in these reforms is the hope by congress and reformers to reduce the number of women in the workforce. However, census data indicate that the number of working women in factories increased in the female-dominated activities between 1895 and 1935. Their productive contribution helped in the overall development of these sectors. If the labour market had been fair, women in female-dominated sectors should have received adequate compensation through higher wages and promotion. Instead women were marginalized in the lowest paying jobs and were limited in their ability to achieve economic emancipation.

How did working women adapt to job discrimination and factory life? Oral histories of Argentina’s working women demonstrate how they publicly accepted their worker status as a subsidiary wage earner.<sup>3</sup> Working women used the language of motherly duty, as supplied to them by the legislators, Catholic elite, and protectors to justify their work outside the home.<sup>4</sup> They used this language as the life script to justify their working lives. Women constructed new feminine identities to deal with the paradoxes of the social expectations to stay in the home and the realities that they must work to support the household. By the 1920s, women who organized did so under the guise that as mothers as they were responsible for the welfare of their families. They developed a language that justified their role in the workplace, but did not disrupt societal norms.

This paper begins by examining the political and social conventions that restricted women’s economic independence and resulted in sex-based legislation. Second, it estimates the number of female workers and gauges their productivity levels in three female-dominated activities of matches, textiles, and tobacco. Lastly, it examines women’s defence of their right to work.

## REFORM AND LEGISLATION

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<sup>2</sup> Bellucci and Camusso, *La huelga de inquilinos de 1907* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales, 1987), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John D. French and Daniel James, editors, *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box* (Duke University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Also see Hutchinson, *Labours Appropriate to their Sex: Gender, Labour, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 9.

The literature on working class females has been rapidly growing to fill a lacuna on Latin American women's activities during the industrial movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Together, these studies demonstrate how managers treated working women differently from men and how women's capabilities were limited through legislation and societal norms that restricted their independence.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, there existed two labour markets. The dual labour market theory distinguishes between the primary and secondary job markets. Primary jobs encourage stable working habits. The secondary jobs discourage stability, turnover is high and wages are low. Historically, these latter jobs are nearly exclusively filled by minority workers, women, and youth. However, neoclassical economic theory cannot explain the dual labour market. It is the 'historical processes whereby political-economic forces encourage the division of the labor market into separate submarkets, or segments, distinguished by different labor market characteristics and behavioral rules'.<sup>6</sup> This paper examines historical patterns leading to discriminatory practices against women in the workforce in Argentina.

Argentine female workers contributed to the industrialization processes from the beginning in the late nineteenth century, and occupied secondary jobs. Most women first entered the industrial workforce out of need for income.<sup>7</sup> For instance, between 1890 and 1913, immigrant women, in particular, played a substantial role in helping sustain the family unit.<sup>8</sup> Immigrant families had substantial financial need.<sup>9</sup> In some cases, heads of household expected unmarried female members to contribute to sustain the household. Generally, women turned to factory work because job opportunities for them were limited to laundresses, ironers, and maids. Factory pay was low relative to male wages, but this pay was likely higher relative to other common female professions.

Argentine Socialists and reformers viewed factory women as victims of modern urbanization and industrialization rather than victims of job discrimination. In the early twentieth century, reformers often described working women as victims of industry, bound to low wages, exposed to disease, and unable to tend to small children. Similarly, Socialists explicitly stated that a woman's 'supreme mission' was to be a mother and that married women 'should never work outside the home'.<sup>10</sup> Generally, socialists represented male worker's rights, but argued against women's rights to labor outside the home. At times, reformers addressed a specific problem facing women. For example, reformer, Juan Biale Massé recognized that working women should receive equal pay for the same work as men. In 1904, physician and labour lawyer, Biale Massé, wrote on the egregious inequality in daily wages between young girls and men in Córdoba.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, however, he believed that women should not work outside the home and his concern lay with not disrupting women's biological functions. He writes, "after an 11 hour shift seated at the assembly line, how is her uterus? How is her congested uterus during menstruation doing? [She] is as a beast burdened by wages and misery."<sup>12</sup>

Protective legislation in Argentina was largely influenced by European sex-based codes. In the late nineteenth century, progressives in England, France, Germany and Belgium debated reforms to

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<sup>5</sup> Ivy Pinchbeck's (1930, 1969) seminal work on British working women was likely the first to focus on female factory workers during the industrial revolution of England. Since then, there were numerous historical works examining working women's lives.

<sup>6</sup> Reich et al. 'A Theory of Labour Market Segmentation', *American Economic Review* (1973), p. 359.

<sup>7</sup> Need can be measured by several variables, namely husband's income, number of income earners versus the number of dependents, and women's household status.

<sup>8</sup> Lobato, 'Women Workers in the "Cathedrals of Corned Beef": Structure and Subjectivity in the Argentine Meatpacking Industry', in James and French.

<sup>9</sup> The Census of 1914 indicates that 30 percent of the Argentine population was foreign born. *Censo 1914* (1917)

<sup>10</sup> A. H. Varela, *El Nacionalismo Argentino y los obreros socialistas* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta López, 1935), pp. 169-174.

<sup>11</sup> Biale Massé, *Informe sobre el estado de las clases obreras en el interior de la república*. Vol. 2. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y Casa Editora de Adolfo Grau, 1904), p. 362.

<sup>12</sup> Biale Massé, *Informe*, p. 362.

protect child and female labour.<sup>13</sup> In 1906, international legislation signed by 13 countries prohibited night work in industrial employment for all women.<sup>14</sup> Other reforms called for maternity benefits, shorter hours, and longer breaks. The outcome in Argentina was Law 5,291 of 1907 that prohibited night work for women and children. The purpose of this law was to prevent abuses observed in European industrial factories.

Other sex-based legislation was debated in Argentine Congress between 1918 and 1924. In 1918, one bill proposed by Senator Enrique del Valle Iberlucea called for the ‘civil emancipation of women’ by giving her equal rights and responsibilities enjoyed by men and by abolishing women’s inferior status within marriage.<sup>15</sup> His proposed legislation would recognize women’s role outside the home, particularly giving her the right to choose to labour outside the home without requesting the consent of a husband or other related adult male.<sup>16</sup> This bill remained in Congress through 1924, which by that time, a new protective labour bill was proposed to replace Law 5,291 of 1907. The new bill became Law 11,317 of 1924 that increased protection for women and minors in factories.<sup>17</sup> This law was considered quite progressive for its time and although enforcement was lax, it expressed the attitudes towards women. Law 11,317 restricted women’s working hours per day and week and granted maternal benefits such as two-hour lunch breaks and fifteen-minute nursing breaks every three hours.<sup>18</sup> It also prohibited women from working in or near ‘dangerous activities’, such as alcohol distilleries, glass-making, and toxic chemicals. Certain careers were banned because they were considered unhealthy for mothers.<sup>19</sup>

What were the motives for sex-specific labour reform in early twentieth century Argentina? Although poorly enforced, sex-specific legislation was intended to protect the family, restrict women’s mobility, and ensure that men remained dominant in the workforce. There was an implicit fear that women would be able to find work easier than men because they could be paid cheaper wages than males. The Argentine government likely sought to develop certain criteria to ensure male employment levels. The protective code lessened women’s abilities to effectively compete with male workers. In 1924, the industrial lobby, Unión Industrial Argentina (UIA), argued against the Law of 1924 specifically because the increased number of breaks disrupted the ‘order and routine’ of the factory schedule, and hiring women would be less convenient to factory owners because of stringent regulations.<sup>20</sup> UIA threatened

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<sup>13</sup> Mary Lynn Stewart, Women, Work, and the French State: Labour Protection and Social Patriarchy, 1879-1919. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989

<sup>14</sup> ‘International Convention Respecting the Prohibition of Night-Work for Women in Industrial Employment’, Berne, September 26, 1906. Reprinted in United States, War Labor Policies Board, Report on international labor standards (1919), pp. 81-83.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Civil emancipación de la mujer’, Diario de sesiones de Cámara de senadores, sesiones ordinarias (May 21, 1918), pp. 38-45.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Civil emancipación de la mujer’, Diario de sesiones de Cámara de senadores, sesiones ordinarias (May 21, 1918), pp. 47-52.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Proyecto de ley sobre trabajo de las mujeres y menores’, Cámara de senadores, 38 reunión de la 16 sesión ordinaria (September 26, 1924), pp. 745-747.

<sup>18</sup> Marcela Nari, Políticas de maternidad y maternalismo político, Buenos Aires, 1890-1940 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2004), pp. 216-19.

<sup>19</sup> Artículo 10, ‘Ley num. 11.317, Ley de menores y mujeres’, Diario de sesiones de la Cámara de senadores, leyes sancionados (November 20, 1924 – January 20, 1925), pp. 122-124. Artículo 11, Law 11,371 of 1924 replaced Law 5291 of 1907 that prohibited women and minors from working night shifts and set the minimum work age to 10. Law 11371 also increased the working age from ten to twelve and had literacy requirements. Law number 5291 of 1907 is reprinted in Matilde Alejandra Mercado, La primera ley de trabajo femenino, “La mujer obrera” (1890-1910) (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1988), pp. 72-74.

<sup>20</sup> Nari, Políticas de maternidad, p. 217.

that women would be less likely to be hired because of these labor laws, and that more expensive adult male labor would be hired to replace women and minors.<sup>21</sup>

The reality was that owners viewed female and child labor as a cheap source to be exploited through low wages and long hours.<sup>22</sup> All industries had labour-intensive tasks that were customarily given to women and children as they were considered ideal for unskilled jobs. Regardless of law, owners found other ways to exploit female labor through home and piece rate work. Sex-specific labour laws largely enforced the assignment of women to lower paying and secondary labour markets.

## FEMALE LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Data demonstrate that female labourers made a significant productive contribution in Argentine manufacturing. Women's productive contribution was clear in the female-dominated sectors of matches, textiles, and tobacco. They represented between 33 and 74.1 percent in these activities in the census years of 1895, 1914 and 1935 (Table 1). In matches and tobacco, there is overall growth to labour productivity between the censuses of 1895 and 1935 (Table 2). The most impressive increases in female labour productivity are in textiles production, wherein productivity increased by nearly three times (Table 2). Women also contributed to production in traditional male sectors, such as iron and steel manufacturing between 1895 and 1935. By 1935, women represented 31.6 percent of the labour force in iron and steel production (Table 1). Female labour dominated in labour-intensive tasks, which makes productivity growth in female-dominated activities all the more impressive. Increases to female labour productivity were due to increased work intensity while in the factory and longer hours by taking work home.<sup>23</sup>

Female wages did not reflect their high productivity levels. Instead female compensation remained significantly lower than that of males. In 1904, the municipal census reported labour statistics including wages and hours worked. Women consistently had lower daily wages than males within six female-dominated activities in Buenos Aires city (Table 3). Depending on task, the majority of women received less than 0.50 and up to \$3 pesos (nominal moneda nacional) per day. Most men, on the other hand, were paid between \$2 and \$5 pesos daily. In regards to hours worked, all labourers worked on average nine hours per day.<sup>24</sup> About 37.3 percent of workers in the city regularly worked on Sundays.<sup>25</sup> Longer hours were particularly important in the labour-intensive divisions of the factory.

In 1935, the Argentine Department of Labour published their statistics on female and child labour in the textiles sector. The Department's results demonstrated that little had changed in the textiles sectors in terms of high female productivity and low wages. Between 1929 and 1935, labour productivity continued to rise, yet women earned on average between 60 and 69 percent of male wages (Table 4). The Department's results also showed that machine use was decreasing in the textiles sector, indicating that

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<sup>21</sup> UIA argued that the minor age should be lowered to fourteen. Unión Industria Argentina, "Observaciones expresadas al P. E., Octubre 10, 1924, al Excmo. Sr. Ministro del interior, Dr. Vicente C. Gallo, Ley de trabajo de mujeres y menores," in *Anales de la Unión Industrial Argentina*, Vol. 38, no. 670 (October 15, 1924), pp. 35-37.

<sup>22</sup> Belluci and Camusso, *La huelga de inquilinos de 1907*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>23</sup> Frederick W. Taylor popularized a process of labor discipline based on scientific management to ensure human efficiency. Among his incentive systems was to 'devise wages scales based on piece work, such that the productive worker shared in the expansion of output, but would fall below a subsistence wage and be forced to quit if inefficient.' Maier, 'Between Taylorism and Technocracy', p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> In a municipal study of average hours worked per worker in 1904, 7,323 establishments of the industries under study stated that 97.8 percent of their workers laboured between eight to ten hours per day. 'Horas de trabajo en los establecimientos industriales', in Buenos Aires (Argentina). Dirección general de estadística municipal, *Censo general de población, edificación, comercio é industrias de la ciudad de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Cía Sud-Americana de billetes de Banco, 1906).

<sup>25</sup> 'Horas de trabajo en los establecimientos industriales'

labour-intensive tasks (“women’s work”) were pushing the sector’s productivity levels. Women increased productivity by way of speed-ups, greater work intensity while on the shop floor, and longer hours by taking work home.

## WOMEN’S DEFENSE OF LABOUR

For the most part, working women who organized adopted the language of the reformers. They argued that they were mothers, wives, and protectors of the family. As protectors of the family, they had a right to earn and contribute to the household. A closer examination of women’s oral histories demonstrates that they took advantage of the language of the sex-based legislation in two ways.<sup>26</sup> First, expectations of work histories and education levels were different for each gender. Women were likely to have inconsistent work histories and low levels of education.<sup>27</sup> Unlike men, women’s interrupted work record could be justified by child rearing and family responsibilities.

Second, assuming need, women would have been obliged to work in some venue. They used the language of ‘womanly tasks’ to emphasize that certain labour-intensive jobs within textiles, tobacco, matches, and foundries were more geared for women. They made such arguments because the alternatives to industrial factory work were limited. Other types of work were domestic servitude, the informal sector, and industrial home work. The latter type of work was characterized by women earning money in their private homes manufacturing small items for factories and stores. By 1940, the Argentine labour department estimated that ‘between 200,000 and 400,000 persons, with 60 percent being women in Buenos Aires city’ were industrial home workers.<sup>28</sup> Women labouring in domestic servitude, the informal sector, and industrial home work were particularly vulnerable. They could be replaced at any time and work unusually long hours. Also, labour and protective laws were impossible to enforce outside of a formal factory job. In the factory, women had some minimum rights to a fixed minimum wage, set hours, and benefits such as a small pension and maternity support in some cases.

## CONCLUSION

Why did factory managers hire married working mothers? The social convention was that working mothers should remain at home with children. Also, under the labour laws of 1924 and 1932, managers would have been expected to increase women’s breaks at the factory and contribute to a maternity fund.<sup>29</sup> However, factories hired women because they were good workers. Economic data

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<sup>26</sup> Daniel James, ‘Tales Told Out on the Borderlands: Doña María’s Story, Oral History, and Issues of Gender’ and Mirta Zaida Lobato, ‘Women Workers in the ‘Cathedrals of Corned Beef: Structure and Subjectivity in the Argentine Meatpacking Industry’, In John D. French and Daniel James, eds., The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers (1997); Mirta Zaida Lobato, ‘La mujer trabajadora en el siglo XX: un estudio de las industrias de la carne y textil en Berisso, Argentina,’ In Lobato, Mirta Zaida, Eliana Villar Márquez et al. Mujer, trabajo, ciudadanía (Buenos Aires: Gráficas y Servicios, 1995); James, Daniel. Doña María’s Store: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Unlike men, women’s labour participation is characterized by frequent entrances and withdrawals. These are associated with marriage, divorce, childrearing, and family responsibilities.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Women Workers in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay (1942), p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Maternity leave laws give women 30 days before and 45 days after childbirth, with a total allowance equal to 2 ½ months’ pay at the rate of 25 working days a month, up to a fixed maximum benefit. The law also prohibits married and pregnant women from being discharged. In Argentina, a maternity fund is maintained by a tax paid by each employed woman on her wages, by a tax paid by the employer on the pay rolls of women employees, and by a contribution from the state. Members of a textile union in Buenos Aires have asked various women’s organizations to consider with them changes in the maternity-fund law, such as the inclusion of women on the board of directors, and methods of giving benefits so that

show women's significant productive contribution. Like men, women played a significant role in industry beginning in the late nineteenth century. The data on female labour productivity and wages implied that the extent of the costs and benefits of the sexual division of labour were unequally shared between men and women, to the patent disadvantage of the latter. The data also indicate that managers hired women because they were capable of increasing productivity through labour speed-ups, longer hours, and increased work intensity.

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they will be used for the purpose for which they are intended' (U.S. Women Workers in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, p. 10).

**TABLE 1. FEMALE AND CHILD WORKERS AS PERCENTAGES OF ALL WORKERS IN ARGENTINE MANUFACTURING CENSUSES, 1895M<sup>a</sup>, 1895P<sup>b</sup>, 1914, 1935**

Percent By Sector, Twelve Activities

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>CENSUS YEAR</b>	<b>NO. OF FIRMS</b>	<b>FEMALE/ALL WORKERS</b>	<b>CHILDREN WORKERS<sup>1</sup>/ ALL WORKERS</b>
<b>(1) Beer</b>	1895M	61	2.1	c
	1914	29	0.2	3.2
	1935	18	0.6	0.7
<b>(2) Cement</b>	1895P <sup>2</sup>	159	4.3	C
	1895M	4	6.8	C
	1914	29	0.5	5.7
	1935	72	0.3	0.5
<b>(3) Glass</b>	1895M	3	0.0	C
	1914	16	2.4	16.4
	1935	35	11.9	10.7
<b>(4) Matches</b>	1895M	5	63.1	c
	1914	16	65.6	17.9
	1935	18	69.0	8.8
<b>(5) Iron and Steel Foundries<sup>3</sup></b>	1895P	1,052	4.9	c
	1895M	44	2.4	c
	1914	2,187	3.5	5.3
	1935	1,708	31.6	31.8
<b>(6) Small-scale Machine Shops and Blacksmiths</b>	1895P	2,111	4.3	c
	1895M	501	2.0	c
	1914	1,088	1.0	5.4
	1935	909	0.2	15.6
<b>(7) Paper</b>	1895	2	c	c
	1914	11	27.5	4.5
	1935	22	19.8	3.5
	1954	952	36.0	9.2
<b>(8) Soap</b>	1895P	152	6.9	c
	1895M	78	5.9	c
	1914	294	3.7	2.7
	1935	239	12.0	4.1
<b>(9) Tobacco</b>	1895P	584	33.2	c
	1895M	207	24.6	c
	1914	234	63.9	2.9
	1935	152	62.8	4.4
	1954	112	58.1	3.2

<b>(10) Alpargatas</b>	1895P	96	60.2	C
	1895M	45	54.5	C
	1914	241	36.5	7.2
	1935	254	50.4	14.5
<b>(11) Burlap Sack</b>	1895P	15	74.1	C
	1914	24	60.0	6.9
	1935	22	69.7	0.2
<b>(12) Textiles<sup>4</sup></b>	1895P	378	70.3	C
	1914	2,458	57.4	5.6
	1935	4,727	49.3	8.5
	1954	5,967	48.7	4.6

a. 1895M indicates that information comes from the manuscript industrial census of 1895. Manuscript data supplements information excluded from the final publication of the census of 1895.

b. Information comes from the published industrial census of 1895.

c. The number of female and/or child workers was not reported.

1. This category includes all boys and girls under the age of 18.

2. Published data includes vertical kilns and other cement-like processing centers. It was not possible to distinguish between modern cement factories and vertical kiln shops in the published report. All were listed under a category of asphalt and cement production.

3. Foundries, iron and steel manufacturing, lead processing. All iron, steel, and lead categories except blacksmith, forge, and machine shop.

4. Textiles category includes cotton, linen, wool, elastics, other natural fibers, hats, and mixed knits. After 1930 also includes nylons, synthetic elastics, silks, and synthetic fibers.

Sources: República Argentina, "Censo social e industrial, 1895," Manuscript (Buenos Aires: Archivo General de la Nación, 1895); Argentina, *Segundo Censo Nacional: Censo de las Industrias 1895*. Vol. 3, Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Hacienda, 1898; Argentina Ministerio de Hacienda, *Tercer Censo Nacional: Censo de las Industrias, 1914*, Vol. 7 (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de L. J. Rosso y Cía, 1917); Argentina Dirección General de Estadística de la Nación, Title varies, *Censo Industrial and Estadística Industrial* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Hacienda, 1937); República Argentina, Dirección Nacional de Estadística y Censos. *Censo industrial 1954*. Buenos Aires, 1960.

**TABLE 2. ESTIMATES OF LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY, 1895<sup>a</sup>, 1914,  
1935  
TWELVE ACTIVITIES**

<b>(Real Pesos<sup>1</sup>)</b>			<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Census Year</b>	<b>No. of obs.<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>(Real Gross Ouput)/ (Number of workers)</b>	<b>(Real Value Added)/ (Number of Workers)</b>	<b>(Real Gross Ouput)/ (Number of workers**)</b>	<b>(Real Value Added)/ (Number of workers**)</b>
<b>(1) Beer</b>	1895	61	2,486.70	1,004.19	2,499.76	1,009.47
	1914	29	7,687.80	5,980.98	7,815.60	6,080.41
	1935	18	5,892.91	4,279.42	5,922.66	4,301.02
<b>(2) Cement</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	4	375.49	262.31	381.97	266.83
	1914	29	2,630.45	1,410.80	2,710.16	1,453.55
	1935	72	5,342.24	3,849.93	5,358.83	3,861.89
<b>(3) Glass</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	3	1,087.18	593.42	1,087.18	593.42
	1914	16	1,115.28	783.50	1,223.07	859.23
	1935	35	1,921.46	1,450.29	2,096.34	1,582.29
<b>(4) Matches</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	5	1,593.12	593.44	1,891.71	704.67
	1914	16	2,534.66	1,892.10	3,396.38	2,535.36
	1935	18	2,297.65	865.71	2,933.01	1,105.10
<b>(5) Iron and Steel<sup>3</sup></b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	44	932.24	186.20	937.80	187.31
	1914	2,187	1,525.96	879.66	1,581.78	911.84
	1935	1,708	14,077.97	6,044.89	18,474.02	7,932.49
<b>(6) Small-scale Machine Shops and Blacksmiths</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	501	552.94	207.56	555.77	208.63
	1914	1,088	2,078.76	973.43	2,142.47	1,003.26
	1935	909	2,148.32	1,596.21	2,331.35	1,732.20
<b>(7) Paper</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>	332.45	b	332.45	b
	1914	11	2,506.80	1,179.46	2,758.16	1,297.73
	1935	22	4,326.45	2,060.92	4,636.53	2,208.63
<b>(8) Soap</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	78	2,716.14	256.23	2,756.57	260.05
	1914	294	5,746.61	1,753.11	5,879.41	1,793.62
	1935	239	8,577.20	1,968.04	9,035.17	2,073.12

<b>(9) Tobacco</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	207	781.69	318.94	832.86	339.82
	1914	234	4,558.23	3,139.84	5,520.50	3,802.68
	1935	152	3,881.06	1,154.44	4,728.19	1,406.42
<b>(10) Alpargatas</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	45	1,409.91	1,103.98	1,632.52	1,278.29
	1914	241	1,973.06	896.48	2,259.94	1,026.82
	1935	254	2,914.65	833.99	3,636.69	1,040.59
<b>(11) Burlap Sack</b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>c</sup>	785.56	777.89	787.28	779.60
	1914	24	11,806.69	1,793.39	14,472.20	2,198.28
	1935	22	12,815.78	990.39	15,539.13	1,200.85
<b>(12) Textiles<sup>4</sup></b>	1895 <sup>a</sup>	36 <sup>c</sup>	1,470.46	564.96	1,671.16	642.07
	1914	2,458	1,448.45	638.72	1,748.44	771.01
	1935	4,727	4,598.42	1,504.34	5,514.00	1,803.87

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\*\*Adjusted for Age and Gender

a. Information comes from the manuscript industrial census of 1895. The 1895 published census failed to report value of output or costs except for breweries.

b. Costs were not reported and value added could not be determined.

c. Number of observations differs from other tables because this table is only considering firms that reported value of output and costs.

1. Base year is 1920 = 100. Real pesos were determined by using the wholesale price index calculated by Leonard I. Nakamura and Carlos Zarazaga, "Economic Growth in Argentina in the Period 1900-1930: Some Evidence from Stock Returns, Table 9.1 Price Indexes" in John H. Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor, eds. *Latin America and the World Economy Since 1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 254.

2. The number of observations includes firms that reported value of output and costs.

3. This category includes all iron and steel foundries and lead processing manufacturers except blacksmith, forge, and machine shop.

4. Textiles category includes cotton, linen, wool, elastics, other natural fibers, hats, and mixed knits. After 1930, this category also includes nylons, synthetic elastics, silks, and synthetic fibers.

Sources: República Argentina, "Censo social e industrial, 1895," Manuscript (Buenos Aires: Archivo General de la Nación, 1895); For breweries only, Argentina, *Segundo Censo Nacional: Censo de las Industrias de 1895*, Vol. 3 (Buenos Aires: 1898); Argentina Ministerio de Hacienda, *Tercer Censo Nacional: Censo de las Industrias*, 1914, Vol. 7 (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de L. J. Rosso y Cía, 1917); Argentina Dirección General de Estadística de la Nación, Title varies, *Censo Industrial and Estadística Industrial* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Hacienda, 1937).

**TABLE 3. NOMINAL DAILY WAGES FOR SELECTED FEMALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES, CITY OF BUENOS AIRES, 1904**  
**MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS IN WAGE CATEGORIES (%)**  
 (moneda nacional \$, 1904)

INDUSTRY/ LABOUR DIVISION	GENDER NO. & No. of EST. workers	EARNING CATEGORY	NOMINAL DAILY WAGES							
			Up 0.50	toUp \$1	toBetween \$1 & 2	Between \$2 & \$3	Between \$3 \$4	Between and\$4 \$5	and Above \$5	
TOBACCO MANUFACTURE (Cigarros y cigarrillos)	68 MALE, 290	Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour	0	18.41	59.62	15.66	6.32	0		
		FEMALE, 364 (55.66% of Workforce)	Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers	0	10.24	33.18	8.72	3.52	0	
		Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers	0.15	2.29	1.22	3.21	12.08	14.53	10.86	
ALPARGATAS	51 MALE, 347	Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour	2.02	7.73	57.65	31.26	1.34	0	0	
		FEMALE, 595 (63.16% of Workforce)	Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers	1.27	4.88	36.41	19.75	0.85	0	0
		Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers	0.00	0.96	1.70	12.95	15.50	2.55	3.18	

<b>BOLSAS DE ARPILLERA</b>	12	MALE, 234	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour</b>	3.35	50.40	13.24	19.94	5.10	7.97	0
		FEMALE, 627 (72.82% of Workforce)	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	2.44	36.70	9.64	14.52	3.72	5.81	0
			<b>Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	0.00	0.23	2.32	17.31	4.18	1.39	1.74
<b>MATCHES</b>	4	MALE, 335	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour</b>	31.64	48.96	13.18	5.65	0.56	0	0
		FEMALE, 531 (61.32% of Workforce)	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	19.40	30.02	8.08	3.46	0.35	0	0
			<b>Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	0.00	2.77	19.98	4.73	5.77	5.43	0.00
<b>MEN'S AND LADIES HATS</b>	37	MALE, 102	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour</b>	11.90	4.76	60.71	20.24	0	0	2.38
		FEMALE, 84 (45.16% of Workforce)	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	5.38	2.15	27.42	9.14	0	0	1.08

		<b>Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	1.08	3.76	12.37	3.23	25.81	6.45	2.15	
<b>KNITS (COTTON, WOOL, MIXED)</b>	47	<b>MALE, 1194</b>	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all female labour</b>	1.92	6.92	41.46	48.89	0.81	0	0
		<b>FEMALE, 1980 (62.38% of Workforce)</b>	<b>Female earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	1.20	4.32	25.87	30.50	0.50	0	0
			<b>Male earners in specific wage category as % of all workers</b>	0.19	1.95	3.25	16.29	15.00	0.76	0.19

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Source: Martinez, Alberto B., Director de la Estadística Municipal. *Censo general de población, edificación, comercio é industrias de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires: Levantado en los días 11 y 18 de Septiembre de 1904*. Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1906.

**TABLE 4. NOMINAL TEXTILE WAGE DATA BY GENDER, FEDERAL CAPITAL, 1935**

<b>A. High, Low, and Mean Nominal Wages of Male and Female in the Manufacture of Textiles: Cotton, Wool, Silk, and Other Fibers, Argentine pesos</b>								
	<b>Male Wage</b>				<b>Female Wage</b>			
	<b>Cotton</b>	<b>Wool</b>	<b>Silk</b>	<b>Other Fibers</b>	<b>Cotton</b>	<b>Wool</b>	<b>Silk</b>	<b>Other Fibers</b>
<b>Highest Wage</b>	9.45	8.50	10.30	9.20	8.75	5.70	6.05	3.60
<b>Lowest Wage</b>	1.20	1.15	2.50	3.05	1.35	1.25	1.60	2.10
<b>MEAN wage</b>	4.86	4.72	5.48	5.49	3.04	2.92	3.75	2.77

**B. Percentage of Average Daily Female Wage divided by Male Wage in the Manufacture of Cotton, Wool, Silk, and Other Fibers**

	<b>Female wage/male wage</b>			
	<b>Cotton</b>	<b>Wool</b>	<b>Silk</b>	<b>Other Fibers</b>
<b>Highest Wage</b>	92.6	67.1	58.7	39.1
<b>Lowest Wage</b>	112.5	108.7	64.0	68.9
<b>MEAN wage</b>	62.5	62.0	68.5	50.4

Source: Argentine Republic, Departamento nacional del trabajo, Division de estadística, "Industria Textil; capacidad normal de trabajo de los obreros, especialmente mujeres y menores," (Buenos Aires, 1939), Compiled from data in Table 5, pp. 11-15.

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Data for this study were gleaned from census data, official government publications on labour wages and conditions, labour statistics collected over time by the Department of Labour, legislative proposals to protect women, labour legislation, and congressional debates and ministerial records on the question of female emancipation and work.

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