

The
Gendered Worlds
of Latin American
Women Workers

From Household and Factory to
the Union Hall and Ballot Box

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Unskilled Worker, Skilled Housewife

Constructing the Working-Class
Woman in São Paulo, Brazil

BARBARA WEINSTEIN



Joan Scott, in her widely read *Gender and the Politics of History*, analyzes the construction of the "woman worker" and the gendering of categories of skilled and unskilled work. Perhaps most controversial is her analysis of the notorious Sears Department Stores case, which has the effect of ultimately absolving Sears of any discernible historical responsibility for job discrimination against women, since the category "woman worker," with its limitations and disabilities, had already been formulated long before Sears began gender-typing positions within its workforce.¹ It is an argument that clearly reflects Scott's immersion in poststructuralist, Foucauldian conceptions of power and hierarchy, with their lack of emphasis on agency and direct responsibility.

Certainly the "woman worker," as a separate historical category with specific implications (unskilled, temporary, unconsciously but doubly oppressed), is so ubiquitous as to seem natural, the mark of a successful social construction. But I prefer to stress the process by which such identities are reproduced, reinforced, or reconfigured by powerful human actors who promote specific policies and ideologies of gender. In the case of São Paulo, Brazil's leading industrial center, over time (1910-1950) we see a narrowing of the acceptable work roles for working-class women, until only "housewife" remains as a legitimate goal, and this narrowing is actively promoted by representatives of various professional and business groups. Though paulista employers, union leaders, educators, and social workers did not invent the category "woman worker," they directly contributed to the marginalization of the woman who worked for wages, and to the idealization of the woman who remained at home. And in the case of the industrialists, they played an active role in setting up programs and regulations that served to narrow the

definition of working-class women's proper roles, even as they continued to exploit women's low-wage labor.

A full account of the changing images of women workers in São Paulo would have to explore debates over labor legislation, the positions adopted by labor unions and radical activists, the activities of feminist organizations, and women workers' own attempts to represent themselves and their roles in an industrializing society. The following analysis does not pretend to be a full account. In this article I will focus on a particular group of industrialists and their allies in the social and educational professions, who played a significant role in defining and limiting training opportunities for women workers and in formulating programs for working-class housewives. In their pursuit of what they considered a modern, industrializing society, these industrialists and professionals promoted certain normative images that ultimately affected a wide range of programs and policies directed at working-class women and created new boundaries for debates about the role of women in industrial society.

focus



Early Industry, Vocational Programs, and the Visible Woman Worker

The position of women in the industrial labor force of São Paulo during the early decades of industrialization (1890s-1920s) is a familiar one. Textiles, by far the largest branch of manufacturing, and the one most approximating modern industry, heavily employed women and girls.² A 1912 study of thirty-one textile mills with a total of 9,500 workers revealed that nearly 72 percent of that workforce was female.³ Only a quarter of these female workers were over the age of twenty-two, so that the classic image of the woman worker juggling the demands of wage and domestic work may have applied to a relatively small portion of the industrial workforce. At the same time, it was generally recognized that substantial numbers of women circulated in and out of the paid labor force—the number of working-class adult women who *never* worked outside the home was probably quite small.⁴

Discussions (mainly among men) of women and work in São Paulo displayed much the same ambivalence as they did in other contexts. As Susan Besse shows in her study of changing conceptions of gender in industrializing São Paulo, there was a growing acceptance of the need for women, even married women from middle-class families, to work outside the home.⁵ In the case of working-class women this might be due to low wages for men,

frequent layoffs and shutdowns, and debilitating illnesses or accidents, while women from more "genteel" backgrounds might be moved to work by the need to maintain the household's middle-class lifestyle in the face of inflation and the financial exigencies of urban life. The recourse to paid employment might be regrettable, but it also often seemed unavoidable.

The question, then, was not whether women should work at all, but what type of work was proper or acceptable for women to perform. Excepting prostitutes, perhaps the most stigmatized or problematized female figure in the labor force was the mill hand. While textile manufacturers eagerly employed large numbers of women and children at wages well below those for adult males, reformist politicians, educators, journalists, and labor leaders decried this practice and called for an end to the industrial employment of women.⁶ The emerging complications of industrial life in a rapidly developing region produced intense anxieties about class conflict, de-skilling and dislocation, and erosion of the traditional family structure. Whether one approached the "social question" as a middle-class hygienist or a working-class labor leader, women in the factory were a "problem." On the one hand they could be charged with abandoning home and children; on the other hand they were belittled as unskilled, uninterested in organizing, and morally compromised.⁷

These nearly universal condemnations of female employment in factories, however, had no immediate impact on the tendency of factory owners to hire girls or women. The more politically self-conscious industrialists, such as Jorge Street, may have been moved by criticisms of women's employment in industry to emphasize the familial atmosphere of their firms, and to install nurseries and other facilities that demonstrated concern for the "special needs" of women workers.⁸ But the negative image of women factory hands did not result in either formal or informal prohibitions on their employment in industry. Instead, it served to marginalize the woman worker professionally, and to deprive her of access to skills and positions in industry that might have made a career in factory work more appealing and materially rewarding.

Deeply implicated in the entire debate over women in industry is the question of skill acquisition. With regard to gender roles in industry, it is especially important to emphasize that the categories of skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled are constructions, rather than simple representations of objective technical criteria. As Joel Wolfe points out in his study of the *paulista* textile industry, the women who dominated the spinning (and more rarely, weaving) sections of the textile plants were quite adept at keeping antiquated and over-

used machines running, and these skills often proved quite valuable to the employer.⁹ But the definition of *skill* that dominated the industrial-education milieu rejected such empirical knowledge in favor of systematic technical expertise. To be sure, both male and female workers were criticized for their empirical approach to the work process, but men's trades were more likely to be seen as susceptible to systematic, theoretical training than women's.

Prior to 1910, skill acquisition for virtually all aspiring craftspeople in paulista industry involved a traditional, if informal, apprenticeship whereby the novice gradually absorbed techniques from older workers. This meant that women had few opportunities to acquire such skills, since the predominantly male skilled workers were unlikely to accept them as apprentices. Still, some women, through considerable effort, learned skills such as weaving by observing other workers, perhaps fathers or brothers. Thus this system tended to exclude women, but not absolutely.¹⁰ In contrast, the more formal institutions for vocational training founded during these early decades of industrialization created rigid and usually impermeable barriers between men's and women's work.

The first major attempt to systematize vocational education in São Paulo began in 1911 with the founding of state-run professional schools. Modernizing engineers and educators throughout Brazil during the years of the Old Republic (1889-1930) sought to combat the traditional Brazilian contempt for manual labor by making professional education a respectable option for urban youths from less privileged backgrounds. Whereas earlier industrial institutes had either been designed for the truly indigent, or had the air of reform schools, these new professional schools were meant to attract the sons and daughters of urban working families of modest means who had the resources to give their children a primary school education, but would not disdain a manual occupation in the industrial sector.¹¹

From the outset the state sponsored both an Escola Profissional Masculina (EPM) and an Escola Profissional Feminina (EPF), thereby acknowledging the rapid entrance of women into the labor force and giving this trend some legitimacy. But it is important to note the dramatically different trajectories of the two schools, with the EPM moving in a more and more industrial direction, and the EPF assiduously avoiding any association with industrial training. Even workshops for spinning and weaving were included in the EPM, despite the limited demand from the male students, who preferred the better-paying metallurgical and mechanical trades.¹² Reformist educators acknowledged the need to provide young women of limited means with skills

that would allow them to earn a living and avoid the horrors of poverty and prostitution, but for that career to be genuinely respectable, it would have to be pursued outside the factory.

Every effort was made to give the EPF an air of gentility and petit bourgeois respectability. It was located in a former residence rather than in a school building, even though the structure was so dilapidated that it was blamed for outbreaks of tuberculosis among students and employees. Its entirely female staff (save one painting teacher and the director) consisted of normal-school graduates from "good backgrounds" who were often compared favorably with the working-class instructors employed in the EPM. According to the director, the EPF's teaching staff was "composed of ladies from our best society, of elevated culture and character, who bring to the school good domestic habits, polite graces combined with technical competence, acquired and practiced as a complement to the actual education." The classes it initially offered included design, dressmaking, sewing, lace and embroidery, flowers and hats, and home economics (mainly cooking). These were, of course, largely non-industrial trades. But it is worth stressing that the students themselves seem to have been solely interested in marketable skills—not a single one enrolled in home economics when it was first offered, causing the course to be canceled. It was revived as a requirement in 1912, but lack of interest, complaints, and the problem of greasy hands led to its cancellation again in 1914.¹³

We have very little data to indicate what type of young woman attended the Escola Profissional Feminina.¹⁴ We do know that, throughout the years 1910–1930, the EPF had many more applicants than places; in contrast to the EPM, it had no trouble finding candidates with the educational prerequisites necessary for admission to the middle-school level. In light of this, it seems likely that the EPM drew almost exclusively from the working-class milieu, while the EPF drew girls from the lower middle class as well as from the working class. In the early 1920s the governor of São Paulo argued for doubling the size of the EPF to give women options other than primary-school teaching for employment—a remark that would make no sense if the school had a strictly proletarian student body, since very few working-class women at the time became teachers. And the school's director frequently complained about "dilettantes" coming to the school to take art classes with a handsome and charismatic male instructor. It is unlikely that young ladies from privileged backgrounds would have invaded the school's premises unless they perceived the regular students as being "respectable" (and predominantly white).¹⁵

The man who directed both the EPM and EPF during their first two decades, Aprígio Gonzaga, vigorously advocated a vocational but nonindustrial iden-

tity for the EPF. A staunch defender of male skilled workers, he denounced the presence of women in factories, citing the employment of women and minors as the main explanation for low wages. Treating women and children as interchangeable categories, he called for the "removal of children and women from factory work," which would "redound to the benefit of the race, of society, and of the nation."¹⁶ At the same time, Gonzaga positioned himself as a progressive and modern educator who recognized women's need for self-sufficiency. He claimed that there were crafts appropriate for female employment, especially in small dress shops and ateliers, and he struggled against attempts by government officials and nonvocational educators to expand the role of home economics in the EPF. He noted with annoyance that, in 1920, the state government appointed a woman to the EPF staff to teach home economics without consulting him.¹⁷ (Once again, the cooking course never really got off the ground, and the instructor resigned by 1924.)

Gonzaga was apparently under fire from various quarters for his strong advocacy of vocational education for women. In the early 1920s he published a pamphlet titled "Objectives of Vocational Education for Women," in which he attempted to show that one could reconcile employment for women outside the home with support for the traditional family (or as he put it, the essay showed that he was not "against the family"). Adopting an increasingly common posture, Gonzaga noted that necessity forced some women to work outside the home, but also argued that vocational education could make them more effective housewives. "A woman thus educated will no longer be a mere decoration or a dead weight in the household economy, but rather will be a brave and very noble collaborator."¹⁸ Thus, to maintain support for the idea of women's (nonindustrial) vocational instruction, Gonzaga capitulated on the question of incorporating home economics into the curriculum.

Neither the indifference of the women students nor Gonzaga's criticisms served to discourage the swelling campaign to emphasize domestic skills in vocational schools for women. In 1935 a major educational reform in São Paulo, championed by the advocates of rational organization and scientific management, made the separation of female and male training even more rigid. The new code formally excluded women from industrial courses, including textiles, and even in coeducational institutions, men and women were to be taught in separate classes (except for courses in secretarial skills, a category that tends to be more cross-gender in Brazil than elsewhere). Courses for women included domestic arts; embroidery; flower-, hat-, and glove-making; and similar artisanal crafts. The domestic arts, now obligatory, included hygiene and nutrition, infant care (to reduce the "frightful rate of infant mor-

tality”), home economics (cooking, washing, and cleaning), and *contabilidade doméstica*—domestic accounting.¹⁹ Finally, students in both male and female schools could sell the wares produced in class to the public. In the men’s case, half the proceeds went into the school endowment and the other half went directly into their pockets. But in the women’s case, the other half went into a *pecúlio*, a nest egg to be made available to them upon graduation, when it could be used to set up a new household with a prospective husband or to finance the opening of a small shop. In short, training young women for domestic life had become as pressing a concern for vocational educators (though not, I suspect, for the students) as training them for a specific form of employment.

Whereas industrial employers openly criticized many reforms during this period as reflecting the unrealistic and uninformed views of government bureaucrats who had never set foot in a factory, they responded to the new educational code with unreserved enthusiasm. This is hardly surprising: among the leading figures in the reform process were men like Roberto Mange, a mechanical engineer and founder of a training center for railroad mechanics, and Horácio da Silveira, an active member of the Institute for Rational Organization of Work (IDORT). Both men had intimate ties to such prominent industrial spokesmen as Roberto Simonsen and Armando de Arruda Pereira, and shared their view of a modernizing Brazil that promised to be more productive, efficient, and rationally organized.²⁰ Such a vision included female factory workers, but only as temporary, semiskilled operatives. Rather than defending women’s employment in industry, these industrial spokesmen treated it as a transitory phenomenon, and professed their belief that women’s main role in a modernizing society was the maintenance of an organized household.

The industrialists’ position on this issue, to the extent that one can be discerned, was a mixture of opportunism and ideological predilections. It hardly behooved industrialists to denounce women’s employment in factories as endangering the family or compromising feminine morality, considering the dependence of the textile sector on female workers. At the same time, the more politically engaged industrialists understood that the high level of female employment in factories made industry vulnerable to attacks by a variety of critics, including agrarian traditionalists, middle-class reformers, and male labor leaders. A more masculine workforce would certainly make industrialization more appealing to those who feared that factory work was eroding traditional family relations and gender roles.

Furthermore, industrialists had their own assumptions about the role of women in industry. When private firms set up apprenticeship or training

programs of their own, they virtually always excluded girls from eligibility.²¹ Girls and women were thought to have natural abilities—manual dexterity, tolerance for monotony—that suited them for routinized industrial labor. Training, therefore, was unnecessary, and could even have the highly undesirable effect of giving women a claim to better wages. Thus, employers derived a certain economic benefit from the exclusion of women workers from the category of *skilled*, and a degree of ideological legitimacy by emphasizing the temporary nature of female industrial employment. ★

This endorsement by industrialist spokesmen of the woman worker as a special (if marginal) category is also reflected in their easy acceptance of proposed legislation to protect women workers from night shifts and hazardous conditions, and to provide them with limited maternity benefits. Whereas other labor laws elicited grumblings from the São Paulo industrial employers’ federation (FIESP), the proposed law on women’s work met with immediate approval. In a 1931 notice to members, FIESP’s directors pronounced the proposal “as nearly perfect as possible,” and felt obliged to insist that most of its provisions were already standard operating procedure in paulista industry.²²

Vocational Education and the Semivisible Woman Worker

Many of the educators and technocrats who were involved in formulating vocational education policy in São Paulo, Brazil’s leading industrial center, also played a prominent role in debates over worker training at the national level during the Vargas dictatorship (1930–1945).²³ In a 1933 speech, Getúlio Vargas declared that “the education we need to develop to the extreme limits of our possibilities is the vocational and technical kind. Without it, organized work is impossible, especially in an age characterized by the predominance of the machine.”²⁴ Indeed, vocational instruction was a perfect issue for a proto-populist regime seeking to curry favor with (re)organized labor, to champion industrial development, and to forge a nationalist political culture. Brazil, rather than relying on immigrant craftsmen or lagging behind more technically sophisticated nations, would now produce its own corps of skilled and disciplined worker-citizens. ★

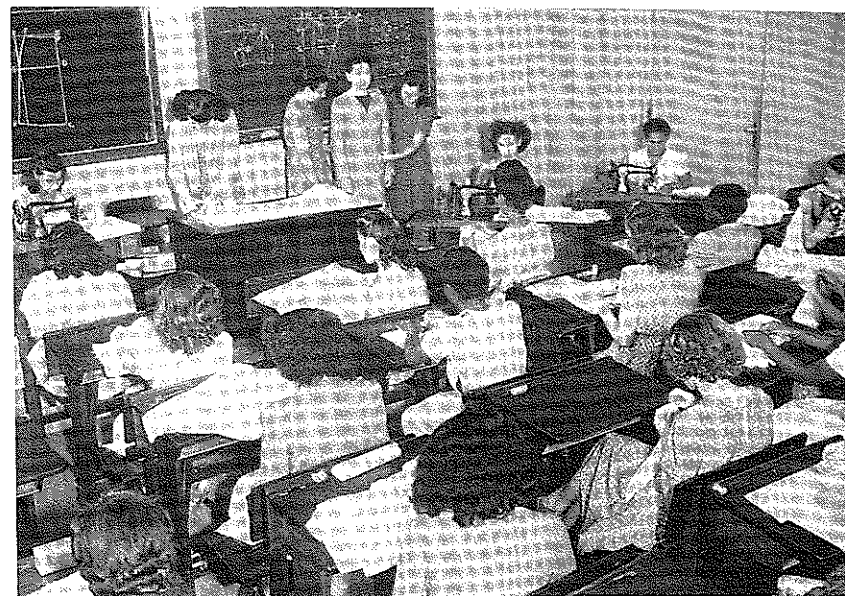
Not surprisingly, the documents produced by the various technical commissions studying the training issue routinely and unfailingly identified the skilled industrial worker as male. Not that women were entirely ignored; as educators and technicians paid more and more attention to vocational training as a means to socialize workers as part of a project for national development, they began to discuss the pressing need for women to become skilled

housewives and childrearers. Typical of this trend was a 1934 report by a leading group of vocational educators that called for obligatory domestic education for women in vocational schools throughout Brazil, "because a woman's professional life should be considered as merely a transitional phase: destiny designates her for . . . the role of wife, mother and housewife."²⁵

This continuing emphasis on domestic education reflected, in part, the enthusiasm for "rational organization" in all spheres of modern life. While scientific management and its correlates are most often associated with the industrial workplace, organizations like IDORT argued that rational principles could increase productivity and social harmony in every arena of human endeavor. Public health officials and hygienists already regarded more rational approaches to infant care and nutrition as a major concern of the state. Accordingly, new vocational schools that admitted women almost always boasted a *posto de puericultura* (child welfare center) where the (supposedly) future mothers could learn the basics of good infant care. And while all Brazilian women could learn to be better wives and mothers, hygienists and educators regarded working-class women as especially in need of guidance given their class's "low moral and cultural level." Thus, not only was the woman worker an increasingly marginal figure for whom extensive training would be a waste, but the role of housewife was seen as one that required tutelage and rational instruction, rather than as a natural outgrowth of women's experience, at least if the women were from the working class.²⁶

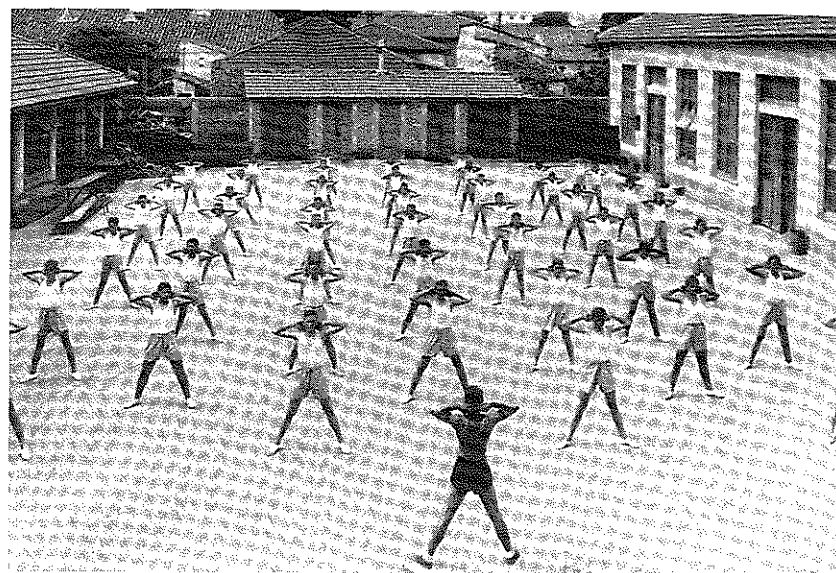
One of the most influential documents produced by the Ministry of Education in the 1930s was a 1938 report on "Professional [Vocational] Education in Germany," by Rodolpho Fuchs, a close ally of Gustavo Capanema, Vargas's powerful minister of education. Fuchs viewed the Nazi system of in-factory vocational training as a perfect model for Brazil. He especially extolled the strict separation of the sexes in German vocational education, both with regard to courses and instructional staff, thus producing "feminine women and real men." He noted that only in São Paulo were courses for men taught only by men, a welcome exception that he explained by referring to that state as the "Prussia of Brazil." He also cited with approval the requirement in Germany that all girls not going on to secondary school attend a domestic arts school and spend six months in service with an experienced housewife, even if they wished to work in industry.²⁷ Fuchs, like many of his contemporaries, sought to modernize Brazil and the Brazilian worker, while reinforcing "traditional" or "natural" gender roles.

By the early 1940s, negotiations among educators, labor ministry representatives, and industrialists had produced an innovative system for voca-



Home economics class (not a vocational course) in sewing for female apprentices at the SENAI school in Campinas, 1946. Courtesy of the Núcleo de Memória, SENAI-São Paulo.

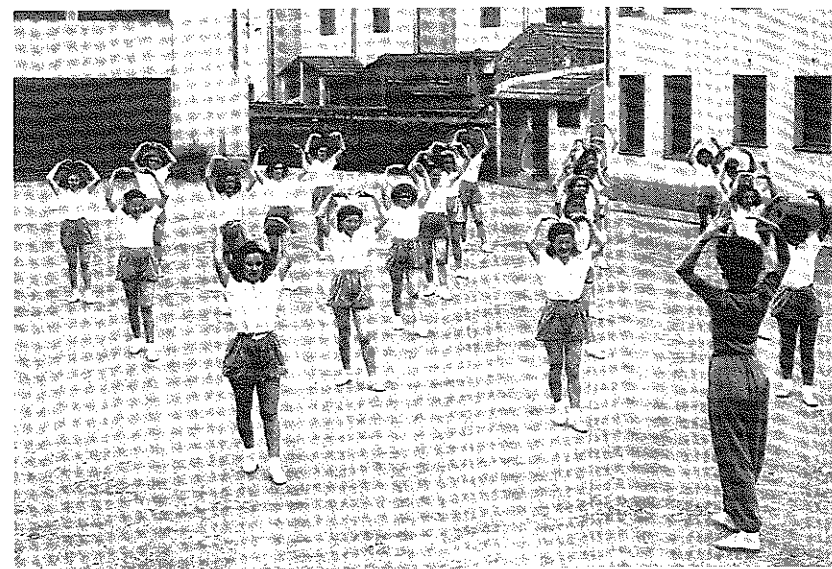
tional training in Brazil known as the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (National Service for Industrial Training), or SENAI.²⁸ Funded and controlled by the industrialist associations, the training service emphasized both proper socialization and the labor requirements of specific industrial sectors. This relatively pragmatic orientation meant that SENAI, in contrast to many state vocational schools, did not completely exclude women from industrial education. Rapid (two-month) courses to produce semiskilled textile workers were almost entirely composed of young women, and such courses as paper making, also regarded as semiskilled, admitted female apprentices. A North American visitor from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mary Cannon, noted that "the program is geared chiefly to boys, though theoretically there are opportunities for girls."²⁹ These opportunities remained largely theoretical, however. Despite the increasing employment of women during the wartime production boom, SENAI early on concentrated its resources in apprenticeship programs for the metallurgical trades—an entirely masculine preserve. And in some cases women's exclusion was formalized: SENAI courses for training textile-factory supervisors (a position held by women in some all-female sections) were officially closed to women.³⁰



Physical education classes for boys and girls at the SENAI school in Brás, 1946. Courtesy of the Núcleo de Memória, SENAI-São Paulo.

The industrialists and technocrats who founded SENAI also demonstrated that proper socialization meant different things for girls than for boys. However small in number, the girls enrolled in SENAI courses routinely received special treatment. The SENAI school in Campinas, São Paulo, proudly announced that it had cut back on math and Portuguese classes for its female students and had substituted domestic education, including sewing classes. Furthermore, the account boasted that the girls regularly prepared meals for the entire student body. SENAI made sure that it could not be accused of ignoring women's "true" domestic vocation.³¹

While SENAI recognized females as an important presence in the industrial milieu (girls consistently accounted for well over half the industrial workers under the age of eighteen), it reinforced women's "natural" role as semiskilled and temporary workers, as well as generally rigidifying the distinction between skilled and semiskilled. Young women were well suited to the role of machine tender; furthermore, their future roles as wives and mother, or mere supplementers of male incomes, made it economically unwise to provide girls with extensive vocational training. Just two years before the founding of SENAI, the FIESP leadership had argued in favor of a lower minimum wage



for women based on their "inferior physiological conditions" due to maternity and menstruation.³² Obviously, the immediate concern was to ensure a continuous supply of cheap industrial labor, but whatever the purpose, such arguments made it highly unlikely that employer associations would then turn around and provide women with elaborate new training opportunities.

In a 1946 article on industrial fatigue, industrialist-intellectual A. C. Pacheco e Silva was unusually blunt about the proper role for women in industry. Arguing that too much training could create discontent among workers performing the monotonous tasks typical of the modern industrial workplace, he suggested that women, since they were less negatively affected by monotony, should be hired as "machine tenders"—after all, "look how they can knit for hours on end without feeling the slightest fatigue."³³ In other words, repetitious domestic tasks prepared women for the role of semiskilled worker, and vice versa.

Aside from its shameless recourse to the most banal sorts of stereotypes, Pacheco e Silva's article is remarkable for its unreserved endorsement of a certain form of female factory employment. This was, I would argue, indicative of a larger trend. As Brazilian manufacturing shifted from its earlier emphasis on textiles to new metallurgical and mechanical products, the rate of male employment in industry rose steadily. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, the proportion of women in paulista industry steadily dropped, easing fears that

inaugurated twenty-five such centers throughout the state (seven in the capital and the rest in the suburbs and the interior). The centers regularly offered three different cooking courses, as well as courses in child care, household management, domestic hygiene, and preparation for marriage. Sewing courses, previously offered only in factories or union headquarters, were now also available at many of the centers. And to complement the activities of these centers, SESI began publishing two monthly magazines—the short-lived *Dona de Casa*, and the more enduring *SESI-Higiene*.⁴⁰

The centers offered instruction for women of all ages, with the courses for *mãezinhas* (little mothers) aimed at nine- to fourteen-year-olds, the preparation-for-marriage courses aimed at young women, and all other courses open to anyone sixteen or older. The centers also reached out to the families of its students; for example, many parents with daughters in the *mãezinha* program attended monthly meetings with the center's staff to be informed of their child's progress and to discuss domestic matters.⁴¹ Students, especially in the cooking courses, frequently organized parties and contests that involved friends and family, and every certification ceremony was an occasion for centerwide celebration. The women associated with the centers also participated prominently in other SESI activities, such as the May Day parade and the Spring Ball. And once having completed the courses, an ex-student could maintain social contacts through the alumnae association formed in each center.

★ Again, all of these courses operated on the assumption that working-class women were, first and foremost, wives and mothers, or future wives and mothers. Women might work before marriage, or work outside the home intermittently after marriage to alleviate financial distress, but their major pecuniary contribution to the household would come in the form of a rationally organized budget, a healthful atmosphere, and well-brought-up children. As the premier issue of *Dona de Casa* (housewife) put it, referring to the magazine's title, "Here you have, in just three words, the golden dream of almost every young woman." And it was not just her dream but her biological destiny. In answer to the question "Is the masculine sex superior to the feminine?" the magazine's editors claimed that it was not a matter of superior and inferior, but of difference, grounded in hormonal activity. "As a result women are capable of noting the small details, while men only see the big picture." Continuing this emphasis on separate spheres, the magazine concluded that, "while the man has his victories at work . . . the woman has the compensation of raising strong children."⁴²

With varying degrees of subtlety, the home economics courses taught their

students that housewives, though not wage earners, were largely responsible for the standard of living and quality of life in their homes. Thus *Dona de Casa* roused its readers with a call to initiate, "by any means possible, a campaign against poor nutrition and the neglect of Brazilian homes." Similarly, an account of a cooking contest among students from the CADs in Santo André and São Caetano assured readers of the *SESI Journal* that "if all future housewives acquired knowledge of the culinary arts, nutrition and diet as administered in the centers for domestic instruction, soon there would no longer be problems resulting from nutritional deficiency."⁴³ Speaking at this same contest, SESI president Antônio Devisate informed his audience that ignorance about domestic tasks on the part of working-class women was a major cause of marital disputes. Indeed, he claimed that some 90 percent of the separation cases brought to the attention of SESI's legal aid service had such domestic incompetence at their roots.⁴⁴ ★ Thus, the competent housewife could not only provide a comfortable home and balanced diet for her family, but could also save her marriage. As if to underline this point, Anita Devisate, SESI's "first lady," regularly handed out prizes such as blenders, dishes, and knife sharpeners at special events.

Much of the cooking and housekeeping advice dispensed by the SESI courses amounted to routine information that could be extracted from the home economics courses offered in São Paulo's vocational schools for women since the early twentieth century. But SESI infused its courses with its own preoccupations, emphasizing the rationalization of housework and adherence to a code of proper moral conduct. An early issue of *Dona de Casa* asked its readers, "Did you know that our organism is similar to a machine?" It also informed current and future housewives that "each twenty-four hours should be divided in three 'eights' so as to be better utilized."⁴⁵ In contrast with home economics literature in wealthier societies, the SESI publications did not emphasize the acquisition of modern, labor-saving household devices; most home appliances were beyond the financial reach of SESI's audience. But precisely because of this, the Brazilian working-class household had to be very carefully organized and managed.⁴⁶

SESI courses and publications also advised young women to be "modest, simple and sweet," claiming that men might go out with boisterous, flirtatious, and heavily made-up women, but chose more demure types to be their wives. Dona Nicota, the fictional advice columnist for *Dona de Casa*, warned young women away from any form of premarital sexual activity, and urged them to think less about love and marriage, and more about domestic tasks.⁴⁷

The issue of proper morality emerged even more conspicuously in the dis-

cussion of health matters, both in *Dona de Casa* and *SESI-Higiene*. The latter publication, issued by Sesi's Industrial Health and Safety Service, clearly targeted women, since the vast majority of its articles dealt with marital, domestic, and childrearing matters. Only on rare occasions did the magazine raise the question of industrial accidents, and it usually did so in relation to some domestic practice that contributed to their incidence. And like much of the organization's literature, *SESI-Higiene* treated good health as a function of knowledge about hygiene and proper morality, regarded as two sides of the same precious coin.

The close association of hygiene and morality is best illustrated by the extensive attention Sesi paid to the problem of syphilis. Since its founding the organization had devoted a sizable portion of its resources to testing hundreds of thousands of factory workers for the disease. This campaign may well have been inspired by Sesi founder Roberto Simonsen's claim, based on a supposedly scientific survey he sponsored in the 1920s, that 45 percent of Brazilian-born workers were infected with syphilis. The actual results of massive testing in the late 1940s and early 1950s revealed a much lower rate of infection—3.5 percent—among industrial workers, a rate that was lower, in fact, than that found in many industrialized nations.⁴⁸ Despite this heartening discovery, Sesi continued to treat syphilis as a major health risk for the Brazilian working class and a major concern for working-class women. Indeed, publications aimed at workers—that is, male workers—rarely made any mention of syphilis or other contagious diseases, whereas the women-oriented magazines obsessively discussed the menace of venereal infection. The debut of *SESI-Higiene*, for example, included two separate articles on the subject, one of which informed its readers that you could contract syphilis from a mere kiss.⁴⁹

Given Sesi's identification of venereal disease as a major social problem for women, it is not surprising that a large portion of the material in the "preparation for marriage" course dealt with syphilis testing and prevention. Instructors advised the prospective bride to choose her husband carefully and to give special attention to her future mate's physical condition. A premarital examination was a must, as was constant vigilance for signs of disease. Much emphasis was also given to the impact on future offspring; Sesi literature told students about the large number of infants who died from the effects of syphilis, claiming that these tiny victims had been "murdered" by their parents. To illustrate this point further, *SESI-Higiene* devoted an entire issue to the hypothetical tale of Lili and Maricota. The former decides to marry the first man she meets, fails to have a prenuptial exam, contracts syphilis, has only

one child who dies in infancy, and ends up ill, abandoned, and childless. The latter, in contrast, patiently seeks the proper mate, has a prenuptial exam, and becomes the perfect wife and mother—as verified by the accompanying illustration, showing Maricota holding an infant in her arms and surrounded by six other children. It seems that nobody at Sesi found any irony in the idyllic portrayal of a working-class housewife with seven young children, a situation that would almost certainly have spelled poverty for her household.⁵⁰

Syphilis was not the only contagious illness that received attention in the domestic arts courses. *Tuberculosis*—a disease spread by poor living conditions, and a real scourge of the paulista working class—was a matter of similar concern. During its first ten years of existence, Sesi tested over a million factory workers and their families for tuberculosis, and also provided treatment centers and a sanatorium. Yet the Sesi literature paid less attention to this disease than it did to syphilis, perhaps because the contraction of tuberculosis could not be so easily attributed to a moral failing. Indeed, Sesi appears to have been most enlightened in its attitude toward those diseases that claimed "innocent" victims. It denounced irrational prejudices about leprosy; *SESI-Higiene* reported the case of a woman who, contracting the disease, postponed marriage, went for treatment, and, on being cured, married happily and had healthy children.⁵¹ The organization's obsessive attitude about syphilis, a relatively minor health concern for paulista workers, had less to do with the incidence or severity of the disease, and more to do with the means of transmission.

Another major preoccupation of the Sesi domestic arts instructors, and the related publications, was to steer women away from midwives and home births, and toward doctors and hospitals. *SESI-Higiene* and *Dona de Casa* portrayed the midwife as "Dona Ignorância's inseparable friend," and regarded the advice of doctors, especially when it conflicted with traditional midwife practices, as unimpeachable. In its discussions of high infant mortality rates, *SESI-Higiene* cited widely recognized factors such as lack of medical attention during pregnancy and infancy, but, in typical fashion, assigned culpability for the problem to the parents: "It is necessary that the parents understand that they themselves are the most responsible for this high mortality."⁵²

While much of the literature produced by Sesi in this vein reflected strong North American influences—bolstered by frequent internships by Sesi technicians in the United States—Sesi displayed more traditional Brazilian attitudes with regard to ideal family size. Unlike North American social workers, who increasingly considered large families to be a major factor in household impoverishment, Sesi's personnel and publications portrayed the ideal family

as consisting of numerous children—seven in the case of the fortunate Mari-cota. This tendency can be attributed, at least in part, to SESI's strong ties to Catholic organizations, which precluded any overt reference to family planning. Indeed, the only published allusion to this subject during the early 1950s can be found in an article titled "Crime and Punishment" that stridently denounced the alleged increase in abortions. Claiming that the high cost of living was driving women to commit "actual murders," *SESI-Higiene* accused lay abortionists, midwives, and "even unscrupulous physicians who dishonor the noble title that they use," of "tremendous barbarities." The article reminded its readers that the "cost" of abortion, aside from the sin of "killing a human being," included considerable physical risk for the woman. Not only did a perforated uterus "invariably lead to death," but also "sterility and uterine cancer have their origins, most of the time, in these hideous acts that are, unfortunately, so common amongst us."⁵³

Another "vice" that SESI's courses and publications routinely condemned was alcohol consumption, treating even recreational drinking as undesirable. According to *SESI-Higiene*, "alcohol destroys the happiness of the home, causes the degeneration of the race, and disturbs social tranquility." And even though the SESI literature regarded excessive drinking as a predominantly male activity, it delegated to the woman the responsibility for discerning signs of such vices in a prospective mate, and for creating a domestic environment that would be conducive to clean living. In its only (oblique) reference to domestic violence, *SESI-Higiene* cited the constant headlines in daily papers about murders and suicides, which it blamed on the victims who "ignore the grave responsibility that is marriage."⁵⁴ In short, it was the woman's role to stretch the family budget, give birth to healthy children, create a wholesome home environment, defeat the spread of syphilis, and avoid circumstances conducive to vice and violence. No wonder SESI scolded women who sought to marry as a way to stop working, reminding them that after marriage "their labors will be greater and their responsibilities greatly enlarged."⁵⁵ Ironically, the young woman's interlude in the factory was now being portrayed as relatively carefree, whereas the real work and responsibilities would begin once she became a *dona de casa*.

One might expect such daunting prescriptions for competence as a wife and mother to discourage working-class women from enrolling in the SESI courses, but the centers proved to be among the most popular of SESI's programs. From 1948, when the domestic arts courses first started functioning, to 1959, the centers granted nearly 200,000 certificates of completion to paulista women, and another 14,000 certificates to women who completed courses

by correspondence.⁵⁶ To be sure, some women took multiple courses, reducing the total number of individuals represented in these figures. However, the statistics probably underestimate the centers' impact, since they exclude women who attended classes but failed to complete a course, relatives who participated in the centers' activities, and the 51,000 graduates of the sewing courses.

We can only speculate about the appeal of these courses, since the occasional remark or letter cited by SESI hardly amounts to a random sample of student opinion. In the case of the sewing courses, which SESI portrayed as vehicles for social education and for reducing household expenses, it is evident that many women enrolled for other reasons. Virtually every comment about these courses by former students mentions the value of learning a skill that allowed them to earn extra income and supplement their husbands' salaries. SESI may have denied that these were professionalizing courses, but the women who enrolled in them insistently disagreed. The same explanation could not apply to most of the other courses, however. Except for the most advanced phase, the cooking classes were too rudimentary to provide a means to earn additional income, and the other courses were only relevant for unpaid work in the domestic sphere.⁵⁷

Why, then, did thousands of women flock to these courses on cooking, child care, and other domestic arts? Perhaps the center attracted them as a place for women only, where they could congregate with other working-class women and discuss problems that were genuinely relevant to their everyday lives. After all, what institution offered urban, working-class women a similar meeting place or forum? Certainly not the male-oriented union headquarters, the priest-centered church, or the typically masculine neighborhood bar. And while SESI's approach to the problems of working-class women may appear to us overly moralistic and often unrealistic, it did treat matters central to most women's lives—cleaning, shopping, cooking, childrearing—as serious responsibilities that deserved thoughtful consideration. In a society that barely took notice of women's unpaid labor, SESI's careful attention to these activities, whatever the ideological underpinnings, probably provided a refreshing contrast.

It is also likely that SESI accurately assumed that most working-class women aspired to the role of housewife and mother. Of course, this was not simply a "natural" inclination. In a society that had long conceptualized the female industrial worker as an unskilled operative with little opportunity for vocational education, professional advancement, or active participation in her union, few women could regard lifetime factory employment as a desir-

able alternative.⁵⁸ And the burdens of the notorious double shift, going from paid work in the plant to unpaid work in the home, widely discouraged women from combining a factory job with homemaking except in cases of dire necessity. A SENAI study of students' families, while not necessarily based on typical working-class households, revealed that the students' mothers, on average, contributed less than 4 percent of the total household income.⁵⁹

Again, SESI made every effort to give its women students a sense of accomplishment and importance (as well as a sense of gratitude to the organization's sponsors) when granting the certificates of completion. The prominent role of SESI "first lady" Anita Devisate at such ceremonies, and the presence of political and religious officials, may smack of noblesse oblige, but their participation undoubtedly heightened the solemnity of the occasion. This was surely an unusual experience for working-class girls and women accustomed to having their considerable domestic labors go unacknowledged.⁶⁰ Similarly, the various festive events promoted by SESI offered rare opportunities for these women to wear formal dresses—often sewn in SESI courses—and emulate a lifestyle normally inaccessible to them. Whereas working-class men had access to an industrial work culture that created attainable images of masculinity—emphasizing strength, skill, and wage earning—working-class women were constantly bombarded with images of femininity and sexuality that normally were beyond the reach of the financially constrained and overworked housewife.⁶¹ SESI took every opportunity to reinforce those aspects of its programs that addressed working-class women's needs in this vein. Its gala New Year's Eve celebration included the crowning of a Queen of the Workers, and its spring ball also climaxed with the crowning of a Queen of Spring and the presentation of working-class *bratinhos* (teenage girls). Apparently, such activities had considerable appeal among working-class women.⁶²

SESI, in its particular fashion, celebrated women's future or current roles as wives and mothers, while downplaying their status as members of the working class and virtually ignoring the idea that they might be workers as well. The goal of the working-class housewife was to cultivate an elegant appearance, stretch the budget, decorate the home, and organize the domestic sphere so that it approximated, as much as possible, the ideal middle-class household—goals that surely led to frustration for many graduates. An article instructing housewives to wax their floors on a weekly basis must have seemed, at best, ironic to the many working-class women who lived in makeshift housing with earthen floors. But the SESI staff took considerable pleasure in the perceived transformation wrought by the CADs. As one female social educator, surveying a graduation ceremony, remarked: "Look at how these young ladies, with

very rare exceptions, are now free of embarrassment and proudly hold their heads up high. *They don't even seem like women workers.*"⁶³

The Woman Worker as Oxymoron

To the extent that it is possible to discern a coherent pattern in these different arenas of education, training, and services for women, we can observe a persistent emphasis on marginalizing the woman factory worker and on transforming working-class women into models of bourgeois respectability (as defined by the relevant employers, educators, and professionals). It is as if the goal was to make *woman worker* and even *working-class woman* oxymorons. A woman might formally belong to the working class by virtue of her husband's place of employment and her limited financial resources, but her outlook, values, and aspirations, oriented toward her roles as housewife and consumer, would not reflect those SESI traditionally associated with that class.

The widespread acceptance of this identification of working-class women with the domestic sphere is exemplified by the labor press during this period. Union newspapers that subjected male-oriented SESI programs to vigorous criticism, even withering sarcasm, would blithely devote their women's pages to long, SESI-authored tracts on how to manage a household, or how to produce more economical, nutritious meals.⁶⁴ These union newspapers not only echoed the notion that women's concerns were domestic in nature, but also treated the domestic or private sphere as beyond political or ideological considerations. Thus, SESI's courses in labor legislation or human relations in the workplace might be incompatible with the development of a militant, class-conscious labor movement, but what harm could classes in household management do?

This consistent identification of working-class women with domestic concerns was made possible, in large part, by emptying the category *woman worker* of all positive connotations. The woman worker became an unfortunate creature who worked only out of necessity. Laboring at lower wages, she undermined men's earning power while exposing herself to sexual abuse.⁶⁵ On entering the factory, she faced a monotonous work routine in a dead-end job. A teenage girl might accept such a situation as a brief hiatus on the way to a marriage and family, but what adult woman would eagerly embrace such a fate? For most, the promise of success as a skilled, efficient household manager must have been much more appealing.

Once out of the factory and into the home, how did society measure success for a housewife? Models for domestic achievement and proper personal

appearance typically reflected a middle-class ideal of a clean, comfortable, orderly home presided over by a competent, fashionably dressed wife and mother. While working-class men could draw on traditions of craft, organization, masculine strength, and earning power to constitute a viable working-class identity (that is, viable both among themselves and in the larger social context), women's association with the domestic sphere provided them with few resources with which to shape an alternative to the SESI ideal. This is not to imply that working-class women uncritically accepted every aspect of the SESI prescription for femininity, respectability, and efficiency. But the evidence of women's enthusiastic participation in SESI courses and festivities, on an entirely voluntary basis, indicates that there was no strong counterweight to SESI's appeal, or a serious aversion to SESI's claims that skilled housewives could resolve such social problems as low wages, infant mortality, and malnutrition.

Throughout the industrializing world, social workers, educators, physicians, and hygienists have intruded themselves into the daily routines of working-class families; São Paulo is by no means unique in this regard. What is especially interesting, however, is the active and salient role played by leading paulista industrialists in conceptualizing and funding the agencies that energetically sought to redefine the working-class woman as, first and foremost, a wife and mother, even as many of these same industrial employers continued to hire women workers in substantial numbers. Several factors help explain this apparent contradiction. First, the circle of industrialists and engineers who dominated São Paulo's employer associations in the 1940s, and who invented SENAI and SESI, had a project for industrial development that went beyond purely economic concerns. SESI took as its motto "For Social Peace in Brazil," and its founders construed social peace as requiring both harmonious relations with (predominantly male) labor unions, and the cultivation of robust, responsible worker-citizens. The masculinization of the workforce on the one hand, and the training of better housewives and mothers on the other, suited both objectives.

At the same time, the marginalization of the woman worker meant little economic sacrifice for industrial employers, since they could still count on a steady supply of girls and young women who quickly acquired the abilities necessary to perform low-wage, semiskilled jobs. The brief training required for these jobs meant that few resources would be wasted when a young woman decided to retire from factory life, and her temporary status made it unlikely that she would make a fuss about low wages or poor working conditions.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the fact that these women tended to exit the factory (by

force or by choice) once they began their own families meant that employers did not have to face the added expense of providing maternity leave or child-care facilities.

Again, the industrialists and educators involved in the programs and institutions described above could hardly take credit for inventing the category *woman worker*. Well before the founding of the Escola Feminina, SENAI, or SESI, the woman worker had already been constructed as a subset of the working class, and was regarded as such by both workers and employers. My argument is not that these organizations *imposed* an image of the woman worker on a working-class population that had no prior gender constructions. But I argue that they served to elaborate, formalize, and institutionalize difference—first between female workers and male workers, and then between working-class men/workers and working-class women/housewives—so that social norms became more rigid. It is one thing for a working-class husband to discourage his wife from keeping her job in the factory, or to expect her to do the domestic tasks. It is quite another for an employer-run organization, whose backers routinely hired thousands of women to do factory work, to deny her access to skilled industrial occupations while offering her courses in cooking, sewing, and child care, and delegating to her the responsibility for resolving a host of serious social problems.

Notes

All translations by author.

- 1 Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), esp. pp. 167–77. Elsewhere Scott has urged historians to examine the way state policies have actively shaped gender relations. See Joan W. Scott, "Rewriting History," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret Higonnet et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 21–30.
- 2 On the role of women in early Brazilian industry see Esmeralda Blanco Bolsonaro de Moura, *Mulheres e menores no trabalho industrial: Os fatores sexo e idade no dinamismo do capital* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1982); Maria Valéria Junho Pena, *Mulheres e trabalhadoras: Presença feminina na constituição do sistema fabril* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1981); and Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900–1955* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).
- 3 Cited in Wolfe, *Working Women*, pp. 7–8.
- 4 Theresa R. Veccia, "My Duty as a Woman": Gender Ideology, Work, and Working-Class Women's Lives in São Paulo, Brazil, 1900–1950," in this volume.
- 5 Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), chap. 6.

- 6 See, for example, the remarks by Aprício de Almeida Gonzaga in *Escola Profissional Masculina, Relatório* (São Paulo, 1920), p. 6.
- 7 On the woman worker as a "social problem" in this era see Margareth Rago, *Do cabaré ao lar: A utopia da cidade disciplinar, Brasil, 1890-1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1985). For a discussion of similar themes in the Argentine context see Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).
- 8 On Street's textile mill and *vila operária*, see Palmira Petratti Teixeira, *A Fábrica do sonho: Trajetória do industrial Jorge Street* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1990).
- 9 Wolfe, *Working Women*, chap. 1.
- 10 On the exceptional women who attained skilled positions within industry see Veccia, "My Duty as a Woman."
- 11 For a more extensive discussion of this trend see Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 28-37.
- 12 *Escola Profissional Masculina, Relatório dos trabalhos* (São Paulo, 1914), p. 12; Carmen S. Vidigal Moraes, "A socialização da força de trabalho: Instrução popular e qualificação profissional no estado de São Paulo, 1873-1934" (Ph.D. diss., University of São Paulo, 1990).
- 13 *Escola Profissional Feminina, Relatório dos trabalhos* (São Paulo, 1922), p. 11.
- 14 For a contemporary account see "A Escola Profissional Feminina de São Paulo," *Revista Feminina* 6, no. 66 (November 1919), cited in Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, p. 121.
- 15 *Ibid.*; Carlos de Campos (governor of São Paulo), *Mensagem à Assembléa Legislativa*, July 14, 1925, pp. 18-23. Susan Besse (*Restructuring Patriarchy*) came across some letters written to advice columns in women's magazines by students from the Escola Feminina. Since *Revista Feminina* was decidedly *not* proletarian in orientation, this seems to support my supposition.
- 16 EPM, *Relatório* (1920), p. 6.
- 17 EPF, *Relatório* (1922), p. 11.
- 18 Cited in Moraes, "A socialização," p. 221. See also Afrânio Peixoto, "A educação nacional: Aspectos femininos," *Revista Feminina* 7, no. 79 (December 1920), cited in Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, p. 122.
- 19 Horácio da Silveira, *O ensino técnico-profissional e doméstico em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Imprensa do Estado de São Paulo, 1935), p. 21. On the relationship between the enthusiasm for rational organization and educational reform see Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil*, pp. 74-75.
- 20 On the Simonsen circle, IDORT, and the shift in industrialist discourse see Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil*, chaps. 1-2.
- 21 While it is hardly surprising that the apprenticeship courses set up by São Paulo Light and Power in the years 1910-1919 recruited only boys, given the extreme

- rarity of women mechanics and electricians, it is more telling that a privately run course for textile workers also confined itself to a male clientele (Arquivo do Centros dos Industriaes de Fiação e Tecelagem de São Paulo, circular no. 779, May 10, 1928).
- 22 FIESP, circular no. 212, November 5, 1931, Biblioteca Roberto Simonsen.
- 23 On the efforts to create a national vocational training system during the regime of Getúlio Vargas see Barbara Weinstein, "The Industrialists, the State, and the Issues of Worker Training and Social Services in Brazil, 1930-1950," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 70, no. 3 (August 1990): pp. 379-404.
- 24 Getúlio Vargas, *A nova política do Brasil*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1938), pp. 121-22.
- 25 "Organização geral do ensino profissional," CPDOC, GC/g 34.11.28, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), Rio de Janeiro.
- 26 For a discussion of women's role in the rational organization of all spheres of Brazilian life see Noêmia Nascimento Gama, "Desperdício do elemento humano," *Revista IDORT* 85 (January 1939): p. 18.
- 27 Rodolpho Fuchs, "O ensino profissional na Alemanha (Berlin, 1938)," CPDOC, GC/g 35.12.00, doc. I-10, FGV. On the training system in Nazi Germany see John Gillingham, "The 'Deproletarianization' of German Society: Vocational Training in the Third Reich," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 3 (spring 1986): pp. 423-32.
- 28 On the founding of SENAI see Weinstein, "Industrialists," pp. 393-94.
- 29 Cited in Wolfe, *Working Women*, p. 103.
- 30 *Informativo SENAI* (São Paulo) 6, no. 60 (January 1951): p. 2.
- 31 SENAI-São Paulo, *Relatório pelo ano 1945* (São Paulo: TK, 1946), p. 29.
- 32 Edgard Carone, *O Pensamento Industrial no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1977), pp. 497-98.
- 33 A. C. Pacheco e Silva, "A fadiga industrial," *Boletim SENAI* (Rio) 2, no. 16 (November 1946): pp. 11-13.
- 34 On the changing composition of the paulista workforce see Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil*, pp. 193-94.
- 35 On the founding of Sesi see Weinstein, "The Industrialists," pp. 397-98.
- 36 Sesi sponsored scholarships for prospective employees to attend a school of social work, but candidates for funding had to be men. Exceptions were made only if no male candidates were available. Sesi-São Paulo, Atas do Conselho Regional, Oct. 18, 1949.
- 37 For an extended discussion of Sesi's mission see Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil*, chap. 4.
- 38 Transcripts of interviews with Antônio Devisate, president of FIESP, São Paulo, April 12, 1956, and Maria José Serra, Sesi Social Worker, São Paulo, April 16, 1956, Robert Alexander Archive, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

- 39 *Educador Social* (São Paulo) 2, no. 3 (March 1953): p. 4; transcript of interview with Hugo Guimarães Malheiros, chief of SESI Social Service Subdivision, April 13, 1956, Robert Alexander Archive.
- 40 Because of the broad overlap in the material they covered, SESI decided in 1955 to merge the two magazines under the name *SESI-Higiene*.
- 41 The mãezinha courses did acknowledge, if only indirectly, that some adult women worked outside the home, since these girls were being trained to take the place of the working mother in the household.
- 42 *Dona de Casa*, August 1951, p. 4.
- 43 *SESI Jornal* (São Paulo) 8, no. 93 (December 31, 1955).
- 44 Ibid. The president of FIESP automatically became president of SESI.
- 45 *Dona de Casa*, March 1950, p. 4, and April 1950, p. 4; *SESI-Higiene*, January 1956, p. 16.
- 46 For a discussion of a similar approach to home economics for working-class women in Weimar Germany see Mary Nolan, "'Housework Made Easy': The Taylorized Housewife in Weimar Germany's Rationalized Economy," *Feminist Studies* 16, no. 3 (fall 1990): pp. 549-77.
- 47 *Dona de Casa*, May 1950, p. 4, and July 1950, p. 4.
- 48 Roberto Simonsen, *Ordem econômica, padrão de vida* (São Paulo: São Paulo Editorial Limitada, 1934), p. 28; SESI-São Paulo, *Relatório* (São Paulo: SESI-SP, 1953). This preoccupation with syphilis also reflects the influence of the eugenics movement in Brazil during the 1920s and 1930s. See Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- 49 *SESI-Higiene*, May 1950, pp. 2-3.
- 50 *SESI-Higiene*, May 1954.
- 51 *SESI-Higiene*, January 1955, pp. 3-4.
- 52 *SESI-Higiene*, January 1951, p. 4, and November 1953, p. 1.
- 53 *SESI-Higiene*, July 1953, p. 3.
- 54 *SESI-Higiene*, May 1953, p. 1.
- 55 *SESI-Higiene*, October 1951, p. 1.
- 56 SESI-São Paulo, *Relatório* (São Paulo, 1959).
- 57 The cooking courses might have been professionally useful for women employed as domestic servants, but they certainly were not geared toward that end, or toward that clientele. On the relative exclusion of Afro-Brazilians from industrial occupations and their concentration in domestic service see George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 79-80, 101.
- 58 Of course, those women who had no choice but to work often preferred factory work to domestic service (that is, working as someone else's maid). Elza Teixeira Nunes da Silva, interview with author, Nadir Figueiredo glass factory, São Paulo, June 2, 1986.

- 59 SENAI-Departamento Nacional, "Ev-
60 For example, the mayor of Santo Ar-
suburbs, served as patron (*paraninfo*).
São Carlos, the inauguration of a CA
municipal council and a bishop (SESI
61 For a similar discussion of masculini-
to femininity) see Deborah Levens
Class Feminism: Women in the 'Mal
1970s," in this volume.
- 62 *SESI Jornal* 1, no. 10 (January 31, 1949)
63 *SESI Jornal* 4, no. 38 (May 31, 1951), e
64 See, for example, the paper of the S
fico, March 1960, p. 6. This case is
matter, the printers' union was very
65 There is a growing literature, in Bra-
tory as a sexually threatening space
to protect women from sexual dai
industrial employment. See Rago,
"Redefining Women's Roles in Two
São Paulo Anarchist Press, 1900-1
Danger.
- 66 Joel Wolfe (*Working Women*) argues
labor movement despite their mar-
played prominent roles in labor pr-
ism formed a significant counter-
women.

- examines the construction of images of ^{working} ♀ in São Paulo that determined policies + programs directed @ women - education - ^{sew} - ^{training}
- negative image of factory work for ♀ did not lead to prohibition, but marginalization of ♀ workers
- state run vocational schools segregated by sex, helped reinforce idea of ♀s work by training them only in non-industrial trades + home econ.
- lack of training programs + idea that ♀ were naturally suited for tedious, repetitive work
- allowed industrialists to classify them as "unskilled" and pay wages
- idea of ♀s work as temporary lapse from motherhood
- "Rational organization" ideas to teach ♀ to be mothers
- collaboration between industry + state agencies
- women as guarantor of household morality
- lack of domestic skills among WC responsible for separation, malnutrition
- association of hygiene + morality

Industrialists redefine role of ♀ as wife/mother even as they depend on them for labor

- + cost of marginalized ♀
- served to "formalize + institutionalize" difference ... so that social norms became more rigid" 95