CITY & SOCIETY

"The Dirt Came Up": Domestic Service and Women's Agency in Oaxaca City, Mexico

JAYNE HOWELL
California State University Long Beach

Abstract

More than two million Mexican women, including over 60,000 in the southeastern state of Oaxaca (population 3.8 million), generate income through paid domestic labour. Within the local political economy, this low-paid, low-status job commodifies the unpaid household chores that local gender role norms ascribe to women. Although the potential economic, social, and physical exploitation of uneducated, poor women domestic workers in a "dead end job" is well documented across the globe (see Hoerder, 2015), less is known about the goals and experiences of women who work in service as a way to "get ahead" through and after schooling. Through ethnographic analysis of the lives of Oaxacan domestics who possess high education levels, this paper explores ways that local socioeconomic and geographic conditions and patterns coincide and contrast with broader debates regarding the gendering of urbanization and employment in underdeveloped regions. This issue is especially compelling in an impoverished state that is notorious for low schooling levels, high rates of international migration, and the nation's highest percentage (80 percent) of workers in the informal sector (CONEVAL 2013). This study contributes to our understanding of the importance of informal sector employment for urban women—both with and without advanced schooling—whose agency has led them to work in domestic service while negotiating precarious economic circumstances. [Mexico, gender, employment, informal sector]

Introduction: Visions of mobility in poor urban households

When we met in 1991, Oaxaca City resident Irma Hernandez (born 1957) was a single mother who worked as a paid household worker to finance her eldest daughter's middle school studies. She told me that her marriage had ended after she had taken the bold step to defy her husband on two accounts. He had forbidden her to work outside the home and also refused to let their daughters study beyond the mandatory schooling level, which, at that time, was Grade 6.[1] In her words,

> I looked at my situation—no skills, no prospects for a good job, and trapped with an abusive bastard for a husband. I was determined that my daughters would have more opportunities than I'd had.

Once Irma divorced, she became the sole economic support for her three children. Elsewhere, I have discussed the sacrifices she made, and

City & Society, Vol. 29, Issue 3, pp. 393–412, ISSN 0893-0465, eISSN 1548-744X. © 2017 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI:10.1111/ciso.12132.

why I initially read them as embodying the stereotype of a *mujer abnegada* who practices self-abnegation on behalf of her family (Howell 2002). However, as Irma spoke of being "finally free" to make a "better life" for herself and her daughters after her divorce, I came to understand her commitment to helping her daughters study as reflecting the resilience and agency I saw in many other women who work as domestics. Quoting her,

> My ex-husband earned well [as a private driver who got tips], and on my own I had less money. But my life became easier. I could budget my earnings, plan to spend how I chose, on what I wanted to . . . I prioritized my daughters' education. They helped me when they could by cleaning [the homes where she worked], and although money was tight, every cent we had went to good things—for the house, and food and school.[2]

Irma's two eldest daughters completed upper secondary studies (12 years of schooling), married, and continue to work as secretaries even though they've both become mothers. Irma paid for her youngest daughter Tamara's (born 1988) schooling through this level, and took on additional work to subsidize the partial scholarship Tamara received from a local private university.

After finishing a baccalaureate degree in the early 2010s, Tamara was unable to find full-time employment with the business major she had pursued. She worked temporarily as a nanny in Canada, and upon returning to Oaxaca, found a part-time office job through a family friend and also began cleaning homes with her mother. As of this writing, Tamara continues her search for full-time employment. She and Irma each told me that they "have faith" that she will be offered permanent professional employment that will enable her to stop working in domestic service.

The emphasis placed on formal education emerging in this snapshot of an economically constrained household exemplifies the well documented goals of poorer urban Mexican parents—including mothers working as domestics—who aspire that their children will "get ahead" (*sobresalir* or *salir adelante*) and have a "better life" (*a vivir mejor*) through schooling (Blum 2004; Díaz Barriga 1999; Goldsmith 1989; González de la Rocha 1994; Lewis 1959; Saldaña-Tejeda 2015). This conviction emerges clearly in historian Mary Goldsmith's (1989, 22) observation that a typical domestic worker in Mexico City "dreams of her children's future rather than her own. Not surprisingly, she does not want her daughter to repeat her life history and instead envisions for her a job in accounting or typing." More recently, anthropologist Miguel Díaz Barriga quoted a Mexico City domestic worker's assertion that her own daughter would only work in service "over my dead body" (1999, 118, my translation).

I have recorded comparable sentiments expressed by dozens of current and former domestic servants—including Irma—collected as part of a decades-long broader project focused on women cityward migrants' education and employment.[3] A number of women who have worked as

household employees to finance their own studies did find permanent, full-time employment in the fields they pursued (Howell 1999). This discussion focuses on a population that is even less visible in the ethnographic record, namely domestic workers with advanced schooling who continue to rely on informal sector employment. I contend that although service work is widely viewed as the job of lowly educated poor women like Irma, limited opportunities for gainful employment in the local economy mean that informal sector earnings are critical for the household survival strategies of women who identify as coming from poorer (*humilde*) households and who possess higher than average education levels (six years among Oaxacan adults). Before turning to the experiences of women in three other households, I provide an overview of service work and the conditions in Oaxaca that make service an important job for both uneducated and educated poorer women in the capital of one of Mexico's poorest states.

Women's work: Gendering domestic service

Over 30 million Mexicans—representing sixty percent of the Economically Active Population (of individuals 15 years and over)—work in the informal sector. In parallel to the overall gender distribution in the work force, 40 percent of the nation's informal sectors are women; the majority of these twelve million Mexicanas work in vending or domestic service (INEGI 2015). Whereas women's vending activities span rural and urban areas (Chiñas 1973; INEGI 2015), service work is a quintessential job of poorer women in cities. Indeed, Mexico's Institute of Statistics and Geography recently reported that 95 percent of the nation's 2.2 million household workers are women, and over 80 percent of domestics work in urban areas, where women are five times more likely than rural women to work outside the home (INEGI 2015). Due to underreporting and misreporting in the census, there is every reason to believe that as is seen globally, untold numbers of women who are included in diverse categories such as housewives, students or other occupations (e.g., Tamara the office worker) also generate income through paid household labour (ILO 2014). Whereas women with their own families often work on a per-task or hourly basis as Irma does, full-time live-in domestic workers are most likely to be single and childless. In keeping with pan-Latin American patterns, these workers are subject to multiple forms of exploitation including low salaries—with over one-third earning below the minimum daily wage of 73 pesos, which is just over four US dollars—excessive working hours, verbal abuse, and in the worst-case scenarios, physical assault including rape. Lack of time, knowledge of their rights, and the isolated nature of their worksites (e.g., private homes) are among factors that preclude these vulnerable workers organizing to demand improved conditions (Blofield 2012, 57–58; Goldsmith 1989; ILO 2014).

full-time live-in domestic workers are most likely to be single and childless

How is it that despite consistent evidence of the drawback of this labour intensive and often exploitive job that service work is one of the fastest growing occupations worldwide (ILO 2014)? This reality is certainly at odds with the predictions of scholars, including Lewis Coser (1973), that service work would decline if not disappear altogether as modernization and economic development progressed. Perhaps one reason the number of servants has increased 50 percent in Oaxaca—from 40,000 in 1990 to over 60,000 in 2010 (INEGI 2010)—lies in historian Elizabeth Kuznesof 's identification of three conditions that make domestic service both "especially suited to" Latin America and the "most important" form of labor for urban women in the region (2013, 31). Specifically, these are extreme wealth differentials, underdevelopment of the countryside that spurs cityward migration, and a steady supply of unmarried rural women who migrate to urban areas seeking employment.

Oaxaca's socioeconomic milieu

The conditions Kuznesof identified regarding underdevelopment, unemployment and economic inequality resonate in Oaxaca City (population 300,000) and more generally, in this mountainous, largely rural (53 percent) and underindustrialized state of 3.8 million residents.[4] Although agriculture remains the largest sector of Oaxaca's economy—and employs the highest percentage (40 percent) of the workforce—the state's diversified economy includes tourism, petroleum production, remittances from tens of thousands of international migrants, and a large service sector (INEGI 2010). Researchers and the census office recognize that, in broad brushstrokes, Oaxaca City retains an historical air of "sophistication" (Overmyer-Velásquez 2007) within an informal yet complex hierarchy founded on employment, income level, economic resources, perceived ethnic identity, place of residence and gender (Higgins 1973; Murphy and Stepick 1991; Montes García 2006). Although locals cite the absence of large scale manufacturing in the capital as contributing to the lack of gainful employment, it has been a boon to the tourism industry. Local, state and federal governments market Oaxaca City's continuing sense of "old Mexico" (Hayner 1948) to promote proximity to pre-Columbian archaeological sites including Monte Albán, which overlooks the capital craft producing villages, and the rich culturally diverse tapestry celebrated in the July Guelaguetza folklore festival. Informal and formal sector tourism jobs are available in the capital. The latter includes positions in hotels, restaurants and stores while those in the former work as vendors, tour guides, and taxi drivers among other casual jobs. Oaxaca City has experienced a proliferation of opulent hotels, five-star restaurants and boutiques that are well beyond the means of the majority of city residents in a state with the nation's third highest degree of economic inequality (GINI coefficient .529) (CONEVAL 2015).[5]

More than 2.6 million Oaxaqueños (62 percent) live below a federally defined floating poverty threshold of 2700 pesos. Equivalent to approximately twice the minimum daily wage, this level is calculated based on the costs of food staples (e.g., corn, beans, eggs, milk and fresh fruit and vegetables, and cooking oil) in the "basic shopping cart" and other basic living expenses (including transportation, medical care, communication, housing, clothing) (CONEVAL 2015). The highest poverty rates are reported across thousands of the state's more than 10,000 communities of varying sizes, the majority of which are designated as "rural" (e.g., fewer than 2500 residents). Although half (n = 47) of the nation's most economically marginal communities are located in Oaxaca including three of the ten poorest (CONEVAL 2012), poverty is not limited to rural areas.

Nearly 100, 000 (approximately one in three) Oaxaca City residents live below the poverty line, with five percent living in extreme poverty (CONEVAL 2010).[6] Using measures such as education levels, access to basic services such as health care, household resources, and conditions of the home, the census bureau classifies three-quarters of Oaxaca City residents in a vulnerable category (CONEVAL 2012). Tellingly, one-third of dwellings in the capital—often in the *colonias populares* (ad hoc communities) that surround the historic central area—have dirt floors or lack indoor plumbing (INEGI 2010b). Cityward migrants are overrepresented among the lower strata, which the government broadly defines as including workers earning less than twice the official minimum wage of 76 pesos per day.[7]

the census bureau classifies three-quarters of Oaxaca City residents in a vulnerable category

Whether viewed as a "semi-proletariat", or Portes and Hoffman's (2003) "manual proletariat," the struggles of women in economically marginal Oaxacan City households parallel ethnographic accounts of the realities of poor urban Mexican households such as Oscar Lewis' (1959) *Five Families: Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. Salient points consistent in these studies include the importance of income pooling as a household budgetary strategy (Chant and Craske 2003; González de la Rocha 1994; Selby, Murphy and Lorenzon 1990; Kearney 1986) and maintaining ties of reciprocity and cooperation across a social network of biological and fictive kin members (Lomnitz 1977; Smith-Oka 2013). That Oaxaqueñas are often the social glue in the latter complements expectations that wives and mothers will oversee the functioning of their households, but also generate income as necessary in a labor force with clear gendered dimensions. Whereas men in Oaxaca's informal sector—which at 80.5 percent is the highest in the nation (INEGI 2015)—tend to work as manual laborers (*obreros*), mechanics and bus drivers, women in precarious circumstances generate income through prostitution (Higgins and Coen 2000), making and selling tortillas or other foods, and more commonly, by vending, and cleaning (Higgins 1973; Mahar 2010; Norget 2006; Whiteford and Alden 1998; Willis 2002). Indeed, nearly two-thirds of Oaxaqueñas in the informal sector work in vending or domestic service (INEGI 2010). This suggests that David Selby, Arthur Murphy and Steven Lorenzon's observation that economic need resulted

in "ordinary people surviv[ing] by taking in each other's laundry" (1990, 48) continues to ring true in Oaxaca City a quarter century later.

At the other extreme are members of a small (13 percent) upper echelon, or "*los ricos*" as poorer Oaxaqueños have called them. This stratum includes business owners and executives, politicians, property magnates and highly paid specialists in law or medicine. The lifestyle includes owning one or more late model cars, living in gated communities or behind gates, sending children to private schools in Mexico or abroad, membership in local country clubs, vacationing at Mexican resorts or abroad, purchasing designer clothing and expensive electronics in exclusive stores, and frequenting expensive coffee shops and restaurants. Many are prominent in local politics, either as elected officials or in behind-the-scene roles (Montes García 1998). As a general rule, elite households employ multiple domestic workers; among them male drivers and gardeners, and women who perform general cleaning or childcare, and specific tasks such as cooking or laundry services.

An "aspiring" middle stratum currently includes households headed by skilled technicians, civil servants (including teachers), and professionals working in the private sector (e.g., physicians, architects, and lawyers) of urban and rural origins. Sociologist Norman Hayner (1948, 386) described in an early study that "the dirt came up" as a "new segment of the middle class" emerged when an expanding post-Revolutionary (1910–1917) schooling system allowed poorer Oaxaqueños to "rise through the ranks" and obtain the skills requisite for civil service. Even so, scholars debate the exact nature of the Mexican middle class and opportunities for mobility (see Walker 2013), and in discussions Oaxacans speak of the local "middle class" as urban-based, well-educated, and with stable enough incomes that their children are able to attend private schools. High monthly income levels—of 10 or more times the minimum wage—allow the purchase of large quantities of consumer goods (including products imported from Europe or the United States), and ownership of private homes and at least one vehicle. It is common for these households to hire full-or part-time domestic workers (Willis 2002; Howell 2002).

Oaxaca domestic servants: Sacrifices for and after schooling

Although no statistical breakdown is available for Oaxaca, my interviews with two dozen current and former domestic servants, aged from 16 to late 70s, indicate patterns comparable to those reported for Mexico more generally. The former domestics I have interviewed over nearly three decades described their roots in poorer (*humilde*) households. In parallel to the average low (n = 4.7 years) schooling level of Mexican women domestics in general (INEGI 2015), with the exception of those women for whom working in domestic service was a way to

eventually pursue higher studies, the Oaxacan domestics I interviewed entered the workforce without advanced schooling.[8] Most did not finish mandatory schooling levels, which were Grades 1–6 of *primaria* (primary school) until 1993 when an additional three years of *secundaria* (middle school) were made compulsory.

Even before they had begun working for income, in keeping with local gender role ideals, each had learned to do domestic tasks from their mothers or older female relatives. They often explained that they had "been working for as long as [I] could remember." However, this remark referred to unremunerated labour in their households, with the type of paid domestic labor done corresponding to a different stage in the life-cycle. In most cases, those who worked as live-in domestics first did so in their teens. Despite the pervasive image of live-in domestic workers in popular media, just seven percent of domestics are reported to do so. Rather, the overwhelming majority of workers live apart from employers and work on an hourly, daily or per task (e.g., cooking, washing clothes, ironing) basis; this is especially true among women who have started their own families. Indeed, more than half of the Mexicanas who perform paid household labour are aged 30–49, and fully one-fourth (26 percent) are over age 50 (INEGI 2015, 3).

Although living with employers ensures that a woman will receive room and board, there is a trade-off. Not only do scholars report abysmal living conditions and diets inferior to those consumed by members of the employers' household, but full-time workers typically toil for more hours for lower remuneration (on average six pesos per hour) than women who are paid by the hour or task (INEGI 2015). These low salaries that preclude the possibility of saving in the present, coupled with an absence of pensions, make for a precarious future for these workers. I return to this point below.

Among the women discussed here, the dreams of getting ahead through schooling, like the difficulties Tamara faced when not finding full-time professional employment after finishing her studies, echo themes that emerge in everyday discourse. The experiences of women in three other households, including teachers Julia (born 1957) and Leona (born 1970), and physician Aracely (born 1986) speak to the reality that domestic service—often combined with other types of informal sector employment—plays an important role in the survival strategies of poorer rural and urban households.[9] All hail from different regions of the state: Julia is from a family of vendors in the northern Sierra region, Leona is from a family headed by a vendor and wage labourer in the southeastern Isthmus of Tehuantepec region, and Aracely hails from a *campesino* household (e.g. supported through subsistence agriculture) near the Pacific Coast. While all three completed *primaria* in their villages before moving to the capital, their paths diverged upon arrival in the capital and further still as they completed advanced studies. Collectively, they represent a number of different scenarios and outcomes in families that placed a high priority on schooling.

domestic service—often combined with other types of informal sector employment—plays an important role in the survival strategies of poorer rural and urban households

Familia Gomez Vásquez: Pooling resources for schooling

Retired teacher Julia Torres Vásquez had moved from her village to Oaxaca City in the early 1970s, accompanied by her mother Renata and six younger siblings, intent on completing middle school. This pattern of relocating to the capital so that some or all children in a household could study was well reported in the 1970s and 1980s (Hendricks and Murphy 1981); it continues today in large part because 70 percent of rural communities lack schools at mandatory levels. When we met in the early 1990s, her father Teodoro was living in their village and visited the family monthly when he came to the capital to sell products (namely, coffee, clothes and sandals) produced in the village. Renata and her children supported themselves by selling chopped fruit in the streets. They initially lived on Julia's uncle's property, and eventually moved to a plot of land Renata purchased on the outskirts of the capital where they gradually constructed a home "room by room."

Struggling financially, which included paying for medical care for two ill children (who died in infancy), the family tried a new economic strategy: thirteen-year-old Julia began working as a live-in domestic for a neighbor Renata had met through her vending activities. In exchange for working six days per week, Julia's employer paid her tuition and purchased her school uniform; Julia also received meals and a few pesos per day that Renata used to pay for her younger children's schooling. Julia and her mother stressed that the employer kept her promise that Julia would be well fed and have ample time to devote to her studies, and both expressed gratitude that this woman had sent leftover food when Julia visited Renata and her siblings on Sundays. Though Julia never used this word, her mother and siblings told me that Julia had "sacrificed" by living away from home. After two years, Julia was able to move back to her family's home because she received a federal need-based scholarship to attend normal school (a teacher training institute). She recalled that,

> Once I began teaching, I gave my mother half my salary. One (fortnightly) paycheck for me, and the other for my mother. I never asked what she did with the money, because I knew it went to help my younger siblings.

Until she became a mother herself, Julia often worked with Renata and her siblings selling fruit when she returned to the capital during school holidays or during monthly visits to cash her paychecks. Ultimately, two of Julia's younger siblings also became teachers, another sister became a secretary, and her younger brother completed a university degree. Today Renata and Teodoro live in a four-bedroom home on the plot of land that Julia and her husband, a former migrant to the US who is now a manual laborer (*obrero*), purchased in a rural community within a half-hour drive of the capital. Renata's youngest sister Monsi, now in her late-40s, works as a teacher and also runs a small store in Oaxaca City. During my recent visit to her home, Monsi rebuked her young daughter who was moaning about having to go to school with the words:

> Be grateful that going to school is your only job. When I was your age I was working with your grandmother selling fruit in the street. But your Aunt Julia made the biggest sacrifice—she worked as a domestic servant while she studied, so that we could stay in school. I owe her more than I could ever repay.

The family's strategic reliance on domestic service as part of a larger practice of pooling resources generated through vending, domestic service and later wage labour is a well-documented facet of the urbanization process in Oaxaca City. Julia's willingness to work as a domestic with a graduate degree, although she resents doing so, can be read as exemplifying the type of agency that Dirk Hoerder (2015, 15) discusses as a "women's self-assertion and strategy to use domestic work as a stepping stone for better jobs and better lives for themselves" and members of their families (see also Smith 1989).

Leona Ortíz Cordova: Domestic service in a heterogeneous household

Leona Ortiz Cordova, who works in both formal and informal sectors, routinely expresses similar sentiments. We met in the early 1990s when she was completing a baccalaureate degree in business at a public university in Oaxaca City. At that time, she hoped to one day work as a government administrator. Although the public sector has long been the largest and most desirable former of employment in Oaxaca (Higgins 1973; Selby, Murphy and Lorenzon 1990; Murphy and Stepick 1991), hiring freezes for permanent jobs (other than to replace positions vacated through death or retirement) were imposed under austerity budgets beginning in the mid-1980s (Alarcón-González and McKinley 1999). Consequently, Leona was only offered part-time work or temporary contracts rather than the full-time, permanent position she sought. In the years immediately preceding and after the birth of her first child in the early 2000s, Leona worked in a restaurant and as a tutor. She also supplemented the wages her husband Fernando earned as a personal aide to a low-level government appointee by embroidering, engaging in petty sales, and renting bedrooms to two students attending a normal school located near the home the couple rented from Fernando's distant relatives. When Fernando lost his job eight years ago, they moved in with his parents. While he worked for eighteen months in the United States, Leona briefly operated an Internet café from a room in their house. After that endeavor failed, and with Fernando unable to find steady full-time employment when he returned, Leona began to clean homes for her neighbours and relatives.

Six years ago, Leona was offered the possibility of taking over a middle school teaching position for a retiring relative. Leona was hired as a provisional teacher, a position that earns half of a permanent teachers' salary. Although she should have been hired permanently once she earned her credential by completing a Master of Education two years later, highly contested changes in federal hiring policies mean that she remains in a temporary status. Tellingly, although her monthly salary of

roughly 7500 pesos (approximately 450 dollars at that time) put her in the middle strata, she describes herself as "working poor" due to considerable work-related expenses that include travelling to and living in a village more than eight hours away (by various forms of public transportation). She must also travel between this community and the state capital to deliver paperwork when required and to participate in labor actions organized by the teachers' union, and for two years she went monthly to Mexico City to participate in a national teacher protest. Additionally, she is repaying a relative the twenty-five hundred pesos she borrowed to pay for the graduate program she attended.

To make ends meet and pay for her daughters' middle school studies, during school holidays and on some weekends Leona generates additional income by cleaning the homes of neighbours and relatives. She speaks of finding it ironic that she had at one time thought that "being a professional" would allow her to hire paid domestic help as her elder sisters (also teachers) have done, yet her circumstances have meant that she typically cleans homes of people with less education than she has. She expresses frustration when speaking of Oaxacans who were

she typically cleans homes of people with less education than she has

> lucky to finish their studies before the economic crises [beginning in the 1980s]. Or they have a *palanca* (connections). When you're looking for a job, you realize that it's a situation of nepotism here, nepotism there and still more nepotism over there. You're only well qualified for the jobs the employers' niece or nephew doesn't want.

Her statements coincide with those made by other Oaxaqueños in precarious circumstances I have interviewed in the past decade. This perception that jobs have become more scarce has intensified in recent decades, with interviewees in a number of fields speaking of job stagnation compounded by increased credentialism (i.e., employers' demands for proof of higher school levels) that lead to more individuals completing higher education. Leona speaks of this creating "a hoard (*un montón*) of qualified applicants for every job." In early 2016, she stressed to me that "Fernando has applied for hundreds of jobs. But he's one of hundreds of applicants himself." Oaxaca City and rural residents have opined that informal sector jobs coupled with widespread migration keep the 2.7 unemployment rate deceptively low (at just 40 percent of the 4.9 national average). This situation contrasts markedly with recollections of Oaxaqueños who finished their post-primary studies in the mid-twentieth century, and insist that there were far more skilled jobs than qualified applicants (see also Myers 1965). Reflecting on her situation in March 2016, Leona opined:

> Having no money is not new to me. I'm from a poor family. My father was orphaned as a child and couldn't finish school. He worked as a laborer all his life, and my mother was a vendor and I helped her for years even when I was in college. So I don't think any type of honest work is beneath me, but I also didn't expect to

> be doing this after I finished [school]. But we have debts, so if I have to do this for now, so be it.

That Leona's household is supported by generating work in both informal and formal labour sectors reflects a perspective consistently heard in Oaxaca regarding the need to do what one has to do to "get by" (Cook and Binford 1991; Higgins 1973; Higgins and Coen 2000; Murphy and Stepick 1991). That she—and other women with high levels of education—work as domestics invokes Scott Cook and Leigh Binford's (1991, 58) use of the local term "obliging need" ("*la necesidad obliga*") to explain that for many economically strapped Oaxaqueños (in their discussion, artisans), "work is not so much a matter of free, individual choice as it is of material need and, ultimately, of survival." This is often the case for cityward migrants including Naomi and Aracely Duarte Fernandez. Both have consistently shown a resiliency that has allowed them to finish college after leaving their villages just as they were entering puberty.

Aracely Duarte Fernandez: Step migration and domestic service

While it is not uncommon for rural women to move directly from their villages to the capital to seek work or to pursue studies as Julia and Leona did, others follow the common route of step migration that Elizabeth Jelin (1977) identified among Latin American domestic workers. This was an integral part of the journey made by Dr. Aracely Duarte Fernandez, now aged 30, who first moved from her village to a district seat before studying in the capital. Service work became part of this journey, as she describes making "the first of many sacrifices when I left home at 11." Aracely was in the first generation of students for whom the three years of middle school were mandatory, but the absence of a school in her village or nearby towns meant she had to leave home to study. She initially worked a live-in domestic in a town located six hours from her parents' home. Although she received room and board, when it became evident she did not have time to study her aunt and uncle invited Aracely to move in with them on the outskirts of the town. Albeit they could not afford to pay room and board, Aracely's parents provided vegetables they had grown, and Aracely helped with housework and worked in their small store. She explained that her parents, subsistence farmers who had never studied, had warned her when she first expressed a desire to study "that there was a possibility that I'd have to work to pay for my studies." She returned home only during school holidays, and described this as a "difficult time" due to suffering consistent homesickness.

After completing this level of education, Aracely moved to Oaxaca City to study the three years of upper secondary school. She had learned through relatives about a *casa hogar* (dormitory) that the Catholic Church ran for rural girls; her parents encouraged her to move there because it would be "safe." Aracely "paid" for her housing by performing chores and with the vegetables her parents delivered monthly; she also received $50 USD monthly from an uncle who was working in the United States. Her situation changed dramatically a year later when her

uncle returned to Oaxaca. She had been making plans to work as a live-in domestic when,

> I saw a flyer about a scholarship, and the director told me to apply… She knew I was thinking I would have to leave [the *casa]* to work as a live-in domestic so I'd have a place to live and money for school. My life changed when I got this scholarship. I could remain at the *casa*, and concentrate on my studies.

Aracely pursued medicine with the goal of one day providing prenatal care to rural women.

> My mother was orphaned when my grandmother died in childbirth. Of the two dozen women in my village who were pregnant when I was young, I know of three who died in childbirth, and I lost track of how many babies died. There's still no clinic in my village.

Aracely was denied entry to a medical program at a public university because there were no openings. She worked for a year as a live-in domestic before entering a private university that offered her a partial scholarship:

> I took time off to work, taking care of an older woman, and saved money so I could return to school. I had enough to pay for registration and a bit more that paid the tuition for one semester. Luckily, I scored really well on the entrance exam, and they offered me a scholarship that paid half my tuition. But [medicine] is a very expensive career, and the school is expensive, so I kept working, even with the scholarship. I got a job cleaning a laboratory, and I was also taking care of a baby. And during my vacations, I always worked because we didn't have classes, so I had more time. Even though I didn't pay all my tuition, I had to pay to live in the capital. My parents couldn't help me. My [four] younger brothers and sisters were in school, too.

Aracely was not the only one in her family to work in service while studying. Her younger sister Pilar, who was able to remain at home while attending a newly opened middle school in their village, later worked as a live-in domestic in Oaxaca City while studying upper secondary. She later received a scholarship to attend normal school. This allowed her to move into the *casa hogar* where Aracely had been living. Like her sister, Pilar often worked as a live-domestic worker during school breaks to pay for her transportation costs.

To save money in the final year of her studies, Aracely moved into the home of an elderly woman for whom she cleaned and provided home health care. She also sought loans and donations from professional women she had met to cover her expenses of travel, a uniform, equipment, and for meals. Upon completing her coursework, she left the capital to begin six months of residency in a clinic in a rural community in the Sierra Sur. She had hoped to work there, to be near her family, but she was not hired permanently. She returned to live in the dormitory

(*casa hogar*), and worked part-time and at temporary contracts while seeking full-time employment. When she needed money, she again provided private care for elderly or ill Oaxaca City residents. Araceley spoke of her

> dream of marrying and raising a daughter. I'd love for [my daughter] to have an easier life than mine. I'd pay for her to attend good schools, once I'm financially stable. I tell myself that I'm young, and God willing, it will all fall into place.

The experiences of women like these sisters exemplify a sad reality in contemporary Oaxaca City. Even as more publicly and privately funded scholarships have become available, the absence of student loan programs and dormitories at public and private schools of higher education mean that women often seek work as live-in domestics to avoid paying the costs of room and board in addition to generating income.[10] At the same time, Aracely's circumstances parallels that of Leona and Tamara and countless other graduates of professional programs who have not been able to secure permanent, full-time employment in the fields they pursued. Instead, they eke out a living combining professional and informal sector employment.

women often seek work as live-in domestics to avoid paying the costs of room and board in addition to generating income

The relationship between service and economic solvency

Taken as a whole, the cases of the women discussed above underscore that casual work can play an important role in Oaxaca City residents' household survival strategies during and after schooling is completed. In addition to working in the informal sector at some point themselves, each of these women lives in a heterogeneous household in that there are members working in both sectors of the economy. This resonates with a more general employment pattern observed in urban Latin America (González de la Rocha 1994; Portes and Hoffman 2003), which a number of scholars including Alejandro Portes and Kelly Hoffman (2003, 65) assert is compounded by neoliberalism because

> it is not necessary to be unemployed in order to be poor. The vast majority of the working population receives wages that would condemn them to poverty, in part because of the generalized underdevelopment of their national economies, but also because of the highly skewed economic pie.

Sylvia Chant (1991) is among those who contend that women are typically the "poorest of the poor" in cities with high rates of informal sector employment and unequal access to schooling. In a more recent study, Chant (2013) argued that women in the Global South consistently face "barriers to empowerment" including a lack of property ownership, personal security and safety that compound their limited employment options. Among other stark realities, the low salaries of women working

in service who have no other source of income, support or benefits preclude them from accumulating savings while they are working. These women face an even more precarious future as they age, including the daunting possibility that employers' death or decision to hire younger, stronger workers will leave these women both jobless and homeless. Writing more generally about this crisis, Scott Cook and Leigh Binford (1991) described childless aging domestics asking extended family members to take them in if they lose their home and livelihood. Given the lack of a social safety-net for individuals in this situation, it is not surprising that many domestics who were married or became mothers but had never studied identified their 'worst fear" as being "alone" if their relatives turned them away.

These realities put into clearer perspective the importance of schooling for mothers or elder sisters who sacrifice for their siblings' schooling to ensure that they acquire skills that would better prepare them to find gainful employment. The importance of women's employment in the formal sector of the "modern" economy where salary is guaranteed takes on added urgency when one considers the findings of a 2013 study conducted by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (El Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social—CONEVAL), an agency charged with analyzing rates of social exclusion and poverty. This study found that between 20 and 25 percent of Mexican households are headed by women, of which 30 percent are headed by domestic workers (CONEVAL 2016).

Statistically, women workers are vulnerable on a number of levels. Economically, women's earnings are lower than those of men. The gender gap (i.e., the difference between the salaries of men and women employed full time) is reported to be as much as 30 percent in some states (INEGI 2017). For example, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI 2017) reports that that at the end of 2016, women workers' average monthly salary was just 4,788 pesos (approximately $274 USD) compared to 6,204 pesos (approximately $355 USD) for men. In the formal sector, average daily wages for women and men were 293 and 334 pesos respectively (INEGI 2017). The wages of those women who lack schooling and are more likely to work in the informal sector are considerably lower.

At the same time, Mexican women's opportunities for being hired (in a labour market where job ads can specify the preferred gender of an applicant) are further constrained by prescribed gender roles, and specifically, familial obligations. In this case, employers' concerns include the possibility that women will take maternity leave during and after pregnancy, or lose work days due to children's health issues or for more general childcare needs (WEF 2015). This reality corresponds to findings that a higher percentage of teenage girls will leave school. This pattern continues to be attributed to ideals that women will work without remuneration in their own homes after they leave school in order to marry or start a family (Arizpe 1977; Kattan and Székely 2015; Smith-Oka 2013; INEGI 2010). Even if they did study as Norma and Aracely have done,

the limited number of permanent, well-paying jobs contributes to a pattern where one in twenty Mexican women work in domestic service (INEGI 2015).

Conclusion

This discussion reflects continuity and changes in the nature of domestic service in the early twenty-first century. Whereas service work is increasingly associated with women international migrants across the globe (ILO 2014), it remains a critical source of employment not only for women—with and without formal education—in urban areas. The compelling lived experiences of the Oaxaqueñas presented here reflect a concerted effort to break the false consciousness of classism and sexism that marginalizes poorer women in a highly stratified patriarchal society. By prioritizing schooling and actively seeking a "better life" for themselves and their families, these women are not "victims of progress," but rather exhibit agency of the type that Sherry Ortner defines as integrating "a number of interrelated ideas revolving around self-confidence, around the idea of being able to make things happen in the world, around activity rather than passivity, around energy and will" (2013, 158).

At the same time, one sees that attaining education for oneself or one's children remains a priority for many marginalized residents who have embraced the government's rhetoric that equates schooling with "progress" and "upward mobility" despite the fact that there are simply not enough skilled jobs for all those completing higher education. The harsh reality that the pursuit of education does not necessarily lead to a "better lifestyle" in and of itself belies the federal and state government positions that have promoted schooling as the key to modernity, national prosperity and individual mobility over the past century (Vaughn 1997; González 2004; C. Lomnitz 2000). Sadly, there has been no significant improvement in employment options in the decade since the 2006 Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO, for Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca) social movement.

there has been no significant improvement in employment options in the decade since the 2006 Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca

APPO garnered support among a wide cross-section of the public, and drew international attention to the poorer locals' frustrations with the unrealized promises of economic growth following decades of neoliberal policies. A decade after the APPO social movement, social critics hold that without sufficient skilled or semi-skilled jobs paying a living wage the region cannot achieve its full potential. On-going social protests and unrest among labor and civic organizations underscore frustrations with on-going poverty and a job market in which opportunities for gainful employment have not expanded, and worse yet, appear to be constricting. Although the informal sector and cityward migration have provided a degree of solvency for many Oaxaqueños who would otherwise be unemployed, a question that arises is how many more people can the already large informal sector absorb?

The latter question has ramifications beyond Oaxaca City and Mexico, as the International Labour Organisation (2014, 3) recognizes high rates of informal employment as a grave and "persistent problem" (2014, 2) for Latin American nations. Among these, low salaries and limited legal protection have made the lives of women domestic workers a visible reminder of the "persistent and increasing social inequality" that David Harvey (2007, 16) identifies as part and parcel of late capitalism in urban areas around the globe. While I have argued here that women with education who work in service show personal agency by taking a job out of necessity that most in society would consider to be beneath well-educated citizens, regrettably, their resilience does not minimize the gravity of structural deficiencies that create the need for them—like millions of other women worldwide who lack other options—to do so. In these cases, service work is an often undesirable job yet critical means of generating income. Unfortunately, global trends suggest that this form of labour will only increase as an occupation for vulnerable women in dire economic straits.

NOTES

Acknowledgements. This research was supported by a California State University Long Beach Research and Creative Activities grant. The author wishes to acknowledge the Oaxacans who shared their personal experiences. They are not named here to protect their privacy. An earlier version of this paper was presented in the panel "Producing Ethnographies of Informality and Precariousness in the Domestic Sector and Beyond" at the 2014 American Anthropological Association annual meetings, and this paper benefitted from discussion with co-panelists Deborah Altamirano and Aranzazu Recalde.

[1]The 1917 Constitution made six years of elementary school (*primaria*) mandatory for children ages 6–12. In 1992, the National Accord to Modernise Basic Education (*Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Basic*—ANMEB) added three years of middle school (*secundaria*) to mandatory basic education.

[2]Irma's comments coalesce with critiques of "common pot" household budgeting models which presume that all household members benefit by sharing resources (de la Rocha 1994). In contrast to the harmony that "*apoyo familiar*" (family cooperation) implies (Saucedo Ramos 2003), scholars reflect on age, gender or other intangible inequities that privilege the needs of some family members over others. Specifically, the absence of a male household head has been shown to have a positive effect on children's schooling because, unlike male household heads who may squander resources on cigarettes or alcohol or the other vices Irma mentions above, mothers prioritize their children's future, including their studies (Chant and Craske 2003).

[3]These data were collected between 1991 and 2015 during participant observation and dozens of interviews with current and former

domestic workers. Observation included spending time in homes where domestic workers were employed while they performed duties and interacted with members' of their employers' households, and conversations with women (aged 17 to 78) who once worked, or currently worked, in domestic service. More than two dozen of the domestic workers did not study beyond (if even through) the mandatory Grade 6 level, and two dozen others who worked as domestics during or after finishing their studies. All of these women described themselves as coming from households that were "poor" or of "modest" means.

[4]The name Oaxaca derives from the Aztec garrison Huaxayác (a Nahuatl term for the acacia tree native to the region on the site) on this site when Spanish conquistadores in the early 1520s. The Spanish founded their settlement as Antequera in 1532, but the name was legally changed to Oaxaca following Mexican independence in 1821.

[5]Mexico's national GINI coefficient is (World Bank 2014).

[6]In 2010, this population included 140,991 women and 122,446 men.

[7]In February 2016, $1 US = 18.5 pesos. In July 2017, the exchange rate was 17.5 pesos to the US dollar.

[8]This is less than half of the 10 years of schooling that the typical employed Mexicana completes. Statistically, 8.5 percent of Mexican women domestic workers are illiterate (relative to 3 percent of women in other occupations), and ten percent have never attended school.

[9]The state is divided into eight geographic and cultural regions, in alphabetical order: the Cañada in the northwest, Costa (Pacific Coast), Isthmus (southeastern region), Papaloapam (northeastern region), Sierras Norte and Sur (northern and southern mountains respectively), and Valles Centrals (which contains Oaxaca City). Nearly one-third of Oaxaqueños speaks an indigenous language as a mother tongue. Zapotec and Mixteco are the most widely spoken geographically and have the highest number of speakers. Although two women in this population were raised in households where an indigenous language is spoken (and continue to speak it with their parents), they have been bilingual in Spanish since childhood. They attended Spanish-language schools at all levels, and although they are proud of their origins, they stated that they did not believe their indigenous origins factored into the decision to hire them or how they are treated. Indeed, employers were not necessarily aware of their employees' origins or personal identities.

[10]The absence of student loan programs is a major problem for poorer students who study beyond mandatory Grade 9 levels. The most sweeping program for younger students is Oportunidades, a conditional cash transfer program that provides progressively higher stipends to over 5 million qualifying households with students in elementary and secondary schools that comply with attendance, health care and nutrition guidelines. Although education levels have increased under this program, critics argue that the government has a placed an onus on mothers to attend mandatory community meetings and ensure that households comply with health and school attendance mandates (Smith-Oka 2013). Locals

insist that the scholarships available through the federal Ministry of Public Education, state government, and NGOs and private universities are insufficient to meet demand.

References

Alarcón-González, Diana and Terry McKinley. 1999. "The Adverse Effects of Structural Adjustment on Working Women in Mexico." *Latin American Perspectives* 26(3):110–17.

Arizpe, Lourdes. 1977. "Women in the Informal Sector: The Case of Mexico City." *Signs* 3(1):25–37.

Blofield, Merike. 2012. *Care work and class: Domestic workers' struggle for equal rights in Latin America*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

Blum, Ann. 2004. "Cleaning the Revolutionary Household: Domestic Servants and Public Welfare in Mexico City, 1900–1935." *Journal of Women's History* 15(4): 67–90.

Chant, Sylvia. 1991. *Women and Survival in Mexican Cities Perspectives on Gender, Labour Markets and Low Income Households*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Chant, Silvia. 2013. "Cities Through a 'Gender Lens': A Golden 'Urban Age' for Women in the Global South?" *Environment and Urbanization* 25(1):9–29.

Chant, Sylvia and Nikki Craske. 2003. *Gender in Latin America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Chiñas, Beverly. 1973. *The Isthmus Zapotecs*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social CONEVAL. 2012. "Oaxaca 2010-Pobreza 2010 Información a nivel estatal." Accessed July 18, 2017. http://www.coneval.gob.mx/InformesPublicaciones/Documents/folletos_pobrezayrezagos ocial/oaxaca_pob_rez_soc.pdf.

Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social. 2013. "Realiza CONEVAL Estudios) Sobre la Pobreza en las Ciudades del País." Accessed July 18, 2017. http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Medicion/MP/Paginas/Pobreza-urbana-en-M%C3%A9xico-.aspx.

—. 2015. Accessed July 18, 2017.http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Informes/Pobreza/Pobreza%20y%20genero/Sintesis_ejecutiva_Pobreza_genero_2008_2012.pdf.

Cook, Scott and Leigh Binford. 1991. *Obliging Need: Petty Rural Industry in Mexican Capitalism*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Coser, Lewis. 1973. "Servants: The Obsolescence of an Occupational Role." *Social Forces* 52 (1): 31–40.

Díaz Barriga, Miguel. 1999. "The Domestic/Public in Mexico City: Notes on Theory, Social Movements, and the Essentializations of Everyday Life." In *Gender Matters: Rereading Michelle Z. Rosaldo*, edited by Alejandro Lugo, and Bill Maurer, 116–42. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Goldsmith, Mary. 1989. "Politics and Programs of Domestic Workers' Organizations in Mexico." In *Muchachas No More*, edited by Elsa Chaney and María García Castro, 221–43. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

González, Roberto. 2004. "From Indigenismoto Zapatismo: Theory and Practice in Mexican Anthropology." *Human Organization* 63(2):141–50.

González de la Rocha, Mercedes. 1994. *The Resources of Poverty: Women and Survival in a Mexican City*. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Harvey, David. 2007. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hayner, Norman. 1948. "Oaxaca: City of Old Mexico." *Sociology and Social Research* 29: 87–95.

Hendricks, Janet and Arthur Murphy. 1981. "From Poverty to Poverty: The Adaptation of Young Migrant Households in Oaxaca, Mexico." *Urban Anthropology* 10(1):53–70.

Higgins, Michael. 1973. *Somos Gente Humilde: Etnografía de una colonia urbana pobre de Oaxaca*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigena.

Higgins, Michael J. and Tanya Coen. 2000. *Streets, Bedrooms and Patios: The Ordinariness of Diversity in Urban Oaxaca*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Hoerder, Dirk. 2015. "Combining Work and Emotions: Strategies, Agency and Self-Assertion." In *Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiver Workers*, edited by D. Hoerder, E. van Nederveen and S. Neunsigner, 113–19. Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishing.

Howell, Jayne. 1999. "Expanding Women's Roles in Southern Mexico: Educated, Employed Oaxaqueñas." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 55:99–127.

—. 2002. "Of Servanthood and Self-Employment: Changing Patterns of Domestic Service in Southern Mexico." *Urban Anthropology* 31(3–4):389–422.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). 2010a. XIII Censo General. Volume 20: Oaxaca. Aguascalientes: INEGI.

—. 2010b. "Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE), población de 15 años y más de edad." Accessed July 18, 2017. http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/Proyectos/encuestas/hogares/regulares/enoe/.

—. 2015. "Trabajadores domesticas." Accessed 18 July 2017. http://www.inegi.org.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/estudios/sociodemografico/trabdomestico/2010/perfil_soc_tdr_2010.pdfhttp://www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/aproposito/2015/trabajo0.pdf.

—. Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). 2017. "Resultados de la Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE), población de 15 años y más." [Cuarto Trimestre de 2016.] Accessed 20 July 2017. http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/enoe/

International Labour Organisation (ILO). 2014. "Formalization in Latin America and the Caribbean." Accessed July 17, 2017. http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_245916/lang-en/index.htm.

Jelin, Elizabeth. 1976. "Migration and Labor Force Participation of Latin American Women: The Domestic Servants in the Cities." *Signs* 3(1):129–141.

Kattan, Raja Bentaouet and Miguel Székely. 2015. "Patterns, Consequences, and Possible Causes of Dropout in Upper Secondary Education in Mexico." *Education Research International* 2015: 1–12. doi: 10.1155/2015/676472

Kearney, Michael. 1986. "From the Invisible Hand to Invisible Feet: Anthropological Studies of Migration and Development." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15: 331–61.

Kuznesof, Elizabeth. 2013. "Domestic Service and Urbanization in Latin America from the Nineteenth Century to the Present." In *Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations: A Global Perspective on Continuities and Discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st Centuries*, edited by Dirk Hoerder and Amarjit Kaur, 85–102. Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishing.

Lewis, Oscar. 1959. *Five Families: Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. New York: Basic Books.

Lomnitz, Claudio. 2000. *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lomnitz, Larissa Adler. 1977. *Networks and Marginality: Life in a Mexican Shantytown*. New York: Academic Press.

Mahar, Cheleen. 2010. *Reinventing Practice in a Disenchanted World: Bourdieu and Urban Poverty in Oaxaca, Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Montes García, Olga. 1998. "El indio visto por una oligarquía regional: El caso de Oaxaca." In *Las imagines del indo en Oaxaca*, edited by Jorge Hernandez, 31–52. Oaxaca: Instituto Oaxaqueño para la Cultura, Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y Artes, y Universidad Autónama Benito Juárez de Oaxaca.

—. 2006. *Meastros en zonas indigenas: construciones de la identidad nacional*. Oaxaca: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca.

Murphy, Arthur and Alex Stepick. 1991. *Social Inequality in Oaxaca: A History of Resistance and Change*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Myers, Charles Nash. 1965. *Education and National Development in Mexico*. Princeton: Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University Press.

Norget, Kristin. 2006. *Days of Death, Days of Life: Ritual in the Popular Culture of Oaxaca, Mexico*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ortner, Sherry. 2013. *Not Hollywood: Independent Film at the Twilight of the American Dream*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Overmyer-Velásquez, Mark. 2007. "Portraits of a Lady: Visions of Modernity in Porfirian Oaxaca City." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 23(1):63–100.

Portes, Alejandro and Kelly Hoffman. 2003. "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change during the Neoliberal Era." *Latin American Research Review* 38 (1): 41–82.

Proméxico. 2015. "Inversión y Comercio. Oaxaca." Accessed July 17, 2016. http://mim.promexico.gob.mx/Documentos/PDF/mim/FE_OAXACA_vfi.pdf.

Saldaña-Tejeda, Abril. 2015. "Un/identifying Reflexive Subjects: The Case of Women in Paid Domestic Work in Mexico." *Current Sociology* 63(7):943–960.

Saucedo Ramos, Claudia. (2003). "Family Support for Individual Effort: The Experience of Schooling in Mexican Working-Class Families." *Ethos* 31: 307–327.

Selby, Henry A., Murphy, Arthur D. and Lorenzon, Stephen A. 1990. *The Mexican Urban Household. Organizing for Self-Defense*. Austin: Texas University Press.

Smith, Margo. 1989. "Where is Maria Now? Former Domestic Workers in Peru." In *Muchachas no More*, edited by Elsa Chaney and María García Castro, 127–42. New York: United Nations.

Smith-Oka, Vania. 2013. *Shaping the Motherhood of Indigenous Mexico*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Vaughn, Mary Kay. 1997. *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930–1940*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Walker, Louise. 2013. *Waking from the Dream: Mexico's Middle Classes after 1968*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Whiteford, Michael and Ruth Alden. 1998. "Changing Gender Role Attitudes among Women in an Urban Mexican Neighborhood." In *Crossing Currents: Continuity and Change in Latin America*, edited by Michael Whiteford and Scott Whiteford. 149–92. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Willis, Katie. 2002. "No es fácil, pero es posible: The Maintenance of Middle-Class Women-Headed Households in Mexico." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 69:29–46.

World Bank. 2014. "Gini Coefficients." Accessed July 18, 2017. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI.

World Economic Forum. 2015. "The Global Gender Gap Report 2015." Accessed July 18, 2017. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf.