Gendered patriots and post-revolutionary ladies: Girl Guiding and twentieth century Mexican girlhood

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GENDERED PATRIOTS AND POSTREVOLUTIONARY LADIES:
GIRL GUIDING AND TWENTIETH CENTURY MEXICAN GIRLHOOD

by

Maryann Kelly

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ABSTRACT

Through the lens of the Guías de México (Girl Guides of Mexico), *Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies* examines Girl Guide efforts to advance international cooperation and peace by promoting international friendship among the world’s youth between 1919 and 1980. From its birth as a branch of the British Girl Guide Movement, Mexican Guides participated in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scout’s (WAGGGS) international conferences, encampments, and global initiatives. During the first half of the twentieth century Western European and United States members established WAGGGS global agenda for social reform and the advancement of women and youth. At the same time Mexican women experienced the radical social and political transformations taking place in post-revolutionary Mexico, and evaluated the Guide Movement’s significance to their gender and culture.

This dissertation serves as a case study to explore United States and British cultural imperialism across the twentieth century, and the ways in which Mexican women challenged imperialist assumptions while at the same time adapting and acculturating the fundamental principles of WAGGGS. The postrevolutionary reconstruction of gender in Mexico took place alongside first and second wave internationalist feminist movements through which women’s roles were contested and redefined. WAGGGS members viewed their association as feminist and egalitarian, and aimed to advance women’s rights and interests internationally. However, western leaders viewed themselves as guides who would teach their Latin American counterparts how to educate young women and girls, and saw United States and western European suffragist and feminist movements as a template for women’s progress abroad. Adolescence and womanhood were politicized, debated, and challenged in Mexico and internationally across the twentieth century. This study demonstrates how ordinary women who were Girl Guide members
appropriated, challenged, and transformed global, national and local interpretations of women’s
rights, roles, and biological and cultural representations, while at the same time supporting
maternalist rhetoric with regards to their social position in society.
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The First Juliette Low Western Hemisphere encampment (above) was held at Camp Andree Clark in Westchester County, New York from August 14th-28th, 1940. Eighty-two Girl Scouts and twenty-two Girl Guide members from thirteen countries and colonies in the Western Hemisphere served as ambassadors of their nations in an effort to build international friendship and understanding. They represented 600,000 U.S. Girl Scouts and 73,000 Guides in the remainder of the Western Hemisphere. World Bureau Director Arethusa Leigh-White of London addressed the young women on the first evening of the conference. The world’s youth, she stated, should give service to humanity in this era of global crisis. It was presumed that women’s inherent moral, self-sacrificing nature made them ideal advocates for global peacemaking.

The New York Times described the encampment as an effort in “good neighborliness”

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1 Segundo “Log” de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F. The above photo shows delegates from Cuba, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil at the First Western Hemisphere Encampment at Camp Andree in Pleasantville, New York in 1940 where they performed “typical” Latin American songs and dances for U.S. Girl Scouts. The stated purpose of the gathering for older girls and leaders was to “promote international peace and friendship” among the world’s youth.

between the youth of the Americas. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts (WAGGGS) hoped that American Girl Scouts would serve as informal agents of U.S. diplomatic Good Neighbor initiatives with Latin America. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who spent an evening with these young ladies, stated “Each one of us owes an obligation to our nation.”… “That obligation is to know all we can about our country. You must learn to recognize various types of oppression – lack of understanding, lack of opportunity, and lack of education. You must discover oppression in your own country and eliminate it if it exists.” Scouts and Guides should not think of themselves, she stated, but of their community and world. Roosevelt and Leigh-White viewed gatherings such as this one as an important step towards international sisterhood and global unity, which they believed could help to prevent future wars. In a spirit of sisterhood, the young representatives referred to each other as *golondrinas*, swallows, who would help deliver peace and unite the people of all nations.3

Referring to each other as *Golondrinas* emphasized the young womens’ shared set of Guiding principles, and their seemingly universal feminine characteristics as future mothers, teachers, and humanitarian internationalists. The concept of feminine universality had its roots in first wave feminist movements that emerged between the late nineteenth century and the First World War. First wave feminism in Western Europe and the United States aimed towards temperance, female suffrage, better education and employment opportunities, and legal rights for married women. Like other international women’s movements such as the International Council of Women (ICW), International Alliance of Women (IAW), and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), WAGGGS expanded its memberships beyond Western Europe and North America in the interwar period. International humanitarian feminism rested

on the belief that women’s difference, symbolized by their seemingly more humanitarian nature, was essential to long term global peace. Much like the ICW, IAW, and WILPF, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts emphasized women’s universality, and defined itself as secular, non-political and open to all women.  

Through the lens of the Guías de México (Girl Guides of Mexico), *Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies* examines Girl Guide efforts to advance international cooperation and peace by promoting international friendship among the world’s youth between 1919 and 1980. From its birth as a branch of the British Girl Guide Movement, Mexican Guides participated in WAGGGS international conferences, encampments, and global initiatives. During the first half of the twentieth century Western European and United States members established WAGGGS global agenda for social reform and the advancement of women and youth. At the same time Mexican women experienced the radical social and political transformations taking place in post-revolutionary Mexico, and evaluated the Guide Movement’s significance to their gender and culture.

The World Association’s internationalist efforts expanded during World War II when the WAGGGS World Bureau temporarily moved its headquarters from London to New York. In 1940 the association focused on expanding Girl Guiding in Latin America through the establishment of a Western Hemisphere Committee. As new WAGGGS members emerged, global south nations advanced their own rights-based agendas for women and girls. By the 1970s WAGGGS internationalist rhetoric shifted from an ethos in which universalist principles tied to imperialist internationalism drove the association’s global agenda, to one in which cultural relativism and transnationalism contributed to the reconstruction of gender across the globe.

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The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts was established in 1928. From its inception, the association focused on girls’ development of life skills through experiential learning, and aimed to foster the growth of responsible global citizens. The association is governed by an elected World Board that includes seventeen members from various regions of the world. The World Bureau in London has an international staff that works under the direction of the World Board. Every three years representatives from all member associations meet to vote on international policies and suggest possible changes to the WAGGGS constitution. The Girl Guides of Mexico was founded in 1930, and is a member of WAGGGS. The association’s national offices are located in Mexico City, and its goals and initiatives are determined by an elected National Assembly and National Directive Committee that oversees the association’s local districts and operations. Though over time each national Guiding association developed its own traditions, songs and symbols, all member associations share a number of features that identify them as members of this international sisterhood. For example, Guiding associations are structured by age to support girls during various stages of development. The Guides of Mexico, for example, are divided into Girasoles (Sunflowers, ages 4-6), Haditas (Fairies, ages 6-9), Guías (Guides, ages 9-12), Guías Intermedias (Intermediate Guides, ages 12-15), and Guías Mayores (Older Guides, ages 15-20). Most WAGGGS members share a promise that includes a duty to God or a religion, a duty to one’s country, a dedication to helping others, and a promise to keep the Guide Law. Guides also demonstrate their sisterhood through a common left

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handshake. The left hand, nearest to one’s heart, represents friendship. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts utilize the three-fingered Girl Scout sign, made with the right hand, to represent the three parts of girls’ common promise. National and local associations provide girls with opportunities to give service to the community, develop leadership skills, travel, and enjoy the outdoors in an all-girl, non-competitive, environment.

Through the lens of the Girl Guides of Mexico, this dissertation serves as a case study to explore United States and British cultural imperialism across the twentieth century, and the ways in which Mexican women challenged imperialist assumptions while at the same time adapting and acculturating the fundamental principles of WAGGGS. The postrevolutionary reconstruction of gender in Mexico took place alongside first and second wave internationalist feminist movements through which women’s roles were contested and redefined. WAGGGS members viewed the association as feminist and egalitarian, and aimed to advance women’s rights and interests internationally. However, western leaders viewed themselves as guides who would teach their Latin American counterparts how to educate young women and girls, and saw United States and western European suffragist and feminist movements as a template for women’s progress abroad. Though the association promoted global, class and racial egalitarianism, it also perpetuated existing social and racial hierarchies. Adolescence and womanhood were politicized, debated, and challenged in Mexico and internationally across the twentieth century. This study demonstrates how ordinary women who were Girl Guide members appropriated, challenged, and transformed global, national and local interpretations of women’s rights, roles, and biological and cultural representations, while at the same time supporting maternalist rhetoric with regards to their social position in society.
While European and Mexican members of the Girl Guides supported the association’s moral and values-based educative program, they clashed with one another regarding the appropriate socialization of Mexican girls. In the 1930s, the Protestant and secular nature of the British Guide program was viewed as un-Mexican. However, in that decade the association altered its pedagogy from one that identified with European secularism and liberalism to one that described itself as conservative and Catholic. The Guides of Mexico created a seemingly secular space in which religious values were forged. Though the association described itself as non-political, it encouraged adolescent girls’ public participation in Mexican and immigrant benevolent reform societies and international women’s rights-based movements.

While the mid-century is widely remembered as a period of regression and conservativism in contrast to first and second wave feminism, this study demonstrates the ways in which 1970s women’s movements were rooted in the social and cultural changes that took place after World War II. Though media derived representations of mid-century middle and upper class Mexican women depicted them as mothers and housewives, this does not reflect women’s increased participation in the job market, expanding leadership roles in church-based organizations, or new citizenship rights that strengthened women’s position in postrevolutionary society. The church, state, United Nations, and Girl Guides used maternalist rhetoric to encourage young women’s service work and employment in educational, health, and literacy campaigns, and viewed the burgeoning world-wide association as a partner in global peacemaking processes. Working within a maternalist framework, the association bolstered girls’ independence outside of the home and church.

The rise of western feminism in the 1970s caused widespread debate within WAGGGS regarding the appropriate socialization of young women. However, much like in the 1930s,
women’s interpretations of rights-based arguments were not homogenous. Rather, local Girl Guide associations developed their own interpretations of women’s roles in society. While the Mexican Guides continued to emphasize women’s reproductive roles, they sought a balance between western feminism and domesticity. Moderate civil associations, such as the Girl Guides, became agents of change amid global human and women’s rights debates. Further, as the Mexican government shifted its welfare role onto civil society in the midst of neoliberal austerity programs, civic and women’s associations took on more public responsibilities. Women’s civic participation and association with the transnational women’s movement heightened their public role and status in Mexican society.

*International Sisterhood*

The 1920s saw the rise of “new feminism” in Western Europe and the United States, which emphasized women’s difference and distinct contributions to society. Unlike in second wave feminism, which arose in the 1960s and 1970s, during the 1920s and 1930s, western women made demands for civil rights based on their responsibilities in the traditional sphere – as mothers, housewives, social workers, and teachers. Therefore, they emphasized these

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commonalities at international events such as the Western Hemisphere encampment at Camp Bonnie Brae in East Otis, Massachusetts in August, 1942 (above). A Christian Science Monitor article about the encampment, which the First Mexican Guide Company placed in their patrol log book, was titled “Girl Cooks of the Americas Aid Hemisphere Solidarity.” According to the article International Cooking Day was a highlight of the encampment. Each representative prepared a national dish to share with their sister Guides and Scouts. These gatherings, it was presumed, would strengthen ties between the nations’ women. One hundred and sixty Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from the Western Hemisphere, twenty-three of whom were from Latin America, gathered in a spirit of international peace and unity.\(^8\)

After World War I, the WAGGGS strove to establish an international sisterhood. Between 1920 and 1940 the association expanded to include an increasing number of women and girls in the “underdeveloped” world. Girls were to be united in a Movement based on femaleness and the common moral and behavioral code of the association. Participation in a single sex association emphasized their intellectual and biological difference from boys. In a patriarchal society, it gave them a sense of belonging as the organization focused on the special needs and interests of future mothers, social reformers, and humanitarian internationalists committed to post-war peace. In the first half of the twentieth century the majority of WAGGGS’ members - whether in India, Great Britain or Mexico - were from upper and middle class backgrounds, so they also shared a similar social class status and educational level. While the association stated that it was open to all girls, the program catered to literate young women who could obtain the necessary funds to purchase uniforms, pay dues and travel to local, national and international meetings, excursions and conferences. As such, much like the members of the ICW, IAW and

\(^8\) Ibid.
WILPF described by historian Marie Sandell, Guides may have had more in common with their sisters abroad than with other social class groups in their own nations.\textsuperscript{9}

First wave feminism and international women’s organizing was based on the assumption that women worldwide shared distinct characteristics. WAGGGS agenda, for example, was linked to western first wave feminism. The first wave of feminism took place in Western Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the late nineteenth century women organizers prioritized property rights and improved access to employment and education. More women found work outside of the home and in new professions during World War I, and associations like the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts were active volunteers for their nations’ war effort. Reinvigorated by their expanding public positions, suffragettes revived the suffrage movement following World War I. In 1918 women over 30 whose husbands were property owners were enfranchised in Great Britain, and in 1928 all citizens over 21 could vote. Women in the United States were granted the right to vote in 1920.

As historian Megan Threlkeld has argued, Western women believed that they had an obligation to assist their sisters in the “developing world” so that they too would obtain these rights.\textsuperscript{10} They aimed to advance the status of women by educating youth in western, liberal, feminist principles. Through their transnational network, WAGGGS guided women in the global south to create seemingly modern and cosmopolitan local girls’ associations. In Latin America, for example, western \textit{Madrinas} were assigned to watch over and advise new national associations in the 1940s.\textsuperscript{11} In the 1970s women in the global south challenged the notion of universality.

\textsuperscript{9} Sandell, location 276.
\textsuperscript{10} Threlkeld, 4-7.
\textsuperscript{11} “Western Hemisphere Bulletin #5, June 1965,” in WAGGGS Western Hemisphere Activity Reports, 1941-1967. National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, New York, NY.
Second wave feminism arose in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of Vietnam anti-war and civil rights movements abroad, and, according to historian Elaine Carey, the emerging student movement and pro-democracy protests in Mexico. The crisis of the Great Depression followed by World War II temporarily re-focused women’s organizing. But a new wave arose after a period of renewed post-war domesticity. At the same time as women gained access to oral contraceptives that allowed for more precise family planning measures and eased women’s personal and career choices, feminists advocated for more equality. During the second wave women sought legal changes such as equal pay for equal work, increased access to higher education, the criminalization of marital rape, and social changes aimed to alter the association between the female gender and domestic labor. Unlike in first wave feminism, the period saw the emergence of demands for gender equality, rather than complementarity, or gender distinction based on women’s intellectual difference. These differences, feminists argued, were socially constructed rather than biological norms. Though they espoused equality, second wave feminist associations fought for their rights in sex-segregated societies, as they felt excluded from the leadership of integrated organizations such as 1950s and 1960s U.S. civil rights associations and Mexican student movements.¹²

Women in the global south challenged western, upper class, and urban notions of feminism and created their own platforms for women’s rights. As women in the post-colonial world joined the Girl Guide association, they emphasized the importance of cultural relativism. Global conferences such as the 1975 United Nations Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City brought international attention to the social and cultural construction of gender, race, class, religion and ethnicity abroad. Representatives of global south nations such as Domitila Barrios de Chúngara,

a Bolivian miner’s wife and member of a Housewives’ Committee, organized to advocate for the rights of mine workers and emphasized working class families’ lack of access to material needs.\textsuperscript{13}

Between 1930 and 1980 the Guías became part of a larger network of Guiding and Scouting organizations, which presented new and ongoing opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, including international encampments, overseas dialogue through the international Council Fire Magazine, and conferences at Our Cabaña, the international Girl Guiding center in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Across the twentieth century the Mexican Girl Guides participated in national and global discourses on childhood and education through their participation in United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) projects and the United Nations Decade for Women and Year of the Child Conferences. Implicitly recognizing the constructed and subjective nature of gender identity, the appropriate socialization of male and female youth was central to these discourses.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Devaki Jain, Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 65-71.

Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies: Girl Guiding in Mexico

Organizations such as the Girl Guides were altered and appropriated by Mexican women, providing Mexican girls with new social spaces where they developed a more autonomous identity from that of the more self-contained familial unit. For example, in the 1960s, María Esther Lemus of Mexico City pled for her father to allow her to participate in the Guías de México - a wish he initially rejected. He felt that a girl’s place was in the home, and was uncomfortable with his daughter’s participation in Guide excursions, volunteerism, and outdoor play. Finally he conceded, opening up new leadership opportunities and freedoms to his daughter. María Esther, who continues to be an active member and volunteer, later stated that this new social space had a great impact on her life. As recounted to me in a 2011 interview, it boosted her confidence and sense of independence, and helped her to overcome her shy nature.

Founded in 1930, the Guías de México aimed to cultivate what its founders perceived to be model postrevolutionary ladies, whom they believed would foster increased respect for female citizens in the modernizing state. A study of the Guías de México presents a unique opportunity to assess the ways in which young women helped to drive the process of modernization in

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15 Guías learning to sew. Segundo Log de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
16 María Esther Lemus. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 14, 2011.
Mexico between 1930 and 1980. I compare the experiences of various generations of urban, upper and middle class women who were Girl Guides. Why did young ladies define gender differently than their mothers and grandmothers? How did nationalist state building projects, religious practices, and globalization impact women and youth of various age cohorts? Mexican womanhood has undergone a series of far-reaching social transformations across the twentieth-century that profoundly altered women’s familial and public positions. Girls’ expectations of adulthood continued to expand long after the 1930s Mexican women’s movement, as they gained access to a wider range of career, educational, and leisure opportunities.

As Threlkeld has argued, while the successful post-war suffrage movements in European countries and the United States following World War I influenced the direction of western first wave feminist movements, the postrevolutionary Mexican women’s movement developed alongside Catholic and nationalist ones. Since the Mexican wars of independence, women have held significant roles in the nation’s political struggles. However, women did not obtain political rights until 1953. While the first women’s magazines and associations were formed in the second half of the nineteenth century, women more actively organized in pursuit of legal and political rights during and after the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution. Women participated in the Mexican Revolution alongside men as soldiers, nurses, cooks and messengers in both the federal and rebel armies. In 1916 Yucatán Governor Salvador Alvarado convened the First Feminist Congress. Some of the issues discussed by women at the congress were addressed in the 1917 Law of Family Relations, which expanded provisions for divorce, and gave women the right to alimony and custody. As the nation recovered from the instability of nearly a decade of civil war, the Mexican government initiated a social and cultural reform program which, they hoped, would unite Mexican citizens. The period 1920-1940 saw the gradual implementation of the radical

17 Threlkeld, 13-14.
1917 constitution, including article 3, which forbade religious education; article 123, which promised labor reforms such as an eight-hour work day and maternity leave; and article 27, which stated that the Mexican state was the owner of the nation’s land and subsoil resources. In 1922 Yucatán Governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto granted women the right to vote and hold office in the state, and the following year three women, including his sister Elvia Carillo Puerto, were elected to the state’s legislature. In the 1930s, the government-sponsored United Front for Women’s Rights pushed for the expansion of women’s political rights and increased social assistance to working class women such as lowering utility rates and reducing rent on market stalls. The growth of the association placed pressure on President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) to pass a suffrage amendment. Though an amendment to Article 23 of the constitution was ratified by all 28 Mexican states in 1939, the Mexican Congress refused to formally recognize it. After the revolution women took on important roles in the state-building process.

Postrevolutionary presidents including Álvaro Obregón (1920-1924), Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928), and Lázaro Cárdenas promoted the modernization of the nation through the promotion of indigenismo, secular education, public art and music, and rural health and literacy initiatives. Teacher training institutes prepared thousands of rural school teachers, most of whom were women, to teach rural residents about hygiene, health, and national culture. However, as historians Nancy Leys Stepan, Alexander Dawson, and Rick López have argued, the version of indigenismo taught in the national curriculum and promoted at government sponsored cultural events was constructed by elites rather than indigenous people themselves, and often

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overemphasized some aspects of rural culture while ignoring, or attempting to eradicate, others.\footnote{21}{Nancy Leys Stepan, \textit{The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), Alexander Dawson, \textit{Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico} (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), and Rick López, \textit{Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans and the State after the Revolution} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).} Further, as historian Mary Kay Vaughn argues, rural communities often rejected this official version of \textit{Mexicanidad}, and demanded that rural school teachers reform their educational initiatives to better fit the priorities of local communities. The implementation of secular education programs and suppression of Catholic schools and other anti-clerical reforms during Calles’s administration intensified the brewing church-state conflict. Churches encouraged their parishioners to protest against article 23. In 1926 the conflict escalated. Thousands of Cristero militants rose up against the postrevolutionary regime.\footnote{22}{Jean Meyer, \textit{The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between the Church and State 1926-1929} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Kindle edition, location 1593.}

Promises of social equality encouraged women to organize for citizenship rights. Feminists fought for women’s citizenship, sex education in schools, and the right to divorce, while associations such as the National Congress of Women Workers and Peasants demanded expanded indigenous rights, the protection of women workers, land reform and an increased minimum wage.\footnote{23}{Jocelyn Olcott, \textit{Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 47-52.} As historians Kristina Boylan and Patience Schell demonstrate, many Catholic women joined the ranks of the Cristeros (1926-1929) to protect the traditional rights of the Catholic Church. Associations such as the \textit{Unión de Damas Católicas Mexicanas} (Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies) headed wide scale campaigns in opposition to the implementation of secular and “socialist” education in schools.\footnote{24}{Kristina Boylan, “Gendering the Faith and Alerting the Nation: Mexican Catholic Women’s Activism, 1917-1940,” in Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano, eds., \textit{Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power} in \textit{Modern Mexico} (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 204-220 and Patience A. Schell, “Of the Sublime Mission of Mothers and Families: The Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies in Revolutionary Mexico,” in \textit{The Women’s Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953} (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 199-222.} President Lázaro Cárdenas’ secular education program, land redistribution, nationalization of oil, and establishment of agrarian and trade union
movements associated with the ruling party tied citizens to the state through the expansion of a corporate political system. As Jocelyn Olcott demonstrates, women were incorporated into the revolution through their participation in the PRM-sponsored Sole Front for Women’s Rights (FUPDM), which included eight hundred women’s groups with more than fifty thousand members. However, she argues, women’s citizenship was shaped by “local and regional characteristics as well as national and transnational ones.” The urban, secular women’s movement aimed to advance women’s right to suffrage, while most women used their membership in the FUPDM to address the practical and material needs of their communities.25

This work elucidates the ways in which, through associations such as the Girl Guides, prominent European immigrant women participated in and influenced women’s political and social mobilizations in Mexico City, as they had in Europe.26 I in turn examine how Mexican women adapted the ideology and organization of the Girl Guides to meet the demands of new, burgeoning forms of women’s civic participation and gendered rhetoric that emerged during the dramatic social, political, and cultural changes taking place in postrevolutionary Mexico.

By shaping the lives of young Mexican women, the Mexican Girl Guides served as a means of inculcating nationalism and acculturation during the postrevolutionary presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). In the late 1930s the gendered philosophy of the British Girl Guides was altered and appropriated by Mexican women. In Mexico City the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts provided their own versions of Mexican nationalism, as they competed for a voice amid the postrevolutionary reconstruction of the Mexican state and society. The first Guide patrols were composed of girls of various ethnic backgrounds and promoted an internationalist, secular and liberal version of Mexican womanhood. But during this period of intense economic

25 Olcott, 4-7.
26 By 1930 Mexico City had 49,637 foreign residents, the majority from North America and Europe. Delia Salazar, La Población Extranjera de México (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1996), 334.
competition between Mexican and immigrant businesses, the nationalist and often xenophobic rhetoric of the Cárdenas presidency pressured immigrants to assimilate. In the state and civil society, European and North American cultural practices were verbally rejected as foreign even as their influence remained strong in government and organizational programs. In 1938 the Mexican Guías requested the establishment of an independent organization associated with the WAGGGS, and the organization adapted a more nationalistic tone. Amidst the church-state conflict Mexican women created a seemingly secular space in which Catholic religious values were forged. At the same time girls learned about the Mexican flag, sang the national anthem, held flag ceremonies, volunteered in city hospitals, and represented Mexico at international Guide conferences. However, their particular version of nationalism was one influenced by members’ affluence, social position, and continued participation in global initiatives through their membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

The perceived need to establish good neighborliness between the women of Mexico and the United States derived from U.S. opposition to the nation’s radical postrevolutionary polices, in particular threats to U.S. property rights. Following Obregón’s refusal to guarantee U.S. oil companies’ subsoil rights, which were threatened by article 27 of the 1917 constitution, the United States government withheld diplomatic relations for three years. In 1938 when Cardenas publicly announced the expropriation of Mexican and British oil companies, Mexico faced economic sanctions from both nations. Despite heightened tensions in the late 1930s, World War II reinforced the need to build a better relationship with Mexico and its citizens.

In the 1940s the Mexican government shifted its focus from rural agricultural development towards urban industrial production and free enterprise. The war stimulated the export economy and encouraged Import Substitution Industrialization. This mid-century “Miracle” brought the expansion of food processing, textiles, and steel production and attracted increased foreign investment. In this period of rapid urbanization and industrialization, the growing middle class became a symbol of progress. Womanhood and Mexicanidad were altered, but not defined by the influx of global and transnational cultural developments.

As María Esther Lemus noted, the Guías de México created a new social space in which girls developed more independent identities. Education, employment, and the loosening of parental restrictions associated with girls’ increased socialization outside the home were significant agents of change. As girls’ opportunities to attend secondary schools improved in the 1940s and 1950s and literacy rates rose dramatically, a new girlhood culture emerged. Girls became more interested in fashion, make-up, comics and magazines. The Guías de México published its own magazines, Nezaldi and Muchachas, hoping that by directly addressing appropriate dress and feminine comportment, they could steer the course of participants. Guide leaders aimed to cultivate career-oriented, athletic, patriotic and Catholic Guías who represented a new path to womanhood different from the flagrantly rebellious chica moderna or the politically active Mexican woman.

The definition of Mexican girlhood and womanhood was again radically reconstructed during the political crises and economic malaise of the turbulent 1965-1975 decade. In the 1960s young women joined pro-democracy urban student movements that denounced police brutality and violations to the autonomy of the national university. On October 2, 1968 the government

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30 María Esther Lemus. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 14, 2011.
ordered an assault on the hundreds of students and other protesters at the Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico City.\footnote{Carey, 177-191.} A second wave feminist movement emerged alongside other Mexican women’s movements for social reform in an atmosphere of increased inflation, economic stagnation, and foreign economic investment.\footnote{Louise Walker, \textit{Waking from the Dream: Mexico’s Middle Classes After 1968} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), Kindle edition, location 130-527.} The feminist movement was central to public discourses on the dissolution of the family, delinquency of youth, and invasion of a seemingly foreign women’s movement.

The majority of Mexican women, including many Guide leaders, strongly rejected the term “feminism” and the stereotypes associated with it. Alongside hundreds of other associations, the Mexican Girl Guides sent representatives to the 1975 United Nations Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City. This study draws attention to the ways in which Mexican womanhood was radically redefined by the everyday decisions and practices of Mexican women and girls as they altered and appropriated these discourses. In their youth, these same women helped steer a course of cultural change: their athletic endeavors, religious and educational practices, and participation in national and international political movements set a new tone for Mexican womanhood. During the 1960s and 1970s the Guías focused on careerism, outdoor adventure, and international development. While in the 1950s the \textit{Muchachas} advice column suggested that girls strive to place motherhood and marriage ahead of their career goals, in the 1970s girls were advised to follow their dreams and aspirations.

Guiding developed most rapidly between 1965 and 1980. While by 1980 the association in Mexico had approximately 10,000 girls, today it has between 6,000 and 7,000 members.\footnote{\textit{Muchachas}, January, 1979, 5 and Cony Rios López. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 15, 2011.} In part this is due to the plethora of new opportunities for girls, such as sports clubs and school-
sponsored extracurricular activities. Further, in 1980 women were invited to be leaders in the Asociación de Scouts de México, A.C., associated with the World Organization of the Scout Movement. In 1981 girls were encouraged to become members. The Scout Association currently has approximately 42,000 members, and in 2010 it selected its first female Chief National Scout, Ana Lorena Gudiño Valdez. Though many former Guides and their children have become Scouts, the Guides of Mexico support a single sex organization that focuses on the needs of girls. One Adult Guides United in Service (GAUS) member stated, “Within the Boy Scouts, girls often return to playing a supporting gender role.” Another argued, “While the Guías address issues such as pregnancy and domestic violence, the Boy Scouts do not.” Though the two organizations share the same founder, motto, promise, and values-oriented goals, the Guides single-sex philosophy rests on the belief that girls learn differently, have separate needs, and develop confidence and self-esteem in single-sex educational environments.

With the emergence of new single-sex Scouting and Guiding associations, older debates have resurfaced. For example, the Scout Association of Great Britain has since 1991 been co-educational at all levels while the Girl Guides of Great Britain have maintained a single-sex association. Since the 1970s many Guiding and Scouting organizations in Europe, such as the Guides of Sweden and France, have merged. In the twenty-first century, do single-sex associations elevate the status of women or place limits on intellectual equality? Guías de México Technical Coordinator Ninfa Nelly Ortiz Treviño, who joined the Movement in 1986, believes that girls are more comfortable stating their opinions and advocating for themselves in an all-girl environment. She stated, “The leadership opportunities that I had in the program

influenced my development as a healthy and independent woman.”

Administrative Coordinator and former Guide Leader Cony Ríos López added, “In a male dominated society, Girl Guiding elevates girls and women. Today it further emphasizes girls’ healthful progression and maturity— their self-esteem, leadership abilities and healthy lifestyle.” The contemporary Movement in Mexico focuses on issues such as human rights, women’s advocacy, service, leadership and sexual education rather than outdoor adventure. It has expanded to various regions of Mexico including Quintana Roo, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, San Luis Potosí, Jalisco, Puebla, Querétaro, Colima, the state of Mexico, Morelos, Nuevo León, the Federal District, and Veracruz. Former First Ladies Yolanda Cecilia Occelli González (1988-1994) and Margarita Zavala de Calderón (2006-2012) were life-long Guide members and continue to be advocates of the association. In 2014 there were ten million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in one hundred and forty-five national organizations around the world, and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts remains the largest global voluntary association dedicated to girls and young women.

Organization and Methodology

This study sits at the intersection of postrevolutionary gender and cultural studies of state-society relations in Mexico and the burgeoning field of childhood history. It is based on original and untapped sources: oral interviews with Mexican Guide leaders, patrol log books, letters and records of the founder, and past issues of Guide magazines. Each of these sources provides insights into the evolving perceptions of girlhood and womanhood across the twentieth century.

36 Ninfa Nelly Ortiz Treviño. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 15, 2011.
38 Ibid.
This work examines the Girl Guides as a new social space for cultural debates shaping the postrevolutionary reconstruction of Mexican womanhood. It assess the gendered lessons that Guide leaders passed to their pupils through badgework, civic involvement, and recreational activities, situating women’s understanding of their role in society nationally and internationally. The study took place largely in Mexico City and utilizes archival sources and interviews with former Guías. These interviews elucidate the ways in which women of various generations experienced girlhood, and how Guiding shaped women’s understanding of their role as citizens. Interviews with adult members from various generations reflect the changing meanings and practices of Mexican girlhood and womanhood across the mid- to late- twentieth century and the ways in which political, social, and economic changes transformed these practices.

This work draws on materials from the Guías’ private library. The library includes historical handbooks and badgebooks, patrol log books, newspaper clippings, letters and records of the founder, and past issues of the Guide magazines Muchachas and Nezaldi, a historical collection that to date has not been explored by historians. It draws on sources from the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada including archival newspapers and magazines, which reflect women’s discourses on and reaction to the modernizing state. Primary sources at the National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, in New York City were also consulted. The Council Fire Magazine, an international Guiding magazine published in England, and documents on international Girl Guide events and WAGGS Western Hemisphere Conferences, were critical in researching the global movement.

This study sits at the intersection of postrevolutionary cultural studies of state-society relations and the burgeoning field of childhood studies in Mexico. Over the past ten years, scholars have engaged in an effort to reconstruct the history of twentieth-century Mexico,
dividing the era into two distinct periods – the postrevolutionary populist presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, and the post-World War II “Golden Age” of modernization. Historians such as Rick López, Marjorie Becker and Mary Kay Vaughan have given much consideration to the impact of Cárdenas’ cultural project, which aimed to connect rural areas to urban and to consolidate state control through educational and agricultural programs. Historians such as Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov have applied the study of cultural politics in the state to the well-documented shift from revolutionary radicalism to the postwar conservative order to explain cultural change in the context of the post-World War II “Golden Age.” In doing so, they have evaluated how the politics of social control and cultural consumption played a role in the construction of Mexican nationalism and identity during the second half of the century. 40 This work utilizes a multigenerational approach to the study of cultural politics, viewing these two distinct periods comparatively rather than as discrete temporal fields. Additionally, it moves beyond the Mexican “Golden Age” to also include an analysis of 1970s national and transnational political transformations.

Twentieth-century Mexico was a society in transition, where women’s position in the state was constantly changing, and visions of women’s subordination and relegation to domestic work clashed with an emerging urban women’s movement for suffrage, civic participation, and educational opportunity. Here this work parallels that of gender historians such as Jocelyn Olcott, Joanne Hershfield, and Anne Rubenstein who have analyzed the modernization of gender and citizenship in the state. State-based initiatives such as the PRM-sponsored Frente Unico Pro-Derechos de la Mujer (FUPDM), attempted to control the emerging women’s movement, and

PRI censorship policies attempted to limit and direct these discourses. These restrictions, however, did not curtail dramatic reinterpretations of gender and difference across the twentieth-century. This work evaluates the ways in which this gendered culture war was interpreted by Mexican women and youth of various generations through an examination of women’s increasingly public roles and expanding opportunities in the church and state. Central to these discourses were Catholic nationalism, the possible masculinization or corruption of the feminine, the merits of co-education, the acceptability of sex education, and the meaning of gender equity.41 In analyzing women and generational change, this work examines gender as a constantly changing societal construct and womanhood as a subjective identity, drawing upon Joan Scott’s theory on gender as a subject of analysis.42

Twentieth-century childhood and girlhood took many forms, reflecting on Mexico’s diversity in terms of social class, region, and ethnic background. Scholars are just beginning to unfold these critical concepts and experiences, which have previously served as only a secondary focal point to scholarly works in women’s history. Historians such as Patience Schell and Mary Kay Vaughan have broached the history of childhood through their work on postrevolutionary state education. These works, which focus on the formal educational sphere, demonstrate the ways in which youth were central to state building projects during the 1920s and 1930s, and how these initiatives were perceived by myriad Mexican communities. More recently, Elena Jackson Albarrán and Susana Sosenski have built upon these discourses, viewing the child as an object of analysis. These works demonstrate the ways in which rapid postrevolutionary industrialization

and urbanization transformed childhood experiences and expectations, and brought political attention to the plight of working class children who became the focus of postrevolutionary labor legislation and reform movements. By focusing on girlhood in particular, this work emphasizes the ways in which national and transnational discourses on feminine comportment, educational opportunity, and gendered social acculturation radically altered girls’ relationship to patriarchy, religion and the state. Girls developed increasingly independent identities and interests, and constructed a new girlhood culture more closely affiliated with other individuals of same age cohort.

By viewing girlhood in a transnational context, this study demonstrates the dynamic relationship between Mexican historical actors and global social and political movements for reform. Rather than viewing early twentieth century Progressive Era and New Deal style reforms and rhetoric as national constructs, scholars such as Daniel T. Rodgers and Elizabeth Borgwardt demonstrate the ways in which the social politics of individual nations were intertwined with international discourses on poverty, urbanization, and industrialization. These historical inquiries have also been utilized to explain the internationalization of the turbulent 1965-1975 decade. The waning of superpower politics, increased demands for global human rights initiatives, and monetary stabilization schemes during the far-reaching social and political upheaval of this decade are viewed as a launching point for the globalization of social and political ideals. As demonstrated by historians Jocelyn Olcott and John Robert McNeill, transnational cooperation on a broader set of social and political issues from environmental

policy to women’s rights were a result of these far-reaching transformations. Through the lens of a transnational organization born out of the Progressive Era, this study builds upon this transnational scholarship by exploring the ways in which Mexican women and girls, through their participation in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and interaction with global organizations and reform movements, participated in global discourses on gendered socialization and youth across the twentieth century. These international ideas and norms were appropriated by Mexican women and strongly impacted the social construction of postrevolutionary Mexican womanhood.

The first chapter, “Girlhood, Progressivism, and the Global Guide Movement,” describes the birth of Boy Scouting and Girl Guiding in Great Britain in 1908 and 1910 and the global expansion of the association, its methods and values, in the inter-war years. While in the early twentieth century the Guide and Scout associations were rooted in Progressive and Edwardian era reform movements, in the interwar period the organization brought women’s roles as caregivers, teachers and volunteers to the international arena. Rather than municipal housekeepers, a term used to describe liberal reformers of the early twentieth century, they became humanitarian internationalists. Members of the Girl Guide and Girl Scout International Council, founded in 1919, believed that creating an international community of women and girls with common values and goals could help prevent future international conflicts; adolescent delinquency caused by wartime turmoil could be ameliorated through the promotion of character and values education abroad. This new global Movement promoted health and wellness, international cooperation, and moral uplift abroad. However, the Guides insistence on spreading

western democratic, liberal ideals and middle class social mores to the throughout the western hemisphere also demonstrates the imperialist nature of first wave feminist international organizing.

The second chapter, “Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies: Girl Guiding in Twentieth Century Mexico, 1930-1945,” discusses the roots of the Guías de México as a branch of the British Girl Guides in 1930 to its emergence as an independent association. As the 1930s progressed, Mexican Guide members responded to nationalist postrevolutionary rhetoric disseminated through public school curricula, state-sponsored cultural events, revolutionary art and literature, and burgeoning activist movements and requested the establishment of an independent Guiding association. Originally a branch of the British Girl Guides, an organization that reflected European Protestant and secular Progressive-era values, Mexican members called for an independent Mexican Guiding association that represented what they perceived to be the needs of Mexican youth – a convergence of British Guide traditions, Catholicism, and emerging nationalist principles. The new organization promoted girls’ involvement in social service organizations and their maintenance of Catholic piety and motherhood.

The following chapter, “Benevolent Femininity and Democratic Motherhood: Mexican Girl Guiding, 1945-1960,” describes the new opportunities that were available to girls and women during the Mexican Miracle. To the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling political party in Mexico, the expansion of the urban middle class was a symbol of its accomplishments, the children a target for its continued success. The construction of parks, schools and universities, development of a welfare state, and passage of women’s suffrage at the national level in 1953 provided new opportunities for Mexican women and youth. In the midst of the Mexican Miracle, the Guides provided a cultural space in which religious values could be
forged within a seemingly secular and modern association. Though feminism and Catholicism in Mexico are historically viewed as opposing forces, the church had significant social, cultural and political influence on the reconstruction of gender and *Mexicanidad*, despite legal sanctions limiting the role of the church in the political arena.

The last chapter “Las Guías de México and the Wave Decade: The Politics of Gender Equity and Difference in an Age of Internationalism” analyzes the radical reconstruction of gender in Mexico and abroad in the 1960s and 1970s. Feminism, rejected by the majority and associated with bra-burning, extremism, abortion, and radicalism, also inspired a plethora of legislation and initiatives within and outside of Mexico aimed towards greater gender equity. Women, liberal and conservative, participated in a dialogue that redefined their roles according to new global and local circumstances. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which moderate civil associations, such as the Girl Guides, became agents of change amid global human and women’s rights debates. Rights-based arguments for change were not solely left and radical. Rather, amid neoliberal austerity programs in which the PRI government shifted its welfare role onto civil society, civic and women’s associations took on more public responsibilities. Women’s civic participation and association with the transnational women’s movement heightened their public role and status in Mexican society. In response to a youth-initiated call for radical change, the Girl Guides of Mexico offered new opportunities for girls. Through exposure to widespread poverty, hunger and economic inequality, and a dedication to the United Nations development goals, girls were presented with opportunities to assist in rural and urban service work aimed at ameliorate the nation’s problems. The Movement steered girls to utilize their supposed feminine virtues, youthful aspirations and exuberance in what they perceived to be a progressive, constructive, and politically acceptable way.
CHAPTER I: GIRLHOOD, PROGRESSIVISM AND THE GLOBAL GIRL GUIDE MOVEMENT

In July 1930, League of Nations Secretariat representative Hallsten Kallia of Finland addressed the newly formed World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts: “Some of you probably know with what great interest both the Secretary-General and we, his collaborators, are following every event we hear of in the Guide Movement, because we do know that you are one of the Movements who work for just the very same aim which is the League’s own - that of furthering international co-operation, goodwill and understanding.”

Like the League of Nations, the first international guiding entity, the International Council, was established in 1919 with the purpose of establishing post-war international cooperation and peace. In her introductory message, World Chief Guide Olave Baden-Powell reminded members of this message: “But one of our greater duties besides the breaking down of barriers is to build up

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46 “Por Tercera Vez Nos Visita Nuestra Jefe Guía Mundial,” Muchachas, November 1959, 18. In the 1950s the Guías de México and the Girl Scouts of Mexico, made up of the daughters of U.S. citizens who resided in the country, joined to form one single organization in Mexico. This picture was taken to commemorate the gesture, intended to promote greater understanding between Mexican and American girls.


The Guides regularly used a capital “M” when referring to their Movement.
amongst our children real interest and keenness to know and care about their fellow human-
beings wherever they may be.”^48

Like the growing legions of post-World War I psychiatrists, pediatricians and educators, leaders of the Girl Guide and Boy Scout Movements saw worldwide cooperation as a key to heightening global morality and preventing future wars. They felt that adolescent ethical and physical wellness suffered from wartime turmoil and a lack of adult supervision during the war years; racial degeneracy and the problems of adolescence could be solved through the promotion of character and values education. Many scholars believed that social problems such as a high infant mortality rate, crime and violence rested squarely on the shoulders of inadequately trained working-class mothers. Therefore, female youth were of particular interest to reformers. But which values did they believe should be shared?

**Boy Scoutsing during the Edwardian Era**

It was due to his heroics during the Siege of Mafeking, the most well-known British action during the 1899-1902 Second Boer War that Lord Robert Baden-Powell became a national hero in Britain. During the war the Lieutenant General recruited and trained boys aged 12-15 as postmen, messengers, and to carry the wounded. It was this work that inspired him to establish the Boy Scout Movement in England.\(^{49}\) On the home front British scholars began to explore the issue of “racial degeneracy” in the Empire. According to historian Carol Dyhouse, during the recruitment process thousands of volunteers were seen as unfit for service. In Manchester alone, she states that 8,000 to 11,000 volunteers were rejected. This state-run study concluded that urbanization and industrialization were socially menacing, and the root cause of

^48 Ibid, 52.
low birth weight, high infant mortality, slums and disease in British urban centers.⁵⁰ Like other reformers of the period, Baden-Powell felt that lessons in patriotism, health and comportment would help young men to become thrifty, useful, and well-educated citizens. At the turn of the century, settlements, youth organizations and charities began to establish camps as an experimental practice to combat the ailments caused by industrialization. While at first it was only elite boys who went to camp, camps later catered specifically to working-class boys.⁵¹ Baden-Powell felt that training boys of all social classes in self-reliance through pioneering, tracking and camping would ultimately strengthen these boys, and in effect, the British Empire.

In 1907 Baden-Powell recruited 22 boys from various social class backgrounds to attend the first Boy Scout Camp on Brownsea Island in England where they would participate in drills, camping, observation, woodcraft, exercises in chivalry and patriotism, and lifesaving – fundamentals of the future Scout program. The success of this experiment and the growing interest in the formation of a British Scouting organization led Baden-Powell to publish Scouting for Boys (1908), which was based on his earlier military books Reconnaissance and Scouting (1884) and Aids to Scouting for NCOs and Men (1899).⁵² His book reflected the concerns of Edwardian reformers in England such as a lack of patriotism, morality, flirtatiousness between young men and women, and conspicuous consumption. It was widely distributed to educators, preachers, and reformers at home and abroad. President Teddy Roosevelt heartily approved of Powell’s methods:

I most cordially sympathize not only with the methods of the book but perhaps even more with its purpose … these lessons which it teaches are applicable to and as necessary for young Americans as young Englishmen. If the next generation grows up to be wishy-washy, to lack patriotism, and neither to have nor to admire the sterner virtues, the outlook will indeed be gloomy, and I think that mere frivolity, mere love of cheap excitement, may do as much damage as corruption. Moreover, I quite agree with the lessons of this book that ordinary athletic sports, excellent though they are, do not take the place of life in the open as you teach it.  

The Movement was adopted in the United States in 1910, and the Scout promise and Law initially presented in *Scouting for Boys* was adopted by all associated Scouting organizations. In reciting the Scout Law, Baden-Powell’s youth promised to be trustworthy and loyal to country, helpful to others, a brother to those of all social classes, courteous and a friend to animals. He aimed to teach British adolescents to smile and whistle - “The punishment for swearing or bad language is for each offense a mug of cold water to be poured down the offenders sleeve by the other Scouts” – to be thrifty, and to be clean in thought, word and deed. “Decent Scouts talk down upon silly youth who talk dirt, and they do not themselves give way to temptation…a Scout is pure, clean-minded, and manly,” he warned. 

**Girl Guiding in England**

According to E.K. Wade, Powell’s personal secretary and author of his biography, *Piper of Pax*, after the publication of *Scouting for Boys* Powell began to receive letters from children throughout England who decided to start their own Scouting clubs. Unexpectedly, and to the consternation of the Lieutenant General, many of these letters came from British girls. Wade quotes a few of these letters in her biography. One young “Girl Scout” proudly boasted “My two cousins and I have a B.P.S.S. that means Baden-Powell Scouting Society. We have had one try at it; it is hard to keep behind bushes without being seen and we get horribly thirsty.”

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53 Wade, 164-165.
54 Baden-Powell, 361.
Baden-Powell’s wife Olave later stated that she viewed the girls’ initiative as a reaction to the Edwardian-era women’s movement in England. “It opened up new and appealing vistas to these young female Edwardians, visions of a life where women could face the world on equal terms with men…The ideas chimed in perfect tune with the growing demand for women’s suffrage.”

Baden-Powell initially viewed the organization as entirely inappropriate for girls. However, unofficial girl scouting continued to spread. At the first official Boy Scout Rally at Crystal Palace in London on September 4, 1909 11,000 boys and a number of girls dressed in ad-hoc khaki uniforms prepared to salute Lord Robert Baden-Powell as he inspected each patrol. Baden-Powell was initially embarrassed by the incident and the bad press that it brought to the organization. But he felt that something must be done about the girls. Thus a separate organization exclusively for girls was established. Robert Baden-Powell recruited his sister Agnes to lead the Movement.

The Girl Guides were officially established in 1910, but rather than giving girls equal opportunities, the new organization initially focused on training girls in hygiene, health, and domesticity. According to historian Carol Dyhouse, following the Boer War, government-sponsored Enquiry Commission Reports blamed the “physical deterioration” of the populace on women’s ignorance of household affairs, poor hygiene, and a “decreased sense of maternal obligation.” The state and philanthropic organizations then opened educative institutions for working class mothers to combat their supposed lack of familial responsibility. However, the need and purpose of public schools for girls was hotly debated. According to Dyhouse, the 1904 Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration argued that school attendance would

57 Proctor, 1.
58 Dyhouse, 92.
give girls the wrong kind of aspirations and encourage them to shirk their responsibilities as wives and mothers. The Guide and Scout Movements followed in the footsteps of other organizations with similar aims such as the Snowdrop Bands and Anglican Friendly Societies, as well as the Boys and Girls Clubs, which aimed to reform working-class youth. Common among these organizations was the fear that boys could be led astray by immoral young ladies. They were concerned with adolescents’ flirtatiousness, course gestures, and vulgar language. With this in mind, Agnes and Robert Baden-Powell felt that the promotion of motherhood should be the primary focus on the British Girl Guides. “With girls it has to be administered with great discrimination; you do not want to make tomboys of refined girls, yet you want to attract, and thus raise, the slum girl from the gutter” Robert Baden-Powell noted. While boys were given some flexibility in choosing their patrol leaders, the girls’ organization emphasized the need to choose the right kind of ladies to lead the new patrols. While working-class girls were targeted as participants, their mothers were generally not selected to serve as Guiders.

According to Olave Baden-Powell, Agnes was “very Victorian in outlook,” and this domestic-centered organization initially failed to excite young British ladies. Once again it was the girls themselves who drove the process of change. Edwardian girls, Olave Baden-Powell explained, felt the organization was old-fashioned. In March, 1916, she travelled the country seeking “suitable [mostly aristocratic] young women” who could be Guide leaders. Olave-Baden Powell, who was twenty-seven years old at the time, found participation and leadership in the organization liberating despite her mother and sister-in-law’s condemnation of her Edwardian views on gender. “Mother…was so very Victorian in her outlook. She condemned

59 Ibid, 102.
60 Ibid, 110.
61 Olave Baden-Powell, 123.
62 Ibid, 126.
suffragettes and any form of ‘Women’s Lib’ whatsoever – even the comparatively modest freedom Robin [Robert Baden-Powell] offered to the girls through Guiding.” She felt the organization should provide girls with opportunities for service, travel, and adventure in addition to teaching domestic skills such as sewing, infant-care, and first aid. It was World War I that provided these opportunities and new freedoms.

New liberal and North American Progressive-era philosophies, which viewed women as municipal housekeepers whom the Social Gospel called to serve their communities, found new opportunities to put these ideals into practice during the First World War. The organization expanded nationally and internationally. By 1920 it included 180,000 British Guides and 50,000 U.S. Girl Scouts. The focus of the organization shifted from housewifery to the development of useful female citizens. Prior to the war Guides and Scouts continued to be accused of raising tomboys, but ironically it was the war that gave the organization a new image. Girls participated in stretcher drills, marched and obeyed whistle and voice signals, collected socks and bandages, and worked for relief agencies throughout the war. The organization claimed a new sense of importance. In 1916 they published official organizational policies and rules and during the 1920s Girl Guide and Scout organizations hired full time professional staff. The Guides began to view their organization as a global association for moral uplift and international peace.

**The Liberal Foundations of Guiding and Scouting**

After World War I Scouting and Guiding became supranational organizations grounded in late nineteenth and early twentieth century liberal ideologies. In the early twentieth century they touted an idealistic philosophy of cosmopolitanism and universalism, democratization, ecumenicalism, fraternity and social uplift. However, each of these concepts was tied to the

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63 Ibid, 129.
64 Proctor, 19.
imperialist assumption that all humans ought to aspire to certain beliefs, habits and behaviors. The organizations arose at a time of democratization in Great Britain during which Edwardian liberals both promoted the enfranchisement of all Britons and feared the impacts of an expanded, less educated, electorate. Moral uplift and educational reform were viewed as a way to prepare the poor and working classes for their new responsibilities as citizens. While technically the Edwardian Era refers to the period during which Edward VII reigned in the United Kingdom (1901-1910), the term Edwardian is representative of a period of social change stretching from 1880 until the outbreak of World War I (1914). Due to industrialization and an agricultural depression that began in the 1880s and lasted through Edward VII’s reign, British cities rapidly expanded as rural young men and women migrated in search of new employment opportunities. The British Empire, the largest in the world, was key to its rise.

The Representation of the People Acts of 1884 and 1918 significantly expanded the electorate, and that of 1928 stated that women’s voting rights would be equal to those of men. The organization’s focus on democracy, responsibility and citizenship arose from these ideals. For example, Scouts and Guides were divided into patrol groups of approximately eight boys or girls led by a patrol leader. Frequent elections were organized to choose a patrol leader, who would organize meetings and activities, and delegate responsibilities to other members under the supervision of the Scoutmaster or Guider. Each individual member would be responsible for a particular task such as quartermaster or scribe. Patrol leaders were supposed to exemplify the universal principles stated in the Scout Oath and Laws.

The ideals of universality and cosmopolitanism were viewed as central to Boy Scouting and Girl Guiding, as they were for other British liberal-minded supranational organizations. For example, starting in the mid-eighteenth century British freemasons referred to themselves as a
universal brotherhood open to individuals of all classes, races and creeds. Like the British Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, the main centers of freemasonry activity paralleled those of the British Empire.\(^6\) The fourth Scout law stated, “A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter what social class the other belongs.”\(^6\) However, like the freemasons, Scouts were expected to adhere to a number of guidelines. These included moral erectness, humanitarianism, and a belief in a universal being. In doing so members implicitly agreed to adhere to middle class sensibilities promoted within liberal reform movements.

In spreading the organization throughout the empire, the Scouts and Guides of Great Britain adhered to the imperial presumption that in doing so they were contributing to international progress by promoting cosmopolitanism, democratic citizenship values, and self-reliance. As the organization spread to British colonies such as South Africa, Kenya and India, the term cosmopolitanism was used to refer to the global nature of the Scout and Guide brotherhood and sisterhood, which claimed to accept members of all nations and creeds. The fourth Scout law stated, “A scout must never be a SNOB. A snob is one who looks down upon another because he is poorer, or who is poor and resents another because he is rich. A scout accepts the other man as he finds him, and makes the best of him - Kim, the boy scout, was called by the Indians ‘Little friend of all the world,’ and that is the name which every scout should earn for himself.”\(^6\) The theory of universality posited that by following the British Boy Scout laws, “Kim” could also aspire to be an honorable, loyal and disciplined member of the empire. Rudyard Kipling, who articulated the vision that civilized white men had something of value to share with the seemingly undeveloped world in his 1899 poem the “White Man’s


\(^6\) Ibid.
Burden,” was a close friend of Baden-Powell. Kipling’s stories, including the *Jungle Book* and *Kim*, were the inspiration for many of Baden-Powell’s Scout games, stories and practices, which became a staple of the Boy Scout movement. While Baden-Powell expressed an appreciation for African traditions, demonstrated through romanticized notions of “frontier” peoples, their resourcefulness and discipline, and his implementation of Zulu traditions such as the Zulu praise song, traditional coming of age journeys, and Zulu bead designs on the Boy Scout Woodcraft badge, the movement also contributed to the deconstruction of traditional ideals through the promotion of Christianity and western morality. In spreading the movement, the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides initially sought “respectable” leaders from within the British settler community, such as missionaries and teachers, rather than Indians and Africans. Cosmopolitanism was demonstrated through the provision of an English education and moral Christian ethos alongside ethnic crafts, songs and games.

In Edwardian Britain, liberals viewed ecumenical religious practices as a departure from the divisive politics associated with religious conflict in the state, resulting from the promotion of Anglicanism as Great Britain’s official religion prior to 1829. Up to that point Roman Catholics had been denied citizenship, land ownership and inheritance rights and were viewed as holding a close allegiance to Rome rather than the King of England. The spirit of ecumenicalism subscribed to by Scouting and Guiding organizations was presented as a secular way to unite Christians throughout the empire. In this case secularism did not mean nonreligious, but rather inclusive of Christian peoples that shared certain principles with one another.

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Ecumenicalism was generally rejected by Catholics due to a history of religious discrimination in England and the connection between new liberalism and Protestant ecumenical practices and organizations.\textsuperscript{70} Prior to the First World War, Scouting and Guiding were largely white and Protestant projects. In 1933 Olave and Robert Baden-Powell visited the Pope in Rome, alongside over 100 Catholic Guides and Scouts, in an effort to promote the organization and make it more accessible to the Catholic community.\textsuperscript{71}

Just as George V stated that it was the duty of the British soldier to pay allegiance to “God, your sovereign, and Country,”\textsuperscript{72} it was considered the duty of all Scouts and Guides to pledge “I will do my duty to God and King.” Christianity remained a part of the British Empire’s civilizing mission and of British national identity, even as the role of the official church, the Church of England, declined.\textsuperscript{73} For example, official religious provisions were made to establish a staff of full-time Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian chaplains across the empire that were charged with elevating the physical, social and moral conditions of the soldiers. Thus it is not surprising that in an era of declining church attendance and a rise in ecumenical movements and organizations, Baden-Powell required that all Guides and Scouts profess a duty to God and King, but did not subscribe to a particular faith. The organization was instead viewed as secular and cosmopolitan. As historian John Wolffe has argued, non-involvement in organized religion did not necessarily represent a lack in personal belief. The nation’s religious and moral mission was deeply imbedded within the rhetoric of imperialism and empire. Nationalism and patriotism, he argued, were intrinsically connected.\textsuperscript{74} Nationalism was not a substitute for religion, but

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{70} Helen McCarthy, \textit{The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 91.
  \item \textsuperscript{71} Proctor, 62.
  \item \textsuperscript{72} Wolffe, 227-228.
  \item \textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 2-21.
\end{itemize}
something that evolved out of a religious identity. Ecumenicalism, a shared belief in God and
dedication to Britain and its king, was a critical element of the shared experience of British Boy
Scouting and Girl Guiding.

After World War I the moral mission of the British Empire expanded. Through the
League of Nations Mandate system, the nation was charged with new possessions in the Middle
East and Africa. The League granted western nations with a “sacred trust,” for the welfare of
seemingly underdeveloped regions “not able to stand by themselves under the strenuous
conditions of the modern world.”75 Historian Helen McCarthy demonstrates the enthusiasm for
international peace and cooperation in Britain through her analysis of the depth and breadth of
the country’s League of Nations Union, formed in 1918 and at its height consisting of 400,000
members. The LNU’s support base consisted of a broad membership of liberal-leaning
associations, religious groups, schools and educational organizations, including the Boy Scouts
and Girl Guides. Like the Scouts and Guides, the LNU promoted liberal values such as non-
partisanship, democratic education and responsible citizenship, and the expansion of ecumenical
networks, bringing Britons of various faiths together in a spirit of international cooperation, or
what McCarthy refers to as “Christian internationalism.”76 Just as Great Britain looked to the
church to morally uplift and educate colonial peoples, it looked to Protestant liberal
internationalists to lead the world on a non-sectarian road to peace, and utilized scripture to
promote the LNU’s message in leaflets, films, propaganda and speeches.

The British LNU had a significant impact on school curriculum and provided
extracurricular opportunities for students to travel to the League’s offices in Geneva, participate
in Model League of Nations clubs, and to communicate with international pen pals. During the

75 McCarthy, 143-144.
76 Ibid.
interwar period, Guides and Scouts similarly sponsored international encampments to promote international understanding and post-war peace, and at times referred to themselves as a little League of Nations. The LNU promoted an increased role for newly enfranchised women, who had gained partial enfranchisement in 1918. Women’s maternal sensibilities, the organization emphasized, made them particularly valuable in an organization dedicated to international peace and reconciliation. As seen above, the British Girl Guides adapted these messages and subscribed to the LNU’s moral mission to establish an international sisterhood based in British liberal principles.77

Historian Daniel T. Rogers argues that British Edwardian and U.S. Progressive Era social movements were not isolated historical developments. Between the late nineteenth century and the Second World War, reform movements and government policies such as social security programs and city planning were a result of global reform movements ensuing from rapid urbanization and the growth of the working classes in the nations’ increasingly industrialized cities.78 Edwardian liberalism did not disappear with the coming of World War I, but rather was transformed into an international movement for the promotion of health and wellness, international cooperation, and moral uplift. These ideals spread to other nations through formerly domestic organizations such as the Girl Guides, and were then adopted and altered to fit the needs of the international community. To middle- and upper-class British and American women, social mothering and municipal housekeeping no longer applied solely to one’s community, but to the entire globe.

The 100th anniversary of Girl Guiding in 2010 inspired historians to consider the far-reaching impact of the Girl Guide and Boy Scout Movements, and to organize conferences on

77 Ibid.
the topic, such as the 2008 Centennial Scout Symposium at Johns Hopkins University. The symposium focused on Guiding in Great Britain, the United States, Canada, and the former British Empire. For example, in *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa*, Timothy Parsons evaluated how Boy Scouts and Girl Guides interpreted the fourth Scout (and Guide) law – be a friend to every other Scout or Guide - and the difficulties in attaining this goal in racially stratified colonial societies. Historian Tammy Proctor published *Scouting for Girls: A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts*, the first academic work on global Guiding, which explores the ways in which Guiding and Girl Scouting has changed over the course of the twentieth century. While she discusses the global expansion of the organization, her research rests on sources and assessment of Guiding and Girl Scouting in England and the United States, rather than the movement’s global dissemination of reform initiatives and human rights discourses.\(^7\) By viewing this international Movement through a study of the Guías de México (Girl Guides of Mexico), established in 1930, this study demonstrates the ways in which non-European countries participated in this global exchange of ideas on gender and cultural values, and how the Mexican organization at times adopted, but at other times resisted, Progressive and Edwardian-era European and North American social values.

**Global Girl Guiding, 1919-1940**

With the creation of the International Council in 1919, Guiding became an international Movement. At the 1920 First International Conference in England two representatives from each country with a Guiding organization were invited to discuss Guiding and its purposes as a global Movement. Olave Baden-Powell served as its first chairwoman. In the early-1920s the

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International Council gained consultant status in the League of Nations, and adopted its goals of world peace and international understanding. By 1928 there were 26 member countries. With the exception of Japan, the United States and Canada, all were either in Europe or a part of the British Empire. Therefore, their outlook on education and gender roles reflected those of liberal reform minded organizations in industrialized North America and Europe.

Post-World War I Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting organizations viewed themselves as a united global Movement which aimed to cultivate cosmopolitan women and promote international peace. Culturally in Europe and the United States the post-war period provided new opportunities for school, employment, and community leadership. Western European and U.S. women gained the right to vote. New methods of recruitment then aimed to attract modern young ladies with aspirations. “The Girl Scout influence prepares a girl either for marriage or a career by helping her to fill her hope chest with desirable qualities of mind, heart, and spirit,” read a 1925 advertisement. However, discussion of female comportment and socialization between the male and female organizations continued to incite fierce international debates over morality and the harmful effects of co-ed interaction.

National Guide and Scout associations viewed girlhood and the World Association’s aims differently. For example, the U.S. organization was described by British Guiders as too militaristic. One U.S. leader training camp is described as follows: “From reveille at 5:20am until taps at 9pm, khaki-clad figures could be seen drilling on the tennis courts, chopping down trees on Boylston Street to build a lean-to, and sliding down ropes. They even practiced jumping

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81 Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, India, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America and Yugoslavia.  
82 Proctor, 106.
from a second story window into a net.”British leaders such as Robert and Olave Baden-Powell disagreed with the use of the name Scout and the choice of khaki, rather than blue, uniforms. Scouting was seen as inappropriate for girls. They believed the U.S. Girl Scouts needed to better demonstrate appropriate male and female behaviors, and that a failure to do so would prevent the spread of the Guide and Scout Movements. The Boy Scouts of America agreed. But as a female sponsored organization originally associated with the Federation Club Movement in Savannah, Georgia, from which it adapted the color green, the Girl Scouts were not initially established within the confines of a Boy Scout movement. Already in her forties when the movement began, founder Juliette Gordon Low felt that Girl Scouting was a way to ensure that American Girls would be prepared to take advantage of the rapidly expanding opportunities offered to early twentieth century women. Like many Southern reformers, Low was single (separated and widowed) when she began her work in Scouting. Prior to her husband’s death she participated in charity associations in England. However, her dedication to public life did not begin until late in her marriage, and began without the permission of her husband, William Low. As the founder of Girl Scouting in the United States, she expanded female participation in progressive social reform movements and promoted women’s independence and self-reliance. Though the U.S. Girl Scout association was a member of the International Council, established in 1919, the organization established its own uniform, handbook, constitution and bylaws. According to Historian Tammy Proctor, the U.S. and British associations later competed to spread their organizational model abroad. Olave Baden-Powell mentioned the mounting tensions

between the two organizations in her autobiography: “Our hostess in Boston was Mrs. J.J Storrow. She was prickly at first for she felt that American Girl Scouts didn’t need to be told from England what to do.”\textsuperscript{87} Later, she noted, these hostilities dissipated. During the post-war period American Girl Scout leaders reverted to a more domestic-oriented focus. However, the name “Scout” continued to be utilized.

Due to his many years of service abroad Robert Baden-Powell was very familiar with all parts of the British Empire. His contacts in South Africa and India proved useful in spreading the Movement to those regions. In 1921 he and Lady Baden-Powell visited India where they met with statesmen and individuals interested in Guiding and Scouting. Olave Baden-Powell explained the importance of spreading the Movement to India. “There were nearly ten million boys of Scout age but many of them were lacking in any opportunity to learn about health and hygiene, quite apart from the moral principles and strengthening of character Scouting could offer.” “Guiding, too, could help break down the traditional conventions that kept Indian women in the background,” she noted. She suggested that an Organizational Commissioner be sent from England to help keep the organization “on the right lines.”\textsuperscript{88} While the Girl Guides stated that all girls regardless of race or class could participate, the spread of British liberal and progressive values across the empire reflected the limitations of the founder’s Edwardian outlook.

During the 1930s the Guide Movement spread throughout the global south headed by British foreign residents abroad. In a spirit of international organizing, exemplified through the various initiatives of the League of Nations and European League of Nations Unions, the British Guide Association hoped to spread its messages of universalism, ecumenicalism and cosmopolitanism. Women’s role as municipal housekeepers was discarded by the British liberal

\textsuperscript{87} Olave Baden-Powell, 137.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 148-149.
aristocracy. Instead, post-World War I global housekeeping reflected women’s responsibility both for the industrial working class at home and for the spread of health, wellness, and European social values abroad. In the British colonies, the organization hoped that the Guide and Scout associations could contribute to the spread of universal values, values that they believed all citizens of the empire should aspire to. Outside of its borders, training in Girl Guiding would advance these principles to children in the developing world.

**Girl Guiding in Latin America**

The establishment of the first Guiding and Scouting programs in Latin America could be viewed through the lens of informal imperialism. These associations aimed to train elite foreign and Latin American youth to uplift girls and boys in seemingly underdeveloped societies. For example, the ancestors of the first Mexican Guides immigrated to Mexico during the reign of dictator Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910). The Díaz administration provided economic incentives to immigrant businessmen interested in relocating to Mexico. Between the mid-nineteenth century and World War I the British invested more in manufacturing, capital goods and loans in Latin America than any other nation, and Latin America amounted to 25% of total British overseas investment. Both before and after the revolution, entrepreneurs invested directly in land, mines, mills, refineries, public utilities, banks and railways, and indirectly through loans and bonds.\(^8^9\) Immigrant settler communities brought with them a mindset of imperial expansion in which the British had a responsibility to uplift unindustrialized nations and help them to progress. European foreign residents labeled working-class and indigenous communities as backwards and in need of reform, and believed that elite Mexicans were in need of political, social and economic guidance. British, French, German, North American and other immigrants, including many of the first

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Guides, accompanied their husbands and fathers to Latin America where they participated in literary clubs, reform-minded beneficent organizations, and private school initiatives. Many were members of the Red Cross, YWCA, Junior League, Rotary Clubs and Girl Guide Association. Organizations such as the Girl Guides demonstrate European women’s interest in spreading liberal reform and social uplift abroad. They sewed clothes for orphans, visited the elderly, and provided educational programs in hygiene, domesticity and homemaking.

Informal imperialism was initially introduced by historians Ronald Robinson and Jack Gallagher in the 1950s to explain British influence in regions that were not under its direct control.90 Scholars such as Matthew Brown, Robert D. Aguirre, Paul Garner, and Alan Knight have recently expanded upon its significance to consider the cultural, commercial and capital interests in the region.91 Knight, for example, defined imperialism as “the practice (or ideology) associated with building and maintaining an empire. An empire involves the sustained, asymmetrical exercise of power and influence by one group of people over another; the groups in question being defined according to some combination of spatial, ethnic and political origins/allegiances.”92 Knight posits that informal imperialism does not necessarily denote coercion, but rather an asymmetrical relationship between two regions. Utilizing this definition, Aguirre argues that much like in Britain’s official empire, industrialists, bankers and other European foreign residents and visitors to Mexico in the nineteenth century defined Mexico’s culture and ethnic composition as inferior, and used pseudoscientific evidence to justify informal

imperial domination. His work demonstrates the ways in which the Latin American “other” was represented in nineteenth century British artwork, museum collections, travel writing and freak shows. For example, two Aztec children, viewed as intellectually and physically primitive, were displayed as specimens in freak shows and museum displays in London. Latin American artifacts were described as curiosities used to demonstrate the unsophisticated nature of indigenous civilizations, and thus their need for British intellectual assistance.93

Historian Paul Garner agreed that an asymmetrical relationship between Great Britain and Mexico existed in the early nineteenth century, when more than half of Mexico’s imports came from Britain, but stated that in the late nineteenth century a much stronger case can be made for British informal imperialism in South America rather than Mexico. Until 1914, 85 percent of British trade with Latin America and 69 percent of British investment was concentrated in Argentina, Brazil and Chile.94 In contrast, between the 1860s and 1880s Mexico was isolated from capital and credit in European financial markets due to the absence of diplomatic relations with Britain.95 In 1884 diplomatic relations resumed but British investors had to compete with U.S. and German companies for markets and influence.

After World War I British foreign citizens continued to reside in Mexico. British businesses, hospitals, banks, organizations and institutions continued to thrive and exert influence in cosmopolitan city centers, even as Britain’s economic influence declined. This study on the Girl Guides of Mexico demonstrates the ways in which foreign citizens identification with British Edwardian liberalism continued to shape interactions between foreign

93 Aguirre, 116-117.
94 Garner, 18.
95 The Convention of London Treaty was an agreement signed by representatives of Spain, Britain and France. The three nations sent troops to occupy the customs house in Veracruz, Mexico until the Mexican government agreed to pay its debts. When it became clear that Napoleon III’s troops were instructed to occupy Mexico City, Spanish and British troops abandoned the mission. Maximilian Hapsburg of France was Emperor of Mexico from 1864-1867.
and Mexican citizens. As is discussed further in chapter 2, the acceptance of the Guide program – along with its messages of ecumenicalism, cosmopolitanism, democratization, and western feminism – required negotiation and reconceptualization before it could expand beyond the foreign colonies of Mexico City.

The 1930 WAGGGS Sixth World Conference took place at Foxlease, a Girl Guide training center established in 1922 in Hampshire, England. During the conference, the WAGGGS world flag was adopted and was to fly alongside each nation’s flag during Guide ceremonies to signify the universal principals that had been adapted by member associations. These symbols were created to demonstrate the universality of the Guide program, its promise and laws, principles which every sister Guide would share with one another. The flag was blue with a golden yellow trefoil symbol, which was to be adopted by all member countries. The yellow color represented the sun shining down on all of the children of the world. The vein of the trefoil represented a compass, which one might describe as a moral compass, reminding girls of the ethical values promoted by the organization. The stars, one on each side, represented the promise and law, originally published in Baden-Powell’s 1909 book *Scouting for Boys*. The circular border around the trefoil represents the organization’s international membership.96

At the Sixth World Conference in 1930 leaders from various countries described the accomplishments of their Guide and Girl Scout organizations and made suggestions for the Movement’s future growth. Topics discussed included “breaking down barriers” among nations and “how youth could help promote peace.” Leaders presented strategies for building girls’ independence and leadership skills. For example, they proposed that girls run their own meetings and plan community service activities. Every member, they argued, had the ability and obligation

to contribute to the community. Guiding would train them for their responsibilities as municipal and global housekeepers.\textsuperscript{97} Presenters at the conference offered advice on leadership building. For example, one Guider suggested a Guide study of wildflowers, and girls’ active participation in preventing plant extinction. She was particularly concerned about plants with medicinal value. Another Guider discussed her troop’s research on garbage disposal, and the ways in which girls could engage local government officials to promote a more even distribution of clean-up services in their city. They reiterated women’s democratic civic responsibilities. “I think, too, that in the election of the patrol leaders Rangers get practice for citizenship. They learn to use the powers of election, which they will have to use later on in electing their members of Parliament. They learn to think of persons, not for their personal likes and dislikes, but for their qualities, and to judge them simply on their merits,” remarked one leader.\textsuperscript{98} It was assumed that building political and community leadership and women’s suffrage were universal goals of the world organization, and that women from South Africa to Brazil should, like British and North American women, work to broaden their democratic rights and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{99}

Initially, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts felt that the Movement could transform global interpretations of modern womanhood. They viewed the progress that North American and European women had made in terms of suffrage, citizenship, access to a growing number of careers, and ecumenical cooperation as an example to women abroad. The Sixth World Conference was the first that included official representatives from a Latin American country, Brazil. In a discussion led by Doña Maria Jose Lynch, Guiding in Brazil was described as a “very uphill fight…as it was all such a new idea to the Brazilians and their better

\textsuperscript{97} Council Fire, October 30, 1930 in WAGGGS Publications 1926-1942. Girl Scout National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, New York, NY, 59.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, 71.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, 71.
class girls lead a very sheltered life under the maternal eye. However, in the last few years things have changed there also, and the Brazilian woman of today is becoming, shall we say, emancipated.” European and North American Guide leaders viewed emancipation as the adaption of twentieth century western values, which they believed were necessary for modernization and progress. Developing nations like Mexico entered the international organization as Tenderfoot members, not yet “finished with their schooling.” Tenderfoot status was awarded to associations not ready to “assume their responsibilities as mature full members of the family” because, according to full members of the organization, they had not yet adopted all aspects of the Guide program. Most global south nations did not acquire full membership until the 1950s and 1960s.

Edwardian and Progressive-era stereotypes were evident in early twentieth century Girl Guide discourses on womanhood. For example, it was suggested that once a year a camp should be held for leaders which would include girls from boarding schools and poorer children. “The latter are best at cooking and similar subjects and the better educated ones are better at drawing up programmes and the more intellectual work, and it does them much good to mix together.” The aristocracy would become future leaders of tomorrow, while working class girls would be splendid domestic laborers. Few patrols mixed girls from various social classes on a day-to-day basis. For example, the Guides of Mexico, founded by Mexican-born, British educator Evelyn Bourchier, did not originally include many Mexican, working class or indigenous members, although they did participate in service projects meant to benefit poor and working-class girls.

100 Council Fire, October 30, 1930 in WAGGGS Publications 1926-1942. National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, New York, NY, 104.
102 Ibid.
103 Guías de México, Bien Preparadas (Mexico City: Guías de México, 2010), 25.
In a 1933 letter to Bourchier, Olave Baden-Powell responded to emerging controversies within the newly formed Guides of Mexico. “I am sure it cannot be at all easy to show what Guiding is for, and I can well imagine what you are up against if you want people to come in to lend a hand…Guiding must be a thing so absolutely new and strange to the people in your town, so that I think it all the more wonderful that you have got it going AT ALL.”

While the Girl Guide Movement was explicitly secular, its ecumenical, non-denominational nature initially caused controversy. By promoting ecumenicalism, Latin American women associated the first Guiding associations with secular values, public school movements, suffragettes, feminism and anti-Catholicism. In England religious practice was experiencing an age of decline between 1870 and 1920, which many historians associate with industrialization. Historian S.J.D. Green argues that this decline occurred concurrently with the rise of secular organizations and reform clubs such as the YWCA, bicycle clubs and literary organizations, which was concerning to the religious community. These stereotypes at times prevented secular and ecumenical organizations from spreading in Catholic communities. Some organizations, such as the French Guides, formed separate Guiding and Scouting associations for Protestants and Catholics. In Mexico the organization’s roots stemmed from efforts within the Protestant immigrant community. In order to attract more Catholics to the association, Robert and Olave Baden-Powell met with the Pope in Rome in March, 1933 to gain his official blessing.

104 The founder, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, and his wife, Olave, the “Chief World Guide,” were closely connected to British imperialists such as Rudyard Kipling, who contributed his knowledge to several Boy Scout publications. Bourchier’s family in England, it seems, socialized in the same circles as the Baden-Powell’s and Juliet Low’s – founder of the Girl Scouts USA. For example, in a 1933 letter to Bourchier, Olave Baden-Powell mentions running into Bourchier’s god-mother who was leaving shortly for South Africa. (Letter to Evelyn Bourchier from Olave Baden Powell, December 1933, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F. and Eileen Kirkpatrick Wade, Olave, Lady Baden-Powell: Authorized Biography of the World Chief Guide (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971).

for the Movement. They also sought the approval of Latin American clergy, which contributed to the organization’s spread in the Western Hemisphere.

**Girl Guiding in the Western Hemisphere, 1940-1960**

At the start of the 1950s there were 1.5 million Girl Scouts in the United States. While during the 1920s the United States and Great Britain competed with one another for influence in new Guiding organizations, during World War II international Guiding temporarily shifted to the Western Hemisphere and the World Bureau moved from London to New York. During the war and post-war period the international organization was heavily influenced by U.S. women, as its Girl Scouts emerged from World War II the most stable and largest member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. In the United States participation in the Girl Scouts became symbolic of the nation’s success in building democracy, patriotism and familial and

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106 Segundo “Log” de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F. (Western Hemisphere Encampment, East Otis, Massachusetts, 1941. Guides from fourteen countries, including Mexico, attended the conference).
108 Proctor, 52 and 78.
gender values.\textsuperscript{109} Spreading the Movement, they hoped, would promote democratic principles among Latin American youth in the face of communist and fascist influences.

The growth of Guiding in Latin America in the 1940s reflected larger trends in Latin American geopolitics. In 1941 Mexico broke diplomatic relations with the Axis powers and encouraged other Latin American countries to join them in supporting the Allied nations in World War II. The U.S. and Mexico established a joint defense board, and Mexican President Ávila Camacho deported German, Italian, and Japanese diplomats from Mexico. While initially Mexico was hesitant to formally ally with the United States, the situation changed after Germany torpedoed a Mexican submarine in the Caribbean and sunk two Mexican tankers.

Post-1940 Mexican governments promoted the amelioration of U.S.-Mexican social, diplomatic and business relations. As historian Julio Moreno has argued, Mexican post-revolutionary leaders viewed industrialization as a marker of Mexican progress and upward mobility. International trade and industrialization in Mexico resulted in decreased prices and an increased availability of manufactured products. Industrial jobs contributed to the growth of the middle class. The expansion of U.S. businesses in Mexico and closer diplomatic relations between the two states was more pronounced as Mexico’s trade relationship with Germany waned. During the Depression era, World War II and its aftermath, United States diplomatic interest in national security along its borders escalated. The U.S. was forced to address widespread revolutionary rhetoric and anti-American sentiment in Latin America.

Rather than defining U.S.-Mexican relations in imperialistic terms, Moreno refers to these negotiations as a “cultural middle ground” in which Mexican and American business

\textsuperscript{109} The U.S. Girl Scouts sold war bonds, conducted scrap metal drives, cultivated victory gardens and collected 1.5 million items of clothing for war refugees. Older girl members also worked as farm aides or operated bicycle courier services. One U.S. wartime propaganda poster showed a young lady saluting the flag. It read “Girl Scouts: Volunteers for Victory,” encouraging more to join the movement. Through the Girl Scout hospital aide program girls fed patients, performed clerical work, and served as messengers.
practices were syncretized. However, like British residents, U.S. diplomats and foreign citizens viewed U.S.-Latin American relations asymmetrically. While in 1933 Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy aimed to distance the United States from past interventionist policies in Latin America, it was reinterpreted after World War II. In 1940 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Nelson Rockefeller Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) due to concerns of rising Nazi influence in Latin America. In Mexico the OCIAA sponsored the growth of audio, visual and communication networks alongside Mexican diplomats and businessmen. Under the supervision of Rockefeller it conducted polls and sponsored development initiatives to raise the standard of living in Latin America. Both countries viewed this transition as vital to national security. Under this pretense, economic, social and defense cooperation was expanded and encouraged.

Scholars such as Seth Fein have emphasized the ways in which the United States Information Service (USIS) and Agency (USIA) worked with the United States Department of State and foreign governments to distribute materials, ally with mass media producers and create films for the purpose of strengthening alliances in the western hemisphere. Consumer culture was promoted alongside sponsorship of mass media through the USIA and influential industrialists such as General Motors, which underwrote Mexico City’s Channel 4 nightly fifteen-minute newscast in the 1950s. According to historian Gilbert Joseph, the industrializing nations of Brazil and Mexico were the target of these propaganda campaigns. In April of 1947 Mexican President Miguel Alemán Valdés became the first Mexican president to

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111 Ibid, 45-82.
112 Seth Fein, “Producing the Cold War in Mexico: The Public Limits of Covert Communications,” in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spencer, ed. *In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 176.
visit Washington. The goal of this meeting with U.S. President Harry Truman was to better U.S.-
Mexican relations and economic cooperation. Loans to Mexico, tourism, and increased trade
relations helped accelerate industrialization. The U.S. government emerged from World War II
supporting an ideology which maintained that the U.S. had a duty to serve as an international
peacekeeping and police force responsible for preventing the spread of communism and
totalitarianism abroad, especially in the western hemisphere.

U.S. women viewed themselves as the arbiters and guardians of the democratic home,
and through international organization such as WAGGGS, the Red Cross, and the YWCA,
contributed to this new relationship as “good neighbors,” which, they surmised, could model
western ideals of democratic motherhood, municipal housekeeping and global citizenship.
Women viewed their membership in secular, supranational organizations as necessary for the
maintenance of peace and post-war sisterhood. However, their promotion of American-style
democratic ideals and gender roles demonstrates the imperialist nature of 1940s and 1950s
international organizing. The Girl Scouts U.S.A. was supported in these efforts through funding
from the U.S. State Department and Information Agency.113

In 1940 the Girl Scouts U.S.A. established a Western Hemisphere Council of the World
Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to unite all of the organizations in the region. At its
first meeting, the August 1940 Western Hemisphere Encampment at Camp Andre in Westchester
County, New York included Guide leaders from throughout Latin America. The newly appointed
Western Hemisphere Bureau Director, Mrs. Arethusa F.G. Leigh-White, also scheduled several
committee meetings. To prepare herself for the endeavor, Leigh-White sought advice and
support from the Pan-American Union, which expanded after World War II to become the

113 “Report of the Director of the World Bureau on the Work Undertaken in the USA, August 1940 to February
1941,” in WAGGGS Western Hemisphere Activity Reports, 1941-1967. National Historic Preservation Center, Girl
Scouts of the USA, New York, NY.
Organization of American States, and the Carnegie Endowment Fund. She also discussed the expansion of Guiding in Latin America over tea with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and consulted with the Brazilian and Mexican embassies. A sisterhood between women in the Western Hemisphere, Leigh-White believed, would promote harmony and understanding between the nations’ youth.

Leigh-White proposed a membership-building campaign across Latin America. She aimed to promote the growth of Guiding in Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Trinidad, British Guiana, and Jamaica. As the southern neighbor of the U.S. Girl Scouts, Mexico was of particular interest. In her Report on the Work Undertaken in the U.S. from August 1940 to February 1941, Leigh-White stated that the Guides of Mexico and Cuba had volunteered to assist with the translation of Guide manuals.\footnote{114} Señora Oscar Braniff, wife of a prominent banker, represented the Mexican association at Western Hemisphere Committee meetings.\footnote{115} She sent literature in Spanish to interested Latin American leaders and associations and translated the minutes of the Western Hemisphere Committee for the World Bureau. Brazilian and Mexican representatives were active participants in early 1940s Western Hemisphere committee meetings, alongside WAGGGS members from the United States and Canada.\footnote{116}

\footnote{114} “Report of the Director of the World Bureau on the Work Undertaken in the USA, August 1940 to February 1941,” in WAGGGS Western Hemisphere Activity Reports, 1941-1967. National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, New York, NY.

\footnote{115} Mrs. Oscar J. Braniff’s father-in-law, Tomás Braniff, was the former President of the London Bank of Mexico and South America, Superintendent for the Construction of the Mexican Railway, prominent entrepreneur, and friend and supporter of President Porfirio Díaz. Her husband and brother in-law were active in these endeavors, and were leaders in the aviation industry. Stephen Haber, \textit{Industry and Underdevelopment: The Industrialization of Mexico, 1890-1940} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 78-80.

While traveling across Latin America, Leigh-White met with leaders of each Guiding organization and presented advice for the Movement’s expansion. She stated:

Their political, social, and cultural interests may differ considerably from those of the North, but their people are proud of their institutions and of their independence and gave me the impression of being peace loving and individualistic. I found it effective to mention that to become a member of the World Association entitled representation at world conferences and a voice in the business of the association.117

However, after the investigation the World Association determined that many of these organizations were not being run along accepted lines and were not ready to become full members of the global Movement. Instead, she concluded, they needed imperial oversight and schooling in western middle class cosmopolitan values.

On her initial investigative mission, Leigh-White met with school teachers, ambassadors, pastors, priests, principals, influential women’s organizations, State Departments, Education Departments, and high authorities of the church. She stated, “I was received with the utmost courtesy by various Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Embassies, Legations, and so on. I was invited to visit and speak at various colleges, including those run under American or British auspices; as well as many of the best convent schools.” She also had the opportunity to advertise the Movement on several Latin American radio stations. In her closing statement she thanked the Girl Scouts, Inc., the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Pan-American Union and the State Department in Washington for their support.118

The WAGGGS lost many European members in the 1930s and 1940s due to fascism and the turmoil and atrocities of the war years. During this period the Guides looked to instead expand its membership to Latin America, viewing the American and British Movements and

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117 Ibid.
their pedagogy as examples that other Guide organizations should emulate. Leigh-White
complimented Latin American organizations on their service work. For example, she
complemented the Brazilian Bandeirantes and the Guides of British Guiana for their labor in
leper colonies, but criticized their small size and limited scope. 119 Many Guiding movements,
such as the one in Mexico, were initiated within European and North American foreign and
immigrant enclaves. Leigh-White encouraged national Guide movements to take on a more Latin
American character. For example, she suggested increasing the number of prominent Latin
American leaders, such as Señora de Niete Caballero in Colombia, wife of the Rector of the
National University. 120 While WAGGGS was concerned with the Catholic outlook of Latin
American-led organizations, as in principle the organization was secular and open to all girls
regardless of religion, social class or ethnic background, the close association between
Catholicism and the practice of womanhood in Latin American countries, in addition to
Protestant and foreign stereotypes, initially limited the scope of the Movement in the region.

WAGGGS would not allow co-educational organizations to join the global Movement, and feared that patrols organized among the working or poorer classes displayed unfeminine
characteristics that would deter upper and middle class membership. In Venezuela, Chile and
Argentina, the Guides and Scouts responded that an all-girl organization would struggle to obtain
funding, as Latin American society at that time did not promote girl’s social clubs. Leigh-White
cautioned that unfeminine co-educational activities would hinder the Movement’s positive
growth in upper and middle class communities. Regarding the Movement in Argentina, she stated:

119 Arethusa F.G. Leigh-White, “Report on the Goodwill Tour Taken Through Central and South America on Behalf
of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, February 14 to May 30, 1941,” in WAGGGS Western
120 Ibid.
There is a great deal of outward display in the way of marching and carrying of flags, or drill and physical exercises, and they take part in joint weekend expeditions when, I am given to understand the girls are expected to do the entire domestic work of the camp for the boys, including the cooking. It is not to be wondered at that none of the better educated and better-class people in the Argentina will have anything to do with the Movement or that it has made no headway in secondary and private schools.

Though in theory WAGGGS encouraged the growth of Guiding among all social class groups, at that time the global organization catered to the behaviors and expectations of middle- and upper-class Latin American women, and sought Anglo and upper-class Latin American leaders to represent it. For example, Leigh-White suggested the Guides of Argentina locate a group of “responsible women,” to reestablish the organization under more acceptable lines. Though encouraging Latin American leadership, she suggested that the “leaders of the Anglo-Argentinean groups,” especially Señora de Guerrera, Chairman of the Inter-American Commission for Women, be responsible for building the program. She had similar concerns about the organization in Chile. She stated, “the type of Scouting or Guiding, as well as the standing of the women Leaders, is not suitable to make the basis of a really satisfactory Guiding or Girl Scouting organization.”

Like in Argentina, she suggested that Chilean Guide leaders seek advice from women in the European community. While the justification for these requirements was that all groups must follow the Baden-Powell philosophy, many of these evaluative measures had more to do with social class and gendered comportment than fulfillment of the Guide promise and law. Regarding the organization in Chile she stated,

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121 Ibid.
It is a very striking contrast to the restricted customs which exist with regard to women generally in Latin countries...On the other hand, so advanced and unconventional a step has had the result in some countries of prejudicing many of the better class and better educated parents against the Movement, so that under this leadership as far as I could judge, the children who join the organization are those whose parents are in the lower income group and who in some cases may be indifferent to matters of custom.  

Further, she felt that the very “Catholic outlook” of Latin American Guide movements was averse to the secular principles of the World Association.  

The Girl Guide Movement experienced considerable growth in Latin America during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1943 twenty-seven women from various Latin American countries were offered Juliet Low Memorial Training Scholarships. Guests visited the Edith Macy Training Center in Briarcliff Manor, New York to learn how to organize Guide patrols, and to participate in roundtable discussions about the roles of women in Latin America and the Guide and Girl Scout philosophy. Recognizing women’s significant involvement in Latin American Catholic organizations, the World Association also sought support from the Catholic Church, speaking directly to and seeking guidance from Archbishops in various Latin American cities. They received continued support from the Pan American Union, Inter-American section of the U.S. Office of Education, Office of the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs, Foreign Policy Association, and Institute for International Education. Scholarships for travel and training abroad reached $50,000 between 1942 and 1944. The funds were used to finance international encampments and training sessions at Edith Macy and abroad. For example, one hundred Latin American guests were invited to tea at the Institute for International Education in New York in

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123 Ibid.  
1943. This institute was established after World War I by Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, Elihu Root, former Secretary of State, and Stephan Duggan Sr., Professor of Political Science at the City University of New York. Their goal was to create educational exchanges to promote international peace and understanding. During the 1940s they cooperated with the Department of State to establish programs in Latin America aimed to counter Axis propaganda and encourage democratic principles; during the 1950s they became involved in a number of United Nation’s sponsored humanitarian efforts in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The World Association viewed the expansion of the Movement in Latin America as a contribution to the modernization and development of its southern neighbors. In doing so the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A fulfilled their role as global housekeepers and good neighbors to Latin American nations. Leaders noted the low literacy rates and limited educational opportunities available to Latin American girls in the 1940s, and believed that Guiding could provide new informal educational and social opportunities, elevating the status of women and girls abroad. In regards to Latin American women, Leigh-White stated, “It has not been the custom for women to take responsible posts or to play any part in public life, except to a lesser degree under men…It is necessary to use tact and restraint when working for friendly relations between the U.S. and the countries of Central and South America, and to be careful not to push prematurely the ideas and customs of North America.” But due to internal economic changes and urban growth, women’s position in Latin American society had also changed from within. In the Latin American cities where Girl Guiding associations were originally established, women were

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126 Ibid.
already very active in civic and benevolent work, and a growing number of women sought professional careers. However, there were few organizations specifically for girls.

In February 1946 the first Western Hemisphere Conference in Latin America was held in Havana, Cuba. The theme of the conference was “Girl Guiding in the Postwar World: Western Hemisphere Training Conference.” While the majority of the presenters were from North America and Europe, several Latin American Guide Leaders also spoke. Señora Elena Mederos de Gonzáles of Cuba presented “The Girl’s Place in Latin American Life.” Señorita Carmen Duany of Cuba’s discussed “The Brownie,” and Senorita Laroquette Pinto of Puerto Rico provided training on “Community Relations.” Other topics included “The Challenge of Guiding in the Postwar World,” “Needs of Girls Today,” “Guiding Throughout the World,” “The Older Guide,” and “The Adult in Guiding.” During the mid-1940s Latin American nations began to sponsor their own western hemispheric events. For example, the Guías de México invited each country in the Western Hemisphere to send one leader and three girls to the 1946 Navidad Guía celebration. According to Leigh-White’s report, “the purpose of the gathering was to introduce Mexico and its way of life to girls from other countries and by so doing form friendships and further understanding.”128 A North American troop connected with the Society of the American Friends of Mexico was also invited. Mexican Guides set the agenda for the program, taking a leadership role in the global organization. Guests participated in a traditional Mexican posada and learned about Mexican holiday traditions.129 As Mexican Guide leaders were given the flexibility to adjust the Guide program based on their own views of femininity and modernity, their organization began to expand.

128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
In 1957 one of the four world centers of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting was built in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The construction of Nuestra Cabaña, which is owned and operated by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, was funded by the Juliette Low Memorial Fund and Western Hemisphere Sub-Committee Fundraisers. This would be a new training center for leaders and girls. By 1962 1,900 girls and 735 adults from over 40 countries had visited Nuestra Cabaña. Projects included service to children and families, carried out jointly with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in rural Chiconquac, Mexico; study tours, which were carried out with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Study Grants (UNESCO) and international conferences. Visitors to Nuestra Cabaña also went to the UNESCO Center of Basic Education in Pátzcuaro, Mexico to observe and assist with work in the regions. They used these opportunities both to learn traditional crafts and customs in the communities and to assist in caring for the children and teaching new skills to the rural women who participated. The rural women, it was assumed, had much to learn from the Guides who sought to uplift rural communities and were trained in first aid, hygiene and a variety of other domestic tasks. A drawing included in a packet describing one UNICEF project, for example, showed a group of Mexican Guides instructing indigenous women in how to build a cooking tripod over the fire. It was likely, however, that unlike these urban Guides, this survival skill was essential to and practiced daily in the village that they visited. But these interactions inspired young women to become increasingly involved in social work and to internalize the ideals of the organization.

The new Guiding organizations were closely tied to international associations for peace and global education, and participated in local religious and government-sponsored initiatives.

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These ties bolstered the growth of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in Latin America. In the 1950s and early 1960s for example, Mexico worked with the Red Cross to offer First Aid courses to girls with scholarship money from the Rotary Club. They cooperated with Acción Católica in Mexico City with the goal of spreading the organization in the Catholic community. Financial support for their publications came from Pepsi-Cola and the British Overseas Airways Corporation, the British state-owned corporation established in 1940. In Brazil, girls participated in government projects for forest protection, the Brazilian Youth Council and the World Assembly of Youth. In Guatemala, girls provided first aid in a government center for those wounded in the 1944 revolution, the government census and food distribution during the 1950s and 1960s. These projects provided publicity for the Latin American associations. However, up to that point Latin American Guiding associations continued to hold a Tenderfoot status in WAGGGS.

The United States Girl Scouts and Western European Guides continued to determine the direction of World Association’s activities into the 1960s. Madrinas, or godmothers, were chosen from among members of the Western Hemisphere sub-committee to adopt and look after developing Guide movements so that they could attain full membership in the organization. Girls were sent to Latin America as ambassadors of the organization, and served as hosts for Latin American guests trained in the U.S. WAGGGS set the agenda for activities at Nuestra Cabaña. For example, during the 1960s a Ranger Service Program sponsored by UNICEF sent girls from North America to work in seven Latin American countries. These girls would assist with WAGGGS aim to “create a bridge between us and regions such as the favelas of Rio de

Janeiro through the service program for Rangers and in cooperation with UNICEF.”134 At first programs in the Brazilian favelas were unsuccessful. However, Leigh-White stated, “Any success at guiding does demand at least an elementary understanding of morality.” Her solution was to simplify the program to focus on hygiene and discipline.135

WAGGGS also sponsored various forms of international exchange. Each summer members of Girl Guiding and Girl Scout organizations in Latin America were invited to work as camp counselors and visit troops in the United States. Between 1957 and 1961 thirty-seven Mexican Guides took part in international exchanges. Sixty U.S. Girl Scouts visited Mexico between 1957 and 1962. Like the OCIA, USIA and USIS described by historians Seth Fein and Julio Moreno, the Girl Scouts U.S.A. created a number of filmstrips and publications in the 1950s to promote Guiding and international friendship abroad. For example, the “Wider World,” produced in 1956 by Girl Scouts U.S.A for the World Association, was presented in Mexico. The Guías de México was one of four Guiding and Scouting organizations featured in the film. One GSUSA film highlighted the international world center, “Our Cabaña.” Another featured girls from eight countries who demonstrated how they live, work and play in their respective communities. The films demonstrated that by the 1950s the World Association’s initial definition of universality started to be replaced with a universality that both promoted a common set of moral principles and celebrated the unique differences between various member nations.

However, according to a WAGGGS Western Hemisphere report “the possible future production of films, filmstrips and flip charts giving practical help on aspects of Guiding and Girl Scouting related to the fundamentals of daily living might well be extremely helpful in the development of the movement in Latin America, especially among underprivileged children.” These films

135 Ibid.
intended to promote practical aspects of homemaking, “sharing simple skills and know-how” and “health and safety in the home, at school, in rural areas, and in the city.” The films were held at United States Information Service (USIS) Centers in Latin America. The USIS also contributed funds for Spanish translations of Girl Scout and Guide manuals, exporting American values as part of the Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America.

Initiatives for the expansion of Guiding in Latin America were successful. By the 1960s there were thirteen Girl Guide or Girl Scout organizations in the region. Each had a national headquarters, and seven had a paid executive staff. WAGGGS sponsored scholarships for Latin American girls to participate in sessions at Nuestra Cabaña, and paid for one year of graduate study at Indiana University for the executive director of the organization in Peru. United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) youth organizations were described as “the nurseries of effective national leadership” in Latin America. The Girl Scouts and Girl Guides were partners in these initiatives. Over time Latin American and other developing nations gained a greater voice within the organization. For example, in 1963 the World Association’s *World Bulletin* remarked on the success of the organization in Mexico, congratulating them on the success of their magazine. “Mexico’s *Muchachas* has become a most popular magazine for all girls- Guides and non-Guides. Its wide subscription … made possible an extensive magazine with stories, arts, guide news, etc.” It praised them for expanding service work initiatives into rural communities, such as a service project in the village of Xoxocotla, where the girls met an eighty year old veteran of the Mexican Revolution, and a Mexican Guide service to the

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136 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
The construction of international Guiding centers abroad Cuernavaca, Mexico in 1957 (Nuestra Cabaña) and Pune, India in 1966 (Sangam) encouraged Guides from around the world to interact with and learn about one another. 1960s conferences focused on themes such as East-West Cultural Values, and speakers represented a wider variety of world regions. Guiding associations around the world established successful educational programs and provided service to their local communities. Increased correspondence and cooperation between WAGGGS members, combined with the spirit of 1960s civil rights movements in the United States and decolonization abroad, promoted more equal partnerships between members in the global south and north.

**Conclusion**

The Girl Guide International Council, founded in 1919, was representative of a new women’s movement, which I refer to in this chapter as global housekeeping – a continuation of the Progressive-era and Edwardian-era women’s movements in the United States and England. Women saw it as their duty to establish post-World War I international cooperation and peace by creating an international community of women with common values and goals. Western Guide leaders believed that their role as modern women entailed heightening global morality and thus preventing future wars, but their values and beliefs were based on a Protestant and western imperial worldview. They believed that adolescent delinquency caused by wartime turmoil could be ameliorated through the promotion of character and values education, and that women could be emancipated through suffrage and civic involvement. Edwardian and Progressive Era movements in England and the United States did not disappear with the coming of World War I, but were transformed into international movements for the promotion of health and wellness, international cooperation, and moral uplift. These ideals were spread to other nations through...

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Ibid.
formerly domestic organizations such as the Girl Guides, and were then adopted and altered to fit
the needs of the international community. Social mothering and municipal housekeeping no
longer applied solely to one’s community, but to the entire globe.

During the 1940s and 1950s United States and Western European women viewed their
membership in secular, international organizations as necessary for the maintenance of peace and
post-war sisterhood. However, their promotion of western democratic ideals and middle class
social mores also demonstrates the imperialist nature of international organizing. By the 1960s
and 1970s Mexican and other Latin American Guiding associations grew and further exerted
their interests. They built independent associations that would represent what they viewed as the
needs and values of Latin American girls. As the Movement spread across Latin America during
the 1940s and expanded within Mexico, Mexico established its own magazines, moved beyond
Mexico City, and became the home of one of four world centers, Our Cabaña, in Cuernavaca,
Mexico.
CHAPTER II: GENDERED PATRIOTS AND POSTREVOLUTIONARY LADIES: GIRL GUIDING IN MEXICO, 1930-1945

Guías de México member Liesel Ponselet de Letiz shared with me her memories as a 1940s Mexican Guide. Her eyes brimming with excitement, she enthusiastically recounted cherished moments – the friends she made, the shiny pins on her perfectly ironed, stellar uniform, and her participation in camping trips, excursions and inter-patrol competitions. She described the organization and experience as “un otro mundo,” another world, or a new social space in which the needs of modern Mexican girls could be assessed and their interests cultivated. Volunteerism at a hospital and the Guides hands-on educational program, she noted, inspired her to become a nurse.¹⁴¹ Ninety year-old Lilia Aburto Mayani added that during the 1930s and 1940s few Mexican girls had the opportunity to attend high school or college. Guiding provided a space for female socialization outside of the church and family.¹⁴² These women clearly saw Guiding as a defining experience of their lives. Guiding gave women and girls an outlet to explore their intellectual interests, travel, socialize, and participate in the community.

¹⁴⁰ World Chief Guide Lady Olave Baden-Powell enjoying lunch with members of various civic organizations in Mexico City, 1946. “Log de la 5A Compañía,” Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
¹⁴¹ Liesel Ponselet de Letiz. Interview by the author. Tape recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 4, 2010.
During the period 1930-1945, Mexico City experienced a cultural revolution, and the roles of modern women were contested and redefined. As the 1930s progressed, Mexican Guide members responded to nationalist postrevolutionary rhetoric, disseminated through public school curricula, state-sponsored cultural events, revolutionary art and literature, and burgeoning activist movements. Originally a branch of the British Girl Guides, an organization that reflected European Protestant and secular Progressive-era values, Mexican members called for an independent Mexican Guiding association that represented what they perceived to be the needs of Mexican youth – a convergence of British Guide traditions, Catholicism, and emerging nationalist principles. The new organization promoted girls’ involvement in social service organizations and their maintenance of Catholic piety and motherhood.

Founded in 1930, the Girl Guides of Mexico aimed to cultivate what its founders perceived to be model postrevolutionary ladies, whom they believed would foster increased respect for female citizens in the modernizing nation-state. The organization would prepare them to be leaders of burgeoning social reform movements, like those in Great Britain and the United States, and would protect middle- and upper-class girls from the corrupting influences of the rapidly changing, increasingly-industrialized cityscape. The Guías de México was founded within the British community in Mexico City, and initially encompassed middle-class and wealthy immigrants in various upper class neighborhoods. Over the course of the 1930s the organization expanded beyond these neighborhoods, and by 1940 became a national and distinctly Mexican association affiliated with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). As the organization spread within the Mexican community, Guiding traditions changed to better reflect elite Mexican women’s perceptions of appropriate gender roles and comportment, which reflected the highly racialized and classed expectations of Mexico
City’s elite. The acceptance of the Guide program – along with its messages of ecumenicalism, cosmopolitanism, democratization, and western feminism – required negotiation and reconceptualization before it could expand beyond the foreign colonies of Mexico City.

As Joyce E. Price, Chairman of the World Committee (1975-1981), stated in a letter to the Guías de México in 1980, “Your Association gave a lead in recognizing very rapidly that our programme for girls, whereby we introduce them to the Guide way of life, must be adapted to the background and needs of the country.”

By the late 1930s Mexican Guides viewed the association’s Protestant, secular, British leadership as foreign, and instead restructured the association to reflect Catholic, conservative gendered values. Instead of a reform movement rooted in British New Liberalism, reform was viewed as the religious obligation of Catholics in the image of historical Catholic figures such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Saint Catherine of Alexandria and the Virgin of Guadalupe, who appeared in various issues of Muchachas magazine. To the Guides, these Catholic figures represented female piousness and Catholic women’s strength, courage, and dedication to service. In the anti-clerical atmosphere of the 1930s, where it was increasingly difficult to establish organizations along religious lines, secular organizations promoting religious values created a new space for a moral and Catholic education.

Postrevolutionary Reform in Mexico

European influence during the Porfiriato (1876-1911) permeated every aspect of upper class Mexico City life – economic, social, and political. Porfirio Díaz provided economic incentives to immigrants interested in relocating to Mexico City. Immigrants were attracted by government gentrification projects, including the beautification of the business district through the construction of Chapultepec Park, historic sites, theatres, and museums. European beneficence associations set up their own hospitals, schools, churches, and financial institutions.

143 Guías de México, A.C., Jubileo de Oro (Mexico City: Guías de México, 1980).
within upper class *colonias* - services to which few Mexican citizens outside of these communities had access. As historian Rick López argues, foreign residents in Mexico continued to participate in the modernization of Mexico well after the Porfírian period. In the 1920s and 1930s local and foreign scholars and entrepreneurs worked with the postrevolutionary government to reshape social reform policies and Mexican national identity.¹⁴⁴

While at times the government blamed Mexico’s lack of development on foreigners’ capitalist enterprises and monopolization of Mexican resources, British and North American intellectuals and entrepreneurs were at the same time key actors in government modernization and industrialization efforts. According to historian Paul Garner, between the middle years of the nineteenth century and World War I, the British invested more in manufacturing and capital goods, loans and investment to Latin America than any other single nation, and Latin America amounted to 25% of total British overseas investment.¹⁴⁵ British entrepreneurs invested directly in land, mines, mills, refineries, public utilities, banks and railways and indirectly through loans and bonds so much so that Garner refers to the nineteenth century as a “British century” in Latin America.¹⁴⁶ British, French, German, North American and other immigrant women accompanied their husbands and fathers to Latin America where they participated in literary clubs, reform minded beneficent organizations, and private school initiatives. Many were members of the Red Cross, the YWCA, Junior League, Rotary Clubs and Girl Guide association. They carried with them early twentieth century liberal-minded ideals, the foundation for the development of these organizations in Britain. Britain saw the rise of new liberalism in the early twentieth century,

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
characterized by its advocacy of private, individual and Protestant moral values such as self-reliance, temperance, suffrage, religious toleration, and anti-clericalism.

The postrevolutionary period in Mexico can be compared to earlier industrial reform eras such as the Progressive Era in the United States and Edwardian Great Britain, though it grappled with an increasingly complex and ethnic social landscape. The new constitutional government hoped to diverge from Porfirio Díaz’s forceful tactics, which had sought to remove lower-class populations from the city and its outskirts to create a utopian city within which upper-class citizens would have control of a ‘civilized’ city center without interference from the masses.\(^\text{147}\) Postrevolutionary elites had to reconsider the “art of government,” as discussed by Michael Foucault in his essay “Governmentality.” While Foucault is referring to societal changes during the eighteenth century, the lessons learned can be applied here. Elites promoted eugenic theories that portrayed the city’s working class and indigenous population as preventing societal progress, pointing to problems such as prostitution, theft and drunkenness, crowded tenement buildings, immoral dress, bobbed haircuts, cabarets, and women’s new assertion of independence – yet, they had to tread carefully in incorporating these populations, particularly in light of the recent revolution and the postrevolutionary empowerment of the urban and rural masses. Here, Foucault’s ideas of governmentality – that the government needed to be tactical in managing the population, punishing “crimes” only when they interfered with economic and elite interests – are demonstrated. Postrevolutionary governments had to consider that the “governmentalization” of the state was what would determine whether it would survive or falter.\(^\text{148}\)

Further complicating the social and political landscape after the revolution and the articulation of official versions of the nation-state was the continued weight of immigrants in


business and society. Perhaps the lack of discussion on immigration in the historiography of postrevolutionary Mexico City is, as historian Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp proposes, a product of post-war nationalist rhetoric. She argues that despite official efforts to create a monolithic Mexico, Mexican immigrants contributed to its multiethnic character.\textsuperscript{149} Immigrants to Mexico City would by the late 1930s begin to assimilate further into Mexican society, as seen through this study of the Mexican Girl Guides. But at the same time they remained what she refers to as “foreign citizens” in the city – immigrants who considered themselves Mexicans and ethnically connected to the nations of their ancestors.\textsuperscript{150} Despite the prevalence of pro-reform, nationalist governments following the revolution, the Mexican administration saw immigrant entrepreneurs as important to Mexico’s development. For example, as historian Robert Weis argued, immigrant groups maintained monopolies in certain industries after the revolution. A coalition of Spanish immigrant-owned baking companies, for example, was able to negotiate with the administration. They continued to dominate the bread-making business because the government needed to continue to sell affordable bread to the masses to bolster social peace and build support. This demonstrates that foreign elites were at times allies of nationalist postrevolutionary regimes even though state officials also criticized foreign social and economic influences.\textsuperscript{151} Alfaro-Velcamp posits that due to postrevolutionary anti-immigrant and anti-western rhetoric, many of these citizens began to shed their ethnic, “foreign” identity. By the late-1930s the Girl Guides accepted a more Mexico-centric program, even though the majority of the original Guides of Mexico could be classified as “foreign citizens,” or residents who identified themselves as both Mexican and part of a foreign ethnic group.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, 62.
Unlike Porfirian reform movements, postrevolutionary modernization efforts focused on incorporating rural and working-class Mexicans into the nation. In doing so they aimed to remake working-class and indigenous Mexico through so-called scientific methods. As historian Alexander Dawson noted, “Administrators believed that by administering a population and controlling its habits, the social sciences in particular could measure and define what the population lacked, and ultimately eradicate these differences.” For example, while reformers viewed Indianness as a unique aspect of Mexican national identity, Dawson argues that government sponsorship of indigenous cultural studies was aimed towards recognizing Mexico’s archeological past. But at the same time indigenous peoples’ so-called folk religious, artistic and medical practices were viewed as obstacles to progress and modernization.152 Eugenic studies identified indigenous cultural practices as primitive. Therefore, government reform programs aimed to eradicate them.

As historian Nancy Leys Stepan has argued, Mexico’s postrevolutionary reform program was rooted in late nineteenth and early twentieth century eugenics.153 The term eugenics was coined by British Victorian and Progressive Francis Galton in 1883 and applied Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theories to human beings. The philosophy of eugenics was founded upon the premise that the genetic quality of human populations could be scientifically altered. Initially Galton’s research focused on positive eugenics, encouraging those who were perceived to have a higher intelligence to have more children. However, negative eugenics - the elimination of negative traits from the gene pool - became more popular in countries such as the United States and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the United States and Germany, eugenic scholars feared that race degeneration could occur if working class and immigrant reproduction continued to outpace that of middle and upper class Anglo-Saxons. These beliefs strongly influenced racial and social policies in Western Europe and the United States prior to World War II. For example, by studying eugenics policies in the state of California, historian Alexandra Minna Stern demonstrated that North American stereotypes of Mexicans’ “Southern European and half-Amerindian” racial mixture, viewed as a product of miscegenation, resulted in oppressive practices of disinfection and quarantine along the U.S.-Mexican border between 1917 and the late-1930s. These policies were based upon the premise that Mexicans were naturally dirty and prone to disease, and thus needed to be improved or isolated. While scientists and scholars abandoned the use of the term eugenics in the 1940s due to its connection to Nazism, the hereditary traits assigned to various racial and social groups did not disappear. For example, Stern argues that the practice of eugenics was not publicly criticized in the United States until race-based philosophies were challenged by civil rights activists and feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. Eugenic explanations for social behavior continued to be endorsed in widely used biology textbooks, the sterilization of women deemed unfit for reproduction continued to be endorsed, and intelligence tests and vocational tracking segregated minority youth from their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

While historians have given much attention to the ways in which eugenics, a western invention, encouraged middle and upper class Europeans and North Americans to view themselves as hereditarily superior in comparison to domestic minorities and peoples of the global south, scholars such as Nancy Leys Stepan and Rick López have articulated the ways in which eugenic studies and social policies were absorbed and re-conceptualized in Latin America.

155 Ibid.
According to Leys Stepan, Latin Americans were identified in European medical texts as a prime example of the degeneration that could occur in a racially mixed nation. Further, the tropical climates of areas such as Brazil were believed to cause sexual abnormality and seduction in women.\textsuperscript{156} However, in Latin America eugenics was reconfigured. Rather than subscribing to the North American or German models of negative eugenics, Latin American scientists and politicians favored Lamarckian hereditarianism, which posited that race betterment was possible through better habits. French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck argued that external influences could positively alter an individual’s germ plasm; education, good laws and sanitary surroundings could result in the transmission of superior traits. Latin American thought also followed the ideas of Paul Broca, a French anthropologist who believed that through racial hybridization the lower racial groups could be absorbed into the higher. Leys Stepan refers to this reshaping of eugenic philosophy as “constructive miscegenation.”\textsuperscript{157}

Like in Edwardian Great Britain, Mexican reformers believed that a healthy and fit population was necessary for material and economic progress. Reformers targeted rural and working class vice, prostitution, alcoholism, disease, high mortality and illiteracy with their social reform movements. Mexican intellectuals and officials' interest in eugenics escalated in the 1920s and 1930s due to the poverty, dislocations and deaths caused by the 1910-1920 revolution. As Minna Stern and Dawson note, after decades of debate regarding how Mexico’s indigenous population should be integrated, postrevolutionary leaders enacted legislation aimed towards the creation of a more linguistically, culturally and politically unified Mexico.

Government programs in the fields of social welfare, education, medicine, criminology, public health and disease control were carried out through the newly established Ministries of Public

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 45.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 138 and 147.
Education and Public Health. Administrators aimed to create a more monolithic and unified Mexico by inculcating “modern” social and cultural practices, while eradicating others.

Minister of Public Education José Vasconcelos’s “cosmic race” highlighted Mexico’s mixed race heritage. Rhetorically La raza cósmica presented mestizaje, the hybridization of indigenous and European traits, as a positive genetic force. The combined attributes of each ethnic group, he argued, would create a stronger Mexican race. But as Leys Stepan, Dawson and López have noted, by viewing mestizaje as representative of Mexicanidad, the value of the nations’ indigenous cultures, language and history were depreciated. For example, López argued that Mexican elites and foreign scholars who studied Mexico’s indigenous populations “recognized neither indigenous people nor artisans as agents possessed of their own volition and able to define themselves, their art or their destinies.”

Public schools in the 1930s promoted selective cultural traditions while encouraging indigenous children to abandon native languages and folk religious practices. Rather than celebrating Mexico’s varied linguistic and cultural groups, elites selected and adopted particular regional types such as the china poblana, a regional style of dress from the state of Puebla, and the charro, a masculine stereotype rooted in the rural landowning elite, and now associated with mariachi musicians, as representative of mestizaje. At public festivals, museums and schools these sterilized and neutralized symbols became culturally and politically safe ways to celebrate popular culture and mexicanidad.

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158 López, 94.
159 Ibid, 36.
Girl Guiding in Mexico, 1930-1938

The Guías de México evolved within the British community in Mexico City. Different from other immigrant beneficent organizations, which provided financial support and entertainment to particular ethnic communities, the Guides aimed to unite young upper- and middle-class ladies of various, mostly European, ethnic backgrounds. Together they participated in social welfare activities, and were instructed in behaviors perceived to be appropriate to their gender and class.\textsuperscript{161} The organization advertised that it was “cosmopolitan” and open to girls of “every race.”\textsuperscript{162} The first Mexican Company was comprised of girls from thirteen different ethnic backgrounds and of seven religious groups. The members were described as Mexican, American, British, French, Japanese, Middle Eastern, German, Spanish, Italian, Chilean, Turkish, Russian, and Dutch. With the exception of one Catholic Guide, participants were of various Protestant faiths.\textsuperscript{163} The girls were daughters of businessmen, ambassadors and ministers, such as Hiroko Hori, the Japanese Minister to Mexico’s daughter and member of the

\textsuperscript{160} Log Book of the 5A Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F. Guides of Mexico dressed for a 1942 international festival.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Untitled article from El Universal, July 1931 in Log Book of the First Mexican Company, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
\textsuperscript{163} Guías de México, Bien Preparadas, 7-8.
The organization was described as multi-ethnic and secular due to the variety of European countries and Protestant faiths represented within it. The majority of these girls attended private schools such as Colegio Americana and the English Windsor School. In the 1930s cross-class socialization was uncommon. While the Guides of Mexico raised funds to help “waifs and strays,” they did not incorporate many girls from the popular classes into the association, although one company for lower class girls was established in 1935.165

The organization had its roots in the British colonias of Mexico City. Like the League of Nations, international leaders such as King George III of England promoted the organization, and were elated that it had spread beyond the British Empire. In 1936 King George presented Guías de México founder Evelyn Bourchier with the title “Order of the British Empire,” for her service to Mexican girls. The World Bureau also sent a congratulatory letter. European Guide leaders noted the perceived difficulty of spreading the organization to Mexico, as Mexican women were stereotyped as conservative and sheltered. They anticipated that families would not be interested in their daughters’ participation in community service activities, athletic competitions, and outdoor excursions.166

Like the movement in England, the first Girl Guide patrol in Mexico was initiated by girls. Two students at the Colegio Windsor, who were previously Girl Guides in Britain, convinced their teacher to start a patrol at the school. Evelyn Bourchier, co-founder of the school, instituted the Mexican Girl Guides as an overseas branch of the British organization in 1930. While on holiday in England, Bourchier was certified as a British Guide captain, and was from that time referred to as la capitana, reflecting her reputation as strict, punctual, organized

164 “The End of the Second Year” in El Universal, September 26, 1932 in Log Book of the First Mexican Company, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
165 Ocelotl Patrol Log Book, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
166 “Order of the British Empire” 1936 Certificate to Evelyn Bourchier from King George III of England, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
and “very British.”

She mandated a clean appearance - shoes shined, uniforms ironed, and girls’ order and attention at official ceremonies. She participated in several literary clubs and benevolent associations in the city. Bourchier was the granddaughter of the famous British General George Bourchier, who gave service to India during the reign of Queen Victoria, and the daughter of Mr. Herbert E. Bourchier and Mrs. Anne Adelise Broomhall de Bourchier, who initially immigrated to Mexico during the Porfiriato to work for a gold and silver mining corporation in Oaxaca. Educated in Britain during the Mexican Revolution, Bourchier had a globally-minded outlook based in liberal Edwardian principles, which fit well within the burgeoning international Girl Guide Movement. Bourchier maintained close ties to the British immigrant community through her work at the Colegio Windsor, and to Mexican elites as an English instructor for the wives of government ministers. The first meeting of the Mexican Girl Guides was held on September 23, 1930 at the house of Señora Forbes, wife of the First Secretary of the British Embassy in Mexico. Letters from Lady Olave Baden-Powell and National Commissioner of England Rose Kerr were read, informing the girls that they had obtained permission and support from the appropriate Mexican authorities. The British Guides sent two British Guide leaders to assist and advise the First Mexican Company. The first Guides were divided into two groups: Little Elves (Duendes) and Guides. Each Guide Company of older girls looked after a group of young elves. At first all of the Guide leaders were British, and only one of them was Catholic. In 1934 Mr. Oscar Braniff, a prominent British entrepreneur, and his wife Beatriz, invited the Guides to use their property at 93 Río

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168 Guías de México, A.C., Jubileo de Oro (Mexico City: Guías de México, 1980).
169 Ibid.
170 Guías de México, A.C., Bien Preparadas (Mexico City: Guías de México, 2009), 6.
171 Ibid, 7 and 22.
Guadalquivir in the Cuahutémoc neighborhood of Mexico City, and in 1942 they placed a sign in front of the building labeling it the “House of the Guides of Mexico.” Their daughters were active members of the association. In 1960 the building was officially sold to the Guides of Mexico after an extensive fundraising campaign, and with a generous donation from the Braniff family. In 1967 the building was renamed Ticalli, which means “your house” in Nahuatl. The building was renovated to include a guest house for international visitors, updated bathrooms and meeting rooms, and an updated kitchen. The building continues to serve as the Guides’ National Office, store and meeting place.\textsuperscript{172}

Rosa María O’Reilly, National President of the Guías de México from 1974-1977, described for me the role of the British community in Mexico City. First, she drew a map of Mexico and reminded me that the country was made up of a number of unique social groups. She then marked the location of the ancient Maya and Aztec civilizations, and described the growth of the mestizo population after conquest. She placed a dot on major cities such as Veracruz and Mexico City, and explained that British foreign citizens resided in industrial and coastal urban areas. She explained that intellectually and culturally, “the British community always looked outward towards Europe,” rather than inwards.\textsuperscript{173} Her description was very accurate. In the 1930s, when O’Reilly joined the Girl Guides of Mexico as a member of Bourchier’s company, little interaction took place between urban elites and rural, indigenous and mestizo Mexico. As foreign citizens in Mexico City, the organization at first looked to European associations and philosophical movements for its inspiration.\textsuperscript{174}

O’Reilly joined the association as a student at the Windsor School. At that time the British immigrant community in Mexico was one of the largest, and had much influence on the

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 89-90.
\textsuperscript{173} Rosa María O’Reilly, Interview by author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 20, 2011.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
capital city and its reform programs. Starting in the Porfirian era, the British community constructed schools, sports clubs, hospitals and cemeteries in the city, and contributed to the modernization of mines, railroads and industry. Like Bourchier, O’Reilly’s descendants moved to Mexico to work for a British mining corporation. Her great-great grandfather, Santiago Wright, was a British Engineer in Taxco. He married a woman of Spanish and Mexican descent, and raised his family in Mexico. The British community’s infrastructure created an important social and economic network that proved useful to her family’s wellbeing. For example, Wright’s widow was able to find work in a British cemetery after he passed. One of his daughters (her great-aunt) then married Eusebio Gayosso, founder of the GAYOSSO Agency, a well-known funeral service agency in Mexico City. Her grandfather, Jorge Togno Wright, worked in the British Company, which administered the Mexican railways. O’Reilly was proud of the British community’s success and contributions to Mexico City’s infrastructure. She highlighted the success of Mexico City’s ballet schools, which used the techniques of the Royal Ballet of England. She explained that Ana del Castillo, a Mexican dancer who studied at a British ballet school in Canada, brought these traditions to Mexico. Mexico was the first Latin American country to establish a Royal Ballet Academy. O’Reilly also stated that the English Hospital was one of the best in Mexico at that time. When she attended the Windsor school, its curriculum prepared girls to be bilingual secretaries and was open to students of all religious backgrounds. Other schools founded by British teachers included the Madox School, the Oxford School and the Garsay School.  

Born into an elite family in Mexico City in 1921, Guide member Angeles Reygadas de Cardeña was also a product of Mexico’s postrevolutionary age of reform. As a child she was inculcated in the ideals of Latin American and British social reform movements. She volunteered 

175 Ibid.
for the Red Cross alongside her parents. Her father was the director of the association, her mother a dedicated volunteer. She attended primary school at the private Francés Mayorazgo (French Primary School), and later went to the British Windsor School where she became a Guide in 1936, and joined a company with ninety-six Guides, separated into five patrols of nineteen ethnicities. As an adult she attended the First International Western Hemisphere Encampment in New York, where she had the opportunity to meet United States First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and became a world traveler, representing the organization at conferences from Cuba to Canada. She was so inspired by these experiences that in 1967 she co-founded the Guías de México’s Coyoacán District in Mexico City, and contributed to the Guide publications Nezaldi and Muchachas. She continued her commitment to social reform in her adult life as a cooking instructor for the Family and Social Institute and Anglo-Mexican Institute of Culture,176 teacher of adult education classes in English, Math, Geography and History, and long-time volunteer for the Mexican Foundation for the Training and Culture of the Blind. Inspired by her parents, the Guide Movement, and the reform era, she dedicated her life to service.177

The organization in Mexico took pride in its multi-ethnic membership, promoting Mexican and British cultural traditions. But the names of Aztec Gods used to represent the Girl Guide patrols, and indigenous symbols of Mexicanidad such as the china poblana and jarabe tapastío, were appropriated by upper class, non-indigenous girls. English language and British civic organizations, such as the Women’s Auxiliary and Junior League, remained important to the new organization. Its first leaders were of British, French, and American descent.178 At Guide

176 The Anglo-Mexican Institute of Culture, an organ of the British Embassy, was founded in 1943 in order to strengthen ties between Great Britain and Mexico through educational and cultural programs such as language classes, film screenings, music, dance and theatre.
178 Bourchier continued to hold significant posts within the organization until she died in 1981. Most members remember having tea at Bourchier’s home. She was a lover of nature, reading, and history, and was involved in
events girls carried the flag of their respective countries, and they pledged allegiance to King George V and England. Officials such as the Secretary of National Defense, the British Minister to Mexico, and on one occasion the Duke of Sutherland, attended annual enlistment ceremonies. A 1931 newspaper article emphasized Mexico’s First Lady Josefa de Ortiz Rubio’s support for the association. It stated, “several children of well-known Mexican families were among the first to join the British company of Guides founded in Mexico City last year.”\footnote{179} The various immigrant backgrounds of these Guides demonstrated Mexico City’s ethnic diversity. 

In interviews, women of European and North American descent differentiated themselves from Mexican girls whose parents, they stated, were less likely to permit their daughters’ participation in Girl Guide excursions and activities.\footnote{180} Mexican Girl Guides participated in a variety of competitions, outdoor expeditions, and multicultural events modeled after those of the British association. Mexican-Canadian Magdalena Echaniz de Rubio, who became a Girl Guide in 1936, mentioned that door-to-door cookie sales were not considered appropriate for 1930s Mexican girls, and that many parents did not condone the liberties that clubs such as the YWCA and Girl Guides allowed.\footnote{181} The YWCA was established in England in 1855, and became a supranational association in the early twentieth century. Like the Guides, it aimed to uplift urban European and North American working-class citizens. The YWCA was established in Mexico City in 1930. Lemonade stands and other fundraisers violated the normative principle that upper class Mexican girls’ activities ought to be limited to the private realm. There were few various civic organizations. She had her own carpentry workshop, and according to a biography of Bourchier in Bien Preparadas, she could do anything that was necessary to care for the home. On display at the Guías National Office in Mexico City are her collection of conch shells and herbs, various books on nature and astronomy, and her records of Girl Guide achievements. She shared many of her talents with girls by teaching painting classes, organizing events and skills tests, and writing articles in Muchachas, the Mexican Girl Guide magazine. (Guías de México, Bien Preparadas).\footnote{179} Untitled article from El Universal, July 1931 in Log Book of the First Mexican Company, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.\footnote{180} Magdalena Echaniz de Rubio. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, July 31, 2010.\footnote{181} Ibid.
opportunities for upper and middle class Mexican girls’ socialization outside of the church, and for many participants outdoor activities and girls’ associations were new to Mexico City in the postrevolutionary era. But as historian Jocelyn Olcott demonstrated, a plethora of Mexican women’s rights based and voluntary associations flourished during the postrevolutionary period, as women took on more public roles and petitioned for suffrage.182

Patrols participated in friendly competitions including knot tying, Morse code, exercises, first aid, swimming, and knowledge of the natural world. At campouts the first Girl Guides played Rugby, which they described as “extremely strenuous,” and participated in drill competitions and hikes.183 They also entertained and learned knot-tying skills from sailors of the HMS Norfolk, which would have been unusual for conservative Catholic Mexican girls.184

Distinct from many women’s organizations in Mexico, most Guide troops were “open.” As noted in the Mexico City Post in October, 1932, this meant that “absolutely no religious instruction or discussions are allowed, so that girls of any religion may belong without fear of any sort,”185 perhaps because of anti-clerical legislation in Mexico, or due to European Protestant liberal principles of religious freedom. However, the activities that they participated in demonstrate that ecumenical non-sectarian Christian ceremonies were considered secular, and were excluded from the Guides’ definition of “religious instruction.” The association’s ecumenical nature was controversial and caused friction between its Catholic and Protestant members. By 1940 most Mexican members were Catholic.

Guides participated in European and international cultural festivals and celebrated foreign folk traditions. At annual international celebrations the girls performed national dances, and the

183 Ocelotl Patrol Log Book, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
184 Ibid.
185 “Social Notes,” Mexico City Post, Saturday Oct 1, 1932 in Log Book of the First Mexican Company, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
British Ambassador was almost always in attendance. Guides were encouraged to learn European languages to gain their interpreter’s badge, and to read European literature for their reading badge. Most early-1930s events were held at the Club Reforma, a British sports club in Mexico City. Normally the Club Reforma was only open to members of the “British Colony,” as stated on the event brochure. However, many Guide events were held in the facility. For example, on Empire Day the British Society of Mexico gave Guides the opportunity to participate in swim races and other athletic events. Empire Day was established in Britain in 1902 to honor the birthday of Queen Victoria, and was made an official holiday in 1916. School children, Guides, and Scouts across the British Empire sang patriotic songs, pledged allegiance to the Union Jack, and told tales of British heroism abroad. The goal of the holiday was to unify Britons in all parts of the empire, and to teach children to be good, responsible, dutiful citizens. The Guides collaboratively attended the 1936 memorial services for King George III at either Christ Church, which was Anglican, or the Catholic Church. Meetings were also held at ethnic community halls and schools. From 1930 to 1934, girls met every Saturday at the British Windsor School, the Belgian Legion, and in the Colonia de Valle. At Guide Rallies, or inter-patrol gatherings and skill demonstrations, the Union Jack and the Mexican Flag were flown on both sides of the World Guide banner. The Local Ladies Association assisted with service projects such as making clothing for poor children in England and Mexico. This service work involved minimal contact between the Guides and the lower class individuals for whom they were producing gifts or collecting clothes.

186 “The British Society of Mexico in co-operation with the British Ex-Service Association of Mexico EMPIRE DAY 1933, Sports and Children’s Fete at the Reforma Athletic Club on Saturday May 27th 1933” in Ocelotl Patrol Log Book, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
187 First Maguey Pack Log Book, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
188 In 1934 Senora Beatriz de Braniff offered a room in her home in Mexico City where meetings could be held, and she and her husband donated what is now the National Office building and hostel, “Ticalli,” of the Guías de México.
189 Ibid.
As the 1930s progressed, the association’s membership expanded. Some members of the association had jobs, as the *First Guide Patrol Log Book* mentions accommodations made for working girls’ transportation to a Guide campout. But it is likely that they were middle class secretaries or office workers, not working class girls. A growing number of Catholics participated, and Sunday plans included Catholic girls’ attendance at Mass and Protestant girls’ participation in interfaith “Guides own” ceremonies, a British ecumenical tradition. But as former Guías de México District of Cuernavaca President Lilia Aburto Mayani confirmed, at that time the organization was geared toward wealthy Mexican and immigrant girls who could afford the necessary uniforms, manuals, and excursions.\(^{190}\) Outward appearance was very important – Guides were required to have ironed uniforms, shine their shoes, and march in military formation.

**The Contestation of Womanhood in Mexico**

Mexican reformers viewed images of the working class *chica moderna* in twentieth-century Mexico as a blight on the rapidly expanding capital city. With confidence, young fashionistas paraded through public streets, flaunting their bobbed haircuts, short skirts, and newfound freedom. Liberated of the traditional parental and customary subjectivities of their pueblos, they spent their evenings immersed in the new theatres, restaurants, parks, and dance halls that were a hallmark of the early twentieth century. By necessity, most of these working-class ladies held jobs, scandalously blurring the customary divide between the public (male) and private (female) sphere. To elites, their mere presence represented societal deterioration – the annihilation of female honesty and morality, resulting in a massive government campaign for the preservation of domesticity – a campaign that became the focus of various federal and municipal policies throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century.

\(^{190}\) Lilia Aburto Mayani. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 3, 2010.
In Mexico City, forms of social control were implemented, such as limitations on where public vendors could operate. At the same time, modern technology, such as the railroad, altered the social structure of the cosmopolitan city center that was previously occupied by the well-educated upper and middle classes. To them, these metropolitan federal districts represented a showcase of national culture and tradition. Prior to the mid-1920s, rather than becoming an integral part of the national cultural hegemony, indigenous and working class individuals faced government scrutiny, or in some cases were ignored all together. These themes were especially evident in Mexico City where authorities increasingly traversed previously known boundaries of public and private life in an attempt to control the behavior of the masses, and in particular the honesty of Latin American women. Upper-class social workers and educators, as in Great Britain and the United States, contributed to these reform initiatives as employees of the state and members of benevolent organizations meant to uplift working-class communities.

While it was increasingly common for women to participate in public activities, each new space continued to be defined by deeply ingrained gender and class expectations. For example, historians Katherine Elaine Bliss and Ann S. Blum explore the dual meaning of contested space in postrevolutionary Mexico through their description of how a simple ride in a car can be either a safe haven from the streets or conversely a place of sexual adventure. A woman who accepted a ride in a car with a male not related to her could unknowingly be participating in an activity perceived to be corrupting her moral values and honor. This situation did not only manifest itself within the confines of the automobile, but in everyday life as well. Bliss and Blum noted that other new venues such as dark theatres and dance halls where males and females established casual relationships far away from the watchful eye of parents had a similar effect.

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The unusually large population of young Mexicans living in the city heightened these concerns. According to Bliss and Blum, the federal district’s population between the ages of ten and nineteen grew by approximately fifty-one thousand between 1910 and 1920. Government officials feared that girls attending the theatre, public dances, and nightclubs were destined for prostitution, and young men who were attracted by new automobiles, bars, and brothels were destined for degeneracy, alcoholism, and crime.

To divert women’s attention from venues of immorality, the Ministry of Education began a widely debated campaign in the 1920s that encouraged women to become involved in athletics. Gym classes were introduced in schools, and even elite women became active in tennis, gymnastics, bicycling, golf, diving, swimming, equestrian, and fencing, invoking the idea that these activities would ensure the health of future mothers. In this way the government itself contributed to changing ideals of femininity. In fact, historian Anne Rubenstein noted that some propaganda posters promoting athleticism showed women in the same clothing styles that political elites rejected as scandalous and immoral. For example, female athletes in flapper length Greek togas were pasted to billboards advertising national festivals. Rubenstein argued that in the 1920s, criticism of fashionable young women could, by extension, be viewed as criticism of official postrevolutionary reform efforts. Despite this, she stated, long hair and short dresses continued to be considered a societal problem until the 1960s when men’s long hair became a more controversial subject of debate.

Many urban-working class girls also attended public and private elementary schools. Like in 1930s Girl Guiding, the curricular emphasis was on teaching girls to be future mothers and

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192 Bliss and Blum, 165.
wives. They were taught lessons on hygiene and health that were unrealistic for most Mexicans. For example, children were taught that it was unhealthy for multiple people to live in the same room, that they should eat meat, and that they should shower daily. This was not always possible for poor students and their families, who often lived in crowded one room dwellings. According to Schell, most teachers recognized that working-class children would enter the workforce following graduation. Therefore, schools also emphasized practical skills. For example, schools had small workshops where students would make handicrafts or food to sell at festivals or at school run stores. They learned how to manage money, and the funds collected were used to cover school costs. Programs focused on the production of wall-hangings, plates, and pillowcases similar to those produced by lower-class vendederas and were inspired by indigenous Mexican themes. Like women in night schools, working-class girls were taught to participate in the same activities as their mothers, which encouraged social class reproduction.194

Fears about women transgressing their social class were fostered by the fact that women’s position in Mexican society was changing rapidly during the postrevolutionary years. In 1917 leaders of the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution gathered in Querétaro to institutionalize the ideals of the revolution in a new liberal Constitution, which included clauses on land reform, women rights - that in the end were stricken from the document - and a complex labor code. By 1930 women, artists, laborers, renters, and community organizations demanded that the government follow through on these commitments. Politically motivated women were particularly concerned that they had not been given citizenship rights, which they, alongside men, fought for during the 1910-1920 revolution. Liberals challenged women’s right to suffrage on the grounds that women’s religiosity would interfere with her ability to participate in civil society and to make independent political decisions, while conservatives claimed that women’s

194 Schell, 85-114.
suffrage was an affront to tradition. At the same time, church and state competed to redefine what it meant to be Mexican, and what the roles of the modern Mexican woman should be.

According to historian Jocelyn Olcott, non-religious women’s associations organized themselves within the government-sponsored FUPDM (Sole Front for Women’s Rights), hoping that by demonstrating that they were loyal supporters of the regime, legislation such as the suffrage amendment would be passed. Representatives from a variety of women’s organizations, including the Communist Party of Mexico, were incorporated into FUPDM. Within each national section women’s priorities varied, further stratifying the women’s movement. Olcott posits that this schism prevented the realization of the 1930s suffrage amendment by allowing the government to offer regional women’s organizations other incentives, while denying them political rights.¹⁹⁵

Both Catholic and secular women’s organizations were by 1930 dedicated to public social work, education, and civic activism. However, anti-clerical legislation implemented during the Presidencies of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928) and Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), created a deep rift between these associations. Historian Patience Schell demonstrates the ways in which the church-state conflict created competition between private and public schools, which fought for the allegiance of Mexican families and the hearts and minds of Mexico’s youth.¹⁹⁶ Many parents refused to allow their children to participate in State Education Department (SEP) programs because of their strictly secular nature. According to historian Kristina Boylan, social

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debates following the revolutionary government’s exclusion of the Catholic Church from the public arena, and the closure of many churches and schools, directly resulted in Catholic political participation. Catholic leaders were determined to protect religious structures and rights, particularly during and after the 1926-1929 Cristero War and the Second Cristiada in the 1930s. Catholic leaders were particularly concerned about President Cárdenas’ “socialist” education programs, designed to replace Catholic schooling, and the government’s 1933 promotion of a sex education curriculum. Catholic women also took it upon themselves to exclude corrupting influences, such as the *chica moderna*, from participating in Mass. In the midst of rapidly changing gendered cultural norms, the Guides aimed to foster girls’ Catholic piety and religious moral values within a seemingly secular space.

**The Church State Conflict**

The 1920s saw an escalation in Catholic women’s organizing, but by the mid-1920s it was in decline due to state-sponsored anti-clerical reform efforts. According to historian Jean Meyer, the 1926-1929 Cristero War between the church and state resulted in the death of an estimated 90,000 combatants in addition to an unknown number of civilians. For Catholic women’s organizations such as the UDCM, religion was synonymous with *Mexicanidad*. Like the late-1930s Guías, they viewed social reform efforts as the religious obligation of upper and middle class ladies. The state aimed to eradicate their influence on young children and the poor.

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197 The Cristero War, 1926-1929, was an attempted counter-revolution against postrevolutionary anti-clerical policies aimed to limit the power of the Catholic Church, such as limiting its rights to property and catholic schooling. Due to the continuation of government anti-clerical programs and the expansion of secular education, Cristero rebellions resurfaced in the 1930s. This second wave of rebellions is referred to as the Second Cristiada. However, the second movement was not as well-organized or as widespread as the 1926-1929 war.


Though Article 3 of the 1917 constitution prohibited religious education in primary schools or the involvement of priests or members of religious orders in primary education, the law was not implemented until the 1920s. According to historian Patience Schell, in Mexico City an estimated 110 Catholic schools were closed in 1926 and UDCM social centers and offices were forcibly shut down. Schell argued, “Part of the consolidation of power was the elimination of other revolutions and actors, thus making the revolution an exclusive rather than an inclusive event.”

Schell posits that Catholic women were seen as a threat to revolutionary reform because their first loyalty was to the church, not the state. Religious benevolent associations were accused of promoting mendicancy. Practices such as the giving of alms to assure ascendancy to heaven were attacked as contrary to revolutionary principles, and were perceived as encouraging dependency rather than self-sufficiency. As historian Nichole Sanders argued, “Whereas the role of the state previously had been that of regulating and policing the lower classes, the government now reconfigured its role to that of protector of the poor and the socially and economically vulnerable.”

But at the same time only 15% of government expenditures were spent on social welfare programs (education, public health and social assistance) and most of those expenditures were concentrated in Mexico City.

Organizations such as the Girl Guides built secular spaces forged by religious values to accommodate to the fact that the revolutionary government had disempowered the Church. Girl Guiding in Mexico City presented a new space where women discussed, appropriated, and at times resisted the contradictions presented to them at home, work, and in the media. The Guías provided new opportunities for girls’ public participation through voluntary activities,

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200 Patience Schell, *Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 119.
202 Ibid.
excursions, and social events, and exposed them to western European liberal principles and attitudes regarding women’s roles in Mexican society.

From Guides to Guías, 1938-1945

As Guider Lilia Aburto Mayani mentioned in an interview, in the 1930s and early 1940s Girl Guiding was one of the few opportunities for socialization that Mexican girls had outside of the home.\(^{203}\) Former National Commissioner Martha Morales de Hernández agreed, “Guías affected my life since the first day I went to a meeting: the ceremonies, uniforms, games, program…Everything was new and interesting. At that time Guías was the only place where you could have activities like hikes, camps, etc., apart from church and possibly a sports club.”

In 1938 the Guías de México began the transition to becoming an independent organization, rather than an overseas branch of the British Movement, to better meet the needs of Mexican girls based on the social mores of upper class Mexican women. These changes reflect the shifting and contested definitions of womanhood in Mexico, and the ways in which various Mexican women experienced, restructured and re-interpreted western modernity. In 1937, the President of the Ladies Local Association of the Girl Guides of Mexico traveled to England to ask the World Bureau for permission to nationalize the movement. In 1940 this transition was official. The Girl Guides were renamed the Guías de México. They wrote their own manuals, kept records and patrol log books in Spanish rather than English or French, and pledged allegiance only to Mexico.\(^{204}\) Their symbol, the trefoil, had a cross in the center demonstrating that religion was at the heart of Mexican womanhood. By wearing this pin, the Guía promised to abide by the triple promise: to fulfill one’s duty to God and to Mexico, the Fatherland, to help ones neighbor in all circumstances, and to obey the Guía law. In an atmosphere of anti-clerical

\(^{203}\) Lilia Aburto Mayani, Interview by author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 3, 2010.

\(^{204}\) Señorita L. Linet, Log de Provincias Republica Mexicana, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
reform in Mexico, the Guías created a new and seemingly secular space for women’s socialization forged by Catholic religious values. By the 1940s, the majority of Guide members were Catholic and Mexican, and girls of various ethnicities were integrated into open patrols. However, some patrols were still geared toward particular immigrant or religious groups such as the French-Mexican, American-Mexican, and Jewish-Mexican Guides of Mexico.

The Mexican nature of the new Guide program represented a climate of conservative, counter-revolutionary, Catholic nationalism in Mexico, and distinguished it from the British Guiding program. The concept of Protestant ecumenicalism as secular was viewed as foreign. While in 1932 religious discussion was limited, by the 1940s religion was seen as central to the organization’s structure. Femininity was defined through girls’ emulation of the Virgin Mary’s purity and abnegation. Mexico had the second largest Catholic population in the world, and Mexican Guides considered Catholicism essential for the cultivation of Mexican girls. Support from the Catholic clergy and the government became important to the organization. It was vital to the Guías that the National Commissioner of the newly independent organization be Catholic, not Protestant. Rose Kerr, Commissioner for Tenderfoot Members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS) supported this decision, stating that “since the country in general is Roman Catholic, we feel that it would certainly be better for the National Commissioner to be a Catholic, who can secure the approval and cooperation of the clergy.” Kerr commented that she hoped the needs of both groups could still be met, and mentioned that “it is a great asset to the Guide movement that Catholics and Protestants within the organization can work together in harmony.”

By 1940 the limited enforcement of anti-clerical legislation allowed for a religious resurgence in Mexico. That year marked the end of the church-state conflict in Mexico. President

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205 Letter to Evelyn Bourchier from Rose Kerr, June 2, 1939, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
Manuel Ávila Camacho, inaugurated in 1940, publically announced “soy creyente,” “I am a believer.” For many Catholics religion and Mexican womanhood went hand in hand. Its emphasis was in part reactionary towards the 1920s and 1930s anti-clerical government policies. The Guides believed Mexican women must emulate la Purísima, the virgin, and be aware of her societal role as a mother and wife. They decided to form “closed,” Catholic-only and “open,” mixed troops. The 1942 manual for Guiadoras was explicit in stating that in both cases spiritual instruction was mandatory. The elimination of religious education in schools in the 1930s likely influenced the perceived need to augment religious instruction. Each Guide promised to fulfill her duty to God. The manual warned, “El o la capitana que no hace esto FALTA SU PROMESA, y por tanto no es digno de pertenecer al movimiento” (The captain that does not do this is breaking her promise, and does not belong in the movement). Bien Preparadas (Well Prepared), a short history of the organization written by the Guías de México, includes a list of Guide achievements in 1940. They celebrated the fact that for the first time eight guides took their Girl Guide promise before the altar, and in the presence of the archbishop. Several Guide log books noted that in December 1940 various companies jointly celebrated “la Patrona de las Guías, nuestra Señora de Guadalupe” (The Patron of the Guides, our Virgin of Guadalupe). In 1945 they adopted the Hymno Religiosa Guía, “Gracias Senor.” Issues of Muchachas magazine regularly made references to the contributions of prominent Catholic figures such as

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207 Guías de México, Servir: Breve Manual de Las Guiadoras, 1942, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
208 Guías de México, Bien Preparadas, 26.
209 Segundo “Log” de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
210 When asked about the importance of Catholicism in Guiding, the vast majority of participants strongly believed that religion was central to the organization. They explained that Catholicism and Guiding provided a moral compass for girls. However, they also mentioned that girls of other faiths were welcome. In some countries the word God has been eliminated from the Guide Law. Several participants stated that Guiding would not exist without religion, and that the word God must remain in the Guide law.
Guías de México, Jubileo de Oro (Mexico City, D.F.: Guías de México, 1980).
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Saint Catherine of Alexandria. They encouraged girls to emulate their piety and good works. However, in an interview Morales emphasized that the religious beliefs of Catholics and Protestants were respected, a fundamental tenet of the organization.  

As dance halls, theatres and new fashions became popular among urban youth in the 1930s and 1940s, Guiding presented an alternative. Guiding promoted religious values and provided girls with healthful entertainment in the outdoors among other girls from “respectable,” or upper class, families. Uniforms meant to promote respect for the organization and girls were worn to each meeting and event, and also served to de-emphasize differences between members and ensured that they were not donning the flagrant fashions of the *chica moderna*. New fashions and entertainment venues, and the government’s zealous public campaign against venereal disease in Mexico City, which made sex education a public rather than private matter, were considered offensive to conservative Catholic ladies and a threat to girls purity and femininity. The 10th Guide law stated that “a Guide is pure and feminine in thought, word, and deed.” The organization provided a social space for girls that would isolate them from these corrupting influences.

The new organization maintained many Guiding traditions introduced by the British organization, including an emphasis on service and domesticity. Morales stated, “perhaps goals in the early times of guiding were to teach girls how to be prepared in matters such as first-aid, cooking, heath and the out-of-doors.” Former National Commissioner Elda Pérez Rivero noted that girls in the 1930s and 1940s were prepared to be housewives. “We took care of gardens, and participated in courses on comportment, posture and decoration. We earned badges in music,

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211 Martha Morales de Hernández. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 20, 2011.
214 Martha Morales de Hernández. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 20, 2011.
dance and literature.” Girls learned domestic tasks such as cleaning, making sweaters, and cleaning clothes. Women became more involved in social work in the 1940s. The Guides were involved in voluntary activities sponsored by the Red Cross, Junior League and Rotary Club.

During the postrevolutionary period in Mexico, in which Mexicans increasingly emphasized the uniqueness of the raza cósmica, and rejected foreign imperialistic tendencies, the organization continued to serve upper class girls, even as it adapted the government’s revolutionary rhetoric and tone and celebrated the “Día de la Raza,” a day of celebration of the Mexican race, emphasizing the richness of its indigenous and Spanish heritage. Middle and upper class ideals of womanhood remained central to the Guide curriculum. For example, the manual for Guide leaders discouraged the creation of Guide companies among girls with limited means. It emphasized self-sustaining finances: “In the case that the children are poor, first you MUST NOT start a Company without a person or entity to pay the basic expenses for indispensable items such as insignias, the girls’ annual dues, the expenses of the Company, Guide manuals, uniforms, etc. Don’t abuse the generosity of others.” It suggested that the best places to start a Guide patrol were schools, churches or women’s clubs which would also provide for an appropriate place to hold meetings. It also recommended sponsorship from a wealthy benefactor or a business. Like social workers at the time, Guiders felt that girls who lived in rural areas needed to learn about homemaking, not the outdoors. Additionally, badges such as the First Aid badge warned against “disorganized clothes,” reading with bad light, or living with germs, rats, and insects – a reality of rural Mexican life. Various other insignias would have

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216 Segundo “Log” de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
218 Guías de México, Servir: Breve Manual de Las Guiadoras, 1942, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
219 Guías de México, Distintivos de Capacidad (Mexico City, D.F.: Guías de México, 1938).
been difficult for girls of limited means to acquire. In the urban milieu of Mexico City, the Guías organization and its community service initiatives were described as gestures of patriotism, as noted in the newspaper *Excélsior*.  

**Performing Revolutionary Nationalism**

The Mexicanization of transnational gendered values is evident in the pedagogy and rhetoric of the Mexican association. They demonstrated patriotism by marching in parades on holidays such as Independence Day. During the 1930s and 1940s the post-revolutionary government and church promoted elite women’s public participation in seemingly respectable urban benevolent societies that promoted post-revolutionary progress. To Girl Guide participants, the message that women could make important contributions to the nation influenced their desire to have a greater impact as adults. They served the nation in benevolent organizations or as social workers, nurses, and teachers.  

It is probable that, as Alfaro-Velcamp proposes, nationalist, anti-immigrant discourse in Mexico during the 1930s encouraged foreign-citizens to assimilate and become more patriotic. During World War II, when German, Italian and Japanese properties and plantations were seized and diplomats associated with the Axis powers were deported, nationalist sentiment also increased.  

Foreign citizens who were born and educated in Mexico, and experienced the 1930s nationalist reform program, likely integrated more quickly, identifying themselves as Mexican women rather than foreign citizens. In the late 1930s one Guide described her patrol’s participation in a Nazi Campfire, suggesting wide-spread pro-German sentiment prior to

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221 Beatriz Barrera de Gonzáles and Liesel Ponselet de Letiz. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 4, 2010.

Mexico’s entrance into the war. But by 1942, when Mexico declared war on Germany, such activities fell into disfavor.

Martha Morales de Hernández became a Guide in 1943 and was part of a Mexican and French patrol. Though the patrol had French and British leaders, she explained, “they emphasized the fact that we were in Mexico and in the Promise we always said ‘I promise on my honor to do my best to fulfill my duties to God and Mexico, my country.’” They demonstrated this duty through service work and participation in public patriotic ceremonies and parades. They participated in traditional posadas, visited historical sites, and were required to know the significance of the Mexican Flag in order to pass the Tenderfoot test. Nationalist and patriotic rhetoric increased after Mexico entered the war. On a 1943 campout, girls competed in an essay contest which posed the question “What does it mean to be patriotic?” The first class test required Guides to acquire a variety of local knowledge such as the importance and location of various local historical sites, transportation systems, and museums. Rather than reading European literature and becoming interpreters, new badges focused on Mexican arts and culture. The reading badge, for example, included a list of Latin American authors such as Mexicans Josefina Zendejas, Jose Rosas, Manuel Gutierrez Najera, and Francisco Monterde; and the cooking badge included more traditional Mexican dishes. Like Guide organizations in other nations, additional badges focused on motherhood and domesticity – sewing, washing, nursing, and first aid.

When Guides traveled abroad to international meetings and festivals they served as professional representatives of the association and patriots of Mexico. Señora Elda de Pérez

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224 Martha Morales de Hernández. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 20, 2011.
225 Log Book of the 5A Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
226 Guías de México, Distintivos de Capacidad (Mexico City, D.F.: Guías de México, 1941).
Rivero joined the Girl Guides of Mexico in 1936 as a student at the Liceo Francés in Mexico City. In the 1940s she became the President of her Local Association, and a member of the WAGGGS Western Hemisphere Committee. She explained that “in this epoch Mexican women did not work outside of the home.” The organization gave her new opportunities to learn about the nation and world, and to give service to the community. She headed many Girl Guide Committees, and had the opportunity to represent the Guides at international events including the WAGGS World Conference in Tokyo, the Broadening Our Reach Conference in Washington D.C., and Western Hemisphere training sessions at Edith Macy Conference Center in New York, and in various Latin American countries. She also visited the Girl Scouts of Miami, Florida and Tucson, Arizona. WAGGGS held international nights in which members of each country taught others about their customs and traditions. The Guías de México proudly displayed Mexican folk traditions including the jarabe tapatio and poblana style of dress.

By 1940 the ruling party (in 1946, re-named the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI) aimed to consolidate a Mexican identity tied to the political party, its support for industrialization, unionization and private industry, and its promotion of the urban middle class as the arbiter of Mexican culture and values. Illustrated magazines produced images of construction projects, workers in the auto industry, school and literacy programs, factories, playgrounds and parks, all representing Mexico’s golden age of progress and the success of the post-war government. While Hollywood and Disney increased in popularity, the Mexican government attempted to present an image of Mexico as separate and distinct from the United States and Europe. In doing so, they took great pains to regulate the content and distribution of periodicals and magazines. Historian John Mraz argued that the representation of Mexicanidad

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228 Segundo “Log” de la Primera Compañía, Guías de México National Offices, Mexico D.F.
experienced a significant transformation during the post-war period, one in which “national unity” he argued, became an “officialist doctrine designed to assure the homogeneity of society.” In particular, the film and magazine industry were censored and regulated to the point where the two produced each other. For example, the PRI encouraged the promotion of Mexican film and radio stars, creating a new pop-cultural identity that the Mexican populace could rally around. The amount of Mexican music to be played on particular radio stations was federally controlled. Production companies, such as that of the periodical Presente, faced destruction and oppression for their content. However, these representations of modernity continued to emphasize upper and middle class urban values, and to marginalize Mexico’s indigenous and working class majority.

The Guides and Scouts of Mexico put on displays of Catholic nationalism, which they viewed as closely connected to one another, and as central to Mexican identity. On Saint George’s Day, together the Guides and Scouts celebrated their promise to both God and Country. The highest authorities of the organization in Mexico gave speeches as did the archbishops, consul to the United States, municipal presidents and local governors. The Scouts and Guides were invited to participate in national festivities – soldiers of the new middle class culture that PRI promoted. On the first day of the celebration, the Guides and Scouts attended a welcome reception at the Hidalgo Theatre in Jalapa and the School of Dance at the Universidad Veracruzana. The next day they marched. According to Muchachas, “The flags of the Americans were followed by the color guard with our insignia. More than 400 Scouts and Guides marched through the major streets of Jalapa. Then a mass was led by the Chaplain Soto Campos and a solemn Te Deum was sung by the archbishop and the Seminary choir.” At the closing ceremony,

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230 Ibid.
“the Girl Guides of the first company of this city, in all their actions, gave a demonstration of discipline and coordination.” Jokes, stories and songs were presented, and scarves and insignias were traded between the Guides and Scouts present.  

The Guides were instructed to be patriotic. Knowing how to raise the flag and to describe its meaning were essential components of a girls training. Illustrations and explanations were printed and reprinted in Muchachas for this purpose. Starting in 1959, Guides celebrated National Guide Week.

Representatives of the Guides offered a wreath at the Column of Independence. Around 600 girls and young women, perfectly uniformed and in good order, marched along the Paseo de la Reforma, the band military band of the Simón Bolívar headed the parade and elegantly marked the step. They were followed by the banner of the country and that of the Guides, duly guarded, and then the flags of each district, providing to the color and emotion of the scene.

The week continued with a mass at the Church of the Sacred Family in Mexico City and a series of excursions to tourist attractions in and around the city. In addition, Guide week was an opportunity for the Guides to advertise the movement. As described in Muchachas, “the principal commercial houses gallantly lent their side boards to exhibit our uniforms and posters, various radio and television programs interviews a number of our girls, and newspapers advertised for the organization. The girls wore their uniforms to school and work for the entire week.

Mexican cultural traditions, initially constructed during the postrevolutionary period, were by the 1950s viewed as integral to Mexican identity. The 1957 Mexican Girl Guide manual reminded girls that they had a rich historical heritage and advised them to visit the museums,
pyramids and other historic sites, many of which had been recently renovated. It also discussed the importance of Mexico City to the nation and global economy. “Today, because of traffic and for other reasons there is a push for more modern buildings and avenues, changing the face of our city, to convert it into one of the best in the world, not only for its size, but also for its cleanliness and ornateness…Girls must visit art exhibitions, and museums of various types including the museum of hygiene, anthropology, natural history and geology.” Muchachas magazine encouraged girls to “conserve the customs and traditions left by our ancestors, and the characteristics of our Mexicanidad.” For example, they suggested that the girls create an Altar de Dolores, a colorful altar traditionally made in honor of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores, The Virgin of Sorrows, and that they celebrate the Day of the Dead, celebrated on November 1st and 2nd of each year, All Saint’s Day. During this celebration family and friends gathered to pray for and remember those who died. The article stated that this was no longer a pagan practice, but an emblem of Mexicanidad, mysticism and devotion. After Our Cabaña, the WAGGGS world center in Cuernavaca, Mexico, was built, training sessions for Guide leaders were held at the facility. Leaders were provided with ideas for running their patrols, many of which promoted the newly constructed parks, tourist sites and school programs, all part of the PRI’s development program. They taught Mexican dances and songs, and organized trips to Taxco, Tepotzlan, Cuernavaca, Xochimilco, Chapultepec, UNAM, the pyramids of Xocholco and the Caverns of Cacahuamilpa. The Guides had indeed transitioned from a Europeanized, liberal, progressive association to being the Mexican and patriotic Guías de México.

236 “Altar de Dolores,” Muchachas, April, 1959, 35.
237 Ibid.
Adaption and Re-Conceptualization

Internationalism remained an important component of the association. During the 1940s representatives from Mexico were invited to participate in various world conferences and encampments. For example, in October 1940 two Mexican girls, Angeles Reygadas Macedo and Natalia Iglesias went to the New York Western Hemisphere Encampment - their first trip abroad. At this multicultural festival, representatives from each country presented traditional dances, and taught others about the food, culture and geography of their homelands. Eleanor Roosevelt, a dedicated supporter of the organization, discussed the need for nationalism, service, leadership, and respect for their home communities. She encouraged girls to make a difference at home while striving for peace and mutual understanding abroad, a longtime goal of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.239 These experiences encouraged independent-mindedness, and emphasized women’s new roles and international responsibilities.

In the 1940s the Guías de México encouraged girls to learn more about the world. The International Knowledge badge, for example, required girls to learn about other nations through a review of travel literature, the Council Fire Magazine, and League of Nations initiatives.240 Each year on the 22 of February the Guías and Scouts of Mexico celebrated Thinking Day, a day dedicated to learning about other countries, performing international dances, and discussing global problems.241 Women’s military service during World War II emphasized women’s ability to serve their country. For example, in 1943 French Guía Lili Linet left Mexico to serve in the French Resistance. Her entire Guide company gathered to say good-bye as her plane departed

240 Guías de México, Distintivos de Capacidad (Mexico City, D.F.: Guías de México, 1938).
Mexico. Other Guides gave service in the Women’s Civil Defense Service and raised funds for
the allied war effort. Elda Pérez Rivero remembers participating in collections, knitting and
sewing.

Campouts and excursions, a British Girl Guide tradition, created a new space where
Mexican girls sought adventure and opportunities to compete in athletics. While there were no
references to “intense Rugby games” in the post-1938 logbooks, there were pictures of girls
holding basketballs and volleyballs, participating in swim races, and jumping from a rope swing
into a stream. In their log books, Guides described inter-company competitions, which included
the construction of objects that could be utilized for the company, or furniture that would hold
the weight of a guide member, athletic exercises, and essay contests. The girls slept on the
ground and carried heavy rucksacks like revolutionary Adelitas. They participated in
scavenger hunts, had large bonfires, sang, and took turns as guards who would watch over the
camp by night. The Guías de México embraced these new and exciting opportunities. Though
during early 1930s Western European Girl Guide members established the Mexican Guides’
educational pedagogy and agenda, by the late 1930s Mexican girls and women experienced the
radical social and political transformations taking place in post-revolutionary Mexico, and
evaluated the Guide Movement’s significance to their gender and culture.

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Mexico City experienced major
demographic shifts, including the arrival of European immigrants who brought with them

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244 The British Girl Guides were formed in 1910 when a group of British girls staged a protest against their exclusion
from Sir Robert Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout program and Rally. They expressed much interest in rugged outdoor
excursions and camping trips, to the surprise of founder Baden Powell.
245 Because of the Mexican Revolutionary folk song “La Adelita,” female soldiers during the revolution are now
often referred to as Adelitas. Today the term is also used to describe a woman of strength and courage.
Progressive-era values and launched European-style civic organizations, such as the Guías de México. Prominent European immigrant women participated in and influenced women’s political and social mobilizations in Mexico, as they had in Europe. As the 1930s progressed, Mexican Guide members responded to nationalist postrevolutionary rhetoric, disseminated through public school curricula, state-sponsored cultural events, revolutionary art and literature, and burgeoning activist movements and requested the establishment of an independent Guiding association. Originally a branch of the British Girl Guides, an organization that reflected European Protestant and secular Progressive-era values, Mexican members called for an independent Mexican Guiding association that represented what they perceived to be the needs of Mexican youth – a convergence of British Guide traditions, Catholicism, and emerging nationalist principles. The new organization promoted girls’ involvement in social service organizations and their maintenance of Catholic piety and motherhood.
When I met “Marta,” she was busy packing for an annual three-generation family vacation to Acapulco. Excited about the upcoming trip, she explained that God and family were the most important priorities of a woman’s life, obligations that she believed one’s selfish desires had the potential to destroy. She shared her moral and religious values with her husband and sons, who were all Boy Scouts. They imparted a Christian worldview that emphasized gender parity, women’s private and men’s public complementary roles. As a young woman in the 1950s Marta served the nation as a rural public school teacher, a defining experience in her life. During the interview she proudly showed her teachers’ scrapbook, as well as photos of herself and her husband as Guide and Scout. Though Marta was a teacher and held leadership roles in the Girl Guide association, she believed that women needed to balance their obligations, always placing

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the family first. She did not view community service or her teaching career in liberal terms, but rather as the fulfillment of her religious obligation to society.\footnote{248}

During the Mexican Miracle, the period of post-war industrialization and economic growth between 1945 and 1960, the stated goal of the Mexican Girl Guides was to foment “modern women of character,” who through their roles as wives and mothers would transform the “children of today into the women of tomorrow.”\footnote{249} In the midst of the Mexican Miracle, the Guides provided a cultural space in which religious values could be forged within a seemingly secular and modern association. Though feminism and Catholicism in Mexico are historically viewed as opposing forces, the church had significant social, cultural and political influence on the reconstruction of gender and Mexicanidad, despite legal sanctions limiting the role of the church in the political arena. Between 1940 and 1960 96-98\% of the population continued to identify themselves as Catholic.\footnote{250}

The Catholic Church has served as a source of power and influence in women’s lives, and as a patriarchal institution that continues to hold women in a secondary position to men. While women support the church internally as nuns, teachers, and sponsors of lay associations, the priest serves as a father figure who conveys pastoral messages to the faithful and leads Catholic rituals for the nation’s faithful. Devotion to the Virgin Mary, the existence of female saints, and veneration of twentieth century Catholic figures such as Mother Theresa, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, demonstrate their importance. In processions, Mary is held high above the crowd and is presented as a mother-figure that watches over her parishioners. Mother Theresa set an example through her pious devotion in caring for the poor, especially those suffering from leprosy and

\footnote{248 Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 3, 2010. “Marta” did not want to be identified by name.}
\footnote{249 Guías de México A.C., \textit{Manual Guía}, 1957 (Mexico City: Guías de México, 1957), 12.}
\footnote{250 Roderic Ai Camp, \textit{Crossing Swords: Politics and Religion in Mexico} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.}
tuberculosis. Still, women could not hold official leadership positions in the Church, dispense the holy sacraments, or become priests, reinforcing the idea that women play both a secondary and supportive, or guiding role, in the church and family.

While American Protestants, British liberals, and some Mexican reformers viewed devoted Catholics as beholden to the Pope in Rome, who they believed shaped Catholic political views and in turn created opposition to secular democratic progress, the majority of Mexicans came to view Catholicism as inseparable from *Mexicanidad*. As an institution that garnered the allegiance of the majority of Mexicans over hundreds of years, the social and cultural influence, morals, and social values associated with the Catholic religion were viewed as secular. Just as ecumenicalism in Britain was recognized as universal, Catholic Mexicans’ familial hierarchies of authority arose out of deeply rooted religious traditions.

Between 1945 and 1960, the Girl Guides promoted women’s roles as democratic mothers, moral educators, and advocates of their husbands’ endeavors. This view of gender was perceived by the Mexican Guide association as Mexican and secular. As political scientist Roderic Ai Camp stated, due to the postrevolutionary state-church conflict, the prominent role of religious institutions in shaping Mexican identity and culture is often overlooked. However, more often than not religious institutions were allies of the state.251 Further, though since the 1930s public schools have been secular, he argued, “Inside the family from the lowliest peasant to cabinet minister, most Mexicans received formative religious influences, typically from their mothers…Mexican bishops are a joint product of Liberal and Catholic influences, just as politicians are products of Catholic and Liberal values. Their differences are ones of degrees, not

251 Camp, 3.
completely opposing value systems. Today, priests in Mexico are Liberals, and Liberals in Mexico are Catholics. ‘Modern’ Mexican liberalism is no longer anti-church.”

During the Mexican Miracle women’s roles expanded within the church and state. To the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling political party in Mexico, the expansion of the urban middle class was a symbol of its accomplishments, the children a target for its continued success. The construction of parks, schools and universities, development of a welfare state, and passage of women’s suffrage at the national level in 1953 provided new opportunities for Mexican women and youth. As Mexico City’s urban population expanded, so did the need for benevolent organizations such as the Girl Guides, and educated women who could staff its schools, hospitals and social service associations. Many women subscribed and attributed to this new, more public, conception of Mexican womanhood.

The ideals of domestic benevolence and citizen motherhood restricted women’s societal participation to problems and issues that, it was presumed, would benefit from her inherent generosity, abnegation and natural abilities as mothers. Women were inculcated in this version of femininity in state and church institutions. Though women’s citizenship was promoted, women were viewed as in need of protection by their husbands and the patriarchal PRI state, which placed legal limitations on their rights. For example, though women were encouraged to join social service associations, become educated and participate in the PRI’s Revolution, until 1974 a man could prevent his wife from working due to his legal obligation to support the family, and thus hers to domestic tasks and child rearing. Up to that point, article 123 of the Mexican Constitution declared that “unhealthful or dangerous work is prohibited for women in general

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252 Camp, 11.
and for young persons under 16 years of age. Industrial work is also prohibited for these two classes and they may not work in commercial establishments after ten o’clock at night.”  

Historian Heidi Tinsman reflected on the gendered nature of state sponsored modernization projects in Chile under Presidents Eduardo Frei (1964 -1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973), arguing that though working class women labored on haciendas and participated in unionization movements and land occupations, the Agrarian Reform program distributed materials and land only to men, who were assumed to be household heads. Similarly, in Mexico the PRI created gendered laws that placed women in a subordinate role. While the state sponsored new employment opportunities for women in the Ministries of Health and Education, legal structures limited their right to work, promoted a pronatalist agenda, and relegated them to a subservient position in the home. Because women’s salaries were seen as supplementary, they were not well compensated for their work.

Urban middle class parents wanted to provide their sons and daughters with a good education, shield them from vice and the influences of Hollywood, and provide them with healthy and informative experiences outside of the home. The responsibility for educating, protecting, childrearing and providing these experiences to children fell squarely on the shoulders of Mexican women. Thus, in the 1950s, women were expected to shield their daughters from harm and inappropriate encounters with boys while, at the same time, they lost a degree of control over their daughters’ movement and everyday encounters. Childhood organizations such as the Mexican Girl Guides, Junior Red Cross, and the Catholic Association

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for Mexican Youth (ACJM) experienced growth and contributed to the new middle class culture.\textsuperscript{258} They each published magazines instructing girls on how to be a woman in Mexico, and emphasized the importance of girls’ healthy diversions and service to the community as future mothers, wives, educators, social workers, secretaries and nurses. The Guías de México published its first magazine, \textit{Nezaldi}, in 1956 and expanded its circulation to the association’s growing membership as \textit{Muchachas} in 1959. Illustrated magazines provided girls and women with new opportunities to express their opinions, comment on social issues, and participate in the expanding middle class consumer culture. As the urban middle class expanded, so did childhood associations such as the Girl Guides. The organization grew to include 6,000 girls by 1960.\textsuperscript{259}

\textbf{Background: The Mexican Miracle}

Manual Ávila Camacho’s presidency (1940-1946) marked the end of the revolutionary reform era, and the beginning of a new capitalist industrial approach toward development referred to as the “Mexican Miracle.” Ávila Camacho and the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) aimed to fulfill the promises of the revolution through urban economic expansion rather than rural development. Industrialization was inspired by wartime shortages of United States and European manufactured goods. The PRI hoped to produce both for the domestic market and to trade with other Latin American nations, increasing employment opportunities and the standard of living in Mexico. The 1940s saw the growth of textile, food processing, chemical, beer and cement production. A new urban middle class tied to this industrial sector emerged in the 1940s and 1950s. The gross domestic product rose at an average rate of 6.4 percent, and

\textsuperscript{258} Elena Jackson (2008), \textit{Children of the Mexican Revolution: Constructing the Mexican Citizen, 1920-1940} (Doctoral Dissertation), University of Arizona, Tucson, 191-200.

\textsuperscript{259} Guías de México, A.C., \textit{Jubileo de Oro} (Mexico City: Guías de México, 1980).
agricultural production more than tripled.\textsuperscript{260} The growing middle class that worked in the new urban industries symbolized the Mexican Miracle’s success. According to Louis Walker, middle class growth continued steadily across the twentieth century from 16\% of the population in 1940 to 29\% in 1970.\textsuperscript{261}

With revenues from wartime production, President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) launched a series of public works projects to meet the PRI’s development goals. These included improvements on the Morelos Dam, construction of the Falcon Dam and a series of hydroelectric stations, which tripled Mexico’s electrical output and expanded acreage of arable land. The 1950s also saw the expansion of oil pipelines and refineries and accelerated drilling, modernization of the railway system, and completion of Mexico’s segment of the Pan-American and Isthmian Highways. Hundreds of small factories were constructed in Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Puebla and San Luis Potosí. Low taxes and high profits encouraged Mexican and foreign investment. The wartime alliance between the United States and Mexico inspired the two countries to form closer economic ties in the post-war period. However, historian Susan Gauss argues that the United States government coerced Mexico into seeking direct foreign investment by refusing to provide post-war loans and development aid.\textsuperscript{262} General Motors, Dow Chemicals, Pepsi-Cola, Colgate, Goodyear, John Deere, Ford, Proctor and Gamble, Sears Roebuck, among others, sought economic opportunities in Mexico.\textsuperscript{263}

The period 1945-1960 in Mexico is remembered as an era of increased political stability and economic growth; however, historians such as Paul Gillingham, Benjamin T. Smith, and

Gilbert M. Joseph, have argued that even at the height of the Institutional Revolutionary Party’s power, hegemony and solidity were a façade. According to Gillingham and Smith, Mexico’s Gini coefficient averaged 0.55 between 1950 and 1968, the third highest in Latin America at that time. Further, development was highly uneven; wages were more than double the national average in Mexico City and other northern urban regions. The PRI was reliant on processes of negotiation and military force in order to co-opt various sectors of society - entrepreneurs, unions, peasants, and religious coalitions. Rewards in the form of jobs, contracts, services and resources were provided to those who cooperated; marginalization and military repression resulted for those who did not. Though elections took place every six years, they were not free, fair or democratic. While the middle and upper classes benefited from industrial growth, social welfare initiatives were often symbolic; the rhetoric of social reform was used to garner support from the masses, but was in reality secondary to the PRI’s new revolution. The Institutional Revolutionary Party reimagined the Mexican Revolution. As Zolov argued, this required the government to reinvent the revolutionary struggle into one in which the various factions – Zapatistas, Villistas, and Constitutionalists – were unified in their efforts to rebuild the country and reform its constitution. He used the metaphor of the revolutionary family to describe the relationship between the president, political party, and citizenry of Mexico under the PRI. He stated, “As the official party of the Revolution (capitalized to enhance its mythic status), the PRI became the ‘family home’ in which postrevolutionary ‘squabbles’ were resolved through rewards and punishment.”

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264 Gillingham and Smith, 17. The Gini Coefficient is a compound measure of national inequality in the distribution of wealth.
Though literacy increased significantly during the Mexican Miracle, from 42% in 1940 to 76% in 1970, state educational programs were often underfunded. However, in the 1960s Adolfo López Mateos’s administration (1958-1964) made a concerted effort to combat illiteracy and, as Nichole Sanders has demonstrated, revenues from the Mexican Miracle resulted in the expansion of the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s clinics, hospitals, health and welfare programs, all of which provided new employment and service opportunities to Mexican women.

The Church and State in Mexico

Though article 130 of the Mexican Constitution limited the role of the church in Mexico by confining its purview to religious worship, and prohibiting its participation in politics and education, the relationship between the Church and state began to change in the late 1930s. In 1938, for example, the church publically supported President Lázaro Cárdenas’s declaration that oil reserves found in Mexican soil belonged to the nation. Additionally, according to Camp, the March, 1937 Papal encyclical on the “Religious Situation in Mexico” encouraged lay Catholics to “continue to exercise their political and civil rights and obligations in defense of personal and Church rights.” Though the church was not directly involved in a political party, it encouraged the laity to represent it in civil society. As Marxism spread across Latin America in the 1950s, the Catholic Church in Mexico supported the state’s initiatives to temper it.

The state recognized Mexican Catholics as an important political constituency and aimed to ease tensions with the church in the 1940s. For example, in 1940 newly elected President Manuel Ávila Camacho attempted to repair the relationship between the Mexican church and

268 Sanders, 2.
269 Camp, 28.
state. During this period, which is commonly referred to as the “modus vivendi” between the church and state in Mexico, the two powers enjoyed a more peaceful coexistence and the state tolerated Catholic education in private schools and public manifestations of religion. According to historian Roberto Blancarte, president-elect Ávila Camacho used religious rhetoric to lessen the church-state conflict. He stated that “all Mexicans [could] unite, forming a single front, consolidating our material and spiritual wealth,” and he promised “that national politics would honor and bolster the high moral values of the Mexican family.” Further, in 1945 he allowed the Church to hold public celebrations in commemoration of the coronation of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and to broadcast the celebration on the radio. President Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) sought the church’s assistance in launching a rural agricultural campaign to improve irrigation and expand access to fertilizers and machinery. At the same time, according to Camp, Mexican Catholics viewed these gestures as an opening for the laity to organize in opposition to the ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party).

Catholics within the National Action Party (PAN), founded in 1939, in the 1940s began to push for the elimination of anti-clerical articles to the constitution, which they claimed violated their individual rights. The PAN party was founded by UNAM rector Goméz Marín, and initially gained popularity within the university’s Jesuit student organization, the National Union of Catholic Students (UNEC). The party drew much of its ideological influence from Catholic thought and papal encyclicals. Though the official church claimed to be non-political, the laity served as its voice in politics. Its creation represented a threat to the one-party state. According to

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271 Camp, 28.
272 Ibid., 56 and 110.
Camp, 70% of Mexican Catholics attended church weekly in 1959. In 1946 four PAN national deputies were elected. However, the party became much more popular in the 1980s when it represented itself as a pro-democratic alternative to the PRI, rather than a pro-Catholic party. In the face of rising communist, socialist, and other leftist movements that rejected the hierarchical nature of ecclesiastical institutions, and increased Protestant influence in Mexico, the Church heightened its efforts at evangelization and religious education. The thawing of the church-state conflict in Mexico allowed the church to re-exert its influence.

As historian John Schwaller and Camp have noted, in the 1950s the Church encouraged a larger role for the laity. This created new openings for Catholic women. For example, Catholic Action, a church-sponsored association, organized the work of the Catholic laity under the direction of local bishops. It focused on charity work, such as assisting the poor and homeless, and religious study. Schwaller stated, “Catholic Action empowered the laity to act on their own, with the blessing of the Church, to solve the problems of the world, consistent with the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.” An insufficient number of priests to carry out this work in the mid-twentieth century, he added, led the church to charge the laity with new roles such as leading prayer meetings, catechism, communion, and confirmation classes.

Liberation theology, which emphasized the church’s obligation to promote social justice and eliminate poverty, aimed to combat the church’s reputation as an elite institution. This, in part, was a reaction to the threat of Marxism, and competition from more egalitarian Protestant influences. These notions were expressed at the 1955 Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 1959 Pope John XXIII announced the coming of the

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273 Ibid., 114.
275 Ibid., 222.
Second Vatican Council, which would meet in four sessions between 1962 and 1969 in order to address relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world.\textsuperscript{276} Its goals of economic development and social justice were dependent on an active and dedicated laity. According to Camp, the Catholic Church in Mexico was comparatively slow to adapt this ethos. Whereas the theology of liberation was at its height in other parts of Latin America in the 1960s, in Mexico it was most influential in the 1970s. Mexico’s episcopate instead concentrated on internal issues.\textsuperscript{277} But this does not mean that it was absent from politics.

Due to the growth of Catholic associations such as Catholic Action in the 1940s and 1950s, the government responded to the laity’s requests to censor the media. For example, historian Anne Rubenstein demonstrated that in response to Catholic protests regarding the content of magazines, newspapers, and comic books, the government Classifying Commission for Illustrated Periodicals and Magazines was established and charged with censoring the media’s content, and monitoring publications for inappropriate language and sexual content.\textsuperscript{278} But it had no clear mechanism for enforcement. Rubenstein stated, “Public space and public behavior became matters for contestation in the booming cities, with battles waged over the naming and renaming of streets after revolutionary heroes or Catholic Saints, the imagery on posters and billboards, the conduct of certain categories of tourists, the location of a bars and dance halls, and overly suggestive forms of dance.”\textsuperscript{279} Women’s representation in the mass media was central to these debates.

Catholic Action launched aggressive moralization campaigns in the 1950s encouraging Mexicans to balance their spiritual and material concerns. According to historian Julio Moreno,

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 228.
\textsuperscript{277} Camp, 30.
\textsuperscript{278} Rubenstein, 2.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid, 5.
the movement was most popular among the urban middle classes. Catholic Action ran a significant number of schools, clothing distribution sites, literacy centers, children’s programs, youth organizations, and publications in Mexico. Moreno noted that the campaign was a response to a letter written by religious authorities in Mexico. The priests and bishops who signed the letter claimed that women’s revealing clothing and participation in sports such as swimming were seductive and resulted in temptation. The success of these campaigns demonstrates the extent to which Mexicans were concerned about the representation of women’s bodies and their new public roles in society. Catholic Action’s protests were successful in stopping the 1949 Miss Mexico beauty contest, and in 1954 prevented the Celanese Corporation from sponsoring a televised swimsuit competition. In 1950 the Mexican Association of Advertising Agencies (ANP) and Society of Authors and Composers signed a Pact of Honor, an agreement to allow the government’s Ethics Commission, formed in 1944, to review its books, scripts and commercial advertising for immoral content.\footnote{Moreno, 222-225.} Catholic women in Mexico drew inspiration and power from their expanding roles in Catholic education, as catechists, and as social reformers. Gender parity held that women occupied a separate, yet important and authoritative, space in the church and family. But at the same time the Church defined their position as secondary, subordinate, and supportive.

**Middle Class Womanhood and the Girl Guides**

In the 1940s and 1950s women had new opportunities to work and volunteer in the church and new state institutions. Historian Nichole Sanders argued that during the Mexican Miracle, women were incorporated into PRI structures through their paid participation as social workers, nurses and teachers in the Ministry of Public Assistance, established in 1937, and its successor, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, established in 1943. Female teachers played a
significant role as professionals in the new educational institutions, and were called upon to
volunteer for secular beneficent organizations, which flourished during the post-war period.

While women became legal citizens of Mexico in the 1950s, these rights were rooted in
what Sanders referred to as “benevolent femininity.” She argued, while women’s involvement in
charity work was not new, women’s employment within these government entities, and the
abundance of newly established secular voluntary and childhood organizations were. As part of
this modernizing project, middle class women were charged with reforming and uplifting the
lower classes as professionals and examples to the community at large.

Reformers saw the intervention of social workers and other government employees in the
everyday lives of poor and working class women as paramount to the improvement of social
conditions. During the post-war period, the state sponsored the construction of kindergartens,
pre-natal clinics, foster care, mother-child welfare centers, and dining halls targeting single
mothers and their children. The gendered model of the 1930s municipal housekeeper was
reconstructed in the 1940s and 1950s. Women now played a vital role in the construction of the
modern state. Motherhood was seen as the true calling of respectable women, benevolent activity
an extension of it.

The Guides viewed adolescent service in these institutions as essential to the
development of wholesome Mexican women who would be the future mothers, wives, nurses,
social workers and educators, and thus would “better the economic and cultural state of the
woman in Mexico.” To the Guides, volunteerism was seen as the fulfillment of their duty to
serve God and country, a vow they repeatedly made when they recited the Girl Guide promise.

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281 Sanders, 4-7.
282 Ibid.
During the 1950s and 1960s the Catholic theology of liberation, the idea that society had a religious responsibility to uplift the nation’s poor as Jesus once did, also contributed to women’s drive to participate in these endeavors. During the 1950s, the Guías Mayores (Older Guides) took turns arranging the atrium in the church, visiting hospitals and asylums and arranging the gardens of nursing homes and other organizations. They provided support to existing Catholic benevolent organizations and the new public clinics, hospitals and orphanages constructed during the Mexican Miracle. They demonstrated their commitment to national development and benevolent femininity by participating in the national literacy campaign and utilizing their first aid skills in the drive to inoculate the population against tuberculosis and polio. The Social Security Administration’s (IMSS) health campaign significantly reduced tuberculosis and polio, while malaria was almost completely eliminated.

Religion and Femininity

The Guides were instructed to be “women of FAITH solidly instructed in their religion and living it in their daily actions.” During the 1950s Catholicism took a more prominent place in the organization. While the cross disappeared from the center of the Guide symbol, the trébol, to represent the association’s secular nature and openness to Jewish girls, it was likely due to international pressure rather than a change in the national organization’s position. The cross still appeared at the center of the trébol in Guide literature during the 1950s and 1960s, even though it was no longer on the Guide pin.

Girlhood and Catholicism were viewed as inseparable. For example, a 1957 Nezaldi article titled “Religion is Essential for Happiness” stated “a religious basis is a key to happiness and success. It does not mean just going to church, knowing the sacred history, or understanding

286 Sanders, 90-116.
theology…serving God is doing something for others daily.”

One National Guide Campout had an Easter theme. Together, all of the Guides of Mexico learned about and practiced in the traditions of Good Friday. “In the morning, while they were sitting in a large circle beneath the sun and the ample horizon, a priest told the story of the life and death of Jesus…. At three in the afternoon was the recitation of the cross. Silently we walked through the woods to a strange altar with three enormous crosses with a red and gold background.”

1950s photos of young Mexican girls in popular magazines such as Revista de Revistas, and in the Guide magazines Nezaldi and Muchachas, presented girls as innocent, timid and angelic. Communion and Wedding photos of girls and young women as they knelt before an altar demonstrated their purity, modesty and dedication to God, characteristics that the church, state, girlhood organizations and Mexican parents wished to preserve. In the Nezaldi and Muchachas section “Rumores,” births, deaths and marriages of Guide members were announced.

In interviews Guides of the 1950s generation mentioned the importance of religion to the lives and values of Mexican women. For example, Maria Pliego Ballesteros reminded me “there are no Girl Guides without God,” and “that is the way that Baden-Powell intended it to be.”

Women’s dedication to church reinforced benevolent femininity.

Benevolent Femininity and the Citizen Mother

Historian Eileen Ford argues that during the post-war period the protection of Mexican children’s physical and emotional wellbeing was central to the PRI’s national project, a symbol of modernity and progress, and an important marker of the growth of the middle classes. This

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291 Maria Pliego Ballesteros. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 26, 2011.
292 Eileen Ford, Children of the Mexican Miracle: Childhood and Modernity in Mexico City, 1940-1968 (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008).
“golden age of the child” elevated the status of women and the role of mothers. Women’s right to suffrage and citizenship stemmed from the popularized notion of gender parity. The responsibility for raising and educating Mexico’s youth, and cultivating girls who would be model middle class citizens of Mexico, were seen as the primary responsibility of Mexican women. The Guides of Mexico aimed to foster girls who would contribute to society as Catholic mothers and citizens, volunteers for the protection of the young and elderly, educators, and the center of the modern Mexican family.

In Mexico, motherhood was seen as the true calling of respectable women, benevolent activity an extension of it. As Ford noted, due to Mexico’s population loss during the revolutionary era, post-revolutionary leaders endorsed a pronatalist agenda. In 1936, President Lázaro Cárdenas passed the first Population Law, encouraging marriage, childbearing, maternal and child health and immigration. The initiative was reiterated in the 1947 Law of the Population. The Mexican government recognized women’s contribution through elaborate Mother’s Day festivals during which women participated in competitions and received prizes for having raised the largest number of children, and for their patience, abnegation and hard work. Psychologists and social workers feared that if women were not available to care for the family, delinquency would prevail. Girls continued to be prepared primarily for motherhood. Younger Guides, Haditas, expressed their dedication to family with their promise “I promise to do my best to God and my County, to help people at all times, every day, and especially those in my household.”

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293 Sanders, 15-16.
294 Ford, 19. Mother’s Day was first established in 1922.
Knowing how to care for children would ensure that the Guides would be good future mothers and role models to others in the community. Like popular magazines and newspapers, Muchachas focused on first aid and childrearing to prepare girls for these roles. One magazine column, “Talks by Dr. Carrington: Your New Little Brother,” girls were taught how to take care for “Pedro.” At first the girls learned about the responsibilities of taking care of a newborn, and the ways in which they could assist their mothers during the stages of infancy. They learned how often and what their little brother would eat, how to change his diapers, hold him and clean him. Later they were taught how to interact with young Pedro- how to play with him, introduce new foods, make toys and help him learn to make sounds. Patrols were encouraged to serve as mothers helpers to new parents. They would adopt a baby and periodically volunteer to babysit him or her. This gave them the opportunity to apply what they learned from Dr. Carrington, a female pediatrician and former National President of the organization. Perfecting these skills would enable the Guides to teach others and “to better the economic and cultural state of the woman in Mexico,” one of the Guides stated goals.

Middle and upper class women viewed themselves as mothers to the community at large. In magazines such as Excésior’s weekly edition Revista de Revistas, women’s issues were addressed in the Mujeres section. Intellectually, it then separated women’s place and space in society from that of the male gender. Like Muchachas, ads focused on the new kitchen appliances and food products now available to middle class mothers. It included articles on motherhood, marriage and fashion advice, childhood education, diseases, health care and hygiene, demonstrating the PRI’s new emphasis on the children of the Mexican Miracle. For example, a January 1950 article discusses the SEP campaign against hunger. It stated,

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297 Ibid.
“Supervising the nutrition of its people is the most important responsibility of a government.” As Eileen Ford noted, during this period the ideal of a new democratic childhood was accentuated, one in which parks, healthy food and primary education would be available to all of the nation’s children. A Revista de Revista article emphasized, “The public parks of Mexico City have been made available to the humble public.” It also advertised that educational magazines would be sold at SEP pavilions at a low cost.\footnote{Luis del Parral, “Escuelas...Muchas Escuelas,” Revista de Revistas, January 22, 1950.} President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) and Secretary of Public Education Manuel Gual Vidal launched the Mil Escuelas initiative, with the goal of building one thousand new schools. According to Revista de Revistas it would reach five hundred thousand children, and was part of a larger campaign against illiteracy for the progress of the nation.\footnote{Luis del Parral, “Escuelas...Muchas Escuelas,” Revista de Revistas, January 22, 1950.} The project was not complete when Alemán left office in 1952. But educational expansion continued such that by 1963 education was the largest item in the Mexican budget.\footnote{Michael Meyer and William Beezley, The Oxford History of Mexico (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 588.}

Women were requisite to the success of these initiatives.

**Women’s Suffrage**

In comparing the 1930s suffrage movement in Mexico to that of the 1950s, historian Gabriela Cano argued, “If for Lázaro Cárdenas, the establishment of a women’s suffrage was a question of democracy, for Adolfo Ruiz Cortines it was an act of chivalry.”\footnote{Gabriela Cano, “Una cuidadania igualitaria: El president Lázaro Cárdenas y el sufragio femenino,” Desdeldiez. Boletín del Centro de Estudios históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, Jiquilpan, diciembre 1995, 73.} Historians such as Cano and Jocelyn Olcott have posited that the party served as a father figure that provided women with the right to vote, yet protected their subordinate position by legally restricting their right to work, and emphasizing their subordinate position within the home.\footnote{Ibid., and Jocelyn Olcott, Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 234.}

 Suffrage was not representative of women’s equality, but was symbolic of women’s parity and benevolent.
femininity. The paternalist state depended on this new constituency in their efforts to modernize the nation. For example, women were directly targeted in campaigns to protect, educate and inoculate children, as the population of children in the Federal District rapidly increased from 605,569 in 1940 (34.5% of the population) to 1,996,950 in 1960 (41% of the population).\textsuperscript{304}

While scholars such as Julia Tuñon Pablos attribute women’s suffrage and citizenship to international pressures for cultural modernization,\textsuperscript{305} these changes were also a result of a confluence of domestic social and cultural developments related to the changing definitions of womanhood and benevolent femininity within Mexico, and the new leadership opportunities provided by PRI structures, the church and benevolent associations.

In May, 1952, an entire issue of \textit{Revista de Revistas} was dedicated to the question of women’s suffrage in Mexico. Women from various sectors of society – women’s associations, educational professionals, activists and religious leaders were interviewed. The issue was introduced as follows: “The Mexican woman is essentially a housewife. The immense majority are inclined to marry and form a Christian family that is permanent and of firm moral cohesion. The mission of Mexican women is to marry, have children, care for and educate them.”\textsuperscript{306} Mexican women were described in contrast to their North American or European counterparts. The author asserted that women in Mexico were not as interested in the right to vote due to their inherent dedication to motherhood. “For the majority of our women, politics is a strange and contradictory entity to family life…. At least this can be seen in the declarations made to our magazine by almost all the women that we interviewed with the goal of knowing the issues that may arise and resolve the problem of women’s participation in the political life of the nation.”

The magazine’s focus on women’s citizenship was inspired by a statement made by the official

\textsuperscript{304} Ford, 40.
\textsuperscript{305} Tuñón, \textit{Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled}.
candidate for President of the Republic, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, in which he emphasized the possibility of women’s suffrage at the national level.\(^{307}\)

While diverse opinions regarding suffrage were expressed, each response was couched in the theory of benevolent femininity - that it was not only appropriate, but natural, for women to participate in social service and education activities as volunteers or professionals because they were naturally self-sacrificing and had an intrinsic inclination to help others. For example, The Alliance of Women supported women’s right to vote. María Lavalle Urbina, Secretary General of the Alliance, Magistrate of the Superior Tribunal of Justice, and one of the first two women elected to the Senate of Mexico in 1964, was interviewed for the column. She stated that the Alliance saw the intervention of women in politics as valuable to the nation because of their position as mothers, wives and teachers. The mother, sister and wife, she argued “is the traditional axis of the Mexican family.” She stated that the suffrage amendment should be passed because women “contribute a human sense to diverse problems. Women are distinct [from men] because of their great generosity, for example, in the care of children, in the hospital and in social work in general.”\(^{308}\) Cuca Escobar de Perrín of XEMX Radio Feminina argued that suffrage was important because of women’s domestic and childrearing responsibilities. According to Perrín, “The home and politics are compatible because the country, in my conception, must be something of an extension of our own homes, a spacious and bright home for all. The important thing is to encounter women that, at the same time that they embellish their homes, embellish the life of this large and marvelous common home.”\(^{309}\) As a working woman, she argued that the workplace and home were compatible. “God willing one day these women

\(^{307}\) Ibid.


that ridiculously lose time playing canasta, will dedicate themselves to work for the benefit of poor women or the elderly,” she stated. After criticizing wealthy and middle class women that remained uninvolved, she made a joke to lighten the mood: “There is one position that women could not accept, that of President of the Republic, because the law requires that the candidate be 35 years old, and no woman would admit to being that old.”

Amalia Saravía, president of the Mexican Girl’s Catholic Youth Organization (La Juventud Católica Femenina Mexicana) added that “The girls affiliated with JCFM understand the concept that their jobs, in the government or otherwise, are transitory and that they only serve as a vehicle to arrive at a desired end – marriage.” She warned that women must not forget their feminine roles, but they should vote. In doing so, they should consider their faith in God and Catholic moral ethos.

Adela Formosa de Obregón Acabaría, Director and Founder of the Universidad Femenina de México, also believed that women’s voice and virtues would benefit Mexican politics. Mexican women should have this right, she argued, “So that youth enjoy clean schools and good ventilation and that up to the last corner of the suburbs enjoy the benefits of electric lights and the comforts of modern life.”

Those who argued against suffrage believed it would interfere with women’s domestic duties and defile her honest character. Alicia Rebeca Gutiérrez, for example, stated that “In places where women do have the right to vote at the municipal level, youth are foolish and petulant.” Apparently this was due to women shirking their duties as mothers while wasting time on politics. “These supposed equalities, in my opinion, are the principal cause of the confusion that has resulted in failing towns where it has been implemented.” She believed that the concept of equality caused an increase in smoking, drinking and women’s participation in “strong sports”

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310 Ibid.
in the United States. Journalist Rosario Sansores noted that “the Mexican woman is not, in
general, prepared for the right to vote. She is sweet, full of tenderness, passionate. She is not like
women of other nationalities and races.” Senator María Ester Rodríguez, Supervisor of
Personnel of Nurses at the Children’s Hospital added, “If women become absorbed with a
profession or with politics, undoubtedly she would neglect her duties as wife and mother.”

Though the Guides stated that they are not a political organization, and opinions among the
organizations members vary widely, they also emphasized the Guides democratic duty to fulfill
their roles as mothers and municipal housekeepers, and after 1954, as citizens.

**The Cultural Construction of Mexican Womanhood**

I had the opportunity to discuss the Guides’ view of girlhood and womanhood in Mexico
with several members of the Guías Antiguas Unidas en Servicio (Adult Guides United in
Service, or GAUS) at Nuestra Cabaña in 2010. They had scheduled a meeting to organize
volunteer initiatives for underprivileged children in their community. The members present
agreed that there were three main differences between Guides in North America and Europe, and
those in Mexico: Catholicism, conservatism and a closer connection to family. While they
stressed that the main tenets of the Guide Movement were the same worldwide, they felt these
three factors shaped and distinguished the Mexican Movement and the identity of the Mexican
woman. They referred to the Guías as a family, and compared their shared ethical values as
analogous to a shared faith.

In the 1950s the Mexican Guides stated that they aimed to prepare “women of work and
action that have acquired the knowledge necessary to comply with their triple mission: religious,

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316 Meeting of the Mexican Adult Guides United in Service (GAUS). Interview by the author. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 2, 2010.
family and social.”\textsuperscript{317} As the population of children in Mexico City exploded between 1930 and 1970, from 403,937 to 2,850,644,\textsuperscript{318} girls were educated in far greater numbers, and participation in age-specific entertainment outside of the home was much more common. It became increasingly difficult to shelter young women whose purity, it was assumed, needed to be protected. Though the 1950s is also represented in United States history as a child centered period during which a youth centered pop-culture emerged,\textsuperscript{319} Mexican women viewed their version of post-war womanhood differently. In part, this was because Mexican womanhood was seen through a culturally Catholic and nationalistic lens – one in which Mexican men and women took pride in the modesty and conservatism of the female populace.

In the face of cultural imperialism from abroad, Mexican women’s representation as traditional, pious, and Catholic was tied to \textit{Mexicanidad}. For example, newspapers and magazines contrasted gender representations from Hollywood films to the behaviors of seemingly more conservative Mexican women and youth, extolling Mexican women’s virtues. This was especially true in the 1950s debates surrounding Mexican women’s right to citizenship. The Guías compared North American and Mexican cultural differences in a letter sent to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America that included a list of “do’s and don’ts” for Girl Scouts’ visits to Mexico. The Mexican Guides disapproved of the influences and behaviors of previous North American guests at the Guide hostel, Ticalli, and felt that the United States Girl Scouts should be more aware of Mexican values and cultural expectations. The author reminded leaders that “In Mexico, young ladies normally are not permitted to go out with boys unchaperoned. On very special occasions with a boy that the girl’s family knows well, a girl may be permitted to go

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\textsuperscript{317} “Carta Abierta,” Muchachas, Guías de México A.C., October-November, 1960, 28.
\textsuperscript{318} Ford, 40.
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out unchaperoned in a group, but to go out alone with a boy she and her parents don’t know is
unheard of.” The Guides felt that American girls had gained a reputation for being “easy” in
Mexico. “Some U.S.A. Girl Scouts who have stayed there have unknowingly been giving Ticalli
something of a ‘reputation,’” she stated. “They have come out on the balconies in shorts, or less,
and waved and shouted to men in nearby office buildings; they have run out to the street in their
bare feet—things which are nothing more than innocent teenage exuberance in the United States,
but which look very different south of the border.”320 While the Girl Scouts may have behaved in
this manner, these statements also reflect common stereotypes of North American tourists in the
region.

Gender parity was encouraged in the church, state and society. According to historian
Anne Varley, in the 1950s the Mexican Supreme Court encouraged the establishment of a single
family home in which the husband served as bread winner, the wife as homemaker. “The key
concern in Supreme Court rulings about shared accommodation was...that the wife should be
able to exercise the rights granted her by law by being the only one to supervise the running of
the home. The judges regarded this as a privilege granted to a woman by virtue of her married
state,” as it was the only real source of power available to her. Varley argued that the law favored
middle class women, as lower class couples were more likely to reside with their in-laws. 321

Popular marriage advice columns and women’s magazines viewed women as responsible
for the stability of the family and of their marriage. Many women internalized this notion.
Revista de Revista’s weekly advice column provided women of the 1950s with advice on
balancing marriage and family and maintaining stability in the home. Women wrote to Agripina,
author of “Consultéme su Caso,” who gave advice on divorce, cheating, childrearing, dating and

320 Guías de México, “do’s and don’ts,” a letter to Leaders of troops Traveling in Mexico, GSUSA (undated). Folder
International Countries, Mexico. National Historic Preservation Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, New York, NY
321 Varley, 248.
careers. Her counsel reflected women’s subordinate status in 1950s Mexican society. In return for his financial support, a wife was responsible for childrearing and domestic tasks. Without his support, she had few economic options. For example, Leticia, who was considering a divorce, was told “If you regularly read this section, like you tell me, you would notice that I never advise divorce except in cases that are grave and extreme…. But your marriage does not fit either of these classifications. That your husband is cheating? The same thing happens to all – absolutely everyone.” Though her husband had another house and children, Agripina suggested that Leticia had not considered the consequences. “You have reached middle age and have behind you your years of happiness. Remember your childhood in a blessed home, your engagement, your wedding...,” she reminded her. She warned that without a father, the children would be undisciplined and rebellious. “Mothers are too soft, precisely because they want too much,” she warned. “Are you going to educate your children for the day after tomorrow when they are men and women, efficient and honorable?” She attempted to comfort Leticia, stating that “if it alleviates your nerves, don’t forget this: 99% of wives are in the same situation.”

In giving dating advice, Agripina expressed that young women in Mexico, more so than young men, were responsible for maintaining respectability in their interactions with others. Like Leticia, Juanita was told that to have a successful relationship, women should be timid, stable and abnegate. “Please don’t imitate your friends who leave and enter relationships, flirt and seem to enjoy themselves more than you. In the long run you will go further on the road to happiness.”

One woman confessed that she was considering an affair, and that her husband had also done so. Agripina acknowledged that the world was not always fair, but stated that “In this world, Señora, the laws were made by men and it is men who they favor.”

“Consultéme Su Caso,” Revista de Revistas, January 1, 1950, 44.

Ibid.
have of the world and of humanity if after seeing his father comport himself poorly he then saw
his mother do the same?,” she asked. According to anthropologists Matthew Guttmann and
Oscar Lewis, the practice of maintaining an informal second family was still common at that
time. The advice column was surrounded by photos of weddings and communions,
emphasizing the purity and honor of the abnegate mother and girl.

**Feminine Modesty and Domestic Perfection**

In addition to the promotion of benevolent femininity, the Guides aimed to cultivate girls’
feminine modesty and domestic perfection. In *Muchachas*, they contrasted the roles of the
Mexican Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. “Guiding is a feminine form of scouting, a method of
educating. The goals are the same – the cultivation of superior men and women with a very
important double formula – The Scout is for the exterior; The Guide is for the interior.” María
Pliego Ballesteros, a Guide member since the 1950s, believed that the differences between male
and female children in Mexico were inherent and striking. Girls, she stated, were calm, tender,
and quiet. “They sing, they do not yell,” she stated. According to Pliego, girls had “different
rhythms, different mentalities.” She believed that women could be cultivated into “magnificent
leaders,” but that girls and boys should not camp together, and should not be educated in the
same way. “When I was a child, the woman could not vote, and worked in the house. My mom
worked in the school because my father was sick.” She stated that girls were taught to always
improve themselves and recognize their faults in a situation. Mexican women needed to maintain
a balance – their role was in the home, their husband’s in the public sphere. Pliego felt that

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324 Ibid., 48-49.
327 María Pliego Ballesteros. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 26, 2011.
feminism and the changing roles of women were a cause of societal deterioration. She stated, “When work is first then family second, the family suffers, the marriage suffers, the man passes more time with his secretary than his wife in the work place. It causes divorce and results in egoism, feminism and ugly competition. Machismo and feminism equals war.”

Domestic perfection and feminine modesty were important components of the Girl Guide program. In 1957 the Guides adopted the theme “Homes of Today and Tomorrow.” Girls were advised to assist with simple daily tasks in the home such as taking care of their siblings, mending socks with holes, learning to wash utensils, and cooking new recipes. In later issues of Nezaldi, girls who assisted in their homes and did good deeds received recognition. Their photos were placed in the magazine. “We don’t need to be heroes or make great sacrifices,” the Nezaldi announcement stated, “doing small things like those that a mother does will bring joy to the family.”

A modest appearance was emphasized, especially as middle class girls began to have a more public position society. As a new age-specific pop culture emerged in which girls read the same magazines, discussed movie stars, participated in girlhood organizations and were educated alongside one another, the balance between sheltering girls and providing them with the opportunities of the Mexican Miracle became increasingly difficult. Therefore, their outward appearance and demeanor, domestic perfection and feminine modesty, became a societal obsession. The 1957 Mexican Guide Manual advised that “A guide should have an impeccable presentation in uniform as much as in street clothes… well done hair, combed and well-arranged, an adequate personality, clean hands and nails, good posture, be perfectly dressed, and have carefully chosen adornment.” “The way of speaking, laughing, walking, and sitting says a lot

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328 Ibid.
about one’s presentation,” they were warned, “Conversations and laughing in a high voice will be harmful to you.” “The older Guide, if she does not already, must learn to move with discretion and naturally, as well as to show femininity in all of her actions.”

Each edition of *Muchachas* contained articles discussing feminine cleanliness and beauty. “What does it mean to be clean?,” one article asked. “Bathing daily, changing your underwear, changing your socks, and applying deodorant.” Though it is unlikely that middle class members of the association needed this kind of advice, they were expected to serve as a good example while volunteering in lower class communities or orphanages, like the new middle class professional who served in these institutions as social workers, nurses and psychiatrists. Another article focused on the “the beauty of the hands.” Girls were warned not to gesticulate or talk too much. “Silence is often gold, a leisurely calm attitude is priceless.” Moderate make-up, scrupulous cleanliness and a “suitable personality” were also encouraged. According to *Muchachas*, “An integral part of a personality is a smile and its frequency…a fundamental part of beauty is an expression of joy, optimism and being agreeable. A youth can have all the attributes of physical beauty in the world and, nonetheless, if they don’t know how to smile, they will not be beautiful or pleasant.”

The maintenance of feminine dress and demeanor were prioritized in part because it was presumed that these factors would determine girls’ future marriage prospects.

In the *Muchachas* column “Tu Personalidad,” girls were advised to dress well, walk correctly and behave appropriately, especially around boys. If the girl had a thick neck, she ought to wear an open neck or V-neck. If she had a long neck, it was recommended that she cover it with a scarf. If you have a fat arm, “avoid complicated sleeves if you don’t want to call attention

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332 Ibid.
to your weak point,” “If you have skinny arms you will look good in balloon sleeves.” Girls were counseled on how to brush their hair, apply creams and ointment, sit, stand and style their hair. They were instructed on how to walk upright. Exercises, such as carrying a book atop one’s head or stretching with hands behind their back in order to find their natural bearing, encouraged girls’ feminine demeanor. “Bad posture makes a person disagreeable,” one article warned, “One cannot be distinguished as a lady if they are not completely upright in their bearing, which you must do to be to be a girl, whether you are a Guide or not”… “and you must walk as attractively and upright as possible. The perfect rhythm is to stride on both feet with the same velocity and force.” Girls’ presentation and ability to afford new consumer products served to distinguish middle and upper class girls from the stereotypes associated with lower class Mexicans.

The advice column “Consejos a Muchachas” encouraged girls to experiment with new consumer products. For example, a Guide asked for advice on how to give life to her limp hair. She was instructed to visit the pharmacy to purchase caster and sweet almond oil, brush it into her hair and sleep on it. The following day she would wash her hair with soap and vinegar, making the hair fuller and easier to comb. Another complained that she was unattractive. Perhaps it was a lack of cleanliness, the article suggested. She was instructed to exaggerate her personal cleanliness, wash her hair and face often, apply cream with lanolin, separate her eyebrows, curl her eyelashes and apply lipstick. “Very quickly,” she was told “you will encounter this personality, the happy and attractive one that has been hidden in you.”

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334 "Tu Personalidad,” Muchachas, April, 1961, 22.
335 "Tu Personalidad,” Muchachas, June, 1959, 30.
337 Ibid.
The Guides feared the masculinization of young women who wore pants or presented themselves inappropriately. They were concerned about the ways in which girls walked, talked and interacted with others. The Guides equated conservative dress with femininity and traditional womanhood, and the *chica moderna* with vice and foreign influence. Girls were advised to avoid revealing new fashions. In 1960 a Guide wrote to *Muchachas* complaining about her parents’ restrictions. “Your parents have reasons for telling you that they don’t want you to wear pants,” columnist Mane Sierra de Scherer explained:

> They are good to wear for a day in the country, work in the garden or to practice a sport. But a girl like you wearing them all the time? You will lose your femininity. Haven't you noticed that when you wear pants you walk and feel differently? The body becomes accustomed to it and adopts masculine affectations. In contrast, when you wear a pretty dress, you walk and feel like a princess. And I will tell you another thing. Boys don't like women in pants. For all these reasons, try to wear them only when they are indispensable.\(^{338}\)

Requiring that girls wear a uniform, perfectly ironed and pressed, with shoes shined and pins correctly placed, reinforced these concepts. They were also highlighted by Marquíta, a paper doll who instructed girls on how to dress for various occasions. For example, in December Marquíta was shown with a selection of Christmas dresses, and in the spring with a collection of color and cut party dresses.\(^{339}\) Mane Sierra de Scherer responded to a letter from *mal vestida*, advising her that “The secret to dressing well is simplicity. The exotic and extravagant things do not look good on anyone…never use things that are striking, always dresses with a straight line, skirts and sweaters for more comfort. Skirts that are broader are now in style. They are very well for the country, a picnic, or at night. Don’t wear them to school or to the office.”\(^{340}\)

*Revista de Revistas* also offered fashion advice. For example, journalists criticized *Pelonas*, women who wore a short “Boston style” haircut. The author stated, “*Revista de*

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Revistas considers that the majority of women who accepted the new hairstyle made an enormous and costly sacrifice… “There are women young and old who have precious hair, it draws attention when they leave their hair down or in thick braids that for many go down to the waist. This hair, blond or black, is extremely attractive. The Boston style is very Manish.”

While direct discussion of girls’ contact with boys was avoided, at times the topic was addressed in the Guide’s advice column or in fictional stories. Consejos columnist Mane Sierra de Sherer emphasized the need for a girls’ parents to be aware of and involved in their relationships, and for those relationships to follow customary rules in order to protect their honor and reputation:

If you want your boyfriend to respect you, give yourself respect and don’t be his accomplice in deceiving your family who believed that you were at your friend’s house, not walking in the streets with your boyfriend. Demonstrate that you are an obedient ad loyal child and that you don’t tell lies and if he does not like seeing you during the hours that he is allowed at your house, I think he is not worth it and you are better if you know that.

In this case, she emphasized that the girl should demonstrate obedience. A Mexican boy, she posited, would seek an obedient and honorable wife. As mentioned above, courtship was still common in the 1950s and early 1960s, and parents often prepared young girls for the process in their late teens. One 14 year old described the jealousy she felt when her parents bought her older sister new dresses and took her to Europe. “These three years bring her to a very important age. You, with 14 years of age are still a child, she with 17 is a young woman. You need to have understanding and patience. Soon you will also be a Señorita and your parents will do the same for you. I am sure that when your parents and sister see that you have grown up they will celebrate you and be happy for you,” Mane Sierra de Scherer explained.

342 “Consejos a Muchachas,” Muchachas, June, 1961, 22.
343 “Consejos a Muchachas,” Muchachas, June, 1959, 17.
The endings to *Muchachas*’ fictional tales were often disappointing – a girl’s crush occurred in a dream, or the handsome boy discussed in the story was not actually a person at all. For example, in “Un Aprende Romántico,” the main character Leticia had been sick and was visited by a doctor. When the doctor came to visit, “She smiled sweetly. The doctor sat near her and began his examination as usual. Her temperature increased and he heard her heart. Leticia felt the blood rush to her head and she thought Dr. Martínez was the most handsome man she had known in her life.” She thought it was a shame that the doctor was married. When she woke up the doctor was old and less desirous than she had imagined. “You were delirious,” her mother said. “Please don’t talk too much.” Humor and the premise that it was only a dream prevented inappropriate notions of romance and inappropriate contact.344

*Muchachas* included a section called “Exámen Interior,” which focused on issues such as public comportment and relationships. Girls were instructed to examine their inner impulses and gain control of them. “If you argue all the time with your boyfriend or your friends, ask yourself if you know the complaints against you,” it explained. “If you have promised yourself very quickly [to a boy], reflect…Are you sure that you are in love and that it is not a craving derived from fantasy or your vanity, or that the whim is due to a stimulus that you received from a film that you desire to imitate the women on the screen? Wait a little bit before you make a formal promise.” The Guides emphasized the continued importance of familial influence and courtship and girls’ responsibility for moderating their behavior when they spent time with boys.345 But during the Mexican Miracle it became difficult for parents and the Girl Guides to shelter girls from contrary examples in the media.

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The PRI’s revolutionary project was urban based and disseminated through new media such as illustrated magazines, radio, film and television. In the first half of the 1940s, radio sets in use more than doubled from 450,000 to over a million.\textsuperscript{347} By contrast, according to historian Celeste González de Bustamante, by 1960 monthly viewership was estimated at 3,864,122 with 780,000 television sets in operation.\textsuperscript{348} Though the Mexican government was dependent on foreign technological support, funding and advertising, historian Celeste González de Bustamante referred to the formation of a new \textit{Mexicanidad} associated with progress and middle class consumer culture, as a form of “cultural hybridity.” This concept, she argued, “holds that when two or more cultures converge, the social practices and beliefs of each group influence one another to the extent that a new distinct culture merges.”\textsuperscript{349} While foreigners were prohibited from owning television stations, local television channels aired U.S. and European shows and

\textsuperscript{346} \textit{Muchachas}, November 1959, 32. “For your excursions make tasty sandwiches with Bimbo bread.”
\textsuperscript{348} Celeste González de Bustamente, \textit{Muy Buenas Noches: Mexico, Television and the Cold War} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 17.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., xxix.
Hollywood films, and were dependent on foreign corporate advertising and sponsorship from companies like Nescafé, Proctor and Gamble, and Colgate-Palmolive. Despite this, as historian Andrew Paxman argued, television and the cinema were important factors in creating a new version of *Mexicanidad* and presenting an image of PRI stability and control.\(^{350}\) In the 1950s, for the first time, this allowed for the widespread viewing of Presidential addresses to the nation, and establishment of other national tele-religious traditions such as the First Lady’s distribution of gifts to children on January 6\(^{th}\), Three Kings Day, and national traditions such as Independence Day and Revolution Day.\(^{351}\) Bullfights, boxing, and other pop-cultural forms of entertainment helped to solidify new forms of Mexican identity.

During the Mexican Miracle women and girls were the main targets of this emerging urban consumer culture. Access to consumer products came to signify middle class modernity, and was demonstrative of the success of Mexico’s industrial development program. The Guides were successful in finding a variety of sponsors for their magazine, including large corporations such as Pepsi-Cola, Pan Bimbo, and IEM Westinghouse. Each printed ads in *Muchachas* and targeted the girls as future consumers. For example, a Pan Bimbo ad (above) encouraged girls to take sandwiches on their excursions. In the 1960s a new Pan Bimbo ad showed Guides playing volleyball in their uniforms. After Pepsi became a sponsor of the association, half page ads for the soft drink were also included. The Guides, thankful for the sponsorship, drank Pepsi Cola. For example, a *Muchachas* article mentioned “eating little cakes and making toasts with Pepsi cola” while a Guider visited with, told stories and gave girls advice on places to visit in Mexico City.\(^{352}\) Lumex Blinds advertised its variety of products in Japanese Bamboo and Chinese Palm

\(^{350}\) Paxman, location 8391.
\(^{351}\) González, 32-52.
\(^{352}\) *Muchachas*, August, 1961, 29.
and a variety of household curtains. Other ads showed new appliances, cameras, private schools, small homes, processed foods, and furniture. A furniture ad spoke directly to the Guides, stating that their products would be perfect for her father’s office.

But at the same time the association emphasized that girls should be thrifty, a promise made when they took the Girl Guide oath. Each issue of Muchachas included a section with “magical fixes” for the home, such as ironing, patching and getting stains out of shirts. Another called “decorations” included instructions for designing curtains, making the most of closet space, adorning mirrors, harmonizing colors, decorating entryways, converting old tables, and constructing decorative lamps with artificial flowers. These ideas catered to middle and upper class girls who would have access to such materials. A “cooking,” section was also included. It had both traditional Mexican recipes and new “modern” recipes, such as one for Nestlé’s Cake, that reflected the emerging Mexican consumer culture

**Education, Assertion and the Reconstruction of Gendered Values**

Benevolent femininity and Catholic activism encouraged girls to assert themselves in new ways. By 1962, the Muchachas column “Between You and Me” addressed the changing roles and expectations of Mexican girls. “There subsists in our youth that anxiety, that concern, that desire to elevate ourselves beyond the ordinary to achieve something more serious, more spiritual, and more definitive in our lives. Girls feel not only desires, but a need to excel, to better increase their personality and affirm their ideas.” While the author advised girls to allow themselves to be Guided by knowledgeable adults, particularly their parents, it did not deter them from asserting themselves or fulfilling those desires.

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355 “la Cocina,” Muchachas, October, 1960, 27.
Muchachas highlighted the successes of prominent historical and religious leaders, emphasizing women’s ability to make a difference in society. For example, at the 1961 National Campout, a park was divided into five sections, each named by an important woman: Florence Nightingale, Lady Olave Baden-Powell, Joan of Arc, Sor Juana de la Cruz, and Madame Curie. Guiders dressed up as these characters and, when discovered in a scavenger hunt-style game, introduced themselves, and taught the Guides about their accomplishments. Each year the Guides collectively celebrated National Women’s Day. The holiday was commemorated by girls’ service in clinics, rural villages, nursing homes, and maternity centers. At Christmas they donated clothes, games, school supplies and candy.

In the early 1960s the association acknowledged that girls might have an occupation other than mother and housewife. As anthropologist Sarah Levine noted, many middle class women realized that part or full-time employment was necessary in order to maintain this new middle class lifestyle, and to meet the increased societal expectations of urban parents. The percentage of economically active women in Mexico rose from 7.3% in 1940, to 13.6% in 1950, to 17.9% in 1960. A 1960 Muchachas article asked “What is a Good Secretary?” Despite stereotypes, the author explained, being a secretary required a variety of skills. They must have great people skills, for example, because they are the first point of contact a customer had when visiting or calling a business. “They will talk with and write to clients, visitors and salesmen, and this reflects the way in which the company is perceived and administered.” Finally, she noted, a secretary must be discreet, because at times the boss will need to count on his secretary to assist

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358 “Cosas Guías,” Muchachas, June, 1961, 34.
360 Tuñón, 108.
with confidential information. The advice column “Consejos a Muchachas,” began to encourage girls to pursue their interests and attend talks addressing women’s issues. One Guide, who met Mane Sierra de Scherer at her talk at the Club Internacional de Mujeres (International Women’s Club), reflected on their encounter. The girl stated, “In your talk you discussed how important it is for a woman to know herself. I am trying to do it but I don’t know where to start.” Girls were encouraged to explore their interests and establish goals for their futures.

The Girl Guides asserted themselves in non-traditional ways though excursions, sports and outdoor activities. Outdoor excursions and competitions were considered modern and necessary because they taught girls to observe rules of hygiene and kept girls’ muscles agile and ready for parenting. The 1957 Guide manual suggested regular exercise, rhythmic breathing for ten minutes a day, and strengthening exercises. But girls also participated in physical competitions, outdoor adventure and leadership. The girls were publically present at expositions and parades, and often received assistance from government agencies for their endeavors. For example, they could become Marine Guides, who learned about navigation, geographical charts and maps. The Secretary of Navy provided books, statistics, and personnel to assist with their training and attended the troop’s exposition.

In 1940 the Federal District began to hold athletic rallies between its five companies at the Liceo Franco-Mexicano. These competitions became larger and more popular over time. In 1960, for example, the six districts of Mexico participated. The event took place at the University City track and pool. Students and staff at the university helped with the swimming events. It began with an Olympic style parade of girls. They competed in races of various strokes and

361 “Que es una Buena Secretaria?,” Muchachas, December, 1960, 33.
distances in the pool, obstacle courses and track events. At that time there were few other venues for participation in sports.\textsuperscript{365} Through athletic participation, they were able and expected to be assertive and aggressive. The girls also learned to survive in the outdoors - to prepare and cook on a fire, lash dish racks and picnic tables, and construct camp benches and furniture from logs and hemp. They held inter-company competitions in outdoor skills.\textsuperscript{366} At meetings they learned to make bedrolls to carry their equipment to camp. While camping was generally considered a healthy diversion from every day city life, it also provided them with a space to participate in activities atypical to their customary roles.

Girls expressed themselves in new ways. For example, this new, educated generation of girls was encouraged to participate in literary competitions. The “My extraordinary Adventure” essay contest instructed girls to write about a life experience in or outside of Guiding that impacted their lives.\textsuperscript{367} It created a culture of inclusion for girls, whose articles would be printed in the magazine. Its very title demonstrated that the girls would have extraordinary adventures outside of the home. Though Hollywood, Rock and Roll and pop-culture were avoided in the 1950s, in 1961 a new Muchachas column written by older Guides, “Various Waves,” created a space in which girls discussed movies and music. Stars such as Cantiflas and Bing Crosby, who tied this generation of youth together, were extolled, and albums and movies were critiqued. “Have you heard of Sorrento sung by Elvis Presley,” one Guide asked, “It is fantastic. For a time it had been number 1 in the U.S.”\textsuperscript{368} If the organization would continue to be popular among girls, it would have to accept the new popular culture that had evolved and the new ways in

\textsuperscript{365} “Rally Atlético,” Muchachas, December, 1960, 18.
\textsuperscript{367} “Mi Aventura Extraordinaria,” Muchachas, December, 1960, 35.
\textsuperscript{368} “Ondas Varías,” Muchachas, April, 1961, 27.
which girls asserted themselves within the organization and society. By 1960 girls were consumers, columnists and contributors of Muchachas.

Guide leaders were encouraged to examine societal issues. For example, instructions on how to lead a discussion were provided by the National Trainer in Muchachas. Leaders and older girls were invited to do research on societal questions and situations, and to organize round table discussions on their chosen topics. These leadership opportunities encouraged women and girls to share their opinions, and to recognize their intellectual abilities and new role as citizens.

Conclusion

During the Mexican Miracle, the period of post-war industrialization and economic growth between 1945 and 1960, the Girl Guides educative program focused on developing modern Mexican women, who through their roles as wives, mothers, Catholics and citizens would preserve traditional Catholic values in Mexico while, at the same time, taking on new modern responsibilities to the church, state and society. In the midst of the Mexican Miracle, the Guides provided a cultural space in which religious values could be forged within a seemingly secular and modern association.

During the 1950s and 1960s, middle class girls participated in age-specific clubs and activities, engaged with the emerging consumer culture, attended secondary school, and entered the labor force. Women used magazines and newspapers to express their opinions and comment on social and political issues in new ways. Despite these changes, women’s societal participation was socially and legally relegated to schools, hospitals and clinics that, it was assumed, would benefit from her inherent generosity, abnegation and natural abilities as mothers.

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Beatriz Barrera de Gonzáles, former National President of the Guías de México, was an older Guide in the 1960s. For her Guiding was a profound, life changing experience. She stated, “I learned more in Guiding than I learned in school. Guiding provided a space for women in an organization that works with and for women.” When she was young, she explained, university was not important, and women were generally expected to be housewives. “In the family the man was more important than the woman. Women have struggled little by little to arrive at a level where, in many cases, they have surpassed men.”

She noted that Guiding taught girls about Mexican women’s personal and civic responsibilities; that they were capable, and could be of value to society. “There are too many women who struggle to be someone. Guiding taught me that you don’t need to be famous to be someone. There are many, many women who work hard for the movement and in their communities. They have become teachers, lawyers, doctors,

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371 “Nuestra Chalet,” Muchachas, May 1976, 17. The caption states, “Guides of the Western District of Mexico City and Satélite who recently travelled across Europe for 44 days.”
372 Beatriz Barrera de Gonzáles. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 4, 2010
nurses, human rights advocates, social workers, deputies, and senators.” Astrid Plarre, an older Guide in the 1970s, embraced women’s changing position in society. She studied industrial design and later became a foreign language teacher. In her life, she stated, “I have always been conscious of my role as a woman and an independent person.” She explained that she knew she did not want to be physically or economically dependent on parents, brothers or a husband. Among her friends in Guides, she added, “everyone had much interest in studying independently and having a role in society. Each considered how they, as adults, could change society.”

During the 1970s women’s position in urban Mexico and abroad was altered. While few women supported radical leftist movements, discourses on the changing roles of women were prevalent in all sectors of society. With the coming of International Women’s Year and the United Nations Decade for Women, the subsequent establishment of sexual education in schools, and the public acknowledgement and condemnation of domestic violence and gendered economic inequality, change was unavoidable. Feminism, rejected by the majority and associated with bra-burning, extremism, abortion, and radicalism, also inspired a plethora of legislation and initiatives within and outside of Mexico aimed towards greater gender equity. For example, in 1974, article 4 of the Mexican Constitution was amended to establish legal gender equality, in 1975, the Civil Code was modified to allow peasant women to own land, and in 1981, Mexico ratified the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Women, both liberal and conservative, participated in a dialogue that redefined their roles according to new global and local circumstances. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which moderate civil associations, such as the Girl Guides, became agents of change amid global human and women’s rights debates. Rights-based arguments for change were not solely

373 Ibid.
left and radical. Rather, amid neoliberal austerity programs in which the PRI government shifted its welfare role onto civil society, civic and women’s associations took on more public responsibilities. Women’s civic participation and association with the transnational women’s movement heightened their public role and status in Mexican society.

As a college education became a possibility for urban middle class Mexican girls, young women imagined themselves not only as housewives, nurses and teachers, but also as scientists, diplomats, and administrators. While the 1970s generation was accused of creating an ideological divide between themselves and older generations, in doing so they promoted a more democratic and equal society, one in which political corruption and widespread poverty would be addressed, and the façade of the PRI Revolution challenged. In response to a youth-initiated call for radical change, the Girl Guides of Mexico offered an alternative. Through exposure to widespread poverty, hunger and economic inequality, and a dedication to the United Nations development goals, Guías were presented with opportunities to assist in rural and urban service work aimed to ameliorate the nation’s problems. The Movement steered girls to utilize their supposed feminine virtues, youthful aspirations and exuberance in what they perceived to be a progressive, constructive, and politically acceptable way.

**Everyday Encounters with Modernity**

Global and national discourses on womanhood - how women should live, act and associate with one another and the opposite sex - proliferated in the 1970s. María Esther Lemus, who became a Guide in 1967, stated that Mexican parents continued to shelter girls. She noted, “Guiding provided us with an opportunity to participate in activities that were not always permitted for girls, such as camping and excursions with friends.” She described the 1970s as “a
period of evolution for women in Mexico.”

While the Guides emphasized careerism and provided girls with new opportunities to serve the nation, they continued to extol more traditional versions of womanhood. They sought a balance between conservative motherhood and second wave feminism. For example, while recognizing women’s changing position in society, one article advised, women “…must take with dignity their place in society, giving men their place, not superseding it, but complementing it and performing their work with pride. Mexico needs women that conserve a soft way of being and a sweet voice.”

Another contributor expressed regret that motherhood had seemingly taken a back seat to other facets of womanhood. She felt that feminism had decreased mothers’ value to society. “Today, the first and most important things are good employment, some distinction, a relevant job,” she lamented.

The Guides feared that girls of the late 1960s and 1970s wave had rejected Mexican feminine and family values. One contributor lamented, “Many children think that their parents don’t understand them when they provide them with strict rules. They think that their parents are far away in a small world full of conservative ideas. As we say, they are ‘outside of the wave.’” Muchachas articles referred to the world as “disoriented,” and the task of teaching girls to be women as a “struggle” and “challenge.” They commented that during the 1970s, more than ever, girls needed guidance. But at the same time the association rode the wave, so to speak, and adopted their program to attract Guides of this new generation. They recognized multiple femininities – mothers, career women, scientists and politicians - complicating their educative

375 María Esther Lemus. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 14, 2011.
program. Guides were portrayed as future leaders not only of benevolent organizations, but also of the state and world, who would as adults bring to nations “the light of progress and peace.”\textsuperscript{379}

Round tables and conferences on youth culture – Catholic, state and secular – marked this new decade. Members of the Guiding organization attended the II Mexican Youth Forum, where the themes of violence, drugs, and eroticism were addressed. They asked, “What is our answer on the part of youth to a world of wars, famine, and vice?” Newspapers and magazines, including \textit{Muchachas}, blamed the diffusion of movies, books, photographs and songs that exposed them to sex and violence at an early age. \textit{Muchachas} contributors criticized free love, and concluded that Guiding needed to promote an alternative - moral and spiritual values, wholesome families, healthy and honest relationships.\textsuperscript{380}

Many Mexicans blamed U.S. television programs, movies and rock ‘n’ roll music for corruptions of Mexico’s youth. As historian Eric Zolov argued, “On the one hand, rock ‘n’ roll was associated with challenges to parental authority and wanton individualism. One the other hand, however, the new youth culture also appealed to many adults’ perceptions of what it meant to be modern, to have access to global culture.”\textsuperscript{381} While the patriarchal PRI state attempted to shelter Mexicans from the influences of U.S. and Mexican protest and youth culture, as portrayed through rock ‘n’ roll music, they also sponsored its distribution and fusion. For example, in 1971 Mexico was the first Latin American country to have its own rock-music festival, Avándaro, which featured native musicians of the \textit{Onda Chicana}, or Chicana Wave. However, President Luis Echeverría Álvarez’s administration (1970-1976) prohibited the distribution of literature at the festival, cut transmission of the concert on Mexico City’s \textit{Radio Juventud} because of

\textsuperscript{379} Nini Trent de Álvarez, “Que es Ser Guía?,” \textit{Muchachas}, November 1970, 4.
\textsuperscript{380} Azucena de Miguel de Suárez, “Que Mensaje Nos Dejo el II Foro de la Juventud,” \textit{Muchachas}, April 1970, 10-11.
musicians’ foul language, and sent 1,000 federal, state, and local armed forces to prevent violent incidents at the festival. News of drugs, nudists, and the corruption of national symbols, such as drawings of peace symbols on Mexican flags, resulted in a backlash against the festival. According to Zolov, the media determined that the culprits of this crisis were “compliant government officials, profit-hungry cultural industries, lax parenthood, and U.S. imperialism.” 382 He also noted that the media reported a significantly smaller number of young female concertgoers in comparison to young men, indicating that teenage girls continued to be more sheltered than their male counterparts. 383

But modern technology and globalization made Mexican and American media, Hollywood and rock n’ roll, widely accessible to urban Mexicans. Even if they could not attend the concert, girls could imagine themselves as a part of the new wave. Seeking a balance between tradition and modernity, the Guides encouraged parents to limit seemingly corrupting influences in the lives of their daughters. For example, in comparing life in the 1970s to earlier generations, a Muchachas article lamented television’s perceived impact on the functioning of the home: “Now there are not games in the fresh air or stories read by Mom, but instead all afternoon, a short distance from the television, filling the head with absurdities and fantasies.” The author noted that adolescents no longer read classic literature that “fascinated and transplanted the reader to foreign lands.” She declared that a crisis in parenting had descended upon the nation, and advised mothers to plan outdoor activities for their children, to provide their daughters with more wholesome diversions that would limit the media’s seemingly caustic

382 Zolov, 201-233.
383 Ibid.
effects. Like in the 1930s, the association viewed its educative program as an antidote to consumerism and vice.

**The International Women’s Movement**

Global discourses on women’s rights influenced the Guides’ structure and pedagogy across the 1970s. The Guías changing positions on women’s roles in society were rooted in the world associations’ close relationship to United Nations agencies and initiatives.

From its birth in 1945, the United Nations created a space for the development of a rights-based feminist paradigm. Of the one hundred and sixty signatories to the United Nations Charter, adopted at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, four of them were women. It was these women – Minerva Bernardino, Wu Yi-Fang, Virginia Gildersleeve, and Bertha Lutz - who advocated for the inclusion of women in the charter through the use of the term human rights as opposed to the rights of man. Though only about half of the member countries represented at the San Francisco Conference granted women full citizenship rights at that time, economist Devaki Jain argues that the United Nations Charter and Declaration of Human Rights (1948) set the groundwork for international women’s rights initiatives. In 1946 the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established as a sub commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to prepare reports and make recommendations on women’s issues. Like its predecessor, the League of Nations, the United Nations initially viewed women’s rights as a national, rather than global, issue. Although the CSW’s women’s rights agenda was not universally accepted among women or United Nations agencies, women’s participation in international governance elevated their status. Jain stated, “This was a significant

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accomplishment at a time when most public agencies across the world viewed women either as mothers or as recipients of welfare services, not as citizens with individual rights.”\footnote{Devaki Jain, \textit{Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty Year Quest for Equality and Justice}, 11-17.}

In 1946 the United Nations General Assembly in London had only 17 women, but they were backed by a much larger constituency. Women from non-governmental associations, women’s organizations, trade unions, and academic associations were invited to hold consultative status in ECOSOC, which allowed them to sit in on its meetings. Other United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Rights and Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF) created similar spaces.\footnote{Ibid, 33.} The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts took advantage of this opportunity. From its establishment, the WAGGGS was attuned to the debates and discourses taking place in the United Nations.\footnote{“Año Internacional de la Mujer,” \textit{Muchachas}, August 1975, 5-6.}

In the 1950s and 1960s women within the United Nations focused on achieving women’s civil rights in all nations. For example, in 1952 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on Political Rights of Women, which promoted women’s right to vote, run for office and participate in all public functions. This helped to accelerate women’s citizenship in Mexico. But between 1956 and 1963 newly liberated United Nations member countries and other global south nations brought a new set of women’s issues and priorities to the organization, such as poverty, illiteracy, and unequal access educational opportunities and credit, and national sovereignty.

United Nations agencies’ definitions of human rights and women’s rights divided women from the global north and south. For example, cultural practices such as child marriage, bride price, dowry, genital mutilation and widow’s rights were challenged. UN members who
questioned these traditions were viewed as holding a neocolonialist attitude towards newly independent nations of the global south, who questioned whether the countries that had previously denied them civil and political rights should now have the authority to define human rights.\textsuperscript{388} Culture based and western-funded modernization projects placed women in a precarious position. If they rejected traditional cultural practices they were viewed as neo-imperialist collaborators, but if they supported them they were viewed as anti-development. United Nations population initiatives were also controversial. Literary theorist and Professor of Asian Studies Shuh-mei Shih argued, “…the extreme negative implication of population control through reproductive rights is the echoing back to the older imperialist paradigm of eugenics. While developed countries are encouraging reproduction due to the aging of the population and the decrease of birth rate, in the developing and underdeveloped countries there is a control of reproduction in the name of free choice.”\textsuperscript{389} While among western feminists birth control and child spacing were liberating forces that elevated the status of women, in other cultures having fewer children could decrease a women’s prestige in the community.\textsuperscript{390}

The First United Nations Development Decade (1960-1970) had its roots in neoliberal capitalist discourses of development based on the idea that privatization, free trade, reductions in deficit spending, economic austerity, and injections of capital into struggling economies through World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans would accelerate development. The benefits would “trickle down” to all members of society.\textsuperscript{391} For example, during the Second Development Decade (1970-1980), President José López Portillo (1976-1982) of Mexico agreed to implement

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{388} Jain, 28-29.
\item \textsuperscript{390} Jain, 60.
\item \textsuperscript{391} Ibid., 41.
\end{itemize}
an austerity program, ending many of the revolution’s social programs. Further, due to burgeoning economic problems in Mexico, López Portillo initiated the sale of state owned enterprises, and invited foreign businesses to invest. The Constitution was modified, deleting the strictures of foreign investment in agriculture and the subsoil. Land reform, initiated during the Cárdenas era, officially came to an end as a provision was made for the conversion of all ejido properties to private land holdings. Though the discovery of vast oil deposits following the 1973 oil crisis gave a boost to the Mexican economy, Mexico faced a wide-scale economic crisis in 1982. The government owed tens of billion dollars to foreign banks, and defaulted on its loans. That year, the peso lost 85 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar, and businesses quickly divested. The 1980s, dubbed the “lost decade,” marked a period of vast unemployment, hyperinflation and capital flight. Private and religious associations, including women’s organizations, increasingly shouldered the responsibility for social welfare programs.

Women within and outside the UN argued that women’s issues had not been considered during the first development decade. They clamored for a more inclusionary Second Development Decade. According to Jain, the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women defined access to development as a human right, and articulated women’s need for increased educational opportunities, training, access to health care and participation in public life. Dr. Gloria Scott of the UN Secretariat, and the first black president of the Girl Scouts of the United States (1975-1978), was charged with preparing a report on women and development. “Integration of Women in the Development Process as Equal Partners With

392 Ejidos were lands provided to peasants during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Ejiditarios did not receive titles to those landholdings.
Men” helped to shape the goals of the International Women’s Year Conference in 1975 and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.\textsuperscript{394} Jain, who attended IWY in 1975, refers to the conference as the “start of the most vibrant and influential phase of the worldwide women’s movement.”\textsuperscript{395} One hundred nations sent women to the conference, and 75 percent of them were women. Between 1975 and the Nairobi Conference in 1985, women around the world established an action based agenda to address women’s priorities. Women were increasingly viewed as actors in development rather than recipients of aid.\textsuperscript{396} But while women around the globe identified themselves as universally discriminated against, universality had its limitations.

The north-south and east-west Cold War divides continued to create tensions between western women, who prioritized feminism characterized by a change in male-female social and sexual relationships, and women from the global south, who prioritized economic and political issues such as anti-colonialism, access to resources, poverty, racism, and the global economy. According to political scientist Amrita Basu, the 1975 IWY Conference brought global attention to women’s strategic interests, identified as feminist, and deriving from women’s subordination, and women’s practical interests, which derive from women’s immediate and perceived needs. Basu stated that global south activists avoided the use of the word feminism because it was considered inflammatory and imperialistic, and “political suicide” for women in government.\textsuperscript{397}

\textsuperscript{394} Jain, 67. Gloria Scott was the only black woman appointed by U.S. President Carter to observe the conference. In 1977 she chaired the UN Decade for Women Conference in Houston, Texas.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{396} Ibid, 68-83.
Feminism in Mexico

The PRI’s Revolution faced a steady decline between 1960 and 1980. As the one party system faltered, the educated middle class demanded increased democratic political participation. As the cost of living increased, those who had supported the authoritarian system in exchange for economic prosperity began to challenge it. And as the government cracked down on union movements and poverty increased, the imagined revolutionary family began to disintegrate.398

Criticisms of the PRI’s version of the Mexican Revolution escalated rapidly after the Tlatelolco Massacre of October, 1968. The conflict arose following a summer of student pro-democracy protests. In October five thousand students and their supporters gathered at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco neighborhood of Mexico City, taking advantage of the upcoming Olympic Games to focus attention on their demands. They asked the government to dissolve the paramilitary riot police force, release political prisoners, and implement a democratic structure of government at the national university. In response the government sent tanks and armored cars to deter and disperse the students. When they refused, police fired machine guns into the unarmed crowd. It is estimated that up to three hundred protesters were killed, and over two thousand arrested. As historians Arthur Schmidt and Elaine Carey have noted, the incident solidified the population’s distrust of the PRI and its Revolution.399 Schmidt stated, “Ultimately, domestic and international events made it impossible for the Revolution to Evolution interpretation to recruit a second generation of adherents.” It demonstrated the

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intolerant, autocratic nature of the one party system, and the insincerity of its revolutionary
rhetoric.\textsuperscript{400}

Historian Elaine Carey argued that the roots of the feminist movement in Mexico took
hold during the student protests. Young women acted as guards, attended meetings, and
participated in student demonstrations, but, like in the United States civil rights movement, they
were marginalized by male radicals. Following the 1968 protests, many former \textit{brigadistas}
formed separate women’s organizations, such as the Union of Women, later called Solidarity
Action, to promote women’s rights in Mexico.\textsuperscript{401} For example, the Union of Women, later called
Solidarity Action (MAS) staged the 1971 Mother’s Day protest in Mexico City to counter the
myths of motherhood and domesticity. Their motto was “A macho is not born, he is created,” as
they recognized the social construction of Mexican womanhood, and the legal limitations of their
state. Carey noted that while MAS and other feminist organizations initiated the women’s rights
movement in Mexico, and in doing so influenced the passage of laws promoting greater equality,
President Luis Echeverría disregarded these organizations at the IWY conference because of
their radical position, while highlighting the nation’s modernity on the world stage.\textsuperscript{402}

Mexican feminism was a largely urban and middle-class movement that was strongly
influenced by U.S. and European feminisms. Like the global women’s movement, it initially
excluded large sectors of Mexican society. Mexican Anthropologist Marta Lamas stated that in
the 1970s, university educated women viewed their version of women’s rights as universal and
rooted in a common gender identity, or \textit{mujerismo} (womanism). While they critiqued sexual
double standards and housewifery, they initially failed to consider the struggles of Mexico’s

\textsuperscript{400} Arthur Schmidt, “Making it Real Compared to What? Reconceptualizing Mexican History Since 1940,” in
Gilbert M. Joseph, Anne Rubenstein and Eric Zolov, eds. \textit{Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in
\textsuperscript{401} Carey, \textit{177-191}.
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
majority. For example, the Coalition of Feminist Women, formed in 1976, focused its efforts on issues like voluntary maternity, sexual education, access to contraceptives, abortion, ending sexual violence, and free sexual choice. Their movement spread through university based networking such as the Women’s Forum on radio UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), academic seminars, and feminist magazines. Additionally, she argued, because feminists rejected the United Nations as imperialistic, the state as corrupt, and the church as the root of gender hierarchy, feminist groups in the 1970s failed to build political relationships.\footnote{Marta Lamas, \emph{Feminism: Transmissions and Retransmissions} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 17-19.}

Feminism reopened debates on cultural relativism in Mexico. For example, anthropologist Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo argued that urban feminists’ universalist models did not leave room for indigenous agency. Though feminists tried to integrate indigenous women into rights discourses through rural development projects, the projects were often viewed as anti-indigenous because feminist groups challenged cultural practices and beliefs such as male-female duality and marriage dowries. She stated, “Most indigenous women associate feminism with urban middle-class women and consider feminism detrimental to their shared struggles with indigenous men.”\footnote{Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo, “Towards a Culturally Situated Human Rights Agenda,” in Amrita Basu, ed. \emph{Women’s Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms} (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), Kindle edition, location 6957.} But Hernández noted that indigenous women sought change within their particular cultural environments. For example, in the 1980s indigenous, peasant and working class women organized themselves in Mexico, often with the support of Liberation Theologians whose version of women’s and indigenous rights rejected urban feminist discourses.\footnote{Ibid., location 7004-7009.} Global and Mexican feminist discourses and movements – whether indigenous, urban or popular...
movements – were often shaped by the non-governmental organizations, church-based, or state-based agencies that funded them. These agencies often awarded funds for a particular purpose.  

**A Little United Nations**

In the 1970s, WAGGGS official publication, *Council Fire*, dedicated itself to the promotion and sponsorship of the ideals and discourses presented in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their mission was to comply with its covenant, encouraging the world’s youth to elevate the status of women and children in every part of the world, through their participation in development and service initiatives. Each issue of *Council Fire* included articles such as “UNESCO and Us,” which emphasized the parallel ideals of the two entities, and reminded members of the partnership between WAGGGS and the United Nations in promoting literacy, leadership training, and development projects. In 1960 alone seventeen African countries gained their independence. As new nations joined the United Nations, the organizations’ position on imperialism and development shifted, and by the 1970s, the global nature of WAGGGS changed accordingly. For example, in a 1973 article Bertie

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Guldmann of the Guide Association of Denmark recognized that the organizations’ approach toward global south nations had been paternalistic. She wrote to the international community in *Council Fire*, “We are apt to use our own well-known cultural background as criteria for understanding [other nations], and not theirs. We maybe even begin to give out advice and try to impose upon others that our way of living, of doing things, of educating, of producing corn, or thinking, is far better than theirs. That, to me, is one of the great dangers of misunderstood readiness to help our neighbour, be he close by or far away…The yardstick, which we use in our comparisons, is often wrapped in layers of prejudice.”

It is evident that UNESCO viewed the Guides as a partner in its development efforts. UNESCO was formed in 1945 in order to support development initiatives abroad in economic and social development, health improvement, cultural and educational cooperation, and universal respect for human rights. Its creators believed that UNESCO’s initiatives could help root out the underlying causes of war and promote global cooperation. Through UNESCO, the United Nation’s sought to ameliorate the world’s food, health, and refugee problems, and improve telecommunications to make it easier for governments to cooperate with one another on controversial political issues. The agency offered travel grants to WAGGGS members from Tanzania to Panama for the purpose of studying global problems and implementing solutions to ameliorate them. For example, one young woman from Jamaica received a grant to study literacy programs abroad. She then returned to Jamaica and established a Guide-run literacy center, initially funded by UNESCO. According to *Council Fire*, Mexico’s 1954 grantee focused on improving the Senior Branch of the Guide Movement, establishing a section for young adults

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who had never been Guides. The article stated, “Since her marriage the grantee helped to write sixteen radio and nine television programs about Guiding. She regularly contributes to the Guide magazine and is at present working as Guide Counsellor to a newly – constituted Region.”\textsuperscript{412}

A 1973 issue of \textit{Council Fire} described WAGGGS’s Public Relations Team at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Its purpose was to promote the Guide Movement and coordinate with U.N. programs. WAGGGS was one of four hundred international organizations affiliated with ECOSOC, and one of sixty that worked directly with youth. According to the article, WAGGGS received $25,000 in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) development grants over the last twenty-five years, members in forty-seven countries were working towards the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Freedom from Hunger Campaign and other FAO sponsored initiatives, and WAGGGS continued to support the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) programs worldwide. Commissions of WAGGGS members were established to attend meetings on the status of women, human rights, social development, youth, the environment, and community development.\textsuperscript{413}

In response to the widespread 1960s youth protests, the United Nations attempted to incorporate the world’s youth into its agencies and programs. The World Youth Assembly, which the General Assembly voted to convene at the UN headquarters in New York in July of 1970, included six hundred and fifty delegates. Three young women were chosen to represent WAGGGS. In addition, the United Nations established a series of volunteer projects, a youth caucus in New York, meetings with youth NGOs in Geneva, and invitations to youth to participate in the Human Environment Conference.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{412}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{414}Ibid.
While national and international sisterhood had always been a part of Guiding, technology helped WAGGGS to globalize the Movement. For example, representatives of the Guías de México traveled to visit Guides in countries as close as Guatemala and Jamaica, and as far as Saudi Arabia and Switzerland. For example, Guide member Astrid Plarre’s patrol represented Mexico at the International Campout in Denmark. She remembered dancing, playing music, singing, and meeting friends from Panama, China, Ireland, and the Middle East. Some of the Guides were Muslim. “I am more tolerant and accepting because of these experiences,” she stated. She explained that her patrol raised money by babysitting, painting houses and selling candy for two years, but also received a scholarship from WAGGGS. She recalled, “If we had not received the grant from WAGGGS, we would not have been able to go.” The patrol spent almost two months in Europe. Plarre’s family hosted a Hindu Guide from India and Guides from El Salvador at their home in Mexico City. Plarre also visited Sangam, the International Guide Center in India. In the 1970s the Guides of Mexico inaugurated the Guide Caravan. Each year older girls travelled to and learned about a different part of Mexico. Parents hosted girls from another state for one week.

“Let us Join Hands to Serve with Understanding” was the theme of the 1969 World Conference. Development, hunger, poverty, oppression and racism were debated internationally, but had local reverberations. The Guides of Mexico were unsatisfied with their reputation as an organization that served the middle and upper classes. As countries struggled to work alongside one another on the world stage, particularly within the United Nations, the Guías encouraged girls in Mexico to learn about the nation’s poor and indigenous population, and sought ways to further incorporate them into the association. One Muchachas contributor stated, “To understand

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others we must put ourselves in their place, in their circumstances, and this will force us to empathize with them. We need to reinforce our ability to have a dialogue and reciprocal understanding so that Guiding in Mexico is a community interested in growing and prosperity.”

While the Guides of Mexico and WAGGGS were not associated with any political party, and referred to the association as non-political, in the 1970s it addressed political issues such as racism, pollution, overpopulation and poverty. While former Director of the World Bureau Lyn Joynt warned that organizations needed to be careful not to acquire a political stigma, she encouraged the Guides to publically advocate for development. WAGGGS encouraged its local organizations to ally with other voluntary movements dedicated to the United Nation’s Development goals. In 1974 fifteen Guide representatives attended the First National Meeting on Voluntary Social Service sponsored by the Committee of Social Service and Culture of Mexico. It was organized in collaboration with the Mexican Institute of Assistance to Children and the Family Planning Program. Four hundred and ten associations including the Red Cross, San Vicente de Paul Society, and National Peasant Confederation attended. Angélica de Gowland, President of the Western Hemisphere Committee, spoke at the conference, and First Lady and Honorary President of the Guías de Mexico, Doña Esther Zuna de Echeverría, inaugurated and presided over the meeting. Gowland stated “We consider it of utmost importance to attend this type of meeting, as people and as an association. We cannot be on the margin of changes and events in the actual world as an organization that prepares children and young adults for the future of our country.” Attendees discussed population growth, family planning, psychology, human communication, rural development, and coordination between

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social service organizations. In 1974 alone the Guides attended the IV Seminar of the Jr. Red Cross; National Día de la Mujer celebrations; courses on Public Relations sponsored by the Mexican Institute of Social Security; the IX Training Course of Women Leaders, organized by the Alliance of Women of Mexico; the Assembly and Congress of the Women’s Christian Association; Celebration of World Health Day, organized by the United Nations Association of Mexico; Burial of Señora Guadalupe Borja de Díaz Ordaz, former First Lady; Inauguration of the Third Section of Chapultepec Park; homage to the famous educator María La Valle Urbina; breakfast to honor the educational initiatives of the President of the Republic Luis Echeverría Álvarez; and meetings of Pedro Ojed Paullada, Attorney General of the Republic, for the planning of International Women’s Year.

**Family Planning in Mexico**

As in the United Nations, development programs related to birth control and population growth in Mexico were politically charged. They divided Catholics and non-Catholics, urban feminists and peasant associations, the target of these initiatives. United Nation’s population initiatives were adapted in Mexico in the 1970s, and were based on the idea that the expanding population had taken a toll on the nation’s infrastructure - the nation did not have adequate jobs, schools and health services to support it. While in 1934 Mexico had about 16 million residents, in 1958 it had 32 million. Further, the growth rate of major cities approached 7 percent a year. The Federal District alone jumped from 3 million residents in 1952 to 4.5 million in 1958.

Though President Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) recognized overpopulation as a problem, he did not address it, as discussion of sexual education was considered anathema. However, in

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response to a decline in real wages and the initiatives of the Second United Nations Development Decade, President José López Portillo’s administration launched a family planning program that helped reduce the fertility rate from 5.4 children in 1976 to 4.6 in 1982.\textsuperscript{423} The new program’s slogan was “La familia pequeña vive mejor,” “The small family lives better.” Birth control access increased so that by 1976 32% of women used contraceptives.\textsuperscript{424}

The plan included a rural program of sexual education in conjunction with the National Peasant Confederation, which organized round table discussions and conferences in rural health centers for couples and adolescents. The National Population Council of the Mexican Social Security Institute printed and distributed a manual to rural and urban families on sex education, and conducted a media campaign, printing a series of articles in newspapers and magazines such as \textit{El Nacional}. The Secretariats of Health and Public Education broadcasted information about sexual education programs on the television and radio. One \textit{El Nacional} article stated, “The sexual education programs will cooperate in the elimination of the ancestral tendencies, prejudices, and ignorance that surround the theme in large sectors of Mexican society, and offers defenses against sexual abuse... Nonetheless, its primary goal will be demographic control, and above all making the public knowledgeable of the close relationship between sex and good social functioning.” The program contributed to the shift in social and familial values by attacking the notion that fathering many children was macho, and that women would be fulfilled by having more.\textsuperscript{425}

The state-sponsored Family Planning program created a rift between the Catholic Church and state. Political scientist Adriana Ortiz-Ortega argued that issues such as birth control access

\textsuperscript{424} Tuñón, 107.
and abortion became battlegrounds in which the church and state tested the limits of their influence. In 1974 article 4 of the constitution was amended, stating that women were free to determine the number and spacing of their children. Abortion became legal in many states, but the circumstances in which it was legal differed. The Catholic Church continued to influence abortion legislation. For example, in 1983 the Church hierarchy fiercely protested a proposed abortion bill, which was then withdrawn. Additionally, in many states a woman’s honor continued to be considered in court cases where an abortion was conducted with *honoris causa*, or for the sake of honor. This provision allowed judges to reduce charges in cases in which the woman had a good reputation, the pregnancy resulted from extramarital relations, and the woman managed to conceal that she was pregnant. In most states abortion is still considered a crime unless the fetus is impaired.426

Dr. Ildelfonso Tellez of the Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE) blamed parents’ and religious organizations for the lack of sexual education programs in public schools. He believed the media in Mexico advanced confusing information about sex in movies and on television that “transmit scenes and images of sexual adventure.” In our country, he stated, “lives an informal sexual education, product of a culture that perpetuates traditional thoughts and attitudes, that has brought as a consequence a series of blemishes like machismo, matrimonial sins, single motherhood, sexual and emotional deviations and dissatisfaction.”427 Journalist and Doctor of Pedagogy, Donaciano Serna Leal agreed, “For many years things sexual were mysterious and prohibited. One could not broach sexual themes without being considered immoral. The hypocritical society closes its doors on themes of an erotic nature, and crosses

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itself upon overhearing free thinkers speak of a secondary sexual character, of the dangers involved in brothels, of free love and artificial insemination.”

Benavides Vázquez, Director General of Medical Services at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), estimated that two million women received abortions each year in Mexico by 1981, about 1 million of them clandestine. While administrators blamed Catholicism for the populations’ ignorance regarding sexuality, the Church argued that sexual education ought to take place within the home rather than in public spaces.

Mainstream newspapers openly criticized men for domestic violence, maintaining two families, and having affairs, and encouraged them to take on more responsibilities in the home. Men were publically pressured to set a more responsible precedent. Dr. Carvajal Fernández wrote that having a parent of the same sex was important to children’s healthy development because from them they would deduce what a man or woman should be. “A child without an adequate model from their own sex suffers confusion, and their conduct might result in their isolation in school.” Without the presence of a father, he argued, youth might imitate characters on television or in the movies that provide a false sense of what it means to be masculine.

Domestic violence education emanated from the Family Planning Campaign. Journalist Beatriz Reyes Navares attempted to publicize the frequency of sexual assault in Mexico City, “It is widespread enough that using the metro during certain hours, getting on a bus or going to the movies alone will verify it.” She stated that there were three reported rapes per day in the capital city alone. She blamed the wave generation who seemingly lacked respect, was out of touch, and did not know how to properly conduct personal relationships. “The notions of respect and

428 Donaciano Serna Leal, “El sexo, la Ética y la Educación, El Heraldo de México, February 8, 1981.
consideration have declined.” In 1979 the Center to Support Raped Women was founded, and in 1984 the Collective for Struggle against Violence toward women offered medical, legal, and psychological support to victims. In the 1980s the first national office specializing in sex crimes was established, and in 1996 Mexico City’s Assembly passed a Family Assistance and Violence Prevention Law. As anthropologist Matthew Gutmann has argued, the disintegration of the PRI’s version of the Mexican Revolution coincided with public criticisms of machismo, domestic violence, and absent fathers, feminist organizing efforts, and elevated marital expectations.

**Sexual Education and Guiding**

The Guides of Mexico evaluated the merits of a sexual education pedagogy. In 1970 they organized a series of round table discussions for leaders to determine how its membership viewed the topic. The initiative arose in reaction to the increased availability of sexual education publications in Mexico, and the cultural debates surrounding the national family planning program. Guide leaders lamented that most of these publications, as well as the state-sponsored family planning program’s television series, were produced in the United States. They felt that these materials did not reflect Mexico’s more religiously conservative culture. For example, one Guider noted, “The television programs are of great controversy based on the temperament of Mexican and American people, who have distinct ways of living and distinct cultural environments. It seems that up until now educators as well as parents have obeyed the law of silence with the pretext that the problem is too complicated. And it is, but it is complicated like life itself.” The author concluded that sexual education was now necessary because girls were

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432 Tuñón, 112.

more exposed to sexual content, and spent more time with non-family members of the opposite sex. She wrote, “We need to prepare and orient them. Daily life, newspapers, movies, obscene lyrics in songs, and bad news from a daughter’s friend, who needs to rapidly prepare a wedding because of a mistake that they committed…all of these things give us the confidence and assurity we need to introduce our children to the mysteries of life.”

*Muchachas* listed a series of articles and books that would be useful to parents. Sex education continues to be a controversial issue, especially for older adult Guides of earlier generations who were taught that sexuality is a private matter.

Girl Scouts and Guides worldwide began to evaluate whether single sex associations were an outdated model in an age of increased gender equality. In 1970 a study was carried out by WAGGGS on Girl Guide - Boy Scout cooperation, prepared by “Public Attitude Surveys, Ltd.” A questionnaire was circulated to leaders of all national organizations, which revealed that in some cases boys were already being admitted to membership. Begum Sherazee, Vice Chairman of the World Committee, responded: “Our movement is designed to meet the special needs for girls and a programme so designed is not appropriate for boys.” A resolution was made stating that the World Association cannot recognize as members of WAGGGS national organizations that admit boys to membership, but that if joint organizations with parallel levels existed, there needed to be male and female leaders such that neither overpowered the other. They were also required to send a majority female committee to WAGGGS functions.

The Guides of Mexico do not sponsor Guide-Scout coeducational activities, but in 1970 some Guide leaders and older Guides participated in a joint pilot project. Through healthy joint activities between Guides and Scouts of Mexico, the leaders believed, girls could get to know

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how to socialize appropriately with the opposite sex. Primary meetings and roundtables were held between male and female adults at which they discussed the attitudes and behaviors of the two genders. In the meetings they proposed ways to better relationships between men and women in an age rapidly changing gendered social norms and expectations. They established joint youth activities including a hippie party, co-ed training in camping and first aid, and joint Guide-Scout ceremonies such as the Scout’s Own, an ecumenical, spiritual observance. One adult Guide commented, “There were many different conceptions, ways of thinking and reactions to this initiative, but at the same time we saw clearly that one sex is not complete without the other – that we need one sex to be complimentary to the other. What is lacking in one is made up for in the other and vice versa. In reality, I believe that all of us are enriched by and learn from one another. Above all we learned something very important – the significance of a Guide-Scout sister and brotherhood.”

Joint activities continued into the mid-1970s.

Like the Guides of Mexico, the international organization felt that women might take on a supporting, rather than a leadership role in a joint Guide-Scout community. Beatriz Barrera de Gonzáles agreed. She stated, “In my time schools were separated – girls and boys – and they didn’t have this competition. They changed this, and what happened? The focus of the teacher is on the boys, but not the girls. Girls need to be told that they can study and do something. Girls will not receive this support from men. Men are your partner in the home, with children, etc., no? I have been married for over forty years. And why? Because my husband supported me in the things that I wanted to do. But many men don’t allow their wives to study, to work. They need her to instead work for them.”

María Esther Lemus attended a mixed school with separate classes for girls and boys. Boys were trained for trades like electrical work and carpentry. Girls

took courses in home arts like sewing, cooking and weaving. She noted that this has changed over the last thirty years and had a positive impact on women. “Today girls have more career and educational options.”

**Girl Guiding and IWY**

The Girl Guides of Mexico restructured their educational program based on their involvement in the IWY conference in 1975 and the subsequent Plan of Action. Though President Luis Echeverría chose conference representatives who were supporters of the PRI, and who would prioritize the New International Economic Order (NIEO) over sexual liberation, other Mexican women, such as the Girl Guides, were able to participate in the conference’s NGO tribune.

Helvi Sipilä of Finland, coordinator of the official United Nations Women’s Year conference, and the first female United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Social and Humanitarian Affairs, was up to that point President of the World Committee of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. She encouraged women and girls to take ownership of their local and global responsibilities stating, “The goals of IWY are clear: activate the equality between men and women of all countries, include women in political decisions, international cooperation and the promotion of peace.”

Several representatives of the Girl Guides of Mexico attended the IWY conference. Señora Emilia Herrera y Lasso, President of the National Council of Honor of the Guides of Mexico, represented the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts at the official sessions. The Guides were able to send a representative to the official conference, which

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included representatives from each United Nations member country, because of WAGGGS’s consultative status in the United Nations. Several Mexican Guide leaders also attended the IWY tribune, a separate session with four thousand attendees representing various worldwide NGOs. The Guías’ representativas included Tere de Barba, Carmen Bermúdez, and Ana Sofía Zozaya de Barba. A separate gathering was convened for all WAGGGS members present at the official conference or NGO Tribune. They met at Nuestra Cabaña, the International Guide Center in Cuernavaca, Mexico, later that week.442

In the United States the GSUSA was accused of being too feminist. One article from GSUSA News stated that the Girl Scouts had endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment. Its author, Richard Knox, Director of Public Relations for the Girl Scouts, said that the association received angry phone calls and letters calling the association “radically feminist.” In part this was because Betty Friedan, a well-known feminist and author of the Feminine Mystique,443 was on the GSUSA’s Board of Directors. An article in the Chicago Daily News and quoted in the GSUSA News responded, “The endorsement [of the Equal Rights Amendment] is not out of character with Girl Scout history. From the beginning the Girl Scouts were teaching young ladies things that many adults felt they shouldn’t be taught.” The Girl Scouts were also accused of being pro-life, and issued a public memorandum indicating that they were non-political.444

Guías former Vice-President Juliette Navarro represented the Guías at the National Women’s Conference in Houston, November 18-21, 1977. Delegates from each U.S. state discussed the United Nations International Plan of Action, an international agreement to advance women’s rights based on conclusions made at the IWY conference. Navarro reported that women of all social statuses attended the meeting – “housewives, handicapped, professionals, people of

442 “Año Internacional de la Mujer,” Muchachas, August 1975, 5-6.
different races and creeds, youth of 15 years to adults of 80 years.” U.S. representatives and observers from ninety countries, totaling ten thousand individuals, discussed and debated what equality meant. Proposals such as the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution, reproductive freedom, sexual freedom, and a women’s cabinet were introduced.445

A large number of GSUSA members attended the national conference in Houston. A Girl Scout exposition highlighting the organization’s commitment to IWY was displayed at the event. Dr. Gloria D. Scott encouraged WAGGGS participation. She was interested in creating a youth delegation, but feared that only “youth extremists” would partake. She instead chose a delegation of Campus Girls Scouts. According to Navarro, girls of various races - Mexican, Caucasian, and African American - attended. Because WAGGGS was a “non-political” entity, these young women did not attend in uniform. There were two Girl Scout/Guide reunions at the conference, and younger Girl Scouts participated in the opening ceremony.446 Navarro was invited to a dinner offered by Leonel Castillo, Chief of the Department of Immigration and Naturalization of the United States, for the Chicana caucus. At the end of the conference Navarro wrote, “We came to the conclusion that participation of the Girl Scouts and Guides in this conference was positive, though it was in an unofficial capacity. It is important that we are forming women who will be successful in our country, that we consider their problems, their ideas, their recommendations and solutions, and that we approach all of these experiences to revise our criteria and work towards the development of young women.”447

The IWY Conference was announced in Muchachas magazine, and several articles were dedicated to evaluating and reporting on its objectives and outcomes. They described the goals of

446 Ibid.
447 Ibid.
the conference: “To awaken the world conscience with respect to the function that women perform in political, social, economic and family life;” “the elimination of discrimination suffered by women in human rights and social justice;” and “to launch a plan of action that responds to the requirements of a world rapidly changing, for the benefit of all humanity, conceding to women equality in rights, opportunities and responsibilities in the laws, in their function in the home, work and society, and equal conditions to men, fundamental factors for achieving development and peace among people.” Articles in Muchachas highlighted women’s limited opportunities for education worldwide, and addressed income gap between male and female workers in Mexico and abroad.448

Following the IWY Conference, the Guides considered and debated what it meant to be a woman in Mexico. One Muchachas article, titled “Competition between Men and Women,” discussed the meaning of gender equality. It asked, “Is equality between men and women only a ‘slogan’ of liberationist movements, or does it have real and true content?” While the Guides did not discuss religiously controversial aspects of feminism such as birth control, women’s sexuality, rape or abortion, they did respond to second wave feminist discourses that challenged the separation of the private and public sphere. They advocated for men’s increased responsibility in the home and women’s increased agency in society. For example, one Muchachas article stated, “We live in a society driven by men at all levels. The woman asks why. Perhaps because we have not been conscious of our role in society, because we failed to change our mentality…Quality of cultural opportunities, development, health, employment, salaries, etc. will happen as soon as we women are able and willing to share responsibility for obtaining them. Today we are actors, not spectators, in the future of humanity.449

Though the Guides were encouraged to take action to elevate the status of women, the association continued to use the term “complementarity,” or gender distinction based on women’s intellectual difference from men. They characterized themselves as private, interior, and naturally abnegate. For example, another Muchachas article stated, “The true greatness and liberty of women is interior. Within her are true values that come to life without her knowing it… Oh women! You would like to, like men, construct cities, conquer nations, and govern towns? Don’t you know that you can transform communities by caring ardently from you heart, in a manner invisible and tasteful?” The Guides version of femininity reverted to earlier tropes advocating for women’s public participation in development and women’s rights advocacy based on their humanitarian nature, and as long as it did not violate Mexican and Catholic familial relationships. IWY articles demonstrated, for example, that 34% of the world’s women were part of the labor force earning only 50-80% of what men earned, and that in terms of education, in 1970 28% of the male population was illiterate compared to 40.3% of women, encouraging girls to fight for greater equality. Another article reminded readers that while in most countries laws concede equal rights to women in respect to education, and recognized women’s contribution to the home, women’s domestic position distanced her from equality with men.

Girl members also evaluated the politics of equality and difference. For example, a girl-organized survey introduced women’s liberation and asked others if they agreed with it. The girls summarized the results of the survey in Muchachas. “The majority of people in Mexico are not in agreement with it. We think that in many cases there is a lot of ignorance about the theme.” According to these Guides, women’s liberation did not appeal to most women because radical women had moved their attention away from the home. For example, they quoted an adult

respondent that stated, “Women must not try to surpass the man in knowledge, if anything they should match it.” A fourteen year old girl replied, “We don’t need to free ourselves from anything!” The girls concluded, “We are in agreement that liberation is approaching equality in legal rights and in possibilities to study and work. But women should not lose her dignity and femininity. We should strive for liberation without forgetting what it means to be a woman, putting the human touch in all that we undertake.”452 They also strove to find a middle ground between tradition and modernity, feminism and complementarity.

In Mexico round tables and conferences were organized to address the IWY Plan of Action. For example, in their continued friendship with the Guides of Belgium, the Guías organized a discussion, “The Situation of Women Worldwide.”453 Though the Guides continued to take tests in camping, first aid, and lifesaving, new badges in the 1976 Guide Manual reflected IWYs development goals. The Social Life badge, for example, asked girls to identify two social problems, and create a list of possible solutions. They were required to know how to organize various types of meetings with different purposes and goals, choose adequate guests for presentations, and make and receive invitations. For Cultural Life, they were required to learn about various “fields of action” that a woman has in her profession or work - in the home, including dating, marriage and the family, and in respect to their own personal interests. They were asked, “What are the benefits of each field of action? How much schooling is required? What is the admissions process at the schools that you would like to attend?”454

For the Guides, 1975 was a year of celebration and reflection. The association recognized women who had made public contributions to the community and world, emphasizing women’s ability to make a difference. They included a new Muchachas column, “Mi Profesión, Mi Labor

Artística, Mi Trabajo,” highlighting girls’ future career options. It included interviews with women such as chemist Silvia Bulbulián, who worked at the Mexican Institute of Nuclear Energy, and Magdalena Saldaña, Coordinator of the Cultural Supplement of Excélsior.\textsuperscript{455} Womanhood was the theme of the National Campout, at which girls learned about celebrated women in Mexico and abroad. A writing contest in Muchachas asked girl members to identify women who were worthy of admiration.\textsuperscript{456} Women selected included historical and Catholic figures as well as career women, such as Dr. Luz de Lourdes Solórzano, founder of a special school for handicapped children at the Céntro Médico in Mexico City.\textsuperscript{457}

As educational opportunities for girls expanded in the 1960s and 1970s, they began to imagine themselves as future women of distinction. Employment including public positions in the upper echelon of government and business would be more available to them as adults. By 1970 79% of children aged 6 to 14 attended primary school and 30% of youth aged 15 to 19 attended junior high school. By 1982, 89% of Mexican women in their childbearing years had attended school, and 57% had completed primary school. In 1980 24% of women were employed.\textsuperscript{458} Prominent Mexican women including First Lady Margarita Zavala, former Secretary of Education Josefina Vázquez Mota, and Jaqueline Butcher, former president of the Mexican Center of Philanthropy were members of the Guías de México, and promoted the organization.

In February of 1975, in commemoration of IWY, the Veracruz district initiated a cycle of twenty conferences about women. Themes included “The Evolution of Women Across Time,”


\textsuperscript{457} “Conozco Algún valor femenino Escondido?” Muchachas, November 1975, 11.

“The Administration of Economic Resources in the Home,” “Religion and Humanity,” “Skin Care and Physical Appearance,” and “Women’s Self-Development.” Important guests such as Ana María Hernández de Maldonado, wife of the Municipal President, Gemma Odila Garzón, Rector of the Women’s University of Veracruz, and Petrilla S. de Montejo, wife of the Commander of the Naval Zone, attended the inauguration and closing ceremonies. At the end of the program diplomas were presented to Guide attendees.459 The Guides civic participation and association with transnational and local women’s movements emphasized women’s public role and elevated status in Mexican society in the new wave.

**Gendered Patriots**

Guides publications reminded girls of their patriotic duty to Mexico and promise to God and country. They continued to attend PRI-sponsored Independence celebrations and public parades, and, in 1968, a group of Guides was chosen to carry the torch and serve as volunteers at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City.460 But while the Guides version of patriotism was based in women’s responsibility to motherhood and domestic benevolence in the 1930s and 1940s, in the 1970s women’s responsibilities to the nation were rooted in women’s citizenship and dedication to the nations’ social welfare initiatives.

Girls were advised that being patriotic meant active civic participation. For example, they were reminded to vote. “If you are now at the age where you can vote, VOTE, conscious that you are fulfilling your civic duty, convinced that family, personal and human values will be respected to the extent that you know and comply with your duties, and invoke your rights as a citizen of a free and respected country.” Another article stated that the vote may or not be respected, but that exercising that right “should be defended more aggressively than the forces

460 Guías de México A.C., Jubileo de Oro (Mexico City, D.F.: Guías de México, 1980).
that deny or violate it.” The author noted that women in Mexico often abstained from voting, believing that politics was unfeminine. But “Mexico,” she warned, “is the result of what we do or don’t do as Mexicans.”

In reaction to the politicized climate of the 1970s, Muchachas emphasized that the girls themselves were responsible for the continuation of the revolution. “The revolution, the change, the series of inhumane situations had not ended, it is something that we are living and we must cooperate in its continuation. It is our responsibility.” Muchachas suggested that girls contribute to modernization by advocating for an end to prejudice, buying Mexican products to help the economy, and to purchasing goods from indigenous artisans.

Global and Mexican Guide conferences reminded girls that they should be working towards their nation’s development goals. For example, representatives from seventy four countries attended the 1974 International Conference at Nuestra Cabaña themed “What Girls Can Do to Assist in the Development of their Communities.” In order to meet their goal of becoming a more diverse organization, an attendee suggested, “…our service must not be paternalistic, but on the contrary, we must learn and educate ourselves together in a parallel process.” In preparing girls to participate in service outside of their immediate communities, the Guides encouraged them to think nationally, then globally, and to avoid discriminating against Mexicans of different racial and class backgrounds: “Don’t critique the clothing or possessions of others because their manner of speaking or clothing are different, their parents are divorced or separated, have less money than you do, are of a different color or race, or do not know as much

about good manners as you do.”

Understanding and helping others was a part of good citizenship. As the welfare state in Mexico disintegrated, NGOs and women’s associations actively contributed to social welfare initiatives.

At the 1973 Western Hemisphere Regional Conference the Guides of Mexico gave a presentation on their work towards development and in diverse communities. The Guías discussed their twelve years of service at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Hospital in San Ángel, Mexico City and the expansion of Guías programs in rural communities for International Literacy Year. They commended a group of older Guides who had established a literacy program, served milk and fruit to children, organized posadas, and used their annual funds to build a Center for Literacy. In December 1973 six hundred Guides camped in this rural village and organized a typical Mexican Christmas festival, serving food and crafting piñatas for the children.

Beatriz Barrera de Gonzáles stated that her patrol’s work in a public hospital in Mexico City was one of the most life changing experiences she had as a Guide, “We used the uniforms of nurse’s assistants, and worked with children and babies, providing recreation, entertainment, and feeding them. I worked there every other Saturday. We rotated with another patrol so that each Saturday one Guide group worked with the children. It taught us to care for children and to respect authority. Many later worked in the field in their careers. It had a great impact on their formation as educators, doctors and nurses. I was not interested in the medical field. For me it

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466 Pepita Butcher, “Un Año de Alfabetizar,” Muchachas, November 1973, 13. Posada means lodging, or accommodation. A typical posada starts with a procession headed by “Mary” and “Joseph.” Participants travel to a designated house or church, representing an inn. Upon arrival they pray before the nativity and sing carols.
was about helping the children.” Similarly, Maria Esther Lemus’s patrol worked in a casa hogar, a home for abandoned babies and orphans.

One Guide company studied the problems of an underprivileged Mexican community. They then organized a “pilot project” in the neighborhood of Guadalupita to address its needs, in cooperation with the parish priest. They aimed to improve education, health and recreational opportunities. Rural girls at a parochial school participated in the Guide’s program alongside their mothers, and the project became a permanent service opportunity at Nuestra Cabaña. Thirty to forty adult guides visited the community regularly and organized games, dances, singing, hygiene courses, crafts and English classes. Adult Guides believed that this type of work would establish girls’ social class consciousness. A report of the project stated, “We have received many letters from Guides expressing that their participation in these projects helped them to decide on a career oriented towards service and above all, that they coexist with these people, and they realized that although these people had almost nothing, on the other hand they have strong spiritual and moral values, and that we have much to learn from them.”

The Proyecto Bélgica-México was a service project carried out alongside a group of Guides from Belgium, and with the support of the Trinitarian Mothers. Together the Girl Guides assisted women and their daughters with their daily activities, and observed their home workshops, where they made ceramic products, sewed and weaved. During a reception at the Colegio Americano in Puebla, two teachers assisted the Guides in creating an educative program. Following the event the Belgian Ambassador offered a reception in recognition of the girls’ contributions. The Guides hoped that these experiences would encourage the Guías to serve

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468 María Esther Lemus. Interview by the author. Tape Recording. Mexico City, Mexico, July 14, 2011.
the nation as adults, “In the last few years we have spoken with more insistence of volunteering, trying to inculcate people, especially the female sector of society, of the need to participate in it, holding seminars and conferences with the objective of preparing people for this end.”

The government provided new opportunities for youth volunteerism in the 1970s. For example, the Guides and other associations received invitations to serve in public facilities such as the Spring Clinic and Mexican Rehabilitation Institute. An article in Muchachas advertised the program: “We invite Mexican youth to be more aware of their function and to incorporate them as volunteers. This is the job of all Mexicans – to fulfill our commitment to the community.” The virtues of philanthropist Mr. Porfirio Mejia, of Pepsi-Cola Mexicana were extolled in the ad. Pepsi-Cola, the article stated, provided a number of scholarships to young teachers to learn therapeutic and rehabilitation techniques in addition to providing funding for the centers. “This attitude displayed by Pepsi-Cola can be followed by all Mexicans to provide children with a better life.”

The Guides also participated in the National Literacy Campaign. Each district was provided with manuals from the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) titled “Yo Puedo Hacerlo,” (I Can Do It) to utilize in their service work. The manuals aimed to instruct women of few resources to be thrifty, hygienic and improve their diets.

Between 1970 and 1980 illiteracy fell from 25 percent to 17 percent. However, the percentage of women who were illiterate rose from 58.6 percent in 1970 to 60.6 percent in 1980.

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471 Voluntariado y Guidismo, April 1974, Muchachas. 3.
474 Tuñón, 109.
Conclusion

During the 1970s women’s civic participation and association with the transnational women’s movement heightened their public role and status in Mexican society. The Guides were invited to participate in a plethora of religious, secular and state-run breakfasts, conferences and commemorative programs. For example, Rosa María de Alchalel, former National President and commissioner of the Guides of Mexico was invited to represent all of the voluntary associations of Mexico at The Seminar for the Leaders of Voluntary and Social Welfare Associations in Bogota, Colombia in 1970. Olga A. de Vaudrecourt, President of the Guides of Mexico Regional Committee of the Federal District, also attended. The Guides were routinely recognized as a driving force in urban social service efforts. During the 1970s two adult Guides were chosen as Woman of the Year of the city of Monclova in Coahuila: Amada Fuentes de la Fuente, President of the Girl Guides of Mexico in the Monclova district, and Teresa Johnson de Drennon, who had dedicated herself to social service since the 1940s. At the 1970 Volunteer Association of Mexico’s National Women’s Day celebration two leaders of the Movement were awarded medals of honor by the Mexican Committee of Social and Cultural Action. The Committee of Social Services and Culture of Mexico organized a Tribute to Mexican Women Volunteers each year at the Fiesta de la Mujer in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. One participant noted, “We were very proud because Mrs. Díaz Ordaz, wife of the president of the Republic and our honorary president of the association was recognized along with other distinguished members of different cultural educational and social service organizations.” Former National President of the Girl Guides of Mexico, Rosa María de Alchalel, received a medal and diploma in recognition of

475 “Distinciones que Nos Honran,” Muchachas, October 1970, 4-5.
476 “La Mujer del Año en Monclova,” Muchachas, April 1975, 8.
her work for the benefit of youth. Several Guide representatives also attended the Meeting of Social Workers and Nurses of Mexico in honor of the then President Elect, Luis Echeverría Álvarez. Alchalel was asked to speak about the work of service organizations, including the Guides.

As the PRI crumbled in the post-1968 era, so did the Guides 1950s road map to womanhood. The association began to focus on public rather than private life, and on global and political problems rather than the church and home. Conferences highlighted the voice of youth, leadership, national development, and careers. Youth were chided for their lack of traditional values, but were at the same time viewed as the driving force for change in the nation and world. Urban Mexican women played a prominent role in the 1968 student protests, 1970s women’s movement and the 1975 International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City. Women’s activism and organizations proliferated. The Girl Guides themselves increasingly participated in Guide publications, international leadership conferences, and surveys to determine the future of the Guide Movement. In 1969 youth were included in each delegation to WAGGGS World Conference, and they continued to play a greater role in the organization into the 1970s.

While Guide leaders worried about the impact of global youth movements and the potential for feminist and radical viewpoints, they believed that as future leaders, girls should be incorporated into WAGGGS global Movement and development initiatives. Mexican International Commissioner Pepita C. de Butcher stated, “It is precisely the idealists that need to see the future optimistically, and it is they who will drive this new and marvelous ‘era’ that we have the privilege to see born.” The Guides and Scouts, she noted, could either be at the

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479 “Distinciones que Nos Honran,” Muchachas, October 1970, 4-5.
foreground of these changes and constructively channel youth energies, or be viewed as old fashioned and outside the wave. The decade saw continued and widespread growth in Guiding, both in the number of countries and quantity of girls participating. In the late 1970s the Mexican association reached its peak of 10,000 members. However, while the number of young participants had risen, the number of older guides declined. Youth were drawn to the myriad new activities and organizations in which young women could actively participate.
Through the lens of the Guías de México, *Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies* examines Girl Guide efforts to advance international cooperation and peace by promoting international friendship among the world’s youth between 1919 and 1980. From its birth as a branch of the British Girl Guide Movement, Mexican Guides participated in WAGGGS international conferences, encampments, and global initiatives. During the first half of the twentieth century Western European and United States members established WAGGGS global agenda for social reform and the advancement of women and youth. At the same time Mexican women experienced the radical, social and political transformations taking place in post-revolutionary Mexico, and evaluated the Guide Movement’s significance to their gender and culture.

This dissertation serves as a case study to explore United States and British cultural imperialism across the twentieth century, and the ways in which Mexican women challenged imperialist assumptions while at the same time adapting and acculturating the fundamental principles of WAGGGS. The postrevolutionary reconstruction of gender in Mexico took place

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482 This picture of a Guías national campout was in a Guide photo album from the mid-1970s (date unspecified).
alongside first and second wave internationalist feminist movements through which women’s roles were contested and redefined. WAGGGS members viewed their association as feminist and egalitarian, and aimed to advance women’s rights and interests internationally. However, western leaders viewed themselves as guides who would teach their Latin American counterparts how to educate young women and girls, and saw United States and western European suffragist and feminist movements as a template for women’s progress abroad. Though the association
promoted egalitarianism, it also perpetuated existing social racial hierarchies.

Adolescence and womanhood were politicized, debated, and challenged in Mexico and internationally across the twentieth century. This study demonstrates how ordinary women who were Girl Guide members appropriated, challenged, and transformed global, national and local interpretations of women’s rights, roles, and biological and cultural representations, while at the same time supporting maternalist rhetoric with regards to their social position in society.

The World Association’s internationalist efforts expanded during World War II when the WAGGGS World Bureau temporarily moved its headquarters from London to New York. In 1940 the association focused its efforts on expanding Girl Guiding in Latin America through the establishment of a Western Hemisphere Committee. As new WAGGGS members emerged, global south nations advanced their own internationalist agendas, just as their country’s ambassadors did within the United Nations system. By the 1970s WAGGGS internationalist rhetoric shifted from an ethos in which universalist principles tied to imperialist internationalism drove the association’s global agenda, to one in which cultural relativism and transnationalism contributed to the reconstruction of gender across the globe.

Changes within the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts demonstrate an intense learning experience regarding the perspectives and knowledge of women from a variety of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. First wave feminism, though associated with a top-down agenda defining womanhood from an imperialist western civil rights perspective, set the stage for international women’s organizing. The second wave aimed to ensure women’s gender equality in the public sphere. Due in large part to second-wave feminist women’s organizing, within and outside of Mexico young urban middle class women have grown up with increased access to a plethora of government and non-governmental associations dedicated to gender rights advocacy,

\textit{Women’s Rights As Human Rights}

As sociologist Yin-Zu Chen has argued, third-wave feminist ideology in Mexico and abroad was constructed in an environment in which young women expect to be presented with the same opportunities as their male peers, are educated alongside their male counterparts at all levels, and imagine themselves as participants in the public and private spheres. College and university students have access to gender studies programs. For example, in 1983 a women’s studies program was established at El Colegio de México, and was followed by 42 others.\footnote{Chen, 189.} Since the 1970s, women have had more equal opportunities in the workforce. Starting in the mid-1980s women were incorporated into the Mexican police force, and by 1988 ten of 64 Mexican senators and 55 of the 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies were women. Since 2012, women have held 37 percent of seats in parliament.\footnote{“Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments,” The World Bank, accessed April 23, 2015, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS.} However, there continue to be approximately 65 women to every 100 men in professional and technical positions, and a gendered pay gap still exists in most fields.\footnote{Sonia Frias, "Measuring Structural Gender Equality in Mexico: A State Level Analysis," \textit{Social Indicators Research} 88.2: 215–246} 

Though girls and women experience increased opportunities in the areas of primary and secondary education, politics, and employment, they still face unequal access to higher education, housing, credit, and health care.\footnote{Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, \textit{Women’s Rights: International Feminist Perspectives} (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-2.} While second-wave feminists focused on women’s legal access to the public sphere, the international women’s movement has since the 1990s emphasized the ways in which women also face discrimination in law and custom. For example, in Mexico gender
discrimination in the private sphere, such as domestic violence, gained little legal attention until the 1980s. Further, according to historian Maxine Molyneux, women’s testimony is still considered less legitimate than men’s. She stated, “The most telling example of this was the treatment of rape cases, where female victims were routinely subject to a range of pejorative assumptions situating them as colluding with the perpetrator or acting provocatively.” Since the 1970s, women’s equality advocates have focused on removing masculine privilege from legal codes, according the same rights to women regardless of marital status, and removing protectionist measures from legal structures. 488 However, the public-private divide continues to conceal household inequalities and abuses of power.

In global south nations neo-liberal economic policies have adversely impacted women. As the responsibility and burden of social welfare shifted from public agencies to the private sector, women have shouldered increased responsibility for the nation’s children, disabled, elderly, poor and sick. Further, as Niamh Reilly has argued, global capitalism is a root cause of global inequality. While the United Nations has set myriad development goals, she stated, “Ignoring such inequalities, mainstream approaches to development focus on how best to integrate poorer economies into the global economy on the basis of their ‘competitive advantage’—often as a source of cheaper primary goods and labour.” 489 As the United Nations’ Millennium Goals for 2015 were established, the ability of global south nations to meet those goals was thwarted by the pressures of structural adjustment programs, which required states to cut spending in exchange for development loans. 490

490 Ibid, 120.
The Guides of Mexico and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts continue to support United Nations initiatives and to promote its women’s rights agenda. The global Movement has encouraged national associations to adopt the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for 2015: eradication of poverty and hunger, universal primary education, gender equality, child mortality, improved maternal health, combat HIV, AIDS and Malaria, and environmental stability. While WAGGGS has acknowledged that the goals will not be met, girls around the world are encouraged to promote action in the community to address them. Every Guide can earn the Global Action insignia by reading about the Millennium Goals, developing a community project, and implementing it. They share their progress with one another on the internet. WAGGGS and the FAO have also developed insignias on climate change and food security.\(^{491}\) In 2013 the Guides of Mexico taught youth about human trafficking. They stated, “We are citizens of the world and cannot remain with our arms crossed and pretend that things are right.” They advised older Guides to educate others and become involved in the campaign to end violence against women.\(^{492}\)

While in the 1970s the Mexican feminist movement was small and associated with urban middle class women, in the 1980s it became more closely tied to other local, national and international movements for women’s rights. For example, starting in 1981 feminists from a variety of ethnicities and social class backgrounds participated in Latin American *encuentros*, with the goal of discussing gender-based discrimination and building strategies for rights-based reform. Issues pertaining to the private sphere, such as rape in marriage, domestic violence, and the feminization of poverty, were addressed. Recognizing that women’s issues were often

viewed as a “special interest agenda” rather than an integral part of the international human rights agenda, female representatives at the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna declared that “women’s rights must be understood as human rights.” These included reproductive rights, freedom from domestic violence, and addressing discriminatory family law.\footnote{Peters and Wolper, 3-6.}

In 1997 the first Mexican Gender and Equity Commission was established in Congress, which included women from all political parties. As a member of the United Nations, the Mexican government now regularly compiles updated information on women’s status and rights. For example, in 1997, the government wrote a report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which emphasized women’s reproductive and sexual rights, equal rights in court, and protection from domestic violence.\footnote{Helga Baitmann, Victoria Chenaut, and Ann Varley, “Law and Gender in Mexico: Defining the Field,” in Helga Baitenmann, Victoria Chenaut, and Ann Varley eds., Decoding Gender: Law and Practice in Contemporary Mexico (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 1-39.} Marital rape was made illegal in 2005. However, the continued separation of Mexico City’s subway cars during rush hour, initiated in the 1980s, is symbolic of the continued prevalence of sexual assault in Mexico. The nation has the sixteenth highest rate of femicide in the world, which has steadily increased since 2007, aggravated by the economic crisis. Though the General Law of Access for Women to a Life Free of Violence was implemented in 2007, it did not impact the number of incidences.\footnote{United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Femicide and Impunity in Mexico,” last accessed August 14, 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx.} While second-wave feminists focused their efforts on obtaining women’s legal rights, third-wave feminists have placed more emphasis on discrimination against women in the private sphere.
Girl Guiding in The New Wave

The third phase of feminism arose in the 1990s, and is informed by post-colonialism, racial inclusion, and LGBTQ-rights advocacy. By recognizing various feminisms, it has deconstructed some notions of unity that were present in 1970s movements. While the trend toward cultural relativism began in the second-wave, third-wave feminists view their movement in more global and multicultural terms. Differences in ethnicity, class and sexual orientation have redefined women’s-rights movements, contesting both the experiential and biological universality of the second-wave.

Founded on the notions of sisterhood and universality, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has come under increased scrutiny from third-wave feminists, who view both the single-sex nature of Girl Guiding and the Guide oath, in which girls pledge a duty to God, as discriminatory, outdated, and a marker of the movement’s exclusiveness. At the same time WAGGGS continues to advocate for women’s equal rights and access to economic, social, and educational opportunities.

Advocates of single-sex Scouting claim that through instruction in crafts such as doll-making, sewing, and cooking, and the use of a uniform that embodies femininity, the Guides and Girl Scouts continue to contribute to the social construction of gender complementarity rather than gender equality. As geographer Sarah Mills argued, “…seemingly banal practices, such as dressing, eating, playing and so on, have a profound geopolitical resonance, positioning the individual as gendered, sexualized ‘subjects’ of both domestic and foreign relations.”

The Girl Guides, from their establishment in 1910, created a pedagogical program that aimed to produce gendered subjects. Though Boy Scouting was founded for the development of exclusively male citizens, a number of girls clamored to participate, making ad-hoc uniforms and arriving uninvited to the 1909 Crystal

Palace rally. To Baden-Powell, the term Scout and the animal patrol names identified with its units were inappropriate for girls. In 1910 the new association referred to the girls as Guides instead of Scouts and their patrols were named after flowers and birds.\footnote{497}

Like the young girl “Scouts” coming of age in the midst of first-wave feminist movements in Great Britain, in the 1970s girls asked to join the Boy Scouts of the United Kingdom, claiming that Girl Guiding did not provide the same opportunities for adventure and sport. In 1976 the National Board of the Boy Scouts UK complied, allowing girls aged 15-19 to participate in the Venture Scout program. In February 1990, UK Scout districts could vote to allow girls to participate at all levels, and in 2007 girls were admitted to all of the nation’s Boy Scouting programs.\footnote{498} Co-ed Scouting is very popular among young British girls. In 2011, for the first time, more girls were admitted to the British Scout Association than boys.\footnote{499} Similarly, in 1980 women were invited to be leaders in the Asociación de Scouts de México, A.C., associated with the World Organization of the Scout Movement. In 1981 girls were encouraged to become members. The Asociación de Scouts de México currently has approximately 42,000 members, and in 2010 it selected its first female Chief National Scout, Ana Lorena Gudiño Valdez.\footnote{500}

According to the Boy Scouts of America, most of the 161 national Scout organizations include boys and girls.\footnote{501} Girls were invited to join the Boy Scouts of America’s Venture Scout program (ages 14-20) in 1998, and female Scouts were invited to participate in the Boy Scout jamboree for the first time in July, 2013. After a significant decline in membership following the Boy Scouts of America’s (BSA) ban on gay membership, supported by the 2000 United States

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{497} Ibid, 547.
\item \footnote{498} Ibid.
\item \footnote{499} “Scouts, Boys Overtake Girls in Admissions,” \textit{BBC News}, April 15, 2011.
\end{itemize}
Supreme Court decision Boy Scouts of America v. Dale, BSA lifted its anti-gay policy in 2013.\footnote{502}

Though many Guide and Scout associations in Europe have merged, the British and Mexican Girl Guides, and the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, continue to provide girls with a unique all-female social and educational space. When confronted by 17-year old Thomas Desai, who claimed he was more interested in Girl Guide activities than those of the more physically challenging Boy Scout program, Girlguiding UK re-iterated its position.\footnote{503} As an association with consultative status in United Nations agencies, WAGGGS has closely followed and participated in the international movement for women’s rights. Recognizing that women worldwide continue share various forms of discrimination including domestic violence, unequal access to leadership positions, and an unequal burden of household work, advocates of single-sex Guiding argue that women’s issues risk being marginalized in a co-ed association, as they are within the United Nations system. Despite this, younger feminists have advocated for increased inclusivity. Chen argues that this difference in perspective is shaped by the younger generations’ individual experiences. She states, “The detachment of feminism from the biological female body arises alongside the deconstructionist perspective on gender, which considers the body a discursive production of intelligibility and sex a result of the operation of gender on the body.” Additionally, in the twenty-first century feminist NGOs in Mexico have increasingly worked alongside men for the promotion women’s rights.\footnote{504}

While third-wave feminists have called for increased flexibility in defining male and female subjectivities, they have also responded to third-world internationalists and local rights advocates demand for more religious and racial inclusivity in the association. For example, the Girl Guides of

\footnote{503} “Teenage Boy That Wanted to Join the Girl Guides Accuses Organization of Sexual Discrimination after he is Turned Away,” \textit{Daily Mail}, February 11, 2011.
\footnote{504} Chen, 199.
Mexico have recently seen an increased number of indigenous and working class participants. Class inclusivity is symbolized by the abandonment of the traditional Guide uniform, once a representation of members’ discipline and middle and upper class feminine respectability, for a Guide member t-shirt. There are also a growing number of Pentecostal and Evangelical members. While the Guías still view the Guide oath to serve “God and country” as integral to the healthy development of Mexican girls, Girlguiding UK omitted “God” from their association’s oath in 2013.

Girlguiding UK’s decision to change the oath was informed by its commitment to creating a more religiously inclusive and secular association. Girls now vow, “I promise that I will do my best, To be true to myself and develop my beliefs, To serve the Queen and my community, To help other people, and To keep the Guide law.” The original version stated, “On my honour I promise that I will do my best, To do my duty to God and the King, To help others at all times, and To obey the Guide Law.” Many of the association’s Christian members refused to recognize the new oath. At first Girlguiding UK threatened to ban them from the association. However, after the Church of England General Synod accused the association of discriminating against Christians, representatives of the association stated that Christian members could add a religious preface of their choice to the oath. While initially religion was a key component of moral character development and citizenship in the Empire, the term “God” in the Guide oath has since become a marker of religious and ethnic discrimination. Secular, once symbolized by ecumenicalism, is now defined by an absence of religion.

The contemporary Movement in Mexico focuses on issues such as self-esteem, women’s advocacy, service, leadership and sexual education rather than outdoor adventure. It has

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505 Meeting of the Mexican Adult Guides United in Service (GAUS). Interview by the author. Cuernavaca, Mexico, August 2, 2010.
506 “God Vow Dropped from Girlguiding UK Promise,” BBC, June, 19, 2013.
507 Ibid.
expanded to various regions of Mexico including Quintana Roo, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, San Luis Potosí, Jalisco, Puebla, Querétaro, Colima, the state of Mexico, Morelos, Nuevo León, the Federal District, and Veracruz. The organization developed most rapidly between 1965 and 1980, but membership has since declined. While by 1980 the organization in Mexico had approximately 10,000 girls, today it has between 6,000 and 7,000 members.509

**Gendered Patriots and Postrevolutionary Ladies**

Founded in 1930, the Guías de México aimed to cultivate what its founders perceived to be model postrevolutionary ladies, whom they believed would foster increased respect for female citizens in the modernizing state. A study of the Guías de México presents a unique opportunity to assess the ways in which young women helped to drive the process of modernization in Mexico between 1930 and 1980. This study evaluates the experiences of various generations of urban, upper and middle class women who were Girl Guides. Why did young ladies define gender differently than their mothers and grandmothers? How did nationalist state building projects, religious practices, and globalization impact women and youth of various age cohorts? Mexican womanhood has undergone a series of far-reaching social transformations across the twentieth-century that profoundly altered women’s familial and public positions. Girls’ expectations of adulthood continued to expand long after the 1930s Mexican women’s movement, as they gained access to a wider range of career, educational, and leisure opportunities.

This study elucidates the ways in which, through associations such as the Girl Guides, prominent European immigrant women participated in and influenced women’s political and

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social mobilizations in Mexico City, as they had in Europe.\textsuperscript{510} It in turn examines how Mexican women adapted the ideology and organization of the Girl Guides to meet the demands of new, burgeoning forms of women’s civic participation and gendered rhetoric that emerged during the dramatic social, political, and cultural changes taking place in postrevolutionary Mexico.

By shaping the lives of young Mexican women, the Mexican Girl Guides served as a means of inculcating nationalism and acculturation during the postrevolutionary presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). In the late 1930s the gendered philosophy of the British Girl Guides was altered and appropriated by Mexican women. In Mexico City the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts provided their own versions of Mexican nationalism, as they competed for a voice amid the postrevolutionary reconstruction of the Mexican state and society. The first Guide patrols were composed of girls of various ethnic backgrounds and promoted an internationalist, secular and liberal version of Mexican womanhood. But during this period of intense economic competition between Mexican and immigrant businesses, the nationalist and often xenophobic rhetoric of the Cárdenas presidency pressured immigrants to assimilate.\textsuperscript{511} In the state and civil society, European and North American cultural practices were verbally rejected as foreign even as their influence remained strong in government and organizational programs. In 1938 the Mexican Guías requested the establishment of an independent association associated with the WAGGGS, and the organization adapted a more nationalistic tone. Amidst the church-state conflict Mexican women created a seemingly secular space in which Catholic religious values were forged. At the same time girls learned about the Mexican flag, sang the national anthem, held flag ceremonies, volunteered in city hospitals, and represented Mexico at international

\textsuperscript{510} By 1930 Mexico City had 49,637 foreign residents, the majority from North America and Europe. Delia Salazar, \textit{La Población Extranjera de México} (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1996), 334.

Guide conferences. However, their particular version of nationalism was one influenced by members’ affluence, social position, and continued participation in global initiatives through their membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS).

The Guías de México created a new social space in which girls developed a more autonomous identity from that of the more self-contained familial unit. Education, employment, and the loosening of parental restrictions associated with girls’ increased socialization outside the home were significant agents of change. As girls’ opportunities to attend secondary schools improved in the 1940s and 1950s and literacy rates rose dramatically, a new girlhood culture emerged. Girls became more interested in fashion, make-up, comics and magazines. The Guías de México published its own magazines, Nezaldi and Muchachas, hoping that by directly addressing appropriate dress and feminine comportment, they could steer the course of participants. Guide leaders aimed to cultivate career-oriented, athletic, patriotic and Catholic Guías who represented a new path to womanhood different from the flagrantly rebellious chica moderna or the politically active Mexican woman.

The definition of Mexican girlhood and womanhood was again radically reconstructed during the political crises and economic malaise of the turbulent 1965-1975 decade. In the 1960s young women joined pro-democracy urban student movements that denounced police brutality and violations to the autonomy of the national university. On October 2, 1968 the government ordered an assault on the hundreds of students and other protesters at the Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico City. A second wave feminist movement emerged alongside other Mexican women’s movements for social reform in an atmosphere of increased inflation, economic

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stagnation, and foreign economic investment. The feminist movement was central to public discourses on the dissolution of the family, delinquency of youth, and invasion of a seemingly foreign women’s movement.

The majority of Mexican women, including many guide leaders, strongly rejected the term “feminism” and the stereotypes associated with it. Alongside hundreds of other associations, the Mexican Girl Guides sent representatives to the 1975 United Nations Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City. My dissertation draws attention to the ways in which Mexican womanhood was radically redefined by the everyday decisions and practices of Mexican women and girls as they altered and appropriated these discourses. In their youth, these same women helped steer a course of cultural change: their athletic endeavors, religious and educational practices, and participation in national and international political movements set a new tone for Mexican womanhood. During the 1960s and 1970s the Guías focused on careerism, outdoor adventure, and international development. While in the 1950s the Muchachas advice column suggested that girls strive to place motherhood and marriage ahead of their career goals, in the 1970s girls were advised to follow their dreams and aspirations.

Today there are ten million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 145 organizations around the world, and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and World Organization of the Scouting Movement remain the largest voluntary organization dedicated to children and youth.

Over the last one hundred years, WAGGGS has been dedicated to international sisterhood, women’s rights, international cooperation, and service to the community.

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