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WOMEN AGRARIAN ENTREPRENEURS AND GENDER INEQUALITY
IN THE CHILEAN RURAL SECTOR AFTER INDEPENDENCE FROM SPAIN,
1830s-1860s¹

ABSTRACT

We provide the first estimates of gender income and land inequality in Chile during the first decades after independence, when Chile was a predominantly agrarian society. We have used a new source: the records of the first agricultural censuses ever made for any Latin American republic. We found that there were over six times more male landowners than women, and that male owners gathered up to 87% of total agricultural income (of those paying the *catastro*). On the positive side, we found that female landownership was more widespread than has previously been assumed by Chilean historians, although it was declining in relative terms. We have also identified the main elite women agrarian entrepreneurs, finding that one of the biggest landowners of this period was a woman, who has been ignored in the historiography. We have documented her economic activities, as well as those of many other prominent women agricultural entrepreneurs, thus showing that women's involvement in crucial entrepreneurship activities started earlier than previously been acknowledged, from colonial times.

Keywords: Chile, nineteenth century, female entrepreneurs, agriculture, gender inequality.

RESUMEN

En este artículo entregamos las primeras estimaciones de desigualdad de género del ingreso y de la tierra en Chile durante las primeras décadas que siguieron a la indepen-

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dencia, cuando Chile era predominantemente una sociedad agraria. Para ello hemos utilizado una nueva fuente: los primeros censos agrícolas de cualquier república latinoamericana. Hemos encontrado que había seis veces más propietarios de tierra varones que mujeres, y que los hombres acaparaban un 87% del ingreso agrícola (de entre todos los que pagaban el catastro). En el lado positivo encontramos que la propiedad de la tierra por parte de mujeres era un fenómeno mucho más diseminado de lo que creíamos, aunque el mismo iba declinando. También hemos identificado a las principales mujeres dentro de la élite agraria, encontrando que uno de los grandes terratenientes del periodo era mujer, la que ha sido ignorada por la historiografía. Hemos documentado sus actividades económicas, junto a la de muchas otras empresarias agrícolas del periodo, demostrando así que la participación de mujeres en actividades empresariales cruciales comenzó mucho antes de lo que creíamos, desde el periodo colonial.

Palabras claves: Chile, siglo XIX, mujeres empresarias, agricultura, desigualdad de género.

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INTRODUCTION

Inequality has been at the centre of the global political debate during the last two decades. Latin America is, and has been, one of the most unequal regions of the planet since the colonial period, currently having the highest within-country income inequality in the world². Chile, a country often praised for political and economic stability, has not escaped this trend, despite a significant drive towards poverty reduction in recent decades³. Of all the countries for which the World Bank estimated Gini indexes for personal income in 2013, Chile ranked fifth from bottom, with a Gini coefficient of 0.505 (*i.e.* extremely high), being the most unequal country of the OECD, a sad record indeed⁴. However, this is not new. The roots of Chilean inequality are to be found in colonial times and the early independence period, reaching back to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁵.

² Leandro Prados de la Escosura, "Inequality and Poverty in Latin America: a long-run Exploration", in Timothy Hatton, Kevin O'Rourke & Alan Taylor (eds.), *The Comparative Economic History*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2007, pp. 291-315; Luis Bértola, Leandro Prados de la Escosura & Jeffrey Williamson, "Latin American Inequality in the Long Run", en *Revista de Historia Económica*, vol. 28, n.º 2, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 219-226; Jorge Gelman, "Desequilibrios regionales, desigualdades sociales. Las economías argentinas en el siglo XIX", en Jorge Gelman (ed.), *El mapa de la desigualdad en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Rosario, Protohistoria Ediciones, 2011, pp. 11-45; Leticia Arroyo-Abad, "Persistent Inequality? Trade, Factor Endowments, and Inequality in Republican Latin America", in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 73, N.º 1, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 38-78.

³ PNUD, *Desiguales: Orígenes, cambios y desafíos de la brecha social en Chile*, Santiago, PNUD, 2017.

⁴ The World Bank, *GINI index*, 2017. Available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI> [Date of consultation: March 1, 2017].

⁵ Eugenio Rodríguez, *Constanza de Nordenflycht: la querida de Portales*, Santiago, Pehuén, 2005; PNUD, *op. cit.*

Chile is a well-known case of severe inequality in a middle-income country. A recent book⁶ has covered Chilean income inequality for the last century and a half, and although it is probably the definitive work on this topic for this period, it does not explore some aspects such as gender income gaps. One of the most important aspects of inequality, and at the same time one of the least researched, is gender inequality⁷. And it is a common theme in economic history that female workers and entrepreneurs (and their earnings), are usually excluded from any historiographic explanation⁸. There is agreement today that female participation in economic activity has been underestimated by historians⁹. On account of this neglect, leading scholars such as Maxine Berg (1993) and Jane Humphries (2013) have convincingly shown that, when assessing the evolution of a country's income, economic historians must include in their analysis not only male wages and other sources of revenue but also female's, otherwise we are missing about half of the population, and therefore a great deal of what we want to explain. We, therefore, believe that gender inequality must be included in any account of a given country's income and wealth inequality. Unfortunately, little has been written on female entrepreneurship for most Latin American countries for the period covering the first decades after independence from Spain (c.1820s-1860s), a foundational period for any Latin American republic, since it is a bridge between the colonial period and the first globalization of c.1870-1914, when the institutional foundations of the country were established.

Furthermore, the scant literature on the role of women in economic activity during the nineteenth century has been mainly limited to developed countries. Latin America in particular has been excluded from most economic history accounts¹⁰. Research on women's involvement in the Latin American economy during the nineteenth century has been focused on the labour side of the story (e.g. women as wage earners, as domestic workers)¹¹, while the role they played as entrepreneurs and managers has been neglected. There is a clear inequality in the coverage of gender economic activity. This said, there are recent and important works on Latin American women's property rights and legal status during colonial and early post-colonial times, which have even challenged the idea

⁶ Javier Rodríguez Weber, *Desarrollo y desigualdad en Chile (1850-2009): Historia de su economía política*, Santiago, Ediciones de la Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, colección Sociedad y Cultura, 2017, vol. LXII.

⁷ PNUD, *op. cit.*

⁸ Nora Reyes, "Women's Wages and the Gender Gap during the Period of Import Substituting Industrialization in Chile", in María Magdalena Camou, Silvana Maubrigades & Rosemary Thorp (eds.), *Gender Inequalities and Development in Latin America during the Twentieth Century*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016, pp. 30-59.

⁹ Jane Humphries & Carmen Sarasúa, "Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labor Force Participation in the European Past", in *Feminist Economics*, vol. 18, N° 4, London, 2012, pp. 39-67; Jane Humphries, "Women and Paid Work", in June Purvis (ed.), *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945. An Introduction*, London, Routledge, 2006, pp. 85-105; Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women, Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.

¹⁰ Bernardita Escobar, "Female Entrepreneurship and Participation Rates in 19th Century Chile", en *Estudios de Economía*, n.º 42, vol. 2, Santiago, 2015, pp. 67-91.

¹¹ For Chile, for example, see the work of Elizabeth Hutchinson, and the bibliography on it: Elizabeth Hutchinson, *Labores propias de su sexo. Género, políticas y trabajo en Chile urbano, 1900-1930*, Santiago, LOM Ediciones, 2006.

of patriarchy during these periods, highlighting the limitations of the patriarchal model for explaining gender relations before the 1850s¹². Yet, for the Chilean case, apart from Eugene Korth and Della Flusch's brief study¹³, little has been produced on this area. In turn, from a purely economic history point of view, apart from the recent works of Bernardita Escobar¹⁴, which approach with a later period than the covered by this article, little research has been directed towards Chile, in particular in relation to female business ownership and management¹⁵. Nevertheless, this is not an issue only for Chile and other Latin American republics. Even with regard to developed countries, the coverage of the role played by elite women as entrepreneurs before WWI has been very narrow¹⁶.

Furthermore, there has been little analysis on the actual limits imposed by national legislation upon the economic activities Chilean women could undertake during the nineteenth century, before and after the promulgation of the first Civil Code in 1855¹⁷. It has been argued that before 1855 Spanish legislation greatly restricted the economic activities married women could undertake, for the benefit of their husbands. The legislation of the time appeared to promote a highly patriarchal family model¹⁸. However, the recent works of Bernardita Escobar and our empirical evidence suggest a different story. Chilean women were active in undertaking their own businesses, and assumed important economic roles not only by becoming elite entrepreneurs, but also by running small businesses, as employees or as wage earners.

In order to fill these gaps in the literature, we explore here female ownership and management of small to large *haciendas* in Chile during the 1830s-1850s, by then an agrarian society (highly reliant on wheat production) dominated by family businesses. We also assess gender land and income inequality during this period, making use of an untapped source (the records of a new agricultural income tax introduced in 1831)¹⁹,

¹² See, for instance, Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985; Chad T. Black, *The Limits of Gender Domination. Women, the Law, and Political Crisis in Quito, 1765-1830*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2010; Kimberly Gauderman, *Women's Lives in Colonial Quito. Gender, Law and Economy in Spanish America*, Austin, Texas University Press, 2003.

¹³ Eugene H. Korth & Della M. Flusch, "Dowry and Inheritance in Colonial Spanish America: Peninsular Law and Chilean Practice", in *The Americas*, N° 43, vol. 4, Washington, 1987, pp. 395-410.

¹⁴ Bernardita Escobar, "Women in Business in Late 19th Century Chile: Class, Marital Status and Economic Autonomy", in *Feminist Economics*, N° 23, vol. 2, Houston, 2017, pp. 33-67; Bernardita Escobar, "Mujeres y negocios en Chile: una exploración al período 1945-1958", en Manuel Llorca-Jaña y Diego Barria (eds.), *Empresas y empresarios en la historia de Chile, 1930-2015*, Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 2017; Escobar, "Female Entrepreneurship...", *op. cit.*, pp. 67-91.

¹⁵ Take for instance Gabriel Salazar, the latest major work on Chilean entrepreneurs during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, where no reference is made to elite female entrepreneurs, and only brief reference to small and medium female entrepreneurs. Gabriel Salazar, *Mercaderes, empresarios y capitalistas. Chile, siglo XIX*, Santiago, Editorial Sudamericana, 2009.

¹⁶ Barker, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Cristián Lepin, "Evolución de los derechos civiles de la mujer en la legislación chilena (1855-2015)", en *Revista Boliviana de Derecho*, n.º 21, vol. 1, La Paz, 2016, pp. 74-93.

¹⁸ Lepin, *op. cit.*; Gonzalo Figueroa, *Persona, pareja y familia*, Santiago, Editorial Jurídica de Chile, 1995; Mauricio Tapia, *Código Civil 1855-2005. Evolución y perspectivas*, Santiago, Editorial Jurídica de Chile, 2005.

¹⁹ Reyes, "Women's Wages...", *op. cit.* Recently published a work on the wages gap between male and female Chilean workers for the 1930s-1970s. She found that, at most, female workers got 66% of the wages

complemented with other sources, also unexplored so far (see next section). This paper will, therefore, contribute to a better understanding not only of the economic role played by women in early Chilean republican life, but also to our understanding of total income and land inequality in Chile, and above all, of gender inequality for these two variables, both fundamental in pre-industrial societies, when most people lived in the rural sector. Unfortunately, there is no data on Chile's total personal income before the 1850s, but thanks to our new database we now have sound information per gender on agricultural market income (in particular about the plots that paid the *catastro*) and land ownership for this period (for all plots for 1832-1834, and for the remaining two *catastros* of those paying this tax).

Our analysis will expose a bleak picture of gender income and wealth inequality in Chile regarding agricultural market income (paying *catastro*) and land possession, but this does not mean that there were no important women agricultural entrepreneurs during this period, as well as an important number of small and medium female landowners. There was some degree of autonomy granted not only to elite women engaged in economic activities, but also to those belonging to the lower social strata²⁰. Although it was said that during the colonial period "Hispanic culture cloistered woman in the convent or home"²¹, there is also evidence that colonial legislation did not hold back women's access to land property. Indeed, most of the wealthiest women described in this paper were born during colonial times. After the independence from Spain, Chilean women gained more prominence within society, entering the public sphere²². Our evidence shows that, despite severe gender inequality in Chile during the 1830s-1850s, there were around 3,000 female owners of rural farms *c.*1832²³, and almost 5,000 by 1855, although their share within total owners was decreasing. These are sizeable figures by any means, which may come as a surprise to many Chilean historians²⁴. These figures show that, from colonial times, literally thousands of Chilean women managed to endure adverse legal conditions and strong patriarchal values to gain ownership of rural land, and equally importantly, to successfully manage it. This confirms previous findings that it is difficult to speak of strong patriarchy before the second half of the nineteenth century²⁵. Male domination was not as monolithic as usually portrayed by the

of male workers, and at times as little as nearly half. This gap was reduced to 77% in the 1990s and to 85% nowadays; PNUD, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Women from humble origins often lived independently, and engaged in many different economic activities, including the production of handmade textiles, laundry, and the making and selling of foodstuffs. They were legally entitled to do so. Gabriel Salazar y Julio Pinto, *Historia contemporánea de Chile. Tomo IV: Hombría y feminidad*, Santiago, LOM Ediciones, 2002, pp. 117-119; Salazar, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

²¹ Gertrude Yaeger, "Female Apostolates and Modernization in Mid-Nineteenth Century Chile", in *The Americas*, N° 53, vol. 3, Washington, 1999, p. 426.

²² Escobar, "Women in Business...", *op. cit.*, pp. 33-67.

²³ Of these nearly 3,000, around 1,000 paid the *catastro*.

²⁴ Salazar y Pinto, *op. cit.* Has acknowledged that many Chileans from low social strata lived in their own farms, although they did not venture to hazard numbers.

²⁵ Arrom, *op. cit.*; Black, *op. cit.*; Chad T. Black, "Between Prescription and Practice: Licensure and women's Legal Identity in Bourbon Quito, 1765-1810", in *Colonial Latin American Review*, N° 16, vol. 2, New Orleans, 2007, pp. 273-298.

traditional Chilean historiography²⁶. Furthermore, the high number of women owners of rural farms, many of whom owned small plots only suggests that not only women from the elites could perform agrarian economic activities, but also those from far poorer economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, we shall show that many of the female agricultural entrepreneurs of this period reached the top of the economic rural pyramid. Indeed, one of the most important landholders during this period was a woman, María Ballesteros, who has been surprisingly ignored by the historiography. It is hard to believe that the second largest landholder (second also by earnings) of a country did not receive any attention from historians just because she was a woman. However, this is not entirely unexpected: in Chilean history, as in most of Latin America, “entrepreneurial women have largely been invisibilized because of the difficulty to identify their contributions to business”²⁷. More generally, “the role of women in family business remains at best supporting, and often invisible”²⁸. We shall bring her case to life, as well as those of many other important female rural entrepreneurs, while also documenting the extent and importance of small and medium rural farms run by women.

After this introduction, we discuss and explain the nature of our sources, as well as the Chilean legal framework relevant to female land ownership during the 1830s-1860s. Next, we present our main findings on total agricultural income and land inequality, focusing on gender inequality for these variables. The following section is devoted to portraying some important female agricultural entrepreneurs of this period, most of whom are virtually unknown to historians, despite their economic prominence during the 1830s-1850s.

Most of our case studies deal with women belonging to the economic elite of the country. The reason for this is twofold. First, there is more reliable evidence of how elite women became landowners (overcoming legal constraints designed to deter women from engaging in economic activities), and how they ran their estates. Secondly, some of these elite women managed the biggest *haciendas* in Chile, which makes them interesting objects of study, given the complexity of the business under analysis.

Our sources and the legal framework

After independence, as in most other new Latin American republics, the Chilean state depended largely on trade duties (mainly import duties) to fund government expenditure²⁹. But this does not mean that other sources of taxation were not explored. In 1831 the

²⁶ Escobar, “Women in Business...”, *op cit.*, pp. 33-67.

²⁷ Erica Salvaj, Andrea Lluch y Constanza Gómez, “La red empresarial chilena en 1939: entre la crisis global y la adaptación a la etapa de la industrialización promovida por el Estado”, en Llorca-Jaña y Barria (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 78-95.

²⁸ Andrea Colli & Mary Rose, “Family Business”, in Geoffrey Jones & Jonathan Zeitlin (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Business History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 194-217.

²⁹ Manuel Llorca-Jaña & Juan Navarrete-Montalvo, “The Chilean Economy during the 1810s-1830s and its Entry into the World Economy”, in *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, vol. 36, N° 3, Liverpool, 2017, pp. 354-369; Elvira López, *El proceso de construcción estatal en Chile. Hacienda pública y burocracia, 1817-1860*, Santiago, Ediciones de la Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, colección Sociedad y Cultura, 2014, vol. LVII.

Chilean government introduced a new land tax (called *catastro*), which taxed the annual income of all Chilean farms producing over \$25 for the market³⁰. It was a tax on the income generated by the land itself but also on all property included on it, mainly wheat plantations, cattle and vineyards. In other words, it was a tax on total agricultural market income, which was in force until the early 1860s, and good evidence of it has survived for the 1830s and 1850s. This is important because for these decades there is no information on total personal income, or total wealth distribution for Chile.

When total personal income data is missing, researchers interested in income distribution in pre-industrial societies have increasingly explored income inequality proxies such as agricultural income and land ownership to measure income or wealth inequality in many countries before industrialisation³¹. This being the case, we are using in this paper measures of agricultural market income as a proxy of gender total income inequality. We recognize that we should not equate access to agricultural market income with access to total income, but Chile was a pre-industrial society during the period covered by this paper, highly reliant on agriculture, when land and labour were the key factors of production³², and the agricultural sector was the engine of the economy³³. The total agricultural income is not available for Chile, but thanks to the *catastro*, for 1832-1834 we know the total agricultural market income, and for 1837-1838 and 1852 we know the agricultural market income for those plots that paid the *catastro*. Our information does not include agricultural non-market income, but it still provides reliable indicators of gender inequality.

In order to collect this new agricultural tax, the Chilean government had to identify first all rural properties existing in the country, and then estimate the individual agricultural market income produced by all these farms, and for this purpose, the owners of farms had to be identified too. It was a task of paramount importance. The government undertook a comprehensive agricultural census for the whole of Chile, started in 1832

³⁰ To give an idea of the purchasing power of \$25 during this period, the annual cash salary of an unskilled construction worker in Santiago c.1834-1852 was \$96 (Llorca-Jaña & Navarrete-Montalvo, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-369) while a rural family of four needed at least \$100 per annum to survive. Claudio Gay, *Historia física y Política de Chile. Tomo primero. Agricultura*, Santiago, Cámara Chilena de la Construcción, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Biblioteca Fundamentos de la Construcción de Chile, 2009, tomo XXVIII, pp. 121.

³¹ Henry Willebald, "Distributive Patterns in Settler Economies: Agricultural Income Inequality during the First Globalization, 1870-1913", in *Historia Agraria*, vol. 66, n.º 1, Murcia, 2015, pp. 75-104; Bértola, Prados de la Escosura & Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-226; Jorge Gelman y Daniel Santilli, "Una creciente desigualdad. La propiedad de la tierra en Buenos Aires entre 1839 y 1855", en *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, vol. 18, n.º 1, Madrid, 2010, pp. 11-33; Luis Bértola & José Antonio Ocampo, *The Economic Development of Latin America since Independence*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012; John Henry Coatsworth, "Economic and Institutional trajectories in nineteenth century Latin America", in John Henry Coatsworth & Alan Taylor (eds.), *Latin America and the world economy since 1800*, Boston, Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 23-54.

³² Bértola, Prados de la Escosura & Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-226.

³³ Apart from land, other forms of wealth, like financial assets and education, were less important during this period in Latin America. In this vein, Jeffrey Williamson, ("Land, Labor and Globalization in the Third World, 1870-1940", in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 62, N° 1, New York, 2002, pp. 55-85) has recommended the use of land ownership or agricultural income as proxies of income inequalities in those economies where the agricultural sector was large (see also Coatsworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-54; Gelman & Santilli, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-33), which is the case for Chile during the period covered by this article.

and finished in 1834, which was followed by similar censuses in 1837-1838 and 1852³⁴, involving cartographers and many other specialists. This was the first complete land survey ever conducted in Chile, and its comprehensive coverage was unique for the region³⁵. Chile became a pioneer in agricultural censuses throughout the world³⁶.

Thus, during 1832-1834 and 1837-1838, for each farm of land generating a market income of \$25 or more per annum, the following variables were registered: names of the owners (which also reveal gender), province, department, parish, name of property, and annual market income. Additional information such as the extension of the property, vineyards, plants and cattle was also entered for the first two censuses. For the 1852 *catastro*, unfortunately, the information is restricted to province, department, property name, names of owners (therefore gender) and annual market income, thus missing useful information if compared to the previous two *catastros*. After entering this information, we also grouped the data per owner, since an owner could possess more than one farm. In all, we entered about half a million records for the three censuses. Our primary source of information was Archivo Nacional de Chile (Contaduría Mayor's collection, henceforth ANCH-CM) for the 1832-1834 and 1837-1838 *catastros*³⁷, while the 1852 *catastro* was published as a book³⁸.

TABLE 1
*Descriptive statistics of Chilean farms paying the catastro,
(i.e. farms with a market income of \$25, or more, per annum)*

Variable	1832-1834	1837-1838	1852
Number of plots	5,408	9,977	33,040
Number of plots' owners	4,980	9,229	27,860
<i>Market Income (\$)</i>			
Total market income	1,518,230	2,760,630	7,400,322
Average plots' income	281	277	224
<i>Extension (hectares)</i>			
Average	471	324	N-A
Total (millions)	2,55	3,23	N-A

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

³⁴ Rolando Mellafe, "Prólogo", en José Garrido, Cristián Guerrero y María Soledad Valdés (eds.), *Historia de la Reforma Agraria en Chile*, Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 1988, pp. 18-30.

³⁵ Arnold Bauer, "Expansión económica en una sociedad tradicional: Chile Central en el siglo XIX", en *Historia*, vol. 9, Santiago, 1970, pp. 137-235; Arnold Bauer, *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008; Sofía Correa, "El proceso económico", en Joaquín Fernandois (ed.), *Chile: La construcción nacional*, Madrid, Fundación Mapfre, 2013, pp. 139-182.

³⁶ Jaime Eyzaguirre, "El primer censo agrícola chileno", en *Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia*, n.º 90, vol. 1, Santiago, 1977-1978, pp. 79-126.

³⁷ Chile, *Dirección General de Estadísticas, Registro de Predios Rústicos* (Statistics General Directorate, Rural Farms Register), Santiago, 1832-1834 and 1837-1838.

³⁸ Chile, *Estado que manifiesta la renta agrícola de los fundos rústicos para deducir el impuesto anual establecido, 1852*, Valparaíso, Imprenta del Diario, 1855.

Table 1 summarises the main contents of our quantitative databases. Thus, in the *catastros* of 1832-1834, 1837-1838 and 1852 we have 5,408; 9,977 and 33,040 farms entered, respectively (with an annual market income of \$25 or more, where \$ denotes Chilean pesos, in a period without inflation)³⁹. During these periods, the owners of rural farms paying this new tax in Chile numbered 4,980; 9,229 and 27,860⁴⁰, respectively, since one owner could possess more than one farm. They owned in total 2.55 million and 3.23 million hectares in 1832-1834 and 1837-1838, respectively, which produced a total market income of \$1.5 million and \$2.8 million, respectively.

Of these owners that paid the *catastro* tax, in 1832-1834, around 1,000 were female (19%). At this point, it is worth mentioning a factor which is not included in Table 1. For this first census only, the Chilean government also registered all owners of rural properties who did not pay this tax. That is, the 1832 census was truly universal: it encompassed all rural properties of the country⁴¹. Were we to consider all rural farm owners (whether paying the *catastro* or not), this takes the total number of female owners of rural farms to nearly 3,000, at a time when the Chilean population was around one million people. Likewise, in the census of 1852, when far more owners of farms paid the *catastro* tax because agricultural market prices were increasing (while land was partitioned), 4,878 women were registered as owning rural farms, nearly 60% more than twenty years earlier. That is to say, we are talking about sizeable numbers. Female ownership of rural properties was not an isolated phenomenon: it was a common feature in the countryside, and surely this was also the case in late colonial times. The rural sector was dominant within the economy overall, reflecting Chile's historical status as an agrarian society.

On account of this interesting phenomenon, we have gathered our data for the first agricultural census, for female (and male) owners according to the size of the farms they owned. We have included both, those who paid the *catastro*, and those who did not. That is to say, the totality of the farms owned by women in Chile in the early 1830s. At this point, let us mention that there is no consensus in the literature on what is considered to be the size of a small, medium or large rural property during this time⁴². In any case, as can be seen in Table 2, circa 1832 there were at least 2,985 female farms owners in the country. Of these, 36% owned farms smaller than five hectares (i.e. very small), whose production was destined to self-consumption, but who probably needed to work for a bigger landowner to ensure subsistence⁴³. That said, 40% of women landowners posses-

³⁹ Llorca-Jaña & Navarrete-Montalvo, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-369.

⁴⁰ We are talking here about a significant number of landowners in Chile for this early period, consistent with the theory that there was a proliferation of small and medium landowners in the Chilean countryside during the nineteenth century. The idea of an agrarian society divided into rich landowners and landless people cannot be empirically supported. For the theory of a boom in the ownership of rural properties, see Gay, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Bauer, *Chilean Rural...*, *op. cit.*; Marianne González, *De empresarios a empleados. Clase media y estado docente en Chile, 1810-1920*, Santiago, LOM Ediciones, 2011; Gabriel Salazar, *Labradores, peones y proletarios*, Santiago, Sur Ediciones, 1985. See also our Table 2, for quantitative precision.

⁴¹ We also collected this information, and we found that there were nearly 22,000 farms in the whole of Chile.

⁴² For a summary of this, see González, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-206.

⁴³ For this idea, see Gay, *op. cit.*, p. 121; González, *op. cit.*; Jean Borde y Mario Góngora, *Evolución de la propiedad rural en el valle del Puangue*, Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 1956.

sed farms of between five and forty nine hectares. In this case we are talking about small and medium female landowners who managed to produce enough to ensure food autonomy, but who also generated some surpluses, thus entering the market with part of their own agricultural produce. More importantly, the remaining 23% (i.e. over fifty hectares) can be labelled as large landowners, or *hacendadas*, although this is not uncontroversial statement⁴⁴. These female landowners, including female owners of small and medium size farms, must have run their own businesses, and can be safely regarded as agricultural entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, we know little about them: “they have remained in a long historiographic darkness”⁴⁵. Previous works have acknowledged the existence of prosperous agrarian family firms during this period, but implicitly associated them with male ownership⁴⁶. Unfortunately, given the extant evidence available to us, it is not possible to examine the entrepreneurial history of female owners of small and medium farms. However, the large number of women owning small and medium plots strongly suggests that they were legally entitled to own and run their own agricultural enterprises. There was no legal impediment to their doing so. Nineteenth-century Chilean women were self-employed, wage workers, as well as entrepreneurs running large businesses, and active in many economic activities. Chilean women cannot be understood as occasional actors in the labour market, not even during the 1820s-1850s⁴⁷.

This assumption (*i.e.* that agrarian family firms were mainly owned by men) is surprising given that, as we mentioned above, recent research has shown that colonial Latin American families were not as patriarchal as previously thought. That said, more often than not the head of the family was the father, and his wife, children and slaves were subject to him, at least in paper. A married woman was regarded as in the custody of her husband (*patria potestad*), forced to obey him, follow him, and seek his authorization to engage in any legal process. The husband (and head of the family) also administrated all goods and assets of the family, including those given as dowry by the wife’s family⁴⁸, although the dowry (as well as the *arras*) remained the private property of the wife⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ For Bauer, *Chilean Rural...*, *op. cit.*, farms of less than two hundred hectares were still medium-size rural properties, rather than *haciendas*. Over that threshold, farms can be classified as large properties or *haciendas*, according to him. Perhaps properties of over two hundred, or even five hundred hectares, were more commonly called *haciendas*. But we do not want to enter here into a quantitative definition of what a *hacienda* is. Rather than that, we wanted to classify the farms in small, medium and large.

⁴⁵ Salazar, *Mercaderes...* *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216. The author of the above quotation, in another of his works, recognized that there were many micro entrepreneurs in Chile before 1860, including in the rural sector, to the extent that they triggered the emergence of a rural middle class, although the role played by women entrepreneurs and landowners is not explicitly mentioned, focussing instead on semi industrial activities. See also Salazar y Pinto, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139; Salazar, *Labradores, peones...*, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

⁴⁶ Gay, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Salazar, *Labradores, peones...*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Escobar, “Women in Business...”, *op. cit.*; Escobar, “Mujeres y negocios en Chile...” *op. cit.*; Escobar, “Female Entrepreneurship...” *op. cit.*, pp. 67-91.

⁴⁸ Antonio Dougnac, *Esquema del Derecho de Familia Indiano*, Santiago, Instituto de Historia del Derecho Juan de Solórzano y Pereyra, 2003; Alejandra Araya, “Cuerpos aprisionados y gestos cautivos: el problema de la identidad femenina en una sociedad tradicional. Chile 1700-1850”, en *Nomadias*, Series Monográficas, n.º 1, Santiago, 1999, pp. 71-84.

⁴⁹ Korth & Flusch, *op. cit.* At the death of their husbands, widows were entitled to full restitution of their dowries and *arras*, while also retaining half the profits made by the marriage. See also Black, “Between prescription...”, *op. cit.*

Furthermore, the patriarch usually decided who would marry his sons and daughters, or to which religious orders he would send those who did not get married. During this decision making process, the patriarch tried hard to keep the wealth of the household within the family, marrying his descendants to close relatives or ‘associated’ families. Common practices included, cousin marriage, or an older man marrying his niece⁵⁰.

TABLE 2
*Size of the farms (in hectares) per gender of the owner throughout Chile
(of those paying or not paying the catastro), 1832-1834*

Plot size (hectares)	Gender owner			Total	Share within gender		Accumulated share	
	Female	Male	Not available		Female	Male	Female	Male
Less than one	451	1,797	39	2,287	15%	10%	15%	10%
1 to 4	638	3,843	25	4,506	21%	21%	36%	30%
5 to 9	570	5,779	20	6,369	19%	31%	56%	61%
10 to 49	636	3,936	22	4,594	21%	21%	77%	82%
50 to 99	222	1,200	16	1,438	7%	6%	84%	89%
100 to 499	291	1,487	25	1,803	10%	8%	94%	97%
500 to 999	82	271	20	373	2.7%	1.5%	97%	98%
1,000 to 4,999	79	287	20	386	2.6%	1.5%	99.5%	99.6%
5,000 to 9,999	8	40	3	51	0.3%	0.2%	99.7%	99.8%
Over 10,000	8	30	2	40	0.3%	0.2%	100%	100%
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>2,985</i>	<i>18,670</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>21,847</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

Marriages almost became commercial transactions, in particular to negotiate dowries and deposits (*arras*). The dowry was a material contribution (of mobile and immobile items) made by the wife’s family⁵¹ (but administrated by the husband), to contribute to the couple’s expenses, but also to secure the future of the wife in case she became a widow. The *arras* was a present made by the husband to his wife, and both, dowries and *arras* were clearly established in notarial documents, and subjected to a complex set of law codes, such as Toro Laws and *Fuero Juzgo*, deriving from sixteenth century Spanish legislation, and in force in Chile until 1855, when a new civil code was promulgated⁵². That said, husbands were not allowed to alienate either dowry or *arras*, thus providing some protection for married women’s assets.

⁵⁰ Dougnac, *op. cit.*; María Angélica Caal, *La dote matrimonial como símbolo de prominencias en familias de Santiago de Guatemala años 1670-1700*, Ciudad de México, Casa Editorial Analéctica México, 2015; Jacques Barbier, “Elite and Cadres in Bourbon Chile”, in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 52, Nº 3, Durham, 1972, pp. 426-435.

⁵¹ It was, implicitly, an advance to the inheritance of the married daughter.

⁵² Korth & Flusch, *op. cit.*; Caal, *op. cit.*; Dougnac, *op. cit.*

Nonetheless, the Toro Laws were damaging for married women, since they were not included in their husbands' inheritance: the offspring had preference. Only if the widow had no assets was she entitled to a fourth of her husband's inheritance. But this did not usually happen in rich families, since the wife could dispose of her dowry, as well as other goods inherited from her parents, once her husband had passed away, and in many cases she was also allowed to administer her children's goods until they were adults⁵³. How, then, despite living in such a macho society did these women manage to own and run so many farms of land? How did this happen before the introduction of the Civil Code in 1855?⁵⁴ There were many alternatives, as we shall see later on for each of the cases analysed. In other words, Castilian law "did contain some elasticity", in particular for widows, who "enjoyed a high degree of independence", as well as for single adult women. The latter could and did act independently of male supervision⁵⁵. Indeed, more often than not the chief female landowners of our period were widows or emancipated single women⁵⁶.

Likewise, there is also evidence that Spanish law on inheritance was complicated and confusing, and cannot be circumscribed to the Toro Laws only: there were many other law codes (e.g. *Codex Justinianus*, *Fuero Juzgo*, *Recopilación de Indias*, *Recopilación de Leyes de Castilla*), which at times contradicted the Toro Laws, thus providing flexibility in women's property rights, endowing wealthy women with significant assets (land included)⁵⁷. For instance, a mother or father could allocate up to one-fifth of his/her state to any member of the family, including daughters. The other four-fifths were also distributed among all necessary heirs, again including daughters, while dowries were usually taken as anticipated inheritance⁵⁸.

It is believed that once these pieces of colonial legislation were replaced by new national legislation, property rights of married women in nineteenth century Latin America improved, "whereby they acquired half of the community property should they be widowed". This change placed them on a better footing than in Common Law countries to pursue independent economic activities⁵⁹. A major difference, to the great benefit of

⁵³ María Selva Senor, "La institución de herederos en la sucesión ab-intestato: Transformaciones en la concepción de familia y herencia. Buenos Aires durante la primera mitad del siglo XIX", en *Quinto Sol*, vol. 8, n.º 1, Santa Rosa, 2004, pp. 73-87; Dougnac, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ The *Civil Code* of 1855, despite still being highly patriarchal, and subordinating married women to their husbands (the husband had many rights over his wife and her belongings), gave Chilean women the opportunity to keep their estates and to separate ownership of property during marriage. But married women still needed the approval of their husbands to sign any contract, accept inherited goods, or acquire properties. Chile, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ In colonial and early post-colonial times, unmarried single adult women had the same property rights than single men. Carmen Diana Deere & Magdalena León, "Liberalism and Married Women's Property Rights in Nineteenth-Century Latin America", in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 85, N° 4, Durham, 2005, pp. 627-678; Korth & Flusche, *op. cit.* See also Black, "Between prescription...", *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ Margarita Iglesias, "En nombre de Dios, por nuestras inteligencias, me pertenece la mitad y mi última voluntad... mujeres chilenas del siglo XVII a través de sus testamentos", en *Revista de Historia Social y de las Mentalidades*, vol. 4, N° 1, Santiago, 2000, pp. 177-195.

⁵⁷ Black, "Between prescription...", *op. cit.* That said, "Toro gave particular attention to the portions of private law regarding females". Korth & Flusche, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Korth & Flusche, *op. cit.*; Deere & León, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Escobar, "Women in Business...", *op. cit.*; Colli & Rose, *op. cit.*

widows, was that in Latin American countries “married women were entitled to fifty percent of marital community property in case the marriage was dissolved”. In particular, married women could even inherit property under their own names. We are therefore talking about a comparatively favourable institutional framework that promoted female ownership of rural properties after 1855.

In order to better understand how exactly women came to own and manage large rural properties, and due to the fact that we know so little about their economic activities because of the lack of historiographical research on them, we have resorted to several additional sources, trying to build a ‘genealogy of the farms’. Given that in our *catas-tros* database the primary information included the name of the farms and name of the owner, we started our perusal with the Real Estate Registry (CBR hereafter) records for the whole of the country, stored in the National Archives, Chile (ANCH). They contain all registered properties for most of our period of study (available online from 1837 onwards). We searched by owner and managed to find most of the individuals we were looking for. In particular, we obtained sale/buying contracts, lending contracts, renting contracts, effective possessions, wills, awarding of inheritances, amongst many other documents. We also found references to wills (written on the side of the CBR records), which we later on found in another rich source: the notarial and judicial records of Chile (ANCH-NR, and ANCH-JR, respectively, hereafter), also available in the National Archives. For the periods, both uncovered and covered by the Real Estate Registry, we performed a detailed search within the notarial and judicial records of Chile. This was a slow, but secure method, which yielded a rich source of information about these female entrepreneurs. Finally, we also used other sources to document the involvement of women in other economic activities, such as the records of all joint stock companies created in Chile from 1849 to 1875, to assess the role of women as shareholders as well.

Findings on total and gender inequality

Before producing our estimates of gender inequality, it is worth mentioning our findings on general inequality indicators first. Our first and most important indicator of inequality, is the agricultural market income Gini among landowners paying the *catastro* (i.e. those included in Table 1). For 1832-1834, 1837-1838 and 1852 we obtained Gini coefficients of 0.75, 0.75 and 0.79 respectively, showing significant agricultural market income inequality for the whole of Chile, which was increasing in the later period. Our estimates are higher than those provided by Javier Rodríguez Weber because they measure different things: we measure only a part of the agricultural market income (i.e. only those paying the *catastro*, and excluding workers’ wages and production for self-consumption), while Rodríguez Weber gave estimates for total income (agricultural and non-agricultural).

Moving ahead, and following recent trends in income inequality studies⁶⁰, it is worth paying even closer attention to what happened to the very rich, or top incomes, that

⁶⁰ On this topic, see Luis Bértola, Jorge Gelman & Daniel Santilli, “Income Distribution in Rural Buenos Aires, 1839-1867”, in *Documentos de Trabajo*, Programa de Historia Económica y Social Universidad de la República, Documento n.º 42, Montevideo, 2015, pp. 1-35.

is, the richest 5% and 1%. In 1832-1834 and 1837-1838, the top 5% and 1% richest landowners took 54% and 23%, 53% and 23% of all agricultural market income, respectively, even increasing these shares to 65% and 37% respectively, in 1852. These ratios confirm a massive and increasing inequality in agricultural market income among landowners, regardless of gender.

All this said, inequality is a complex concept, which makes it necessary to combine different inequality measures⁶¹, with the aim of getting a better picture of overall inequality for the population under examination. Therefore, apart from the agricultural market income inequality indexes above presented, it is worth analysing other inequality measures if they are at hand. Luckily we can get Gini coefficients for land distribution for the first two *catastros*. For 1832-1834, the land Gini coefficient among landowners is a staggering 0.92, if all landowners are considered (nearly 22,000), and 0.87 if only those that paid the *catastro* are included (around 5,000, as in Table 1). For 1837-1838, for those that paid the *catastro*, the land Gini is equally high: 0.86. These ratios confirm the severe inequality of nineteenth century Chile.

Another indicator of inequality widely used is 'land ownership concentration', which is defined as the share of households owning no land⁶². This indicator complements the first agricultural income Gini above presented, because that Gini coefficient includes only landowners whose annual agricultural income was equal or superior to \$25. That is, the poorest landowners are excluded. In part, we corrected this issue with the second Gini coefficient we estimated for 1832-1834. For 1832-1834, 1837-1838 and 1852, we estimate that 97%, 94% and 86% respectively of all Chilean households in the rural sector either did not own land at all, or the land they owned generated a market income of less than \$25 per annum.

More important for us here, as far as gender inequality is concerned, Table 3 contains information on the farms' annual market income according to the gender of the owner. The results are noteworthy. In 1832-1834 and 1837-1838, male owners received 82% and 85% of the income of all farms for which we have gender information (which is most of them, i.e. 96% of total income). This participation further increased to 87% in 1852, showing significant gender inequality in agricultural market income. Furthermore, we can put the numbers in Table 3 in per capita terms, per gender of the owner, and our estimates show that, on average, the annual market income for female land owners were 92%, 93% and 84% in 1832-1834, 1837-1838 and 1852, respectively, of that of male land owners. This adds another negative aspect to gender inequality. That is, not only did women get a small part of the total market income, but on average, those who did receive income got less than the average male owner.

⁶¹ Bértola, Gelman & Santilli, *op. cit.*

⁶² Leticia Arroyo-Abad, "Persistent Inequality? Trade, Factor Endowments, and Inequality in Republican Latin America", in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 73, N° 1, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 38-78. To calculate this variable we need to make some assumptions regarding: the proportion of people living in the rural sector; the average size of rural families; landowners' family profile; as well as how land was distributed within households. We have assumed that 80% of the population was rural; that on average a household during this period had six members; that all landowners were heads of households; and that the head of the household was the only landowner within the family.

TABLE 3
*Distribution of agricultural market income
 (Chilean pesos of each year) per gender of landowners,
 1832-1834, 1837-1838 & 1852*

<i>Gender of landowner</i>	<i>1832-1834</i>		<i>1837-1838</i>		<i>1852</i>	
	<i>Annual Income (pesos)</i>	<i>Share subtotal</i>	<i>Annual Income (pesos)</i>	<i>Share subtotal</i>	<i>Annual Income (pesos)</i>	<i>Share subtotal</i>
Female	261,036	18%	395,414	15%	921,938	13%
Male	1,190,548	82%	2,249,301	85%	6,290,695	87%
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>1,451,585</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,644,715</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>7,212,633</i>	<i>100%</i>
N/A	66,645		115,916		187,689	
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>1,518,230</i>		<i>2,760,630</i>		<i>7,400,322</i>	

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

In all, although there was massive gender inequality, women were not wholly excluded from land ownership in the first decades of independence from Spain (as we saw before), but the share they got from the total market income generated by rural farms was very small, as shown in Table 3. Additionally, crossing our data with that of the national population census, we estimate that circa 1832 and 1852, the market income share, for Chilean female owned land, was just 0.6% and 0.7%, respectively, while these shares for men were far higher at 3.6% and 3.9%. That is, about six times more. In other words, if you were male, you had six times more chance of owning land than a female in Chile during the 1830s and 1850s. Should we consider the ratio for adult people only, these rates would increase⁶³, but the difference between female and male would remain the same.

TABLE 4
*Distribution of rural land (thousand hectares), per gender, of landowners paying catastro,
 1832-1834 & 1837-1838*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>1832-1834</i>		<i>1837-1838</i>	
Female	478	20%	577	19%
Male	1,934	80%	2,496	81%
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>2,412</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>3,073</i>	<i>100%</i>
N/A	135		161	
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>2,547</i>		<i>3,234</i>	

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

⁶³ Based on data from the census of 1865, and assuming that 40% of the population was older than fifteen in the 1830s and 1850s, we estimate that in 1832 and 1852, 0.9% and 1.1% of all females older than fifteen owned land.

Table 4 is similar to Table 3, but deals with land ownership, rather than income. Table 4 contains the distribution of land ownership (of the farms paying the *catastro*) per gender for 1832-1834 and 1837-1838 only, since it is not possible to obtain this information for 1852. The shares we get for female ownership are just slightly better than the women's share of agricultural market income, but still poor. Chilean women owned about a fifth of the taxed land, at a time when they comprised more than half of the population⁶⁴. In all, the information contained in tables 3 and 4 reveals another bleak picture of gender inequality in Chile during our period of study.

Female agricultural entrepreneurs

This final section is devoted to bringing to life some of these anonymous Chilean female agricultural entrepreneurs, and analysing some representative cases. In tables 5 to 7 we have included the Chilean female agrarian elite of the first half of the nineteenth century, whose histories have previously remained hidden, despite being members of the elite. In all, these tables show all the female landowners for the periods 1832-1834, 1837-1838 and 1852, who made the top-100 in the ranking of agricultural landowners in Chile (including both male and female), ranked per annual income of their farms for those particular periods⁶⁵.

Combining these three rankings, we have thirty three female major landowners in Chile during these crucial decades (against two hundred nineteen male), an important number in and of itself, some of whom were prominent members of society. All of them were large landowners and enjoyed a sizeable agricultural income. However, despite their unquestionable importance, just a handful of them are familiar from the historiography⁶⁶. Such are the cases of Javiera Carrera and Candelaria Goyenechea⁶⁷. The rest have been rendered invisible by historians, who may have studied Chilean women members of the nineteenth century economic elite, but mainly in connexion with non-economic affairs such as poetry, or philanthropic activities. Furthermore, even Javiera Carrera and Candelaria Goyenechea have not received all the attention they should have, at least regarding their economic activities.

⁶⁴ According to data from the 1854 census, the female share of the total Chilean population was 50.46%. Díaz, Wagner & Lüders, *op. cit.* Before that, during the 1810s-1840s, it is estimated that this share was even higher. Salazar, *Labradores, peones...*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ In the mid-1850s, it is believed that the top-145 landowners, ranked per annual rent, could be considered as the *crème de la crème* of Chilean aristocracy. Bauer, *Chilean Rural...*, *op. cit.* That is, our selection is even more elitist.

⁶⁶ This is despite the recognition that during the nineteenth century Chilean women were, "gradually and slowly" entering modernity and changing their roles in a traditional patriarchal society. Araya, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-84; Salazar y Pinto, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ See, for instance: Pilar Alamos, *Candelaria Goyenechea de Gallo. Una mujer del siglo XIX*, Santiago, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1995; Virginia Vidal, *Javiera Carrera, Madre de la Patria*, Santiago, RIL Editores, 2010; Antonio Ondarza, *Javiera Carrera V. heroína de la Patria Vieja*, Santiago, Editorial Neupert, 1967.

TABLE 5
*Main female agricultural landowners in Chile,
ranked according to agricultural market income in 1832-1834*

<i>Ranking within top-100 landowners</i>	<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Agricultural annual income (pesos)</i>	<i>Major cattle, heads</i>	<i>Small cattle, heads</i>	<i>Vineyard plants</i>	<i>Hectares of her plots</i>
6	Ballesteros, María	10,500	11,787	8,200	0	48,670
16	Alcalde, Teresa	6,900	634	1,350	16,100	800
17	Azúa, Ana Josefa	6,500	4,170	6,000	7,323	700
24	Rojas, Mercedes	6,000	2,000	3,000	10,000	8,200
28	Rosales, Gertrudis	5,500	4,000	500	0	27,500
35	Guzmán, Mercedes	5,000	4,000	300	35,000	5,000
37	Molina, Bárbara	5,000	2,000	1,000	0	3,000
43	García, Tadea	4,550	2,500	550	18,150	1,203
44	Pozo, Mercedes	4,500	2,500	400	0	1,700
45	Rojas, Agustina	4,500	3,400	0	10,000	5,300
47	Arismendi, Dolores	4,100	0	0	4,400	201
51	Errázuriz, Micaela	4,000	1,813	410	0	1,400
56	Landa, Carmen	4,000	4,000	3,000	5,000	13,000
57	Lecaros, Carmen	4,000	3,000	700	0	3,000
62	Ramírez, Mercedes	4,000	1,000	2,000	15,000	1,100
80	Valdéz, Mercedes	3,200	1,500	1,400	16,000	2,700
88	Barahona, Pastora	3,000	3,000	600	0	1,600
98	Mazcayano, Micaela	3,000	1,500	1,200	4,000	ND
100	Prado, Rosaria	3,000	1,200	450	7,000	ND

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

Some cases of neglect are hard to explain. For instance, in 1832-1834, María Ballesteros ranked sixth among all landowners with regard to annual income, second in the ranking of total hectares owned, first in the ranking of ovine cattle holders, and fourth in the ranking of major holders of bovine cattle of the country. In the following ranking, 1837-1838, she climbed to second place in the income ranking. In all, she was one of the principal agricultural entrepreneurs, if not the most important, in the 1830s in Chile. Nonetheless, her name is not mentioned in any indexed article, while there is no entry for her in the major biographical dictionaries of Chile⁶⁸. Likewise, there were other prominent female agricultural land holders. For instance, Gertrudis Rosales ranked 28th in the agricultural income ranking for 1832-1834, improving to 6th and 5th in the land extension ranking of 1832-1834 and 1837-1838, respectively. In turn, Ana Josefa Azúa,

⁶⁸ Few entries for any Chilean women exist in the major biographical dictionaries available for c.1750-1850.

who ranked 17th in the income ranking that first period, was second in the ranking of major holders of ovine cattle in the country in the early 1830s. Yet again, neither Gertrudis nor Ana Josefa have received any attention by historians.

Given this neglect, we are devoting this last section to some of these female landowners, members of the Chilean economic elites, and about whom we know so little. Our aim is to provide information on their economic activities as major landholders, making use of notarial and judicial records, as well as Conservative Real Estate records. But we also want to determine how these women became major landowners, despite the social and legal constraints they faced at that time, as well as to highlight some similarities and differences between them. Chilean women overcame adverse legal conditions in various ways, and their biographies reveal how they became large landowners.

Given the extant evidence, our analysis was necessarily confined to women members of the elite, for whom there are surviving records in Chilean archives. Even so little information exists about many of the women listed in tables 5-7, so they were necessarily excluded from our account. Ideally, we had wished to include also Chilean women from lower socioeconomic strata, but no primary sources were available.

These caveats aside, let's start then with María Ballesteros, whose full name was María Rodríguez de Ballesteros y Taforó⁶⁹, wife of the Spanish born José María Fernández Balmaceda. They got married in Lima in 1815⁷⁰, but José María died in 1830, leaving her a widow, with just a son (aged just fourteen). This caused María to take ownership and control of their *haciendas* for a quarter of a century, part of a *mayorazgo*⁷¹. She was no other than the grandmother of José Manuel Balmaceda⁷², future president of Chile between 1886 and 1891, which makes it even more surprising that we know so little about this character. Furthermore, Ballesteros was close not only to the Chilean elites, but also to the colonial elite before independence, since she was the daughter of Lima's Regent of the Audience⁷³.

⁶⁹ María Rodríguez de Ballesteros y Taforó (1771-1856); Raúl Silva, *Cartas de Juan Egaña 1832-1833*, Santiago, Imprenta Universitaria, 1951.

⁷⁰ The ancestry of José María Fernández Balmaceda can be traced back to Juan de Balmaceda (1702-1778), who was appointed as *Oidor* of Chile's Real Audiencia in 1742. Juan de Balmaceda married Agustina Alvarez de Uceda in 1750, but she died in 1761 without having children and, therefore, Juan inherited her fortune. After Juan's death, Pedro Fernández Balmaceda (Juan's nephew) founded a *mayorazgo* with part of the inherited fortune, being, together with another of Juan's nephews, Francisco Ruiz de Balmaceda, the heirs of Juan Balmaceda's fortune. It was Pedro Fernández Balmaceda who bought the Hacienda Bucalemu, in 1778, to Bartolomé de Ureta. But Pedro Fernández Balmaceda left no children, and it was his nephew, José María Fernández Balmaceda, who was lucky enough to inherit his uncle's properties, following Pedro's death in 1808. Domingo Amunátegui, *Mayorazgos y títulos de Castilla*, Santiago, Imprenta Barcelona, 1904.

⁷¹ The *mayorazgo* was a Spanish institution by which a patriarch was allowed, by previous royal authorization, to give in inheritance a set of goods, most usually to his eldest son, but which had to be linked forever to the family. The inheritor could enjoy the inherited goods, but never sell them. In Chile in particular many were created between 1681 and 1791. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*; Bauer, *Chilean Rural...*, *op. cit.*

⁷² Son of Manuel José Balmaceda (1816-1874), author of a well-known book called *Manual del hacendado* (farmer's manual), widely circulated within Chile at that time. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*

⁷³ She was the daughter of Juan Rodríguez de Ballesteros, Spanish lawyer, *Oidor* of Lima and Santiago's *Audiencias*. Silva, *op. cit.*

TABLE 6
*Main female agricultural landowners in Chile,
 ranked according to agricultural market income in 1837-1838*

<i>Ranking within top-100 landowners</i>	<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Agricultural annual income (pesos)</i>	<i>Major cattle, heads</i>	<i>Small cattle, heads</i>	<i>Vineyard plants</i>	<i>Hectares of her plots</i>
2	Ballesteros, María	18,500	11,800	8,600	0	48,670
20	Azúa, Ana Josefa	8,000	4,170	5,000	7,325	34,540
44	Rojas, Mercedes	6,000	2,000	3,000	10,000	12,874
47	Valladares, Elena	6,000	4,000	400	20,000	2,355
53	Ramírez, Mercedes	5,037	1,015	2,050	15,000	1,790
63	Molina, Bárbara	5,000	2,000	1,000	0	4,710
73	Alcalde, Teresa	4,500	524	800	16,000	785
81	Valdivieso, Tránsito	4,500	3,000	6,000	14,000	3,925
99	Huici, Josefa	4,000	0	0	25,000	94
100	Landa, Carmen	4,000	5,000	3,000	5,000	20,410
100	Ríos, Petrona	4,000	3,500	2,000	2,000	6,280
100	Rosales, Gertrudis	4,000	2,600	700	0	43,175
100	Sánchez, Juana	4,000	2,000	800	10,000	6,280
100	Serrano, Catalina	4,000	600	400	20,000	471

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-1834 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

María Ballesteros managed until near her death one of the biggest *haciendas* of Chile: Bucalemu, an estate of nearly 38,000 hectares, but this was not free of legal controversies⁷⁴. The information about her activities clearly shows that we can consider her as an entrepreneur, managing *haciendas* and making the final call in key business decisions. Take for instance some letters exchanged with Juan Egaña (her lawyer) during the early 1830s, and it is clear that she was personally involved in the running of the business. We also know that during the 1830s and 1840s María Ballesteros acquired and

⁷⁴ Pedro Fernández Balmaceda had appointed, before his death, Rafael Beltrán (a relative), Ignacio de Landa, and his nephew José María as executors of his fortune, leaving clear instructions about keeping the Hacienda Bucalemu for good, linked to the *mayorazgo*. The first to enjoy Bucalemu was to be Rafael Beltrán, for a period of five years, followed by José María Fernández Balmaceda. After independence, the situation became complicated and Bucalemu became the object of many lawsuits. To start with, the Hacienda was expropriated by the state soon after independence, and only returned to Jose María in 1823, although half of the Hacienda had to be donated to the state. Jose María managed the Hacienda until his death in 1830 (thereafter his wife managed it), but after that, Rafael Beltrán, José María Fernández Arnero and the archbishopric of Santiago sued María Ballesteros, claiming that her family had already enjoyed the Hacienda for the period established by Pedro Fernández Balmaceda. The legal process lasted for over twenty years, and by the end of the 1840s Ballesteros had to, eventually, return it. Chile, *Balmaceda contra la solicitud de D. Rafael Beltrán*, Santiago, Imprenta de La Opinión, 1833; Chile, *Apuntes legales que manifiestan el derecho de D. Rafael Beltrán*, Santiago, Imprenta de La Opinión, 1840; Chile, *Adición al papel en derecho de la señora doña María Rodríguez Ballesteros como curadora de su hijo*, Santiago, Imprenta de La Opinión, 1841.

exploited new *haciendas* after her husband's death, such as San Gerónimo, which comprised 11,000 hectares⁷⁵, and urban properties in Santiago, greatly increasing the assets of the family, while she also engaged actively in stockbreeding activities⁷⁶, and she was legally entitled to do so. She was not a widow living off her rents or instructing her male relatives in the running of her businesses.

TABLE 7
*Major female agricultural landowners in Chile,
ranked according to agricultural market income in 1852*

<i>Ranking within top-100 landowners</i>	<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Agricultural annual income (pesos)</i>
22	Rojas, Mercedes	18,000
45	Ramírez, Dolores	12,000
64	Aguirre de Munizaga, Isidora	10,275
65	Cortés, Trinidad	10,105
66	Errázuriz, Micaela	10,075
74	Carrera, Javiera	9,620
84	Mascayano, María de la Luz	9,000
91	Goyenechea, Candelaria	8,825

Source: ANCH-CM (for 1832-183 & 1837-1838); Chile 1855 (for 1852).

Ana Josefa de Azúa y Marín (date of birth unknown, but died in 1839), Marquise of Cañada (another *mayorazgo* primogeniture), inherited this title after the death of her brother José Tomás in 1818⁷⁷. Furthermore, even before the death of her brother, her mother María Constanza Marín, who was still alive, left her the Hacienda Chicureo, as part of the inheritance from her father⁷⁸. Ana Josefa is barely known to Chilean historiography, only mentioned in passing in some works because she was the great aunt of Constanza de Nordenflycht, lover of Diego Portales⁷⁹, with whom Constanza had three children⁸⁰. But she should be better known because, despite residing in Santiago (in Compañía street), like María Ballesteros, she managed for over two decades a large plot, namely the Hacienda Purutún of Quillota, which had an impressive extension of

⁷⁵ María Ballesteros and José María Fernández Balmaceda had only one son, Manuel José Balmaceda, the father of the future president José Manuel Balmaceda. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ "Delivery of animals", Santiago, 1849, ANCH-JR, Box 903.

⁷⁷ Rodríguez, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ "María Constanza Marín's will", Santiago, July 1798, ANCH-JR, Box 1820. The Hacienda was then valued at \$12,000.

⁷⁹ Diego Portales (1793-1837) was one of the most important figures of the Chilean early republican period. He was a minister and entrepreneur. His political influence was so long-lasting that the period c.1830-1850 is known as the *Portalian* period in Chilean history. Sergio Villalobos, *Portales, una falsificación histórica*, Santiago, Editorial Universitaria, 2005.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Constanza ended up being the heiress of her great aunt. Andrea Parada, "Desembodgando a la Constanza: la Emperrada, de Marta Blanco", en *Anales de Literatura Chilena*, vol. 3, n.º 1, Santiago, 2002, pp. 63-78.

nearly 35,000 hectares. The origin of this Hacienda dates back to the early seventeenth century in Chile, which then operated under the *encomienda* system. Ana Josefa also owned and managed other large properties such as Pucalán, El Melón and Carretón, which were inherited from her family. She never got married, leaving no descendants, which makes her an interesting case because she became a major landowner without being a widow⁸¹. That is, it was possible in Chile, even at this early period, to be a major female landowner without having to get married, and despite adverse legal conditions.

María Bárbara de Molina y Agüero (c. 1779-1861)⁸² was the wife of Miguel Herrera y Rojas⁸³, a member of the *mayorazgo* (primogeniture) Herrera y Rojas. She owned the Hacienda Lo Herrera, in Calera de Tango, near Santiago. In 1808, her husband died, leaving her in charge of the *haciendas* and two children, at the age of twenty nine, and she survived her husband for over half a century. We have here another case of a widow becoming a major landowner for a long period. At this point, it is worth mentioning that the husband of María Bárbara de Molina was linked to the same family of Mercedes Rojas (another of our selected case studies), as we shall see later on.

Next on our list is María Teresa Alcalde y Bascañán (1778-1847), who got married to José Tomás de Vicuña y Madariaga (b.1769, major of Santiago in 1807, who died in 1826) in 1802⁸⁴. She was none other than the daughter of José Antonio Alcalde Rivera (died in 1804), Third Count of Quinta Alegre, and Mercedes Rosa de Pineda Bascañán y Meneses⁸⁵. Her brother Juan Agustín was the last Count of Quinta Alegre. Although

⁸¹ How was this possible? In 1750 Tomás de Azúa e Iturgóyen (first rector of Universidad de San Felipe) married his niece María Constanza Marín de Poveda (daughter of the marquis of Cañada Hermosa, José Valentín Marín de Poveda and Ana Azúa e Iturgóyen, and granddaughter of a Chilean president), and had one son and three daughters, the eldest daughter being Ana Josefa, who was second only to her brother José Tomás. Tomás de Azúa died in 1756, and his brother in law, Santiago Ignacio Marín de Azúa, the eldest brother of María Constanza, managed their properties. But Santiago Ignacio did not have any children, and died quite early, in 1765. Thus, when José Valentín died in 1772, the widow of Tomás de Azúa, María Constanza Marín, inherited the Castile's title, until her death in 1812. After her death, her son José Tomás became the head of the family, but he died quite young too (in 1818), without children, leaving her eldest sister, Ana Josefa, in charge of the family fortune until her death in 1839. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*; Pablo Montero, *Familias y propiedad rural del valle de Quillota en los siglos XVIII y XIX*, Santiago, Altazor, 2012.

⁸² Daughter of Lúcas de Molina y Margarita Agüero. Luis Thayer Ojeda, *Orígenes de Chile: Elementos étnicos, apellidos, familias*, Santiago, Editorial Andrés Bello, 1989.

⁸³ Son of Jerónimo José de Herrera Morón and María Mercedes de Rojas y Cerda. In turn, María Mercedes de Rojas y Cerda was the daughter of Andrés de Rojas and Catalina de la Cerda. That is, Miguel Herrera was grandson of Andrés de Rojas, who happened to be also the grandfather of Mercedes Rojas, but coming from different marriages of their grandfather. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Juan Mujica, *Linajes españoles. Nobleza de Chile colonial*, Santiago, Editorial Zamorano y Caperán, 1927.

⁸⁵ The first Alcalde of this lineage, Juan de Alcalde, arrived to Chile during the first third of the eighteenth century. In 1731 he married Isabel Margarita de Ribery y Cabrera (born in Lima in 1703, died in Santiago in 1771). They had eight children, Juan Ignacio being the eldest. Of their daughters, the only one who got married was Rosa, who became the wife of José Antonio de Lecaros y Rojas in 1765. In 1763, Juan de Alcalde bought the title of Count of Quinta Alegre, and died in Santiago in 1780, leaving a house on Merced street, another in Alameda (Quinta Alegre), and a village in Melipilla. Thus, Juan Ignacio inherited the title of his father, and Quinta Alegre. But Juan Ignacio also acquired the *haciendas* of Naltahua (Santiago) and San Juan or San Antonio de la Mar (Melipilla), in 1783 and 1790, respectively. Unfortunately, Juan Ignacio left no descendants, and his brother José Antonio succeeded him, when Juan Ignacio died in 1798 (in Spain), inheriting

she did not inherit much from the Alcalde family, José Tomás de Vicuña y Madariaga brought his fortune to the marriage, including the *haciendas* Piguchen and Toro, both in San Antonio, with a combined extension of over 1,200 hectares⁸⁶. After her husband's death, she had to manage the assets of the family for over two decades. Once again, her life provides an example of a woman becoming a major landowner after becoming a widow, and successfully managing her *haciendas* for a long period.

Another case worth mentioning is the one of Mercedes Rojas y Salas, owner of Hacienda Polpaico, in Lampa, with an impressive extension of nearly 13,000 hectares, and which had a rich deposit of lime⁸⁷. This case is different from most of the others, because she also successfully entered into non-agricultural economic activities. She was the only daughter of José Antonio de Rojas Ortuguren (1737-1817), and María Mercedes de Salas y Corbalán (b.1725)⁸⁸, whom he married c.1779. José Antonio inherited the *mayorazgo* (primogeniture) Rojas in 1775, after his father's death⁸⁹. Later on, being an only child, Mercedes inherited Polpaico after her father passed away in 1817. Instead of becoming a widow, Mercedes married an old man, Manuel Manso de Velasco y Santa Cruz (b.1755), Director of the Chilean Customs, who had only one daughter and no sons⁹⁰. But Manso y Santa Cruz died early too. We found telling evidence of her entrepreneurial activities linked to Polpaico, in which Mercedes engaged directly, such as borrowing monies, selling lime to the government and the police for building purposes, worrying about the baking process of the lime, and even suing the government for unfair treatment (fixing lime prices under Santiago's market price)⁹¹. Even before the death

most of his brother's fortune. Before that, in 1773, he had married Rosa Bascuñán. Part of the dowry was the Hacienda Chiñihue. But José Antonio also bought other *haciendas*, such as El Marco and El Paico (Melipilla), and was granted the encomienda associated with Chiñihue. José Antonio and Rosa had six daughters and one son, Juan Agustín, the last Count of Quinta Alegre, known for his longstanding support for Chilean independence, and member of parliament many times. Juan Agustín married María del Carmen Velasco y Oruna, in 1812. He died in Santiago in 1860. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Putaendo, 1859, ANCH-CBR, vol. 11.

⁸⁷ In the early 1860s it was valued at \$320,000. Santiago, 1862, ANCH-CBR, vol. 7; "Writing against Julio César Escala", Santiago, January 20, 1862, ANCH-NR, vol. 360.

⁸⁸ She was the daughter of José Perfecto Salas and sister of Manuel de Salas. José Antonio was, therefore, the brother in law of Manuel de Salas, and uncle of José Miguel Infante, placing him at the centre of Santiago's cultural life. Amunátegui, *op. cit.* Mercedes Salas also brought his fortune to the marriage, via a wealthy dowry. "Andrés Rojas Estate", Santiago, 1838, ANCH-JR, Box 464.

⁸⁹ The origins of this *mayorazgo* are to be found in Andrés de Rojas, son of Pedro de Rojas y Acevedo and María de la Madriz y Sagredo. Andrés de Rojas married one of the daughters of Juan de Dios de la Cerda, Catalina de la Cerda, from the *mayorazgo* Cerda, bringing his fortune to the marriage. Andrés was the first member of this family to own the Hacienda Polpaico. "Mercedes Rojas and the heirs of Andrés Rojas", Santiago, October 06, 1839, ANCH-JR, Box 463. Of the marriage between Andrés and Catalina only four children reached adulthood, who were all female. However, Andrés de Rojas married again (after the death of Catalina), to María Mercedes Ortuguren, a marriage that resulted in another eleven children, the oldest son being José Antonio, future father of Mercedes Rojas y Salas. Thus, when Andrés de Rojas funded the *mayorazgo* Rojas, it was José Antonio who was nominated to inherit it.

⁹⁰ Their daughter, Teresa Manso, married the famous colonel Jorge Beauchef (1787-1840), in 1822. Guillermo Feliú, *Memorias militares para servir a la historia de la independencia de Chile*, Santiago, Editorial Andrés Bello, 1964. Both of them died before Teresa's mother. Thus, Manuel Beauchef Manso de Velasco was the heir. See Santiago, 1862, ANCH-CBR, vol. 360.

⁹¹ For some examples, see "Mercedes Rojas against Andrés Rojas' heirs", Santiago, 1839, ANCH-JR, Box 464.

of her husband, Manuel Manso, he had given a power of attorney giving the administration of the Hacienda Polpaico to his wife, 'Mercedita', as he called her even in legal documents⁹². At this point, it is worth mentioning that Mercedes was married again, to José Santiago Luco (1784-1863), but left no descendants.

Another interesting case is Candelaria Goyenechea (1795-1884), from Copiapó⁹³. She married Miguel Gallo Vergara, but he died in 1842, when she was still quite young, in particular considering that she lived nearly ninety years. Indeed, she survived her husband for over four decades, and because of this she had to manage the *haciendas* Chamonate⁹⁴ and Pichiguao (of about 2,000 hectares)⁹⁵, again, as in many of our case studies, for a considerable period of time. We obtained evidence of Candelaria Goyenechea engaging in diverse economic activities, lending money to local entrepreneurs, buying and selling urban properties in Valparaíso, Santiago and Copiapó⁹⁶. Candelaria should be regarded as a pioneer, given that she greatly diversified her portfolio, unlike most other elite women, who concentrated on agricultural endeavours. In order to undertake these activities, she relied on her sons, in particular on Ángel Custodio Gallo, who frequently acted as her attorney or legal representative, but also on her other sons, Tomás Gallo and Miguel Gallo (the latter died in 1869, aged just thirty-two)⁹⁷. At this point, it is worth mentioning that, for another research project of our team, we have also gathered information on shareholding in Chile between 1849 and 1875, and found that Candelaria bought two hundred shares of the Copiapó Railways Company (accounting for 13% of the capital value of the company) (Compañía del Camino Ferrocarril de Copiapó 1836). Her participation in this company, as a major shareholder, is a point worth highlighting since this was the first ever railway introduced in the country, a project led by a woman. She was also one of five original shareholders of the railways between Santiago and Valparaíso, a revolutionary project at that time⁹⁸. These investments show her not only linked to the agricultural sector, but also to transport and finances. Indeed, when Candelaria died in 1884, amongst her belongings were the Hacienda Pichiguao, of over 5,300 hectares, which was divided into three farms, the biggest being the *haciendas* Molino and Toquihue, but she left many other assets too⁹⁹.

Next is Isidora Aguirre de Munizaga (1818-1894), from La Serena, where she lived permanently, close to her properties. She married Juan Miguel de Munizaga (1765-

⁹² Chile, *Memoria legal por doña Mercedes Rojas y Salas sobre la caducidad del compromiso que celebraron los herederos de don Andrés de Rojas*, Santiago, Imprenta La Opinión, 1833.

⁹³ Álamos, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ "Pascual del Fierro", Copiapó, January 13, 1886, ANCH-CBR, vol. 288.

⁹⁵ After her death, this Hacienda was divided into smaller farms, called El Molino (835 hectares), Hijueta Norte de Pichiguao (546 hectares), and Hijueta Taquihue. "Candelaria Goyenechea's will", Santiago, May 04, 1886, ANCH-JR, vol. 710; "Candelaria Goyenechea's will", Santiago, August 1886, ANCH-JR, vol. 7103.

⁹⁶ See for instance, Copiapó, ANCH-CBR, vol. 16; Valparaíso, 1866, ANCH-CBR, vol. 8; Valparaíso, 1868, ANCH-CBR, vol. 11.

⁹⁷ He was followed by another son, Pedro León Gallo, perhaps the best known of them all, who died in 1877, aged forty seven. Sergio Villalobos, *Pedro León Gallo: Minería y política*, Santiago, Fundación Tierra Amarilla, 2009.

⁹⁸ Emilio Jofré, *Boletín de leyes y decretos sobre ferrocarriles dictados por la República de Chile desde 1848 hasta 1890*, Santiago, Imprenta Santiago, 1891.

⁹⁹ Rengo, 1886, ANCH-CBR, vol. 7; Santiago, 1885, CBR, vol. 70. See also, Villalobos, *Pedro León...*, *op. cit.*

1846)¹⁰⁰, once mayor of Serena, who died when Isidora was twenty-eight years old, leaving her as his executor and tutor of their sons, all under the age of twelve¹⁰¹. Juan Miguel was his great-uncle, and this explains why she survived her husband by nearly fifty years. After the mid-1850s, she is described in several legal documents as “free manager of her goods”, thanks to the promulgation of the Civil Code of 1855. She owned and managed many rural properties, including large ones such as Altovalsol, Saturno, Hinojal, Tongoy, Miraflores, Las Tablas, Quilacan, and a house in the centre of La Serena. We have managed to locate documents where she appears as money lender, selling small pieces of land, allowing railway projects through her properties, renting properties and donating assets. Isidora’s biography, like the one of Candelaria, shows that economic diversification was possible for elite female entrepreneurs. During the whole period she was in charge of the business, she increased the capital of the family and did not sell any of the family’s large properties; rather the reverse, she acquired new properties after her husband’s death, and left her entire heritage to her descendants, achieving considerable success in her business activities¹⁰².

Another case which can be well documented is that of Francisca Javiera de la Carrera y Verdugo, better known as Javiera Carrera (1781-1862)¹⁰³, a member of the most famous family of the independence period in Chile. She first married Manuel de la Lastra y Sotta (b.1771), from a respected merchant family, but he died in 1800 during a commercial trip to Buenos Aires, leaving her a widow at the age of 19, with two surviving children¹⁰⁴. Four years later, she married again, this time to the Spanish lawyer Pedro Díaz de Valdés (1762-1826), but he also died young, leaving her in charge of the whole business for three decades and a half, plus another five children. Most of the period she was married to Díaz was marked by a profound political instability in the country, when, as her biographers have revealed, she showed herself to be a very determined woman. For example, in the middle of the independence wars, fearing her house would be attacked, she left her second husband and children to follow her brothers to Mendoza, writing to her husband, “I have the sin of being a Carrera”¹⁰⁵. While on exile, by 1821, aged forty, she had lost her three brothers (executed as part of the independence wars), her father and her mother. It took years for her to recover from so many losses, but she had

¹⁰⁰ He was married before, to Manuela Barrios Esquivel (1776-1830). “Juan Miguel Munizaga’s estate”, La Serena, 1846, ANCH-JR, Box 98.

¹⁰¹ “Partition of goods of Juan Miguel Munizaga”, La Serena, 1846, ANCH-JR, Box 98; “Juan Miguel Munizaga’s estate”, La Serena, 1846, ANCH-JR, Box 98.

¹⁰² For some examples, see La Serena, ANCH-CBR, vol. 122; La Serena, 1869, ANCH-CBR, vol. 140; Coquimbo, 1869, ANCH-CBR, vol. 3; La Serena, 1875, ANCH-CBR, vol. 24.

¹⁰³ Daughter of Ignacio de la Carrera y las Cuevas (1747-1819) and Francisca de Paula Verdugo Valdivieso (1750-1805), who married in 1773. She was also the sister of the famous Carrera brothers: José Miguel (1785-1821), Luis (1791-1818) and Juan José (1782-1818). Both Luis and Juan José were shot in Mendoza, Argentina, three years before the most famous of the three brothers, José Miguel, suffered the same fate, in the same city. Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *Doña Javiera de Carrera: Rasgo biográfico*, Santiago, Librería, Imprenta y Encuadernación, 1904.

¹⁰⁴ They were called Manuel Joaquín de la Lastra y Carrera (1797-1869) and Dolores de la Lastra y Carrera (b.1798, and who died before her mother Javiera, leaving descendants). See “Javiera Carrera’s will”, Santiago, 1862, ANCH-NR, vol. 360.

¹⁰⁵ Vidal, *Javiera Carrera...*, *op. cit.*; Ondarza, *op. cit.*; Vicuña Mackenna, *Doña Javiera...*, *op. cit.*

no option other than to reinvent herself emotionally and economically, which she managed to do, retiring from political life. In her last will, months before she passed away, she declared that “all goods I possess are mine”, including the Hacienda San Miguel and Hacienda Pelvin, which she managed until her death¹⁰⁶. We have found revealing evidence showing her making improvements to Hacienda San Miguel, after her return to Chile around the mid-1820s¹⁰⁷.

Finally, we wanted to explore many other cases, but it proved difficult to get enough information. That said, we must mention some of these elite women in nineteenth century Chile. Let’s start with Mercedes Guzmán, owner of Hacienda Huechún (originally owned by Antonio de Rojas) in Melipilla, one of the biggest estates in Chile, formerly owned by Tomás de Toro Zambrano in the seventeenth century, about whom little is known. Next is Elena Valladares, registered as owner of Hacienda Nancagua, in San Fernando, of about 1,800 hectares¹⁰⁸ and for whom we could not gather much information¹⁰⁹. Likewise, we have Dolores Ramírez, owner of Hacienda El Armague, in Caupolicán, Colchagua. Like Candelaria Goyenechea, Dolores also invested in shares in the railways sector, buying ten shares of Ferrocarril del Sur¹¹⁰. Another prominent woman during this period was Micaela Errázuriz Aldunate (born in 1796), from Quillota, who was the daughter of Francisco Javier de Errázuriz Madariaga (1744-1810) and María Rosa Aldunate Guerrero (1753-1810). One of the few things we know about her is that she married Ramón Ovalle Soto. In the same vein, Trinidad Cortés y Cabrera (b.1791), from Los Andes, owned the *haciendas* San Vicente, San Antonio and del Castillo. She married José María de Araya y Gacitúa, but she survived him and managed the above mentioned *haciendas*, which were inherited by their son, José Gregorio¹¹¹. In turn, Gertrudis Rosales Larraín, a member of two of the most important families of late colonial Chile, was once the owner of Hacienda de las Tablas (including the portion called Hacienda del Batro) from Casablanca, as well as that of Tunquén and Quintay¹¹². She married Francisco de Paula Ramírez de Saldaña Velasco (Francisco Ramírez in primary sources)¹¹³, and after Francisco’s death, Gertrudis had no other option but to manage the *haciendas*. Indeed, she legally became owner and manager of the *haciendas* following the partition of goods of her deceased husband¹¹⁴. They had many children (ten in total), including José Manuel, Juan Enrique and Miguel Ramírez¹¹⁵. Finally, María Mercedes

¹⁰⁶ “Javier Carrera’s will”, Santiago, 1862, ANCH-NR, vol. 360.

¹⁰⁷ “Javier Carrera’s and José Miguel Carrera’s heirs”, Santiago, 1841, ANCH-JR, Box 657.

¹⁰⁸ Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *La edad del oro en Chile*, Santiago, Ediciones Ercilla, 1932.

¹⁰⁹ We know that she was married to Gregorio Argomedo Montero, and that they did not have children. “Don Gregorio Argomedo”, in *Gaceta de los Tribunales*, San Fernando, September 4, 1854.

¹¹⁰ Jofré, *op. cit.*

¹¹¹ “José Gregorio Araya y Cortés’ will”, Santa Rosa de los Andes, October 4, 1882, ANCH-CBR, vol. 132.

¹¹² This was a *hacienda* owned by the Jesuits, until their expulsion from Chile in 1767, after which it was acquired by Francisco Ruiz de Balmaceda in 1784, and later on by José Ramírez de Saldaña in 1794, who thus gained access to Ramírez de Saldaña’s wealth. Amunátegui, *op. cit.*

¹¹³ For some examples, see Casablanca, 1859, ANCH-CBR, vols.1 & 11.

¹¹⁴ Valparaíso, May 1853, ANCH-NR, vol. 16.

¹¹⁵ For some estate operations, see Casablanca, 1859, ANCH-CBR, vol. 1. Mario Cárdenas, “Felipe del Solar, comerciante y corsario de la Independencia”, en *Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia*, n.º 101, Santiago, 1990, pp. 341-352.

Ramírez de Saldaña was the owner of Hacienda de San Regis, in San Felipe, also part of *mayorazgo* (primogeniture) Toro y Mazote, and was married in 1797 to José Santiago de Ugarte Salinas¹¹⁶, also a member of one of the elite colonial families¹¹⁷.

CONCLUSIONS

Our main finding, with regard to the lion's share of agricultural market income and land distribution, is that there was considerable gender inequality in Chile in the first decades after independence, which surely also reflects the situation in the colonial period. To support this assertion, we have provided strong evidence about an important share of total agricultural market income and most of the land distribution in Chile, as a proxy of total income and wealth, respectively. It is impossible to draw further conclusions without total income data, or total agricultural income data, neither of which is available for this period, which is why Rodríguez Weber's work started from the 1860s¹¹⁸.

That said, we have also shown in this paper that female ownership and management of farms in Chile was an early feature of economic activity during colonial times and after independence from Spain, far earlier than has been previously thought (based, for example, on the traditional accounts of Chilean historians), and in line with what happened in more developed economies such as the USA and the UK¹¹⁹. Castilian law on inheritance and property rights (in force during colonial and early independence times) was flexible enough to endow wealthy adult women (either widows or unmarried) with economic independence and significant resources.

Chile was an agrarian society, with accentuated patriarchal values, but nonetheless this did not preclude women (married or not) from emerging as key players in the agricultural sector, thus changing early colonial traditional gender roles, which confined women to housework and charitable work. Our results are in line with the previous works of Bernardita Escobar that show the extensive participation of Chilean women in business more generally. The paper suggests, too, that there was an important female economic autonomy, which is in line with previous findings for other Latin American countries and for later periods and other sectors of activity in urban areas in Chile¹²⁰, although the relative importance of women as landowners declined from the early 1830s

¹¹⁶ "Juan Francisco de la Carrera against Mercedes Ramírez", Santiago, 1827, ANCH-JR, Box 223. See also Mujica, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁷ José Toribio Medina, *Diccionario Biográfico Colonial de Chile*, Santiago, Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1906.

¹¹⁸ This is important because total income inequality, or total agricultural income inequality was probably not as high as the agricultural market income inequality we have shown here. We are grateful to a referee's comment for this caveat.

¹¹⁹ See, for instance, Barker, *op. cit.*; Lucy Newton & Philip Cottrell, "Female Investors in the First English and Welsh Commercial Joint-Stock Banks", in Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby & Janette Rutterford (eds.), *Women and their Money. 1700-1950: Essays on Women and Finance*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 115-132; Zorina Khan, "Married Women's Property Laws and Female Commercial Activity: Evidence from United States Patent Records, 1790-1895", in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 56, n.º 2, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 356-388.

¹²⁰ Escobar, "Women in Business...", *op. cit.*, pp. 33-67.

to the early 1850s, which may be due to the declining practice of giving dowries¹²¹. In this vein, our findings regarding a decline in the relative importance of women as landowners between the 1830s and the 1850s are in line with what Dore termed a process of “one step forward, two steps back” during the young independent republics’ period in Latin America. That is, state policy on gender equality was rather negative¹²².

In turn, nineteenth century Chilean women entrepreneurs were not confined to the agricultural sector. They were also very active in other pseudo entrepreneurial activities, such as hospital management, dispensaries and insane asylum institution management¹²³, as well as board participation, by the end of the century¹²⁴. Likewise, they were also active in economic activities in urban areas, such as the capital of the country. According to Bernardita Escobar¹²⁵, by the end of the century, around 3% of the female workforce could be labelled as entrepreneurs, and there was a considerable degree of expansion both in number and the sectors covered. To be more precise, by the 1890s, Bernardita Escobar estimated that women managed nearly a quarter of Santiago de Chile’s firms (based on the records of Santiago’s business license registry) and five percent of elite firms nationally (i.e. those registered in the national trademark registry). Likewise, for another project we have gathered information on all joint stock companies created between 1849 (when the first one was created) and 1875¹²⁶. We found that that there were around 3,000 shareholders in the country at that time, and that among them there were 117 women, or 4% of them, again, a significant number. Finally, we also gathered evidence on ownership of urban properties in Santiago de Chile in 1820. That year the government levied a tax on rich urban properties to fund the expedition to liberate Peru from Spain. In total, the 902 richest properties of the capital were registered. Of these, 114 were female (14%), which contributed with 19% of the total funds collected, being Ana Josefa Azúa the second greatest individual contributor.

All in all, despite severe gender inequality and (apparently) adverse legal conditions, our study confirms previous findings for other Latin American countries that many women managed to possess their own land and urban properties, and to manage complex agricultural enterprises, investing some surpluses in other sectors of economic activity. It is true that many of them were widows, but this was not a *sine qua non* for female entrepreneurs during this period: many were also unmarried adult women. It is unfortunate we knew, and still know, so little about them. Likewise, our findings, although mainly related to elite women, are also applicable to women from lower socioeconomic strata:

¹²¹ Something similar happened in Brazil. On this, see Muriel Nazari, *Disappearance of the Dowry: Women, Families, and Social Change in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1600-1900*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991.

¹²² Elizabeth Dore, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century”, in Elizabeth Dore & Maxine Molyneux (eds.), *Hidden Histories of gender and the state in Latin America*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000.

¹²³ Yaeger, *op. cit.*

¹²⁴ Salvaj, Lluch & Gómez, *op. cit.*

¹²⁵ Escobar, “Female Entrepreneurship...”, *op. cit.*; Escobar, “Women in Business...”, *op. cit.*; Escobar, “Mujeres y negocios...”, *op. cit.*

¹²⁶ Santiago and Valparaiso (several volumes for 1854-1875), ARNAD-NR; Chile, *Boletín de las Leyes i Decretos del Gobierno*, Santiago, 1849-1875; Newspaper *El Araucano* (several issues for 1870-1875); ANCH, Ministerio de Hacienda (several volumes for 1854-1875).

thousands of them were self-employed, employees (i.e. wage earners), or ran their own small and medium enterprises, including small farms.