Digging Below the Surface:  
Women and Families in the El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1930

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**Introduction**

The El Teniente mine had been in operation from the colonial era through the 19th century, but in the 20th century copper production grew under foreign ownership, making El Teniente the largest underground copper mine in the world.\(^1\) Due to copper’s electric conductivity, copper demand escalated during World War I. Developing the Chilean mine into a powerhouse to meet global demand took more than importing new technologies and machinery. In fact, I found, the North American owners (Braden Copper Company), developed a mining community and implemented social engineering strategies aimed at shaping El Teniente’s labor force into the most effective and efficient in the world.

Braden Copper Company (BCC) put a gendered social welfare system in place that was designed to produce better workers (male) through cultural betterment of El Teniente’s Chilean population, instilling the values of morality, domestic responsibility, and nationalism. Why did the American corporate management think regulating sexuality and family life was the answer to improving business? The new system focused on the formation of stable nuclear families and the creation of social activities such as Boy and Girl Scouts, sports teams and music groups, as well as the building of schools and vocational schools. Family life and activities would replace the sinful cultural habits that disrupted production: informal sexual relationships, drinking and gambling.

The company’s welfare department aimed to restructure the ways in which working-class women spent their time by teaching, disciplining and regulating their behaviors. My thesis

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will explore the three most important areas in which the welfare department intervened into 
family life at the El Teniente mine: hygiene, money management, and education. Women were 
told that their responsibility to their family and to their country was to be hygienic and maintain 
hygienic spaces, to save and manage the money that their husbands earned, and to educate their 
children—the future employees of BCC and the future citizens of Chile. Women were central to 
the North American’s project of guiding the labor force into the epitome of middle class 
respectability and civility.

I. Development of the Mining Industry: Background to the 20th century Chilean 
Copper Boom

The evolution of Chile’s mining industry, and the cyclical nature of Chile’s commodity-
based economy, particularly in the last two centuries, has been shaped by the global supply and 
demand of copper. During the colonial era, Chileans exploited gold, silver, copper and mercury, 
but they could hardly compete with the mines of Peru or Bolivia. Fortunately, Chile was 
edowed with rich copper deposits, located where they could be easily exported. By the mid 19th 
century foreign capital played a crucial role in the development of the Chilean copper industry. 
In 1876, Chile was providing 62% of the world’s copper output.²

In the latter decades of the 19th century, copper mining expanded rapidly in the United 
States. The US mines benefited from low transportation costs due to the nation’s growing 
network of railroads and canals and improved technologies that allowed for large scale 
production of low-grade ore. Chile’s comparative labor inefficiency (Chilean mine owners used 
colonial methods of mining and cheap labor) and inferior technology (that only extracted from

² Kendall W. Brown, *A History of Mining in Latin America: From the Colonial Era to the Present*, 
the richest veins with over 10% content) led the South American nation's share of the world copper market to drop to five percent by the end of the 19th century.3

While the Chilean copper industry was facing difficulties, there was a boom in the nitrate industry. During the War of the Pacific (1879-1883), Chile annexed previously Peruvian and Bolivian provinces, which had rich nitrate mines. Thus, Chile gained a monopoly position.4 The Chilean government imposed export taxes of up to 70 percent of the domestic nitrate prices, and up until 1920 these revenues provided a major portion of government revenues.5 Population in the northern provinces (where the nitrate mines were located) more than doubled between 1885 and 1907, including similar increases in the ranks of dockworkers, construction and railroad crews, prostitutes, and merchants.6 This boom too proved short lived. In the early 20th century, German chemists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch developed an artificial nitrogen fixation process on an industrial scale, which reduced the global demand for Chilean nitrates.7 By the end of World War I, copper replaced nitrates as the main source of mining production and exports.8

Economic and social development of El Teniente

The El Teniente copper mine is located in the O'Higgins province, in the Andes, about 100 miles southeast of the capital of Santiago and thirty miles from Rancagua, a town in the central valley of Chile. The early years of the mine were marked with dramatic changes on the

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5 Brown, A History of Mining in Latin America, 106.
local and international levels. El Teniente’s development into a force to be reckoned with in the international copper industry was shaped by the Chilean government’s favorable foreign investment policies, business mergers, technological innovation, global demand of copper, and BCC’s labor strategies.

According to legend, the mine dates back to at least the 18th century when a fugitive Spanish lieutenant (teniente), escaped to the snowy Andes between Chile and Argentina. He set up a camp, where he discovered a vein of high grade copper ore. He took the profits from a shipment of copper to pay the authorities “which freed him from further difficulties with the colonial government.”

Throughout the 19th century the ownership of the mine changed many times. In 1904 when the Chilean owners of El Teniente could no longer afford to operate the mine, they sought financial support from fellow-Chileans, and potential investors in England, France, and Germany, but none were interested. New-York Braden Copper Company bought the mine in 1904 when the Chilean owners could not secure outside investors.

The journey to reach El Teniente from the nearest town (Rancagua) was arduous before railroads were installed. To create a labor force in the mine, the Braden Copper Company immediately began building a mining town. In 1905, a wagon road was constructed to bring machinery and construction material up to the site where the town would be built. The company hired about 1000 Chileans to build the town (later named Sewell), paying them 25 pesos (about $7.50 USD) per ton of heavy loads hauled to the mountain site. The town of Sewell became the

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11 Braden Copper Company, “Early History of the Braden Copper Company.”
home of the Americans and Chileans living and working in the mine. Below is a photograph of Sewell taken in 1923.  

By 1909, Braden sold his rights to the firm to the Guggenheim family. The Guggenheim’s also owned Chuquicamata in the Chilean Atacama Desert, which was the world’s largest open-cast mine. In 1915, the Guggenheims merged their U.S. mines and mines in U.S. territories (mines in Alaska, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico) with their Chilean copper mines and formed the Kennecott Copper Company, which dominated the global copper industry. El Teniente began producing in 1910 and was the first large-scale mine to use the flotation process for concentration. In this process the crushed ore is reduced by rotating mills to a powder which is fed into pools of chemicals where the particles of copper-bearing materials are

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12 La Ciudad de Las Escaleras: Sewell, 1923, Photograph, 1923.
separated from the non-copper-bearing rock. The early 20th century was marked by increased foreign investment in Chile, which was encouraged by the Chilean government, through mechanisms including a low tax rate for foreign companies. It is estimated that in the period 1913-1924, the total taxes that Kennecott Company paid to the Chilean government amounted to only 0.8% of gross sales. Between 1900 and 1914, United States investments in Chile increased from approximately $5 million to almost $200 million. The United States capital invested in Chilean copper was the largest North American investment in South America.

World War I increased the global demand for copper and increased foreign investment leading to an age of ‘new copper mining’ in Chile. Because of copper’s high level of electric conductivity, it was extremely important to war-time industry. By the end of World War I, American investors controlled over 87 percent by value of Chilean copper production. BCC brought in new technology to keep up with demand, including modern mills and crushers and new flotation units to separate the copper concentrate from impurities. The machinery helped the El Teniente mine boost production and meet copper demand.

In order to keep up with the rapidly increasing production, Braden Copper Company (even when El Teniente was sold to Kennecott Company, the mining company was still referred

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16 Moran, Multinational Corporations and the Politics of Dependence, 22.
17 Ibid.
18 Chile American Association, Mutual Trade and Resources of Chile and the United States (New York, 1926), 28.
20 Loveman, Chile, 213.
21 Klubock, Contested Communities, 28.
to as Braden Copper Company) needed a skilled labor force that knew how to operate the machinery and work in the mines. BCC wanted to attract new labor, but more importantly it wanted to create an environment where workers made a full-time career of mining and stayed for extended periods of time. Up until 1914, El Teniente operated on a seasonal basis, closing during the coldest winter months.\footnote{Luis Hiriart, \textit{Braden: Historia de Una Mina} (Santiago: Editorial Andes, 1964).} BCC employed a mobile labor force that worked during the warm months and then returned to the city, countryside or northern nitrate mining districts in the winter. The living and working conditions were harsh, and many workers hoped to accumulate savings and then return to the countryside or search for easier forms of labor after the season was over. It is estimated that the permanent work force in 1917 was 22.4\% and in 1918 it was 23.8\%.\footnote{Alejandro Fuenzalida Grandón, \textit{El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente”} (Santiago: Soc. Imprenta-Litografía Barcelona, 1919).} The company publication, \textit{Teniente Topics}, published “Problemas obreros sociales: el hogar” (Miners social problems: the home) in 1917 that said “Chilean miners are always living in a state of abandonment that deprives our national pride.”\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “Problemas obreros sociales: el hogar,” \textit{Teniente Topics} 2 (May 1917). “Los mineros chilenos viven siempre en un estado de abandono que priva nuestro orgullo nacional.” All translations done by author.} There was a constant ebb and flow of miners moving in and out of El Teniente and Sewell.

BCC devised financial incentives for miners to stay in the mine, such as the implementation of a 10\% bonus for miners who worked for 300 days.\footnote{Fuenzalida Grandón, \textit{El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,”} 97.} Further, the company created a lottery system, where every man who worked from May to September (the Winter months when men usually left) would get a lottery number. The lottery had prizes from 100 to 500 pesos.\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “Early History of the Braden Copper Company.”} But, BCC had to go beyond monetary enticements to institutionalize permanency. It was a critical time for the mining company, and they had to make a change to the social and
cultural makeup of the town, in order to change the nature of the labor force from transient to permanent.

Braden Copper Company attempted to make a fundamental change in the social and cultural environment in the mine in order to increase the number of permanent miners and laborers. In 1915, the company established a welfare department, which became the architect of the mining society. The North-American men running the welfare department believed that encouraging marriage and stable nuclear families would incentivize men to stay in the mine for longer periods of time. BCC encouraged the formation of families, with a gendered division of domestic duties and values. Women were charged with the responsibility of maintaining hygiene, managing money and educating their children. Exploring each of these values in depth will shed light on the changing and complicated conceptions of gender, family and modernity.

II. Literature Review

Because of the importance of copper to the Chilean economy (in 2013 copper made up approximately 20% of GDP and 60% of exports—Chile produced about one third of the world’s copper), a significant amount of research has been dedicated to the Chilean copper industry. The research ranges from economic history to political history to labor history. I want to focus in on the first third of the twentieth century because it marks a time of expansion of the copper industry, industrialization and urbanization, an increase in foreign investments, and a transformation of cultural identities. My research starts in 1904, because that is when foreign ownership took over the mine and ends in 1930, because that marked a time of global depression and shift of the copper industry. My project will be a close reading of the BCC corporate welfare system’s intervention into the lives of women and families living in the company town.

27 “Mining in Chile: Copper Solution,” The Economist, April 27, 2013.
Thomas Klubock’s book *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (1998) has opened important questions on gender in the El Teniente mine. Klubock explores class formation and the transformation of a transient work force into a settled and trained work force in a modern capitalist enterprise. He pays special attention to how identity formation along gendered lines, influenced the labor and political movements of the 20th century. In particular, the miner’s unions explicit ties with socialist and communist parties, which he argues was a result of the class formation dating back to the 30s, helped influence the election of the first socialist President Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity in 1970. The book focus on how class and gender relationships in the El Teniente mine in the mid-twentieth century affected leftist labor movements later in the century.

In order to trace Chilean attitudes towards women in the early 20th century within the mine, it is important to look at the broader research that has been done on women and labor in Chile. Research has explored how women’s participation in the urban labor force in early 20th century affected political and labor movements. With the growth of industrialization and urbanization, in the late 19th century, women had a visible role in the workforce, particularly in factory work. By the 20th century, a handful of social actors, from anarchists to senators, took the figure of the workingwoman as proof of social destruction. Because of this political and social movement, Elizabeth Hutchinson argues in her book *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* (2000), that female labor in Chile disappeared from the census records in the early twentieth century, but female labor was in fact burgeoning in urban areas. Her study explores working-class feminism and its substance and significance

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within socialist unionism.\textsuperscript{29} Her work is important to understanding female labor movements, but does not touch on women living and working in mining towns.

The rise of the company town was happening elsewhere in the world during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. After the social manifestations in Europe in 1848, the industrial bourgeoisie realized the importance of a stable workforce. They wanted to separate the workers from the conflict-riddled environment of the city, and promote the social well-being of their employees, by controlling their environment. Thus, cities like Saltaire, Mulhouse, Le Ceusot, Bournville, Colonia Güell and others sprung into existence. The influence of the European experiences with industrial settlements, as well as the formulation of English city-gardens and utopian concepts, gave rise to the model of the company town. Some of the most emblematic company towns in the United States include Lowell (1822), Pullman (1880), Gary (1907) and Tyrone (1915).\textsuperscript{30} Las ciudades de cobre (2007), discusses the rise of the copper mining towns in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, particularly the towns of Sewell (El Teniente), Chuquicamata, Potrerillos, El Salvador, San Lorenzo, Pabellón del Inco, Los Pelambres. The book’s emphasis is on the architecture and spatial planning of the different cities. It is filled with beautiful photographs as well as blueprints and plans. However, Las ciudades de cobre completely left out gender, which is a defining characteristic of the town’s physical space.

The relationship between the copper company towns in the United States and the copper company towns in Chile is at the heart of Janet Finn’s Tracing the Veins of Copper, Culture, and Community from Butte to Chiquicamata (1998). She looks at the mining communities in Butte,

\textsuperscript{29} Elizabeth Q. Hutchison, Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930, Latin America Otherwise (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
\textsuperscript{30} Eugenio Garcés Feliú, Marcelo Cooper Apablaza, and Mauricio Baros Townsend, Las Ciudades Del Cobre: Sewell, Chuquicamata, Potrerillos, El Salvador, San Lorenzo, Pabellón Del Inca, Los Pelambres, 1. ed, Investigaciones (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 2007).
Montana, USA and Chuquicamata, Chile. Both were affiliated with the copper mines owned by the Anaconda Company in the 20th century (Guggenheim’s sold to Anaconda in 1923). The book is more than a comparative account, it traces the relationship between the United States mining community and the Chilean one. Finn demonstrates the fluctuation of North American and Chilean cultural values between the two mines. There is mention of gender, but it is not the central focus of her study.

There is also research on gender relations in extractive mines outside the Americas. For example, Donald Burton looks at coal mines in 1868-1930 (between the Meiji Restoration and the beginning of the war mobilization boom) in Japan, where mining women witnessed no significant changes in working practices, unlike their counterparts in the Americas. Having a point of comparison is helpful in understanding the unique nature of the North and South American gendered relationship in the mines.

Copper mines in Chile have received a lot of attention in recent history, in particular the economics and the labor activism that have affected the rest of the country. But, I think there is more to the story of copper in Chile in the early 20th century. The mines present a well-documented community of North American and Chilean culture coming together in an age of transforming global markets and shifting and intricate conceptions of gender and family.

### III. Chapter Outline

In chapter one, I argue that Braden Copper Company inspired and even demanded women living at Sewell, through regulations and company produced literature, to be “hygienic”. The word hygiene is complicated, and in this context it will refer to both physical and moral

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cleanliness. Enforcing hygiene was a means of encouraging virtue and discouraging prostitution and alcoholism. The company wanted to deter prostitution in favor of stable, nuclear families to get workers to stay in the mine for longer periods of time. Similarly, alcohol was detrimental to laborer’s efficiency so it needed to be disposed of. It was a business decision to focus on cleaning up the unhygienic practices of prostitution and alcoholism. The company targeted women as the custodians of hygiene because BCC’s North American owners believed that the home was where moral and social change could and should occur.

The source base for this chapter is primarily articles from Braden Copper Company-owned publications, *Teniente Topics* and *El Teniente*. Teniente Topics was published in English and Spanish from 1915 to 1920. After a brief hiatus, *El Teniente* was printed from 1922 through the 1970s (when the mine was nationalized), exclusively in Spanish. The articles generally articulate the views of the North American company, but were frequently contributed to by male and female members of the Chilean community as well. The topics of the articles range from descriptions of machinery, to how to properly educate children, to Chilean and American politics. I supplement the articles with reports written by outsiders about the mine, in particular Alejandro Fuenzalida Grandón’s report on work and life in the mine and Santiago Marin Vicuñas “El Mineral de El Teniente.” Additionally, to understand the broader cultural context about hygiene and morality, I look at the American and Chilean publications that were present at the library at Sewell. These included magazines like *Life* and *McClure’s*, as well as *El Mercurio* and *Zig Zag*.

In chapter two, I use a similar source base as chapter one to look at how international copper markets affected the household economies at Sewell. In the mining town, money management was an exclusively female responsibility; but, women had to be taught by Braden
Copper Company or another authoritative (presumably male) figure to handle a family’s finances. I find that the women at El Teniente, despite the broader culture in the US and Chile that focused on consumerism in the early 20th century, were told to be parsimonious in order to uphold their family and marriage. Contradictorily, the women were also told that they could achieve social mobility by purchasing beauty products and furniture to augment their appearance and the appearance of their home. I focus in on Teniente Topics and El Teniente articles on the domestic economy and articles on women’s responsibility in the home. To understand the global market from 1915-1930, I primarily rely on secondary source material like Cobre Chileno. At the Archivo Nacional de Chile, I found internal memorandums and letters that explained the company’s decisions on production and labor in result of booms and busts of the global copper industry.

In chapter three, I investigate how the Braden Copper Company used schools, as well as informal educational systems like sports and clubs, to further its agenda of shaping the social and cultural values of the Chilean inhabitants at Sewell. Again, the company targeted women to instill the values of middle class respectability—women were responsible for raising their children according to those values. When children were of age to go to school, parents were urged to collaborate with the schools in order to reinforce the moral and practical lessons their children learned. The company used the language of nationalism to encourage women to fulfill their educational responsibilities. In order to shape an industrial utopia, the American men tried to teach Chileans to be Chilean. Similar to the first two chapters, I primarily rely on Teniente Topics and El Teniente articles as my primary sources, in conjunction with reports, internal memos and letters regarding education. There is not a lot of variation in my source material, as
my thesis is a close reading of the Braden Copper Company’s promulgation of middle class values.

Hygiene, frugality and education were lessons that the North American mine owners believed all women at Sewell should possess. They believed that they had to teach these values to women through literature and classes. Regulating the social lives of workers and their families was primarily a business decision—if miners were in stable nuclear families and adhered to gender specific roles, the mine would operate more efficiently and effectively. But, it was also a means of reaching towards modernity. The early 20th century was wrought with dramatic and rapid change. The Americans wanted Sewell to be at the fore-front of progressiveness and civility, in what they would call a developing and backwards country. The company envisioned Sewell as a model of middle class respectability that other communities in Chile should emulate. However, their vision rested upon enforcing traditional gender roles in a time when those roles were being questioned and reimagined across the world. My thesis is a nuanced vision of how global capitalism influenced women and families living in a company town in the first third of the twentieth century. Looking at the regulations and expectations the company set for women reveals how transnational ideologies shaped gender and family relations during the rise of the foreign-owned copper industry in Chile.
In the early 20th century, Braden Copper Company forced a fundamental reorganization of family life, that centered around morality and hygiene, in the Sewell mining town at El Teniente. Braden Copper Company’s North American owners decided that the best way to establish a permanent and reliable labor force was to regulate the social lives of miners and incentivize the formation of nuclear families. BCC established a welfare department that created rules and regulations with the purpose of “attending to the moral, social and economic condition of the personnel.”

The company publications and the rules pertaining to women, encouraged women to be hygienic and virtuous mothers and wives. The regulations discouraged uncleanliness, which was implicitly connected with prostitution and alcoholism. The welfare department established a rhetoric of hygiene that was rooted in medical movements in Chile and the United States. In this context, hygiene is both literal and figurative. Hygiene is used to refer to both the physical cleanliness of spaces and bodies; as well as the religious sense of hygiene, as morally clean.

I. Regulating Families and Spaces

By using the discourse of hygiene to regulate the traditionally female dominated sphere (the home), the welfare department was not only regulating physical spaces, but also regulating family life. Company-produced publications declared hygienic women synonymous with virtuous wives/mothers, which made informal sexual relationships, particularly prostitution, unhygienic and intolerable in the mining town of Sewell.

The men in charge of BCC’s welfare department sought to change the social and cultural makeup of Sewell by discouraging prostitution and encouraging stable nuclear families. In 1919,

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33 Fuenzalida Grandón, *El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,”* 79. “objeto primordial es atender al mejoramiento de la condición moral social i económica del personal.”
Alejandro Fuenzalida Grandón, a professor at Universidad de Chile, published “El trabajo i la vida en el mineral ‘El Teniente’” (Work and life at the ‘El Teniente’ mine). Fuenzalida Grandón pointed out, “the single miners are eminently floating” and were an obstacle of the goal of creating a more permanent labor force.\(^{34}\) The single miners were so prone to transience because of the “female element” which alluded to the growing presence of prostitution and informal relationships between single miners and women in Rancagua. In the study, he wrote that “disorders of various kinds are revealed. The female element was not the best.”\(^{35}\) Informal relationships, prostitution in particular, were an obstacle to the company’s goal of creating a permanent workforce.

In the early days of the mine (before WWI increased copper demand and BCC needed to change the nature of workforce), the majority of the miners stayed at El Teniente temporarily. With the transient miners came a parallel ebb and flow of women looking for work in the O’Higgins province. While women sought a variety of different jobs, ranging from domestic servants in workers’ cantinas to employees at laundries, Rancagua became known for the presence of prostitution. Historian Gabriel Salazar wrote that in the mining camps of the nineteenth century “contact with women was converted into distant, commercialized companionships. Matrimony and the family became improbable alternatives.”\(^{36}\) When José Pezoa Varas visited the El Teniente camps in 1919, he “described how prostitutes stood at the windows and doors of taverns and brothels in the city and in settlement along the railway up the

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 95. “Especialmente la población de solteros es eminentemente flotante.”
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 100-101. “Desórdenes de diversa índole quedaron de manifestó. El elemento femenino no era de lo mejor. Las prohibiciones reglamentarias sobre el alcohol eran con frecuencia burladas, i el juego de azar sentaba sus reales.”
\(^{36}\) Gabriel Salazar Vergara, *Labradores, peones y proletarios: formación y crisis de la sociedad popular chilena del siglo XIX* (Santiago, Chile: LOM, 2000), 135.
mountain waving and shouting ‘flirtatious phrases and burlesque jokes.’”37 Many women set up household as single mothers, and entered into “consensual unions” with men who moved in and out of the mining town. Further, many women engaged in prostitution to supplement their insufficient incomes. Some women set up or managed their own houses of prostitution in Rancagua.38

The El Teniente miners were the Rancaguan prostitute’s primary clientele. In August 1916, the newspaper La Voz del Obrero wrote that miners “lacking honest distractions spend their money in the bars, clubs and the immense majority, in the houses of tolerance.”39 As documented by historian Thomas Klubock, “the writer and former Braden Copper Company employee Baltazar Castro, for example, describes in his stories of life in the camps and how single girls ‘went up to work in the cantinas of Teniente C, the camp next to the mine, where they hoped to earn more money from the passions of the workers than from their work in the pensions.’”40 Brothels were ubiquitous, and prostitution was part of the economic and social make-up of Rancagua. Prostitutes were an obstacle to the company’s project of worker retention.

In order to create a more permanent and productive workforce, the company wanted to reorganize relations between male and female migrants into nuclear families. If miners were in stable marriages, they would be less likely to uproot their families and leave the mine in cold or difficult months. Many of the regulations put forth by the company involved men and women presenting formal marriage certificates, like the one written in 1919 that did not allow a woman to live with an employee in company owned housing who did not present a certificate of civil

37 Thomas Miller Klubock, Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1931, Comparative and International Working-Class History (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1998), 44.
38 Ibid., 42.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 45.
matrimony to the representatives of the welfare office. In a 1922 annual report, the Welfare Department, wrote “aside from increasing the married workers living with their families in the camps another part of the remedy…is an increase of wages to offset the real or imaginary harder work and dangers of the mine.”

Formal marriage would help reorganize labor (to be more settled) and would reinforce morality. The author of a 1917 Teniente Topics article wrote “it is worth noting that no one has resisted the internal order of the company [to present legal marriage certificates], save the vicious spirits who don’t have the slightest notion of cultural morality…good legally constituted families have welcomed this public health movement” Only immoral people would oppose the new regulations. It is telling that the author used the rhetoric of “cultural morality” and “public health” to describe the regulation of marriage and family. The temporary work force was a social, moral, and hygienic problem, and the home and the family became the place where the problem would be fixed.

Hygienic spaces and nuclear relationships

By 1915, the company simultaneously regulated relationships between men and women, and the spaces in which men and women spent their time together. The company’s regulations aimed to enforce clean, nuclear families living together in hygienic housing. Many of the official regulations enforced a high standard of physical hygiene and order. New employee’s homes were built to have two or three floors, in order to create “a good hygienic distribution.” Additionally, under “Rules for houses, type ‘D’, for miners and their families,” rule number nine

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41 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 101.
42 Klubock, Contested Communities, 57.
43 Braden Copper Company, “Construcción legal de las familias en el Mineral ‘El Teniente,’” Teniente Topics 2 (December 1917). “Vale la pena señalar que nadie ha resistido el orden interno de la empresa, salvo los espíritus viciosos que no tienen la más mínima noción de moralidad cultural … las buenas familias legalmente constituidas han acogido con satisfacción este movimiento de salud pública.”
44 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 132. “…por su buena distribución higiénica.”
“demanded the maintenance of absolute cleanliness and order inside the floors. The lavatories and washrooms should be used with decency.” Rule number eleven stated “trash shouldn’t be thrown around the hallway, it should always be gotten rid of.”

Cleanliness was institutionalized with the company’s regulations. The rules were expected to be followed, and when outsiders visited the mine they noticed the clean state of the miner’s living quarters. In the 1917 report “El Teniente,” Santiago Marin Vicuña wrote “the houses of habitation are hygienic.”

While cleanliness and hygiene were required from the entire mining population, it was inherently gendered.

Promoting and maintaining hygiene was the woman’s duty. By 1920, the Spanish version of Teniente Topics included a section in the monthly issue entitled Página feminina (feminine page). The purpose of the page was “to give information which will be, without doubt, of vital interest to our female readers: we hope that they will help us by sending us, when they have the opportunity, their opinions and advice aimed towards female wellbeing and domestic economy.” The Página feminina painted a picture of the ideal woman—she was elegant, frugal and hygienic. The June 1920 issue said “the compliance to hygienic law is the way to combat mortal sickness…personal cleanliness and healthy eating is of the utmost importance.”

Another article entitled “El aseo personal” (personal cleanliness), said “it’s repugnant to see women with...

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45 Ibid., 74. “las basuras del barrido no deben arrojarse sobre el corredor i se debe evitar siempre, al barrer, levantar polvo”
46 Santiago Marin Vicuña, “El mineral de El Teniente” (Santiago, Chile: Imprenta Universitaria, 1917), 21. “...y que las casas de habitación son higiénicas...”
47 Braden Copper Company, “Para las dueñas de casa,” Teniente Topics, 1920. “…para dar informaciones que serán, sin duda, de vital interés a nuestras lectoras; por lo tanto, esperamos que ellas nos ayuden, enviándonos con oportunidad sus opiniones y consejos encaminados al bienestar y economía doméstica.”
48 Braden Copper Company, “El cuidado del nene,” Teniente Topics, June 1920. “El cumplimiento estricto de las leyes de la higiene fortificará por lo menos al pequeñuelo contra el ataque de enfermedades mortales…limpieza personal y los alimentos puros son también de suma importancia.”
dirty faces.” Not only was personal cleanliness important, but women were also expected to keep their families and homes clean. There were articles that detailed how to properly bathe children who “also shouldn’t be dirty. It’s negligent and sick of a mother to have dirty kids.” Homes were expected to embody “cleanliness, with lovely touches like flower…nothing should be left to chance, women should pay attention to detail.” The model woman was married, with children, and maintained hygiene in all aspects of her life.

The level of literacy for Chileans living in Sewell was low. One of the Braden Copper Company’s attorney’s wrote in 1916, that about 60% of the whole population was illiterate. The amount of miners’ wives that were able to read Página feminina every month, was probably relatively low. But, the page reflects concepts of personal and spatial hygiene that were probably present in the El Teniente mining community. Women had to work hard to maintain cleanliness in order to maintain their status as good wives and mothers.

BCC promoted the idea that if a woman could keep herself, her children, her husband and her house clean, her husband would be a more productive and successful employee. “The Chilean miner understood that the happiness of himself and his family depended in great part on the comfort that he should have in his home…this accepted measure [of creating comfortable homes] is good for the workers.”

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49 Braden Copper Company, “El aseo personal,” Teniente Topics, June 1920. “…yo he visto aquí en el Mineral a muchas mujeres ya casadas o solteras, todas desgreñadas y sucia de la cara, que da repugnancia pasar cerca de ellas.”
50 Braden Copper Company, “El cuidado del nene.” “…también no deben estar sucio. Es negligente y enfermo de una madre tener hijos sucios.”
52 Don Moisés Vargas, “Political Life in Chile,” Teniente Topics 2, no. 6 (August 1917).
53 Daniel A. Guerra, “Problemas obreros: el hogar,” Teniente Topics 2, no. 4 (May 1917). “El minero chileno entiende que la felicidad de él y su familia dependía en gran parte de la comodidad que debe tener en su casa… esto medida aceptada es bueno para los trabajadores…”
regulating the miners’ homes, because it would lead to larger profits for the American company.

The company equated a comfortable home with a hygienic home, “when the miner returns home from an arduous day at work, he gets a true satisfaction of having a bath. After the bath, he passes through the dining room and expresses true happiness when he sees his woman preparing food.”54 Because the home was the key to making successful workers, and the home was the women’s sphere, BCC produced literature targeting women. The model woman at Sewell maintained a clean, and therefor productive, household. The respectful and clean wife was the ideological antithesis of the prostitutes on the skirts of the mining community.

In contrast to the hygienic spaces and peoples of Sewell, the city of Rancagua became associated with uncleanness. The 1915 article “Rancagua y el mineral ‘El Teniente’” appeared in the widely circulated newspaper, El Mercurio. The article describes how the Rancaguan public services are “behind.” For example, the water is completely “unhealthy” and the police station is in “ruin.” The anonymous author compares the dirty town of Rancagua with the mining town, which is a “splendid establishment,” where he eats a “first class” lunch. The article created a dichotomy between Rancagua and Sewell that centered around hygiene. An article entitled “La ciudad del crimen” (the city of crime) describes Rancagua as an “agglomeration of taverns and prostitutes.”55 Rancagua was dirty and filled with prostitutes; Sewell was clean and filled with virtuous mothers and wives.

Sewell and Rancagua were constantly in comparison: Sewell was the hygienic, modern, glistening city on the mountain and Rancagua was the dirty, backwards city at the foot of the

54 Ibid. “Cuando el minero regresa a casa después de un día arduo de trabajo, obtiene una verdadera satisfacción de tener un baño. Después del baño, pasa por el comedor y expresa la verdadera felicidad cuando ve a su mujer preparando la comida.”
55 “La ciudad del crimen,” El Mercurio, April 6, 1916. “…la aglomeración de tabernas y prostíbulos de Rancagua”
mountain. Braden Copper Company wanted Sewell to be a model community, not only in its physical spaces, but also in its social makeup. Sewell encouraged marriage and sobriety, while Rancagua was a breeding ground for informal sexual relationships and alcohol. Creating this dichotomy, forced value judgements on the two spaces and the people who occupied the two spaces. The men who planned Sewell created a hierarchy of spaces and values—that placed their society above the Rancaguans’s society.

Of course, the mining population was not always in favor of the changes that the company was making to the labor force and social make-up of their community. Fuenzalida Grandón wrote that the company’s regulations on social life “encountered at first huge resistance. There were ardent protests.” For example, in 1916, there was a strike and the labor force protested the high cost of living and the system of token payment in the company store, demanding higher wages and prompt payment of their salaries in cash. The tokens were put in place as a means of retaining workers; if a worker quit they could not use their token payments outside the camp. Some of the workers began “throwing rocks, breaking office windows” which caused the company to bring in the police to “shoot against the workers, resulting in some deaths and wounds.” The company rejected most of the miner’s complaints, except for the abolishment of the token system. Despite the violent confrontation, the company remained steadfast in continuing their agenda of regulating spaces and families.

56 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 89. “La medida encontró al principio enorme resistencia. Hubo protestas, quejas ardientes…”
57 Klubock, Contested Communities, 51.
58 A. Cruz Cañas, “Sociabilidad obrero,” El Mercurio de Valparaiso, March 26, 1916. “…arrojaron piedras y quebraron algunos vidrios de las oficinas; fue ese un motivo para que se dispara contra los trabajadores, resultando algunos muertos y heridos.”
Cleaning up prostitution and disease

Where did the concept of the hygienic housewife and the unclean prostitute come from? In the early 20th century in the United States and in Chile, there were changing attitudes and policies towards prostitution. Historians like David Pivar, Suellen Hoy and Mary Douglas have done significant research on the introduction of hygienic discourse into family life in the Progressive Era. During this time, there was an endemic of venereal diseases in both countries. Medical breakthroughs in the early 20th century led to more accurate diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases, that were associated with prostitution. For example, the Wasserman test (1906), developed an antibody test for syphilis. In 1910, the Wasserman test was brought to Chile. These medical developments brought increased attention to venereal diseases in the US and Chile. These medical technologies were widely advertised. In the Chilean publication, Zig Zag, in 1910 an advertisement stated “Syphilis: discovery of a new system of agreeable and infallible treatment.”

In the United States, Medical journals published articles blaming prostitutes for the spread of diseases. Physicians, such as Ludwig Weiss, believed prostitution was the

60 “Sifilis,” Zig Zag, 1910.
61 Pivar, Purity and Hygiene, 27.
fountainhead of these diseases. Physicians coupled with women’s movements and organizations, including the America Purity Alliance, and launched sanitation campaigns with the goal of cleaning up the spread of diseases linked to prostitution. “Unsanitary conditions in hospitals and ignorant nurses and attendants spread gonorrhea in hospital wards, even creating epidemics.”

Venereal diseases were considered a “social disease,” and the social consequences of the disease also had to be cleaned up. The movement went past the 19th century rhetoric of purity, and utilized modern medicine and sanitation to mobilize anti-prostitution actions.

As argued by historian Christopher Diffe, the Progressive era was primarily marked with laissez-faire policies; but, the growth in “white slavery” or prostitution was viewed as needing social regulation. During this era, for the first time women were depicted as being trafficked against their will for prostitution. The narrative followed that white girls were drugged, tricked or imprisoned and forced into prostitution. And social workers and reformers, like Jane Addams, believed that these “slaves” were in need of rescue and protection. Those social workers and reformers worked with the social hygiene movement. For example, Jane Addams not only wrote *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, which gave accounts of victims of white slavery, but she also served as vice president of the American Social Hygiene Association. Prostitution became equated with disease and unsanitary conditions.

A parallel movement existed in Chile that aimed to rid the country of venereal diseases, that were believed to spread through prostitution, through sanitation campaigns. “In 1900 more than 21 percent of infants who perished before the age of six were victims of congenital

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62 Ibid., 29.
64 Ibid.
syphilis.”⁶⁵ Venereal diseases were rampant and demonized. For example, syphilis was considered “a scourge to divine justice.”⁶⁶ Prostitution was identified as the cause of the evil infections and diseases. A 1912 El Mercurio article said “…the development of the venereal diseases, a consequence of clandestine prostitution in Santiago.”⁶⁷ Venereal diseases, and there for prostitution, became connected to unhygienic environments.

Research by Elizabeth Hutchins, reveals that authorities in Santiago viewed prostitution as a necessary evil, that was best contained through public health regulations that would control how and where sex was sold.⁶⁸ Before prostitution was made illegal in 1925, an 1896 municipal ordinance “established a register and regular medical inspections for prostitutes, and required brothel owners to report the number of prostitutes they employed and to meet standards of cleanliness and public morality.”⁶⁹ The Chilean press indicated that clandestine prostitution took place in environments with deplorable hygienic conditions.⁷⁰ A newspaper article in April, 1915 called for increased regulation of prostitution to maintain a “hygienic and healthy public.”⁷¹ Maintaining hygienic and clean conditions would maintain a healthy society, in which prostitution was limited. The early part of the century saw increased efforts to regulate prostitution in order to combat venereal disease.

⁶⁵ Pivar, Purity and Hygiene, 177.
⁶⁷ “Noticias de Santiago,” El Mercurio de Valparaiso, August 3, 1912. “En seguida se leyó un extenso informe de la Inspección Sanitaria sobre el desarrollo de las enfermedades venéreas a consecuencia del clandestinaje de la prostitución en Santiago.”
⁶⁹ Ibid.
⁷⁰ “Por la moralidad y la higiene,” El Mercurio de Valparaiso, February 1915.
⁷¹ “La inspección de servicios y disposiciones municipales,” El Mercurio de Valparaiso, April 10, 1915.”…público higiénico y saludable.”
In both the United States and Chile, medical improvements, particularly diagnostic technologies, influenced the rhetoric of combatting venereal diseases and the social disease of prostitution with sanitation and public health movements. Hygiene and sanitation became critical in eradicating and regulating prostitution. While the diction of hygiene saturated both the American and Chilean publications. The Chilean publications were more explicit in identifying prostitution as the root of the spread of disease. Despite the fact that many interest groups were mobilizing campaigns against prostitution, the American publications mostly kept the private life private. The Americans and Chileans living in Sewell, would have been exposed to the hygienic discourse, medical breakthroughs and sanitation movements.

II. Regulating Alcohol Consumption

Braden Copper Company created a ban on the consumption of alcohol in the mine and in the mining town of Sewell. Alcoholism, similar to prostitution, was deemed a social disease that was unhygienic and immoral. BCC not only wanted to regulate the family and spaces of miners, but also wanted to regulate the social pastimes of the miners. The company publications targeted women to help uphold the compliance on the ban of alcohol.

In the mine, alcohol was one of the principal impediments to maintaining a permanent workforce. Fuenzalida Grandón’s wrote “the inebriated Chilean miner is a terrible threat to order.”72 Alcohol consumption hurt the production and efficiency of the mine. An article detailed that “the work was accomplished, and in fact was possible, only in defiance of the customs of the country. These, including immoderate consumption of liquor, and the observation of numerous fast days, besides Sundays, throughout the year, supposed to constitute the necessary evil on which it would be impossible to cope.”73 Moreover, the 1917 report “El Teniente” articulated that one of the first priorities of the welfare department was to “dispel the miner from the vice,

72 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 87. “El obrero chileno ebrio, es una terrible amenaza para el orden.”
73 Braden Copper Company, “Early History of the Braden Copper Company.”
mainly alcohol, which they have declared a relentless war upon.”74 Because alcohol was detrimental to business, the sale and consumption of alcohol was banned in the mine and BCC watched closely to ensure compliance with the ban.

When journalist Tancredo Pinochet visited the mine in 1920, he wrote “I asked the sergeant to find a house where there was a drunkard. I couldn’t find one, not today, or any other day of the year. I couldn’t find a bottle of wine or beer in the entire population, in the homes of the engineers or the bosses. Here there is an absolute ban on the consumption of alcohol.”75

There was even a joke in the restaurant at Sewell:

Visitor: What wine do you serve? White or Red?
Waiter: There is not wine of that type, there is only “Braden wine”
Visitor: Then, bring that.

The waiter brings a crystal bottle, shining with pure water, that really is of the highest class and extinguishes thirst more intensely than wine.76

While humor was certainly present in the mine, the ban on alcohol was very important to the company; it was another way of regulating the miner’s social behavior in order to increase worker productivity.

74 Marin Vicuña, “El Mineral de El Teniente,” 19. “…alejar al obrero del vicio y principalmente del alcohol, al cual le ha declarado una guerra cruda y sin cuartel.”
76 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 90. “Una broma corriente en Sewell es la siguiente:
Cuando llega una visita, el anfitrión o el mozo alegacionado que sirve a la mesa, seriamente pregunta:
-¿Qué vino se sirve?
 El interpelado contesta:
 -Blanco tal o tinto cual
 -No hai vino de esa marca, solo vino ‘Braden’
 -Traiga entonces, de ese.
 I aparece el botellón de cristal, reluciente con el agua pura, que realmente es de mui buena clase i apagadora de la sed por más intensa que sea.”
Discouraging unhygienic social pastimes

The company again used the rhetoric of hygiene in order to justify the prohibition of alcohol. The ban had “great hygienic, moral and practical significance, in a country like ours that has such a history of alcoholism.”\(^77\) The Chilean press applauded the ban on alcohol: “all that the company has done to end the introduction of liquor to the mine, deserves applaud and that is the good of ‘El Teniente,’ the lack of alcohol.”\(^78\) Prohibition was considered “moral” “hygienic” and “good,” by the Americans running the mine and the elite Chilean press.

Alcohol was seen as a social vice. To replace alcoholism, the company promoted social activities like sports and music. The Welfare Department established over 16 social clubs and activities, ranging from the “Turner Boxing Club” to the “Braden Military Band” and the “Teniente Chapter of the American Red Cross.”\(^79\) The American company attempted to exert total control over the social activities and spaces of the miners. The new social activities hoped to “attend to the conditions of hygiene and security, so essential to the collectivity [of the mine].”\(^80\) Gambling and drinking were social activities that brought men together, and BCC attempted to replace those masculine bonding activities with new ones.

Despite the ban on alcohol, there was an underground market of making, selling and consuming alcohol—and women were key players in that market. “As with all absolute prohibitions…the vice revives or wakes up.”\(^81\) The sellers of contraband alcohol were able to sneak in a fair amount of liquor, “primarily whiskey and cognac, which cost $25 to $30 for the

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 89. “gran significación higiénica, moral i práctica, en un país como el nuestro, de tan arraigado abolengo alcohólico.”

\(^{78}\) Cruz Cañas, “Sociabilidad obrero.” “Todo lo que hace la compañía para evitar la introducción de licor al mineral, es digno de aplauso y esto es bueno que hay en ‘El Teniente’, la falta de alcohol.”

\(^{79}\) Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 85–87.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 80. “…i atender a las condiciones de higiene i de seguridad, tan esenciales en una gran colectividad.”

\(^{81}\) Ibid., 88. “Como pasa con todas las prohibiciones absolutas…el vicio revive o despierta.”
first, and $10 to $12 for the second. When liquor is found it is confiscated: the bad liquor they throw out, and the good liquor they send to the hospital as remedy.”

The individuals who smuggled alcohol into the camp were referred to as “huachucheros” or “guachucheros.” The vigilance committee would make trips in search of the guachucheros. One day they went to the White River in search of the guachucheros, and were trying to prevent the guachucheros from entering the camp, when one of them took out a revolver a shot the member of the vigilance committee in the face. The guachuchero’s would buy alcohol in Rancagua and then put it in bags or tires around their bodies and sneak it into the camp. The sale of alcohol was happening in the “well of brothels and taverns in the hell of Rancagua, within walking distance of the white citadel.” Like prostitution, alcohol became equated with uncleanliness and sin. Again there was a dichotomy created between Rancagua and Sewell that placed Rancagua as hygienically and morally inferior to Sewell.

According to the Teniente Topics articles mentioned earlier, women who lived in the mine were expected to devote their lives to being clean and virtuous mothers and wives—not selling contraband alcohol. A story appeared in the company produced Teniente Topics in 1920

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82 Ibid. “principalemente wiski i coñac, que se expenden a $25 i $30—el primero i a $10 i $12 el segundo. El licor encontrado se confisca; el de mala clase se bota, i el mejor se envía al hospital como remedio.”
84 “La ciudad del crimen.” “…el pozo de los prostíbulos y tabernas que ofrecía al pie de la ciudadela blanca el inferno de Rancagua.”
on the Página Femenina, urging men not to drink, women not to tolerate drinking and children to
grow up to disdain alcohol.

Carlitos is a sad and shy boy who only plays with the crude little Italian boy. Carlitos
wants to be happy, but he is incapable. Why is he like this? Because his father isn’t like
the rest of Carlitos’ peer’s father. His father doesn’t kiss his mother and make her happy;
his mother cries all of the time. His father doesn’t go to work and drinks from sunrise to
sunset every day. He mistreats his wife and hits her. The fault is the storekeeper’s who
sells alcohol even though law prohibits it. Children: tomorrow when you are men, don’t
ever get drunk, and if any of you become legislators or lawyers, fight for prohibition. If
you ban alcohol, you will contribute to our nation, avoiding disgrace of many names and
sufferings of children like Carlitos. 85

The story of Carlitos aimed to teach women that if they sold contraband alcohol or complied
with their husband’s drinking, they would be mistreated and unhappy. Further, a poem entitled
“El Padre” that appeared in Teniente Topics in 1919, opened with the lines “He was always
drunk, and always fierce, beating his wife.” 86 The company wanted to create a clear association
between domestic violence and alcohol abuse. It was explicitly the women’s job to educate her
family on the harmfulness of alcohol and discourage her children and her husband from breaking
the ban on alcohol.

Alcohol outside the mine

In Sewell, there was a library that carried American and Chilean publications. The
American and Chilean publications stigmatized alcohol consumption. In 1916, Williams
Jennings Bryan made over 60 speeches in Ohio arguing that “opposition to the manufacture and
sale of intoxicating liquors rests upon the proposition that alcohol is a poison which taken into
the system, weakens the body, impairs the strength of the mine, and menaces the morals.” 87

86 Tourgueneff, “El Padre,” Teniente Topics, July 15, 1919. “Siempre borracho estaba, y siempre fiero,
pegaba a su mujer”  
1920, under the eighteenth amendment, prohibition was national. It was the “culmination of protracted local experimentation and of the steady education of public opinion in its favour.”

Alcohol was promoted in US publications as sinful and unhygienic.

Alcohol was regarded as an immoral substance, and the only way to combat alcoholism was with modern, hygienic medicine. According to a Life article in 1918, “if there is any alcohol in it is unethical and must go under the ban.”

In this era, advertisements began to appear for institutions that could sanitize and cure alcoholism. For example, this 1915 advertisement from Scribner’s calls for “baths” and “electricity” for alcohol patients. Modern treatment for alcoholism was linked with hygiene.

The hygienic discourse for banning alcohol was also gendered: alcoholism was a male disease that mothers had to help combat. In a 1915 article of McClure’s, “I can trace every sorrow and misfortune that came to my mother and me during the first sixteen years of my life to my father’s indulgences in liquor…I would cling tightly to her skirt and would whisper fearfully to her ‘Is it whiskey, Mother?’” Alcohol was portrayed as creating a disastrous home life, and it was always the male who tore the family apart by his drinking, and the female was the “educator” that tried “again and again” to help him. Similarly, in the 1919 Life Magazine article “Two Experts on Alcohol,” the character called “the mother” says to her boy “perhaps you

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88 Arthur Newsholme, Prohibition in America and Its Relation to the Problem of Public Control of Personal Conduct (London, 1921), 5.
89 “Ignorance About Drinks,” Life, February 21, 1918.
91 “Twelve Years with Alcohol: The Story of a Man Who Spent $70,000 Before He Quit,” McClure’s Magazine, August 1915.
would like to listen to my paper on the ‘Evils of Alcohol.’” Alcohol was equated to evil, and the woman was to lead the charge in the campaign against that evil. Mothers directed the fight against the evil sickness of alcoholism because they were virtuous and clean.

Similarly, in Chilean publications, alcohol was regarded as a sin that needed to be cleaned. The 1918, *El Mercurio* article “Liga Chilena de Higiene Social,” (Chilean Social Hygiene League) said that the League’s duty is to “combat the most grave social malady: alcoholism, and especially the sale of toxic drinks in the houses of prostitution.” The article explains alcoholism and prostitution as the social vices that needed to be cleansed; however, a ban on alcohol was never institutionalized in Chile as it was in the United States. Overall alcohol was far less present in Chilean magazines and publications than in American ones.

Both nation’s publications were easily accessible to the men who created the rules and regulations pertaining to alcohol at El Teniente. The US federal prohibition and the discourse of the evils of alcohol in the American publications would have surely influenced the decision to ban alcohol in El Teniente and Sewell.

The rhetoric of hygiene infiltrated the construction, regulations, and minds of Americans and Chileans in the El Teniente mine. The American and Chilean publications in the mine’s library presented a discourse that promoted hygiene and rejected prostitution and alcoholism. While hygiene was critical to both nations, the American magazines were predominately more explicit in their rejection of alcohol, and the Chilean magazines were extremely critical of prostitution.

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III. Hygiene and Modernity in the Mine

*Braden Copper Company primarily implemented the rules and regulations about physical spaces, family organization and alcohol to increase worker productivity and increase copper production and profit. But, the hygienic rules were also a means of projecting the status of the mine and the status of the men who ran the mine. Sewell was the fruition of an elite, male-dominated vision of modernity and progress.*

Hygiene was not only a way to regulate family, but it was a way to propel Chile into modernity. Fuenzalida Grandón wrote in a footnote “all of the civilized countries, and especially the mining countries, have given significant attention to the homes of miners and to the hygiene of the laborers in the interior of the mine.” BCC sought to become an enclave of modernity by tackling hygienic problems. Similarly, in a 1917 *Teniente Topics* article, the author wrote “we have learned that this ordinance [the requirement of legal documentation of marriage in the camp], which has received so much sympathy from the true lovers of the future of Chile.” By enforcing hygienic spaces and nuclear families, the company was investing in Chile’s development.

Progress within the mining community was believed to only be achievable with the help of Americans. In an article in *El Mercurio*, Enrique Stuven wrote “the North American company that exploits the El Teniente mine could not have found capitalists in our country to carry out a company of the alluded magnitude.” The initial version of *Teniente Topics* was published in English in June, 1915 with the purpose of

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94 Fuenzalida Grandón, *El trabajo i la vida en el mineral ‘El Teniente.’* “Todos los países civilizados, y en especial los países mineros, han prestado una atención significativa a los hogares de los mineros y a la higiene de los trabajadores en el interior de la mina.”

95 *Braden Copper Company, “Construcción legal de las familias en el Mineral ‘El Teniente.’”* “Hemos aprendido que esta ordenanza, que ha recibido tanta simpatía de los verdaderos amantes del futuro de Chile.”

“work and play, for there are many who have never lived in a mining camp and who are apt to think of us as marooned, that our existence is one of work without pleasure, in a distant land… Teniente Topics by accurate portrayal will try to give a keener insight into the joys and sorrows of our daily work, and to draw all by a band of common interest.”

The magazine provided a window into the mine for American outsiders. The early issues of the magazine contained articles like “A Hunting trip into the Argentine,” “The Caletones Races,” and “The 1915 Tennis Tournament,” that aimed to establish the mine and the people working in the mine at the forefront of modernism and elite culture. In 1917, the US government’s Department of Commerce wrote that “the foreign colonies in Chile are represented by… The Teniente Topics, a monthly magazine in English published by the employees of the Braden Copper Co., at Sewell, Rancagua.” The magazine was seen as the American voice in Chile in the early 20th century—and the voice was modern and elite.

The physical components of the mining town were built to project modernity. Marin Vicuña wrote in Sewell there are

“two Spanish schools and one in English… two hospitals, attended by three doctors and a third in construction; two movie theatres that worked every night; seven football clubs; two tennis courts; two social clubs, that periodically offer receptions for the families; a sporting club…; a wonderful brigade of boy-scouts; a band of musicians with twenty-eight instruments; a finally this intense social life, is periodically published in a magazine that is edited in two languages”

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97 Teniente Topics, June, 1915.
99 Marin Vicuña, “El Mineral de El Teniente,” 20-21. “…en Sewell existen dos escuelas en español y una en inglés… dos hospitales, atendidos por tres médicos y un tercero en construcción; dos biógrafos, que funcionan todas las noches; siete asociaciones de foot-ball; dos canchas de tennis; dos clubs sociales, que periódicamente ofrecen recepciones a las familias; un Sporting Club…; una hermosa brigada de boy-scouts; una banda de músicos con veintiocho instrumentos, y por último, para estimular toda esa Vida Social intensa, se publica mensual y lujosamente ilustrada, una revista que se edita en dos idiomas, The Teniente Topics…”
Sewell sought to be more than just a place for miners to live—it wanted to be a cutting edge society that fundamentally reordered male and female relationships. The Chilean elite looked towards the United States, and the American owned companies in Chile, as a model of progress.

Conclusion

It was presupposed that modernity and progress were only possible in communities that were organized into male-headed nuclear families, where men engaged in productive social activities and women dominated the home and kept the spaces and the family hygienic. The founding members of Sewell believed that progress was possible at the mining town because it had the North American men guiding the town towards a hygienic utopia. In contrast, Rancagua was dirty and behind the times because it did not have elite, American men forcing the city to change. The North American men who envisioned and established Sewell created a system that aimed at cleaning up the Chilean population—if Sewell and its inhabitants were hygienic, it would serve as an example to the surrounding towns and eventually to the country as a whole. The development and advancement of Chile was only possible if the American men cleaned it up.
Digging Below the Surface: Women and Family in the El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1930

Chapter 2: Development of the Domestic and International Economy

One of the principal duties of women in Sewell was to monitor and oversee the household budget and all of the families’ spending and saving. The families were living in the heart of a commodity-based economy that was subject to booms and busts based on the international climate. Women had to navigate a constantly changing financial environment, while receiving contrasting messages on frugality and spending.

I. Frugality and Sexuality

Cost of living

Braden Copper Company incentivized miners to endure grueling working conditions in the copper mine by paying high wages. In his 1919 report on work and life in the El Teniente mine, Alejandro Fuenzalida Grandón wrote about the economic conditions of single miners and miners with families. The minimum wage was $4.50 a day (and the average wage was $6.30 in 1917), so the lowest paid workers were making about $27 a week. “The single men eat at the homes of married workers: they take ‘pension’ daily or weekly, and some hotels have up to 80 pensions.” Rather than do their own domestic tasks, single men pay between $10 and $17 a week, for daily breakfast, two plates of lunch, and two plates of food and tea prepared by married women. Since housing was free and the weekly pension was one of the few costs of living “the economic margin was not insignificant.” To analyze the economic conditions of families, Fuenzalida Grandón looked at the incomes and expenditures of 20 families. The total monthly inflow (all of the families’ incomes combined) was broken down into the males’ salary which was $4465, the females’ salary of $282, and the money from pensions was $2496—totaling to $7443. The total monthly costs for the family was $5960.04, which was broken down into food, clothing, fuel, light and other costs. Food costs were 54.83% of expenses, clothing was 11.58%,
fuel was 8.28%, light was 2.13% and other costs were 3.22%. According to Fuenzalida Grandón, two of the twenty families had a deficit and the other eighteen made a monthly profit. The company tried to limit the employees’ expenditures, thus foodstuff was not typically sold for a profit in the company store. Fuenzalida Grandón wrote that “Mr. James, the boss of the store, told me that 95% of items are sold at cost or less than at cost.”

In 1919, according to company reports, the cost of living in the mine was significantly lower than living in Rancagua. “From these figures it is clear that the workers' families enjoy a economic well-being... it seems that the economic condition of these families is far superior to the great majority of the working families of other industrial centers of country.” In order to attract labor, Braden Copper Company spent a significant amount of money on housing and lowering costs of necessities for.

However, the cost of living was frequently a contentious issue between employees and management. In 1924, a miner wrote a letter in the *El Teniente* article “El precio de subsistencia,” which articulated that “Life in this mine is made more and more impossible because of the enormous cost of basic necessities. A married worker, with two children, with no other income other than his salary, cannot live on daily wage of 10 pesos.” In response, the superintendent of the Welfare Department wrote an article on the cost of living. The superintendent apparently conducted a study to compare the caloric intake of workers in various countries concluding “In Germany the worker consumes substances that give him 3055 calories. The French worker needs 4266 calories, while his English companion is content with 3475 ... but in Sewell, according to our research, the worker consumes elements that provide him with 4715 calories.

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102 Ibid., 105. “Mr. James, jefe del almacén, me decía el 95% se vende al costo o a menos del costo.”
103 Ibid., 94. “En todo caso, parece que puede inferirse que la condición económica de estas familias es mui superior a la gran mayoría de las familias obreras de otros centros industriales del país.”
104 Braden Copper Company, “El precio de la subsistencia,” *El Teniente*, 1924. “Un obrero casado, con dos hijos, que no tenga otra entrada más que su salario, no puede vivir en ésta con un jornal al día de diez pesos.”
calories, a figure that indicates a number undoubtedly superior to his needs.”

Superintendent Walker clearly was trying to illustrate how the employees of Sewell were profligate in their food intake. He went on to say “Five years ago, or the year 1919, the average salary was $7.43 and the cost of living per family was $153.59 a month; last year the average salary was $10.01 and the cost of living was $175.53, which is to say that the cost of living has increased 14.3% while the average salary has increased 34%.” The predominately North American managers were trying to tell the employees of Braden Copper Company not to complain over costs of living because their salaries were more than sufficient to cover the costs. The disagreement over prices and costs remained a constant source of conflict between employees and employers at El Teniente. Despite the disputes being between male managers and male workers, a family’s financial management was deemed an exclusively female responsibility.

Women as money managers

Miners’ wives were typically responsible for the spending and saving of their husbands’ earnings. It was believed that “the financial state of the family depends exclusively on the criterion which the housewife make her purchases.” Money management was believed to be a woman’s duty because money was critical to the maintenance of the domestic sphere: money was spent on items for the home and the family. An article on the Página femenina of Teniente Topics in 1921 articulated that “it [the family’s financial management] is the task of the

105 Braden Copper Company, “El costo de la vida,” El Teniente, May 24, 1924. “En Alemania el obrero consume materias que le proporcionan 3055 calorías. El trabajador francés necesita 4266 calorías, mientras su compañero inglés se contenta con 3475...pero en Sewell, según nuestras investigaciones, el obrero consume elementos que le proporcionan 4715 calorías, guarismo éste que indica un consumo indudablemente superior a sus necesidades”

106 Ibid. “Hace cinco años o sea el año 1919, el salario medio era de $7,43 y el costo de la vida $153.59 por familia-mes; el año pasado el salario medio era de $10.01 y el costo de la vida $175,53, o sea, mientras el costo de la vida ha subido en un 14.3%, el salario ha subido un 34% sobre aquella época.”

107 Ibid. “el estado financiero de la familia depende exclusivamente del criterio con que la dueña de casa haga los gastos”
housewife, because the natural tendency of men is to not appear as stingy in front of his better half.”  

The author did not argue that women are superior to men at wealth management, but instead suggested that men inherently want to show off or please their wives, which is not financially sustainable. Similarly in the article “La mujer directora del hogar,” the author wrote that the wife “must be the one who limits her husband’s lavish initiatives and reduces the expenses to their true level.” The financial stability of the family rested on the woman’s ability to manage money, even though she typically had no control over the inflow of income.

The men and women living at the El Teniente mine followed the strict adherence to the sexual division of labor. Men were meant to make money, and the women were to save that money. “Women should always try to make the best use of the money that the husband receives, considering the painful efforts, the enormous sacrifices and even the humiliations that the husband suffers many times to satisfy this obligation.” Men were depicted as the heroes that suffered to bring home money, only for women to spend it frivolously, unless there was an intervention by BCC or another authority figure to teach her otherwise. Women were taught, through company-published literature and through vocational school courses, to be sensible consumers and to save money.

Braden Copper Company literature often focused on the necessity for women to limit their spending. The Página femenina of Teniente Topics continuously articulated that the ideal woman should be frugal. In the 1920 article “La mujer en su casa y en la sociedad,” Susana

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108 Braden Copper Company, “Para las dueñas de casa.” “La dueña de casa hacerse cargo de esta tarea, por cuanto que, la natural tendencia de los hombres, es de no aparecer como tacaños ante la vista de su cara mitad.”


110 Ibid. “La mujer debe tratar siempre de aprovechar del mejor modo posible, con la mayor economia, el dinero que recibe el marido, considerando los penosos esfuerzos, las enormes sacrificio y hasta las humillaciones que éste sufre muchas veces para satisfacer esta obligación.”
Maler wrote that “Without wanting to encourage women to frivolity and expense, it can be said that a sensible woman can, without greater expenses, be better and more elegantly dressed than another that spends more.”\footnote{111} Not only were women not to spend money on their clothing, but they were also to furnish and maintain a humble home. To create a humble home “a woman may have only a modest living room, furnished with old and used furniture.”\footnote{112} The company urged women to spend as little money as possible on clothing and furnishings, as well as to minimize the amount spent on food and necessities. For example, in the article “La economía en los alimentos” (The Economy of Foodstuff) the author implored women to learn how to bake their own bread to save money.\footnote{113} The article also emphasized how women could use stale bread and leftover bones in their cooking in order to not be wasteful. In addition, spending money frivolously was demonized. One article said “whoever spends more than they have is a vulgar robber.”\footnote{114} Frugality was one of the pillars of being a respectable woman and wife in the Sewell mining community.

The company also did not assume that frugality was an innate quality, but that women had to be taught how to limit their spending. In a 1929 article “Contabilidad casera” (Home Accounting) the author wrote “the housewife is in charge of the attendance to the interior expenses, she must carry a book to write down the money she receives and the money she spends.” Women had to carry around a book because otherwise they would say, “but I don’t
know what I spent the money on; I don’t know where the money went.” The company published articles and pamphlets with tips and lessons for women to save money, and to be held accountable for their purchases. Additionally, many of the vocational courses for women offered at the schools in Sewell were on the domestic economy. In schools, women were “to be educated and formed into good housewives, who are not burdens to their parents first or to their husbands after, which occurs when women don’t have any preparation to direct a home.”

Teniente Topics explicitly articulated that

> “Above all, let us raise the culture of working women, intensify in this the home, cultivate and fortify their feelings of dignity and honor, strive for the correct management of the home, instill in it the spirit of order, economy and foresight and instruct it in that group of practices of urbanity that make each woman a respectful, affable, attentive and affectionate wife.”

The company took it upon themselves to “raise the culture of working women.” Gender roles had to redefined by the company, and women had to be cultivated and cultured to live up to their new responsibilities. A Chilean woman had to be taught to be frugal and to be a good wife who didn’t wantonly spend her husband’s hard earned money.

Women were not only supposed to be prudent consumers, but were also meant to manage and save the family’s money. Women were taught to save a significant portion of the money their husbands earned in order to preserve their marriage and family. One woman, Ester, wrote in

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115 Braden Copper Company, “Contabilidad casera,” *El Teniente*, January 9, 1929. “…para atender los gastos interiores debe llevar un libro, en el cual anote lo que recibe y lo que gasta… ‘Pero no sé en qué se ha gastado el dinero; no sé cómo se va la plata.’

116 Braden Copper Company, “Enseñanza vocacional,” *El Teniente*, October 10, 1922. “Ellas se conforman con educar y formar buenas dueñas de casa, que no sean una carga para los padres primero y para los maridos después, cual son las que sin ninguna preparación tienen que dirigir un hogar.”

117 “La felicidad en el hogar modesto,” *El Teniente*, February 22, 1926. “Sobre todo, elevemos la cultura de la mujer obrera, intensifiquemos en esta el a su hogar, cultivemos y fortifiquemos sus sentimientos de dignidad y honor, esforzémonos el manejo correcto de ella, inculquemosle el espíritu de orden, economía y previsión e instruyamosla en ese conjunto de prácticas de urbanidad que hacen de cada obrera una esposa respetuosa, afable, atenta y cariñosa.”
1921 that her husband made 200 pesos per month, and she would save one eighth (or 25 pesos) each month. The housewives at Sewell had an active role in the financial planning of the family because it was what was expected in a successful marriage. Ester goes on to argue that she saves money “because a family who lives at their means and doesn’t save a single cent, is a ruined marriage, and is more likely to end when least expected”\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “Para las dueñas de casa.” “porque una familia que vive de lo que se fana y no logra ahorrar un solo centavo, es un matrimonio arruinado.”} In the 1920 Teniente Topics article “El Matrimonio” the author defined the aspects of marriage as religious, moral and economic. Marriage is “economical if one considers that the communion of efforts and capital as a source of wealth.”\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “El matrimonio,” Teniente Topics, 1920. “Económico si se considera que la comunión de esfuerzos y capitales fuente de riquezas”} The collective wealth of a couple was seen as one of the most important characteristics of marriage; giving women the exclusive and active role of saving the family’s wealth was a large responsibility. BCC published material that held that financial planning and stability were the glue of a successful marriage. And the demise of a marriage was not simply in the inability to save money, but in “feminine vanity.”\footnote{Ibid.} When women were unable to save money they were unable to hold a family together.

\textit{Parsimony and virtue}

Frugality was formed not only to be a lifestyle choice, but also to be an important virtue. Girls were instructed to be virtuous from a young age, and part of being virtuous was being parsimonious. The fourth principal in the 1926 “Decálogo para las niñas” (Decalogue for girls) was “be modest before beautiful and always good.”\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “Decálogo para las niñas,” El Teniente, June 15, 1926. “Piensa en ser modesta antes que bella, y siempre buena.”} Modesty was an ideal that was primarily applied to physical appearances and relations with men; but it was also applicable to financial
frugality. The ideal housewife “should not make a lot of noise, nor attract looks, she should pass without calling attention to the family.”\textsuperscript{122} Wives were meant to be modest in their personal lives, which included their appearances, actions and financial decisions. “Living in a decent and economical way, when there are few resources…is not purely and simply and economic question, but also a moral one.”\textsuperscript{123} Living humbly became equated with living honorably, and both were connected with a fruitful marriage and family life.

An intimate connection was formed between sexual and financial modesty. In a \textit{Teniente Topics} article a woman named Berta wrote a rebuttal to the article “Para las dueñas de casa” by Ester; Ester had argued that financial planning was the means to keep a family together. In response, Berta wrote that one of her daughters, who never saved money and was desired as a single girl, had a successful marriage; but her other daughter who “had a soul of God” when she was young had an unsuccessful marriage. She argued that this occurred because “man is not the sole King of creation; but love is also. Love can be kind or tyrannical, depending on the case.”\textsuperscript{124} The disagreement between Berta and Ester illustrates that while \textit{Teniente Topics} was financed and owned by Braden Copper Company, the articles were not pure propaganda. There was room for dispute and critique. While Berta made a solid argument that love, not fiscal responsibility, is the key ingredient in the success of marriage, she does not question the connection between lavishness and loose morals that was being articulated by Braden Copper Company. Spending money became associated with being sexually frivolous. “She should think only of the

\textsuperscript{122} Braden Copper Company, “La buena dueña de casa,” \textit{Teniente Topics}, 1920. “…no hacer ruido, no atraer las miradas y pasar sin llamar atención en la familia.”
\textsuperscript{123} “La felicidad en el hogar modesto.” “…y esto no es ésta pura y simplemente una cuestión económica, sino también moral.”
\textsuperscript{124} Braden Copper Company, “Para Ester,” \textit{Teniente Topics}, 1921. “…el hombre no sólo es el Rey de la creación; sino también es el Amo, Amo bondadoso o tiránico, según los casos; pero Amo, al fin, de nuestros hogares.”
necessities of the family, because she is not busy earning money for the family…The girl who is desired when she is single, is the worst when she is married. She who is flirtatious when single, when married is irresistible, and she will result in loss when her husband loses faith in her.”

A connection was created between promiscuity and spending money.

There was a clear dichotomy between women who maintained a financially sound home and women who spent money lavishly and did not save; that dichotomy corresponded to morality, the former was morally good and the latter was morally corrupt. One 1928 article said “It is necessary to have some constant money and some provisions for bad times; but most of all it is urgent to possess principles, some rules for directing life and behavior.” If women had the discipline to live an upright life they would also have the discipline to be prudent with spending and saving money. Frugality became attached to the ideals and virtues that were promulgated by the Braden Copper Company.

*Social mobility through consumerism*

While modesty was supposedly championed over beauty in BCC literature, the sexual contract that underlay the maintenance of the family and marriage required women to work to uphold a certain physical appearance. One article told women that they “must try to make themselves agreeable, not only by their amiability, but also by their manner of dressing.” Another author wrote that “here in the Mine I have seen many women, married and single, all

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125 Braden Copper Company, “Para las dueñas de casa.” “Ella puede pensar detenidamente en las necesidades de la familia, por cuanto que no está atareada en ganar el dinero para el mantenimiento de la familia…La muchacha que es deseada cuando soltera, lo es, peor cuando casada. La que coqueta cuando soltera, cuando casada es irresistibile, y ella es la que resulta perdiendo cuando el marido pierde la confianza en ella.”

126 C Wagner, “El valor moral,” *El Teniente*, January 9, 1928. “Es necesario tener algún dinero constante y algunas provisiones para los males tiempos; pero más que todo, es urgente poseer algunos principios rectos, algunas reglas para dirigir la vida y la conducta.”

127 Braden Copper Company, “El aseo personal,” *Teniente Topics*, March 15, 1920. “…deben tratar de hacerse agradables, no sólo por su amabilidad, sino también por su manera de vestirse”
disheveled and dirty, that are repugnant to pass by.”

The Welfare Department even sponsored beauty contests for the camps’ women. Women were meant to maintain physical cleanliness and beauty in order to preserve their marriage, as “the grooming and the care of her person should also be for the woman of careful attention. Hopefully your husband will never have the chance to meet another woman.” Beauty was seen as something that could be and should be worked towards in order for women to maintain their husband’s attention. It was the woman’s duty to upkeep her physical appearance so that her husband remained faithful. It was contradictory that women were meant to both actively work on their appearance and abjure vanity in favor of frugality.

Women were not only expected to live up to a certain beauty standard, but were also expected to make their homes into places of social gathering so that their husbands and children wouldn’t have to go out. “The home should be the first and preferred social center of the family. If husbands and children run away from their homes in search of other environments, it is because they do not find food, shelter, comfort of the soul, longing and social needs.” Since the home was seen as the “school of civility, morals and virtues” of the family, if a woman’s husband or children were spending their free time away from home it was supposed that they were doing something that wasn’t in line with traditional values. It was therefore the wife’s fault if her husband was spending his time going off to Rancagua and frequenting taverns and

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128 Ibid. “…yo he visto aquí en el Mineral a muchos mujeres ya casadas o solteras, todas desgreñadas y sucia de la cara, que da repugnancia pasar cerca de ellas.”

129 Klubock, Contested Communities, 65.

130 Braden Copper Company, “La mujer directora del hogar.” “El aseo y el cuidado de su persona habrán de ser también para la mujer de una atención esmerada.”

131 Braden Copper Company, “El hogar,” El Teniente, September 8, 1926. “El hogar debe ser el primero y preferido centro social de la familia. Si hay maridos e hijos que se escapan del hogar en busco de otros ambientes, es porque en él no encuentran el alimento, el abrigo, el confort del alma, el anhelo y necesidades sociales.”
brothels. “Entertainment and friends will have much less appeal to the man who has a neat, tidy home…where the loving hand of his wife who puts the house in order is seen.” A good wife was to maintain a clean home, entertain her husband and children, and not be an “obstacle in the happiness and sociability of the home.” This vision of the home could only be achieved by families that were financially capable of dedicating money to costs that went beyond the basic necessities.

In 2006, Sewell was declared a UNESCO world heritage site. One of the large signs overlooking the El Teniente mine reads “Sewell’s diverse middle class” and goes on to say “given the variety of jobs, there was a high level of social mobility in Sewell, particularly for the workers who were often promoted to employee positions. The work ethic instilled by the American bosses with its marked emphasis on individual effort and merit contributed to this social mobility.” Even today, social mobility is seen as a hallmark of life in the Sewell mining town.

Braden Copper Company articulated that a family’s social mobility would be possible through cultural improvement, education, moral behavior and the organization of gender relations to conform to an ideal of domesticity. BCC translated the language of families increasing social standing, to Chile’s mobility in the global economy.

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132 Braden Copper Company, “La mujer directora del hogar.” “Las entretenciones, los amigos, tendrán mucho menos atractivos para el hombre que posea un hogar aseado, ordenado... donde se vea la mano cariñosa de la esposa que arregla su casa.”
133 Braden Copper Company, “El hogar.” “las mujeres somos a muchas veces el mayor obstáculo de la alegría y sociabilidad del hogar”
134 Sign at Sewell
In the early 20th century, Braden Copper Company assumed that women were susceptible targets for an ideology of social mobility. There was an establishment of an ideal domestic space, which was not only defined by virtues and morals, but by the consumption of material goods like furniture, clothing, and appliances. The company welfare department opened up a “model home” which “will also be a means of stimulating the merchants located here, by offering the population furnishings that are economic and suitable to the particular living conditions of the mining town.” Through consumerism, women were given the space to imagine a better material life. The company paper frequently introduced women to modern forms of clothing, household furnishings and décor. Women were urged to aspire to new lifestyles, which were wrapped around the idea of wealth augmentation.

**Consumerism outside the mine**

Middle class consumerism proliferated American publications in the 1920s. There was a vast amount of advertisements in American publications concerning feminine beauty and material goods to augment appearance. For example, in *Life Magazine* in 1919 Resinol Soap placed an advertisement with the title “Make him proud of your complexion” and with the description “He wants you to look your best.” Physical appearance was heralded as necessary for successful relationships and marriages, and the market was flooded with products that would help women achieve that appearance. Another advertisement for Boncilla facial creams in *McClure’s* read “you can feel Boncilla bringing out the beauty in your face.” Material items were required to meet beauty standards. There was also a standard for furnishings and home

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135 Braden Copper Company, “Casa modelo para obreros,” *El Teniente*, 1923. “A la vez será un medio de estimular a los comerciantes aquí radicados, para preocuparse de ofrecer a la población los artículos de menaje más económicos y adecuados a las especiales condiciones de vida de estas faenas.”


appliances that households had to be equipped with. An article on “Health and Beauty” articulated that “your bed should contain a mattress, sheets, and a blanket, and should be so arranged as to roll out of the window at one end.”\textsuperscript{138} In addition, household appliances were advertised specifically towards women: an advertisement for Whiting-Adams Household Brushes read “You’ve certainly got to hand it to her! For she knows a good brush.”\textsuperscript{139} American women were targeted for middle class consumerism in products related to the beauty and maintenance of appearance and of the household. The rhetoric of materialism in the North American publications was similar to that of the Braden Copper Company published literature; however, the message of the connection between frugality and virtue was not articulated to nearly the same degree in the US publications as it was in Sewell.

Similar to the North American magazines, Chilean publications continuously promoted material culture. In each issue of the magazine \textit{Sucesos} there was a page called “Notas Femeninas,” which often contained articles about fashion and beauty. Consumerism was increasingly globalized in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. For example, women in Chile would have access to the latest clothing trends in Paris through magazines and newspapers. The magazine \textit{La Familia}, was a women’s magazine that had pages filled with articles on “Winter fashions,”

\textsuperscript{138} “Health and Beauty” J. Hornung Musclebounder, May 15, 1919
“Modern dances,” and “The beautiful home.” There were even advertisements in Spanish for a menstrual medication made by the Ulrici Medicine Company based in New York. The advertisement for the medicine said “The health of the woman is exposed to the infirmities of her sex and it is urgent to attend to the needs of her nature…[the product] stimulates, fortifies, vitalizes and returns the appearance of well-being, joy, beauty and a woman’s natural coloring.” The medicine company believed speaking to women’s physical appearance would convince women to buy their product. Similar to the advertisements in the American publications, advertisements in the Chilean publications targeted women as the consumers of beauty products, furniture and household appliances. Advice columns focused on flower arranging, and timing of meals rather than warning women about frivolity and promiscuity.

The early twentieth century was an age of increased consumerism in both the United States and Chile, and women in both countries were identified as key players in the consumer goods markets. In the book Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and Social Roots of the Consumer Culture, Stuart Ewen argues that the growth of advertisements in the early 20th century reinforced strict gender roles. Most key employees of advertising agencies were men, and women were the consumers. Thus, when advertisers spoke to women it was with a male, authoritative voice. The magazines that were present in the BCC library were carriers of materiality and the women living in Sewell would have had access to the advertisements, women’s pages and advice columns that promoted consumerism. But, neither the American nor

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140 La Familia 221 (May 1928).
141 “The Ulrici Medicine Company Advertisement,” El Mercurio de Valparaiso, November 11, 1918. “La salud de la mujer está expuesta a achaques propios de su sexo y es urgente atender a las necesidades de su naturaleza…. Estimula, fortifica, vitaliza y devuelve la apariencia de bienestar, alegría, belleza y buenos colores propios de la mujer”
the Chilean magazines focused on the importance of frugality for familial harmony. The mining community occupied a unique cultural space that concurrently promoted materialism and prudence.

II. The Booms and Busts of the International Copper Industry

The Sewell community was in the heart of a commodity based economy that was subject to dramatic swings in demand that profoundly affected the economic stability of mining families. Sewell’s relationship to the international commodity markets influenced the cultural adoption of frugality as a virtue. Prudent consumerism and saving money at the family level was seen as a stepping stone to Chile’s development into modern nation.

While generally the miners received higher wages than the average Chilean worker, there were moments of great financial hardship for the employees of the Braden Copper Company. The climate of the international copper often dictated the survival of the workers and their families. When global demand for copper decreased and prices fell, the Kennecott Company (owner of Braden Copper Company) in New York would order drastic production cuts. Partial shutdowns would result in large dismissals or wage cuts. Employees were unprotected by Chilean law, and when an individual was fired he would be given two weeks’ wages and then would be put on a train to Rancagua with his family.

After the first World War there was an abrupt drop in the demand for copper in the global market, as well as increased inflation and unemployment in Chile, which directly influenced the well-being of the miners’ and their families.\(^{143}\) In Chile, the total production of copper was 106,800 tons in 1918, dropping to 79,600 tons in 1919 and again to 59,200 tons by 1921.\(^{144}\) This decrease was felt profoundly in the El Teniente mine. In 1919, “it has been resolved to deal with this crisis, not with a general reduction of salary as was done in 1914, nor a major and graduated reduction as has been done elsewhere, but we are going to adjust the prices of the stores to put

\(^{143}\) Codelco, *Cobre Chileno*, 1975, 33,

\(^{144}\) Codelco, *Cobre Chileno*. 
them on a commercial basis that means their economic autonomy.”\textsuperscript{145} In response to the company’s decision to increase prices in the company stores, there was a violent and prolonged strike by the miners at El Teniente in 1919.\textsuperscript{146} And in December 1920, the company in New York told El Teniente’s mine manager that due to the lack of global demand for copper, El Teniente would reduce production by about one third, and “the result of this reduction in production is the separation of about 2100 men.”\textsuperscript{147} An article in \textit{El Mercurio} appearing only a few days after the memorandum from New York entitled “Dos mil empleadas y operarios quedan sin trabajo” the author wrote that “the Braden Copper Company representative reiterated the deep regret that the company feels about taking these measures that are so sensitive to the employees and operators for whom the company has always had the greatest consideration.”\textsuperscript{148} A month later, Edmond Guggenheim an owner of the Kennecott Copper Company visited El Teniente. In an article in \textit{La Estrella}, it was reported that Guggenheim said that the company reduced its personnel at the “last minute, hardly reducing production and as far as construction work and waterproofing these have been followed without any interruption, in accordance with the future and the next resurgence of the industry that will require a lot of production.”\textsuperscript{149} He was implicitly saying that rather than completely halting all construction for future production, the

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\textsuperscript{145} S.S. Sörensen, “Memo to All Employees of Braden Copper Company,” May 23, 1919.
\textsuperscript{146} Eduardo Castillo Alarcón, \textit{Sucesos de la Braden Copper Company (El Teniente)} (Chile: publisher not identified, 2000).
\textsuperscript{147} L.E. Grant, “Letter from Gerente General to Señor Intendente,” December 13, 1920, Archivo Nacional de Chile. “la resulta de la reducción de producción es la separación de apropiadamente 2100 hombres.”
\textsuperscript{148} “…el representante de la BCC nos reiteró el pesar que experimenta la compañía al tener que tomar estas medidas que son tan sensibles para los empleados y operarios para quienes he tenido siempre la mayor consideración.”
\textsuperscript{149} “Optimistas opiniones sobre la industria del cobre,” \textit{La Estrella}, January 20, 1921. “Ha esperado hasta última hora, disminuyendo apenas la producción y en cuanto a los trabajos de construcciones y engrandecimientos, estos se han seguido sin interrupción alguna, en conformidad con el futuro y muy próximo resurgimiento de la industria que exigirá muchísima producción.”
\end{flushleft}
company reduced costs through personnel cuts because it would be easier to quickly hire people than quickly start physical building. The company placed a greater importance on the mine’s ability to make a profit over the financial stability of the miners. The macro-economic conditions profoundly impacted the day-to-day lives of the miners and their families.

As Guggenheim predicted, by 1922 there was a rebound in the global demand for copper and in response production was increased at the El Teniente mine. An article in El Mercurio in January, 1922 said Braden Copper Company was ready to “increase copper productions, news that was naturally flattering since it could lead to economic and social improvement for our country and especially for the labor element which was temporarily abandoned.”

By the late 1920s the copper market was booming again. Below is a table of El Teniente’s production of blister (partly purified copper) and refined copper from 1922-1953.

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150 “Mineral El Teniente,” El Mercurio, January 17, 1922. “De aumentar la producción de cobre, noticia que naturalmente era halagadora, puesto que podía traducirse en un mejoramiento económico y social para nuestro país y en especial para el elemento trabajador que por razón de la había debido abandonar momentáneamente esas labores.”

151 Braden Copper Company, Mineral El Teniente: en estas páginas se ofrece una síntesis de la génesis, el desarrollo y la organización de los diversos campamentos de Braden Copper Company, 1971, 6.
The dramatic shifts not only affected the miners and their families, but also the broader Chilean economy which was dominated by the copper industry. Copper contributed more and more to the overall Chilean economy each year. In 1925 the government imposed a new 6 percent tax on copper mining companies, as well as imposing another levy which raised the tax rate on copper mining to 12 percent. Copper production not only increased the Kennecott Company’s profit, but also more of the company’s profits remained in Chile than ever before. There was a dangerous reliance on foreign markets, which was highlighted by the effects on the mining families during the sharp recession following World War I, despite the recoveries made later in the decade.

The always changing value of copper influenced the contradictory rhetoric directed towards women around the domestic economy. The families had to prepare for the worst because of the constant fear that a change in demand would leave the breadwinner without work; but, they also were often placed in the position of being financially in the upper ranks of the middle class. It is unsurprising that the Página femenina and the explicit articulation of the ideal women as frugal and virtuous began in 1920 and continued through the 1920s. From 1904 to 1915 the demand for copper was growing steadily, thus production and employment opportunities within the mine were also increasing. So, the focus was not placed frugality. During WWI copper demand grew exponentially and the company encouraged the formation of nuclear families in order to maintain a reliable and steady workforce. A critical part of the nuclear family composition was the ideal woman, who would be able to lure her husband from drinking and gambling to virtuous social pastimes within the home. She had to be physically attractive and make her home socially attractive to have a successful marriage. Thus, during this period there

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was increased attention on social mobility through material culture. But, when the demand collapsed in 1920 the company had to cut production and employees. The company began to encourage financial tightening from the family unit to the company as a whole. Consequently, women continued to be told that they should be concerned with superficiality and material goods, but should also not succumb to vanity. The macro economic conditions had deep impacts on the daily lives of the women and families living in the copper mining town at El Teniente. Living in a company town profoundly exacerbated the influence of the commodity-based economy.

*Development of the home and the country*

Braden Copper Company believed saving money should start at the familial level, directed by the woman, and then expand to the country as a whole. The article “La familia” articulated that “The family is the cell, the principle and the first component of society; it is there that States are formed, since it is there that the men who compose them are formed.” Women were supposed to be forward looking and to be economic and moral stewards of the future. “The task of women should not only be cooking and washing, their duty is linked to great social interests and linked to the future of the people: their work, because it goes beyond what we believe and higher than we think, must act in holier and more sublime spheres after the simple daily work of the home.” Articles published by Braden Copper Company continued to assert the higher purpose of women’s domestic and familial responsibility. In the article “Women in

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153 Braden Copper Company, “La familia,” *El Teniente*, June 22, 1924. “…la familia es la célula, el principio y el primer componente de la sociedad; es allí donde se forman los Estados, puesto que es allí donde se forman los hombres que han de componerlos.”

154 Braden Copper Company, “Organización femenina,” *Teniente Topics*, February 1920. “La tarea de la mujer no debe ser solamente la cocina y el lavado, está ligada a grandes intereses sociales y vinculada al porvenir de los pueblos: su obra, pues va más allá de lo que creemos y más alto de lo que pensamos; debe actuar en esferas más sagradas y más sublimes después de la simple labor diaria del hogar.”
her house and society” Susana Maler wrote “it is necessary for women to have an infinite touch of prudence and delicacy…Such is the elevated mission of women in her house and in society.”\footnote{Maler, “La mujer en su casa y en la sociedad.” “Es necesario, a la mujer, un tacto infinito de prudencia y e delicadeza…tal es la misión de la mujer en su casa y en la sociedad.”} The copper company enforced gender roles by elevating the status of domestic life. The sexual division of labor was seen as important not only to the maintenance of order within the mine, but also to the cultural and economic future of Chile. Women were to stay committed to the roles and duties specified by their gender, because it would propel their families socially, and their society developmentally.

The management of the Braden Copper Company saw the ability to save money as a key signifier of a developing country. “Ignoring this principle [of saving money], lived the people in the wild, without contributing with one single effort to the prosperity of the family or to humanity.”\footnote{Toro Ossandón, “La economía, base de bienestar.” “Desconociendo ese principio, vivieron los pueblos en estado salvaje, sin contribuir con un solo esfuerzo a la prosperidad de la familia, ni de la Humanidad.”} Savagery was defined as the inability to save money for the family, which takes away from the prosperity of the human race as a whole. A distinction was created between civilized and wild people along the lines of money management. In other words, the domestic economy was an indicator of the state’s level of development and modernization. Chile’s lawmakers and business leaders were pushing industrialization and the development of the Chilean economy—both nationally and locally; and Chile was looking towards the United States as an example of modernization. One article said “If you look into the home of a modest English, German or North American worker: the atmosphere of ease, comfort and well-being will draw your attention. Order and cleanliness reign in the smallest details, the art, and good tone everything is divided and distributed.”\footnote{“La felicidad en el hogar modesto.” “…penetrada en el hogar de un modesto obrero inglés, alemán o norteamericano: os llamará fuertemente la atención el ambiente de holgura, comodidad y bienestar que en}
seen as a model of order that should be followed. Not only was the domestic life of the West to be an example, the economic model was as well. An article in *El Teniente* “La economía, base de bienestar” clearly identified western society as the economic model which Chile ought to follow. The author wrote “if we observe Europe and after the Americas, we will see that those countries that culminate in the peak of Civilization, are those which practice the principles of economy and of saving.”\textsuperscript{158} The company pushed that saving money was not only very important to the maintenance of family life, but also to the growth of the modern and civilized nation state. The North-American owned company was promoting the United States and Europe as examples that ought to be followed in order to reach civility—the American men were pushing Chilean families to act more American by saving money.

After World War I, the ties between Chile and the United States grew even stronger. For example, in trade, “In 1910 US trailed both England and Germany in imports to and exports from Chile. Great Britain was far in the lead and Germany was gaining every year. In 1920 figures for German trade showed a sharp decline for the decade, while England was hardly holding its own. On the other hand, the US had passed both of its rivals, and its imports from Chile were double those of the British.”\textsuperscript{159} But, it was in the field of Chilean finance that the entrance of the United States was most striking during and after the war. By 1915, branches of American banks were opened in Santiago. And shortly after the close of the war, a group of Chileans went to the United States to study American finance and procure a government loan. And by 1925, a

\textsuperscript{158} Toro Ossandón, “La economía, base de bienestar.” “Si observamos a la Europa y después a las Américas levantarse sobre el pedestal de su gloria, veremos que aquellos países que más culminan en la cúspide de la Civilización, son aquellos que más han practicado los principios de la economía y del ahorro.”

\textsuperscript{159} Henry Clay Evans, *Chile and Its Relations with the United States* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1927), 178.
Princeton University professor, Edwin Kemmerer and came to Chile to study its national finances. As a result of his recommendation, Chile established a Federal Reserve Bank which held exclusive right to issue paper money for the nation, convertible into gold at the rate of exchange then prevailing. The new bank was also to be the fiscal agent for the central government and likewise for municipalities, railways, and other large business concerns.\textsuperscript{160} The influence of the United States on Chile went beyond private American companies, like Braden Copper Company, setting up villages after the American model, it infiltrated large, institutional change like the financial system.

\textit{Conclusion}

The early 20\textsuperscript{th} century was marked by an increase in consumerism around the world. In both the United States and Chile advertising for material and consumer goods in magazines grew dramatically during this time period. Many of the advertisements were marketed specifically towards women. Similarly, the Braden Copper Company publications promoted material culture as a means of social mobility for families. However, Braden Copper Company literature was also permeated with lessons of frugality aimed at women. Copper prices are dictated by the international market and subject to large fluctuations based on global demand. From 1904-1930 the employees at El Teniente had little protection from mass-firings or wage cuts when BCC decided to cut production and costs during downturns in the market. The financial uncertainty factored into the company’s insistence on frugality and saving money at the familial level. It was perceived as immoral for women to frivolously spend their husband’s hard earned money. Parsimony was painted as a virtue that women had to be taught for the sake of their marriages, families and country.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 178–181.
Chapter 3: Education and Nationalism

Education was a pillar of Braden Copper Company’s attempts to train and regulate its workforce and its future workforce. The mine built schools for children, as well as vocational and night schools for men and women.\(^1\) The mine also set up a series of clubs and activities that aimed to socialize and moralize the population at Sewell.

In this chapter I argue that Braden Copper Company used the rhetoric of nationalism to inspire parents, particularly women, to dedicate their lives to the education of their children. Further, Chilean men and women were persuaded by the Company to embrace formal and informal means of education in order to better themselves, which in turn would better the country.

I. Education within the Home

Braden Copper Company placed an importance on the care and education of children because education influenced the advancement of BCC’s future employees. Parents played a critical role in the education of children because they “initiated and prepared children to arrive, as they are supposed to, at the jobs that workers occupy today and the children will occupy tomorrow.”\(^2\) BCC wanted to maintain a steady and reliable workforce. So, they focused on the development of children in the mine to become the next generation of miners. Children were viewed not simply as individuals, but as future miners and miners’ wives. Ultimately, the focus on education was a business decision. The company targeted the home because they believed the home was influential in the development of their future employees.

It was understood that education began before children entered school. BCC believed that by the time children were of age to go to school “they already brought strong influences of great consideration and of significance in their development…the paternal house being one of these

\(^1\) Klubock, *Contested Communities*, 68.

\(^2\) Braden Copper Company, “El niño y la escuela,” *El Teniente*, February 6, 1928. “Iniciaron y prepararon a los niños para llegar, como se supone, a los trabajos que los trabajadores ocupan hoy y que los niños ocuparán mañana.”
In October 1922, the “Diario del Centro Pro- Educación y Asistencia Social” (Journal of the Center for Education and Social Assistance) began to publish the daily paper El Teniente inside the mine. One article entitled “Su influencia en el cuidado y crianza del niño” (Your influence on the caring of children) said that “the environment in which the child lives and develops is the child’s principal educator.” The nuclear-family unit and the home were instrumental in the development of children.

Education began in the home and it was women’s responsibility to produce and socialize the next generation of miners. “From the first moments of existence, a child begins to develop the germs of virtue and greatness, unique to the human race. So, mothers should promote the development of their children, so that they acquire the faculties with a greater force, which will be easier if the children have grown up with wise teachings.”

There was a lot at stake for a mother to “correctly” raise and educate her children. The Página femenina of Teniente Topics frequently focused on the mother’s duty in educating and taking care of her children—with an entire series of articles entitled “El cuidado del nene” (Caring for your baby). The articles had very specific instructions on how women should act in certain scenarios. For example, when children were less than 1 years old mothers should serve their children “orange juice, dissolved

\[163\] Braden Copper Company, “La escuela y el hogar,” Teniente Topics, April 1920. “Ya que el niño lleva a la vida escolar ese Adelanto cultural es evidente que ha habido fuerzas influenciales de gran consideración y de gran significado en la formación y desarrollo de todas sus facultades…entre esas fuerzas la casa paternal.”

\[164\] Braden Copper Company, “Su influencia en el cuidado y crianza del niño,” El Teniente, October 13, 1922. “El ambiente donde el niño vive y se desarrolla es el educador principal del niño.”

\[165\] Braden Copper Company, “El hogar y la mujer,” El Teniente, April 19, 1924. “Desde los primeros momentos de la existencia, empiezan a desarrollarse en el niño los gérmenes de la razón, de la virtud y de la grandeza, propios de la naturaleza humana. Deber de la madre es entonces impulsar progresivamente dicho desarrollo, para que las facultades vayan adquiriendo mayor fuerza, lo que será más fácil si en el niño se han desarrollado sabias enseñanzas.”
in water with sugar.”  Even the chief surgeon at Sewell created pamphlets that covered subjects ranging from the care of babies, to children’s hygiene, sickness, and vaccination. BCC often focused on the idea that women should be physically and emotionally present with their children—in the home. For example, “It is a necessity that child has maternal care and the intimate human relations that naturally exist between mother and child.” Women were supposed to always watch their child, always make sure their child was clean and “teach him [your child] in your home for as long as you can, don’t send him to school.” The company not only released information through pamphlets and newspaper articles, but also believed that women should be educated formally to be the best mothers and housewives they could be.

The company believed that women should have a “profound education in the understanding of the home; because of this the management of a family should be considered as a science no less important than the rest.” The company took it upon themselves to develop courses and materials that would help women be better mothers and better housewives. One *El Teniente* article said that “we should prepare not only the men to face the tribulations of her[life], but also especially prepare women.” BCC set up a vocational school for women which offered classes in household cleanliness, clothes making, cooking and household budgeting.

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166 Braden Copper Company, “Lectura útil,” *Teniente Topics*, July 1, 1919. “…jugo de naranja, disuelto en agua con azúcar…”
168 Braden Copper Company, “El cuidado del nene.” “La necesidad que tiene el niño de los cuidados maternales y las intimas relaciones humanas que naturalmente existen entre la madre y el nene.”
169 Braden Copper Company, “Tu hijo,” *Teniente Topics*, August 1920. “Hasta que puedas, enseñarle en tu casa no le mandes a la escuela…”
170 Braden Copper Company, “El hogar y la mujer.” “La mujer debe hacer un estudio profundo de lo concerniente al hogar; por esto el manejo de una familia podemos considerarlo como una ciencia no menos importante que los demás.”
171 Braden Copper Company, “La educación de la mujer,” *El Teniente*, June 11, 1926. “Para estar ciertos que la jornada de la vida no será propicia debemos preparar no sólo al hombre para afrontar los tropiezos que encontremos en ella, sino muy especialmente a la mujer.”
172 *Teniente Topics*
purpose of the vocational schools were two fold, to better women’s ability to act as educators to
the next generation and to better the women’s ability to act as housewives. Further, the
vocational school for women was seen as “an institution that hopes to teach people to understand
noble and patriotic ends.”\footnote{173} The company told miner’s wives that they had to be trained in the
art of homemaking and childrearing because it was the patriotic thing to do.

*Educators for La Patria*

Braden Copper Company used the language of nationalism and morality to inspire
women’s dedication to the education of their children. One article detailed that “This influence
of children has done more for humanity than any other factor.”\footnote{174} The Braden Copper Company
publication insisted that “education is the most powerful way to contribute to and to lift
humanity.”\footnote{175} In order to not only maintain, but to advance the lives of the inhabitants of Sewell,
women had to fulfill their duty of child rearing. The *Teniente Topics* article detailed that “the
home is irreplaceable as a social value to make the child’s soul a factor that is later useful to
himself, to others and to the Fatherland.”\footnote{176} The home, the sphere of women, was believed to be
the place where a significant amount of moral and civil development took place in a future
citizen’s life. The article implicitly stated that the only way women could have a significant
impact on the development of the nation, of the fatherland, was through the management of her
home and the education of her children. Women were encouraged to abide by the regulations and
expectations the company set, for the good of their country.

\footnote{173} Braden Copper Company, “Educación,” *El Teniente*, November 8, 1922. “Una institución que espera enseñar a la gente a entender fines nobles y patrióticos.”
\footnote{174} Braden Copper Company, “El cuidado del nene.” “Esta influencia de los niños ha hecho más en favor de la humanidad que ningún otro factor.”
\footnote{175} Braden Copper Company, “Programa de trabajo de la Sociedad de Señoras en organización,” *Teniente Topics*, n.d. “Educación es la mejor manera de contribuir y levantar a la sociedad.”
\footnote{176} Braden Copper Company, “La escuela y el hogar.” “El hogar es irremplazable como valor social para hacer del alma infantil un factor que sea más tarde, útil a él mismo, a los demás y a la Patria.”
BCC used the language of nationalism, “the fatherland,” and duty to inspire women to focus their attention on their children, which both limited and expanded women’s powers. The article “El Concepto de la Patria” (The concept of the fatherland) articulated that “la patria is another mother that gives us intellectual and moral education.” Similarly, in the article “Patria y patriotismo” (The fatherland and patriotism) the author defines la patria as “the mother of all mothers, she is who feeds us materially and spiritually.” Both authors made a powerful connection between women and la patria that centered around intellectual and moral education. By characterizing the republic as a woman, the authors likened a woman to a territory or space, which men have to fight for and rule over—maintaining women’s role as inferior to men’s. On the other hand, by labeling the republic as a woman, the authors recognized the importance that women play in the maintenance of a civilized nation. The term “Republican motherhood” was created by historians in the late 20th century to characterize an attitude towards women’s roles present in the United States after the American Revolution. The concept centered on the idea that women should uphold the ideals of republicanism, in order to pass republican values onto the next generation. While the values of republicanism in Chile in the early 20th century were not the same as the values being promoted in the United States in the 18th century, the idea that women should educate their children in order to preserve the values of the nation-state has existed for centuries.

Some women at Sewell accepted their place in the home and as educators, not because they viewed it as maintaining patriarchy and misogyny, but because they believed it was their

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duty to the nation. A woman named Lorenza wrote an article for *El Teniente* in 1926 about women’s patriotism. She wrote that while women “don’t have the vote, we do have a voice, which can influence those who do have the vote…to consider some of the ways in which women can manifest their true patriotism: first is in the education of her children.”

Women believed that through the proper education of their children they could influence the political atmosphere of their country. Further in a 1929 *El Teniente* article “El arte de manejar al marido” (The art of driving your husband), Nora Storm wrote about how women ought to persuade their husbands, “never cry, but learn how act like you’re going to cry.” Women were developing techniques to use their unique feminine abilities to manipulate and influence their husbands and children.

Women’s duties in the home and to the family were not insignificant, but were the “elevated mission of the woman in the house and in the society.” Defining women’s duty to stay in the home and educate their children was paradoxical, it simultaneously limited women’s powers (to the home) and expanded women’s powers (to the maintenance of the entire nation).

By the end of the first third of the twentieth century, women began to use their education and the expansion of their powers to criticize the traditional notion of the domestic sphere. In a 1926 article, “El hogar,” the female author Iris Lotina began to question the dominate social contract within the home. Lotina wrote that “the science that we women study when we are single, is how to weave nests for the future. But then we stayed there, without worrying about building cages for the husband we have taken, for the children who will grow; cages that are

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180 Braden Copper Company, “El patriotismo de la mujer,” *El Teniente*, September 21, 1925. “Es verdad que no tiene voto, pero si tiene voz, y puede ejercer bastante influencia en los que manejan el voto. Vamos a considerar algunos de las cosas por las cuales la mujer puede manifestar su verdadero patriotismo. 1) es la educación de sus hijos.”


beautiful, joyful, attractive, pleasant where we with our smiling and jovial character with all the resources at our hands will stay at the center.”¹⁸³ The characterization of the home from a nest to a cage is striking. Women were publicly criticizing the confining and restricting nature of the domestic sphere. However, Lotina’s response is not for women to leave the domestic sphere but to “let us [women] make our home a center of family sociability.”¹⁸⁴ Instead of suggesting that women leave the private domain, Lotina wanted to make the private domain more public. Further in the 1929 article “Esclava que debe libertarse” the author wrote “one of the saddest events that history tells us through all time is the slavery of women” and women are slaves because “we have no rights.”¹⁸⁵ The author also clarified women should be educated “to understand her sacred mission: motherhood and the responsibility she has for humanity.”¹⁸⁶ Even Chilean women who were fighting for women’s rights, reiterated the rhetoric that women’s domestic duties would be beneficial to humanity. Individuals were beginning to question women’s role in society, “Most women are in error in believing that their future is marriage and that arriving at a certain age means that some young man would be presented to them, to follow the task of their father to provide for them; no, they shouldn’t wait for anyone; they should only work and be useful to themselves and to their peers.”¹⁸⁷ Young women were taught not to simply wait for a husband,

¹⁸³ Braden Copper Company, “El hogar.” “La ciencia que nosotras las mujeres estudiamos cuando solteras, es la de tejer redes para el futuro. Pero después nos quedamos ahí, sin preocuparnos de construir jaulas para el marido que hemos cogido, para los hijos que crecen; jaulas bonitas, alegres, atractivas, placenteras, donde nosotras, nuestro carácter risueño y jovial, con todos los recursos que tengamos a la mano, seamos el centro.”
¹⁸⁴ Ibid. “Hagamos de nuestro hogar un centro de sociabilidad familiar.”
¹⁸⁵ Braden Copper Company, “La esclava que debe libertarse,” El Teniente, January 24, 1928. “Uno de los acontecimientos más tristes que nos señala la historia a través de todos los tiempos, es la esclavitud de la mujer”, “no tenemos derechos aún.”
¹⁸⁶ Ibid. “…a comprender su sagrada misión: la maternidad y la responsabilidad que por ella tiene ante la humanidad.”
¹⁸⁷ Braden Copper Company, “La educación de la mujer.” “La mayoría de las mujeres están del error de creer que su porvenir es el matrimonio y que, llegadas a cierta edad, ha de presentarse algún joven como a buscarlas para seguir la tarea del padre que da al pequeño todo lo necesario; no, no deben esperar a nadie; solo deben trabajar y ser útiles a sus semejantes.”
but to begin to learn useful skills. Clearly, roles within the domestic sphere were beginning to be reimagined. Of course, most of the useful skills they were taught were still related to the domestic sphere.

While there was a consistent focus on identifying women with the domestic sphere, BCC’s social welfare policies also implied new domestic responsibilities for men. Men were expected to play an important role as fathers and providers. In a 1922 article of *El Teniente*, the author wrote that “all fathers of families have the obligation to be the provider and to think in the morning about his home.”188 The welfare department stressed the importance of male-headed nuclear households—one article said “in his house a poor man is a king.”189 Being king of the household with patriarchal power over his subjects, his wife and children, came with domestic duties. Men were supposed to raise their sons to be disciplined and responsible members of society. Again, BCC intervened to ensure that the men were passing along to their children the lessons and responsibilities that BCC wanted their employees to know. *Teniente Topics* began a column entitled “Instrucción cívica” (civil education) with the purpose of “being taken advantage of by the citizens and the fathers of families who care for their children, who are the fathers and citizens of tomorrow.”190 Among other things, the column contained lessons on the Chilean constitution, laws about marriage, laws about alcohol and the importance of voting. Men were to be trained in subjects of government, law and civic duty, by Braden Copper Company, so they

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188 Braden Copper Company, “Previsión,” *El Teniente*, November 14, 1922. “Todos los padres de las familias tienen la obligación de ser el proveedor y pensar en la mañana sobre su hogar.”

189 Braden Copper Company, “Problemas obreros sociales: el hogar,” *Teniente Topics*, May 1917. “…en su casa un hombre pobre es un rey.”

190 Braden Copper Company, “Instrucción cívica,” *Teniente Topics*, February 1920. “a fin de que sean aprovechados por los ciudadanos y los padres de familia los hagan extensivos a sus hijos, que son los padres y los ciudadanos.”
could pass that information onto their sons. Education in the home by both parents was one of the most important aspects of raising a child in Sewell in the early 20th century.

The company used the language of nationalism to encourage parents to play their part in the education of their children. The future Braden Copper Company and the future of Chile depended on parent’s ability to educate. The mine was an enclave of Chilean and American values, yet the company relied on the language of Chilean nationalism to coerce parents. On the surface it is paradoxical that the schools, which were set up by the North American minority recruited its students through the rhetoric of Chilean nationalism. But, in reality it reinforced the dichotomy between the North Americans and the Chileans—the Chileans had to learn from the Americans to develop and modernize their households, communities and eventually their country. In short, the Americans had to teach the Chileans to be Chilean.

The shift in rhetoric that revolved around women’s patriotic duty by the late 1920s, also represents the changing perceptions about the role of women in society. Women were no longer constricted to the home because they were inferior beings and could do nothing else, but because they were superior in the domestic sphere and should use that superiority to guide the country by directing their husbands and children. While women were still confined to the private sphere, the language of nationalism elevated their status and duties.

II. Schools at Sewell

When children were a few years old they were required by law and expected by society to go to one of the schools in Sewell. The goal of educational programs was made explicit in an undated Braden Copper Company report found by Thomas Klubock “if we can train and educate our own people and if we can satisfy the Braden workman and employee, there is a large labor element in Chile which would be contented here and would not be continually after the politicians
for instigation of laws prejudicial to our interests.” The report went on to say “one of the most desirable features…[is] the education of children throughout the entire property, taking the line of the Catholic Church, Mussolini and Hitler who always worked on the young people, feeling that if he youth had proper training there was no need to worry about their later years.” 191  While this report was clearly written later in the 20th century, it still articulates the two-fold purpose of the schools: to please their workers so that they wouldn’t complain to the authorities and to influence (brainwash) children with compatible views with the company. But beyond the training of cult-like followers, building and filling of schools, was seen as a way to influence the evolution of individuals, the company and the nation. In a 1922 article about the advancement thus far in Sewell, the author made note that overtime the town has advanced in “schools and more schools, social laws, hygienic rooms, the dry law in the industrial center, minimum wage and working day of eight hours.” 192  It is noteworthy that schools are mentioned as the first item that demonstrates the progress of the community.

According to Grandón’s 1919 report on Sewell, there were three schools for children: one for Chilean boys, one for Chilean girls, and one for Americans. Both Chilean schools had about 100 students each. The school was built to accommodate 300 students altogether and the company spent $1692.95 USD to build the school. 193  Parents did not have to pay for their children to go to school, and schooling was obligatory for children up until the age of 14. 194  The American school had about 14 students, and the parents of the American children had to pay $2 USD monthly for

191 Klubock, Contested Communities, 68.
192 Braden Copper Company, “Evolución,” El Teniente, November 6, 1922. “…escuelas y más escuelas, leyes sociales, salas higiénicas, ley seca en el centro industrial, salario mínimo y jornada laboral de ocho horas.”
193 Fuenzalida Grandón, El trabajo i la vida en el mineral “El Teniente,” 81.
their children to attend this school. The three schools were under the direction of three professors, with the help of two teachers’ assistants.

When Sewell began operating schools autonomously from the Chilean educational system, it clashed with the Chilean government’s ideas about education. In a particularly harsh critique of the Chilean education system, an article in *El Teniente* said

“The latino concept of education is the consequence of the latino concept of the State…the idea that the student should limit him or herself to learn by rote manuals that would tell him what political, religious, philosophical, and scientific authority had decided on all issues. This was the old ideal…The university… is the most beautiful example of the methods that must be followed to enslave the intelligence, to depress the characters and transform the young Latinos into slaves or into insurrectionists.”

The educators in Sewell were staunchly opposed to the way in which the education system was implemented in Chile, and insisted on maintaining a separate curriculum and organizational structure.

The schools built by Braden had a curriculum developed by the cultural department of the U.S. embassy. In a 1915 letter to the mayor of the Province of O'Higgins, the mine manager S.S. Sörensen wrote that he had been “ignoring the beginning and the end of the school year…with the object of a convenient beginning for our workers.” The school system operated on the typical American time table, from September to May, which is distinct from the Chilean

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197 Braden Copper Company, “Estudios sociales,” *El Teniente,* December 9, 1922. “El concepto latino de la educación es la consecuencia del concepto latino del Estado…el alumno debería limitarse a aprender de memoria manuales que le dijeran lo que la autoridad política, religiosa, filosófica y científica había decidido sobre todas las cuestiones. Esto era el antiguo ideal…La universidad…es el más hermoso ejemplo de los métodos que hay seguir para esclavizar la inteligencia, deprimir los caracteres y transformar a los jóvenes latinos en esclavos o en sublevados.”
198 Klubock, *Contested Communities.*
system which operated from March to December.\textsuperscript{200} Sörensen went on to apologize for the inconvenience and for the appearance “that the company sought to evade its duties or obligations with respect to the laws or customs of the country.”\textsuperscript{201} The Chilean officials clearly had qualms with the way in which the Sewell schools operated. Another principal difference between Chilean education and Sewell education was the emphasis that the Braden Copper Company put on “practical” training. BCC “gives a wide field to our young scholars so that they can come to know the practice of work, what they had previously only learned in books.”\textsuperscript{202} The schools focused on the development of boys into future miners and girls into future housewives, rather than giving students a broader education.

From 1915-1922, all schools were separated by gender and education was gender-specific. In a letter to the mayor of the Province of O’Higgins, S.S. Sörensen wrote “The gubernatorial appointment of a teacher whose wife is in charge of the instruction of the girls while he attends to the male children, would have a powerful influence on the moral habits of the students.”\textsuperscript{203} There were also certain lessons and virtues that were meant only for girls. In 1926, \textit{El Teninte} published “Decálogo para las niñas” (Decalogue for girls) which contained lessons such as “think about modesty before beauty” and “work in the home as if you didn’t have the help of your mother” and “don’t forget that she who is a bad friend, will make a bad wife and she

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\textsuperscript{200} Braden Copper Company, “Instrucción: escuelas públicas y privadas,” \textit{Teniente Topics}, April 20, 1919.
\textsuperscript{201} Sörensen, “Letter to Intendente Garcia.” “…que la compañía trató de eludir sus deberes o obligaciones con respeto a las leyes o costumbre del país.”
\textsuperscript{202} Braden Copper Company, “Escuela de trabajo,” \textit{El Teniente}, June 10, 1926. “…da un amplio campo para nuestros escolares jóvenes para que puedan llegar a conocer la práctica del trabajo, lo que tenían antes sólo aprendido en los libros.”
\textsuperscript{203} S.S. Sörensen, “Letter to Intende Nicolas Garcia,” February 10, 1914, Archivo Nacional de Chile. “El nombramiento gubernativo de un maestro cuya esposa está a cargo de la instrucción de las niñas mientras que él asiste a los niños, tendría una poderosa influencia en los hábitos morales de los estudiantes.”
\end{flushleft}
who is a bad child, cannot be a good mother.”

From an early age the schools taught girls about the female realm—the home. A *Teniente Topics* article said “In the first place, it [the girl’s school] developed a class with lessons and objectives on the home.”

As argued by historian Thomas Klubock “Ultimately, the education of women to be attentive mothers was important because mothers ‘initiated and prepared children to arrive, as they are supposed to, at the job that workers occupy today and that they will occupy tomorrow.’”

From a young age, boys were trained to be miners and future heads of households and girls were educated and socialized as future wives and mothers.

In 1919, the school for girls was divided into three sections based on age. The youngest girls to attend were between the ages of seven and ten. Because girls were supposed to learn about the woman’s sphere, their teachers were all women. In 1919, the two female teachers of the girls’ school were paid $100 monthly, which was the same rate that the male teachers who were in charge of the boys’ schools were paid.

The equity of wages illustrates the importance that the mine put on the education of both sexes.

The education of girls to be proper housewives and future educators was just as important as the education of boys to be good miners. In 1917, the director of the school for girls was Mrs. Lucilla Quiroz v. de Beas. She gained much respect in the community for her work with the girls. The mine manager at the time, S.S. Sörensen, wrote a letter to Lucilla saying that while “I am not competent to give an opinion of the labor of the needle, I can say that the…”

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204 Braden Copper Company, “Decálogo para las niñas.” “Piensa en ser modesta antes que bella,” “Trabaja en el hogar como si no tuvieras el auxilio de tu madre,” “No olvides que la que no es buena amiga, no será buena esposa, y que no es buena hija, no podrá ser buena madre.”

205 Braden Copper Company, “Escuela de trabajo.” “En primer lugar, la desarrolló una clase con lecciones y objetivos por el hogar.”

206 Klubock, *Contested Communities*, 67.

have made everyone think that a considerable progress has been made under your skilled
instruction.” Mr. Sörensen felt the need to clarify that he doesn’t know the trade of women, in
this case sewing, but it is clear that she does and is teaching the young girls well. When Lucilla
left the mine to teach at a school in Santiago, her portrait was published in Teniente Topics with
the caption “at the Mine, where she has conquered the appreciation and respect of numerous
fathers.” While the classes in the girls school were aimed at teaching girls distinctly female
knowledge, men (fathers in particular) were the judge of the female teachers’ ability.

Over time the strict compliance to single sex education began to change. By 1923 there
were op-eds published in the company newspaper, El Teniente, imploring the company to adopt
coeducation. Carlos Fuentes Silva wrote

“Far from being a danger, coeducation, from our way of thinking, is a benefit. The
society of men and women in an educational establishment will allow educators to count
on the learners immediately, to gradually form that feeling of respect that the men must
feel towards the women; to create mutual esteem that should exist between individuals of
different sex and to awaken prudence, moderation and reactivity in women, virtues
against which man never preaches because he instinctively appreciates them.”

Parents and educators were beginning to change their perspective on how schools should be
organized. Fuentes Silva went on to say that the company should look at the example set by
countries such as the United States, Germany and England who have implemented coeducation,

208 Braden Copper Company, “La instrucción primaria en El Teniente.” “No soy competente para opinar
sobre el trabajo de la aguja, puedo decir que las ... exposiciones han hecho que todos piensen que se ha
hecho un progreso considerable bajo tu instrucción.”
209 Teniente Topics, May, 1917. “En la Mina, donde ha conquistado el aprecio y respeto de numerosos
padres...”
210 Carlos Fuentes Silva, “La Coeducación,” El Teniente, March 4, 1923. “...lejos de ser un peligro la
coeeducación, a nuestra manera de pensar, es un beneficio. La sociedad de hombres y mujeres en un
establecimiento educacional permitirá a los educadores contando de inmediato con los educandos, formar
poco a poco ese sentimiento de respeto que debe sentir el hombre hacia la mujer; crear la mutua
estimación que debe existir entre los individuos de distinto sexo y despertar la prudencia, la moderación y
el reacción en la mujer, virtudes contra las cuales el hombre nunca intenta porque las aprecia
instintivamente.”
“we need to be more liberal; that we surrender more faith to educational practices, which are more humane and wise than the old ones.” It is evident that Fuentes Silva saw that coeducation was a means of further developing Chile into a modern nation, joining the ranks with the US, Germany and England. The population living and working in the El Teniente mine was growing rapidly in the 1920s (by 1922 the total population living in the mine 9,940) and there were small settlements with schools set up in areas other than Sewell, including Caletones, Coya and Brahaona. In 1922 the company moved the copper smelting facilities from Sewell to Caletones to grow the production. By 1925 there were over 3,000 people living in Caletones. When the Caletones school was set up in 1922 it was coeducational. Due to the success of the mixed school at Caletones and at Coya, in 1923 in Brahona another coeducational school was established.

*School reform in Chile*

The first third of the twentieth century saw an exponential growth in schools and formal educational institutions across Chile. Primary school enrollment reached 336,000 students in 1915—which was a fourfold increase from 1900. Further, about two-fifths of the population was literate by 1907, and half by 1920 (which is remarkable considering illiteracy was over 70% in 1895). School attendance officially became compulsory in 1920, but it was not vigorously enforced. In the 1920s there was also a strong Chilean governmental interest in educational promotion.

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211 Ibid. “Necesitamos ser más liberales; que entregamos más fe a las prácticas educativas, que son más humanas y sabias que las antiguas.”
The 1920s in Chile were rot with a high amount of political instability and acute disagreements between the parliament, the president and the military, resulting in conspirators surrounding La Moneda in 1925. A new military junta was installed in January of 1925. But by March, populist President Arturo Alessandri retook control from the military junta. In the first few months he governed by decree and did not recall Congress until November. His first priority during these months was constitutional reform. The 1925 constitution among other things shifted power toward the executive, separated the Church and State and established a central bank.\(^{216}\) The new constitution also reaffirmed the state’s obligation to make educational institutions broadly available, stressing the statutory requirements for mandatory schooling, and guaranteed the right of private schools to exist. Further, the government under Alessandri (1920-24, 1925, 1932-38) expanded governmental grants to private schools.\(^{217}\) According to a table in Schutter’s dissertation “The Development of Education in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay” the Chilean government expenditures on education increased dramatically in the 1920s.\(^{218}\)

![Table 3](image)

\(^{216}\) Ibid., 205–213.


\(^{218}\) Charles Henry Schutter, “The Development of Education in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay” (University of Chicago, 1943), 126.
The early twentieth century was marked in Chile by a conscious push towards increasing and bettering educational programs.

Parents involvement with the school

At Sewell, parents were expected to work with the schools and the teachers and continue to play a crucial role in the education of their children. In the Teniente Topics article “La escuela y el hogar” (The school and the home) the author wrote that “public education cannot be successful unless the family prepares, maintains and completes it.” ²¹⁹ The company believed that the school and the home should be in “intimate contact, tight, sincere and constant collaboration.” ²²⁰

It was most important that the school and home work together in the moral education of children. One article said “the professors who full of patriotism, enthusiasm and joy, mold the children's brains to form the true citizens of tomorrow who know how to take their country for the flowering of moral, intellectual, physiological and economic progress, and they desire a frank collaboration with the home.” ²²¹ In short, BCC believed that “the action of moralization happens through life, it not only occurs at school but also in the home.” ²²² The El Teniente article, “A los padres de familias” (to the parents of families) detailed particular steps that parents could take to ensure the formulation of good future citizens. The steps included the preservation of the rules of

²¹⁹ Braden Copper Company, “La escuela y el hogar.” “La educación pública no puede tener éxito a menos que la familia lo prepare, lo mantenga y lo complete.”
²²⁰ Ibid. “…contacto íntimo, estrecha, sincera y constante colaboración.”
²²¹ Lucar Díaz, “A los padres de familias,” El Teniente, March 10, 1926. “Los profesores que, llenos de patriotismo moldean con entusiasmo y alegría los cerebros de los niños para formar los verdaderos ciudadanos de mañana que sepan llevar a su patria por el ser duro florido del progreso moral, intelectual, físico y económico, solicitan y desean una franca colaboración del hogar.”
²²² Braden Copper Company, “La escuela y el hogar.” “La acción de la moralización ocurre a través de la vida, no sólo ocurre en la escuela sino también en el hogar.”
morality, hygiene and civility that were supposed to govern a “healthy and honorable family.” BCC believed it would be cost effective to dedicate significant time and money into the moral and social conditions of inhabitants of Sewell from an early age, so they would grow up to be productive miners and miners’ wives.

Parents were also expected to be involved in the sexual education of their children. In the 1920s the Company decided that sexual education was important to the growth and development of the children and community. In the 1926 El Teniente article “Mejoremos la unidad para mejorar el todo,” (Let us improve unity to improve everything) the author wrote that

“Physical and sexual education for disease prevention is the greatest guarantee of progress of a country. From a young age, the formation of the persons’ conscious in a truthful life will free him from prejudice and pseudo sexual modesty. It is time to break the old molds that have imposed on humanity some of the religious sects that dispute their dominion. If we show children at their genesis the problems and dangers that lurk, they can be avoided.”

Sexual education was important to limit disease and to advance as a country. While educators and individuals were beginning to see the benefits that sexual education could incur, it was not institutionalized and was meant to take place in the home. One article detailed that “the ideal would be that fathers individually instruct their sons and mothers their daughters in relation to sexual education.” Sexual education was not meant to encourage sexual relations between boys and girls, as it was still strictly forbidden in the mine to have relationships outside of

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223 Braden Copper Company, “A los padres de familias,” El Teniente, March 10, 1926. “…familia sana y honorable”

224 Braden Copper Company, “Mejoremos la unidad para mejorar el todo,” El Teniente, June 4, 1926. “La educación física y sexual para la prevención de enfermedades es la mayor garantía de progreso de un país. Desde una edad temprana, la formación del consciente de las personas en una vida verdadera lo liberará del prejuicio y de la pesado modestia sexual. Es hora de romper los viejos moldes que han impuesto a la humanidad algunas de las sectas religiosas que disputan su dominio. Si mostramos a los niños en su génesis los problemas y peligros que acechan, pueden ser evitados.”

225 Braden Copper Company, “Educación sexual,” El Teniente, January 27, 1924. “Lo ideal sería que los padres se preocupasen individualmente de los hijos y las madres de su hijas en lo relacionado con la educación sexual.”
marriage. Sexual education was meant to be another step towards the moral and social betterment of Chile.

Often parents would not send their children to school, even though it was against the law. The attendance at schools was consistently less than the population of children living in the mine. First Teniente Topics and then El Teniente frequently published articles begging parents to comply with the law and enroll their children in school. One such article, “Por el regular funcionamiento escolar” (For the regular function of school) said that

“There has been a need to resort to ordinary justice to signify to parents that they have the duty to see that their children attend school and that they arrive at school in a timely manner. And this is regrettable, because the parents should never allowed it to get this far. They should not have given rise to these problems because we ourselves, from these same [newspaper] columns, often call attention to the legal provisions [in relations to children’s attendance at school].”

The article went on to call parents who did not send their children to schools “enemies of the school…for the wrong of the children who are educated, for the wrong of the family, for the wrong of all social interests.”

The company created a dichotomy between good parents and bad parents that was synonymous with good citizens of the state and bad citizens of the state. BCC wanted to create a clear connection between patriotism and parenting in order to convince parents to send their children to school.

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226 Braden Copper Company, “Por el regular funcionamiento escolar,” El Teniente, January 28, 1926. “Ha habido necesidad de recurrir a la justicia ordinaria para significar a los padres de familia que tienen el deber de velar por que sus hijos asistencia a las escuelas y porque lleguen oportunamente a las clases. Y esto es lamentable, porque los padres de familia nunca debieron de dar margen a que se llegara a este extremo. No debieron dar lugar a ellos porque nosotros mismos, desde esta mismas columnas, les llamamos la atencion hacia las disposiciones legales en vigencia.”
Education for men and women

Children weren’t the only ones who received an education in the mine, there were also night schools and vocational schools put in place for men and women to attend. The idea of the vocational school began in Chile in 1909, and by 1922 Sewell had one of only seven vocational schools in the country.  

The vocational schools were established so that men could “experiment in one or another specialty, until they found which was their true vocation.” For men and boys, vocational schools allowed a certain amount of social and career mobility. The schools allowed men who were “born into work and never had the opportunity to nourish their brains” to study and learn.  

By 1922, there were three tracks for men: carpentry, mechanics and electricity. Each track was a three year course. According to the professor of the school his students “could satisfactorily demonstrate progress and had declared that in the few months that this school has functioned, they have obtained the mark of workers assistants, a high grade of technical, intellectual and moral improvement.” Even though the content of the course was aimed at developing very practical and technical skills, the men’s education was also aimed at developing morality. The company wanted to play an active role in the moral and technical advancement of its employees.  

There were also night schools for men and women. For men, the night school focused on mechanics, math, Spanish, physics and chemistry and civic instruction. Many of the courses

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227 Braden Copper Company, “Enseñanza vocacional.”  
228 S.S. Sörensen, “Enseñanza Vocacional,” El Teniente, October 12, 1922. “…experimento en una u otra especialidad, hasta que descubrieron cuál era su verdadera vocación.”  
229 T. Carbera, “En la escuela de Teniente C,” El Teniente, December 6, 1922. “…nacieron en el trabajo y nunca tuvieron la oportunidad de nutrir sus cerebros.”  
230 Ibid.  
231 Braden Copper Company, “Escuela nocturna de Sewell,” Teniente Topics, June 15, 1919. “Podría demostrar satisfactoriamente el progreso y había declarado que en los pocos meses que ha funcionado esta escuela, han obtenido la marca de los asistentes de los trabajadores, un alto grado de mejora técnica, intelectual y moral.”
were for illiterate men. Also by 1924, there were classes for men to learn English and stenography. On the other hand, the night school for women focused on courses that related to upkeep and management of the home. While there was a shift towards the coeducation of children, the education of men and women were distinct because their careers and lives operated on such different planes.

*Vocational education in the United States and Chile*

Night schools for mechanics and craft workers began to appear after the Industrial Revolution in England, and then popped up in the United States after 1820—most notably the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Mechanic’s Institute in Cincinnati and the Maryland Institute in Baltimore. However, by the mid-late 19th century, the education of adults, particularly of employed workers was in decline. Many of the institutes formed earlier in the century closed and others survived only through private donations. But, the turn of the century marked a reemergence of manual labor seminaries and vocational schools in the United States. Many states, including Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Wisconsin, adopted state supported and or controlled vocational education programs. The nature of the programs differed state to state, but most were centered around industrial, mechanical and agricultural training.

The Progressive Era in the United States was wrought with the tension between the need for labor and the need for social order. As documented by historian Jane Bernard Powers in *The ‘Girl Question’ in Education*, the rise of factories and industrialization created a place for women in the labor market to perform low paying, low status and seasonal work, which

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234 Ibid., 40–41.
employers and women generally welcomed. But, concerns with social order were also linked to working women—“the increasing incidence of working women was linked to higher divorce rates, prostitution, unsupervised children, and the decay of the family, as well as moral degeneration in general.”\textsuperscript{235} Vocational schools for women were implemented as a potential solution to the tensions of labor and morality: they would provide technical training and moral, feminine lessons. There was also a concerted effort to ‘feminize’ education by including home economics in school programs in the public education system.\textsuperscript{236} There was great debate over the issue of industrial and technical education for women, which reflected the pervasive concern over the changing roles of women and the effects of industrial employment on women and their families. “The most popular position was a compromise that allowed for women’s presence in the work force while it provided a protective influence over the kind of workplace. Mary Shenck Woolman’s Manhattan Trade School for Girls was typical. It provided trade training in trades that were specified as feminine and mainly involved traditional needle trades.”\textsuperscript{237} Vocational education for young women in Progressive Era America had to simultaneously teach women to fill the new industrial occupations and maintain the principals of morality and femininity.

Similarly, in Chile, industrialization played a role in the implementation of vocational education for women. After the War of the Pacific in the 1880s, business men and politicians wanted to stimulate industrialization in Chile believing it to be the means towards achieving national economic prosperity. With the desire for industrialization came the increase in vocational education, including the Santiago Arts and Crafts School (Escuela de Artes y

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., chap. 2.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 35.
Oficios). As documented by historian Elizabeth Hutchinson, there was also an increase in vocational training for women. In 1889, the Professional School for Girls (Escuela Profesional de Niñas) was opened and over the next forty years more than eighty thousand women attended vocational education classes.\textsuperscript{238} The curriculum of the vocational schools still operated on the basis of the sexual division of labor, separations of occupations by sex and unequal wage scales. Further, “many administrators found it necessary to justify the idea of training women as workers by showing how the schools improved their students in their roles as working-class wives and mothers.”\textsuperscript{239} Vocational training could not conceive of women’s labor as disconnected from morality and family life. Across Chile, women’s vocational education was not purely for economic growth, but continued to focus on proper conduct, service and family management. While educating women superficially may have appeared as a step to contradict normative gender roles, it was actually a means of enhancing and reinforcing the sexual division and inferiority of women’s labor.

III. Informal Education of Boys and Girls

As discussed in the first chapter, Braden Copper Company encouraged the formation of masculine bonding activities that would replace the traditional “sinful” activities of drinking and gambling. The welfare department set up clubs and sports games for the miners to take part in. The architects of the welfare department believed that they could teach boys, who would grow up and become miners, from a young age to partake in noble pastimes. The welfare department established cultural activities and social clubs to convince workers and their families of a set of values that were linked to the ideal of middle-class respectability. For example, in a letter to the mayor of the province of O’Higgins, the president of the “Rancagua Boxing Club” wrote “The

\textsuperscript{238} Hutchison, \textit{Labors Appropriate to Their Sex}, 143.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 144.
importance of our youth in the development of physical activity, which is practiced with regularity and enthusiasm, makes of the new generation a bunch of healthy bodies, both morally and physically healthy...this crusade for the ‘pre bettering of the Race.’”

The clubs and groups would not only make the mining lifestyle more attractive as a future career, but would also be instrumental to Chile’s national development. If children participated in these positive intellectual, physical and moral activities from an early age they would be ingrained with good virtues, which would propel the Chilean race.

The Sewell Boy Scouts Brigade became the central mechanism for guiding young boys into the men that the company wanted them to be. In Chile, the Scouts were founded in 1909 and were to learn “about camping life, the observation of nature and the application of the lessons learned, the art of tracking, horsemanship, swimming, shooting, the learning of first aid, hygiene, rescue and other useful notions compatible with the age.” They were to learn these lessons and skills to “contribute to the formation of manly and honorable citizens, clean of body and spirit, patriots, self-less, ingenious and caretakers of themselves.”

The very creation of the Scouts at Sewell was described as the “collective effort between people who knew each other, who were appreciated and who sustained the same longings for social welfare.”

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240 “Letter to Intendente de O’Higgins,” June 22, 1921, Archivo Nacional de Chile. “…la importancia que tiene en nuestra juventud el desarrollo físico que practicado con mesura y entusiasmo hace de la nueva generación una talante de cuerpos sanos físicas y moralmente… esta cruzada ‘pre mejoramiento de la Raza’”

241 Braden Copper Company, “Boy Scouts de Chile,” Teniente Topics, September 1, 1919. “…la vida de campaña, la observación de la naturaleza y la aplicación de sus enseñanzas, el arte de rastrear, la equitación, la natación, el tiro al blanco, el aprendizaje de los primeros auxilios, la higiene, el salvamento y otras nociones útiles ‘compatibles con la edad.’”

242 Ibid. “Contribuir a formar los ciudadanos viriles y honrados, sanos de cuerpo y de espíritu, patriotas, abnegados, ingenuos y dueños de sí mismo…”

243 Braden Copper Company, “Boy Scouts del mineral El Teniente,” Teniente Topics, November 1915. “Esfuerzo colectivo entre personas que se conocían, que eran apreciadas y que sostenían los mismos anhelos del bienestar social.”
Scouts was explicitly to further the social welfare agenda created by Braden Copper Company. Moreover, the values and behaviors of the Scouts were to be “mimicked by all of the inhabitants of this camp.” The men who led the scouts and the boys who participated were meant to be exemplars for the rest of the society.

The advocates of the Boy Scouts believed that the increased transformation of boys into noble and dignified scouts would improve society and the nation by propelling the mining town into modernity. BCC again used the language of the future of Chile to inspire men and boys to take part in the Scouts. “The Company, which always had a special appreciation for this patriotic institution, forming the future citizens, has the proposition to prepare a location for a school of instruction” BCC invested money into building a place the scouts could meet in because they believed that Scoutismo would contribute to a positive education of their future employees. A Teniente Topics article outlining the creation of the brigade said that every Scout should aspire “to live in the middle of a perfect social environment; without rivalry and with his soul and heart always predisposed to contribute to a greater social perfection and an era of true progress and culture for their homeland. In a word, the Scout desires to be useful in all manifestations of life.” The boys and men of Sewell had to join together in order to push their community, and eventually their country into development and advancement. “The young Boy Scouts prosper in the fullness of their physical vigor towards a goal of moral perfection, for the well-being of each

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244 Ibid. “…imitado por todos los habitantes de este campamento.”
245 Braden Copper Company, “Boy Scouts de Chile.” “La Compañía, que siempre ha tenido especial aprecio por esta patriótica institución, formadora de los futuros ciudadanos, tiene el propósito de preparar un local para una escuela taller.”
246 Ibid. “Vivir en medio de un ambiente social perfecto; sin rivalidad y con su alma y corazón siempre predispuestos a contribuir a una mayor perfección social y a una época de verdadero progreso y cultura para su patria. En una palabra, el Scout desea ser útil en todas las manifestaciones de la vida.”
and every one and for the prosperity of the mother country.” The Scouts were meant to act as a representative of the future—of social perfection. Education of the next generation went hand in hand with the development of the future nation.

With the success and popularity of the Boy Scouts, the inhabitants at Sewell decided to start the Girl Scout Brigade, the Girl Guides. Below is the headline in El Mercurio, “Investidura de las Girl Guides” (Inauguration of the Girl Guides).

In an editorial in the 1917 October issue of Teniente Topics, there was an article on the newly formed Girl Scouts.

“One of the worthiest events of note during the national holiday was the organization of the Girl Scout brigade in this mine. This aspiration is worthy of all applause by all Chileans who are present. With enthusiasm and perseverance, they have taken charge of the organization and maintenance of this institution, which is a true school of civility.”

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247 "Que son los Boy-Scouts?,” El Teniente, March 2, 1924. “...asi prosperan los jóvenes Boy-Scouts en la plenitud de su vigor físico hacia una meta de perfeccionamiento moral, por el bienestar de cada uno y de todos y por la prosperidad de la madre Patria.”

248 “Investidura de las Girl- Guides,” El Mercurio, October 7, 1918.

249 Braden Copper Company, “Girl Scouts,” Teniente Topics, October 1917. “Uno de los eventos más notable durante la fiesta nacional fue la organización de la Brigada de Girl Scouts en esta mina. Esta aspiración es digna de todos los aplausos de todos los chilenos que están presentes. Con entusiasmo y perseverancia, se han encargado de la organización y el mantenimiento de esta institución, que es una verdadera escuela de civilidad.”
Similar to the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides aimed to teach the qualities and values that would shape the girls into model women in the community. The brigade at Sewell was the first Girl Guide organization in Chile, and one of the first of brigades outside of the UK.

The Boy Scouts movement was founded in England in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell. In the first two years, young British girls informally participated in many of the outings and voraciously read the guides to scouting. By 1909 a group of girls attended a Boy Scout Rally calling themselves the Girl Scouts. Baden-Powell believed that a parallel movement to the Boy Scouts should be set in place for girls, and by 1912 the Girl Guide was officially established in the UK under the leadership of Agnes Baden-Powell (Robert’s sister). There was a fair amount of backlash over the Girl Guides movement, but it continued to spread globally. Girl Guiding in the United States was founded by Juliette Low, after she met Baden-Powell in the UK in 1911. She spent a year leading a Girl Guide unit in a poor, rural community in Scotland, and then became the Guide Commissioner in London for some time. When she returned to the United States, the girls she worked with in the US petitioned to change the name from Guides to Scouts to be “somehow more American.”

The appeal of the Girl Guides/Scouts laid in its simultaneous ability to quench adventurous fantasies, and its ability to develop skills to “fight the perceived decadence threatening homes in the early 20th century.” As argued by Tammy M. Proctor in *Scouting for Girls: A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts*, scouting for girls spread like wild fire across the world in the early 20th century, because of its ability to tap into the need girls felt for the primitive—the outdoors, as well as its emphasis on duty and service through domesticity,

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251 Ibid., 12.
Girl Guides appeased the fears of inculcating a lawless and masculine spirit in girls by focusing on womanly attributes and incorporating domestic education into scouting. Globally, Girl Guides were to be a complementary, but separate form of Scouting for girls. Proctor explains, “With different uniforms, altered organizational structure and emblems, Girl Guides was designed as a sex-appropriate answer to the thousands of girls clamoring for entrance to Scouting.” The Girl Guides’ education was supposed to be “compatible with their age and sex.” A central part of the Girl Guiding curriculum, was learning to be moral guardians of the home. As documented by Proctor, the Girl Guide handbook of 1912 articulated that “their greatest duty in life was to ‘bring up good citizens’ for the country and to ‘teach them to be good, hardworking, honorable and useful citizens for our great British Empire.” Thus part, of the girl’s scouting education included cooking, sewing, nursing and childcare. Similar to the rhetoric published by the Braden Copper Company, Guiding’s emphasis on service—to friends, family, countries and humanity—imbued the girl’s mission with a higher significance. It is unsurprising that the enrollment in Girl Guides (in the UK and across the globe) spiked during the World War; scouting became a means for women to contribute to their country and show their patriotism.

At Sewell, the scouts allowed young girls to leave the home and learn from nature like the boys; but also enforced a feminine education. The girls camped, hiked and learned signaling, tracking and the basics of outdoor life. The Girl Guides met daily, the younger girls meeting in the room of the police and the older girls meeting in the room of the Brigade (where boy scouts

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252 Ibid., 7.
253 Braden Copper Company, “Boy Scouts de Chile.” “…compatible con su edad y sexo.”
254 Proctor, Scouting for Girls, 12.
255 Proctor, Scouting for Girls.
256 Ibid., 12.
met daily). The girls went on excursions such as “a march from Sewell to the small encampment of Copado.” Guiding attracted so many girls at Sewell and across the world because of its adventure and its divergence from home-based activities. One Girl Guide wrote that the brigade was formed with the objective of “physical development to form moral character.” However, she goes on to write that “later when they are no longer students of this school, they know how to conduct themselves well, because not only will they be taught the gymnastic exercises, but also many maxims that all ‘girls’ must have in mind at all times of their life.” At Sewell, similar to the global Girl Guiding movement, girls were able to learn from nature and experience the outdoors; but, they were also meant to learn female-specific “maxims” or lessons. Informal education, such as the Scouts, reinforced the values that the Company wanted the boys and girls at Sewell to learn in the home and in the school. Recreational activities became just as important as formal educational mechanisms (like school) as a means of guiding Sewell’s future inhabitants.

Conclusion

Many of the institutionalized and unofficial changes in educating children and adults, were brought about because of the changing global environment due to World War I. While Chile was not directly involved in the conflict, cultural and social shifts profoundly affected communities across Chile, and were particularly strong in the North-American and Chilean community at Sewell. Across the world, women had to assume new duties while their husbands,

257 Braden Copper Company, “Boy Scouts,” Teniente Topics, October 1919. “…Una marcha desde Sewell hasta el pequeño campamento de Copado.”
259 Ibid. “más tarde cuando ya no sean alumnas de esta escuela, sepan conducirse bien, porque no solo se las va a enseñar los ejercicios gimnásticos, sino también muchas máximas que toda las "girls" debe tener presente en todo momento de su vida."
fathers and sons were away at war. Women were capable of leaving the private sphere and excelling in various crafts and professions. Women’s war-time responsibilities challenged traditional notions of the abilities and rights of the sexes. After World War I, women’s suffrage movements exploded. By 1920, women had gained the right to vote in the United States. Chile did not legalize women’s suffrage until the 1931 (originally for municipal elections, and then national elections by 1949), but women in Chile would have been well aware of the changing tides across the world. A February 1920 article, “Movimiento social femenino,” in Teniente Topics communicated

“The world war has been a severe lesson for mankind and everyone is ready for a fight nobler than that of arms: the fight for economic and moral progress, within reason, freedom and law. It was therefore just that within these ambitions the women of this mineral would also rise ... to prepare themselves for this new struggle of feminine redemption.”

Sewell was both progressive and regressive in terms of women’s rights. Sewell supported the education of women and girls, but the curriculum was also heavily weighted towards domestic education. Women were allowed to organize and create a feminist society, but were also expected to maintain a clean and hygienic home for their husbands and children. The higher-ups at Sewell wanted to create a modern and advanced enclave to be a model for Chilean society, but they also wanted to enforce the maintenance of nuclear male-headed families to sustain the mine’s workforce. This paradox, resulted in informal and formal education systems that seemed to be stuck in between two ages.

\footnote{Braden Copper Company, “Movimiento social femenino,” Teniente Topics, February 1920. “La guerra mundial ha sido una severa lección para la humanidad y tordos se aprestan a un combate por el progreso económico y moral, dentro de la razón, la libertad y el derecho. Era, pues justo que dentro de estas ambiciones las mujeres de este Mineral…para prepararse a esta nueva lucha de redención femenina…”}
Conclusion: Convergence of Capitalists and Suffragists

The Chilean government’s favorable foreign investment policies in conjunction with increased global demand for copper due to World War I, fundamentally changed the copper mining industry in Chile. North American companies, such as the Braden Copper Company as well as the Anaconda Company and Chile Exploration Company, took over the large copper mines dotting the Western Andes mountain range. Because the majority of the mines were located in remote and mountainous regions, the North American corporations built company towns for their employees to live in. The company town at El Teniente, Sewell, was among the largest in Chile. In the early days at El Teniente, copper mining jobs were seasonal or temporary. Typically, miners would stay at the mine for a few weeks or months and then return to agriculture or nitrate mining. The transient male labor force was accompanied by an ephemeral female movement—and the men and women often engaged in informal sexual relationships.

When the demand for copper skyrocketed during the first World War, the company needed to increase production. BCC needed to make a change in the nature of the work force. They needed a permanent labor force trained to operate the newly introduced machinery. Along with financial incentives to retain workers, the company founded a welfare department, intervening in the social lives of miners to promote stability. In particular, the company wanted to encourage the formation of nuclear families, where men and women adhered to gender specific roles. Women were in charge of the domestic sphere. In addition to traditional domestic chores of cooking and cleaning, women at Sewell were supposed to maintain hygiene in all aspects of their lives, manage the family’s finances, and educate their children. These regulations and expectations were not created in a vacuum, but were the result of changing and complicated middle class values and conceptions of femininity and family in the United States and Chile.
In the United States, women began to enter the nondomestic work force in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as the increased mechanization and industrialization created a myriad of unskilled jobs for low-wage labor, suitable for women entering the workforce.\textsuperscript{261} At the same time, increased personal wealth led to the expansion of service industries like laundries, restaurants and beauty salons, creating positions not ordinarily operated by men.\textsuperscript{262} The labor market was thus defined by sexual segregation. Most female laborers were members of male-headed families and their supplementary wages gave a new flexibility to stringent household budgets.\textsuperscript{263} While there was an increase in female low-wage, unskilled labor and traditionally female skilled labor by the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, it was still understood that domestic duties were a woman’s first priority. And there was a clear sphere of female authority when crossing the threshold separating the home from the outside world.\textsuperscript{264}

World War I altered the traditional discourse on families across the globe. Davis Stevenson argues in \textit{With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918} that without the cooperation from millions of women, neither side could have continued fighting during the Great War. On both sides of the war, most feminist organizations supported the war effort, including the Bund der Fraun in Germany (with over 500,000 members) and the Women’s Social and Political Union in Britain (which suspended its suffragist campaign to march through London on

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\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 80–81.
\end{flushright}
behalf of ‘Women’s Right to Serve’).265 Women also directly supported the armed forces—the French army employed 30,000 women as nurses and 90,000 more served via the French Red Cross; and the German army employed 92,000 women. And Britain even set up uniformed women’s auxiliary services under military discipline with over 90,000 members.266 Furthermore, a significant number of the men who served were married. All over Europe women filled the jobs their husbands had vacated, managing businesses and farms as well as the family. Women attained a new visibility in public places and accomplished tasks of which they had previously been judged incompetent.

After the war, various military leaders and heads of state, including Joseph Joffre (France), Anthony Asquith (Great Britain), and Woodrow Wilson (USA) acknowledged the critical role women played in the success of the Allies.267 Stevenson argues that the Central Powers were less effective than the Allies in mobilizing women’s industrial labor. In the United States from 1917-1918, the number of women in industry rose two and a half times, to one million.268 “White women moved into armaments, chemicals, and consumer goods, operating lathes, driving cranes, becoming inspectors and streetcar conductresses; black women replaced them in textiles and domestic service.”269 In 1918, Woodrow Wilson urged the Senate to approve a constitutional amendment for women’s suffrage, on the grounds that it was “vitaly essential to the successful prosecution of the great war…This war could not have been fought had it not been

266 Ibid., 490.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid., 444.
269 Ibid., 445.
for the services of the women.”²⁷⁰ Although the votes did not receive the necessary two thirds
majority in 1918, the Nineteenth Amendment became law in 1920.

With the end of the World War, America was pushed from the Victorian era to
modernity. The 1920s were marked with dramatic cultural changes in the United States,
including shifting gender roles and family values. As articulated by Susan Currell in her book
American Culture in the 1920s

“This Common, everyday experiences that ordinary Americans took for granted by 1931
would have seemed exotic and extraordinary only six months after the armistice…
Imagining the daily routine of ‘Mr. and Mrs. Smith’ in May 1919…they would not have
heard of vitamins, tabloid newspapers, Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, the Chrysler
automobile, traffic congestion and speed restrictions.”²⁷¹

There was not only a plethora of new inventions and consumer products in the 1920s, but the
relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their family would have changed from 1919 to
1931. In the 1920s divorce was made easier and the number of divorces doubled; women smoked
in public, danced new dances and were more sexually liberated than ever before; women’s
fashion strayed away from long skirts and corsets in favor of clothing made for convenience and
activity.²⁷² Modernity was defined not only in new inventions, but in the change in women’s
status and the nature of relationships within the family.

Chilean women’s labor and women’s rights

Nara Milanich argues that in 19th century Chile, labor, class status and domestic
arrangements were tightly intertwined. The prevailing wisdom in 19th century Chile held that
poor women were destined for domestic service—they were to live as dependents in someone
else’s household rather than presiding over their own. Milanich argues that this suggests that

²⁷⁰ Ibíd., 491.
²⁷¹ Susan Currell, American Culture in the 1920s, Transferred to digital print, Twentieth-Century
²⁷² Currell, American Culture in the 1920s.
poor women were not “envisioned exclusively, perhaps not even primarily, as wives and mothers in their own right, but rather as domestic dependents.” Radical Chilean thinkers believed social mobility could be engineered through “the formation of peasant households,” and “an ‘honorable and secure future’ had not only vocational and material dimensions, but also a familial one.” Of course, the dominant discourse rejected this idea because “‘Artisans, farmers, and men of science, if you will, cannot be created from cadavers.’” The idea that poor women were destined as domestic servants, is in sharp contrast to the ideals of working-class domesticity of 20th century Chile.

In the 19th century, Chile’s population was predominately rural. Almost 80% lived in rural areas in 1850. But the twentieth century, in the wake of the War of the Pacific, was marked by urbanization and industrialization. By the turn of the century, tens of thousands of women participated in the urban, industrial workforce—working as seamstresses and laundresses as well as filling roles in Santiago’s weaving, clothing, tobacco and food-packing factories. As argued by Elizabeth Hutchinson, there was a general perception that factory work encouraged prostitution. The thinking was that working women had already abandoned the safety of the home for the dangerous workplace, and thus were on the path to prostitution. While there was an increase in women in the public workplace, there was a shame associated with working-class female employment.

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274 Ibid., 13.
275 Ibid.
277 Hutchison, “‘El Fruto Envenenado Del Arbol Capitalista’: Women Workers and the Prostitution of Labor in Urban Chile, 1896-1925.”
278 Ibid.
Following the example of victories of women around the world, in the 1910s and 1920s many activists in Chile invoked the examples of “advanced” European and North American countries as civilizations to be emulated. Women with certain financial means or with a certain level of education would have access to the events and social trends occurring in other parts of the world. However, they advocated small steps and “a modified feminism suitable to Chilean culture.”

While women endorsed the desired goal of suffrage, they did not actively pursue it. Chilean feminism in the early twentieth century, rejected individualism (that was embraced by suffragists in the United States) in favor of an emphasis on the importance of family and companionate marriage as the basis for a stable society. One female leader, Amanda Labarca wrote:

“We have a different individuality, just as our ideals and our culture are also different. It would not surprise me that in this southern continent, in Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile, progressive countries, in which secular prejudices against women don't exist with the same ferocious intensity as in Europe, should arise a new feminist creed, more domestic, more closely linked to the future of the home, the family, and the children, than the Saxon feminism, which carries that race's mark of exaggerated individualism.”

By the 1920s national and political developments began to change the course of the Chilean women’s movement. Reformist Arturo Alessandri won the presidential election of 1920 by campaigning for economic improvements of the working class. Newly formed labor unions and other groups demanded profound social reforms. Industrial capitalism continued to grow, and feminists cited the growing number of women workers and university students as

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280 Pernet, “Chilean Feminists, the International Women’s Movement, and Suffrage, 1915-1950.”
281 Ibid., 667.
282 Ibid., 669.
confirmation that even middle-class women had abandoned the confines of the home. Yet, women’s activism in Chile had a much slower pace than in the United States or Europe. Corrine Pernet argues that this is because many Chilean women had not yet been forced by their social and economic situation to demand their rights and because there was the occasionally voiced ambivalence about the impact of women’s vote. However, Chile’s women’s movement continued its labors and eventually achieved women’s suffrage in municipal elections in 1931 and federal elections in 1949.

Very few women at Sewell entered the public work force. And the jobs they did occupy, were at laundries, cafeterias and small stores. For example, single thirty-year old Laura Cespedes Gamboa was working as a laundress. Going through over 400 accident reports from El Teniente in the years 1919-1921 in the Chilean National Archives, revealed that the report on Laura’s burn (from an iron) was the only report on a female employee. Further, the company publications never mentioned female employees. Despite the women’s movements occurring across the world, the women at Sewell remained relatively silent up until 1920. In the 1920s, a feminist organization was formed at Sewell and women began writing articles encouraging

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female education and criticizing traditional gender roles. While the middle-class values promulgated at Sewell were rooted in both Chilean and North American discourse, it seems that the women at Sewell were more in line with Chilean feminism, in that the women used the rhetoric of family and communal values to pursue their rights.

The focus on family and community values was consistent with the North American’s vision of the company-town. The North Americans who regulated and guided the Chilean’s social lives were primarily concerned with the development of their business, but also envisioned Sewell as a progressive utopia through a paternalistic lens. They wanted to care for and to lead the Chileans into modernity. BCC portrayed Sewell in contrast to Rancagua; Sewell was filled with hygienic and alcohol-free spaces and nuclear relationships while Rancagua was dirty and occupied by prostitutes and taverns. Sewell was declared a moral beacon in its physical layout and social regulations. Further, the women at Sewell were educated in the domestic economy and were able to be frugal, while still looking elegant and maintaining a lovely home. The family unit was where saving money began, and saving money was a means of developing the nation into the modern political and economic order of civilized nation-states. And finally, women’s status was elevated to the stewards of Chile’s future. Women had the power to educate and drive the next generation of citizens to success. Of course, BCC insisted that women had to listen to authoritative male figures in order to understand what lessons they should be instilling into their children. But, it is important that even in the subordinate role that the North American men envisioned women fulfilling, women were critical in the maintenance of the family and the nation. Women and families were critical to carrying out the welfare department’s vision of social engineering.
In the early 20th century, global capitalism and women’s movements intersected in the copper mine El Teniente. Capitalism, in conjunction with paternalism, drove the North American mine managers to regulate the social lives of miners and their families. International women’s movements inspired women to organize and question traditional gender roles. While these two movements on the surface seem contradictory, the rhetoric of family and modernity were present in both. This convergence allowed segregated sexual labor and the continuation of nuclear families guided by multinational middle-class values to flourish with little contestation for many years.
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