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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Defending the Family: Female Begging and the Policing of Female Begging on the Streets of Pinochet's Santiago (1973–90)

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Abstract
Economic crises during Chile's civic–military dictatorship (1973–90) forced a growing number of people onto the streets, including women who commuted from peripheral neighbourhoods to beg in downtown Santiago. Under military rule, impoverished women in public spaces became a police problem. Despite their constant presence on the streets throughout the twentieth century, Chile's begging laws were rarely applied to women, except for a brief period under Pinochet, when begging emerged as a female crime in Santiago. This paper examines female begging and the policing of female begging, revealing both to be framed as a defence of the family.

Keywords: Chile; police; begging; dictatorship

In July 1979, 24-year-old Jovina was arrested in downtown Santiago by a female sub-lieutenant of the 2nd Women's Commissary 'for not having a licence to beg in public places […], thereby infringing Article 1 of the Law on Antisocial States'.[1] She was detained with her one-year-old son, who was sent to the Casa Nacional del Niño (National Children's Home, CNN) while Jovina herself was held in the Centro de Orientación Femenino (Centre for Female Guidance, COF). A COF report described the child as being in poor physical condition and Jovina as pregnant and being treated for tuberculosis. The female social worker who compiled the report also wrote that Jovina 'continually enters this penal establishment for begging' and 'has always been detained together with her children, who she uses to inspire pity'. In her statement before a judge, Jovina insisted she and her sons – the one-year-old and a five-year-old – had been waiting for a bus, but she did concede that she used to beg: 'up until they [briefly] took my son away, after they took him away, I didn't beg any more'. She testified her family

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[1] Case 91.865-1, 2nd Criminal Court of Santiago (2CCS), 16 July 1979, Archivo Judicial de Santiago (AJS). All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

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was now provided for by her partner, and a subsequent investigation confirmed that she was a *dueña de casa*.[2] Jovina was released on 20 July. Jovina's experience is representative of both the practice of begging and of its policing during Augusto Pinochet's civic–military dictatorship (1973–90). Begging was, and still is, an established part of daily life in Santiago, but it increased during economic crises under military rule, and between 1979 and 1985 arrests of women for begging overtook those of men, reversing the pattern of the earlier part of the twentieth century.

After providing historical context for Pinochet's Santiago, and a historical and historiographical review of begging and its regulation, this article examines downtown begging under Pinochet. It finds begging to be a strategy employed by women who moved outside of collective strategies of survival in the *poblaciones* (poor urban neighbourhoods) on the periphery of the capital. These women found asking for loose change shameful and humiliating, but some also found honour in the struggle to provide for their families. The Penal Code,[3] however, defined begging as a crime, and Jovina was arrested on at least six other occasions for begging between 1979 and 1985. Her relationship with the *carabineros* (police) parallels a broader shift in the policing of Santiago's streets. This article also examines the policing of begging, revealing it, too, to have been driven by ideas of family. The military regime framed expressions of poverty as the result of moral decay and family breakdown, and it understood family breakdown as a threat to national security. In this context, and from the late 1970s, the regime committed to 'defending the family' and at-risk children. As part of this 'defence', the *carabineros* criminalised poor mothers who begged on downtown streets with their children.

Pinochet's Santiago

The late 1970s is an important juncture in Chile's dictatorship. Having deposed the elected government in a violent coup on 11 September 1973 and waged a brutal and systematic 'war' against its 'internal enemies', the junta sought to legitimise its rule. It ended the 'war', lifting the state of siege in 1978, and in 1980 installed a new constitution to protect its political and economic project. The regime and its civilian advisers had fundamentally reorganised the economy from 1975: industry protections were removed, public spending slashed and financial markets deregulated, plunging Chile into crisis, which was felt hardest on the edges of the city. From 1978 the economy showed signs of macroeconomic recovery, but this 'miracle' did not make it to the *poblaciones*.[4]

Hunger cut through households on the edge of Santiago from the end of 1973 as inflation raised the prices of basic goods, and unemployment spiked following the shock of economic reforms.[5] Among *jefes de hogar* (heads of households) in the *poblaciones* unemployment ran as high as 60 per cent. Desperate need was met initially, and in particular, by soup kitchens (*ollas comunes*) run by the Catholic

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[2] The term '*dueña de casa*' refers to women who might have worked, and might still be working, but whose identity was defined by the role of mother, wife and homemaker.

[3] *Código Penal de la República de Chile* (1874).

[4] Manuel Gárate Chateau, *La revolución capitalista de Chile (1973–2003)* (Santiago: Ediciones UAH, 2012), pp. 221–7.

[5] José Aldunate, 'El hambre en Chile', *Mensaje*, 253 (1976), p. 509.

Church. As it became clear towards the end of the decade that economic crisis was not a transient situation but the new reality, *pobladores* (inhabitants of the *poblaciones*), especially women, built a web of solidarity, including subsistence organisations, such as shopping collectives and *ollas comunes*, to feed themselves.[6] Overcrowding in the *poblaciones* reached a crisis point around the same time, giving rise to a housing movement and the re-emergence of the practice of squatting. Grassroots and collective responses to poverty and housing shortages consolidated as the regime's 1979 urban development plan formalised and accelerated the 'eradication' of squatter settlements (*campamentos*), often moving the most impoverished families from wealthier neighbourhoods to poorer, peripheral districts (*comunas*).[7] These eradications were part of Pinochet's proposed solution to the housing crisis, as well as his effort to hide signs of poverty, which undermined the image of the modern, almost-developed nation enjoying 'miraculous' economic growth that the dictatorship sought to project.[8]

The economic recovery collapsed in 1981 on the back of the global oil shock and a burst local debt bubble. The *poblaciones*, which had not felt the recovery, were plunged further into economic crisis as well as into what social scientists at the time called a 'crisis of the family'.[9] The regime's reforms had been ushered in amid rhetoric that affirmed the ideal of the patriarchal, nuclear family, with a male breadwinner and a stay-at-home wife and mother. This 'traditional' family was forged during industrialisation and the emergence of the modern welfare state in the early twentieth century, and as an ideal remained unchallenged despite subsequent decades of political and social upheaval.[10] During the dictatorship, the junta justified the coup and its rule as necessary to protect and provide for Chilean families. As part of this effort the regime created the Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer (Women's National Secretariat) to 'propagate patriotic and familial values',[11] and it established an enormous 'voluntariat' of middle- and upper-class women who ran workshops in the *poblaciones* on baking, weaving and embroidering, promoting this type of work within the home as a chance to 'work daily for the uplift of the woman, the family and the *patria*'.[12]

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[6] Clarisa Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad = ollas comunes* (Santiago: PET and Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, 1986), unpaginated preface.

[7] Alison J. Bruey, 'Limitless Land and the Redefinition of Rights: Popular Mobilisation and the Limits of Neoliberalism in Chile, 1973–1985', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 44: 3 (2012), pp. 523–52.

[8] Edward Murphy, *For a Proper Home: Housing Rights in the Margins of Urban Chile, 1960–2010* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), p. 164.

[9] Oscar Corvalán and Erika Santibáñez, *Situación socio-laboral de la juventud chilena: Diagnóstico y perspectivas* (Santiago: CIDE, 1986), p. 124 and Irene Agurto and Gonzalo de la Maza, 'Ser joven poblador en Chile hoy', in Irene Agurto *et al.* (eds.), *Juventud chilena: Razones y subversiones* (Santiago: Eco, 1985), pp. 65–6.

[10] Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950–1973* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); and Gwynn Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile: Familial Ideals, Citizenship, and Political Struggle, 1970–1990* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).

[11] This was the title of one of the organisation's pamphlets: *Valores patrios y valores familiares*, Cuadernos de Difusión, no. 7 (Santiago: Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer, 1982).

Despite the regime's insistence on its role as the protector of the family, economic crises under Pinochet undid 'traditional' gender relations. Unemployed and underemployed men struggled to assume the 'male' role of provider. Some participated in emergency work programmes, some tried to get by on irregular and informal work, and others turned to drink to drown their shame.[13] Women had worked to supplement household income throughout the twentieth century, but during Pinochet's crises they often found work more easily than did their partners, challenging, intentionally or not, male authority within the household. This 'crisis of the family' in turn helped mobilise opposition to the dictatorship, with emerging social movements from the end of the 1970s often appealing to the same discourse of the family as did the regime.[14] Growing popular movements, persistent political organisation and economic crisis merged in a national day of protest in May 1983. Monthly street protests followed, until the regime declared a state of siege the following year. A cycle of street protest and violent crackdown characterised the lead-up to the 1988 plebiscite, Pinochet's loss at the ballot box and the country's return to democracy in 1990.

Begging in History, the Law and the Archives

Begging is not part of the histories of the Pinochet dictatorship. Studies of the *poblaciones* and poverty have tended to focus on the junta's policies to combat extreme poverty, survival strategies built on solidarity, political repression, or political, popular and feminist movements.[15] Where begging is tangentially mentioned, it is framed as a 'perverse', 'extreme' or 'deviant' behaviour that – along with black-marketeering, drug-trafficking, prostitution and theft – exists in opposition to solidarity, organisation and informal work.[16] Studies of begging in Chile are instead limited to histories of the colonial period and the nineteenth century,[17] and criminological and legal analyses of the regulation of begging in the first half of the twentieth century.[18] The history of crime and criminality in Chile[19] and Latin America[20] similarly focuses on the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this context, studies on women have focused on correctional houses and 'female' crimes, such as prostitution,[21] and studies of the police are rare. *Carabineros* became the face of political repression under Pinochet, regularly detaining more than 100,000 annually – mostly young men – for being 'suspicious' (*por sospecha*), and carrying out massive raids in the *poblaciones*. Nevertheless, as Daniel Palma has noted, 'there is no policing historiography in Chile', and studies that do exist are dominated by institutional histories and examinations of post-dictatorial reforms.[22]

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[12] Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, pp. 148–53; see also Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 114–16.

[13] Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad,* unpaginated preface.

[14] Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, pp. 139–67 and 170–202.

[15] For contemporaneous social science studies see: Luis Razeto, *Economía popular de solidaridad: Identidad y proyecto en una visión integradora* (Santiago: Area Pastoral Social de la Conferencia Episcopal de Chile, 1986); Guillermo Campero, *Entre la sobrevivencia y la acción política: Las organizaciones de pobladores en Santiago* (Santiago: ILET, 1987); Mariana Schkolnik and Berta Teitelboim, *Pobreza y desempleo en poblaciones: La otra cara del modelo neoliberal* (Santiago: PET, 1988); Pilar Vergara, *Políticas hacia la extrema pobreza en Chile, 1973–1988* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1990); Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad*; Clarisa Hardy, *Organizarse para vivir: Pobreza urbana y organización popular* (Santiago: PET, 1987). For historical studies see: Cathy Lisa Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995); Philip D. Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*; Murphy, *For a Proper Home*; Alison J. Bruey, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty: Grassroots Activism and Human Rights in Pinochet's Chile* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018).

[16] Vicente Espinoza, 'Social Networks among the Urban Poor: Inequality and Integration in a Latin American City', in Barry Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 149–51; Andrea Rodó, 'El cuerpo ausente', *Debate Feminista*, 10 (1994), p. 87; and Sonia Zapata and José Antonio Moya, 'La mendicidad y su

The lack of research on everyday policing in the late twentieth century is due partly to the focus on human rights violations and partly to the difficulty of access to sources. This paper examines the existing ledgers of cases and of files sent to the Archivo Judicial de Santiago (Judicial Archive of Santiago, AJS) from Criminal

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mundo: Análisis y perspectivas de acción', unpubl. Master's thesis, Instituto Latinoamericano de Doctrina y Estudios Sociales (Biblioteca Universidad Alberto Hurtado), 1991, p. 33.

[17] Mario Cárdenas, 'Grupos marginados en los inicios de la era republicana: Vagabundos, mendigos e indigentes', *Cuadernos de Historia*, 11 (1991), pp. 47–62; Alejandra Araya Espinoza, *Ociosos, vagabundos y malentretenidos en Chile colonial* (Santiago: DIBAM / CIDBA / LOM, 1999).

[18] Claudina Acuña Montenegro, 'El problema de la mendicidad en Chile', thesis, Universidad de Chile, 1923; J. Florencio Galleguillos V., *La vagancia y la mendicidad como problema social y como delito* (Santiago: Dirección General de Prisiones, 1936); Carlos Valdovinos, 'La vagancia, la mendicidad y demás estados de desvalimientos y la represión de la ebriedad', in Patronato Nacional de los Desvalidos (ed.), *La vagancia, la mendicidad y demás estados de desvalimientos. La acción del Patronato Nacional de los Desvalidos en el estudio de este problema* (Santiago: Leblanc, 1942), pp. 11–37.

[19] Marco Antonio León León, *Construyendo un sujeto criminal. Criminología, criminalidad y sociedad en Chile. Siglos XIX y XX* (Santiago: CIDBA / Editorial Universitaria, 2015); Tomás Cornejo and Carolina González (eds.), *Justicia, poder y sociedad en Chile: Recorridos históricos* (Santiago: Ediciones UDP, 2007); Daniel Palma Alvarado, *Ladrones: Historia social y cultura del robo en Chile, 1870–1920* (Santiago: LOM, 2011); María José Correa Gómez (ed.), *Justicia y vida cotidiana en Valparaíso. Siglos XVII–XX* (Santiago: Acto Editores, 2014); Daniel Palma Alvarado (ed.). *Delincuentes, policías y justicias: América Latina, siglos XIX y XX* (Santiago: Ediciones UAH, 2015).

[20] Ricardo D. Salvatore and Carlos Aguirre (eds.), *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Essays on Criminology, Prison Reform, and Social Control, 1830–1940* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996); Carlos A. Aguirre and Robert Buffington (eds.), *Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000); Ricardo D. Salvatore, Carlos Aguirre and Gilbert M. Joseph (eds.), *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society since Late Colonial Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

[21] For Chile see Carla Rivera Aravena, 'Mujeres malas. La representación del delito femenino en la prensa de principios del siglo XX', *Revista de Historia Social y de las Mentalidades*, 8: 1/2 (2004), pp. 91–111; María José Correa Gómez, 'Demandas penitenciarias: Discusión y reforma de las cárceles de mujeres en Chile (1930–1950)', *Historia*, 38: 1 (2005), pp. 9–30; and Ana Gálvez Comandini, 'Lupanares, burdeles y casas de tolerancia: Tensiones entre las prácticas sociales y la reglamentación de la prostitución en Santiago de Chile: 1896–1940', *Tiempo Histórico*, 5: 8 (2014), pp. 73–92. In a regional context see Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); and David Carey Jr., *I Ask for Justice: Maya Women, Dictators, and Crime in Guatemala, 1898–1944* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2013).

[22] Daniel Palma, '"Una historia en verde": Las policías en Chile. Balance y sugerencias para la investigación', *Revista Historia y Justicia*, 2 (2014), p. 18.

Courts nos. 1–5 of Santiago, as well as case files in the AJS.[23] Locating a file inside the AJS requires a case number and date, court and bundle (*legajo*) numbers, as well as the date the file was sent to the archive. This information can often be found in the ledgers, but the coverage is patchy and stretches back only to 1979. By reviewing and cross-referencing the sets of ledgers the author identified 141 locatable case files across the years 1979, 1982–8 and 1991–5, mainly in the 2nd Criminal Court. The sample is small, given the nearly 6,000 begging arrests recorded between 1977 and 1998, but it does show the same gender patterns as police statistics: women (49) outnumber men (29) between 1979 and 1985, and men (41) outnumber women (34) between 1986 and 1995.[24] The case files typically contain a police report and a statement made by the detainee before a judge, in which the detainees appear to speak relatively freely about their lives and their arrests.[25] In addition to these case files, this article also draws on interviews conducted by social scientists Sonia Zapata and José Antonio Moya around the end of 1990[26] and interviews conducted by a government working-group on poverty in 1996 with individuals who had begun begging in the 1970s and 1980s.[27] Taken together, these documents allow some insight into the phenomenon of begging as well as into its relationship with the law.

Chile's 1874 Penal Code stipulated imprisonment for vagrants – those without a fixed address or way to subsist, those who did not work despite being able to, and those who inspired 'well-founded suspicion' – as well as those 'who beg in public places without the correct licence'. The articles relating to vagrancy and begging were removed in 1998.[28] Between the end of the nineteenth century and the decriminalisation of begging at the end of the twentieth, descriptions of begging in Santiago reveal two main things. First, despite fluctuations in numbers, particularly in moments of economic crisis, the demographics of the city's beggars remained relatively consistent. Observers emphasised the sick, disabled, aged, unemployed men, children, women, and women who begged with children, noting, too, the presence of 'professional' beggars.[29] Second, they suggest that the policing of begging bore little relationship to the practice of begging.

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[23] Both sets of ledgers (cases and files) for all of Santiago's criminal courts are currently held in the 34th Criminal Court. The record is incomplete due to damage, poor management and loss. This study focuses on Courts nos. 1–5 because, according to a report compiled for the author by the Dirección de Estudios de la Corte Suprema, they received the most begging cases, and because the ledgers for these courts are the most complete.

[24] The totals do not tally because some case files could not be found in the AJS.

[25] There is little in the available case files to suggest that the women detained were inhibited by fear of abuse or reprisal when speaking before a judge. Police harassment was real, as was fear of it, but statements show a preparedness to admit to begging, denounce police harassment or insist police are lying.

[26] Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', Anexo A: 'Historias de vida'.

[27] Consejo Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza (CNSP), *La pobreza en Chile: Un desafío de equidad e integración social* (Aug. 1996), available at http://www2.superacionpobreza.cl/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/la_pobreza_en_chile_1996.pdf (last accessed 4 March 2020).

[28] Ministerio de Justicia, Ley no. 19.567 (1 July 1998).

[29] Acuña Montenegro, 'El problema de la mendicidad', pp. 7–10, 26–8; Valdovinos, 'La vagancia', pp. 11–12; J. D. Porteus, 'Microspace Geography: Beggars in Santiago de Chile', in Brenton M. Barr (ed.), *New Themes in Western Canadian Geography: The Langara Papers*, no. 22 (Vancouver: Tantalus

Begging was largely tolerated by police in the early twentieth century despite the ban.[30] From the mid-1930s the recently restructured police force took on the floating population, including beggars, as a police problem.[31] Beggars were typically not detained for begging itself, but were likely to have been caught up in broad sweeps of the city as *carabineros* rounded up 'suspicious' individuals and those out late, making little practical distinction between 'vagrants', 'drunks' and 'beggars'.[32] This shift in police practice paralleled criminological debates and positivist efforts to have vagrancy and begging framed not as crimes, but as 'dangerous' or 'antisocial' activities that would necessarily lead to crime. This idea of 'dangerousness' was eventually codified in the Law on Antisocial States (1954, repealed 1994),[33] which stipulated additional security measures for a range of socially 'dangerous' categories including drunks, drug users, vagrants and beggars.[34] These security measures were never implemented as the necessary infrastructure was not put in place, but the law consolidated the figure of the criminal beggar as the unproductive, lazy, parasitic worker, and as the potential, even inevitable, violent criminal. Importantly, this figure was implicitly male. Police actions to round up the floating population were still regular in the decades preceding the 1973 military coup,[35] and arrest rates reflect the police focus on those men they considered idle and suspicious. Impoverished women on the street were not considered a criminal problem for most of the century,[36] and there was little practical difference between the 'crimes' of vagrancy and begging, but between 1979 and 1985 a new distinction emerged, with *carabineros* detaining more women than men (Figure 1).

In the available court ledgers, there is little overlap between the populations of criminal 'vagrants' and criminal 'beggars' that can be identified by name and gender.[37] Vagrancy remained a male crime and continued to follow the logic of 'dangerousness'. Downtown 'vagrants' were mostly young men stopped by the Policía

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Research, 1976), pp. 89–95; Mary Helen Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 175–6.

[30] Acuña Montenegro, 'El problema de la mendicidad', pp. 21 and 25; Valdovinos, 'La vagancia', p. 31.

[31] Marcos Fernández Labbé, 'Police Imagination: The Construction of Drug Users and Drug Trafficking in Chile, 1900–1950', in Luz E. Huertas, Bonnie Lucero and Gregory J. Swedberg (eds.), *Voices of Crime: Constructing and Contesting Social Control in Modern Latin America* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2016), pp. 78–82.

[32] Valdovinos, 'La vagancia', pp. 24; Marcos Fernández Labbé, 'Asociales: Raza, exclusión y anormalidad en la construcción estatal chilena, 1920–1960', *Revista de Historia Social y de las Mentalidades*, 16: 2 (2012), pp. 184–5; Fernández Labbé, 'Police Imagination', p. 81.

[33] Ministerio de Justicia, Ley no. 11.625 (21 Sept. 1954); Ley no. 19.313 (21 July 1994).

[34] Azun Candina Polomer, 'Seguridad ciudadana y sociedad en Chile contemporáneo. Los delincuentes, las políticas y los sentidos de una sociedad', *Revista de Estudios Históricos*, 2: 1 (2005); Fernández Labbé, 'Asociales', pp. 167–94; León León, *Construyendo un sujeto criminal*, pp. 133–68.

[35] Ministerio de Planificación, *Habitando la calle. Catastro nacional de personas en situación de calle* (Santiago: Ministerio de Planificación, 2005), p. 28.

[36] From the end of the nineteenth century, women and children were targeted by charitable institutions, not police; see Macarena Ponce de León Atria, *Gobernar la pobreza: Prácticas de caridad y beneficencia en la ciudad de Santiago, 1830–1890* (Santiago: DIBAM, 2011), pp. 183–206. In subsequent decades police barely detained any women, and public concern about 'female' crime focused on abortion, abandoning the home, bigamy, adultery and 'crimes of passion': see Rivera Aravena, 'Mujeres malas', pp. 100–2.

[37] A review of Ledgers 5, 6 and 7 of the 2CCS of files sent to the AJS identified 114 'beggars' (65 women and 49 men) and 1,704 'vagrants' (323 women and 1,381 men) by name and sex. Only nine women and 11

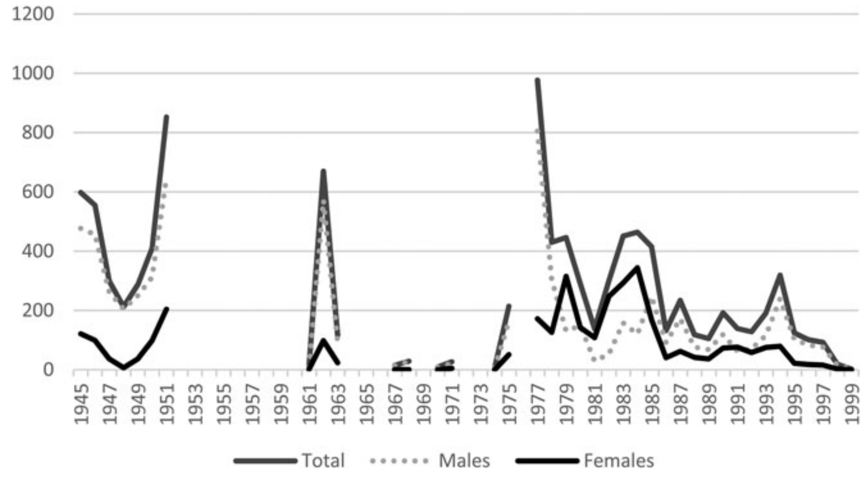

Figure 1. Arrests for Begging in Santiago (1945–99) by Gender

Source: Author's elaboration using statistics published in Carabineros de Chile, *Anuarios estadísticos* (1949–51), Carabineros de Chile, Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics, INE), *Anuarios de estadísticas policiales* (1967, 1977–99), and INE, *Anuarios de justicia y policía* (1961–82), and INE, *Anuarios de justicia* (1983–99). Gaps in the data are due to incomplete records or inconsistent reporting.

de Investigaciones de Chile (Investigations Police, PDI), a separate branch from the *carabineros*. These young men were then detained if their names appeared – usually in connection, however tenuous, to robbery – in the PDI database.[38] Begging, however, became a female crime in Santiago.[39] Hunger had been a feature of daily life since the end of 1973, and the limited accounts suggest downtown begging increased markedly in subsequent years.[40] Nevertheless, such an increase cannot be quantified, and does not explain the timing of the shift in policing or necessarily account for the gender differential in arrest rates. Under military rule, too, there seems to have been little relationship between the phenomenon and the policing of begging. Both, however, were shaped by ideas of gender and family.

Female Begging: Poverty, Shame, Honour and Family

Verónica grew up as one of 12 siblings in the Santiago *comuna* of Recoleta. She never went to school and worked briefly as a seamstress, before marrying in order to escape her childhood home. However, her new husband soon lost his factory job, and she found herself facing 'the same poverty' as before. The couple did not talk to their neighbours or participate in neighbourhood organisations, and in the late 1970s they would go two or three days without eating. Verónica was in her

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men were detained for both 'crimes'. Common first and last name combinations and the use of initials may impact the accuracy of the numbers, but not to any significant degree.

[38] Based on a review of 89 vagrancy cases in the AJS.

[39] At the national level arrests of men outnumbered those of women; see Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', p. 20.

[40] See, for example, Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, pp. 175–6.

mid-twenties and pregnant when in desperation she asked for milk in a local corner shop, offering to trade some earrings she had found. A shopkeeper gave her milk and some advice: 'Love, this barrio is not the place to be doing this. Go to Providencia.' Providencia was a wealthy *comuna* with the central district on its western border. Recoleta is separated from the northern part of Providencia by the steep Cerro San Cristóbal and although the two *comunas* are adjoining at the foot of the hill Verónica had never been to Providencia, nor did she know where it was. The following day she caught a bus there and sat in front of a church. She insisted in a 1990 interview with social scientists Zapata and Moya that begging was not dishonourable, but that she did find it humiliating. She kept her begging from her husband out of shame, telling him that she had work. When he found out, he wept and asked her to stop. She refused, but eventually sold things instead. She earned less, but being a street vendor was more dignified, she said.[41] Verónica's story reveals some of the shame, but also honour, that shaped poverty in the *población* and begging in the city centre.

The practice of begging evolved as military rule changed the face of the city. Under Pinochet more parks were built, more cars used the roads, and commercial centres popped up. Parallel to this 'modernisation', however, poor families struggled to cobble together livelihoods from emergency work programmes, government benefits, piece work, odd jobs and domestic service.[42] Subsistence was also facilitated by the sharing of information, pooling of resources and collective survival strategies in the *poblaciones*. Beggars, however, moved outside of this economy of solidarity. Clara Han echoes descriptions of shame in the *poblaciones* in the 1980s when writing of the distinction between solidarity and begging in Recoleta in the first decade of the twenty-first century. She differentiates between women 'asking' (*pedir*) and 'begging' (also *pedir*). Asking for help within the *población* leant on familial relationships and friendships, and implied possible – but not necessarily actual – reciprocity. However, as appeals strayed from personal relationships or failed to imply reciprocity, 'asking' slid towards 'begging', which was shameful and undignified.[43] Downtown begging displaced this shame. It was often women without access to support networks, or who were suspicious or fearful of collective action, who begged, joining the increasing number of people on the street trying to secure subsistence by selling trinkets, cleaning and guarding parked cars, stealing or collecting rubbish.[44]

In their 1991 study, Zapata and Moya identified broad gendered profiles among Santiago's beggars. The men had turned to begging after losing work due to illness or age, and they lived in hostels or on the street. They found begging shameful, but also framed it in terms of freedom: from schedules, from family, from work. For the women, however, begging was a response to 'not being able to feed their family, either because of the unemployment of the head of the household, alcoholism, pseudo-work, low salaries, etc.'. They had homes, which they were leaving to beg. They did not engage with their neighbours or participate in neighbourhood organisations. They had no interest in politics, and were unable to articulate what politics was. They did, however, have 'a clear definition of [gender] roles, roles that have been present in society for a long time': the woman ran the household and the man provided.[45] During field work in the mid-1980s Andrea Rodó and Paulina Saball identified in the *poblaciones* the same familial identity, which they associated with 'working-class culture': stable family groups based in legal marriages, in which women were '*dueñas de casa* par excellence', and men were assigned the role of 'head of the household', whether or not he was the sole or main provider.[46]

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[41] Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', Anexo A, pp. 34–43.

[42] Schkolnik and Teitelboim, *Pobreza y desempleo*, pp. 13–14.

[43] Clara Han, *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 75–87. See also Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad*, pp. 158–9 and 168.

[44] Schkolnik and Teitelboim, *Pobreza y desempleo*, pp. 13–14.

Rodó and Saball ascribed begging not to the *poblaciones*, but to the *campamentos*, where housing and living conditions were more precarious still.[47] Among the poorest and most marginal, they found that family groups were unstable, and women had no real connection to public life, and no collective identity. They rarely participated in solidarity organisations, and, when they did, it was in order to gain an immediate and personal benefit. Gender roles here were not, Rodó and Saball wrote, the 'normal' ones. The role of provider was not exclusively masculine, as women usually worked, either intermittently or as the *jefa* (note that the word is feminine) *del hogar*.[48] Moreover, while the city's poorest had always relied in part on Church or state handouts, cases of begging, robbery and prostitution had been extreme. Such cases were no longer 'extreme', especially among women and children, Rodó and Saball wrote in 1983.[49] Police files suggest, however, that begging was a strategy that straddled the worlds delineated by Rodó and Saball.

The women identified in the available begging case files often came from stable homes and relationships, and they lived predominantly in one of three *comunas*: La Granja and La Cisterna on the southern edge of the city, and Conchalí to the north.[50] In 1978 these *comunas* were home to thousands of families living in *campamentos*, but in this respect they were not unique. Together they accounted for less than 15 per cent of squatting families. Over the following years, a significant number of families 'eradicated' from *campamentos* were settled in La Granja, but very few in Conchalí and La Cisterna.[51] The overrepresentation of these *comunas* in the case files may be a product of the small sample size, but in 1983 Doris Cooper also found that people charged with robbery in 1983 came overwhelmingly from five *comunas*, including La Granja, Conchalí and La Cisterna. Without providing details, she described these *comunas* as being among the city's poorest and most marginal.[52] Similarly, a study that considered variables including housing, health, education and municipal spending, ranked La Granja, La Cisterna and Conchalí among the five lowest-scoring *comunas* in 1982.[53] An additional factor may have been mobility. Residential *comunas* La Granja and La Cisterna, while on the periphery, had fairly direct access to the centre of the city via main transport routes. Conchalí in 1983 was described by Dagmar Raczynski and Claudia Serrano as a residential neighbourhood that had grown out of government efforts to formalise squatter settlements in the 1960s. There were, they wrote, very few work opportunities for women within the *comuna*, and work in domestic service was complicated by difficult access to wealthier suburbs, as Conchalí, like neighbouring Recoleta, was separated from the north-eastern barrios by hills. Access to the centre, however, was relatively easy.[54]

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[45] Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', pp. 91–4, 146–51.

[46] Andrea Rodó and Paulina Saball, 'Mujer popular, familia y cesantía: Apuntes de terreno', *Proposiciones*, 9 (1983), pp. 39–54; Rodó, 'El cuerpo ausente', pp. 86–7.

[47] Rodó and Saball, 'Mujer popular', p. 49.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 51; Rodó, 'El cuerpo ausente', pp. 86–7.

[49] Rodó and Saball, 'Mujer popular', p. 49.

[50] Sixty-seven identifiable women have an address in their file. More than half lived in Conchalí (13), La Granja (12) or La Cisterna (10).

[51] Sergio Rojas, 'Políticas de erradicación y radicación de campamentos. 1982–1984, discursos, logros y problemas', *Documento de Trabajo FLACSO*, 215 (1984), pp. 9–14; Armando de Ramón, *Santiago de Chile. Historia de una sociedad urbana* (Santiago: Catalonia, 2007), p. 254. La Granja, Conchalí and La Cisterna ranked third, fifth and 19th respectively among the most overcrowded *comunas*: see Sergio Wilson Petit, *El drama de las familias sin casa y los allegados* (Santiago: Fundación para la Acción Vecinal y Comunitaria, 1985), p. 89.

Raczynski and Serrano's description of Conchalí appeared in a study on the impact of unemployment on families in the *comuna*.[55] They cite work surveys by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics, INE) from 1980 to 1982 to show that around 30 per cent of women declared that they were 'economically active', and the vast majority of the rest said they were dedicated to 'household tasks'.[56] Such surveys did not readily capture the dynamic of female work in the *poblaciones*, whereby women tended to stop paid work when they married or had children, before sporadically returning to it when the family required additional income. In Conchalí this work – often taking in washing or sewing – was typically in the home.[57] Around the same time, across town in La Florida, Clarisa Hardy found that around one-fifth of households that participated in *ollas comunes* did not include an adult male and therefore listed a woman as head of the household (*jefa del hogar*).[58] Moreover, 'the vast majority' of women who were not the head of the family 'dedicate[d] themselves completely to housekeeping and only in a marginal way [did] paid work outside the home'.[59] The categories self-selected by women in work surveys and the designation of the role of *jefe del hogar* captured gender roles more accurately than they described employment patterns.[60] Women worked – inside and outside the home – but they often linked this work directly to their domestic role.[61] However, women's paid work was a source of shame and conflict when women felt they were forced to abandon their home duties, when they assumed the role of provider, or by the public display of poverty associated with domestic work, street vending or seeking help from the Church or *ollas comunes*.[62] Beyond their own shame, women had to contend with men's shame at not being able to provide, which commonly expressed itself in resignation, isolation, alcoholism, feelings of impotence, and anger.[63] Women's shame about their work outside the home also turned to frustration and anger inside the home as many blamed their husbands for not working and making them take on the role of provider.[64] Female begging was also shaped by this same 'working-class' shame, and the same sense of crisis.

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[52] Doris Cooper Mayr, *Delincuencia común en Chile* (Santiago: LOM, 1994), p. 88.

[53] Patricio Gross and Alfredo Rodríguez, 'Segregación ambiental en Santiago: 1952–1982', *Eure*, 15: 44 (1988), pp. 55–77.

[54] Dagmar Raczynski and Claudia Serrano, *Vivir la pobreza. Testimonios de mujeres* (Santiago: Pispal / CIEPLAN, 1985), pp. 19, 184.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 43–58. See also Ministro de Economía, Fomento y Reconstrucción (Ministry of the Economy, Development and Reconstruction, MEFR), *XV censo nacional de población y IV de vivienda*, 12 vols., Vol. 2 (Santiago, 1982), pp. 266–7; and Schkolnik and Teitelboim, *Pobreza y desempleo*, pp. 323–7.

[57] Raczynski and Serrano, *Vivir la pobreza*, pp. 43–58, 88, 98.

[58] Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad*, p. 70. Hardy's figure for the eastern *ollas comunes* aligns with the 1982 census: see MEFR, *XV censo nacional de población y IV de vivienda*, Vol. 3, pp. 124–5, and with Schkolnik and Teitelboim's figures for the *poblaciones* of José María Caro, Lo Sierra, Lo Hermida and a *campamento* in Lo Espejo: see *Pobreza y desempleo*, p. 296.

[59] Children and other relatives living with the nuclear family contributed more to household income than did wives; see Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad*, p. 79.

[60] Raczynski and Serrano, *Vivir la pobreza*, p. 44.

The women in begging case files were on average 30 years old, one-fifth were married, and they typically identified as *dueñas de casa* in their statements.[65] The women interviewed in 1990 by Zapata and Moya had worked previously, but were not working at the moment they started to beg.[66] They also showed resentment, anger and fear at becoming the *jefa de hogar*. Zapata and Moya wrote of their female interviewees that 'when they have to assume roles that were not theirs, culturally speaking, like being the provider for their family group, it produces feeling of rejection and anguish, and for this reason they severely criticise what caused their husbands or partners to abandon their role, whether voluntarily or not, for example: alcoholism, unemployment, etc.'[67] One woman said she resented her husband for not providing and because she had to resort to begging. As he sat silently on the patio, she told him: 'If you're upset, go and find work […]. That's the way it should be.'[68] This 'anguish' paralleled an anxiety related to the abandonment of their motherly role. Most of the women Zapata and Moya spoke to had more than two children, and they were 'always struggling, on the one hand with the need and urgency to gather together some money to feed their children, and [on the other with the] annoyance and anxiety that comes with abandoning the home, their children, which means not fulfilling their role of mother'.[69] This tension between earning money and abandoning their domestic maternal role was particularly acute among women who begged with their children. These women had their children with them for a variety of reasons: to guard against partners' suspicion that they were having an affair, or because there was no one to leave them with, for example.[70] Women recognised that begging with their children risked them falling in with sex workers, drug users or thieves because of being on the downtown streets, but they also saw these same threats on the streets of their *poblaciones*: 'the people in the *población* are not good people', said one woman when explaining the dangers in her neighbourhood.[71]

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[61] Rodó and Saball, 'Mujer popular', p. 42.

[62] *Ibid*., p. 45; Hardy, *Hambre + dignidad*, pp. 158–9; Lorena Nunez, 'Women on the Streets: Vending and Public Space in Chile', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28: 44 (1993), pp. WS71 and WS75–WS76.

[63] Raczynski and Serrano, *Vivir la pobreza*, pp. 240–1.

[64] Rodó and Saball, 'Mujer popular', pp. 41–6 and 52; CNSP, *La pobreza en Chile.*

[65] In the available case files between 1979 and 1990, 59 individual women can be identified. Around half of these women were detained at least once with their children, or alongside someone with children. They identify as mostly as *dueñas de casa* (22). The next highest category is street vendor (five).

[66] Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', p. 148.

[67] *Ibid*., p. 149.

[68] Interview with Guadalupe in Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', Anexo A, pp. 14–32.

[69] *Ibid*., pp. 148–9.

[70] *Ibid*., Anexo A, p. 26.

Once downtown, women who begged often found a sense of calm and respite from their troubled home lives.[72] Some also found a sense of honour in holding their family together or feeding their children. In her 1990 interview, Verónica conceded the humiliation of begging, while maintaining that it was not dishonourable,[73] and Victoria from La Cisterna insisted on her honour before a judge in the mid-1980s. Twenty-nine-year-old Victoria was repeatedly detained on the same downtown corner and admitted in court to begging.[74] In July 1985 she told the judge: 'I do it periodically in order to subsist because I am a single mother and looking after my children does not allow me to work.'[75] In an earlier police report from April she was more defiant: 'It's true that I was begging in order to feed my children, because I have four and no way to feed them, and it would be worse if I went around stealing or committing some other type of crime. I am not ashamed of what I do, because I am honourable [*honrada*].'[76] Victoria's testimonies anticipated Javier Martínez and Margarita Palacios' 1996 study of the 'culture of decency' in the *poblaciones*. 'Decency', they argued, was based in the belief that it was possible to overcome the degrading effects of poverty. It was underpinned by a moral code of honour (*honradez*) that valued 'caring for the property you had acquired by virtue of your own effort or by gracious concession, […] and, by consequence, the rejection of criminal appropriation of goods'.[77] For some on the street, therefore, it seems begging was not a 'perverse' or 'deviant' activity, but a response – at once humiliating and honourable – to hunger and deprivation. While social scientists at the time did not consider begging as work, lumping it in with prostitution and theft, Victoria, for example, contrasted her begging with such 'crimes'.[78] Moreover, the practice of female begging was often shaped by the same fears and sense of shame as informal work. In fact, begging proved in many cases a gateway to informal work as women stayed on the street, switching to street commerce. While these women framed their begging as a struggle on behalf of their families and their children, they were confronted with the *carabineros*' effort to protect the regime's vision of the family.

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[71] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[72] *Ibid.*, Anexo A, pp. 11 and 69.

[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 34–43.

[74] Case 113.573-11, 2CCS, 23 Nov. 1985, AJS; Case 112.161-6, 2CCS, 9 July 1985, AJS.

[75] Case 112.421-3, 2CCS, 30 July 1985, AJS.

[76] Case 111.092-11, 2CCS, 22 April 1985, AJS.

[77] Javier Martínez Bengoa and Margarita Palacios, *Informe sobre la decencia: La diferenciación estamental de la pobreza y los subsidios públicos* (Santiago: Ediciones SUR, 1996), p. 14. The same year, the CNSP's report detailed the effects of male alcoholism in the *poblaciones* and the 'strength of women in the everyday struggle against poverty'. These women were, the report says, willing to do anything – including begging – to provide for their families: see *La pobreza en Chile*.

[78] See note 16.

Policing Begging: Family, the Nation and Moral Decay

In 1984 retired *carabinero* Héctor Jacob Sánchez wrote a 'frank' analysis of the institution he cherished, taking issue, in particular, with the practice of detaining people for *sospecha*. 'In recent times', he wrote,

> several procedures have been revived, which, while applied in isolated contexts many decades ago and exclusively for reasons to do with policing, were soon abandoned because they did not have the expected results, because they deeply violated human dignity of the most modest and abandoned social groups, […] and, in addition, because they demonstrated a lack of intelligence and an inability to resolve, with legitimate tools under the law, cases of the potential crimes committed by antisocial elements within these needy social groups.

Under military rule, *sospecha* became the tool the *carabineros* used to arbitrarily detain hundreds of thousands of poor Chileans, usually young men. These arrests occupied more than half of police time, Sánchez wrote. Detainees were held overnight and these '"dangerous subjects" […], these poor citizens, wretched even, whose only sin, if you can call it that, was to be poor', were removed from the cells in the morning. When writing about raids in the *poblaciones*, Sánchez made brief reference to the political repression of the time, but his interpretation of the general dynamic was more detailed and more prosaic: 'It all […] has an absurd explanation. *Carabineros* have to show that they did "effective police work" during their shift, so that the respective chief does not run the risk of receiving negative evaluations of his work.'[79] It may be that, like *sospecha*, the policing of begging was also impacted by unofficial bureaucratic quotas. It seems likely, too, that the policing of begging was 'revived' as part of the junta's efforts to eradicate common crime and hide signs of extreme poverty:[80] people caught up in sweeps were processed as beggars, members of the Romani population were routinely detained for begging, and some detainees described arrests that resembled *sospecha* or identification checks.[81] However, in Santiago from the late 1970s the begging laws were applied mostly to poor women.

Around the time of Sánchez' observations, 27-year-old Morelia, a married '*dueña de casa*' from La Pintana, was detained three times for begging. Her son was removed from her in 1984 while she was held in the COF.[82] In 1985, she acknowledged that on previous occasions she had 'had to beg to feed her children'.

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[79] Héctor Jacob Sánchez, *Análisis crítico sobre la policía uniformada chilena* (Santiago: n.p., 1984), pp. 7–9 and 49–54.

[80] For the regime's effort to eradicate crime and its persecution of societal groups that contradicted its modernisation narrative see Bruey, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty*, pp. 90 and 145.

[81] Begging is its own 'crime', rather than a sub-category of vagrancy or *sospecha*. In the 89 cases of vagrancy reviewed (see text at note 38), both women and men were typically detained because their names appeared in the PDI database, and although *sospecha* was an overwhelmingly male category, thousands of women (5,522 in 1979) were arrested for *sospecha*. In 1979, 315 women were detained for begging. Women such as Erna reported being arrested because they could not produce identification when asked to by the *carabineros* (Case 120.406-1, 2CCS, 22 June 1987, AJS); another (Case 122.203-1, 2CCS, 3 Nov. 1987, AJS) described being detained even after producing her papers.

[82] Case 109.732-2, 2CCS, 31 Dec. 1984, AJS.

The police report does not mention the children, but Morelia told the judge that she did not know what had become of them since her arrest: 'they've been alone since yesterday, and today I was meant to take one of them to the doctor […] but because I was detained I was not able to fulfil my obligations'.[83] Later that year, she was arrested again and spent a night in the COF. She denied being a beggar, insisting that she had been arrested as an illegal street vendor.[84] Morelia's experience is representative: women were usually held in the COF for between one and three nights to await an appearance before a judge, and if they were arrested with children, the children were typically sent to the CNN for the duration of their mother's detention. Neither the formal legal criteria for criminal begging, nor the now anachronistic references to begging licences that appeared in police files, seem to have driven these arrests. Instead, they are the product of a shift in police practice from tending to 'irregular children' to criminalising their 'irresponsible' mothers.

Morelia's 1984 case file cited Law 16,618 when justifying sending her child to the CNN. This 1967 Minors' Law created police units with specialised personnel dedicated to 'collecting minors in irregular situations in need of assistance and protection', and 'surveillance of sites known to be centres of corruption of minors'.[85] The same law also created the Consejo Nacional de Menores (National Minors' Council), which was charged with preventing child 'irregularity' and the elimination of 'vagrancy and begging among minors', and defined parents who 'allow their children to devote themselves to vagrancy or begging […], whether in an honest manner or as a professional pretext', as morally incompetent. The passage of the Minors' Law paralleled a reform process within the *carabineros* that gave rise to the Women's Brigade, the Department of Minors and the 'Child and Fatherland' Foundation (Fundación Niño y Patria), which tended to vagrant children.[86] Attempts in the previous decades to eradicate child vagrancy had had little success, leading to a shift in police policy in the early 1960s from repression to prevention:[87] *carabineros* continued to round up children but no longer treated them as criminals.[88]

The 1960s 'decriminalisation' of 'irregularity' featured heavily in the first edition of the police magazine *Niño y Patria* published by the Department of Minors in 1975. The editors cited at length comments made by Captain Santiago Silva of the 2nd Minors' Commissary in 1967 about vagrant children begging downtown, encouraged by their parents. Once they outgrew begging, Silva said, echoing the thinking at the time on 'dangerousness', girls turned to prostitution and boys 'almost inevitably to crime'.[89] In the same magazine, the head of the Women's

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[83] Case 111.603-6, 2CCS, 30 May 1985, AJS.

[84] Case 113.537-11, 2CCS, 23 Nov. 1985, AJS.

[85] Ministerio de Justicia, Ley no. 16.618 (1967).

[86] Carlos Maldonado Prieto, 'Los carabineros de Chile: Historia de una policía militarizada', *Iberoamericana – Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 20: 3 (1990), p. 18.

[87] Jorge Rojas Flores, *Historia de la infancia en el Chile republicano, 1810–2010* (Santiago: JUNJI, 2010), pp. 372 and 504–8; 'Una ley que ayudó a solucionar problemas de vagancia infantil', *Niño y Patria*, 1: 1 (1975), p. 18.

[88] Sandra Ponce Pardo (Teniente [Lieutenant]), 'La policía chilena y su preocupación frente al niño en situación irregular', *Niño y Patria*, 1: 1 (1975), p. 14.

[89] A 1967 article in the *La Nación* newspaper cited in 'Una ley que ayudó', p. 18.

Commissary, Captain Carmen Ferreira, described how some of the training courses for female officers were delivered by the Department of Minors because female officers would have the important mission of protecting the city's 'irregular' children.[90] This maternal role was an extension of the officers' 'sacred obligations' as women, as noted in Colonel Pedro L. Reveco Gutiérrez' speech at the inauguration ceremony for female officers that was reproduced in the same issue. 'From humanity's first steps across the face of the earth', Reveco told newly-minted officers,

> the pairing man–woman negotiated the centuries of history in permanent communion. The roughness of the man was compensated by the gentleness of the woman […]. This has been recognised by those who have understood how to employ women in tasks that are more appropriate to their condition. As defenders of the law, these officers are important to society, but above all they are women.[91]

From the late 1970s, therefore, it was the city's Minors' and Women's Commissaries that assumed responsibility for children on the streets.

The same history of *carabinero* engagement with poor children recounted in *Niño y Patria* in early 1975 had also been expressed in April 1974, when the military junta heard a submission from retired police officer and former member of the National Minors' Council, 'Coronel señor Vicuña'. Vicuña made the case for greater funding to address the issue of 'minors in irregular situations', understood as minors without secure access to 'culture, education, health services, and even adequate food'.[92] In subsequent years, the regime implemented programmes directed at helping 'limited', 'crippled', malnourished children, including the *carabineros*' Corporación de Ayuda al Menor (Corporation for the Care of Minors), created in 1976 to 'protect' children in 'irregular situations'.[93] By 1978, however, the regime recognised that these policies had not worked, and with the Justice Ministry's National Plan for Minors 1978–82 it sought to overhaul legislation relating to minors in irregular situations. The plan attributed 'irregularity' to a combination of economic, environmental, genetic and psychological factors, and it proposed measures, including economic subsidies, day care for working parents, adoption, foster families and the institutionalisation of children removed from their families. It also envisaged a preventive role for the *carabineros* via youth clubs run by the Department of Minors.[94]

A catalyst for the renewed focus on 'irregularity' was the lead up to UNESCO's 1979 International Year of the Child. The National Plan for Minors acknowledged the importance of the upcoming celebration,[95] the magazine *Niño y Patria* celebrated the International Year of the Child as an opportunity to refocus on the issue of irregularity[96] and the anniversary also led to increased press coverage of poor, marginalised and abandoned children.[97] Adult begging was not covered in the press under military rule, but newspapers regularly addressed childhood vagrancy and begging, presenting children as beings to be protected: if families were not going to protect children, the state – via the *carabineros* – should assume responsibility and remove them from the 'bad life'.[98] This type of coverage increased from around 1979, and that year, for example, the newspaper *La Tercera de La Hora* wrote that 'in general [child vagrants and beggars] are children that have lost the notion of home'. 'There is no respect', it continued, 'because the father goes out to drink and the mother, who has lost her vision of family, is happy to have the children leave the home'.[99] The same year, the military regime replaced the National Minors' Council with the Servicio Nacional de Menores (National Minors' Service, SENAME).[100] The creation of SENAME was based on the idea that the family was the 'fundamental nucleus of society' and that it was the responsibility of the state to defend and strengthen it, particularly in cases where parents or guardians were unable to provide opportunities for the normal development of minors.[101] The policy, press and police focus on childhood irregularity was part of the regime's broader 'defence of the Chilean family' as a way to protect the nation.

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[90] 'Jefe de la Comisaría de Mujeres habla para nuestra revista', *Niño y Patria* 1: 1 (1975), p. 53.

[91] 'La historia señala permanente comunión del Binomio Hombre – Mujer', *Niño y Patria* 1: 1 (1975), p. 28.

[92] Actas de Sesiones de la honorable Junta de Gobierno, Acta no. 112-a (15 April 1974): https://www.bcn.cl/obtienearchivo?id=recursoslegales/10221.3/34754/1/acta112_a_1974.pdf (last access 25 March 2020).

[93] Rojas Flores, *Historia de la infancia*, pp. 685–6.

[94] Ministerio de Justicia, *Plan Nacional para Menores 1978–1982* (Santiago, 1978), pp. 3, 11–15, 19–25, 37. See also 'Clubes de menores: Rol preventivo, vacuna contra la irregularidad social', *Niño y Patria*, 2 (1978), pp. 37–8.

In addition to the 'traditional' police concern about idleness and crime, the military regime began to link together irregularity, criminality and Marxism. In his 1974 meeting with the junta, Vicuña recounted the de-criminalisation of childhood vagrancy, echoing Captain Silva's 1967 comments on the link between irregularity and criminality. Vicuña, however, also added that 'the irregular child is a breeding ground for Marxism'.[102] Under military rule, the antisocial causality of positivist criminology was augmented by the junta's Cold War paradigm. The family was the 'basic nucleus' of society and its health was linked directly to that of the nation.[103] In this context, expressions of poverty were seen not only as pathways to criminality but also as threats to national security and symptoms of moral decay and family breakdown. The junta described this connection in its 1978 Population Policy, part of its National Development Plan (1978–83).[104] The policy linked family planning, opposition to abortion, population growth and 'responsible' parenting to national security, and it insisted on the 'moral strength' of the nation, that is, a shared set of family values:

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[95] Ministerio de Justicia, *Plan Nacional para Menores*, p. 9.

[96] 'Celebración del año internacional del niño', *Niño y Patria*, 3 (1978); María Eugenia Oyarzún, 'La responsabilidad de la sociedad frente al niño', *Niño y Patria*, 4 (1980), pp. 9–11.

[97] Rojas Flores, *Historia de la infancia*, pp. 690 and 695.

[98] Patricia Castillo and Nicolás Peña, 'Niñez como objeto del discurso de la prensa durante la dictadura chilena (1973–1989)', *Revista Austral de Ciencias Sociales*, 32 (2017), pp. 23–40; here pp. 30–1.

[99] As cited in *ibid.*, p. 30.

[100] Ministerio de Justicia, *Plan Nacional para Menores*, pp. 3, 11–15, 19–25, 37.

[101] Ministerio de Justicia, Decreto Ley no. 2.465 (1979); Rojas Flores, *Historia de la infancia*, p. 708.

[102] Actas de Sesiones de la honorable Junta de Gobierno, Acta no. 112-a.

[103] Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 138; Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, p. 141.

[104] Oficina de Planificación Nacional (ODEPLAN), *Política de población: Política poblacional aprobada por su excelencia el Presidente de la República y publicada en el Plan Nacional Indicativo de Desarrollo (1978–1983), en noviembre de 1978* (Santiago: ODEPLAN, 1979), translated in 'Chile Adopts Pronatalist Policy', *Population and Development Review*, 5: 3 (1979), pp. 563–71.

> the spirit of self-defence that a society possesses will be a direct function of the values and principles by which it is governed, in which it believes, and for which it must continue to exert its efforts.
>
> The intensity with which these values are held, the awareness of them, and the reaffirmation given to them determine the depth of social cohesion, community feeling, patriotism, and all other values that give meaning to life and for which one is willing to die.[105]

Cracks in this 'moral foundation' represented 'fertile ground' for '[f]oreign and aggressive social systems' to 'penetrate' Chile. It was the task of 'responsible parents' to transmit not only life, but also 'moral, cultural and spiritual values'. The policy went on to insist that '[t]he incentives for any kind of child degradation, such as begging, vagrancy, improper child labor, and corruption, must be removed'.[106]

The Population Policy reflected the increasing effort in the late 1970s to protect the Chilean family not just from Marxism, but also from 'drug addiction, graft, pornography, and alcoholism'.[107] The regime declared the 'war' against the Communist internal enemy to be over at the end of the decade, identifying a range of new threats. Protecting families from these threats became, according to Gwynn Thomas, 'a kind of spiritual calling that justified all means employed by the government'.[108] It was a 'spiritual calling' in which 'deviant' mothers, in particular, were held responsible for the moral failing of the family. The military regime celebrated women who conformed to heteronormative gender roles, maintained 'moral' homes and raised children in agreement with its conservative ideology; the inverse of this celebration, however, was the condemnation of women who did not conform to these roles. The dictatorship blamed poor people for their poverty, and framed crime and expressions of that poverty as the direct result of the breakdown of the family unit inside the *poblaciones*. In this context, women who failed to maintain a proper home, failed to discipline their husbands and could not control their children were held responsible for producing cracks in the moral foundation of the nation.[109] Whereas blame for female destitution had once been laid at the feet of their unemployed husbands, women were now at once culpable for their families' poverty and for threats to national security.

Police publications in the late 1970s reinforced the idea of the family as 'the basic nucleus' of society and that family disintegration was at the root of sociocultural 'maladjustment' and 'helplessness', which in turn led to child vagrancy, and subsequently, criminality.[110] It was at this moment, as the defence of the family consolidated and political attention turned to children on the street, that the police units responsible for addressing childhood vagrancy began arresting women for begging. While the Minors' Commissaries stopped detaining child beggars,[111] they were responsible for the spike in arrests of women for begging. Arrest statistics show that they policed begging more rigorously than did other prefectures, and that, in the early and mid-1980s, and in contrast to other prefectures, they policed begging more rigorously than vagrancy.[112] In available case files from this time, more than half of female cases were the responsibility of Women's or Minors' Commissaries, involved women detained with children, or involved women previously detained with children and known to police. From mid-1987, however, personnel from Women's and Minors' Commissaries no longer appear in the available police files as arresting officers. Instead, the responsible units are predominantly the 1st and 4th Commissaries: the same units as those responsible for the majority of arrests of male 'beggars' throughout the entire period.[113] The profiles of the male and female criminal 'beggar', and the police units targeting them, suggest that from 1979 the commissaries charged with protecting the city's 'irregular' children turned their attention to rounding up 'irresponsible mothers'. Holding women in the COF and removal of children appears, too, to have been, at least in part, punitive and intended as a deterrent.

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[105] *Ibid.*, p. 569.

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 570.

[107] *Ibid.*, p. 569.

[108] Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, p. 148.

[109] Bruey, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty*, pp. 84 and 89–94.

[110] María Teresa Miranda Becerra, 'Departamento de Menores: Medidas adoptadas y proyección futura', *Niño y Patria*, 1: 2 (1978), pp. 13–14. Articles in the magazine also point to inadequate housing, parental alcoholism, underdevelopment and 'irresponsible' family planning, and they make clear a preference to

Detention in the COF suggests a punitive motive because the *carabineros*' 1982 *Basic Manual of Police Procedures* actually prescribed provisional release in begging cases.[114] In the available case files, women were provisionally released more often than men, but never in cases where arresting officers are identified as being from a Women's or a Minors' Commissary. Women in cases where children were not mentioned averaged less than one night in the COF, whereas women in cases where children were involved were typically held for one, two or three nights. In June 1987, for example, Erna (34) was held for three nights while her children – a three- and a four-year-old – were sent to the 34th Minors' Commissary as a 'protective measure'.[115] The COF had a maternity section to house women who gave birth in prison with their babies, and a day care facility, where the infants of prisoners and prison employees played together.[116] Moreover, in 1983, the Good Shepherd

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keep families together: Georgina Rivera Lechat (Capitán [Captain]), 'Consecuencias desfavorables del medio que conducen a la condición de irregularidad', *Niño y Patria*, 2 (1978), p. 11; 'La familia popular y todos sus problemas', *Niño y Patria*, 5 (1985), pp. 41–3.

[111] Colonel Mario López, chief of the Department of Minors and executive vice-president of Niño y Patria, explained this dynamic in 1987, saying that child beggars were detained only if they should have otherwise been at school: see Vicaría de la Solidaridad, 'Mendicidad infantil. La pobreza obliga', *Solidaridad*, 251 (1987), p. 20.

[112] Chilean police prefectures have a larger brief than do individual commissaries. The *Anuarios de estadísticas policiales* published by the *carabineros* and the INE (see source to Figure 1) break down arrests by prefecture from 1982.

[113] In the sample of cases, the 2nd Women's Commissary and the 34th and 35th Minors' Commissaries were responsible for 13 arrests of women for begging between 1979 and 1987, and for none after 1987.

[114] Carabineros de Chile, Dirección de Instrucción, *Manual básico de procedimientos policiales para Carabineros* (Chile: Carabineros de Chile, Dirección de Instrucción, 1982), p. 43.

[115] Case 120.406-1, 2CCS, 22 June 1987, AJS.

[116] Interview with Sister María de la Paz Venegas (7 Nov. 2019, Congregación Buen Pastor [Congregation of the Good Shepherd], Santiago). Sister María de la Paz was warden of the COF from 1978 to 1982 and

Congregation, which ran the COF, had entered into an agreement with SENAME to house 'minors in irregular situations' in the COF.[117] However, the *carabineros* sent children of female 'beggars' to the CNN, a protocol that suggests they were 'protecting' these minors from what they considered to be 'incompetent' and 'irresponsible' mothers.

Beyond being a 'protective measure', child removal resonated among women as a strong disincentive to beg. In a 1996 interview, for example, Georgina recounts how in the years following the coup, her husband lost his job and they had nothing to eat. One day her neighbour suggested they beg:

> my neighbour is a beggar [*machetera*], who begs for money on the street with a child in her arms, and so we went to beg [*machetear*]. We went to Augusto Leguía Street and when the lights went red we asked for loose change. The *pacos* [police] chased us a lot, in those days they used to take my kids prisoner. They always took the kids off me. They took me in just once. A *paca*, as female officers are called, calls me over and she says to me, '*Señora*, come here', and she says, 'What are you doing?', I told her I came from a job around here. They took the girls, Ivonne, Lorena and Clara. She says to me: '*Señora*, I'm not going to give the girls back, they are going before a tribunal.'[118]

The attention she and her children received did not drive them from the street, but it did prompt a shift away from begging. Georgina began to look after parked cars at a cinema two blocks away for tips. It was work she and her children were still doing in 1996.[119] In July 1979 Jovina also cited the removal of her son as the catalyst for her transition to street vending.[120] Over the subsequent years she testified to selling towels, crispbreads and coin purses.[121] A 1985 statement also confirms she was on the street with her seven-year-old son, presumably the same child as the one removed from her in 1979.[122] Jovina's wariness of the police was linked to begging and the risk of her son being taken from her. It was a specific and contextual fear.

Fear, like Jovina's, was common under military rule but fear had different causes. To explain their interviewees' lack of interest in politics, Zapata and Moya noted not only their low level of education but also how political repression had sown fear and made political engagement taboo and dangerous. These women feared police, but 'above all soldiers', and they tended to link this fear to 'being political', which for them meant the violence of the coup, disappearances and raids in the

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again between 1991 and 1994. The COF also had a section for 'minors', that is prisoners under the age of 21. Sister María de la Paz recalled the youngest during her time as being around 18.

[117] The archive of the Good Shepherd Congregation contains a 1984 update to the 1983 agreement, raising the number of 'minors in irregular situations' whom the sisters agreed to house from 40 to 45 (Archivo Histórico de la Fundación Buen Pastor, Document 200-8-1).

[118] CNSP, *La pobreza en Chile*, p. 22.

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] Case 91.865-1, 2CCS, 16 July 1979, AJS.

[121] Case 99.329, 2CCS, 26 Feb. 1982, AJS; Case 103.934-9, 2CCS, 24 June 1983, AJS; Case 109.815-9, 2CCS, 8 Dec. 1985, AJS; Case 118.873-1, 2CCS, 2 March 1987, AJS.

[122] Case 113.133-6, 2CCS, 15 Oct. 1985, AJS.

poblaciones.[123] However, fear of the policing of 'apolitical' activities in the city centre was different. Street vendors in the 1980s, for example, came from the *poblaciones* and also feared arrest, but they did not fear the types of abuses associated with political repression. Amid a police crackdown on street commerce, vendors spoke of suffering physical abuse, others insisted they were treated well, and many harboured no ill-will, insisting officers were just doing their jobs. What they feared was spending a night in the commissary, the confiscation of their wares and the associated loss of income, and the fine they would have to pay.[124] Similarly, women like Jovina and Georgina did not fear the type of political repression or physical abuses that occurred in the poblaciónes; they feared the police as they might take their children from them.[125] It is clear, too, that they assumed their begging or history of begging was related to their arrests, as they switched to street commerce in large part to reduce the risk of detention.

Interviews and judicial files suggest female beggars transitioned to street commerce not only because it was a more dignified option, but also to escape the police harassment associated with begging. At the time of Jovina's transition, police targeted illegal street commerce, and, as permits were not granted, essentially all commerce was illegal.[126] This repression was not new, but became more rigorous from the mid-1980s as the city's municipalities used the police force to clear the streets and pavements.[127] As part of this crackdown *carabineros* focussed on men. In the early 1990s vendor Isabel, who had started selling in the 1980s, told her interviewer that:

> Men are treated harder, they are treated much tougher because they are men, especially if they are young, they say to them, '*guevon*' ['mate'], what do you have to be doing on the street, you should be working, working in something else, leave this to the old women who can't work, to the old people who can't work either.[128]

Isabel's observation aligns with the 'traditional' concern with male 'idleness', and it is also reflected in the statistics. A 1988 study of street vendors – the majority of whom started after 1981 – found that women represented approximately one-third of the city's vendors.[129] Without quantifying the motivations of these women, the authors cite above all the need of *dueñas de casa* to leave the house to work.[130] 'Illegal street commerce' appears as a category in published police statistics from

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[123] Zapata and Moya, 'La mendicidad y su mundo', pp. 92–4, 97 and 149.

[124] Victoria Contreras and Uwe Weihert, *Sobrevivir en la calle: El comercio ambulante en Santiago* (Santiago: PREALC, 1988), pp. 39–40, 91, 93, 99, 103. Murphy too writes of the ambivalent relationship between *pobladores* and the police within the *poblaciones*: see *For a Proper Home*, pp. 143–4.

[125] Begging arrests followed a different rhythm from repression in the *poblaciones*. Massive raids of poor *comunas* showed a lull in the late 1970s, spiked in the mid 1980s and remained relatively high in the late 1980s: see Laura Moya, Claudia Videla and Ricardo Balladares (eds.), *Tortura en poblaciones del Gran Santiago (1973–1990)* (Santiago: Corporación José Domingo Cañas, 2005), p. 75.

[126] Contreras and Weihert, *Sobrevivir en la calle*, pp. 20 and 37.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[128] As translated in Nunez, 'Women on the Streets', p. WS79.

[129] Contreras and Weihert, *Sobrevivir en la calle*, pp. 5 and 23.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

1989, and from that year until 1998 men were consistently detained more often than women, at a rate of about six to one.[131] The shift from begging towards street commerce evident in the case files also aligns with the explanation given by *carabinero* General Alfredo Núñez for the drop in arrests for begging in the late 1980s. In 1991, Núñez described to a Chamber of Deputies commission the steep reduction in arrests of adults for begging between 1988 and 1989, and explained that the 'very complex phenomenon' of street vending had obscured the practice of begging or had incorporated beggars.[132] This lack of visibility seems to have brought to an end the new policing of begging, and in terms of gender differentiation and police unit participation, criminal begging arrests began to again resemble arrests for 'criminal' vagrancy.

Conclusion

Despite the military junta's conservative gender roles and its preference for stay-at-home wives and mothers, economic crises under military rule and hunger in Santiago's *poblaciones* pushed an increasing number of people onto the streets, including women who begged downtown. These women typically commuted from their neighbourhoods on the edge of the city, where their fear or suspicion of organisation isolated them from solidarity networks that emerged to combat poverty. However, their begging was often shaped by the same shame and humiliation of displaying one's destitution that also shaped community organisation and informal work. Begging was undignified, they insisted, but some also found a sense of honour in feeding their children and defending their family against the deprivations caused by the crisis. Meanwhile, a different 'defence of the family' informed the policing of begging.

While the destitute woman on the street with a child had been a constant figure in descriptions of begging in Santiago throughout the twentieth century, these women were not a police concern until the late 1970s. The shift in the profile of the criminal beggar was an expression of the Pinochet regime's focus on childhood 'irregularity' and its defence of the family. The dictatorship understood crime and expressions of poverty not as the consequences of economic crises, but as the result of moral decay and family breakdown. It blamed in particular poor women who 'failed' to maintain a proper home for emerging threats to the Chilean nation. This defence of the family deepened from the end of the 1970s, at the same time that children in 'irregular situations' became a focus of national debate, policy makers and preventive police work. At the same time, in Santiago's downtown streets, the police units responsible for looking after children in 'irregular' situations drove the spike in arrests of women for begging, as the *carabineros* 'defended' the Chilean family and these impoverished children by criminalising their mothers.

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[131] Carabineros de Chile, INE, *Anuarios de estadísticas policiales* (1989–98).

[132] Cámara de Diputados, Sesión no. 29(a) (15 Jan. 1991).

Spanish abstract

Las crisis económicas durante la dictadura cívico-militar en Chile (1973–90) forzaron a un creciente número de personas a trabajar en la calle, entre ellas mujeres que se trasladaban de barrios periféricos a pedir limosna en el centro de Santiago. Bajo el régimen militar, mujeres empobrecidas en espacios públicos se volvieron un problema policiaco. Pese a su constante presencia en las calles a lo largo del siglo XX, las leyes contra la mendicidad fueron raramente aplicadas a las mujeres, salvo durante un breve periodo de la era Pinochet cuando pedir limosna emergió como un delito femenino en Santiago. Este artículo examina la mendicidad femenina y su tratamiento policiaco, enmarcados ambos como una defensa a la familia.

Spanish keywords: Chile; policía; vagancia; dictadura

Portuguese abstract

A crise econômica causada pela ditadura civil–militar do Chile (1973–90) forçou um grande número de pessoas a trabalhar na rua, incluindo mulheres que vinham de bairros periféricos para mendigar no centro de Santiago. Durante o regime militar, a presença de mulheres pobres em espaços públicos se tornou um problema 'de polícia'. Apesar de sua constante presença nas ruas ao longo de todo o século vinte, as leis de mendicância raramente foram aplicadas às mulheres, exceto por um curto período sob Pinochet, quando a mendicância começou a ser vista como um crime feminino em Santiago. Este artigo examina a mendicância feminina e o policiamento da mesma, demonstrando que ambos foram enquadrados dentro do argumento de defesa da família.

Portuguese keywords: Chile; polícia; mendicância; ditadura

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