


RESEARCH ARTICLE

Women and Guilds in a Growing Economy: The Case of Lima, Peru

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Abstract

This article examines the role of women in the guild system of Lima, Peru, during the nineteenth century. Using data from the guild system of Lima between 1838 and 1859, it shows that women participated in a variety of guilds, primarily in retail trade and food manufacturing. Most women were not part of the guilds of merchants and professionals. A social stratification analysis reveals that women in guilds were concentrated at the lower end of the income distribution, with very few reaching the highest social classes. As the economy of Lima expanded during the Guano Era, enterprises had opportunities to grow and enter profitable sectors. However, women did not advance into the most lucrative sectors of the economy, with most remaining in the lowest social classes.

Keywords: Women; guilds; Peru; Latin America

Introduction

The role of women in the economy in the past and the restrictions they faced in the labor market have received much attention in the literature. Some scholars have shown that women participated in some crafts and trades in medieval and modern times. For example, Margret Wensky showed that most guilds in medieval Cologne did not restrict women; they could participate as members and workers (Wensky 1982). Meanwhile, Alice Clark pointed out that the guild system in seventeenth-century England allowed women to participate in crafts and trades through the household economy (Clark 1919). In addition, Judith Coffin showed that women played an important role in the garment guilds in eighteenth-century Paris (Coffin 1994), and S. David Smith argued that women were admitted to the tailor guild in modern York (Smith 2005). In addition, some studies show that independent women's guilds emerged in some cities (Crowston 2008; Ogilvie 2019).

However, although women participated in some crafts and trades, they did not face the same conditions as men for participating in the economy. For example, according to Maryanne Kowaleski and Judith Bennett, in the Middle Ages, “most trades and crafts were dominated by men, and the guilds formed by these occupations tended to treat women as second-class workers and second-class members” (Kowaleski and Bennett 1989: 475). Similarly, Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman pointed out that women in modern Europe were typically excluded from craft and high-skilled jobs (Honeyman and Goodman 1991). More recently, Sheilagh Ogilvie has shown that all-female and mixed-sex guilds made up a small percentage of guilds in medieval and early modern Europe (Ogilvie 2019).¹ Even Alice Clark, who argued that women played an important role in the economy of seventeenth-century England, pointed out that the advent of capitalism affected women’s participation because of the decline in household production (Clark 1919).

Several economic, social, and business historians have analyzed the role of women in the guild system in the past.² However, Latin America has been largely absent from the discussion of this topic. Some studies have analyzed the history of guilds and other associations in Latin America since the colonial period (Johnson 1980; Quiroz 2008; Tovar de Teresa 1984; Woodward 2007). However, none of them have analyzed the role of women in the guild system.

Guilds appeared in Peru during the colonial period (Quiroz 2008). After independence from Spain, guilds continued to play an important role in the Peruvian economy. There were guilds of *almaceneros*, *tenderos*, shoemakers, lawyers, and many others. Some guilds demanded restrictions on competition, which sometimes led to special government protection (Gootenberg 1982, 1989). Over time, however, the constraints of competition were reduced.³ By the nineteenth century, *almaceneros* and other merchants were far richer than retailers and artisans (Yepes 1981; Zegarra 2023). As the economy of Lima expanded during the Guano Era,⁴ and restrictions on competition were reduced, the gap between the richest and the poorest businessmen widened. Merchants and financiers experienced an increase in profits during this period; in contrast, medium and small businessmen did not experience a significant increase in profits (Zegarra 2023).

The guild system of Lima has garnered attention in the literature (Quiroz 2008, 2022; Zegarra 2023). However, the role of women in this system remains unexplored. How did women participate in Lima’s guild system during the nineteenth century? Were there women engaged in wholesale trade, or was their involvement confined to less profitable sectors? Did women benefit from the growth of the economy during the Guano Era?⁵

¹Given these restrictions, most women had to work in low-paying service jobs or outside the guild system.

²For a review of the literature on women and European guilds, see Crowston (2008).

³For example, tariffs were lowered in the 1850s, which probably affected some artisans.

⁴During the Guano Era, the Peruvian economy experienced an important expansion of foreign trade (Randall 1977; Zegarra 2018).

⁵In the historiography of Peru, the Guano Era is typically defined as the period between 1845 and 1875. During this period, Peru exported large quantities of guano, which is the accumulated excrement of birds, primarily extracted from several islands off the southern coast of the country. In the mid-nineteenth century, guano was in high demand in international markets as a natural fertilizer.

This article examines the role of women in the guild system of Lima, Peru, during the nineteenth century. Using information from the guild system in Lima between 1838 and 1859,⁶ it demonstrates that women participated in various guilds, primarily those associated with retail trade and food manufacturing. Women were members of the guilds of *cajoneros* and other small trades. They also participated in the guilds of butchers, *mazamorreras*, and *chicheras*.⁷ However, women did not belong to the guilds of professionals, had limited participation in many artisan guilds (particularly those unrelated to food manufacturing), and were generally excluded from merchant guilds. Social stratification of guild members reveals that women were positioned at the lower end of the distribution of guild members, with very few belonging to the highest social classes. A comparison of this study's findings with those of other studies indicates that Lima resembled other cities in the limited participation of women in the guild system and their concentration in relatively low-income guilds.

As the economy of Lima grew during the Guano Era, there were more opportunities for businesses in the city to expand their operations and even enter the growing sectors of the economy. However, women did not enter the most profitable sectors of the economy. Guild women remained at the bottom of the social ladder. Capital constraints and human capital deficits likely limited women's ability to participate in the most dynamic economic sectors.⁸

The article is divided into eight sections. Section 2 provides a historical background of Lima in the nineteenth century. Section 3 analyzes the guilds of Lima. Section 4 discusses the barriers to entry into the guild system. Section 5 examines the participation of men and women in the guild system between 1838 and 1843. Section 6 analyzes the changes in profits and the distribution of guild members by social class between 1838 and 1859. Section 7 explores the distribution of entrants by social class and mobility across social classes during this period. Section 8 concludes the article.

Historical background

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Peru was a largely rural country,⁹ with only a few cities having more than 10,000 residents. Lima, the capital and largest city of

⁶This period does not cover the entire Guano Era, but only its first phase (the late 1840s and the 1850s), due to data limitations. Information on guild taxes is available for the late 1860s. However, many wealthy guild members were corporations. Since information on the owners of these companies is not available, it was not possible to estimate the income of men and women in the 1860s.

⁷A *mazamorrero(a)* was a man(woman) who prepared and sold *mazamorra*, a Peruvian dessert. A *chichero(a)* was a man(woman) who prepared and sold *chicha*, a beverage made primarily from corn.

⁸Some may question the representativeness of this study in understanding the differences between large and small businesses and the role of women in Lima's economy in general (not only the guild system). It is likely that some men and women (particularly low-income earners) did not join the guild system. However, the lower proportion of small businesses within the guild system compared to the overall economy does not negate the significant differences in profits between large and small businesses. In addition, the fact that some women worked outside the guild system (primarily in low-income occupations) does not alter the fact that women were predominantly in the lowest social classes.

⁹Recent estimations show that agriculture had a large participation in total output in the nineteenth century (Seminario 2015).

Peru, had a population of nearly 100,000 people around 1850.¹⁰ Approximately 45 percent of Lima's residents were men. Most of the city's population was engaged in urban activities within the secondary and tertiary sectors. According to the 1858 census of Lima, financiers, merchants, and retailers comprised 15 percent of the labor force, while artisans accounted for 25 percent.¹¹ In addition, low-skill workers represented 40 percent of the labor force.

Most of Peru's exports were raw materials. From colonial times, the main exports were agricultural and mineral products. After independence, the country continued to be an exporter of raw materials. Peru exported silver, sugar, cotton, and, in the middle of the nineteenth century, guano and nitrates. Meanwhile, Peru imported manufactured goods, especially textiles.¹²

Soon after independence, the Peruvian economy struggled to grow. Foreign trade faced a crisis during the 1820s, with exports and imports declining between 1821 and 1826. However, foreign trade recovered in the late 1820s and 1830s. Exports rose from 1.6 million dollars in 1830 to 5.7 million in 1838, while imports grew from 3.7 million dollars in 1830 to 8 million in 1840. A series of civil wars, rebellions, and coups disrupted the economy in the early 1840s. Exports remained below 6 million dollars in 1839–40, and imports stayed below 7 million dollars in 1841–44 (Randall 1977; Zegarra 2018).

The situation of the Peruvian economy changed during the Guano Era. During this period, the economy and, especially, the export sector benefited greatly from the extraction of guano. In 1845, Peru exported 140 thousand dollars worth of guano. Fifteen years later, guano exports reached 20 million dollars. The impact of guano on total exports was great: the total value of Peruvian exports increased from 5.9 million dollars in 1840 to 31 million dollars in 1860 (Zegarra 2018). As the economy developed and incomes rose, so did imports. In particular, Peru's annual imports rose from about 5 million dollars in the 1830s and 1840s to 15 million dollars in 1858–60 (Randall 1977).¹³

Due to its proximity to Callao (the main port of Peru), Lima's economy was largely tied to foreign trade. The economy of this city expanded during the Guano Era. Trade in Lima grew rapidly (Camprubí 1957). In addition, finance expanded in Lima. For example, in constant 1830 dollars, total notarized credit in Lima in 1855 was almost five times its annual value in 1835–45 (Zegarra 2016). As the economy grew, and families and firms demanded more credit, investors proposed the first projects to establish banks in the 1850s. The first banks appeared in Lima in the early 1860s.

¹⁰Peru had 2 million inhabitants in 1850.

¹¹A comparison of census and guild figures suggests that the census figures on merchants and retailers include the owners of commercial establishments and the employees. Similarly, the census figures on the number of artisans include all categories of artisans, not just masters. Census information on the labor force comes from Fuentes (1858) and Zegarra (2020).

¹²For example, around 80 percent of British imports in 1839–60 were textiles.

¹³Information on the total imports of Peru during the nineteenth century is somewhat scattered. However, imports from Great Britain also show an increase during the Guano Era (Bonilla 1977). The growth of the economy and, consequently, the rise in incomes may partly explain this increase in imports. In addition, it seems the reduction of tariffs in the late 1840s and early 1850s also fostered the growth of imports (Gootenberg 1982).

Some sectors benefited from the expansion of the economy in Lima. Growing economic activity led to increased demand for land and, consequently, higher land prices, benefiting real-estate proprietors. In fact, the real value of real estate in Lima rose by more than 40 percent between 1836 and 1857 (Zegarra 2025). In addition, the growth of foreign trade created greater economic opportunities for merchants, particularly those engaged in export and import activities (Camprubí 1957).¹⁴ However, not all residents of Lima benefited from the growth of the economy. For example, low-skill workers did not experience an increase in real wages during this period (Arroyo-Abad 2014; Zegarra 2020, 2021).¹⁵ Although nominal wages rose during the Guano Era, the increase was insufficient to offset the rising costs of food and housing.

Guilds in Lima

In medieval and modern times, guilds played an important role in many cities around the world. Guilds were associations of individuals and companies with the same occupation and the right to conduct businesses in a city. There could be guilds of shoemakers, masons, various types of retailers, etc. Guild directors usually approved the admission of members and regulated the prices and quality of the products sold by their members. They also pushed for restricting the activities of non-guild members and generally represented the interests of guild members in their dealings with other members of society, especially the government.

In Lima, guilds appeared during the viceroyalty of Peru (Quiroz 2008). After independence, the new political system sought to eliminate privileges and restrictions on trade and industry (Quiroz 2022; Zegarra 2023). As a result, guilds were outlawed. This prohibition did not last long, however. In 1826, a decree established that merchants, retailers, artisans, and professionals had to pay taxes for a license (a *patente*) to offer their services.¹⁶ The decree called this tax the “contribution of guilds.” It seems that residents of Lima were required to belong to a guild in order to carry out their regular commercial, artisanal, and professional activities. In the following years, other laws and decrees mentioned guilds when regulating the activities of businesses.¹⁷

In the following decades, several guilds in Lima brought together merchants, retailers, artisans, and professionals of similar types. Among merchants and retailers, there were guilds of *almaceneros*, *pulperos*, *tenderos*, *cajoneros*, *fonderos*, and *chinganeros*, among many others. *Almaceneros* were warehouse owners. *Pulperos* sold groceries at retail. *Tenderos* specialized in selling other goods, particularly clothing. *Cajoneros* were small retailers, who sold a variety of products in small wooden stores (*cajones*) located on some streets. *Tendejoneros* and *manteras* were street vendors. Meanwhile, *fonderos* and *chinganeros* operated

¹⁴There could be some differences in income growth within some sectors. For example, the increase in the average profits of *bodegueros* or *encomenderos* does not necessarily imply that all *bodegueros* or *encomenderos* experienced an increase in profits.

¹⁵The decline in real wages may be partly explained by the increase in the supply of labor from indentured Chinese workers (Zegarra 2020).

¹⁶Decree, August 10, 1826 (Oviedo 1870:390–91).

¹⁷See the appendix for a review of the legislation.

restaurants and bars. There were also guilds for various types of artisans, including carpenters, bricklayers, silversmiths, blacksmiths, shoemakers, butchers, and chocolate makers, among others. In addition, professional guilds brought together medical doctors, lawyers, and other specialists.¹⁸

The nature of the guild system of Lima reflected the structure of its economy. In Lima, the labor force was engaged in a variety of urban activities. Some people worked in commerce, others provided various services, some were involved in manufacturing, and others were professionals. Reflecting this diversity of occupations, Lima had multiple guilds of merchants, retailers, manufacturers, professionals, and service providers.¹⁹ On the other hand, industrialization never occurred on a large scale in nineteenth-century Peru; manufacturers tended to be very little mechanized and operated on a very small scale.²⁰ Consistent with the slow process of industrialization in Lima, artisan guilds existed for a long time in Lima.²¹

Guild directors in Lima established a set of norms that regulated the activities of guild members. These directors were elected by the guild members and had several functions, such as regulating prices and quality, settling disputes, and approving new members. With the approval by the directors, the new member could request authorization from the Prefect of Lima. By limiting the number of members, guilds could limit competition from new members.

Some guilds lobbied for public policies that restricted competition and trade (Gootenberg 1982, 1989). At times, however, different guilds had conflicting demands. For example, Peruvian *almaceneros* competed with foreign commercial houses operating in Lima. Some retailers, however, could benefit from an increase in the activities of foreign mercantile houses. Some merchants and retailers could benefit from an increase in imports, while some artisans benefited from the prohibition of imports. Some of the laws and decrees regulating the operation of the markets resulted from the interaction of the government, foreign merchants, Peruvian wholesalers, small retailers, and artisans (Gootenberg 1982, 1989).

In the first two decades after independence, the guilds of domestic merchants and artisans successfully pushed for restrictions against their direct competitors (Gootenberg 1982, 1989). Through the *Consulado*, merchants financed the state and thus had an important influence on government decisions. Merchants and retailers sought to limit the scope of foreign commercial houses and foreign auctioneers. They were sometimes successful in limiting competition. Similarly, the artisans' guilds were successful in their demands for import restrictions; in 1828, for example, several imports were banned.

¹⁸Table A.4 in the appendix lists the guilds Lima in the nineteenth century.

¹⁹Similarly, in modern Europe, guilds were not exclusive of artisans: there were also guilds of merchants and retailers (Quiroz 2008).

²⁰For example, among chocolate makers, Carmen Noriega was the only one described as "chocolate maker with a machine" in the tax report of 1838. She made far higher profits than other chocolate makers. In particular, she made 1,200 pesos in profits in 1838, while other chocolate makers made an average of 289 pesos in profits.

²¹This was a difference between the guild system of Lima and those of Western Europe. Artisans in Europe became less important in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to the industrialization of the economy.

From the 1840s, the influence of local merchants and artisans declined. Foreign merchants increased their presence in Lima, and tariffs decreased. In addition, Peruvian merchants changed their position in relation to foreign merchants. Artisans faced increasing competition from growing imports. Peruvian wholesalers also faced competition from foreign commercial houses. However, the expansion of imports enabled these Peruvian merchants to grow their businesses. Following the enactment of the Commercial Code of 1852, tariffs were lowered, increasing competition and allowing markets to operate more freely.

Barriers to entry

This section discusses the barriers to entry in the guild system and the differences in restrictions faced by men and women. Investors encountered obstacles when starting a business. Guild directors could impose entry restrictions. Limited access to capital also prevented some individuals from investing in certain sectors. Deficiencies in human capital could make it difficult to join specific guilds. How significant were these barriers to entry in the guild system? Did men and women face different barriers to entry?

Guild directors could erect barriers to entry into a guild. One of their duties was to approve the admission of new members. For example, the bylaws of the shoemakers' guild stipulated that the guild directors, along with two experts, would evaluate a candidate and decide whether he or she met the requirements to become a master artisan.²² If the candidate was approved, the Prefect of Lima could issue a license that authorized the new master artisan to open a workshop. Without the approval of the guild directors, an individual could not apply for a license to open a workshop. Within certain limits, the guild directors could restrict entry and maintain some market power.

In some cases, even when barriers to entry were low, some businessmen could choose not to join a guild. By remaining outside the guild system, a person avoided paying the guild tax (the annual cost of the license or *patente*). However, he/she could be fined if discovered. The probability of detection was not the same for everyone. It was probably more difficult and costly to identify a businessman without a license if he/she was small. In addition, it may have been easier for street vendors to operate without a license.²³ On the other hand, the probability of detection for not having a license may have been greater during the Guano Era. As the government had more resources, it had a greater capacity to detect those operating without a license.²⁴

Investors also faced capital constraints in starting a business. In some sectors, a person needed substantial funds to invest in fixed and movable capital. It was more feasible for most people to open a small retail store than a large wholesale

²²AGN, Fondo de Gremios. Gremio de zapateros, Oficio de Reglamento General, 1826.

²³In addition, for people working only a few hours per day, it could have been easier to operate illegally without being detected.

²⁴The incentives to operate outside the guild system were probably not the same for men and women. As will be shown later, a relatively large number of women worked as small retailers, some of them as street vendors. For example, *mazamorreras* usually sold *mazamorra* at night; most of the work of butchers was probably done in the morning. As a result, women may have been less likely to be caught working without a license and therefore less likely than men to join a guild.

establishment. *Cajoneros* required far less capital than wholesalers to start a business. *Manterías* did not even need to rent a store because they sold their products on the street.

Investing in the wholesale sectors and other highly profitable sectors requires large sums of money. For example, since the average profit of *almaceneros* in 1838 was 2,317 pesos, the average capital of an *almacenero* was over 11,000 pesos if the profit rate was 20 percent of capital; the average capital was about 46,000 pesos if the profit rate was 5 percent. These amounts were very large for the average Lima resident. For example, laborers earned about one peso per day of work during this period. A laborer who spent half his salary had to work 60 years to accumulate 11,000 pesos (assuming he worked every day) and 252 years to accumulate 46,000 pesos.

Investing in small retail businesses was much more feasible. For example, since the average profit of a *cajonero* (a small retailer) of groceries in 1838 was 172 pesos, the average capital was 860 pesos if the profit rate was 20 percent and 3,440 pesos if the profit rate was 5 percent. A laborer who spent half his salary had to work 4.7 years to accumulate 860 pesos (assuming he worked every day) and 19 years to accumulate 3,440 pesos.

The lack of human capital could also prevented some people from joining some guilds. In some cases, a person had to be a professional in order to join a guild. Guilds of lawyers or medical doctors could only be formed by people who held those degrees. In a time when higher education was limited to only a few people, there were natural restrictions for many to join these guilds.

Training was also required to enter some businesses, especially those related to artisan work. To become a master artisan and own a workshop, a person needed special training, which was usually acquired as an apprentice. Young people could become apprentices to learn the skills associated with a craft. Over time, as they learned the skill, apprentices became journeymen and master artisans. Master artisans could own a workshop; hire journeymen, apprentices, and laborers; and be part of a guild.

The barriers to entry were probably not the same for men and women. Women did not face the same economic and social conditions as men in nineteenth-century Lima. Capital constraints, deficiencies in human capital, and prejudice may have affected women's incorporation into the economy and especially into the guild system.

Compared to men, women may have had more difficulties raising the capital necessary to start a new business. Women could legally own a variety of financial assets. However, restrictions on property rights could prevent some women from using their capital as they wished. Single women had similar rights to men over their property and income; like men, single women could sign contracts, sell property, and mortgage their property.²⁵ Under the law, however, married women were dependent on their husbands. Married women could not exercise their rights without the consent of their husbands (Zegarra 2013).²⁶ The husband was the

²⁵As indicated by Francisco García Calderón, non-married women were practically equal under the law as men, although "with small differences" (García-Calderón 1879:1396 Vol. II).

²⁶In every marriage, there were three types of property: (a) property that specifically belonged to the husband, (b) property that belonged to the wife, and (c) collective or common property, which belonged to

administrator of the couple's property and the wife's property, with the exception of the paraphernalia, which was administered by the women.

It is also possible that women had more limited access to external finance than men.²⁷ For Lima, a recent study shows that women did not pay higher interest rates than men during the Guano Era, controlling for other loan terms (Zegarra 2013). However, women received smaller loans. If women faced severe difficulties in accessing credit, they would not have been able to afford the costs associated with investing in a business, especially in the large commercial sectors.

On the other hand, there were differences in human capital between men and women. Certainly, men and women had similar access to basic education. Schooling was always available to girls, not only to men;²⁸ moreover, according to the 1876 census, literacy rates in the province of Lima were very similar for men and women.²⁹ However, there were important gender differences in the type of education and access to higher education. As Margarita Zegarra pointed out, before 1845, the courses that girls took prepared them to find a husband and to work in the home. The sciences were reserved for men. Education prepared girls "for the household, not for the world of knowledge nor to learn a skill" (Zegarra 1998: 533). Secondary education was primarily for men, while tertiary education was virtually inaccessible to women. Women were not admitted to universities until 1908, although some women studied independently (Villanueva 2010: 14). Women could not become professionals. Thus, it was not possible for them to join the guilds of lawyers, medical doctors, and other professionals.

There were also differences between men and women in training to become a master artisan and to own a workshop. Women were less likely than men to be apprentices in some sectors. For example, in 1858, no women were apprentices or journeymen in carpentry, blacksmithing, silversmithing, and tailoring shops, among many other types of workshops in Lima (Fuentes 1858).

Prejudice about women's abilities could also affect their ability to own a successful business. If women were seen as incapable of performing entrepreneurial tasks, they may have found it difficult to start a business. Prejudice may have limited women's interaction with investors, thereby affecting their ability to start and grow a business.

The evidence suggests that there was significant prejudice against women. In nineteenth-century Lima, there was widespread belief that women did not play

both spouses. The husband's individual property included assets acquired before marriage, as well as inheritances and donations after marriage. The wife's individual property consisted of the dowry, *arras* (wedding gifts from the husband to the wife), *paraphernalia* (clothing, jewelry, and household goods), and inheritances and donations received after marriage. The couple's common property included any income generated from their individual assets (such as rent and interest), as well as assets purchased with their combined earnings from work or industry.

²⁷Some studies for other countries show that women face higher credit constraints than men (Buvinic' and Berger 1990; Due and Summary 1982). However, other studies show that credit markets do not discriminate against women (Asiedu et al. 2012; Blanchflower et al. 2003).

²⁸As J. J. von Tschudi indicates, in the 1840s, there were primary schools for boys and girls. Thirty-six primary schools were for boys and sixteen for girls (Tschudi 1847).

²⁹About 5 percent of men and 8 percent of women could not read, and 50 percent of men and 46 percent of women could not write. Thus, there were no significant differences in basic human capital between men and women, in terms of literacy rates or access to basic education.

the same role in the economy as men. Some people also believed that women had different needs and goals than men. For instance, many thought that a woman's primary goal in life should be to get married (Oliart 1995).³⁰ According to nineteenth-century tradition, marriage or, alternatively, becoming a *beata* (a lay religious woman) were the two socially acceptable paths for women (Salinas 2011).³¹ Given these beliefs, it is not surprising that many people viewed women's nature as unsuitable for the same positions as men (García-Calderón 1879).³²

Therefore, there were several possible barriers to entry to start a business and join the guild system. In addition, men and women did not face the same constraints to enter into a guild. Capital constraints may have limited the capacity of women to join certain guilds, particularly those requiring high levels of investment. Women also faced greater restrictions in sectors that required higher education and specialized artisan training.³³ Prejudice may have also made it difficult for women to succeed in various businesses and enter into the guild system.³⁴

Guilds, social classes, and profits, 1838–43

This section examines women's participation in the guild system between 1838 and 1843, as well as the differences in profits between men and women. The analysis is based on information from guild tax records.³⁵ For 1838 and 1843, tax reports provide valuable information on nearly all guild members, and this section relies on that information. Additional data are available for 1852 and 1859; however, for these years, the information is more limited due to tax exemptions for low-income

³⁰As Patricia Oliart indicates, the effort of finding a husband appears as the must-be objective in the life of every woman, according to several nineteenth-century writings and paintings.

³¹Women whose goal in life was not marry or become a *beata* were often criticized. The view that a woman's primary role was to be a good wife and mother may have been dominant. In 1847, for example, the legislator Juan Celestino Caveró argued that the goal of women's education was to form "tender mothers, faithful and resigned wives, docile and respectful daughters" (Salinas, 2011, p. 82).

³²According to Francisco García Calderón (1879), nature made women timid, denied them the force of men, and made them more suitable for work in the domestic household.

³³With the exception of food manufacturing.

³⁴Risk aversion may also have affected the likelihood of joining the guild system. Some scholars have pointed out that there are differences in risk aversion between men and women. Some studies suggest that women are more risk averse than men (Agnew et al. 2008; Bernasek and Shwiff 2001; Jianakoplos and Bernasek 1998; Rutterford et al. 2011). Others, however, show that there are no gender differences in risk aversion in making financial decisions (Kiss et al. 2014; Schubert et al. 1999). In nineteenth-century Lima, women may also have been more risk averse than men. Women may have been less likely to invest large sums of money into high-investment sectors. They may have preferred to start a business by investing relatively small amounts of money.

³⁵See the appendix for a description of the dataset. Guild tax records are available at the National Archives of Peru for several years. These records provide information on guild members and their taxes. Taxes can be used to estimate profits. Information from the Lima guild tax records has been transcribed for the years 1838, 1843, 1852, and 1859. These sources were previously used to analyze the evolution of profits during this period, but no distinction between men and women was made (Zegarra 2023).

guild members. In the following sections, a subpopulation of guild members will be used to analyze changes in profits and the distribution of social classes between 1838 and 1859.³⁶

The analysis of the entire dataset shows that most guilds included men. Some were merchants or financiers. Many were *chinganeros*, *pulperos*, *cajoneros*, and *tendejoneros*. A large number of men were *pulperos* (grocery retailers) and *chinganeros* (small restaurant owners). Many were artisans and belonged to the guilds of masons, sawyers, carpenters, blacksmiths, mat makers, silversmiths, tailors, saddlers, and shoemakers, among others. Some of the men were professionals and belonged to the guilds of lawyers and medical doctors, among others.

Overall, 80 percent of guild members were men in both 1838 and 1843. Men were present in the majority of guilds. During this period, the proportion of men among guild members exceeded 60 percent in approximately 90 percent of guilds and surpassed 80 percent in more than 80 percent of guilds (Table 1).

Women played a more limited role than men in the guild system. Several guilds had no women members. For example, in 1838–43, no woman was a lawyer, mason, or sawyer. In 1838 and 1843, 68 percent of guilds had no women members. Other guilds had few women members. For example, female membership (the proportion of women in the guild) ranged from 0.1 percent to 20 percent in about 18 percent of guilds in 1838 and 16 percent in 1843. Some guilds were largely composed of women; however, these were few in number. In particular, women made up more than 60 percent of guild members in less than 5 percent of guilds in both 1838 and 1843.³⁷

Most women worked as small retailers, selling a variety of products. Many were *cajoneras*, selling goods from small wooden stalls (*cajones*) located along streets. Women had an important presence in the guilds of *cajonero(a)s* of ribbons, shoes, groceries, and leather. For example, in 1838, María del Rosario Mena, Manuela Montero, and María Alvarez were *cajoneras* of ribbons; Manuela Manrique, Agustina Meneses, and Josefa Morán were *cajoneras* of shoes; Juana Corro, Agustina Varela, and Antonia Cabello were *cajoneras* of groceries; and Francisca Díaz and Manuela Soriana were *cajoneras* of leather. These women were just a few among many *cajoneras*. Women owned 54 percent of the *cajones* of ribbons, 61 percent of the *cajones* of shoes, 54 percent of the *cajones* of groceries, and 33 percent of the *cajones* of leather between 1838 and 1843. Other women worked as *manteras* (street vendors) and dressmakers.

Many women sold food and beverages. A significant number worked as butchers. For example, in 1843, around 91 percent of butchers were women. They sold meat in market squares (*plazas*), such as Santo Tomás, Nazarenas, and Baratillo (Fuentes 1858: 715–17). In 1843, some of these women butchers included Andrea Baraona, Manuela Agüero, Rufina Calguavilca, María Salomé Castellanos, and Tadea Alvarez, among many others. Some women were *chicheras*, while others were *mazamorreras*. *Chicheras* sold a beverage called *chicha*, made from corn (*jora* or, alternatively,

³⁶This subpopulation does not provide a picture of all guild members but provides valuable information on high- and medium-income members.

³⁷Commercial directories also indicate that women had a limited participation in many occupations and sectors.

Table 1. Distribution of guilds according to the percentage of male and female members

	Number of guilds in each category with respect to the total number of guilds (%)	
	1838	1843
According to the percentage of male members		
0%	0.0	1.6
From 0.1% to 20%	1.5	0.8
From 20.1% to 40%	2.3	2.4
From 40.1% to 60%	4.6	4.8
From 60.1% to 80%	7.7	9.5
From 80.1% to 100%	83.8	81.0
According to the percentage of female members		
0%	67.7	67.5
From 0.1% to 20%	17.7	15.9
From 20.1% to 40%	7.7	7.9
From 40.1% to 60%	3.8	4.0
From 60.1% to 80%	1.5	2.4
From 80.1% to 100%	1.5	2.4

Notes: The table shows the distribution of guilds, according to the percentage of male and female members. For the calculations, the entire population of guild members was used.

purple corn), chickpeas, and pineapple. *Chicheras* sold this beverage in the streets of Lima, using small tables to serve their customers (Prince 1890). *Mazamorreras* sold a dessert called *mazamorra*, made from purple corn, in the streets of Lima (Prince 1890).³⁸ In 1838, some of the *chicheras* included Pascuala Gutiérrez, Joaquina Azaña, Manuela Cochabambina, and Casimira García, among many others. That same year, Petronila Benavides, Juliana Olmedo, Manuela Calderón, and many others were part of the guild of *mazamorreras*. Women made up 76 percent of *chicheras/chicheros* in 1838.³⁹ In addition, in the guild of *mazamorreras/mazamorreros*, the participation of women was 56 percent in 1838 and reached 100 percent in 1843. Women also played a significant role in the guilds of chocolate makers, pastry makers, refreshment makers, and *fondas* (restaurants).

Social stratification is useful for analyzing the participation of men and women in the guild system. For this study, guild members were segmented into five social

³⁸*Chicheras* and *mazamorreras* sold their products in the streets of Lima. Considering the preparation process of *chicha* and *mazamorra*, it is unlikely they were produced in the street; they were probably produced at home.

³⁹The tax report of 1843 does not include information on the guild of *chicheras*.

Table 2. Distribution of guild members by social class and gender

	Total		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
1838						
Total	2,237	100.0	1,784	100.0	434	100.0
A	143	6.4	123	6.9	6	1.4
B	120	5.4	120	6.7	0	0.0
C	444	19.8	378	21.2	62	14.3
D	376	16.8	357	20.0	19	4.4
E	1,154	51.6	806	45.2	347	80.0
1843						
Total	2,156	100.0	1,672	100.0	452	100.0
A	113	5.2	89	5.3	3	0.7
B	149	6.9	149	8.9	0	0.0
C	446	20.7	374	22.4	64	14.2
D	372	17.3	347	20.8	23	5.1
E	1,076	49.9	713	42.6	362	80.1

Note: The table reports the distribution of guild members by gender and social class. For the calculations, the entire population of guild members was used. Notice that some guild members were companies. For this reason, the total number of guild members is greater than the sum of the number of men members and the number of women members. *N* = Number of guild members.

classes based on their occupation and status.⁴⁰ Class A includes merchants and financiers;⁴¹ class B consists of professionals; class C includes large and medium retailers as well as other service providers; class D comprises high- and medium-skilled artisans; and class E includes small retailers, low-skilled artisans (including small food manufacturers), and other low-income guild members. Classes A and E had the highest- and lowest-income guild members, respectively.⁴²

Table 2 shows the distribution of guild members by social class. In 1838, there were 1,784 men guild members; approximately 13 percent of them were in classes

⁴⁰Following the work of Mark van Leeuwen and Ineke Mass, guild members were initially segmented into 11 classes (van Leeuwen and Mass 2011). However, some classes were formed by a very few people (moreover, some classes did not include any guild member). The original classes were then grouped into five classes. Classes A and B corresponded to original classes 1 and 2, respectively; original classes 3, 4, and 5 were grouped into class C; original classes 7 and 9 formed class D; and original classes 10 and 11 formed class E. Classes 6 and 8 had no members. Some guild members had occupations that belonged to different classes. They were placed in the class in which they earned the most.

⁴¹For this study, they were classified as managers.

⁴²Several factors could influence the membership of a social class. A person could belong to a particular class, depending on his/her access to education and capital (Zegarra 2023). To some extent, membership to a social class could be also influenced by racial hierarchies (Cosamalón 2017; García-Bryce 2008).

A and B. Most men belonged to the lower classes; for example, classes D and E accounted for 65 percent of all men guild members. In 1843, the distribution of men by social class remained very similar, with around 14 percent in classes A and B, 22 percent in class C, and approximately 63 percent in classes D and E.

Women had very limited participation in the upper classes. In 1838, only 1 percent of women were in class A, and none were in class B. Five years later, the distribution of women across social classes remained similar: only 1 percent were in class A, and no women were part of class B. As indicated by the figures for class A, very few women were merchants. Additionally, the figures for class B show that no women belonged to the guilds of professionals.

On the other hand, compared to men, a relatively low proportion of women were in class C. This class accounted for 14 percent of women in both 1838 and 1843, a smaller proportion than that of men in the same class. In addition, only a few women were part of class D (4 percent in 1838 and 5 percent in 1843). This class was largely composed of high- and medium-skilled artisans. Most women did not have access to many types of artisan training, preventing them from becoming master artisans or owning textile, wood, or metal workshops. The vast majority of women belonged to class E, which included 80 percent of women in both 1838 and 1843. Most guild women were small retailers and small food vendors or manufacturers.

The profits of merchants were relatively high. In 1838, *almaceneros* earned an average of 2,317 pesos, while *bodegueros* earned an average of 1,259 pesos. Professionals earned less. For example, medical doctors earned an average of 683 pesos in 1838. Medium retailers and artisans also earned less than merchants. For example, *chinganeros*, *pulperos*, slaughterers, and carpenters earned an average of 241, 402, 614, and 456 pesos, respectively. Small traders had the lowest profits. For example, *lecheros* (milk vendors) and *manteros* (street vendors) earned less than 150 pesos.

Class A, which included merchants, was the class with the highest profits. On average, in 1838, profits per guild member in this class were 1,330 pesos (Table 3).⁴³ In addition, profits were 410 pesos in class B, 345 pesos in class C, 410 pesos in class D, and 183 pesos in class E. In 1843, profits in class A remained significantly higher than in other classes, averaging almost 1,700 pesos, while in the other four classes, they remained below 350 pesos.

Since profits in class A were significantly higher than in other classes, and fewer women were part of the upper class, women earned far less than men. In 1838, average profits were 350 pesos for men and 179 pesos for women. In 1843, average profits were 318 pesos for men and 160 pesos for women. On average, men earned twice as much as women in both years.

Therefore, women participated in the guild system of Lima, but their participation was very limited. Most women worked in low-income sectors, particularly in the retail sale of food and beverages. Several factors may explain the differences in men's and

⁴³Profits for men and women were lower than the average profits for all guild members because companies without an identified owner (not included in the samples of men and women) earned more than other guild members.

Table 3. Profits per guild member (pesos)

	1838 a/			1843 a/			1843 b/		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Profits per guild member for all occupations (pesos)									
Average	339	350	179	317	318	160	402	403	202
Median	200	225	100	175	200	100	222	254	127
Standard deviation	503	430	230	564	458	177	715	580	224
Maximum	6,200	6,200	3,000	8,000	8,000	2,750	10,142	10,142	3,486
Minimum	61	61	75	25	25	75	32	32	95
Percentile 95	1,063	1,063	388	1,050	1,050	341	1,331	1,331	432
Percentile 5	75	75	75	75	75	75	95	95	95
Profits per guild member in each class (pesos)									
Class A	1,330	1,080	894	1,698	1,283	1,450	2,153	1,627	1,838
Class B	410	410	c/	327	327	c/	415	415	c/
Class C	345	355	267	305	317	197	387	402	250
Class D	410	421	213	342	339	350	433	430	444
Class E	183	197	149	167	186	130	212	235	165
Number of guild members	2,237	1,784	434	2,156	1,672	452	2,156	1,672	452

Notes: The table reports descriptive statistics of total profits per guild member. For the calculations, the entire population of guild members was used. The total profits of each guild member were calculated considering the profits from all his/her occupations. The table also reports average profits per guild member for five classes (A, B, C, D, and E). Some guild members had occupations that belonged to different classes. Guild members were included in the class from which they received the largest profits. a/ Profits are in current pesos. b/ Profits are in constant pesos of 1843; real values were obtained using the cost of a fixed subsistence basket from Zegarra (2021) as a deflator. c/ No woman was part of class B.

women's participation in the guild system. Capital constraints, human capital deficiencies, and even prejudice against women's capabilities may have made it difficult for them to enter the most profitable sectors.⁴⁴

Economic growth and the guild system

The economy of Lima experienced significant expansion during the Guano Era (Randall 1977; Zegarra 2018). As commerce and the economy grew, residents had better opportunities to improve their living standards. Meanwhile, the guild system underwent legal changes during this period. In particular, guilds lost some influence over

⁴⁴As mentioned previously, the incentives to join a guild were lower for small firms. Since most women ran small businesses (and many of them were street vendors), women were less likely to join a guild than men. If all firms (not only guild members) were included in the dataset, the new results would show a larger participation of women. However, the results would still show that most women belonged to the lowest social classes and earned lower profits than men.

government decisions and, as a result, faced increasing competition from foreign entrepreneurs and imports, especially from the early 1850s (Gootenberg 1982, 1989).

This section analyzes the profits of guild members between 1838 and 1859, paying special attention to the differences between men and women. In the 1830s and early 1840s, the economy was stagnant, but in the late 1840s and 1850s, it expanded.⁴⁵ Did women see an improvement in their earnings during this period of changing economic and legal conditions? Did they benefit from economic growth as much as men?

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important to be cautious when using information from tax reports. The dataset includes information about almost all guild members in 1838 and 1843. However, for 1852 and 1859, some guild members were tax-exempt and therefore were not included in the tax reports. The dataset must be adjusted in order to analyze the distribution of guild members between 1838 and 1859. In particular, the analysis will rely on a subpopulation of guild members that omits all guilds that were excluded from at least one of the tax reports in 1838, 1843, 1852, or 1859. While this subpopulation does not provide a complete picture of all guild members, it is useful for examining the evolution of high- and medium-income guild members.

There were some changes in the composition of the guild system. Over time, many entrepreneurs entered the guild system, and others left. The rates of entry and exit exceeded 50 percent (Table 4).⁴⁶ Some of the new members were women. However, the proportion of women in the guild system did not follow an upward trend. It was 22 percent in 1838, 24 percent in 1843, 20 percent in 1852, and 16 percent in 1859. Women's participation in the guild system was limited during this period. In 1838, about 55 percent of guilds had no female members.⁴⁷ By 1859, this percentage had risen to 72 percent. Only a few guilds had more than 80 percent women members. In contrast, more than 75 percent of guilds had more than 80 percent men members.

Joining the guild system provided better opportunities to accumulate wealth. However, the evolution of a person's profits depended on the sectors in which he/she worked. Some industries may have been far more profitable than others. Entering the guild system to be part of the most dynamic sectors offered better economic prospects than entering stagnant markets.

The evidence for the first phase of the Guano Era shows that the profits of merchants increased. In particular, the profits of consignees increased by 6 percent per year between 1843 and 1859, from about 4,800 pesos in 1843 to more than 11,800 pesos in 1859, and the profits of *bodegueros* increased from less than 1,300 pesos in 1838 to more than 1,800 pesos in 1859, or by 2 percent per year. The profits of other occupations increased at lower rates or not at all. For example, the profits of *cajoneros* of clothing, groceries, and shoes declined between 1838 and 1859. In addition, the profits of carpenters, bakers, tanners, mat makers, and tanners increased by less than 1 percent per year.

⁴⁵As indicated previously, this study does not analyze the entire Guano Era, but only its first phase.

⁴⁶Entry and exit rates were calculated as the percentage of guild members who entered or left the system with respect to the total number of guild members in the last tax report.

⁴⁷It can be noted that female participation varies depending on the population or sample. When the entire population was used, 68% of guilds had no women members in 1838 (Table 1). When the subpopulation was used, the proportion became 55% (Table 4).

Table 4. The guild system, 1838–59

	1838	1843	1852	1859
Number of guild members				
Total	1,798	1,775	1,490	2,023
Men	1,387	1,311	1,131	1,422
Women	392	432	304	315
Companies	19	32	55	286
Distribution of guild members (%)				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men	77.1	73.9	75.9	70.3
Women	21.8	24.3	20.4	15.6
Companies	1.1	1.8	3.7	14.1
Annual growth rates (%)				
Total		−0.3	−1.9	4.5
Men		−1.1	−1.6	3.3
Women		2.0	−3.8	0.5
Companies		11.0	6.2	26.6
Entry				
Number of new members		1,011	1,296	1,296
As % of total number of members		56.2	73.0	87.0
Exit				
Number of members who left the system		1,034	1,335	942
As % of total number of members		57.5	75.2	63.2
Number of guilds with respect to the total number of guilds (%)				
With no man	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
With less than 20% of male members	2.6	2.5	3.8	1.4
With more than 80% of male members	79.5	75.9	79.7	78.4
With no woman	55.1	58.2	64.6	71.6
With less than 20% of female members	80.8	78.5	88.6	90.5
With more than 80% of female members	2.6	2.5	1.3	1.4

Notes: The table shows the number of guild members, the number of new guild members, and the number of those who left the system. The results were obtained using the subpopulation of guild members, which excludes guilds that were absent in at least one of the tax reports of 1838, 1843, 1852, and 1859. The table also shows the number of guilds for different rates of male and female participation.

On average, nominal profits grew by 2.7 percent per year between 1838 and 1859, while real profits grew by 1.7 percent per year (Table 5). Profits grew more rapidly in social class A. In particular, the average profit per guild member in this class increased from 1,324 pesos in 1838 to 1,698 pesos in 1843, 3,470 pesos in 1852, and 4,497 pesos in

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of profits per taxpayer

	1838	1843	1852	1859
Number of guild members	1,798	1,775	1,490	1,844
Descriptive statistics of total profits per guild member (pesos)				
<i>Current pesos</i>				
Average	384	346	652	674
Median	238	200	266	250
Standard deviation	549	611	1,948	2,093
Maximum	6,200	8,000	24,000	24,000
Minimum	61	75	50	50
<i>Constant pesos of 1838</i>				
Average	384	439	789	543
Median	238	254	321	201
Standard deviation	549	774	2,357	1,686
Maximum	6,200	10,142	29,034	19,328
Minimum	61	95	60	40
Average profit per guild member per class (pesos)				
<i>Current pesos</i>				
Class A	1,324	1,698	3,470	4,497
Class B	427	336	431	352
Class C	346	305	568	504
Class D	425	336	530	530
Class E	207	178	225	219
<i>Constant pesos of 1838</i>				
Class A	1,324	2,153	4,198	3,622
Class B	427	425	521	283
Class C	346	387	688	406
Class D	425	426	641	427
Class E	207	226	272	176
Average profits by gender				
<i>Current pesos</i>				
Men	408	355	595	548
Women	180	161	167	148
<i>Constant pesos of 1838</i>				
Men	408	450	720	441
Women	180	204	201	119

Notes: The table shows descriptive statistics of total profits per guild member in 1838, 1843, 1852, and 1859. The results were obtained using the subpopulation of guild members. The total profits of each guild member were calculated considering the profits from all his/her occupations. A price index was used to deflate nominal values; this index was estimated using the cost of a fixed subsistence basket from Zegarra (2021).

1859. On average, profits in this class grew by 6 percent per year. In real terms, profits in class A increased by 5 percent per year. In other classes, profits grew at a slower rate or even declined. In classes C and D, average real profits increased by 0.8 percent and 0.02 percent per year, respectively. In classes B and E, average real profits fell. The reduction of government protection could have affected the profits of artisans. However, real profits did not increase rapidly in several guilds, not only among artisans.⁴⁸

The distribution of men by social class did not change much between 1838 and 1859 (Table 6). Information from the subpopulation of guild members shows that about 17 percent of men were in classes A and B in 1838. This percentage was 16 percent in 1843, 18 percent in 1852, and 15 percent in 1859. Meanwhile, class C represented between 24 percent and 30 percent of the number of guild men during the period 1838–59. Most men were in the two lowest classes, D and E (low-income artisans and small retailers). In 1838, about 57 percent of men were in these two classes. In the following three tax reports, this percentage ranged between 55 percent and 58 percent.

The distribution of women by social class differed from that of men. As indicated in the previous section, using the full dataset, the majority of women were in class E in 1838 and 1843. Using the subpopulation of guild members, most women were also in class E. For example, in 1838, about 79 percent of women were in class E. Very few women were in classes A and B. This situation did not change much over time. Guild women were largely absent from the upper classes.

Because guild women were largely absent from class A (and this class was the only one that experienced a large increase in profits), women's average profits did not increase.⁴⁹ On average, the profits of women declined from 180 pesos in 1838 to 148 pesos in 1859. Over the period 1838–59, women's average profits fell by 0.9 percent per year in nominal terms and by 2 percent per year in real terms. Women guild members did not benefit from the growth of the Lima economy. In contrast, men's average profits increased from 408 pesos in 1838 to 548 pesos in 1859.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁸Class D was composed of high and medium skilled artisans, while class E was composed of low-skilled artisans as well as of small retailers.

⁴⁹The evidence shows that exit rates were high (Table 4). Many women may have left the guild system in order to find better economic opportunities. In this case, the change in guild profits received by women between 1838 and 1859 would underestimate the change in real incomes of women during this period. Additional evidence suggests, however, that most women did not earn relatively high incomes outside the guild system. Census data from 1858 show that most women in Lima worked outside the guild system as laundrywomen, cooks, seamstresses, and servants (Fuentes 1858). The wages of women in these occupations did not exceed the profits of the guilds. For example, an analysis of wages paid by churches and convents in 1858 shows that laundrywomen earned between 72 and 120 pesos per year and cooks earned between 48 and 168 pesos per year (Fuentes 1858). By comparison, in 1859, the average profit of women in the guild system was 148 pesos. Some women may have left the guild system for better economic opportunities. On average, however, women guild members did not face higher opportunity costs.

⁵⁰Some men experienced a significant increase in earnings. In particular, the profits of men in class A increased by 3.7% per year in real terms. For women, real profits also increased in class A. However, only a few women were in class A. The majority of women were in class E. Since profits in this class declined, the average profits of women declined in real terms between 1838 and 1859.

Table 6. Distribution of guild members by social class and gender

	Guild members						As percentage of all members	
	Total		Men		Women		in the same class	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	Men	Women
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(2)/(1)	(3)/(1)
1838								
Total	1,798	100.0	1,387	100.0	392	100.0	77.1	21.8
A	144	8.0	124	8.9	6	1.5	86.1	4.2
B	113	6.3	113	8.1	0	0.0	100.0	0.0
C	413	23.0	348	25.1	61	15.6	84.3	14.8
D	349	19.4	332	23.9	17	4.3	95.1	4.9
E	779	43.3	470	33.9	308	78.6	60.3	39.5
1843								
Total	1,775	100.0	1,311	100.0	432	100.0	73.9	24.3
A	113	6.4	89	6.8	3	0.7	78.8	2.7
B	126	7.1	126	9.6	0	0.0	100.0	0.0
C	396	22.3	333	25.4	55	12.7	84.1	13.9
D	358	20.2	334	25.5	22	5.1	93.3	6.1
E	782	44.1	429	32.7	352	81.5	54.9	45.0
1852								
Total	1,490	100.0	1,131	100.0	304	100.0	75.9	20.4
A	135	9.1	109	9.6	1	0.3	80.7	0.7
B	97	6.5	97	8.6	0	0.0	100.0	0.0
C	306	20.5	271	24.0	14	4.6	88.6	4.6
D	240	16.1	224	19.8	10	3.3	93.3	4.2
E	712	47.8	430	38.0	279	91.8	60.4	39.2
1859								
Total	2,023	100.0	1,422	100.0	315	100.0	70.3	15.6
A	141	7.0	91	6.4	1	0.3	64.5	0.7
B	158	7.8	118	8.3	0	0.0	74.7	0.0
C	473	23.4	426	30.0	14	4.4	90.1	3.0
D	285	14.1	264	18.6	2	0.6	92.6	0.7
E	966	47.8	523	36.8	298	94.6	54.1	30.8

Notes: The table shows the distribution of guild members by social class. The results were obtained using the subpopulation of guild members. *N* = Number of guild members.

profits of men increased by 1.4 percent per year in nominal terms and by 0.4 percent per year in real terms.⁵¹

Entering into the guild system and mobility across social classes⁵²

An investor could follow different paths over time. He/she could start a business with little capital, join a guild of small traders, and over time accumulate capital and move up across social classes. Alternatively, this investor could enter the guild system with a large capital and immediately become part of the upper social classes.

Gender differences in the distribution of guild members across social classes could be attributed to gender differences in the distribution of new members and gender differences in vertical mobility among incumbents. Were women in lower classes than men at a particular moment because relatively more women were in the lowest classes in the early years of their businesses, or because women were less likely to move up across social classes?

Table 7 shows the distribution of new guild members by social class. A new member in year τ is defined as a guild member who appeared in the tax report of year τ but did not appear in the previous tax report.⁵³ There were important differences in the distribution of social classes between men and women entrants. The concentration of new members in the lowest classes was greater for women. In 1843, about 35 percent of men entrants were in class E. For women entrants, the percentage was 78 percent. In 1852, 41 percent of new guild men and 90 percent of new guild women were in class E. In 1859, the percentages were 37 percent for men and 93 percent for women. For both men and women, few new guild members were in class A. However, there were differences between men and women. Between 1838 and 1859, from 5 percent to 9 percent of new guild men were in class A. For women, the percentage was always less than 1 percent.

⁵¹As noted above, it is possible that women had fewer incentives to join the guild system than men, especially in the lowest social classes. In general, however, the incentives to join the guild system were probably higher for both men and women during the Guano Era: during this period, the state had more resources and, presumably, a greater capacity to detect firms operating without a license. Therefore, if all firms (and not just guild members) were included in the dataset, the number of women in the lowest social classes would probably increase in 1838 and 1843 (before the Guano Era). It would also increase in 1852 and 1859 (in the Guano Era), but to a lesser extent. The number of men in the lowest social classes would probably also increase, but at a lower rate than the number of women. Consequently, if all firms were included in the dataset, the average profits of both men and women would decline throughout the entire analysis period, but the decline would be greater for women, especially in 1838 and 1843. With these changes to the dataset, the results would still show that businesswomen experienced lower profit growth than men between 1838–43 and 1852–59. The new results would actually show a larger difference in profit growth between businessmen and businesswomen.

⁵²It is important to be careful with the interpretation of mobility in this article. In this article, mobility refers only to mobility within the guild system. Social mobility usually involves many other aspects that are not discussed in this study.

⁵³There were important similarities in the distribution of guild members by social class for incumbents and new members. For example, most incumbents and entrants were in classes C, D, and E.

Table 7. Entry of men and women into the guild system

	All guild members in year t			New members in year τ		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Period 1838–43 ($t = 1838$, $\tau = 1843$)						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A	8.0	8.9	1.5	5.5	5.6	0.7
B	6.3	8.1	0.0	5.0	7.4	0.0
C	23.0	25.1	15.6	23.4	26.9	14.6
D	19.4	23.9	4.3	19.1	24.9	6.5
E	43.3	33.9	78.6	46.9	35.2	78.2
Period 1843–52 ($t = 1843$, $\tau = 1852$)						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A	6.4	6.8	0.7	8.4	8.7	0.5
B	7.1	9.6	0.0	5.0	6.7	0.0
C	22.3	25.4	12.7	21.0	24.2	5.4
D	20.2	25.5	5.1	16.2	19.8	4.1
E	44.1	32.7	81.5	49.4	40.6	90.0
Period 1852–59 ($t = 1852$, $\tau = 1859$)						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A	9.1	9.6	0.3	6.6	5.4	0.4
B	6.5	8.6	0.0	5.0	6.6	0.0
C	20.5	24.0	4.6	28.2	33.5	5.3
D	16.1	19.8	3.3	14.2	17.1	0.9
E	47.8	38.0	91.8	46.0	37.4	93.3

Notes: The table shows the distribution of guild members by social class. The results were obtained using the subpopulation of guild members.

Joining the lowest social classes did not necessarily mean that it was not possible to move up across social classes.⁵⁴ A small retailer could accumulate capital, start a larger business, and join a guild of medium retailers. A small artisan might also

⁵⁴Jesús Cosamalón points out that there were racial social hierarchies in nineteenth-century Lima. For example, most proprietors, professionals, and merchants (the richest people in Lima) were white; in contrast, only a small proportion of those who prepared food and beverages servants and laborers (the poorest people in Lima) were white (Cosamalón 2017). Similarly, Iñigo García-Bryce argues that racial and social hierarchies played an important role in the nineteenth century Lima society so that mobility through education and association had its limits (García-Bryce 2008). Racial restrictions may have limited mobility. However, despite social or racial restrictions, the evidence shows that some businessmen moved across social classes.

Table 8. Mobility across social classes, 1838–59

Proportion of guild members in class <i>s</i> in 1838 who were in class <i>r</i> in 1843 1/					
	Guild members in class A in 1838	Guild members in class B in 1838	Guild members in class C in 1838	Guild members in class D in 1838	Guild members in class E in 1838
<i>Men</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1843	0.7321	0.0000	0.0493	0.0118	0.0000
Belonged to class B in 1843	0.0000	0.9600	0.0070	0.0000	0.0113
Belonged to class C in 1843	0.0714	0.0000	0.7958	0.0412	0.1299
Belonged to class D in 1843	0.0179	0.0000	0.0141	0.8882	0.0452
Belonged to class E in 1843	0.1786	0.0400	0.1338	0.0588	0.8136
<i>Women</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1843	1.0000	a/	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belonged to class B in 1843	0.0000	a/	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belonged to class C in 1843	0.0000	a/	0.7692	0.0000	0.0168
Belonged to class D in 1843	0.0000	a/	0.0000	0.6000	0.0000
Belonged to class E in 1843	0.0000	a/	0.2308	0.4000	0.9832
Proportion of guild members in class <i>s</i> in 1843 who were in class <i>r</i> in 1852 2/					
	Guild members in class A in 1843	Guild members in class B in 1843	Guild members in class C in 1843	Guild members in class D in 1843	Guild members in class E in 1843
<i>Men</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1852	0.7714	0.0217	0.0602	0.0127	0.0654
Belonged to class B in 1852	0.0000	0.9348	0.0120	0.0000	0.0093
Belonged to class C in 1852	0.1143	0.0000	0.7108	0.0506	0.1402
Belonged to class D in 1852	0.0286	0.0000	0.0602	0.7468	0.0374
Belonged to class E in 1852	0.0857	0.0435	0.1566	0.1899	0.7477

(Continued)

Table 8. (Continued)

Proportion of guild members in class <i>s</i> in 1843 who were in class <i>r</i> in 1852 2/					
	Guild members in class A in 1843	Guild members in class B in 1843	Guild members in class C in 1843	Guild members in class D in 1843	Guild members in class E in 1843
<i>Women</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1852	a/	a/	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belonged to class B in 1852	a/	a/	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belonged to class C in 1852	a/	a/	0.5000	0.2500	0.0000
Belonged to class D in 1852	a/	a/	0.0000	0.2500	0.0000
Belonged to class E in 1852	a/	a/	0.5000	0.5000	1.0000
Proportion of guild members in class <i>s</i> in 1852 who were in class <i>r</i> in 1859 3/					
	Guild members in class A in 1852	Guild members in class B in 1852	Guild members in class C in 1852	Guild members in class D in 1852	Guild members in class E in 1852
<i>Men</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1859	0.8056	0.0000	0.0392	0.0110	0.0260
Belonged to class B in 1859	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0110	0.0065
Belonged to class C in 1859	0.0833	0.0000	0.8039	0.0110	0.0584
Belonged to class D in 1859	0.0000	0.0000	0.0588	0.9011	0.0455
Belonged to class E in 1859	0.1111	0.0000	0.0980	0.0659	0.8636

(Continued)

move to another guild, attracted by greater profits. Meanwhile, after a series of unsuccessful operations, a merchant could opt for reducing his scale of operations and even migrating to a guild of medium retailers.

Were there differences in vertical mobility between men and women? Table 8 shows the proportion of guild members who moved across social classes or stayed in the same

Table 8. (Continued)

Proportion of guild members in class <i>s</i> in 1852 who were in class <i>r</i> in 1859 3/					
	Guild members in class A in 1852	Guild members in class B in 1852	Guild members in class C in 1852	Guild members in class D in 1852	Guild members in class E in 1852
<i>Women</i>					
Belonged to class A in 1859	a/	a/	0.0000	a/	0.0000
Belonged to class B in 1859	a/	a/	0.0000	a/	0.0000
Belonged to class C in 1859	a/	a/	1.0000	a/	0.0000
Belonged to class D in 1859	a/	a/	0.0000	a/	0.0000
Belonged to class E in 1859	a/	a/	0.0000	a/	1.0000

Notes: The table reports the proportion of guild members, women and men, in class *s* (*s* = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in year *t* that were in class *r* (*r* = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in the following tax report. The results were obtained using the subpopulation of guild members. 1/ It only considers the guild members who appear in the tax reports of 1838 and 1843. 2/ It only considers the guild members who appear in the tax reports of 1843 and 1852. 3/ It only considers the guild members who appear in the tax reports of 1852 and 1859. a/ There was no guild member in this class in year *t*.

class.⁵⁵ The information for men shows that it was possible for some guild members to move to another social class. Some moved up, and some moved down. Looking at the guild members who appeared in the 1838 and 1843 tax reports, about 5 percent of the men who were in class C in 1838 moved up to class A in 1843, and 13 percent moved down to class E. In addition, 13 percent of the men who were in class E in 1838 moved up to class C in 1843. Few men moved out of or entered class B. This is not surprising. It took time to become a professional and join the guild of lawyers or medical doctors; moreover, professionals were unlikely to take up another occupation. Guild members of other classes moved more often. Overall, 16 percent of guild men moved to another class between 1838 and 1843. As the economy of Lima expanded, some investors were able to take advantage of increased opportunities and move up in the social hierarchy. The evidence shows that some men also moved across social classes (some up, some down) between 1843 and 1852⁵⁶ and between 1852 and 1859.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Mobility between two consecutive tax reports was estimated. In particular, this section reports on mobility across social classes between 1838 and 1843, between 1843 and 1852, and between 1852 and 1859. For these calculations, only guild members appearing in two consecutive tax reports are considered.

⁵⁶About 23% of men moved from class A in 1843 to another class in 1852. In addition, 7% of men in class B moved out of that class. About 29% of men moved from class C in 1843 to another class in 1852, 25% of men moved out from class D, and 25% of men moved out from class E.

⁵⁷For example, 20% of men moved from class C in 1852 to another class in 1859.

The mobility of women was very different. For example, no woman in classes C, D, and E moved up to classes A or B between 1838 and 1843. A similar phenomenon occurred in the periods 1843–52 and 1852–59. However, some women did move between classes C, D, and E. Looking at the women who appeared in the 1838 and 1843 tax reports, 23 percent of the women in class C moved down to class E, 40 percent of the women in class D moved down to class E, and 2 percent of the women in class E moved up to class C. Some women moved between social classes between 1843 and 1852, in particular from classes C and D to class E. However, no woman moved out of class E. Moreover, no woman moved across social classes between 1852 and 1859. Therefore, the mobility of guild women between 1838 and 1859 was very limited to the three lowest classes.

Upward mobility was not common for women. For example, Bartola Baraona, Mariana Castillo, and Juliana Gutiérrez were butchers in 1843,⁵⁸ so they were in class E; in 1852, the three remained butchers.⁵⁹ Manuela Maldonado was a cigar maker in 1838, so she belonged to class E; in 1843 and 1852, she remained in the same guild. Petronila Hoyos was a chocolate maker in 1852, so she belonged to class E;⁶⁰ she remained in the same guild in 1859. Brigida Coloma was a *cajonera* of shoes in 1838 and was in class E; she remained in the same guild in 1843 and 1852.⁶¹ Nicolasa Matallanes owned a *fonda* (a type of restaurant) in 1838, which means that she was in class C; she remained in the same guild in 1843 and 1852.⁶² Agustina Avila was a harness maker in 1838 and 1843, so she was in class D; in 1852 and 1859, she was a braid maker, so she was in class E.

Therefore, the relatively large proportion of women in the lowest classes can be attributed to the concentration of new guild women in the lowest social classes and the low mobility of women across social classes. No woman moved up from class E to classes A and B. In addition, some women in classes C and D moved down to class E. Because new women did not enter class A, and incumbent women did not move up, guild women did not benefit from the expansion of the economy of Lima in the late 1840s and 1850s.

Conclusions

Scholars have analyzed the role of women as investors, entrepreneurs, and workers in the past. However, the participation of women in the guild system in Latin America has been mostly absent from the literature. This article contributes to our understanding of the economic role of women in nineteenth-century Latin America by examining the guild system in Lima, Peru, between 1838 and 1859.

The evidence shows that women participated in a variety of guilds in Lima. Some were *cajoneras* and sold groceries, clothing, and shoes; others sold food and beverages, such as butchers, *mazamorreras*, and *chicheras*. These sectors were not as

⁵⁸Juliana Gutiérrez was also a butcher in 1838.

⁵⁹Mariana Castillo and Juliana Gutiérrez do not appear in the tax report of 1859. In 1859, Bartola Baraona was still a butcher.

⁶⁰She does not appear in the tax report of 1859.

⁶¹She does not appear in the tax report of 1859.

⁶²She does not appear in the tax report of 1859.

profitable as the wholesale sectors, where women were mostly absent. Women were also absent from professional guilds and many artisan guilds (especially those not related to food preparation).

A social stratification analysis shows that guild women were at the bottom of the distribution of guild members. Women belonged to the guilds with the lowest profits. Further research is needed in order to determine the factors that contributed to the high concentration of women in the lowest social classes. However, it is likely that capital constraints, human capital deficiencies, and prejudice against women contributed to this type of distribution of guild women.

Lima experienced an expansion of commerce during the Guano Era. Some sectors benefited greatly from the growth of commerce. The evidence from the first phase of the Guano Era shows that merchants and financiers experienced a significant increase in profits. In contrast, the profits of small retailers and artisans remained stagnant or even declined during this period. Women did not enter the most dynamic economic sectors, so their profits remained stagnant during this period. The expansion of commerce provided opportunities for some people in Lima to increase their incomes. However, guild women did not benefit from the expansion of commerce and the increase in profits.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2025.22>.

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