

*WHAT HAPPENED TO MEXICAN
EUGENICS?: RACISM AND THE
REPRODUCTION OF THE NATION*



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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing, which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. It has not been previously submitted, in part or whole, to any university or institution for any degree, diploma, or other qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses historical sociology to explore the ways in which eugenics was carried out in Mexico. Particularly, this research seeks to analyze the historical continuations of eugenic measures and ideas in Mexico and the ways in which this impacts and echoes in the twenty-first century. This, in turn, allows for an intersectional approach that engages with issues of gender, race, sexuality, science and technology, risk and the management of disease.

This work is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters are historical in their approach and tackle the construction of the nation after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the ways in which this event became intertwined with the rise of exclusionary ideas cemented in the science of eugenics. This approach enables an exploration of eugenics in Mexico from different angles, including the impact of the members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (SME) on the making of the family at an individual and national level, and the definition of who does not belong to the Mexican nation. The final two chapters focus on the last half of the twentieth century, following the assumed retreat of scientific racism and the decline of the SME. I argue that eugenics did not simply disappear but continues to be seen in the processes in which individuals manage their own bodies, as well as in state measures concerning public health crises such as the HIV epidemic, and issues of population control. Overall, this work introduces the concept of "slippery eugenics" to account for the ongoing development and impact of eugenic ideas in Mexico, which, it argues, continue to shape the reproduction of the nation into the present.

Keywords: Eugenics, Mexico, Racism, Gender, Mestizaje, Disability, Scientific Racism

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

In Alphabetical Order:

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CNDH- National Commission for Human Rights

Colectivo- Colectivo Chuhcan

CONASIDA- National Council for AIDS Protection and Prevention

DIF- National System for Integral Family Development

DPH- Department of Psychopedagogy and Hygiene

FMREM- Mexican Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill

ENES- National School of Higher Education

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IMSS- Mexican Social Security Institute

MDRI-Mental Disability Rights International

RAE-Spanish Royal Academy

Reglamento- Rule to Exercise Prostitution

SEHP- Section for Eugenic Education and Propaganda

SME-Mexican Society of Eugenics

SNTE-National Workers Union

SRE- Secretary of Foreign Relations

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN-United Nations

UNAM-National Autonomous University of Mexico

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

US-United States of America

UK-United Kingdom

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INTRODUCTION: THE BROAD HISTORY OF EUGENICS AND MEXICO

In the end Eugenics is an art that has a social application. It is made to rectify, through health, the matter of human happiness; which would resolve so many defects conducive to criminality, sexual aberration, madness, prostitution, and disease.

-Alfredo Saavedra, *Eugenesia*, 1940

Through this thesis I develop an understanding of Mexican eugenics and its impact nowadays by the exploring of the ways in which eugenics resurfaces and hides between the cracks of Mexican society, governance, scientific, anthropological, and medical research, among others.

After the Revolution, during the decade of the 1920s, Mexico was undergoing a period of demographic crisis and political upheaval, which presented a singular opportunity for the introduction of eugenic ideas into the new post-revolutionary state. Thus, the rise of eugenics in Mexico stemmed from a perceived need—by the Mexican elites—to modernize, civilize and reconstruct the nation after the Revolution. Additionally, eugenics seemed like a viable solution as different eugenic programs were already being implemented and used in societies throughout Latin America that were affected by similar problems to those facing Mexico. The Mexican Society of Eugenics

(SME) was created in 1931 by very influential members of the Mexican political, medical, and scientific elite. This allowed the spread of eugenics through different social policies, medical practices, educational campaigns, among other means.

The guiding question that I address in my work is, what happened to those who do not belong to “la gran familia Mexicana” and how is the nation conditioned to identify and categorize into humans, non-humans, and not-quite humans. With this work I explore the impact of eugenics ideas on the creation of *mestizaje*, as a technology used to cement racializing assemblages. Through the concept of *criollo* eugenics, a term I use to capture the specificities of Mexican eugenics, this thesis examines the role of eugenics in the construction of a *mestizo* nation in Mexico. The construction of this *mestizo* nation relied on the eugenic regulation of gender roles and the family. Hence, my aim is to untangle scientific racism and the role of the family in post-Revolutionary Mexico. This, in turn, allowed me to explore the different eugenic measures and ideas that organized the care of children, womanhood, and masculinity to form “la gran familia Mexicana”. In this way, Mexican eugenics came to be thought of as a progressive and liberal response to the management and control of mortality and diseases through hygiene, based on eugenic conceptions of family and nation. In short, I explored the ways in which eugenics is concerned with the regulation of race, disease, and hygiene within the nation. This, in turn, focuses notably on the family as a unit for reproductive choices.

The treatment of syphilis offers a chance to demonstrate the workings of what I term “slippery eugenics”. In Mexico, *criollo* eugenics created the conditions to manage life through the establishment of state-managed institutions, the drafting and amendment of different sanitary codes, and hygiene policies that called for a sort of preventive state control. More importantly, though, it provided the eugenic tools for the self-management of the population. This proliferation of medical attention that tended to rely on the control of the masses through individual choice is now commonly associated with neoliberalism. Nowadays, there are new configurations that manage health and disease. Besides Foucauldian biopolitics there are new institutions and power configurations—like market-oriented pharmaceutical companies—that manage health and disease such that, in contemporary times, “the state is no longer expected to resolve society’s needs for health” (Rose, 2001: p.6). These new configurations of the links between politics, the market, healthcare, drug provisions, and self-management are what Rose (2001) terms *ethopolitics*. I use the concept of slippery eugenics to explore the ways in which eugenically oriented campaigns and ideas can still be seen through the treatment and

management of different diseases. I conducted a historical exploration of syphilis during the twentieth century and HIV after the 1980s, as the virus that represents the neoliberal ways in which the state and individuals deal with pathologization and discrimination (Fouron, 2013). This sets the bases for the last chapter in which I explain the ways in which disability studies, and bodies constructed as disabled, negotiate with different instances of slippery eugenics in Mexico nowadays: from the denial of medical services to the use of forced or coerced sterilization processes to cover up acts of rape in different Mexican institutions for people with disabilities. Furthermore, another way that I will be exploring slippery eugenics is through the discussions and advocacy for “good eugenics” in Mexico nowadays.

I argue that eugenics in Mexico produced a strong body of knowledge that spread not only locally, but internationally. However, this development of Mexican eugenics did not arise in a vacuum; rather it followed, adopted, adapted, and critiqued a body of theories produced in various contexts. Therefore, in order to understand eugenics in Mexico, it is important to analyze where eugenics comes from, in order to see its similarities, transformations and divergences.

0.1 The History of Eugenics

The term eugenics was coined by Sir Francis Galton, who used it in print for the first time in his book *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, published in 1883. Galton coined the word from the Greek “*eugenes* namely, good in stock, hereditarily endowed with noble qualities” (Galton, 1883: p.17). The term responded to a particular concern of his, “the science of improving the stock” (Galton, 1883: p.17)—a phenomenon he regarded as equally applicable to “men, brutes, and plants” (Galton, 1883: p.17). For Galton, eugenics was not a passive process, but a science which was, he stressed, “by no means confined to the questions of judicious mating but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognizance of all the influences that tend in however remote a degree to give the most suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had” (Galton, 1883: p.17). Thus, in Galton’s view, science had the power and authority to influence and guide individuals’ mating choices in order to ameliorate the qualities and potential of the broader population.

0.1.1 Heredity, Monogenism, Polygenism, and Darwinism

Heredity was a newly developed term in the biological sciences from around the late eighteenth century based on an emerging concern with understanding the transmission of qualities from parents to offspring. Before then, the debate revolved around the development of generations and family lines, specifically around the works of the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), and the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829). However, after the development of the fields of agriculture and medicine, and the professionalization of medicine in the 19th century, the debate from generation to heredity and what we would term modern genetics grew stronger among the scientific community.

The principal debate in the mid nineteenth century revolved around whether human groups were different species or just different varieties within one species. The two key strands of theories that provided scientific explanations of human diversity were monogenesis and polygenesis. Monogenesis theorists argued that all of the human races had a common descent and polygenesis theorists contended this view by stating that all races had separate origins and that they were usually distinct and immutable species.

During the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, monogenesis theories had more support in Europe and the United States, as they maintained Christian orthodoxy and Biblical accounts that “we all come from Adam and Eve”. However, one of the most important contributions of monogenesis to scientific ideas of the time was the notion of race as a “type” of human (Sera-Shriar, 2015: p.23). One of the most important thinkers who advocated for monogenesis and the conceptualization of race as a “type” was Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778). In his book entitled *Systema Naturae* (The Natural System) in 1735, Linnaeus built on earlier works about the identification of varieties within species of animals and plants, like pine species, to provide a similar categorical system for humans. In this work he concluded that there were four different kinds of humans, the *Homo Americanus* (American Man), *Homo Europeus* (European Man), *Homo Asiaticus* (Asian Man), and *Homo Afer* (African Man). For Linnaeus these differences were purely based on climate and environment. However, he ascribed different values to them. For instance, in his view, *Homo Europeus* was ingenious, inventive, and governed by law but *Homo Afer* was crafty, lazy, careless, and governed by the arbitrary will of his masters. Another key figure and advocate of monogenesis was

Johan-Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840). Blumenbach, often referred to as the father of physical anthropology, first identified three fundamental races: Caucasian, Mongolian and Ethiopian in his work titled *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (1775). These were later supplemented with a further two; American and Malayan. (Dubow, 1995: p.26). Contrary to Linnaeus, he ranked the races into a hierarchy, which he based on alleged differences in both the physical capacities and moral qualities of the races. This hierarchy put “Caucasian-Europeans” at the top and “Ethiopian-African, South of Sahara” at the bottom. In his work titled *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1775) he explained why and how he coined the name Caucasians for Europeans:

I have taken the name from Mount Caucasus because it produces the most beautiful race of men. I have not observed a single ugly face in that country in either sex. Nature has lavished upon the women beauties which are not seen elsewhere. I consider it impossible to look at them without loving them. (Blumenbach, 1775: p.6)

Thus, to Blumenbach, Caucasians were created in the Christian god’s image and the other races inside of his hierarchy were just a degeneration of this ideal image.

By the mid-nineteenth century monogenism was widely contested by the scientific community as it aligned with what scientists started considering as backward ideas of Christianity. As stated above, polygenesis theorists believed that races had different and separate origins depending on geographic territories (Knapman, 2016: p.910) which became the dominant framework during mid-nineteen century Europe, by which time polygenesis theories had powerful supporters in Britain, France, and the United States, where they developed in the context of the debate over slavery (Dubow, 1995:p.26). In the context of slavery, if Black people were seen as a less-evolved type of humanity –or not properly human– than Whites, it was more accepted and justifiable to enslave them. For instance, Philadelphian medical doctor and natural scientist Samuel G. Morton (1799-1851) assembled an enormous collection of human skulls in order to prove that the races of the world could be ranked in order of superiority, by “demonstrating” that “Whites” had the biggest brains and “Blacks” the smallest (Geller et.al, 2017; Renschler et.al, 2013). In Britain, racial typology was also entangled with internal national concerns as well as their colonial and imperial endeavours. For instance, Scottish ethnologist and physician Robert Knox (1791-1862) tried to associate physical differences and national character in his book *The Races of Men* in 1850. He argued that “race was everything” and that human character was “solely traceable to the nature of that race to which the individual or the nation belongs” (Dubow 1995, p.27). For instance, he

argued that there were four races in Britain, the English race and three Celtic races which were the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh. However, he stated that “[t]he source of evil lay in the race, specifically, the Celtic race of Ireland”, in Knox’s view, the [Irish] must be forced from the [England] by fair means, if possible, still they [had to] leave. England’s safety [required] it (Knox 1850, p.253).

Beyond the internal dynamics there were also colonial interests in the study of racial typology. For instance, speech therapist and founder of the Anthropological Society of London, James Hunt (1833-1869) wrote an important article entitled *On the Negro’s Place in Nature* (1864). In it he argued that, firstly, “there [was] a good reason for classifying the Negro as a different species from the European” (Hunt 1864, p.16). This, Hunt stated, was due to the difference in intelligence between the two. Secondly, “that the analogies are far more numerous between the Negro and the apes than between the European and the apes” (Hunt, 1864: p.16). This similarity put, in Hunt’s view, the Europeans farther away from the apes while ascribing animalistic qualities to black populations. In Hunt’s third point he explicitly stated that “the Negro [was] inferior, intellectually to the European” (Hunt, 1864: p.16). This allowed him to support slavery as Hunt argued that “the Negro [was] more humanized when in his natural subordination to the European, than under any circumstances” (Hunt, 1864: p.16). Hunt then proceeded to state that “the Negro [could] only be humanized and civilized by Europeans” (Hunt, 1864: p.16). After suggesting that Black populations were capable of being civilized, Hunt stated that “European civilization [was] not suited to the requirements and character of the Negro” (Hunt, 1864: p.16). Thus, even if there was a minute chance of civilizing what Hunt deemed a lesser race that should be subjugated, Black populations should be separated from Europe and constricted to “their own spaces”.

The work of the English naturalist, geologist and biologist, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) made a radical contribution to the debate between monogenism and polygenism by theorizing that humans were a product of natural evolution. In his work entitled *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859), Darwin developed his theory of evolution in which he attributed the differences in organisms—animals and plants—to accidental or spontaneous biological change. To Darwin, the maintenance and elimination of these modifications occurred through natural selection. Over several decades, Darwin’s ideas undermined polygenesis as they marked a change in the ways in which scientist thought about species as mutable with internal variation arising from selection. As these ideas

started gaining acceptance within the scientific community, a new application of ideas of evolution—beyond Darwin’s own theories—developed. A key figure in the body of theories that are now called Social Darwinism was English philosopher, biologist, and anthropologist, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). He coined the term “survival of the fittest” in an attempt to advance the theory that the weakest members of a race would eventually be extinguished and only the strongest would survive and reproduce, transferring their characteristics to their offspring. For instance, in his collected volumes entitled *Principles of Biology, Volumes 1 & 2* (1898) Spencer stated that:

The average vigour of any race would be diminished if the diseased and feeble habitually survive and propagate; and [...] the destruction of such, through failure to fulfil some of the conditions to life, leaves behind those who are able to fulfil the conditions to life, and thus keeps up the average fitness to the conditions of life. (Spencer 1898:532-533)

Thus, for Spencer, the subspecies that he categorized as inferior would not be part of the evolution of future generations.

In short, scientific ideas regarding heredity and transmission of characteristics from parents to offspring emerged from the late eighteenth century. Monogenism categorized race as a type and, despite coming from a common origin, some groups were catalogued as either less developed or degenerations of the most evolved. By mid-nineteenth century monogenism was losing the battle to polygenism as the most acceptable way of studying the races. The developments in anthropology, racial typology, ethnology, medical science, among other fields aided the interconnectedness of internal and colonial politics to support slavery and European imperial expansions during the nineteenth century. Finally, Social Darwinism emerged as a viable option to break with monogenism and polygenism while keeping racial typologies and specifically, racial hierarchies. Thus, eugenics did not arise in a vacuum. In the next section I will explain in detail the thought and influences of Galton, and the eugenic movement and its popularization, to understand why eugenics became so popular in this climate.

0.1.2 Galton and Influences

In an early book entitled *Hereditary Genius* (1868), Galton argued that eminence and talent closely aligned to abler races, a theme that he repeated in later works on eugenics like *The Human Faculty and its Development* (1883). Galton drew substantially on Thomas R. Malthus (1766-1834), a very influential English cleric and scholar, whose theory of population argued that increases in the means of subsistence, like nourishment,

were necessary to improve the quality of a population (Malthus, 1798: p.153). Galton used Malthusian theory to argue that reproduction and marriage should be regulated so that the world would not host those populations “for whom there is no place at the great table of nature” (Galton, 1868: p.920). He then proceeded to indicate the influences that would allow a “race” to either improve or degenerate. Using Darwin’s theory of Pangenesis (Darwin, 1868) in which the latter hypothesized that there are hereditary particles called gemmules that circulate throughout the body but gather in the gonads, Galton argued that the reproduction of hereditary material had to be controlled and managed for the betterment of the stock of a given population. In his words, “the theory of Pangenesis brings all the influences that bear on heredity into a form, that is appropriate for the grasp of mathematical analysis” (Galton, 1868: p. 1065). Mathematical analysis, to Galton, was the purest form of science, and therefore, if it was used for issues of planning and governance, heredity could also be scientifically and mathematically controlled. In his words “the control of the nature of future generations should be [...] within the power of the living” (Galton, 1868: p.1008).

What differentiated eugenics from other contemporaneous research into these themes was Galton’s explicit interest in applying science to society, as a means of rationalizing and “improving” populations. However, he referred specifically to the improvement of the “most suitable races”. Galton subscribed to racial theories and hierarchies of the time. In his work *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883), he saw eugenics as a way of emphasizing particular characteristics that he saw as already inherent to different populations, while weeding out “bad” traits.

Drawing on Darwin’s theories of natural selection, published in his celebrated study *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Galton had explained in his earlier work *Hereditary Genius* (1869) that abler “races” were a product of heredity and not of environmental factors—which suggested that the only change was through reproduction, not education and care. However, Darwin expressed his concerns about Galton’s radical notion of evolutionary biology in *The Descent of Man* (1871) as he disagreed with the idea that natural selection led to “inferiority” and “superiority”. While Galton’s theories were very attractive to many scientists and politicians of the time, not everyone agreed with their moral implications given the already existing toxic theories around race superiority. This was specifically seen in relation to the abolition of slavery, which was why Darwin was so reluctant to support Galton’s ideas. In Darwin’s book *On the Origin of Species* (1859), he hinted that all humans were biologically related; US readers that

supported anti-slavery used his work to refute the idea that enslaved Africans belonged to an inferior species (Fuller, 2017: p.14-15).

0.1.3 Competing Theories of Inheritance in Eugenics

In the decades following Galton's publications, his concept of eugenics was taken up by scientists and thinkers around the world, who sought to apply his principles to their own social contexts. The different interpretations of his theory led to a main epistemological split among eugenicists. This division roughly followed two derivations: one based on the work of the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), and the other based on the work of the German evolutionary biologist August Weismann (1834-1914).

The continuing search for the factors controlling heredity led three botanists, Hugo DeVries, Carl Correns and Erich von Tschermak to independently and more or less simultaneously rediscover the work of Gregor Mendel during the months of March and April of 1900, as a way to explain heredity (Roberts, 1929: p.320). Mendel (1822-1884), a Czech scientist and Augustinian friar, developed what we now term the theory of Mendelian inheritance. Basing his experiments on the study of pea plants, he argued that certain characteristics were a product of heredity and that patterns of inheritance could be detected by the crossing of different pea plants with dominant and recessive characteristics through different generations. In *Experiments in Plant Hybridization* (1865) he based his experiments on the crossing of pea plants the majority being from the *Pisum sativum* species (Mendel, 1865: p.4). The characteristics he based his study on were the following:

[d]ifferences in length and color of the stem; the size and form of the leaves; in the position, color, form, size of the flowers; in the length of the flower stalk; in the color, form, size of the pods; in the form and size of the seeds; and in the color of the seed-coats and of the albumen (endosperm). (Mendel, 1865: 4)

The rediscovery of his experiments was seen as a breakthrough for explaining theories and patterns of inherited traits as they served as a basis for explaining how different factors in plants, like height, seed coat and color, acted independently of environmental factors.

The rediscovery of Mendel's theories galvanized Weismann, a German biologist and evolutionary theorist, to build on his own burgeoning theory of genetics. Drawing on

Darwin's theories, Weismann's early works emphasized the idea that transmutation, the idea of one species changing into another, was directly linked to environmental factors. Like Darwin, Weismann was a man of God, and was therefore very interested in the debate between creationism and evolution. By studying ants and later sea urchin eggs, and drawing on the theories of Lamarck, Mendel, and Darwin, Weismann concluded that the germ plasm – where he believed hereditary material was carried – could not in fact be changed by environmental influences. By rejecting the conception that environmental factors were key to the development of heredity, Weismann's theories supported Galton's ideas about the possibility of racial improvement, which he indicated could only be achieved through the mechanism of genetic inheritance. This led to a series of adaptations to modern genetics that allowed for the discussion of eugenics in different scientific circles during the early 20th century. Weismann's derivation of Galton's eugenics, which emphasized internal hereditary traits rather than environmental factors, had the greatest impact in Germany, Britain, and the United States.

The other strand of genetic theory that influenced eugenics was neo-Lamarckian theory (Hodgson et.al., 2006). Lamarck, a French biologist whose work was very influential throughout the 19th century, argued in his theory of transmutation that external influences could alter the germ plasm or "sex-cells". The development of neo-Lamarckian theory, which was used to challenge Darwinism, as the body of theories that explored biological evolution, argued that social and environmental factors played a major role in the improvement of human stock. This theory was more widely accepted among French, Italian, Russian and Latin American eugenic circles, where it was used to suggest the importance of environmental factors on hereditary traits, and to support the fields of puericulture, centered on the care of children, and biotypology, the study of life forms that share similar hereditary characteristics. Unlike Weismann's theories, which tended to disregard environmental factors when discussing the intricacies of hereditary traits, neo-Lamarckian theories were used to explore and control the influence of environmental factors upon hereditary traits. Nonetheless, while some countries are more broadly identifiable with either the neo-Lamarckian or Weismannian derivations of Galton's theory, they were not monolithic, and their principles continued to be debated within, and among, national scientific communities.

Thus, the development of eugenics during the early 20th century was closely tied to pre-existing notions of heredity (López Beltrán, 2004) and social hygiene (Kühl, 2013; Nash, 1992; Žalnova et.al., 2016), and formed part of the broader development of modern

genetics while holding a significant importance to the development of what we know now as scientific racism.

0.1.4 Positive and Negative Eugenics

The implementation of hygienic and sanitary policies all over the world was also seen as crucial to the aims of eugenics. Different state-managed health programs were based on eugenic ideas that privileged rational, “scientific” principles, which would in turn gradually change the way in which nations and their populations were conceived. Galton’s work had specified that the improvement of “the stock”, or selected breeding populations, could be achieved through a series of tests to determine if an individual or family was “suitable” to reproduce. He also advocated for the production of measures to ensure marriages among those who were considered fit, while supporting the idea that the “unfit” should be placed in monasteries and convents, thus separating them from the “suitable” breeding population (Stepan, 1991: p.34).

From the 1920s there was a shift in the way in which eugenics was conceived, from favoring the reproduction of the “fit”—a term coined by the English biologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)—towards preventing the reproduction of the “unfit” (Spencer 1898). The distinction between positive and negative eugenics was first referred to in the scientific literature by English physician and writer Caleb Williams Saleeby (1878-1940), in his text entitled *Parenthood and Race Culture: An Outline of Eugenics* (1909). Advocates of positive eugenics mainly—but not exclusively—focused on the reproduction of “the fit”: those that displayed “desirable” traits such as intelligence, health, good hygiene (a concept ranging from cleanliness to the pathologization of cultural and behavioral patterns that diverged from a social “norm”), success (encompassing class status or profession), and other characteristics. Eugenists who advocated for a focus on positive eugenics employed methods to promote the reproduction of these traits, like pamphlets advising on the choice of sexual partners, campaigns directed at women and emphasizing the importance of procreation, proposals to grade families according to their eugenic potential, pre-nuptial certificates, selective migratory policies, among other things.

Negative eugenics supported the elimination of the reproductive line that would cause the population to “degenerate”. These included people labelled as “alcoholics”, “prostitutes”, “imbeciles”, “abnormal”, “idiots”, “homosexuals”, “cripples”, “mentally

insane”, “feeble-minded”, among others. The list varied according to national context and the characteristics that particular eugenicists considered necessary to improve the genetic stock of specific populations. Some of the methods discussed under the remit of negative eugenics were seclusion, sterilization, internment, and, in extreme cases—like the Final Solution—, genocide (Mottier, 2008; Levine, 2017; Flitner, 2003; Conroy, 2017). These concepts of positive and negative eugenics were not tied to either the Weismannian or Lamarckian strand in eugenic theory, but were adopted progressively in different countries in various ways. That is to say, these theories were often used selectively and in tandem to treat particular social “problems” like prostitution, “racial degeneracy” (through the regulation of marriages and prenuptial clinics), migration, “laziness”, and criminality, among others.

0.1.5 Science and Eugenic Societies

Eugenics differed from other branches of science in that its focus on social implementation brought together experts from various academic fields as well as leading public figures from diverse sectors of political and social influence. This has led theorists like Spektorowski (2013) to propose that eugenics went beyond a strictly academic discipline, and that it can more appropriately be seen as “as a mixture of science and policy, as a discipline and social movement”, meaning that “eugenics lies at the interface of biological science and society” (Spektorowsky, 2013: p.1). As the popularization and consensus of eugenics as an important branch of science grew, various eugenics societies started to appear all over the world during the first decades of the twentieth century. Their members included physicians, biologists, sociologists, journalists, anthropologists, geneticists, psychologists, economists, government officials, and others. This allowed eugenicists to influence the elaboration of policies, academic fields and the development of scientific theories to the extent that their ideas impacted legislation, approaches to healthcare, and national ideologies about citizenship, sexual reproduction, and hygiene. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, eugenics was broadly regarded as a respectable branch of science, while eugenic societies were seen as important centers of social and political influence. As eugenic principles filtered into public institutions and social policies, they became part of “common sense” ideas about reproduction, fitness, and how ordinary citizens could and should contribute to the future of the nation. These discourses also contributed to the elaboration of ideas about particular populations’

“fitness” or “suitability” to reproduce, in opposition to the designation of “unfit” bodies who were targeted for exclusion from the idealized future nation. However, eugenics fell from grace in the lead up to and during World War II, particularly due to its associations with Nazism, which used eugenic principles to justify its Final Solution: the genocide of Jewish and other ethnic minority communities living in Europe and people construed as disabled like homosexuals, “cripples”, “abnormals”, sex workers, “idiots”, among others.

Nonetheless, by the mid-century, eugenic ideas had infiltrated so many areas of policy, as well as the science of health and reproduction, that they continued to influence societies long after formal eugenics groups had dissolved. The study of eugenic thought therefore holds much relevance today, as aspects of these theories still occupy an important space in social and cultural understandings of gender, race, and class, among others. For instance, eugenic principles have shaped contemporary understandings of sexual, physical, and mental health, particularly with regards to the construction of a conception of “normality” vis-à-vis pathological bodies and populations. Eugenics therefore has been argued to hold a significant relevance to the broadening of our understanding of scientific development, but also to the shaping of contemporary social policy, cultural understandings of science, conceptions of nationalism, and biological science.

0.2 Mexican Eugenics

The exploration of Mexican eugenics helps to broaden our understanding of this phenomenon. Its similarities with other countries, contradictions, and paradoxes make it a noteworthy case for explaining the different dynamics behind the production of eugenic knowledge, not only in Latin America, but its connections with eugenics societies and eugenicists around the world. Throughout this thesis, I use texts written by Mexican eugenicists and the official journal of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (SME), *Eugenesia*, to make a detailed exploration of the development of eugenics and its impact from the early twentieth century to the present.

By looking at the official journal of the SME, entitled *Eugenesia* (1939-1954), and different core texts from eugenicists, physicians, anthropologists, and scientists during the early twentieth century I explored the ways in which eugenic ideas impacted Mexico. I spent four months in Mexico City building my own archive of materials written by eugenicists and prominent actors who used scientific or eugenic ideas for the goal of

improving the Mexican population. The majority of the materials in this thesis were taken from the archives at the Centro Médico Nacional Siglo XXI, Unidad de Congresos del IMSS. However, I also found some of the materials at the Historical Archives of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the archives at the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH), the eugenic archives of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Library of Congress in Washington DC, New York Public Library, International Commission of Jurists, The Autonomous University of Nueva León, The Institute of Legal Investigations (UNAM), the University Library at the University of Cambridge, the British Library, among other digital archives and secondary sources.

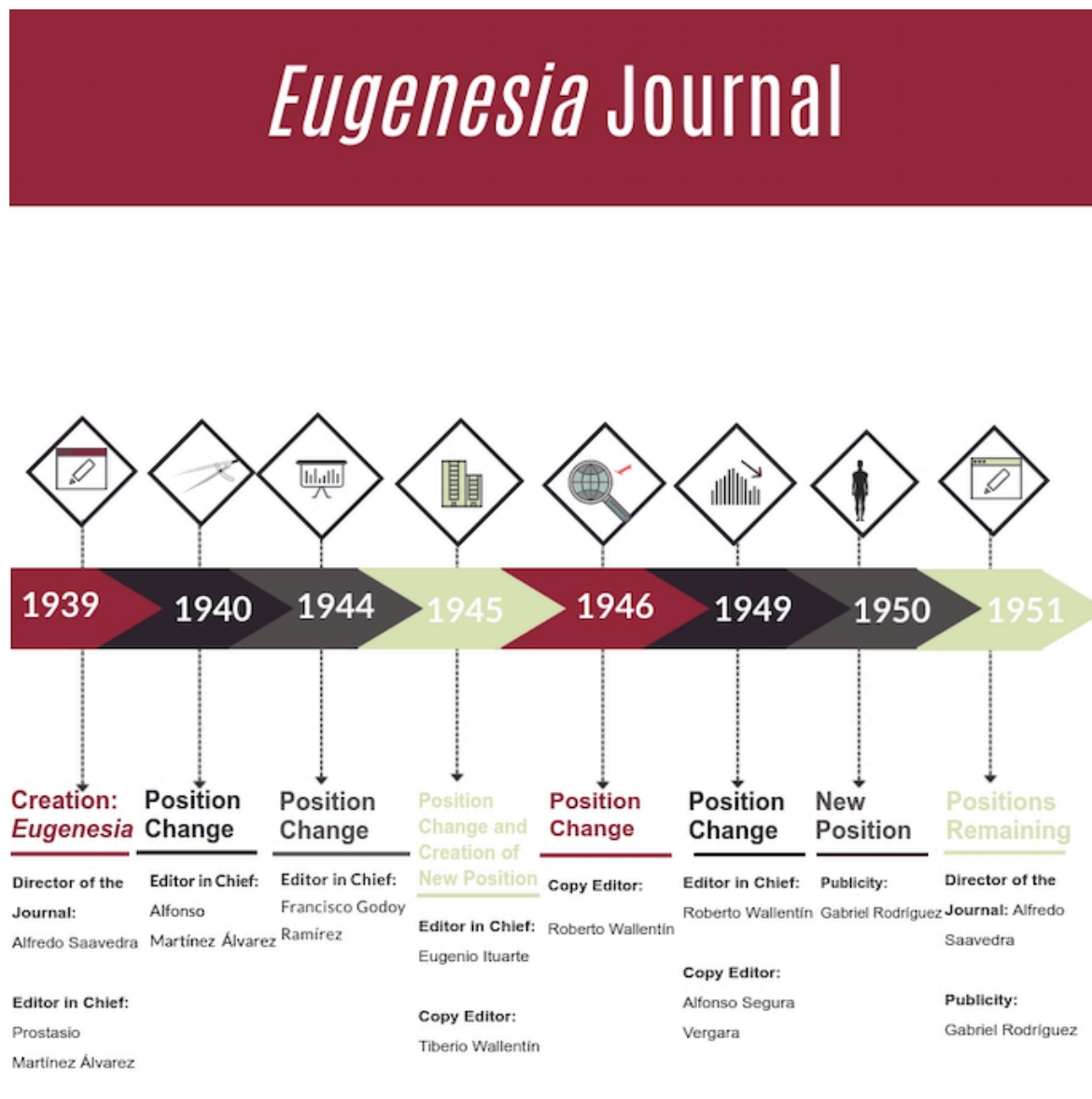


Table 0.1: *Eugenesia* and its board of directors (Positions) (Diagram by the Author)

The *Eugenesia* journal published its first volume in November 1939 and it continued to publish every month—though sometimes every two months—until it slowly stopped publishing in the mid-1950s. Figure 0.1 shows the positions held by Mexican eugenicists in relation to the journal. Through the journal, I can observe the prominence that surgeon Alfredo Saavedra had in the SME since he is the only acting director of the journal. Protasio Martínez Álvarez was the only one with experience as a journalist; the rest of the board were medical doctors except for Eugenio Ituarte who was a chemical engineer.

The SME had approximately 130 members —by the time it was founded in 1931—, who were part of the professional elite of Mexico (Suárez et.al., 2005: p.113). The society was based in Mexico City at the Avenida Insurgentes, number 85 and its premises were mostly used for meetings. From there eugenicists would organize activities, conferences, alliances with other societies and governmental organizations, radio programs, among other things. The SME also created alliances and collaborations with other eugenic societies in Mexico and Latin America like the Eugenics Committee in Aguascalientes, the Bolivian Society of Eugenics, the Peruvian Society of Eugenics, among other organizations. Nowadays, Aguascalientes is also the base of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). Some of the INEGI's responsibilities today include the creation of statistical and geographical data regarding economic indicators, housing, and censuses which parallel demographic interests and activities of eugenicists. To illustrate, Gamio used statistics in *Forging a Nation* (1916) to advocate for the inclusion of indigenous populations to mestizaje and, Argentinian eugenicist Victor Delfino used statistics to pathologize feeble-mindedness for the betterment of the race (Delfino, 1940: p.3). From this example I can observe the contemporary impact of eugenics. Even though eugenic societies have disappeared, its headquarters are occupied by trusted and respectable institutions that use similar tools of governance.

The *Eugenesia* journal—which was normally a monthly issue of twenty to twenty-five pages—featured different articles, bibliographic recommendations, medical adverts, notifications regarding the directives, an editorial section, conference minutes and, in some cases, even games (refer to Appendix 2). The adverts were usually targeted at medical professionals by advertising the latest discoveries in medicine, books, and remedies. However, the nature of some of the adverts suggests that this journal was targeted at male medical professionals. For instance, this is a common advert through the majority of the issues of *Eugenesia*:



Figure 0.1: Advert- OXO [Wheel Company] (*Eugenesia*, 1942: p.24)

Figure 0.1 is an example of many adverts featured at the *Eugenesia* journal. The advertisement above shows the image of a woman in the driver's seat. The advert translates as "Let her drive...and we will guarantee your life!". This advert plays on the stereotype of women being "bad drivers" to sell their "high-quality tires" by stating that the main priority of the tires was to "provide security for you and your people". Thus, I can suggest from adverts like this that this journal was targeted to male medical professionals who had the means to purchase a middle-class car—like the one shown in the figure above.

In the journal there was also a section dedicated to influential people who shaped the SME's eugenic thought like Moses, Hippocrates, Aristoteles, Charles Davenport, Erich Hoffmann, Susana Solano, Charles Darwin, Carlos A. Bambarem, among many others. As it can be seen from the names mentioned, there was a mixture of influences that shaped Mexican eugenics that ranged from Greek philosophers and characters from the Christian Bible to eugenicists that aligned with different strands of eugenics like US eugenicist Charles Davenport—who made remarks against miscegenation and for negative eugenic measures in various works like *Race Crossing in Jamaica* (1929) and with the *Code of Eugenics and Homiculture* at the Pan-American League in 1927 (Stern, 2016: p.5).

To summarize, this thesis aims to examine the materials published by the SME members and other members of Mexican elites to show the ways in which eugenic ideas infiltrated different aspects of Mexican society. I also try to comprehend the ways in which eugenics in Mexico was adapted to fit into ideas of nation, science, mestizaje, gender, reproduction, the control and management of diseases and risk, and disability. I argue that a similar phenomenon can be seen in Mexico since eugenicists would make use of "Western science" to research and pathologize different groups despite them being part of "the dominant forces of homogenizing national cultures within their own societies" (Burton, 2018: p.24). Furthermore, I argue that these developments in local-Mexican science impacted scientific research and policy outside of Mexico—like the UNESCO Statement on Race, scientific expeditions to Mexico and vice-versa, among others that will be discussed throughout this work. This will allow me to explore the ways in which Mexican eugenicists acted as producers of scientific knowledge which in turn can help to achieve a better understanding of eugenic ideas through other lenses and contexts to investigate the long-lasting impacts, echoes, and continuations of eugenic ideas in contemporary times.

0.3 Thesis Overview

In chapter one, I provide an overview of the Mexican context and its relation to eugenics in order to examine terms like “Latin American eugenics” (Turda et al, 2014) and “preventive eugenics” (Stepan, 1991) in relation to eugenics in Mexico. This, in turn, leads into an exploration of the development of eugenic ideas before and after the Mexican Revolution, in which I outline the early stages of eugenic thought in Mexico. This is done in order to trace the history, creation, members, and impact of the Mexican Society of Eugenics on the nation-building process of Mexico. Chapter one will provide an overview of the main theoretical background within the secondary sources used in this thesis while delivering a historical outline and periodization of the development of eugenics in Mexico, its influence, and connections locally and internationally.

The second chapter explores the important role played by scientific ideas and eugenics in the development of the ideology of *mestizaje* and vice versa. In this chapter I explore the ways in which the concept of *mestizaje* and the figure of the *mestizo* were used as an ideological resource that allowed post-revolutionary elites in Mexico to create a national identity through *mestizaje* (López Beltrán, 2013: p.391-392). By looking at the historical development of purity of blood, the caste system, migratory policies, *mestizaje*, eugenics, and their role in the construction of the Mexican nation I argue that *mestizaje* can be seen as a technology and a racializing assemblage that metamorphoses, changes, and slips into different social forms.

In order to address these slippages and metamorphoses of eugenic ideas and the ways in which they operate in Mexico, the first and second chapter use the concept “criollo eugenics”. In chapter one I set the basis for this by discussing how *criollo eugenics* refers to the adaptation of eugenics in Mexico. This term is used to explore the ways in which the SME and its members implemented eugenic policies in Mexico that surpassed the prevention of hereditary diseases. This also helps explain how eugenics in Mexico went on for longer than in many other countries, as the SME kept publishing about eugenic ideas and its implementation beyond the end of World War II. *Criollo eugenics* allows for a deeper and more thorough exploration of the specificities of the Mexican case. I therefore use *criollo eugenics* in chapter two to reflect on the historical processes of racialization and the various technologies used to privilege *mestizaje* as a homogenizing yet exclusionary tool.

Criollo eugenics allows me to explore the ways in which Mexican eugenicists operated in and as part of an assemblage to construct the figure of the mestizo and make it seem like a stable category, as the archetypal body of the Mexican nation (Wade, 2017). Technology, according to Weheliye, is the function of understandings and knowledge to the practicality of human life or to transform and control the human environment (Weheliye 2014: p.12). Using Weheliye (2014) I argue that technologies that are used either to manipulate or transmute our environment have always been present and operate in favor of assembling nodes of knowledge that delimit what it means to be human. Assemblage theory provides a useful starting point to understand the ways in which society and its components create and operate on an ever-changing structure out of intermittent networks that shift between entities and articulations (Weheliye, 2014: p.46; Wade 2017: p.45). Wade (2017) invites his reader to think about the mestizo as an “assemblage in itself and a component of other assemblages” in “need of constant work and regulation to act [and seen as] solid and institutional” (Wade 2017: p.47). This creates a seemingly stable figure of the mestizo that responds to the national imaginary in which can simultaneously oscillate between seemingly contradictory ideas of “racial difference” and “racelessness” (Wade 2017: p.50-51). Weheliye (2014) adds another layer of complexity by introducing “racializing assemblages” as an element that does not frame race as a biological or cultural categorization but as a cluster of socio-political processes that regulates humanity into full humans, not-quite-human, and non-human (Weheliye 2014: p.4). I argue that it is due to this creation and solidification of the figure of the mestizo that other groups—like Chinese, Jewish, Japanese, and Black populations—were relegated to become mere factors inside of the process of constructing the mestizo, making them seem not-quite or non-human without the ameliorating process of mixture (Wade, 2017; Weheliye, 2014). Thus, I have coined the term criollo eugenics to show the ways in which racializing assemblages and the development of scientific research in Mexico follow a distinct historical development relative to the systematic repression, management, and control of the Mexican population, which was cemented in eugenics and the myth of mestizaje.

Chapter three examines the impact of criollo eugenics on different programs relating to the family throughout the post-Revolutionary period. It deals with the ways in which Mexican elites thought about the family and how these discussions delimited who should be part of or exist under the banner of “la gran familia mexicana”. Here I discuss how eugenicists’ debates regarding motherhood, puericulture, class, and different

preventive health measures were intended to keep “undesirables”—or the people who, in their view, should not be part of “la gran familia mexicana”—at bay. This chapter shows the ways in which these eugenic debates resulted in a normalization and management of sexuality and gender roles that ranged from prenuptial certificates to sterilization measures and the institutionalization of eugenic ideas in Mexico. This chapter also outlines the main goals of the SME as stated in the Mexican Code of Eugenics, and concludes by indicating that, contrary to some characterizations in the secondary literature, negative eugenics were extensively discussed during the first stage of eugenics in Mexico. However, the goal of eugenics in Mexico was to construct a set of eugenically oriented guidelines in which the individual and the nuclear family would be able to regulate themselves in order to protect the nation or, in this case, “la gran familia mexicana”.

Following the main discussions regarding the development of eugenics in Mexico, chapter four is dedicated to the conceptual development of disease and pathology in Mexico. Through the recent history of syphilis, in particular, and the different attempts to contain the disease, I argue that eugenics in Mexico never ceased to exist and can instead be conceived through shift in eugenic processes—especially regarding to risk politics and preventive medicine (Rose, 2001)—that I term slippery eugenics. Through the study of syphilis, I explore the ways in which the Mexican context presents many contradictions in the governmental measures taken for the containment of the disease. After the popularization of the cure for syphilis, contradictions appeared in public health discourse, and diverse ways of dealing and pathologizing populations and/or individuals appeared. The AIDS crisis in Mexico and the ways people with a HIV positive diagnosis were dealt with illuminates how forms of slippery eugenics can be seen.

Slippery eugenics is a concept that I will use to guide my discussion in chapters four and five. Drawing on Moreno Figueroa’s (2006) term “slippery emotion” in which she refers to the ways in which diverse practices of racism are generated and resurface in different forms—in sometimes imperceptible ways—I argue that eugenics possesses a similarly slippery nature. I coined the term slippery eugenics to help me incorporate and combine both concepts of laissez-faire eugenics (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011) and flexible eugenics (Taussig et al, 2005). Laissez-faire eugenics can be said to exist when the state does not, or is not expected to, manage the population through the use of eugenic ideas—a state which is commonly seen in neo-liberal settings—and flexible eugenics refers to the historical biases of atypical bodies and their encounter with the possibility of

“normalization” through technologies. For instance, flexible eugenics is used by Taussig, Rapp, and Health to refer to the tension that “little people” encounter when they are presented with discourses of individual perfectibility and a collection of, what they term as “technically mediated choice” (Taussig et al, 2005: p. 195-196). However, in the case of Mexico, the division of contemporary eugenic practices is not definite. Through the study of the containment and contagion of disease and risk groups and disability studies, I show how, in some cases, the state is expected to intervene or in others I observe the ways in which both flexible and laissez-faire eugenics operate in tandem with each other. I argue that the use of slippery eugenics allows me to explain contemporary eugenic attitudes and dynamics and the fact that eugenics never ceased to exist in Mexico, it only slipped through the cracks of contemporary self-management, scientific practices, and governmental policies. Additionally, it is important to note that it is this slipperiness that makes the phenomenon imperceptible and, therefore, difficult to pin down as one specific thing. The multifaceted character of contemporary eugenics is what makes it slippery.

I use disability studies as the main focus of chapter five. Through Mexico’s history regarding the construction of disability, chapter five explores the ways in which slippery eugenics operates in this context. Thus, this chapter sheds some light on how criollo eugenics shaped the ways in which disability is constructed and treated. Additionally, this chapter aims to show how contemporary versions of eugenics can be observed through the abuses of people with disabilities. I do this by investigating the reports made by the activist work of Disability Rights International and the Colectivo Chuhcan—a not-for-profit organization made by women who identify themselves as people with psychosocial disabilities, to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Mexico. Here, disability studies provide a useful link for understanding slippery eugenics and its continuations in Mexico. Additionally, this chapter will explore different intellectual works in Mexico that support “good eugenics” —or rather the advocacy of a eugenically-oriented self-management driven by individual choice—to underline the ways in which eugenics is slipping back into acceptable scientific discourse in contemporary Mexico.

Overall, this thesis uses a *longue durée* historical sociological analysis in order to understand how eugenics came about in Mexico and to answer the question of what happened to criollo eugenics after the dissolution of the SME in the 1950s. I suggest that it is through the answer to this question that we can observe the interconnectedness of eugenic ideas, globally, the production of context-specific eugenic ideas, and their impact

on the every-day life of individuals. I argue that eugenic ideas in Mexico allowed the creation of a national body that, in turn, helped to pathologize groups that, in the eugenicists' view, were not relevant to "improve" the national stock—ideas that continue to exist through the usage of veiled and coded language without overtly racist overtones. Thus, I will provide the tools to recognize eugenic practices and ideas to reveal their continuation even after the language of eugenics falls from acceptability.

1 THE ORIGINS OF MEXICAN EUGENICS

What makes the development of eugenics in Mexico so thought-provoking? Is there such a thing as a “Latin Eugenics” (Turda et al, 2014)? Does the concept of “preventive eugenics” accurately encapsulate everything that eugenicists were doing in Mexico (Stepan, 1991)? In this chapter I will explore the development of eugenic ideas after the Mexican Revolution and engage with the early stages of eugenic development. Afterwards, I will trace the history and creation of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and its impact on the nation-building process of Mexico. It is through these approaches that I will give an overview of the secondary literature regarding eugenics in Mexico and how my work engages with it.

1.1 Eugenic Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico

In the 1920s, Mexico was undergoing a period of demographic crisis and political upheaval, which, I argue, presented a singular opportunity for the introduction of eugenic ideas into the new post-revolutionary state. This government elites were concerned with populating, mostly because of the demand for workers to reconstruct Mexico and the fact that the country’s governors feared the imperialist ambitions of the United States (Alonso, 2005: p.41). The political and social composition of the country was also changing, as different communities of rural migrants—mostly working-class and indigenous people—who participated in the war had begun to settle in the cities. In addition, the National Sanitation Systems in Mexico had been ruined during the conflict, causing political, social, and cultural instabilities in the quality of life; these ranged from the lack of resources like water and food to the precarious state of sewer systems (Molina del Villar et al, 2010). All of these elements caused, as a result, the spread of malnutrition and infectious diseases like typhus, smallpox, tuberculosis, scarlet fever (specifically in the center, north, and the Mexican Gulf), and the influenza pandemic of 1918. According to Márquez Morfín and Molina del Villar (2010), 2 million people perished due to armed

conflicts and 300,000 died as a result of the influenza pandemic (Márquez Morfín et al, 2010: p.12).

Since the nineteenth century, Mexican rulers had been preoccupied with modernizing and being able to compete economically with their powerful northern neighbor, the United States. This need to conceptualize what or who the Mexican citizen should be was now exacerbated by the pressing issues caused by the precarious situation of the post-revolutionary context, a moment that brought with it social changes, the secularization of government, and different social and cultural experiments in the making of policies to modernize and “civilize” Mexico. The anxiety for creating a “modern” Mexican citizen was also driven by the restructuring of the elite, the rise of the middle class, and the weakening of the role of the Catholic Church in state affairs. Venustiano Carranza (1859-1920) played a very influential role in the advocacy for the need of “modernization” and “civilization” in post-revolutionary Mexico as this assumed a context of crisis. These elements created spaces for the development of new theories and modes of knowledge to infiltrate the Mexican imaginary of what or who a citizen should be and these new actors’ roles in society.

Many of these ideas were inherited from the rule of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911). During the Porfiriato, the ruling intelligentsia shared a fundamental concern to civilize and govern using the scientific knowledge produced by the fields of anthropology, phrenology, sociology, studies in heredity, among others. As Del Pilar Blanco (2016) has argued, science functioned in public discourse during this time as an “aspirational rhetoric employed to justify an elitist mode of governance” (Del Pilar Blanco, 2016: p.416). On the one hand, the Porfiriato drew on early nineteenth century conservative strands and scientists like fray Servando Teresa de Mier (1765-1827), Carlos María de Bustamante (1774-1848), Lucas Alamán (1792-1853), Lorenzo de Zavala (1788), and José María Luis Mora (1794-1850) who had argued that “indians” formed a degenerate race, which constituted one of the biggest obstacles for the modernization, civilization, development, and progress of the Mexican nation (López Sánchez, 2001: p.45).

On the other hand, liberal strand of Mexican intellectuals and elites also played an influential role in the delimiting of the Mexican nation. During the nineteenth century, there were different efforts to culturally transform the figure of indigenous populations by advocating for the unification of indigenous and Latino elements (Chirinos Palomo, 2014: p.254). This union was characterized by Enlightenment ideas that advocated for representation, equality, and freedom; in Mexico this was better known as the “período

indiano” (the indian period). However, because these ideas had—as a goal—the cultural assimilation of indigenous people to a white-European culture, they also privileged whiteness. Both liberal and conservative arguments were used to influence the development of state policy, such as the incentive scheme for Europeans to migrate to Mexico, implemented in 1909. The idea that Europeans were the “most apt” and “civilized” population to constitute the Mexican nation during the Porfiriato led to the implementation of immigration policies that resulted in the dispossession of land from rural, mostly indigenous communities (Alonso et.al., 2005: p.41). Thus, I suggest that discourses to “civilize” came to be a euphemism for “racially superior” that usually meant European.

The two seminal figures who contributed to the new conceptualization of a national Mexican identity in the post-revolutionary period were José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), an avowed advocate of eugenic principles, and Manuel Gamio (1883-1960), who later became a member of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (SME). While the Mexican Society of Eugenics was founded in the 1930s, eugenic ideas had already been around in the country for a number of years. One of the earliest advocates of eugenics was Manuel Gamio (1883-1960), considered today as the father of modern Mexican Anthropology. He studied his M.A. (1911) and Ph.D. (1921) at Columbia University with Franz Boas (1858-1942) as his advisor. Boas was the founder of an important school of anthropological thought which emphasized values of egalitarianism and anti-racism, and a focus on culture and environment in racial/ethnic formation, rather than typological race-thinking. This is where Gamio cemented his interest in the role of indigenous populations in Mexico. He then returned to Mexico and was made the Director of Anthropology (1916-1924). During the Presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles (1914-1920), Gamio was named Sub-secretary of Public Education and then, under President Lázaro Cárdenas del Río (1934-1940), he was appointed as the Director of the Interamerican Indigenist Institute (1942-1960) (Alonso, 2005: p.42; Stern, 2000: p.60-63). This allowed him to implement ideas regarding modern anthropology and nationalism during and after the Mexican Revolution. For instance, in Gamio’s book entitled *Forging a Nation* (1916) he imagined a new race, formed through the mixture of “whites” and “indians”, which, in his view, was needed to achieve the national coherence in Mexico. Gamio's ideas strongly emphasized the need for racial and cultural homogeneity within the nation in order to successfully build a modern, productive state. He therefore predicated his ideas on the mixing of “indians” and “whites” who, in his eyes, were the two most significant

populations while relegating other populations like Chinese, Jewish, and Afro-descendant Mexicans, among others, to gradual disappearance.

While also advocating for a “mestizophilic project”—or the privileging of the mestizaje (Basave, [1992] 2009)—, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), took a somewhat different route to Gamio (Alonso, 2005: p.45; Stern, 2000: p.61). In 1920, he was appointed Rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). During his role as Secretary of Education (1921-1924), Vasconcelos launched an initiative to bring art—specifically murals painted by artists like Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros—to the masses, in order to bring the ideas of the Mexican Revolution to “the people” (Alonso, 2005: p.45). It is important to note that despite the fact that Vasconcelos was politically conservative, he commissioned people like Diego Rivera, a committed Marxist, to paint the murals (Dalton, 2018: p.13). This is an example of the way that these “civilizing” and eugenically-oriented measures transcended liberal or conservative ideologies as the modernization of the Mexican nation was perceived as a common goal. Additionally, Vasconcelos created a literacy and public hygiene project entitled “The Cultural Mission” which had, as its goal, to “civilize” and modernize Mexico—especially in indigenous areas. A year after this aggressive campaign—which still retains an impact today in the federalization of school programs (Manrique, 2016: p.5)—he published *The Cosmic Race* (1925). Similar to Gamio’s *Forging a Nation* (1916), this book conceptualized mestizaje as an ideal and progressive goal (Suarez et al, 2005). However, instead of focusing only on the “Mexican nation”, Vasconcelos thought of the cosmic race as a unifying tool for all of Latin America. In it, Vasconcelos argued that the beginning of the twentieth century marked the start of a new historical phase in which mestizaje—or the cosmic race—would serve as a uniting element for the homogenization of Latin America. As Federico Navarrete (2016) points out, Vasconcelos thought that the role of the mestizo was not only to emancipate Latin American nations from indigenous tradition and foreign oppression but to serve as an example for the rest of the world to see that the future relied on this supposedly inevitable and desirable racial mix (Navarrete, 2016: p.101). Contrary to Gamio who denied, in theory, the existence of inherent superiorities among human populations, thinkers like Vasconcelos and Andrés Molina Enríquez (1868-1940)—an intellectual during the Revolution who drafted the land reform movement in *Great National Problems* (1909), which became Article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.55-56; Suarez et al, 1999: p.52; Stern, 2000: p.60-61)—supported the idea of social evolution as a biological processes (Glick, 1996: p.295-296).

Molina Enríquez used Mexican politician and naturalist Vicente Riva Palacio (1832-1896)—who argued that Indians were superior to other races if they were judged from an “evolutionist perspective” (Riva Palacio, 1884 in Glick, 1996: p.295)—to distinguish different groups of indigenous people and conclude that “the indigenous people of America had a number of highly evolved individual traits but could not stand up collectively to the Europeans” (Glick, 1996: p.295-296). Vasconcelos used his predecessors’ theories—especially Molina Enríquez—to create the idea of the cosmic race and defend the principles of Mendelian science to maintain the strength and superiority of the mestizos. Vasconcelos supported a mestizaje that privileged European ancestry and influences while criticizing European science and categorizing it as a colonial fallacy—like in the case of Social Darwinism and eugenics. However, he also adapted European science and used it as a tool to achieve the goals of the “cosmic race” (Suárez et al, 2005: p.90; Vasconcelos 2009 [1925]: p.23). This is to say, Vasconcelos sought, in mestizaje, the future of the world and he used it to conceptualize a new paradigm of racial nationalism by adapting science depending on his own needs for “progress” and “civilization”.

Like the generation of Mexican scientists before them, Gamio and Vasconcelos were keenly concerned with the role of indigenous populations in the Mexican nation. However, both of them departed from the conservatives’ idea that “Indians” should be kept apart from the Mexican national body. Both Gamio and Vasconcelos suggested a more liberal approach which argued that indigenous populations could be incorporated and modernized through the process of mestizaje. Their early works, like *Forging a Nation* (Gamio, 1916), *Mexican Intellectuality* (Vasconcelos, 1916), and *The Cosmic Race* (Vasconcelos, 1925) served as foundational texts for new post-revolutionary ways of governing the population through their ideas of mestizaje (Alonso, 2005: p. 41-47). Their ideas of racial mixture permitted them to distance themselves from previous theories that centered overtly on ideas of European racial superiority, while nonetheless privileging some bodies over others as a way of gradually whitening through mestizaje. These ideas would not only serve as a post-revolutionary model for governing citizens’ bodies but as the bases of a singularly Mexican, nationalistic strand of eugenic thought and practice, in which racial mixture provided the main platform for understanding and constructing the nation.

The concept of mestizaje, which continues to be the dominant paradigm of Mexican national identity, was also crucial for Mexican scientists to be able to

differentiate their strand of eugenic thought from the notoriously racist work of eugenicists in the United States, whose work was used to justify Jim Crow segregation. The violence and inequality produced by Jim Crow led Mexican scientists of the time, like Vasconcelos and Gamio, to privilege “mestizaje” over “racial purity” as a national identity. Furthermore, mestizaje was seen as inclusive and egalitarian which in the Mexican officials’ and eugenicists’ view enabled them to present themselves as morally superior to the United States. However, mestizaje was always conceptualized as a way of gradually “improving” indigenous peoples from the population through what the SME termed as a “rational mixing”. For instance, *Eugenesia* published an article in which physician and eugenicist Luis Gaitán advocated for pre-nuptial certificates as a eugenic measure that sought to set the “rational bases for the betterment of our race” (Gaitán, 1940: p.7). Similarly, a year later, Uruguayan obstetrician and gynaecologist Augusto Turenne presented the pre-nuptial certificate, voluntary abortion, and eugenic education as some of the elements for the establishment of a eugenic rational mixing of the population in Mexico (Turenne 1941: p. 11-24). In his view, these measures would control and solve assumed eugenic, hygienic, and population problems (Turenne, 1941: p.17). By 1942, rational eugenic ideas were seen in mainstream media when Spanish-born journalist and lawyer Antonio Zozaya published in the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* that a rational mixing was needed in Mexico so that the offspring would become “apt” to “develop their intelligence and noble faculties for their betterment and the improvement of society” (Zozaya 1943 [1942]: p.4).

Another example of the development of eugenic solutions for pre-existing “issues” was linked with presumed “problematic groups” like the Chinese farmer population in Mexicali during the 1920’s and the ethnic cleansing campaigns that targeted these populations (Chang, 2011). Similarly, as I will discuss in chapter two, there were different practices and policies that pathologized migrants and prevented them from naturalizing as they were considered “not assimilable” to Mexican mestizaje. Following these examples, it can be observed that mestizaje was not always about incorporating all members of a society, but those deemed desirable and assimilable. Under the influence of Gamio and Vasconcelos, mestizaje became a unifying tool for the creation of Mexican nationalism, reflecting these intellectuals’ anxiety to homogenize Mexico, and to play an integral part in the development of scientific knowledge in the rest of the world as, at this point, similar anti-European, anti-United States, pro- “Americanist”, indigenist, and mestizophile ideologies were emerging across Latin America (Stern, 2000).

The idea that science could create new futures with the aid and development of modern technologies was very much present as a solution to precarity after the Mexican Revolution. Today, eugenics is typically seen as retrograde and pseudoscientific, but during the first-half of the twentieth century it was seen as a modern way of solving political, demographic, and social problems. This allowed eugenicists and their ideas to be presented as a social project to “take care” of the future of the national stock. Eugenicists in Mexico constructed arguments and programs that were relevant to a range of contexts, from the field of puericulture—aimed at reducing child mortality, a pressing issue at the time—to immigration policies. Planned reproduction was seen as key element for creating a Mexican nation that could be world-famed for its harmonious constitution—which was seen as inseparable from its racial composition. As Heberto Alcázar Montenegro, a member of the SME and professor of biochemistry, argued, “selective immigration [would] set the bases for a mestizo population. The gradual and proximal mixing of the population [would] set the scene for Mexico to be characterized as one that [had] a rational ethnological composition” (Alcázar 1944: p.16). Thus, a positivistic vision of strict societal planning linked mestizaje to the scientific principles of eugenics by portraying it as a rational and logical measure for good governance. This is how the SME presented Mexican rulers and politicians with the tools they needed to delimit and construct a modern ideal of citizenship.

Within this vision, the question of who was fit to populate the future Mexican nation—thereby creating a new generation of Mexican citizens—became an urgent issue in the nation-building process after the Revolution. The post-revolutionary setting in Mexico was regarded as a clean slate for building an “ideal state”, which necessitated strict measures of population control. This, in turn, led scientists and governors to distinguish between groups who were seen as suitable for reproduction, others that needed to undergo processes of “improvement” to be included in the Mexican national body, and finally those who were to be excluded from the future nation. In accordance with these schemata, Mexican scientists, anthropologists, politicians, among others, drafted missions to target and deal with these different populations. The concern with “populating well” led eugenicists to intervene in various other aspects of social policy. For example, prostitution in Mexico during the 1920s and 1930s was seen as health hazard and a hygiene concern due to the spread of syphilis. The Sistema Reglamentarista or System of Rule (1862-1940)—a governmental measure dating from the Porfiriato that had catalogued prostitution as a “necessary evil”—was starting to be seen as problematic, and

different sectors of the population, including the members of the SME, advocated for the outlawing of prostitution, which was eventually enacted in 1940 (Bailón Vásquez, 2016). This, in the SME's view, was claimed as a victory for the development of eugenics, as in the editorial section of *Eugenesia* Alfredo Saavedra commented the following:

Our purpose to transform the official concepts about the regulations for prostitution, for which we have been advocating over the past couple of years, was echoed in the House of Representatives, which approved the new law proposed by the Public Health Department to push new modalities regarding the fight against venereal diseases. (Saavedra, 1940: p.3)

The eugenicists' claims after this "political victory" were somewhat exaggerated. The opposition to prostitution responded to international groups and countries that had already outlawed or were in the process of outlawing prostitution. Additionally, there were other groups that advocated for the cessation of regulatory prostitution in Mexico, such as the feminists. Moreover, the case of prostitution is more complex than it seems at first glance, as advocacy for outlawing sex-work was partly about stigmatizing sex-workers as a "non-reproductive population", but also about stemming the spread of syphilis among "suitable" reproductive populations. Thus, following international and national trends, the SME viewed prostitution as a health problem that should be treated as a public issue as, in their view, it prevented men from reproducing effectively and actively worked as a mechanism to spread venereal diseases with the proliferation of syphilis—and not sex-workers—as their main concern.

Another reason why eugenics may have seemed a promising solution was the fact that eugenic programs were already being implemented and used in societies throughout Latin America that were affected by similar problems to those facing Mexico. By the 1920s there were already eugenic societies operating in different parts of Latin America like the Society of Eugenics in Sao Paulo, created in 1917 by Renato Kehl (1889-1974), and the Society of Eugenics in Buenos Aires, founded by Victor Delfino in 1918. Moreover, even if a national eugenics society did not emerge, topics regarding eugenics were being discussed by scientist and politicians throughout the 1910s and 1920s in other Latin American countries. In these contexts, eugenic programs were seen as a tool for modernization and had been deemed successful for dealing with different issues, for instance in the abolition of prostitution, implementation of eugenically oriented migratory policies, prenuptial certificates, and puericulture. One key example of this was the implementation of hygienic and educational policies, known as social prophylaxis, in Argentina. Despite the disputes among Argentinian eugenicists regarding the adaptations

of different eugenic ideas from the US, UK, Germany, and Italy, social prophylaxis became a very important measure for the regulation of sexuality, management of disease, spread of eugenic ideas, among other institutional measures to “better the race” during the 1920s and 1930s (Rossi, 2006; Vallejo, 2018).

So far, I have argued that the rise of eugenics in Mexico stemmed from a perceived need to modernize, “civilize” and reconstruct the nation after the Revolution. Since the Porfiriato, scientists had played an important role in informing state policy. After the Revolution these ideologies remained in place as science was portrayed as a tool for progress, modernity, and homogenization. With their seminal works, Vasconcelos and Gamio set the bases for the development of eugenic thought in Mexico by advocating for specific versions of racial mixture as the main platform for understanding and constructing the nation. Meanwhile, the notion of “suitable” and “unsuitable” breeding populations began to be used as a guideline for the implementation of eugenic programs to create a new generation of “modern”, “civilized” Mexican citizens. In the next section, I will take a closer look at how eugenic ideas were operationalized in Mexico, and by whom. I will also show the different ways in which eugenicists in Mexico positioned themselves among the growing anti-racist campaigns and the global decline of eugenic science.

1.2 The Mexican Society of Eugenics and its Members

Eugenic ideas were spread by individual theorists like Gamio and Vasconcelos, but the first organized societies that attempted to implement eugenic programs emerged in the late 1920s and 1930s. This caused the gradual spread of eugenic science and thought to be popularized and spread among influential circles, especially in Mexico City. Inspired by Neo-Lamarckism (which was widely used in the work of Gamio), Rafael Carrillo (a professor of the School of Natural Sciences and Medicine) founded the Society of Puericulture in 1929. The term puericulture came from the French Neo-Lamarckian conception of eugenics, and it dealt with maternity, child-bearing practices, the care of children, and hygienic practices. This adaptation of puericulture to the Mexican context was partly due to the strong historical connections that Mexican academia had with France, which allowed the adaptation of theories like Lamarckism to be widely accepted in Mexico as a tool for modernization and progress. However, it was also due to assumed needs to compete with rising world powers—like the United States—and the fact that it had already proven successful in other Latin American countries like Argentina, Brazil,

Cuba, among others. The Society of Puericulture started publishing their own journal entitled the *Mexican Journal of Puericulture* in 1930. By 1931, the Society of Puericulture—which is now the Mexican Society of Pediatrics—had about 130 members and regularly included a eugenics section in their publications (Suarez et al, 1999a: p.191).

The SME was created in 1931. Its founding members were paediatrician and anthropometrist Rafael Carrillo; medical doctor Salvador Bermúdez; geneticist, paediatrician, and physiologist Fernando Ocaranza; Berkeley trained veterinary and physiologist José Rulfo; medical doctor and psychologist Adrián Correa; and medical doctor and surgeon Alfredo Saavedra—many of whom were also members of the Society of Puericulture. Among the SME's 130 to 150 members (at the height of its popularity), were people from all disciplines and contexts. They met in different local and international congresses throughout the year, but they also had an official meeting place at the Avenue Insurgentes, number 85 in Mexico City. Some of the members were medical doctors, intellectuals, journalists, lawyers, politicians, and members of government. However, they all had something in common: all the SME members were important in their spheres of influence. For instance, Fernando Ocaranza was a surgeon and professor who was later appointed as the dean of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Similarly, Adrian Correa was one of the members of the Society of Puericulture, in which he advocated for the sexual education and hygienic campaigns in Mexico, as I mentioned in the section above, still shape Mexico's education system (Manrique, 2016). Lastly, Alfredo Saavedra, surgeon and professor of the UNAM, served as the first President of the SME, the Society's Secretary for Life, and the director of the SME's journal *Eugenesia* (Suárez et al, 1999: p.63).

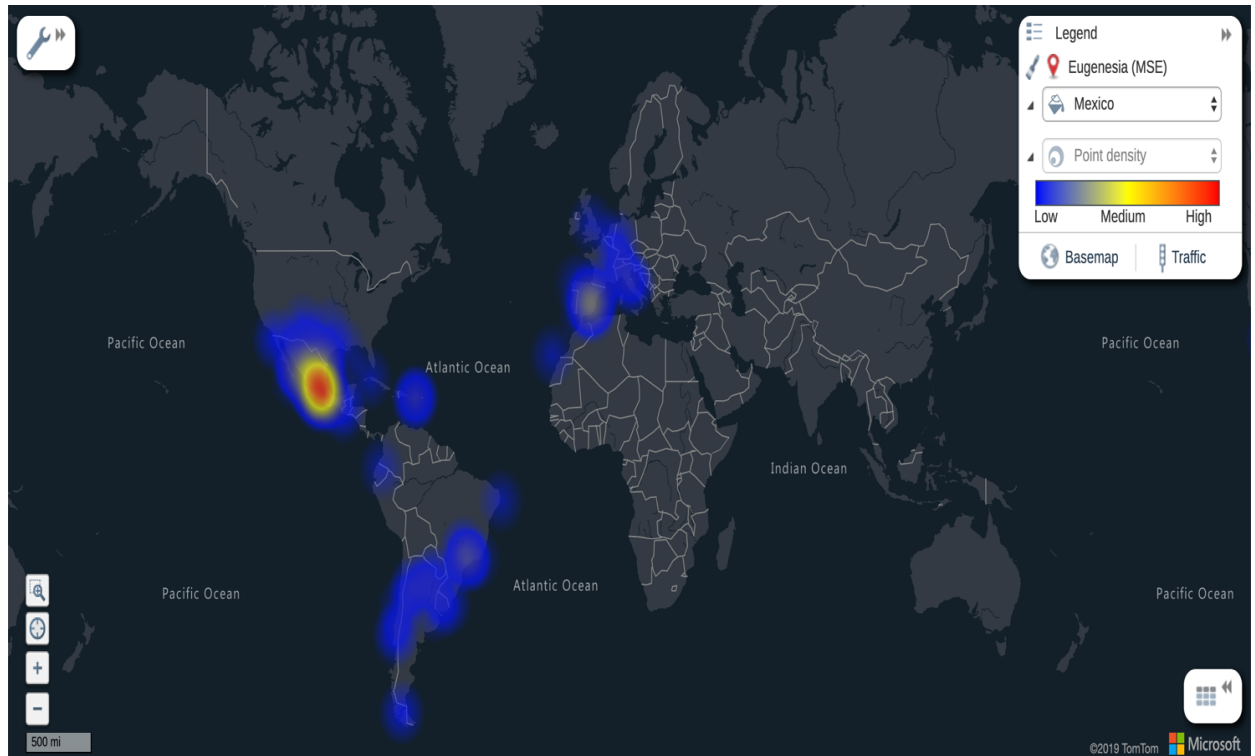


Figure 1.1: [Members of the SME and Places of Influence \(1939-1951\)](#) (Diagram by the Author)

Figure 1.1 shows the country of origin of the members listed as part of the SME and a gradient map depending on the quantity of members in each country (Table and map hyperlinked above). As we can see from Figure 1.1 there were members of the SME inside and outside of Mexico. This hints at the existence of vast connections and networks between the members of the SME at national and international levels, which is shown in the publications of the *Eugenesia* journal, the conference reports, and the authors referenced by local members of the SME and vice versa. This, in turn, created networks of eugenic knowledge-exchange that impacted different spheres beyond the SME. Among the members were physicians, writers, scientists, researchers, lawyers, politicians, feminists, soldiers, psychologists, journalists, mathematicians, among others. In this section, I will show how all of these disciplines, countries, and actors were joined together by the SME in an attempt to implement eugenics ideas in their respective spheres of influence.

1.2.1 Medical Doctors and Scientists

The Members of the SME were very influential in different professional and political circles in Mexico. This section will explore the extent to which the propaganda published in *Eugenesia* and their works on eugenic ideas impacted their practice and

networks around them. I will mention some examples of influential men that are rarely thought of as eugenicists nowadays. By doing this I will investigate to what extent eugenics was a side-project or interest group that was easily discarded after it became academically contentious, or did it influence their professional work in such a way that eugenics was bound up to their own research which enabled these ideas to remain.

Eugenicists were in influential fields such as public health and therefore the management of population. Eliseo Ramírez Ulloa was one of the founding members of the SME in 1931. He was also a researcher, mathematician, surgeon, among other occupations. Furthermore, he was the founder of the Mexican Society of Biology along with SME member Fernando Ocaranza (Quijano-Pitman, 2007: p.218). Besides these roles he was a military doctor and professor at the National Medical School of Mexico and Chief of Education at the Medical School and the section Surgical Pathologies. He also contributed to the opposition to the regulation of prostitution and the advocacy for the abolition of prostitution, national sexual and hygienic education, and the creation of antivenereal clinics that had, as a goal, not only to cure patients but to draft statistical epidemiological data regarding risk groups and hygiene—which were all displayed as concerns of the SME (Ruíz-Moreno et al 2016: p. 414). Additionally, Ramírez Ulloa was the director of the Central Laboratory for Public Health in which, with the help of physician Francisco Bossols, he drafted a rule that sought the biological control of drugs and opotherapeutic products in 1935 (Ruíz-Moreno et al 2016: p. 414). I can suggest that these measures stem from eugenic ideas and the production of eugenic propaganda at *Eugenesia*, as prostitution, the spread of venereal diseases, and the recreational use of substances were all seen by the group as degenerative elements that would tamper with the “Mexican race”.

Besides their private medical practice, it was common for these physicians to be involved in the National Medical Schools. For instance, Fernando Ocaranza was a surgeon and professor who later became the dean of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He was also the doctoral supervisor of Gerardo Varela, who was also one of the founders of the SME. Clearly, eugenicists were keen to develop synergies with other organizations, institutions, individuals, and disciplines. However, these connections may also reflect that the SME could have been thought of as a networking experience for (mostly) male doctors.

Heredity, Pediatrics, and the containment of diseases were linked with puericulture and eugenics which allowed eugenic ideas to continue. During the 1930s,

Anastasio Vergara functioned as the director of the Mexican Society of Puericulture, which advocated for eugenic ideas on heredity and the care of children; but he was a member of the National Academy of Medicine in Mexico in which he published various works, with a particular emphasis on the hereditary traits of venereal diseases like syphilis (Suárez et al, 2005: p.113, 158). In his work entitled *The Concepts of Heredity in Tuberculosis and Syphilis*, Vergara questioned the hereditary factor of syphilis and tuberculosis. After the cure of syphilis—penicillin—was used on a patient (1943) he asserted his theories in *The Bioethical Concept of Hereditary Syphilis in Pediatrics* (1945) by arguing that syphilis was an infection that was not technically hereditary as it was only transferred through contact. This created the conditions for expanding the risk of contracting venereal diseases to the rest of the population which called for the self-surveillance and self-management of everyone while keeping preconceived stereotypes of risk groups like sex-workers and the working-class. As will be explored in chapter four, these ideas extended risk politics (Rose 2001) well after the SME. This is why the Society of Puericulture was able to change its name to the Society of Pediatrics and Anastasio Vergara is still remembered, not as a eugenicist, but as an influential pediatrician.

It was not uncommon for eugenicists to gravitate towards and influence spaces inside and outside of academia by publishing academic journals, attending conferences, and influencing the fields of bioethics by advocating for eugenic ideas in and outside of the classroom. This is to say, some of these physicians and scientists had an impact on the ways in which research and medical practice was and is carried out today. This can be seen in the remnants of their legacies which are buildings and monuments in different Medical Schools in Mexico. For instance, Silvestre Frenk, a Medical Doctor born in 1923, was originally from Hamburg, Germany but moved to Canada when he was 5 years old, and then relocated to Mexico with his parents in 1930. His father, Ernesto Frenk, was also a physician and active member of the SME; so much so, that he was one of the members of the directive and published various works for the *Eugenesia* journal advocating for eugenic sterilization (Frenk, 1940: p.16). Silvestre Frenk specialized in endocrinology and implemented his ideas as a eugenicist in his practice. Using pediatrics eugenicists like Frenk were able to cover eugenic language while maintaining the ideas. In his chapter on *Mexican Pediatrics* in *The History of Pediatrics* (1991) published with Ignacio Ávila-Cisneros, Frenk used the history of puericulture in Mexico to invisibilize eugenic ideas while still maintaining eugenic developments as “achievements” (Frenk et al 1991: p. 67-

69). He suggested that the history of puericulture in Mexico was dependent of its time and recounted that ten years after its creation in 1939 changed its name to the Society of Pediatrics as a way of shifting with the times and adapting to modern developments regarding the “American model” (Frenk et al 1991: p. 69-72). Nowadays, the Children’s Hospital in the National Medical Center of the twenty-first century is named after him. Drawing on the experiences in different countries in which Frenk lived, he became interested in puericulture as a tool for the betterment of the population. This became evident in his various publications regarding the care of children and pediatrics, for example, publications in *Eugenesia* and the edited volume of *History of Pediatrics 1850-1950* (1991) which then became a book entitled *The History of Pediatrics in Mexico* (1997).

1.2.2 Lawyers, Journalists, and Politicians

Having lawyers, journalist, and politicians as members of the SME contributed to spreading eugenic ideas in Mexico at a broader level. One of the most important figures was demographer and politician Gilberto Loyo. In the first half of the 1930s he studied alongside eugenicist, demographer, and statistician Conrado Gini at the University of Rome (Turda et al, 2014: p.141; Stern, 2000: p.69). Here, he set the bases for the research of population “problems” in Mexico which then were consolidated through the creation of the Mexican Committee for the Research of Population Problems, created shortly after Loyo’s return to Mexico (Turda et al, 2014: p.141; Stern, 2000: p.69; Welte-Chanes, 2011: p.22). He then collaborated with different presidents like Plutarco Elias Calles and Lázaro Cárdenas from the 1920s to the 1940s (Stern, 2000: p.69). Loyo then published his work *The Demographic Politics of Mexico* (1935) sponsored by the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) and the Institute for Social, Political, and Economic Studies in which eugenics and demography were mixed into a list of aspirations against children’s mortality, the creation of prenuptial certificates, the advocacy for strong public health measures, immigration of “desirable individuals, repatriation of Mexicans living in the United States, and the betterment of the mestizo through programs directed to modernize indigenous people” (Stern, 2000: p.69). The majority of these eugenic recommendations were translated into the General Population Law of 1936 (Turda et al 2014: p.141-142; Stern, 2000: p.69; Welte-Chanes, 2011: p.27).

Eugenics, public health and policy were intertwined during the first half of the twentieth century in Mexico. Cayetano Andrade, the vice-president of the SME (1939), was a Mexican politician, doctor, and poet who participated in the Constituent Congress of 1917. He was the Constitutional deputy from the State of Michoacán (1916-1917), the federal and local deputy for the State of Guanajuato (1924-1926; 1928-1932), physician at the Medical Department of the Secretariat of Health (1935-1951), director of the Official Diary (1958-1962), among others (Camp, 2013). This allowed Andrade to publish and disseminate eugenic ideas in his spheres of influence. For instance, he was an avid advocate of the use of publicity to support and promote hygienic and eugenic ideas, and published papers regarding the use of propaganda. An example of these papers and practices can be seen in his article published by the Bulletin of the Public Health Department in Mexico entitled *The Importance of Hygienic Propaganda* (Andrade, 1930: p.1113-1115). Nowadays, Cayetano Andrade is seen as one of the founders of the Mexican constitution and a very important figure in Mexican history. There is now a well-renowned prize in his name that was given to the National Workers Union (SNTE) in Guanajuato (January 2017) to commemorate the 100 years of the drafting of the constitution and Cayetano's involvement with it, intended to portray his commitment with the working class.

Besides their impact in politics, SME members were also involved in policy making and law. Roberto Solís Quiroga—one of the founders of the SME who specialized in psychology at the UNAM—was particularly interested in pathology, puericulture, child education and adolescent care, which are all topics discussed in the *Eugenesia* journal. After graduating, Solís Quiroga became the founder of the first Juvenile Court of Mexico, among other societies and organizations. As I discuss in chapter 3, the creation of these juvenile court systems was used as a eugenic tool for the reproductive control of young working-class individuals—mostly indigenous—who would migrate from rural to urban areas of the country after the Revolution. After this, Solís Quiroga continued to be a professor of Law and Jurisprudence at the School of Philosophy and the Arts of the UNAM and the National Teachers' School (Moreno Kalbtk, 1994: p.105-107), in which he spread ideas about puericulture, criminality, and psychology among his students and through various publications such as *Fundamental Principles that Normalize Therapeutic and Pedagogical Labor* (1939), *The Major Problems of Childhood, Adolescence, and the Prophylaxis of Juvenile Criminality* (1943), *Normal School for Specializations* (1945), *Factors that Depress Children* (1958), *Neurosis, Emotional Disorders, and Behavioral*

Problems of Feeble-minded Children (1958) (Moreno Kalbtk, 1994: p.105-107). Solís Quiroga's main texts indicate the eugenic links with ideas such as feeble-mindedness, normalcy, puericulture, criminality, management, and control. Smililar to Solís Quiroga, another eugenicist who advocated for these ideas outside of the SME was Luis Rubio Siliceo, who was a professor of the National School of Law and Jurisprudence. As one of the founders of the SME, he advocated for the role of lawyers in society following the precepts dictated by eugenics and morality (Actualidad Universitaria, 1937: p.6).

Journalism was another prominent source of members of the SME. Besides being the editor in chief of the *Eugenesia* Journal, Protasio Martínez Álvarez collaborated along with Félix F. Palavicini on a book entitled *The Ethical Responsibility of Journalism* that advocated for eugenic measures and the role of the journalist in these situations (Suárez et al, 2005: p.144). For Martínez Álvarez and Palavicini, their journalistic work was entangled with eugenic ideas regarding the betterment of the race and they used their profession as a way of disseminating eugenic ideas to educate the masses. This was reflected in their works as journalists in which they published many articles on the eugenic role of journalism in Mexico and its importance for the betterment of the "race", like *The Nation through the School* (Palavicini, 1916). This was written before the creation of the SME or the Society of Puericulture which shows how eugenic ideas were present since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Similarly, another instance of the impact and dissemination of eugenic ideas was by policy makers. Octavio Rojas Avedaño was the director of the Section for Hygienic Education and Propaganda (SEHP). Rojas Avedaño was in charge of propaganda regarding hygienic education whose goal was the wide circulation of eugenic ideas through Mexico in 1929—same year as the creation of the Society of Puericulture (Gudiño Sejudo, 2016: p. 2264-22670). Rojas Avedaño not only acted as an active member of the SME but also applied its eugenic measures to the population by conducting an extensive hygienic education campaign. As a way of containing and controlling syphilis contagion, Rojas Avedaño called a press conference in which he indicated that after January 1927 the SEHP was going to send a sanitary brigade to two states of Mexico per month, composed of a director, three medical students, a photographer, and cinematographer, as a measure of social prophylaxis (Gudiño Sejudo, 2016: p.2664). Even though the hygienic campaign was supposed to have a "strictly scientific tone [in which] the moral sensibilities of patients would not be tampered with", according to the Secretary of the Department of Public Health Bernardo Gastélum (1924-1928), the

national campaign called for the targeting of sex-workers and men who engaged in prostitution as the main culprits for the high numbers of contagion (Gudiño Sejudo, 2016: p.2619). As I will argue in chapter 4, the politics of risk and the categorization of risk groups through targeted hygienic campaigns extended the prominent role of eugenicists well after the end of the SME.

Eugenic ideas did not remain as a discussion portrayed in the *Eugenesia* journal alone; they had an impact on the everyday lives of the people from Mexico, as the networking of the SME allowed its members to move further with hygienic campaigns that were based on eugenic ideas. This can be seen in the different spheres of influence created nationally but also internationally with honorary members from other countries. These honorary members, from Latin America, Europe, and the United States, were very influential in their own countries. They included Renato Kehl, founder of the Eugenics society in São Paulo; Victor Delfino, founder of the Eugenics Society in Buenos Aires; Domingo F. Ramos, a Cuban eugenicist and founder of the Pan-American Society of Eugenics in 1935; Conrado Gini, Italian statistician, fascist, and eugenicist; and Charles Davenport, who was a very influential eugenicist in the United States of America. These connections with other countries and ways of employing eugenics allowed the SME to create different networks inside and outside of its own context; so that the SME, as a group, and the *Eugenesia* journal became hubs for different eugenicists to discuss their ideas.

Eugenics appealed not only to various professions but also to different ideological groups as a way of solving social problems. For instance, the development of eugenics in Argentina was first associated with secular and anarchist groups as a progressive way of modernizing the cultural and political life of the country (Stepan, 1991: p.58). Similarly to Argentina, Mexico found in eugenics a progressive tool-set to deal with Mexican modernization. For example, a somewhat surprising source of political support for certain eugenic programs came from Mexican feminists. In the Mexican Congress of the Child (1921) various Mexican feminists advocated for the eugenic sterilization of criminals as they were believed to contribute to the degeneracy of future generations (Stepan, 1991: p.56). Other examples were the various debates from feminists regarding social prophylaxis and the measures that the SME should take with regards to feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, prostitution, indigenous peoples, the lower classes or “prole”, among others. Using a scientific argument, such as eugenics, reinforced the idea that these were progressive and rational goals for the development of Mexico. In the next

section, the different “achievements” of the SME will be shown in order to explore the impact of the abovementioned individuals.

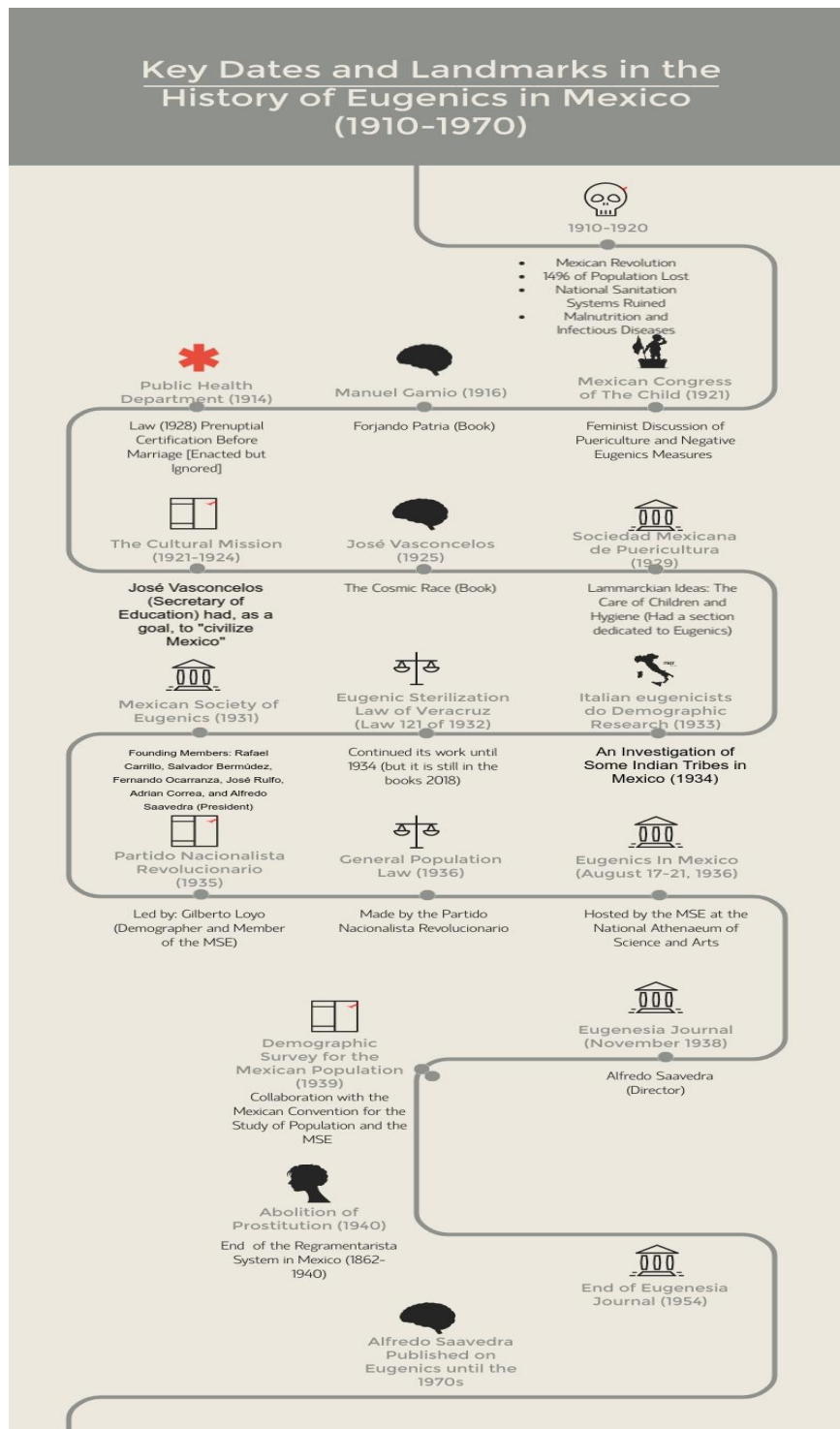


Figure 1.2: The History of Eugenics in Mexico, Key Dates and Landmarks (Diagram by the Author)

1.3 The SME's "Achievements": Beyond Preventive Eugenics?

In the month of November 1938 eugenicists published the first issue of the SME's official journal, entitled *Eugenesia*. This journal was a publication produced every month or two that contained, in twenty pages or so, different articles written by the members of the SME and international eugenicists. The journal also included an editorial section, usually written by Alfredo Saavedra, which was used to talk about the society's achievements and goals. The cover page varied depending on the month but usually featured photos and artistic depictions of mothers with their children (from 0-3 years approximately) or influential eugenicists (from Mexico or elsewhere). By 1945 the SME was printing 3,000 issues of each edition that were distributed all over Mexico (mostly among medics, nurses, members of the SME and social workers) (Suárez et al, 2005: p.140). The role of the journal was to instruct medical workers (as a type of medical manual); to act as a manifesto of eugenic ideas (specifically their Editorial section); and as a bulletin of the SME's achievements. However, beside the numbers of the members and the issues produced, how far can the impact of the SME's influence be assessed in Mexican society?

According to eugenicists, members of government, and feminist groups, there was a need for a medical certificate before marriage that resulted in the creation of Law 1928—like the Congress of the Child in 1921. However, this law was enacted but generally ignored (Stepan, 1991). Stepan's conception of preventive eugenics is a useful tool to explore this issue. Stepan describes preventive eugenics as an idea that "did less to improve public health in Latin America (most of the eugenicists' social-welfare recommendations *were never implemented*) than to promote new, biologically governed norms of social behavior which were justified in the name of hereditarian science—something new, modern, and in keeping with the scientific standards of Europe" (Stepan, 1991: p.17, my italics). In Stepan's view, eugenics in Latin America was associated theoretically with "flexible neo-Lamarckian notions of heredity (in which no sharp boundaries between nature and nurture were drawn) and practically, with public-health interventionism" (Stepan, 1991: p.17). The result of the ways in which eugenics was carried out in Latin America was "a 'preventive' eugenics directed to improving the nation by cleansing from the milieu those factors considered to be damaging to people's hereditary health" (Stepan, 1991: p.17).

According to Stern (2011), an example of the ways in which preventive eugenics operated was the creation of Law 121 in Veracruz (1931). According to the SME, this law advocated for the migration of “apt races” (Saavedra, 1939: p.1); the abolition of brothels (Martínez Alvarez, 1940); the introduction of eugenic education, pre-nuptial clinics, and other measures. According to Stern, this law was founded by the Section of Eugenics and Mental Hygiene, which was “in charge of studying the physical diseases and effects of the human organism, susceptible of being transmitted by heredity” (Stern, 2011: p.440). However, drawing on Stepan (1991), Stern points out that “[s]parse historical records make it difficult to discern if any sterilizations were actually performed in Veracruz [...] the State Archive of Veracruz do not list ‘sterilization’ as a separate category of clinical intervention alongside procedures such as urethral disinfections or mercury injections” (Stern, 2011: p.441). Thus, Stern expands the use of preventive eugenics to show the ways in which both positive and negative eugenics were present in Mexico in theory and practice among eugenicists’ debates (Stern 2011: p.432). Moreover, after this law was passed in Veracruz, eugenics grew stronger specifically in Mexico City as the SME was consolidated. This led the SME to discuss a potential law that would allow sterilizations at a national level. For instance, Saavedra argued that sterilization should be part of the eugenic agenda for those who were degenerates and whose degeneration could be passed on to other generations (Saavedra, 1945: p. 5). Thus, besides the actual practice and implementation of Law 121 in Veracruz, the SME thought of the new sterilization law as a measure that should be followed for the advancement of eugenics in Mexico more broadly.

As discussed in the previous section, the SME was created by influential members of the medical and political community of Mexico at a pivotal time in Mexican history. This meant that their members were able to deal with a lot of “problems” that ranged from children’s mortality to the “rational mixing” of the population. For example, this can be seen in Figure 1.2, during 1936 when the PNR led by Gilberto Loyo created the General Population Law which included a civil register and migratory policies that responded to eugenic precepts. As mentioned in the above section, Loyo was an active member of the SME, and during 1939 he joined the Mexican Convention for the Study of the Population with the SME to create a demographic survey for the Mexican population. Additionally, Figure 1.2 shows different instances that were catalogued as “achievements” for the SME. This includes, the creation of different policies such as Law 1928 for the Prenuptial Certification, which I will discuss further in chapters 2 and 3; Law

121 of 1932, which advocated for the eugenic sterilization of criminals (as I will show in chapter 2), the “feeble-minded” (explored in chapter 5), among others; and the Abolition of Prostitution (1940)—which I discuss through the history of syphilis and the politics of risk in chapter 4. However, these are just a few examples of the ways in which eugenics became embedded in the national development of post-revolutionary Mexico.

Stepan’s conception of preventive eugenics can be seen in some of the examples given in this section like pre-nuptial certificates and Law 121 in Veracruz (1932). Nonetheless, I argue that in order to understand the development of eugenic ideas in Mexico one needs to study beyond the implementation of laws and examine the soft dissemination of ideas through the networks built by the SME. These allowed for the introduction of new techniques and behaviors through eugenic ideas and practices that later become “slippery”. This is to say, the extension and periodization of eugenic ideas in Mexico go beyond the impact of the Second World War as eugenicists used the creation of medical precedents, norms of sexuality, population growth and ideas of the family as a mechanism that validated the continued use of eugenic ideas in Mexico past 1945. I argue that the success or failure of the dissemination of some eugenic ideas in Mexico was not particularly in regard to policy making but about influencing behaviors and creating networks. Using Moreno Figueroa’s idea of slippery emotion as an element that reveals the contradictory role that emotions play in the lived experience of racism and differentiation (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.14), I argue that eugenics is also reflected in contradictory dynamics at an individual and collective level after the dissolution of the SME in the mid-1950s. This was partly due to the dissemination of ideas through public policy, implemented laws, the diffusion and circulation of the *Eugenesia* journal, the international connections of the SME (in and outside of Latin America), but also the collective internalization of eugenic ideas and the modification of terminologies while leaving pathologizing practices in place—as it will be explored in chapters 4 and 5 through the history of syphilis and HIV, and disability studies.

The range of professions encompassed by the SME is reflective of the different areas of society in which they implemented their ideas. This influence on the creation of public policy, academia, medical practices, journalism, law, among other things went beyond scientific activity and research to have an impact on the development of Mexico after the Revolution. Following Foucault (1975), these members used the SME to create links and influence their disciplinary institutions of power. One of the key elements for the role of the Clinic, as Foucault depicted it, in the nineteenth century was demographics

and the discipline of the body (Foucault 1975). The concept of biopolitics as a new technology of power, which deals with the population as a “multiple body” and a scientific and political problem (Foucault, 1978: p.245), can shed some light on the development of eugenic ideas. If biopolitics was an important element in the organization of society and the organization of everyone then eugenics, as a set of principles, was used to guide biopolitics. The networks built by the SME allowed eugenics to embed itself in not only the disciplinary institutions of power, but in every aspect of life since these actors and eugenicists from various disciplines came applied eugenics upon principles such as hygiene, diets, and the normalization of sexuality. These, in turn, control the way in which the body interacts with other bodies within the spectrum of, in this case, patriarchal and authoritarian regimes. According to Foucault, the eugenics movement was one of the ideologies that made its appearance at the end of the 19th century to regulate, manage and discipline the body. Thus, mapping out the activities, professions and spheres of influence of the members allows us to understand the impact that eugenics had in the nation-building process of Mexico and the ways in which it became so embedded in society. I argue that eugenic ideas still remain in contemporary times through slippery eugenics. In a way, this resonates with Stepan’s conception of preventive eugenics as it helps to break from the binary distinction of positive and negative eugenics—positive being the incentivization of the “apt” to reproduce and negative as the denial and restriction of those categorized as “unfit” to reproduce. However, when Stepan coined preventive eugenics, she was referring to the inner workings of eugenics across Latin America; this in turn allows me to question and explore the usefulness of preventive eugenics to context-specific situations.

Preventive eugenics only accounts for a small fraction of the ways in which eugenics was being developed and produced in the Mexican context. As we have seen in this section preventive eugenics can be expanded to explore the ways in which both positive and negative eugenic practices and ideas coexist. However, I argue that eugenics became disseminated more broadly through the creation of networks and the influencing of behaviors that lead to a self-management of the population. This allowed eugenic ideas to exist beyond the dissolution of the SME through, what I term, “slippery eugenics”. This term allowed me to explore and investigate the different ways in which these developments and networks in Mexico can be linked into the broader network of eugenic science and thought in Latin America, and beyond, for this period in time. For instance, in chapter two, I indicate that many of the premises behind Mexican eugenics were

already put in place by the social framework of the colonial period. Thus, to explore Mexican eugenics, it is important to discuss its specificity and the dynamics that surge from it. In the next section, I will discuss how the development of eugenics in Mexico contributed to wider strands of scientific theories, specifically when discussing eugenic science and the ways in which foreigners impacted eugenics, the SME and the nation-building process in Mexico. In doing so, this section will also explore and connect the importance, limits and contradictions of using the term Latin Eugenics for the Mexican case.

1.4 “Latin Eugenics” and Mexico

Turda and Gillette (2014) argue that there was a development of eugenics that allowed for the creation of ties throughout the “Latin world”, which they term “Latin Eugenics”. They characterize Latin Eugenics as “a particular strand of eugenics that became an aggregate of ideas and practices espoused by many eugenicists who considered their countries to belong to an international Latin cultural community during the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century” (Turda et al 2014: p.1). In their view, the development of eugenics responded to a historical and linguistic continuity that allowed Latin eugenicists to build ties and connections in the way in which eugenics was carried out. Thus, for Turda and Gillette (2014), the culture of Latin countries was based on a synthesis of ancient Roman civilization, linguistic and cultural commonality, and Roman Catholicism (in the Romanian case, Christian Orthodoxy) (Turda et al, 2014: p.1). As they understood it, countries in Europe (France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Romance-Speaking Switzerland, Portugal and Romania), and in the Americas (particularly Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, and Chile) considered themselves to be Latin (Turda et al, 2014: p.1). Drawing on the creation of the Latin International Federation of Eugenics Societies founded in October 1935, Turda and Gillette (2014) argue that there is a clear connection between the eugenic development of Latin countries throughout the world by several standards like linguistics, cultural and historical developments, among others. This could lead us to conclude that there was indeed a Latin eugenic community (Turda et al, 2014). However, once we allow the specificities of each Latin American country to come into the discussion with regards to how eugenic ideas and knowledge were produced and adapted, this conception of a Latin Eugenics seems more diffuse. For instance, Mexican, Argentine and Cuban eugenicists and societies of eugenics had connections with eugenicists in the United States such as

Charles Davenport (1866-1944), who was an avid supporter of Weismannian ideas and showed fervent disapproval for racial mixture.

When discussing the implementations of eugenics in Latin countries, theorists like Stepan (1991), Glick (1996), and Turda and Gillette (2014) have characterized Latin Eugenics through its alignments with Neo-Lamarckian theory, which emphasized questions and issues regarding environmental factors, like climate, behavior, among others. However, places like Cuba were also inclined to discuss Weismannian conceptions of eugenics. Domingo F. Ramos—a famous Cuban eugenicist, doctor, and public health official, educated in France and Cuba (Saénz Rovner, 2008: p. 37)—participated in conferences elsewhere like the Congress of Eugenics in New York in 1921 in the United States. After these conferences, his connection with American eugenicist and biologist Charles Davenport grew stronger, Davenport argued in the Pan American Eugenic conferences founded by Ramos that Latin American eugenicists should strive for a eugenics with a “North American point of view”. He also created the Code of Eugenics and Puericulture (Turda et al, 2014: p.154; Schell, 2010: p.479; Stern, 2016: p.5) which according to Schell (2010), “mandated the classification of all inhabitants of the Americas as ‘good’, ‘bad,’ or ‘doubtful’ and the restriction of the reproduction of the ‘bad’ or ‘doubtful’ through sterilization or some form of isolation” (Schell, 2010: p.479). The Code’s goal was the protection of ideas of white superiority in Latin countries, specifically in Latin America, by calling for immigration quotas and compulsory sterilization (Stern, 2016: p.5). In Davenport’s view, racially mixed individuals suffered from mental disharmonies that threatened the social stability of their respective countries (Turda et al, 2014: p.155). Despite Davenport’s arguments, and Ramos’ support, this was widely criticized among the delegates of the Pan American Eugenics intellectual community in both the Havana meeting of 1927 and the Second Pan American Conference of Eugenics and Homiculture in Buenos Aires (1934), whose main argument relied on *mestizaje*. Nonetheless, in Mexico, Ramos and Davenport continued to be part of the honorary members of the SME. Thus, even though Davenport’s and Ramos’ ideas were widely contested they retained connections with other Latin American societies after the 1920s and 1930s.

Another example is the discussion and advocacy for the eradication of different peoples who, in the view of Mexican eugenicists, did not belong. As mentioned in the section above, Ernesto Frenk published an article in *Eugenesia* entitled “Eugenic Sterilization” (1940) where he mentioned that the objective of negative eugenics was to

“impede the procreation of undesirables due to their hereditary degeneracy, feeble-mindedness, or the transmission of alcoholism” (Frenk, 1940: p.16). Additionally, Frenk advocated for the eugenic sterilization of “criminals, perverts, prostitutes, feeble-minded, and epileptics” by using the Juke family as an example (Frenk, 1940: p.16). The Juke family were based in New York and were an object of eugenic and hereditarian research throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. American sociologist Richard Dugdale (1877) used them as an example for the ways in which genetic and environmental traits became considerable factors in the feeble-mindedness, criminality, disease and class determinants of this family. Since the example was borrowed from the United States it can be inferred that Frenk was suggesting that these hereditary problems were universal and not down to the specific social contexts of particular nations. This was contended by different members of the SME such as Francisco de A. Benavides, who argued that each country had its own problems that should be carried out with specific eugenic policies (De A. Benavides 1940, p.4). Nonetheless, Frenk also pointed to the amount of wasted energy and economic expenditure by the state to sustain “undesirable” individuals. He claimed that pursuing the happiness of “undesirables” proved to be detrimental to their families and placed a burden on the entire population. Therefore, his argument was that the state should limit their birth rate through eugenic sterilization, as was the case in the United States, among other countries.

Using the example provided above I suggest that the dichotomy between Lamarckian and Weismannian theories became more diffuse when exploring the specificities of each country and the actors involved. Conroy (2017) argues that eugenics became a “secular religion” which sought a “utopian chimera of a ‘scientifically’ created perfect society” and that it would be incorrect to assume that there was any degree of homogeneity in the ways in which the current of thought and application of it took place (Conroy, 2017: p.16). Thus, despite the fact that there was an obvious desire for eugenics to be seen as a universal science, it is clear from exploring the ways in which eugenicists thought and interacted that this was only a veneer, and eugenicists and eugenics societies cherry-picked different approaches depending on the social issue they were aiming to address. Influential eugenicists from Latin America who did not align with only Lamarckian theories, like Domingo Ramos, Ernesto Frenk, and Renato Kehl, show the different ways of employing and discussing eugenics that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century. These developments, in turn, would go on to determine not only the ways in which eugenics was studied, but the ways in which these countries, by

adapting eugenic ideas, created new eugenic forms of knowledge. Thus, eugenicists in Latin America were not only consumers of ideas developed in Europe and North America but producers of scientific ideas (Stepan, 1991: p.3-4).

An example of the interconnectedness and collaborative links between scientists and eugenic societies can be found in the associations that Mexican eugenicists created with Italian eugenicists. Corrado Gini was a fascist, statistician, demographer, and eugenicist from Italy who was appointed the president of the Latin International Federation of Eugenic Societies (1935) at the second Pan-American Eugenic and Homiculture Conference of the American Republics, which met in Buenos Aires in November 1934 (André Berlivet, 2016: p.51--52). It is worth noting that Gini was not even present when he was made president, as the society was mainly made by Latin American eugenicists. However, the fact that Gini was made president could indicate to the uneven dynamics of power created between eugenicists from Latin America and Europe, the privileging of Latin American eugenicists of European culture, or a mixture of the two. Nonetheless, prior to this, Gini had built a strong relationship with different eugenicists in Argentina and Mexico. For instance, during the early stages of the SME, Gini attended some of the congresses hosted by the SME and became an honorary member of the Society in 1933. During the months of August and September of the same year, Gini, Giuseppe Genna, and Dino Camavitto from the University of Rome travelled to Mexico to conduct a demographic study of the Seri community in the Mexican state of Sonora, as they considered them to be “racially pure among the indian population” (Turda et al, 2014: p.141). This research resulted in a publication entitled *An Investigation of Some Indian Tribes in Mexico* (Eugenical News, 1934: p.114-115). This research gave way to further investigation and curiosity in Mexico by Italian eugenicists. By way of example, Dino Camavitto published an investigation entitled *Premiers résultats d'une recherche anthropologique sur les Zambos de la Costa Chica (Guerrero, Mexique)*, in *Fédération Internationale Latine des Sociétés d'Eugénique, Ier Congrès Latin d'Eugénique* (1937: p.40-60).

In turn, Mexico also impacted the ways in which eugenics developed in fascist Italy under Mussolini's rule. Due to the constant interest and links that Mexican eugenicists and Italian eugenicists had built during the 1930s, Mexican delegations of eugenicists were sent to study and contribute to the development of Italian eugenics. Gilberto Loyo, one of the most influential figures in the development of eugenics in Mexico, was awarded various fellowships to research Italian eugenics and statistical

demography (Turda et al, 2014: p. 141). His connections there created links in the ways in which eugenics was being carried out in Italy in terms of demography, biotypology, and statistics. One of his most influential books entitled *The Demographic Politics of Mexico* (1935) was written during his stay in Italy and published by the National Revolutionary Party in Mexico, which was used as the bases for the creation of the General Population Law (1936) in Mexico. After Loyo's return to Mexico, he created the Mexican Committee for the Study of Population Problems which, as mentioned in the previous section, collaborated with the SME on different projects that were demographically and eugenically oriented.

Besides the clear connections that can be traced with the development of eugenics in Latin countries, like people doing research, publishing, and attending conferences, it is important to explore the timelines of the evolution and continuity of eugenic knowledges in different countries vis-à-vis Mexican eugenics. For instance, Renato Kehl founded the first eugenics society in Brazil in 1917 as the *Sociedade Eugénica de São Paulo* (Eugenics Society of São Paulo). During the decades of 1910-1940 he saw eugenic propaganda as an intellectual and political mission (Sebastião de Souza, 2006: p.29). He published the majority of his works in the *Boletim de Eugenia* (Eugenics Bulletin) that circulated from 1929 and 1933 (Sebastião de Souza, 2006: p.30). However, some of his works were translated and published at the SME journal *Eugenesia* during the 1940s like *Postulates Around Hygienic Bases* (1941) and *Elite's Formation* (1943). These short articles mostly advocated for what we now term positive eugenic measures, based on Lamarckian theories. However, Kehl changed his view of eugenics and started to favor negative eugenic measures, such as sterilization, after a research trip to Germany in 1928 (Turda et al, 2014: p.146). Thus, the historical continuity, periodization and dissemination of knowledges varied greatly which, in turn, had an impact on the development of eugenics in different countries inside and outside Latin America. More importantly, it suggests that Mexican eugenicists were using foreign ideas that supported their own goals even when they had since been disavowed by their authors. This is to say, eugenics was not a homogeneous science as practitioners tended to take from different strands and production of theories that other countries and actors had moved away from. Hence, the pragmatic way in which theory was used to address current debates, well after they had fallen out of use in other countries, goes against the conception of a homogeneous "Latin Eugenics". Thus, instead of a collaboration of ideas

we see the ways in which the SME was selecting ideas that would support their own eugenic measures, disregarding historical continuity and context.

How do we separate the specificities of one country from “Latin Eugenics”? As we have been able to observe, eugenics came as a response to the problems produced by the precarious situation of post-revolutionary Mexico. The SME (1931) started after the eugenic section at the Society of Puericulture rose in popularity in 1930. Moreover, it was not until November 1939 that the SME started publishing its own journal, *Eugenesia*. In comparison to its neighboring countries in Latin America, eugenics started very late in Mexico as a tried and tested theory to aid the Mexican nation-building process. The fact that it occurred at the heart of a very powerful nationalist movement can be compared to the way in which eugenics developed in Turkey, maybe even more than other countries in Latin America. After the War of Independence (1919) and the Declaration of the Republic of Turkey (1923), eugenics became the solution for the modernization, the development of modern medicine, and the construction of the nation-state (Güvenç-Salgırlı, S. 2010, p.285). Similarly to Mexico, there were different connections and links between eugenicists that made Turkey a hub of eugenic ideas based on principles of modernity, civilization, and progress that became subsumed in policies and nationalistic discourses reflected in contemporary times. Mexico holds some similarities with the Turkish case, as, due to the links produced by the SME, Mexican eugenicists produced, disseminated and implemented eugenic ideas that become subsumed within every day practices following the dissipation of the SME after the mid-1950s.

As we have seen from this chapter there are certain elements that make Mexico not only a consumer of knowledge but also a producer of eugenic theories and scientific ideas. Therefore, in order to address the specificities of Mexico without disregarding the international connections that the term “Latin Eugenics” hold, I propose to use the concept of criollo eugenics for Mexico, which I will elaborate during the course of the next chapter. This term refers to the adaptation of eugenics in Mexico which shows how the SME and its members implemented eugenic policies that surpassed the prevention of hereditary diseases and lifespan of eugenics in surrounding countries due to the links created in their own spheres of influence as it will be explored in chapters 4 and 5. Thus, to study eugenics in Mexico, it is imperative to explore not only the adaptation of eugenics ideas through laws and policies, but on the one hand how Mexico acted as a producer of scientific and eugenic knowledge due to its transnational and global connections to different societies and eugenicists internationally that are not restricted to a “Latin

Eugenics” and, on the other, the ways in which criollo eugenics influenced behaviors that created the conditions for eugenics to slip into ideas about population, hygiene, nationhood, and belonging in contemporary times.

After 1945 and with the Nazi plan to eliminate Jewish populations and other “undesirables” from Europe, commonly known as the Final Solution to the “Jewish question”, eugenics came to be catalogued as a pseudo-science by the wider scientific community. However, following Levine, I can argue that its impact remained throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when faced with arguments regarding the contemporary ethical dimensions and arguments of heredity, reproduction policies, and practices (Levine 2017, p. 24). The Mexican Society of Eugenics condemned the actions of Nazi Germany during the Second World War but did not cease their own activities. As I will show in chapter 2, by adapting eugenics to the nationalist discourse behind mestizaje in Mexico, the SME managed to criticize the way in which eugenics was being carried out in Nazi Germany without jeopardizing their own eugenic ideals of a mestizo nation.

The SME continued meeting until approximately 1954 and people like Alfredo Saavedra continued writing about eugenics until the mid-1970s (Stern, 2011: p.433). The SME ceased to exist in the mid-1950s probably because most members died or retired during this time, but without signs of a controversy such as the categorization of eugenics as a pseudo-science due to the atrocities committed by Nazi-Germany. Thus, eugenics in Mexico has many context-specific characteristics such as the longevity of its eugenic society and ideas, their connections with countries that were defined as Lamarckian or Weismannian, and the privileging of mestizaje as a major characteristic for the betterment of the race, among others. This is why I will use the concept “criollo eugenics” to refer to the privileging of Mexican eugenicists of mestizaje as the nationalist symbol of development for future generations. I propose that it is because “criollo eugenics” separated itself from eugenics in other parts of the world, like Germany or the United States, that a continuation of eugenic ideas and practices was not frowned upon by the Mexican scientific community, policy makers, members of government, among others. To disregard the specificities of the development of eugenics in each of the Latin American countries by using only the term Latin Eugenics risks ignoring the different social problems faced by specific countries, timeframe in which they were developed, and their own scientific influences. Thus, criollo eugenics will allow me to observe the nuances in the production of eugenic knowledge in Mexico. I argue that by using the

framework of criollo eugenics we can explore the ways in which Mexican eugenicists acted as a producer of knowledges specifically by creating an ideal “mestizo nation”—as I will discuss in the next chapter.

2 THE MESTIZO AS A RACIALIZING ASSEMBLAGE

In 1939, during the outbreak of the Second World War eugenicist and surgeon Alfredo Saavedra argued in the editorial section of *Eugenesia* that “it [went] without question that the betterment of humanity [stemmed] from a good racial constitution and their capacity of assimilation” (Saavedra, 1939a: p.1). In Saavedra’s view the ideal Mexican would homogenize through an adequate mix to prevent degeneration for future generations (Saavedra, 1939b: p.1). To the SME, this was the true goal of eugenics in Mexico—what I have termed “criollo eugenics” —in the 1930s and 40s. However, following Saavedra’s statements, why were race and “adequate mixing” so essential to criollo eugenics, and how was this different from the eugenic practices criticized by the SME in Nazi Germany? In this chapter I will explore how ideas of adequate mixture and betterment were able to “pass without question” through ideas based on *the endorsement of the ideology of mestizaje*. To do this I will explore at the contribution of criollo eugenics to the placement of mestizaje and the ideal mestizo at the heart of the post-revolutionary Mexican nation.

2.1 The Mestizo as an Ideological Tool

The term mestizo historically stems from the caste system in Latin America, its literal translation being “(racially) mixed” (Goldberg, 2008; Stolcke, 2009: p.2). Even though this concept was used in the majority of the countries in Latin America, in contemporary Mexico, mestizo is used as a synonym to mexicanidad (Saldivar et al, 2018: p.433). This term holds many contradictions as it responds to a multifarious discourse that varies through context, time, and space. This chapter will explore the ways in which the mestizo was used as an ideological resource that allowed post-revolutionary elites in Mexico to create a modern national identity (López Beltrán, 2013: 391-392).

For a long time, the mestizo was seen by Spanish and criollo elites as a natural occurrence, rather than an organizing principle. However, in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth century, the figure of the mestizo was conceptualized so the state would not only create a sense of homogeneous identity but arrange everyday interactions and state policies (López Beltrán, 2013: p.391). The "mestizo" was originally one among many categories in the caste system, signifying a specific degree of mixture. Over time this definition has changed: mestizo has become a generic category symbolising the archetypal Mexican. The mixture between White and indigenous populations is today held to be what makes the nation coherent, homogeneous. Mestizaje is defined as both the process by which this comes about (i.e. sexual and cultural mixing), and an ideology that posits mixture as the future of the country.

The mestizo, as the nation's archetype, is a manifold term that needs to be contextualized, as "mestizaje does not have a single meaning within the Latin American context, and contains within it tensions between sameness and difference, and between inclusion and exclusion" (Wade, 2005: p.240). The process of subjective identification with mestizaje in Latin America operates within different components such as race, class, gender, sexuality, culture, politics, among others (Smith, 1997). According to some theorists mestizaje is composed of three main processes (Chaves et al, 2006; Smith, 1996; 1997). The first being the social and gendered production and reproduction of people of mixed biological heritage (Chaves et al, 2006: p.7). This can be shown in how sex was used as a tool for domination during the colonization of the Americas (Wade, 2009: p.74). The second process refers to the personal or collective identification either with mestizo communities or with the mestizo national subject created by intellectuals (Chaves et al, 2006: p.7). This alludes to mestizaje as a political and social ideology defined during the nation-building process. The third process concerns the discourses of intellectuals and subalterns about mestizos' position in society and their relationship to other forms of identity (Chaves et al, 2006: p.7), in particular referring to the systematic exclusion of different sectors of the population. In this work I will be exploring the ways in which these different processes of mestizaje are embedded in and supported by historical processes and criollo eugenics.

2.1.1 Racializing Assemblages and Mestizaje in Mexico

I argue that mestizaje after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) was used as a discursive and technological tool to unite and construct the idea of the nation. Stepan (1991) argues that "racial and gender definitions are not 'given' by nature but are

historically constituted in different ways in different historical periods” (Stepan, 1991: p.12). These ideas allowed social constructivists, like Stepan, to break away from preconceived and essentialist notions of gender, race, class, among others to explore how these conceptions—that were once seen as natural—are constructed and respond to social and historical periods. This was a very important breakthrough in the ways in which scholarly work is being carried out as it showed the ways in which knowledge is always situated in relation to others and it depends on its social positioning and context. Nonetheless, binary constructions like the nature/culture divide must be challenged, for as Dorothy Roberts (2011) has signalled “race is not a biological category that it is politically charged. It is a political category that has been disguised as a biological one” (Roberts, 2011: p.4).

In this section I will use Alexander Weheliye’s (2014) definition of technology and draw on Wade (2017) and Dalton (2018), to provide a useful definition of terms that will allow me to think about the mestizo as an assemblage that is in itself and, simultaneously, operates as a component of other assemblages to construct and congeal configurations of these relations that make the mestizo seem as an immutable entity while being positioned as the archetype of the Mexican nation (Wade, 2017: p.45-51). I argue that “criollo eugenics” operate in these assemblages as a technology to construct the mestizo and make it seem as the archetypal citizen of the nation while categorizing other racial categories as not-quite or non-human (Weheliye, 2014; Wade, 2017). I argue, furthermore, that eugenics played an essential role in these configurations that transmute in “nonlinear, nonorganic and nondualistic ways” (Wade, 2017: p.45).

Weheliye (2014) draws from Hortense Spillers’ distinction between body and flesh to signal the ways in which “violent political domination activate[s] a fleshly surplus that simultaneously sustains and disfigures said brutality, and, on the other hand, reclaim[s] the atrocity of flesh as a pivotal arena for the politics emanating from different traditions of the oppressed” (Weheliye, 2014: p.2). It is based on this idea that Weheliye suggests the emergence of “a technological assemblage of humanity” (Weheliye 2014, p.12). He defines technology as “the application of knowledge to the practical aims of human life or to changing and manipulating the human environment” (Weheliye, 2014: p.12). This definition proves useful for my analysis as I argue that eugenicists in Mexico made use of various regimes of knowledge and scientific technologies to attempt to manipulate and control the population.

Weheliye then complicates his framework by providing a definition of assemblages. Following the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987), Weheliye argues that assemblages “constitute continuously shifting relational totalities comprised of spasmodic networks between different entities (content) and their articulation within ‘acts and statements’ (expression)” (Weheliye, 2014: p.46). While arguing that this is a good start to understanding assemblages, Weheliye considers a heterodox understanding of this term since “strict Deleuzianism keeps in place segregated and colonial structures of knowledge” (Weheliye, 2014: p.47). He critiques Deleuze and Guattari’s privileging of impurity as they state that “[a] race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination. Bastard and mixed-blood are the true names of race” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: p.379). This quote supposes that there is racial purity which “territorializes the very notion of racial difference” (Weheliye, 2014: p.50). Nonetheless, Weheliye uses Deleuze and Guattari as a starting point to develop the term “racializing assemblages” which articulate “relational intensities between the human physiology and flesh, producing racial categories, which are subsequently coded as natural substances, whether pure or impure, rather than as the territorializing articulation of these assemblages” (Weheliye, 2014: p.50-51). The provided definition then encompasses the ways in which these racializing assemblages delimit “what it means to be human in the modern world” (Weheliye, 2014: p.12), specifically relating to oppressed groups, seeing as it allows the exploration of the inner workings of processes of racialization. Weheliye uses this term to explore how surveillance technologies in the military are used as a form of racialization through the persecution of non-White people (Weheliye, 2014: p.65-73). Using this, Weheliye discusses the tacit division between “human” and “non-human”. Thus, he seems to even go beyond racialization as, in his view, “race” is a division of humanity rather than something outside of it. Thus, if the mestizo is thought of as an assemblage, different processes of exclusion can be seen through the delimitation of what it means to be Mexican, therefore human, which in turn causes different practices of systemic oppression through technological tools such as eugenics.

Peter Wade (2017) has also developed a theory of racializing assemblages in the Latin American context. Wade argues that “[a]ssemblage theory offers a useful approach to thinking about society and its components as parts in a nonlinear, nonorganic, nondualistic ways that emphasize emergence, heterogeneity, and contingency, while still retaining some element of structure” (Wade, 2017: p.45). To explain the

interconnectedness of science and society and the ways in which they participate in the development of population, mestizo, and race, Wade uses Latour (2005) to focus on the ways in which—in the context of science—assemblages of relations and objects are constructed into a series of relationships and meanings that are often taken for granted (Wade, 2017: p.44-45). He argues that the mestizo is one of those objects that are taken for granted and is only made stable through the work of assembly. Thinking about the mestizo as “an assemblage in itself and a component in other assemblages” allows us to explore how, due to its unstableness as an object and a series of relations, it “need[s] constant work and regulation to act solid and institutional” (Wade, 2017: p.47). I argue that my concept of “criollo eugenics” is an integral part of this assemblage, since it contributed to the configuration of the mestizo as dominant which “[created and solidified] connections to privilege certain objects in ways that, collectively and as a result of aggregated foreseen and unforeseen consequences, create structuring tendencies” (Wade, 2017: p.47). I will show how eugenicists in Mexico contributed to the normalization of the mestizo as an archetypal citizen.

Wade (2017), also underlines the importance of the concept of topology for understanding the relationality and continuum of assemblages, as the mestizo is a “mutable mobile object in an assemblage [...] brought into various proximal relations with other components to materialize as transformed versions in a fluid way” (Wade, 2017: p.50-51). Wade presents the ways in which the mestizo can relate to ideas of “racial difference” by identifying with foundational and national myths while at other moments moving to signify “racelessness”, in which it is “emphasized [that] mixture overcomes the boundaries separating those original categories” of the foundational racial origins—meaning the assumed mixture between indigenous and White (Wade, 2017: p.51; Wade, 2010; Moreno Figueroa, 2013). This allows for instances in which “idealized constructions of mixture conflict with visible racist incidents, anti-racist activism, and the implementation of ethno-racial public policies” (Emboada Da Costa, 2015: p.480-481). It is in these instances that we can observe the dynamics of mestizaje as an “all-inclusive ideology of exclusion” which allow “criollo eugenics” to continue after the dissolution of the SME through veiled eugenic practices (Stutzman, 1982 in Chaves et.al., 2006: p.7). The continuation of these ideas, like eugenics and mestizaje, give way to the imaginary of Latin America—and, in this specific case, Mexico—as a pluricultural society in which racism does not exist, while simultaneously supporting systemic racism and oppression to pathologize the “other” at an institutional and structural level.

In order to address these apparent contradictions, my concept of “criollo eugenics” reflects the racializing assemblages used to privilege mestizaje as a simultaneously homogenizing and exclusionary tool. Through criollo eugenics I refer to eugenics and mestizaje as tools of oppression that operate in racializing assemblages, which follow a historical development of systematic repression, management, and control of the Mexican population.

Thinking about the mestizo as an assemblage allows me to get a grasp the role of science in the inner workings of mestizaje. Mestizaje worked as a tool supported by the state that “imagined technology as a means for modernizing and assimilating the masses” (Dalton, 2018: p.3). I will give a few examples before getting to the more detailed history of mestizaje to illustrate. Measures to technologize the indigenous body were seen in the elite’s advocacy of measures for the mixing of the indigenous populations to be “whitened” and, therefore, incorporated into the mestizo nation. Unlike in Brazil or Argentina where, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, migration policies to incentivize European immigration received a significant response, Mexican officials realized by the early twentieth century that they had not been very successful in stimulating European migration to spur whitening processes; they settled instead for a process of cultural mixture and assimilation. These processes and practices are seen in the cultural production to “civilize” and incorporate indigenous populations into the construction of the nation. This is seen through measures such as cultural missions—created by President Adolfo de la Huerta (1920) and implemented by President Alvaro Obregón (1921-1924) and José Vasconcelos—government-funded operations, and campaigns that “civilized” indigenous populations through art (such as murals), education, and hygienic campaigns.

The construction of modernity and nation in Mexico, as mestizo, allowed eugenicists to be present in the spread of ideas that would “ameliorate the race”. Using science and hygiene as a modern technology to civilize, eugenicists ensured that the indigenous body would become culturally an enhanced body; the ideal mestizo. The technological alteration of indigenous bodies through criollo eugenics would produce “positive changes” for future generations since it would prepare them to be a part of a modern and civilized society (Dalton, 2018: p.14-17; Suárez et al, 1999: p.63). Thus, the idea of eugenics as a technology can help us surpass the nature/culture dichotomy, exploring “how these scientific and political practices and ideas are elements in a complex

assemblage, rather than being two domains of ‘science’ and ‘politics’ that interact” (Wade, 2017: p.2).

Beyond thinking about mestizaje as a part of technological but also a constitutive element of these assemblages, could also be conceptualized as a racializing assemblage (Wade, 2017; Weheliye 2014). Weheliye argues that the idea of racializing assemblages “construes race not as a biological or cultural classification but as a set of socio-political processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (Weheliye, 2014: p.4). A key point here, in the case of eugenics, is to explore the ways in which “discipline” takes different forms—for instance, teaching people who they should marry, and eliminating people who should not reproduce. I argue that these racializing assemblages defined and constructed light-skinned mestizos into full humans, and “less-White” mestizos and indigenous peoples, as not-quite-human or non-human. This is done because both criollo eugenics and mestizaje responded to a perceived need, expressed in international science and politics, to improve and whiten which created the conditions to invisibilize, decimate, and discipline humans into non-humans from other groups that did not fit into the idea of a desirable mestizaje such as Black Mexicans, Caribbean people, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Jewish peoples, among others.

Even though mestizaje is sometimes construed through racelessness, it relies on race and the possibility of purity. I argue that the logics of mestizaje (Moreno Figueroa, 2006) operated to make possible eugenicists’ claims during the early twentieth century as well as their continuation, because of the long history underpinning ideas of mestizaje. The construction of mestizaje comes from a series of practices and meanings that have assembled to offer diverse historical meanings (Wade, 2017: p.48). By arguing scientifically, socially, and culturally, that the mestizo was to become the archetype for the nation, Mexican elites structured assemblages that produced a slippery dynamic which is sometimes taken for granted. In the next section I will look at the mechanisms and structures that were already in place prior to “criollo eugenics”. This, in turn, will show the slipperiness of the boundary between culture and nature in the construction of the mestizo.

2.2 The History of the Mestizo in Mexico

“Purity of blood”, during the early stages of colonization in the Americas, plays an important role in the development of racializing assemblages. In the beginning of the

fifteenth century, blood purity was used by the Spanish during the Inquisition to differentiate Jews who converted to Christianity from individuals who did not have any “heretic” blood, meaning ancestors who were not Christian (Martinez, 2008: p.1). At this point the Spanish thought that qualities such as faith and heresy—which today are seen as opinions, preferences, or manners of affiliation—were fixed since these were “inherited naturally” through blood. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Spanish were fixated with genealogy to distinguish those who had “pure” Christian lineages from those who were seen as tainted by “heretical” ancestry (Martinez, 2008: p.1). This fixation with genealogy was linked to the acquisition and maintenance of the colonial power, resources, loyalty, and honorability in the Americas. As a way of maintaining power, the Spanish Crown decided to implement genealogical certificates. These certificates were mandated by a royal decree as a means to prove the blood purity of an individual. In this way, genealogical certificates became a technology used to support the Inquisition (Wade, 2009: p.68).

The idea of purity of blood was transported to the American colonies which changed the notion of blood purity due to the context-specific dynamics of colonization and encounters with indigenous populations (Martinez, 2008: p.91-122). After the first encounters with indigenous peoples in the Americas, there were numerous debates regarding “whether they were rational beings, whether they were barely human savages or unspoiled innocents, and whether they could be enslaved or not” (Wade, 2009: p.68-69). The vocabulary, cultural ascriptions, and markers created before the colonial system were not enough to describe and classify the elements found in the Americas (Pagden, 1982: p.12). Due to the lack of understanding and language, these descriptions gave way to different mythic comparisons—drawn from imaginative literature from the late-middle ages—and varied classifications and meanings about what it meant to be human (Pagden, 1982: p.10). According to Pagden, classifying humans proved to be very difficult since “the observer not only [had] to decide what he [was] seeing; he also [had] to find some place for it in his own world” (Pagden, 1982: p.12).

By 1542, for the Spanish colonies, and 1570 in Brazil, the Spanish crown declared that indigenous peoples should not be enslaved—even though this continued to be carried out informally. In the case of the Spanish colonies, the crown mandated to concede purity of blood certificates for those indigenous peoples who converted to Christianity (Wade, 2009: p.69). Although the crown allowed indigenous people, and their offspring, to be recognized as human if they adopted Christianity, they were seen as

a “childish” form of human who were not fully formed; therefore, not-quite-human (Padgen, 1982). Following this logic, indigenous people required the “care” and “civilizing tools” provided by Spanish colonizers.

As of 1570 the Indian and Spanish Republics were envisioned as a means to segregate these groups. However, this did not prove feasible because, firstly, the colony depended on the workforce of indigenous, Black, and mixed-raced people and, secondly, “this scheme was undermined by sexual relations between these three classes of people and the resulting offspring”. By this point, and up until the mid-1600s, mestizos could be incorporated into the dominant categories, depending on their phenotypes and their parental status. This created anxiety within dominant powers—colonizers, the crown, and the church—as “it threatened the exclusivity of the White category and its presumed purity of blood was not a long-term option” (Wade, 2009: p.85-86).

2.2.1 The Dynamics of Purity of Blood in New Spain

Themes of population, heredity, governance, inheritance of property, blood, and purity have always concerned the elites. During the late seventeenth century Spanish conceptions of blood purity cemented a hierarchical system of classification in the Americas called the caste system (Martinez, 2008: p.1). There were ways to regress or advance in this system. One could be considered honorable—or respectable, so to participate in the economic and social activities of the “higher castes”—after two generations of selective reproduction that favored the Spanish. However, when mixed with “Black blood” one could also regress, as slaves were not considered subjects with souls but objects, property, therefore, non-human. Indigenous blood was regarded as “redeemable”: it could be “rescued” or “improved” not only through reproduction but also cultural elements like religion (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.62). It has been argued that mestizos in the caste system found it very difficult to achieve a state of honor due to their status as illegitimate children given that formal marriages between “Spanish men” and “indigenous women” became less frequent when Spanish women began to migrate to the American continent (Wade, 2009: p.69-70,80). To keep their honor and respectability intact, Spanish men continued to have informal unions or concubinage with indigenous women, meaning that the “key driver underlying [marriages or informal unions] was the elite’s concern with honor and purity of blood” (Wade, 2009: p.89). However, this argument regarding mestizo legitimacy has been contested by Alberro and Gonzalbo

(2014) as they state that the majority of “common people” in New Spain barely knew their parents let alone grandparents (Alberro et al, 2014: p.274). Hence, while the caste system seemed structured and definite there was a distinction between laws and practice which made this classification and organizing scheme much more fluid.

By the late seventeenth century, the availability of wealth undermined the ideal function of the caste system, yet people were still, literally, “buying into” the hierarchy (Viqueira Albán, 1999: p.6). Individual wealth did not particularly change the status quo since those who had the means would buy their mobility into the caste system. This gave legitimacy to their lineage while reinforcing the existing social hierarchy. Thus, blood remained a very important part of the social control of New Spain and yet it was not deemed fully “natural” as it could be modified through technologies like bureaucracy and wealth. During the Spanish colonization, to be mestizo was to be mixed between Spanish and “indian”, a status that was regarded as a lower social category by the Spanish and criollos (people of Spanish parents born in Latin America) due to their “less pure” blood. It is believed that the etymology of “criollo” comes from the Portuguese word crioulo or from the Spanish “criar” which means “to raise”. Thus, it refers to an act of raising, educating and civilizing which, by contrast, imparts a sense of backwardness or inferiority to everyone who is not “criollo”. Linking criollo to the nature and culture debate alludes to the positive influence of culture in creating supposedly civilized men and women as opposed to the “natural savages” of the colonies. Being criollo gave a sense of a redeeming cultural influence, that only works for those who are of “pure” Spanish ancestry. Being born in the American colonies makes one immediately inferior to one born in Spain but with the possibility of improving one’s status through education by travelling to Spain. Indigenous people could also be improved by converting to Christianity or mixing with Spaniards so that their offspring would be mestizo. Even then, they would never be on the same level as criollos, let alone Spaniards. So, this system of improvement had its not-so-natural possibilities and limits.

The caste system allowed for the lower castes to be improved through the whitening of generations to come, meaning that a person’s lineage could become closer to being “Spanish” after a couple of generations. To be Spanish, in this sense, emerged from colonial contact and it was created in negative relation to blackness and indigeneity as it stemmed from selective and aspirational mating. By this point “whitening” or the possibility of being closer to Spanish did not necessarily refer to having “lighter-colored” descendants, it referred to a cultural and legal transition towards the criollo status—

which, in this case, was the closest thing to being Spanish (Alberro et al, 2014: p.315). During Spanish colonial rule a Spanish or criollo man's status was measured by his honor and reputation, and a Spanish or criollo woman's status was defined by her honor, purity, and shame. It was decent for women to stay and reproduce within the confines of honorability—i.e. with Spanish or criollo men (Wade, 2009: p.140-141). It is useful here to draw attention to the asymmetry in gender roles. Wade argues that sex was used as a tool for domination but also to regulate the social order. He states that “[s]ex was not only a means of conquest, but also as means of building and governing a new social and moral order” drawn from Iberian life but adapted to control the realities of the Americas and the not-quite and non-human (Wade, 2009: p.82). Spanish or criollo men were socially allowed to engage in sexual acts with mestiza, indigenous, or Black women because the latter did not have “natural” honor. Thus, the construction of notions of honorability through technologies like certificates could legitimize and present one's blood and lineage as honorable; however, this was only available and “needed” by select elites who could pay to get ahead in society—for much of the population the production of certificates was inconsequential (Alberro et al, 2014: p.288-310).

By the end of the eighteenth century this system had changed radically with the adoption of Enlightenment ideas (Viqueira Albán et al, 1999: p. 2). This was partly due to the erosion of the caste system in the seventeenth century and the creation of the “*gracias al sacar*” certificates in which “the Spanish crown had issued an official price list for the Americas that included both legitimation and whitening among seventy-one purchasable options” (Twinam, 2015: p. 34-35). The difference between buying into a higher level of the caste system in the seventeenth century and the “*gracias al sacar*” certificates is that the latter was a judicial process that was not mediated by the Church in which you could completely “ascend” to another classification (Alberro et al, 2014: p.2681). According to Alberro and Gonzalbo (2014) only one “*gracias al sacar*” request has been found historically for New Spain—so it was used much less than in other Spanish viceroyalties (Alberro et al, 2014: p.2687). This reinforces the idea of a relatively fluid system of categories, which was fairly exceptional for the region. Even if the judicial acceptance of these certificates was rather low, some people would benefit from the informal remunerations of being white or partially whitened through these technologies (Twinam, 2015: p.37). These decisions to “whiten”, made by the Council of Indies, “created a slippery bureaucratic slope that eventually led to the issuance of an official whitening option” (Twinam, 2015: p.131). The contradictions created by the Bourbons’

reforms (economic, political, and social legislation that pursued the control of the crown over the rule of the Catholic church) and Enlightenment ideas “opened new channels of social mobility—both upward and downward —; the portrayal of the ethnic/racial hierarchies within society no longer had much foundation” (Viqueira Albán, 1999: p.213). In trying to revive the caste system, the Spanish implemented the Royal Pragmatic decree (1779) which aimed to end marriages between members of the superior and inferior castes for fear of an uprising by the mestizos due to their dubious identity and malleability which, in the elites’ views, could allow them to create alliances with indigenous communities.

Different technologies were used throughout the colonial period to improve “blood”, a supposedly inherent trait. Nonetheless, blood was not about biology—as this did not exist—, but a metaphor for social status, linked to birthright and ancestry. These technologies afforded a way to rise through the social ranks, for those that needed it. Although the value of a lineage was meant to stay the same over several generations, in many cases it could be improved, or degraded through honorable or dishonorable behavior and different technologies (like certificates) suggesting that there was nothing “natural” about it. Despite these bureaucratic equipment being available to select elites, these technologies set the bases for the operation of elite interactions within different assemblages to legitimize categories, social status, behavior, class, purity, and honorability that categorized some as human (*criollos*), not-quite-human (indigenous people and White women), and non-human (enslaved Africans and indigenous women). This changed in the nineteenth century as “scientific” ideas about “race” spread. Thus, concepts of blood purification, betterment, and deterioration have existed and been cultivated in elite thought since the early days of Spanish colonization and could be thought of as the precursors to *criollo* eugenics and the popularization of race science.

2.2.2 The Spread of Scientific Ideas and the Mexican Independence

During the beginning of the nineteenth century, scientific production started gaining ground internationally impacting the racializing assemblages that were executed in Mexico. The population began to be subjected to different scientific taxonomies that “made the gendering of race and racing of gender as well as social hierarchies to be ordained by nature” (Martinez, 2008: p.6). Preconceived notions of honorability, respectability, and purity of blood were subsumed within new scientific ideas to manage

and control reproduction, framed within the terms of an “ideal” mixing of people consequently determining the ideal Mexican citizen after the independence in 1821.

Medical doctors, anthropologists, sociologists, and politicians during the Mexican independence process started using scientific ideas to discuss ideas of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging. According to Pérez Vejo (2017), there were two important imaginaries that defined nationalism which were spread to the population through artistic expressions like paintings and literature. Firstly, the creation of the nation as a product of the pre-Hispanic era. The second process relied on the metaphor of the Mexican mestizo son born as a result of conquest, developed during colonization; and now independent to take care of the nation (Pérez Vejo, 2017: p.67). The metaphor of the son stems from the myth of mestizaje in which the mestizo represents the product an original or foundational mixture between White men and indigenous women, embodied in the figure of Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortés—commonly believed to have caused the fall of the Aztec Empire—and the rape of the Malinche—a Nahua woman who served as an interpreter for Cortés during the initial conquest. It was believed that the first mestizo was born from Malinche’s rape by Cortés—embodied in the figure of Martín Cortés.

After the independence (1810), whiteness—understood as racial typology that could degenerate depending on mixture—and liberalism were privileged in Mexican nationalism. Science became the tool for supporting the privileging of whiteness through the understanding of heredity and hybridity (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.67). After the abolition of slavery in Mexico (1829), enslaved populations and castes were contemplated as citizens, except for indian republics. This allowed indigenous groups to keep their traditions, customs, and languages. Because this was not in accordance to the national ideas of progress, the government unilaterally decided to “homogenize the country’s populations of a new order organized around private property eradicating all laws which help distinguish indígenas from the rest of the mass: dress code, tribute, and residence laws, and even forms of control via the church” (Moreno Figueroa 2006, p.66). The Cadiz Constitution (1812) categorized indigenous peoples as Spanish citizens by common law but continued to be segregated; this meant that the old colonial republics would become constitutional city councils. This was done to assimilate them into the new republican ideal and political organization (Stavenhagen, 2017: p.217). Through the systematic stripping of the laws of indigenous people, the elites sought to homogenize and construct a cultural mestizaje in the search of a national unity.

Scientific ideas of desirable reproduction and heredity remained during the Porfiriato (1876-1880; 1884-1911), which coincided with the international emergence of race science, eugenics, and modern anthropology. The emergence of scientific ideas for delimiting the racial and gendered dynamics were seen by the Porfiriato as a “mode of rational governance”. By this point racial thinking is explicit, and imagines “pure” and potentially incompatible biological types. Anthropometrics was used by intellectuals to determine human physical, psychological, and moral variations depending on gender, race, and class. Mexican scientists like Juan María Rodríguez (1828-1894), Nicolás San Juan (1847-1916), and Francisco Flores (1855-1931) used these techniques to argue that Mexican women had a dissimilar and cramped pelvis due to racial mixture (López Sánchez, 2001: p.45-48). Mexican scientists made clear biological links between racial mixture and inheritance, while considering “Mexican women” as a particular racial type defined by mixture. These sorts of ideas would dictate how notions of heredity were discussed from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.

Measures created to control indigenous populations and the fact that most of the peasantry was composed of indigenous peoples, blurred the difference between campesinos and indigenous peoples in the discourses employed by politicians and intellectuals during the late nineteenth century. These elements and new changes in policy caused people to start identifying as mestizos in bureaucratic forms; this would bring them a distinctive status in a society that privileged and hierarchized mestizos over “indians” (Stavenhagen, 2017: p.222-223). In fear of more uprisings from these peoples who identified as “mestizo”—like the Caste War (1847-1901) and the Yaqui War (1825-1832)—new measures were implemented to include indigenous populations within the national imagery of Mexico. For instance, the Yaqui War during the nineteenth century was a reaction to taxation measures implemented by the Mexican states of Sonora and Sinaloa—known as the Western State. Measures to “civilize” and include indigenous populations into the idea of mestizaje worked as an exclusionary tool that incremented the dichotomy between mestizos and “indios” (Araujo, 2015: p.232). This illustrates how processes that promote mestizaje operate as a fluid—and, sometimes, contradictory—non-linear assemblage. Due to its unstable quality, the work of intellectuals and its proximal relations is essential to its materialization (Wade, 2017: p. 47-51)

During the Porfiriato, intellectuals of the time—mostly men, both liberal and conservative—conceptualized new ways of defining the Mexican population. They used developments of science and politics to delimit and construct those bodies who should be

part of the nation (Pérez Vejo, 2017: p. 74). One example of these was the set of theories that argued that contemporary indigenous people were biological degenerations of the glorious pre-Hispanic past. These argued that the nation needed to incentivize the migration of White Europeans to Mexico. This would create a systematic “whitening” of the population through reproduction, similar to Brazil and Argentina. Scientific ideas were put into practice through various policies such as the Immigration Law of 1886—or Vallarta Law—in which the principles of naturalization were dictated by heredity and race which meant that instead of having citizenship just because of the territory that you were born, you could also be Mexican if you had one Mexican parent but were living elsewhere (Pani, 2015: p.47-48). Naturalization measures were used as a technology for state control in the exclusion of populations deemed “undesirable”, like the denial of the naturalization of Jews, Japanese, Turkish, Afro-Caribbean and Chinese migrants, among others (Iparraguerre et al, 2011: p.15; Gleizer et al, 2015b: p.125).

Ideas of exclusion based on racial determinism that were developed during the Porfiriato were carried into the revolutionary period. Leading intellectual Andrés Molina Enríquez (1868-1940) wrote *Great National Problems* (1909); this piece of economic research supported the agrarian reform proposed by the revolutionary government. His works were influenced by the works of Spencer, Darwin, and Haeckel (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.70). He argued, when discussing indigenous territorial property, that property was “too subjective for people that [had] not yet acquired a high evolutionary level” (Molina Enríquez, 1909: p.27). When discussing the figure of Benito Juárez (1806-1872) and what he represented, he stated that “[t]he new leader of the nation had to be the unity of the mestizo element [...] [Juárez] represented true nationhood” (Molina Enríquez, 1909: p. 57). To him, indigenous people were one evolutionary step away from achieving evolution and becoming mestizo. Molina Enríquez’s ideas set the bases for discussing the ways in which mestizaje was carried out in Mexico. For instance, José Vasconcelos drew on Molina Enríquez’s works to coin the term “cosmic race” (Stolcke, 2009: p.2).

2.2.3 The Fathers of Mexican Eugenics

Intellectuals such as Manuel Gamio (1883-1960) and José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) played an influential role in the early stages of the introduction of criollo eugenics to support a racial concept of mestizaje. One of these ideas was indigenism, which was a set of theories and ideas that started to be popularized in Mexico during the 1920s with

Manuel Gamio as the most influential figure. With the rise of Mexican anthropology, which often espoused a romanticization of the indigenous past, indigenistas “celebrated indigenous peoples on a purely symbolic level, with no real commitment to social reform” (Manrique, 2016: p.4; Stern, 2000: p.61). In *Forging a Nation* (1916), Gamio started by stating that the problem with Mexico was that it denied the indigenous population from creating a series of small nations. Gamio stated that with colonization, “the crucible that unified the race was tragically overturned and the mold in which the Nationality was created [...] fell to pieces” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.23). Gamio argued that after the independence of the Americas “[t]here was an attempt to sculpt the statute of those [nations] with the Latin racial element, leaving the indigenous race in a dangerous oblivion” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.24). This created a series of small nations and local nationalisms as the majority of the population in America—indigenous people—“[went] unnoticed by all the so-called civilized world” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.23). Gamio then proceeded to argue that in order for a nation to work had to have a sense of “defined and integrated nationality” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.26). Gamio mixes cultural and racial elements in his work to achieve his idea of an integrated nationality.

Gamio’s focus on “culture” obscures deterministic ideas about race and the way he maintains hierarchies between indigenous and mestizos. He provided a series of guidelines on how the new revolutionary government needed to attend to the needs of indigenous populations to create a homogeneous nation (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.164). His goal was to

bring [indigenous populations] closer to that social group whom they have always considered to be an enemy [the Spanish], to incorporate [indigenous people] into [Mexican society], to blend them with [Mexican Society]. Our end should be to make the national race homogeneous, unify the language, and make the different cultures that exist in our country converge into one. (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.28)

In Gamio’s view, mestizaje was imperative to make a powerful nation. Racial homogenization was possible through not only biology, but technology: anthropology, art, culture, and statistics which would give scientists a better understanding of indigenous groups.

Gamio had contradictory ideas regarding indigenous populations. Despite the fact that “[t]he indian [had] the same aptitude for progress as the White; he [was] neither superior nor inferior [to Whites]” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.39), Gamio also categorized indigenous groups depending on their level of “savagery” and classified them depending

on their degree of contact with the Spanish. In his view, there were two groups, those “that [were] called savages, [which were] indigenous people that [lived] in almost the same state in which their ancestors were surprised by the Conquest” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.154). The second group, which he categorized as “semi-civilized”, were “of pure indigenous race [...] but had more ample contact with the White man” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.156). The usage of these categorizations suggests that even if indigenous people could possibly have the same aptitudes for progress, Gamio privileged those who had absorbed elements of “White culture” as more “civilized”. Through his categories, he also tended to invisibilize Black and other non-White migrant populations from Mexican history. He stated that small nations in Mexico were divided in two groups; “those whose population is exclusively indigenous and others whose populations show the harmonic fusion of the indigenous race and the race of European origin” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.29). Here, Gamio erases the history of the enforced migrations of enslaved Africans, and disregards the significant Chinese and Japanese migrations to Mexico, among others.

The fact that Gamio advocated for an integration of indigenous people to the Mexican nation supposes that “both Whites and ‘indians’ were incapable of transcending the conquest”, therefore “[a] new protagonist was needed for the second independence” (Alonso, 2005: p.42). In the chapter titled Our Intellectual Culture he argued that Mexico was composed of three classes or groups Whites, indigenous, and mestizos. The indigenous groups that had “always been servants, pariahs, the disinherited, the oppressed” and “did not know the appropriate needs to attain [their] own liberation” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.96-97). This is yet another example of how Gamio, using culture, maintains deterministic ideas of mestizo racial superiority. In his words, mestizos were “the only class that [produced] intellectually in [Mexico]” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.99). However, he argued that inside of this class, that he categorized as middle class, there was a “terrible disjuncture” as some mestizos renounced their indigenous past and others, which Gamio argued are more reproachable, tried to capitalize on indigenous culture without knowing its historical antecedents (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.100). Gamio privileged both biological and cultural (or technological) mixture as he believed the biological mestizo needed to accept and comprehend their cultural indigenous roots. Thus, Gamio’s identification as indigenista was not mutually exclusive to his privileging of mestizaje.

José Vasconcelos, rector of the UNAM and then Secretary of Education, was responsible for implementing the Cultural Missions (1921-1924) which had as its goal

the civilization and modernization of rural—mostly indigenous—communities. The following year, Vasconcelos published *The Cosmic Race* (1925), in which he envisioned a new mixing of the races, not only in biological but also in aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual terms (Miller 2004, p.30). Vasconcelos' argument relied on history and science (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.13). Vasconcelos looked at history as a progressive timeline as “the ulterior ending of History [was] to achieve a fusion of people and their cultures” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.23). Vasconcelos argued that “Latin American nations are ‘new’ and need to play catch-up with Western modernity to enter the world stage” (Manrique, 2016: p.8). This is particularly evident in the ways in which he talks about the US. He blamed United States' imperialism and progress on various historical and racial reasons by stating that the “yanqui (United States citizens) [felt] as English as the English from England” which made them part of the “White race” that subjugated other regions and races (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.16). This shows how Vasconcelos, like Gamio, uses cultural and political elements to comment on pretensions of racial purity ascribing whiteness to the US as well as England. Furthermore, in his view, “[the US] committed the crime of destroying [Black and indigenous] races, as in, we [Latin Americans] embraced them, and this [gave] us new rights and hopes of a historical mission with no precedent” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.23). This is why, for Vasconcelos, independent Latin American countries should have united as the mestizo had all the elements to create “the definitive race or the integral race, made by the minds and bloods of all people and, for this reason, [was] more capable of true fraternity and a truly universal goal” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.26). For Vasconcelos, whiteness (meaning the US) was not the future of the Americas but the progressive racial mixture produced in Latin American countries due to colonization but now independent. However, “Vasconcelos redeems the figure of the mestizo only at the expense of other groups, particularly Asians, whom he continually denigrates” (Manrique, 2016: p.8). The denigration of “yellow races” was common, due to the constant racism and systematic elimination of Chinese populations from the mestizo imaginary despite Vasconcelos denouncing of the US for “the exclusion of the Japanese and Chinese from California” (Chang, 2008; Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.25).

Due to his view of history as progressive, Vasconcelos argued that all the races converged in the Americas to create the fifth race; the cosmic race. Vasconcelos argued that there were four types of races which were white, yellow, red, and black (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.11). To Vasconcelos, the cosmic race was the future, however, this had to

go through three distinct processes or “social states” to achieve its goal to “send planes and armies throughout the planet to educate the people [of a] life founded in love [that would] come to be expressed in terms of beauty” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.31). The first period (i.e. the colonial period), was “the material or warfare”; this was dictated by conflict, as “there [could not] be a choice; the strong [took] or reject[ed] the submissive women”, during this process, “it [was] not possible to work towards a cordial fusion of the races” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.33). The second process entitled “the intellectual or political” consisted of reason. Here, eugenics and Social Darwinism or, what he called, “artificial norms [would] take advantage of conquest and [amended] its mistakes” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.34). Vasconcelos criticized both eugenics and Social Darwinism as these theories were a colonial scheme to regulate love and “due to their incomplete and false scientific data produce[d] no valid results” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.34). Through his critique, Vasconcelos contrasts a segregationist and negative eugenic US against a mestizophile and “cultural” eugenics in Mexico. He then coined the term “aesthetic eugenics” as something to strive for in the last process; “the spiritual or aesthetic” which consists on the framing of “religion as a civilizing agent” was dictated by love and aesthetic beauty (Manrique, 2016: p.8; Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.41). Likewise, he imagined an intertwining of nature—meaning genetics—and culture by stating that

[t]he tendencies of the future intertwine in contemporary Mendelian conceptions of biology, a socialist government, growing sympathy in the souls, generalized progress, and the manifestation of the fifth race that will populate the earth with the achievements of the first truly universal culture; truly cosmic. (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.45)

Thus, the only route towards the progress of humanity was the cosmic race. Additionally, Vasconcelos idea of love can be explained by way of Ahmed (2004) in which she explains how “love is crucial to the delineation of the bodies of individual subjects and the body of the nation” (Ahmed, 2004: p.117). In this sense the continuous denigration of yellow races meant that these were excluded from love, therefore the body of the nation. According to Vasconcelos love would translate to reproduction and betterment through beauty since anyone perceived as ugly would not reproduce (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.36-37). Thus, the figure of the mestizo may be interpreted as a racializing assemblage that connects, through love and beauty, not only the individual and the collective but also the possibility of a new world order.

Gamio and Vasconcelos both privileged the mestizo as the archetypical citizen. By doing so, they set the bases for criollo eugenics and the ways in which the mestizo operates as a “stable” assemblage perceived as an integral part of history. Both Gamio and Vasconcelos constructed and hardened connections and networks to privilege the structural tendencies of mestizaje that in turn positions other groups that are not mestizo as not-quite or non-human. An example of this was the popularization of the Cultural Missions in Mexico as a way of “civilizing” indigenous people through education and art. Additionally, through Gamio and Vasconcelos’ works we are able to see how racial thinking impacted eugenic thought, introducing new stakes for the need to discipline citizens to conform to ideas of racial perfection while obscuring these ideas through the discussion of cultural and political elements. As I mentioned in the section above, during the colonial period, there was a clear distance between law and practice seen in the fluidity of the caste system in New Spain. However, from the nineteenth century, the threat of racial degeneration made the idea of a “good mixture” seem imperative to the future of the nation. In this sense, eugenicists tried to diminish the distance between law and practice, disciplining the population to obey their rules for “suitable” reproduction.

2.2.3.1 Eugenic Science and its Impact

The beginnings of criollo eugenics—which, at this stage, was mostly a collection of theories put forward by prominent scholars and intellectuals—served as the basis for the drafting of different policies and measures to regulate, pathologize, and control the population (Urías, 2007: p.107, 147-171). During the presidency of Venustiano Carranza (1917-1920) there was an assumed need, by Mexican elites, to prevent genetic degeneration. The 1917 Constitution contained a special section that presented the need for an aggressive health campaign led by the Superior Health Council, which responded directly to the executive branch (Urías, 2007: p.109). Here, it was stated that the government thought of alcoholism as an element of genetic degeneration (Mexican Constitution, 1917: Article 73). By 1925, a new General Health Rule was implemented which gave place to the Sanitary Code (1926) that implemented the prenuptial certificate as a prerequisite for marriage (Urías, 2007: p.109). In 1926, a Migration Law was also implemented and by 1928 the Civil Code was re-drafted, to deal with the regulation of migration; this Code also contained clauses criminalizing alcoholism and vagrancy as these were depicted as a public health concern. The Civil Code stated the following: “when there is a risk to the health, mental state, or descendants; these illicit activities will

be published” (Civil Code, 1928: Article 447). What all these measures have in common is that they were believed to prevent genetic degeneration for the betterment of mestizaje while being intersected by ideas of class, gender, and race. For instance, alcoholism and vagrancy were seen as an indigenous trait (chapter 5), and prenuptial clinics were made to prevent those categorized as undesirables from reproducing (chapter 3).

During the first-half of twentieth century, criollo eugenics played a part in different migratory policies to regulate and control migration. The racialized logics behind the practices of the Secretary of Foreign Relations (SRE) from 1886, that would deny “undesirable” migrants, were legitimized by the Naturalization and Foreign Law of 1934 which started to delimit the bodies that could constitute part of the nation (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.115). This was mostly in reaction to the doubling of migration from 1913-1930 which led the SRE to draft the Migration Law of 1926, to control and regulate migrants through the categorization of foreigners as “assimilable” or “unassimilable” to mestizaje in terms of science, race, religion, and culture (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.113). The laws and measures privileged some foreigners over others. To illustrate, they gave preferential treatment to Spanish migrants by making an Emergency Law (1940-1941) to naturalize Spanish people who came to Mexico escaping the Spanish Civil War but denied citizenship to Chinese and Jewish populations (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.122-123; Yankelevich, 2015: p.315). Gleizer (2015) mentions the case of Chi Wong, a Chinese migrant who applied for naturalization and, despite having all the requisites, was denied citizenship (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.109-112). According to Gleizer (2015) this was made under arbitrary measures as there were other foreigners that were not asked for certain documents (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.110). However, this was not an isolated case as it refers to Gleizer’s extensive study on the acceptance and denial of naturalizations which were mediated by the idea of an acceptable mestizaje (Gleizer et.al., 2015: p.111).

The case of Jewish populations in Mexico shows a distinct type of racial categorization as Jews “can be both White and racially distinct from other Whites” (Frye Jacobson, 1998: p.6). Different processes of naturalization or exclusion of groups demonstrated continual efforts of elites to respond to migratory flows and delimit who was an acceptable migrant and who was not, based on mostly French and Anglo-American anthropological science while adapting it with criollo eugenics. During the 1920s, there was an influx of migration of mostly eastern European Jews to Mexico (Yankelevich, 2015; Lomnitz 2010). During the 1930s, there was a general mistrust of groups who, in the SRE’s view, were not capable of assimilating into mestizaje, therefore

catalogued as undesirable. The measures and laws produced to regulate and manage migration offer a glimpse of which bodies were considered desirable for mestizaje. The Official Statement 157 (1934) argued that because Jews were not assimilable to the Mexican population—as, according to officials, they would only mix with each other—, they should not be welcomed to the country (Official Statement 157 in Yankelevich, 2015: p.221; Gleizer, 2013: p.29-30). These ideas, based on stereotypes regarding commerce—as Jews were believed to be “greedy”—and assimilation fuelled eugenicists, like Manuel Gamio and Gilberto Loyo, to add to the anti-Semitic conversation. Gamio, who was part of the Demographic Department of the Government’s Secretary in Mexico, argued that Jews were not assimilable to the Mexican population therefore should not be allowed to the country (Yakelevich, 2015: p.221-222). In 1939, Gilberto Loyo expressed that there was no real Jewish problem yet, however, the country needed to stop that migration so they would not be (Yankelevich, 2015: p.223).

The drafting and re-drafting of different policies to prevent or allow certain groups to be naturalized as citizens was a recurring topic in post-revolutionary Mexico. These technologies allow us to observe the functioning of mestizaje as an “all-inclusive ideology of exclusion” (Stutzman, 1982 in Chaves et.al., 2006: p.7). This can be seen in the denial and exclusion of groups such as Black migrants in Quintana Roo who came from Belize, Jamaica, Caiman Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cuba, as well as those who came from the coasts of Honduras, Guatemala, the Hispanic Caribbean and the US (Cunin, 2015a: p.339-340; Cunin, 2015b: p.125-154). Cunin traces the rationale for targeting these groups to two different scientific explorations in Quintana Roo. The first one being in 1916 in which, geographer, Pedro C. Sánchez and, engineer and topographer, Salvador Toscano went to the territory, with government funding, to explore its resources and propose ways to exploit them (Cunin, 2015a: p.344-345). In the 1918 report about the exploration, Sánchez and Toscano argued that the territory was inaccessible, hostile, and savage (Cunin, 2015a: p.345). This report had accounts of encounters with Black populations from Belize, however, these were “bound to disappear once the territory is colonized and civilized” (Sánchez and Toscano, 1918 in Cunin, 2015a: p.346). According to Cunin “the natural versus civilization, is symbolized through the presence of Black populations which do not appear to be a part of society but as a constitutive element of the natural environment” (Cunin, 2015a: p.346). Before discussing the second scientific exploration, I will examine how migration was carried out after the revolution. The territory of Quintana Roo was supported mostly through the exploitation of Black

migrants from Belize which acted as the workforce for the construction of railways and agriculture (Cunin, 2015: p.142). However, this migration was threatened by migratory regulations dictated by criollo eugenics. Private land owners with commercial interests on the continuation of the exploitation of Black migrants, like Robert Sidney Turton, the migration agent of Quintana Roo, and local government officials issued different letters to allow the migration of Belizeans (Cunin, 2015b: p.143-147). Even though Sidney Turton's request was denied in 1925 by the Department of Migration as "they were undeniably against the admission of inferior races" (Cunin, 2015b: p.144), the local government official's request was accepted in 1926. This was because this letter was written on the condition that Quintana Roo needed Belizeans due to the lack of Mexican population – which implied that to be Mexican was to be mestizo – and that migrants would be far from mestizos, therefore could not mix. The acceptance came with its own regulations like number of migrants and duration of their stay, and required, medical exams, official contracts with companies, a registry, and a tariff (Cunin, 2015b: p.146-147). Eleven years after the conditional acceptance of Belizeans there was a second scientific exploration during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1930) to learn the origins of the Mayan population and how they arrived at the Yucatan peninsula (Cunin, 2015b: p.350). The conclusion of this exploration was that mestizaje had not yet arrived to Chetumal and that Black populations living in Quintana Roo represented a threat to the future of mestizaje as they might "contaminate" the rest of the population (Cunin, 2015b: p. 351-352).

The figure of the mestizo is an assemblage that is in constant flux and conversation with other networks throughout history. If there is something these periods have in common is the privileging of whiteness constructed by the Mexican and Spanish elites. Nonetheless, whiteness is often defined in different ways depending on the historical context and the case. In some instances it could refer to physical whiteness (i.e. color), an abstract idea that relates to culture and genealogy, or both. The denial of Jewish populations complicates the framework as Jews are seen as civilized, but unassimilable as stereotypes dictated that they practiced endogamy and concentrated on the acquisition of socioeconomic power. Black migrants, on the other hand, were considered by Mexican officials as threatening because they are too apt to mix, and could "bring down the race". These processes serve to understand the eugenic development in Mexico as something that derived from technologies informed by local historical practices, as well as imported

scientific ideas. Thus, there are different racializing mechanisms at play that make the privileging of whiteness and possible mestizo as an unstable category.

2.3 The Mexican Society of Eugenics, Mestizaje, and Criollo Eugenics

Criollo eugenics reflects the historical and racializing dynamics during the development of eugenics after the Mexican Revolution. During this period, “criollo” still held the definition created during the caste system as referring to those born in the Spanish ex-colonies with exclusively European ancestry. However, in some cases criollo also entailed having noble indigenous ancestry or another “acceptable” mixture which reinforces my notion of “criollo eugenics” as an elevated and suitable type of mixture (Alberro et al 2014: p. 7090). Official discourses in New Spain privileged the idea of homogenizing the population to conform to whiteness, thereby reflecting ideals that were in place from the caste system onwards. And yet, mestizaje has not always been about praising whiteness. On the contrary, indigenous people were also supposed to bring new biological virtues. For instance, Manuel Gamio argued that in order for Whites to adapt and enjoy the rights of an autochthonous nation it was imperative to “mix with aboriginals [...] as the intensive mestizaje of the population [needed] to be favored, not only by socio-political convenience but, primarily, for the beneficial biological results that this mix [would bring]” (Gamio, 1942: p.8). Consequently, in order for mestizaje to expand and flourish, Gamio argued that there needed to be a mixture between indigenous and White which forcibly invisibilizes other “racial categories” and actively segregates them as “not assimilable”, thus, incapable of belonging to the Mexican nation. The SME’s honorary member and medical doctor Leoncio E. De La Rocha argued that “there [was] no social or racial condition that [could] escape the diseases transferred through heredity” (De La Rocha, 1942: p.3). In this context, De La Rocha uses criollo eugenics to separate himself and his ideas from US and Nazi eugenics by arguing that it was not only the mixture of White and indigenous that made the ideal mestizo, but the eugenic regulation of it.

Mexican Eugenicists drew on the work of other Latin American theorists to add to their ideas of mestizaje. This can be seen in *Eugenesia* in which eugenicists from different parts of the region, like Renato Kehl (Brazil), Carlos Bambarem (Peru), Victor Delfino (Argentina), Domingo F. Ramos (Cuba) among others, contributed their ideas

regarding eugenics and mestizaje. Nonetheless, due to their economic, political, cultural situation, Mexican eugenicists resorted to producing their own bodies of knowledge regarding eugenics to support their version of mestizaje. As a way of defending their version of eugenics, Saavedra argued that “[e]very country has its own needs and destiny to be achieved dependent on its context and time” (Saavedra, 1942: p.3). This reasoning partly stems from the failure of migratory efforts in comparison to Latin American countries like Brazil and Argentina. For mestizaje to continue operating the Mexican government – with the support and encouragement of José Vasconcelos – created the Secretary of Public Education in 1921 which had the goal of bringing education, civilization, and culture. This aim was called the “Cultural Missions” which operated as a campaign to technologize the indigenous body and making it mestizo through the creation of schools in rural – and mostly indigenous areas – and the artistic production of murals.

Measures to incentivize selective migration and the acceptance of naturalizations show how criollo eugenics operated to achieve a desirable mestizaje. The Naturalization and Foreign Law (1934) legitimized practices of exclusion. Gleizer (2015) argues that it was not an active or systematic denial of naturalization but an exclusion due to excessive bureaucracy, in the sense that if the SRE did not want a person to be naturalized they would ask for unnecessary papers that were almost impossible to find (Gleizer, 2015: p.116). This is similar to Roger Bastide’s description of veiled discrimination in Brazil during the early twentieth century when he states the following: “a Negro is not refused a post because he is a Negro—he is told that unfortunately it has just been filled; he is not refused promotion—he fails to pass the medical examination” (Bastide, 1957: p.512). In a way, these practices can shed some light on what kind of mestizaje was being favored by criollo eugenics as a veiled racism. In this sense talking about mixture was a way of concealing ideas about purity.

Similarly, naturalization practices were used as a way of concealing beliefs about race and belonging. In 1939, the SME and the CMEPP—led by demographer, politician and eugenicist Gilberto Loyo—mentioned that “mestizaje [could] only be done when the economic and social level of the indigenous masses mixes with assimilable foreigners” (Welti-Chanes, 2011: p.24-25; SME et al, 1939: p.2-3). However, who were these assimilable foreigners if not the existing mestizo population? According to the SME and the CMEPP, a successful mestizaje could only involve “groups of White immigrants and mestizos that [belonged] to superior economic and social classes” (Saavedra, 1939: p.3).

This suggest that the mixture between Whites and indigenous people was not seen as possible; there had to be a two-tier mixture. First between indigenous and mestizos, then between mestizos and White immigrants. This was argued so that, ultimately, people from both extremes would melt into the category of mestizo.

Additionally, Saavedra introduced a class element with Whites are at the top of the social hierarchy, mestizos in the middle, and indigenous people at the bottom. Nonetheless, this did not necessarily represent the reality of Mexican society as, according to Saavedra, race seemed to be just a way of talking about class. Moreover, after the efforts to bring desirable subjects for mixing to Mexico failed, a general distrust of migrants that agreed with communist ideas resurfaced nineteenth century scepticism towards foreigners. For instance, five years later, Francisco de A. Benavides argued that “mestizaje between indians and migrants [was] almost impossible, [Mexicans needed] to be cautious of migrants that could come and extort the afflicted indian” (De A. Benavides, 1944: p.11). Using this quote, I can draw a parallel with the nineteenth century onwards and the fear that excluded certain castes. This fear of foreigners was used to unite and challenge the status quo—even if the ideal of the dominant class had now changed to privilege the mestizo.

The incorporation of indigenous populations was a key goal of criollo eugenics to promote and implement mestizaje. Eugenicists were concerned with indigenous peoples that were not identified as mestizo by the scientists of the time. In this regard, indigenous and mestizos were seen as opposite values. Alfonso Ruíz Escalona, medical doctor, questioned the future of indigenous people in Mexico by stating: “[w]hat are we to do with the vast portion of indigenous peoples as they are an unavoidable factor of ours” (Ruíz Escalona, 1942: p.12). A key point here would be to see the distinction that Ruíz makes between we—the mestizo and civilized—and them—indigenous and backwards. Despite their backwardness and presumably constricted by the size of the population, Escalona also mentioned that “it [was] important to keep [indigenous peoples] as they carry various virtues” (Ruíz Escalona, 1942: p.12). Despite the fact that he did not go into specifics as to what “various virtues” meant, in his view, indigenous peoples were important to the racial composition of Mexico as they composed an integral part of mestizaje. Nonetheless, he continued by questioning that if “the majority of [indigenous peoples], [were] poor, dysgenic men, weak-minded, [could they be] worthy of being part of humanity?” (Ruíz Escalona, 1942: p.11).

In Escalona's work, the mestizo was made partly from indigenous people but it changed them beyond recognition, both biologically and culturally. The questioning of the humanity of indigenous peoples had been a recurring topic since the early stages of Spanish colonization (Pagden, 1982), from their categorization within the caste system to their segregation into Indian republics. According to Escalona, with the rise of mestizaje indigenous people became an evolutionary element to produce the mestizo as the Mexican national symbol. This treatment of indigenous people as a "factor" possibly relegates them as not-quite or non-human. Additionally, it can be argued that Escalona's reference to indigenous "men" as dysgenic links to the longstanding way that indigenous men are left out of the colonial and nation-building processes, seen as dominated by the reproduction between White men and indigenous women (Wade, 2017: p.22).

Thus, after the nineteenth century—with the popularization and creation of modern anthropology and the scientific model—the discussion revolved around the questioning of indigenous peoples as worthy of being part of humanity and, therefore, placing them in the condition of not-quite-human. Hence, to possibly move indigenous peoples into the category of human they needed to be mixed as the "rapid guided mestizaje [was] going to be indigenous weapon of choice" (Rúiz Escalona, 1942: p.11). Primarily, the idea of "guided mestizaje" stems from a eugenically oriented mestizaje provided by criollo eugenics that ranged from prenuptial certificates and eugenic education to suggestions of negative eugenic measures. Carlos Burgos Larrea also stated that "eugenics [was] indispensable to better the human race. A human race that [would] not see color and [would] not succumb to supposed and constructed differences" (Burgos Larrea, 1944: p.12). This seems to be a critique of eugenics in the US which was mostly oriented toward the Black/White color line. Additionally, the fact that he pointed to "constructed differences" demonstrates a clear development in thought towards an anti-racist, constructivist paradigm that was already spreading among international networks of scientists as a means of denouncing racial determinism. Burgos Larrea proceeded to state that the eugenicists' goal was to create a "more egalitarian and homogeneous society" (Burgos Larrea, 1944: p.12), and claimed the goal to conquer racism was to soften or eliminate racial difference, through mixture. Larrea's idea of a desirable mestizaje could only be controlled by criollo eugenics. Once the desirable mestizaje was achieved, a utopian society free of discrimination could be accomplished as the "only differences that [could] exist [would] be a series of values and selective criterion solely

dictated by God” (Burgos Larrea, 1944: p.12). Here eugenicists would be right beneath the higher power and control of the Christian god.

2.3.1 The Mexican Population and Eugenics

The article titled “The Mexican Population and Eugenics” (1940) published in the *Eugenesia* journal by Mexican engineer Alfredo Valle, allows us to observe the historical connections of criollo eugenics and mestizaje. He indicated that the purpose of eugenics was “to examine Mexico and how it [was] formed physically and demographically to adapt our activities to better our races. (Valle, 1940: p.11). He argued that criollo eugenics was the tool to turn Mexico into a beacon for economic growth by fostering and breeding the best for the future of the nation. Valle envisioned Mexico taking its rightful place as a developed and civilized nation. To him, it was required that Mexico made use of the technologies of eugenics given by Western civilization to seek economic growth (Valle, 1940: p.11-12). Valle then proceeded to discuss the different factors that would tamper with the production of wealth: “earth, capital, and men” (Valle, 1940: p.12).

Demography was a very important tool for eugenicists as a way of planning “suitable” mixtures and setting targets to better the race. Drawing on the work of Mexican writer and politician Emilio Rabasa (1856-1930) and the 1910 census, Valle concluded that Mexico was a mestizo country with mestizos accounting for 37% of the population, criollos 20%, and less than 1% being foreigners. Valle argued that despite the 1930s census not having racial categories – only languages used— “it was undeniable that there were different racial groups with distinct characteristics in Mexico” (Valle, 1940: p.11). The census abolished racial categories from the 1820s onwards since Mexican officials thought that “race” was not a useful or valid concept for Mexico, due to its history of mixture; to them, language was the marker of indigeneity (González Navarro, 1968: p.35,38). Yet in the twentieth century, some eugenicists used “racial groups” as a scientific and international term; in this sense, the idea of race was a driving force in eugenics, including criollo eugenics. In this case, Valle suggested that there were distinct racial groups to be found in Mexico—despite the history of mixture—and against the prevailing governmental modes of measuring the population.

Valle then delineated what he saw as the three main groups that composed the Mexican population: criollos, mestizos, and indigenous. I will start by explaining the

main categories ascribed to the criollos which he described as “descendants of Europeans, with no mixture” (Valle, 1940: p. 12). His definition of criollo departs from the historical one as it imagines the continuing existence of racial purity in Mexican society. He proceeded to provide different elucidations to incentivize the mixture of criollos. Valle indicated that “to augment our population from this race it [was] important to have other races that are adaptable to our environment so they [could] mix between one or two generations” (Valle, 1940: p.12). Valle continued by stating that there were only less than one percent of foreigners in Mexico but out of that figure thirty percent were Spanish, which he considered beneficial as they were “more assimilable”. However, “due to the fact that [criollos’] percentage [was] so little they [ended] up mixing with mestizo men and women without contributing Iberian blood into the mix. The number of criollos tended to diminish in favor of mestizos” (Valle, 1940: p.12-13). This presupposes that certain strains of blood were “stronger” or more “potent” than others, which was an idea often associated with “Black blood” as one that causes permanent “stains”—seen in the caste system. Valle then discussed the other seventy percent out of the one percent of foreigners which he saw as problematic because “for the common interest of the Mexican population the migration of Russians, Polish, Czechs, among others [were] of no importance as they did not mix with nationals; keeping their customs and affects intact” (Valle, 1940: p.13). Valle deliberated that these migrants—despite being White—went against mestizaje and were therefore not desirable. A similar problem was perceived in Brazil as *mestiçagem* was also designed to integrate these “insoluble” groups (Skidmore, 1993). Despite lack of criollos Valle foresaw an opportunity in misfortune the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); he affirmed that “there has been a truly unexpected opportunity, from a national point of view, of a massive migration from Spain who [would] add itself to our nationality” (Valle, 1940: p.13). According to Valle “it [was] very much desirable, from a eugenic point of view, that these migrations among young men and women occurred as it [would] enlarge the criollo population and [would] inject new blood among our mestizos” (Valle, 1940: p.13) This presupposed that, for Valle, a better mestizo was a Whiter mestizo.

Valle defined mestizo as “the descendants of the mixture between indigenous, Spanish, and Black. They [composed] forty-three percent of the Mexican population which [made] them the dominant group (Valle, 1940: p.13). According to him, “mestizo numbers [continued] to grow thanks to criollo and indigenous groups” (Valle, 1940: p.13). Valle’s definition of the mestizo went against the “whitening” theory, instead,

criollos were dissolving into the mestizo category. This possibly meant that the desirable mestizo should be, not only, a lighter-skinned mestizo but also dependant on their degree of European ancestry. Valle then referred the caste system by recounting that “[f]or various years there were numerous attempts to create different categories to include the different proportions of Spanish, indian, and Black blood. The classifications were composed of 16 different groups” (Valle, 1940: p.13). Despite Valle’s narration of the history of castes he alluded to a racial progression as “[i]t was understandable why [Mexicans] abandoned the different categorizations made to racially divide the population because if it was difficult, during colonial times, to get to the 16th category, now that many centuries have passed those categories [did] not exist” (Valle, 1940: p.13). Even though he mentioned a mixture of indigenous, Spanish, and “Black races”, the “natural” and historical racial progression disappeared the bottom categories. This suggests a systematic erasure of Black populations, migration, and slave trade in Mexico from mestizaje (Martínez Montiel, 2017: p.44-45). Valle indicated that “the fire of many centuries has merged and now, without the complete disappearance of those original groups, [Mexicans] produced a conglomerate of [their] own characteristics that constructed a thriving race full of possibilities for the future” (Valle, 1940: p.13). Firstly, the complete disappearance that Valle mentioned suggests that even though mestizos possessed all these groups, and, in a sense, they are all present due to mixture; there are distinct groups from the caste system that are no longer present (Wade, 2010). Secondly, these quotes suggest the eugenicists’ fondness for categorizing everything, as far as possible. Nonetheless, in Valle’s view, the influence of mestizaje was “too strong” to maintain racial boundaries as it declassified everyone. Consequently, “this mix principally dictates totally different attitudes, qualities, and defects” (Valle, 1940: p.14). However, heredity was not the only determinant factor as “it is not possible to consider men merely in a biological sense. It is also necessary to consider them as a product of context, in which psychological elements will be transferred through generations” (Valle, 1940: p.14). This underlines the need of eugenics to regulate biological reproduction as well as the management of culture and environment to create the best type of mestizaje.

Valle suggested that the Mexican mestizo was a work in progress, thus, in need of criollo eugenics, because even though the “mestizo has demonstrated great capacity for the sciences, their character is so fickle that it is not possible to determine their reactions to certain stimuli because it is always disproportionate” (Valle, 1940: p. 14). Valle argued that this was not a good trait if Mexico was on the quest for modern progress

because “the type of man who is necessary for modern progress is supposed to be balanced” (Valle, 1940: p.14). Therefore, the development of the Mexican mestizo needed eugenicists to achieve economic, social, cultural, and political goals (Valle, 1940: p.14).

The last racial category that Valle described were indigenous people. He defined this group as one “formed by the descendants of aboriginal races” (Valle, 1940: p.14). Valle then complicates the narrative by indicating that “there is no possible scientific way to determine which individuals belong to this group as there are so many mestizos with a high percentage of indigenous blood that makes it difficult to distinguish” (Valle, 1940: p.14). To Valle, the difficulty relied on distinguishing between mestizos and indigenous but not between criollos and mestizos. Despite his “difficulty” he argued that “[e]ven if it is anthropologically impossible to distinguish the races, it is evident to characterize the costumes, aptitudes, virtues, and defects as they do contain some variations from one racial family to another” (Valle, 1940: p.14). Thus, for Valle, classification was drawn via social, cultural, and linguistic traits, not by blood.

Did these cultural differences require a merely cultural solution? To some Mexican eugenicists—who followed ideological and anti-racist positions spurred by the activities and works of Franz Boas and his disciples—biology and culture were regarded as two different things. In the application of eugenics solutions, however, the two tended to become entangled once more. For his part, Valle never addressed this question, affirming instead that the fact that there were many indigenous people in Mexico was not necessarily a bad trait as “the vast majority of indigenous people in Mexico belong to a more advanced cultural type inside of their primitivism” (Valle, 1940: p.15)—a reference to the glorious past empires led by the Aztecs, Totonacos, and Tarascos. Additionally, he argued that despite the high percentage of indigenous blood in the contemporary mestizo

[t]he majority [of indigenous people] have been influenced by the Spanish but in an imperfect and incomplete manner as more than a million [indigenous people] do not understand Spanish and another million, even though they speak Spanish, used their own dialect among themselves. (Valle, 1940: p.15)

Thus, the process of influence and mixture was incomplete as “in most aspects the mentality and customs of indigenous people [were] stuck in the past” (Valle, 1940: p.15). Besides the cultural aspect, Valle asserted that indigenous people were needed as they provided some genetic characteristics that were needed by the mestizo like their capacity to reproduce and they were also “peaceful, humble, hospitable, selfless, and [had] a better

sense of solidarity” (Valle, 1940: p.15-16). These “positive” traits described for indigenous people had also been their downfall as these traits allowed for “the poor treatment given to indians during the Spanish colonization” (Valle, 1940: p.16). Nonetheless, he qualified indigenous people to be the workforce behind the construction of Mexico as “[t]heir sweat and blood allowed the creation of the beautiful colonial monuments of which we are all proud of” (Valle, 1940: p.16). Despite indigenous people being the workforce behind Mexico, Valle argued that they had no place in contemporary society because “the indian—like any other peasant—[had] a routine which [lacked] a spirit of entrepreneurship”, which made them, “reticent toward any ideas of progress and betterment” (Valle, 1940: p.16). Here, we can perceive a form of veiled racial determinism that is no longer biological, but cultural. Valle’s assessment portrays indigenous people as the factor that allowed, through exploitation, the construction of Mexico. He also puts them in a position of a not-quite or non-human when discussing them as a factor needed for the development of mestizaje, while demoting them as an element of the past that is no longer necessary for the future of Mexico.

Valle seemed to think that Mexico’s future was inevitably mestizo but clearly stated that more criollos were needed to improve and balance mixture. To him, criollos and indigenous groups had certain racial elements that made the “mestizo race” stronger. He concluded stating that indigenous people had been treated very badly during the Spanish colonization— as a way of advocating for the positive integration of culturally indigenous people that, also due to colonization, had been influenced genetically through mixture. Valle suggested that for these reasons Mexico’s indigenous people were capable of “improvement” rather than liable to “degeneration”. It remains unclear whether Valle thought that everyone would eventually meet in the middle, through the creation of a homogeneous, middle-class mestizo nation—meaning achieving a balance between criollo and indigenous—or whether the country would eventually become “whitened” as the way in which the Brazilian elites envisaged the future of Brazil (Skidmore, 1993). In the case of Mexico, eugenicists goals had to adapt to the low migratory conditions in which a person would be culturally “whitened” while still looking phenotypically “mixed”.

Valle concluded his article comparing the situation of segregation of Black populations in the US to indigenous groups in Mexico by stating that

[Black people in the US had] suffered and [would] continue to suffer in order to achieve a real sense of equality next to Whites; but [Black people in the US got]

stronger after every fight and struggle, they [had] been acquiring the necessary tools to subsist and, as a result, they [had] been growing in importance every single day despite the social hostility. (Valle, 1940: p.16)

Social scientists in the US and elsewhere had been discussing the ways that segregation in the United States had contributed to, or at least not impeded, the emergence of a Black middle class (Adelman, 2004; Patillo, 2013; Alba et.al., 2000). The experience of oppression inspired race conscious politics, like the Negro Improvement Association, and cultural organizations, like the Harlem Renaissance. Drawing on this, Valle alluded to a perverse kind of virtue in segregation in that it inspired “progress” among the racially oppressed, whereas mestizaje regimes in Latin America just inspired whitening tendencies. However, this was an unpopular view among most Mexican scholars—Gamio among them—who viewed segregation as anathema to their “democratic project” of mestizaje.

2.4 Nazi Eugenics vs Mestizaje: The International Dimensions of a Criollo Eugenic Argument

Using criollo eugenics, eugenicists and state officials managed to use ideas of homogenization to exclude and invisibilize certain groups. This allowed Mexican officials to reinforce ideas of citizenship that privileged an assimilable whiteness while separating themselves from Nazi eugenics. However, this was not new. Brazilian eugenicist and intellectual Edgard Roquette-Pinto argued for an antiracist eugenics on a similar basis since the 1920s (Ventura Santos, 2012; Stepan, 1991: p. 160). Francisco De A. Benavides argued that “the role of eugenics [was] to fight for the betterment of the species and it should not be interpreted as a barrier for the development of the nation, as absurd racist principles or the Nazi theory of the super-race” (De A. Benavides, 1943: p.6). Using criollo eugenics, the SME managed to criticize how eugenics was being carried out in Nazi Germany without jeopardizing mestizaje. During 1942, Leonicio E. De la Rocha, argued that “there was no racial or social condition that [could] escape transmissible hereditary diseases” their only mission was puericulture as all the “races” could potentially suffer from degenerate traits. (De la Rocha, 1942: p.3). De La Rocha did not deny the existence of races but sidestepped the question of whether any were superior or inferior to the others. This implies that De la Rocha believed in a move

towards a race-free eugenics, similar to Roquette-Pinto's idea in Brazil. In 1943, the SME published an article by José Chelala who argued that it was

incorrect to argue that there [was] racial superiority or inferiority. There [were] only individual components caused by social and environmental factors that [played] a role in the physical, intellectual and moral fibre of humankind [...] there [were] no studies or investigations that [supported] the existence of a superior race as argued by Nazi eugenicists and Nazi scientists. (Chelala, 1943: p.14,15)

Through his critique of Nazi Germany Chelala also put forward criollo eugenics by “rejecting all the concepts and theories produced by the argumentation and advocacy of a pure race and the superiority of some races over others” (Chelala, 1943: p.18). He concluded stating that “eugenicists [fought] for the betterment of the physical and mental quality of men. This [was] the most useful method to ensure individual and social evolution for a better future” (Chelala, 1943: p.20).

Mexican eugenicists claimed that races should not be considered superior, instead, they recommended a certain racial mix to achieve maximum potential. Thus, while criticizing the idea of racial hierarchy based on Aryanness, SME members produced another hierarchy in which mestizaje was the highest value. The SME endorsed this paradoxical argument by claiming that the superiority of only one race was illogical as “racial purity” did not exist. While deeming “Nazi theories of a superior race to be absurd”, criollo eugenics advocated for a betterment of the race that had, as its goal, the creation of a “human of better quality” (De A. Benavides, 1943: p.6,10) – namely, the mestizo. The SME employed criollo eugenics to sustain their arguments behind mestizaje, eliminate possible ties to Aryan doctrine, and continue adapting eugenics in Mexico. The result was that the interest in racial homogeneity did not cease to exist but went underground.

After the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany and international condemning of eugenics as a pseudo-science, Mexican eugenicists made their appearance as leaders of anti-racist discourses. Juan Comas Camps (1900-1979), a Spanish-born, Mexican-raised anthropologist, was one of the collaborators in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Statement on Race in 1950. Comas was appointed to this position by the Director-General of UNESCO (1948-1952), Mexican politician and writer, Jaime Torres Bodet (1902-1974). Torres wanted to organize a conference alongside the UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences as a part

of the organization's "race" program (Hazard Jr., 2011: p.176). Apart from Comas, another seven scholars were appointed to compose the panel.

British anthropologist, Ashley Montagu (1905-1999), was the rapporteur for the 1950 UNESCO Statement on Race based on what he argued in *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1942). In here, Montagu indicated that there was no point in redefining a word like "race" and it would be better to stop using it as it was "utterly erroneous and meaningless" (Montagu, 1997 [1942]: p.64, 116). This created a new definition of race in which there was no hierarchy, and represented dynamic and open evolutionary and biological systems. In point six of the Statement he advised to use of the concept of ethnic groups instead of race. He then proceeded to state that there were only three major classifications for mankind "(a) Mongoloid division; (b) the Negroid division; and (c) the Caucasoid division" (UNESCO Statement on Race, 1950: Point 7). Montagu continued by stating that there were different sub-groups or ethnic groups that lay beneath these three major divisions. Thus, "by rendering ethnic groups subdivisions of the three 'races', Montagu actually biologized 'ethnic group'" (Hazard Jr., 2011: p.181).

The 1950 Statement caused major criticisms in different spheres of influence. Due to this backlash, another Statement was published in 1951. After these Statements, the ways in which the term "race" was used started to change. Nowadays, in the public sphere and scientific research "ethnicity" or "ethnic groups" has come to be something of a euphemism for "race". So, the meanings have both multiplied and blurred. Song (2018) argues that "this reluctance to use the term 'race', and the preference for 'ethnicity' [...] translates into an equivocation about 'race' that leads to infer that race and racial categories do not matter anymore" (Song, 2018: p.1135). An unintended consequence of these Statements is that the act of not mentioning race becomes a way of denying the continuing impacts of structural racism and discrimination.

Comas Camps is very important to understand how criollo eugenics transformed and transported ideas from Mexico to the international sphere and vice versa. Besides his collaboration on the first UNESCO Statement on Race (1950) and his identification with indigenismo and anti-racism, —drawing on Gamio's theory—Comas Camps contributed to eugenic theories which argued that indigenous populations should be systematically "de-indianized" (Gómez Izquierdo, 2000: p.100-101). Even though Comas was not part of the SME, he drew on criollo eugenics, to publish some of his main works like *The Social Problems of Triqui Indians in Oaxaca* (1941), *The Nutrition Regime and Indigenous Betterment* (1942), *The Public Assistance and Biological Development of*

Indigenous People (1943), and *The Medic and Teacher in the Betterment of Indigenous People* (1945), among others (Gómez Izquierdo, 2000: p. 84). In these works, Comas used criollo eugenics to advocate for the betterment of indigenous people. For instance, like other physical anthropologists post-WWII, Comas gave “race” a very particular biological meaning, which he designated as devoid of connotations of purity or hierarchy. In ‘Scientific’ Racism Again? (1961), Comas argued that “[t]here [was] no evidence that race mixture, as such, [produced] bad results from a biological point of view” (Comas, 1961: p.311). Comas wrote this in opposition to eugenicist and biologist Charles Davenport (1866-1944) and his assistant, physical anthropologist and eugenicist Morris Steggerda’s (1900-1950) work entitled *Race Crossing in Jamaica* (1929) which condemned miscegenation as degenerative. This allowed Comas to assert his view on the positive traits that race mixture had in his own context.

Comas then proceeded to state that “[t]he social results of race mixture, whether for good or ill, are to be traced to social factors” (Comas, 1961: p.311). He suggested that if, for example, a biracial couple had children that engage in criminal activity, it was because of social and environmental factors in their upbringing and not because of anything inherently degenerative in their biological makeup. Comas developed these ideas which then translated into the second UNESCO Statement (Comas, 1961: p.304). To conclude, criollo eugenics seemed very progressive and antiracist in comparison to the overt racism of Davenport in the US. But in its own context, these ideas clearly had an important and pernicious element aimed at deculturating indigenous people and invisibilizing certain groups. Consequently, these forms of “cultural racism” mainly replaced “biological racism” (Balibar 1991).

2.5 Final Considerations

The mestizo, as an assemblage, operates in itself but it is also a component of other assemblages (Wade, 2017: p.47). To understand the mutability and fluidity of these assemblages that contributed to the configuration of the mestizo it is important to explore the elements that create and solidify these connections (Wade, 2017: p.47-51). Throughout the history of the mestizo I can observe that categories were an imagined and fluid category that could be either falsified, cast into doubt, and mainly mattered for people aspiring to enter the elite classes. However, these ideas fuelled and informed modern understandings of racial categories.

After the Mexican independence and with new anthropological and scientific developments in the international sphere, the Porfiriato and its supporters and intellectuals known as the científicos started implementing policies that privileged the migration of Whites in order to assimilate and whiten the population with the Vallarta Law of 1886. However, these failed as attempts to “whiten” the population were not met due to the small number of migrants during the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, one thing is clear, scientific ideas expanded ideas of mestizaje to the population which pathologized everyone that would fall outside of the imagined and idealized version of the mestizo.

Criollo eugenics was supported on scientific ideas from Europe, Latin America, and their own production of knowledge. Through the works of Vasconcelos and Gamio I saw how the privileging of the “mestizo” was done in different ways. These ideas were then taken on by Mexican eugenicists to go with and against these original ideas but always operating within the assemblages of the mestizo as the archetypal citizen while invisibilizing certain groups or categorizing them as a mere factor in the process and logics of mestizaje which, in turn, puts them in a position of not-quite or non-human.

Additionally, criollo eugenics interweaved the nation-building process of Mexico. These technological tools, like eugenic science, acted as racializing assemblages to convert not-quite-humans or indigenous populations into full humans and invisibilize and/or eliminate in a systematic manner those categorized as non-humans. Criollo eugenics supported the understanding of these context-specific ways of technologizing and pathologizing certain groups that allowed anti-racist position that not only spread through Mexican nationalism but was exported internationally as seen with Juan Comas Camps and the drafting of the UNESCO Statements of Race.

3 THE MAKING OF “LA GRAN FAMILIA MEXICANA”: EUGENICS, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN MEXICO

The post-revolutionary conceptualization of “la gran familia Mexicana” is very important to the broader understanding of Mexican eugenics. By studying the ways in which Mexican elites thought about the family, this chapter will address the following questions: what would be the role of women in post-revolutionary Mexico? What did Mexican eugenicists and eugenic science have to say about the care of children, womanhood, masculinity, and feminism? Which were the appropriate eugenic measures to take care of the future of Mexican generations to come? Were sterilization and abortion measures a viable answer to prevent eugenic degeneration? In short, who should, or could be part of “la gran familia Mexicana”?

3.1 La Gran Familia Mexicana: Processes of Defining, Senses of Belonging

Stern (1999) states that after the Revolution, different institutions and state services were dedicated to the reconceptualization of motherhood and puericulture—the care of children—under the banner of “la gran familia Mexicana” (Stern, 1999: p.375; Stern 2000: p.66). The term “la gran familia mexicana” in fact originated in the nineteenth century as a popular saying that fed different political rhetoric and referred to being naturalized and accepted as a citizen of Mexico. This concept of “la gran familia mexicana” stemmed not only from the processes of naturalization, but also from the fact that most migrants seeking naturalization had already built a life in Mexico and did not have any plans to return to their countries of origin (Pani, 2015: p.113). This section will explore the figure of the “gran familia Mexicana”, on its macro- and micro-levels, as it was defined by Mexican eugenicists.

Eugenicists in Mexico played a very important role in the configuration of what they called “*profilaxis social*” (social prophylaxis). The term social prophylaxis referred to a set of scientific ideas with a program of social implementation, which followed Neo-Lamarckian principles of eugenics by arguing that there were certain hereditary precepts that could be controlled or managed. During the decade of the 1920s the political and cultural climate of post-revolutionary Mexico was changing due to the massive migration of young peoples from the rural parts of Mexico to the city (Bliss et al, 2007: p.210). According to Katherine Bliss and William French (2007) young people aged from 10 to 24 composed about one third of Mexico City’s population as it was recorded in the 1921 census (Bliss et al, 2007: p. 2010). The transformation of the city gave way to different ways of living and inhabiting it. These adolescents usually composed part of Mexico City’s working class and would spend their wages on “venues associated in public discourse with sexual permissiveness” (Bliss et al, 2007: p.210). These adolescents, in the elites’ view, were leading a life of degeneration and disease that would jeopardize the future of the Mexican nation. It was in this political and cultural climate that eugenicists came to try and regulate, manage, and control the reproduction of women to construct a family that, in their view, would be free from hereditary defects and the risk of long-term genetic degeneracy.

Eugenics was seen by the Mexican elites as a tool to control this population that was migrating from rural to urban parts of Mexico, regulate their acts of sexual permissiveness, and try to eradicate their erotic sentiments through eugenic measures. The term adolescent came into use in the first decades of the twentieth century by North American and European intellectuals, to divide childhood and adulthood within institutional efforts to separate education, work, leisure activities, and romance with regards to this new social classification (Bliss et al, 2007: p.210-211). In the case of Mexico, the usage and institutionalization of adolescence was also eugenically oriented. With the vast migration from rural areas of the country to Mexico City, Mexican eugenicists tried to control the activities of leisure and what they considered to be sexual deviancies among working class adolescents. For instance, eugenicist and physiologist, Joaquín Izquierdo recommended—at the Second Congress of the Mexican Child in 1923—that it was important to do an exhaustive study of the distribution of “la gran familia Mexicana” to determine the defects and characteristics of the unions between the Indian, criollo, and mestizo (Stern 2000: p.66). This created the conditions for the creation of Juvenile Court’s Observation Rooms (1926) made to discipline and reincorporate

criminal adolescents into society, and in the 1930s the Juvenile Court System was created under the Department of Social Provision (Stern, 1999: p.386). According to Stern (1999), the Juvenile Court System was managed by five magistrates, among whom were eugenicist Manuel Gamio and feminist eugenicist Matilde Rodríguez Cabo, who were in charge of “discipline and reform predicated on eugenic understandings of heredity, sexuality, and cognitive capacity” (Stern, 1999: p.386). Additionally, in the *Eugenesia* Journal there were various mentions of different ways in which eugenicists and Mexican officials could control the working class. For instance, educator and psychiatrist, Raúl González argued that there was a “difference in the moral sexuality of the bourgeoisie and the working class” (González, 1940: p.9) (Stern, 2006: p.337; Suárez et al, 2005: p.231). González proceeded to argue that there were four main characteristics of the sexual lives of working-class women. These were “precocious initiation, promiscuity, and fugacity at the time of initiation, lack of a legal marriage, and elevated percentage of clandestine, accidental—which, in this case is synonymous to occasional—, or transient prostitution” (González Enríquez, 1940: p.9; Camba Arriola, 2005: p.50). Eugenically oriented institutions like the Juvenile Court also show a form of assimilated eugenic thinking (Rose 2001) dictated by moral precepts, as these were used by parents to discipline their children by claiming they were engaging in prostitution based on no specific grounds or evidence (Bliss et.al., 2007: p.209-236). This can be seen in other places such as Nazi Germany when parents requested for their own children to be subjected to eugenic measures due to eugenic campaigns and propaganda that called for the self-regulation of those considered as unfit to bear any offspring (Rose, 2001: p.4). These eugenic approaches that tended to advocate for the self-regulation and management of people were very much present in Mexico.

It was as a way of contesting these lives of “degeneration,” pleasure, and sexual leisure that eugenicists in conjunction with the Mexican government started to try and implement measures and ideas to control and manage sexuality. For instance, in February 1933, two years after the creation of the SME, Alfredo Saavedra drew up a Mexican Code of Eugenics. This Code was mainly directed towards an extensive program of eugenically-oriented sex education that was made in conjunction with radio broadcasts and eugenically oriented pamphlets for popular consumption (Stepan 1991, p.57; Stern 1999, p.376; Suarez et al 1999). The Mexican Code of Eugenics was a series of guidelines that advocated for measures to better the Mexican race. This code stated that “[i]t [was] not rational to accept that love must be blind” (Saavedra, 1940a: p.1) alluding to the

advocacy of a rational mixing of the Mexican population through puericulture and the prevention of undesirable marital unions. Additionally, this new idea of love contrasted with the typically romantic nineteenth century idea of love to demarcate a new era of rational thinking.

The Mexican Code of Eugenics (1940) was divided into twelve eugenic precepts:

1. Marriage is the union between two people of the opposite sex that unite in order to form a home in which there is moral, physical, and economic cooperation. This has the end goal of perpetuating the species.
2. Children are the base of solidarity in a marriage. Parents have full responsibility of their offspring.
3. Sick parents, either mentally or physically ill, cannot produce healthy offspring; most of them are insane criminals, blind, and perverted. It would be all the parents' fault for producing degenerate offspring as they did not have previous cultural and moral preparation.
4. That alcoholism in general and drugs, even more so before marriage, can damage the life of the offspring and can produce mentally deficient, sick, or perverted children.
5. That venereal diseases, specifically syphilis and gonorrhea, are direct causes of racial degeneration and the death of children before being born.
6. That marriages between family members cause biologically deficient individuals.
7. If a couple is not completely healthy, they should abstain from sex and not bear any children.
8. One cannot have children if they are not to be born healthy or one cannot teach them the basic principles of hygiene.
9. Abortion is reprehensible for moral and biological reasons.
10. Parents are responsible for knowing the fundamental principles behind childcare before their children are born.
11. Beyond economic, social, or emotional reasons one needs to pick the best partner rationally. This means choosing out of the best equipped morally and physically.
12. Before marriage, one needs to consult a doctor who will recommend hygienic practices and will do a study of each person to guarantee the best conditions for the future offspring. (Saavedra, 1940a: p.1-2)

Firstly, it should be noted that the heterosexual family was the only one able, according to the SME, to reproduce the Mexican race, thus, everything outside of heterosexuality as a norm became pathological. During the early 1940s, the SME published various discussions regarding sexuality; in order to do this they would quote Austrian neurologist and forefather of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). For instance, on a summary of the 9th Cycle of Conferences made by the SME, they published a paper presented by neuropsychiatrist and psychotherapist Guillermo Dávila. In his paper entitled *The Sexual Problems of Infants* (Dávila, 1940: p.12), Dávila drew on Freud's ideas, specifically on the *Essay of Infantile Sexuality* (Freud, 1905: p.277-339), to argue that "pansexuality [began] when a person [was] born and [this had] repercussions on the person's psychological status since homosexuality originally [derived] from narcissism" (Dávila, 1940: p.12-13). Dávila used these ideas to argue that homosexuality and developmental problems in the psychological composition of an infant could cause a regression that would lead to neurosis (Dávila, 1940: p.13). However, alluding to Neo-Lamarckian conceptions of eugenics, he also argued that the only way that homosexuality could be eradicated would be through censorship and education (Dávila, 1940: p.13). This censorship was discussed in various essays of the *Eugenesia* journal and it alluded to the censorship of literature, theaters, and art that would contain sexual content as, in the eugenicists view, this would tamper with the developmental composition of children. Two years after Dávila's paper, José Chelala published an article at the *Eugenesia* journal entitled *The Infantile Psychic Personality and its Influence in Mental Hygiene* (1942). Drawing on Freud's ideas, Chelala argues that if a parent's pathologies tampered with the determining stages of the child this could lead to an abnormal child (Chelala, 1942: p.3-30). Hence, "[t]he normative conflation of hetero-sex with reproduction means that the bond gets structured around the desire to 'reproduce well'" (Ahmed, 2004: p.128). Additionally, while there was no direct mention of races in the code there is a hidden racial aspect that comes with Saavedra's account of rational love in order to make a better offspring for the future of Mexican society. Saavedra's quest to find the best and rational way to reproduce well was mainly a series of precepts that would lead to a "good mixing of the races" that would focus on assumed biological and eugenic reasons. Following Ahmed (2004), "good reproduction is often premised around a fantasy of 'making likeness' by seeing my features reflected back by others, whose connection to me is then confirmed" (Ahmed, 2004: p.128). According to Saavedra, this likeness revolved around a mestizaje that would be imprinted in the skin as a sign of progress and modernity that,

in his view, went beyond economic and emotional considerations (Saavedra, 1940a: p.1). However, this anxiety to “make likeness” through mestizaje was reflected since the early stages of the post-revolution when eugenicist and indigenist Manuel Gamio created the beauty pageant “La India Bonita” in 1921 as a way of making indigenous women desirable to criollo men—as will be explained later in the following section.

To summarize, this code presupposed that those who were not able to abide by the rules of the code “failed to create or sustain a normative heterosexual family through marriage (and its presumed corollary, procreation)” (Stern, 2010: p.184). This meant that the legal heterosexual union of the family had to be eugenically managed both at an individual and collective level through, what I term, criollo eugenics. Thus, the abovementioned eugenic Code advocated for a rational mixing made by the eugenic self-control of the population, allowing for a desirable mestizaje that would create a cohesive national identity in Mexico.

The development of eugenics helped to construct the ideal family while pathologizing traits that were considered a degeneration for future generations. There were different measures that advocated for the eugenic regulation of marriages during the Mexican Revolution, like the creation of the first article requiring medical certification before marriage in 1914 and the Family Restriction Law of 1917. However, it was not until after the Mexican Revolution that these measures started to be more prominent. For instance, during the course of the Sixth Latin American Medical Congress in 1922, prenuptial certificates were “defended as a solution to depopulation and racial health” (Stepan, 1991: p.124). This was one of the contributing factors for the creation of a Pan American Office of Eugenics. Latin American eugenicists found support in other eugenic societies such as France and Belgium although these societies argued in a conference in 1926 that a prenuptial examination must be regarded “as a voluntary and prudential aid to marriage, not as an obligatory impediment to it” (Stepan, 1991: p.124). In the same year, the Sanitary Code of 1926 declared prenuptial certificates as a requisite for marriage. However, these measures were implemented but not enacted until 1935.

The Prenuptial Certificate Law in decree 1709 of 1935 is central to showing the influence of eugenicists and the SME in Mexico (Suarez et al, 2001: p.86; Lisbona-Guillén, 2015: p.177). Through the drafting of this measure I can observe how liberal policies were modified in Mexico in ways that would favor more interventionist rules after eugenics became a part of official discourse (González Soriano et al, 2010: p.42). The prenuptial certificate had two main goals, the first one being the prevention and

elimination of the spread of syphilis and other incurable diseases. For instance, the Federal Civil Code (1928) mentioned “[a] medical certificate by an official Medical Doctor” (Federal Civil Code, Art.94, Num.4) which implied that the prenuptial certificate had to be regulated by the state as it could only be awarded by an official physician. The Federal Civil Code continued by stating that “those who are about to contract matrimony [could not] suffer from syphilis, tuberculosis, or any chronic or incurable disease that could be contagious or hereditary” (Federal Civil Code, 1928, Art.94, Num.4) which presupposed a state control over the spread of diseases that followed Lamarckian ideas of eugenics as acting as a social prophylactic which leads me to the second objective of prenuptial certificates. This was to work as a gatekeeper for regulating marital unions in Mexico. By way of example, Uruguayan physician and honorary member of the SME, Augusto Turenne stated that reproduction should be managed through science as “this should be the only criteria that supports and controls all activities from official institutions” (Turenne, 1941: p.17). Thus, this shows the ways in which science was presented as a force for implementing different eugenic plans and, in the specific case of Mexico, SME eugenicists wanted to make science a mechanism for political intervention that would reduce mestizophiles’ dreams into a modern nation (Saade, 2011: p.62). This can be seen in the ways in which eugenicists discussed the implementations of measures such as the prenuptial certificate as the rational mixing by the population for future generations. In their view the certificate was “the first step, made by the individual to have the home that they desire” (Saavedra, 1941: p.6). Through having the home that Mexican individuals desired by accepting eugenic precepts as a way of self-management, the idea of eugenics, envisioned by the SME, would become the organizing principle for the family in Mexico. Eugenics in Mexico—or the dynamics of criollo eugenics—and the idea of a desirable reproduction impacted state measures like the Sanitary Code (1926), regulations to the Civil Code (1928), and produced other institutional services such as the Hereditary Health Counselling Service (1951) to create desirable future prospects for a modern Mexico.

3.1.1 Mexican Mothers: *Mujer decente, chica moderna, and india bonita*

Similarly to “la gran familia Mexicana”, the management of reproduction and the role of women comes from a long history of gendered ideas that date back to colonial times. This is to say, the control of sexuality has always been central to the management

of reproduction in Mexico. For instance, in colonial America a man’s status in society was dictated by honor and respectability, while a woman’s status was supported by ideas of honorability, purity, and shame (Wade, 2009: p.62). However, conceptions of honorability were also mediated by notions of blood and caste, as only Spanish men and women could be considered honorable. Therefore, among the colonial elites, marriage was central to safeguarding and enhancing the honor and respectability of the wealthy and, more importantly, the family (Vinson III, 2018: p.125). However, it is important to note the legal notion of the family, in colonial New Spain, was conceptualized for safeguarding honor and wealth, rather than something to protect for its own sake.

After the independence of Mexico (1810-1821), Mexican elites were extremely concerned with immorality and the feeling that the value of honor had completely left the nation (Escalante, 1992). During this period the “mujer urbana” (urban woman) or “chica moderna” (modern girl) was an object of debate by the elites as these conceptions of urban and modernity were, in the latter’s view, bringing about immorality and sexual permissiveness (Zavala, 2006: p.150-152). This led to a rise in academic and scientific works during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century that discussed the purity and honorability of women. For instance, Mexican physician Francisco Flores published a book entitled *The Hymen in Mexico* (1885). His interest was showing, through his sample of 181 women, that virginity was a sanitary, legal, and hygienic concern. Ruiz (2001) argues that these investigations showed a moral concern for the virginal state and purity of women while making an active effort to frame it as a scientific and anthropological concern for defining nature, biology, and the cultural behaviors of Mexican society (Ruiz, 2001: p.148). Similarly, indigenist and eugenicist Manuel Gamio dedicated an entire chapter of *Forging a Nation* (1916) to women, entitled *Our Women*—which suggested, in a patronizing way, a sense of property. In this chapter he classified and divided women into three categories: servant, feminist, and feminine (Gamio, [1916] 2010: p.115-125). Gamio argued that feminine women were the most desirable of the three, as they still held notions of honorability and purity that would make for a desirable mixture of the existing races in Mexico. Conversely, in Gamio’s view, feminists had masculine traits like modern, short haircuts which contrasted with the traditional long hairstyles of indigenous women who still preserved their traditions of purity and morality (Zavala, 2006: p.164-165). Additionally, he argued that the newly-independent Mexican state had the “patriarchal” and “colonial” duty to care for the virginal and pure status of feminine women that was jeopardized in the cases of servant

or feminist women. In his view, the latter only wanted to colonize the former (servants) as a way of exerting a colonial-style power within family structures (Ruiz, 2001: p.149). I can suggest that this refers to a kind of class discourse that insinuated that middle-class Mexican women were better.

Gendered, regional, racial, and class dynamics of honorability, purity, and shame were still present after the Mexican Revolution. However, the Mexican elites made the political decision to modernize the pure and honorable idea of the Mexican woman—or “mujer decente” —while it coexisted with the “chica moderna” (Hershfield, 2008). The differences between them range from the honorability and purity of the “mujer decente” to the “chica moderna” being a figure of progress but sexual permissiveness usually ascribed to the city. The figure of the “chica moderna” was produced by the Mexican government, institutions, and elites through a series of images made to fashion an emergent, national middle-class citizen who would combine notions of purity and honorability with modernity (Hershfield, 2008: p.4-6). However, conflicting ideas of modernity make this notion rather difficult to define. For instance, for people like Manuel Gamio, Mexico’s modern woman should also be inherently traditional. This can be seen in the 1921 beauty pageant “La india bonita”. The study of this pageant sheds some light on the gendered notions of racial mixture in post-revolutionary Mexico.



Figure 3.1: The Jury for the Contest: “La India Bonita” Taken from: (El Universal Ilustrado, 1921 in Albarrán Samaniego, 2018: p.5)

As I showed at the bottom of Figure 3.1, Gamio was one of the organizers and part of the jury of the contest. Being one of the organizers of the pageant, he used his own thesis in *Forging a Nation* (1916) to construct a feminine category of woman who was desirable to white Mexican men in order to make a good and rational racial mixture. In Gamio's view the "india bonita" pageant was the epitome of authentic Mexican beauty (Zavala, 2006: p.160). He argued later, in 1923, that Mexico's demographic problems could only be solved by white men mixing with indigenous women as the latter were intrinsically monogamous (Ruiz, 2001: p.153).



Figure 3.2: Winner of "La India Bonita", María Bibiana Uribe, 16 years old (Taken from: El Universal Ilustrado, 1921)

By portraying the winner of the pageant, María Bibiana Uribe, as a “pure race meshica indian” he presented her as an exotic indigenous woman with a glorious lineage that could be traced to courageous warriors, making her the ideal woman for mestizaje. Additionally, the idea that someone—in this case an indigenous woman—from within the Mexican nation could be exotic is telling as it places her in contrast with the “chica moderna” who is an acculturated criollo. Furthermore, instances like “La india bonita” beauty pageant puts into question why indigenous men were not considered ideal for mestizaje. Is it because making indigenous men the ideal for mestizaje would tamper with a majority criollo elite in Mexico? Also, the idea of an “india bonita” pageant also suggests that indigenous women were inherently seen as “not beautiful”. Thus, Mexican ideas of beauty allow the study of the different ways in which beauty can enhance understandings of the different “mechanism of racism in Mexico by offering an innovative analysis of how whiteness is a core-structuring motif obscured by the homogenizing racial logic of mestizaje” (Moreno Figueroa, 2010: p.388).

The visualization of what the new modern woman of Mexico entailed, according to national values and precepts, gave a sense of empowerment that simultaneously positioned women as not only modern, but as a reproductive apparatus for the future of Mexico (Hershfield, 2008; Stern, 2010). This paradox of the role of Mexican women as an empowered subject while also being the holder of biological burden for the future of the nation is a constitutive element of the way in which eugenics and Mexican nationalism was carried out (Stern, 2010: p.174). Additionally, gendered ideas of the different roles of men and women in society work as an organizing principle for eugenic ideas on race, class, beauty, among others.

3.1.2 Mexican Fathers: An Absent Presence?

The role of men in the family became constantly blurred in eugenic conceptions of caregiving. Alfredo Saavedra argued that, despite supporting the role of women’s empowerment and the “chica moderna”, it was important to keep a traditional patriarchal structure. For instance, one can observe the paradoxical elements of “criollo eugenics” between the figure of the “chica moderna” and “mujer decente” when Saavedra argued that the “first step of female liberation, motivated by the incentive of the species, [entailed] not worrying about the interests of the father” (Stern, 1999: p. 377). For Saavedra, the roles of men and women were dictated by biology. In his view “women had to be fundamentally feminine and men had to be essentially masculine with all the

attributes and obligations that emerge from their somatic constitution” (Saavedra, 1940: p.19). Similarly to Gamio, femininity, in Saavedra’s view, had to do with caregiving and purity while following modern eugenic precepts of reproduction. For instance, this is shown in the different covers of *Eugenesia*.



Figure 3.3: *Eugenesia* Covers, December 1941 (top-left), February 1941 (top-right), September 1941 (bottom-left), July 1950 (bottom-right)

Figure 3.3 shows the ways in which the role of women is relegated to caregiving. Additionally, the majority of the images show non-indigenous women and white babies which I suggest that could either reflect internal tensions between different members of the SME that dictated whose bodies should be part of the nation or it possibly portrayed something to strive for, a light-skinned mestizo. Nonetheless, the gender roles depicted by the SME show a socialization and relegation of women to caregiving.



Figure 3.4: *Eugenesia* Cover, January 1948

As shown in Figure 3.4, the girl is already taking care of an infant which shows the processes and early-socialization of gender roles, advocated by Mexican eugenicists in society.

Saavedra's idea of being "essentially masculine" was counterposed with vagrancy and delinquency, which were traits considered by eugenicists as generally unproductive to Mexican society. To eugenicists, men were just a small element of reproduction. However, by this point in time Saavedra's mention of the role of men and paternity seemed revolutionary as previously this configuration of the matriarchal family was deemed pathological. Saavedra proceeded by explaining the role of women in society by stating that "the fundamental mission of women [was] motherhood, but it [could] also derive to other functions of caregiving within society such as education (i.e. teachers) and social work" (Saavedra, 1940: p.20). Thus, he made use of biological and anatomical conceptions to support changing political and social conventions (Preciado, 2016: p. 408).

The need for "new men" in the twentieth century was a very common rhetoric among eugenicists that can be seen replicated in Mexico (Stern, 2010: p.180). In the case of Mexico, most male eugenicists were upper or middle class who not only were active participants in the Revolution—as policy makers, drafters of the constitution, soldiers, among others—but who also positioned themselves as the best subjects for reproduction due to their superior lineage vis-à-vis the working class. For instance, Stern (2010) mentions that in 1921 at the Second International Congress of Eugenics in New York City, Mexican physiologist Joaquín Izquierdo (1893-1974) presented his family tree which dated his lineage back to Spanish conquistadors (Stern, 2010: p.179-180). By showing his family tree Izquierdo showed a preference for his European ancestry portraying himself as the outcome of his white forefathers that, in Izquierdo's view, were soldiers and conquistadors of new civilizations. Thus, as Stern (2010) argues, the "brand of colonizer masculinity was integral to eugenics" (Stern, 2010: p.180). However, Wade (2017) argues that these notions probably stemmed from the fact that in some Latin American context the white criollo upper-middle class men came to be seen as effeminate—by revolutionaries—, while the mestizos became the new model of masculine virility (Wade, 2017: p.201). Additionally, I suggest that this is also an attempt to show one's masculine qualities "despite" whiteness. In an attempt to break away from these conceptions of femininity and showing their qualities, white upper-middle class men started advocating for a pragmatic way of "bettering" the population. Thus, this brand of colonizer masculinity not only stems from a gendered and racializing principle

but, in the case of Mexico, is simultaneously used as a class marker to differentiate white or light-skinned upper or upper-middle class from the rural to urban migration of working-class adolescents that, in the elites’ view, were tied to degeneration, vices, vagrancy, and disease. Moreover, the example of “la india bonita” pageant shows how people like Gamio felt the need to make indigenous women desirable to white men that started look from pragmatic ways to integrate and change the desired mestizaje of post-revolutionary Mexico.

3.1.3 Healthy Families, Happy Children

The control and management of children played an important part in eugenic discussions. However, since the Porfiriato there were different measures to standardize and medicalize the education system in Mexico. For instance, in 1908 the Department of School Anthropometrics and eugenicists Daniel Vergara Lope and Everando Landa investigated the “physiological averages of Mexican Children from birth until the age of 24 years” (Stern, 1999: p.383). This was done to gather data on the children’s height, weight, and thoracic width in order to create an average of intelligence and mental normalcy (Stern, 1999: p.383). Additionally, in 1910, José de Jesús Gonzalez stipulated the bases for separating “retardation” and “normalcy” through a series of categories like “false from true retards, educable from non-educable abnormals, imbeciles from simple retards, moral abnormals from mental cases, and so on” (Stern, 1999: p.383-384).

After the Revolution (1910-1920) these ideas set the bases for the creation of different eugenically-oriented institutions to catalogue and construct an average for children. For instance, in 1922 the Child Hygiene Center was created and in 1925 the Department of Psychopedagogy and Hygiene (DPH) was founded. By 1926, the DPH administered exams to over 15,000 pupils, seeking to determine levels of mental retardation (Stern, 1999: p.384). As a result, by the early 1930s between 90,000 and 200,000 students were being tested in Mexico per year and by 1935 and 1936 the DPH was directing and organizing workshops to instruct school teachers in places like Michoacán, Guerrero, and Mexico City (Stern, 1999: p.385). Additionally, during the 1930s the state created a Juvenile Court System that was overseen by the Department of Social Provision and the Child Hygiene Services (Stern, 1999: p.386-387; Bliss et al, 2007).

Eugenicists counted these measures as an achievement for advancing a eugenic agenda in Mexico. They argued that the measures taken by the state would go hand in hand with the role of the mother outside of these institutions. For instance, eugenicist Cisneros de S. Hernández argued in an article in *Eugenesia* that if children were not given the appropriate care they would become “problem children”, which would make them a collective issue. He stated that “problem children [stopped] being an individual problem and [became] a social problem [...] and this problem not only [rested] on the hands of the state but also on the hands of medical doctors, pediatricians, and researchers; but, overall, these problems [relied] on the weak hands of women and particularly the woman-mother and the woman-teacher” (Cisneros de S. Hernandez, 1939: p.8). Thus, women were entrusted with childcare but only to a point in the development of children. This suggests that the state became the equivalent of a father figure in the Mexican family. A similar point was argued by eugenicist José Torre Blanco (1895-1987), a Spanish obstetrician and gynecologist exiled to Mexico in April 1939 due to the Spanish Civil War. By 1953, he revalidated his title in Mexico and became chief of the obstetric and gynecological section of the Sanatorium for Education Workers and the 20 de Noviembre Hospital. Beyond his medical practice, Torre Blanco was also a founding member of the Mexican Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics and an active member of the SME. At the 16th Conference Cycle of the SME he presented a paper entitled *Instinctive, Affective, or Rational Maternity* (1944) in which he claimed that “eugenics had the fundamental responsibility of making a conscious, healthy, and responsible family” (Torre Blanco, 1944: p.11). Nonetheless, this responsibility for the family was mainly part of the role of women as he stated that “woman as a biological representative of her sex, due to her biology, and social situation cannot develop any activities capable of damaging herself, the working class, or society in general” (Torre Blanco, 1945: p.8). Thus, the construction of the “gran familia Mexicana” relied on the, apparently dubious, rationality of women to make the “right” or eugenically oriented decisions for the betterment of society.

In 1916, Mexican feminists held two conferences in Yucatán in which they used the label “eugenic feminism”. This was a popular term among the suffragette movement in Britain and was used by Margaret Sanger in the United States and India to advocate for birth control, which was mostly based on Weismannian theories that differed from Lamarckian ideas in that they did not consider environmental conditions to be relevant when studying heredity (Stern, 1999: p. 377-378; Nadkarni, 2014: p.1). In Mexico, feminist campaigners, who were mostly upper or middle class, used eugenic feminism to

refer to the preferable reproduction of a desirable mestizaje and the control of the working classes or “la prole”. Additionally, at the Mexican Congress of the Child in 1921, the feminists of the time discussed different measures for childcare and puericulture—typically neo-Lamarckian ideas. However, in this same congress different feminist eugenicists advocated for the sterilization of criminals—who were thought of as afflicted by a hereditary disease—which, in their view, would damage or degenerate mestizaje based on Weismannian ideas and eugenic feminism. Thus, through these examples it can be observed that neo-Lamarckian and Weismannian ideas were present in Mexican eugenic discourse—as well as among feminists and patriarchal scientists—during the 1920s as a way to control the reproduction of the working classes.

The duality of eugenics between giving the women a sense of empowerment, belonging, and citizenship while technologizing them as reproductive apparatuses for the future of the nation created a paradoxical fissure in the ways in which feminists discussed eugenics. When the SME was created in 1931 it created internal disputes with the existing Society of Puericulture, mostly between feminists—who were women, members of the SME—and male members of the Society of Puericulture, who “dominated the world of pediatrics” (Stern, 1999: p.374-375). For instance, as mentioned above, people like Manuel Gamio did not believe that feminism was the ideal for women; to him, this was an imported ideology that nothing had to do with Mexico’s context (Zavala, 2006; Ruiz, 2001). Thus, feminist eugenicists were trying to carve out their space in a male-dominated discipline like puericulture.

The feminist and eugenicist Antonia Ursúa provides an example of these dynamics among eugenicists. She was a prominent obstetrician who not only attended the First Mexican Congress of the Child but was also the co-founder of the National League of Women (Stern, 1999: p.376). In the sixth conference made by the SME and then published by the *Eugenesia* journal in its March 1940 issue, Ursúa presented a paper entitled *Eugenic Matrimony* (1940) in which she expressed that women needed eugenic education to eradicate their “erotic sentiment.” This in turn would allow women to “sublimate erotic sentiment” while achieving “normal reproductive function” (Ursúa, 1940: p.19). In Ursúa’s view a normal reproductive function entailed giving way to a rational mixing to stop genetic degeneration and achieve a better outcome for future generations. Ursúa “envisioned autonomous women producing a biologically fit society in which children were placed in civilizing institutions” through the power of education (Stern, 1999: p.376)—which formed an integral part of puericultural and neo-Lamarckian

ideas. Meanwhile, Ursúa also quoted the Galtonian and Weismannian notion of the “germ plasm” to explain “the inexorable laws of heredity and the marvelous force of the environment” (Stern, 1999: p.376). Thus, Ursúa used both Lamarckian and Weismannian ideas to explain that puericulture and eugenic education should be employed to eradicate the “erotic sentiment” of working-class women—as it was believed by eugenicists that it was them who were more prompt to sexual perversions. This eroticism referred to the irrational sexual permissiveness of women without state and eugenic control in the cases in which heredity could still be controlled. It was with this set of theories that she concluded that eugenics was a form of women’s autonomy and empowerment, in the sense that it gave women the capacity of eugenically self-managing and controlling her sexual partners for an ideal reproduction, while enforcing the idea of women as reproductive machines for the future of the Mexican nation (Stern, 1999: p.376).

The statements made by Saavedra condemning abortion in point number nine of the Code of Eugenics did not arrive in a vacuum. Different mentions of abortion had been made since the end of the nineteenth century. For instance, the Penal Code of 1871 authorized abortion in cases in which the health of the mother could be endangered (Urías, 2007: p.149). Moreover, during the first decades of the twentieth century there were various medical debates and academic theses that discussed the role of the state in abortion practices. These debates held moral, social, and biological discourses that did not take into account specific cases as in most of the eugenicists’ view the biological function of women was to procreate. For example, in the SME’s view it was more favorable to sterilize as a form of prevention than to opt for abortion as this measure was seen as an indicator of social degeneration (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.151). Thus, the SME would still follow some of the Catholic Church’s precepts by saying that it was immoral and criminal to perform an abortion. However, these moral discourses were employed while using scientific and demographic language to support it, since the SME argued that it did not go in accordance to their view to simply populate but to populate well as “the social good should be over any other conveniences” (Saavedra, 1940b: p.1). Nonetheless, despite the mostly general consensus condemning abortion there were other cases in which abortion was considered as a viable measure for the containment of bad hereditary traits. Urías Horcasitas describes another thesis written in 1933 by Alfredo Islas Hernández that advocated for the eugenic sterilization of alcoholics, addicts, feeble-minded, and people with syphilis, leprosy, cancer, among others (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.155).

Besides medical doctors, there were other eugenicists whose profession was in the legal branch of the government who were interested in abortion. They argued that criminal abortion was the first step toward immoral behaviors in women (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.154). However Urías Horcasitas (2007) points out that in a thesis presented at the Faculty of Medicine in 1920, medic and lawyer Joaquín García Santaella stated that the majority of women seeking for an abortion were middle or upper class women looking to preserve their honor while working class women would wait and commit infanticide (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.154). It could be inferred from this study that different abortion measures were used by women of all classes as a strategy to try and preserve their social status which, in the case of middle/upper class women, was related to the notion of decency. Thus, the ways in which the debates on abortion were carried out show a great concern for the state but not for the individual as women’s role in society was, in the eugenicists’ view, to procreate well and care for, supervise, and protect their children.

By the same year that the Code of Eugenics was drafted, the Department of Public Health decreed that medical doctors had to have a private registry of patients who had different venereal diseases that could be hazardous for future generations without performing abortions (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.153). Additionally, medical doctors had to notify authorities immediately if these people affected by venereal diseases stopped their treatment (Urías Horcasitas, 2007: p.153). This is why, in the Mexican eugenicists’ view, “the purpose of eugenics was not to restrict birthrate, but it [was] obligatory to select those who [were] going to populate Mexico because it [would] be useless to populate with individuals who [were] going to be a burden to the state” (Saavedra, 1945: p.14). The goal of eugenics to procreate more by not restricting birthrate meant that eugenically select people had to reproduce more. Hence the burden of the role of the “mujer decente” was to conform to the idea of a virginal and pure reproductive machine for eugenically better offspring.

As it is seen from these sections the “gran familia Mexicana” holds many contradictions. However, it is important to note the ways in which the contrast between the role of women was dictated by eugenics as the defining element of modernity or “la chica moderna” while holding onto the values of honorability and purity that made the “mujer decente”. These gender roles were made as a guide to ensure the eugenic self-management of individuals to produce the best mixture of the “races” for the collective Mexican nation in which the state would act as a paternal figure. This is done due to the

mostly absent figure of the biological, preferably white, father and the management of the collective offspring through different measures and institutions (i.e. education). Now that an idea of who are the desirable subjects for the reproduction of Mexico is formed by eugenically oriented measures and conceptions of purity, honorability, modernity, and masculinity one question is left unanswered; who are the people who were not allowed to reproduce? Which hereditary traits were eugenicists trying to “weed out” (Mottier et al, 2007)?

3.2 Who is Outside “La Gran Familia Mexicana”

Eugenics was not only concerned with a monolithic conception of race as the SME combined class, illness, disease, race, heredity, and biology, among other traits. For instance, in the Code, Saavedra also stated that any bodies and traits constructed by eugenics as pathological (feeble-mindedness, homosexuality, criminality, among others) should not be allowed to reproduce, as they constituted a threat to the future of “la gran familia Mexicana”. In the cases of feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, homosexuality, and criminality, eugenicists thought that these “defects” could be genetically inherited. Therefore, they could not be part of the rational mixture of future generations to come as in their view “the true wealth of a country relies on its ethnologic value” (Saavedra, 1941: p.11-12). In this case Saavedra refers to ethnologic value as “the quality of its inhabitants as the true wealth relies in their health and mental capacity” (Saavedra, 1941: p.14)—which suggests a value in both social groups as well as culture. Additionally, by drafting this code, Saavedra managed to bring to the fore other issues that, in his view, constituted sanitary concerns like the condemning of abortion and prostitution (Bailón Vázquez, 2016). Saavedra pathologized sex workers and portrayed them as the main culprits for the spread of syphilis in Mexico. He characterized them as not apt for the reproduction of the nation due to their hereditary degeneracy produced by the Sistema Reglamentarista (System of Rule) (1862-1940) which allowed sex-work to be legal until the abolition of prostitution in 1940, which the SME claimed to have a vast role in bringing about.

From 1862 to 1940 prostitution in Mexico was tolerated under what was called the “Sistema Reglamentarista” (The System of Rule). Even though there had been projects and meetings to regulate prostitution since 1851, it was not until 1862 with the First Regulation for Prostitution at the Federal District that the first official rule was created. This was amended and renewed in 1865, 1868, 1871, 1898, 1914 and 1926 (Bailón Vázquez, 2016: p.50). The three main rules in the “regulation of prostitution”

made the police responsible for keeping track of sex workers’ identities, in order to differentiate them from “las mujeres decentes” or “las mujeres honradas”—which was a term used by legislators and eugenicists alike. According to the regulation of prostitution, sex workers had to go through weekly medical checkups. Additionally, they had to be within the “zonas de tolerancia” (tolerance zones) and were also divided into categories which allowed the state to charge them different fees depending on the type of work that they did and where those actions took place. In addition, if sex workers were caught working outside of the regulations established, they would be fined. According to the last amendment of the Sistema Reglamentarista in 1926, there were three main groups in to which sex workers were categorized, depending on the types of activities they engaged in: “las asociadas” (the associated), “las aisladas” (the isolated) and “las clandestinas” (the clandestine) (Meneses Reyes, 2011: p.57). According to Rodrigo Meneses Reyes (2011), sex workers had to be older than 18 years old but younger than 50 in order to exercise their profession; they were not allowed to be virgins—as this would tamper with the idea of “mujer decente”—and they were expected to display an adequate level of discernment to understand the significance of their actions as they engaged in their professional activities (Meneses Reyes, 2011: p.57).

Prostitution in Mexico was seen by eugenicists as the main cause for the spread of diseases and the degeneration of generations to come. During the first decades of the twentieth century eugenicists, feminist groups, politicians, and different sectors of the Mexican elite were calling for the abolition of the “Sistema Reglamentarista”. However, in the views of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century elites, the regulation of prostitution was perceived to be “the only measure to prevent or decrease the negative effects of venereal diseases within society” (Bailón Vásquez, 2016: p.43). However, under President Cárdenas (1934-1940), a new form of government was implemented that advocated for “social welfare programs”. These paternalistic forms of government created a space in which the Mexican feminist movement could articulate its views on the “Sistema Reglamentarista” as perverse and immoral which, in turn, portrayed sex workers as victims of the system (Bailón Vásquez, 2016: p.136).

Eugenicists also used this discourse of victimhood to refer to working class women who “fell prey” to prostitution, in order to advocate for its abolition. For instance, in their issue of February 1940, the *Eugenesia* journal dedicated the entire editorial section to a chronological account of achievements made, to celebrate the abolition of prostitution. In this section they claimed that the SME had been advocating for the

abolition of prostitution since 1933, when they held a conference on the topic at the National Athenaeum for the Arts and Sciences in Mexico. At the conference they claimed to have stated that the SME fought the venereal problem behind prostitution, arguing that they “discussed the official term fallen woman, we fought for her freedom, dignity, and modesty” (Saavedra, 1940c: p.1). Then the SME proceeded to blame the government for the immorality of the Mexican state. From this quotation we can see the ways in which the SME used Biblical semantics to portray sex workers as fallen women and victims that needed to be rescued from the immorality of the state. However, this was not always the way in which sex workers decided to portray themselves.

There are various instances of sex workers who made use of the discourse of victimhood employed by the elites to advance their own agendas. Katherine Bliss (2001) states that in the 1920s a group of sex workers, who referred to themselves as the “daughters of disgrace”, “wrote to Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928) to complain about the laws that governed the practice of sexual commerce in the nation’s largest city, they defined themselves as ‘nationalists’ who were concerned for Mexico’s welfare” (Bliss, 2001: p.1). According to Bliss, the “daughters of disgrace” also complained about external prostitution and human trafficking, deeming it to be non-revolutionary and non-nationalistic, given that it allowed for immoral practices from the outside. By defining themselves as the “daughters of disgrace,” these women were clearly seeking to portray themselves as defenseless victims who deserved the state’s protection, could be redeemed of their “disgrace” as “fallen women,” and had the right to participate fully in revolutionary society” (Bliss, 2001: p.4).

Similarly, in 1937, the Anti-venereal Campaign, composed by eugenicists, feminists, and politicians alike, convened a meeting with different members of the Legislative Power to discuss and design a new rule regarding prostitution. By 1938, a new and more restrictive rule was implemented to stop prostitution in different zones of Mexico City, thus causing the closure of numerous brothels. After these new restrictive measures were implemented, sex workers decided to organize with their “matronas” or pimps—most of whom were women (at this point)— to question and reverse this new rule. This union between sex workers and “matronas” was so strong that during the first 15 months of the new rule, the National Supreme Court of Justice had to intervene. According to Fabiola Bailón Vazquez (2016), not only did these women complained, protested, and lobbied—as a consequence of the new restriction of their functions—but they also demanded a new space for sex work. They underlined that their activities

contributed economically to the government’s treasury, and so they called to be treated equally, as beneficiaries of the freedom of labor stipulated in Article 4 of the Mexican constitution (Bailón Vásquez, 2016: p.141). Sex workers and “matronas” created a union in which they advocated for the continuation of prostitution. They also lobbied for a new zone for prostitution, a hospital, and a pension for women who were sex workers but, because of their age, could not continue to work (Bailón Vásquez, 2016: p.141-142). Even though the pension and hospital were not created, the Health Department in Mexico City decided to keep the “tolerance zones”. While striking for their demands for working rights, sex workers also used the narrative of the “mujer decente” to their advantage, claiming that thanks to the existence of prostitution the “mujeres decentes” were kept at a distance from men’s moral flaws and immoral dalliances.

3.2.1 Sterilization of Undesirables

Eugenicists dedicated entire sections and articles in *Eugenesia* and the *Mexican Journal of Puericulture* to discussing the possibility of sterilization measures in Mexico. For instance, eugenicist Rafael Carrillo advocated, in the *Mexican Journal of Puericulture* in 1933, for the idea of responsible motherhood which in some cases meant that women had the responsibility to avoid getting pregnant (Stern, 1999: p.375). In his article entitled ‘The Social and Medical Aspects of a Conscious Maternity (1933) he insinuated the need for forced sterilization of women who were viewed as defective (Stern, 1999: p.375). However, this was not the only case of discussions of sterilization in Mexico. In the *Eugenesia* journal, eugenicists framed sterilization as an economic measure that would benefit the Mexican welfare state. For instance, Ernesto Frenk argued in his article entitled *Eugenic Sterilization* (1940) that it was important to “impede the procreation of undesirable subjects due to their hereditary problems, mental defects, or transmission of alcoholism” (Frenk, 1940: p.16). To Frenk it was necessary to prevent undesirables from reproducing as “the amount of energy and money wasted by society [was] due to the harmful descendance of these subjects” (Frenk, 1940: p.16). This, in turn, caused “unnecessary expenditures to sustain undesirables for their happiness at the expenses of the moral ruin of their families and it [was] because of this that the healthy population [had] to restrict them from being born” (Frenk, 1940: p.16). Thus, according to the SME a healthy family did not necessarily have to mean having happy parents since the most important issue at stake was the rational mixing of desirable subjects. However,

in the previous section, it was necessary to have a rational mixing to avoid producing “niños tristes” (sad children). For instance, medic and feminist, María de J. Cisneros de S. Hernández, published an article in *Eugenesia* entitled *Repercussions in the Species: Children’s Sadness* (Cisneros de S. Hernández, 1939: p.3-10). Cisneros argued that children were an individual and collective problem that relied on the “weak hands of women; women-mother or women-teacher” (Cisneros de S. Hernández, 1939: p.6). This was why she argued that love had to be rational as when “we rely on disorganized love [...] children can fall prey to a complex emotion such as sadness” (Cisneros de S. Hernández, 1939: p.6-8). However, in Cisneros view, hereditary problems could be diminished through the individual and collective care of the children as hereditary problems were already an issue and they stemmed from the indigenous side of the mix between the races. Cisneros stated that indigenous populations are part of “a race filled with sadness” (Cisneros de S. Hernández, 1939: p.9)—which was a common depiction of indigenous people in the literature of the time. Thus, Cisneros concluded the article by stating that “if we [cared] about a better humanity, eugenic considerations [were] needed” (Cisneros de S. Hernández, 1939: p.10). As is seen here, different layers of eugenic practices and ideas are in place. Firstly, the gendered aspect that argues that women have the main role in the care of children. Secondly, that the mix between the races should be rational so that children are not pathological. Thirdly, the role of the state and the individual in the management of their own pathologies and, lastly; the ways in which the indigenous “race” is always thought of as pathological.

As mentioned in Chapter one, Stepan (1991) used the term preventive eugenics to refer to the ways in which eugenics was carried out in Latin America. However, preventive eugenics in Mexico was also used to advocate for the sterilization of undesirables. Using Neo-Lamarckian ideas of eugenics, the SME’s editorial section of July 1940 expressed that “preventive measures have to take into account the study of the hereditary personality exposed to environmental factors, intoxication, insalubrious homes, education, domestic and social organizations, labor conditions, and vagrancy” (Saavedra, 1940d, p.2). After expressing that environmental conditions tended to impact the hereditary composition of a person it stated that criminals or delinquents should be treated as patients, rather than merely delinquents, due to their genetic and hereditary disease. Putting the delinquents inside of the medical system, Mexican eugenicists sought to control them by pathologizing them. In this sense, and following Foucault (1975), it can be said that the clinic and the prison system operated together to create a class of

delinquency that would, in turn, be pathologically marginalized and racialized (Foucault, 1995 [1975]: p.294-298; Tiethof, 2016: p.110-111). Thus, in the eugenicists’ view, measures needed to be taken into account to stop the spread of undesirable traits. It is mentioned that “the death penalty is too radical, but it could be effective in some cases, like when it is a chronic pathology” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). Nonetheless, “eugenic sterilization is the best preventive measure” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). Additionally, various eugenicists saw the United States as an example worthy of following when it came to eugenic implementation. For example, Francisco Peña Trejo, an honorary member of the SME based in El Salvador, showed the way that eugenics was being carried out in the United States as an aspirational example. Peña Trejo stated that “while all the best laws are obligatory, registers show [in the United States] that most cases have had the consent and moral help of the family of the patient. However, there is also a great number of compulsory and involuntary cases” (Peña Trejo, 1940: p. 10). As we can see, Peña Trejo believed that sterilization was the best preventive eugenic measure for those who carried undesirable traits. Moreover, Peña Trejo’s thought that citizens could internalize eugenic principles and volunteer family members for sterilization “of their own accord”, for the benefit of the nation. In his view, sterilization was the tool or back-up measure, but eugenic thinking was the truly ideal and revolutionary aspect of the program. From Peña Trejo’s writing it can be inferred that ideally, people would simply use the Eugenic Code to decide who to marry, or whether to simply eliminate themselves from the population. This is to say, Stepan’s (1991) conception of preventive eugenics needs to be revisited and reconceptualized in order to incorporate accounts of the support given to sterilization measures in Mexico.

Similarly to the role of women as caregivers and mothers, the responsibility to have oneself sterilized for the betterment of future generations mostly relied on the individual. For instance, in the editorial section of October 1940, usually written by Alfredo Saavedra, it is stated that “if we do a labor of persuasion by stimulating the reproduction of the good specimens for the prosperity of the people, we could recommend the *ultimate elimination* of inadequate procreators of the race” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2, my italics). Thus, in their view, the management and control of those who were able to reproduce would by definition exclude those undesirable genes from the Mexican people. Additionally, the editorial stated that this was not the only way of keeping undesirable genes out of mestizaje but, in the SME’s view, it was imperative for citizens to “voluntarily get sterilized as [Mexicans] should be conscious of their paternity”

(Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). Thus, children also had a responsibility to the collective to know who their parents were and atone for their hereditary traits. The implication was that if they were aware of having undesirable parentage, they would have to make the decision to sterilize themselves. However, the SME identified other cases that called for an “imposition in the cases that the laws deem necessary that the subject is capable of damaging the collective” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). Therefore, according to eugenicists, “it must always be present that society should not be subordinate to the individual as the social good [had] to be more important than all individual conveniences” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). This seems the point of convergence in which the nuclear family connects to “la gran familia Mexicana” which, in the SME’s view, entails sacrificing one’s own family and the continuation of the individual lineage for the good of the national family. Moreover, it can be seen from this quote that Mexican eugenicists considered what they would call persuasion—via educational campaigns and prenuptial clinics—to advocate for the reproduction of desirable subjects while supporting the sterilization (voluntary or not) of those deemed undesirables. However, the goal of the SME was to normalize the idea of volunteering oneself for eugenic sterilization as, in their view, the whole of Mexican society should regulate itself so those undesirable individual traits would cease to exist.

Who were the people who, according to the SME, were not suitable to reproduce and therefore should be sterilized? Francisco Peña Trejo argued, following Galton, that sterilization should include “all the people that due to their degenerative or hereditary traits diverge from the average as they could be parents to an inadequate social descendancy” (Peña Trejo, 1940: p.8). He also mentioned that all those people deemed as undesirable parental figures would benefit from sterilization, and advocated for “segregation (a negative system of colonization) for imbeciles, epileptics, people with a similar family background, physical and mental invalids, obligatory for dipsomaniacs, relapsing criminals, professional vagrants, and all people who [refused] to work” (Peña Trejo, 1940: p.3). The usage of segregation as a negative system of sterilization requires attention. Generally, Mexico and other Latin American countries tended to pride themselves on not using forms of racial segregation, unlike the United States. But in the context of the war, concentration camps were being used for different kinds of “undesirables”, for instance Japanese-Mexicans. It could be inferred that the wartime context made statements and segregationist ideas more acceptable to the eugenic audience. Additionally, this transition to a Weismannian negative eugenics could be a

result of the relational connections with other ways of implementing eugenic ideas by countries like the United States during the war, despite the official oppositional discourses of Nazi eugenics.

As it can be noted, the SME advocated for an internal and biological system of colonization in which eugenicists would be in charge of managing the reproduction of Mexico. However, besides the groups mentioned above, sex workers were also deemed as undesirable subjects that should be sterilized. In the case of the sterilization law of Veracruz sex workers became fully pathological bodies that could no longer be redeemable in contrast with the abovementioned conception of fallen women. This can be seen in article number three of the sterilization law (Law 121) of 1932 in which it is stated that “the state of criminals, alcoholics, prostitutes, and addicts in general [would] be investigated, proceeding in the same way with those individuals that [could] give way to poverty” (Law 121, Art. 3, 1932). Thus, the categorization of undesirable groups that had to be sterilized also intersected with class dynamics in post-revolutionary Mexico.

Due to the elite’s concern to populate in the aftermath of the revolution, the prominent activities of sexual permissiveness, and the flagrant role that the Catholic church still held in Mexico, for instance in the case of condemning eugenics and abortion—despite it being a secular state—there existed various discourses that advocated for eugenic sterilization while playing down its consequences. For example, in the editorial section of October 1940 it was expressed that “eugenic sterilization does not mean castration or the suspension of sexual faculties, eugenic sterilization [consisted] on the technique of avoiding fertilization. This [was] done for the overall health of the working class” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). As we can see, eugenicists seemed to imply that degeneration and disease mostly—or only—came from the working class. In the same section they proceeded to mention that this was a very simple procedure that was advisable to all of those who were “conscious of their degenerate hereditary background or sickness. It [was] also suitable to alcoholics or addicts, criminals, retards, imbeciles, and idiots” (Saavedra, 1940d: p.2). This is to say, the construction of a rhetoric built on biological and hereditarian factors was intertwined with eugenic ideas that ranged from Weismannian to Lamarckian conceptions of eugenics in order to pathologize the emerging working class of the revolutionary period.

3.3 Final Considerations

The idea of the “gran familia Mexicana” and the role of women played a pivotal role in the development and care of post-Revolutionary Mexico. DiGirolamo and Salgado de Snyder (2008) state that the family was “considered the most important value in Mexican culture, and that the woman [was] the essential unifying element within the family” (DiGirolamo et.al., 2008: p.516). The creation of a “chica moderna” who would not tamper with traditional roles of the “mujer decente” proved to be very conflicting as it gave a sense of empowerment for only as long as women would abide to their eugenic role of caregiver and mother inside of this post-revolutionary setting. This can be seen in the ways in which feminists and male eugenicists carried out debates regarding motherhood, puericulture, class, and different preventive measures to keep undesirables at bay. These debates resulted in a normalization and management of sexuality that ranged from prenuptial certificates to sterilization measures and the institutionalization of eugenic ideas. Additionally, negative eugenics measures were extensively discussed in Mexico. However, the goal of what I term as “criollo eugenics” was to construct a set of eugenically oriented guidelines in which the individual and the nuclear family would regulate themselves to protect the “gran familia Mexicana”.

4 NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF EUGENICS: TOWARDS A SLIPPERY EUGENICS

As I have shown in previous chapters, Mexican eugenics came to be thought of as a progressive and liberal response to the management and control of mortality and diseases. These sorts of eugenic practices, measures, and ideas can be conceptualized—in part—using Foucault’s thesis of biopolitics, which holds that certain institutions are in charge of “the management of life in the name of the well-being of the population as a vital order and of each of its living subjects” (Rose, 2001: p.1). Foucault (1976) argues that “biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as a problem of power” (Foucault, 1976: p.245). In Mexico, “criollo eugenics” created the conditions to manage life through the creation of state-managed institutions, the drafting and amendment of different sanitary codes, and hygiene policies that called for a sort of preventive state control. More importantly, though, it provided the eugenic tools for the self-management of the population. This proliferation of medical attention that tended to rely on the control of the masses through individual choice is now commonly associated with neoliberalism and has been analyzed and conceptualized through the terms “laissez-faire eugenics” (Taussig et al, 2005: p.196) and “flexible eugenics” (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011: p. 1802). These allude to a self-management of the individual through internalized eugenic ideas of health and hygiene in which the state is not expected to intervene. It is in this light that this chapter will explore these terms, drawing on the history of syphilis, and analyzing the ruptures and continuities in eugenics through the history and management of disease in Mexico.

My analysis is also informed by what Rose (2001) has termed "risk politics": new structures of management and control that have been fundamental in shaping contemporary biopolitics. Rose argues that during the twentieth century there was no clear distinction between preventive medicine and eugenics. This stems from the ways in which medicine at the beginning of the twentieth century drew upon "moralizing interventions into the habits of the poor that had proliferated in the second half of the nineteenth century" (Rose, 2001: p.3). This constituted an attempt to control these populations through different medical concerns with decreasing and/or eliminating the chances of receiving hereditary conditions that were coded as defects in one context or another. In Mexico this was seen through the ways in which eugenicists discussed reproduction and implemented measures such as pre-nuptial certificates, which had as their goal the systematic production of the best offspring for the improvement of Mexico as a modern nation. However, these sorts of preventive measures created, as a side-effect of these measures, the pathologization of certain sectors of the population by measuring their propensity to risk. In the case of Mexico, there was a constant mention of disease prevention and risk that became embodied in the figure of the prostitute as the main culprit in the spread and contagion of syphilis. Thus, policies created in order to manage prostitution can be catalogued as a measure for disease prevention and risk that, in turn, disengaged them from their eugenic background and allowed them to continue well after the SME ceased to be active.

4.1 The History of Syphilis in Mexico

Syphilis as a disease first appeared in European literature in 1494. However anthropological evidence seems to suggest that syphilis was present for several hundred years before the end of the fifteenth century (Mansilla et.al., 1995: p.187; Marquez Morfin et.al., 2015: p.93). Syphilis spread among the population of New Spain during the first stages of the colonization process in the sixteenth century (Marquez Morfin et.al., 2015: p. 91). During colonial times the hospitals in New Spain were usually controlled by the Catholic Church. For instance, the Hospital Amor de Dios (Hospital Love of God) was created in an attempt to treat syphilitics and control the spread of the disease. This hospital operated from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century (Marquez Morfin et.al., 2015: p. 91-92). Afterwards, syphilitics were taken for treatment at the Hospital San Juan de Dios (Saint John of God Hospital), which cared primarily for the underprivileged (Marquez Morfin et.al., 2015: p.92).

The first attempts to divide the State from the Church made a great impact upon the ways in which disease prevention and the control and management of the population were seen from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. The first official call for a separation of State and Church was in the 1857 Constitution and the Reform Laws led by Benito Juárez (Gayet, 2015: p.91). In an attempt to assert state control while emulating European models of disease prevention and containment, the First Prostitution Rule for the Federal District was created in 1862. Additionally, the liberal reforms of the Maximilian Empire (1864-1867) created the first amendment to regulate prostitution at a national level. For instance, these imperial regulations created the first hospital designed exclusively to treat sex workers, as well as the Sanitary Inspection in 1865 (Gayet, 2015: p.92; Marquez Morfin et.al., 2015: p.103). These measures paved the way for new ways of conceptualizing risk through disease prevention, as the first attempt at regulating prostitution followed the French model, intended to protect the health of soldiers (Gayet, 2015: p.92). Thus, the first regulation of prostitution was created as a way of containing not only syphilis, but the “natural sexual depravity” of men which was depicted, in this case, as the major risk factor. Additionally, this new rule was created under the assumption that prostitution in Mexico was something that could not be avoided but only contained. Thus, prostitution and syphilis began to be conceptualized as necessary evils whose effects were only manageable by the modern state.

During the Porfiriato (1876-1911), a separation of the Church and the State existed in theory, however in practice the division was not clear. This, in turn, evidenced the beginnings of an elision between moral and scientific arguments regarding the spread and containment of diseases, with a special attention to syphilis. At this point venereal diseases began to embody and inhabit the body of the sex worker in the medical and state discourses of disease prevention and control. Thus, during the Porfiriato the elites catalogued “prostitutes as the transmission group, men (specifically soldiers) as the main risk groups, and married women and children as ‘innocent victims’ of syphilis” (Gayet, 2015: p.93). These scientific ideas were fed by moral and religious arguments about the family, the need for more established gender roles to try and keep “mujeres decentes” away from prostitution, and the continued state preference for religious matrimonies as a means to maintain control of the population and manage the spread of venereal diseases (Gayet, 2015: p.63).

In an attempt to break away from the old religious customs, Mexican revolutionaries turned to science to try and contain the spread of syphilis. By 1905 Fritz

Schaudinn and Erich Hoffmann discovered the causative organism of syphilis and by 1909 this discovery was mentioned in several Mexican medical journals (Gayet, 2015: p.95). After 1910 various measures were conceived and designed as cures for syphilis in Mexico, such as mercury injections and Salvarsan (1911), developed at Paul Ehrlich's lab by Alfred Bertheim in 1907. Arsphenamine, better known as Salvarsan, was the first effective treatment for syphilis as it was toxic to the *Treponema pallidum* — the bacterium that causes syphilis. These new techniques extended the prevention, risk, and control of syphilis to the rest of the Mexican population, making it feasible—for the first time—to treat the population at large, while keeping sex workers under control and surveillance by the state-controlled registration programs of the regulation of prostitution. These new ways of thinking about syphilis dictated the ways in which legislation was designed and implemented. For instance, the government started advocating for the popular use of preventive measures like antiseptic soaps and condoms. By 1915 syphilis began to be considered a viable cause for divorce in Mexico. In the same manner, by 1917, the Department of Public Health had been created in Mexico and one of its main tasks was to stop and contain the spread of syphilis which, as a result, led to the criminalization of the spread of syphilis in 1918 (Gayet, 2015: p.111-113). These new ways of looking at syphilis prevention led to an extension in the conceptualization of risk groups. This is to say, besides sex workers and soldiers, workers were added to the groups of high risk, while the risk, prevention, and care of contagion was on the way to being extended to the entirety of the Mexican population, due to the development and popularization of Salvarsan.

After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) the state and medical discourses regarding prostitution started to change. For instance, the last amendment of the Rule for Exercising Prostitution (Reglamento) in 1926 “rested on older arguments regarding the prostitute's deviancy and the client's normalcy” (Bliss, 2001: p.3). For instance, the Reglamento dictated that sex workers should undergo regular medical inspections by federal public health personnel while customers did not have to undergo medical examinations (Bliss, 2001: p.2). Due to opposition to the Reglamento during the 1920s and 1930s, this amendment brought about a new position on prostitution, envisioning a future in which all of the population would be correspondingly at risk for the transmission of syphilis (Bliss, 2001: p.3). Thus, science started to be seen as the solution to and salvation for the spread of syphilis.

The growing group opposition in Mexico to the Rule for Exercising Prostitution can be seen in various instances. For instance, in 1923 the Pan-American Feminist Congress of the Pan-American League of Women advocated for the protection of women (Bailón Vázquez, 2016: p.133). During this congress, the feminist current in Mexico adopted and promoted the abolitionist ideas relayed by the English feminist and social reformer Josephine Butler in relation to the abolition of prostitution in Mexico and some of them advocated for more state representation on the matter. Moreover, Bliss (1999) notes that during a public health conference held by the Pan-American Sanitary Congress in 1926 at Washington DC, Mexican medical doctor and scientist Bernaldo Gastélum named syphilis as the primary health problem in post-revolutionary Mexico as, in his estimation, fifty percent of the population suffered from conditions associated with syphilis (Bliss, 1999: p.1; Gudiño Cejudo, 2016; p.2619). Additionally, Gastélum held the family and the Mexican state responsible for allowing the continuation of the spread of syphilis through prostitution (Bliss, 1999: p.2). As a result, these elements caused the drafting and implementation of a new sanitary code in 1934 in which the Mexican state required doctors, schools, industries, institutions, among others, to inform the Health Department of people who had a venereal disease. This started creating new forms of surveillance behaviors and ideas of what it means to be “at risk”.

The SME was also very vocal and active against the Reglamento and advocated for the abolition of prostitution from a medical and moral viewpoint. In the issue launched in February of 1940, they dedicated the entire Editorial section to venereal diseases and prostitution. In this section, the SME gave a chronological account of what the SME had done to fight prostitution since 1933, in which they combined feminist rhetoric that portrayed sex workers as victims of the government’s prostitution regulations with Gastélum’s vision of prostitution as the main issue regarding the spread of syphilis. For instance, the SME wrote that in 1933 eugenicists had congregated at the National Athenaeum for the Arts and Sciences in Mexico to argue that “our work about prostitution and the venereal problem lets us explore the official concept of the fallen woman” (Saavedra, 1940: p.1). According to Bliss (2012), the concept of the fallen woman appeared among middle class activists, legislators, and public officials as a way to critique the Reglamento, differentiating themselves from the poorer classes in Mexico while showing themselves as supporters of revolutionary principles (Bliss, 2012: p.5). Additionally, the idea of “fallen women” echoes the Christian mythology of Eve’s fall from grace and into temptation or, in other words, the “original sin”. This reinforces the

idea that only women, and not men, can “fall”. This is another example of the ways in which the SME mixed different moral and religious rhetoric and legitimized pre-existing exclusionary notions with the use of science. Similarly, the SME blamed the state for being immoral and “damaging the women’s purity and dignity” by letting them “fall into” prostitution. The SME originally saw prostitution as a threat to society and as a danger to the new revolutionary government. Drawing on Kunzel’s (1993) work on unmarried women as “fallen women” who, in the views of evangelist women, were in need of attention and the transition of the professionalization of social work in the United States, it can be seen that this type of rhetoric was used in other contexts to reflect the morality of the time. Additionally, the multiple meanings that were given to unmarried women in the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) depicted them as an innocent victim as well as sex delinquents and feeble-minded (Kunzel, 1993: p. 5). This multiplicity of new axes of scientific knowledge can also be seen in the case of Mexico in which prostitutes were seen, by feminist groups and eugenicists, as morally depraved, deficient, and victims.

The editorial section of *Eugenesia* also mentioned that during the decade of the 1930s the SME collaborated with the Mexican government for the abolition of prostitution in an attempt to stop the spread of syphilis. For instance, they referenced a motion presented to the Mexican government in 1935 to eradicate prostitution (Saavedra, 1940: p.1). Additionally, the SME argued that they were very influential in the amendment of the Penal Code of 1937, drafted by the Mexican Health Department, which discussed issues like regulated prostitution, and reprimanded all of those who spread syphilis. Thus, by this point there were ideologies that placed sex workers as the main cause for the spread of syphilis, but also advocated for the abolition of prostitution based on the argument that sex workers were victims of the system and that “no women should be considered a prostitute” (Saavedra, 1940: p.1).

During and after the Revolution, eugenics, science, health, and disease prevention provided new sets of beliefs for the population. This is to say, eugenics became “a secular religion promising to deliver the utopian chimera of a ‘scientifically’ created perfect society, in which sickness, crime, and anti-social behavior would be eradicated forever” (Conroy, 2017: p. 16). In Mexico, eugenicists came to adapt and reject different religious and moral beliefs under a scientific banner through the promise of the eradication of syphilis once prostitution was abolished. Eugenics and its new scientific tools, like Salvarsan, came as a solution to treat syphilis, which was something that the Catholic Church was never able to do. In this sense, eugenic science came to be the viable

solution to fix, control, and surveil the population. This can be seen in the way in which the *Eugenesia* journal advertised different cures for syphilis.

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SIFILIS

HEREDO SIFILIS

TRATAMIENTO DE ASALTO
Y DE CONSOLIDACION

PALUDISMO

ARSAMINOL

Inyecciones intramus-
culares y subcutáneas
indoloras

- Débil toxicidad
- Tolerancia perfecta
- Eliminación por la ori-
na en 48 horas o menos

Usese exclusivamente por prescripción

DOS FORMAS

ADULTOS	1 ampollita 3 c.c. - 0 gr 15	As
	1 " 5 c.c. - 0 " 25	As
NIÑOS	1 " 1,1/2 c.c. - 0 " 0375	As



LABORATOIRES CLIN COMAR & C^{ie}., Paris
AGENCIA GENERAL: COMAR & C^{ia}., Apdo. 1977 - MEXICO, D. F.

Figure 4.1: Advert for Salvarsan (from *Eugenesia*, December 1939)

As demonstrated by figure 4.1, by 1939 the SME was advertising Salvarsan and constantly publishing journal articles that drew correlations between prostitution and the spread of syphilis. In the specific case of figure 4.1 the advert published in *Eugenesia* is aimed at medical professionals and intended to be used on mothers as a way of stopping the hereditary transmission of syphilis. By 1939 eugenicists still believed that syphilis was a venereal disease that could be genetically inherited by the offspring. Thus, by advertising Salvarsan eugenicists hoped to contain the spread of syphilis. In addition, by expanding the risk of syphilis contagion to the rest of the population, eugenicists secured their continuing importance in post-revolutionary society even after the abolition of prostitution.

During the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas in 1940, the Reglamento was eliminated and substituted for the Rule for the Campaign Against Venereal Diseases (Gayet, 2015: p.155). This new rule contained regulations and instructions for the entire Mexican population, which ranged from the continuation of the medical registry of people with venereal diseases to the need for certificates to lactate, as well as different reforms to the Penal Code of 1934 that continued to present the contagion of other people as a crime (Gayet, 2015: p.155). The SME claimed the abolition of prostitution as a victory, stating in their editorial section:

Our ongoing aims to transform the official concepts about the regulation of prostitution found an echo and the legal chambers approved the new legislation proposed by the Public Health department about the regulation and the relation with the anti-venereal fight. (Saavedra, 1940: p.3)

However, even though the abolition of prostitution was in force from the 1940s onwards and the publication of articles regarding this topic in *Eugenesia* became less frequent, they did not cease completely. Prostitution in itself did not stop either after the 1940s; rather, it drifted and dispersed to places outside the governmental gaze. Moreover, the idea that the SME were singlehandedly responsible for achieving the abolition of prostitution needs qualifying; in fact, the abolition of prostitution was approved mostly due to international pressure. This is mostly because the United States wanted to control and regulate the spread of syphilis in Mexico since US soldiers were crossing the border to engage the services of sex workers, as will be explored further in the next section. However, even after abolition, the practice of prostitution continued as police officials received bribes from “matronas” and pimps, and sex work persisted outside of

governmental regulation (Bailón Vázquez, 2016: p.160). The SME was conscious of this. For instance, José Benavides, one of the members of the SME, argued that the abolition rule was insufficient from a sanitation and public health perspective as the Sistema Reglamentarista, in a sense, still existed outside of policy (Benavides, 1943: p.8).

In short, through the study of the management and containment of syphilis we can see series of correlations with the construction of risk groups that, in turn, serve to unveil a systematic discrimination of certain groups. During the nineteenth century prostitution started to be regulated by the state in an attempt to control the spread of syphilis as it the act of prostitution was seen as a necessary evil to control the natural insatiable sexual desire of men. Due to the fact that men were seen as the risk factor, during the Porfiriato prostitutes were constructed as the main culprits while “mujeres decentes” and children were seen as the victims of this pernicious but necessary act. The discovery of the causative organism of syphilis in 1905 and its appearance in Mexican journals in 1909 complicates and extends this framework from prostitutes as the main culprits for the spread of syphilis to workers, in an attempt to control the working class during the Mexican Revolution (1910). After the Mexican Revolution (1920) there was a growing opposition to the regulation of prostitution. This created the conditions for a new Reglamento in 1926 that presented sex workers as deviants and clients as normal. However, the opposition groups, which were mostly feminists and eugenicists, believed that sex workers were “fallen women” that were simultaneously victims of the Reglamento and deviants. The abolition of prostitution in Mexico City was in 1940, marking, according to Mexican eugenicists, their greatest achievement up-to-date. However, the abolition of prostitution was part of a greater issue regarding international pressure. Moreover, after the 1940s prostitution continued to be practiced without governmental control. This resulted in an avid eugenicist concern regarding the spread of syphilis after the 1940s.

4.1.1 The Abolition of Prostitution and Risk

After discussing the intricacies of the early nineteenth century and the quest for the abolition of prostitution after the Mexican revolution I will explore what happened after the abolition of prostitution, with the conceptualizations of risk and the management and control of venereal diseases and hygiene during the decades up to the 1960s. This, in

turn, will allow me to explore the different ways in which risk factors and prevention allows for the discrimination of certain groups.

After the abolition of prostitution, the measures taken for syphilis prevention started to change. For instance, in 1940 the Mexican government commenced a campaign to fight venereal diseases in which elected officials distributed prophylactic bundles to the rest of the Mexican states (Gayet, 2015: p.163). This package contained a condom, prophylactic ointment, and a set of instructions, and was to be sold at local pharmacies throughout Mexico (Gayet, 2015: p.163). The prophylactic bundle—which was smaller than a pack of matches—can be seen as indicative of the first stages of contemporary biopolitics or, as Rose (2001) terms it, ethopolitics. This term refers to a liberal manifestation of biopolitics. In Rose's view ethopolitics refers to the ways in which the “meaning and salience of health and disease have changed (Rose, 2001: p.5). In this new stage, “the state is no longer expected to resolve society's needs for health” (Rose, 2001: p.6). This is due to the fact that apart from the state institutions and state sponsored programs, there are commercial interests and individual drives as well. This refers to the ways in which the individual or the body—meaning both the national body and individual body—regulates itself through the mechanism of Foucault's (1982) technologies of the self which often refers to the ways in which individuals effect their own self-perception or means (Rose, 2001: p.1-2). Thus, the commercialization of the prophylactic package in Mexico represents a new form of individual self-regulation that relieved the need for state control by moving towards private measures of self-management of diseases.

In 1942, the United States and Mexico entered the Second World War as allies. During 1941 and 1942 these two countries re-established their alliance after the agreement of the sale and consumption of petroleum through the commercial treaty signed in 1942 and enacted in 1943 (Avella Alaminos, 2018: p.1725-1726; Gayet, 2015: p.165). In a similar way, through the modification of the Sanitary Code of 1941 to coordinate with the Rule for the Campaign Against Venereal Diseases (January 1941) and the new alliance with the United States, Mexico shifted its interest back to the control of prostitution and the spread of venereal diseases. This interest in the control of prostitution and the containment of syphilis was mostly due to the fact that the disease posed a “problem” for American soldiers crossing the Mexican border looking to engage the services of sex workers (Gayet, 2015: p.166). During this period, the discourse against the spread of venereal diseases shifted. The Mexican government and public health officials from the Secretary of Health and Assistance began to claim that the regulation

of prostitution was not meant to stigmatize but to regulate public prostitution which, in the government's view, was part of deeper social problems (Gayet, 2015: p.166). Thus, attention began to be shifted away from sex workers as the main culprits of the spread of syphilis toward the categorization of particular sexual acts as an indicator of risk. This is to say, the propensity of risk began to be shifted from groups (sex workers) to individual actions. For instance, high risk groups came to be defined by sexual acts such as engaging in prostitution but not by prostitution itself. Nonetheless, by doing so, sex workers demonstrably remained the focus group for venereal risk, as in 1942 individuals who engaged in prostitution were still be kept under state surveillance through governmental prostitution records. However, this was yet another method for normalizing men who would occasionally become involved in the act and pathologizing the prostitute as the act of prostitution came to be seen as their constant every-day activity and identity.

The discovery of penicillin as a cure for syphilis in 1943 also had a major impact on the way the disease was regarded and dealt with by health officials. The following year, President Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) expedited a decree publicized at the Official Diary of the Federation to control the use of penicillin because he believed that the introduction and regulation of this antibiotic would cause great difficulty in terms of transport, commerce, use, and supply (Ávila Camacho, 1944 in Aguilar Aguilar, 2015: p.254). In March of 1944 the National Commission for the Regulation of Penicillin was created to be overseen by the Secretary of Health and Assistance (Aguilar Aguilar, 2015: p.253-254). However, by 1945 the control of penicillin was extended to the rest of the Mexican population (Gayet, 2015: p. 167). The fact that the control of penicillin was extended to the rest of the population marks a change in the way in which risk was thought of, as these new policies suggested that the responsibility for the control of contagion and containment rested on all Mexicans. One example of this was the SME's use of the *Eugenesia* journal to advertise penicillin.



Figure 4.2: Penicillin Advert (Eugenesia, September 1946)

La Penicilina C. S. C., sal sódica cristalina, se encuentra disponible en frascos de 20 cm³, en concentraciones de 100.000 Unidades, 200.000 Unidades y 500.000 Unidades, respectivamente.

El grado de concentración (NUMERO DE UNIDADES POR MILIGRAMO) se especifica claramente en la etiqueta.

"La potencia de la penicilina influye indudablemente sobre los resultados obtenidos. Con penicilina de un mismo lote, fueron curados 15 pacientes. A los 7 enfermos siguientes se les administró la misma dosis, pero, de distintos lotes de penicilina. Cinco de los siete, no curaron. Los ensayos hechos con la penicilina administrada a éstos, reveló que su potencia era baja". Trumper, M. y Thompson, G. J.: Prolonging the Effects of Penicillin by Chilling, J.A. M.A. 130: 628 (marzo 9) 1946.

1 NO REQUIERE REFRIGERACION:
Estudios cuidadosos - conservando la droga a 100° C., durante 14 días sin pérdida apreciable de potencia - han demostrado que la Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina, se conserva prácticamente a la temperatura ambiente. *
*Precaución: Una vez en solución, la penicilina sí requiere refrigeración.

2 Inyección casi indolora:
En contraposición con las formas anteriores, menos purificadas de la droga, la Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina, produce un mínimo de dolor inyectada intramuscularmente.

3 Tolerancia subcutánea:
Por su alto grado de pureza, la Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina resulta efectiva y bien tolerada, cuando se la administra subcutáneamente.

4 No causa reacciones por impurezas, a dosis elevada:
La Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina, permite alcanzar dosis elevadas, frecuentemente necesarias, sin dar margen a que se presenten reacciones indeseadas atribuibles a las impurezas.

5 Actividad terapéutica óptima:
La alta potencia por miligramo de la Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina, alcanzada con este nuevo adelanto, permite un máximo de actividad terapéutica.

DADO que la Penicilina C. S. C., Sal Sódica Cristalina no requiere refrigeración, el médico puede disponer de esta droga en cualquier momento, lo que le ha creado un lugar insustituible en el maletín médico y no tiene por qué preocuparse mientras hospitaliza a su enfermo o consigue penicilina.

DIVISION FARMACEUTICA
COMMERCIAL SOLVENTS CORPORATION
Terre Haute **CSC** Ind., E.U.A.
172 East 42nd Street New York 17, N. Y. - E. U. A.

Figure 4.3: Penicillin Advert with Instructions (Eugenesia, September 1946)

As seen in figures 4.2 and 4.3, advertising penicillin as an item that every doctor needed indicated the commonness of the disease and implied that penicillin needed to be part of every doctor's daily toolkit. However, the popularization of penicillin in Mexico did not mean that sex workers were exempt from the governmental biopolitical gaze; rather, government medical officials administered routine injections of penicillin to sex workers as a prophylactic measure (Gayet, 2015: p.170). Nonetheless, the Sanitary Codes of 1950 and 1955 stipulated that abortion practices or contraceptive measures should not be used (Gayet, 2015: p.183). Thus, if an individual had any kind of venereal disease, they should voluntarily refrain from having any kind of sexual relation. This was due to the influence of the Catholic Church in Mexico and the fact that the majority of eugenicists believed that if penicillin was commonly used for individual self-regulation it was not necessary to incur negative eugenic measures.

Due to the popularization and success of penicillin during the 1960s, the Mexican population, governmental officials, and medical doctors alike stopped worrying about syphilis and the spread of venereal diseases. However, the stigma of having a venereal disease—which at this point became almost synonymous with syphilis—was still present. For instance, there were a lot of instances of people being laid off their jobs because they had a venereal disease (Gayet, 2015: p.190-193). This suggests a culture of surveillance even in places of work, where sexuality was not officially seen as relevant. Thus, to escape the stigma, and thanks to the existing legislative policies that allowed people to self-regulate through private practices and low-cost medical treatment kits sold in pharmacies, people started seeking medication and treatments outside of governmental institutions. These self-regulation practices through low-cost medical kits were made possible due to the massive exportation of Mexican drugs and prime materials to other countries after the Second World War as, before then, Mexico depended on external materials for the development of their pharmacological industry (Godínez Reséndiz et al, 2014: p.62). In other words, Mexico became a producer rather than importer of pharmaceutical products. Thus, pharmaceutical products became more accessible to the Mexican population. It was due to this massive amount of individual self-regulation through private channels that medical doctors stopped using the governmental registry for people with venereal diseases, which marks the first element of transition towards a “laissez-faire” eugenics—which refers to a eugenic self-management in which the state is not expected to intervene (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011). This marks a change in which syphilis starts to be seen as it is less of a stigma because it is not deadly, and as a result

men and women alike can be expected to treat it without it being a major issue. As a result, these new conceptions of risk reduced the correlation with sex workers as the main focus for the spread of syphilis during the 1960s.

4.2 New Pathologizations and Preconceived Ideas: HIV

The 1970s is regarded as the period of sexual revolution in Mexico. However, this was also a period of economic crisis and of international pressure to incorporate family planning policies and the massification of contraceptive measures in Mexico. These elements contributed to the creation of the National Population Council in 1974 (Gayet, 2015: p.197). In this same period, venereal diseases started to be referred to as sexually transmitted diseases. The term “venereal” has its roots in the early fifteenth century from the Latin words “venereus” or “venerius” from Venus that referred to sexual love or sexual desire. The new terminology seems to have the function of voiding any moral or emotional connotations. Thus, the disease was thought of as something that was transmitted by sex, but something that was not integral to sex itself. Moreover, this term seems to suggest what eugenicists were arguing about the irrationality of love and the ways in which it can be detrimental to the rational reproduction of the betterment of the race. For instance, it is shown the ways in which criollo eugenic ideas permeated the management and control of disease—as mentioned in chapter 3— Saavedra argued at the beginning of the Mexican Code of eugenics that “it [was] not rational to accept that love must be blind” (Saavedra, 1940b: p.18). Furthermore, these new use of the term venereal diseases in the medical and political jargon translated into what government officials called “promiscuous behavior” as an indicator of risk. This implied that there was a series of sexual practices, dictated by misguided love and desire, that might increase risk of contagion, which, in turn, changed the focus from individuals to the systematic pathologization of practices.

Sexual practices were not the only issue. Because sanitation and hygiene policies and institutions were mostly built to contain and manage syphilis, the usage of prophylactic measures like condoms was not seen as necessary since syphilis was not seen as life threatening. Also, not seeing syphilis as a major problem, the Sanitary Codes in the 1950s and 1960s condemned prophylactic use in an attempt to increase the rate of the population. However, this created the conditions for an outburst of gonorrhea. This

is why medical doctors and government officials started focusing on the spread of gonorrhea, which was newly associated with prostitution.

During the same decade of the 1970s the Mexican government changed its position regarding contraceptives. As mentioned above, during the 1950s there were different official policies in the Sanitary Code that rejected the use of contraceptives. However, this changed after the pharmacological industry that produced contraceptives using a wild yam called “barbasco” was nationalized under the Luis Echevarría (1970-1976) government, as one of its populist measures. Even though the “barbasco” was not that popular at this time due to the fact that the majority of pharmaceutical companies moved to synthetic compounds that were cheaper to develop, “barbasco” was put by Echevarría at the center of debates regarding the price of medication, overpopulation, and the role of the countryside in Mexico’s quest to modernize (Laveaga, 2009: p.2055). Also, the government under Echevarria believed that “barbasco” could act as a key element to fight against Mexico’s disadvantaged situation in the rural part of the country (Laveaga, 2009: p.2089). Overall, “barbasco” came to symbolize how Echevarria’s political ideology could materialize change for Mexican society by turning rural areas into economically productive regions and bringing together indigenous campesinos (peasants) and the middle class (Laveaga, 2009: p.2109).

In 1976, there was a great concern from the government for family planning in which the General Population Law established the need to regulate the population through family planning policies and educational campaigns (Perea, 1999: p.151). This concern occurred due to the Mexican population growth during the 1970s. For instance, in 1970 Mexico’s population was 48.3 million and by 1976 it grew to more than 70 million (Laveaga, 2009: p.2109). This created the conditions for the implementation of the Family Planning Plan and the Global Development Plan in 1977, in which it was stated that there should be a population growth of 1% until the year 2000. This, in turn, allowed for the systematic implementation for contraceptives and sterilization processes in order to achieve that goal. These practices and procedures were mostly targeted toward—mostly indigenous—working-class families in rural areas of the country.

Another populist measure implied by officials during the Luis Echevarria period was to single out other behavioral groups as being at fault for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. For instance, homosexuality appeared as a new risk group on the medical and public health scene in Mexico City after the sexual revolution of the 1970s (Gayet, 2015: p.204). For instance, in Luis Echevarria’s fourth report to the government

in 1974, he stated that children that come from unstable households have a high risk of being sexually promiscuous or homosexual (Echevarria, 1974). As a result, homosexuals started to be the new pathologized group, portrayed as having a high risk for the spread and contagion of gonorrhea. However, during the 1980s the medical climate began to change due to the HIV crisis in Mexico.

The first HIV case reported in Mexico dates back to 1983; however, 1986 marked the first appearance of AIDS in a Mexican medical journal (Gayet, 2015: p.217). These instances changed the ways in which risk groups were to be thought of. For instance, public health officials in Mexico defined high risk groups that could be affected by HIV as including homosexual men, pharmaco-dependants, bisexuals, recipients of blood transplants, among others. The fact that homosexual men—mostly referring to “effeminate” men—were part of the high-risk groups introduced a new paradigm whereby men, as well as women, could “fall”. Due to these new conceptions of risk, the Mexican government decided to fund CONASIDA in 1988. Following Gayet (2015),

the center of attention during this time was HIV and, as it used to happen with syphilis during the beginning of the twentieth century, the preoccupation was not the diseased sex-workers but the dissemination of it to the rest of the society through heterosexual transmission. (Gayet 2015, p.222)

This is why the Mexican government dedicated its efforts to implementing sexual health education schemes that pathologized particular sexual practices as high risk. Gayet (2015) implies that by concerning themselves with disease prevention, government officials in Mexico ensured the purity of normalcy. This term refers to the active concern with safeguarding gender roles as honorable, respectable, and pure while pathologizing individual actions that might diverge from monogamous heteronormativity. This is why, similar to the spread of eugenic ideas in Mexico, the separation between practices, groups, stigma, and systemic discrimination is never clear.

While new risk behaviors and individuals appear, there are other systematic elements that require attention, especially in the realm of reproductive justice. For instance, in the National Population Program (1984-1988) clear goals for demographic growth were stipulated in which contraceptives, preferably sterilization, were given more attention, as this program only allowed for a 1% growth of the population annually. Due to the fact that the working class and indigenous populations were targeted for these population control measures it can be said that negative eugenic practices were very much present in this context long after the end of the SME during the mid-1950s. Thus, even

though contraceptive and sterilization were previously rejected on moral and religious grounds, as eugenicists believed that through the self-regulation of individuals one could reproduce a rational and better mestizo, they are now seemed to be appropriate measures for population control which created the conditions for the systematic sterilization of indigenous women since the 1980s.

With the aim of uncovering the actions taken by the National Population Program and protecting women's reproductive rights, the Network for the Health of Women at the Federal District created a Tribunal for the Defense of Reproductive Rights, which took place in Mexico City on the International Day of Women's Health on May 28, 1996. (Brigida et al, 2010: p.265). However, it was not only the Network for the Health of Women who participated. The mock tribunal was also composed of various non-governmental feminist organizations and the Men's Collective for Egalitarian Relations. Among the different organizations were directors of government-led health institutions, international representatives for the organizations, and academics and intellectuals who formed a mock jury in the aim of taking a critical approach to the situation of reproductive justice in Mexico. Their objective was to make public the testimonies of mostly indigenous and working-class women whose reproductive rights had been violated, to promote debate and to create a series of strategies to prevent these practices. Their aim consisted in reinforcing "the actions for the exercise and the protection of reproductive rights of Mexican women, in the search of a better quality of health services by the modification the laws and imparting justice" (Red por la Salud de las Mujeres del Distrito Federal, 1996: p.1). Even though this marked a pivotal point in Mexican history by bringing for the first time to the public sphere many of the cases of human rights violations in Mexico, forced and coerced sterilization still happen today.

The case that I will discuss in the following section is one that was brought to the Tribunal for the Defense of Reproductive Rights in 1996. This case will shed some light on the ways in which high risk is conceived and how the body of a person who is diagnosed as HIV positive is constructed or stigmatized as disabled or not apt to integrate into society and, therefore, be a part of the nation. The historical account of María—that I summarize below—marks a transition in how the body is conceived after the onset of the neoliberal era in Mexico. In short, it will help to show how the moral and scientific construction of HIV responds to ideas of the purity of the nation which, in turn, pathologizes certain bodies, resulting in discrimination and human rights violations.

4.2.1 The Story of María

María was 35 years old and residing in Mexico City when the mock tribunal took place in 1996. She and her husband made a complaint to the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), National System for Integral Family Development (DIF), IMAN Hospital, Médica Sur and National Council for AIDS Protection and Prevention (CONASIDA) for “the lack of quality in the attention and care of HIV/AIDS and a legal gap to voluntarily disrupt her pregnancy” (Red por la Salud de las Mujeres del Distrito Federal, 1996: p.17). In 1992, María was working as a nurse in a public hospital. She recalls working with people who tested positive for HIV and she also remembers pricking herself with their needles but did not think much about it as she thought that she had not acquired it. However, she then experienced diarrhea and a high fever. She received medical attention and her symptoms disappeared, so she forgot all about it, thinking that it was just a common virus. She then got married and had two daughters. When the youngest one started having some respiratory complications, María went to various state hospitals and clinics. María claimed that her daughter did not receive the necessary attention and physicians did not give her a proper diagnostic evaluation. Because of the lack of attention in the public clinics, they decided to turn to a private institution. After a series of studies, the doctors decided to test their daughter for HIV. It was after—what they stated was—a long waiting time for the results that the medical doctors gave the test results back to María. The claimants stated that the process was handled with very little regard for confidentiality, although the minutes of the mock tribunal do not go into detail as to what this entails.

The couple recalled that the physician gave them the results in a sealed envelope to deliver to another doctor, but they opened them to try and figure the results out, as they claimed to be desperate to know. This is how they realized that their daughter tested positive for HIV. When they returned to the doctor, he stated that he could not continue treating their daughter. After this, they started to look for other channels for receiving medical attention at the IMAN and CONASIDA but, according to them, they only received discrimination and mistreatment there. Because of the stigma and denial of medical services, the couple decided to treat their daughter at home by not telling a general doctor that she tested positive for HIV. The six-month old girl died soon after.

Afterwards, the couple decided to return to CONASIDA and, on their return, the personnel suggested that both of them get checked for HIV, and the couple accepted. Because María tested positive and her husband tested negative, the personnel implied that she was having extramarital sex and pressured her to “confess” this. Foucault (1976) talks about the clinic as a site of confession. In his view “Western societies have established the confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth” (Foucault, 1976: p.56). This, in his view, was echoed in biopolitics in the role of the clinic. In this sense María was pressured to confess in order to keep the order and control of the clinic by producing a truth that would make her a deviant and, therefore, a culprit of her own dire situation. Thus, in this case she is held responsible as a person for her assumed sexual deviancy and it is her assumed agency in having “irresponsible sex” that makes her morally abhorrent and therefore undeserving of medical treatment. The HIV-positive body of the patient became seen as disabled, it was held responsible for the medical condition that it suffered. The patient is required by the physician to explain her “deviant practices” in order to restore the doctor’s conception of the status quo as she could not possibly be a “mujer decente” while being HIV positive. This is to say, the demand of an account of deviant practices relegates the body from the social norm of “mujer decente” to a “deviant”. As G. Thomas Couser (2013) explains:

The elicited narrative is expected to conform to, and thus confirm, a cultural script. For example, people diagnosed with lung cancer or HIV/AIDS are expected to admit to behaviors that have induced the condition in question—to acknowledge having brought it upon themselves. Thus, one fundamental connection between life narrative and somatic anomaly is that to have certain conditions is to have one’s life written for one. For people with many disabilities, culture inscribes narratives on their bodies, willy-nilly. (Couser 2013, p.458)

This acknowledgement is made clear using Rose’s ethopolitics (2001) in which the decisions and practices that are required to be “better people” and “good citizens” rely on the individual. In other words, when physicians and personnel asked the woman to “confess” to extramarital relations as a cause for her diagnosis, they are asking her to acknowledge her own responsibility as a citizen regarding her sexual behaviors, thus fitting into a determined cultural narrative constructed to normalize certain social markers and behaviors through stigmatized conceptions of health and illness.

María’s case is a clear example of Rose’s ethopolitics in which bodies and people are being made to “confess” to stay within the grounds of “good government”. In Rose’s words:

The ways in which the ethos of human existence—the sentiments, moral nature or guiding beliefs of persons, groups, or institutions—have come to provide the ‘medium’ within which the self-government of the autonomous individual can be connected up with the imperatives of good government. (Rose, 2001: p.19)

In this light, I can observe the ways in which ethopolitics constructs the body—either HIV positive or diagnosed with AIDS—as pathological and how it was stigmatized by social and cultural markers within an internalized eugenic discourse whose roots lie in a contemporary, but veiled, version of eugenics.

A year later, the couple got the news of an unexpected pregnancy and decided to go to an IMSS clinic for information about the probabilities of transmission, treatment, and the possibility of getting an abortion. In the clinic, they were denied the possibility of an abortion. After this incident, the patient and her husband decided to look for another opinion and to go back to CONASIDA. Only then were they advised properly and enabled to obtain the necessary information regarding the pregnancy and their options. After close examination, María and her husband, decided to perform the abortion. This procedure was done in a private clinic in which they received the emotional support in the environment that they required. The admission of abortion as an appropriate measure here requires attention. Shakespeare’s (1998) work on eugenics, pre-natal screening, and disability sheds some light on the matter. He points to the paradoxical elements regarding disability and abortion by proposing a “position which accepts women’s right to choose but opposes social and cultural pressures for selective termination of disabled people” (Shakespeare, 1998: p.666). In his view, the systematic pathologization of disability induces individuals to regulate themselves in a way in which maintains marginalization and discrimination. This goes in accordance with Rose’s (2001) ethopolitics in which individual choice intersects with and is coerced by preconceived notions of self-regulation and control that go beyond and get masqueraded by one’s possible course of action. In their work about parentality in France, Roux and Vozari (2018) use ethopolitics to argue that the role of parenthood also intersects with these dilemmas. For instance, they argue that “discourse and practices surrounding the idea of parentality have not only encouraged codifying and systematizing practical knowledge about how to act; they have also problematized the relationship which subjects have to themselves” (Roux and Vozari, 2018: p.19). Drawing on this, it can be argued that the supposed choice to terminate the pregnancy also stems from internalized ideas of what it means to be disabled and who is regarded by pathological that also concerns the parent’s role as a subject that

self-regulates and abstains. In other words, María and her partner are also accepting their role as “non-normal”, therefore, not-apt to reproduce.

The case of María is noteworthy for various reasons. Firstly, the discrimination and stigma that comes with the construction of the body of a person who tests as HIV positive. HIV came to be portrayed as the first “disease” symptomatic of the neoliberal era as it affects bodies who fall outside of the disciplinary apparatus: bodies that are portrayed as “ungovernable” (Preciado, 2014). For example, in the United States, AIDS was colloquially known as the disease of the 5H Club. This encompassed a series of bodies that acquired or were associated with the disease. According to these narratives, the bodies of the heroin addicts, homosexuals, hemophilic bodies (because they needed blood transfusions), Haitians or Hispanics, and hookers were considered as impure or infested, therefore, unworthy of constituting the body of the nation. This systematic form of exclusion was experienced by subjects through the lack of treatment and the constant stigmatization from medical doctors and the general population when it came to seeking job opportunities, treatment, housing, among other things (Fouron, 2013). Thus, like syphilitics who lost their jobs in Mexico, this suggests a broad internalization of the idea of pathological bodies through the risk of contagion.

In the abovementioned case, the fact that the pregnant woman was discursively constructed as a “prostitute” or a “hooker”, since physicians and medical personnel assumed she had acquired HIV by having extramarital relations, left the status quo intact. She is portrayed as responsible for her deviant practices, which do not fall under the moral code of the Mexican nation, simultaneously putting the rest of the population at risk of infection. This, in turn, leaves the idea of purity, morality, and the figure of “mujer decente” intact. By portraying the María as a “hooker”, her body is constructed as one that escapes the logics of the clinic and the eugenic discourse of purity vis-à-vis sexual deviance. This, in turn, systematically, scientifically, and medically justifies letting “ungovernable” populations die. However, the idea of individuals putting the population at risk does not have to do strictly with the science of disease and contagion. It is an image that arose in the nineteenth century and could be applied to groups as pathological for other reasons. Jackson’s (2000) work on children as victims of abuse informs the understanding of the ways in which pathology is constructed in England and Wales during the Victorian Era. For instance, she mentions that “the act of sexual abuse was deemed to have corrupted the girl and effected her ‘fall’ from innocence; once ‘fallen’, her moral status was dubious” (Jackson, 2000: p.6). As it can be seen from these instances, as well

as the figure of the prostitute, there is a gendered element from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ideas of “fallen people” until, in the case of Mexico, the late twentieth century with homosexual men. Nonetheless, this also requires our attention as homosexual men are seen as a feminized and pathological version of the “fallen women”.

HIV was constructed as the disease of the neoliberal era which would gather up and claim those bodies who were pathologized through eugenic discourse and the narratives behind the creation of the nation. Conceptualizations of public health, administered only through state control, started to change as they began to respond to measures of self-management imposed by the state that are situated outside of traditional conceptions of biopolitics, like the pharmacological industry. This has created a community of consumers of pills and technologies of the self, which in this case means Antiretroviral therapy. Thus, pharmacological consumption practices

are manifest in commercial chemical substances and molecules, biotype bodies, and fungible technological goods managed by multinationals. The success of contemporary technoscientific industry consists in transforming our depression into Prozac, our masculinity into testosterone, our erection into Viagra, our fertility/ sterility into the Pill, our AIDS into tritherapy, without knowing which comes first: our depression or Prozac, Viagra or an erection, testosterone or masculinity, the Pill or maternity, tritherapy or AIDS. This performative feedback is one of the mechanisms of the pharmacopornographic regime. (Preciado, 2013: p.355-359)

Following Preciado, the clinic cannot be thought of just simply using Foucault's definition of the latter as he portrays a clinic that is sufficient by itself (Foucault, 1963; Foucault, 1975). There are other types of technologies and disciplinary apparatuses in charge of the management of the bodies still operating nowadays. However, in the specific context of Mexico I think it is imperative to mention that the neoliberal conceptions of self-management do not outdo the disciplinary apparatus, but there is a constant interplay between the two systems of power that enters the management of the bodies. This can be seen in the ways in which syphilis is treated and commercialized while targeting specific sectors of the population—like prostitutes, workers, soldiers keeping the collective at risk through their actions or risky sexual behaviors.

The case of María helps to understand how in the neoliberal system, flexible eugenics and laissez-faire eugenics operate alongside and against each other. As we have mentioned before laissez-faire eugenics is when the state does not intervene with eugenic practices (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011) as flexible eugenics is when “long-standing biases

against atypical bodies meet both the perils and the possibilities that spring from genetic technologies” (Taussig et al, 2005: p.196). Flexible eugenics is seen when María and her husband decide to self-manage and perform an abortion which makes us question the dynamics of long-standing biases of bodies constructed as pathological and the assumed “choice” to terminate the pregnancy. It is the state that has the power to provide the health services needed, however, one must take individual and collective actions and self-regulation into account as well. For there are different interest groups, like the case of the Network for the Health of Women at the Federal District, that through activism are looking for ways to go against not only the state but the private clinics and the pharmacological system as a disabling industry that depicts the body as a consumer of technologies. Both public health practices, private clinics, and the pharmacological spectrum work and advertise the administration of this edible, drinkable and easy to administer medicine, but it is not necessarily available through one mechanism or the other. Instead, it works against and in synchrony with different mechanisms of power, which keep the body caught between their influence. However—as I have shown through the history of syphilis—the convergence of flexible and laissez-faire eugenics is not a drastic change that is simply associated with the neoliberal phenomenon, which tries to portray self-management and individual actions as the absence of politics; rather, the prevention of risk through eugenic ideas is still very much present.

4.3 Slippery Eugenics

To reconcile contemporary eugenic practices in the form of laissez-faire eugenics, and flexible eugenics I decided to coin a concept that encompasses these two practices. “Slip” comes from an early fourteenth century unrecorded Old English word or cognate Middle Low German to refer to something that “glides, slides” to give a sense of “pass unguarded or untaken” or, as it was used in the 1540s to “allow to escape through carelessness”. Moreno Figueroa (2006) in her work of mestiza identification and the hidden logics of racism that surrounded mestizaje, explores the term slippery emotion to show the ways in which “expressions of racism have infiltrated social life and transformed their modes of presentation” (Moreno Figueroa, 2006: p.17). I argue that it is through the convergence of these two contemporary factors, laissez-faire eugenics and flexible eugenics, that these expressions of racism have infiltrated to the extent that they pass unguarded in our every-day understandings of contemporary science at an individual and collective level. However, contrary to the 1540s use of the term “slip”, I argue that these

logics that supposedly escape or allow for a slippery eugenics are not created through a mere act of carelessness. I will be elaborating this term in the next chapter through the study of disability and what some claim to be “good eugenics”.

4.4 Final Considerations

As it can be seen through the history of venereal diseases with a specific focus on syphilis and HIV, the Mexican context allows for many contradictions and cannot be reduced to a rupture in paradigm between eugenics and the retreat of scientific racism making eugenics a pseudo-science or a taboo. Through the history of attempts to contain disease it can be observed that eugenics in Mexico never ceased to exist, but rather adapted into a series of processes that I have dubbed slippery eugenics. In short, I argue that in Mexico bodies have been pseudo-capitalized as “bioconsumers/producers by the Western pharmaceutical system” (Preciado, 2013: p.566-570) while they also respond to the traditional disciplinary apparatus of power. However, they do not escape the biopolitical logics as they are depicted as unfit because they have been constructed as pathological by the state. The bodies which are discursively and linguistically constructed as disabled, specifically the bodies that are diagnosed with HIV, come to join the clinic and the technobiopolitical regime that show significant parallels with eugenic ideas (Preciado, 2013; Davis, 2014; Rose, 2001; Sleebom-Faulkner, 2011). However, this idea of disability is multiple and transversal as it responds to social inequalities. For instance, over 40 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS and 95 percent of these tend to live in developing countries (Kremer et al, 2014). Kremer and Synder (2014) question whether economic factors create a gap between social and private investments for the research and possible creation of a vaccine. Their research suggests that the pharmaceutical markets are the ones who are, in some way, in charge of the management of the bodies. Hence, the creation of a vaccine or lack thereof shows how market distortions, biases, as well as structural inequalities affect the management of the bodies.

Thus, through the study of syphilis, reproductive technologies, and HIV it can be observed that there is a paradigm shift in the processes in which eugenics operates. Programs and regulations towards eugenic betterment are then geared towards the “optimization of human capital in the name of self-determination, personal preventative provisions, and freedom of choice” (Lemke 2004 p.561). In Mexico, this can be observed through the changeover from the systematic pathologization of different populations to risky behaviors as a way of inducing the entire Mexican population to self-manage

diseases after the discovery of penicillin. It is through these processes that eugenics can be seen as slippery eugenics which oversees the private auto-managerial response of individuals through a flexible and/or laissez-faire eugenics. This is to say, in order to answer what exactly is meant by a contemporary form of eugenics it is important to observe the processes and categorizations of medical risk that have, as a goal, the creation of a biological underclass (Lemke, 2002: p.283). In Mexico, this biological underclass responds to eugenic precepts of purity rooted in gender roles and the contagion and containment of disease prevention and risk. This is to say, the fact that there has been a shift to risky behaviors does not prevent certain populations from being stigmatized and discriminated against. Moreover, socially marginalized populations are usually the vessels for the systematic stigmatization, racism and/or discrimination.

5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISABILITY AND ITS RELATION TO EUGENICS IN MEXICO

With eugenics being an integral part of the bases for modern genetics there are a few questions left unanswered when it comes to the study of eugenics in Mexico. I argue that disability studies provide a useful framework for understanding and critique eugenics. Thus, the scope of this chapter will be to answer the following questions: How does neoliberalism set the bases for slippery eugenics in Mexico? Is there such a thing as “good eugenics” or “acceptable eugenics”?

5.1 Normalcy and Eugenics

The assembly of terms like “the norm,” and “normalcy,” play a very important role in the understanding of the ways in which disability and pathology are constructed in relation to the body. Before the nineteenth century, concepts like “normal”, “normalcy”, “normality”, “norm”, “average”, and “abnormal” did not exist (Davis, 2017: p.16). According to Davis (2017) the concept that preceded “norm” was “ideal” which dates from the seventeenth century. The notion that would shape the ideal body in the seventeenth century was modelled after and presented a “mytho-poetic body that [was] linked to that of the gods” which, in turn, presented the ideal body as one that was impossible to obtain (Davis, 2017: p.16). This was mostly seen in artistic representations like “David”, the famous sculpture made by Michelangelo and the paintings of goddesses like Aphrodite in which painters and sculptors would gather what they considered as the best attributes of a group of people to represent these mythological gods. These instances represent the ways in which all members of the population were always going to be below the conceptions of the ideal so there was no social pressure to conform to it (Davis, 2017: p.16).

During the nineteenth century, and with the rise of statistics, the term average and norm appeared in European culture (Davis, 2017: p.17). One of the main contributors

to the creation of these terms was Belgian astronomer and statistician Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1847). Quetelet noticed that “the ‘law of error’—which was used by astronomers to locate a star by plotting all the sightings and then averaging the errors—could be applied to the distribution of human features” (Davis, 2017: p.17). He was going to call this “the average man” (which it can be observed, is a very gendered conception of what it means to be human). However, Quetelet, “compared his average man to an artistic prototype, like a ‘Greek sculpture’, which captured an essence of the form” (Donnelly, 2016: p.138). Thus, his statistical composite of individuals behind “the average man”, as a way in which one could observe moral and physical qualities, resembled more seventeenth century conceptions of the term ideal than contemporary versions of normalcy and average. Therefore, the changeover from ideal to average is not that clear-cut. The only difference between the ideal and the “the average man” is that the latter was constructed to pursue an unattainable goal. Following Donnelly (2015), Quetelet’s work is as a methodological plan for individuals to serve government and scientific institutions (Donnelly, 2015: p.158). Basically, Quetelet’s ideas were thought of as a set of “prescriptions for governments to alleviate human suffering and the belief in the perfectibility of mankind” (Donnelly, 2015: p.144).

Quetelet’s statistical ideas served as the bases for many eugenicists like Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, and R.A. Fisher (Donnelly, 2015: p.6; Davis, 2017: p.17). Thus, in order to understand the early beginnings of eugenics it is important to put the field into context and study the foundations of the disseminations of normalcy after the nineteenth century. Drawing on Quetelet’s ideas of perfectibility and idiocy, eugenicists sought to divide the population into standard and nonstandard populations in an attempt to normalize (Davis, 2017: p.17; Donnelly, 2015: p.141). However, in order to normalize the nonstandard it was important, in the eugenicist view, for evolutionary defectives to not reproduce. Thus, “eugenics became obsessed with the elimination of ‘defectives’, a category which included the ‘feebleminded’, the deaf, the blind, the physically defective, and so on” (Davis, 2017: p.17). However, Galton sought to change the statistical model of the time, even if it was widely used at this time—for instance, during the 1830s, there was a great interest in the formal study and institutionalization of statistics with the creation of the Board of Trade in 1832 and the General Register Office in 1837 (Davis, 2014: p.3)—so it could be better tailored to eugenic ideas.

Galton was facing the problems of extremes inside of his statistical data. For instance, in a normal distribution curve both extremes—even if they were “desirable” or

not—were considered as deviant of the norm. Hence, in order to highlight preferable traits and support his ideas of “the science of improving the stock”, Galton “substituted the idea of ranking for the concept of average” changing the way in which the curve is studied from the usage of the mean to the median (Galton, 1883: p.17; Davis, 2017: p.18). Galton created a ranked system that divided the curve into quartiles to emphasize and privilege desirable traits and avoid the “middling of desired traits” (Davis, 2017: p.18-19). It is through his model of statistics that he showed an active “attempt to redefine the concept of the ‘ideal’ in relation to the general population” (Davis, 2017: p.19). Davis argues that Galton’s ideal of ranked order “is powered by the imperative of the norm, and then is supplemented by the notion of progress, human perfectibility, and the elimination of deviance, to create a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be” (Davis, 2017: p.19).

Scientific and medical ideas during the nineteenth and twentieth century developed through the identification and possible correction of “structural and functional “defects” on the body” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.29) This biomedical examination of defective bodies, “rather than how societies treat disabled people” obscures social factors that “keep disabled people at the margins” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.29). In an attempt to explore contextual factors that disadvantage certain populations, I will use disability studies to explore the ways in which scientific and eugenic ideas in Mexico construct normalcy while pathologizing deviancy.

5.2 Disability Studies

According to Schillmeier (2010) disability studies “aims to highlight the societal construction of disability in order to show that disability is not merely a naturally given matter of fact” (Schillmeier, 2010: p.2). To Goodley (2011) impairment refers to “the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental, or sensory impairment” as disability, on the other hand, is “understood as an act of exclusion” in which “people are disabled by contemporary society” (Goodley, 2011: p.8). Drawing on Thomas’ (2007) idea of disablism, to Goodley this term refers to a “form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments” (Thomas, 2007: p.73; Goodley, 2011: p.8-9). In other words, society was built for those considered “able” or “normal” while excluding certain groups from participating in “interpersonal, social, cultural, economic, and political affairs” (Goodley, 2011: p.9). Goodley coins the term disablement to portray the practical results of

disablism and ableism to describe the social biases that bodies considered as normal have towards those bodies who are considered to be outside of the norm due to their diverse functionality (Goodley, 2011: p.9-12).

However, there are debates inside of the body of theories known as disability studies. For instance, Schillmeier (2010) argues that “we should leave the distinction impairment disability aside in order to make the social of disability traceable” (Schillmeier, 2010: p.5). To him, this is only possible if there is an active rethinking of society and its separation from nature. According to Schillmeier,

this powerful assemblage [meaning nature and the social; impairment and disability] provides a strong normative line of demarcation between humans and nonhumans, the living and the dead, the normal and abnormal, and last but not least the division between the disabled and non-disabled. (Schillmeier, 2010: p.5)

To Schillmeier it is these distinctions that create strategies of inclusion and exclusion. When he proposes to think about nature and the social as an assemblage, Schillmeier provides the tools to think critically about exclusionary practices that lead to disablement. Watermeyer (2013), on the other hand, argues that “a merger of the social and individual analyses of disability studies is needed” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.35). The social model was the first body of theories dedicated to questioning disability and it proposed to view people as disabled by society and not by their difference. Thus, in their view, “it is ‘society’ that has to change, not individuals” (Schillmeier, 2010: p.3). Watermeyer argues that the theorists that initiated the social model reduced the “experiences of a diverse disabled population into the common denominators of their own lives; that is, the circumstances of middle-class, white, male, Western wheelchair users” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.35). Additionally, this model was “solely focused on material ‘barriers to inclusion’—at that, barriers prominent only to a subset of impaired people” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.35). Because this model could not account for the lived experiences of individuals, social constructivists and postmodernism developed a model in which these accounts would be included in academic writing. However, the accounts of suffering and trauma allowed for an “identification with the subject and feelings of pity or empathy [that] tend to eclipse any critique of political context” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.42). Additionally, deconstructionist approaches of disability studies replaced a “barren biological essentialism with an equally depersonalizing ‘discursive essentialism’. Instead of breathing life into the body, deconstruction dissolves it into nothing more than its constituents’ cultural signifiers” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.46).

As a solution to these limiting strands of disability studies Watermeyer proposes a phenomenological approach. Shakespeare's (2006) critical realist view in which he suggests that "people are disabled by society and by their bodies" and, that it is "inescapable that some forms of impairments are more limiting than others" (Shakespeare, 2006: p.60) is used by Watermeyer to see the body as a constitutive element of human affliction and affectivity. In Watermeyer's ontological view of the body, he describes this phenomenon as a site in which the body as well as their experience cannot be separated (Watermeyer, 2013: p.49-50). To Watermeyer disability "is not a function of oppressive societies or impaired bodies, but an emergent phenomenon flowing from the interplay of structural constraints, psychology and culture" (Watermeyer, 2013: p.50). In this sense, he invites the reader to think about the impaired body as a lived cultural phenomenon.

5.2.1 Slippery Eugenics, Assemblages, and Disability

As I discussed in chapter two, *mestizaje* is a racializing assemblage that operates in itself, in conjunction, and as a component of other assemblages. The figure of the *mestizo* is an unstable category in itself that necessitates the creation and solidification of other associations with diverse assemblages that give it the illusion of being a stable category (Wade, 2017). Eugenic ideas and eugenicists operate as one of these assemblages that works towards the making of the *mestizo* as a stable category that makes it seem the archetype of normalcy behind what it means to be Mexican. However, in doing so, eugenics also ensured the stability of the *mestizo* by positioning anything outside of the construction of the norm as deviant, abnormal, or pathological, therefore, creating a tacit division that relegates anything that is outside of the norm to a not-quite or non-human status (Weheliye, 2014).

Eugenic science helped towards the creation of the *mestizo* as a stable category of Mexican nationalism, giving way to a *criollo* eugenics as a viable way to regulate and manage life. However, due to international pressures that categorized eugenics as a pseudo-science, Mexican eugenicists evolved toward a language of veiled eugenics hidden behind theories of risk politics (Rose, 2001)—as I have shown in chapter four. Nonetheless, because the eugenic conditions to self-management and surveillance were already put in place by Mexican eugenicists, and due to the fact that these sets of behaviors were part of these "non-linear, nonorganic, nondualistic ways that emphasize

emergence, heterogeneity, and contingency, while still retaining some elements of structure” eugenics slips through in different shapes, ways, narratives, and behaviors (Wade, 2017: p.45). The fact that the mestizo was constructed as an assemblage that overpowers the confines of racial difference through the construction of imagined ideas racelessness gave way for slippery eugenics.

Slippery eugenics is a mixture between flexible and laissez-faire eugenics that gives way to a eugenic practice of self-surveillance and management in which state control is needed in some instances but no longer needed in others (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011; Taussig et al, 2005). Thus, ethopolitics (Rose, 2001) signals at the ways in which these changes are encountered and lived. In contemporary times eugenic ideas regarding normalcy are so engrained in our every day that it is the long-standing biases of these non-normative or different functioning bodies that feed this assemblage when technological possibilities of normalization are created.

By looking at eugenic ideas and the mestizo as an assemblage I can explore the ways in which the process of normalization and stabilization of unstable categories give way to the creation of an undesirable deviant. I argue that in the process of making the mestizo as the archetype of Mexican citizenship, eugenics privileged the creation of an “able-mestizo” that in turn pathologizes everything that falls outside of this idea and categorizes it as feeble-minded, physically inept, and disabled.

In contemporary times the “marginality of disabled people [is seen] as unfortunate but ideologically neutral” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.28). Through assistive technologies disability has developed “as a multi-billion dollar industry, incorporating an elaborate web of professional, organizational, and cultural interests” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.34). Due to the ethopolitical commercialization of bodies constructed as disabled by eugenic ideas and the rise of Western biomedicine, the personal experiences of these bodies “are very much related to the power of techno-scientific and medical practices that, according to the social model, translate (bodily and mental) disability into an individual model of disability” (Schillmeier, 2010: p.3).

Through the study of disability in Mexico I will explore the ways in which eugenics operated not only to contribute to the stabilization of the mestizo but the creation of and preference for an “able mestizo”. Simultaneously, this will allow me to explore how Mexican eugenicists discussed and constructed bodies and groups as feeble-minded, abnormal, deviant, perverse, among others; which in turn will serve as the basis to observe

the ways in which these categories are still used, or slip in today and the ways in which these ideas contribute to “slow death”. According to Puar (2017), and her work on disability in Palestine, slow death refers to the “debilitating ongoingness of structural inequalities and suffering” (Puar, 2017: p.1). I argue that the poor living conditions of people detained in psychiatric wards and mental health institutions in Mexico live a process of slow death that is only collectively and structurally allowed due to long-standing eugenic ideas of deviancy and normalcy that are still present today through what I term “slippery eugenics”.

5.3 The Beginnings of Feeble-mindedness and Eugenics in Mexico

The Mexican medical system during the nineteenth century was changing hands from the Church to the state due to the country’s recent independence from Spain (1810-1821), but it was declared completely secular by 1861 (Sacristán, 1998: p.208). This, in turn, impacted the hierarchies and models that were used to conceptualize new categories of normalcy and the ideal Mexican body. According to Sacristán (1998), the shaping and authority of the involuntary detainment of people in Mexico was dictated by the family, the state, and medicine (Sacristán, 1998: p.203). By the nineteenth century the recognition of “locura” and/or feeble-mindedness depended on the ascription of medical certificates for admittance to an asylum or mental health institution (Sacristán, 1998: p.204). However, authorities would also collect people who were considered as “locos”, from the streets and confine them in mental health institutions. Additionally, families would play a big part in the reclusion of some categorized as “locos” as they were legally able to institutionalize them.

The role of the family in the care and pathologization of feeble-mindedness was important for the conceptualization of normalcy in Mexico from the end of nineteenth century onwards. This is mostly due to the disregard of feeble-mindedness in the Mexican Sanitary Codes of 1881, 1884, and 1902 respectively (Sacristán, 1998: p.208). At this point there were not many changes to regulations regarding “locura” or mentions of people considered feeble-minded—who in this case ranged from alcoholics, vagrants, homosexuals, among others—because the families were the ones either taking care of them or secluding them in different hospitals dedicated to the care of “locura”. Thus, at

this point feeble-mindedness was not considered much of a public health issue as it was seen as a private issue concerning the family.

At the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 the Castañeda asylum was created in Mexico City. This was a hospital created with public funds and operated until its demolition in 1968. During its first decade of operations the asylum was strongly affected by the armed conflict throughout the Revolution (1910-1920). The goal was to host 1,300 patients and to create 700 additional spaces, however, due to the conflict produced by the Revolution, the Castañeda only hosted about 550 patients (Sacristán, 2017: p.3; Ríos Molina, 2009: p.30). At the beginning of the Castañeda the patients were mainly produced by the transfer of 350 men from the Hospital for the Insane of San Hipólito and 429 women from the Hospital of the Divine Savior (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.30). The abovementioned hospitals were closed due to their colonial and religious origin in an attempt to create the bases of a secular psychiatric institution (Ríos Molina 2009, p.30). These patients were mostly diagnosed as epileptics and died during the first eight years after being transferred to the Castañeda (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.30-31). At this point epileptics were considered—by Mexican scientists and psychiatrists from the nineteenth and early twentieth century—as “amoral” which constructed them as a threat to society as they could commit crimes or attempt against morality (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.31). This idea was taken from theories of hereditarian racial degeneration produced by French positivism and Galtonian eugenic ideas created at the end of nineteenth century. Thus, drawing on ideas regarding epileptics as hereditary threats and criminals, family members preferred to leave epileptics segregated from society (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.31). However, this idea started to change with new patients coming into the Castañeda from 1917 to 1920. At this point the Castañeda was thought of as a place for curing patients more than a tool of segregation (Sacristán, 2017: p.3). The majority of the patients were men identified as alcoholics and women diagnosed as neurotic or hysterical (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.31). By this point 41.3% of people admitted were released by their families after approximately eight months (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.32). According to Ríos (2009), this attitude was not particularly mediated by change in policy or the medical discourse but a common distrust of the constitutionalist government of Venustiano Carranza (1917-1920).

During the early twentieth century eugenic and statistical ideas in Mexico became entangled in scientific thought. These ideas were so popular that Mexican scientists such as indigenist and anthropologist Manuel Gamio (1883-1960) argued that

“it is not possible to determine the necessities of a people, or to seek their improvement, without knowing their statistics” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.43). However, similarly to Quetelet and Galton, Gamio also supported a mixture of statistics and qualitative factors for the betterment of the population when he stated that in Mexico “statistical studies have tended to focus on the quantitative evaluation of the population, almost never accounting for qualitative factors. This [had] been the cause for endless political failures” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.43). To Gamio a mixture of quantitative and qualitative statistical methodology was needed to “promote greater efficiency in the activities of the population” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.46). However, Gamio complicated the framework by stating that even though

general concepts used in conducting statistical investigations [were] the same in all countries, given that the fundamental nature of all men [was] the same [...] one should not use the same statistical methods or get the same results in all countries. (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.46)

To Gamio there were cultural specificities and local relevances that varied depending on the context and, therefore, needed to be adapted. He argued that due to “the ethnic heterogeneity of the Mexican population, the diversity of its ideals, languages, and so forth, it [became] indispensable to have an ethnographic reconnaissance and classification of its diverse social groups” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.47). According to him the adaptation of a statistical method that based itself on general foundation of universal application was necessary for the national development of Mexico so that “the state of social cohesion that [was] inherent in all defined and conscious nationalities [could] emerge” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.47). In this quote Gamio suggested that a context-specific statistical model was needed to normalize and define different populations in Mexico that were conscious of their “ethnic heterogeneity” but wanted to create a cohesive nation. This is to say, Gamio believed that through statistics, Mexico could create a unitary or cohesive version of a nation—through the figure of the mestizo—in which ethnic heterogeneity was just a factor of this unity that would lead to progress. Thus, according to Gamio, the figure of the mestizo was constructed as the norm which, in turn, implies that the ethnically heterogeneous factors were needed for the creation of the mestizo but no longer conformed to the idea of progressive human perfectibility. Consequently, when the mestizo was made to be the norm—in Gamio’s statistical model—it simultaneously dehumanized groups that no longer fit into this idea.

Despite the fact that Gamio uses American anthropologist and his former supervisor Franz Boas’ book *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911) to argue that “the innate

inferiority that is ascribed to some groups does not exist” he also sorted indigenous populations in Mexico according to their level of savagery depending on their degree of contact with the Spanish (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.38, 154-156). Similarly, José Vasconcelos (1925) argued that the “red races”, which he considered an element for the creation of the cosmic race but backwards in nature, “fell asleep millions of years ago with no chance of waking up” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.21). Vasconcelos argued that contemporary indigenous populations were mixed and “has no other choice but to modernize their culture through Latin civilization” (Vasconcelos, 2009 [1925]: p.22). Thus, context specific elements led Mexican intellectuals to use eugenic science and statistics to normalize certain categories, like the mestizo, while dehumanizing others. The fact that indigenous populations were associated with backwardness shows the underpinnings of racialized conceptions and its links to feeble-mindedness, disease, and pauperism.

Since the last third of the nineteenth century French psychiatric nosology was used as a method to classify mental health diseases. However, by 1925 this system of classification was substituted by Kraepelinian psychiatry (Sacristán, 2017: p.12). Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) was a leading German psychiatrist during the early twentieth century. During his time in Munich during 1903, Kraepelin became very interested in neo-Lamarckian eugenics. He argued that eugenics was imperative to “preserve and enhance the health of the German populace” (Engstrom, 2007: p.392). Kraepelin also shaped his understanding on psychiatry by building on neo-Lamarckian ideas that suggested that there were certain attained characteristics that could be passed on to the offspring. Moreover, he argued that when classifying and treating feeble-mindedness it was important to categorize the “feeble-minded” according to their evolution and not only diagnose them according to their symptoms in a specific moment like nosology used to do (Sacristán, 2017: p.12). According to Sacristán (2017), Emil Kraepelin’s work influenced the way in which modern psychiatry developed in Mexico.

Intellectuals, scientists, and members of government were not the only ones behind the construction of ideas of feeble-mindedness during the 1920s. For instance, the family played a very influential role in the state-management and care of “feeble-minded”. Ríos (2009) suggested that psychiatrists would struggle with family members to take care of the patients that, in the psychiatrist’s view, would function in society but family members would prefer to keep patients confined (Ríos, 2009: p.32). This was particularly evident in families that would offer to pay monthly fees to keep family members in the

Castañeda or would make use of psychiatric jargon to describe their family members and categorize them as feeble-minded according to their own needs (Ríos, 2009: p.32). Additionally, there were also patients that would take advantage of the system by pretending to be under the category of feeble-minded to evade outside penal problems or even their own families; these patients would go in and out of the Castañeda as they pleased (Ríos, 2009: p.32). The attitudes of family members in Mexico firstly shows how keeping the feeble-minded in asylums proved convenient to them. However, it also shows the ways in which ideas of feeble-mindedness were already “deeply entrenched in the culture and socialization on the broadest scale” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.30). This is particularly shown in the ways in which family members would make use of psychiatric terminology to pathologize their relatives. Thus, in this case, it is not “medicine per se, but rather a mode of performing medicine” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.40). Nonetheless, it was in response to these dynamics created by family members and patients that the state department of Public Beneficence hired psychiatrist and neurologist Enrique O. Aragón (1880-1942) in 1925 to create a report on the needs of the Castañeda. Aragón argued that there were many patients without a diagnosis, deficient clinic histories, ill prepared personnel, among other issues, however, he never questioned psychiatry as a science but the precarious conditions of patients (Sacristán, 2017: p.3).

5.3.1 The Mexican Society of Eugenics and its Contribution to Feeble-mindedness

The report made by Aragón created the conditions for a new administration of the Castañeda by Manuel Guevara Oropesa (1932-1944) (Sacristán, 2017: p.3). This new period was characterized by a systematic increase in patients admitted to the Castañeda which, in turn, marked a change in the ways in which feeble-mindedness was going conceived. Vasconcelos’ and Gamio’s eugenic and statistical ideas were carried out by eugenicists in Mexico from the creation of the SME in the 1930s onwards. This, in turn, had an impact in public policy and the way in which society would think about feeble-mindedness. For instance, one of the “achievements” of the impact of eugenics in Mexico was Law 121 of Veracruz in 1932. As I mentioned in chapter one, the state of Veracruz passed a eugenic sterilization law that drew its ideas from the hereditary perversions of feeble-mindedness and its links to criminality and degeneration (Stern, 2011). This law called for the creation of a Eugenic and Mental Hygiene Section that

“would study, in their context [Veracruz], the diseases and physical defects of humans that could be transferred from parents to their offspring” (Law 121, Article 2). Through the statistical study of these hereditary defects, the law proceeded to list the groups of people considered feeble-minded like “criminals, alcoholics, prostitutes, addicts [...] and individuals that give way to pauperism” (Law 121, Article 3). With the statistical information created by the Eugenic and Mental Hygiene Section this law would “dictate and apply, in each case, the necessary prophylactic and scientific measures to prevent new generations against disease, physical defects, and feeble-minded” (Law 121, Article 5). This law shows the ways in which feeble-mindedness and deviancy from the norm were no longer thought as something that could be repaired but contained.

Drawing on Davis (2017), “the ‘problem’ of disability does not lie with the person with disabilities but rather in the way normalcy is constructed” (Davis, 2017: p.16). This is especially seen in the ways in which the Mexican eugenicists’ goal of the betterment of the race intersected with pressing social and political rhetoric that stemmed from the creation of a systematic homogenization of the race. For instance, in the editorial section of the *Eugenesia* journal it was stated that

we worry greatly about the future racial constitution of our [Mexican] nationality which is called upon to homogenize through an adequate mix that will allow us to develop in better conditions. This [adequate mix] will free us from hereditary defects that make us prey of disease, insane psychological clashes, and perversions in sexual conduct. (Saavedra, 1939: p.2)

I suggest that the adequate mix that will create the mestizo for the betterment of, not only the race, but the Mexican nation is not only the mestizo but an able mestizo. Almost year later, Argentinian eugenicist (Vallejo, 2018) and member of the SME, Victor Delfino (1883-1941), argued that “it was imperative to create, in our respective countries in America, statistics of the feeble-minded in order to establish tight measures of auditing; a biological customs for the benefit and well-being of the individual and the race” (Delfino, 1940: p.3). Thus, one of the main goals of statisticians and eugenicists alike, was the improvement of people so deviations from normalcy would diminish over time (Davis, 2014: p.3).

Eugenicists did tend to put all the categories such as “feeble-minded”, “the physically defectives”, “addicts”, “vagrants”, “sexual perverts”, among others, in one. For instance, the editorial section of April 1940 Saavedra argued the following:

we cannot close our eyes to ethnographic studies and ignore the basic origin of our troubles [...] if we do not eugenically guide the population, we will raise professional delinquents [...] if we do not address with selective births, the problems of detrimental hereditary factors, venereal diseases, drug addictions, and the subtraction of the feeble-minded, we will not have a healthy and strong race. (Saavedra, 1940: p.1-2)

Saavedra then finished this section by stating that “mental hygiene stems greatly from racial hygiene” (Saavedra, 1940: p.2). To Saavedra eugenicists had the task of controlling reproduction for the betterment of the race. However, based on his final statement, all of the categorizations above stem from mental deficiencies that could be eradicated through the eugenically assisted control of births as, in Saavedra’s view, these were hereditary defects.

The eugenic construction of feeble-mindedness in Mexico intersected with different aspects such as gender, race, class, among others. For instance, the idea of “perversion in sexual conduct” was then expanded in a paper given by eugenicist Raúl González Enriquez at the VII Conference Cycle of Eugenics in 1940. González suggested that “perversions in social conduct” were a sign of feeble-mindedness referred to “the difference between the sexual morality of the proletarian class and the bourgeoisie” (González Enriquez, 1940: p.9). In his view, there were four fundamental characteristics in the sexual lives of proletarian women: “early initiation, promiscuity, fugacity when starting, absence of legal marriage, high percentage of clandestine, accidental or transient prostitution” (González Enriquez, 1940: p.9). Besides the class and gendered distinction that, according to Enriquez, would lead to sexual perversions, men could also be categorized as abnormal. The work entitled *Our Right to be Happy* written by Cuban eugenicist, Rafael A. Monederos, taken from the Public Health Journal in Habana, Cuba was published in *Eugenesia* in May 1940. In here, Monederos argued that

abnormal men, men who possess a lesser personality, who cannot find their development in natural life, its pleasures, and happiness are enticed to incur to bad remedies for the quest of happiness such as alcohol, opium, morphine, cocaine, among others. (Monederos, 1940: p.4)

In Monedero’s view a person that used these “bad remedies” could “create deformities, transmitting physical and moral plagues from the individual to the offspring” (Monederos, 1940: p.7).

Alcoholism, at this point, was seen by eugenicists as a problem that could bring hereditary defects to the rest of the population. However, alcohol consumption in post-

revolutionary Mexico had a racialized aspect. For instance, the discourse that stemmed from the agrarian reform and indigenists looked for possible solutions to solve “the indigenous problem” which comprised “the numerous dialects, analphabetism, alcoholism, superstition, religious fanaticism, misery, lack of hygiene, technological backwardness, work ethic, among others” (Mijangos Díaz et.al., 2011: p.51). This is particularly salient in Gamio’s *Forging a Nation* (1916) when he stated that indigenous people had “only assimilated the use of firearms, iron utensils, and alcohol. This last factor [was] a sad legacy that surely [made] their lives more painful than before the coming of the white man” (Gamio, 2010 [1916]: p.154). These ideas of indigenous people as backward and alcoholics translated into different policies after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), to the Cultural Missions from the 1920s to 1940s, in an attempt to civilize and modernize poor, and mostly, indigenous populations. However, by the 1940s eugenicists started changing the rhetoric from alcoholism as something that could be changed through education, to an unchangeable process rooted in abnormality that could be genetically transmitted. At the same conference in which Raúl González Enriquez presented, Ernesto Frenk advocated for the eugenic sterilization of alcoholics as a way of “impeding the procreation of undesirables due to their hereditary disease” (Frenk, 1940: p.16). Similarly, the editorial section of October 1940 advocated for the eugenic sterilization of alcoholics and addicts as a way to “fight against diseases that damage future generations and free them [future generations] from stigma and disease” (Saavedra, 1940: p.1). Antebi’s (2013) work on disability in post-revolutionary Mexico mentions that racial difference functions as a mode of disability as their inherited characteristics were, according to eugenicists, impossible to detach (Antebi, 2013: p.164). Thus, the elimination of alcoholism as an abnormal and degenerative hereditary problem stems from racialized logics that would, in some eugenicist’ views, lead to the elimination of indigenous populations.

Eugenicists would also make use of economics to sustain their arguments regarding what Delfino termed a “biological customs” to protect the population from feeble-mindedness and abnormality. This “biological customs” or fiscalization, in the eugenicists’ view, would achieve a better race as well as the progress of Mexico. For instance, Saavedra stated the following:

[a] country with a majority of healthy people is a nation that has resolved a high percentage of its problems; but a nation that has to carry the burden of many sick people, crippled, or feeble-minded is a poor country. Not only because it stops producing but also because of what it represents and the service that we need to

give to the weak within society. This is because they consume energies that could be used for another type of enterprise. Thus, the money spent on them [the feeble-minded, cripple, and sick] could be expended in the vital overcoming of economic hardship. (Saavedra, 1941: p.1)

It can be observed from this that the eugenicists' ideas of feeble-mindedness is separated from sickness and physical "impairments" but simultaneously put in the same category of deviant or abnormal. In an attempt to untangle these terms, I will provide a couple of examples on the ways in which Mexican eugenicists made use of and categorized abnormality.

Peruvian eugenicist Susana Solano discusses in the *Eugenesia* journal the psychiatric intricacies of what she terms the "perverse constitution" of "abnormal individuals" (Solano, 1941: p.2). Drawing her ideas from Brazilian eugenicist Renato Kehl, she argued that "the perverse is an abnormal individual with aberrations that weaken or eliminate their moral restraints due to their pernicious environment" (Solano, 1941: p.7). In her view, the "feeble-minded" was a product of hereditary traits and environmental attributes. Thus, Solano argued that "hereditary syphilis, alcoholism" could be part of the perverse constitution as well as environmental issues such as "misery, indigence, bad nutrition, abandonment, analphabetism" (Solano, 1941: p.8-9). Thus, Solano suggested that feeble-mindedness was an issue created by the abnormality in their "social and family [meaning reproduction and development]" that was caused by precarity and poverty (Solano, 1941: p.9). Cuban eugenicist José Chelala Aguilera, then drew on the idea of Solano and Kehl of the elimination of moral inhibitions to argue that the "low biological quality of the population is fertile ground to the rise of delinquency and criminality" (Chelala Aguilera, 1941: p.19). Thus, the "feeble-minded" individual was, in the eugenicists' view, one that could not function in society due to the hereditary constraints transmitted by their "abnormal" parents, which in turn, produced a damaged collective. Thus, these deviances from a norm created to fit the standards of the "able mestizo" started to be identified and criminalized by Mexican eugenicists.

According to the SME the wealth and well-being of the population was supposed to be measured by the quality of the people. This idea created a concern among eugenicists whose goal was the "production of better humans every day" (Ruíz Escalona, 1942: p.11). Ruíz Escalona argued that "our working class and peasants are wandering idly in infectious pigsties, enfeebling their offspring with a mixture of factors that contribute to the destruction of the race" (Ruíz Escalona, 1942: p.14). In this same issue of the *Eugenesia* journal, Gamio combined the problems of the working-class depicted

by Escalona with those of the indigenous people when stating that “aboriginal groups from Mexico [were] the ones that [had] the highest rates of mortality and, therefore, require the highest governmental spending and wider health programs” (Gamio, 1942: p.6). However, in Gamio’s view, this did not mean that they should be eliminated through eugenic sterilization, like Frenk had argued in 1940, but “they [were] the most healthy, due to the fact that their ancestors had lived in the country [Mexico] for millions of years” (Gamio, 1942: p.6). Thus, Gamio suggested that the fact that indigenous people had survived, despite their insalubrious conditions, made them an important factor for the betterment of the “Mexican race”. However, the indigenist’s assessment of the indigenous as a factor that could contribute to the reinforcement and construction of the “able mestizo” put indigenous populations in a category of not-quite or non-human (Weheliye, 2014).

Eugenicists argued for various measures to impede individual hereditary defects from damaging the collective. Despite the abovementioned implications of gender, race, and class behind ideas of abnormality, eugenicists argued that “there [was] no social or racial condition that [could] escape the diseases transmitted by heredity” (De la Rocha, 1942: p.3). This quote suggested that the goal of Latin American eugenicists, contrary to other places like Nazi Germany—which De la Rocha strongly criticized—, was to achieve a national homogeneity but to weed out individual pathologies. The SME argued for various measures to stop this supposedly individual problem. Some suggested the eugenic sterilization of individuals and others advocated for social prophylaxis, which was a series of preventive measures to regulate the reproduction of these abnormal hereditary traits. However, more often than not, these measures would converge. For instance, in 1943, Saavedra argued that “sterilization is imposed as a preventive measure of public health, it is a corrective healing that acts upon the individual. This is not an imposition or punishment but a humane and medical practice capable of saving the interests of the species” (Saavedra, 1943: p.1).

Depicting degenerate subjects as an individual threat that could jeopardize the able mestizo led to various discussions of not only what to do with deviants or abnormal but how to recognize them. However, this preoccupation was due to the fact that from the creation of the most important mental asylum in Mexico City, the Castañeda, in 1910 to 1944 the idea was that “segregation was key” (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.34). However, after the Revolution this idea started to change because it was assumed, by government officials and scientists, that vagrancy and unproductive people were a threat to

revolutionary ideas (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.35). As a result, the Castañeda created programs to keep individuals active. This created new baseball and basketball teams as well as agricultural programs situated in the gardens behind the Castañeda (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.35). This program became so large that the authorities decided to transfer some of the patients hospitalized in this asylum to a modern farm in Guanajuato in 1944 (Ríos Molina, 2009: p.35). Despite the fact that this was meant to alleviate the Castañeda due to its high number of patients, the director of the asylum Guevara Oropesa saw it as an opportunity for patients to recover (Sacristán, 2017: p.4) This created a sense of anxiety among eugenicists. This is why in their editorial section of 1944 they stated that “abnormals” or “deviants” were everywhere and even if they looked inoffensive or even normal, they could

become dangerous and are the ones that, in their majority, can trigger tragedies like suicides, fights, homicides, fires, among others. These are people that, at any given moment, would commit gross indecencies and crimes. Thus, they are the root of society’s problems and, more importantly, the family as they would cause tribulations in the composition and organization of the home. (Saavedra, 1944: p.1-2)

This is to say; eugenicists were worried that new ideas regarding the possibility of recovery could tamper with the betterment of the race. According to eugenicists if these undesirable and abnormal traits kept being reproduced, Mexican society would suffer a social degeneration that in turn would trigger feeble-minded populations to act against what I termed in the third chapter as “la gran familia Mexicana”.

Due to the eugenicists’ concerns about hereditary degeneration they posed a solution that would lead to social prophylaxis of the individual. This is why Saavedra argued in the editorial section that:

[w]hen we [the SME] are dealing with mental sicknesses, epilepsy, cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, or when their forefathers had some hereditary physical defect and they [Mexican citizens] do not say anything; it is as if they are committing a crime. (Saavedra, 1946: p.8-9)

Thus, following this quote, the SME called for a mode of self-surveillance of degenerative traits that would lead to feeble-mindedness. Thus, once again the family was supposed to be vigilant against their own relatives. This also raises a link between sickness and criminality that goes to the heart of Galton’s eugenics. For instance, in Galton’s book entitled *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883) he dedicated an entire section to the topic which he titled *Criminals and the Insane*. Similar to the expressions

made by eugenicists in the *Eugenesia* journal, which suggests that they were following up on Galton's ideas, Galton argued that "it [was] easy [...] to show that the criminal nature [tended] to be inherited" (Galton, 1883: p.43). He then proceeded to express the same anxieties regarding the fact that some criminals were difficult perceive in plain sight. For instance, Galton suggested that

the true state of the case appears to be the that the criminal population receives steady accessions from those who, without having strongly-marked criminal natures, do nevertheless belong to a type of humanity that is exceedingly ill suited to play a respectable part in our modern civilization, though is well suited to flourish under half-savage conditions, being naturally both healthy and prolific. These persons are apt to go to the bad; their daughters consort with criminals and become the parents of criminals. (Galton, 1883: p.43-44)

This is to say; Mexican eugenicists recovered Galton's ideas regarding the associations made between criminality and feeble-minded as a hereditary condition to consolidate a strong Mexican state in which the feeble-minded were to be separated from the population. However, the conditions created by these new measures of the possible recovery of deviants threatened eugenicists' idea of the betterment of the race through segregation, social prophylaxis, and even sterilization. The fact that from 1944 to 1948 there were different creations of these farms as a possible "road to recovery" changed the ways in which feeble-mindedness would be seen in Mexico as something that could be solved without the possibility of eugenic social prophylaxis.

Despite these new changes regarding the treatment of feeble-mindedness, eugenicists continued to assert their view on abnormality and deviance. Referring to the new changes regarding recovery, Mexican eugenicist Lázaro Sirlín argued that "one of the more discussed and debated topics [had] been the influence of alcoholism as a hereditary problem [...] the majority of imbeciles, idiots, epileptics and some epileptics come from alcoholic ascendance" (Sirlín, 1946: p.5). He then argued for an exhaustive statistical analysis and discussion so a pragmatic solution for the elimination of hereditary feeble-mindedness (Sirlín, 1946: p.5). Despite their insistence on the hereditary dimension of deviants, other Mexican eugenicists argued that the problem of abnormality or feeble-mindedness was the fact that most deviants hid their condition as feeble-minded. This was shown in the editorial section of August 1946 in which Saavedra argued the following:

Having relatives or ascendance with a determined lesion or ailment [referring to feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, among others] cannot

be seen as a sign of shame that is denied or obscured as a lunar influence or a terrible accident. (Saavedra, 1946: p.9)

However, Saavedra made these statements to call for a mode of self-surveillance or, even, an act of confession (Foucault, 1976). For instance, he then stated that

[t]his denial or concealment can bring serious consequences to the descendants that can be avoided. This concealment is even a criminal act as it attempts against the health of the species. Nothing is achieved through the act of hiding due to shame which is going to affect the offspring of those who want to deceive themselves. (Saavedra 1946, p.9).

As can be seen from this quote, Saavedra believed that if ideas of recovery were to dictate the ways in which feeble-mindedness would be seen in Mexico, it was better to opt for a method in which deviants would confess to their hereditary problems so eugenicists would be able to control them.

Nonetheless, once methods of self-surveillance and management were in place; the measures to control and manage feeble-mindedness, according to eugenicists, remained the same. For instance, María Luisa Arriaga Galindo published a book entitled *Sterilization and Delinquency* (1947) in which she advocated for the sterilization of criminals, physical or mental deviants, and sexual delinquents. Arriaga Galindo also advocated for the creation of a group of medical doctors and lawyers that would study heredity and sterilization to ensure the application of sterilization measures in the necessary cases. In a similar manner, eugenicist Carlos Bernaldo de Quirós argued that

[e]very social prophylaxis plan should be part of civil and criminal law to ensure the rise in legitimate marriages and the diminution of feticides, moral abandonment of people, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality. It would also ensure the fight against social disease, misery, and disease to decrease criminality and vagrancy. (Bernaldo de Quirós, 1947: p.18)

Thus, to Bernaldo de Quirós, a eugenically oriented social prophylaxis plan would ensure the eradication of undesirables and deviancy for future generations and it

would guarantee better physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the offspring and the total segregation of undesirables. In short, it would regulate relations, feeble-minded, and international issues over everyone from a sanitary and reproductive viewpoint. (Bernaldo de Quirós, 1947: p.18)

In this sense, after the mid-1940s, eugenicists tried to configure a system of self-surveillance and management of deviants due to the recent changes in the treatment of people that would escape the logics of normalcy or, what I term, the able mestizo.

However, their core argument regarding the hereditary transmission of undesirable traits with social prophylaxis and eugenic sterilization as the solution, remained the same.

To Sum up, eugenics played an important role in the construction of feeble-mindedness in Mexico. In the attempts to secularize mental health hospitals in Mexico I was able to explore the ways in which conceptions of heredity, abnormality, deviance, amorality, and criminality were very much present through the figure of the epileptic since the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. However, due to the dire conditions created by the Revolution in Mexico the Castañeda—and its creation in 1910—started changing ideas of feeble-mindedness as someone who could be treated and cured. However, this was not taken well by individuals—family and patients alike—who would make use of the system to keep themselves segregated. I suggest that this could be the early beginnings of a system of self-surveillance as well as a contestation and questioning to the veracity and viability of Carranza's constitutional government. Nonetheless, psychiatrists and individuals were not the only ones who helped shape feeble-mindedness during the decades of the 1910s and 1920s. Theorists like Manuel Gamio and José Vasconcelos made use of statistical, scientific, and eugenic ideas to produce racializing logics that normalized the mestizo while dehumanizing others by putting them in categories such as backward, deviant, or as a mere factor for the development of the able mestizo. After the creation of the SME the abovementioned ideas of feeble-mindedness and normalcy were used to create a hybrid idea that would normalize the able mestizo as the archetype of the Mexican nation and assert their importance to create a better Mexican race. These ideas influenced the ways in which feeble-mindedness was seen after the Mexican Revolution. Mexican eugenicists would mention different categories, considered as deviant, as a way of linking them to hereditary degeneracy and its social threat, criminality, sexual perversion, physical degeneration, alcoholism, among others. However, through the eugenicists' discussions I was able to examine the ways in which these categories intersected with race, class, gender, among other factors. However, by 1944, the threat of degeneration was particularly relevant due to the creations of farms for functional patients on the road to recovery. The idea of recovery—as I was able to show with the different methods explored by the SME regarding social prophylaxis and sterilization—was not part of the rhetoric of Mexican eugenicists. This, in turn, created a sense of anxiety in the ways in which eugenicists discussed hereditary defects and their impact on the Mexican race and society that led to new configurations that required deviants to apply mechanisms of surveillance to themselves.

5.4 Disability After the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

After the second half of the twentieth century there was a shift regarding disability rights. International organizations played a major role in the incorporation of different resolutions. The first was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, ratified by Mexico, whose article 25 stated that

[e]veryone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (UDHR, Article 25)

However, despite the ratification of the UDHR, it is important to mention that the SME's focus on the hereditary problems that, in their view, led to deviancy and should be either segregated or eliminated through sterilization did not cease during the 1950s. Additionally, some eugenicists like Alfredo Saavedra continued to write about eugenics and advocate for these ideas until the 1970s (Stern, 2011). Nonetheless, at this point the rise in numbers of patients admitted to the Castañeda stabilized to the creation of outside treatment clinics in the 1940s and despite the fact that eugenic ideas were present, international pressure was felt. For instance, when Manuel Velasco Suárez became the director of Neurology, Mental Health, and Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Health and Assistance he opened the possibility for a "possible closing of the Castañeda to give way to communitarian psychiatry that went accordingly to international tendencies" (Sacristán, 2017: p.5).

By 1968, the Castañeda asylum was closed down due to "poor conditions, inadequate food, lack of treatment, and crowded living areas" (Mental Disability Rights International, 2010: p.6). The process of closing the asylum was known as the Castañeda Operation. The closing of this hospital was "a strategy to create a network of psychiatric hospitals in different states of the republic, decrease the number of existing patients, and finally, closing the Castañeda" (Ríos Molina et.al., 2017: p.27). This was partly due to international changes regarding the treatment of patients, the ongoing critiques of mistreatment, and the failure to cure feeble-mindedness. For instance, the criticisms to the Castañeda surged since 1944 when eugenicist and psychiatrist Matilde Rodríguez Cabo argued that the asylum "limited itself to be a mere warehouse for mental patients with very little or no chance of rehabilitation" (Sacristán, 2017: p.4). It is important to note that despite the fact that Rodríguez Cabo was a eugenicist I can suggest, from this quote,

that she believed in the rehabilitation of patients. Nonetheless, by the 1960s the Castañeda had become a problem due to its overpopulation, lack of adequate services, and changes in the ways in which mental health was starting to be seen locally and internationally.

In the 1970s the United Nations created two more declarations, the Declarations on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons in 1971 and, in 1975 the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Both of these declarations advocated for the “necessity of assisting mentally retarded persons to develop their abilities in various fields of activities and of promoting their integration as far as possible in normal life” (Resolution 2856, 1971; Resolution 3447, 1975). The problem with these declarations is that “disabled people are treated as objects rather than as authors of their own lives; ‘person fixing’ rather than ‘context changing’” (Goodley, 2001: p.8). By advocating for integration there is no real commitment to changing underlining ideas of the hegemony of normalcy (Davis, 2017: p.22).

By the 1990s in Mexico there were different non-governmental organizations that advocated to improve the care given at mental health institutions in Mexico. For instance, the Mexican Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill (FMREM) was a part of various international and local forums advocating for the improvement of care at mental health institutions, among other organizations (Mental Disability Rights International, 2010: p.7). Both FMREM and the Dignity Foundation established community-based programs inside of psychiatric hospitals in Mexico. These programs consisted of community-based residential homes and rehabilitations homes for people with mental health disabilities (Mental Disability Rights International, 2000: p.II). These consisted in shared housing accommodation, educational programs and a ceramics workshop (Mental Disability Rights International, 2000: p.II). While conducting these programs, the FMREM realized that there were a series of mistreatments inside of mental health facilities in Mexico that ranged from poor living conditions and lack of resources to physical violence. As a result, the FMREM decided to expose these abuses as human rights violations and push the government to draft a new law that would protect the people inside of these institutions. This developed into the drafting of a federal health law that was adopted by the federal legislature in 1994 and ratified in the Federal District of Mexico City in 1995 (Mental Disability Rights International, 2010: p.7). By 1996 and 1998, respectively, this law was passed and implemented throughout the country. This law called for better living conditions for medical and psychiatric hospitals and it called for “a cluster of services provided to the user that had, as a goal, to protect, restore, and

maintain their mental health through preventive, rehabilitative, curative measures” (NOM-025-SSA2, 1994). This law also called for preventive activities like education, detection and management, external consults, the participation of health providers, the family, and the community, as well as community programs for the reincorporation of the person (NOM-025-SSA2, 1994). The norm also provided a section entitled “Human Rights and the Respect to the Dignity of its Users” in which it was stated that

all users have the rights to receive good and humane treatment, no discrimination, the right to information to them and their legal representative, a safe and hygienic environment, good accommodation with ventilation and natural and artificial light, deny participation as a subject of scientific research, receive the complete information, and request meeting with their medical professional. (NOM-025-SSA2, 1994)

However, despite the Norm created in 1994, the FMREM with Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI) argued in a report made in 2000 entitled Human Rights and Mental Health in Mexico that people detained in psychiatric institutions—commonly known as *granjas* (farms)—after the creation of the first one in Guanajuato and the various others after the closing of Castañeda, “experience a total lack of privacy and basic control of over the most minute and personal decisions of their daily life” (Mental Disability Rights International, 2000: p.IV). Additionally, after FMREM and MDRI visited the *granjas* in 1999, they stated that people were living in “filthy living conditions, unhygienic treatment practices, lack of appropriate medical and dental care, improper use of physical restraints, and shortages of blankets and clothing” (Mental Disability Rights International, 2000: p.IV). The FMREM and MDRI argued that psychiatric institutions outside of Mexico City were even worse. They mentioned two psychiatric institutions one in Ocaranza, Hidalgo and another one in Jalisco, Guadalajara. They indicated that in Ocaranza, for example, people were constricted to small areas where

they were left to sit, pace, or lie on the concrete floor all day. Without activities or attention, they rocked back and forth or self-stimulated in other ways. Some patients regularly urinated or defecated on the floor, in areas where others often sit or walk through with bare feet [...] they were brought straight from this ward to the dining area without an opportunity to wash their hands or clean themselves. Those able to get to a bathroom did not have access to toilet paper. People on the ward were given medications with water from a common bucket, using one cup passed from one person to another. (Mental Disability Rights International, 2000: p.V)

Despite the Mexican regulations in place and the ratification of international declarations, people detained in these institutions were treated as non-human and therefore, subjected

to slow death (Weheliye 2014; Puar, 2017). The second example they give is a children's institution at Jalisco in the outskirts of Guadalajara. They mention that some of the children were covered in urine and feces, these were left lying on mats on the floor, and were often left with no supervision which led to self-inflicted abuse and some of the children were "observed eating their own feces" (Disability Rights International, 2000: p.V). Additionally, they also indicate the abuse of physical restraint. The laws created came as a response to the changing international sphere and community-based efforts regarding disability rights. However, the change in law is only a small element as the practices did not seem to change.

However, social and cultural conceptions of disability were impacted by the new policy change. These policies and measures are usually met in place to "allow nation states to identify those who qualify for welfare. Simultaneously, though, these definitions individualize the problems of disability" as a product of individual misfortune that could be corrected through the power of health and normalizing technologies (Goodley, 2011: p.5). The TV and radio broadcast Teletón in 1996 is a good example to understand the ways in which the individualization of disability gives way to slippery eugenics.

5.4.1 Teletón and Slippery Eugenics

Teletón is an annual Televisa-produced fundraiser for children's rehabilitation centers. Antebi (2018) argues that "the pleasure of moral action (helping children) becomes indistinguishable from the pleasure of looking [...] in one sense voyeurism may be said to masquerade benevolence" (Antebi, 2018: p.219). These kinds of programs display disability as a financial transaction dictated by neoliberal notions that create an affective reaction on the spectator. The fact that there are "benevolent", and presumably, rich citizens that are willing to pay for the rehabilitation of these children shows the ways in which in a regime of ethopolitics the state is no longer expected to solve society's health "problems". Additionally, it also shows that with new technological or pharmacological developments there is "[a] need to believe in a quasi-magical repair for this desolation found form in prosthetics, and [it gives way to a] generalized to a view of individuals—and society at large—as machines amenable to reconstruction" (Watermeyer, 2013: p.33). Thus, the historical, scientific, and eugenic biases that create deviancy and abnormality assemble and combine with new technologies to give the possibility of normalcy.

As soon as the historical baggage and scientific biases behind the construction of deviance are met with the possibility of individual change, the disabled subject appears as a consumer of the technologies within the disability industry or the pharmacological spectrum. Thus, it is through slippery eugenics that we can see the ways in which the neoliberal system acts as a tool for systematic oppression for bodies that have been historically constructed as deviant. This is to say, during the neoliberal era a change in paradigm occurs: the discourse shifts from the usage of eugenics as a scientific truth to one that prominently considers the economic spectrum. This is the discourse that will legitimize, in a seemingly accepting and tolerant society, the targeting of certain bodies as either an object of pity, disgust, or fear but always as an outsider. Nevertheless, these two considerations—science and the economic spectrum—do not contradict one another as this would only show the continuation of eugenic ideas behind the threat of deviancy, abnormality, or disability. This, in turn, allows for the systematic individual and collective rally against bodies constructed as disabled.

Despite international change regarding disabilities during the 1970s, these measures never questioned the fact that the social conditions are made by hegemonic constructions of normalcy. It was not until 1995 that the first federal norm emerged to regulate and establish protective mechanisms for the involuntarily reclusion of people with mental disabilities in Mexico. However, as it has been mentioned in this section, neoliberalism changed the bases for the conceptualization of disablement through new formulations of disability in which individual self-management created the conditions for slippery eugenics. However, the fact that there is a clear failure of state-sponsored programs in mental health institutions and psychiatric wards that are critiqued and contested by different local and international institutions shows that the state is expected to cover the needs of a certain sector of the population. Nonetheless, at the same time, there is a televised spectacle masqueraded with the benevolence of individuals to economically solve and normalize different functioning bodies without the questioning of the hegemony of normalcy. This is a good example to show a transition to slippery eugenics in which the failure of the state gives way to an interrogation of the state that leaves individuals to resort to other channels outside of state-sponsored and managed programs of normalization. However, one thing is left untouched; the eugenic idea that everyone should strive for normalcy and that there is such a thing as abnormally or deviancy which should be corrected for the betterment of the collective.

5.4.2 Colectivo Chuhcan and Disability Rights International

In Mexico, the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) defined people with disabilities in 2012, using the United Nations (UN) Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 2006, as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”(CNDH, 2012: p.5-6). It is interesting to note the change in language from feeble-mindedness, deviance, and abnormality by eugenicists at the beginning of the twentieth century to people with disabilities in the twentieth century. There has been a lot of debate among intellectual, activists, and academic circles regarding what is the “politically correct” terminology. For instance, US minority model supporters advocated for a people’s first language, meaning “people with disabilities” instead of “disabled people”. However, UK social modelists preferred disabled people because they consider the people’s first language as naïve as, in their view, it contributes to the prominence on the individual. The UK social modelist theorists argue that disabled people “connotes the anti-medicalizing idea of ‘people disabled by society’” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.34). In the case of Mexico activists’ groups, like the Colectivo Chuhcan, the people’s first language is employed when they identify themselves as “people with psychosocial disabilities”.

On the Colectivo’s webpage it is mentioned that their aim is to “achieve the complete inclusion of people with psychosocial disabilities to community life through the promotion and defense of rights recognized by the UN’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (Colectivo Chuhcan, 2011). Community participation of people with different functioning bodies that are constructed as disabled is needed because they serve as a way of “[evoking] sites of violence, restriction, confinement and absence of liberty for disabled people” (Goodley, 2011: p.18). Despite of the use of and adherence to the UN’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Mexico there are a lot of stigmas, exclusionary and debilitating practices that still persist in Mexican society as well as a general mistreatment of people considered as disabled as “the dominant framework for understanding disability has been the medical model”(Hughes, 2000: p.555). This is to say, the probability of inclusion to a society constructed under the precepts of a hegemonically constricted model of normalcy is never

under question by the different policies and measures created locally and internationally. Thus, “if political movements choose to rely on oversimplified binaries for the good of their cause, the identities of oppressed and oppressor become increasingly reified” (Watermeyer, 2013: p.46). This in turn allows for systematic pathologization and stigmatization, not only at an individual level, but also at a structural level.

The report entitled *Twice Violated: The Abuse and Denial of Sexual and Reproductive Rights to Women with Disabilities in México* (2015) can shed some light on the ways in which disability operates in Mexico. This report was published by the Colectivo Chuhcan in collaboration with Disability Rights International in 2015, and its main purpose was to “lay the bases for further advocacy efforts to guarantee the sexual and reproductive rights of women with disabilities at the legislative and policy level in Mexico” (DRI et al, 2015: p.43). The Colectivo Chuhcan, based in Mexico City, is the “first organization in Mexico managed by people with psychosocial disabilities” (DRI et al, 2015: p.9). In the report made by both of these institutions it is not stated what exactly is psychosocial disabilities. In an attempt to show what this means in Mexico I was able to find an official report made by the CNDH in 2012 that uses both international and context-specific categories of what they term “risk groups” or “vulnerable groups”. Using Rose’s (2001) term “risk politics” proves very useful for the understanding of the CNDH’s report. Risk and vulnerability are seen as synonyms by the CNDH. However, risk politics informs us of the ways in which medicine and science throughout the twentieth century drew from moralizing interpolations into the habits of those considered abnormal or deviant (Rose, 2001). These ideas are carried out by the CNDH through both vulnerability and risk. However, as Lemke (2002) suggests, the usage of these terms do not mean that there is a linear continuity of eugenic practices or that there is a clear rupture. It just suggests that eugenics is slippery, and it often passes unnoticed in contemporary understanding of not only scientific and medical research, but also cultural and social dynamics at an individual and collective level.

The CNDH defines psychosocial disabilities as “something that can derive from a mental disease. Psychosocial disabilities have genetic and biochemical elements and it is not related to intellectual disability” (CNDH, 2012: p.10). As can be seen from this definition, disability “ceases to be thought in terms of broad social categories [instead] misleading appearances of pathology and normality [are shown through] underlying determinants, the genes and their mode of functioning at a molecular level” (Rose, 2001: p.13). Through the creation of definitions such as the one created by the CNDH, eugenic

goals seem to be discredited as meanings and hypotheses are now seen through “scientific improvements in molecular genetics” (Lemke, 2002: p. 284). In their attempt to categorize psychosocial disabilities, the CNDH mentions that

[t]he symptoms are usually presented during adolescence. Psychosocial disabilities can be temporary or permanent and become a life-time condition. For instance: depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, panic attacks, phobic disorder, and split personality disorder. (CNDH, 2012: p.10-11)

Thus, this genetic reductionism that draws its bases from ill-informed historical and moralizing interventions to be only geared to specific interests based on commercial interests also has a great impact in “practical terms and what social consequences it will have beyond all scientific debate” (Lemke, 2004: p.553).

The report, published in 2015, constituted an effort to uncover these abuses as human rights violations targeted at people with disabilities. The aim of this research was “to identify the main violations against the sexual and reproductive rights of woman with disabilities in Mexico” (DRI et al, 2015: p.9). The research was divided into two parts. The first one consisted of a questionnaire that was designed and tested by the members of the Colectivo Chuhcan for people, like them, who would identify as people with psychosocial disabilities. In the report they point out their difficulties in trying to access women with psychosocial disabilities. They argue that this is an especially difficult group to access as the majority are “overprotected by their families and remain segregated at home or, in the worst-case scenario, have been institutionalized” (DRI et al, 2015: p.10). The suggestion made by the Colectivo in regard to the act of “overprotection by their families” should not come as a surprise. The prominent role of the families in the care and management has been present seen since the end of the nineteenth century. However, the idea of care changes substantially depending on the time period in Mexico. For instance, at the end of the nineteenth century segregation was seen, by the family, as the best form of care and protection. Nonetheless, during the constitutional government of Carranza (1917) family members would both commit or discharge relatives by way of protecting them from their own deviancy or feeble-mindedness but also safeguarding them from the conditions imposed by the new rule. However, this act of committing and discharging relatives for their supposed protection dictated the behavioral patterns of the family in Mexico until the closing of the Castañeda in the late 1960s (Sacristán, 2017: p.9). The fact that these models of “care” and “protection” by the family are still in place in the twenty-first century is very telling. First of all, because through these models of

care and protection we see the shaping of ideas that are dictated by scientific, eugenic, and medical models of deviancy, amorality, feeble-mindedness, and now, disability. The act of committing and discharging shows how the family is also self-surveilling and managing who belongs in society as “normal” and who is not, depending on the scientific and policy discourse of the time. Additionally, it shows the ways in which the person categorized as abnormal or deviant loses their “choice” to, for example, be or not at a mental health institution or to be part of an interview. Thus, these dynamics make me question up to what degree these persons are constructed as non-normal and, therefore non-human (Weheliye, 2014).

This report offered as its methodology a questionnaire to “51 women with psychosocial disabilities who were either members of the Colectivo Chuhcan or received outpatient services at four different health clinics and psychiatric institutions in Mexico City” over a period of seven months (DRI et.al. 2015, p.10). Disability Rights International and the Colectivo Chuhcan interviewed women that were part of the Colectivo, the clinic No. 23 of the Mexican Institute for Social Security (IMSS) and Psychiatric Hospital of the IMSS—which are under the authority of Mexico City’s Government—but also interviewed women from the National Psychiatric Hospital Ramón de la Fuente and the Psychiatric Hospital Fray Bernardino Álvarez—which are under the authority of the Federal Government (DRI et al, 2015: p.10).

The main findings of this report were that the Mexican state “has failed to implement policies that ensure that women with psychosocial disabilities have safe access to sexual and reproductive health services, on an equal basis with others” (DRI et.al. 2015, p.13). The Colectivo Chuhcan and Disability Rights International found that over forty percent of the women that were interviewed in Mexico City had suffered abuse while visiting a gynecologist, including sexual abuse, and rape. They also found a high rate of forced or coerced sterilization documented on the interviews. Basically, the report shows that “over forty percent of the women had been sterilized either forcefully or had been coerced by family members to undergo the surgical procedure” (DRI et al, 2015: p.13). This shows the ways in which family members serve to enforce the surveillance and self-management of eugenic sterilization put in place during the twentieth century in Mexico. The fact that there are new conceptualizations of disability that rely on the celebration of scientific technologies to improve the health and quality of life and simultaneously use arguments of genetics “obscure the threat that new biological practices of control will coerce, restrict and even eliminate those whose biological propensities are believed—by

doctors, parents or perhaps even by political authorities—to be defective” (Rose, 2001: p.2)

As a response to these new dynamics of coercion and poor treatment, the Colectivo Chuhcan is trying to position itself as an advocate of women with psychosocial disabilities. This, in turn, puts the Colectivo between the influence of the state and the family. Thus, it is through this political positioning that the Colectivo questions the bases that safeguard ideas of contemporary eugenics. Thus, despite the fact that they use the incorporation of people with psychosocial disabilities into society as their bases for social justice and activism, the society that the Colectivo envisions requires an active questioning of contemporary practices of eugenics or, as I term it, slippery eugenics.

Slippery eugenics allows us to observe how engrained eugenic ideas are in society and the ways in which they have been internalized through a mode of self-management. Women with psychosocial disabilities in Mexico are structurally oppressed by historical eugenic ideas that impact contemporary Mexico. There have not been policies for women with psychosocial disabilities to have safe access to sexual and reproductive services because of an idea that “they should not be allowed to reproduce” in the first place due to the eugenic threat of hereditary degeneration. For instance, it is said on the report that the director of an institution that houses children with mental disabilities expressed that “[a]ll of the girls have to be sterilized” (DRI et al, 2015: p.18). This shows the ways in which the belief that certain groups should not have a say regarding their reproduction as they have been constructed as deviant or abnormal and, therefore, a threat for the future composition of the nation. However, these eugenic ideas have also been internalized by them at an individual level. For instance, on question number 16 of the report it was asked if women with disabilities had the right to be mothers. To frame this question, they put an example of a

30-year-old woman from the South of Mexico who has a developmental disability. A few years ago, she was also diagnosed with depression. Maria and her partner are thinking about starting a family; however, they have faced opposition from their families, friends, and doctor. In your opinion, can this woman be able to choose to reproduce? (DRI et.al., 2015: p.39)

Among the 51 women interviewed, 27% answered “no” or “don’t know”. On his work about sexuality and disability in Britain, Shakespeare (2000) mentions that “sexuality, for disabled people, has been an area of distress, and exclusion, and self-doubt for so long, that it was sometimes easier not to consider it, than to engage with everything from which

so many were excluded”(Shakespeare, 2000: p.160). This idea that disabled people should not be allowed to reproduce or could even consider the possibility to reproduce stems from eugenic ideas regarding the threat of degeneration and the mission to “better the race” in Mexico. However, the fact that such a significant percentage of women said “no” or “don’t know” represents the ways in which eugenic ideas have been internalized and translate to an individual self-management of these women pathologized throughout the twentieth-century.

In this report it is also indicated that while visiting a gynecologist the women interviewed were subjected to abuse, including sexual abuse and rape. For instance, they revealed that when Disability Rights International (DRI) went to Casa Hogar Esperanza (Home for Hope), an institution for children with disabilities, in June 2014 they found that Casa Hogar Esperanza had a policy that consisted in the “forceful sterilization of every girl that is admitted to the facility” (DRI et al, 2015: p.44). Disability Rights International and the Colectivo Chuhcan stated that given “the pervasive problems of sexual violence in institutions” they believe that this is done to “cover up sexual abuses by preventing a pregnancy that can result from it” (DRI et al, 2015: p.44). While the report does not go into details as to the conditions of these sexual abuses due to their lack of access to these institutions, I claim can be understood in various ways. It can be seen as a way of expressing the “worthlessness” of these children and women by, yet again, relegating them to a position of non-human. Or due to the accounts of excess of physical force in these institutions, it can be seen as a form of “punishment”. Exercising a form of “punishment” on women and children internalized in these facilities suggests an idea of criminality that can be traced back to eugenic ideas that combine both feeble-mindedness and criminality which, from this account I can suggest, still exist today.

The Colectivo and Disability Rights International actively denounced eugenic ideas and its links to the ways in which people with disabilities are treated in Mexico now. This is particularly clear when the Colectivo and Disability Rights International state that the eugenic sterilization law in Veracruz still plays a major role in allowing mistreatment targeted towards people considered as disabled (DRI et al, 2015: p.4). They argue that the facts that the 1932 law 121 which

called for the ‘regulation of reproduction and feasible applications of a methodical eugenics’, including legal sterilization of ‘the insane, idiots, degenerates or those demented to such a degree that their defect is considered incurable or hereditarily transmissible in the judgment of the Section of Eugenics and Mental Hygiene’. Eighty-three years later, this law has not yet been abolished. (DRI et al, 2015: p.4)

By creating this report, the Colectivo Chuhcan and Disability Rights International are using their knowledge of the current situation regarding people with disabilities to analyze critically the development of medicalization and problematize its development in light of Mexican eugenics. Through the creation of this report the Colectivo and Disability Rights International built a bridge between Mexican eugenics during the first half of the twentieth century and slippery eugenics through the ways in which these ideas slip into the practices that exclude, pathologize, and dehumanize people with disabilities. However, besides bridging practices of exclusion, discrimination, and dehumanization of non-normative bodies, how does eugenics express itself in Mexico in the twenty-first century?

5.5 Good Eugenics?

In the dawn of new presidential elections in Mexico an article was published in 2011 entitled *Eugenics: A Historical Analysis and a Possible Proposal* by Fabiola Villela Cortés and Jorge E. Linares Salgado. The article had, as a goal, to “review eugenics movements in the mid-twentieth century, eugenic resurgence, and current advancements” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189). This, in their view, would pave the way to creating a new model of eugenics that would take the best traits of liberal and totalitarian eugenics (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.196).

Before going into details, it is important to know who are the authors of this article, published in the academic journal *Acta Bioethica*. This journal publishes twice a year and is part of the Interdisciplinary Center for Studies in Bioethics at the University of Chile. On the page of the journal it is stated that *Acta Bioethica*

constitutes a pluralistic source of perspectives and an important tribune which accepts the contributions of authors compromised with the interdisciplinary study of ethical determinants and consequences of techno scientific research. (*Acta Bioethica*, 2019)

Fabiola Villela Cortés is a biologist who is the director of the Department of Continuing Education at the National School of Higher Education (ENES) at the Mérida campus. Before then, she was a professor at the Faculty of Veterinary and Zootechnics and the Postgraduate in Bioethics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Additionally, she was also a collaborator in different projects such as *The Creation and Engineering of Life: A Humanistic Vision* (2017-2019) funded by the Support Program for Research Projects and Technological Innovation (PAPIIT). This project is ongoing,

and, to this date, there is no description on articles published on the latter. However, the director of this program is Jorge Enrique Linares Salgado.

Jorge E. Linares Salgado is the co-author of *Eugenics: A Historical Analysis and a Possible Proposal* (2011). He was appointed to be the director of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (FFyL) at the UNAM (2017-2021). Before this, Linares was the director of the University Program of Bioethics at the UNAM. His most famous piece of work is entitled *Ethics and the Technological World* (2009), in which he argues that “the philosophical reflection about science, technology, and technoscience have, today, a great importance in virtue of social life and history which depend more and more on techno-scientific developments” (Linares Salgado, 2009: p.19). In Linares’ view the technological world is a global system that dominates both nature and society due to its techno-scientific uniformity. This is why, in his view, these technologies can be modified to create better conditions for human life. However, he argues for an ethics of technology that takes into account social responsibility, justice, and individual and collective autonomy. These ideas shape his understanding of eugenics as will be shown by his publication of *Eugenics: A Historical Analysis and a Possible Proposal*.

In this article it is first stated that the act of “searching for perfection is not new” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189). They argue that this searching can be traced back to the Greeks and after studying various social projects there are three constant elements which they describe as follows

a)the idea that it is possible to perfect humans, b)the existence of subhumans, better put, beings that are not considered people and, c)the idea that biological and psychological perfection is linked to the progress of different social schemes. (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189)

Thus, here they draw historical elements to argue that human perfectivity and the existence of sub-humans is something inherent to society. However, in their, view the problem relied in leaving eugenics solely to the management of the state as “a eugenic model managed by political power will very possibly lead to a moral catastrophe” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189). Then they argue that, according to some theorists—like Nicholas Agar, Michael Freedman, and Daniel Sutullo—there could possibly be another option which would entail leaving eugenic control to the capitalist market, as we have seen in the second half of the twentieth century but this would entail relegating individual autonomy to the market (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189).

Their proposal consists in a mixture between a state-sponsored eugenic program, which they term “totalitarian eugenics” and a “liberal eugenics” controlled by capitalist markets. This eugenic mixture or hybrid model is called, by Villela Cortés and Linares Salgado, “third eugenic model” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.189). However, in order to propose their model, they draw on the “best traits” from the two existing eugenic models. In the first part Villela Cortés and Linares Salgado summarize the history of eugenics, mostly in the US, UK, Germany, Mexico, and Brazil, to argue that state control of eugenics is not good because it can lead to concentration camps and systematic sterilization laws for those considered deviants, poor, feeble-minded, among others (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.190-195). On the other hand, “liberal eugenics” provides the technological tools to fix or perfect humans without coercion, since, according to them, this is only made by individual choice. This, in their view is due to “the accelerated development of biomedicine and molecular biology obtained through DNA that opened new possibilities to the effective manipulation of our genomes” (Villela Cortés et.al., 2011: p.2011). This refers to ethopolitics in which the state is no longer needed due to the creation of new technologies to modify bodies constructed as deviants. Additionally, as discussed above these ideas separate the long history of eugenics and the biases that stem from this through these new medical and scientific interventions. This occurs because of changes in language that tend to obscure the long history of pathologization. Thus, drawing on Rose (2001)

[t]his molecularization was not merely a matter of the framing of explanations at the molecular level. Nor was it simply a matter of the use of artefacts fabricated at the molecular level. It was a reorganization of the gaze of the life sciences, their institutions, procedures, instruments, spaces of operation and forms of capitalization (Rose, 2001: p.13)

Villela Cortés and Linares Salgado do not seem to problematize the slippery eugenic processes that exist in what they term liberal eugenics. Instead they argue that nowadays positive eugenics aims to “enrich our genotypes to modify our phenotypes” and negative eugenics seeks to “correct our genetic errors and eliminate diseases or genetic factors that produce them” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.195). In their view, the only problematic element of liberal eugenics is that the “freedom to benefit from these mechanisms rely on the acquisitive power of the individual and the production of these technologies is dictated by the interests of big transnational pharmaceutical companies” (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.196)

These criticisms are what take them to the third model. In Villela Cortés' and Linares Salgado's view the state should only "facilitate eugenic decisions instead of imposing" (Villela Cortés et.al., 2011: p.196). This is a clear example of what Sleeboom-Faulkner (2011) calls "laissez-faire eugenics" in which Villela Cortés and Linares Salgado argue for a state that does not intervene in eugenic practices. Then, they proceed to suggest the need for a pseudo-totalitarian model in which the state recuperates eugenicists' views on the "importance of health, hygiene education, environmental considerations, nutrition, maternal health but, this time, for everyone and not the ones considered "the best" (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.196). In their view this third model of eugenics should: "a)be part of a social system of health in which there is an equal distribution of health services and opportunities for development [...] b)be cautious of technological implementations" (Villela Cortés et al, 2011: p.196). This model disregards the long history of eugenics as a technological assemblage of racialization, oppression, and exclusion. Additionally, it ignores the systemic social inequalities that are in place in relation to gender, sexual orientation, class, race, space, language, among many other things that impede the sense of equality proposed above. This discounting allows pro-eugenicists to advocate for neoliberal conceptions of individual self-management based merely on choice, and "risks creating a new biological underclass" (Lemke, 2002: p.283). Equally worrying is the fact that these people, in positions of power, would be part of these assemblages and do not question the systematic exclusionary practices that are created by eugenics and still exist today. For instance, Villela Cortés and Linares Salgado still advocate for the third model of eugenics like their articles entitled Genetic Prenatal Screening and Abortion: Two Issues of Eugenics and Discrimination (2012), *Eugenics: How to Achieve Betterment, to Whom, and Why?* (2015) and *Eugenics and Genetic Determinism: A Simple Solution to a Complex Problem* (2017).

5.6 Final Considerations

The historical approach of eugenics through the lens of disability studies allowed me to explore the ways in which eugenics slips into common understanding in science, society, medicine, bioethics, policy, and every-day practices. Mexican eugenicists used science to pathologize different functioning bodies and categorize them as non-human using racial, classist, and gendered biases. These ideas had such a pervasive nature that they still operate in the discrimination, oppression, and abuse of people constructed as disabled.

Despite local and international policies made to protect “disabled groups” there is, first, no real effort to question or eradicate the hegemony of normalcy and, second, no real determination to stop abuse in mental health hospitals. However, there are different non-governmental organizations who are actively fighting to question and fix the conditions created by the systematic pathologization, exclusion, and discrimination of different functioning bodies.

However, this questioning made by different non-governmental groups seems interrogated by the creation of new ways of implementing eugenics in contemporary Mexico. These ideas show a disregard for the long history of abuses and exclusionary practices that brought the able mestizo to be seen as a stable assemblage. By doing so, they disregard the slipperiness of eugenics, and the fact that eugenic ideas always count on the reproduction of exclusions based on historical assessments and categories of normalcy.

6 FINAL REMARKS AND NEW AVENUES FOR RESEARCH INTO SLIPPERY EUGENICS

In this thesis, I aimed to address the question of what happened to Mexican eugenics during the existence and after the dissolution of the SME, in order to produce a new perspective on the development of eugenics and the ways in which it still slips into, not only science, but the systematic oppression of certain populations. Using an historical and sociological approach, I addressed some of the major concerns regarding ideas of race and racism, class, gender, heteronormativity, and the logics in which they operate in policy-making and scientific research nowadays.

Through the historical study of eugenics in Mexico, I contributed to the body of theories that links the understanding of scientific racism locally and its transnational connections to broader understandings of eugenics regionally and internationally. While addressing the specificity of Mexico I argue that one cannot constrict the study of eugenic science to a single place, time, practice or context as race science and eugenics were international networks of ideology and knowledge, fomented by transnational connections, and responding to their own context while being in conversation with others. This can be seen in the ways in which Mexican eugenicists adapted bodies of knowledge on race science and eugenics from other contexts that impacted Mexico as well as research conducted internationally—with Manuel Gamio's studies at Columbia University with Franz Boas; Gilberto Loyo's fellowships to research Italian eugenics and statistical demography (Turda et al, 2014: p. 141); eugenicists from other contexts visiting Mexico like Giuseppe Genna and Dino Camavitto in his investigation entitled *An Investigation of Some Indian Tribes in Mexico* (Eugenical News, 1934: p.114-115); the UNESCO Statement on Race, among others.

6.1 Overarching Conclusions and Objectives

In the introduction to this work I showed the ways in which Mexican eugenics did not appear in a vacuum as it tended to follow international trends in modern genetics and scientific research regarding heredity. However, it is important to note that using scientific developments from other contexts, Mexican eugenicists produced their own eugenic and scientific ideas that responded to national concerns. It is by throwing this into relief that a more thorough understanding of the main theoretical debates surrounding “Latin eugenics” and “preventive eugenics” can be carried out. Through the theoretical debates provided in Chapter one, eugenics in Mexico and its connections were analyzed in order to appreciate and comprehend the differences and the productions of eugenic knowledge that are specific to this context. Turda and Gillette (2014) use Latin Eugenics to refer to the specificity of eugenic development – from the end of the nineteenth to the first-half of the twentieth century – in countries who have a “Latin cultural community” stemming from a common history, language, and religion. However, their view does not take into account, first, the specificities of each country and, second, the unequal positions of scientists from ex-colonies who, despite being part of the elites in their own spheres of influence, seem to be relegated to the margins in scientific development. For instance, the foundation of the Latin Federation of Eugenic Societies (1935) was mostly a Central and South American initiative, nonetheless, these eugenicists decided to appoint Italian eugenicist Conrrado Gini as president (Berlivet, 2016). These dynamics of power, in which it was believed by Latin American eugenicists that instating a European as the head of the Federation would give them more legitimacy, is obscured by the term “Latin eugenics”. Turda and Gillette (2014) seem to assume that Latin American eugenicists are just a consumer of scientific development from other “Latin” countries. Moreover, their concept posits that Latin American eugenicists can be interpreted as a homogeneous block.

In an attempt to address Latin American eugenics in its context-specific spheres of influence, Stepan (1991) coined the term “preventive eugenics”. In her view, eugenics in Latin America only referred to the soft-dissemination of a mostly Neo-Lamarckian eugenics, whose principles were never implemented in public health policies. However, in my discussion of “preventive eugenics”, I question whether this term is useful when discussing Mexican eugenics. I present different cases in which “preventive eugenics”

operates, such as the pre-nuptial certificates (1928) and the sterilization law in Veracruz (Law 121, 1932; Stern 2011). In both cases policies were in place; nonetheless, these were not always enacted, or there is not enough evidence to suggest they were put into practice and use. Stepan refers to “preventive eugenics” as a term applicable to Latin American eugenics—using mainly Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico as her case studies. Nevertheless, I question whether this term is fully applicable to a periodization that extends further than the life-span of the Mexican Society of Eugenics. Additionally, I interrogate whether “preventive eugenics” is enough to understand the contradictions of Mexican mestizaje indigenism, eugenic ideas, and the historical development of technologies that allowed eugenic ideas and the hierarchization of some bodies over others to pass unnoticed or even within a self-avowedly anti-racist political program in the Mexican national imaginary.

These theoretical debates set the basis for understanding the history behind eugenics in Mexico and the ways in which Mexican eugenics appears as a producer of eugenic knowledge, which I term *criollo eugenics*. This concept helps to understand the specificities of eugenic science in Mexico while pointing to the broader influence of Mexican eugenics both inwards and upwards. *Criollo eugenics* is useful for understanding the ways in which eugenic science, first, did not arrive in a vacuum as it responds to historical ideas and preconceived notions of purity of blood and the caste system. This relates to Weheliye’s (2014) use of technologies as the practical application of sets of knowledge that modify and influence the human environment which in turn delimit what it means to be human while relegating others to non-human or not-quite human (Weheliye, 2014: p.12). In the case of the caste system in Mexico, the systematic privileging of Spanishness in colonial times provided the technologies to implement a hierarchical system of control that gave a sense of progression or regression depending on reproduction as a tool for domination (Wade 2009). It also shows that there was nothing “natural” about this privileging of some people over others as it depended on cultural and social dynamics, phenotypes (in some cases), individual wealth, and bureaucracy. With the adoption of Enlightenment ideas in the eighteenth century, and the surge of race science in the nineteenth century, the privileging of whiteness moved to other technologies like anthropology, sociology, science, and race to pathologize those who did not conform to the national Mexican body. These ideas and forms of social control were carried into the late-nineteenth and twentieth century with ideas of mestizaje serving as a way of homogenizing the population. The failure to whiten the Mexican

population through migration policies during the nineteenth and twentieth century led Mexican eugenicists to seek new ideas for achieving *mestizaje*. This is what I refer to as “criollo eugenics”.

The influence of eugenicists in Mexico is further addressed through the historical study of *mestizaje* in chapter two. This section gives a thorough examination of the making of *mestizaje* and its connections to scientific ideas by looking at the figure of the *mestizo*. Through this work the *mestizo* is framed as technological and racializing assemblage in which I explored different processes of exclusion through the delimitation of what it means to be human, in turn causing different practices of oppression and racialization. Besides the historical technologies that allowed the production of institutions and cultural arrangements that sought to delimit what it means to be human (Zwart, 2009; Weheliye, 2014), I add that these technologies contribute to racializing assemblages. Assemblage theory was a useful tool for understanding the ways in which the figure of the *mestizo* is constructed and assumed as the archetype of the Mexican nation (Wade, 2017). According to Wade (2017), the figure of the *mestizo* operates as an “assemblage in itself and a component in other assemblages”; nonetheless, due to its unstableness, this figure needs “constant work and regulation” (Wade, 2017: p.45-47). I argue that Mexican eugenicists and scientist created a “criollo eugenics” in order to materialize the figure of the *mestizo* as the archetype of the Mexican national body. This, in turn, has allowed for the figure of the *mestizo* to work in tandem with seemingly contradictory notions of “racelessness” and “racial difference” that produce social inequalities at a structural level. Thus, exploring the development of technology has allowed me to show the ways in which criollo eugenics strengthens scientific and political practices inside a racializing assemblage (Wade, 2017: p.2; Weheliye 2014: p.4). Following Weheliye (2014), the concept of racializing assemblages posits race not as a biological or cultural category, but as a part of sociopolitical practices that classify and regulates humanity into “full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (Weheliye, 2014: p.4). By addressing the specificities of criollo eugenics, I conclude in chapter two that the processes of race science and pathologization in Mexico go beyond the so-called retreat of scientific racism (Barkan, 1992) and places Mexico as a producer of knowledge locally and internationally, for instance through the figure of Juan Comas Camps and his involvement in the UNESCO and dissemination of anti-racist ideas associated with *mestizaje*.

In chapter three I aimed to analyze the ways in which eugenicists discussed the making of “la gran familia Mexicana”. This term was used as a technology of exclusion, based on criollo eugenics, to reject certain groups that did not fall into the desirable mestizaje for the future of the Mexican nation. This chapter explored the ways in which Mexican eugenic ideas and debates translated into educational campaigns and policies to create a desirable “mestizo race”. This chapter dealt with gendered and class-oriented ideas that were embedded in the national and scientific discourses of the time and showed the ways in which the social adaptation of eugenics allowed the making of an exclusionary “gran familia mexicana”. More importantly, through this chapter I explored the ways in which criollo eugenics delimited the role of the individual and the different impacts that it could have in the collective imaginary underpinning the Mexican nation. For instance, I presented the ways in which internal migrations—from rural to urban Mexico—shaped the elites’ understanding of racial degeneration, leading them to advocate for the regulation and control of “undesirables”. These scientific ideas fed into the drafting of different measures and the creation of institutions like the Juvenile Court’s Observation Rooms (1926), the establishment of pre-nuptial certificates (in 1914 and the Sanitary Code of 1926 [enacted in 1935]), The Family Restriction Law (1917), and beauty pageants, like “La India Bonita” (1921). I use the beauty pageant as a way of showing the delimitation and management of gender roles, which simultaneously demonstrates the ways in which science and politics converged to produce a “desirable” figure of the Mexican mestizo. *Indigenista* and eugenicist Manuel Gamio put his theories (first presented in *Forjando Patria*, 1916) into practice by delimiting and controlling the bodies who are desirable for reproduction. This, in his view, was the mixture between white men and indigenous women.

In chapter three I also developed a theoretical toolset for observing the paternalistic role of the Mexican state and masculinity in criollo eugenics. For instance, Mexican eugenicists advocated the importance of paternal figures—in this case, meaning “good biological reproduction”—to produce better mestizos for the nation. However, caregiving was usually constricted to women and the state as configurations of paternal care were supposed to be provided by the state. This can be seen in the way in which eugenicists discussed the figure of the “happy child” and the creation of the Mexican Code of Eugenics (1933). Criollo eugenics seemed to advocate for gender roles that guided the eugenic self-management of the population to produce the best “biological mixture”; nevertheless, the Mexican state and criollo eugenics were the ones that would

act as a parental and paternal figure to control behavioral patterns dictated by precepts of morality that would make a nation of “happy offspring”. Nonetheless, these technologies made to control and regulate desirable reproduction and behavioral displays of the Mexican population also relegated other groups to the margins, categorizing them as non-human or not-quite-human.

By looking at who is outside of “la gran familia Mexicana”, I offered a clearer vision of those bodies constructed as “undesirable” or “not-apt” for the betterment of the collective figure of the mestizo as a homogenizing principle. In chapter three, I was able to observe the ways in which feeble-mindedness, prostitution, alcoholism, vagrancy, homosexuality, and criminality were seen, by eugenicists, as genetically inherited defects that should be eliminated or “weeded out” of the Mexican population. This was particularly evident in the advocacy for the abolition of the regulation of prostitution during the 1930s, in which eugenicists portrayed sex-workers as victims of the Mexican state and, simultaneously, as a health hazard and public health concern, while disregarding their agency. Similarly, criollo eugenics advocated for the sterilization of assumed undesirable groups based on criteria that intersected with gender, class, and racial typologies. By discussing the different eugenicists’ concerns and advocacy for eugenic sterilization (negative eugenics) as well as the self-regulation of individuals and eugenic education (positive eugenics), I was able to show how criollo eugenics ranged from Weismannian to Lamarckian notions to pathologize different groups that did not belong to the hegemonic assemblage of the Mexican mestizo.

Thus, through the historical and sociological content provided in the three first chapters I developed the term criollo eugenics to refer to the specificities of Mexican eugenics, which cannot be constricted to earlier conceptualizations of eugenics meant to describe Latin America as a whole. Criollo eugenics proves useful not to only explain Mexican eugenics, but to provide a critical analysis of the idea of Latin American eugenics as homogeneous, since the processes and developments of eugenic ideas carried out in Latin America are interconnected but are also varied, divergent and dependent on the context-specificity of assumed national and societal needs.

In chapter four, I marked the bases for understanding why eugenic practices continued well after the end of the Mexican Society of Eugenics, through the study of risk and disease. Providing an analysis of the diagnosis and treatment of syphilis in Mexico into the twentieth century, I was able to explore the ways in which different groups continued to be branded as pathological, while converging with new

conceptualizations of risk that extended this problem the rest of the population. This, I argue, gave way to a type of eugenics in which there was both state intervention and self-managing eugenic practices. This is to say both *Laissez-faire* eugenics—as the active denial of state-managed eugenics (Sleeboom-Faulkner, 2011: p.1802, 1808)—and flexible eugenics—as the tension that “atypical” bodies encounter when presented with ideas of “choosing and perfecting oneself” through the usage of genetic technologies (Taussig et al, 2005: p.196) were not enough to understand the ways in which eugenics is carried out in Mexico.

Using historical sociology and sociology of health and illness, I traced the history of syphilis and its impact according to what Rose (2001) calls “risk politics”. Drawing on Foucauldian biopolitics (1976), this term refers to the ways in which eugenics was thought as a progressive response to the management of disease and the prevention of mortality during the twentieth century. In this chapter I discuss how after the sixteenth century and with colonization, syphilis spread among the population of New Spain. Up until the second half of the nineteenth century, the hospitals in New Spain were managed by the Catholic Church. However, by 1857, with the drafting of the Constitution and the New Reform Laws by Benito Juárez, the active secularization of the state impacted the management and control of disease. One of the secularizing measures was seen in the first attempt to regulate prostitution in 1862. This technology was developed as a way to control the “natural depravity of men” while framing them and sex-workers as the major risk factor. Since it was believed at the time that syphilis was hereditary, during the Porfiriato (1876-1911), “respectable” women and children were considered to be innocent victims who fell prey to syphilis contagion. These elements produced what the Mexican elites regarded as a need to eliminate the regulation of prostitution during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Criollo eugenics played a major role in the advocacy for the abolition of prostitution. During the first decades of the twentieth century there were various amendments to the regulation of prostitution that called for the medical examinations of sex workers which offered science as the redeeming factor and answer to the spread of syphilis. Growing opposition groups started emerging with the goal of eliminating prostitution; among them were feminists and eugenicists. With the abolition of prostitution in 1940 in Mexico City, Mexican eugenicists believed this to be their “achievement”. However, because prostitution practices continued, they did not stop portraying sex-workers as both victims of the state and their own degeneration, and as a

main risk factor and public health concern. Following abolition, the Mexican state began a national prophylactic campaign in which government officials distributed prophylactic bundles. This marks the ways in which the whole of the population was now seen to be “at risk”. I argue that the creation of this prophylactic bundle symbolizes the first stages of a liberal notion of biopolitics—or *laissez-faire* eugenics—in which the individual started to self-manage without having to go to a physician. However, with the discovery of penicillin (1943), the state asserted its power by regulating its distribution during 1944. Nonetheless, this regulation was short-lived, as by 1945 the control of penicillin was extended to the rest of the population marking the ways in which individual self-management worked in tandem and cooperation with the Mexican state. This can be seen in the figure of the prostitute, whom the state still marked out as a health hazard to be managed and controlled by the preventive provision of penicillin. Due to the success of penicillin, the Mexican population, governmental officials, and medical doctors stopped maintaining a record of syphilitics, but the stigma was still present. In this chapter I showed how, in the 1960s, people could be fired from their jobs if they had a venereal disease (Gayet, 2015: p.190-193). These instances indicate the development of a culture of surveillance in which individuals managed and regulated themselves and those around them through flexible eugenics.

In chapter four, I argued that after the 1970s—with the Mexican sexual revolution—there was a change in terminology and practices, which nonetheless left ideas of pathologization and normalcy intact. An example of this is the change from the term “venereal” to “sexually transmitted” diseases. I trace the roots of “venereal” to “venerious” or “venereous”, referring to Venus’ sexual love and desire. Due to the self-regulation of bodies—specifically through the use of contraception, there was no need for “the regulation of love” to be a prerequisite for making the archetypal mestizo as there was already a culture of self-surveillance in place. Therefore, the new terminology of “sexually transmitted diseases” describes an assumed problem or disease that is transmitted through intercourse, but which is not intrinsically and morally linked to the sexual act. This responded to a perceived need, by the Mexican government, to control and highlight new sexually transmitted diseases that were invisibilized (like gonorrhea), since the institutions made to control venereal diseases were usually targeted at syphilis and, without it, the Sanitary Codes during the 1950s and 1960s condemned the use of prophylactics in an attempt to increase the population.

However, during the decade of the 1970s, president Luis Echevarria (1970-1976) changed the state's position regarding contraceptive use, due to the nationalization of the pharmaceutical industry that was in charge of producing and distributing organic contraceptives. These came to be a symbol of a political ideology meant to unify the rural ("indigenous") and urban ("mestizo") parts of the country (Laveaga, 2009). I argue that this was yet another technology used to unify and cement the mestizo as an assemblage (Wade, 2017). However, by 1976, there was a presumed "population growth problem" in Mexico that resulted in both the General Population Law (1976), the Family Planning Plan and the Global Developing Plan of 1977, which sought to decrease the rapid population growth. This resulted in the systematic sterilization of mostly indigenous women in Mexico, which demonstrates that the state was still very much present in not only risk politics, but in demographic and population policies that were cemented in exclusionary ideas, resembling and echoing criollo eugenics long after the end of the SME. An example of this, regarding risk, was the appearance of homosexuals as the new risk group for the spread and contagion of gonorrhea. By the mid-80s, HIV appeared in Mexican medical journals, which defined high-risk groups as homosexual men, pharmaco-dependants, bisexuals, recipients of blood transplants, among others. I argue that it is through HIV and new conceptions of disease prevention that the paradoxical nature of a new eugenics can be glimpsed. I use the case of María to explore these inconsistencies in between laissez-faire eugenics and flexible eugenics.

The case of María was taken from an activist mock-tribunal, conducted by the Cluster for Women's Health in the Federal District in 1996. At this point, María was a 35-year-old nurse diagnosed as HIV-positive due to an accident during the treatment of a patient. She recalls dealing with the denial of health services for her and her family that resulted in the death of her 6-month-old daughter. Here, I observe how, by participating in the tribunal, María seems to expect the state to intervene in her medical needs. However, she also shows the exercise of flexible eugenics when she recounts getting pregnant for a second time and deciding to terminate the pregnancy; or when—due to the denial of health services in state-sponsored hospitals and clinics—she decided to treat her daughter privately without the medical doctor knowing that she had tested positive for HIV. Thus, it is in these instances that one can observe how flexible or laissez-faire eugenics are not enough to understand how the continuation of criollo eugenics operates. It is because of this that I have decided to coin the term "slippery eugenics".

I use the term slippery eugenics in chapters four and five to refer to a contemporary version of eugenics in Mexico. Rose (2001) uses the term ethopolitics to refer to the continuation of Foucauldian biopolitics (1976), in which the state is no longer required to undertake all of society's health needs (Rose 2001, p.6). Drawing on ethopolitics, flexible eugenics, laissez-faire eugenics, and the ways in which these processes are carried out in Mexico, I use slippery eugenics to explore how the pathologization, discrimination, and exclusionary practices created by criollo eugenics to stabilize the racializing assemblages that underline the figure of the mestizo, infiltrate every-day life, practices, policies, and science. In other works slippery eugenics refers to the combination of processes that are state-oriented and individual-based that are used to manage the bodies in a way that it shows how internalized eugenics is still present in our every-day life.

In chapter five I argue that historical notions around what it is now termed as disability operate in a similar manner to that of risk-control and prevention. Using the concept of slippery eugenics, I address the incongruencies and continuations of eugenics in relation to the practical impact that notions of disability have upon those bodies constructed as "outside of the norm" or "in need of fixing". By producing an historical account of the ways in which eugenicists in Mexico dealt with feeble-mindedness, I was able to trace eugenic ideas to different activists' accounts of perceived human rights violations and eugenic practices that still exist in Mexico. I started this chapter by exploring "normalcy" and its connections to eugenics inside and outside Mexico. By doing so, I set the bases for understanding the ways in which criollo eugenics pathologized deviancy, according to its practitioners' version of "the able mestizo". I then studied the main theoretical debates around disability studies to situate slippery eugenics and assemblage theory within the abovementioned body of theories. Through these debates, I argue that an intersectional analysis is crucial for the understanding of slippery eugenics, since ideas of feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, prostitution, criminality, vagrancy, among others, usually converge with scientific pathologizations, gendered ideas, racism, and classism. To illustrate my arguments, I drafted some examples of how disability has been depicted and defined in Mexico since the nineteenth century.

Through the history of disability, I was able to explore the ways in which the "able mestizo" became solidified as an immutable entity, an assemblage that operates in itself and in tandem with other assemblages. In the nineteenth century, feeble-mindedness was regarded as a private issue that concerned those who lived in close proximity to the

assumed problem: the family. At this point, people who suffered from epilepsy were seen as “immoral”, therefore prompting criminal acts that would jeopardize the collective. Thus, there was a collective idea that these individuals should be segregated from “the normal” population. However, after the creation of the Castañeda Asylum in 1910 and the tumultuous political climate, due to the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution, this idea started to change. For instance, psychiatrists started to advocate for the temporary reclusion of “feeble-minded” individuals and their possibility of recovery. However, this was not particularly accepted by family members or patients, who would make use of the medical jargon to accommodate their needs. However, a report made by psychiatrist and neurologist, Enrique O. Aragón (1880-1942) in 1925 showed these incongruencies without jeopardizing scientific hegemony, which resulted in a restructuring of the asylum and an increase in people admitted to the Castañeda.

The Mexican Society of Eugenics played an influential role in the discussion of feeble-mindedness in Mexico. Mexican eugenicists did not tend to make a distinction between “mental degeneracy” and “physical impairments” instead they put all the categories such as the “feeble-minded”, “the physically defective”, “criminals”, “addicts”, “vagrants”, “sexual perverts”, “prostitutes”, “alcoholics”, and “syphilitics” into one. These notions make it near impossible to define or separate deviancy from technologies mediated by gender, class, or “race” that define pathology while asserting the position of the “able mestizo” as the archetype of the Mexican nation. This, in turn, led Mexican eugenicists to advocate for the complete segregation and sterilization of everyone who would not comply with or embody the “able mestizo” through measures of (preferably) self-regulation. Nonetheless, by 1944, Mexican eugenicists perceived a crisis in the segregation system, as some “patients” segregated in the Castañeda were transferred to “recovery farms”.

International pressure played an important role in the changing of notions regarding “feeble-mindedness” after the second-half of the twentieth century. The Mexican ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the closing of the Castañeda in 1968, the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971) and the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) marked a change in language and an impact upon local and international practices of care. However, this was only “on paper” as, first of all, there was no real commitment to demystifying pathological notions of deviancy, normalcy, and disability; and second, during the 1990s, different non-governmental organizations in Mexico exposed the mistreatment of “people with

disabilities” and framed them as human rights violations. I then present another layer of complexity to the framing of disability and its relation to slippery eugenics in Mexico with the 1996 Teletón. This fundraiser produced by Televisa displayed disabled children in need of “fixing” by technological advancements without state-intervention, which shows the ways in which “flexible eugenics” still operates in Mexico. However, by using the report published by Disability Rights International and the Colectivo Chuhcán, I also explore the ways in which “flexible eugenics”, “laissez-faire eugenics”, and the continuations of “criollo eugenics” operate in contemporary times, giving way to slippery eugenics. The Colectivo Chuhcán is an organization composed by a cluster of women who identify as women with psychosocial disabilities. Based on the report published in collaboration with Disability Rights International in 2015, I highlighted the ways in which eugenically oriented self-regulation meets the critical undertaking of mistreatments, rape, and the systematic framing of women with psychosocial disabilities as non-human. Thus, by researching the work done by the Colectivo Chuhcán and Disability Rights International, this chapter was able to observe the ways in which eugenics slips through into not only scientific research and policy, but the lived experience of individuals.

To summarize, these two chapters enabled me develop the term slippery eugenics to understand the ways in which eugenics slips into society and governance well after the end of the Mexican Society of Eugenics. This term shows how different scientific-racist and discriminatory practices, ideas, and processes resurface in insidious ways. The usage of this term allows us to understand and answer what happened to Mexican eugenics after the periodization provided by secondary sources, and provides new avenues for research.

6.2 New Avenues for Research

Following the study of Mexican eugenics, this thesis paves the way for new avenues of research. For instance, it would be very useful to explore the ways in which the different societies of eugenics in Latin America and beyond operated and produced their own knowledge. This would allow a relational research study instead of a comparative one that could obscure and continue to hierarchize different axes of knowledge. While engaged in the present work, I found data that supports and shows how national and international campaigns and societies intervened in Latin America and the Caribbean as a site of experimentation. This can be seen in the ways in which contraceptives were created—with mostly US funding—as a eugenic measure tested on

Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Haitian working-class women, with little or no consent (Briggs 2002, Preciado 2013, Davis 2013, Laveaga 2009). However, it is important to note that national racializing practices and eugenic ideas helped the US and different private enterprises to use these places and bodies as sites of experimentation. Moreover, aside from these experimentations with contraceptives, Latin America and the Caribbean have been used as experimental settings by local elites and external interventions to support eugenic ideas, like Davenport and Steggerda's study in Jamaica (1929) that condemned racial miscegenation. This was used in turn to support their ideas in the United States' context but also in the Pan-American Society, when Davenport and Ramos created and presented the Code of Homiculture—better known as puericulture. These neo-colonial dynamics show the ways in which there are bodies considered and disciplined as human, non-human, and not-quite-human. It also shows the ways in which science and politics were used as a tool for internal and transnational colonialism through the systematic experimentation of bodies considered less-than-human.

Eugenics in Mexico continued after the dissolution of the SME and—as I mentioned in chapters four and five—this can be seen in the obstetric violence and systematic sterilization of people with disabilities and indigenous women. While I was doing my PhD, I encountered countless cases of forced and coerced sterilization practices in Mexico after the implementation of population growth quotas during the late-1970s and 80s. However, these practices are still present, even though there is no official or approximate number. In order to understand the practicalities of slippery eugenics and the ways in which contemporary eugenics affects the every-day lives of women in Mexico, it is important to explore ongoing sterilization procedures and the targeting of these toward specific populations. For instance, the Information Group for Wanted Reproduction (GIRE) created a report showing that these practices of forced sterilization affect people all over the country (GIRE, 2015). This report states that women in the prisons of Guanajuato, Guerrero, Puebla and Querétaro are coerced into sterilization procedures in exchange for their conjugal visits—which shows how criminality, eugenics, and population control are still very much present in measures and procedures taken in Mexico. Furthermore, the Commission of Human Rights in Mexico (CNDH) stated in 2002 that personnel in rural public health clinics were coercing and forcing indigenous women to be sterilized by withdrawing their services in some states like Aguascalientes, Baja California, Campeche, Chihuahua, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Estado de México,

Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas.

It would be beneficial to explore the ways in which slippery eugenics relates to and operates in contemporary genomic research and practice. Through this we could observe the practical implications that genomics has on the everyday life of individuals. Researching the ways in which ideas of multiculturalism and mestizaje sustain themselves through genomic technologies in Mexico and other parts of Latin America could shed some light on the slipperiness of eugenic ideas. Additionally to this, it would be beneficial to further explore the ways in which the advocacy of “neo-eugenic” ideas or “good eugenics” is discussed in Mexico by tracing these contemporary ideas, projects, publications, and authors to seek a better understanding of how these works obscure the long history and contemporary practices of oppression and structural racism. For instance, in the past two years, there has been a rise in couples from Latin America—especially Brazil—seeking to have IVF with “white sperm” from American donors to “better the race” (AmericaTV, 2018). This procedure is usually done by lesbian couples looking to have children. Similarly, the GIRE reports a case of a gay Mexican-Spanish couple, based in Spain, who elected to have a Mexican surrogate mother in order to make the process “cheaper”. In these cases, it is shown how the “manufacturing of designer babies” intersects with contemporary eugenic ideas produced by specific contextual dynamics based on “choice” (Franklin, 2015; Franklin et al 2016; Franklin 2013).

By way of conclusion, this thesis contributes to the understanding of eugenics, in that it transcends the “traditional” periodization of eugenics and, with it, allows me to observe the different timelines, relations, and ideas in light of criollo eugenics and slippery eugenics. This, in turn, helped me to achieve a broader understanding of eugenics in Mexico and the ways in which it still operates as a tool of oppression and discrimination, albeit in a veiled and slippery manner. To conclude, this thesis provides the reader with tools to be able to identify and detect pernicious eugenics practices and ideas and the way they impose exclusive ideas of normalcy with regards to race, gender, class, and ableness.

1.5 Epilogue

The discomfort of being a queer, non-binary, non-white, working-class, colonized subject from Puerto Rico has always allowed me to be critical of my

surroundings. I had always questioned why people stare at me doing “normal things” like walking down the street, doing grocery shopping with my mom, or sitting on one of the benches of the barrio where I used to live. This increased after I got a partner; the process of hiding when holding hands or kissing became even more and more unbearable. These processes made me question if what I thought were “normal things” were even “normal” at all.

During my undergraduate degree, —and thanks to all the University of Puerto Rico and Columbia University Professors—I became interested in the histories and sociologies of science and medicine. While taking all the classes for my two degrees and paying for my undergraduate degree with a job selling cellphones, I was able to understand that the disconformity that I felt stemmed from a long history of eugenic processes and race and gendered scientific ideas that stemmed from the nineteenth century.

Puerto Rico, as colony of the United States since 1898—and an almost 500-year-old colony of Spain before then—was very much subjected, by the empires and local elites, to eugenic ideas (Baerga 2009-2010; Baerga 2005-2006). By 1939 “President Roosevelt’s Interdepartmental Committee on Puerto Rico issued a statement attributing the island’s economic problems to the phenomenon of overpopulation” (Davis 2013, p. 364). During the 1950s there were many governmental educational campaigns that advocated for the sterilization of Puerto Rican women; which resulted in a “twenty percent decline in population growth by the mid-1960s” (Davis 2013, p.364).

By the 1950s and 1960s, Puerto Rico became the main site for the experimentations with contraceptive measures, more generally known as “the pill”. Women used for these experimentations were usually working-class and dark-skinned and, similarly to sterilization practices, they did not know the complete information. In this sense, Puerto Rico became “the most important clinical site for testing the Pill outside the national disciplinary institutions of the asylum and the prison and functioned as a parallel, life-sized biopolitical pharmacological laboratory and factory during the late 1950s and early 1960s” (Preciado 2013, p.2202).

These eugenic measures paved the way, during the late 1970s and 1980s, to state-sponsored programs to sterilize women at a low cost or, in most cases, free of charge. These practices gave way to a notion of progress that was tied to eugenics and neo-Malthusian ideas which translated into the self-management of women on the Puerto Rican archipelago. For instance, by the 1990s women were choosing to get sterilized;

among this my own mom that the day after of having my brother in 1995 decided to get sterilized because “it was the thing to do”.

On August 25, 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Foundation) launched the Zika Contraception Access Network (Z-CAN). According to their webpage,

[T]he Network is providing women in Puerto Rico with a full range of contraceptive options free of charge on the same day of their healthcare service. Z-CAN was established by the CDC Foundation to address an urgent need to improve contraception access in Puerto Rico during the Zika outbreak. The program gives women who want to delay or avoid pregnancy an effective means to do so, and the option to prevent the devastating, life-long consequences of severe birth defects Zika virus can cause. (cdcfoundation.org, 2016)

By framing their endeavor as a means to contain the spread of the Zika virus, the CDC would provide contraceptives to Puerto Rican women of reproductive age. However, Zika virus in Puerto Rico only had one reported case in December 2015 and 29 during 2016 (Thomas et.al. 2016, p.154). Thus, I suggest that the Zika virus was being used as a tool, both by internal and external colonial powers, to manage and control women’s bodies.

After this, on September 20, 2017, Hurricane María destroyed the island of Puerto Rico which resulted in the deaths of more than 4,000 people approximately. I could not communicate with my parents until November 2017. Every time I would communicate with them, they would tell me for the next ten months after that the ways in which they struggled for water, food, electricity, among others. This was the experience of the majority of Puerto Ricans that due to the exacerbation of social inequalities on the island, the mismanagement of funds and aid, among others were forced to move — like my brother who is now in Florida—, or stay and deal with the lack of resources and the increase in criminality due to the desperation and discomfort of these violations.

In July 2019, 889 pages of a governor’s chat with government officials leaked to the press. In it, there were homophobic, and racist misogynistic “jokes”. Additionally, it gave us a glimpse of the corruption and mismanagement that there was after the passing of Hurricane María. Consequently, more than 200, 000 Puerto Ricans inside of the archipelago —and others in social media and states of the US—rose up and congregated asking for the governor’s, Ricardo Rosello, resignation. People from different backgrounds, class, subjectivities, among others, joined forces against this. However, there are some underlining issues of racism, gendered discrimination, class oppression,

reproductive injustices, and colonial status that are yet to be uncovered which, I argue, come from a long history of science and its practical implications.

The disconformity I felt allowed me to see an affective continuation between eugenic practices and ideas during the beginning of the twentieth century to now. However, the disconformity felt by people who were forced or coerced to get sterilized or experimented on, or the people forced out of their country or relegated to live the exacerbation of social inequalities; those are the ones that we should strive to help and uncover these processes.

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Eugenic Crossword

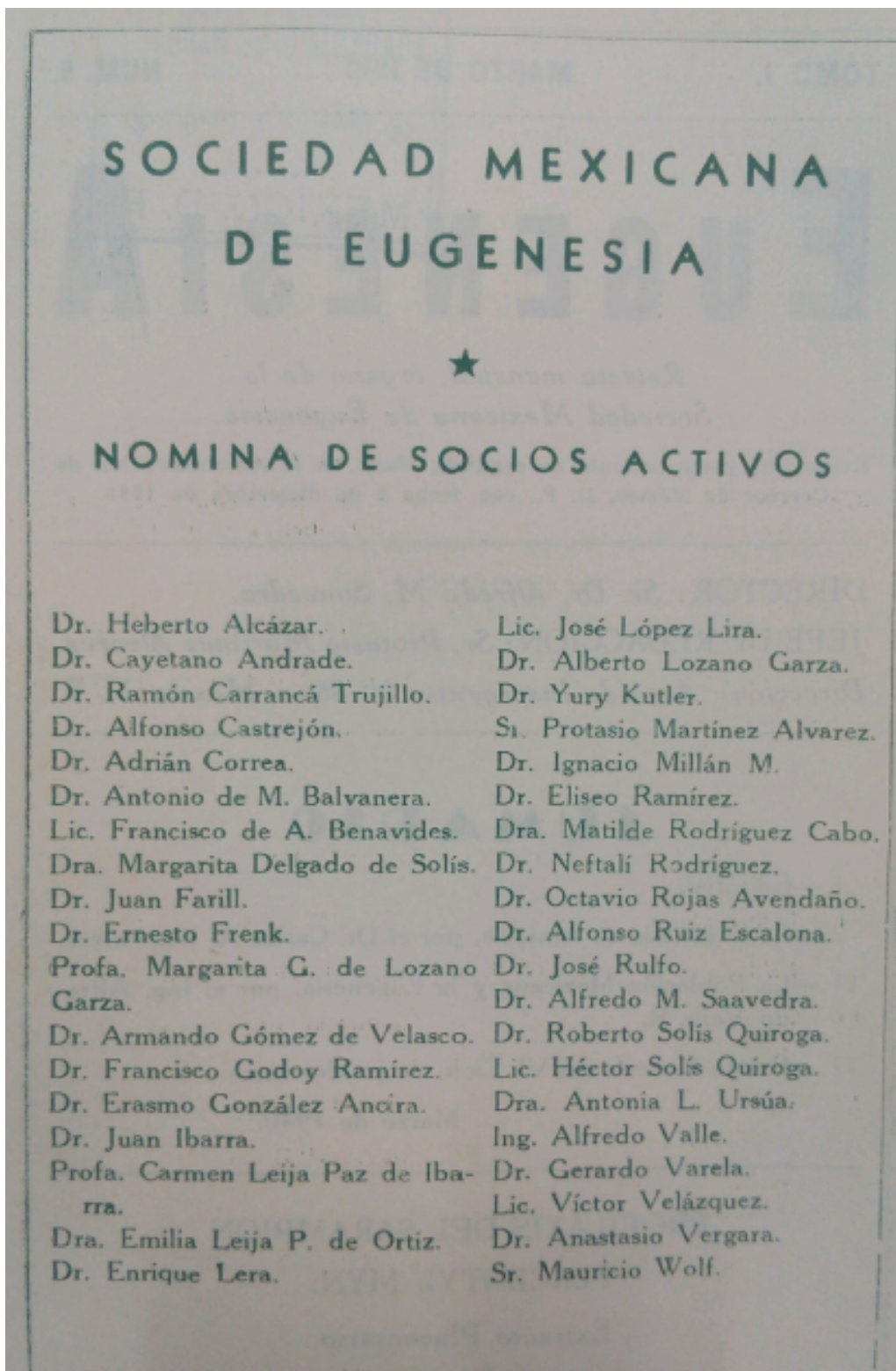


Taken From: Crucigrama Eugénico, 1942. *Eugenesia* 3, 17.

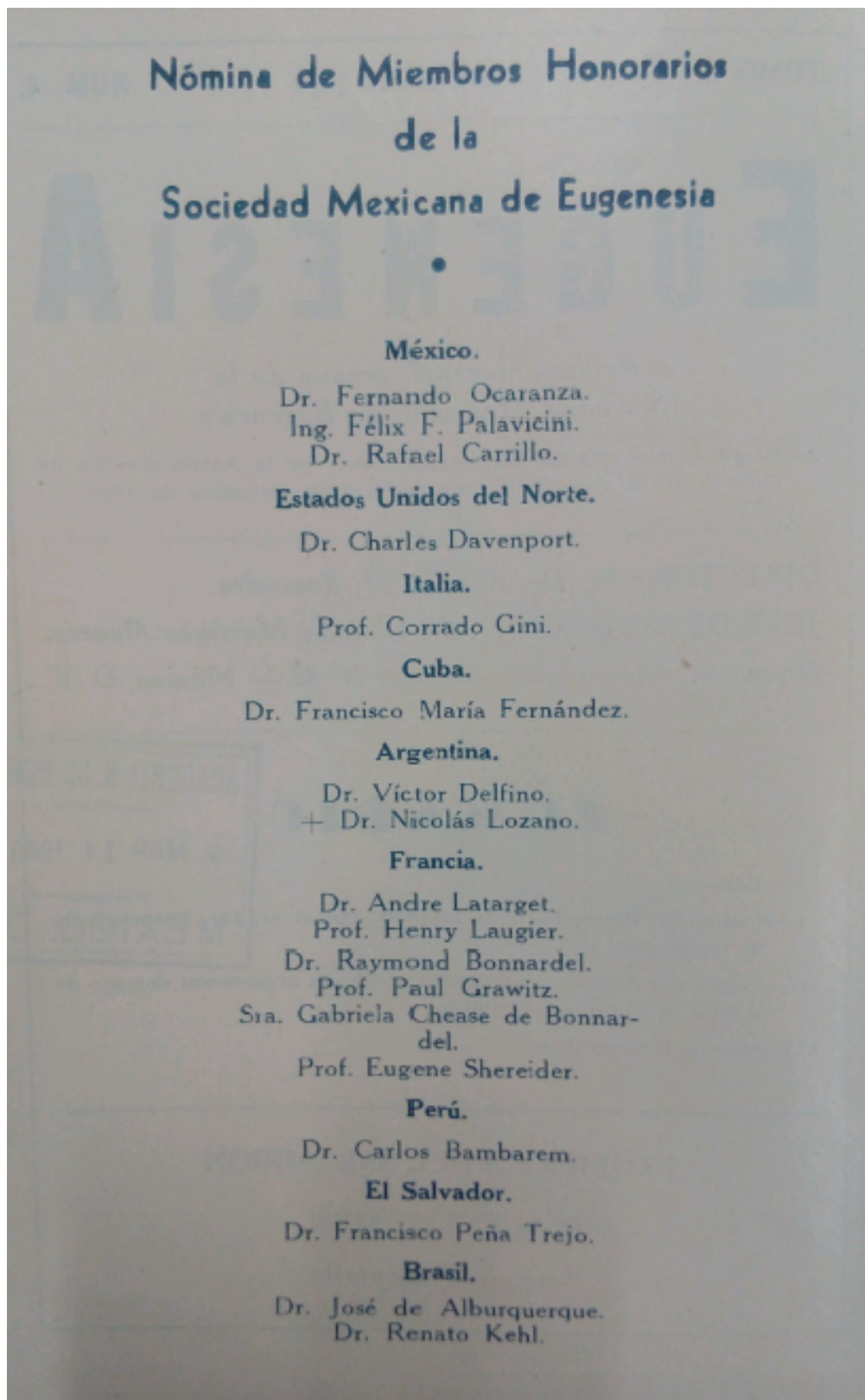
Appendix 2 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Positions (1939)

SOCIEDAD MEXICANA DE EUGENESIA
MESA DIRECTIVA:
Presidente:
DR. HEBERTO ALCAZAR.
Vicepresidentes:
DR. ERNESTO FRENK y DR. CAYETANO ANDRADE.
Secretario Perpetuo:
DR. ALFREDO M. SAAVEDRA.
Secretario de Actas:
LIC. FRANCISCO DE A. BENAVIDES.
Tesorero:
DR. ARMANDO GOMEZ DE VELASCO.
Vocales:
DR. RAFAEL CARRILLO, DR. ELISEO RAMIREZ, DR. ANASTASIO VERGARA E., SR. MAURICIO WOLF y DR. ADRIAN CORREA.
COMISIONES:
Técnica Consultiva:
DR. ELISEO RAMIREZ, DR. FERNANDO OCARANZA y DRA. ANTONIA L. URSUA.
De Hacienda:
DR. ADRIAN CORREA y DR. OCTAVIO ROJAS AVENDAÑO.
De Relaciones Culturales:
DR. ANASTASIO VERGARA, DRA. MARGARITA DEL- GADO DE SOLIS y LIC. HECTOR SOLIS QUIROGA.
De Honor y Justicia:
DR. ERNESTO FRENK y LIC. FRANCISCO DE A. BENAVIDES.
De Admisión de Soc'os:
SR. MAURICIO WOLF y DR. ENRIQUE LERA.
De Prensa y Propaganda:
DR. ALFREDO M. SAAVEDRA, SR. PROTASIO MARTI- NEZ ALVAREZ y SRA. PROFESORA CARMEN LEIJA PAZ DE IBARRA.

Appendix 3 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (1940)



Appendix 4 Honorary Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Countries (1940)



Appendix 5 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Addresses (1941)

<div>SOCIEDAD MEXICANA DE EUGENESIA</div> <div>Socios Activos y Fundadores en Funciones</div>	
1.—Dra. Margarita Delgado de Solís.	Chilpancingo 46. 14-24-52.
2.—Dr. Juan Farill.	Atenas 1. 12-81-26.
3.—Dr. Octavio Rojas Avendaño.	Av. Chapultepec 141. 12-14-27.
4.—Lic. Luis Rubio Siliseo.	Londres 62. Tacuba, D. F.
5.—Dr. Alfredo M. Saavedra.	Acapulco 44. 14-45-92.
6.—Dr. Roberto Solís Quiroga.	Uruguay 66. 13-42-68.
7.—Dr. Gerardo Varela.	S. Juan de Letrán 24. 13-39-99.
8.—Dr. Adrián Correa.	Marsella 34. 18-83-24 L-18-60.
9.—Dr. Anastasio Vergara E.	Paraguay 49. 16-80-81.
10.—Lic. José López Lira.	Dennisetti 15. Villa Obregón, D. F.
11.—Dra. Antonia L. Ursúa.	Palma 39. 12-45-18.
12.—Dr. Ignacio Melán M.	Av. Veracruz 69.
13.—Dr. Heberto Alcázar.	Puebla 383. 14-26-50 16-32-43.
14.—Sr. Mauricio Wolf.	Palma 33. 12-10-42.
15.—Dr. Ernesto Frenk.	Mexicali 153. 15-14-72.
16.—Lic. Héctor Solís.	Madero 34. 13-07-30 14-47-23.
17.—Dr. Yury Kutler.	Amsterdam 223 (6).
18.—Dr. Armando Gómez de Velasco.	Madero 67 (216). 12-50-28.
19.—Dr. José Rulfo.	Soto 67.
20.—Sr. Protasio Martínez Alvarez.	Ezequiel Montes 96.
21.—Profa. Margarita Lozano Garza.	Edificio Condessa 2. 14-05- 12. Apartado Postal 7525.
22.—Profa. Carmen Leija Paz de Ibarra.	Varsovia 53. 14-01-05.
23.—Lic. Francisco de A. Benavides.	Privada Medellín 47. 14-03-11.
24.—Dr. Alfonso Castrejón.	Hamburgo 10. 18-75-59.
25.—Lic. Víctor Velázquez.	Av. Juárez 4. 12-60-10.
26.—Dr. Alberto Lozano Garza.	I. la Cotólica 40 (403). 13-27-24.
27.—Dra. Emilia Leija Paz de Ortiz.	Varsovia 53. 14-01-05.
28.—Dr. Ramón Carrancá Trujillo.	Nayarit 38. 14-37-92.
29.—Dr. Enrique Lera.	Londres 38. 14-18-93.
30.—Dra. Matilde Rodríguez Cabo.	Domicilio. 14-94-40.
31.—Dr. Neftalí Rodríguez.	Madero 55 (104). 13-16-02.
32.—Dr. Erasmo González Ancira.	Insurgentes 1921.
33.—Dr. Francisco Godoy Ramírez.	José Salgado 7. 13-37-75.
34.—Dr. Juan Ibarra.	Av. S. Francisco 345. Col. Valle, D. F.
35.—Dr. Alfonso Martínez Alvarez.	Madero 55 (104). 14-70-74.
36.—Profa. María Concepción Uranga Fernández.	Londres 56. 14-97-90.
37.—Dr. Luis G. Vázquez Vega.	Palma 10 (103). 14-03-11.
38.—Dr. Conrado Zuckermann.	Av. Jalisco 76. Tacubaya, D. F. 15-20-44.
	Victoria 72 (4).
	Sonora 136.
	Marsella 11.

Appendix 6 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Addresses (1942)

Sociedad Mexicana de Eugenesia.	
Nómina de Socios Activos y Fundadores en Funciones	
DR. HEBERTO ALCAZAR Puebla 83. — 14 25 50, Col. Mil. 16 32 48.	DR. IGNACIO MILLAN M. Ave. Veracruz 69.
LIC. FRANCISCO DE A. BENAVIDES Hamburgo 10. — 18 75 59.	DR. FEDERICO PASCUAL DEL RON- CAL. Ignacio Ramírez 11-63.
DR. RAMON CARRANCA TRUJILLO Londres 38. — 14 18 93 ó 14 89 90	DRA. MATILDE RODRIGUEZ CABO Insurgentes 1921. — Tel. Ol. 12-65-27.
DR. ALFONSO CASTREJÓN Ave. Juárez 4. — 12-60-10	DR. NEFTALI RODRIGUEZ José Selgado 7. — 13-37-75.
DR. ADRIAN CORREA Marsella 34. — 18-83-24 ó L-18-60	DR. OCTAVIO ROJAS AVENDANO. Ave. Chapultepec 141. — 12-14-27.
DRA. MARGARITA DELGADO DE SO- LIS. Chilpancingo 46. — 14-24-52.	LIC. LUIS RUBIO SILICEO. Londres 62. — Tacuba, D. F.
DR. ERNESTO FRANK Madero 34. — 13-07-30 ó 14-47-23.	DR. JOSE RULFO. Nápoles 64.
Profa. MARGARITA G. DE LOZANO GARZA Varsovia 53.	DR. ALFREDO M. SAAVEDRA. Acapulco 44. — 14-45-92.
DR. FRANCISCO GODOY RAMIREZ Londres 56. — 14-97-90 ó 19-19-92.	LIC. HECTOR SOLIS Q. Calle S. Antonio 208. Col. Valle, D. F.
DR. ARMANDO GOMEZ DE VELASCO Soto 67.	DR. ROBERTO SOLIS QUIROGA. Uruguay 65. — 13-42-68.
DR. JUAN IBARRA Palma 10-403. — 12-94-45.	DRA. GLORIA EDITH SOTOMAYOR GONZALEZ Palma Norte 335-409.
Profa. CARMEN LEIJA PAZ DE IBARRA Privada Medellín 47. — 14-03-11	Profa. MARIA CONCEPCION URAN- GA FERNANDEZ. Hamburgo 70.
DRA. EMILIA LEIJA PAZ DE ORTIZ Nayarit 38. — 14-3-92.	DR. LUIS G. VAZQUEZ VEGA Sonora 136. — Domicilio: 18-69-83. — Desp. Ayuntamiento 70 — 13-2-03
LIC. JOSE LOPEZ LIRA. Donisetti 15. — Villa Obregón, D. F.	DR. GERARDO VARELA. S. Juan de Letrán 24. — 13-39-99.
DR. YURY KUTLER Madero 67-210. — 12-50-38.	DR. ANASTASIO VERGARA E. Paraguay 49. — 16-80-81.
DR. ALBERTO LOZANO GARZA. Varsovia 53.	SR. MAURICIO WOLF. Palma 33 ó Mexicali 153. — Tels.: 12-10-42 y 15-14-72.
DR. ALFONSO MARTINEZ ALVAREZ Ave. Jalisco 76. — Tacubaya, D. F.— 15-20-44.	DR. CONRADO ZUCKERMAN. Marsella 11.
SR. PROTASIO MARTINEZ ALVAREZ Edificio Condesa 2. — Apdo. Postal 7525. — Tel. 10-05-92 ó 13-37-76.	

Appendix 7 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Addresses (1943)

NOMINA DE SOCIOS ACTIVOS

- 1.—Dra. Margarita Delgado de Solís.—Chilpancingo 46.
- 2.—Dr. Octavio Rojas Avendaño.—Ave. Chapultepec 141.
- 3.—Lic. Luis Rubio M. Siliceo.—Londres 62.—Tacuba, D. F.
- 4.—Dr. Alfredo M. Saavedra.—Acapuleco 44.
- 5.—Dr. Roberto Solís Quiroga.—Uruguay 66.
- 6.—Dr. Gerardo Varela.—S. Juan de Letrán 24.
- 7.—Dr. Adrián Correa.—Marsella 34.
- 8.—Dr. Anastasio Vergara.—Paraguay 49.
- 9.—Lic. José López Lira.—Donisetti 15.—Villa Obregón, D. F.
- 10.—Dr. Ignacio Millán M.—Ave. Veracruz 69.
- 11.—Dr. Heberto Alcázar.—Puebla 383.
- 12.—Dr. Ernesto Frenk.—Madero 34.
- 13.—Sr. Mauricio Wolf.—Palma 33.
- 14.—Lic. Héctor Solís Q.—Amsterdam 223 (6).
- 15.—Dr. Yury Kutler.—Madero 67.
- 16.—Dr. Armando Gómez de Velasco.—Degollado 101.
- 17.—Dr. José Rulfo.—Nápoles 64.
- 18.—Sr. Protasio Martínez Alvarez.—Edificio Condesa Depto. N-2.
- 19.—Profa. Margarita Lozano Garza.—Varsovia 53.
- 20.—Profa. Carmen Leija Paz de Ibarra.—Privada Medellín 47.
- 21.—Lic. Francisco de A. Benavides.—Hamburgo 10.
- 22.—Dr. Alfonso Castrejón.—Ave. Juárez 4.
- 23.—Dr. Alberto Lozano Garza.—Varsovia 53.
- 24.—Dra. Emilia Leija Paz de Ortiz.—Nayarit 38.
- 25.—Dra. Matilde Rodríguez Cabo.—Insurgentes 1921.
- 26.—Dr. Neftali Rodríguez.—J. Salgado 7.
- 27.—Dr. Francisco Godoy Ramírez.—Londres 56.
- 28.—Dr. Juan Ibarra.—Palma 10.
- 29.—Dr. Alfonso Martínez Alvarez.—Ave. Jalisco 76.—Tacubaya, D. F.
- 30.—Profa. María Concepción Uranga Fernández.—Hamburgo 70.
- 31.—Dr. Luis G. Vázquez Vega.—Sonora 136.
- 32.—Dr. Conrado Zuckermann.—Marsella 11.
- 33.—Dra. Gloria Edith Sotomayor González.—Palma Norte 335.-409.
- 34.—Dr. Federico Pascual del Roneal.—Ignacio Ramírez 11.—3.
- 35.—Dr. Ricardo Fandiño.—Prolongación Vizeaínas 5.—101.
- 36.—Dr. Alfonso Segura Albiter.—Guatemala 99.
- 37.—Srita. Guillermina Llach.—Calle del Naranjo N° 139.

Appendix 8 Honorary Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics and Countries (1944)

Socios Correspondientes de la Sociedad Mexicana de Eugenesia

REPUBLICA ARGENTINA:

Dr. Raúl C. Marante Cardoso, Dra. Mercedes Rodríguez de Ginocohio, Dr. Leopoldo C. Bard.

REPUBLICA DEL SALVADOR:

Dr. Andrés González Funes, Dr. Raulfo Castro, Dr. Ricardo Posada H.

REPUBLICA DEL BRASIL

Dr. Enrique Roxo, Dr. Theodolindo Castiglione.

REPUBLICA DE GUATEMALA

Dr. Luis Gaitán.

REPUBLICA DE CUBA:

Dr. Domingo F. Ramos, Dr. Oscar Pérez, Dr. José M. Gutiérrez.

REPUBLICA DE HAITI:

Dr. Pierre Moravich Morpeau.

REPUBLICA DE PARAGUAY:

Dr. Andrés Gubetich.

REPUBLICA DE CHILE:

Dr. Waldemar E. Coutts B.

REPUBLICA DEL PERU:

Dr. Bernardino León y León, Dr. Guillermo Fernández Dávila, Dr. Luis Guillermo Trejo.

ESTADOS UNIDOS DE NORTE AMERICA:

Dr. Arthur Schram, Dr. Malcolm R. Mackintosh, Dr. Charles Matthias Goethe.

REPUBLICA DE URUGUAY:

Dr. Gabriel González Danrré.

Appendix 9 Honorary Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics, Countries of Origin, and Deceased Members (1945)

NOMINA DE SOCIOS

HONORARIOS

Dr. Fernando Ocaranza, de México.	Prof. Eugene Schereider.—Francia.
Ing. Félix F. Palavicini, de México.	Prof. Corrado Gini.—Italia.
Dra. Antonia L. Ursúa, de México.	Dr. Carlos Bambaren.—Perú.
Dr. Arturo R. Rossi. — Argentina.	Dra. Susana Solano.—Perú.
Dr. Carlos Bernaldo de Quiroz.— Rep. Argentina.	Dr. Guillermo Fernández Dávila.— Perú.
Dr. José de Albuquerque.—Brasil.	Dr. Carlos Enrique Paz Soldan. —
Dr. Renato Khel.—Brasil.	Dr. G. Banú.—Rumania.
Dr. José Chelala.—Cuba.	Dr. Augusto Turenne. — Uruguay.
Dr. Francisco Peña Trejo. — El Salvador.	Dr. Roberto Berro.—Uruguay.
Dr. Paul Popenoe.—Estados Uni- dos del Norte.	SOCIOS HONORARIOS FALLECIDOS
Dr. Andrés Latarget.—Francia.	Dr. Nicolás Lozano. — Rep. Argen- tina.
Prof. Henry Laugier. — Francia.	Dr. Francisco María Fernández.— Cuba.
Prof. Paul Grawitz. — Francia.	Dr. Rafael Carrillo.—México.
Dr. Raymond Bonnardel.—Francia.	Dr. Víctor Delfino. — Rep. Argen- tina.
Profa. Gabriela Chease de Bonnar- del.—Francia.	Dr. Charles Davenport. — Estados Unidos del Norte.

Appendix 10 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (1947)

SOCIOS activos
de la Sociedad
Mexicana de
Eugenesia

- 1.—Dra. Margarita Delgado de Solís.
- 2.—Dr. Octavio Rojas Avendaño.
- 3.—Dr. Alfredo M. Saavedra.
- 4.—Dr. Roberto Solís Quiróga.
- 5.—Dr. Adrian Correa.
- 6.—Dr. Anastasio Vergara E.
- 7.—Dr. Ignacio Millan M.
- 8.—Dr. Ernesto Frenk.
- 9.—Sr. Mauricio Wolf.
- 10.—Lic. Héctor Solís, Quiroga.
- 11.—Dr. Agustín Hernández Mejía.
- 12.—Dr. Yury Kutler.
- 13.—Dr. Armando Gómez de Velasco.
- 14.—Dr. José F. Rulfo.
- 15.—Sr. Protasio Martínez Alvarez.
- 16.—Lic. Francisco de A. Benavidts.
- 17.—Dr. Alfonso Castrejón.
- 18.—Dr. Francisco Godoy Ramírez.
- 19.—Dr. Juan Ibarra Hernández.
- 20.—Dr. Alfonso Martínez Alvarez.
- 21.—Profa. María Concepción Uranga Fernández.
- 22.—Dr. Luis G. Vázquez Vega.
- 23.—Dr. Federico Pascual del Roncal.
- 24.—Dr. Ricardo Fandiño.
- 25.—Lic. Guillermina Llach.
- 26.—Dr. Alfonso Segura Albiter.
- 27.—Dr. Ernesto González Tejeda.
- 28.—Dr. Jorge Torrijano Ritchie.
- 29.—Dr. José Torreblanco.
- 30.—Ing. Eugenio Ituarte Pérez.
- 31.—Sr. José Olmedo.
- 32.—Dr. Wenceslao Dutrem Dominguez.
- 33.—Dr. Tiberio Wallentin.
- 34.—Dr. Feliciano Sánchez Ríos.
- 35.—Dr. Eduardo Gómez Jauregui.
- 36.—Sr. D. Roberto Wallentin.
- 37.—Sr. D. Silvestre Frenk.
- 38.—Dr. Federico Molas.

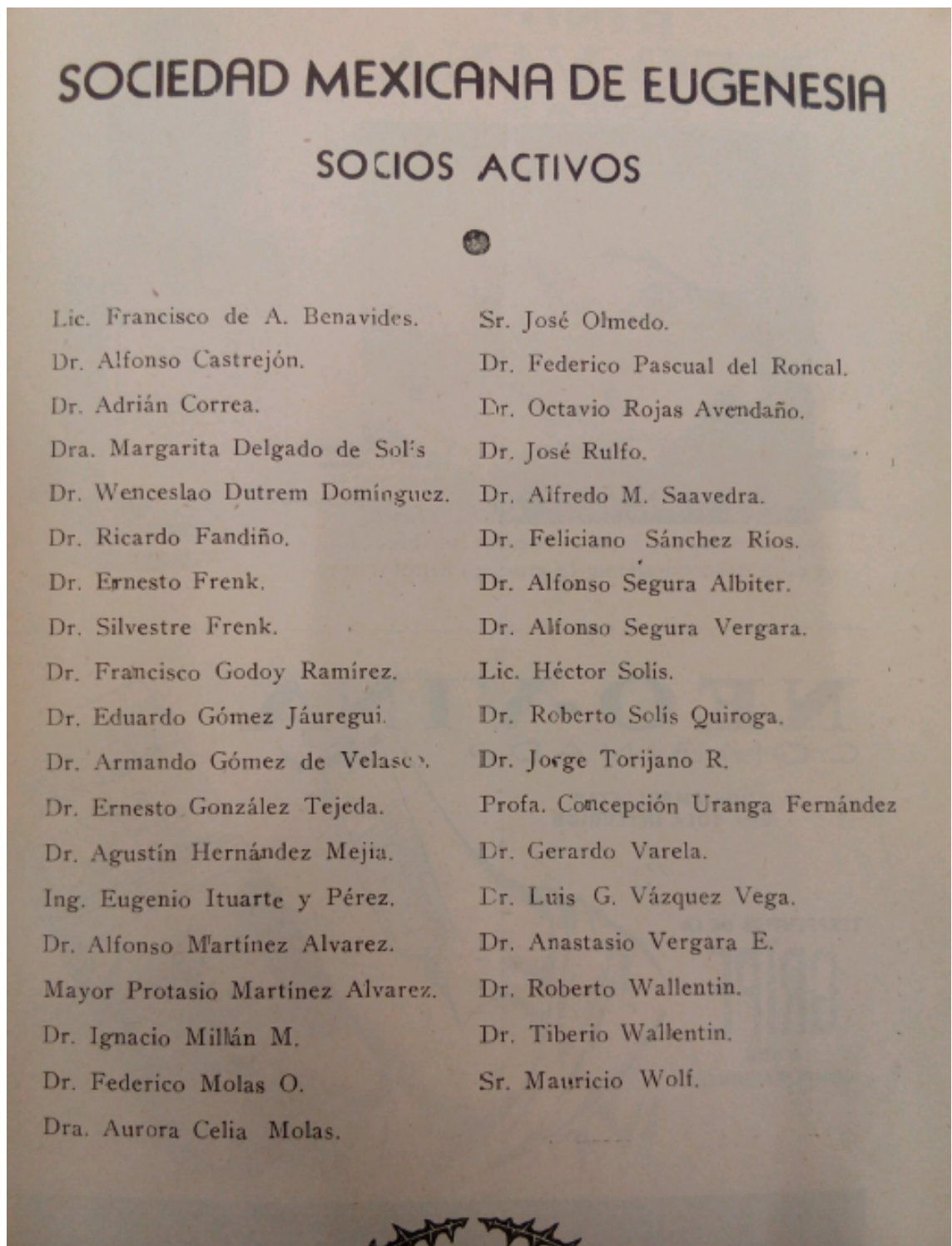
Appendix 11 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (1948)

SOCIEDAD MEXICANA DE EUGENESIA

NOMINA DE SOCIOS ACTIVOS

Dra. Margarita Delgado de Solis.	Profa. María Granga Fernández.
Dr. Octavio Rojas Avendaño.	Dr. Luis G. Vázquez Vega.
Lic. Luis Rubio Siliceo.	Dra. Gloria Edith Sotomayor González de Sánchez.
Dr. Alfredo M. Saavedra.	Dr. Federico Pascual de Roncal.
Dr. Roberto Solís Quiroga.	Dr. Ricardo Fandiño.
Dr. Adrián Correa.	Srita. Lic. Guillermina Llach.
Dr. Anastasio Vergara E.	Dr. Alfonso Segura Albiter.
Dr. Ignacio Millán M.	Dr. Ernesto González Tejeda.
Dr. Ernesto Frenk.	Dr. Jorge Torijano Ritchie.
Sr. Mauricio Wolf.	Dr. José Torreblanco.
Lic. Héctor Solís Quiroga.	Ing. Eugenio Ituarte Pérez.
Dr. Agustín Hernández Mejías.	Sr. José Olmedo.
Dr. Yury Kutler.	Dr. Wenceslao Dutrem Domínguez.
Dr. Armando Gómez de Velasco.	Dr. Tiberio Wallentin.
Dr. José F. Rulfo.	Dr. Feliciano Sánchez Ríos.
Sr. Protasio Martínez Alvarez.	Dr. Eduardo Gómez Jáuregui.
Lic. Francisco A. Benavides.	Dr. Roberto Wallentin Springer.
Dr. Alfonso Castrejón.	Sr. D. Silvestre Frenk.
Dr. Francisco Godoy Ramírez.	Dr. Federico Molas.
Dr. Juan Ibarra Hernández.	
Dr. Alfonso Martínez Alvarez.	

Appendix 12 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (1949)



Appendix 13 Members of the Mexican Society of Eugenics (1951)

Nómina de Socios Adherentes de la Sociedad Mexicana de Eugenesia

Dr. José L. Amor
Dr. Cayetano Andrade
Prof. Abelardo Avila
Dr. Salvador Bermúdez
Dr. Alejo Z. Calvo
Dra. María de J. Cisneros
Profa. María del Refugio Delgado
Dr. Nestor Herrera
Dr. Salvador Iturbide Álvarez
Dra. Emilia Leija Paz de Ortiz
Lic. Gilberto Loyo
Dr. Alfredo Magaña
Dr. Pablo Mendizabal
Dr. José Monroy Velasco
Dr. Alfonso Pruneda
Dr. José Ramio Solé
Dra. Matilde Rodríguez Cabo

Dr. Neftalí Rodríguez
Dr. Leonardo Silva
Dr. Antonio Sordo Noriega
Dr. Manuel Perea y Sra.
Dr. Cuauhtémoc Tlapanco
Profa. Ana Saldoval Perea
T. S. Margarita G. de Lozano Garza
Dr. Alberto Lozano Garza y Sra.
Profa. Carmen Leija Paz de Ibarra
Dr. Antonio Santamaría Rodríguez
Dr. Adrián Correa
Dr. Armando Gómez de Velasco
Lic. Alfonso Castro Loyo
T. S. Olimpia Ortiz Mendoza
Profa. Ma. Luisa Tenorio.
Profa. Pina Florizno

Nómina de Socios Corresponsales de la Sociedad Mexicana de Eugenesia

Prof. Carlos Esqueda
Rosales No. 34,
GUAMUCHIL, Sin.
Dr. Alfonso Ruiz Escalona
Morelos No. 15,
CHIHUAHUA, Chih.
Dr. José Manuel de la Fuente
Av. Obregón No. 24,
TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Chis.
Dr. Manuel Mendiola Z.—Presidente del
Comité.
Av. Ocampo No. 1402,
CHIHUAHUA, Chih.
Dr. Roberto del Valle.
Pino Suárez No. 1203,
NUEVO LAREDO, Tamps.
Dr. Armando Gómez Chávez
Esquina 16 de Septiembre y Lerdo,
CD. JUAREZ, Chih.

Dr. Raúl Sempé, Representante de la
Sociedad Médica Veracruzana, Lerdo No. 71
VERACRUZ, Ver.
Dr. J. Manzur.
VILLAHERMOSA, Tab.
Dr. Fausto Pérez Martínez, Secretario
de la Sociedad de Eugenesia de Oaxaca.
2a. Zaragoza No. 6.
OAXACA, Oax.
Dr. Luis Pavón Sarrelangue
Obregón No. 288
NOGALES, Son.
Dr. Juan Arau Reus.
Independencia 171,
VERACRUZ, Ver.
Dra. Otilia Villarreal Elizondo
C. Civil 624-Sur
MONTERREY, N. L.

