

“Without the Soldaderas there is no Mexican Revolution- they kept it alive and fertile, like the earth.”

-Elena Poniatowska

Soldaderas were women soldiers who participated in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. These revolutionary women are often categorized into two different groups: *soldaderas* and camp followers. A camp follower aided the men with domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, nursing, and watching over the children, while a *soldadera* was a woman who fought bravely alongside the men. The two categories were clearly distinguished by the soldiers at the time, but a turn in the course of the Mexican Revolution led to the merging of both groups. Camp followers, by necessity, had to take up arms and thus prove their usefulness and resourcefulness. On the other hand, *soldaderas* also took on domestic roles and cared for the well-being of their male soldiers.ⁱⁱ Becoming a *soldadera* allowed Mexican women to leave the traditional way of life behind and pursue a career in the revolutionary army. This paper will explore the significant roles of *soldaderas* during the Mexican Revolution, while it at the same time it looks at how propaganda sexualized the image of *soldaderas*.

Soldaderas received little attention in the analysis of the Mexican Revolution by historians until about the 1980s. However, in the last thirty years, more historians have been rewriting their stories, giving them a proper platform. Elizabeth Salas explores the changing role of a *soldadera*, both in reality and as a cultural symbol. Salas focuses on the legacy *soldaderas* created while fighting and aiding the men. She argues that *soldaderas* took the role of mother/war goddess, mediator, and sexual companion to warriors to support their people to victory. The author takes a look at journal entries, photos, archival documents, and oral histories. to clarify the impact soldiering had on women and their experience

during the Mexican Revolution. In looking at personal accounts of nine different women, Salas can tell their story and show their struggle in how they are portrayed.

While Salas examines the different experiences of *soldaderas*, Andres Resendez Fuentes focuses his research on distinguishing female fighters from camp followers. In Fuentes' article, *soldaderas* were camp followers who aided the men with their daily needs, and female fighters are the women on the battlefield. The purpose of his research is to provide a better understanding of the two different roles women had during the Revolution. The focus of the paper is analyzing the different armies that needed women and how the troops used women's labor in a variety of ways. He argues that a clear distinction should be made between *soldaderas* and female fighters.ⁱⁱⁱ Fuentes also contends that the different experiences and the various roles contributed to the change in perception and arrangement of the two genders.^{iv} To further his research, Fuentes uses *corridos* and newspaper articles to provide evidence on the different experiences *soldaderas* and female soldiers partook during the war. Fuentes uses newspaper articles that were published from 1910 to 1920 to discuss events that were occurring during that time and how the media viewed them.^v He also uses *corridos* to show the ways that male songwriters of the time depicted these women.^{vi}

While Fuentes contrasts the roles of *soldaderas* and female fighters, he writes very little on romanticized propaganda, a topic on which Alicia Arrizon focuses as she attempts to construct and reconstruct the romantic notion of the Revolution. Her primary sources, in particular *corridos*, photographs, and journal entries, are a way to demonstrate the way female soldiers were represented during the Mexican Revolution. She uses the *corrido* "La Adelita" to show how romanticized it was for a woman to participate in the revolution. The role of a *soldadera* was highly romanticized through the use

of *corridos* that would depict these women as lustful and a distraction to the soldier's duties on the battlefield. The work of Arrizón follows the course into why the *corridos* played such an essential role in sexualizing *soldaderas*; her work argues that *soldaderas* during the Mexican Revolution were given no respect. Through literary criticism, textual analysis, and historical interpretation Arrizón is able to get to a deeper understanding of the problem of identifying the ideal female soldier in "La Adelita." This research unfolds the culture and drama of the *corrido* and the way "La Adelita" represented and misrepresented *soldaderas*.

While Arrizon deconstructs the *Adelita* image by providing evidence of the role that women played in the revolution, Ela Molina-Sevilla de Morelock pushes the gender analysis further by bringing a feminist perspective to the analysis of four women that participated in the revolution.^{vii} She uses memoirs from the women that participated in the revolution that wrote in detail about their daily lives on the camp. Molina-Sevilla also uses letters written by and to these women to see their experiences and how they described it to other people that had no idea about the real conditions of the camp. She takes a gender, social, political, and cultural approach when analyzing the documents for her book. Molina-Sevilla contends that in order to prove her point she must bring to light the stories of four revolutionary women and show how much they contributed to the Mexican Revolution.^{viii}

The first section of the paper will focus on the hardships and mistreatments that *soldaderas* experienced during the Mexican Revolution. Through the use of newspaper articles printed between 1910-1920, we aim to depict how these women were treated daily. Secondly, the paper seeks to demonstrate how *soldaderas* showed their loyalty to their country by participating in the war efforts. This section analyzes personal accounts by John Reed and Sra. Flores de Andrade that explain a woman's

reasoning for joining the revolution and also demonstrating the tasks and hardship the *soldaderas* went through. Lastly, the third part of the paper looks at the various roles a *soldadera* had in the army and how some of these women came to join the revolution, focusing on the way the *soldadera's* participation was romanticized and sexualized by the men of the revolutionary period through the use of *corridos*. Ultimately, this paper argues that through the use of propaganda the mistreatment *soldaderas* experienced was dismissed, as was the way these women, despite being repressed, showed their loyalty to their country. We also contend that the *machista* beliefs in Mexico helped keep gender roles and gender expectations established during war times through the use of propaganda.

Women began to participate in the revolutionary groups that would take them, whether it was the federal army or the rebels. Zapata used more than two hundred women to fight alongside the men in the summer of 1913, in using the women to attack a railroad so they would be able to pass through towns faster.^{ix} With Zapata's army growing in numbers other revolutionary leaders, like Carranza and Obregón, also filled up their army with anyone they could find, which included women along with children.^x This became an essential factor to the women, as they were able to be a part of the militant group. *Soldaderas* broke away from traditional female roles and risked their lives for the Revolution. Regardless of their background, *soldaderas* aided the men in a variety of ways. This included cooking, cleaning, nursing the wounded, and in many occasions fighting alongside the men.^{xi} *Soldaderas* aided the men in any way possible but always ended up with the worst of the Revolution. They did not get a choice to join the war voluntarily; most of the women followed the men because they had no form of income, while other women were taken from their homes and were forced to become a soldier's companion. Once at war these women rode in boxcars meant for horses or trailed the army on foot carrying an immense amount of cargo on their backs.^{xii} *Soldaderas* also had to face the disapproval of

generals who believed they had no real role in the revolution. For instance, Pancho Villa insisted the women slowed down his cavalry.^{xiii} The women of the Mexican Revolution were the last priority and often unprotected by the men they followed. In many occasions, *soldaderas* had to fend for themselves, but they always stayed loyal to the Revolutions. However, the characteristics of a *soldadera* often fall into the same category: a woman with a heart of gold and the sweetheart of the troops.^{xiv} Through propaganda, the contributions and treatments of *soldaderas* have been overshadowed with a romantic notion of these women.

The Image of a *Soldadera*

A *corrido* is a song that tells the tale of a significant heroic figure or event. The Mexican Revolution provided a considerable amount of material for *corrido* writers.^{xv} Additionally, *corridos* also played a substantial role in romanticizing the image of a *soldadera*. A patriarchal society, such as Mexico could not accept the reality of women soldiers.^{xvi} However, these women had to be recognized for their commitment to the war. In order to do so, *soldaderas* were neutralized, making her a love object and presenting her in a less threatening manner.^{xvii} In *corridos* about male revolutionaries, such as Villa and Zapata, the listeners know their full name and their actions in the Revolution.^{xviii} However, in the popular ballads written about *soldaderas*, the listeners do not get the reality of their contributions to the war, much less a real name.^{xix} In most cases, *corridos* were composed from the perspective of a love-struck man.^{xx} Consequently, *corridos* contain very little about the women's experiences in battle and at the camps.

One of the most famous *corridos* composed during the Mexican Revolution is "*La Adelita*." "*La Adelita*" depicts the ideal *soldadera* - a beautiful and valiant woman, who was neither vulgar nor

ruthless. Madly in love with her lover, Adelita follows him to war to become his loyal camp follower.^{xxi} It is hard to pinpoint the true identity of Adelita, but some sources suspect that a Durangan woman who joined the *Maderistas* movement inspired the ballad.^{xxii} While other sources suspect Adelita was a fourteen-year-old girl who nursed a soldier named Antonio de Rio back to health.^{xxiii} In another version, Adela was a woman who won the heart of Francisco “Pancho” Villa. However, in a great disappointment, Adela had a boyfriend Pancho Portillo, who later on commits suicide. Still pursuing Adela, Villa asks his guitarists to serenade Adela with “*La Adelita*.” Nevertheless, the males who sang the ballad never focused on the Adelita’s bravery and contributions to the war, but rather her beauty and desirability.

*“Popular entre la tropa era Adelita
la mujer que el sargento idolatraba
y además de ser valiente era bonita
que hasta el mismo Coronel la respetaba.”^{xxiv}*

*“Popular amongst the troops was Adelita
the woman the sargent idolized
and apart from her bravery she was beautiful
that even the Coronel respected her.”*

In a fifteen-stanza *corrido*, only the first line from the first stanza describes the bravery of Adelita.^{xxv} This is an example of the idea that women that were following the army were only there because they were in love with someone in the army and were there to be promiscuous.^{xxvi} Adelita was beautiful and respected by men in the army including the Colonel of that army depicting that the only reason they respected her is due to her beauty and not because she partakes in assisting during battles.^{xxvii} The

stanza describes the “bravery” of Adelita but is quick to mention that her beauty is what gained the respect of the Colonel. Her contributions and hard work to aid the men at war is never mentioned in the famous *corrido* that gave a universal name to all *soldaderas*. Gradually, the name Adelita was used to refer to all *soldaderas*, along with the characteristics she embodied “*La Adelita*.”

Another equally spirited *corrido* that has sparked debate is “*La Valentina*.” Although the composer of “*La Valentina*” is unknown, the ballad gained its popularity in the year of 1914. The famous lyrics tell the story of a love-sick soldier who is expressing his love and dedication to Valentina Gatica.^{xxviii} Gatica was a woman from Sinaloa who was a *soldadera* from Obregon’s troops. The tale goes that Valentina Gatica was left an orphan after the death of her father. She decided to join Obregon’s troops and became another one of his soldiers. However, when the tale of Valentina Gatica is told she is described as, “...brave, daring, beautiful and attractive.”^{xxix} The tale fails to state the contribution Gatica had towards Obregon’s troops. However, other sources state that “*La Valentina*” was inspired by a woman named Valentina Ramirez as can be seen in Figure 1.1.^{xxx} In this photograph, Ramirez is seen with a Cartridge belt strapped across her chest, and a gun in her right hand ready to serve her country. However, not a single verse in “*La Valentina*” describes this photograph or her action on the battlefield.

*“Una passion me domina
Es la que me hizo venir,
Valentina, Valentina,
Yo te quisiera decir.*

*Dicen que por tus amores
Un mal me van a seguir,
No le hace que sean el diablo*

Yo Tambien me se morir.^{xxxxi}

*“A passion has dominated me
it’s what made me come,
Valentina, Valentina,
I would like to tell you.*

*They say that for your love
An evil will follow,
It doesn’t matter if it’s the devil
I also know how to die.”*

Unlike “*La Adelita*,” the composer of “*LA Valentina*” fails to mention any notion on the bravery of Valentina. The romanization of the ballad’s glosses over the involvement of a *soldadera*. Rather than focusing on her hard work and contributions to the revolution, the *corridos* concentrate on the male’s soldier’s contribution to war and his love for a *soldadera*, which can be seen in “*La Adelita*” and “*La Valentina*”. *Soldaderas* are being denied the chance to be seen as respectable soldiers. However, the popularity of these songs imprinted and cemented a romanticized image of a *soldadera* in the minds of many people.

Furthermore, the few *corridos* that illustrated a *soldadera* as a hero to a battle tended to make her seem like a mythical figure. A woman who led her troops to victory due to supernatural powers. These types of *corridos* also depicted *soldaderas* who refused to find love resulting in a cold heart. The writer of the *corrido* is stating that this woman was faithful to only her father, even after a gunshot wound killed him. The *corrido* also explains that this woman did not see herself as a *soldadera* anymore and was only focused on killing as many enemies as possible to avenge her father. To be specific, “*La*

Chamuscada,” which translates to a female devil. The name Chamuscada associates the woman warrior with the supernatural powers of Satan. In addition, the woman warrior is described as fearless and invincible, to the brink of no bullets ever harming her.^{xxxii} While at war she has no time find love, nor is interested in any of the men.^{xxxiii}

*“No hubo un hombre jamas a aquen quisiera
De entre la tropa ninguno le cusadro,
Solo a su padre le fue fiel soldadera
Y al pobrecitio una bala lo quebro.”^{xxxiv}*

*“There was never a man that sparked her interest
Within the troop no one dared cross her,
She was only a loyal soldadera to her father
and the poor man was shot.”*

The stanza above confirms that “*La Chamuscada*” did not want to find love, the only man she liked was her father and he was killed by a bullet at war killed him. Interesting enough, by the end of the “*La Chamuscada*,” the protagonist of the *corrido* hears the song about herself and break into tears because of the way she is described.^{xxxv} As mentioned before, many *soldaderas* portrayed in *corridos* do not have their name displayed in the song; that is the case with “*La Chamuscada*.” Throughout the song, her name is never revealed, and her supernatural powers define her courage and strength. Never entirely giving her credit for the aid she provided on the battlefield.

Consequently, the ballad emphasis that although she can be defined as a “female devil.” she still has a sensitive side to herself. These *corridos* made way for *soldaderas* to been seen as objects to these

men. While most of them were still trying to make a name for themselves, *corridos* about them hurt them. Degrading them and making them less of a woman. With the new verse of the song and artist adding their spin to the lyrics, *soldaderas* are still not being represented respectfully.

Gender Roles: What Did They Do?

Most *soldaderas* were forced to join the army for protection and survival during this time because women, as in other countries, were not allowed to work or earn money. A journalist from the Mexican Revolution named John Reed was following armies and writing down the daily experiences of the soldiers and *soldaderas*. John Reed had approached two women that were cooking for their men and asked them if he could have some tortillas and coffee from them and they agreed to cook this for him.^{xxxvi} While he was waiting for the food he had asked them what it was like following their men during this dangerous war, and both women gave somewhat different answers but were also similar in the way they end. The older woman of the two claims that she was married to a man but that he abandoned her and left her to fend on her own, so she found herself another man in another army, whom she called her "Juan."^{xxxvii} She said that the other man was handsome and younger in comparison to her first husband that had abandoned her.^{xxxviii} Reed most likely made this woman seem like she was acting against the roles and expectations set for her because of how easily she went and found another man. He is also making it seem like this older woman only decided to follow this new man because he was young and handsome, which most likely was not the case. She most likely decided to follow this man because he was alone, needed a woman, and she needed protection and a sense of safety. The younger woman, on the other hand, had a different story compared to the older woman's story.

The younger woman was a new mother and had her baby hanging on her chest and was happy that she was able to be so close to her man but always feared of his wellbeing when he went into battle.^{xxxix} She claimed that she did not mind loyally following him around all of Mexico, but that she wished there was a way to know if he was all right during his time in battle because she had to stay and watch the baby at the camp.^{xl} The younger woman is representing the ideal woman of this time because she is keeping her loyalty to her man and is not thinking about whether she needs a new one. She is, in turn, the romanticization of the *soldaderas* that participated in the Mexican Revolution and the older woman would be representing the sexualization of the *soldaderas*. Although these women valiantly followed their men for protection from the horrors of war, they played very crucial roles in the camp and the battlefield.

Soldaderas had more roles and duties than people assumed; they were given household duties along with keeping an eye out for the men as they rested from their post. Because there were no can goods women had to use all resources that were available to them at the campsite. The use of raw materials was essential to a *soldadera* because it was their way of preparing a warm cooked meal for their men. At times the food these women carried was not enough to cook a meal, and *soldaderas* were forced to steal, beg, or buy food.^{xli} This was not an easy task, in taking a close look at figure 1.2^{xlii} there is a group of women that are cooking on top of train cart we able to see that they had a dangers lifestyle. We see some women making *tortillas* from scratch, and others are preparing some soup. *Soldaderas* followed the armies because they saw that they were needed in a way that no man would be able to fulfill, providing that household aid that these men needed.^{xliii} However, not all women had to join the men on the field some stayed in the towns or pueblos as it was easier for Zapatista women to help and

supply the men from there.^{xliv} One essential role the *soldaderas* held on the camps was to scout for food and cook it for their men, children, and themselves.

The Mistreatment and Hardships of a *Soldadera*

Soldaderas had hard lives, while most walked on foot and did not have time to rest; they had to make sure everything was ready for the soldiers. Military trains were common ways of traveling during the revolution, taking soldiers and *soldaderas* to their next campsite.^{xlv} However, when traveling by train, horses took up most of the space inside the train cars and the soldiers were pushed to stay on the



Figure 1.2

rooftop.^{xlvi} Leaving *soldaderas* to carry the soldiers “bulky” cargo and walk to the next destination.^{xlvii} On foot, *soldaderas* had no chance of keeping up with the pace of the mounted troops. Many of the generals toyed with the idea of eliminating them because they were slowing down

their travels.^{xlviii} Villa came very close to attaining this goal because he saw the women as useless burdens to his cavalry.^{xlix} However, the need for *soldaderas* was in demand, because without them, the army had no formal commissariat.^l

Furthermore, *soldaderas* were fully outfitted with cooking utensils, food, clothing, and camping equipment, which can be seen in Figure 1.2. In several occasions, the women also carried their children and cargo at the same time. Upon their arrival, whether for a few minutes or a couple of hours, *soldaderas* were quick to unload their cargo and begin cooking for their men.^{li} The food they cooked came from their load, or when needed, *soldaderas* would need to scavenge for their next meals. It did

not matter that *soldaderas* were carrying an immense amount of cargo, or that they traveled the same distance as the men, *soldaderas* had to make sure their men were well taken care of.

In the personal accounts from American journalist John Reed, he talks about his accounts with Elizabetta, and she was an Indian girl no more than twenty-five years old whom Captain Felix had found wandering in a *hacienda*.^{lii} Being scared, she chooses to leave with the Captain, in having lost everything she did not see anywhere else to go. Reed writes, "Captain Felix let his horse drink. Elizabetta halted, too knelt and plunged her face into the water."^{liii} He then claims that the Captain, who was Elizabetta's companion, rushed her from her few seconds of rest and said, "'Get me my supper!' Then he strolled away towards the houses where the rest of the soldiers sat."^{liv} Elizabetta's need for rest after a long journey came second to her man's needs.

Elizabetta shows the struggles that are presented by wanting to get away for at least one day. Although John Reed was a witness to the hardship Elizabetta faced, he is often accused of embellishing his writing in order to enhance his attractiveness to women. It was surprising that Captain Felix allowed his woman to spend the night with another man, because would never be allowed. While Reed is convinced that Elizabetta, should spend the night with him even though she had just met him. Many women that were in Elizabetta's shoes would willingly begin serving the men that found them to keep themselves and sometimes their children safe. Elizabetta woke up and decided she would loyally follow Captain Felix into battle, and she seems to be excited to do so.^{lv} Given the gender roles and expectations put at that time in Mexico, women were expected to behave in specific ways to maintain her honor and her family's honor.

In the case of Sra. Flores de Andrade, she joined the revolution in her way, by giving back to the people that were in debt, even if it resulted in her losing all her land. While she did lose everything at the start of the revolution, she goes on to *El Paso*, where she meets her husband. However, she loses her husband and joins a revolutionary group that tells her whom to marry, as she needs protection for herself and her children. Sra. Flores goes on to marry a revolutionary man and ends up hating herself for it. She says, “They offered me money and all kinds of advantages, but I would have preferred everything before sacrificing myself and prostituting myself.”^{lvi} This shows the impact the protection of a man was to women, as they did not have anyone to help them out. While Sra. Flores was forced to marry this man, but she still had a role in the army that allowed her to take care of her husband and her children, while still providing aid to others in need. As she is not in love with this man but having no choice, she needs his help to survive.

“*La Valentina*” was popularized in 1914, is depicting a *soldadera* who should be feared due to her strength on the battlefield but is still degraded down to her beautiful physique. The author of the *corrido* is so mesmerized by Valentina’s appearance to the point that it is the only thing he thinks about, labeling Valentina a distraction from his military duties.^{lvii} The writer is obsessed with her and wants to become her lover even though he claims that becoming her lover would be dangerous and would eventually die loving her.^{lviii} The writer of this *corrido* is rarely mentioning that Valentina is a *soldadera* and is contributing to the revolution.^{lix} The anonymous author only views her as a sex object that is only there for his pleasure and fails to mention the mistreatments or hardships that were mentioned.

What Are They Fighting For?

Other women joined the revolution to fight for a cause; in some cases, they joined the federal armies in others; they joined the revolutionary groups. Rosa King states, “the Zapatistas were not an army, they were people in arms.”^{lx} King was a hotel owner in the city of Morelos where she saw many soldiers come in and out of town, she was also from the United States making her one of the few women that we can protect themselves during the war. While she did not want to join the revolution, she was able to see why many women choose that life and did not criticize them. Women joined revolutionary groups that would take them, whether it was the federal army or the rebels. Zapata used more than two hundred women to fight alongside the men in the summer of 1913, in using the women to attack a railroad so they would be able to pass through towns faster.^{lxi} With Zapata army growing in various numbers other like Carranza and Obregón filled up their army with the people they could find, this included women along with children.^{lxii} This became an essential factor to the women as they were able to be a part of the militant group; this is where the term female fighters would be used more. Their part in joining the armies and being able to hold a gun made them more than a *soldadera*. However, they were still given the same duties having to clean up after the men even if it was in battle.

Venustiano Carranza was also one of the first revolutionary leaders to appeal to women, in wanting to gain support from them.^{lxiii} In the case of Gildardo Magaña, she had shown a copy of *Profesora Jiménez’s* plan to Zapata, and he became very impressed with what she had stated. He believed women like her should join his revolutionary army and fight for what they believed.^{lxiv} He believed that she was a strong woman and knew a lot of what was going on. This is something that not many believed, they saw *soldaderas* as illiterate and someone that knew very little of what was going on or as someone that did not even know why the revolution was happening. *Soldaderas* have been stereotyped as the *Adelita* with women that carried around their rifle and cartridge belt around their chest; however, these women

were more than that. Some women disguised themselves as men so that they would be able to fight in the battles.

One of the prominent figures in the Revolution is Coronel Amelio Robles. Amelio Robles was born as female with the birth name, Amelia Robles Avila. Robles enlisted in the army rather than agreeing to an arranged marriage.^{lxv} Robles joined the insurgent troops in the southern part of the country, under the agrarian flag.^{lxvi} Robles constructed himself as a masculine hero, ranking up to Colonel, due to this many of the women joined the revolution dressed as men to gain respect and rank up in the military. Robles decided to stay as a man because he wanted to be recognized as a veteran, a recognition that could not happen if he identified as a woman. Another prominent figure is Perta Herrera, a well-known *soldadera* on the battlefield during the Mexican Revolution. During the war, she was known as Pedro Herrera, and just like Coronel Robles, Herrera disguised herself as a man to engage in combat with the men at war.^{lxvii} However, just like Jimenez, Herrera revealed herself as a woman, a perilous move that could have led to being discriminated and treated poorly. Herrera established her role on the battlefield when she fought alongside four hundred other women in the battle of Torreon in 1914.^{lxviii} Her exceptional role in the battle earned her the respect of the male troops. She was even described as the women who, "...turned off the lights when they entered the city."^{lxix} Throughout the war, Herrera established her leadership skills and excellent battleground fight.

Dominga "Angel" Jimenez is a female fighter that joined the revolution for a very personal reason. During the outbreak of the revolution, Federal soldiers attacked Jimenez house looking for rebels.^{lxx} While searching for rebels, the federal troops tried to rape Angela's sister, but in self-defense, Angela's sister killed the federal soldier and herself in the process.^{lxxi} Fearing the federal troops, Angela

dressed as a man and joined the war, vowing to kill all federal revolutionaries.^{lxxii} Jimenez served as a flag bearer, explosive expert, spy, meanwhile making sure her comrades had a proper meal.^{lxxiii} She often referred to herself as, “a volunteer who actively participated but was never given promotions.”^{lxxiv} She does speak out and is recognized as a soldier but never could rank up. Unlike Robles, Jimenez found benefits in her gender be known. On one occasion, her troop was captured and imprisoned. Always carrying women clothing with her, Jimenez dressed back to a woman and was able to convince a group of *soldaderas* to help her fellow troops escape prison. Dressing as a woman helped Jimenez get out of a variety of sticky situations, including avoiding execution with the help of another *soldadera*. Jimenez usually had pleasant comments about *soldaderas*, although she never referred to herself as one. She states, “I know of several women that joined the troops, not as “*Adelitas*” but as true soldiers...” she continues by saying, “If the man happen to be killed, the woman would pick up his rifle and shoot along with the rest of us...”^{lxxv}

Machismo

Machismo is a considerable problem in Mexico and other countries as well because it creates a skewed image of women in the country. *Machismo* is the belief that men are superior in every way and that women are only on the earth to serve men and are inferior to men in all ways.^{lxxvi} Almost all *corridos* written about *soldaderas* and their contributions to the revolution have a *machista* bias to them. Certain Generals like Pancho Villa did not want to have women in his army but chose to allow them because it increased their numbers.^{lxxvii} *Machismo* has had a decrease in Mexico’s most recent times because women can work and support themselves and have access to education. However, during the Mexican Revolution, women were rarely allowed to get an education, and they were also not allowed to work for

their income. This was due to the strong *machista* beliefs in Mexico during the revolution, and it created skewed views of the women that participated in the revolution or the women that were food vendors of the revolution, labeling them as prostitutes. General Pancho Villa is the best example of these *machista* beliefs in action during the revolution.

General Pancho Villa, like General Emiliano Zapata, allowed women to join their army in hopes of swelling their numbers. In Zapata's army women were often put in firm leadership positions within the ranks and were greatly respected among the troops.^{lxxviii} However, Pancho Villa later wanted all *soldaderas* out of his army, and the decision seemed to be made from one day to the next. Villa made excuses about why he wanted them gone, his most used excuse was that the women were slowing down his troops and that they would move faster and be more efficient if *soldaderas* were removed from his troops.^{lxxix} In reality, he was angry because a *soldadera* had attempted to assassinate him some days before his decision of having all *soldaderas* removed from his troops.^{lxxx} These demands were not taken seriously by the *soldaderas* because they had been in his troops for so long that they felt they were not ready to leave so soon. When the *soldaderas* were refusing to leave, he did something to strike fear in the women that did not want to leave his army immediately. Villa killed a train car that was full of women to show his troops that he was serious about his decision to have women removed from his troops.^{lxxxi} Many generals followed his decision to get rid of the *soldaderas* in their troops, but none were as violent as Villa was. Many articles had been printed reporting the conditions of the campgrounds during the revolution and estimating just how many women and children were involved.

The *soldaderas* that the generals were attempting to remove were essential to making their armies look bigger than they are. More than half of the people in Carrancista's army were made up of

women and children.^{lxxxii} As soon as the troops set their designated camping grounds the women had to begin cooking the meals for their men immediately and tending to their children's needs as well.^{lxxxiii} This gave the women very little time to rest or tend to their own needs as soon as they arrived at the camp, they had first to take care of their man, then their children and then they could take care of themselves.^{lxxxiv} Since most of these camps had full families in them, they were compared to Gypsy camps because the Gypsy people would often travel together in huge groups and were made up of entire families.^{lxxxv} Almost all military camps looked like they could have been Gypsy camps because women had no other choice but to follow their man and take care of him.^{lxxxvi} There have also been *corridos* of *soldaderas* made that make them seem like they are only following the army for their sexual desire or that they dress in provocative ways to distract the men from their duties on the battlefield.

A *corrido* called "La Marieta" was written to describe a woman that was dressing in provocative clothing to distract the men fighting in the revolution. The writer of the *corrido* states, "Porque la mujer que tiene/El vestido tan cortito/Cuando llega así a agacharse/Se le mira muy bonito"^{lxxxvii} This part of the *corrido* is sexualizing the *soldadera* that is being written about. It is making it seem like this *soldadera* is the person interested in distracting the men and being readily available for them. The writer of the *corrido* also states, "Marieta no seas fea coqueta/porque los hombres son muy feos malos/prometen muchos regalos/y lo que dan son puros golpes palos."^{lxxxviii} This is directly implicating that the woman is only interested in flirting with the men fighting in the revolution in order to distract them from fighting for their cause. This *corrido* and other *corridos* made on *soldaderas* have a *machista* base to them and tend to romanticize or sexualize the *soldadera*, making her into an object of sinful lust.

Conclusion

Propaganda played a significant role in the image of a *soldadera*. The lyrics do not display the actual contributions of a *soldadera*, and this is because the Mexican society was not ready to accept a female hero. Throughout the Revolution, *soldaderas* had no chance to live on their own, while many saw them as nothing, they took it upon themselves to make something of themselves and be useful to the Revolution. Although *machismo* is a strong ideology in Mexican culture it has begun declining in recent years because women's role in society is beginning to be accepted.^{lxxxix} Women's public roles in religion, politics, and the economy are being seen as essential and parallel to men's roles in these three spheres.^{xc} The image shown is being seen around the world is very different than what was seen from 1910 through 1920. While all these women wanted their voices heard and seen as something more, or given the same respects of men, they will always fall short if people continue to have the same image presented over time.

ⁱ Elena Poniatowska, *Las Soldaderas* (Mexico City, Mexico: Fototeca, 1999), 15.

ⁱⁱ Oswaldo Estrada, "Si Adeltia Se furera Con Otro... Soldaderas of an Unfinished Revolution," in *Troubled Memories: Iconic Women and the Traps of Representation*, (Albany: State University of New York Press 2018), 143.

ⁱⁱⁱ Andrés Reséndez Fuentes, "Battleground Women: Soldaderas and Female Soldiers in the Mexican Revolution," in *The Americas* 51, no 4 (1995), 526.

^{iv} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 526.

^v Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 525.

^{vi} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 525.

^{vii} Ela Molina-Sevilla de Morelock, *Relecturas y Narraciones Femeninas de la Revolución Mexicana: Campobello, Garro, Esquivel, y Mastretta* (Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2013), 15.

^{viii} Morelok, *Relecturas y Narraciones Femeninas*, 21.

^{ix} Alicia Arrizón, "Soldaderas and the Staging of the Mexican Revolution," in *The Drama Review* 42, no 1 (1998), 96.

^x Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History*, (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press 1990), 49.

^{xixi} Arrizón, "Soldaderas and the Staging of the Mexican Revolution," 96.

^{xii} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 541.

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- xiii Mark Wasserman, *The Mexican Revolution: A brief History with Documents*, (Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's 2012) 15.
- xiv Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 82.
- xv Wasserman, *The Mexican Revolution*, 91.
- xvi Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1990) 103.
- xvii Marian Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 104.
- xviii Marian Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 89.
- xix Marian Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 89.
- xx Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 89.
- xxi Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 108.
- xxii Arrizón, "Soldaderas and the Staging of the Mexican Revolution," 90.
- xxiii Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 91.
- xxiv Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 107.
- xxv Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 92.
- xxvi Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 107.
- xxvii Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 107.
- xxviii Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 108.
- xxix Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 109.
- xxx Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 109.
- xxxi Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 109.
- xxxii Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 114.
- xxxiii Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 114.
- xxxiv Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 113.
- xxxv Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 114.
- xxxvi John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 196.
- xxxvii John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 198.
- xxxviii John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 198.
- xxxix John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 197.
- xl John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 197.
- xli Reel Life, in *Women in Mexico*, 87
- xlii Elena Poniatowska, *Las Soldaderas*, 34.
- xliiii Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 530.
- xliv Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 534.
- xlv Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 541.
- xlvi Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 544.
- xlvii Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 544.
- xlviii Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 544.
- xliv Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 544.
- l Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 530.
- li Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 541.
- lii Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 104.
- liii Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 104.
- liv Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 106.
- lv Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 109.

^{lvi} Sra. Flores de Andrade, interviewed by Manuel Gamio 1920, *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931) 29-35, quoted in Oscar Martinez, *Fragments of the Mexican Revolution: Personal Accounts from the Border* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 17.

^{lvii} Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 110.

^{lviii} Elizabeth Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940* (Denver: Arden Press, 1990), 44.

^{lix} Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 110.

^{lx} Rosa King, *Tempest Over Mexico: A Personal Chronicle* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935), 94, quoted in Andres Resendez Fuentes, *Battleground Women: Soldaderas and Female Soldiers in the Mexican Revolution, The Americas*, Vol 51 no 4, (1995), 534.

^{lxi} Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women*, 46.

^{lxii} Gonzales, 141.

^{lxiii} Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Women*, 49.

^{lxiv} Anna Macias, "Women in the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940," *The Americas* 74, no 1 (2017), 61.

^{lxv} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Revolution*, 45.

^{lxvi} Estrada, "Si Adeltia Se furera Con Ortro," 180.

^{lxvii} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Revolution* 48.

^{lxviii} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Revolution* 48.

^{lxix} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Revolution* 48.

^{lxx} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 529.

^{lxxi} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 529.

^{lxxii} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 71.

^{lxxiii} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 73.

^{lxxiv} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 74.

^{lxxv} Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, 77.

^{lxxvi} Merriam Webster Dictionary, Accessed March 7, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/machismo>.

^{lxxvii} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 527.

^{lxxviii} John Mraz, *Photographing the Mexican Revolution: Commitments, Testimonies, and Icons* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 118.

^{lxxix} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 550.

^{lxxx} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 551.

^{lxxxi} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 549.

^{lxxxii} *The New York Times*, November 9, 1913.

^{lxxxiii} *The New York Times*, November 9, 1913.

^{lxxxiv} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 539.

^{lxxxv} *The Sun*, November 16, 1913.

^{lxxxvi} Fuentes, "Battleground Women," 539.

^{lxxxvii} Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 114.

^{lxxxviii} Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*, 114.

^{lxxxix} Morelock, *Relecturas y Narraciones Femeninas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 93.

^{xc} Morelock, *Relecturas y Narraciones Femeninas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 93.