

Victim, Perpetrator and Witness: Criminal Spaces and Statistics Involving Women in Late Nineteenth-Century Manila

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Introduction

Manila has long been a site of major events and processes in Philippine history. Since the seventeenth century, it has functioned as the Philippines' primate city, the Spanish colony's centre of political, economic and religious administration.^[1] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, Manila's economic and physical expansion was impeded by the colonial government's overdependence on both the Galleon Trade and Royal Subsidy for its operations, as well as a tepid interest in developing the land and agricultural resources of the country.^[2] It was only during the aftermath of the British Occupation,^[3] the end of the Galleon Trade, and Spain's loss of the majority of its colonies in Latin America by 1825 did the colonial authorities turn to international trade and cash export agriculture for its survival and financial autonomy from the mother country.^[4]

Such events and changes in policy led to Manila's transformation into the Philippines' import and export hub by the 1830s.^[5] By the late nineteenth century, Manila and its environs served as the manufacturing and processing centre of the country and the only place where modern machinery could be feasibly used,^[6] making it the Philippine colony's only true commercial city in the 1800s.^[7] Manila's economic vibrancy in the 1800s went hand in hand with the city's rapid demographic and urban transformation at a scale never before experienced in the colony. Xavier Huetz de Lemp's noted that Manila's population tripled from 1817 to 1892,^[8] an increase that could only have happened through massive migration of individuals from nearby provinces,^[9] the Spanish Empire,^[10] and southern China^[11] who saw in Manila work and market opportunities expected to be had in a progressive city.^[12] By the mid-1800s, the expansion of built-up settlements and a high level of activity within Manila^[13] and nearby towns^[14] made it prudent for the authorities to designate an administrative region called *Provincia de Manila*, whose extent nearly approximates that of the current-day National Capital Region.^[15] The economic opportunities Manila offered, combined with the density and diversity of people typically found in cities^[16] produced a lively urban environment with a diversity of scenes and spaces where people interacted and transacted with one another.^[17] Such features were observed and noted in foreign accounts of nineteenth-century Manila, and one of the main groups that caught their attention was the active role played by women in Manila's everyday life.

Many western visitors, such as John Bowring,^[18] Ivan Goncharov,^[19] Fedor Jagor,^[20] James LeRoy and John Earle Stevens,^[21] and Charles Wilkes,^[22] wrote about the active and lively presence of women in Manila's businesses, markets, factories and throughfares. Others were impressed by the social and even sexual freedoms enjoyed by Filipino women,^[23] while other travellers' accounts emphasised the facility of Filipino women, irrespective of class and race, for business.^[24] Beyond the recorded observations and descriptions of westerners, the presence and roles played by women in Manila's nineteenth-century past has also been the subject of scholarly research. Maria Luisa T. Camagay's landmark work, *The Working Women of Manila in the Nineteenth Century*,^[25] employed sources from the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) to make clear the active participation of the Manilaña in the city's labour force and commercial life. The adept use of archival civil registers of Manila and its districts in

the late 1800s enabled the historical demographer Daniel Doepfers to piece together the collective story of female migration to Manila and the somewhat limited occupations in which they were involved.^[26] This work included participation in Manila's expanding sex trade wherein young females, mostly migrants, put themselves in harm's way in the city's streets, private homes and brothels while being the object of much suffering and abuse in the hands of both their clientele, handlers and the state.^[27]

The nineteenth century, unfortunately, was not only a period of economic progress and social change in Manila. Similar to other parts of the country, it was also the time when the city was in the midst of a crime wave. Greg Bankoff's trail-blazing work on criminal activity in nineteenth-century Manila and the Philippines provides the context of such criminality.^[28] He explored how the colonial state sought to suppress such acts and impose order among its subjects through the imposition of a criminal, legal and justice system, while also narrating stories of women as perpetrators and victims of crime.

Across time and place, crime is a reality of city life, an expected consequence of urban growth.^[29] Quite possibly, it is also the natural outcome of weakening kinship bonds, a decrease in the importance of family, erosion of traditional methods of social control, the dominance of more transactional relations and increasing anonymity.^[30] It is, thus, unsurprising that lawbreaking and wrongdoing were statistically recorded with respect to cities.^[31]

A criminal act will always have the following dimensions: a. the law that identifies an act to be criminal, b. the offender, c. the victim, d. its geographic component (the crime scene), and e. the time of its occurrence.^[32] These elements of a crime can be observed in archival documents that allow us to imagine snapshots and scenes of people's lives in the past.^[33] In the case of nineteenth-century Manila, sources from the archives, enable us to retrieve the voices and presence of marginal groups, such as those women who were identified as perpetrators, victims and witnesses of crimes that transpired in various spaces in the city.^[34]

In this paper, I provide both an illustrative sample and a working database of the crimes, crime scenes, and spaces in Manila that its women were involved in from the middle to the late nineteenth century. Using particular accounts from NAP records such as the *Asuntos Criminales*, *Adulterios*, *Prostitucion* and *Juegos Prohibidos* and quantitative data from selected issues of the *Gaceta de Manila*, this study seeks to answer the following:

- 1) In what types of spaces were Manileñas involved in as protagonists or witnesses to crime?
- 2) What kinds of criminal activity occurred within such spaces?
- 3) In which crimes did the Manileña tended to be the perpetrator, victim or witness?

A typology of crime spaces and the violations committed within them

Spaces and places have been defined by geographers as sites where memory, identity and meaning come together.^[35] In general, they are bounded areas where our lives and routines unfold, where relations take place and behaviour is imprinted.^[36] In the study of cities and urban areas, spaces are commonly divided into two categories—the public and the private. Unfortunately, these two types of space can prove quite difficult to separate, partly because what is considered as public space by the authorities or some groups, may be utilised as personal spaces by others.^[37] Alternatively, what can seemingly be private spaces, such as the home, can also be sites of production and livelihood where people outside of the family or household can come and go.^[38] Even places that are considered public spaces are also filled with private entities, such as businesses, that are open to all, and which give life to spots frequented by the general public.^[39]

Clearly, these characterisations of private or public spaces are proof that there is no standard definition and typology of space. Thus, for the purposes of this study on women and sites of criminal activity, the

following categories of space will be used and defined: a. private/domestic space; b. public spaces; and c. hidden, converted, or anonymous spaces. Private spaces are those limited access sites that are accessible only to a select number of individuals who share particular habits and values and even resources (i.e., living space).^[40] These include, in particular, home or domestic spaces where family, kin and close relations can relax, recharge, be intimate and be protected from the outside world.^[41]

Public spaces, are sites where one meets strangers and where relationships are generally fleeting and shallow.^[42] These are places that are open and accessible to all where relations that are commercial or transactional in nature transpire.^[43] Included in this category are streets and other sites where the state and its agents try to impose order^[44] and where only proper or acceptable behaviour is tolerated.^[45]

The final spatial category of criminal activity, Concealed/Converted/Anonymous spaces, recognises the reality that there are sites that bisect or challenge notions of what are public and private.^[46] These spaces are home to illegal activities whose perpetrators use natural (i.e., evening, darkness, wilderness areas) and built (i.e., secret or backrooms) environments to hide or keep anonymous acts that are considered unlawful by the state or immoral by society. These include streets and brothels used by prostitutes and their clients^[47] and gambling activities in houses and woodland areas,^[48] and other portions of the city where people and illicit acts can be camouflaged.^[49]

Crimes committed in domestic spaces

Dwellings serve as one of the fundamental spaces of any settlement. Such residences are considered to be 'fields of care,'^[50] and in nineteenth-century western societies, a home was seen as a 'blessed sanctuary' that shielded its inhabitants from the harshness of the outside world^[51] and, if well managed by the wife and daughters, provided the man of the house with order and routine^[52] that would enable him to compete in the public sphere.^[53] These aforementioned statements and descriptions about the home paint a picture of pleasant domesticity and safety. However, a review of criminal case records, police reports and even adultery or legal separation cases reveals that domestic spaces were sites of crimes against property, crimes against persons and an individual's honour, and acts that were considered scandalous.

Crimes against property in homes: Theft, robbery and estafa

Beyond being living spaces, homes also serve as a repository of resources and valuables, from furniture to jewellery and money. In the case of nineteenth-century Manila, the non-existence of a mature banking sector meant that many families, particularly the well-to-do, kept most of their assets in their residences. Unfortunately for these homeowners, the maintenance of their households, at times, relied on the presence of non-family members, such as servants, wet nurses, workers and even midwives, who could easily be tempted by the presence of much 'portable wealth.'^[54] As some of these employees had to live in the same space as their employers, such proximity could naturally have led to issues.^[55] Such incidents included domestic theft, a crime against property which carried jail time based on the value of the stolen properties^[56] and may have been common in a city that by 1873 had supposedly one servant for every 67 persons.^[57]

In a few cases, this type of offense occurred while the employer was away. For example, in December 1891, Segunda Ynolo arrived at home after attending an evening 'possession' only to find out that her *criada* (servant) Gregoria Samaniego had gone missing. Also missing was Ms. Ynolo's box that contained the following: P8.50 worth of silver coins, a hair palette with gold trimmings, two gold pins, a pair of gold earrings, and a document containing the names of four people who owed Segunda money, which included her servant Gregoria. Segunda believed that Ms. Samaniego was simply goaded by her father to

commit the said crime.^[58]

At times, even trusted employees could steal from the dwellings of their bosses. In March of 1868, a teenage servant named Fabiana Salazar had earned the trust of her employer, Dña. Mercedes Villalon, so much so that the latter gave the former one of her rings for safekeeping. Ms. Villalon soon lost the said ring as well as a comb. During the hearing of her case, Fabiana admitted to stealing the belongings of her employer, but she reasoned that she only did the deed because her mother, Tomasa Esguerra, goaded her to do so. Because she was only thirteen years old, Fabiana's prison sentence was reduced to three months.^[59] Like Dña. Mercedes, a shopkeeper known only as Ms. Molina lost three gold rings, a gold pin with nine precious stones, pearl earrings, and a comb with eight pearls, when the trusted wet nurse of her two children, Ambrosia Alberto, and her husband Francisco Galvez, whom Ms. Molina allowed to stay at her place for three weeks, left the Molina residence with the said items while the complainant was tending to her store on Christmas Eve of 1891.^[60]

Individuals who were familiar and could access a household's private spaces were also accused of stealing. In July 1848, a merchant named Dña. Getrudes testified in the court of Tondo that she woke up one morning to find out that three *baul* or trunks and a *tampipe* (native clothes chest) containing apparel for daily use were empty. A witness named Basilia Rafael claimed that she saw Nicomedes Adriano, a carpenter, that same morning scaling the inner walls of the house. Rafael said that Adriano could only have entered the residence through the roof, and his familiarity with the place was due to his having done a previous job at the said residence. Nicomedes, for his part, admitted that he had in the past stolen items from Dña. Gertrudes' store but the latter apparently forgave him. While he denies that he again took away from his employer's properties, Mr. Adriano admitted that he was inebriated due to consuming too much coconut toddy or *tuba*.^[61] It should be noted that nineteenth-century criminologists considered it an axiom that excessive consumption of alcohol led to crime,^[62] and while the case file did not provide a verdict, it was unlikely that Nicomedes would have been acquitted.

Even people who were hired to provide much needed home-based services were not spared being accused of theft. The midwife Estafania Cortes learned about this the hard way when Rafael Rances, whose wife Ursula she assisted during childbirth and whose wounds she had cleaned from time to time, blamed Cortes for the loss of jewellery that was said to have been wrapped in a white cloth and placed in Ursula's room one evening in February 1871. A female shop owner who served Ms. Cortes a glass of wine that same evening testified that she indeed saw the defendant holding a precious ornament on her arm. For her part, Estefania said that she indeed left the house of her client with a white cloth, but she denied carrying any expensive gemstones or trinkets with her. In the end, the court acquitted the accused as there was not sufficient evidence to pin her to the alleged theft.^[63]

Similar to theft, robbery was also a crime against property, albeit of a more severe form as it also entailed the use of intimidation and violence. Such acts, some of which transpired in the victims' abodes, received punishments ranging from a day's worth of jail time to life imprisonment.^[64] The spouses Ysabelo Baterno and Leoncia Noguiera were victimised by robbers when, on the evening of 20 June 1878, they were accosted by two men as they were about to enter their house. One of the crooks pointed a knife at Leoncia's chest, giving the couple no choice but to allow the men to come inside with them. There, the thieves got hold of and then ran away with Leoncia's pearl comb, a couple of gold earrings with diamond stones, which had a cumulative value of P170.^[65] It should be noted that the value of the stolen jewelry was already extraordinary as P3 was the monthly wage for a servant at that time and that was already considered good pay.^[66] While some individuals may have been robbed without getting physically hurt, others were not so lucky. In the evening of 29 September 1882, D. Mauro Patiño, his wife Roberta de los Santos, and their children were at their residence in Parañaque when several men barged into their home and demanded that they surrender their valuables. While the men found no money and jewellery, the couple were beaten up by the robbers, with Roberta needing medical attention at the San Juan de Dios

Hospital for her wounds. In her testimony, she mentioned that the intruders first struck her and D. Mauro and then demanded money or any clothes of value, both of which they could not provide. The couple's daughter, Calista, also recounted that there were eight men who woke them up from their sleep and commanded they give them anything of value. When they offered the robbers the pans in their cupboard, the group refused. Another male witness, Luis de la Cruz, mentioned that two of the men carried a pistol and a bolo, respectively.^[67]

Swindling and other false pretenses were also considered crimes against property that were punishable from one month to six years of imprisonment, depending on the value of what was stolen. Unfortunately, a good amount of *estafa* (swindling) cases found and examined at the NAP had the residence of the victims as the site where monies or valuables last changed hands. One victim of swindling in late nineteenth-century Manila was D. Calistro Peña. D. Calistro recounted that he was tricked by Carmen de los Santos and Anastacia Bautista—two women whom he knew well and had had previous dealings with. The two suspects arrived at his house one day and informed him they had found potential buyers for his jewellery and that they would promptly return these if the potential sales fell through. Finding no reason not to believe them, Mr. Peña entrusted to the pair with an assortment of rosaries, rings, and combs made of and encrusted with pearls, diamonds and gold that had a market value of P141.25. After three weeks of not hearing anything from the two, the aggrieved party decided to report the crime to the police.^[68]

At times, even educated men were conned by attractive and convincing tricksters. In 1876, Veronica Enriquez, supposedly a resident of Malolos, Bulacan deceived three men who were members of Manila's upper class. Ms. Enriquez first duped D. Domingo Barretto, an unmarried bookkeeper, into believing that she had much property in Malolos and Paombong, Bulacan that she wanted to sell. Thus, she needed funds to defray her transport expenses to and from Manila as well as the paperwork needed to facilitate the sale of such assets. As proof, she showed Mr. Barretto what supposedly were certified true copies of the titles of her properties. Domingo must have been both persuaded and smitten by Ms. Enriquez that he even served as Veronica's guarantor for the monies loaned to her by Dons Ramon Rivera and Agapito Enriquez. Before she left with the money, Veronica was even able to acquire on loan P8 worth of apparel from Barretto's sister that she promised to repay once the sale of her lands were consummated. Unfortunately for Domingo, Veronica never returned.^[69]

Among business partners, dwellings also served as the site where agreements were made and goods exchanged. Such may have been the case for Macaria Alcantara and Engracia Jacinto, women who seem to have had previous dealings with each other. In the early part of June 1895, Ms. Alcantara of Alcaicera Street, Binondo, was said to have entrusted Ms. Jacinto, who resided in the same district along Camba Street, jewellery valued at P42, a batch of *sinamay* (coarse *abaca* or Manila hemp textile) cloth valued at P5 and a *real* (1/8th of a Peso), a diamond pin with a value of P3, and P6 worth of Japanese slippers. Supposedly Engracia was to sell all the said items valued at P56 within 24 hours, but after that time she was nowhere to be found. Luckily for Ms. Jacinto, it was determined by the court that that there was not enough evidence to pin her for *estafa* (criminal deception).^[70]

Crimes against persons, chastity, liberty in household spaces: Injuries, domestic violence, detention, rape, etc.

A person's residence is commonly considered to be a safe space where individuals can be themselves, relax and be shielded from whatever is happening beyond its walls. Unfortunately, not all homes are safe and peaceful, and such a reality is revealed in select archival records that tell of stories of verbal or physical injuries inflicted by one person on another.

Documents from the *Asuntos Criminales* reveal that there were individuals who were charged with committing *injurias* or injuries. Upon closer inspection, these hurts were inflicted on an accuser's dignity or

honour, meaning that the assault was verbal in nature. Usually in the form of insults or cuss words, the category closest to verbal injuries in the Spanish Penal Code would be threats directed at a person and their honour. Such actions brought a punishment of incarceration between one to six months and a fine of between P65 to P650.[71] Based on the criminal records, charges of verbal injuries were not uncommon. This could be explained by the reality that many communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, irrespective of place, there were 'oral societies' where one's reputation and honour had to be protected since a simple statement or gossip against an individual that goes around could ruin both their social and economic standing.[72]

A particular case of verbal injury involved a female tenant and her Chinese landlord. The complainant, 18-year-old Dña. Bruna Barbo of Masbate, claimed that Alejo Ching Chuco allegedly entered without permission the place she was renting from the latter without permission and then proceeded to call her a 'whore.' Mr. Ching Chuco, in his testimony, belied such a claim and said that he only passed by to collect the rent that was due to him. He even said that he had previously attended the rental property several times but decided not bother the plaintiff as she seemed to have been busy. It was likely that Mr. Ching Chuco was absolved of any wrongdoing although the court is silent on the matter.[73]

In May 1888, Dña. Maxima Guerrero of Intramuros filed a similar incident against D. Genaro Oungera of the Manila Provincial Government. The incident apparently transpired in the residence of Dña. Maxima during the making of an inventory of the properties of D. Miguel Ferrer who had just died. Ms. Guerrero claimed that D. Genaro threatened her with a cane and then called her 'the daughter of a bad mother' and a 'pig.' While two female embroiderers stood as witnesses, most likely for the accuser, Ms. Guerrero's allegation could not be substantiated.[74]

Nineteenth-century Manila was the site of a vibrant real estate market that included rentals for people looking for affordable living spaces. Given the high level of economic activity and demand for space in the said city, leasing living spaces did not come cheaply as some people were compelled to live in cramped and blighted dwellings that were, nevertheless, near sites of work opportunities.[75] In such housing facilities where several individuals or groups had to share limited space, conflicts could definitely arise. This is what happened to Dalmacia Reyes who was apparently a renter in the house of D. Ramon Montejo and his alleged mistress Asuncion Nieva in San Luis Street, Ermita. Dalmacia and Asuncion apparently worked as seamstresses, while D. Ramon was a tailor. The incident of verbal injuries occurred when Dalmacia broke an oil lamp and a jar, after which either Ramon or Asuncion called her *sin verguenza* (without shame). It did not end there, according to Ms. Reyes, as she claimed that she was soon treated by Ms. Nieva like a servant, and in one incident, the complainant mentioned that she was even ordered around by her fellow seamstresses to remove several items near the window so that they would not be doused by the rain. Unfortunately, the case file does not provide a clear resolution.[76]

Even fellow tenants could have issues with each other that could degenerate into full blown arguments. In 1887, a married seamstress named Isabel Lopez accused a student named D. Ignacio de la Cruz of calling her a 'whore' (*puta*), an 'uneducated person' (*hija de sin educacion*), and a 'fuck up' (*jodida*). This incident was supposedly caused by a stinking *arinola* (chamber pot) that had become a nuisance in the living space that they shared. In the court hearing, Ignacio admitted saying those things but that the object of his anger was a woman named Vicenta Villareal and not Isabel Lopez. The case must have caused so much embarrassment that Isabel Lopez's husband Jose refused to appear in the court hearing as he claimed to be busy. The issue ended with the defendant being absolved of the offenses with which he was charged as the court deemed that the accuser simply lacked proof.[77]

Relations among housemates could turn so sour that such individuals could come to blows. This was exactly what Maximina Reyes claimed to have happened when she charged Gregorio Lisboa, Severina Condes and Eugenia Dimanlic of inflicting physical injuries on her brother Feliciano de la Cruz. Maximina claimed that she arrived home in Sta. Cruz one night at around 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. when an argument over

money ensued between her, her brother and their housemates. This, Maximina claimed, spilled over to the accused attacking her brother. Again, the court deemed that there was not enough proof to convict Mr. Lisboa as well as Misses Condes and Dimanlic.[78]



Figure 1. A sketch of a domestic scene wherein a man is beating up a woman.
Source. *Manila Alegre*, 1 Jan. 1887, p. 5.

Domestic spaces could also be the setting of marriages that had gone awry. Unfortunately, in some instances, husbands were accused or convicted of hurting their wives, a reality that was even noted by both a traveller's account[79] and a cartoon sketch in a Manila-based periodical in the late 1800s (Figure 1).[80]

Two cases from legal separation documents found at the NAP called the *Adulterio* underscore the existence of domestic violence against women in the late nineteenth century, a term that unfortunately did not yet exist at that time. In a separation case that Dña Cecilia Sanchez Pita filed against the *Español Insular* D. Luis Ortiz in 1865, the former spilled the details of the latter's abusive nature in their abode. Cecilia, who by then lived in a *beaterio* or house inhabited by pious women, asserts that Luis was not only unfaithful but also punched, kicked and even starved her on occasion. Aside from the P25 monthly alimony that she demanded, she demanded that Mr. Ortiz should issue a public apology.[81] Dionisia Aguilar, who also wanted a legal separation from her spouse Crispin Manuel stayed in San Juan de Dios Hospital for several days in order to recover from injuries she suffered at the hands of Crispin.[82]

It could not be determined if Dña. Paula Tayson demanded legal separation from her husband D. Jacinto Fernandez. What is certain is that she was able to get her spouse jailed in May 1893 for physical abuse. In the early part of the said year, Paula had apparently lost her baby in childbirth. To take her mind off her sorrow, she decided to pay her older sister a visit. But since she forgot to ask permission from her husband, Dña. Paula suffered facial and neck injuries after being punched and kicked by Mr. Fernandez.[83]

Unrelated families sharing the same household space would understandably encounter some friction that would not necessarily escalate to violence. This however was not the case for Vicenta Santos whose

family was sharing a house with the Dayao family. Apparently, Vicenta was accused by her husband Lino Cabigao of having an affair with Martin Dayao, an allegation of which all witnesses in the case denied any knowledge. It was alleged that out of anger, Lino attacked Vicenta with a bolo, and this resulted in deep cut wounds on both sides of her head, the loss of her middle and index fingers on her right hand, and a deep cut that extended from her thumb on her left hand. Because he was found guilty of mutilating his wife, Cabigao was sentenced to 28 months in jail.[\[84\]](#)

Female family members and household staff were also the subject of abuse. One type of criminal offense where perpetrators either victimised family or employees was rape, which was defined in the Spanish Penal Code as the act of lying with a woman using force or intimidation. Such an offence meted a prison term between 12 and 20 years.[\[85\]](#) Male heads of households were one of the more commonly accused individuals in rape cases. An example is D. Ciriaco Ubero who was accused of raping and impregnating his 14-year-old sister-in-law Jacinta who was staying at Ciriaco's residence in Quiapo in August 1854. It was alleged that Ciriaco, who was married to Jacinta's older sister Macaria, a cigar factory worker, ordered the house help to run an errand so that he and Jacinta could be alone at home. Then Ciriaco threatened his sister-in-law that he would kill her and Macaria if Jacinta did not accede to his wishes. Unfortunately the case file is silent on whether D. Ciriaco's accuser was able to get a conviction.[\[86\]](#)

Another male head of the house who was accused of rape was Manuel Galit. According to Saturnina Manabat, Galit's servant, she was asleep one night when she suddenly woke up after she felt that someone was raising her skirt. To her surprise she saw her employer, Mr. Galit, beside her, and this made her scream and cause a commotion. The defendant, for his part, claimed that he was asleep with his wife in the early morning that he was supposedly lying with Ms. Manabat. He also argued that Saturnina was only accusing him of such a dastardly act because the latter owed and stole money from him. Unfortunately for Saturnina, Mr. Galit was judged to be not guilty of the charges the former raised against him.[\[87\]](#)

In the court of Malabon on 17 September 1887, a 13-year-old servant from Malolos, Bulacan named Rosa Gutierrez formally accused the coachman Gregorio Bautista of raping her in a space that bordered the home of the Chinese Christian Chua Uatong. Bautista, 28-years-old and a native of Hagonoy, Bulacan, was promptly arrested and jailed, but he claimed that no rape occurred. He explained that he was no stranger to Rosa as he and the plaintiff both worked for D. Eulalio Tiburcio who was the head of the *gremio* or council of Chinese mestizos in Malabon. When asked about this, D. Eulalio confirmed that he was indeed the employer of both Rosa and Gregorio, and that he, in fact, saw the two have sex in the stables area of his residence. He claimed that he was the one who had Mr. Bautista arrested not because he committed a crime but that he had no updated *cedula* or head tax. A surgeon eventually medically examined Rosa and confirmed that there was indeed no sign of rape.[\[88\]](#)

Another form of crime against chastity or liberty was illegal detention, or the locking up of an individual which results in the said person's loss of freedom.[\[89\]](#) In October 1894, 18-year-old servant Tomasa Palad informed her employer, an old woman named Dña. Ambrocía Damacio that she now planned to leave her job and the household very soon as she wanted to start her life with her partner, Julio. She had already left several times in the past, but she always returned out of pity for her employer. That same evening Tomasa woke up to find out that she had been chained up by Dña. Ambrocía. It took Ms. Palad two days to escape, after which Ms. Damacio was promptly arrested and jailed. However, given her age and her good reputation in the community, Ambrocía was eventually set free.[\[90\]](#)

Abduction was another crime against chastity on women[\[91\]](#) that was recorded in the *Asuntos Criminales* with several of these incidents occurring within the confines of a home. In October 1888, Gabriel Martinez was accused of kidnapping as well as corrupting Ygnacia, the daughter of Toribia de la Cruz Gabriel, and was subsequently arrested at his home in Tinajeros, Malabon where he had taken Ygnacia. Mr. Martinez actually expressed surprise as to how he could be accused of such an offense as Toribia specifically

asked him to take Ygnacia to mass in Obando, Bulacan. He even asserted that he and Toribia had had a relationship for the past 16 years and that he believed that Ygnacia was his daughter. Gabriel was freed on bail after being incarcerated for two months, but no final decision was indicated in the case file.^[92]

Cities are said to be sites of weakened social bonds, isolation and anonymity.^[93] Perhaps it was these same supposed features of city life that enabled and even emboldened a 70-year-old and unmarried Francisco Marcos of San Miguel, Manila to abduct a young Miguela Nicolasa of Sta. Cruz District in March 1873. Miguela's grandmother Gabriela Celidonio said that Miguela was just playing underneath their home (*silong*) when she suddenly disappeared. It was a good thing that the maid servant of the area's lieutenant commander knew of the incident and tipped off the authorities, thus leading to the capture of Mr. Marcos.^[94]

Thirteen years later in the town of Pasig, a 30-year-old ex-convict and boatman named Fermin Sillano along with Alejandra Antonio were tried in court for allegedly abducting and then raping Ignacia Antonio, the wife of 21-year-old baker Antonio Cruz. Antonio claimed that he knew Fermin since the latter regularly passed by his residence to visit his cousin Adriana, and that he may have had designs on Ignacia. One day, Fermin passed by and asked for Ignacia's help in properly cleaning his friend's linen in another residence. Once they reached the said house, Ignacia claimed that Sillano punched her and had his way with her twice. While Mr. Sillano and Ms. Antonio were made to produce P200 and P100 respectively as bond, both were eventually acquitted.^[95]

The last kind of crime against persons that was regularly recorded in the *Asuntos Criminales* was murder or homicide. The first account of murder that was identified in this research involved a deranged man who randomly selected a household and attacked its inhabitants. In August 1874, an unhinged Sebastian Alipasa suddenly appeared in the dwelling of Antonia Olaza, who was five months with child, stabbed her to death, and then took his own life. While it could not be determined if this was a normal Spanish practice, the court nonetheless tried to indemnify the family of the deceased by ordering the living relatives of Mr. Olaza to pay Antonia's kin P200 in damages.^[96]

The protection of one's assets could lead to the death of a homeowner. This is exactly what happened to Eugenio Anastacio on the evening of 15 August 1882 in Sitio Balintatao, Caloocan. That night, Mr. Anastacio went out of his house upon hearing his carabao make an unusual noise. He then encountered two men who stabbed him eight times that caused his demise. One of the suspects who remained at-large was Pedro Fulgencio, who was reported to be the lover of the deceased man's wife, Severina Sta. Ana. While there was suspicion that Anastacio's murder was planned by the two, only Pedro received a six-year prison sentence and a fine of P100, albeit *in ausencia* (in absentia). Four years later, however, Mr. Fulgencio was caught in a house he shared with Severina in Sitio Diliman, and he was subsequently sentenced to four years jail time plus an indemnity to Pedro Fulgencio's kin worth P125.^[97]

Crimes committed in public spaces

Public spaces serve as important components of any settlement. They represent places where you can encounter other people, usually strangers, and where the relations forged are usually fleeting or transitory.^[98] For others, public spaces are sites of production, where people make a living to pursue commerce and forge transactions.^[99] People are supposed to behave a certain way in public spaces^[100] in order to avoid conflict. Because governments are always trying to ensure order in its territories, agents of the state monitor public places to rid it of individuals that are considered threats to public order^[101] and that challenge their authority.^[102]

All of these aforementioned descriptions and definitions of public spaces were reflected in selected criminal records at the NAP. Unfortunately, the women involved in cases in public places were considered

to be either 'misbehaving' or were the victims of 'bad behaviour.' In a similar way to domestic spaces, however, the crimes alleged committed in public were, for the most part, similar in type, albeit with lesser frequency and different features. Moreover, a review of criminal incidents in public spaces yielded two new types of violations: prostitution and falsification.

Crimes against property: Theft, swindling, and falsification

Bad behaviour such as theft, robbery, and *estafa* transpired in the privacy of residences as well as in very open and exposed places. Yet theft seemed to be a crime that was more domestic in nature as only one such case in public was identified. This occurred of all places, in an opium den (Figure 2). In May 1898, an 18-year-old Chinese merchant named Co-Pungco was attending such an establishment in Tondo that was staffed by 30-year-old Arcadia Flores. The two seem to know each other as Co began to tease Flores. However, according to Flores, things got out of hand as the young man allegedly insulted her by calling Arcadia's sister a whore. Angered by what she heard, Flores quickly left to report Co-Pungco to the police, but when she returned, Arcadia claimed that Co was no longer there and P55 that was in the cash box was also missing.^[103]



Figure 2. Opium den on Malinta Street, Manila.

Source. [Lot 11356 \(492\)](#), Carpenter Collection (1,823), Prints & Photographs Online Catalog (Library of Congress) (985,255), Prints and Photographs Division (1,049,422), Library of Congress Online Catalog (1,486,953), accessed 1 Dec. 2023. No known restrictions on publication.

Swindling likewise took place in public spaces, particularly work sites where people made transactions and then left. This included spaces for making a living such as factories. In November 1890, Filomena Mariana was a trusted *cabo* or head of Dña. Ciriaca Pascual, who owned a cigar factory (Figure 3). Apparently, this trust may have been abused as Ms. Pascual found out that Filomena, also known as *Cabo* Minang, may have stolen P100 worth of tobacco from the factory's stock. Minang was able to escape when she found out that Dña. Ciriaca had filed a case against her.^[104]



Figure 3. A cigar factory scene in nineteenth century Manila

Source. [Wikimedia Commons](#). From *Harper's Pictorial History of the War with Spain*, Vol. II, published by Harper and Brothers in 1899, accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

An owner of a general store in Caloocan named Sy Chongco was also a victim of trickery. One day, a certain Filomena Morante apparently sold Mr. Sy what seemed to be P24 worth of lottery tickets. Given that a commercial establishment is a public place where people came and stayed around a while to observe what transpires in such a space, there were two witnesses who testified that a woman by that name indeed sold Mr. Sy such tickets. Unfortunately, these were found out to be fake. After a case was filed, the authorities captured a Filomena Morante but she was found out to be a different person. The Ms. Morante who swindled Mr. Sy was never found.^[105]

Falsification was another crime that was committed in public spaces, particularly in areas where people sold goods. One such case involved a female storeowner who sold substandard materials to a government agency. In 1886, a naval station ordered 20 kilograms of *Yakal Angat* lumber from Dña. Juana Goco for P9.75. Employees from the said institution, however, claimed that what was given to them by Ms. Goco's store was 20 kilograms of cordwood. But when confronted about the mistake and instead of apologising, Dña. Juana threw a fit, cursed at the poor complainant, and slapped him. While the case file does not provide any resolution, the accused could have ended up in jail for six months if she had been found guilty.^[106]

The manufacture of counterfeit currency was such a serious offence that anyone who was caught committing such an act risked staying in prison for life. Those who transacted business while knowingly using fake money, could suffer anywhere between six months to six years of incarceration.^[107] One woman who was arrested, jailed and eventually freed for using counterfeit currency in her business affairs was 26-year-old Catalina Manuel of Binakayan, Cavite who traded items in Manila's Quinta Market (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4. Rear of La Quinta Market in Quiapo, along Pasig River in Manila, 1900–1910.

Source. [Ortigas Foundation Inc. Library](#), access number ROJR-000326, accessed 1 Dec. 2023.



Figure 5. Market in Binondo [La Quinta Market in Quiapo], Manila, 1901

Source. [Ortigas Foundation Inc. Library](#), access number OFI-000044, accessed 2 Dec. 2023.

She was charged on 12 May 1871. The authorities at that time had received word that fake *cuarto* (1/160th of a Peso) coins were being used for buying and selling at the said market. Manuel was selling about 3000 mangoes at the market with her P10 worth of *cuartos* in full view of the public. The police then

arrested and jailed her. During investigation she claimed that the coins that the authorities said were fake actually freely proliferated in her hometown—an assertion that was supported by Feliciano Eullo, a close friend of the accused. After 54 days, Catalina was freed as the police could not ascertain that she knowingly used fake money. In fact, they also admitted that such fake *cuartos* that looked like the original were already common place in Manila.^[108]

Crimes against persons in public spaces: Cases of rape and injuries

Like domestic spaces, wrongdoings against persons did occur in Spanish Manila's public areas and one of these was the crime of rape. Surprisingly, rape occurred and another was attempted in sites where one would expect the existence of foot traffic. An act of sexual assault that did occur happened in Tondo in 1855, and it involved a 27-year-old sailor from Dumaguete, Negros Oriental and a local girl who was barely four years old. In that year, the Brigantine *Dolores* docked at the Manila harbour, and one of its crew, Pedro Jacinto, who planned on visiting his friend named Mariano in Tondo left the ship. The details of the case seem unclear, but it was stated that while on his way to Mariano's house, Pedro chanced upon the house of an old woman named Bibiana who was taking care of three children, one of whom was Marciana. Pedro then took Marciana by the hand and it seemed that people thought that Mr. Jacinto was someone that the little girl knew. It was said that accused brought the child to a portion of a beach where he raped her. Child rape was not yet defined at that time, but he ended up in prison for a year where he did hard labour.^[109]

It is said that 80 per cent of perpetrators of sexual assault are known by their victims.^[110] Such was the experience of a teenage girl named Ursula Mariano who filed *violacion* charges against Venancio Morales in 1888 in the court of San Miguel. Ursula, who was then fifteen years old, was on her way to say confession at a mission house in Calle San Marcelino, Dilao. On her way there, at around 7:00 p.m., she encountered Venancio Morales along Ayala Bridge. She must have known Morales as Morales had been pestering her since the early afternoon of that day. He even had the gall to tell Ursula that she should join him and go to San Felipe Nery (present-day Mandaluyong), implying that they should elope. When Ursula understandably refused, Morales tried to force himself on her, but the young girl fought back. The complainant's torn *camisa* (blouse) was her proof of what had happened.^[111]

The throwing of insults and threats in public, were mainly considered to be misdemeanors,^[112] and were one of the more prevalent offenses committed by individuals against each other in public. Apparently, people had no compunction at that time taking others to court for insults thrown at them in neighbourhoods and streets. Some, like Ermita resident Dña. Josefina Aguirre was ordered by the court to pay D. Manuel Villaba P55 in damages for calling the latter 'without shame,' 'thief' and 'land usurper' in public.^[113] Almost a year later in February 1889, Dña. Eulalia Diaz claimed that D. Jose Armano called her a *puta*, *puñetera* and *patutot*, all of which are different expressions of the term, prostitute,^[114] while in 1894 Martina Pascual and Agustina de los Santos were trying to collect payment for the clothes they washed from Carmen Pascual only to be insulted by the latter and her three companions with hurtful words such as *puta*, *puñetera* and *puta con chino*, or a woman who had paid sex with Chinese men.^[115]

Some forms of violence against women in public were deliberate, while others were accidental. One case of such intentional assault was committed by 19-year-old Ancelmo Clemente of Malate on his own 15-year-old sister Josefa in May 1882. Apparently angered by his sibling's alleged flirting with a soldier, Ancelmo confronted Josefa, slapped her, and then stabbed her left shoulder with a short knife before running for the sea. While he was initially sent to jail, Mr. Clemente was eventually freed with no charges filed against him.^[116] Another involved Tondo resident Juana Lavandero who, in October 1894, was beaten up in her neighbourhood store with a slipper and a cane by Cipriano Sevilla and Pilar Mendoza for claiming that the accused's servant had tried to buy stuff from her store using fake coins.^[117]

The most common trespass that people committed in public areas was physical assault or injuries. Manila's streets served as sights of these physical altercations. In 1852, a cook named Alipio Santos finally realised that his love for his co-worker the Raymunda Torres was unrequited as she loved their household's butler. One day, Raymunda was walking towards the Colegio de Sta. Isabel to fulfill an errand. Apparently, Alipio followed her and it was while going to the said school that Ms. Torres was injured by Mr. Santos.^[118]

Manila's streets in the late 1800s were filled with animal-powered transport, such as the *calesa* and *carromata* (a two-wheeled, box-like, horse-drawn vehicle) that caught the attention of western travellers.^[119] So numerous were these forms of conveyance that it was not uncommon for dogs and chickens to be run over by them,^[120] and people were also hurt in Manila's busy streets. One such victim was the 30-year-old widow Ignacia San Diego whose foot suffered injuries after she was hit by a *calesa* driven by Rufino Dionicio in Tondo on 22 February 1891. Ignacia's injuries caused her to be hospitalised for eight days, and, as a result, Rufino had to spend five days in jail and pay P28.75 to cover the costs of the case, the papers that were used, and the honorarium of the doctor who cared for Ignacia.^[121]

While the impression is given that women were always at the receiving end of physical abuse, there were also cases in which women initiated the altercation or they fought back. These altercations commonly involved local women and Chinese immigrants. On 18 August 1891, Dionisia Ronca was arrested for beating up Sy Ap. Mr. Sy was an ambulant meat vendor who was called by Ms. Ronca and four other female companions to come towards them at an *acessoria* (apartment) along Asuncion Street in Binondo. He informed Ms. Ronca that the two pieces of meat he was selling went for 10 *cuartos*, but while they were haggling over the price of his wares, Sy Ap suddenly slipped and accidentally hit Dionisia with his big toe. Angered by this, Dionisia slapped Mr. Sy who, in retaliation, called her a whore. She responded to this by throwing a stone at his face which caused him to be hospitalised for eight days. To indemnify Mr. Sy, Ms. Ronca was ordered to pay the former P5.^[122] On 11 September 1893, a 36-year-old vegetable vendor named Tan Tanco was assaulted by 28-year-old shopkeeper Gregoria Benedicto with an umbrella. Mr. Tan felt that the money Ms. Benedicto was using to pay him for his vegetables was fake. Benedicto eventually admitted her wrongdoing and she spent a week in prison.^[123]

Another case of a native woman and a Chinese man coming to blows was a woman named Gregoria and Chenga Sy Yu who had a violent encounter in full view of a *tableria* or wood board factory. Believing that he had doused hot water on her pig, Gregoria threw a brick at Mr. Sy Yu. Angered by this, the Chinese man called Gregoria a whore and slapped her before alighting into a *carromata*. The strike on the accuser's face caused a wound on Gregoria's upper lip that was almost an inch long. As proof that she was wounded, Gregoria used as evidence the blood that was stained on her blouse. Due to his actions, Chenga escaped jail, but he had to pay a fine of P3.^[124]

Prostitution as public scandal

Public places are areas where the State tried to assert its power and impose order.^[125] Sites such as streets and common areas open to anyone were considered places where people should behave in a manner that society and the government thought to be decent. Prostitution, soliciting for sex in public as a 'streetwalker,'^[126] were considered illegal. However, since prostitution was not categorised as a crime in the Spanish Penal Code, trying to do sex work in public was instead considered a form of public scandal—a crime that could cost the guilty party anywhere between P65 and P650.^[127] While both genders were charged for acts of public scandal, in the case of prostitution, only women were explicitly penalised for such an offense even if the men who were with them were mentioned in the case files. By the 1880s and 1890s, the authorities simply assessed arrested women with fines of as low as P5, but it seemed that no penalties were meted out for males who were caught with them.^[128] One instance of grave scandal supposedly committed by sex workers involved Juliana de la Cruz, Matea Samson, Rosa Aljalde and

Dominga Alverges, who were with a male companion, Gregorio Batac. In 1892, they were charged by the *alguacil* of Barrio Lecheros, Tondo of displaying shameful behaviour in full view of the general public. The four women were accused of leading bad lives, together with Gregorio, who was likely to be their pimp.^[129] A similar charge was pressed against Rosario Pascual, Feliciano Villarba, Quiteria de la Cruz, Guillerma Cachayo and Claudia de Jesus, along with four men. Based on the case file of Binondo's Court of First Instance, the women were cited for committing immorality and causing scandal along the interior portions of Magdalena Street in Trozo District together with these men who likely served as their intermediaries.^[130]

Crimes committed in hidden/converted/anonymous places

Illegal activities are transgressions; they are behaviours that go against accepted norms and promulgated codes.^[131] Those who commit undesirable acts are cognisant of their actions and recognise the social and legal repercussions if they get caught. Those who do commit certain crimes usually make an effort to keep their activities clandestine. They convert and use seemingly unspectacular and anonymous spaces to avoid detection.^[132]

Cities are places of density, anonymity and secrecy,^[133] and there will always be spots where activities are able to be hidden.^[134] Some individuals in late nineteenth-century Manila did use such sites with permanent and temporal features that allowed for the possibility of concealing illicit and illegal undertakings. Unfortunately for its users, agents of the state were still able to detect or find out about their acts of rape, the corruption of minors, abduction, falsification, gambling and prostitution.

Crimes against persons in hidden spaces: Rape, abduction and corruption of minors

Being familiar with a person may give one a sense of safety and security. Sadly, however, familiarity sometimes leads to abuse. This is what Agapita Mariano claims to have led to the abduction and subsequent rape of her 17-year-old daughter Blasica in the hands of Victoriano Ligdao, an employee of the complainant in her home-based tailoring shop. Agapita argued that on 8 January 1893, her daughter did not return home from mass. She recounted that the teenager met 25-year-old Victoriano, who was already married, on her way to church. After professing his love for Blasica, Mr. Ligdao allegedly suggested to the young woman that they should go to mass together in Binondo by taking a *carromata* (**translation please**). The vehicle, however, took them straight to a house in Malabon where Ligdao was said to have forced himself on the girl. Blasica, however, refused to undertake a medical exam to prove that she had indeed been raped. It soon appears that the couple did have sex, but it was consensual. After a month, it seems that her parents had already forgiven Victoriano and that case against him was dropped.^[135]

Parts of Manila Province, such as Novaliches, still had forested areas in the late nineteenth century, and it was in these woodlands that Fulgencio Austria had his way with his barrio mate 18-year-old Valentina Biglang-Awa. Fulgencio was apparently courting the latter. Their feelings for each other were mutual, and it appears they may have been a couple for around three months.

One evening, while Valentina was outside of her house, Mr. Austria appeared, covered that latter's mouth with a handkerchief, and threatened Ms. Biglang-Awa to not resist or else he would kill her with his bolo. The couple then proceeded to the woods near their community where Fulgencio had his way with Valentina. The next morning, Fulgencio surrendered to the barrio lieutenant of Maybiga, with the young woman in tow, and admitted what he had done. He, however, said that he had already informed the girl's parents of what had happened and that he was willing to marry their daughter. This wish of Mr. Austria was shared by Valentina, as ascertained by the parish priest. It should be noted that it is stated in Article

448 of the Spanish Penal Code that the act of rape is expunged if the abuser and abused party get married.^[136] Mr. Austria who was a member of Maybiga's *principalia* or local elite, was familiar with the law, and the family of Ms. Biglang-Awa seemed amenable to the arrangement.^[137]

People who know that they are doing wrong take pains to hide their transgressions. Adriano Guevarra, a sex trafficker, made an effort to hide the girls whom he peddled. He apparently let these girls, who worked as prostitutes in a brothel managed by a woman named Andeng, to stay in a house when not engaged in sex work. The police apparently received word of Adriano's activities, and, as such, in June 1893, Mr. Guevarra's holding area was raided by the authorities. There the police found Barbara Domingues, along with Sinfrosa de los Reyes, Yluminada Avila and Leoncia Patacio, all of whom Domingues tried to hide using what seemed to be a blanket.^[138] The three women were all under the age of 23 and, based on Article 443 of the Spanish Penal Code, were thus considered to be minors who by virtue of their being prostituted had resulted in their corruption.^[139]

A crime against the state: Falsifying seals through a hidden room

One of the basic activities of a state is to claim resources from its citizens, be it through taxes, labour, conscription and revenue from regulated economic activities.^[140] Access to such resources serves as the lifeblood that makes possible the functioning of government institutions. Thus, any act that deprives the state of what it deems its rightful claim is considered to be an economic crime. An example of such a violation is counterfeiting or the 'making of a product which so closely imitates the appearance of the product of another as to mislead a consumer that it is the product of another.'^[141] With respect to the *Asuntos Criminales*, colonial government agents were able to stop a state telegraph seal counterfeiting operation that involved several women and its leader named Manuela Tanguco.

Ms. Tanguco seemed like your ordinary businesswoman who operated a shop located along the Plaza de Moraga where items like cigarettes were sold. What many did not know was that the same shop had a hidden room that led to a production area where women such as Restituta Mariano, Placida Carreon, Fulgencia Tuazon, Pascuala Tuanengco and Leonora Villareal fashioned fake government telegraph seals based on copies of green-coloured stamps that Manuela was able to get from a government officer. The authorities became suspicious when telegraph seals that looked slightly different from what they were used to seeing began to be used in transactions. The foreign companies that Tanguco's operation was able to trick included British firms such as Ker and Company as well as Brittle and Bell.^[142]

Gamblers caught in hidden spaces

Gambling in the colonial Philippines has been described in western accounts as a custom or vice that plagued Philippine society at all levels,^[143] particularly in Manila.^[144] Knowing fully well that nearly all of these games of chance were illegal, its players tried to evade the law by hiding such activities, particularly in the safety of their houses.^[145] Those who had the misfortune of getting caught by the *guardia civil* playing illegal games such as the card games *monte* and *panguingue* were the victims of house raids. One of these was the residence of Lorenza Peras in Sitio Portero in San Pedro de Makati. Ms. Peras was a *casera*, a homeowner who hosted card games for profit. Perhaps Ms. Lorenza felt that she could monetise her house for gaming purposes as her residence was located in an out-of-the-way area that was filled with trees. Unfortunately for her, the *guardia civil* had already caught on to her clandestine activities as they swooped into Ms. Peras's residence on 11 March 1896. While the authorities were able to arrest one male player and Peras herself, it was reported that around 15 to 20 individuals were able to escape by running towards the wilderness.^[146] Teodora de Leon, a cigar worker, also operated a gambling den in her home along Anahaw Street in Sta. Cruz. Her luck run out on 11 January 1894 when the police caught six men and a woman named Victoria Domingo playing *monte* within de Leon's property.^[147]

Even well-to-do individuals were caught gambling or hosting gambling sessions. While one could apply for a *panguingue* licence and operate during the legal hours of 12 noon to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.,^[148] a *mestiza sangley* (half-Chinese, half-local) widow from Plaze del Calderon in Binondo named Dña. Ygnacia Eusebio did not even bother to seek a permit. This proved to be her undoing as she, together with five men and two other women, were caught by the police playing *panguingue* at Eusebio's home at 4:25 p.m. on 1 August 1884. Ms. Eusebio apparently tried to resist arrest, but she and the other players were prevailed upon to simply pay the requisite fines. Juana Rufina of Navotas, on the other hand, did have a licence to operate a *panguingue* table in her home. However, she did allow two men and Feliciano Borja to play card games in her residence during prohibited hours on 14 June 1883. The authorities were able to confiscate 200 playing cards and P2.11 worth of coins after raiding Rufina's home.^[149]

Those who could not afford a home or structure to conceal their gambling, or who had a building to hide their games but were still afraid of getting apprehended, opted to use elements of nature such as the darkness of evening and remoteness of the wilderness to fulfill their gambling fix. On 11 December 1893, 11 individuals, including Filomena Reyes, Francisca Salvador, Eustaquia Morelos, Cecilia Serrano, and Dionicia Roma, seemed intent on playing the card game *monte* from late afternoon to the wee hours of the morning in Magallanes Street, Manila by using darkness as their camouflage from the authorities. Such a plan was implied in the paraphernalia that was confiscated by the *guardia civil* when they arrested these individuals at 5 p.m. of that day. Items that were used as evidence against those arrested included the usual 40 cards needed to play *monte* and a flask filled with oil, which was to be used by the players for illumination purposes.^[150]

Ysidra de la Cruz and nine men, were willing to play *panguingue* in the home of Ysidoro Domingo because of the security that his abode offered against prying eyes. They were also given security by the fact that they were playing late in the evening, under the cover of darkness. Despite the protection provided by structures in built-up areas and the nocturnal invisibility that nature provides, they were not able to anticipate the fact that a *denunciador* or informant had tipped the police on what was going on in Mr. Domingo's house.^[151]

The hidden spaces of sex work

Urban life is said to be erotic as it develops a demand for sex.^[152] Some social scientists have even argued that cities and urbanising areas tend to have more sexual activity, albeit of the paid kind.^[153] This is due to features such as weakened social bonds, anonymity, the transactional nature of relations, and the high number of unmarried male immigrants, elements that nineteenth-century Manila possessed. Like all illegal activities that are objects of surveillance, sex workers used converted and anonymous spaces in the landscape in an attempt to avoid police detection^[154] and address their clients' need for privacy.^[155] Aside from brothels that blended with the regular landscape, such hidden areas for sex included very unusual spaces that showed people's creativity and desperation in trying to evade the authorities.

One prostitution case in late nineteenth-century Manila involved a brothel operation that used rented space unbeknownst to the lessor. One evening in 1872, the police stormed one of the rental houses owned by a Spaniard named D. Francisco Cabrerias. The said landlord had no idea that one of his properties in Calle Bantayan, San Nicolas was apparently being utilised as a brothel. In the said raid, four women were arrested. This included a seamstress from Malabon named Tomasa Diwa.^[156]

Even state facilities were used by sex workers and their clients. In 1872, a 30-year-old named Maria Guinto worked as a washerwoman in the barracks of the men who worked at the Barca Bridge. One evening that same year, Maria, along with her namesake Maria Castañeda, were entertaining two male clients in the said quarters with when the *guardia civil* caught them red-handed.^[157]

Some women and their clients made such an effort to hide from the authorities that they used common workspaces in the evening to consummate their transactions. As early 1862, state agents had already arrested a woman named Maria and her 10-year-old daughter Leonarda for prostituting themselves in a Chinese-owned ironwork shop in Barrio Murallon, Paco where they serviced Chinese immigrants.^[158] Like Maria and Leonarda, Paula Prim, Andrea Austria and Serapia Roncal were also arrested by the authorities for prostitution in a Chinese-owned enterprise in Sta. Cruz. This time, however, the three women were found in a soap shop under the ownership of Sy Jaco and Sy Junco. Apparently, residents in the neighbourhood had complained that the reputation of their community was being sullied by what was going on in the said establishment.^[159]

The prostitution case that highlighted the desperation of both client and sex worker involved a woman named Valentina Domingo. On 10 October 1891, using a tip from an informant, the *guardia civil* arrested Ms. Domingo entertaining an unidentified Chinese man in a *tinapaeria* or a smoked fish warehouse in Barrio Bancusay, Tondo. One could only imagine the stench of the place, where both Valentina and her client undertook their transaction.^[160]

The Manileña as victim, perpetrator and witness: Some initial statistics and generalisations from the *Gaceta de Manila*

The ability of stories, such as criminal case files and police reports, to provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which women experienced, committed, or witnessed a crime cannot be disputed. It should, however, be stated that quantitative information, such as crime statistics, also serve a purpose in illuminating the lives of social groups. In the case of crime statistics, such data could underscore a common experience and the social realities of a specific sector of society. Combined with other material, such as qualitative and literary data, statistics help reveal social facts.^[161]

One source of quantitative data with respect to crimes that were heard trial in Manila's courts in the late 1800s were the announcements of cases printed in the *Gaceta de Manila*.^[162] Using 632 listed scheduled announcements from the early 1860s to the late 1890s of hearings in Manila, patterns and tendencies as to which crimes involved female members of Spanish Manila as a complainant, a defendant, or witness can be generated.

The Manileña as complainant

It is clear that Manila's women actively participated in Manila's social and economic life. However, women in Manila were rarely involved in the filing of criminal cases. In fact, of the 632 charges that were tabulated, a female was a complainant in only 83 or 13 per cent of these incidents. The most common case filed by women was theft (18.1%), while rape and kidnapping/abduction was tied for the second most frequent offence wherein the woman was the victim (10.8%). Robbery was the third most common crime against women (8.4%), followed by injuries and *estafa* (7.2% each). Overall, a third of all cases filed by women were property crimes (33.7%), while nearly three out of every 10 cases wherein a woman was a plaintiff involved violent offences against the latter's person and dignity (See Table 1).

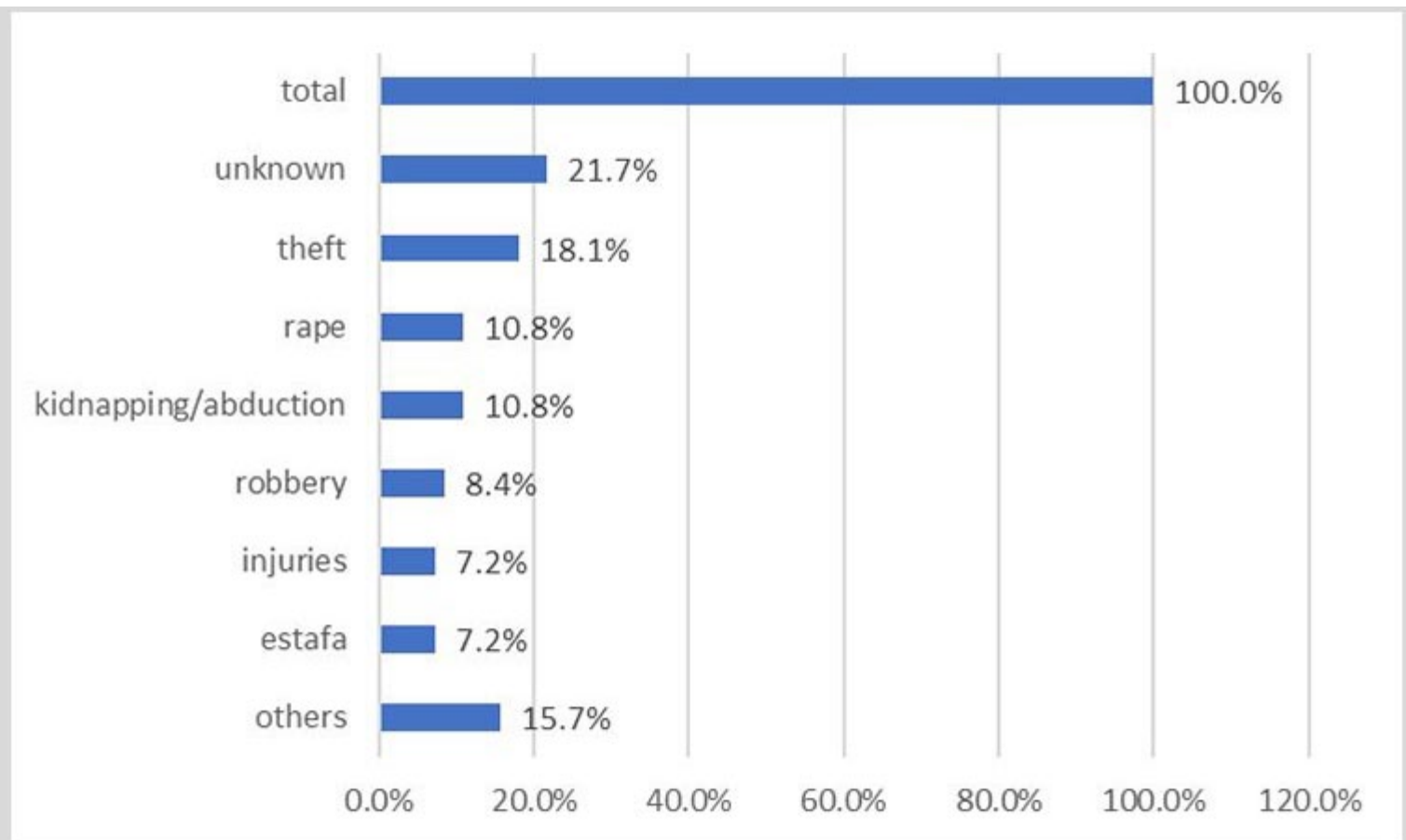


Table 1. Cases filed by women by percentage share, place, dates.

Source. Compiled by the author from the following microfilmed issues of the *Gaceta de Manila*, NAP: Enero–Diciembre 1862, Enero–Diciembre 1868, Enero–Abril 1869, Febrero–Diciembre 1871, Marzo–Diciembre 1889, Enero–Diciembre 1890, Enero–Diciembre 1896.

Offenses of which the Manileña was commonly accused

In the database that was produced, a woman was listed as a defendant in 34 per cent of all cases (214 of 632). What is clear is that in four of every 10 such cases, Manila's women were alleged committers of property crimes such as theft (32.7%) and *estafa* (8.4%), wrongdoings that clearly required more guile than brute strength or intimidation. Moreover, in roughly one out of every 10 of these instances, a woman was being charged for injuries caused on another (9.8%). Aside from these violations, the crimes a woman was commonly accused of in Manila's courts included maltreatment (4.2%), robbery (2.8%), and corruption of minors (2.8%), with the former a crime that most likely occurred in domestic spaces (See Table 2).

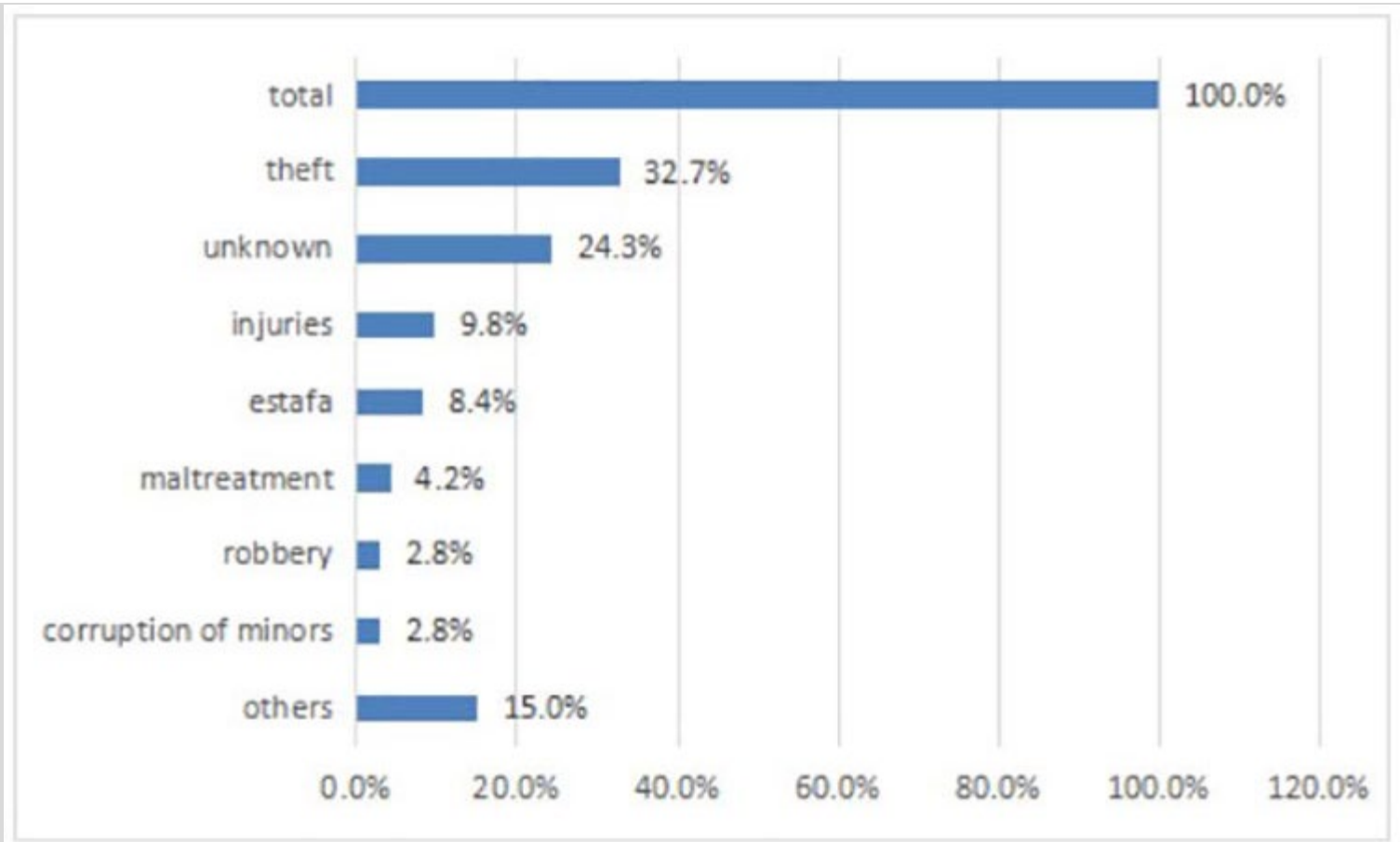


Table 2. Crimes wherein women served as a defendant, by percentage.

Source. Compiled by the author from the following microfilmed issues of the *Gaceta de Manila* NAP: Enero–Diciembre 1862, Enero–Diciembre 1868, Enero–Abril 1869, Febrero–Diciembre 1871, Marzo–Diciembre 1889, Enero–Diciembre 1890, Enero–Diciembre 1896.

The Manileña as witness

In the 632 cases listed in the *Gaceta de Manila* that were examined, a woman served as witness in half of these instances (313). In more than a quarter of these cases, women were to testify to theft offences (27.2%). If these were combined with other crimes against property—robbery (8.6%) and *estafa* (8.3%)—property offences would account for almost half (44%) of all court events that required a female witness. The second most frequent case that called on a female to give her testimony involved injuries (15.3%), while the clearly violent crimes of kidnapping and murder/homicide accounted for almost one of out of every 10 (9.6%) of the hearings that required a female to testify. Combined, all crimes against persons cases with a woman as witness accounted for a fourth of all announced hearings. However, it should be noted that while women were clearly the ones who filed charges of rape and assault, of the 32 cases that dealt with such violations, a woman or several women were called upon as witnesses (14) in less than half of those instances.

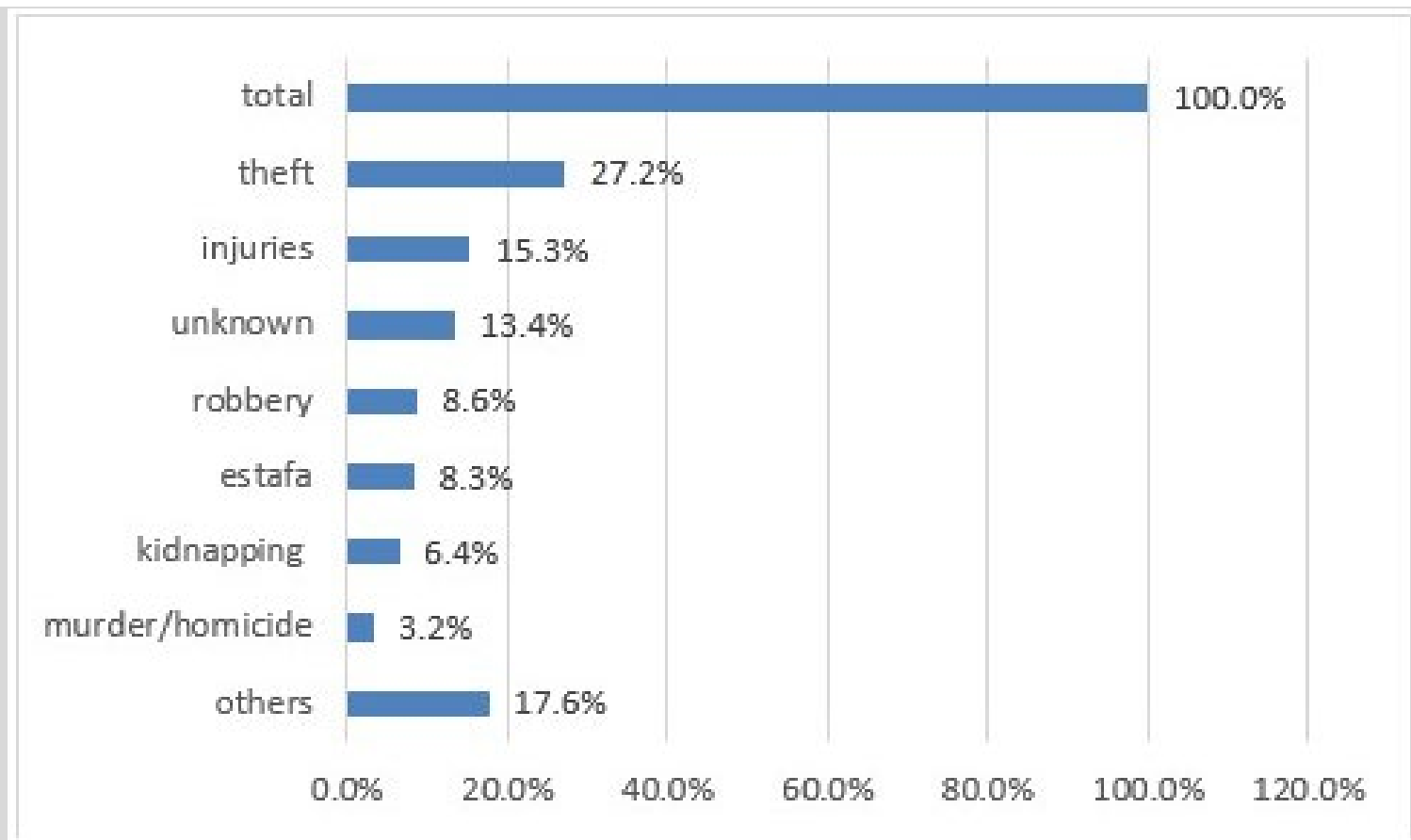


Table 3. Crimes wherein women served as a witness, by percentage.

Source. Compiled by the author from the following microfilmed issues of the *Gaceta de Manila* NAP: Enero–Diciembre 1862, Enero–Diciembre 1868, Enero–Abril 1869, Febrero–Diciembre 1871, Marzo–Diciembre 1889, Enero–Diciembre 1890, Enero–Diciembre 1896.

Observations

Archival sources can serve as a means of uncovering the voice, presence and even snapshots of the lives of different individuals and social groups.^[163] Statistics culled from historical documents can also help illuminate the collective existence of sectors of society that would commonly be invisible or silent.^[164] Just as important, such material could serve to determine the spaces where particular aspects of their lives, whether good or bad, occurred.

These features of city life include incidents of criminal acts, particularly those that involve women. By utilising police reports, criminal case files and government announcements culled from bundles found in the NAP, this study has demonstrated that Manila's women interchangeably played the role of victims, perpetrators and even eye witnesses to crimes that were said to have occurred in the city's private, public, as well as its concealed, converted and anonymous spaces. Residences in the city became the site where its owners—both male and female—became victims of theft from their female employees, violent robberies committed by men unknown to them, and even incidents of swindling from women business associates whom they thought they could trust. Such domestic spaces in nineteenth-century Manila also became the scene of violent acts against women. Wives were beaten up or sexually abused by their unfaithful and violent husbands, men and women sharing cramped living quarters exchanged injurious insults, and female domestics may have been victims of rape and illegal detention by their employers. Young girls and women alike were recorded to have been abducted from their homes. Women were also determined to have been victims and perpetrators of physical assault and murder in Manila's spaces for living.

In the case of public spaces where men and women worked and dealt with associates and strangers, such sites became the stages where females were accused of retailing counterfeit items and even using fake coins in their transactions. Criminal accounts in public spaces also exposed the ways in which women could inflict physical harm on others, particularly if the objects of their anger were Chinese males. Moreover, the prevalence of prostitution in a highly urbanised place such as Manila inevitably led to the documentation of several acts of prostitution and 'scandalous' behaviour by females and their male companions in Manila's streets.

Public awareness of those who committed illegal acts activities led them to conceal their acts in hidden, hard-to-find, unassuming portions of Manila. It is in these spots, such as seemingly legitimate establishments, storage facilities and random residences, that sordid deeds like rape, abduction and the corruption of girls and young women occurred. Gambling incidents were recorded in homes, and unusual spots such as wilderness areas became scenes where female gambling operators and players were caught red-handed by state agents. Stories from archival records also reveal that female sex workers and their clients took great pains to hide their transactions from the state.

Finally, an initial database of court cases reveals preliminary trends and tendencies regarding the Manileña's participation in criminal events. Females did file cases in Manila's courts, and these commonly dealt with property crimes (i.e., theft, robbery) as well as kidnapping or abduction. Women were usually defendants in theft, *estafa*, and injuries cases. If ever a woman was called on by the courts to serve as a witness, these had to do with alleged incidents of crimes against property as well as cases pertaining to injuries but rarely for incidents such as assault or rape.

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Published with the support of Gender and Cultural Studies, School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University.

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Last modified: 27 December 2023 1323