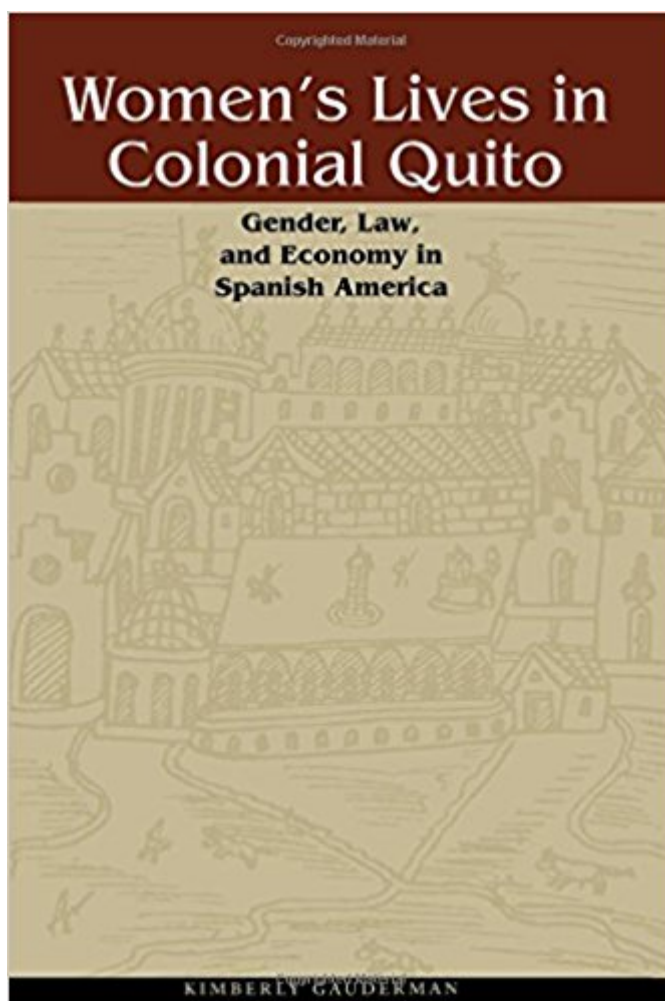




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Women's Lives In Colonial Quito: Gender, Law, And Economy In Spanish America



Synopsis

What did it mean to be a woman in colonial Spanish America? Given the many advances in women's rights since the nineteenth century, we might assume that colonial women had few rights and were fully subordinated to male authority in the family and in society—but we'd be wrong. In this provocative study, Kimberly Gauderman undermines the long-accepted patriarchal model of colonial society by uncovering the active participation of indigenous, mestiza, and Spanish women of all social classes in many aspects of civil life in seventeenth-century Quito. Gauderman draws on records of criminal and civil proceedings, notarial records, and city council records to reveal women's use of legal and extra-legal means to achieve personal and economic goals; their often successful attempts to confront men's physical violence, adultery, lack of financial support, and broken promises of marriage; women's control over property; and their participation in the local, interregional, and international economies. This research clearly demonstrates that authority in colonial society was less hierarchical and more decentralized than the patriarchal model suggests, which gave women substantial control over economic and social resources.

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"Kimberly Gauderman has produced an informative, well-organized study on the lives of Spanish, mestiza, and indigenous women in seventeenth-century Quito." (Colonial Latin American Historical Review)"Gauderman's book is a must-read for anyone interested in gender and the law. " (Law and History Review)"Overall, this book contributes significantly to the field by shedding a great deal of light on the complex terrain in which the women, men, and state officials of colonial Quito negotiated

policies and power. Its careful analysis, rich data, and readability will make it enormously useful in both research pursuits and the classroom." (The Journal of Latin American Anthropology)"I am impressed by the extent to which Gauderman . . . seems to have better grasped the complexities of [colonial] womenâ™s lives than most of the [authors of] existing literature. . . . I am very enthusiastic about this book.Patricia" (Seed Rice University, author of To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574â€“1821)

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