

Women, Work, and Family: The Female Workers of the Bunge & Born Group (1914-1965)

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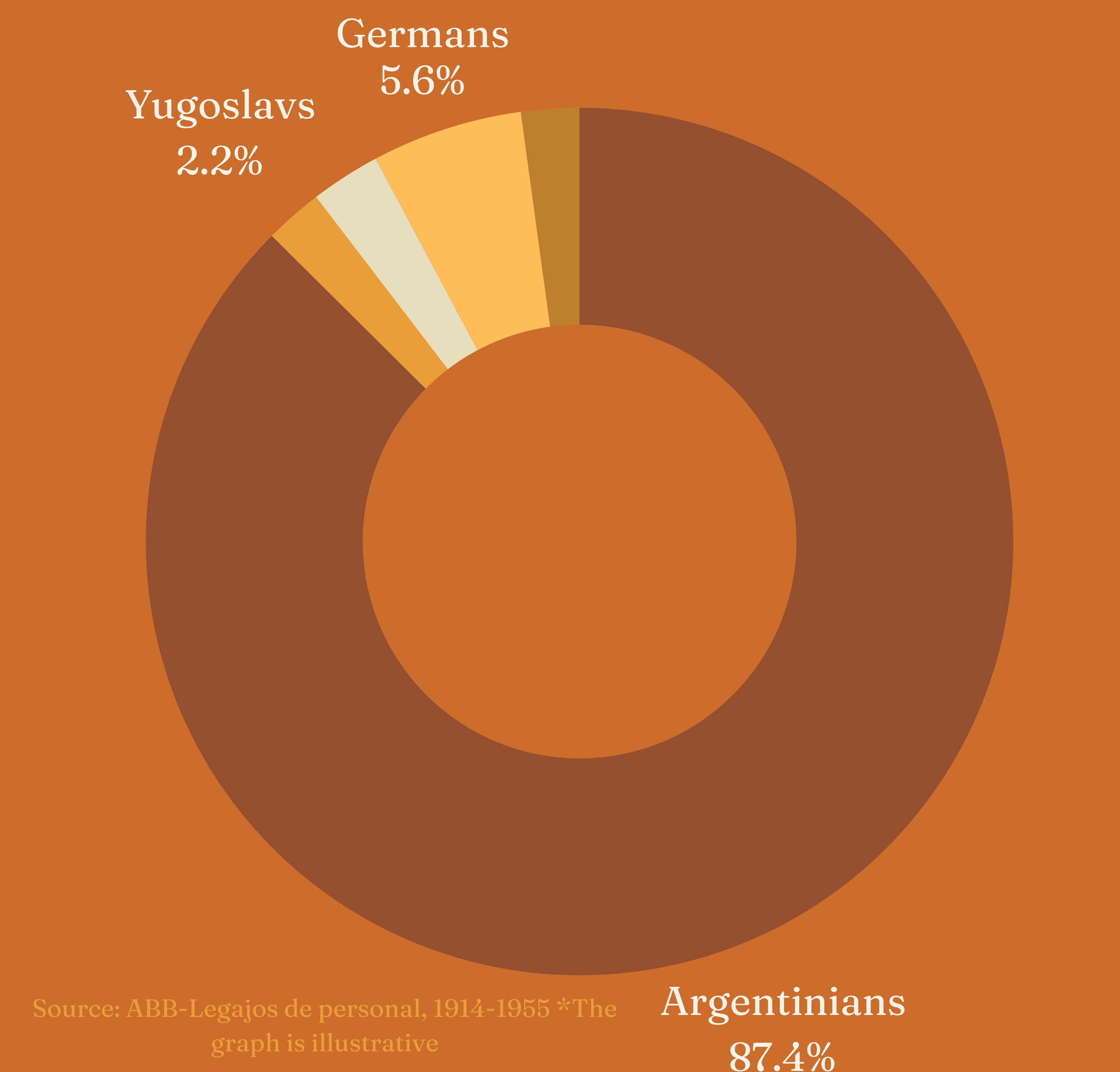
A history of Bunge & Born

In July 1884, Ernesto Bunge and his brother-in-law Jorge Born, two Belgian merchants recently arrived in Argentina, formed a partnership under their surnames.

- Initially, the company concentrated on the **exploitation of local agricultural products** for export to Antwerp.
- Over time, it **diversified industrially**, coming to have under its orbit **more than 14 companies operating 56 industrial establishments** and numerous branches throughout the country.
- Due to the type of industry in which the company operated, from its early days, **women played a crucial role**, taking care of **administrative and communication tasks**.
- At the company's headquarters, **more than 650 women worked during the period from 1914 to 1965**. Most of them served as **typists, stenographers, and secretaries**. Although many also worked as **telephone operators or translators**.

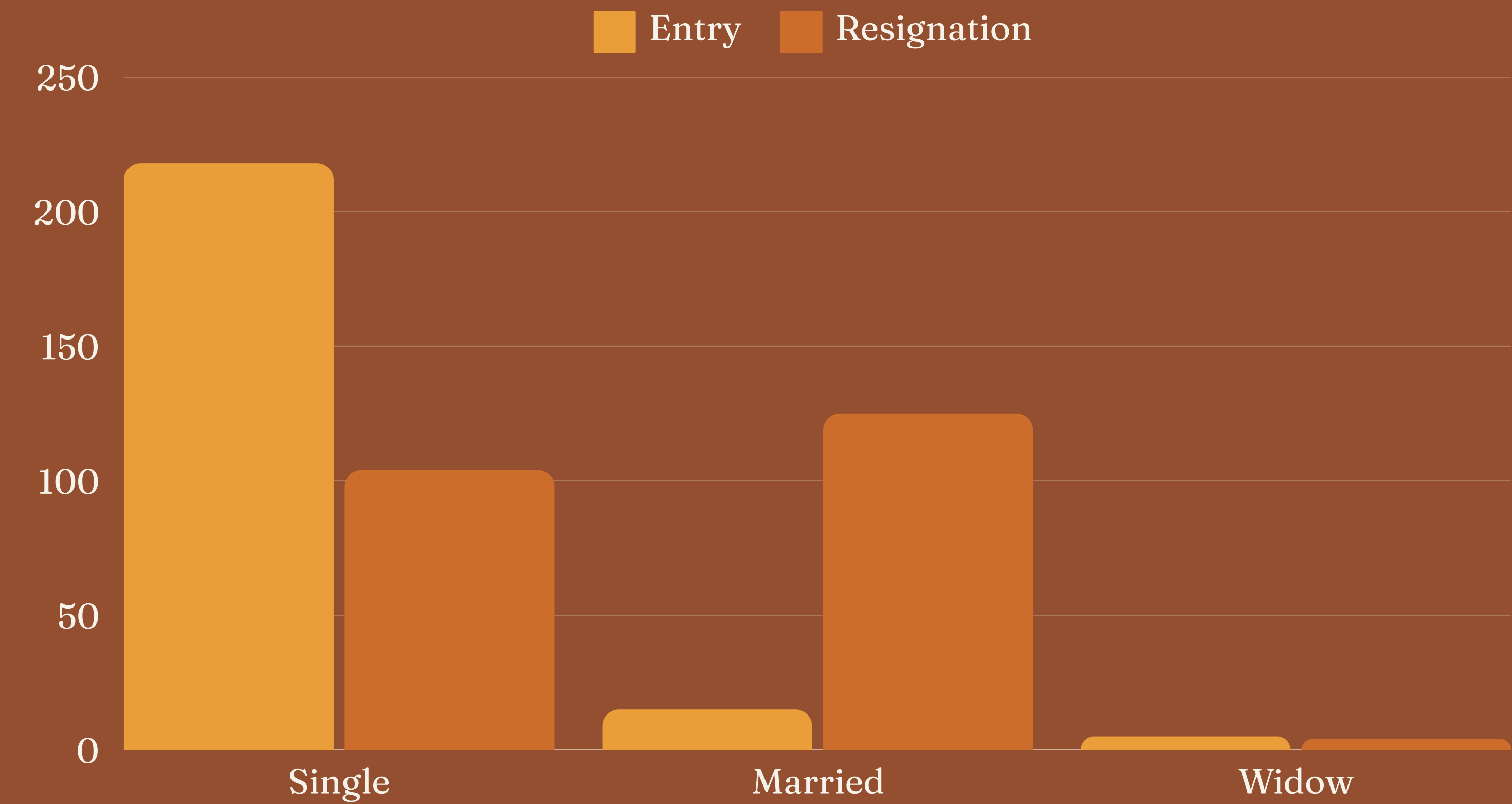
Female employees: introduction

This research is based on an analysis of **over 250 personnel records** preserved in the Bunge and Born Archive. These records **provide extensive information regarding the women employed**, as detailed in the subsequent section, which presents a succinct summary of the findings derived from the examination of these sources.



As for their origins, **82.4% of the workers were born in Argentina**, while **5.3% were German**, **2.4% were Italians**, **2% were Yugoslav**, and **2% were Spanish**, as can be seen in the graph above. he trend changes when we analyze those women who are daughters of foreign parents. In this case, the vast majority of them have **Italian and Spanish parents**, with a smaller percentage having German parents.

Source: ABB-Legajos de personal, 1914-1955 *The graph is illustrative



A shift in marital status tendencies

At the time of **entering the company**, 90% of these women were **single** and 6.2% were **married**. While at the time of their resignation or dismissal, the **percentages are reversed**, resulting in 51.9% married and 43.2% single. This can be observed very clearly in the graph above.

Trends in working ages

In relation to the above, we found that the highest percentage of women who joined the company did so between the **ages of 18 and 20**. Regarding the age of departure, there is a significant **peak at 55 years**, at which point they resigned to retire, and another peak between the **ages of 24 and 28**. The women who left between the ages of 24 and 28 mostly did so when they got **married or became pregnant**. Based on the investigation of the workers files, we have been able to observe that the **relationship between women and their family responsibilities** was **decisive** at the time of **entering and leaving** the company.

