



# Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor in Nineteenth-Century Mexico

*Kathryn A. Sloan*

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Against the backdrop of nineteenth-century Oaxaca City, Kathryn Sloan analyzes *rapto* trials--cases of abduction and/or seduction of a minor--to gain insight beyond the actual crime and into the reality that testimonies by parents, their children, and witnesses reveal about courtship practices, generational conflict, the negotiation of honor, and the relationship between the state and its working-class citizens in post colonial Mexico.

Unlike the colonial era where paternal rule was absolute, Sloan found that the state began to usurp parental authority in the home with the introduction of liberal reform laws. As these laws began to shape the terms of civil marriage, the courtroom played a more significant role in the resolution of familial power struggles and the restoration of family honor in *rapto* cases. Youths could now exert a measure of independence by asserting their rights to marry whom they wished. In examining these growing rifts between the liberal state and familial order within its lower order citizens, Sloan highlights the role that youths and the working class played in refashioning systems of marriage, honor, sexuality, parental authority, and filial obedience.

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